



THE WORD

“Go forth! Be brave! Be proud! Be true!”—Jane Leonard (1840-1925), IUP English Professor

A Home for the Humanities

This year, several departments have made their new home in the stunning, five-story Humanities and Social Sciences building, located behind the Stapleton Library and across the lawn from Clark Hall. It boasts a 250-seat auditorium, 31 updated classrooms, computer labs, media rooms, ample faculty office space, a great hall, and a Subway sandwich shop. In addition to technological improvements, the

are all together under one roof. The architecture firm Astorino designed the HSS building to be reminiscent of Keith and Leonard Halls—the former homes of the humanities—including the long rectangular windows and square structure. It is a perfect fit in the center of IUP’s brick campus. Unlike the former halls, the new building is comfortable and digitally accessible. Students and teachers are excited to find all the necessary technological



English professor Dr. Emily Wender works with students in a classroom in the new HSS building.

new building is conveniently located in the center of campus and provides complete handicapped accessibility.

The departments of English, Journalism, Anthropology, Political Science, Foreign Language Studies, Economics, Geography and Regional Planning, History, Philosophy, Sociology, and Women’s Studies

resources and space available to them in one building.

“Being able to walk into a classroom, such as HSS 321, and hit the ground with a full complement of computers already up and running has saved me and my students more than seven hours of startup time over the course of a semester,” commented English professor Dr. Daniel Weinstein,

Issue 1, Spring 2017

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Interested in donating to IUP English? Contact Development Officer Chrystie Raymond at Chrystie.Raymond@iup.edu

who praised the efficiency of the new building. The classrooms he uses are equipped with state-of-the-art software, including projectors, document cameras, instructor PCs, audio amplifiers, VCR/DVD players and ten round lab tables with electrical outlets to charge laptops.

From the Mouths of B.A.s: Jacob Sloan's Valedictorian Speech, May 2017

2016 B.A. in English valedictorian Jacob Sloan's speech from the 2016 English Department graduation ceremony demonstrates the usefulness and urgency of textual analysis in the 21st century. He has kindly permitted us to excerpt it here.

As most of us know, the English major, whether at a family dinner or at a funeral, is often met with the following question: What are you going to do with your degree? However, if, as an English major, you cannot answer with either "I'm going to write the next great American novel," or "I'm going to teach children how to read and write properly," you are often met with absolute confusion. Indeed, if you answer that your next project involves redeploing Georg Lukács's work in delineating narration from description in order to develop an eco-Marxist reading of migrant worker literature—a recent project of my own—most people tend to walk away from you, quietly lamenting your poor job prospects.

Initially, and for many, it may seem that the work we tend to do in English departments—that is, critically engaging with and analyzing various cultural texts—is of little importance, and is itself entirely divorced from the demands of reality. However, Georg Lukács, the literary critic and philosopher, tells us that the "approach of literary" analysis "is the one best suited to the problems of history," to the problems of reality. For, Lukács continues, the "literary . . . exposition of a problem appears as an expression of a social whole, of its possibilities, limits and problems" (34). Drawing from Lukács, I would

like to outline the ways in which the analysis of literary and cultural products, a skill we have developed as English majors, not only allows us to critically engage with the narratives we tell and are told about ourselves, our country, and our socio-economic system—narratives that tend to obscure structures of violence, exclusion, and exploitation—but also allows us to map the complexity of our social world, to grasp its interconnected "possibilities, limits and problems," so that we can understand its mechanisms, and perhaps, one day, collectively transform it for the better.

[For instance,] *Jaws*, Stephen Spielberg's famous 1975 film . . . tells us a particular story, a story in which the heroes are white men, and the villain is a rogue shark, a form of nonhuman nature that has escaped human control, and must be subdued and destroyed. However, because of our training, we are able to see the inadequacy of this narrative, to grasp its ideological function, and to undermine it. Looking at *Jaws*, we are able to see that the villain is not nonhuman nature, but the mayor who refuses to close the beaches, or rather the socio-economic system that he embodies: a system that will willingly sacrifice human and nonhuman life in order to make a profit. . . . [L]iterary and cultural criticism remains not only important, but also necessary. By learning how to analyze narratives, we become able to undermine those stories that tell us that the world, even with all of its forms of violence and exploitation, is as it should be, and that it cannot be made any better.

We also become able, though, by critically engaging with the narratives we are told about ourselves and our world, to map our social and material relationships in all of their complexity; that is, to understand how and why the world functions as it does, so that we can collectively change it for the better. The skills that we have acquired and honed as English majors, then, are not to be taken lightly. Indeed, despite the narratives it tells about itself, the social and economic system in which we live demands radical transformation. For so many—from the laborers in the maquiladoras along the Mexican border to indebted university students . . . our world is not only inadequate, but also incredibly violent, and the way in which we live now is, in the words of Arundhati Roy, "destroying the planet" (46). Indeed, then, as Marx argues—and I promised my parents that I would try to get through this speech without quoting Marx, so, Mom and Dad, prepare to be disappointed—we must attempt not merely to interpret the world as it stands, but also to "change it" (123). What I have attempted to argue here today is that our ability to critically engage with narratives, with cultural texts, is and will be essential for such a project of transformation.

Before stepping down, though, I would like to thank the members of IUP's English department for empowering us to do this very important work, and for making this work so enjoyable and rewarding.

Jacob Sloan is currently in his first year of the graduate program in English at University of Buffalo (SUNY).

On the Front Lines: Journalist and Filmmaker Melissa Troutman Returns to IUP to Talk Water Protection



Melissa Troutman

Melissa Troutman, a journalist, writer, vocalist, and IUP English alumnus, delivered a talk, “On the Front Lines: Fracking and the Struggles to Protect Water,” to a packed room on October 27, 2016. The event was co-sponsored by IUP English and IUP Sustainability Studies.

Troutman was born in Potter County, PA, where, she says, fracking was touted as an easy fix to the county's job problems and energy dependence. She began investigating shale gas extraction in 2010 as a newspaper reporter in her hometown of Coudersport before co-founding the investigative news nonprofit *Public Herald*, where she now serves as Executive Director. She quickly realized that there was more to the story than the industry and her state representatives were letting on.

“The mainstream media has failed us. People needed a more realistic picture of the effects of fracking,” Troutman says. “No one was reporting about the fact that Pennsylvania environmental regulators are not tracking the total amount of water contamination related to fracking.”

According to Troutman, 80% of Pennsylvania's drinking water originates from forested watersheds, meaning that the task of managing and protecting the people's drinking water should be vastly more regulated and made more public. “For decades and decades now we as a society have willingly handed over the control and the supply of our most basic survival needs to strangers,” says Troutman. “We don't give it a second thought because it is just the infrastructure of our culture and the way we operate.

Yet, in reality it is an incredibly vulnerable position to put ourselves in.”

Troutman credits Josh Fox's documentary *Gasland*—a portrait of the harmful effects of fracking on the environment and individual lives across the country—with inspiring her to create her own documentary, *Triple Divide*. Troutman co-wrote, directed, and edited the film, which she also co-narrates with award winning actor Mark Ruffalo. Her new documentary, *Invisible Hand*, tells the story of a rebellious township in Indiana County fighting to keep a frack wastewater injection well out of its township.

Troutman's *Public Herald* has been collecting all of the complaints sent to Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding water contamination dating back to 2005. After years of work and thousands of documents reviewed, the *Public Herald* is close to finishing a project that will allow citizens to navigate an interactive map that displays if their county or region has been impacted by water contamination. Troutman claims the real number of complaints far exceeds the 284 noted on the DEP's website.

“The DEP should start acknowledging its own data and placing it publicly on its own site,” Troutman says. “Also, if they do confirm a water complaint, they do not formally notify the people living in the general area of the potentially hazardous water. They should send letters to anyone in a general radius of the source of possibly contaminated water or at the very least put it in the local newspaper.”

Troutman sees her experience at IUP as hugely impactful on her current work. “The things that impacted me the most at IUP were individual professors,” says Troutman. “They inspired me, and more importantly, challenged me. I learned my skills from educators who despite being overworked carved out the time for me. They made me realize how important passion is for myself, and that is invaluable.”

To learn more about Troutman, her journalism, and her documentaries, visit <http://publicherald.org>.



Dr. Matthew Vetter works with students in his Composition II class.

IUP English Welcomes 3 New Tenure-Track Hires

IUP English is delighted to welcome three new faculty members this year: Dr. Katrina Miller, Dr. Mary Stewart, and Dr. Matthew Vetter.

Katrina Miller specializes in writing assessment and has been named IUP's LSE Assessment Coordinator in addition to teaching courses in basic writing. Miller received her Ph.D. from the University of Nevada and worked as a lecturer there for a year before joining IUP's faculty.

She was drawn to the diverse student population found in the general education writing classes. "Students tell me I am the only teacher they have that knows their name and where they can actually speak to their classmates," Miller says. "I think connecting with students and feeling solidarity with their peers will increase retention, especially for the more at-risk population that can be found in 100-level setting."

As a teacher, Miller sees herself as giving her students the tools for writing and allowing them to utilize them however they see fit. She likes to compare herself to a personal trainer: she lets them do the reps and she will walk them through the exercises, encouraging creativity within guidelines.

Miller lives in Pittsburgh with her wife and their two children and looks forward to exploring Pennsylvania's wilderness. Miller says she loves the IUP campus's architecture and the diversity of its students. She says that she was inspired in orientation to see so many like-minded faculty members with a passion for wanting to give students the very best classroom experience.

Dr. Mary Stewart agrees. "When searching for a job I never really thought I'd find that 'good fit' because I didn't think a university would check all of my boxes," says Stewart, a new hire in the Composition and TESOL program. "Then I found IUP and I was proven wrong."

Stewart completed her undergraduate studies in her home state of Texas, at Baylor University. A love for James Joyce and Twentieth-Century Literature then brought Stewart to England – where she studied for her M.A. at Durham University. Afterwards, she joined her husband, a literary science fiction writer, in San Diego, where he was pursuing an M.F.A. at San Diego State. In San Diego, Stewart began

teaching writing to returning learners (primarily in their 30s or 40s) online.

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Once she began reading composition theory, she realized there was a whole field dedicated to the craft – leading her to pursue her Ph.D. in Education, with an emphasis in Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition Studies from University of California-Davis.

“Most teachers are scared to teach online; for me it was the opposite,” says Stewart. She was tasked with developing the university’s first hybrid (face-to-face and online) writing class, and combined her background in online teaching with her new experiences in a physical space to craft a course that would facilitate learning in both spheres. This is important since Stewart is an advocate for digital literacy and being able to read and write in the multiple outlets that digital innovation has created.

“There are a lot of interesting tools for people to communicate on the internet,” says Stewart. “So, let us leverage those tools for learning. A physical space allows very spontaneous, creative, and reactionary learning. However, a digital space has less immediate feedback, which allows for more in-depth, meditative thinking.” Her research focuses on exploring the similarities and differences between those spaces, with the goal of designing engaging and collaborative learning experiences for students in multiple learning environments.

Dr. Matt Vetter, a new hire in the Composition and TESOL program, previously worked as Visiting Professor of English at Ohio University Zanesville. After receiving a B.A. in English at Morehead State University, he went on to complete a M.F.A. in Writing at Spalding University, an M.A. in English at Morehead State, and a Ph.D. in English at Ohio University Zanesville with a concentration on digital rhetoric and pedagogy.

In his teaching Vetter focuses on digital rhetoric and explores technology’s influences and applications on contemporary writing pedagogy: more specifically, the critical approach to Wikipedia and its uses in academia. He is currently partnered with Wiki Education Foundation to heighten awareness of Wikipedia as an academic resource through workshops and collaborative exercises. Through digital pedagogy, Vetter teaches students to be conscious of public audiences and to teach writing based on a purposeful audience, one with real-life application in a technological world.

In spring 2017 Vetter is teaching the graduate courses ENG 730 Teaching Writing and ENGL 831 Rhetorical Traditions. He spends his free time with his wife and three children in their home in Indiana. Matthew grew up in the small town of Maysville, Kentucky and has traveled up and down the Appalachian Mountains throughout his life.

IUP Hosts 2017 PCEA Conference on Comics



Conor McCreery

The English Department hosted the Pennsylvania College English Association (PCEA) conference on March 10-11, 2017.

The theme, Comics and/as Rhetoric: (Anti)Static Narratives, explored the ways comics recontextualize narrative elements and the rhetorical significance of these recontextualizations.

The conference, co-coordinated by Drs. Oriana Gatta and Gian Pagnucci, brought together departments across IUP—including Theatre, Criminology, History, Religious Studies, Library Science, and English.

Conor McCreery, author of *Kill Shakespeare* comic book series, gave the keynote address on his interpretive approach to narrative. SCG Hobby, Indiana’s local comic book shop, was also at the conference selling many of the comics referenced in conference presentations.

The PCEA’s journal, *Pennsylvania English* (edited by IUP English professor Michael Williamson), is running a concurrent special issue featuring essays and creative writing relating to comics.

To learn more about the PCEA and its projects, publications, and events, please visit the organization web site at <https://www.pcea.online/>.



Alumni Spotlight

Andrew Brandt, a 2012 IUP English Education graduate, has taught for three years as a language arts teacher at Morningside Middle School in South Carolina. Brandt has recently assumed the position of interim Assistant Principal. During his years at the middle school, Brandt has worked tirelessly to provide an excellent education and dedicated service to the children of Charleston. He has developed a Saturday sports program for students in the district to provide them with extracurricular activity in response to the recent rise of youth violence in Charleston. In 2015,

Brandt was honored as Charleston County Teacher of the Month.

Cooper Presents at Sigma Tau Delta Conference

Mary Cooper, a junior English B.A. major, presented at the Sigma Tau Delta's "Creepy Conference IX," at Robert Morris University. Her creative nonfiction piece, "What Are You So Afraid Of?" was based on a paper she wrote that tackled surface-level fears and her own most deeply-rooted terrors. The conference focused on a variety of horror-themed topics including haunted planes, *wendigos*, and possessed dolls.

Cooper says that she loves the English department at IUP for being so warm, inviting, and supportive. She also is part of the Honors College and praises the two communities for being so tight-knit and welcoming. "I feel like I can come to my professors

with any kind of problem," said Dr. **Thomas Farrell**, a graduate of IUP's Composition and TESOL Ph.D. program, is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University in Canada. Dr. Farrell has travelled across the globe, spending more than thirty years teaching in Ireland, South Korea, Singapore, and Canada. Farrell earned his Ph.D. in IUP's summers-only program while teaching at Yonsei University in Seoul. His most recent book, *From Trainee to Teacher: Reflective Practice for Novice Teachers* (Equinox, 2016), promotes reflective practice as a way to help ease new English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors as they transition from teacher training programs to the classroom.

with any kind of problem," said Cooper. "I feel at ease with that kind of knowledge. Having that personal connection to my department means a lot to me."

Cooper's piece is based on her life-long fears and anxieties, which she categorized into five zones inspired by the five layers of the ocean: the sunlight zone, the twilight zone, the midnight zone, the abyss, and the trenches. "The sunlight zone was really shallow fear, like being uncomfortable by a fish touching you in the water," said Cooper. "Then the next zone was fear of spiders, and the deeper terrors manifested in lack of control and the deep, psychological fears that burden myself and others."

A Brief Word

See <http://www.iup.edu/english/news/more>.

Dr. **Reena Dube** has published the 2016 double special issue of *Studies in the Humanities*, Vol. 43 (Numbers 1 and 2) on Youth Culture in Film and Television, guest edited by Karin Beeler, University of Northern British Columbia.

Dr. **David Downing** has published the 2016-17 issue of *Works and Days*, guest edited by Joseph Ramsey and titled *Scholactivism: Reflections on Transforming Praxis in and beyond the Classroom*. This 500-page volume includes essays, reviews, and interviews with some of the world's leading scholar-activists.

Dr. **Tim Hibsman** taught in the summer teaching experience in Kyungpook National University (Daegu, South Korea) in July 2016. He taught a course titled International Sports Marketing and Research. The KNU four-week Global Summer School brings together students and academics from all over the world for a unique intercultural learning experience and special taste of Korean culture.

Dr. **Chauna Craig** served as writer-in-residence during October 2016 at Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Community in Las Animas, Colorado. The community provides recovery-oriented transitional housing to up to homeless individuals across Colorado, with an emphasis on serving homeless veterans.



IUP Celebrates the Power of Banned Books

In September 2016 IUP marked Banned Books Week, celebrating and foregrounding messages held in the pages of some of literature's most contentious novels. IUP has participated in this event, organized by Dr. Tanya Heflin, for the past five years. Over the past decade, 5,099 books were reported to the Office for Intellectual Freedom on charges of inappropriate themes or corrupting today's youth. The American Library Association "promotes the freedom to choose or the freedom to express one's opinions even if that opinion might be considered unorthodox or unpopular." IUP English stands in solidarity with the ALA's struggle against censorship.

IUP English, the English Graduate Organization (EGO), and IUP Libraries co-sponsored two events during the week. A newly formed organization of English graduate students, Pop Culture Methodologies, hosted the first event, "What's Pop Culture and Why do Diverse Pop Culture Voices Get Challenged?" during IUP's Six-O'Clock Series.

At the Banned Books Readout, bright yellow caution tape surrounded seats organized into neat aisles in the corner of the new Humanities and Social Sciences building, a striking display for students passing through to and from class. Participants read passages from banned books selected by EGO members to a receptive

audience. Students and teachers gathered together for the love of literature, to share and receive wisdom from books that are condemned for their content.

Literature and Criticism graduate students Meghan Hurley and Wesley McMasters served as hosts. They were joined by IUP President Dr. Michael Driscoll, who kicked off the event by reading "The Disappearing Spoon." Dr. Yaw Asamoah, the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, read an emotional section from *Things Fall Apart*. Dr. Gian Pagnucci gave a mesmerizing rendition of a popular scene from *The Hunger Games*, where the protagonist makes a possibly fatal choice to save her sister. "This book has been labeled 'anti-family,'" Pagnucci remarked. "You can judge for yourself."

English professor Dr. Emily Wender read from Sherman Alexie's "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part Time Indian." The excerpt involves the protagonist learning about his grandmother's progressive views on homosexuality. "It's a really positive moment...this shared bond with a kid and his grandmother," said Wender. "These are the moments that are lost when we ban a book. Where an adolescent has an epiphany and realizes that an older relative has a more nuanced outlook on the world...that's important to read when you're younger."



Mark Your Calendar! Upcoming Events

Jan. 30

LSE and Lattes Teaching Circle (Commonplace Coffee House, 10:10-11. Subsequent meetings Feb. 23, 12:45-1:35; March 29, 11:15-12:05; April 14, 9:05-9:55)

Feb. 15

The **Kathleen Jones White Endowment Speaker Series**, featuring Dr. Pablo Mendoza (HSS 225, 3 PM, with reception to follow)

Feb. 23

IUP English Publication Celebration (Location TBA, 2-3:30)

Feb. 24-25

English Graduate Organization conference (HSS)

March 10-11

“Comics and/as Rhetoric” **PCEA Conference**; special live-action performance of *Kill Shakespeare* (Fisher Auditorium, 7 PM on March 10)

March 23

IUP get-together at 2017 **TESOL Convention**, Seattle, WA (Sheraton Hotel, Juniper Room, 5:30-7:30 PM)

April 6

LSE Gallery of Student Writing Celebration (HSS lobby, 1:30-3:30)

May 12

ENGL 101 **assessment samples** due; spring LSE rating session will take place May 17-18

The Word
IUP English Newsletter



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