



Indiana University of Pennsylvania L & C Program Newsletter  
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# Literature & Criticism

## From the Director



I am in the final year of serving as the L&C program director, and what an experience it has been! When I stepped in in 2017 as Dr. David Downing readied for retirement, none of us could have imagined how much would

happen in a fairly short span of time. I thought I'd devote my last column to looking back, to remind us how far we've come in these six years.

Let's start with a statistic that blows me away. Since 2017, Graduate Studies in Literature and Criticism has welcomed over 100 students to the ranks of program alumni! We've had seventeen colleagues graduate with their MA in Literature, thirteen graduate with a MA in Composition and Literature, and a mind-boggling sixty-four graduate with their PhDs. Their theses and dissertations demonstrate the impressive range of knowledge emerging from our program. With so much good reading to be had, I can only offer a few of the titles that jumped out at me over the years:

- Aishah Alreshoud's *Gender Identities and Self Representations in Post 9/11 Global Arab and Muslim Women's Literature* (2019)

- Mark DiMauro's *Developing the Digital Gothic and its Ramifications in Twenty-First Century Literature Through an Examination of Nonhuman Memory and the Digital Afterlife* (2021)
- Brandon Galm's *Defining Post-Katrina Literature: Hurricane Katrina and Experiences of Disaster, Race, and Environment* (2018)
- Kelly Hamren's *Я тоже мраморною стану: The Poetics of Metamorphosis in Russian Modernism* (2020)
- Matthew Loudon's *We're One Weird Herd: Alternative, Queer Communities in Modern Animation* (2020)
- Bandar Otayf's *Exploring Dystopia in Postcolonial Literature* (2022)
- Reza Parchizadeh's *The Recurring Progress of English Political Thought in Shakespeare's Histories* (2018)
- Emily Rupp's *Silencing Desire: Female-Female Relations and Heterosexual Apathy in Jane Austen* (2019)
- Lauren E. Shoemaker's *Structures of Terror in Caribbean Women's Writing* (2017)
- Mark Thomas's *The Monster in All of Us: How Understanding the Irrational Helps Define the Rational in Gothic Fiction* (2022)
- Jesse Ulmer's *Popular Music in the Films of Joel and Ethan Coen* (2017)
- Zainab Younus's *An Archive of Imagined Worlds and Futures: Environmental Speculative Fiction of the 20th and 21st Century* (2021)

I sincerely hope many of the fine scholars who have matriculated from our programs continue their research, wherever they have landed professionally.

As I think back over these last six years, I am struck with the amount of innovation the program pursued to ensure that we were being as supportive of and responsive to our students as possible. Well before the COVID-19 pandemic, the academic job market was in trouble, a result of the corporatization and "adjunctification" of higher education. Yet, we find that prospective students

still want the PhD! And they are coming to us with a wider range of professional interests and backgrounds than ever before. Far from a single-minded focus on snagging a traditional faculty role, applicants are articulating interests in academic publishing, gaming/film/media studies, nonprofit work, educational administration, community work and activism. These interests are not their “Plan B” either; these are the things they wanted to be prepared to pursue as their “Plan A.”

In response to this new, broader set of professional interests of prospective students, the program began to embrace career diversification as a goal and began to figure out how we could prepare students for the paths *they* envisioned for themselves. Many of the faculty began to develop assignments that would support the development of a wider range of skill sets in our courses; we began to offer cutting-edge courses in gaming, public humanities and podcasting, to name just a few; and we reviewed program milestones, specifically the Candidacy review process (so far), to increase opportunities for students with career goals outside of classroom teaching to demonstrate their learning in ways that were more authentic to them.

Driven by what we were seeing and institutional changes that were underway, we also began a programmatic review pretty quickly after I became director. While that work is still moving forward, there have already been some results that we believe will benefit current students as well as those who will join us in the future. The first was the adoption of a revised set of student learning outcomes that, for the first time, articulated the program’s commitment to supporting students pursuing career paths beyond the professoriate. We prepare students to:

- Conduct deep, sustained research to produce new knowledge.
- *Engage various audiences and the public* in conversations and discussions about literature, film, and games.
- Refine your scholarly writing, presentation skills, project management abilities, and diverse pedagogical approaches.
- Use your research, analytical, and communication skills *in a wide range of professional and community contexts*.

We also instituted a “Dissertation Rotation Policy”—a bit of a misnomer since it happens after the Comprehensive Exams are completed—that adds a non-specialized reader to each committee as a student begins to work on their dissertation proposal. There are a couple of benefits to this policy, but the one I’m most excited about is the way that the addition of this general reader encourages students to research and write with a broader audience in mind. We’ve also revised the instructions for developing the Comprehensive Exam Reading lists to give more flexibility to students in crafting those lists with their career interests in mind.

In the wake 2020-?? global pandemic, like everyone else, the program had to make some quick adjustments to get through the crisis. We held our first fully online, synchronous graduate classes in the spring of 2020. That spring we also held our first online dissertation defenses, which had the wonderful effect of expanding who could attend those celebratory events to a much wider audience. We created new ways of interacting with each other—from online workshops hosted by EGO to the weekly social mixers I held just so people could stop in and relax for a bit. We got to know spouses and kids and pets and who to turn to for room design tips. Even as we became squares on the screen, many of us became fuller to each other than we had before. That was all for the good, I think, and I’m encouraged when I see that many of the strategies we developed to weather the storm have continued. I hope they have created more equity, access and community for everyone.

Beyond the everyday, we’ve seen successes in reengaging program alumni and showcasing the variety of ways they have used their experiences with us as a springboard for their meaningful pursuits. We’ve continued to work on pathways to bring international, historically underrepresented scholars and students from around the country to our program to continue their education. And we’ve expanded intra-institutional collaborations to increase the range of professionalizing opportunities that we make available to our students. We now have established placements with the nationally-recognized Kathleen Jones White Writing Center, Special Collections and University Archives, and IUP’s Thesis and Dissertation Office. In our latest venture with Special Collections, we have launched a COVID-19 documentation project that has some of our students

collecting oral histories and artifacts that shed light on the variety of ways the university and surrounding community navigated and responded to that public health crisis. I am extremely proud of the ways we continue to put our skills and knowledge into service in/for our communities, for these are the ways we demonstrate the power and relevance of English Studies, and the humanities more broadly, to the public.

It feels like everything gets measured by the marker of the global pandemic these days, and perhaps that's for good reason. But when I look back over the last six years, there are many things that I would be equally good measures of how far we've come.

Your brilliance, tenacity and growth has kept me going, has kept me hoping, has been my North Star when it was hard to know which way to turn. Thank you. It has truly been my honor and privilege to serve as your program director. I pass the reins to my colleague, collaborator and friend, Dr. Michael Williamson. You are in good hands!

Veronica T. Watson, PhD



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## From the Director of the MA in Literature and the MA in Composition and Literature Programs

It is with great pleasure that we congratulate our graduates from the MA in Composition and Literature Program: Jacob Breslawski, Courtney Harbaugh, Mace Long, Ryan Mahokey, Aiden Mountain, Kimberly Nichols, Alexa Pianta, John Phillips, and Summer Stephenson and the MA in Literature Program: Holly Acker, Bader Al-Nawmasi, Mikenna Beattie, Kylee Carcione, Shirley Petropoulos, Wyatt Shank, and Laura Tubayan. Congratulations to you all on your fine work. We are also glad to welcome Ryan Mahokey, Shirley Petropoulos, and Summer Stephenson into our Doctoral Program in Literature and Criticism. We look forward to seeing you grow as scholars and presenters of original research!

Please also welcome our new students: Grant Bicklehaupt, Adriana Guth-Borowski, Taylor Kianka, Capri McDonald, Alayna Pesce, Sydnee Pilarski, Isobel Rosiak, Riley Stitt, Mary Stewart and Angela Wharton.

Our program goal of providing you with many opportunities to shape and present your work in public was particularly exciting this year. We were able to present our work in person, first of all, but more importantly we were able to share a wide range of critical approaches to literature and composition. MA student accomplishments are extensive. Aiden Mountain presented a paper, "Censorship vs. *The Poet X*: A Call to Ban the "Hostile" Questioning of Religion in Books," at the Banned Books Week seminar panel. Zachary Black presented "Combatting the Censorship of Slavery and Racism: Octavia Butler's *Kindred*" at the same event.

Significant partnerships with IUP's Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Dr. Elise Glenn, emerged from this panel.

MA students presented papers, asked brilliant questions, and contributed their intellectual energy to the Spring 2022 in-person English Graduate Organization conference, "Inclusivity Beyond Diversity." Papers presented include:

- Kylee Carcione: "Liminality, Identity, and Embodiment: The Graphic Novel Medium as Inclusive Queer Representation"
- Holly Acker: "Forgotten Fanfics"
- Ryan Mahokey, "A Fate Worse than Death: Forgetfulness in Vasily Grossman's *Everything Flows*"
- Shirley Petropoulos: "Women Writers Take on Mental Health"
- Zachary Black, "Patriarchy as a Background Character: Gertrude Stein's and Elizabeth Bowen's Prominent Women"
- Kimberly Nichols, "Beacons: Angie Brown and Frodo Baggins Light the Way for Humanity"
- Thomas Hamilton, "I'm Saved ... Almost: Strengths and Limitations of Social Media for Inclusivity through a Digital Rhetorical Analysis of Ai Weiwei's COVID Vaccination Instagram Posts"

The English Graduate Organization widened the scope of the conference to include faculty from other departments, especially History and Disability Support Services, and the keynote address, "Our Student's Experience of Disability, Their Classroom Experiences, and the Impact on Inclusivity," was delivered by a team of students led by Dr. Cathy Dugan.

MA students were also well-represented at the 2022 Pennsylvania College English Association Conference in May. Papers presented included:

- Joshua Calandrella (MA 2021) "Abraham Sutzkever's Memoir and Testimony from Vilna to the Soviet

Union: Recovering Yiddish Literary Resistance of Poetic Self-Mythology”

- Shirley Petropoulos, “Phyllis Alesia Perry’s Stigmata: A Forgotten Literary Text and Speculative Fiction of Slavery”
- Taylor Whitehead, “Pastiche, Plagiarism, and Profit: The Abandoned Texts of ‘Pull-to-Publish’ Fanfiction”
- Kylee Carcione, Zachary Black, Holly Acker, Ryan Mahokey, presented revised versions of their EGO Conference papers.

Dr. Veronica Watson, Director of the Literature and Criticism Doctoral Program, delivered a fabulous keynote address, “Recovery is a Verb: Re-Membering the Lost Legacies of Frank Yerby.”

In May 2023, I will move into the position of Director of the Doctoral Program in Literature and Criticism at IUP. It is exciting to follow in the footsteps of my friend and colleague Dr. Watson, who has made significant changes to the program over the last six years. First and foremost, under her leadership as Doctoral Program Director, our MA programs have been more fully integrated into the social, academic, and professional cultures of graduate studies at IUP. We have shared the same practical goals of:

1. increasing student productivity and visibility beyond IUP;
2. offering multiple ways of engaging with the texts and contexts that you all love to talk and write about;
3. providing practical training for you to put your ideas and visions into practice in a wide range of settings (not exclusively academic, but also strongly academic when needed); and
4. enhancing your abilities to compete in an uneven and inconstant job market that sometimes provides us all with new and unexpected opportunities.

Our dedication to your success has made it possible for you to see those opportunities and to embrace them, and the zest with which you do so has been inspiring.

Providing you with more chances to develop and present your ideas in a number of different ways will be my main goal as your Director. We will offer workshops that guide you through the phases of both of our MA programs and our Doctoral program (especially the Dissertation Proposal or MA Thesis Proposal phases and the transition from coursework to the wider world of academia, other professional venues for your talents, and beyond), and we will continue to work closely with the English Graduate Organization to develop and extend opportunities to do what we love. We will all work with you to carve out spaces to read, read, read, and then read some more and then write, reread, write, reread and write some more. Then we will share our ideas and innovations with each other.

As we move into a future that is full of opportunities and possibilities, we are aware of the impediments that all of us encounter along the way. With a strong curriculum and classes that are innovative and grounded in cutting edge research, we will work with you to make the many transitions you face productive, stimulating, and yes ... life changing.

We all look forward, as faculty in the Literature and Criticism Doctoral Program, the MA in Literature Program, and the MA in Composition and Literature Program, to a productive and intellectually energetic Spring semester. The range of your abilities and interests is impressive, as is your dedication to developing those abilities through reading literature from many centuries and from many places without the prejudice, bigotry, or the dismissive disinterest (current and historical) that characterizes some depictions of our discipline and that looms over (but is hopefully receding) us all. We care about what we read. We care about who wrote what we read. We care about each other. We nurture each other’s ideas. Then we share them.

Michael T. Williamson, PhD

# Coursework & Community: Literature and Criticism Students Weigh in on IUP's Professional Development Opportunities

By: Daniel Pintos



Literature and Criticism program director Veronica Watson says that careers in academia are about more than just coursework, exams, and dissertations — careers are built on your scholarly expertise “and.” That “and” is comprised of the various unique skills graduates gain during their time at IUP which distinguish them and prepare them for a range of professional paths. As such, the graduate programs in English emphasize the creation of opportunities for graduate students to challenge themselves and grow through scholarly endeavors in the classroom and beyond. Whether you picture yourself as future tenure-track faculty at a university or in public humanities, IUP can place you in a position where you practice and gain the experience needed to excel in a plethora of roles.

For instance, my graduate assistantship (GA) placement is with the Jones White Writing Center, which employs several students from the graduate English programs. As a PhD Candidate Literature and Criticism, the variety of experience I gain as a writing tutor benefits me in multiple ways. I collaborate with other students in all kinds of writing scenarios, from English 101 students writing their first college-level paper to doctoral students working on their dissertations. I also offer a number of

workshops and presentations that help me develop and hone my writing pedagogy and presentation style. All of these experiences have helped me to grow tremendously. I tend to be pretty introverted, and having to present material to a group of strangers for an hour or more at a time has really improved my confidence and speaking ability, while also providing tangible teaching experience I can add to my CV.

I was also surprised to realize the ways in which the courses I have taken in the program have prepared me to contribute to the IUP community in unexpected ways. Knowledge on critical race theory I gained in class came in handy when working with a psychology PhD student beginning her dissertation. It's amazing how often everything I've learned as an English graduate at IUP intersects with the needs of others outside the inner circle of English studies.

Another of the partnerships that provides professional development to doctoral and Master's students in the literature side of the department exists with IUP's Special Collections and the University Archives. Students are awarded GAs to develop and lead public-facing programs that make the rich resources of the library's archives available to the university community. Haleigh Hayes, a PhD Candidate in Literature and Criticism, says that her employment with Special Collections allows her to work with rare documents, literary texts, and archival materials from the university and surrounding community. She also recently acted as a liaison between Special Collections and the English Graduate Organization (EGO) for a panel on banned books. EGO panelists presented on rare editions of banned books such as *Clockwork Orange* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Last semester, she was involved in a special Into the Archives event--a series co-developed by a former Literature and Criticism doctoral student--where she discussed a rare edition of Ovid held at Special Collections. Hayes' archival work enables her to network and engage with a broader community outside of graduate studies, sharpening her expertise “and.”

Ileana Leon, another Literature and Criticism PhD Candidate, works as a GA at IUP's Thesis & Dissertation office, which serves doctoral students across the university. She had much to say about how her GA placement has aided her professional development, “Like

Lit & Crit, the Thesis & Dissertation office pushes me to work past the previous boundaries I've set for myself. I think I have a leg up when I begin dissertating because I've been exposed to dissertation requirements early and repeatedly." Leon also notes, "There is a lot of pressure because I am directly responsible for helping students craft some of the most important scholarly work they'll write. However, I have found that I thrive in this space."

Hayes, Leon, and my experiences are typical examples of how IUP's graduate English programs set students up for future success through roles outside of the department. Other graduate students have helped to develop literacy programs in the local community, proposed literature-based, pre-professional workshops for creative writing and fine arts majors, and have supported existing initiatives like The Digital Storygame Project and departmental publications. More collaborations are coming in the near future, all of which contribute to L&C's mission of training a community of teacher-scholars with the talent to operate as future faculty and in a broad range of other professional paths.



## Interview with Dr. Chauna Craig

By: Sydnee Pilarski

Dr. Chauna Craig is a professor of English and the director of the Honors College at IUP. She has taught a variety of courses, including Creative Writing, Writing of Fiction, Creative Writing Pedagogy, Introduction to Women's Literature, Introduction to LBGQT Literature, the Short Story and the Novel. While she is currently between projects, she recently published a short story collection entitled *Wings and Other Things*. Dr. Craig's future interests include contemporary women's memoirs as they provide a new representation of fiction techniques in lyrical nonfiction. Dr. Craig

**Sydnee Pilarski (SP):** Where did you attend grad school and what was your research focus?



**Chauna Craig (CC):** I completed my MA at Arizona State where I focused on the American Novel. I then completed my PhD at the University of Nebraska where my focus was Creative Writing, Twentieth Century Women's Literature, and Literature of the American West.

**SP:** If you could offer advice to any incoming graduate students, what would it be?

**CC:** Be open to all the possibilities for what you might study or work on. Be curious. Sometimes what you want as a scholar evolves, so be open-minded towards any class and opportunity.

**SP:** What inspired you to become a professor?

**CC:** I was always good at school. I loved reading and writing, so I kept going to school. Eventually I understood that this path was leading me to teach. While I was an undergrad I realized I would make a good writing teacher after helping my brother with a paper. I was so excited to help him, and I used a questioning method that allowed for a natural dialogue to emerge. I had a natural, organic talent for this, and I learned that I enjoyed working with students one-on-one where we can discuss their writing and help them improve.

**SP:** How long have you been teaching at IUP, and what courses have you taught?

**CC:** This is my twenty-third year at IUP. I have taught many courses here including creative writing, writing of fiction, and a graduate course in creative writing pedagogy.

**SP:** What has being the director of the Honors College taught you about yourself and students?

**CC:** [Regarding students] It has taught me that everybody is thinking and worrying about the same

things. No one wants anyone to know that because they are nervous that they're alone. They don't want to ask for help because they're worried it's a reflection that they aren't smart enough. Eventually I hope students come to recognize that learning and education are collaborative, and everyone walks in on the first day worried that everyone else is smarter. The students who let go of their egos grow faster and recognize that learning happens in the classroom.

[Regarding herself] I have learned that I thrive as a professional when I have the resources to make things happen. I'm imaginative and good at pulling people together when I have the support.

**SP:** How do you think being the director of the Honors College will benefit you and your students in the graduate program?

**CC:** Teaching in the Honors College has been an open-ended experience. I can tailor to personal and student interests and I believe the graduate experience is very similar. Both the Honors College and our graduate programs hold expectations that students will take and build their own paths from the experiences they have in the classroom.

**SP:** Do you have any recent publications that you are particularly proud of and what inspired you to write on that topic?

**CC:** I just published a short story collection titled *Wings and Other Things*. It pays homage to early feminist American literary pieces with an element of contemporary stories. There are "easter eggs," or pieces of works like *The Awakening* or *A Doll's House*, that served as inspiration for some of the stories. Short stories don't always start out as collections, but as you're writing them, you begin to recognize a theme and then make connections. And then that becomes a collection of stories which leads to a book.

**SP:** How do you envision your future role within the graduate program?

**CC:** I see myself bringing in new perspectives. I'm looking to bring new ideas to the curriculum and find ways to include creative projects in scholarly ways. I

want to help students look at a problem or an idea and find creative ways to approach that. I enjoy mentorship, one-on-one conversations, and helping students work towards reaching the next level.

**SP:** What would you like to bring to the program to further its tradition of inspiring students to pursue their own lofty research and professional goals?

**CC:** I am always very curious about other people, and I enjoy asking a lot of questions and having that dialogue. It's important because it helps them figure out what their goals are. Listening to students is super important because we are all different. We each have our own path, so listening and reflecting are important approaches for the faculty to use.

**SP:** What type of course would you like to design teach in the program?

**CC:** I would be interested in teaching a course on women's memoirs because memoirs have become a big thing in the publishing world. They have taken an interesting turn in truth and representation. These authors often use techniques of fiction and lyrical nonfiction to break the narrative and find new ways to talk about their lives. Very interesting work is also being done right now by queer writers in both the nonfiction and poetic forms which is changing the game as far as contemporary writing is concerned.





# Interview with Meghan Hurley-Powell

By Elizabeth Laughlin

Dr. Meghan Hurley-Powell is a 2019 graduate of the IUP Literature and Criticism program. She explored her interests in feminist literature through her dissertation, titled, “Comply to Resist: Agency in Feminist Dystopian Novels, Television, and Video Games.” Currently, Dr. Hurley-Powell teaches at Haas Hall Academy, a charter school in Arkansas, and runs a podcast, *The Power within Her*, named after her book.

**Elizabeth Laughlin (EL):** Your book, *The Power within Her*, was published this year, and you founded a publishing house, PWH Publishing. How have you created your own path in publishing?

**Meghan Hurley-Powell (MHP):** I keep looking for someone to tell me what to do. (Laughs). I’m figuring it out as I go. It’s really cool for me to develop the writers. It’s really cool for me to help my authors develop their manuscripts so that they can be the best they can be. In addition to figuring it out myself, I was a freelance editor for a major publishing house and an editorial assistant for Elisely Publishing, which has absolutely helped me to understand the industry. It all boils down to networking and making authentic connections.

**EL:** How did you come up with the idea for your podcast and book?

**MHP:** I graduated in 2019, and my first actual job outside the PhD was a full-time adjunct, which was really difficult for me. After IUP, I felt lost and confused because it’s hard to be an adjunct. As I began to dig into who I was, I began to journal. And I started to share my journey online with a community of women. After a lot of work and seeing what was possible from other women, I just decided one day that I was ready to take some messy action.

I started to share what I was going through on Instagram because I knew that if I was struggling with my identity, others might be doing the same. And lo and behold, many women slid into my DMs to say, “Thank you so

much for sharing, but... how do you actually journal? I really want to try it.” So, my book was born out of necessity: see a need, fill a need. It was my responsibility to teach women how to journal in ways that are individually empowering for them.



Through journaling, I realized I had a lot to say about personal development content on a consistent basis,

which is why I started my podcast, *The Power Within Her* (available on wherever you get your podcasts). It’s about women coming together to discover and embrace that inherent power within.

**EL:** What do you draw on from your graduate-school experience as you travel this path?

**MHP:** There are so many amazing professors and courses at IUP who have absolutely shaped what I’m doing today. I loved women’s lit and empowerment, and feminist studies. I am obsessed with women making an impact on the world. I learned from Dr. Mike Sell that your research needs to be connected to your teaching, so I specialized in women’s lit for my research. *The Power Within Her* has become my real-world feminist project where I get to empower so many women to believe in themselves, despite the patriarchy.

**EL:** What would you like current L&C students to know?

**MHP:** My PhD--those five years were the golden years, especially the community. Grad school can be one of the most beautiful but brutal times of your life. Really make time for self-care. My advice is to stop waiting, start trying. We as women wait until we’re ‘ready.’ There’s no such thing as ready. I believe if it’s in you, it’s for you.

**EL:** Tell me what you’ve been working on recently. What comes next?

**MHP:** I’m in a season of slowing down. I took a different job in Arkansas, at a charter high school called

Haas Hall Academy. I'll be teaching tenth-grade literature, 8th grade literature, and a journalism course. I recently hit twelve thousand downloads on Apple Podcasts. On December 13th, I'm having Natalie Lue, the author of *The Joy of Saying No*, come onto my podcast. In mid 2023, my company will be publishing a young-adult-mystery-romance called, *The Hearts We Keep* by Haley McMillian.

As for my own writing, I'll be co-authoring a non-fiction book with two friends, Emily Helderman and Diana Marie Keller. It should be released sometime in Summer 2023.

## EGO: A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Last year's EGO board, headed by President Brian Sateriale, saw many exciting events, including the Spring Conference: Inclusivity Beyond Diversity, which involved students from various English programs appearing in person for the first time since the pandemic began, as well as students from outside universities appearing over zoom. It was a pleasure to work

with Brian, Joe, Kaitlynn, and Aaron, and I'm sure we are all very excited to see what they've been doing since moving on.

A new year has dawned and like years past, a new slate of EGO officers has stepped up to continue last year's momentum by putting its own stamp on the organization. This year we welcome Haleigh Hayes as vice president and my right-hand woman, Zachary Black as Secretary, Shirley Petropolous as Treasurer, Ileana Leon as Social Media Coordinator, Liz Laughlin as Workshop Coordinator, Carly Park as our CAL/TESOL Coordinator. We also welcome back Meghan Cronin as our Webmaster. This team has already put in a lot of work to make this year one of the best yet, and as your president, I am beyond excited to work everyone to create another bright year for the organization.

Previous years for EGO have met with many challenges, especially with the pandemic. This year we are focusing on bringing L&C, CAL, and TESOL together in more ways in order to bridge the gaps between programs and create a bigger, more inclusive community. Our Summer barbecue, graciously hosted by former President Brian and L&C third-year Marco Ramos, included students from all three programs, and created bonds that we hope will be fostered as we continue.

National Banned Books Week, which is always an exciting event for EGO and IUP at large, had the timely theme of "Books Unite Us, Censorship Divides Us." With the help of librarians Dr. Theresa McDevitt and Dr. Harrison Wick, and Acting Assistant Vice Provost for University Libraries, Dr. Kelly Heider, EGO put together three full days of events in fall 2022 to commemorate Banned Books Week. In conjunction with the Special Collections in the Stapleton Library, EGO and Dr. Wick presented the first "Banned Books in the Archives" event, which featured discussion of rare editions of a few of the most popular banned books.

For the read-aloud, which was held in the Library's atrium, we extended the event to a full hour and a half, packed with readers from many departments, as well as President Mike Driscoll, Provost Lara Luetkehans, the Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Dr. Curtis Scheib, and many others, making this year's event the largest so far!

A Banned Books panel brought to light banned books both in America and other countries, highlighting how books are being censored and banned all over the world. Our panelists included Haleigh Hayes, Zachary Black, Kayla Kemper, Aidan Mountan, and Jasmine Bishnoi. This was Jasmine's first EGO event as a new L&C PhD student and, though her first language is Hindi, she learned to read in Punjabi especially for it!

EGO has been working diligently to create new and exciting events for this year. On November 12, we hosted a poetry slam, themed "Unmasking the Real EGO." It focused on inclusivity and community as well as promoted self-expression through personal experience. We also partnered with Vitalant to host a blood drive on November 17th.

As Shakespeare said, "Let every man be master of his time," which brings us to our Spring Conference theme: Time and its Influences (Call for Papers available at the IUP English Graduate Organization Facebook group). The goal of this year's conference is to explore how language and literature have changed over time, whether due to changes in society, globalization, colonization, or other influences. It will be held on April 14-16<sup>th</sup>, both in person and on Zoom.



On behalf of the EGO board, we look forward to expanding the connections we have, creating new ones, and moving

forward as a community that promotes understanding, empathy, and success both individually and as one people.

Jordan Hansen  
President, English Graduate Organization



## MEET OUR MA STUDENTS!



**Grant Bickelhaupt** is a first year MA in Composition and Literature student. Their research interests include

play and games, and they are currently exploring directions their research can take them.

**Zachary Black** is a first year MA in Literature program student. He lives in the Plum area of Pittsburgh with his wife and their two cats. Outside of class, he enjoys video games, and going to concerts. He is interested in 20th century Women's Literature, Post-Colonialism, and Modernism. He is excited to present at a roundtable in the upcoming 2023 NEMLA conference.

**Adriana Guth-Borowski** is an early admissions student to the English MA: Composition & Literature program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her scholarly interests include writing studies, women's literature, and 19th & 20th century British literature.

**Alayna Pesce** is a first year student in the Literature and Composition MA program. She is also currently finishing her undergraduate degree in secondary English education through IUP's 4+1 program. Her literary interests include fantasy, science fiction, and young adult literature.

**Sydnee Pilarski** graduated from Thiel College in May of 2022 and received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English with a secondary education certification. During her time at Thiel, she was the copy editor and publicity chair for the campus literary arts magazine, *The Phoenix*, as well as one of the lead editors for their undergraduate research journal *The Lectern*. Sydnee acted as the president for the English honors society, Sigma Tau Delta, as well as the women's fraternity Chi Omega for two years. She is currently a Master of Arts student at IUP in the Literature and Composition program. Sydnee also has a graduate assistantship working with Dr. Williamson on the *Pennsylvania English* where she is the assistant editor as well as the art editor.

**Isabel Rosiek** is a first-year student in the Literature and Composition MA program. Her interest areas include writing pedagogy, folklore, and the art of re-telling.

**Mary Stewart** is a first year MA in Literature student. Her research interests include 19th Century American and British Literature, Holocaust Literature, and Medieval Studies. She is a recent graduate from Penn

State Altoona with a bachelor's degree in English. With the intention of pursuing her education further at IUP, she hopes to teach at the collegiate level one day.

**Angela Wharton** is a first year MA student in Literature and Composition program. Her research interests include 17th Century British Literature, and American Romanticism. She is a recent graduate from Saint Francis University with a bachelor's degree in English. She hopes to teach at the collegiate level one day.



## MEET OUR NEW PHD COHORT!



**Sarah Abuhandara** earned her Master's of Arts in English Literature from Tarleton State University in 2020. In May, she presented her paper "The Folkloric Influence on Medicine During the Medieval Islamic Era and Its Impact in Europe and the Middle East" at the 57th International Congress on Medieval Studies. Her scholarly interests include Islamic and Medieval literature and race studies. She is also passionate about Palestinian-American literature and voicing the occupation and exile of the Palestinian Diaspora.

**Jasmine Bishnoi** earned her Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from Maharshi Dayanand University in 2018. She holds a Master of Arts in two disciplines, one in English Literature from Kurukshetra University in 2020 and the other in Journalism and Mass Communication from Maharshi Dayanand University in 2022, where she

was also named valedictorian of her class. Jasmine is a full-time social activist and in 2020 she received a national award from the honorable President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, for her contribution to Indian society's welfare and development. Her scholarly interests include feminist studies and digital media. As an international student from India, this is Jasmine's first time in the United States, and she hopes to have an incredible academic and cultural Ph.D. journey.

**William Griffin** earned his Bachelor of Arts in Media & Communications at The University of Pittsburgh and his Master of Arts from Bowling Green State University in American Culture Studies. His research interests include film and television studies, women in Hollywood films from 1940s to the present; popular culture and American Studies focusing on music history; and international popular culture and mass communications. He is excited to explore more of his writing within the Literature and Criticism PHD program.

**Ryan Mahokey** earned his MA in Literature and Composition at IUP in August of 2022. His scholarly interests include humor studies, the intersections between literature and philosophy, nineteenth and twentieth-century literature, and film. Ryan serves the English department undergraduate community through tutoring even as he continues to develop his own scholarly writing and critical eye. In 2022, he presented "A Fate Worse than Death: Forgetfulness in Vasily Grossman's *Everything Flows*" at the English Graduate Organization conference.

**Shirley Ann Petropoulos** earned her MA degree in English Literature from the Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her interests include Shakespeare, Jane Austen, adaptation, feminist and critical race theories. Shirley Ann presented "Women Writers Take On Mental Health: Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Phyllis Alesia Perry's *Stigmata*" at the English Graduate Organization's (EGO) in April 2022 and "Phyllis Alesia Perry's *Stigmata: A Forgotten Literary Text and Speculative Fiction of Slavery*" at the Pennsylvania College English Association's (PCEA) conference in May 2022. She is excited to continue her work as a PhD student.

**Summer Stephenson** earned her master's degree in Literature and Composition at Indiana University of

Pennsylvania in Spring of 2022. Her research interests include black women's literature, feminist and intersectional theories. She plans to take more classes on women's and multicultural literature to expand her knowledge of poetry.



## Alumni Rod Taylor and Len Lawson in Conversation in South Carolina

Rod Taylor (MA '11; PhD, L&C '20) met with Len Lawson (PhD, L&C '21) at Drip Cafe in Columbia, South Carolina, to discuss their work and experiences in the Literature and Criticism program, and their connections to South Carolina.

**Rod:** Len, I appreciate you taking the time out of your schedule to come to Columbia and chat. I imagine we can call this the Carolina Conversation. (laughter)

**Len:** Always good to talk to you.

**Rod:** Tell me about the most recent award you won with the South Carolina Humanities.

**Len:** It's called the Fresh Voices in the Humanities Governor's Award. Different humanities workers or patrons nominate people in the community who they think deserve to be highlighted. My name came up, and they decided to go with it. It's a public service award, but it became an award for artists whose names are out there and who are doing things people should know more about. It relates back to what I learned at IUP with Dr. Watson in making the humanities more applicable to the community.



*Rod Taylor, left. Len Lawson, right.*

**Rod:** Since you mentioned IUP, that's a good segue to discuss the program. What sort of experiences at IUP prepared you for the public-facing humanities?

**Len:** First, internally, it's the research aspect. I know how to be a student, but IUP trained me to be a scholar. Submitting assignments in class is one thing, but we were encouraged to make it something scholarly and something that our peers or the field would read or acknowledge. IUP was a good training ground for me in that respect.

**Rod:** Were there any particular classes or experiences that were transformative to your scholarly persona?

**Len:** In the courses with Dr. Sell or Dr. Watson and a lot of the other faculty were encouraging us to keep publication in mind. Not just knowing the content, but also sharing it and publishing it. But sometimes we were also pushed to think even outside of traditional academic avenues for sharing our work. For instance, when I took a class on Emancipation Narratives, the final project

wasn't just a seminar paper, which we get pretty adept at doing. We created a project for a public art institute or a museum, arts commission, chamber of commerce, something like that. I was able to put something together based on some of the novels we were reading, which was similar to what I do now in South Carolina. I am a part of the South Carolina Humanities Speakers Bureau, which is a list of humanities scholars that go to different places in the state and discuss whatever their specialty is. I think there is an appreciation when places outside of academia see you coming and sharing what you have gained. It makes them feel you are a part of them, and it makes us realize what we are doing is not just for a degree.

**Rod:** If people were considering doctoral programs and they want to do it in literature, what do you think the advantage of IUP is?

**Len:** The advantage for me is that I was not a traditional student at the time. I would not be able to go to a traditional program and live on campus for a couple of

years and still be able to take care of adult responsibilities. I think the niche of the program is to reach those who are already in the field so that they can get the Ph.D. credential. It was appealing to me when I first heard about it. I lacked a Ph.D. in my field, and I definitely felt the glass ceiling by not having it. For me, I always felt I had the potential to do the program. I just didn't have the time. IUP was the perfect marriage because it allowed me the time and convenience to complete the program.

**Rod:** I did not go through the summer program; I went through the traditional academic year program. But, I would take summer classes with people in the Summers-Only program. I would see that these people have jobs that I want eventually. They were and are working professionals. They bring such added value to the program. I came to the program in my twenties with no real teaching experience or publication record, and I am taking classes with people who are publishing collections of poetry, and scholarship and I was always grateful for that experience over the summer.

**Rod:** What sort of advice do you have for anyone starting the program?

**Len:** When I started the program, I already had an idea as to what I wanted to do. As I went through coursework, I was building on the idea each summer, and by the time I got to the proposal stage, I already had an idea as to what I wanted to do for a dissertation. I don't think it is ever too early to think about it. It will certainly take away a lot of the anxiety and intensity when it comes around because we are always trying to figure out the unknowns of the process.

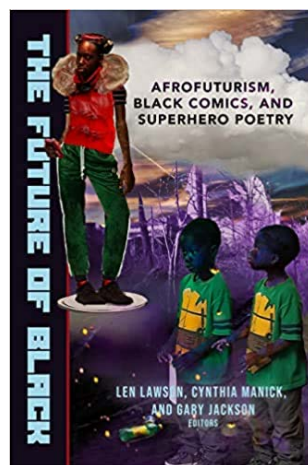
**Rod:** For me, it was a little different. I really did not have a clue what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to do African American literature, but I thought I wanted to do something a little more contemporary. Somewhere along the way, I fell in love with the 19th century, and I sort of came to that process organically. I attribute my path, in some ways, to working the program—so to speak—where I needed the chances of coursework to see what sort of trajectory I wanted my research to go. But, I had some peers who were like you. They came in, knew what they wanted to do, and did it well.

**Len:** I would also say there is strength in numbers. Rally your peers together. They can be your lifeline at times. The people in my cohort built group chats, email threads, and stuff like that. I tried to go out once a summer with my group, just to be social instead of keeping to myself. Everyone is in it together.

**Rod:** It's building a community. Dr. Thompson always reinforced the importance of the community of scholars. He said that quite a bit when I was in the program, and I have often reiterated that on the various stops in my career. While we have to do a lot of work in isolation, while we have to comb through the library, academia can and should be a deeply social project too where you can talk to your peers and find support throughout the life of the program. Then, you can forge lifelong friendships where you see your friends succeeding in their professional lane.

**Len:** Also, being social with your peers aids in accountability. You have accountability partners who motivate you to get to work when you need a little motivation. These partners check up on you, and you can check up on them. People sometimes leave the program because they don't have a support system. People around you can help you see it from a different perspective and give you the boost you need.

Whatever the way, the more we know about the process, the less fearful we will be of it. Therefore, you in grad school you really need to get to know the faculty and let them know where you are coming from as far as your goals and plans.



**Rod:** True, true.

So, you have some new works in the pipeline. Regrettably, I have not purchased any of them.

**Len:** Shame on you (laughs).

**Rod:** I know, but they are in the Amazon cart. The Afrofuturism collection is in there. I always talk about

how I want to teach Afrofuturism because it's growing in literary and cultural studies. And I've only read an essay or two on the topic, paired with watching movies such as *Blade* or *Black Panther*. But do you care to talk about the collection?

**Len:** In 2021, I co-edited a collection of poems entitled *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, and Superhero Poetry*. As a kid, I was into superheroes and comics. When I became a writer, especially a poet, I recognized that I could merge the two.

There was a poet who did this named Gary Jackson. He wrote an exceptional work of poetry, which used comic book characters but discussed them from a black perspective or away from the comic book page. He touted them as real people with real experiences, but also from an African American lens, black superheroes who have to deal with race and their superhuman abilities. His book is titled *Missing You, Metropolis*. It plays on where Superman does his crime-fighting. I wanted to get him involved because we are in the same state. Also, Cynthia Manick also wrote a few poems on a similar subject. We started inviting noteworthy black poets who have written on those topics to share new work or allow us to print their previous work, as well as sending out a call for poems about Afrofuturism and black comics, or just superhero culture from a black lens. We did all of this during the pandemic.

The final book is ambitious. We categorized the poems and compiled artwork that would be part of the book. We also included a syllabus of works of Afrofuturism--movies, TV shows, scholarly works--so even if you haven't had a lot of experience with the topic, you can pick any of them and start your journey. It took us about two or three years to work with our publisher, Blair, and they were very good to us.

What about you, Rod? What are you up to these days?

**Rod:** I am in the African American Studies Department at the University of South Carolina. I teach a number of the 200-level classes on Arts and Culture as well as a state-mandated course on the US Founding documents. I encourage students to see those, to put them in conversation with, texts from the African American tradition. I recently joined USC's Institute for Southern

Studies where I will be teaching their Southern Literature survey, so I am wearing a few hats at the moment.

**Len:** You had a significant move when you left Pennsylvania and came to South Carolina. What has that been like for you? How has this affected you as a professor, teacher, and scholar?

**Rod:** (Long Pause and laughter) I would say at the beginning there was a lot of homesickness. For you, South Carolina is home, but for me, Pennsylvania is home. I lived in and around Pittsburgh for my entire life. Even if you are well-traveled, there is nothing comparable to living somewhere new. So at first, there was a longing for something more familiar until I got my bearings.

In the classroom, I was concerned about how students might respond to my teaching, but that really wasn't a problem. I've found that college students are very similar across the board as they mostly share the same popular culture.



I really like South Carolina, because it is loaded with a history that is significant to the foundation of the American republic, the institution of slavery, and Reconstruction. As a scholar of the 19th century, I wanted to be closer to it all. I wanted to be closer to the archives and feel the history, and honestly, you do. But, also, the significance of Columbia during the Civil Rights Movement. There is just so much calling me to come down here. You think you come here just to work, but then you meet so many people, and I am not even talking about just USC. Throughout the state, in places

like Pawleys Island and Edisto Island, there is a treasure trove of history and culture to explore while I am here as far as food, narrative, and history.

**Len:** That's interesting to hear you say that. I've lived here my entire life, and I still haven't done all the things that I could. I think you get sort of indoctrinated into the culture very young and coming out of the South Carolina school system, the history often gets lost. Not just the history, because we have classes on state history in the public schools, but to know you are living in a space that so many consider to be pivotal in shaping the history of America for better or worse really puts your existence in perspective.

A lot of times, people living here try to get along with one another individually and try not to expose one another to the difficult emotions of that type of history. So, I guess that ties back to my work, in my creative writing, where I try to bridge that gap to have those tough conversations, to give more use to history because the surface hasn't been scratched. These powerful histories sometimes get swept under the rug. Poetry and any kind of art can help to start those tough conversations.

Len Lawson is author of *Negro Asylum for the Lunatic Insane* (Main Street Rag, 2023), *Chime* (Get Fresh Books, 2019), and the chapbook *Before the Night Wakes You* (Finishing Line Press, 2017). He is also co-editor of *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, and Superhero Poetry* (Blair Press, 2021) and *Hand in Hand: Poets Respond to Race* (Muddy Ford Press, 2017). South Carolina Humanities awarded him a 2022 Governor's Award for Fresh Voices in the Humanities. Len earned a Ph.D. in English Literature and Criticism at Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he received the 2020 Outstanding Doctoral Student Award and a 2021 Carter G. Woodson Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the IUP Center for Multicultural Student Leadership and Engagement. A South Carolina native, he is currently Assistant Professor of English at Newberry College.

Rod Taylor is a Race, Freedom, and Democratic Citizenship Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of African American Studies and affiliate faculty in the Institute for Southern Studies at the University of South Carolina where he teaches courses on the US Founding documents and literature, history, and culture of the American South. His essays have appeared or are forthcoming in *The Conversation*, *Mississippi Quarterly*, and *Food and the American Dream in American Literature* with The University of Tennessee Press.

## UNIVERSITY AWARDS!

Zainab Younus and William Nolen shared the top spot for the university-wide Outstanding Dissertation Award, 2021–2022.

Dr. Younus was recognized for her dissertation, *An Archive of Imagined Worlds and Futures: Environmental Speculative Fiction of the 20th and 21st Century* and Dr. Nolen shared the limelight for his dissertation, *A Despairing of the Imagination: Eutopia, Dystopia, and Apocalypse in the Western Cultural Tradition*.

## STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

**Jeff Ambrose (L&C, 4<sup>th</sup> Year)** had his first two publications release this year – a chapter on teaching masculinity using Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* in a book published by Vernon Press, and a chapter on memory as monster in Stephen King's *It* in a collection published by the University Press of Mississippi. That topic, memory as monster, has developed into Jeff's dissertation focus. Across three chapters, Jeff argues that in horror literature one's trauma is personified as a monster in order to be faced and overcome. Finally, Jeff was selected as a Teaching Associate for the 2022-2023 school year and enjoys being back in the classroom.

**Waseem Anwar (L&C 2001)** published several articles over the last year: "Pakistani Literary Digitalization: 'Mediascaping' Mohsin Hamid's 'The (Former) General in His Labyrinth,'" published in *Film, Media, and Representation in Postcolonial South Asia: Beyond Partition*; "Introduction: Decolonization and Its Discontents" in *History and Myth in Postcolonial Consciousness*; "Teaching Lit.-Crit. Theory about 'Taboo' to the Pakistani Precariat Generations: A General Survey of the Women [Womxn], [Trans]-Gender and [Queer] Studies" in *Global Identity: A Cartographic Journey of Race, Power and Gender*; and "Searching in Confusion: Reading Transnational Friendships in Raja Rao's Kanthapura and Ahmed Ali's Twilight," co-authored with Farah Fatima and published in *Reading India in a Transnational Era: The Works of Raja Rao*.



Waseem's panel presentation on Fawzia Afzal-Khan's book, *Siren Song*, is available on YouTube and can be found under the title "Women Singers of Pakistan: Past and Present." The panel was conducted by Raza Rumi in Urdu language for the Naya Daur (New Era).

After retiring from his former Forman Christian College (Lahore, Pakistan) in 2021, Waseem assumed the position of Director for the International Centre for Pakistani Writing in English (ICPWE) at Kinnaird College for Women (Lahore).

**Laurie Jean Carter (L&C 2006)** was named as the Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at Susquehanna University in 2022. Her memoir, *Other Than Honorable: A Soldier's Struggle Through Military Sexual Trauma* will be released in 2023.

**Lisa Elwood-Farber (L&C, 2020)** is Professor of Literature at Herkimer College in upstate New York. She has two articles accepted for publication. The first, which has already been submitted to the editor, is "Disguising the Gay Hero Combating Crimes of the British Empire: Slavery and Colonialism in the Outlander and Lord John Series." It will be included in an edited collection titled, *Outlander as Crime Fiction*. A second article, "Louisa May Alcott's Work: A Story of Experience and the Heroine's Educational Journey in the Professions," focuses on Alcott's lesser-known novels and novellas and will be published in *Expanding the Canon: Essays on the Minor Books*, due to be released in 2023. Lisa also received a \$20,000 grant from SUNY to serve as lead faculty in creating, developing, and implementing the Accelerated Learning Project (ALP) to enhance courses on developmental writing on her campus.

She is finishing up a two-year term as Academic Senate President, which is an elected position. She has appreciated the opportunity to serve her colleagues and the institution at this level.

**Sheila Farr (L&C, 2019)** is in her 3rd year as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English at Thiel College in Greenville, PA, where she teaches writing and literature courses in the English Department and courses for the Dietrich Honors Institute. In Spring 2022, she received Thiel College's Distinguished Scholar of the Year Award for her support of undergraduate research. As the

recipient of this award, she was invited to give the Keynote Address for Thiel's Arts and Scholarship Symposium. Sheila also serves as the Gender Studies Minor Coordinator and the faculty advisor of Sigma Tau Delta; The Phoenix, Thiel's literary and arts magazine; and The Lectern, Thiel's undergraduate research review. In March 2022, Sheila presented, "The Radical Social Experiment of Companionship: Married Love in Victorian Cinderella Adaptations," at the Nineteenth-Century Studies Association Conference. She will be co-presenting with her colleagues on "Making a Way for Hope: A Rural College's Adaptive Advising Model in Its First-Year Writing Curriculum" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in February 2023.

**Antoinette Gazda (L&C, 2022)** has been promoted to Associate Professor at Averett University where she currently teaches courses in the Language, Literature & Culture department and is faculty coordinator of the African & African American Studies program. She recently served as a panelist in a *Juneteenth Celebrating Freedom* event at the New College Institute in Martinsville, Virginia. The panel was entitled, "Black Is Everyone's Culture." Part of her presentation touched on Critical Race Theory and its controversial role in contemporary American society, as well as conversations about the Long Civil Rights Movement and her dissertation topic, "A Tale of Many Stories: Youth Narratives of the Civil Rights Movement, Connecting Past to Present (and Future) through Literature."

**Emily Grigg (L&C, 3rd year)** is having her Performance Review of King Lear at Shakespeare's Globe published in the November 2022 issue of *Cahiers Elisabethains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*. Additionally, she presented "'Look here upon this picture': Ophelia's Art in a Postmodern Hamlet" at the April 2022 Popular Culture Association Conference. Emily has been named the Co-Chair of the Community College Humanities Association (CCHA) National English Committee, and she will give her presentation, "Shakespeare Productions Increase Inclusivity, but Objectifying Minor Female Characters Remain," at the 2022 CCHA Conference in October 2023.

**Karen Griscom (L&C, 5th year)** won the Committee Prize from the British Society for Eighteenth-Century

Studies for her paper "Louds Sounds of Joy: Music in Aphra Behn's Pindaric Odes," at the annual conference in January 2022. This presentation was part of a panel representing the Women's Studies Group 1558-1837. In the spring of 2022, Karen was hired as an editorial assistant for the international journal *Women's Writing*, which publishes work on women writers in English through 1900.

Karen participated in the Folger Shakespeare Library's course Practical Paleography in fall 2022, an extension of work she began in 2021 with a week-long workshop at Rare Book School studying early modern English handwriting and manuscript culture. She also hosted a panel and presented her work on early modern women translators for one of the annual Online Olios Webinars hosted by Digital Cavendish, in affiliation with the International Margaret Cavendish Society. She presented a paper on Lucy Hutchinson's *Elegies* for the Renaissance Society of America's conference, RSA Virtual 2022.

**Haleigh Hayes (L&C, 2nd Year)** presented on the echoes of the execution of Socrates in the more recent Salman Rushdie attack, as well as the way ancient Greek reactions to the works of Sappho relates to the rampant suppression of modern queer authors. After her second time presenting for EGO at Banned Books Week, she is ever more committed to the message of Banned Books and honored to continue to champion free speech.

**Emily Hicks (L&C, 3rd year)** is an English Language Arts instructor at Venango Catholic High School in Oil City, Pennsylvania. She was a panel speaker at the international conference, Messengers from the Stars. In November she presented at the annual South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference in Jacksonville, delivering a paper entitled, "Who are the Real Monsters?: An Ecocritical Approach to A Song of Ice and Fire." Her research interests include the representation of economic and political institutions in speculative fiction as viewed through the lenses of ecocriticism and Marxism.

**Jemayne King (L&C, 2020)** had a chapter included in *The New York Mets in Popular Culture*, published by McFarland in 2020. He delivered a presentation based on that chapter at the 33rd Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture in June 2022, at the

National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York.

**Zebadiah Kraft (L&C, 4th year)** is a 10-year faculty member at the University of Alaska Anchorage. He presented "Rethinking the Undead in the New Millennium: Fictional Zombies in Our Real Apocalypse(s)" at the Popular Culture Association conference in April 2022. He also presented "Monsters, Trauma, and the Metamodern: Explorations of the Zombie as the Shambling Image of the Precariat" at the 1st Annual Metamodernism Summit in Seattle in September 2022. Kraft was awarded an IUP travel grant to present at the summit, and a Nicole LaRose grant from Society for Utopian Studies to attend and present "Possibility in Destruction: Zombie Narratives of Renewal and Utopia" at the Society for Utopian Studies in November 2022.

**Elizabeth Laughlin (L&C, 2nd Year)** is an adjunct professor at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, where she helps advise *The Advocate* newspaper and teaches journalism. She is a graduate assistant and an editor for the department newsletter. She recently was awarded a travel grant through NEMLA, and she is running for a leadership position within the organization. She also serves on a committee for SAMLA involving undergraduate student essay awards. In summer 2022 she worked for *Modern Language Studies* on its literary blog, where she wrote about trends in literature and the publishing industry. Her creative short stories have been published by *Modern Language Studies* and *October Hill Magazine*. Her research interests include Gothic literature, Romanticism, and Renaissance Literature, as well as the publishing industry. She also works as a freelance writer for *Tube City Media*.

**Len Lawson (L&C, 2021)** has been awarded a 2022 South Carolina Humanities Governor's Award for Fresh Voices in the Humanities. The award is given annually to South Carolina residents who are invigorating public humanities across the state. In 2022, Len was also a keynote speaker at University of Pittsburgh Johnstown, discussing the intersection of race, sports, and poetry. He was a keynote speaker at Greater Johnstown High School as well. In addition, he gave a poetry reading and classroom visits at Ursinus College in Pennsylvania. Len presented at the 2022 Association of Writers & Writing

Programs (AWP) Conference in Philadelphia and at Blerdcon 2022, a conference that celebrates Afrofuturism. Both panels were to discuss his 2021 co-edited poetry anthology, *The Future of Black: Afrofuturism, Black Comics, and Superhero Poetry* (Blair Press).

**Reza Parchizadeh (L&C, 2018)** was interviewed by *The New Yorker* about how, similar to the former Soviet Union, the autocratic regime in Iran exploits cinema and international film festivals to showcase itself as a normal government and advance its agenda on the global stage while it relentlessly silences, imprisons or drives into exile dissident artists, writers and filmmakers. As an international political theorist and editorial board member of the news agency Al-Arabiya Farsi, Reza was one of the leading voices in the global information campaign on the murder of the young woman, Mahsa Amini, by the religious police in Iran, to raise consciousness about the plight of women under a patriarchal theocratic regime similar to the one depicted in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*.

**Kaitlynn Sass (L&C, 3rd year)** was awarded the Sigma Tau Delta's William C. Johnson Distinguished Scholarship Award. A member of Sigma Tau Delta since 2014, she has served the Society as the Eastern Region Student Representative (2016-2017) and as the Student Advisor (2018-2020 and 2022-2024). Kaitlynn also served as the Vice President (2018-2019) and as the Secretary (2020-2022) of IUP's English Graduate Organization.

**Sahar Al-Shoubaki (L&C, 7<sup>th</sup> year)** has published a book chapter titled, "American Palestinian Women as Public Intellectuals: New Narratives of Resistance," in the edited collection, *Literary Representations of the Palestine/Israel Conflict After the Second Intifada*, published by Edinburgh University Press. She was awarded the 2022 PASSHE Foundation Dr. Lou Bohl-Fabian Memorial Fund Grant and secured a summer 2022 internship with Dr. Rabab Abdulhadi, Senior Scholar and Director of Arab and Muslim Ethnicities and Diasporas Studies in the College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University. In addition, Sahar was appointed as a supervisor of the American Culture and English (ACE) Tutoring program at the American Language Institute while keeping her job as an instructor at the ALI. In March 2022, she chaired a roundtable

session titled, "Intersectionality of Struggles in Arab Diaspora Literature," and presented a paper titled, "Precarious Life: Coming of Age in Ibtisam Barakat's Life Narratives," at the Northeast Modern Language Association Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. She has also presented a paper on the interventions of feminist Arab American writers in contemporary Arab American literature at the Arab Studies Quarterly Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, which was held in March 2022.

**Zeeshan Siddique (L&C, 5<sup>th</sup> year)** contributed to the co-authored article, "Designing Decisions: Using Digital Storytelling to Teach Storytelling and Decision-Making Skills," which was published in *The Engaging Classroom* (2022). His co-authored chapter, "Significance of Social Systems in Forest and Biodiversity Conservation: Experiences of Jangal Mahals of West Bengal, India," was published in *Conservation, Management, and Monitoring of Forest Resources in India* in 2022. Recently he also co-authored an article with Dr. Mike Sell and Dr. Rachel Scheira, "Decision Literacy, Multimodal Storytelling, and the Digital Story Game Project," which appeared in the *English Language Journal* in Feb 2023. The chapter reflects on the implementation of multimodal teaching strategies to foster student engagement and decision-making skills.

Zeeshan presented "Zombifying Gender: An Ecofeminist Reading of Anthropocene in Train to Busan" at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference at the University of Georgia and "Zombifying Anthropocene: An Ecofeminist Reading of Anthropocene in Train to Busan" at the Pacific Modern Language Association conference in Los Angeles, both in November 2022.

For four years Zeeshan has been an active member of the Digital Storytelling Project and has been teaching and facilitating digital storytelling along with Mike Sell at IUP, Franklin Regional Senior High, and other academic institutions. Zeeshan's dissertation encompasses Anthropocene literature, experimental pedagogy, multimodal ecocriticism, and genre innovations in climate fiction.

**Kyle Smith (L&C, 8<sup>th</sup> year)** recently accepted a new position as an English Instructor at Fayetteville State University in Fayetteville, North Carolina. He will teach

both Composition courses and a wide range of literature classes, including ones focused in speculative fiction, his area of focus. He presented “*Matrix* Transitions: Exploring the Non-Cis-Normative” at NeMLA’s annual convention in Baltimore, Maryland in March 2022. The presentation is under consideration for inclusion in a book about the visual representations of transgender bodies in film and television. Kyle’s review of David Steinberg’s book *Inside Comedy: The Soul, Wit, and Bite of Comedy and Comedians of the Last Five Decades* is forthcoming in the journal *Studies in American Humor*. A presentation he is co-writing with fellow IUP student Mary Reading entitled “LeFou: The Queer Sidekick,” is scheduled to be given at the American Folklore Society’s annual conference in October 2022. This presentation was part of a panel on queering Disney and the many ways the queer community has been both baited and coded over the years. It has been accepted for publication in an edited anthology called *Queering Disney: History of the Walt Disney Company and the Queer Community*, which will be published by Wayne State University Press.

**Matthew Stumpf (L&C, 6th year)** accepted and began a full-time, tenure track faculty position at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College in Richland, PA. In accepting this position, Matthew has joined an institution dedicated to providing an affordable, high-quality education that offers a catalyst for regional renewal in West-Central Pennsylvania. While working this new dream position, Matthew is continuing to write his dissertation concerned with the cultural and stylistic influence of poet Gwendolyn Brooks on the city of Chicago, its Black literary landscape, and the Black Arts Movement more broadly. A chapter from this dissertation was accepted for presentation at the College English Association conference, held in Birmingham, AL in March 2022.

**Rod K. Taylor (MA 2012, L&C 2020)** is a Race, Freedom, and Democratic Citizenship Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of African American Studies at the University of South Carolina. Rod recently joined U of SC’s Institute for Southern Studies as an affiliate faculty member. He published on 19th century African American writer Charles Chesnutt in the public scholarship forum, *The Conversation*, has an article titled “At the Foot of the Racial Mountain: Pauline Hopkins’ Literary Exodus In Peculiar Sam; or The Underground

Railroad” forthcoming in *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures*. Rod recently had his chapter, “Loving My Soul: African American Foodways and the American Dream,” accepted in an edited collection centered on Food and the American Dream. He presented and chaired a panel at the NeMLA convention in Baltimore on food and literature, participated on the roundtable “Amplifying Africana Studies in Curricular Requirements” at the South Carolina Africana Studies Symposium, and chaired the panel “The Function of Race in American Humor” at the American Literature Association conference in Chicago. In summer 2022, Rod was awarded a McCausland Family Endowment Innovation Grant from U of SC’s College of Arts and Sciences to expand the offerings of his popular Carolina Core class “Freedom Papers: Narratives of Race and Nation.” Additionally, Rod assumed the duties of Secretary/Treasurer for the American Humor Studies Association and remains a member of their M. Thomas Inge First Book Workshop.

**Rachael Warmington (L&C, 10th year)** presented “Building Your Writer Profile and Navigating the Publishing Process” for Sigma Tau Delta at Thiel College in March 2021. She published a review of the poetry collection, *Together in a Sudden Strangeness: America’s poets Respond to the Pandemic* in the Winter 2021 issue of *BigCitiLit*. She also has four poems included in the upcoming 2022 poetry collection called, *The Sonnet Corona Project*.

Rachael presented "Perpetuating and Disrupting the Arthurian Canon: Portrayals of Morgan le Fay and Merlin" at the 53rd Annual NEMLA Convention in March 2022 and "The Evolving Arthurian Mythos in Comics and Graphic Novels: Why Variations Matter" at the 42nd Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum Conference in April 2022. Additionally, she gave a talk titled, "Alternatives to the Research Paper" for the Digital Humanities Summer Institute sponsored by the Seton Hall Center for Faculty Development. Rachael is a member of the Diversity Coalition and Digital Humanities Committee at Seton Hall University. She is also the coordinator of the Seton Hall Digital Humanities Learning Community.



## FACULTY NEWS



**Dr. Chauna Craig's** second collection of short stories, *Wings & Other Things*, was published in September 2022 by Press 53. Early reviews praised "prose [that] demonstrates vulnerability, a rawness of syntax and image" and argued, "While firmly grounded in contemporary, middle America and feminine spaces, these stories play with time reminiscent of "The

Garden of Forking Paths" (1941) by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges." Dr. Craig's flash fiction, "High on the Divide," was selected for inclusion in W.W. Norton's 2023 anthology, *Flash Fiction America: Very Short Stories*, and she will moderate a reading from the anthology at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs annual conference in Seattle in February 2023. Other readers include Venita Blackburn, Rion Scott Amilcar, and Terese Svoboda. She will also serve for a second year on the Fulbright National Screening Committee rating applications for creative writing projects.

**Dr. Reena Dube** received her PhD. in Critical-Cultural Studies from the English Department, University of Pittsburgh. She teaches film and global literature, through a critical theory perspective including postcolonial-poststructuralist, marxist-feminist and psychoanalytic, as well as eco-criticism. She is the editor of the English department journal, *Studies in the Humanities* since 2008. During her tenure the journal has been dedicated to bringing out special issues on the topic of globalism from below. Her research interests and teaching practice mixes the study of classic western texts with postcolonial poststructuralist texts, and relating both to contemporary political trends and social movements. She has taught in the Honors College for many years, and has recently begun teaching in the Graduate Studies in Literature and Criticism program.

**Dr. Chris Orchard** is finishing up his book on theatre and political unrest in 1640s and 1650s Britain. It will be published by Routledge in early 2023. His GA, Meghan

Cronin, is writing the bibliographies for each chapter. He also plans to present a paper on marital crises in post-9/11 fiction at the 2023 NEMLA conference in Buffalo. He is starting two new projects. The first is an article on the library of the Lord Pierrepont, which is housed in the Royal College of Physicians in London. He will travel to London to continue research for that article in 2023. The second project is a book length study of marital metaphors as signifiers of political crises in the 1640s and 1650s. It will pivot around Milton's divorce tracts.

**Dr. Mike Sell's** newest book is *Systemic Dramaturgy: A Handbook for the Digital Age* (Southern Illinois University Press). Co-written with Michael M. Chemers of the University of California, it describes a new framework for understanding the relationship of theatre, performance, and technology that encompasses both centuries-old traditions (such as the *sokyukuchi* aesthetic of the 14th-century theatre artist and philosopher Zeami Motkiyo) and emergent platforms like videogames.

Games and play are the focus of his next solo-authored monograph. *Playing Literature* explores three dimensions of the millennia-old relationship between games and literature: representations of games in literary works, the literature of games (i.e., tabletop roleplaying games, party games, word games, etc.), and the role of games and play in literary theory. In support of that project, Sell is studying cinematic adaptations of game rules and affordances (what he terms "procedural adaptation") in movies about car racing, card games, and chess. *Ready Reader One: The Stories We Tell With, Around, and About Videogames* will be published by Louisiana State University Press. Co-edited with Megan Amber Condis of Texas Tech, the contributors's essays (including one by L&C doctoral student Aaron Heinrich) explore the literature of videogames: novels, poetry, short fiction, young adult fiction, life writing, and paratexts such as boss-battle instructions and feelies. In October 2023, Sell will deliver a keynote to the international webinar *Live Performance and Video Games: Appropriations, Inspirations, and Mutual Transfers*, hosted by the Université de Lorraine and Université de Lausanne.

Dr. Sell is an avid player, scholar, and maker of tabletop roleplaying games. His essay "The Dramaturgy of

Tabletop Roleplaying Games” will appear in *Experiential Theatres: Praxis-Based Approaches to Training 21st-Century Theatre Artists* (Routledge). "Immersion and the Tabletop Roleplaying Game," co-written with Chemers, is part of the forthcoming anthology *Enveloping Worlds* (Southern Illinois University Press). Dr. Sell's supplementary materials for the TTRPGs *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Monster of the Week* can be purchased on *Dungeon Masters Guild* and *DriveThruRPG*. He is currently co-writing a series of mysteries for the *Call of Cthulhu* TTRPG, set in California in the 1960s.

Dr. Sell is founder of the Digital Storygame Project and co-directs it with Rachel Schiera of Lander University with the assistance of lead instructor and L&C doctoral student Zeeshan Siddique. Since 2015, the DSP has run on-site workshops in middle schools and high schools that teach students how to create interactive storygames using the open-source program Twine and supports teachers in the incorporation of creative coding, design thinking, and decision-focused storytelling in standards-based curricula. In the Spring of 2022, the DSP hosted workshops for nine 11th-grade English Language Arts classes at Franklin Regional High School, assisted by IUP graduate students Willa Black, Meghan Cronin, Aaron Heinrich, Jacklyn Heslop, Alexandra Krasova, and Danning Liang, with Daniel Pintos assisting on assessment data collection. In Spring 2023, the DSP will lead workshops in eight school districts across western Pennsylvania. These will focus on the creation of "decision-literacy prototypes" that use interactive storytelling to explore and educate about decision-making in personal and professional contexts.

The DSP's essay "Design Decisions: Using Digital Storygames to Teach Storytelling and Decision-Making Skills" appeared in *Literacy Today* this past summer. "Decision Literacy, Multimodal Storytelling, and the Digital Storygame Project" will appear in a special issue of *English Journal* in early 2023. In March 2022, Dr. Sell presented the pedagogical framework of the DSP to the Seton Hall University Center for Faculty Development and Digital Humanities Learning Community, and he will guest-teach a class on decision-focused storytelling for the Seton Hall Law School in November.

**Dr. Kenneth Sherwood**, Co-director of Center for Digital Humanities and Culture, published the digital poem "Coal Code" in the peer-reviewed *Electronic Literature Collection*. Programmed in Javascript, the multi-media piece combines lyric voice tracks with an array of images reflecting upon and recycling stories and postcard images from nineteenth century coal culture in Pennsylvania. An international scholarly non-profit, the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO) published this anthology to feature an international range of works in the field, including 132 literary works from 42 author nationalities in 31 languages. The prior three editions of this anthology were published in 2016, 2011, and 2006. ELO editors explain: "E-literature . . . derive[s] meaning from a fusion of computational and literary layers. This fusion shows that human literary creativity entwines technological innovation with cultural and historic context" (ELC 2022). He also presented virtually on the teaching of E-lit to IUP Honors College students at the annual ELO conference in summer 2022. Dr. Sherwood hopes to be able to work with L&C students in a Humanities Podcast initiative and research project in collaboration with CAL faculty member Dr. Dana Driscoll in 2023. Digital humanists should be in touch!

**Dr. Todd Thompson** published, "WHY WE SHOULD ANNEX": Reprints and Repercussions of Twain's *New York Tribune* Letters on Hawai'i," in *The Mark Twain Annual*. His book chapter, "Then and When? Teaching Cooper and Adaptation as Layered Cultural History," was published in *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of James Fenimore Cooper* (Modern Language Association Press, Eds. Keat Murray and Stephen Arch). In April, 2022 he presented, "Indigenous Pacific Studies, Humor, and Empire," as part of the Pacific Routes/Asian Routes in the Long Nineteenth Century Seminar at the C19: Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists Biennial Conference. Dr. Thompson was named Contributing Editor for *Studies in American Humor* and served as an article reviewer for *Studies in American Humor* and *American Periodicals*. He also earned IUP's Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching in 2022.

**Dr. Veronica T. Watson** is the co-creator of the I Fear for My Life website (<https://ifearformylife.org/>), commissioned by the 400 Years of African American History Commission. The product of two years of research, interdisciplinary collaboration and

development, *I Fear for My Life* is designed to be a resource for people who are looking to learn, to engage diverse voices and perspectives, and to prepare for personal and social action in the on-going change movements to improve policing and criminal justice outcomes, especially for communities of color in the U.S. The site launched nationally in July 2022 and includes multimedia resources to support dialogue and awareness of the intersections of policing and race in the U.S.

Connected with the launch, Dr. Watson has participated in a number of conferences and other speaking engagements to promote the site and to encourage national dialogue on the issues represented there. She delivered the presentation that launched the website at the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice Conference in July 2022, chaired the *I Fear for My Life: Considering Trauma and Mental Health* panel at the Association for the Study of African American Life and History Conference in October 2022, and offered remarks at the Art of Justice Symposium at Southern University of New Orleans, also in October 2022.

Dr. Watson was tapped to deliver the keynote address at the Pennsylvania College English Association conference at the University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown in May 2022. Her talk was entitled, “Recovery Is a Verb: Remembering the Lost Legacies of Frank Yerby.” She also participated in the Georgia Center for the Book’s annual event, held virtually in 2022. She presented “Rediscovering Frank Yerby” as part of the Lost Southern Voices roundtable. Rounding out her efforts to support the recovery of Frank Yerby, she was the keynote speaker at the Paine College 24th Evelyn G. Etheridge Conference on the Harlem Renaissance in October 2021, where she presented “Frank Yerby, A Man in Shadow.”

A private donor renewed support for Dr. Watson’s police training protocol, Humanities Training for Law Enforcement, with a \$30,000 gift in year three of the project. The funding provides support for books and materials, travel expenses, and trainers to work with law enforcement organizations to improve legitimacy and understanding between police and communities of color. Diana Forry, an alumna of the MA Composition & Literature program, continues as a trainer and Ryan

Mahokey (L&C 1<sup>st</sup> year) is now learning the training protocols for the project.

Dr. Watson is currently pursuing two research projects. One will have her re-engaging her previous work at the intersections of African American Studies and Critical Whiteness Studies to contribute a chapter to an edited collection. The second project is reflected in the new graduate class she is teaching in spring 2023 on Afrofuturism. She continues to be active in national conversations about 21<sup>st</sup> century graduate education in the humanities.

**Dr. Michael T. Williamson** presented, “Tiny Surrealisms: Dali, Yiddish Poetry, and Post Holocaust Dead” at the International Society for the Study of Surrealism Conference (Nuits Blanches: Noches en Blanco: Around the Clock) international conference and “The Labor of Transmission: Abraham Sutzkever’s Epic Yiddish Poem, *geheymshot* (1945-47), and the Anti-Commemorative Elegy,” at the 2022 Conference of Space Between Society: Literature and Culture, 1914-1948. He also presented, “Translation and Recovery: Abraham Sutzkever’s Epic Yiddish Poem, *geheymshot* (1945-47)” at the 2022 Pennsylvania College English Association Conference. His essay “Helen MacInnes’s *The Unconquerable* (1944): Gender, Spying, and National Ethics” was published in *Spying, Sexualities, and Gender in the Fiction of Espionage* (Bloomsbury 2022). He published a peer-edited review of *The Construction of Testimony: Claude Lanzmann’s Shoah and Its Outtakes* in *Studies in 20th and 21st Century Literature*.

Dr. Williamson was a member of the Conference Planning Committee for the Pennsylvania College English Association, a Faculty Mentor at the Space Between Society, and was elected as Vice President of the Space Between Society. He continues to serve as EGO faculty advisor, co-Director of the Dessy-Roffman Myth Collaborative, Editor of the journal *Pennsylvania English* (with Assistant Editor/Art Editor Sydnee Pilarski, MA in Composition and Literature) and editor of the Myth Journal, *ARISTELA* (with Associate Editor Allen Shull of the University of Tennessee at Martin and IUP’s Literature and Criticism program).

Dr. Williamson recently completed his third year of work training IUP Police Academy students with Dr. Veronica Watson and Diana Forry (Doctoral Candidate at Duquesne University, MA in Composition and Literature '19) for the Humanities Training for Law Enforcement Program. With Haleigh Hayes (second-year L & C student), he is working on a project on Greek Drama for the Dessy Roffman Myth Collaborative, and on a World Literary Theory project with Jasmine Bishnoi (first-year L & C student).

Dr. Williamson serves as Director of the MA in Literature Program and the MA in Composition and Literature Program. In May 2023, he will assume duties as the Director of the Literature and Criticism Doctoral Program.

**Dr. Lingyan Yang** won the university-wide teaching award of Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Faculty Recognition Award in the category of Inclusive Excellence in 2022 for the second time in her tenure at IUP. She has also been appointed by the Provost to serve on Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Advisory Board. In August 2022 Dr. Yang was appointed for a second term (the first having been completed 2012-2015) as Director of the Women's & Gender Studies Program (WGS) by Dr. Curt Scheib, Dean of the College of Arts and Humanities.

Dr. Yang organized an event called "IUP Reception for Women," in October 2022, which celebrated the vital contributions of women faculty, students, administrators, and staff to academic excellence at IUP, and advances the gender, sexual, and cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) on campus and in the communities. It was co-sponsored by our English Dept., Social Equity & Title IX Office, AAUW, and President's Commission on the Status of Women. In its 8th year collaborating with IUP Women's & Gender Studies, AAUW (Association of American University Women), Indiana Branch, announced one \$1000 scholarship to an outstanding woman student who has done important work to advance the cause of women's & gender equity at IUP and in the communities.

Dr. Yang presented at a panel discussion titled, "The Right to an Education," in November 2022. This

panel, organized by Dr. Joan Van Dyke from the Department of Theatre, Dance, and Performance, featured an invited speaker, Torah Bontrager, who is founder of the Amish Heritage Association. The speaker's event and panel discussion supplemented a ballet titled, "Orgnung: An Amish Ballet." The event was co-sponsored by IUP Libraries and Women's & Gender Studies Program.


Dr. Yang serves as the Co-Chair (with Dr. Mike Williamson) of English Department's Evaluation & Tenure Committee for 2022-23. She was also appointed to serve on the English Leadership Council.



Dissertation Defense of Mark Thomas

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Students in Dr. Ken Sherwood's podcasting class developed some new skills in fall 2022. Check out their series, Whatcha Readin'? at <http://whatchareadin.net/>.



## Trace

Waseem Anwar

Because “the seeing” eyes “see” very “little,”  
his inward eye could see it all,  
and like Milton, Keller, Beethoven\* he made,  
look big, the smallest of small.

Where no one dared, he glided smooth,  
in every 'clave of blessed souls,  
to track the strangest, untrodden paths  
that ever were his standard goals.

Visions, he carried, sacred like books,  
and missions above all faiths,  
and by more than love he served others+,  
who wouldn't know, what swathes?

Here, I sit now, with tearful eyes,  
spilling out my dismal heart,  
and like a decades-old family friend  
recall some soothing part.

We jogged together the *Forman's* air,  
and ran the *Forman* sway,  
and travelled *Fulbright* routes together,  
to live their virtuous way.

Gone is he, but for a cause so great,  
that even humbling in the high  
he deems fancy's language lit,  
through the reveries deep they sly.

And mentors we shared, and passions and dreams,  
and posts, positions, and academies too,  
but for imagining in us some skill that would,  
translate abilities, just for you.

Jolly were we, for our pun braced fun,  
when our chatting logy around, abound,  
our debates to roll and roll ahead,  
for rowing round and round.

Symphonic, choral, chording contents,  
that nurtured a copious contest,  
such were our joyful converse,  
that synced our zeal with zest!

Like a Keller, would he challenge take,  
and classic would he play,  
the game of mirth and murk alike,  
by night or by day.

An epic worthy, shall he remain,  
for *Paradise* is his grace,  
and in time, while people come and go,  
live those who leave a trace...

He leaves inspired, the youth and all,  
but special for the special stay,  
they wonder the joy of beauty he shares,  
to miss him, and to pray...

Rest in Peace, but rest assure,  
we follow your suit to walk your walk,  
revive journeys, enlighten abodes,  
water your saps to talk your talk.



Dr. Kamal ud Din (L&C, 2008) passed away on 3 April 2021. This poem, composed by his colleague and friend of 40 years, Dr. Waseem Anwar (L&C, 2001), is a humble tribute to honor Dr. Kamal's courage to do, know and envision things, with an exemplary commitment and determination. Dr. Kamal was stricken with meningitis in his adolescence, lost his eyesight, but did not give up on his aims. He attended IUP as a Fulbright Fellow and earned his PhD. His research centered on African American women poets and their struggles.

\* References in the poem are made to John Milton (1608-1674), the famous 17<sup>th</sup> Century English poet, creator of “Paradise Lost” and “Paradise Regained,” who went blind in his later age but could compose poems, unprecedented in the field of literature; Hellen Keller (1880-1968), the famous 20<sup>th</sup> Century American author and a disability rights activist, who herself overcame the handicaps of blindness and deafness, and in her famous essay, “Three Days to See,” states very wittily and confidently, “Only the deaf appreciate hearing, only the blind realize the manifold blessing that lie in sight”; and Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827), 19<sup>th</sup> Century German pianist of the Romantic era, who was visually challenged in his later age but retained his inward vision to compose unmatched symphonies, chamber music and piano trios, concertos and sonatas.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. NICOL EPPLE!

Dr. Nicol Epple, a graduate of the L&C program, was selected as the Graduate Graduation Commencement speaker for December 2022. Dr. Epple's dissertation "Transforming Trauma to Transcendence: Sex-Trafficked Activist Memoir as Freedom Narratives," emphasizes the power of story to evoke empathy, which enacts social change.



Dissertation Defense of Mauve Perle Tahat



Dissertation Defense of Toni Gazda

## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES! THESIS AND DISSERTATION TITLES

The following students successfully graduated in December 2021- December 2022.

### DECEMBER 2021

- Nouf Al-Aamer, "A Psychodynamic Study of Trauma Induced Illnesses in Selected Works of Literature and Film" (Dr. Christopher Orchard, Director)

### MAY 2022

- Sultan Alquthami, "Fighting Realism?: A Dialectical Standpoint" (Dr. Susan Comfort, Director)
- Kylee Carcione, "Embodiment and Identity Construction: Liminal Spaces in Queer Literature" (Dr. Michael Williamson, Director)
- John Corum, "Spell of Revolutions: Narrative-Creation in Latin American Literature of War" (Dr. Michael Williamson, Director)
- Eden Hade, "Gothic Mothers & the Gothic Daughters They Create" (Dr. Veronica Watson, Director)
- William Nolen, "A Despairing of the Imagination: Eutopia, Dystopia, and Apocalypse in the Western Cultural Tradition" (Dr. Michael Williamson, Director)
- Bandar Otayf, "Exploring Dystopia in Postcolonial Literature" (Dr. Lingyan Yang, Director)
- Jose Otero, "From Island to Mainland: The Construction and Performance of Nuyorican Masculinities" (Dr. Kenneth Sherwood, Director)
- Loren Stephenson, "Is Literature Food? A Short Trop(h)ic History of the Nourishment Metaphor for the Concept of Literary Value" (Dr. Christopher Kuipers, Director)

## **AUGUST 2022**

- Evelyn Emma, “Nineteen Century British Literature and Sacred Temporalities: The ‘Operations of Time’ on Emotions, Intellect, and Politics” (Dr. Michael Williamson, Director)
- Mark Thomas, “The Monster in All of Us: How Understanding the Irrational Helps Define the Rational in Gothic Fiction” (Dr. Melanie Holm, Director)

## **DECEMBER 2022**

- Nicol Epple, “Transforming Trauma To Transcendence: Sex-Trafficked Activist Memoir as Freedom Narratives” (Dr. Chauna Craig, Director)
- Mauve Perle Tahat, “Specters of Racial Capitalism: Carceral Witnessing and Reparative Reading in Contemporary American Prison Life Writing” (Dr. Susan Comfort, Director)
- Larry Sugisaki, “Community College Writing Teacher Experiences, Knowledge, Beliefs, and Training Needed for
- Serena Gould, “Past Forgetting and Remembering: The Evolving Metatext of Jewish Inter- and Intragenerational Holocaust Memoirs” (Dr. Christopher Orchard, Director)

### **2021-2022 L&C AWARD WINNERS**

#### **Outstanding Teaching Award for College-Level Students**

Tracy Rysavy  
Kheiriyeh Ahmadi

#### **Outstanding Dissertation Award**

Sultan Alqutami  
Will Nolen  
José L. Otero  
Zainab Younus

#### **Outstanding Scholarship Award for a PhD Student**

Ahlam A. Abulaila  
Mingle Moor  
Will Nolen  
Zainab Younus

#### **Outstanding Service & Citizenship Award**

Brian Sateriale, Joseph Canton, Jordan Hansen, and Kimberly Bressler in one team award.

### ***GOOD READING ALERT!***

Dr. Forrest Helvie (L&C, 2013) would love to have you take a look his professional blog series, [Higher Edu Dev Notes!](#)

### IMPORTANT DATES

#### Spring 2023

MLK Holiday: No Classes:	January 16, 2023
Classes Begin:	January 17, 2023
Candidacy Portfolio:	March 22, 2023
May Graduation Application Due:	April 1, 2023
Last Day of Spring Classes:	May 1, 2023
Final Exams:	May 2-5, 2023
Graduate Commencement for Master's & Doctoral Degrees:	May 5, 2023

#### Summer I 2023

June 5-30, 2023

#### Mid-Summer 2023

July 3-8, 2023

#### Summer II 2023

July 10-August 4, 2023

All Summer session courses will be available in person and remotely via Zoom in Summer 2023!

### APPLICATION DEADLINES

Priority review will be given to applications received by the following deadlines:

For summer: November 15, January 15 for early decision or March 15 for second round.

For fall semester: November 15, January 15 for early decision or March 15 for second round.

Applications received after March 15 may be considered on a rolling basis, but only in the case that there are still openings in the program.

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**Graduate Literature Telephone:** (724) 357-2263  
**IUP Academic Calendar:** <http://www.iup.edu/news-events/calendar/>

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