

DEPARTMENT OF

ENGLISH

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES



Late afternoon behind Denney Hall



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY



Maybe by Instagram

The Oval

Department of English News • 2014

Contents

2 English Department Welcomes New Chair

Inaugural Message

Debra A. Moddelmog, Chair and Professor of English

4 Telling Untold Stories in Hollywood and at Ohio State:

An Interview with Professor Angus Fletcher

7 Brighter Minds Internship Opens Door to Bright Future in Los Angeles:

An Interview with Alumnus Alex Yue

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS:

10 Collecting Literacy Narratives from Columbus African American Communities

12 Getting to Know Gifted Young Writers in Columbus, Ohio

13 The Appalachian Project, Ohio: How I Got to College

14 The Versatile PhD

15 Upcoming Events

16 2013 – 2014 Graduate Degrees

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW CHAIR

Debra Modellmog was appointed chair of the Department of English in June 2014. A member of the English faculty since 1986, Modellmog brings a wealth of institutional knowledge and administrative experience to this leadership position. She served as chair of the department's Promotion and Tenure Committee from 2009 to 2014 and as director of Ohio State's Diversity and Identity Studies Collective (DISCO) from 2010 to 2013. Additionally, Modellmog spent the past 12 years coordinating the university's Sexuality Studies Program, which she founded in 2002. She is an affiliated faculty member in the Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies and the Department of Comparative Studies, and from 2004 to 2007, she served as associate dean in the (former) College of Humanities.



Debra A.
Modellmog

In addition to leading one of the country's largest English departments, Modellmog continues to serve as an assembly delegate for the Modern Language Association and to maintain an active research program. She recently published a state-of-the-field essay on Modernism and Sexology, and

has completed an overview of 60 years of criticism on gender and sexuality in Hemingway as well as a chapter on teaching Hemingway's story "A Simple Enquiry." She is working on a book-length study on the influence of British sexologist Havelock Ellis on modernist and Harlem Renaissance writers. She also is co-editing (with Joe Ponce) a collection of essays on Ohio State English department alumnus Samuel Steward (BA, MA, and PhD, 1927 – 1934) and directing four doctoral dissertations.

The author of *Reading Desire: In Pursuit of Ernest Hemingway* and *Readers and Mythic Signs: The Oedipus Myth in 20th-Century Fiction* and co-editor of *Ernest Hemingway in Context*, Modellmog has written numerous articles on twentieth-century American writers and sexuality-based topics and has received the Ohio State Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award, the College of Humanities Diversity Enhancement Award and the Marlene B. Longenecker English Faculty Teaching and Leadership Award.

Inaugural Message

Debra A. Modellmog, Chair and Professor of English

If you read the news (whether it's Yahoo or the *New York Times* or *USA Today*), you've probably encountered any number of stories about "The Five (or 10) Hottest Degrees" or "Degrees That Pay Off" or "Degrees That Will Get You a Job — and Those to Avoid." I always read these stories, even though I know what they will say: unless you want to be a teacher (elementary school teaching is supposedly "hot" right now), steer clear of English. If you're a student, you've probably heard your friends, parents, or even a well-meaning guidance counselor say something like, "Don't major in English; you won't be able to get a job or you'll get only a low-paying one." They seem to be reading the same news sources I am.

If you're an alumnus of our department, you might recall having a similar conversation with your parents, regardless of when you were in school. I know I did over 40 years ago! My dad was the one who encouraged me to get a "practical" degree. It's the reason I have a BS in Journalism when what I really wanted to do was study British and American literature, and learn how to become a better writer. It took me a year of working for a community newspaper and another two years of working in the hotel business to realize that I wasn't going to shake that desire to immerse myself in English and American literature and write about it. I left a promising career at an international hotel chain to enroll in graduate school in English.

The concern about the usefulness, value and relevance of an English degree has been propagated for a long time, and it makes me wonder how valid the doomsday stories of today might be. After all, despite apparently long-standing efforts to deter students from majoring in English, many very successful people have gone on to do so — and continue to do so — disregarding the warnings: Toni Morrison, author and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature; Jodi Foster, actress, director, writer and Academy Award winner; Harold Varmus, Nobel Laureate in medicine, former Director of the National Institutes of Health, and currently Director of the National Cancer Institute; Mario Cuomo, former Governor of New York; and Judy McGrath, former MTV CEO (2004-11).

These people and others, including an infinite number of our own alumni (such as R.L. Stine, creator of the famous *Goosebumps* children's series) have repeatedly proved the worth of the English degree and the skills developed in pursuing it.

Among these skills are the ability to think critically; to develop convincing and engaging arguments for multiple audiences; to communicate clearly using a variety of forms and media;

to understand the importance of historical context; to identify and be responsive to social differences, economic disparities, and power relations that create inequities in our society and world; to analyze people’s motives and psychology; to present ideas effectively to others; to imagine multiple solutions to difficult problems; and to conduct meaningful research using reliable sources.

With such a combination of proficiencies and talents, it’s not surprising that English majors land all over the place when they graduate, even though journalists who write about “the top majors of today” seem to view our fanning out into a variety of jobs as a problem rather than a plus. But one could argue that the multiplicity of careers pursued by those with English degrees demonstrates not the inadequacy of the degree but its rich and wide-reaching potential.

Although warnings thus far seem to come with the territory — and I don’t want to downplay the difficulties that English majors and graduate students can have finding meaningful work that pays well — a combination of factors have made the negative discourse about English (and the humanities and liberal arts more generally) more concerning than ever.

One of those factors is a stressed job market resulting from an economic recession. This market has encouraged many students to seek “practical” degrees in an effort to guarantee themselves a solid job at the end of an expensive four years of schooling, made more expensive for many by student loan debt.

Another factor is the enormous attention being placed on the STEMM fields (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) both nationally and within higher education. For example, Ohio State recently launched three “Discovery Themes” (Health and Wellness, Food Production and Security, and Energy and Environment) into which a large portion of funding and resources are being funneled.

While these areas of research are doubtless important, one result of their current prominence (at least it seems to me) is that we have to work harder than ever to explain and promote the relevance of an English degree.

One of my goals as our new chair, then, is to lead us in pursuing a variety of initiatives that will change the discourse about our degrees — including our graduate degrees (MFA, PhD) — which could actually prepare students for a variety of exciting nonacademic as well as academic careers.

We also will be pursuing projects that will help to connect us more fully to other parts of the university (including the STEMM fields and Discovery Themes projects) as well as to the world outside the university.

“...CONCERN ABOUT THE USEFULNESS, VALUE AND RELEVANCE OF AN ENGLISH DEGREE HAS BEEN PROPAGATED FOR A LONG TIME, AND IT MAKES ME WONDER HOW VALID THE DOOMSDAY STORIES OF TODAY MIGHT BE.”

If you are a current student, alumnus, retired faculty member or friend of the department, we could use your help with this mission. There’s never been a better time to share your views about the value of an Ohio State English degree.

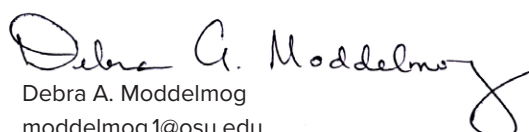
You can do this with us directly (send me an email) so that we can circulate these views on our website or via other publications; or you can do it in your own sphere of influence by talking with your friends, coworkers, employer and family about the importance of your degree.

If you’re an alumnus, there’s also never been a better time to participate in our career events or mentoring program (if interested, send me an email).

There’s also never been a better time to donate to our department to help us offer our students more opportunities — such as study abroad experiences or scholarships — and to create new opportunities of your own imagining (once again, send me an email).

We have work to do, and I hope you will help us no matter what form of involvement you’d like to take.

I feel extremely fortunate to be chairing our fabulous and highly accomplished department and look forward to working with students, faculty, staff, alumni, administrators and friends of the department over the next four years.


Debra A. Modellmog
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TELLING UNTOLD STORIES IN HOLLYWOOD AND AT OHIO STATE:

An Interview with Professor Angus Fletcher

Newly-hired Associate Professor of English Angus Fletcher has taken a surprising path to Ohio State: from grad student in Renaissance literature to accomplished Hollywood screenwriter. Professor Fletcher sits down with Assistant Professor of English Jesse Schotter to talk about the evolution of his career and his plans for screenwriting at Ohio State.



Angus Fletcher

Jesse Schotter

Jesse Schotter asks the questions.

Angus Fletcher answers them.

How and why did you decide to move from a PhD in English to being a screenwriter?

My background is a little bizarre; my undergraduate degree was actually in neuroscience, where I became interested in how the brain processes narrative. I came to believe that stories were incredibly powerful in terms of shaping us as individuals and as societies, so my first big move was from science into English, and I got a PhD at Yale to study the power of stories.

My first job after graduation was a postdoctoral position at Stanford, and I made friends with several people in the movie industry. I realized that there's all this wonderful knowledge contained in English departments about how stories function, but a lot of that knowledge doesn't necessarily make it out into the world.

When you look at movies and a lot of popular entertainment, it's surprising how the same stories get told over and over and over again. So I thought it would be useful to go to Hollywood and act as a consultant, and to tell them about all these wonderful stories that weren't being told. As you can imagine, my advice was greeted with near-total derision and apathy. So I realized that the only way I could make a dent was actually to write a screenplay that told a story that hadn't been told before. And so I did; I wrote a screenplay, and it won an award called the Nicholl, and it ended up on the Blacklist [a list of the best unproduced screenplays].

From then on people continued not to have any interest in what I considered a good story, but they did have interest in employing me as a screenwriter. I was fortunate that I met some good directors and producers, and I've been able to find some great projects. I've used my English background to select the kinds of movies I'm involved in and write those stories that I think are under-told in today's world.

What stories are being under-told—how are they different from the kinds that are being told?

Let me give you one example. One screenplay I'm currently

HOLLYWOOD

doing [for Electric Shepherd Productions] is based on a Philip K. Dick novella called *The Variable Man*. The premise of the screenplay is a near-future in which computers are so smart that we let them make all our decisions. What do I feel like eating today? Well, the computer knows. What person should I marry? The computer knows, and it never makes mistakes.

The bigger idea behind this screenplay is that, in the real world, there's been a rising tide of perfectionism, this belief that there's something wrong with mistakes. But it's really important to me that young people, creative people, feel that it's okay to mess up. So they should be inspired by heroes who aren't always right, but do their best, and in the end, bring something original into the world.

The screenplay is about that kind of hero, the "variable man," the one guy who doesn't follow the computers. And along the way, you learn a lot about what it means to be human: a sense of growth, of possibility, of the unknown, of uncertainty. Those really powerful qualities that are so central to literature. That's the kind of story I'm trying to tell, and it may work because it's a big movie, where a lot of things blow up, so it has that Hollywood feel. But it also has a different understanding of what it means to be a hero: a hero, in this story, is really just someone who has the courage to fail.

What are some of your other screenplay projects?

Another movie that is in development and has Michael Apted attached to direct, is a biopic of J.R.R. Tolkien called *Middle Earth*. It's the story of how Tolkien fought in the First World War, and how while he was fighting he had many of the experiences that would become part of the *Hobbit* and the *Lord of the Rings*.

Even though Tolkien went to war, he was a pacifist; he basically refused to fight. And over the course of the war, he lost many of his closest friends, and came back broken. But

over time, he recovered his faith in the possibilities of life because he never surrendered his belief in the power of literature to create new worlds.

What attracted you to making the transition from living in Hollywood to teaching at Ohio State?

I've never wanted to be a Hollywood screenwriter. My goal has been to change the narrative in any way that I can, to encourage the stories that aren't being told.

So I wanted to help students tell stories; that's my biggest passion. I was attracted to Ohio State for a variety of reasons. First off, we have Project Narrative here, which is the foremost authority on narrative and storytelling at a university, so that's been extraordinary.

And I always remind my students that Ohio is the most representative state in America. So when I look around

Ohio and around this campus, I see many people and many different perspectives, and that's really exciting to me, because I want to take that diversity and give it some tools to express itself more fully in the world.

What directions would you like the screenwriting program at Ohio State to take over the next few years?

Basically I'd like to help build a small, dynamic program. I'd like to develop a number of new voices and to establish them in internships and as screenwriters.

Part of that process is going to be driven here at Ohio State by starting an internship program, by recruiting some new faculty, by offering new screenwriting classes. But I also hope it's going to be accomplished by our students when they go out to Los Angeles and start to make connections.

And we're also going to be bringing people from Los Angeles to give talks. We had a development executive from Pixar come out this spring. Next year I think we're

“YOU JUST HAVE TO BELIEVE IN YOURSELF, AND MORE THAN THAT, BELIEVE IN THE STORIES YOU'RE TELLING.”

HOLLYWOOD

going to have Gary Ross, the director of the *Hunger Games*. We might have Michael Apter. So I feel like we have a lot of exciting filmmakers and writers to bring in and inspire the students.

You've talked a lot about facilitating internships for Ohio State students; how has that process been going?

It's been going great. It just never occurred to a lot of our students that they could go to Los Angeles for an internship. But actually there's a real hunger for students who have the qualities that our students have.

Already in our first year we've had students who've been offered positions at the BBC, at major film studios, major film agencies.

We ask the students, "Who's your favorite director, what's your favorite TV program?" And then we give them contact info and have them call up and ask for an internship. We don't have any specific connections — we're just using the students' enthusiasm and passion and showing them that it's possible.

We've also been very fortunate, since a lot of our students don't necessarily have the money to go on internships, that we've had offers of financial support from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. So hopefully we'll also be sending out students who maybe have never left Ohio.

What advice would you give to students who are interested in pursuing a career in screenwriting or in film more generally?

I'd tell them to come and take our classes!

But beyond that, the most important thing to do is to write. Write every day, write stories that you're passionate about. And to help guide your writing, it's always good to find models. If you love a particular TV show, download scripts for that show. Identify what you like about those scripts, and then

try to reproduce that in your own writing.

Once you've written a few scripts, and you have some you're proud of, I'd recommend that you get an internship and maybe enter a screenwriting contest. A lot of competitions will tell you how high you placed even if you don't win. So if you start placing in contests you can start soliciting for agents, start soliciting for work and doors start to open. You just have to believe in yourself, and more than that, believe in the stories you're telling.

How do you see the Ohio State film program differing from similar programs?

We have an opportunity to do something different here, because a lot of film programs are distinct from the literature parts of the university. But the training you get in literature classes — the books you read, the critical capacities you develop — teaches you to analyze, to look at the world and at yourself differently. And that allows you to access new points of view, new perspectives.

If you go straight into a professional environment you wind up replicating that environment—there isn't any change or development. If you're always thinking practically, you miss those moments when you don't know what's going to happen, which are when true discoveries occur.

I think if we're ever going to produce new, powerful, exciting art, it has to come from a protected space. And that's the amazing thing about being in a public university: it is a protected space. But it's also open to everyone in the state and everyone in the nation, and that kind of interchange of ideas, and that willingness to care about things that aren't obviously money-making, is paradoxically what makes the most successful and ultimately the wealthiest societies.



BRIGHTER MINDS INTERNSHIP OPENS DOOR TO BRIGHT FUTURE IN LOS ANGELES

An Interview with Alumnus Alex Yue

MACHINIMASM

Who wouldn't love the opportunity to earn college credits while playing games all day? English major and professional writing minor Alex Yue got to do just that—and much more—at his summer 2010 professional writing minor internship. Alex applied his expertise in graphic novels and video games with his writing skills to market games for Brighter Minds Media, a publisher of online and multimedia materials.



Alumnus Alex Yue at Machinima

Reflecting on his internship, Alex said he became “a much more versatile writer.” He accomplished this by writing press releases, posting to comic book forums and networking with video game bloggers.

He added, “At Brighter Minds I was able to work on much more creative things [than academic papers]. I was able to help design video games, interact with other professionals, do some image editing and get my foot in the door of an industry that is very hard to penetrate.”

While still interning at Brighter Minds, and just before he graduated, Alex was hired by Machinima, a gaming and media streaming website and multi-channel network. He was recently promoted to a new position, partner ops specialist, which required him to move to LA.

Alex shares insights with Trish Houston, Department of English staff member and coordinator of the minor in professional writing about how his experiences here at Ohio State have supported his career.

Trish Houston asks the questions.

Alex Yue answers them.

As an English major, why did you decide to pursue the professional writing minor?

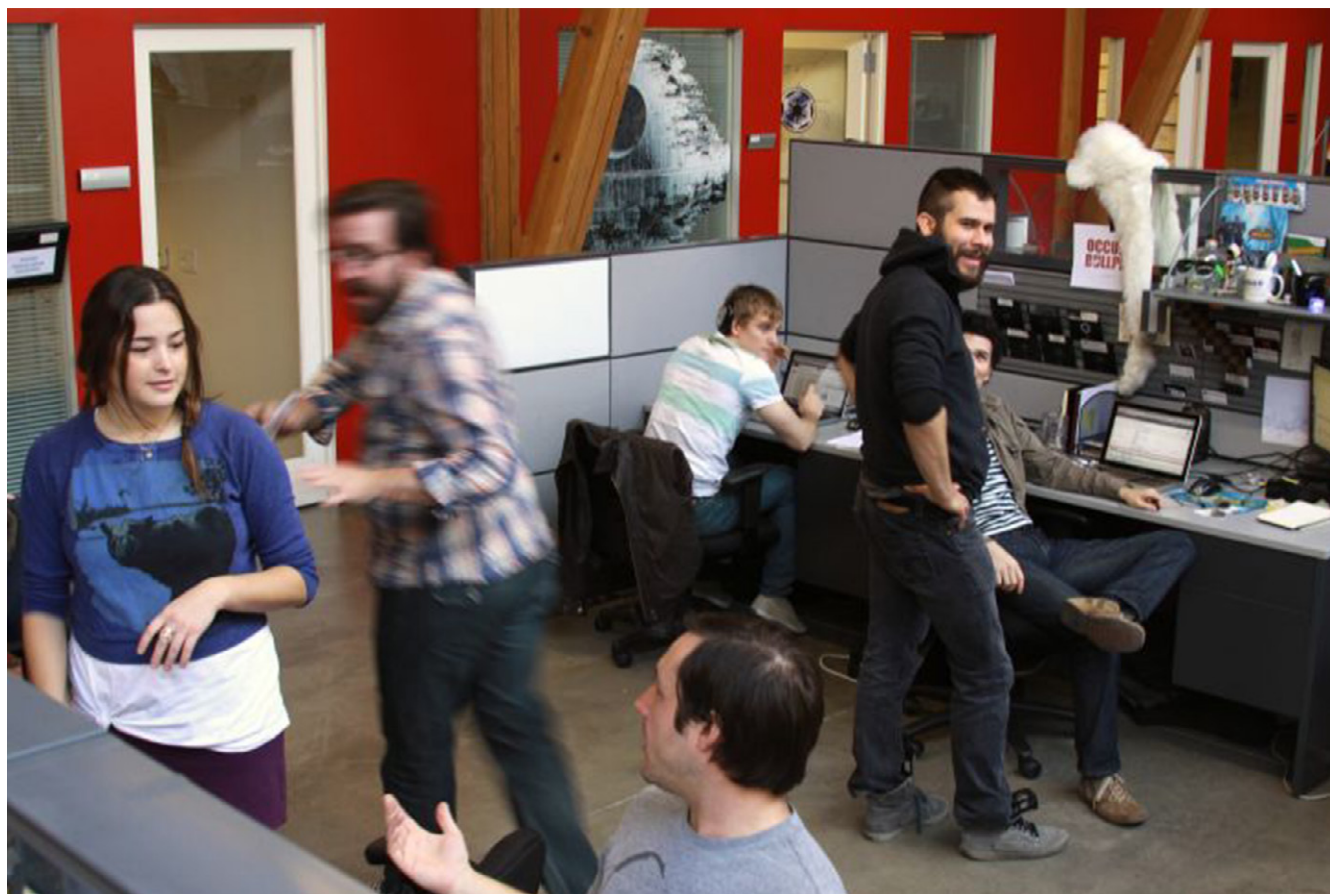
To be honest, my decision to pursue a professional writing minor was solely based on making myself a more marketable candidate in the workforce. As everyone in the English department knows, one doesn't pursue a degree in English for the money. It's something one studies out of passion for the subject matter. I knew that I would have a hard time getting a job out of college if I didn't diversify my skillset. The professional writing minor seemed (and was) a fantastic meeting point of my passion for writing and my desire to have a marketable skill post-graduation.

What was your favorite aspect of your internship at Brighter Minds?

Hands down my favorite thing about my time at Brighter Minds Media was seeing how videogames are made. All my life I've been a gamer and have wanted nothing more than to be involved in the gaming industry.

The thing is, growing up in Ohio there's not a lot of opportunities to be a part of the gaming industry. When I found out there was a small, independent games developer

A view inside Machinima's headquarters



NEW

PROFESSIONAL WRITING MINOR MOVES TO NEW HOME IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

In August 2013, the minor in professional writing moved from the site of its design and inception, the Center for the Study and Teaching of Writing, to its new home in the Department of English. Created by Drs. Beverly Moss and Kitty Locker 10 years ago, the professional writing minor works with students across the curriculum whatever their majors — from English to engineering, music to mathematics — to professionalize their writing skills and prepare them for the various kinds of writing needed in contemporary workplaces.

The program continues to thrive in its new Denney Hall home. This year it placed 72 students, representing 20 different majors — including anthropology, chemical and biomolecular engineering, fashion/retails studies, finance and public affairs; and, of course, English — with 45 Columbus area workplaces. From BalletMet to the Ohio Commission on Minority Health, from the Children’s Hunger Alliance to the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, students contributed their writing skills in the areas of arts and culture, civic

engagement and community service, law and politics, health and science, marketing and public relations, media and publishing and university life. These students demonstrated that good writing matters in all sectors of the work world.

For more information, please contact the Professional Writing Minor Program coordinator, Trish Houston, at houston.61@osu.edu, or visit go.osu.edu/pro-writing.

in Columbus (especially one with a relationship to Ohio State’s professional writing minor program), it blew me away. I just had to get involved with them. Even though they were making educational children’s games and not giant blockbuster titles, it was still amazing to see how the whole process worked firsthand.

How did the professional writing minor help you get your position at Machinima?

My current position at Machinima is “partner ops specialist.” Essentially my job is to handle all of our back-end YouTube technical tasks (claiming videos, running proper ads, handling copyright issues, etc.)

When the tools needed to complete these tasks break, either for us or for our partners, I am the person who has to contact Google and effectively communicate what the issue is. When copyright issues come up, I have to contact the other party involved and try and work out a solution.

Without the professional writing minor, chances are I wouldn’t have the necessary communication skills to effectively solve these problems while representing Machinima in the proper light.

What was the most valuable skill you honed through the professional writing minor?

The most valuable skill has to be communicating effectively in a professional manner. As I mentioned above, I’m

constantly in contact with Google, one of Machinima’s main investors. The last thing I want to do is sound unprofessional or give unclear information when communicating to the company that is investing its time, money and technology so that we can be successful.

When did you move from working for Machinima in Columbus to your new role in Los Angeles?

I was lucky enough to get a contractor position with Machinima right out of college. My role when I started was to do copy editing of our content as well as a little graphic design work. I worked with Machinima from Columbus for almost three years. This past summer there was an opening that met my skillset, and my manager offered me the opportunity to work in the West Hollywood office. I packed up all my things and drove across the country in September. After the winter I heard you guys had, I think, made the right decision!



ONGOING INITIATIVES

Collecting Literacy Narratives from Columbus African American Communities



Ohio State's Service-Learning Initiative supports the development and delivery of more than 70 undergraduate service-learning courses designed to engage students in organized educational activities that meet identified community needs.

We are currently home to three such courses: a special section of the university's second-level writing course focused on the literacy traditions in Columbus African American communities; an upper-level course that prepares participants to serve as tutors in Ohio State's Writing Center; and an advanced-level

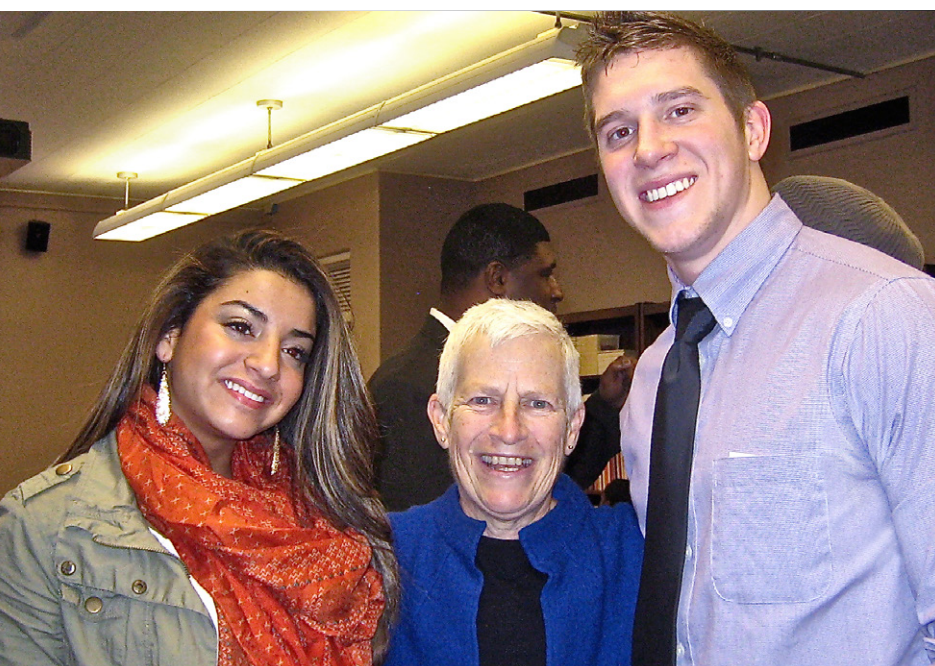
course during which students complete real-world writing assignments in collaboration with and for area nonprofits.

It is no surprise that these courses are popular among English majors, but students majoring in a wide variety of fields — art, business administration, communications, engineering, fashion and retail studies, the health sciences, music, psychology and social work — find them valuable as well.

The following narrative from Humanities Distinguished Professor Cynthia Selfe shows this service-learning framework allows students to establish strong and productive ties with one another, their instructors and participating community partners:

"During the autumn 2013 term, I taught a special section of 2367S (the university's second-level writing course), *The Literacy Narratives of Black Columbus*. The course included 15 undergraduates, as well as six graduate student mentors forming three teaching teams.

"Each graduate student-led team assumed responsibility for mentoring a group of five undergraduates. The teams collected and digitally recorded literacy narratives from members of the Columbus African American community that focused on one of the following topics: the experience of



Literacy Narratives: Shadia Smidi, Professor Cynthia Selfe, and Ben Lyon

AND PARTNERSHIPS



Black poets; the Black church and community activism; and desegregation and education.

“To prepare themselves for this fieldwork, the undergraduates analyzed readings, videos and audio texts on African-American history, culture and experience at the local and national level. They also discussed with one another and their graduate student mentors how to interact responsibly with communities and individuals in a research setting, practiced recording digital narratives and completed a series of team-building exercises.

“The teams then worked together to identify individuals willing to serve as their liaisons to larger groups within the city’s African-American communities. Among these community partners were performance poet and Ohio State English alumna Vernell Bristow (MA, 1995) and Sarah Twitty, a program coordinator with the Ohio State African American and African Studies Community Extension Center.

“After several of these partners visited the class to talk about their community groups and provide their own literacy narratives, the liaisons assisted the students in identifying other citizens willing to share their stories.

“All of the narratives recorded by the students were then uploaded to the Ohio State Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (DALN), which contains more than 5,050 such narratives and is the world’s largest, publically available online archive of first-hand accounts of literacy.

“AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE TERM, THE CLASS HOSTED A CELEBRATORY EVENT IN DENNEY HALL DURING WHICH EACH OF THE THREE UNDERGRADUATE TEAMS PRESENTED WHAT THEY HAD LEARNED FROM THE LITERACY NARRATIVES THEY COLLECTED.

“More than 60 community participants, poets, politicians, musicians and faculty members attended this evening event, which also featured a poetry reading and musical performance.”

Professor Selfe has taught several other iterations of this second-level writing course, along with recently retired English Professor H. Lewis Ulman. Previous versions also have focused on the literacy narratives of various groups within Columbus African American communities including near east-side neighborhood residents and the city’s jazz musicians. To access these narratives and those collected by the students in Professor Selfe’s autumn 2013 course, visit go.osu.edu/blackcolumbus.

...stories continue on next page

ONGOING INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS

CONTINUED

Getting to Know Gifted Young Writers in Columbus, Ohio

Rebecca Turkewitz, MFA, Class of 2015

For the past six summers, the Department of English's Creative Writing Program has hosted a weeklong residential program for high school students enrolled in Columbus City Schools (CCS).

Known as the Young Writers Workshop, the program offers participants the opportunity to develop their writing skills under the direction of Ohio State creative writing students, faculty and alumni. Up to 30 high school students are selected to participate each year, based on their writing samples.

The Young Writers Workshop was formed when a donor approached Michelle Herman, English professor and director of the Creative Writing Program, and offered to fund a project that provided opportunities for CCS students.

Through the generous support of this donor, all participants receive full scholarships that include on-campus housing, meals and a bound anthology of work produced during the program.

Participants take classes and write in three genres: fiction, creative nonfiction and poetry.

Each morning, they attend classes led by current MFA students. In the afternoons, they work on their own writing and participate in workshops led by established writers, usually alumni or faculty of the Creative Writing Program.

In the evenings, after a communal dinner, students attend readings or presentations on topics such as applying to college.

The program concludes with a celebratory capstone event, during which students read their work aloud in front of family and friends.

Sarah Carnes, a student at Columbus Alternative High School and a 2012 and 2013 program participant, reflected, "My time at Young Writers Workshop at Ohio State is among my greatest memories. I was lucky to spend two summers with wonderful peers who have [a] passion for writing. The help and infinite support from members of the English department and professionals in writing drove me to give writing my all and to try new things."

I worked as a fiction instructor during the 2013 program. Although I had heard that teaching in the program would be a wonderful experience, I still wasn't prepared for how unbelievably talented, imaginative, hardworking and dedicated my students would be.

Every morning, they came to class energized and ready to tackle the day's lesson and their next writing exercises. They were focused and engaged but still quick to joke and laugh with one another, creating a supportive and enthusiastic environment that allowed everyone to take risks in their writing and in class discussions.

AND WHEN THEY FINALLY MADE IT BACK TO THEIR DORMS, THEY STILL HAD THE ENERGY TO PUT ON IMPROMPTU VIOLIN CONCERTS, TALK UNTIL LIGHTS OUT—AND ONCE—ORGANIZE A WATER BALLOON FIGHT.

I was awed by the quality of work that these young writers produced and delighted at how much more confident they became over the course of the week. They became more open about their ideas and their excitement, more eager to discuss a potential plot twist for a story or how to get the last line of a poem just right.

At the capstone event, I watched them beaming with pride after their readings and noticed how enthusiastically they cheered and clapped for one another. In only a week, these writers had formed a strong and supportive community. I'm so grateful to have been a part of that community, and I'm so glad that this wonderful opportunity exists for these gifted young writers.



Participants in the Young Writers Workshop

The Appalachian Project, Ohio: How I Got to College

Krista Bryson, PhD candidate, and co-director of The Appalachian Project, Ohio

Cassie Patterson, PhD candidate, and co-director of The Appalachian Project, Ohio

The Appalachian Project, Ohio: How I Got to College, is an interdisciplinary research team of faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students dedicated to understanding the educational routes of young people in the Appalachian counties of Ohio.

Patricia Cunningham, director of Social Change in Ohio State's Office of Student Life, founded the Appalachian Project in 2010 after serving as a retention counselor and working with many Ohio State students from Appalachia who were struggling with their transition to college.

Cunningham currently co-directs The Appalachian Project with two PhD students from the Department of English, Krista Bryson and Cassie Patterson.

Data from Ohio State's Office of Enrollment Services show that from 2011 to 2014 between 3,400 and 3,700 Columbus campus students were from Appalachian Ohio.

Many of these students receive diversity scholarships, but many others don't identify as Appalachian or don't understand how their Appalachian identity qualifies them for such awards.

THE APPALACHIAN PROJECT OFFERS STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THEIR APPALACHIAN HERITAGE AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THEIR EDUCATION BY ENCOURAGING THEM TO CONDUCT FIELD RESEARCH IN THEIR HOME COUNTIES.

Because the Appalachian Project honors the role of personal narratives in understanding life in Appalachian Ohio, the team's primary form of data collection is conducting interviews with its students, school teachers, administrators and residents.

This research and data are stored in the Center for Folklore Studies Archive (which Patterson directs) and are intended to help researchers identify factors affecting Ohio Appalachian students' pursuit of post-secondary education. The Project's goals include producing recommendations for how Ohio State can address challenges facing these students and work toward a sustainable educational and economic atmosphere in Appalachian Ohio.



The Appalachian Project Team Members (Dr. Patricia Cunningham, bottom row, left; Cassie Patterson, bottom row, third from left; Krista Bryson, top row, left).

To date, the project has conducted 15 site visits and collected more than 500GB of video interviews and photographs. The Governor's Office of Appalachia provided a \$15,000 grant to support the project throughout the 2013–2014 academic year. This allowed the team to purchase equipment, conduct five additional site visits, host a screening of the interactive documentary *Hollow* and present at two Appalachian Studies Association conferences.

Additionally, our undergraduate student researchers, advised by Bryson and Patterson, gave presentations on the project at the university's 2014 Denman Undergraduate Research Forum and the Department of English's Undergraduate Research Forum.

Looking forward, the project team will collaborate with the College of Arts and Sciences' Lawrence and Isabel Barnett Center for Integrated Arts and Enterprise to host Appalshop's Roadside Theater, an arts initiative designed to tell Appalachian community stories.

They also will sponsor a symposium on diversity and well-being in Appalachia and, in spring 2016, host a summit to bring together regional partners to discuss ways to support Ohio Appalachian students.

For more information about these events and initiatives or to volunteer with the project, contact co-director Cassie Patterson at patterson.493@osu.edu.

THE VERSATILE PHD



Dr. Paula Chambers

Dr. Paula Chambers entered Ohio State's Department of English PhD program in the fall of 1996, fully intending to become a professor and scholar specializing in rhetoric and composition. Chambers loved working with Drs. Andrea Lunsford and the late Kitty Locker as well as other rhetoric and composition faculty, but decided mid-program that her impatient temperament might be better suited to a nonacademic career.

At the time, little information was available about alternative careers for humanities PhDs, so in 1999 Chambers started a listserv called WRK4US ("Work for Us") to provide a safe space for discussion of this then-taboo topic. (Little did she know that the listserv would eventually *become* her career.)

After graduating with her PhD in December 2000, Chambers moved back home to Los Angeles and forged a successful career as a grant writer, raising millions for the arts, the environment and social justice initiatives.

In her spare time, she continued to manage the listserv, and it grew like crazy. In 1999, the listserv won a Woodrow Wilson Innovation Award and later migrated from the Ohio State server to that of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (2002–2006) and subsequently to Duke University (2006–2010).

The listserv continued to thrive under Chambers' consistent leadership even as she built her post-academic career as a grant writer. Eventually, Chambers realized that her true passion was helping PhD students to realize their full career potential, and in May 2010, she abandoned her grant-writing career and launched Versatile PhD.

Versatile PhD (versatilephd.com) is a web-based career resource that helps graduate students and early-career PhDs envision, prepare for and excel in nonacademic careers. Supported by institutional subscriptions (Ohio State is a subscriber), Versatile PhD provides a wealth of information about non-faculty careers from the unique perspective of PhDs actually working inside those careers. Current subscribers include 70 research institutions and more than 40,000 individuals.

Chambers has become a popular speaker on the university circuit, giving talks on the state of the academic job market for different disciplines, the skills that PhDs have (even if they don't know it) and how to prepare for many possible employment outcomes upon graduation. She also is at work on an essay about how to prepare graduate students for nonacademic careers, which is sure to be a good read.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, Dec 5, Noon–1:30 p.m.
Humanities Institute, 104 E. 15th Ave.

Interdisciplinary GradSem:

Research Funding Strategies

Looking Ahead to Spring 2015...

Thursday, Feb 5, 4:00–5:30 p.m.
Humanities Institute, 104 E. 15th Ave.

Lecture in Literacy Studies:

William Stuckey (Postdoctoral Fellow, North Carolina), “I Want to be a First-Class Citizen”: Black Youth Literacy and Empowerment in the Mississippi Freedom Schools.”

Friday, Feb 6, Noon–1:30 p.m.
Humanities Institute, 104 E. 15th Ave.

Interdisciplinary GradSem:

Literacy Campaigns and Initiatives, with William Stuckey.

Thursday, March 5, 4:00–5:30 p.m.
Denney Hall 311, 164 W. 17th Ave.

Annual Lecture in History of the Book:

Cynthia Brokaw (Brown), on the role print culture played during the Qing dynasty.

Friday, March 6, Noon–1:30 p.m.
Humanities Institute, 104 E. 15th Ave.

Interdisciplinary GradSem:

The Push and Pull of Specialized Literacies

Friday April 17–Saturday April 18, 2015
Thursday April 23–Friday April 24, 2015
Van Fleet Theatre, Columbus Performing Arts Center

A Performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II*

by the Lord Denney Players

The first English Department student production of a Shakespeare play (supported by a generous donation from an English alumnus)

Thursday, March 26, 2015, 4:00–5:30 p.m.
311 Denney Hall, 164 W. 17th Ave.

OSU MFA Alumni Series: Books that Cook

MFA and PhD alumna **Jennifer Cognard-Black** and PhD alumna **Melissa Goldthwaite**, co-editors of *Books that Cook: The Making of a Literary Meal*





2013 – 2014 GRADUATE DEGREES

MASTER OF ARTS

Cassie Bower • Dorothy Noyes
Erin Cahill • Cynthia Selfe
Michelle Cohen • Kay Halasek
Matthew Connolly • Jill Galvan
Emily Corey • Jill Galvan
Jared Jones • Clare Simmons
Joanne Kim • Clare Simmons
Alison Sagara • Jared Gardner
Andrew Sydlik • Andrea Williams

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Brett Beach • Erin McGraw
Kristin Ferebee • Erin McGraw
Kristen Grayewski • Lee Martin
Rebecca Huntman • Lee Martin
Jenna Kilic • Andrew Hudgins
Preston Witt • Lee Martin
Shelley Wong • Kathy Fagan Grandinetti
Elizabeth Zaleski • Michelle Herman

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Summer 2013

Timothy Jensen • Wendy Hesford
Brian McAllister • Brian McHale
Annie Mendenhall • Kay Halasek
Adam Stier • David Herman
Erika Strandjord • Nancy Johnson
Julia Voss • Beverly Moss
Nancy Yan • Amy Shuman

Autumn 2013

Sharon Estes • Clare Simmons
Chiaki Ishikawa • Debra Moddelmog
Suhaan Mehta • Pranav Jani
Lauren Obermark • Wendy Hesford

Spring 2014

Jennifer Herman • H. Lewis Ulman
Will Kurlinkus • Cynthia Selfe
Hyesu Park • Frederick Aldama

Summer 2014

Elizabeth Brewer • Cynthia Selfe and Brenda Brueggemann
Brad Freeman • Martin Ponce
Mira Kafantaris • Christopher Highley
Megan LeMay • Debra Moddelmog
Brandon Manning • Adeleke Adeeko

Graduate's Name • Their Advisor(s)



Spring 2014 graduate Jennifer Herman with advisor Professor H. Lewis Ulman



Summer 2014 graduates (l-r) Bandon Manning, Megan LeMay, and Brad Freeman



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AT A GLANCE

HIGHLY RANKED PROGRAMS

Rhetoric, Composition and Literacy
Creative Writing
Digital Media Studies
Medieval and Renaissance
Narrative Theory

PRIMARY AREAS OF STUDY

Literature, Theory and Culture
Creative Writing
Digital Media Studies
Rhetoric, Composition and Literacy

ADDITIONAL AREAS OF STUDY

African and African-American Studies
American Indian Studies
Asian American Studies
Business, Professional and Technical Writing
Disability Studies
Film and Popular Culture
Folklore
Gender and Sexuality Studies
History of the Book and Manuscript Studies
Language and Linguistics
Latino/a Studies
Scholarly and Literary Editing
Postcolonial Studies



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