

English Department Newsletter

Spring - Summer 2018



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GONZAGA
UNIVERSITY
Robinson House
English Department
Department of Religious Studies

This summer we say “Farewell!”
to Robinson House and “Hello!”
to our new offices in The HUB.

People Doing English

Welcome, Readers!

Numerous interviews conducted with current and former Gonzaga professors demonstrated the ability for English as a subject to break boundaries. To foment conversation. To take lines and blur them. Reading and writing enable people to apply their language skills to do work, tell stories, and solve problems. Do you want to “Do” English at Gonzaga? Reach out to us at the Gonzaga University English Department Facebook page and <https://tinyurl.com/GUEnglish>.

“*You can learn about the lives of people like you, and people radically different from you. Both kinds of learning are transformative.*”

—English Professor Ann Ciasullo



Student Paige Buccola: A freshman at Gonzaga, Paige spoke to these conversational possibilities; she claimed that English lets people...

“[I]earn stories through something deeper than the story itself.”

Paige was speaking of poetry, her main love within the English arsenal of subjects. She hopes to one day teach, taking her love of English to those younger than her, instilling a lifelong desire to record life through words.



Student Moorea Makis: Another GU freshman, Moorea advocated a similar agenda within her love for English:

“We can learn from others through their writing.”

Moorea emphasized how English Studies enable all of us to cross boundaries and learn about those starkly different from ourselves.

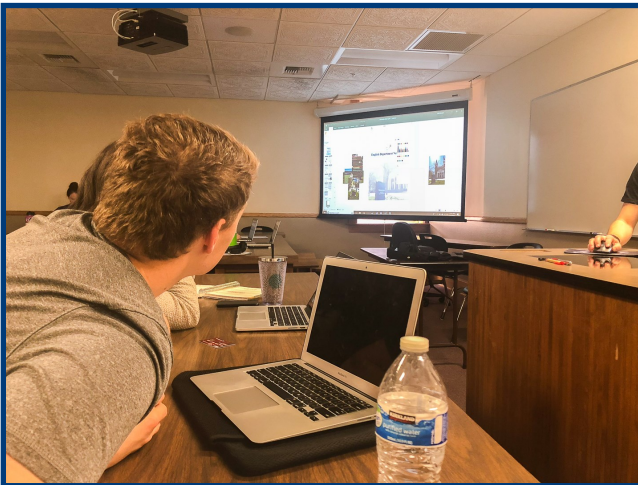
“I have always loved being able get out of my own world and hear other stories,” she noted, and English allows her to do so.

People Doing English

English Professor Dan Butterworth took English down a slightly different route:

"Writing is for me the practice of living consciously. It allows for concentration and focus and foregrounds the exchanges and the processes of engagement that keep me alive to what's going on."

He has committed his life to the production and teaching of the English language, both in prose and in poetry. He consistently engages with people of different backgrounds, and writing enables him to reflect on those experiences.



The pictures above and to the right are of Lilac City Writing Consultants at work. We formed this group (a.k.a. English 406: Advanced Writing in the Workplace) to foster collaborative work with writers and readers. We created this newsletter.

English Professor Michele Pajer delved deeper into these interactions with students and community members of many backgrounds:

"Now that I have been doing this work for a while, I tend to reflect on my choices, and I must say that I have no regrets. I've taught so many amazing students, and I love being part of a university community. Also, my profession has grown over the years so that now we address important issues in the world such as multi-culturalism, technology, critical thinking, inclusion, and globalization, just to name a few."

Professor Pajer's testimony speaks to social justice issues and hearing others' stories. These concepts go hand-in-hand: to advocate for marginalized groups, we must hear them. As Pajer would attest, part of advocating for a cause comes in the form of writing well. That's people doing English!



Rhetoric: The Power of Words

“*You can learn about the power of language, and you can teach others that words do indeed matter.*”

—English Professor Ann Ciasullo

English Professor Tod Marshall

Facility with language (English) allows me access to the knowable world and glimpses of the transcendent. I am thankful for the imperfect tool (“It is impossible to say just what I mean”) that is language for communicating my inhabiting of the world (“Shall I say I have gone at dusk—”) on the page and through speech to those around me—as well as the chance to hear their visions and revisions (“which a minute will reverse”). Perhaps even more so than any of the above: English can—through literature (the story, the novel, the play, the poem)—go beyond utilitarian function and create a third space (let us call it) of unknowable knowability.

For example, let’s focus on how a poem—by Whitman, by Brooks, by Hass, by Lee, by Diaz, by Eliot, by Dickinson—can shape a temporal and mysterious entity—“Who is the third who walks always beside you?”—call it God, call it mystery, call it the silvery sheen that negative capability leaves on the halfway-developed print, call it that hint of understanding, that uncertainty in which we dwell (without irritable reaching): call it whatever you want, but know that English artfully used can do that, can shape these vistas, these clouds, this yellow fog in which God, being, self, “every atom belonging to me” become clear for a moment and then fade away (to be found later under our boot soles).



Sophie, a friend of our consulting team, reads on campus while enjoying Spring.

Rhetoric: The Power of Words

“*Language is a finding place, not a hiding place.*”

—Writer Jeannette Winterson

English Professor Heather Easterling

Fundamentally, studying and ‘professing’ English means caring profoundly about language. And because I’m a professor of literature, I find myself thinking about the ways that literature asks us to pay attention, how that literature can illuminate and make remarkable new things we might not otherwise consider remarkable.

Student Maya Coseo

“Language”

Stories and books are mirrors into the soul of a culture. We would not be whole without them, as Milton knew: For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them...they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. But language is more than written words—it is any way we communicate and it is what inspires passion, discussion, thought, and action in our society. Virginia Woolf, Lin-Manuel Miranda, Maya Angelou, and Elie Wiesel all changed the world, and they only used their words to do it.



The Gonzaga Class of 2018 united on The Quad

Rhetoric: The Power of Words

English Professor Brian Cooney

The question at hand asks how an English major can “serve” me in life or in my discipline, a phrasing that appears to demand some practical response. To that end, I will give the answer students likely have heard before: an English major can do virtually anything for you “practically.” For example, English majors taking the MCAT for admission to medical school outscore peers majoring in Biochem, Biology, or Chemistry nationally. English majors similarly outscore Finance and Accounting majors on the GMATs. I would guess—this is conjecture, however—that the English students, having trained in language and narrative, would also do especially well in the graduate school interviews their strong scores earned them. So, if you are considering a medical degree or any advanced degree, an English major or minor would likely benefit you.

That said, we collectively participate in Jesuit education, something distinct from other approaches to higher education because of its attention to spiritual growth, a pursuit of truth, and a dedication to the development of the whole person. We do this because we know that life is not simply about paychecks; it is a project of improving (and not simply materially) ourselves and our communities. We should all be committed to a project of enlightenment, following the Kantian motto: *Sapere Aude*, dare to know!

The close attention to language seems to me as important an endeavor as any we can undertake. It borders on cliché to say humans are the language (or story) making animals, but it is an evolutionary “miracle.” Taken further: we are, as individuals, as subjects, constituted by language: it is in a large system of a given language that we identify our own idea of who we are, what we feel, of what is right and what is wrong. And through that language (already socially given), we are able to negotiate and renegotiate all of those notions. The great 20th century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein leaves us a pair of famous axioms that have moved and influenced me throughout my adult life: first, “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”; and second, “what we cannot speak of we must pass over in silence.”



Captivated listeners in the GU Writing Center, listening to guest writer Hanif Abdurraqib

Rhetoric: The Power of Words

Business Professor Cathy DeHart

When accountants begin their careers, they are often surprised by how much writing their jobs require. Typical writing tasks include emails and letters to clients, documentation of audit procedures, letters to the IRS, and reports analyzing complex financial data. Accountants must write clearly—often in layperson's terms—to communicate essential financial information to clients and company managers. In fact, writing is so important to the profession that the CPA Exam tests candidates on their written communication skills. Courses like ENGL 406 help our students!



Student Colin Bonini, a graduating senior this Spring, received the Fr. William Costello Outstanding Senior English Major Award in the Gonzaga English Department. Colin has attended all four years at Gonzaga, and his work as an English major culminated in his Senior Project: the creation of a graphic novel with special emphasis on the themes of unintended consequences and loss of innocence. Colin will be venturing to Australia following graduation, with the plan of pursuing graduate work in publishing and media.



The mission of the English Department's Lilac City Writing Consultants is to foster a collaborative workshop that empowers students to improve their workplace writing and maintain the highest standards for self-critique in their writing. Thanks to all newsletter contributors!

What Can English Do For You?

“*By studying English, you can learn to read the world critically and find ways to make it better.*”

—English Professor Ann Ciasullo

English Professor Linda Tredennick

After teaching in the Honors Program off and on for over a decade and serving as Associate Director of Honors for three years, I was appointed Director of the program starting in January. It is a great educational experience, deeply committed to Jesuit ideas and ideals. Honors constitutes a tight-knit intellectual community—and I am both excited and humbled to be in this position. There are going to be a lot of changes in the program in the coming years: moving out of Hopkins House and into a Living Learning Community in Crimont, updating our curriculum, and developing new events that will help Honors take a more active role in the intellectual life of Gonzaga as a whole. One example is our new 60 Second Speaker series, which was a big hit last semester and we hope to grow to a campus-wide event next year.

English Professor Michele Pajer

I am so proud of the work the editors of *Our Voices* put into the journal this year. If I weren't teaching writing, I would have never had the experience of reading so many essays that described how students arrive here and experience a kind of culture shock while adjusting to life at Gonzaga. I would not have been motivated to propose my idea for the journal to the Publications Board, and I would not have been able to work with the awesome editors and staff over the years. Also, serving as faculty advisor has given me the chance to fight for something I believe in. When we first started the journal, some people questioned why Gonzaga needed a publication focused on diversity; others worried the journal might expose something unpleasant about GU. But there were people who understood the value and importance of *Our Voices*, and I am so grateful to them. The journal continues to grow as a platform to represent all GU voices.

“Writing every day in a journal allows me to discover what I know and what I don't know.”

—English Professor Dan Butterworth

What Can English Do For You?

The Gonzaga Writing Center—Open to All

Though the Writing Center serves writers from across the curriculum, the English Department faculty and students play a pivotal role in the Center's ability to fulfill its mission.

In fact, many different writing activities take place here. We welcome students who have always had difficulty writing. We welcome students whose first language is not English. We even welcome faculty. Above all, the Writing Center is an intellectual space. You can walk in one day and hear Luke, a tutor majoring in Philosophy and Mathematics, zestily discussing with another tutor an essay about Aristotle's virtue ethics. The next day, you may see Will, a Biology major, researching how to help a student write an Engineering paper. And because dialogue is essential, you'll often hear tutors ask: "How can we work together to sharpen your argument?"

Because intellectual growth is an important part of the Writing Center, we've also had some other great opportunities this semester. These included a collaboration with Whitworth University to host a "Composing Effective Research Posters" workshop; collaborations with the MATESL program's First Friday Forum, and a visit from Hanif Abdurraqib, a poet, critic, and writer who was recently named on Oprah's book list.

Service and community blend at the Writing Center, where tutors both help with writing and promote discussion and connection that breathe life into the shared experience about writing and writing processes. Tutors help writers gain the confidence and skills they need.



English Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Erin Fangman, Alumnus Class of 2017

Upon graduating from Gonzaga University this past December, many responsibilities hit me hard once I was introduced to the “real world.” I moved to a city I was unfamiliar with and started working 9 to 5 as an administrative assistant. It was not ideal, but I was close to loved ones and made just enough to cover my bills and a bottle of wine every now and again. Although I have been happy in my post-grad life, I was only a few months into my new job, when I began feeling the weight of wasting my days in an environment I found uninteresting. So just a few weeks ago, I decided I would challenge myself and look for a new career.

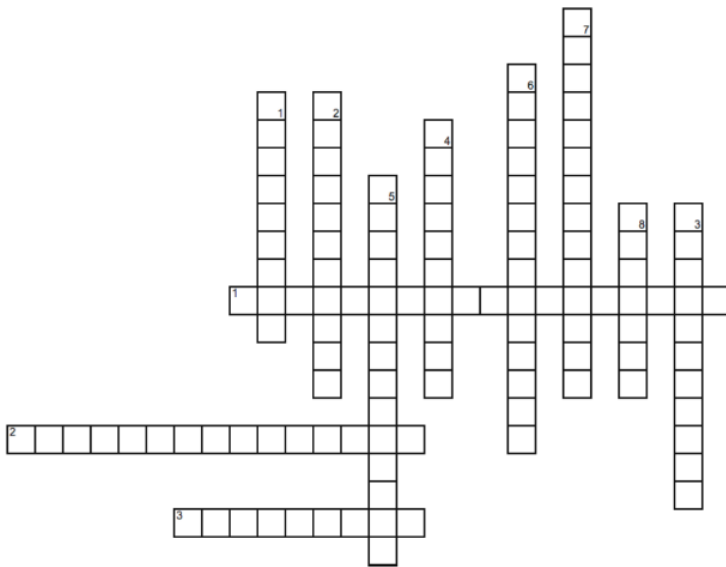
During my sophomore year at Gonzaga, I took Dr. Eliason’s Writing in the Workplace course. I remember I was put in charge of the graphic design aspects of our imaginary consultant firm, understanding that all the work from the class would carry the logo I was tasked with creating. I remember completely freaking out for about three hours, before finally Googling “How to create a logo.” The drafting probably took about 30 minutes, and half of that time was simply picking a color. In the end, Dr. Eliason gave me significant responsibility, but I learned that the job at hand was not nearly as gigantic as I had made it seem in my head. This lesson carried into every subsequent project.

When it was time to begin writing my senior thesis, I again felt that this monstrous project was impossible to tackle. However, Dr. Easterling reminded my class of panicking Seniors that half of the battle was paying attention to the little things, the mechanics of the essay. She also encouraged us to ask questions, big or small. She was truly interested in helping each of us succeed in crafting a refined essay we would be proud to present. When asked to submit a reflection of my experience with Gonzaga’s English Department, I was hard pressed to narrow down what I most appreciated. The timing of this reflection feels perfect because I just recently accepted a position as a proofreader at a publishing firm in St. Louis, Missouri. In the interview for that position, I spoke about understanding what it was like to have a project at a standstill until your job is complete, and about knowing how to pick apart a piece of writing until it becomes polished. Showing them my senior thesis proved what I said was accurate.

Although I understand that an English major or minor is not for everyone, I believe that the frustration endured while writing and revising an essay is directly related to the real world that I have experienced so far. I am incredibly thankful for the lessons and panic attacks given to me by the English Department. Without them, I would not have grown as a writer, or as a responsible and accountable adult.

Andrew Mercer, Alumnus Class of 2016, AmeriCorps Member

An English degree has afforded me the opportunity to interrogate the realities that I am around and to understand how to help create a more equitable and just society. An English degree teaches you how to critically examine the sources and events that you partake in and use that information for the betterment of others. I believe that an English degree gives professionals the skills necessary to learn from past thinkers, disseminate information in the most applicable form, and push forward change. An English degree, in my opinion, helps to fulfill the Jesuit values of developing the whole person – intellectually, spiritually, culturally, physically, and emotionally, by forcing us as students to think differently about our education both in and out of the classroom. I am heading to grad school to pursue my Master of Fine Arts (MFA) as a means of developing these skills further and helping me understand how to expand upon the thoughts, leadership and change of those that have come before me. English Studies will help me create a more just and equitable world.



ACROSS

- Contributed the following phrases to the English language: "all of a sudden," "wear your heart on your sleeve," and "star-crossed lovers"
- Once stole a urinal from a local bar and brought it to his home, arguing that he has "pissed away" enough money in the bar so he deserved to own the urinal
- Wrote about chocolate factories and friendly giants but actually worked as a spy during World War II

DOWN

- Next-door neighbors with Harriet Beecher Stowe in Hartford, CT
- Started writing Frankenstein when only 18 years old
- The pen name for Mary Ann Evans
- Almost died at the age of seven, when she and her sister caught diphtheria while in Oxford
- Wrote with the same typewriter for 50 years and auctioned it off for over \$250,000 when it broke
- American poet who only left her house to tend to the garden; didn't even leave her bedroom to attend her father's funeral in the downstairs of her home
- Thought of her murder mystery plots while eating apples and relaxing in a warm bath
- British author who died on the same day John F. Kennedy was assassinated

Outstanding Poets

E K N N R K H S W H I T M A N
 U R C C V L G U L N R X I G N
 S F A X Z N E G G C F N M Z Y
 I H K E I I O K R H I I N H P
 D Q O M P Q P Z O T E I O J J
 S L M A R S B R X L R S S M N
 Q U S V K Y E F A K D O N I A
 C G L H Z Y R K Y L A S I L F
 E I E Q N O O D A G L U K T S
 A B K Y S T A E K H S R C O I
 J V R T R U V F Q T S S I N M
 D M Z N X F Y R Q E L N D E I
 W U C V X C X I T W A A T S B
 K Q J O Z U L B P V Y D T J Q
 A D H Y E R V V H R J A L A C

CUMMINGS
 FRYE
 MILTON
 WHITMAN

DICKINSON
 HUGHES
 POE

FROST
 KEATS
 SHAKESPEARE



FOLLOW US!

Gonzaga University
 English Department

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ANSWER KEY
 Across
 1. William Shakespeare
 2. Ernest Hemingway
 3. Roald Dahl
 Down
 1. Mark Twain
 2. Mary Shelley
 3. George Eliot
 4. Jane Austen
 5. Cornelia McCarthy
 6. Emily Dickinson
 7. Agatha Christie
 8. CS Lewis

Selected English Department Events from Spring - Summer 2018

Ann Ciasullo – Article published in *Critical Insights: Social Justice and American Literature*

Dr. Ann Ciasullo published “Embattled Terrians: The Body as the Site of Social (In)Justice in American Literature” in early January.

Beth Cooley – Short story published in *Wisconsin Review*

Dr. Beth Cooley published “Op Ed” in early January.

Gender and Pop Culture Speaker Series

Emily Klein & Kevin Beggs

Sophomore English student Emily Klein discussed gender bending as observed on SNL; Lionsgate Television Group chairman Kevin Beggs detailed his career trajectory and involvement in the production of critically-acclaimed shows *Mad Men* and *Orange is the New Black*.

Chris Abani – Gonzaga Visiting Writer Series

February 12, 2018

Chris Abani, a Nigerian-born novelist, poet, essayist, playwright, and screenwriter, has won a variety of awards and has been published in a variety of mediums, including a *TED Talk*. He currently teaches at Northwestern University in Chicago.

Meagan Ciesla & Ginger Grey – Short stories published in *Lilac City Fairy Tales*

Megan Ciesla’s story “Tower Records” and Ginger Grey’s story “Bloodshed” were published in volume 4.

Marie Howe – Gonzaga Visiting Writer Series

March 6, 2018

Marie Howe, an American poet, famous for her incorporation of Biblical and mythical allusions and biographical aspects of human life, is the author of several renowned poetry collections, including *The Good Thief* and *The Kingdom of Ordinary Time*. Her most recent collection, *Magdalene*, was selected for the 2017 National Book Award Longlist for Poetry. She was poet laureate of New York (2012-2014).

Jessica Halliday; Michael & Gail Gurian Award Winners – Various Genres—Gonzaga Visiting Writers Series

March 28, 2018

Jessica Halliday is an American writer most recently featured in *Sports Illustrated* Online. She studied at University of Washington and Eastern Washington University and teaches in the English Department at Gonzaga University.

The Michael & Gail Gurian Awards are presented annually to student writers of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. The awards are presented at the Gonzaga Visiting Writer Series. Winners are awarded a cash prize.

Brian Bedard – Flash nonfiction piece published in *Flash Nonfiction Funny*

Brian Bedard’s piece is titled “Stand-up Comedian.”

Colin Bonini – Fr. William Costello Outstanding Senior English Major Award

This award is presented to an outstanding senior English student for their contributions to the department. Bonini’s work has been published in *Reflection* journal and other publications.

Coming Soon...

Gonzaga-in-the-Wilderness Program

Summer 2018

Gonzaga Outdoors, Study Abroad, and the departments of English and Environmental Studies are partnering on a Summer I program that will include academic studies, hiking, camping and canoeing. English professor John Eliason will teach ENGL 306: Nature Writing.

Art Spiegelman – Gonzaga Visiting Writer Series

September 25, 2018

Graphic novelist Art Spiegelman will visit campus during the fall semester. Some faculty will integrate his well-known book *Maus* into their Fall curricula.

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