

REACHING CREATIVE HEIGHTS: Film and Media Studies Joins English

English is more glamorous than ever. The department now has visiting movie stars, internships in Los Angeles and New York, even a study abroad in Rome, and it's all due to the conjunction of Film and Media Studies (FMS) and English. The FMS faculty bring a wealth of experience, along with a variety of creative pursuits: acting, directing, and writing for the screen, stage, and page.

With the addition of FMS, the Department of English now offers seven undergraduate degrees. But how does FMS fit with English? The Department of English's mission is to "study, create and teach spoken, written, visual, and digital communication practices." Ultimately, books, television shows, and movies are just different ways of storytelling.

In its rigorous exploration of film and media as communication practices, FMS offers four distinct areas of emphasis, all of which can be completed entirely online. The concentration in Media and Society examines the representation of social relations, including race, gender, sexuality, and religion. The Media Industries concentration focuses on the analysis of storytelling within the current media landscape and how it is affected by production cultures and regulation. The concentration in Styles and Genres analyzes the aesthetics, genres, and authorship of Hollywood and international cinemas. And finally, the Screenwriting concentration, which includes writing across multiple platforms, most resembles a traditional English major.

Chris Bradley, screenwriting faculty, notes: "Students aren't just learning how to write a screenplay. They are also learning how to think critically about narrative. They come to realize that narrative isn't simply reporting events. Narrative is taking those events and creating meaning." Bradley also puts an emphasis on cultural awareness: "As a policy, we don't tell our students what to write, but we do challenge them to come to their writing conscious of race and gender representations, and conscious of the ethical responsibilities of the artist."

To enrich the learning process, FMS hosts celebrities like Jane Seymour, the stars of *Footloose*, and, most recently, John Cho and Kal Penn of the *Harold and Kumar* movies. Students are also given the opportunity to meet and listen to producers and writers from new media, film, and television—like

Phil Rosenthal, creator of *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and Charles H. Eglee, executive producer of *The Shield*.

FMS undergraduates intern at places like Miramax and help produce television series like *Survivor* and *The Daily Show*. By giving students a chance to experience their chosen career hands-on outside of the classroom, not only do students gain experience for their resume, but, as Kevin Sandler, lead faculty for the media industries concentration and internship director, explains, they "learn how media worlds operate on the practical side, understanding the personal, temporal, and industrial factors that shape a piece of media content."

This is part of what makes ASU's FMS program stand out: through internships, students get to test the skills they've learned through their course work, and these internships often lead to full-time employment after graduation. In many ways, internships are the culmination of the undergraduate FMS experience.

The FMS program also has its own summer study abroad program. ASU: Film in Rome is led by ASU faculty and open to any major, not just FMS students. According to Kevin Sandler, the Rome program "uses a combination of classroom and on-site experiential learning techniques. Students gain insight into another culture by exploring Italian culture from a number of perspectives." The study abroad program increases cultural awareness and makes students more attractive to employers because the international experience provides them with a new skill set.

FMS also offers a Master of Advanced Study (MAS) degree in American Media and Popular Culture, which is completed entirely online. Aaron Baker, program director, explains that the program's popularity is a result of the increased flexibility that distance learning provides for working professionals with busy schedules. The format also increases a student's ability to mold the program to fit individual interests.

Now that FMS has joined English, even more opportunities will likely open up for both programs. Maureen Daly Goggin, Chair of the Department of English, is "excited by the intellectual and creative energies that faculty in FMS have brought to our department" and sees "great opportunities for FMS to collaborate with others in English who share a passion for creating, circulating, and understanding the ways in which stories make meaning."

—DEANNA STOVER



Left to right, top to bottom: Aaron Baker, Associate Professor; Chris Bradley, Lecturer; Dan Cutrara, Assistant Professor; Michael Green, Lecturer; Bambi Haggins, Associate Professor; Peter Lehman, Professor; Michael Rubinoff, Lecturer; Kevin Sandler, Associate Professor.

If all the pessimists of the past had been right in speaking of their society's running out of creative possibilities, or going to ruin, civilization would indeed have ground to a halt long ago.

—SISSELA BOK

CHAIR'S CORNER

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Musing on "Creative Acts"

Just what *is* creativity? How do creative acts emerge? Steven Johnson, director of TED Talks, has been exploring creativity and where "good ideas come from." He theorizes a notion of connectivity, or what he calls "networks," for understanding creativity. This view challenges much of the language we use to describe the genesis of innovation and creativity. Good ideas are often couched in terms of a "flash, a stroke, a eureka, an epiphany, a light bulb," all of which share the basic (and, as Johnson argues, mistaken) assumption that an idea is a single, isolated thing, something that happens in a wonderful illuminated moment to one individual.



Maureen Daly Goggin

We need to change our models of what deep thinking looks like as it is more accurate to conceive of an idea as a network of connections within and beyond the individual. We glimpse these networks in the intertextual traces that saturate our discourses, our visual representations, and our digital texts. Rhetorician Yameng Liu calls attention to these vestiges when he notes "what is 'new' is always already saturated with 'traces' of the old, what is 'unique' saturated with 'traces' of the common, what is 'different' saturated with traces of the same." To be creative, then, is "to strive for the new without attempting a clean severance with the old and to search for the unique through an identification with the common; it is to try to achieve originality, with the understanding that the more original a perspective is, the more deeply it is rooted in the conventional." Innovation could not be recognized as such if it weren't already rooted in what we already know and believe. If it were otherwise, we could not "see" it at all.

As Bakhtin taught us, "meaning does not reside in the word or the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. *Meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex.*" We might extend Bakhtin's theory to include more than just the spoken word as the "material." Visual, digital, and sensory materials also generate meanings. As we move through this academic year, our challenge is to create spaces to encourage meaningful interactions. That is, we need to find ways to construct inquiry-based sites—or what Johnson calls "liquid networks"—where different ideas collide and jostle and yield new concepts. We need to do this for our students, certainly, but also for ourselves and for each other. Here's to a year of creative acts in robust spaces!

—MAUREEN DALY GOGGIN

Books by English Faculty and Staff



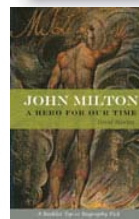
Aaron Baker. *Steven Soderbergh.* Univ. of Illinois Press, 2011.



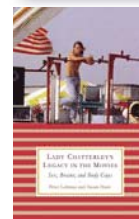
Ron Broglio. *Surface Encounters: Thinking with Animals and Art.* Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011.



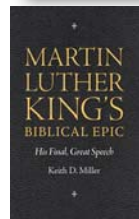
Paul Cook. *Halo.* Reissue. Arc Manor/Phoenix Pick, 2011.



David Hawkes. *John Milton: A Hero for Our Time.* Paperback reprint. Counterpoint, 2011.



Peter Lehman and Susan Hunt. *Lady Chatterley's Legacy in the Movies: Sex, Brains, and Body Guys.* Rutgers Univ. Press, 2010.



Keith D. Miller. *Martin Luther King's Biblical Epic: His Final, Great Speech.* Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2011.



Simon J. Ortiz, Mary Eunice Romero-Little, and Teresa L. McCarty, with Ran Chen, eds. *Indigenous Languages Across the Generations: Strengthening Families and Communities.* ASU Center for Indian Education, 2011.



Lee Bebout. *Mythohistorical Interventions: The Chicano Movement and Its Legacies.* Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2011.



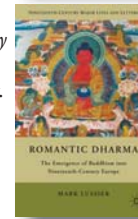
Paul Cook. *Duende Meadow.* Reissue. Arc Manor/Phoenix Pick, 2011.



Paul Cook. *On the Rim of the Mandala.* Arc Manor/Phoenix Pick, 2011.



T.R. Hummer. *Ephemeron: Poems.* Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2011.



Mark S. Lussier. *Romantic Dharma: The Emergence of Buddhism into Nineteenth-Century Europe.* Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.



Richard Newhauser, trans. *Peter of Limoges, "The Moral Treatise on the Eye."* Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012.



Matthew T. Prior, Yukiko Watanabe, and Sang-Ki Lee. *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Second Language Research Forum: Exploring SLA Perspectives, Positions, and Practices.* Cascadia, 2010.

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

English-SILC Collaborative Brings Romanian Culture, Scholars to Arizona

Transylvania.

Did you think of Count Dracula?

Sure, the scenic, wooded region of Romania is the setting for Bram Stoker's famous *Dracula*, but according to Romanian Studies Professor and ASU English alumna Ileana Orlich (PhD 1987), Romania is home to a whole lot more than vampire myths.

The Romanian Studies Program in the School of International Letters and Cultures and the Department of English are partnering to launch the Central European Cultural Collaborative (CECC), which will serve as a bridge between Romania and Arizona—and in time, several other countries in the region—to create a mutually beneficial environment fostering the exchange of art, culture, and scholarly pursuits.

“These efforts are part of a larger commitment to offer faculty and students opportunities for global engagement, a pressing and significant move on the part of the Department of English,” says Maureen Daly Goggin, Professor and Chair of English.

While the collaboration is new, Romanian culture has been a part of ASU for several years now, thanks to Orlich, who is also the 2011 Parents Professor of the Year, and the Honorary Consul General of Romania in Arizona.



ASU Professor of Romanian and alumna in English Ileana Orlich (PhD 1987) is congratulated upon being named 2011 Professor of the Year by the ASU Parents Association this past spring. Photo/Tom Story.

The Romanian Studies Program annually hosts guest lecturers and performances, including traditional puppet shows. One hundred fifty students are enrolled in Romanian language courses, sixty in undergraduate and graduate cultural courses (which are often cross-listed as English, political science, religious studies, cultural geography, or history classes), and there's a summer study abroad program (led by none other than Orlich) to Romania and other central European countries. The trip highlights Budapest, Hungary; Vienna, Austria; Prague, Czech Republic; Bratislava, Slovakia; the medieval castles and towns of Transylvania, Romania; the monasteries of Moldova; and the Black Sea. The summer program offers a broad range of classes at undergraduate



The village of Sirnea in Braşov County, Transylvania. The region is one of many featured locations in Orlich's study abroad program.

and graduate levels, taught by Orlich and professors within the countries themselves.

The CECC is the newest addition to Romanian events and classes at ASU, and had a sort of “unveiling” the week of November 5-10, 2011, with two performances of *Pockets of Bread* by internationally known Romanian playwright and poet Matei Vişniec, at 7:30 p.m. on November 5 and 6, at ASU's Empty Space Theatre. The play starred Romanian actor Dragoş Pop (who also directed) along with ASU Associate Professor of Theatre and Film Lance Gharavi. In addition to English and Romanian Studies, sponsors of the performances included the ASU Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, the ASU School of International Letters and Cultures (SILC), the ASU School of Letters and Sciences, the ASU Institute for Humanities Research, the ASU Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, the ASU School of Theatre and Film, the Honorary Consulate General of Romania in Arizona, the Romanian Cultural Institute in New York, and the Consulate General of Romania in Los Angeles.



Internationally known Romanian playwright and poet Matei Vişniec helped launch the CECC this fall.

The CECC also hosted Vişniec for two lectures during his week-long stay at ASU: “How to Become a Good Writer in a Foreign Language” on November 9 and “Metaphor and Political Theatre: Between East and West” on November 10.

All of the events, including the performances, were free of charge and open to the public.

Clearly, Romania has a lot more to offer than vampires.

—DEANNA STOVER

GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Alumna in China: Necessity, Mother of Invention

“If you’re not confused about China, you’re not paying attention.” Alumna Erica Day, an English instructor at Jilin University in Changchun, China, was once told this by an expatriate of twenty years, and she can now attest to it. A 2008 MTESOL graduate who studied under Elly van Gelderen, Day has lived in the Jilin province in northeast China for a year and a half. She says it is a joy to live in and learn about another culture, and she describes the Chinese people as helpful, patient, and above all, hospitable. Yet, Day also notes that China is a land of contradictions. While she doesn’t chafe under governmental restrictions in her daily life, she also is aware that packages arriving in the mail have occasionally been opened, and visitors to a city must register with the local police. Day passes it off as just part of life in China.



Overseas teaching has its perks: Erica Day visited one of China’s most recognizable landmarks, the Great Wall. Photo/Courtesy Erica Day.

Perhaps more significant differences are perceived in the Chinese educational system, which emphasizes rote memorization and is exam-based. The more interactive, discussion-oriented approach favored by Americans is unfamiliar to Chinese students, but they adjust quickly and enthusiastically. Day teaches “Oral English” to four sections of sophomore English majors (approximately 90 students) and praises them for their extraordinary diligence, hard work, and motivation: they attend class without fail and complete every assignment, even homework. Students also frequently initiate meals or other outings to spend time with their teacher. “This is something that is certainly different from the U.S.!” Day says.

A challenge for Day is in planning lessons and assessing students. She observes that it is notoriously difficult to create realistic and accurate assessments for speaking, particularly with a large number of students, so creativity is a must. Day also designs class homework that requires students to listen to an English newscast or other type of program, discuss it with their partner, and prepare a short summary. Additionally, students must prepare presentations about particular aspects of American culture.

Day expects to remain in China for several more years, perhaps undertaking some full-time Chinese language study before continuing her teaching career. Teaching abroad has been her long-time dream, and she hasn’t been disappointed.

—JANE PARKINSON

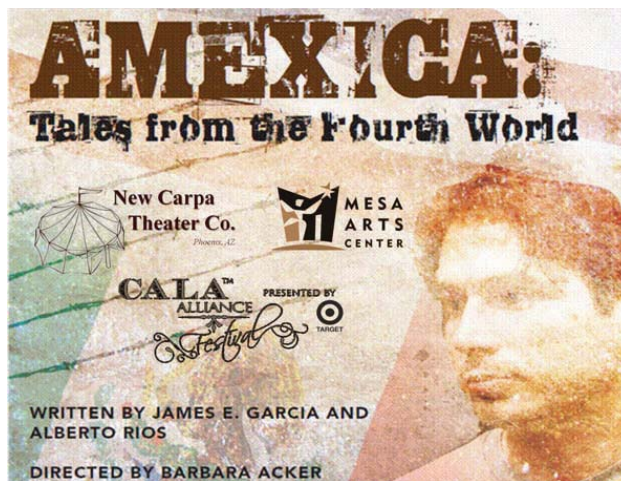
Alberto Ríos’ “Fourth World” Collaboration

Creative acts come from inspiration and they, in turn, may inspire others. Take this concept and multiply it by several talented artists in various disciplines and you’ll start to understand the genius behind the collaboration *America: Tales of the Fourth World*.

This story of an aspiring poet on a search for his birth mother through the border towns of Mexico was co-written by ASU Regents’ Professor Alberto Ríos and alumnus James E. Garcia (MFA 2005). Garcia is founder and producing artistic director of the New Carpa Theater Co. in Phoenix, which performed *America* in Mesa this fall, October 21–November 6.

The narrative Ríos and Garcia created follows a young poet on a journey that is both timely and timeless; by seeking a deeper understanding of his own origins he humanizes the worlds of the border towns he visits. Although the story is not autobiographical, Ríos did infuse some of his own unique understanding, having grown up in the border town of Nogales, Arizona.

In the play, each locale is captured as a concrete, discrete place in a layered, multimedia experience: projected images of the locations provide a backdrop for the narrative. Interspersed are Ríos’ poetic interludes, which, he said, are intended to allow the audience to find “a reasonable pathway to things that seem impossible.”



Accompanying the action is original music by Quetzal Guerrero and coordinated by Ruth Vichules, and choreography by dancer Michele Ceballos. Together, these artists weave a dramatic understanding of this “fourth world” that takes their audience beyond the daily news reports and makes real the places and the lives lived there.

Ríos and Garcia had been planning a collaboration for a couple of years, Ríos said, and when funding became available from CALA Alliance, a “community-based organization dedicated to educating and inspiring all Arizonans about the richness of our Latino cultural heritage” (calaalliance.org), the two got to work, completing their project in a matter of months. The Mesa Arts Center offered its Nesbitt/Elliott Playhouse, director Barbara Acker signed on, and additional support came from Childsplay, ASU Gammage, and the Herberger Theater Company.

—JAN KELLY

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT

ASU English Scholars Share Their Work at Two Regional Conferences

The fifteenth annual Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference, “Places,” returned to ASU on October 21-22, 2011. The conference began as the ASU Composition Conference in 1995 and in 1997 became the Western States as a collaborative project hosted by Peter Goggin at ASU and Maureen Mathison at the University of Utah. The conference alternates every other year between the two universities and is held in intervening years at other universities by guest hosts. Annual themes encourage and support discussion and networking for scholars on a variety of contemporary issues on theory in rhetoric and literacy studies. This year’s conference theme of “Places” asked scholars



Kim Donehower, Associate Professor of English at the University of North Dakota and keynote speaker for this year’s WSRL Conference, asked “what might the role of reading and writing be in shaping people’s sense of place?”

to explore the rhetorics and literacies of places, and the places of rhetoric and literacy. Next year’s conference, “Transnational Rhetorics and Literacies,” will be hosted by ASU English rhetoric, composition, and linguistics alumna, Jennifer Clary-Lemon (PhD 2006), at the University of Winnipeg, Canada.

The Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association also returned to the area this fall, holding its 65th annual conference in Scottsdale, Arizona on October 6-8. The large conference was co-hosted by ASU and the University of Arizona and drew numerous scholars from all over the country. Many ASU graduate students and faculty presented at the conference on subjects ranging from popular romance reading to transatlantic studies of eighteenth-century literature. Deborah Clarke chaired a panel of ASU English graduate students titled, “Modern American Cultural Memory and the Representation of Place.” Meredith Moss chaired a session on English Linguistics which included presentations by Don and Alleen Nilsen and Cynthia Simmons. The conference also included a special reading by “American Indians Poets of the American Southwest,” which featured authors Ofelia Zepeda, Simon Ortiz, and Laura Tohe.

—KATHLEEN HICKS

Writing Programs Celebrates National Day on Writing

“Writing takes place” asserts the motto of the Writing Programs in the Department of English, and it certainly did take place around the country and here at ASU on October 20. The event was in celebration of the National Day on Writing, which was established by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and resolved by the U.S. Senate.

Creativity arises out of the tension between spontaneity and limitations, the latter (like the river banks) forcing the spontaneity into the various forms which are essential to the work of art or poem.

—ROLLO MAY

Once again this year the “place” of the actual event was Cady Mall near Danforth Chapel, where members of English’s Writing Programs and the ASU Student Success’ Writing Center engaged students, staff, faculty, and campus visitors in various writing activities intended to, in the words of Shirley Rose, Director of Writing Programs, “help people understand that everyone’s a writer and that writing takes place everywhere.” Responses to questions like, “What is your favorite place to write?”

were collected on posters at the site and tweeted to participants in English Education who projected them onto a screen on the porch of the Language and Literature Building.

Participants also contributed to a “kinetic poem,” facilitated by guest author and CLAS Visiting Scholar Carolivia Heron. With the help of Instructor Meghan Bacino, participants each wrote one word on a large card. Heron then organized the students and cards into verse. At the same time, other passersby used sidewalk chalk to write about places they “draw” on.

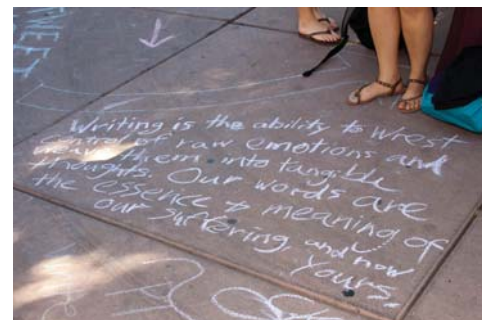
This was the third year ASU has participated in the event, and the second year that reflected the theme of “place” and its importance to the act of writing. As Rose says, “ASU’s Project Humanities and the 2011 Western States Rhetoric and Literacy Conference shared the theme this year of ‘place,’ as does our program motto and t-shirts. Our idea is to emphasize how big a role writing plays in our lives—it’s not just a ‘school’ activity.”

ASU’s contributions to the NCTE National Gallery of Writing are viewable online at: galleryofwriting.org (search for “Tempe” in the “gallery city” category).

—JAN KELLY



Students Carrie Axtell (left) and Kimmie Oltmanns seem to have post-graduation employment on the mind as they participate in the kinetic poem during ASU National Day on Writing celebration, October 20.



A clever sidewalk musing on what writing means: “Writing is the ability to wrest control of raw emotions and weave them into tangible thoughts. Our words are the essence & meaning of our suffering, and now yours.”

NEW FACULTY & STAFF

LEE BEBOUT :: Literature [Chicana/o Latina/o]

Assistant Professor Lee Bebout joins ASU's Department of English after four years of teaching at Sam Houston State University. He earned his PhD in American Studies at Purdue University, and his research interests include Chicano/a studies, American studies, and critical race theory. Bebout's *Mythohistorical Interventions* just came out from University of Minnesota Press; the book contends that Chicanas/os deploy narratives of myth and history (Bebout's term is "mythohistorical") to contest dominant narratives of white supremacy such as Manifest Destiny, the Melt-

ing Pot, and the Mexican Problem. The project also traces the intellectual history and internal dynamics of Chicana/o politics from the mid-1960s onward and argues that mythohistorical narratives became a fruitful space for early, heteronormative Chicana feminists and Chicana lesbian feminists to articulate their belonging to the community. Bebout just adopted a two-year-old boy named Jayden Bebout-Vega. He hopes that by getting his son interested in watching football he can reclaim some of the free time he used to enjoy.



—LAURA WAUGH

MARK HANNAH :: Rhetoric and Composition [Professional Communication]



Assistant Professor Mark Hannah, a former tax attorney new to ASU this fall, hails from the Midwest. Hannah received his JD from DePaul University College of Law and his PhD from Purdue University, where he specialized in rhetoric and in professional—business, technical, and workplace—writing. His writing has appeared in *Technical Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication*, and *Programmatic Perspectives*. This

year Professor Hannah is teaching ENG 301 "Writing for the Professions," ENG 302 "Business Writing," and ENG 655 "Professional Writing Theory." An engaged scholar, Hannah addresses complex and pressing communication demands to "promote 'innovation' in organizational and workplace contexts." Among his personal accomplishments, Hannah notes, "I have a 21-month-old daughter, Evelyn."

—CORNELIA WELLS

ERSULA ORE :: Rhetoric and Composition [Rhetorical Theory]

Assistant Professor Ersula Ore received both her Master's in English and Women's Studies and her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition from Penn State, University Park campus. Ore specializes in African American rhetoric and expressive culture, contemporary rhetorical theory, and visual rhetoric. Her writing has appeared in the journal *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, and she co-edited a special issue "African American Contributions to Service Learning," forthcoming in *Reflections: A Journal on Writing, Service-Learning, and Community Literacy*. This year, Ore is teaching ENG 472 "Introduction to Rhetorical Traditions," ENG 551 "Problems in Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: Expanding



the Canon," and ENG 651 "Advanced Studies in Rhetorical Theory: Rhetoric & Public Memory." Ore views her scholarship as fundamentally "generative" in its ability to help us "think about how legislation and language... together... define subjects." Ore is also invested in how "unspoken codes of conduct [including violence]... communicate who we are" and how we are defined.

—CORNELIA WELLS

MATTHEW PRIOR :: Applied Linguistics [TESOL]



Matthew Prior, Assistant Professor, joins the ASU Department of English from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. He received his PhD in second language acquisition (SLA) from the internationally recognized Department of Second Language Studies at the University of Hawai'i. In addition to contributing to projects sponsored by the National Foreign Language Resource Center, he was also Managing Editor of *Language Learning & Technology* and assistant to the editor of *Applied Linguistics*. Prior is excited to join ASU because of the diverse student body and classroom environments, the prestigious faculty, and the transdisciplinary approach of its departments. His scholarly interests include second language acquisition, language and emotion, socio-psychological dimensions

of language learning and use, multilingualism and identity, narrative and discursive-constructionist approaches (including ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and discursive psychology), critical pedagogy, and immigrant and adult language learners.

In Prior's teaching, his passion for applied linguistics and his contributions to the professional development of his students is evident in his course LIN 520: "Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theory" in which he encourages students to investigate how linguistic theory and research can inform educational practice and policy. His recent publications include "Self-Presentation in L2 Interview Talk: Narrative Versions, Accountability, and Emotionality," in *Applied Linguistics*, and contributions to two books in progress, *Language, Bodies, and Health* and *Identity Formation in Globalizing Contexts: Language Learning in the New Millennium*. He enjoys hiking, eating sushi, traveling, learning languages, and training his cat.

—ILEANA ROCHA

NEW FACULTY & STAFF

CHRISTINA SAIDY :: English Education [Secondary/University Writing]

Christina Saidy, Assistant Professor in the Department of English, comes to ASU from Purdue University where she recently earned her PhD in rhetoric and composition with specializations in public rhetorics and English education. Prior to receiving her PhD, Saidy earned an MA in rhetoric and composition from California State University and an MEd from National University while teaching both middle and high school in the Los Angeles area.

Saidy's research interests are in secondary/university writing connections and public rhetoric, specifically as it relates to educational policy. In her recent dissertation, Saidy analyzed the public responses to three educational policy documents as she focused her project on the use of public educational documents to explore the relationship between rhetoric, civics, and education. She is currently working on a paper about secondary/university collabora-

tion and another about the representation of teacherly identity in the public.

In addition to her research, Saidy has taught a variety of classes including secondary school language arts, adolescent literature, writing for teachers, writing methods, first-year composition, business writing, technical writing, and the practicum for teachers of first-year writing. She has also served as a supervisor for student teachers. This semester she is currently teaching "Methods of Teaching English" (both in composition and language), as well as "Methods and Issues of Teaching Language and Composition."



—KACIE KISER

MICHELLE LAWS [Undergraduate Advising] and KIVA JAMES [Business Operations] :: Staff

With the recent joining of English and Film and Media Studies, the Department of English welcomes back Michelle Laws and Kiva James.

Laws, a second-generation Arizona native, has come full circle. After working as an advisor in English several years ago, she took a position at the Study Abroad Office where she helped students plan fabulous educational adventures, and for the past year she's been the advisor for Film and Media Studies (FMS). Now she's serendipitously returned to the Department of English advising staff where she "enjoys helping students be successful both inside and outside the classroom." The FMS online program will be one of her areas of expertise. Laws holds undergraduate degrees in English and German and a Master of Teaching English as a Second Language (MTESL) diploma from ASU. When not assisting English students, she loves to cook and read and hike—especially in very green places, such as England, Iceland, and



Michelle Laws

Scotland. And those are only a few of the many lands she's travelled.

As an undergraduate at NAU, Kiva James majored in English and minored in Spanish, and later received her Master of Arts (MA) in English (comparative literature) from right here at ASU, where she focused on Latin American studies. For three years, James managed the FMS department, including budgets, course scheduling, media, and marketing. Now, she will focus on the Department of English's business and financial operations. A cowgirl from Memphis, Tennessee, James is a member of Cowgirls Historical Foundation, a nonprofit equestrian group dedicated to preserving western heritage. She also volunteers as a youth mentor for a foster/adoption program. James loves to spend her free time with Lee, her horse and "best friend" of fifteen years.

"First and foremost—the people," says James in response to what she most likes about working in English. "It feels like home."

—SHEILA LUNA



Kiva James

From the Archives

JOHN NEWMAN BEECHER [1904-1980]



John Beecher during a 1974 recorded interview. Photo/Reproduced from the Jack Rabin Collection on Alabama Civil Rights and Southern Activists Digital Collection, Courtesy of Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Special Collections, The Pennsylvania State University Libraries.

In 1958, John Newman Beecher, a great nephew of Harriet Beecher Stowe, was hired as a part-time Lecturer in the Department of English at ASU. He had reportedly been "blacklisted" for nearly a decade after being fired from San Francisco State College for refusing to sign a McCarthy-inspired loyalty oath. An activist poet and Alabama native, Beecher's most famous piece is entitled "To Live and Die in Dixie." Several U.S. organizations—including Penn State's Libraries and the Smithsonian Institution—have Beecher

collections, which include audio recordings, biographies, interviews, and photographs, in addition to his works. Listen to or download recordings of Beecher reading his poetry at the Smithsonian's Folkways website, www.folkways.si.edu/albumdetails.aspx?itemid=1703. Information about Beecher's ASU involvement can be found in Katharine C. Turner's written history of the ASU Department of English (only current as of 1979). Contact Kristen.LaRue@asu.edu or 480.965.7611.

—KRISTEN LARUE

STUDENT STORIES

Outstanding Students Nominated for Phi Beta Kappa

Twenty-one of our outstanding students in English and Film and Media Studies were nominated for Phi Beta Kappa membership during fall 2011. These students account for 16% of the total number of students invited by Arizona State University this year. This is a truly wonderful acknowledgment of our students' achievements.

Phi Beta Kappa was founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776 during the American Revolution and emphasizes the principles of personal freedom, scientific inquiry, liberty of conscience, and creative endeavor. The society's Greek letters (ΦBK) represent the motto, "Love of learning is the guide of life." This prestigious honor society celebrates and supports the work of exceptional students in the liberal arts and sciences. Selection for Phi Beta Kappa is very competitive and based on academic excellence as well as integrity, openness to multiple views, and a wide range of academic interests. Membership represents a commitment to freedom of inquiry and expression, and is a valuable asset on the job market. There are currently 280 chapters at American colleges and universities, of which Arizona State University is one.

Please join us in congratulating the following English major nominees (in alphabetical order):

- ANDREW ROOS BELL (English-Literature/Political Science)
- AMY SOK-YEN CHEUNG (English-Creative Writing)
- MOLLIE KATHLEEN CONNELLY (English-Literature/History [graduated August 2011])
- LAUREN RENEE COVEY (English-Linguistics, Spanish minor)
- JESSICA CYRELL (English-Linguistics [graduated May 2011])
- STEPHANIE ODETTE DE LA ROSA (English-Creative Writing/French)
- GRAEME JASON FOX (English-Literature)
- CAROLYN KATHLEEN GRANT (English-Literature/Sociology)
- EVAN ADAM LEWIS (English-Literature, Writing Certificate)
- ELIZABETH SARAH ONATE (English-Literature/Biological Sciences, LGBT Certificate)
- MELANIE LYNN PATTERSON (English-Literature)



Phi Beta Kappa nominees pictured, from left to right, top to bottom: Lauren Renee Covey, Jessica Cyrell, Stephanie Odette De La Rosa, Graeme Jason Fox, Carolyn Kathleen Grant, Melanie Lynn Patterson, Benjamin Ryan Scolaro, Deanna Marie Stover, and Melissa Allison Tse. Photos/Courtesy the students.

- LIDIA LAVONNA PEREZ (English-Literature/Global Studies)
- ASHLEEN ISABELLA PIERCY (English-Literature/Political Science)
- TYE CAMERON RABENS (English-Literature/Journalism, Chinese minor, Religion & Conflict Certificate)
- LINDSAY ANN SCHARDON (English-Literature)
- BENJAMIN RYAN SCOLARO (English-Literature, Spanish minor)
- SARA KATHERINE SMITH (English-Literature/Journalism, Spanish minor)
- MELISSA STOECKMANN (English-Linguistics/Spanish [graduated August 2011])
- DEANNA MARIE STOVER (English-Literature)
- MELISSA ALLISON TSE (English-Literature/Chinese; Boren Scholarship in China Fall 2011)
- GABRIELLE RAE WIELAND (English-Literature, Math/Spanish minors)

There is nothing like a dream to create the future.
—VICTOR HUGO

—HEATHER M. HOYT (Phi Beta Kappa 1992)

STUDENT STORIES

Toward 50 Years of Creativity: The Swarthout Awards

One of the most enduring traditions in creative writing at Arizona State University is the awarding of the annual Swarthout Awards, honoring the best in writers at the beginnings of their careers.

The award series is the legacy of novelist Glendon Swarthout and his wife, Kathryn,

also a writer and who, with her husband, wrote many works for children.

In 1962, Glendon and Kathryn established the Swarthout Writing Prizes at Arizona State University. In 2012 the contest will celebrate fifty years of recognizing great writing. These eight prizes in both poetry and fiction (with a current top prize of

\$2,400 in each category), have grown until they now rank among the top five awards financially for undergraduate and graduate writing programs at all the colleges and universities in America.

Following are excerpts from the most recent (spring 2011) winners' entries in poetry and fiction.

John-Michael Bloomquist—first place, poetry From “Meet Me in the Oil Fields”

. . . The advent of notice is in the uneventful: the morning light you'd pull your hair through, the rubber band, vegetables clean over the sink, eggs whipped in a bowl.

The apartment was wallpapered with pink flowers, the pine breeze from the windows glazed our eyes.

Comparing your eyes to what desire might look like, I imagine tree sap blackened by flame, the floods and the years that made it crystal. . . . §



Spring 2011 Swarthout Winners: John-Michael Bloomquist (left) and Courtney Fowler. Photos/ Courtesy the students.

Courtney Fowler—first place, fiction from “Service Industry Night”

In the kitchen were bunches of porcelain chili peppers on a string and the cookie jar shaped like a goose that was their mother's. The tile was yellow and sparking clean. A refrigerator that could keep beer inside for more than a day. It was warm and felt like a home should. She was not sure why this surprised her. After all, Tina was a mother now and homemaker, with a man who provided for her. She felt a surge of warmth for her sister and her life here and found herself wrapping her arms around her sister's waist at the fridge, her face against her back. Tina stiffened.

“Careful—the baby,” she said,

but put her hand around the back of her head for a moment.

Amy stood back and let Tina pull a beer from the case and bring it out to Ray in the front room. She looked over the photos on the fridge: portraits of Celeste from the mall, pictures of Tina and Marco fishing in Mexico, Tina smiling. A photo of their parents in the seventies: their mother slim and serious, their father with his white jeans and menacing eyes, gold rings on his fingers that she knew had been used more than once like brass knuckles. She wanted very much to take it from under its magnet: she had seen so few pictures of their father. §

Graduate Student Lounge Gets Creative Makeover

During Teaching Assistant orientation fall 2010, we were sent out in groups to take notes on different campus spaces in preparation for a writing project we would teach in ENG 101. I don't remember the room I presented on very well, but I do remember the report on the Graduate Student Lounge in LL 311 rather vividly. The lounge, we were told, was a relic from a previous century and the years had not been kind. It was cluttered, dingy, and practically reeked of neglect: outdated flyers hung on corkboards over battered, unused mailboxes; shelves were full of unread books and journals; the couches were worn and stained with the passage of time. Nobody in the group reporting on the lounge felt that anybody would want to spend time in this space.

I forgot about the room over the course of the year, coming into it only to retrieve food from the refrigerator before retreating to my office. The following fall, however,

fellow graduate students Dan Bommarito, Brent Chappelow and I decided that it was high time somebody did something about the room. We assembled a group of volunteers to clean and reorganize it: nothing fancy, just a grassroots organization, as it were. I went to Department Chair Maureen Goggin to find out what I could do with the books and mailboxes still in the room. The response blew me away: within a few days, we had been joined on the project by new Business Manager Kiva James and given a small budget to repaint the walls and replace much of the furniture. Over the course of September, the room was given a complete overhaul so that it now has little in common with the forgotten little hole-in-the-wall it once was. We have a proper lounge now, one that I think future TAs will be much more positive about if they are sent to take notes on it.

—JOHN HENRY ADAMS, President Graduate Scholars of English Association (GSEA)



Photos/John Henry Adams



WORD LOVERS' CORNER

Hats Off to the Creativity of Our Linguistic Forebears

In nearly all aspects of life we are in favor of creativity, but when it comes to spelling, we want to offer a little food for thought. When one of our students made 51 spelling errors on a four-page, short-answer final exam, she blamed her mistakes on the fact that she had to write her answers instead of typing them into her computer where she would have had help from *spell-check*. True, a computer would have helped her with some of the errors, but not all of them. A 2006 study found that the most frequent error on the papers of college freshman was “Wrong Word—often due to acceptance of automatic word replacement by computers.” For example, if someone makes a spelling error with *definitely*, the computer might put in the correct spelling of *defiantly*. In a major article, we once published, “It is worth *noting* that . . .” which came out as, “It is worth *nothing* that . . .” and we frequently type “the United States” so fast—and apparently so wrong—that our computer changes it to “the *Untied* States.”

When strangers learn that we are English teachers, they used to apologize for their grammar, but today they launch into a discussion of spelling. Some blame their troubles on the fact that they weren't “taught phonics,” while others say they are waiting for spelling reform, which they are sure is on its way. They think that if computer experts can create something as complicated as GPS systems, surely they will be able to change English into a consistent (i.e. a purely phonetic) system. We refrain from mentioning how the robo-voice on our GPS “phonetically” mispronounces such southwestern place names as *Tucson*, *Albuquerque*, and *Chaparral*. We also refrain from listing these other things that the world's English speakers will have to do if we are going to change English into a truly phonemic language:

1. Increase the size of our alphabet because English has more than 40 sounds instead of just 26, as implied by the number of characters in our present alphabet.
2. Reprint and replace all of the materials now printed in English.
3. Provide new symbols or reassign the symbols on world-wide computers and other high tech equipment now coded in English.
4. Teach all English speakers to pronounce each word exactly the same or tolerate as much difference in writing as there is in speech.

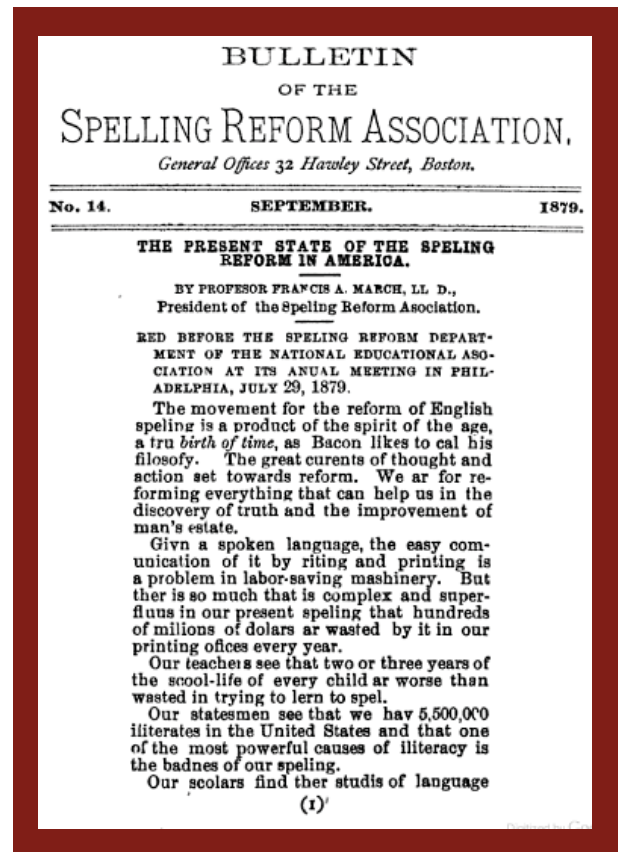
English is now a world language with more people speaking it as a second or third language than as a first language, and the way these speakers pronounce English is influenced by their native languages. The more varied is English speech, the more important it is that we have a consistent spelling system. This is not so true about names, but that's a different story.

What we need to realize is that English is a morphophonemic—not a purely phonemic—language and our linguistic

ancestors need to be thanked for how skillfully they managed to create a writing system that honors both the phonemes (the sounds) and the morphemes (the meanings) of words. Because of their dual focus, we can recognize semantic relationships even when words neither sound nor look exactly the same. So-called “silent letters” often communicate a meaning relationship, as in “A *resignation* needs to be *signed*,” and “A *debit* card makes it easy to go into *debt*.” Also we can benefit from pondering the related meanings of words that are spelled and pronounced the same but generally viewed as being entirely different, for example, a *pitcher* in a baseball game and a *pitcher* on the table both throw something forward. And when you *draw* the drapes or *draw* a picture, your hand pulls something across either a curtain rod or a piece of paper, similar to the way you pull out dresser *drawers*, and in old-fashioned stories, to the way people “pulled up their *drawers*.”

We are not writing this to discourage the use of creative spelling—which we realize serves many purposes. We just don't want people to be too quick to throw out their dictionaries or to give up on teaching their children to spell.

—ALLEEN NILSEN AND DON NILSEN



An 1879 bulletin from the Spelling Reform Association—written in mostly reformed spelling—which advocated for a stripped-down version of American English spelling.

IN MEMORIAM

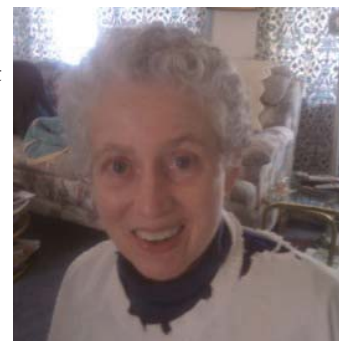
Remembering Thais Morgan (1951-2011)

Thais Morgan taught from about 1984 to about 1993 in the ASU Department of English. She specialized in Victorian and modernist literature, notably Swinburne, Baudelaire, and Mallarmé, but developed and taught an immense variety of courses, notably pioneering courses in critical theory, gender studies, and film. Raised in New York and Connecticut, Morgan received her BA from Smith College, the PhD in Comparative Literature from Brown University, and held a post-doc at the University of Pennsylvania. Hired away from University of Oklahoma, when Morgan came to ASU she became a mainstay of ASU's graduate curriculum in the Humanities. Her rigor and open-mindedness drew students from throughout the university, and made her a friend and mentor to many young scholars. Although Morgan's career as a publishing scholar was but a decade long, she was incredibly productive. Her work is still regularly cited. Three titles she particularly liked were "Is there an Intertext in this Class" (in *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 1985), "Victorian Effemina-cies" (in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, edited by Richard Dellamora, 1999), and "A Whip of One's Own: Dominatrix Pornography and the Construction of a Post-Modern (Female) Subjectivity" (in *The American Journal of Semiotics*, 1989).

Incongruous as it might seem, Morgan was as devoted to kitsch as to French. Despite a peripatetic life, her house sheltered an odd assortment of artifacts, including a few stuffed animals from her childhood, a growing assortment of new, strange greeting cards, and a mixture of household objects on which she bestowed original and appropriate names, such as the pool-lounge-chair-with-drink-holder that she dubbed "Cleopatra's Barge." She loved to

watch the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. As the sometimes strangeness of living in the West never ceased to amuse her, she never tired of hearing about the latest twists in Arizona politics. Words rarely failed Morgan, but if they did, she'd raise her eyebrows, open her eyes wide, purse her lips, and guffaw, all the while shaking her head.

Following the onset of her illness, Morgan joked about the irony of being a Victorianist who'd acquired a mysterious wasting disease. When the desert heat intensified her multiple sclerosis, Morgan moved to Flagstaff, where she made a new circle of friends. She still loved hearing from her dearest friends in Phoenix, and spoke with equal pleasure of those she heard from regularly as of those who'd died, such as Ian Fletcher ("the only one who could call me 'thighs'"). A tireless worker and fighter who came from a long line of strong women, Morgan turned her clear-sighted rigor and good humor to the task of living with illness. Accepting the likelihood of a short life, she refused self-pity. Rather, she took pleasure in every day and hour, in clouds and plants. She delighted in her birds. Released from a long fight, she has emerged a winner, having lived with courage, grace, unswerving honesty, neighborliness, and generosity.



Thais Morgan

—ELIZABETH HORAN

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accents on ENGLISH



Red Mountain by James Davidson. Used by permission. 2009, oil on canvas, 24" x 30" | jamesdavidson3@gmail.com

James Davidson's artistic career began in New Orleans in 1990 when he started a business in art object restoration, which grew and flourished until Katrina put an end to it. He is self-taught and believes in using his own imagination, intuition, and wit as his textbooks. His work in restoring porcelains, pottery, marble, jade, and ivory for such former New Orleans institutions as Manheim Galleries and Animal Art Antiques brought recognition and a broader clientele that eventually included the New Orleans Museum of Art, the Louisiana State Museum, the U.S. Navy Seabee Museum, and numerous private collections. By 2000 he was widely recognized as the foremost objects restorer in the southeast.

Having relocated to Tempe, AZ, he has now reestablished his art objects restoration business and has devoted himself to painting land, sea, and skylines in oil on board and canvas. The miraculous colors of skies and mountains in Arizona have been a constant inspiration.

While building a body of work, Mr. Davidson has sold paintings to private collectors in Arizona, Florida, Colorado, and England. He has recently exhibited at ASU's Gammage Auditorium and currently works out of his home in Tempe.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
COMING EVENTS

February 16-18, 2012 | "Erotica and the Erotic in the Middle Ages and Renaissance." *18th Annual ACMRS Conference.* Sheraton Phoenix Airport Hotel (1600 S. 52nd St.) Tempe.

March 3, 2012 | **ASU Composition Conference.** Keynote speaker: Alice Daer. ASU, Tempe campus, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

March 15, 2012 | "Redefining Indigenous Perspectives through Art and Dialogue." Lecture by Bob Haozous, Sculptor, Santa Fe, NM. *Simon Ortiz and Labriola Center Lecture on Indigenous Land, Culture, and Community.* Heard Museum (2301 N. Central Ave.) Phoenix, 7 p.m.

March 30, 2012 | **Chaucer Celebration 2012.** ASU, Tempe campus. Time and exact locations TBA.

May 2, 2012 | **Department of English Awards Ceremony and Graduation Reception.** University Club Heritage Room (UCLUB) ASU, Tempe campus, 3 p.m.

October 11, 2012 | **Lecture by Ofelia Zepeda, Poet and Regents' Professor, University of Arizona.** *Simon Ortiz and Labriola Center Lecture on Indigenous Land, Culture, and Community.* Heard Museum (2301 N. Central Ave.) Phoenix, 7 p.m.

November 8-11, 2012 | "Catastrophes." *International Conference on Romanticism.* ASU, Tempe campus. More information TBA.