

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

UIC COLLEGE OF
LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012

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Message From the Department Head

Dear UIC English Colleagues, Students, Alumni, and Friends,

Once again this year, the English department at UIC distinguished itself in a highly visible national ranking: this time, *Poets & Writers* magazine ranked our Creative Writing PhD program sixth in the nation. Echoing the department's strong showing last year in the National Research Council rankings (see our 2011 newsletter online at the department website), the *Poets & Writers* survey of PhD Programs acknowledges the superb training that we

provide for our PhD Students as well as the high degree of faculty productivity. Even though the ranking concentrates on the PhD program, the honor speaks volumes about the superior education that UIC English provides for all of our students, at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

As this newsletter notes, the English department is very quickly changing: four faculty members are retiring this year (Professor Philip M. Royster also retired from his position as Director of the African-American Cultural Center). Three new faculty members have joined us in the past two years: Professor Roger Reeves joined the department in the fall of 2011; we just hired a new Professor of English Literature, **Nasser Mufti**, and a new Professor of Rhetoric, **Robin Reames**. Professors Mufti and Reames will begin teaching in the fall of 2012. We are excited about our new hires, who will build on the many years of great scholarship and teaching that have made UIC a vibrant and successful intellectual community.

As always, the English department is grateful for the support that it continues to receive from alumni and friends, even while we seek to increase the support that we currently have for students who are doing groundbreaking research. This year, PhD student **Snežana Žabic** and **Tasha Marren** were among several students who used Selby Fund support to attend conferences; they presented at the &Now Festival of New Writing at the University of California, San Diego. Žabic calls the festival "a busy lab in which we not only imagined what the future of writing might be, but also paid homage to the past avant-gardes." Supporting students like Žabic and Marren helps them to realize their ambitions as scholars and writers, and their success in turn enhances the value of the UIC degree. We hope that you will consider making a donation to the department, and we provide a tear-out in this publication for donations to the Selby Fund and to the English department's General Fund (which supports programming such as visiting speakers and visiting writers).

I'll take this opportunity to announce that I am stepping down as department Head in August, 2012. It has been a pleasure leading our faculty and students, and getting to know many of our alumni. I look forward to serving the department, college, and university in new ways in the future, and I'm pleased to announce (see page 3) that Professor Emeritus John Huntington will be succeeding me as Interim Head.

Finally, I'll remind all readers of the newsletter that they are encouraged to send us news for the next publication: please send all items to englishnewsletteruic@gmail.com.

Best wishes,

Mark E. Canuel

The Stanley Fish Lecture



Slavoj Žižek and Stanley Fish engage in a dialogue after the lecture.

The biennial Stanley Fish Lecture is designed to acknowledge the achievements of Stanley Fish as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UIC (1999-2004). Past Stanley Fish Lectures include: **Judith Butler**, Maxine Elliot Professor, University of California, Berkeley (2009); **Stephen Greenblatt**, University Professor of the Humanities, Harvard University (2007); and **Frederic Jameson**, Director of the Institute for Critical Theory, William A. Lane Professor of Comparative Literature and Romance Languages, Duke University (2005). The Stanley Fish Lecture is sponsored by The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

On October 21, 2011, cultural critic and philosopher **Slavoj Žižek** (Institute of Sociology, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) was greeted by hundreds of students as he presented “Freedom in the Clouds: What is Possible and Impossible Today.” Žižek is internationally known for his innovative interpretations of Jacques Lacan and he is the author of *The Indivisible Remainder*; *The Sublime Object of Ideology*; *The Metastases of Enjoyment*; *Looking Awry: Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*; *The Plague of Fantasies* and *The Ticklish Subject*. The webstream and transcript of Žižek’s lecture can be found on [The Institute for the Humanities’](#) website.



Žižek and Walter Benn Michaels field the audience for questions.

Photographs courtesy of *Roberta Devlin* and the *Institute for the Humanities*

UIC Creative Writing Doctoral Program Ranked #6 in Nation

In a recent survey conducted by *Poets & Writers*, UIC English ranked in sixth among doctoral programs in Creative Writing. The rankings are determined by surveying applicants to PhD programs across the country, and the results reflect our many different strengths. Here at UIC, we have a prolific, distinguished, and dedicated faculty; we have superb students who are making their own marks as writers by winning awards and publishing widely; and we have alumni who have gone on to have stellar careers after graduating from UIC.

More details can be found on *Poets & Writers’* online [magazine](#).

Congratulations to all of our writers!



Colloquia Feature Scholarship

The English department enjoyed a wide variety of speakers from within the department and from outside the UIC community at its Friday afternoon colloquia during the 2011-2012 academic year. This year, the following have or are scheduled to present their work at the colloquia: UIC PhD Candidates **Cynthia Barounis**, **Star Costello**, **Andrew Farkas**, **Nicole Martinez**, **Megan Milks**, **Jen Moore** and **Kristy Ulibarri**; Professor **Sunil Agnani** (UIC), Professor **Michael Clune** (Case Western Reserve University), Professor **Samuel Fleischacker** (UIC), Professor **Sianne Ngai** (Stanford), Professor **Bruce Robbins** (Columbia University); Professor **Richard Weisberg** (Cardozo Law School) and poet **Karen An-Hwei Lee**.



PhD candidate **Megan Milks** presents her work as Professor **Ashton** and department faculty listen.

Alumni Read at the Humanities Institute

The English Department hosted its annual Alumni Poetry & Fiction Reading at the Humanities Institute on February 10, 2012. Sponsored by the UIC Program for Writers, the Department of English, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Office of Advancement, this event featured alumni **Orlando Ricardo Menes** and **Zoe Zolbrod**.

Zoe Zolbrod is a writer, editor, traveler, and parent. **Zoe** received her M.A. from University of Illinois at Chicago's Program for Writers and is currently a senior editor at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. Her first novel, *Currency*, received a 2010 Nobbie Award and was a Friends of American Writers prize finalist. Her short stories and nonfiction have appeared in *The Chicago Reader*, *Kneww-Jerk Offline*, *Fish Stories Collectives*, and *Maxine*, a zine she co-founded in the 1990s. She blogs at *The Nervous Breakdown* and lives in Evanston, IL.

Orlando Ricardo Menes was born in Lima, Peru to Cuban parents but has lived most of his life in the U.S. He holds a B.A. and an M.A. in English from the University of Florida. In 1998 he

received a PhD in English from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Since 2000 he has taught in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Notre Dame, where he is currently Associate Professor in English and Faculty Fellow of the Institute for Latino Studies. His third collection of poems, *Furia*, was published in 2005 by Milkweed Editions.



UIC Alumni **Zoe Zolbrod**, **Zara Neyestani**, **Orlando Menes**, and **Archie Maglalang**

In addition to the Alumni Reading, the Program for Writers sponsors the Friday Night Reading Series throughout the academic year to highlight the work of current faculty members and graduate students. This year's readers included: **Annah Browning**, **Mathew Corey**, **Star Costello**, **Cynthia Cravens**, **James Ellis**, **Chris Girman**, **Josh Gryniewicz**, **Brianna Knoll**, **Jenny Morse**, **Mathew Overstreet**, **Sara Tracey**, and **Snežana Žabic**.

The Program for Writers also hosts an annual One-on-One Reading series showcasing the work of a nationally known writer and a graduate student in the UIC Program for Writers. On April 13 2012, Professor **Sharon Bridgforth** (DePaul University), will read with PhD candidate **Shelly Connor**.

New Personnel join UIC English



Professor Emeritus **John Huntington** will be taking on the Interim Headship of the English department as of August 16, 2012. A scholar of early modern and modern British literature, professor Huntington has been at UIC as a faculty member since 1976. He has served the department and the university in ways too numerous to mention here in detail, although highlights include service as Associate Head of English (several times), Director of Graduate Studies (English), Director of Undergraduate Studies (English), and Interim Head of Slavic and Baltic Languages and Literatures.

In the Fall of 2011, **Roger Reeves**, joined UIC as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English. He will be teaching courses on poetry, poetics, and literature.

In the Fall of 2012, **Nasser Mufti** and **Robin Reams** will join the UIC Department of English.

In Memoriam

Dean Emeritus **Howard Kerr** passed away on August 14, 2011. Professor Kerr earned his Bachelor's degree from University of California, Berkeley and his Master's and Doctorate degrees from University of California, Los Angeles. Joining UIC's faculty in 1966, he served as the English department's chairman of composition and director of Undergraduate Studies. A scholar of 19th-century American literature, Professor Kerr served as the second Honors College dean from 1984 to 1996. Professor Emeritus **Christian Messenger** writes of him, "Howard was a powerful figure in the development of this English Department, a fine American Literature scholar, a valued friend and mentor, and a long-time Dean of the Honors College. He was a Man of great humor and personal character." Kerr is survived by his wife Louise, and his three daughters Lizabeth, Catherine and Sarah.



English Department News

The Institute for the Humanities has appointed Professor **Natasha Barnes**, Departments of African American Studies and English, as one of six Faculty Fellows for 2012-2013. Her project, "Cartographies of Violence: Making the 'Without Sanctuary' Lynching Photography Exhibit" will help mark the Institute's 30th anniversary and serve as one of the workshops and lectures in a special series of programs and conferences throughout the year.

Lecturer **Marsha Cassidy**, PhD, is one of six recipients in LAS of the Silver Circle Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2011. The award is one of the university's highest honors for teaching and is based on nominations solicited from graduating seniors. Since 1966, the Silver Circle Award has been presented to some of UIC's best teachers. In addition, Marsha Cassidy is the winner of the 2012 Award for Outstanding Pedagogical Achievement conferred by the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, an international scholarly organization with 3000 members.

Professor **Ann Merle Feldman** won a 2011 UIC Award for Excellence in Teaching. The award recognizes distinguished contributions in teaching philosophy, teaching practice, curriculum development, and administration.

Lecturer **Cathy Birkenstein**, PhD, and Professor **Gerald Graff** delivered lectures at the "Assessment in the Humanities" conference held at Miami University of Ohio. They also lectured jointly on the teaching of writing at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Ursinus College and gave a keynote address at a conference on "Academic Writing in the 21st Century" at MIT. Jerry and Cathy also presented two workshops for Chicago Public School teachers, one at Ogden Elementary School and another, sponsored by the Chicago Debate Commission, at Westinghouse High School. Cathy Birkenstein also served as an external reviewer for the Common Core Course at Valparaiso University.

Lecturer **Andrea Witzke Leavey** served as chair of the "Transnational American Literature Panel" at the American Literary



Professor **Wildman**, Professor **Messenger**, and Professor **Huntington** celebrating at the 2011 Department of English Retirement Party.

Association in May 2011 and became editor at the Chicago-based journal *Rhino Poetry* this past September.

Professor **Cris Mazza** won a 2011 UIC University Scholar Award. The University Scholars Program provides significant awards of funds to faculty members who "have demonstrated superior performance in scholarly activities in both research and teaching and who show great promise for future achievements." She has also received the 2011 Graduate Mentoring Award from the UIC Graduate College. Along with two alumns from UIC's Program for Writers, **Zoe Zolbrod** and **Gina Frangello**, Professor Mazza was featured in "Neighborhoods" a public reading sponsored by Chicago Publishes.

Graduate Coordinator **Neil O'Callaghan** received an Award of Merit from the UIC Department of Human Resources. The Award of Merit is a university-wide honor and recognizes "campus staff members who exhibit service, commitment, and dedication."

Professor **Christina Pugh** received a Graduate Mentoring Award from the Graduate College at UIC. Graduate Mentoring Awards, according to the Graduate College, "are designed to encourage and award excellence and innovation in all aspects of graduate mentoring."

On November 16, **Professor Mary Beth Rose** gave an invited lecture at the University of Alabama entitled "Time, Narrative, and Maternity in Augustine's *Confessions*."

Faculty Members Retire

During the past academic year, **Ann Merle Feldman**, **Judith Kegan Gardiner**, **Clark Hulse**, **Ned Lukacher**, and **Philip M. Royster** announced their retirement. Each of these faculty members has given many years of service to the department and to the university community and has contributed in a variety of ways to enhance the department's national reputation. A retirement reception honoring this year's retirees is to be held on Friday April 13, 2012.



Professor **Feldman** Professor **Gardiner** Professor **Hulse** Professor **Lukacher**



Professor **Philip M. Royster** giving the African American Academic Network (AAAN) convocation address in 2011 entitled, "The World Bends to Righteous Endeavor."

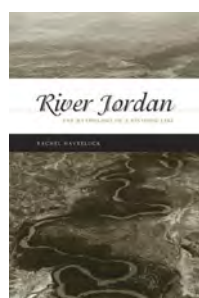
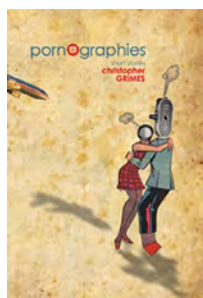
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Publications by Faculty

Professor **Gerald Graff's** and Lecturer **Cathy Birkenstein's**, PhD, co-written article, "A Progressive Defense of Educational Standardization," was reprinted in the Teagle Foundation collection, *Literary Study, Measurement, and the Sublime: Disciplinary Assessment*.

Professor **Judith Gardiner's** essay, "Queering Genre: Alison Bechdel's Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic and The Essential Dykes to Watch Out," is featured in the special issue of *Contemporary Women's Writing: New Texts, Approaches, and Technologies* November 2011.

Professor **Christopher Grimes's** new books, *The Pornographers: A Novel* and *The Pornographies: Short Stories*, was published by Jaded Ibis Press. The Pornographers is being praised as "The single brilliantly funny voice of something genuinely new" and "Think Marcel Duchamp, with a pen and a stiff" by Professor **Walter Benn Michaels** (UIC) and **Miles Clark**, respectively.



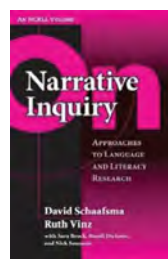
Professor **Rachel Havrelock's** book, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line*, was published by the University of Chicago Press in December 2011. She spoke on the topic of "The History of the Map of Israel" at Vanderbilt University and the University of California, Berkeley. Her keynote address, "Joshua, Ben-Gurion, and Me: The Borders of the Land and the Limits of the Collective" launched the 2012 "Borders in Jewish

Thought" conference at the University of Chicago.

Zach Lamm's article, "That Darker, Though Truer Aspect of Things: Melville's Failed Romances," is forthcoming in *Mosaic*.

Andrea Witzke Leavey's collection of poems, *To Find a New Beauty*, was accepted for publication by Gold Wake Press and will be released in April 2012. Her scholarly paper, "Between the Scylla and the Charybdis: Dialogic Circling as Ideological Weaponry in Julia Alvarez's 'The Other Side/El Otro Lado,'" was accepted for inclusion in a collection of critical essays on Julia Alvarez. Other poems have been published in various journals, including *Written River: A Journal of Eco-Poetics*; *Chiron Review*; *Alba: A Journal of Short Poetry*; *Connotation Press*; *Sea Stories*; and *The Houston Literary Review*. She also publishes creative work under the name of Andrea Witzke Slot.

Professor **Cris Mazza's** new co-edited anthology was released in October 2011, *Men Undressed: Women Writers on the Male Sexual Experience*.



Professor **David Schaafsma's** co-authored book, *Narrative Inquiry: Approaches to Language and Literacy Research*, was published by Teachers College Press in 2011 as part of NCTE's National Council of Research on Language and Literacy qualitative research methodology series.

UIC English on Facebook

The English Department now has a [Facebook](#) page. It will be used along with the department website to advertise events and share news with department members, alumni, and friends.



Office of English Undergraduate Studies



Professor **Christina Pugh**, Director



Brianna Noll, Office Assistant

Among its many functions, the Office of English Undergraduate Studies provides English majors with ongoing support and guides them towards completion of major requirements. In addition, the office helps to inform students about the many career paths available to them, both inside and outside of academia. Professor **Christina Pugh** heads the office as Director of Undergraduate Studies, and doctoral candidate **Brianna Noll** serves as the Undergraduate Studies office assistant. The Office of English Undergraduate Studies would like to remind students to take advantage of the following opportunities to help ensure their success at UIC:

- **ACADEMIC ADVISING:** Schedule an academic advising appointment to discuss your progress towards graduation and course selection that will help you to complete credit hours while exploring your intellectual interests.
- **WORKSHOPS ON JOBS IN ENGLISH AND APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL:** Announcements are made each semester about workshops that offer tips for applying to graduate school or landing that first job. Contact David Krstovich for more details at dkrstol@uic.edu.
- **INTERNSHIPS:** The best way to get started in a career is to undertake an internship that will give you hands-on experience in that field. The English Department offers internships in a variety of careers, including major media outlets and nonprofit organizations. Internships

are a great way to gain experience, earn credit, and make valuable professional contacts. Speak to **Linda Landis Andrews** for more details (landrews@uic.edu).

- **SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS:** Stop by our office for details on different scholarships and awards. We strongly encourage students to compete for these awards.

- **GET CONNECTED:** The E-Majors listserv provides English majors with announcements about opportunities available on and off campus, along with information on registration, office hours, and graduation. If you are not subscribed to the listserv, please contact Michael Fitzpatrick (MFitz01s@uic.edu).

Graduate School Workshop

In the fall of 2011, Professor **Christina Pugh**, Director of English Undergraduate Studies, organized a Graduate School Workshop. This session was designed to provide guidance and support to English Majors who were considering pursuing an advanced degree. Speakers for the event included PhD candidate **Amy Gates**, Professor **Christina Pugh**, Professor **Mark Chiang** and Professor **Sunil Agnani**. Students in attendance came away from the workshop with valuable information about what a graduate degree can offer, along with important strategies for selecting the right program and generating a strong set of application materials.



Alumnus **Andrew Gavarilos** discusses his path to becoming a Producer for WGN-TV Chicago as other Alumni look on.

Senior Thesis Presentation Event

The senior thesis is a fantastic opportunity for undergraduates to create a writing sample for employers, or graduate school. Some students have used the senior thesis as a means of beginning a collection of poems, short stories, or the spring-board for their future novel. Other students focus on the critical aspects of literature and examine an issue in depth in English Literature. The senior thesis is a *requirement* for students to be eligible to graduate with *Highest Distinction*.

Each semester, undergraduate senior thesis writers present their work in a colloquium format in the department. In the fall of 2011, seniors **Alexander Giersch**, **Yunha (Tori) Choi**, **Kaitlin McIntyre**, and **Katya Gorecki** presented their projects to an audience of students and faculty. The event included both critical and creative writing theses. It was organized by Professor **Christina Pugh** (Director of Undergraduate Studies) and **Brianna Noll**, office assistant. The next senior thesis presentation event will be on Friday, May 4th, 2012, at 1:00 p.m. in UH 2028.

Jobs for English Majors Workshop

In the spring of 2012, **Linda Landis Andrews**, Internship Coordinator for the Department of English, held a career workshop for English majors. Alumni speakers discussed their particular career paths and offered advice to current English majors about pragmatic steps they could take to launch their own careers.



Alumnae **Kelly Murray**, **Bernadette O'Shea**, and **Zahra Neyestani** before 2012 Jobs for English Majors Workshop.

Alumni speakers in jobs workshop:

- **David Batka**, Editor, *College News and collegeneews.com*

- **Andrew Gavrilos**, Producer of a Morning Show, WGN-TV, Chicago (*Psychology and Communications Majors alumnus*)

- **Erin Massey**, graduate student, *Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University*

- **Kelly Murray**, graduate student, *John Marshall School of Law*

- **Zahra Neyestani**, Production Editor, *Aon Hewitt*

- **Bernadette O'Shea**, Director of Development, *Rush University Medical Center*



Writing Center

The Writing Center is part of a grant awarded to UIC to support Asian American and Pacific Islander students and students learning English. The grant will allow the Writing Center to extend its hours, reach out to more students, and provide new training opportunities for tutors. As part of the grant, **Charitianne Williams** is designing new training material for tutors, **Lydia Saravia** is conducting a mentoring program for English 070 students, and **Allison Yasukawa** is conducting workshops for tutors on working with ELL students.

Lydia Saravia and the tutors **Erica Barban**, **Jessica Espinosa**, and **Karen Mariscal** held a panel presentation titled, "Online Tutoring: Being a Peer through a Screen." The presentation is part of the Writing Center's project, coordinated by Lydia Saravia, introducing real time tutoring online.

The new recipients of the Rosenthal Social Justice Scholar award are tutors **Cole Sorenson**, **Fae Rabin**, **Amber Savino**, and **Jessica Espinosa**. The award supports the students' work organizing events and publications for the Future Teachers for Social Justice. A project the group has sustained over the last several years is mentoring tutors at the peer writing center of the North Lawndale College Prep high school.



Photographs courtesy of **Vainis Aleksa** (Director of Writing Center).

The Rosenthal Foundation has also given an award to the student editors of *Through the Glass*, the Writing Center's newsletter. The editors include **Rosendo Garcia**, **Sara Rusnak**, **Tim Makowski**, and **Alex Giersch**. The editorial team is coordinated by **Charitianne Williams**.

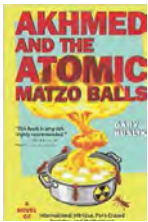
The Writing Center has now introduced online scheduling. Students can make appointments by going to uic.mywconline.com.

Visit the Writing Center's newly designed website at writingcenter.uic.edu. The design is responsive and is able to be viewed comfortably on a smartphone. The new site includes resources for students, information for faculty using the writing center, and new photos by **Max Herman**.

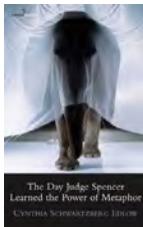
UIC WRITING CENTER
Individual tutoring for your writing

Alumni News and Publications

Anya Riehl Bertolet (PhD, English) has been granted tenure at Auburn University.



Gary Buslik (PhD, English) has a novel forthcoming from Solas House entitled, *Atomic Matzo Balls*, in March 2012.



Cynthia Schwartzberg Edlow, (MA, English) recently published her new book of poems, *The Day Judge Spencer Learned the Power of Metaphor*, with Salmon Poetry. As part of promoting her new book,

Cynthia hopes to do a Chicago reading series sometime in the latter portion of the year (september or beyond). To learn more about the book go to salmonpoetry.com.

Fred Gardaphe (PhD, English), Distinguished professor of English and Italian American Studies at Queens College and the John D. Calandra Italian American Institute, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar teaching fellowship. He will lec-

ture in American Cultural Studies at the University of Salerno in Italy during the 2010-11 academic year. Fulbright recipients are selected on the basis of academic or professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential in their fields.

Jessica Kuhnen (BA English) has been accepted for fall 2011 into the graduate program in social work at the University of Chicago.

Congratulations are in order for **Janice Tuck Lively** (PhD Creative Writing, 2006), who recently accepted a tenure-track position at Elmhurst College in Elmhurst, Illinois. Lively's hiring comes after working the last couple of years as a part-time instructor in Elmhurst's English Department as part of the Preparing Future Faculty grant program. "My PFF Fellowship experience was directly related to my being hired as a tenure-track assistant professor this year," said Lively. "The program gave me an opportunity to teach courses at the College, develop relationships with my current colleagues and ties

to the College." While studying at UIC, Lively worked closely with Cris Mazza on her dissertation, "A Dress for Dorothy Dandridge." Lively will teach two courses this semester: Epics and Stories: Ancient and Modern; and a Fiction Writing course.

Orlando Menes, (PhD, English) is the editor of the new anthology of poetry from Notre Dame, *The Open Light* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2011). This is Orlando's fourth book.

Gerald Nicosia (BA and MA, English) has had a successful career as a professional writer since the late 1970's. Along with publishing two award-winning books, *Memory Babe: A Critical Biography of Jack Kerouac* (Grove Press, 1983) and *Home to War: A History of the Vietnam Veterans'*



Movement (Random House, 2001), Nicosia has published several books of poetry, articles, reviews for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*,

Student News

PhD candidate **Stefanie Boese** was awarded the Chancellor's Supplemental Research Fellowship by the UIC Graduate College for 2012.

PhD candidate **Annah Browning's** chapbook-length sequence "The Inheritors" was nominated by The White Whale Review for a Pushcart Prize.

PhD candidate **Ryan Brooks** has won the Marxist Literary Group's Michaels Sprinkler graduate essay prize for his paper, "Clean Hands: Post-Political Form in Richard Powers' *Gain*."

Danielle Christmas, a PhD candidate, was awarded the Chancellor's Graduate Research Fellowship, a renewable award that funds interdisciplinary dissertation projects, and presented a paper entitled "Resituating Eichmann, Relocating Judgment: Extra-Legal Theories of Justice in Holocaust Trial Films," at Monash

University in Melbourne Australia.

Ph.D. candidates **Danielle Christmas** and **Julie Fiorelli** are 2011-2012 recipients of the Grace Holt Memorial Award, sponsored by the Department of African American Studies. The Holt Award recognizes students who have worked actively to improve the lives of African Americans and have demonstrated a commitment to issues of racial justice.

In 2011, PhD candidate **Virginia Konchan** was nominated by UIC for inclusion in Best new Poets 2011.

Tongue, PhD candidate **Tyler Mills'** manuscript of poems, was selected for the 2011 Crab Orchard Series in Poetry First Book Award. It will be published by Southern Illinois University Press in Jan. 2013.

Alumni News and Publications Continued

and the *Chicago Tribune*. He also has new book coming out from Viva Editions in Berkeley, entitled, *One and Only: The Untold Story of On The Road*. Concerning the book's origin he writes, "It's based on two long interviews I had done in 1978 with Lu Anne Henderson (the model for the character "Marylou" of *On The Road*), which I discovered when I was coaching Kristen Stewart and working as an advisor to the film version of *On The Road* last summer in Montreal."

Nnedi Okorafor's (PhD, English) novel, *Who Fears Death*, has just won a World Fantasy Award for Best Novel of the Year.

Anne Marie Saviano (BA, English) was featured in an article by UP Chicago as Chicagoan of the week. After graduating from UIC, she pursued an internship at WGN-TV. Although she began with secretarial duties, Anne Marie went on to work as a writer, segment producer, and entertainment producer. She eventually won two local Emmy awards. In 2006, She spent the year assistant directing two resident company stages at Second City's Mainstage and ETC stage. Anne Marie has spent the past year as co-creator, producer and director of *Oprah! A Comedy!* at the Annoyance Theatre in Chicago and has recently spoken to UIC students enrolled in the "Media and Professional Writing" class in the Department of English.

Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, **Alex Shakar** (PhD English) has released his new novel, *Luminarium*. This decade long book project is praised by the *Chicago Tribune* as "Powerful and Profound,...encompassing, caring, provocative and funny."



UIC 1972 Alumnus **Burt Visotzky** (BA, English), or rabbi Visotzky serves as the Appleman professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies and the Director of the Louis Finkelstein Institute for Religious and Social Studies at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. He has recently published his his tenth book, *Sage Tale: Wisdom and Wonder from the Rabbis of the Talmud*.

Associate Professor at the University of Kentucky, **Vershawn Young** (PhD, English) is the new host for *New Books in African American Studies*, (<http://newbooksinafroamstudies.com>) a branch of the *New Books Network*. He also has two new books out: *From Bourgeois to Boogie* and *Code-Meshing as World English*. And his most recent performance, *Your Average Nigga*, can be found at <http://vimeo.com/16178014>.



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Student research & travel; outstanding graduate student essay award
- LAS English General Fund** (33334704)
Development of new fellowships, programs, & other initiatives in the Department of English

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Graduate Student Publications

Annah Browning's poems have recently appeared in *The Southeast Review*, *Elimae*, and *Anobium*. She also has work forthcoming in *Handsome Journal* and *The Bellingham Review*. Annah has been a featured poet in the journal *Anti-* and was interviewed by *Harpur Palate*.

Brian Charest's co-authored piece, "Applying the CEE Position Statement Beliefs About Social Justice in English Education to Classroom Praxis," appeared in *English Education* on October 2011. His chapter, "Toward a Theory and Practice of Radical Pragmatism," was published in the book *Critical Service Learning as Revolutionary Pedagogy: A project of Student Agency in Action*.

Star Costello's short story, "Fragments," is forthcoming in the Spring 2012 volume of *Gambling the Aisle*.

Jason Evans' article, "Structuring the Color Line through Composition" will be published in *Open Words*, a peer-reviewed composition journal, this Spring. He also organized panels for both the 2011 and 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC), and presented at the National Council of Teachers

of English conference in November 2011.

Amy Gates published a review of Terry Eagleton's *Reason, Faith, and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate* in Volume 18 of *Symploke*. She also published a profile of UIC Chancellor Paula Allen-Meares in the spring/summer 2011 issue of *Continuance*.

Adam Jones (pseudonym A D Jameson) has published his first two books: *Amazing Adult Fantasy* and *Giant Slugs* June 2011. Interviews with him have since then appeared at *Caffeine and Aspirin*, *Chicago Subtext*, *Plain Wrap*, and *Untoward*. Meanwhile, Adam's fiction has appeared in *Conjunctions*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Decomp*, *This May Get Awkward*, and *The Collagist*. His book reviews appear regularly in *Review of Contemporary Fiction* and is a contributor to *HTMLGIANT*.

Virginia Konchan's poem "Café Noir" was selected by D.A. Powell and published in an anthology. Her work was recognized with a Vermont Studio Center residency (Dec. 2011). Within this academic year, she has also had poems accepted and/or published in the following publications: *The New Yorker*, *Boston Review*, *Seneca*

Review, and *Cerise Press*, and a short fiction piece in *Story Quarterly*.

Tyler Mills was on a work-study scholarship at the Bread Loaf Writer's Conference this summer. Her poem, "Penelope's Firebird Weft," is in the Summer/Fall 2011 issue of *TriQuarterly Online*, and her poem "The Sirens" is in the Fall 2011 issue of the *Nashville Review*.

Sacha Siskonen's short story "The Phoenician Book of the Dead" is forthcoming in *Querty* and "The Great Elsewhere: Perfection" has been accepted into *The Masters Review's 2012 Shortlist* to be published on March 15, 2012.

Sara Tracey's poems are recently published or are forthcoming in *Juked*, *The Collagist*, and *The Laurel Review*. Her poem, "Back to the Rookery," was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *Passages North*.

Snežana Žabic's essay "Neo AFZ: Revolution Without Premeditation" has appeared in the October 2011 issue of *Feminist Review*.



PhD students, **Stephanie Boese** and **Cynthia Barounis**. **Cynthia** is the latest Anne Hopewell Selby Award winner.

The Anne Hopewell Selby Memorial Fund

Relatives, colleagues, and other friends of the late **Anne Hopewell Selby**, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, have established a fund in her memory for awards for distinction in Graduate Studies in English. Annually the department of English designates one graduate student enrolled in the department who has demonstrated outstanding scholarship in English to receive an award, which is paid from the income derived from the memorial fund. The student so designated is selected by a committee appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies on the basis of a substantial critical essay (an essay written for a course during the academic year, an MA Thesis/Project, an approved Dissertation Prospectus, or a PhD Dissertation chapter) submitted to the committee. Students in all specializations are eligible for the award, presented at the department's annual spring celebration.

Graduate Student Presentations

The Marxist Literary Group held its annual Institute on Culture and Society in the Institute for the Humanities in June of 2011. English graduate students and alums who presented and/or helped plan the conference include **Euihuack Kang, Ryan Brooks, Lucas Johnson, Julie Fiorelli, Jen Hammond, Vincent Adiutori, Dongho Cha, Gina Gemmel, Emilio Sauri, Madeline Monson-Rosen, Alice Haisman, and Jonathan Poore.**

Last fall, **Kevin Carey** attended the English Institute at Harvard; the UIC Department of English sponsored his attendance. Eminent scholars, including Patricia Crain, Andrew Piper, Christopher Cannon, and others, presented new work representing a variety of interests and critical approaches to the subject of Reading. This conference furthered Kevin's interests in reading as metonym for critical thinking, and English departments as sites of contestation between the study of literature as a professional discipline and the teaching of critical literacy as a public service.

In April 2012, Ph.D. students **Smita Das, Surbhi Malik, Julie Fiorelli** and **Lyndee Yamshon** presented the panel, "Transnational Reconfigurations of Race in Multiethnic Literature" at the 2012 MELUS/USACLALS conference at Santa Clara University.

Jocelyn Eighan presented a paper titled "Can dust praise You?: Reflections on the Holocaust, Debasement, and Shame in the Poetry of Paul Celan" at the Third Biennial English Graduate Conference at Boston College in March 2011. She also presented "Reshaping the (M)other: Feederism in Fiction" at the 2011 Popular Culture/American Culture Association conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Amy Gates will be presenting "'These Simple Land-Marks: The Site/Sight of the Dead in Shelley's Frankenstein'" at the British Women Writers Conference (BWWC) in Boulder, Colorado hosted by University of Colorado Boulder.



PhD candidates **Chris Bryson, Sacha Siskonen, Virginia Konchan, Brianna Noll, and Tyler Mills** at the 2011 Department of English Retirement Party.



PhD students **Megan Milks, Shelly Conner and Brook Wonders** at the Department of English End of the Year Party.

Gina Gemmel presented her paper, "Too Far-Fetched and Too Neatly Symmetrical: History and Fiction in Kamila Shamsie's *Broken Verses*" at the annual conference of The Society for the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States.

In March, **Virginia Konchan** will be presenting her paper, "Emily Dickinson's Annus Mirabilis" at the 14th Annual Graduate Student Conference at the University of Western Ontario.

Snežana Žabic performed her video/poetry piece "Po(eat) ry=2xContinents, 3xForms, 2xLanguages, 3xWomen" with **Tasha Marren** at the &Now Festival of New Writing in San Diego, this past October. At the same conference, Zabic and Marren presented "Pneumoniatism" on the Panel "Manifestos' R' Us: The Possibility."

PhD Candidate **Roxanne Pilat** has presented two papers, titled "Bound by Bended Knee: Santa Liberata, and the Italian Immigrant Mutual Aid Societies," and "Kitchen Girl, Cowgirl," at the American Italian Historical Association in Tampa, Florida, in October 2011.

Monica Westin has been invited to serve on the editorial board of *Transformations*, where her article on contemporary environmental art is forthcoming this spring. She will also be contributing an essay about contemporary art to Professor **Ralph Cintron** (UIC) and Professor **Robert Hariman's** (Northwestern) forthcoming book on political texture and curated a digital exhibition for the related Political Culture Conference at Northwestern. Monica moderated a panel on the sublime in contemporary fiction and visual art at the "ASAP 3/Arts of the Present" conference in Pittsburgh. Monica also plans on presenting her current work on material rhetoric and "artsapes" at the Rhetoric Society of America conference in Philadelphia this May.

Department of English Presents Student Awards



Professor Michaels and **Jen Moore**, Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award recipient.

The Department of English announced award winners for the 2011-2012 academic year its year-end celebration held Thursday, April 28, 2012. Graduate student awards went to Cynthia Barounis, Dean's Scholar Award and Anne Hopewell Selby Award; Danielle Christmas, Provost's Award for Graduate Research; Jennifer Moore, Department of English Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award (formerly the Stern Award); Amy Gates, Gloria Fromm Award; and Jennifer Berner, Kogan Bonus Award.

The Program for Writers Awards were presented to **Cynthia Cravens**, Goodnow Award in Fiction; and **Garret Brown**, Goodnow Award in Creative Writing.

Undergraduate student awards were presented to **Yocheved Sapphire-Bernstein**, Anne Hopewell Selby Award; **Mike Hartge**, Robert and Corinne Silver Award; **Benjamin Reedus**, Ernest C. Van Keuren Award and first place in the Paul Carroll Award in Creative Writing; **Allison Funk** placed second in the Paul Carroll Award in Creative Writing; and **Jacob Cayia** placed first and **Thomas J. DeSalvo** placed second in the English Department Critical Writing Award. English Education Awards were presented to **Lindsay Zidek** and her mentor teacher **Kim Kody**, Woods-Lindley Prize.



Professor Pugh and **Jacob Cayla**, Critical Writing Award recipient.

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