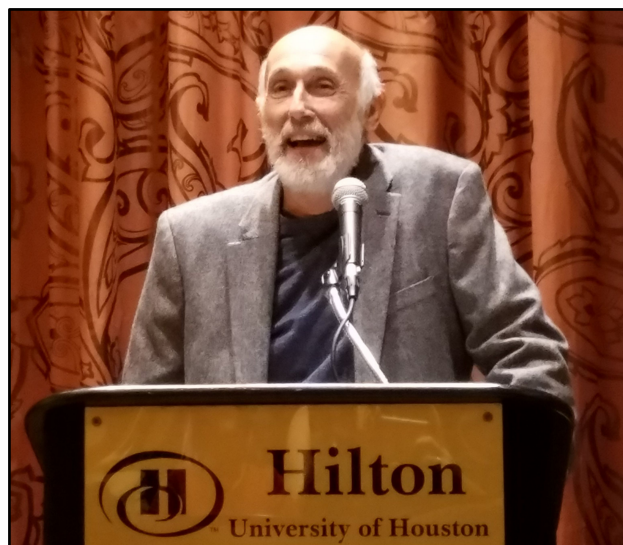


# FORUM | THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UH ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

## Message from the Department Chair:

As I conclude my time as Department Chair, it feels appropriate that the Department will be temporarily moving out of R. Cullen for a year or two. The renovation of the building is long overdue, and like any renovation, it will undoubtedly have its share of surprises and it will take longer than projected. But I like to think that the timing of the renovation coordinates nicely with the changing of the Department administration. It signals a new beginning and, at the same time, it promises continuity with the past. In Fall 2019, we will



have a new Departmental Chair in Professor Ann Christensen and a new Associate Chair in Professor David Mazella. Professor Jen Wingard, Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Maria Gonzalez, Director of Lower Division Studies, and Professor Hosam Aboul-Ela, Chair of the Research Committee, and Professor Alex Parsons, Director of Creative Writing, will continue in their departmental administrative posts. They will be joined by Professor Cedric Tolliver, who will be taking over the Directorship of Upper Division Studies from Professor Jason Berger, who I want to thank for doing such a wonderful job as Director. It feels to me that a direction begun by other Chairs before my Chairmanship and that I hoped I furthered is now coming to fruition. We are a strong, productive, Tier-1 research department—one with exciting and committed faculty, with smart and directed students, and with a professional staff that is extraordinary. We are a Department in which I like to work and of which I am very proud. I anticipate the new leadership team taking us to the next stage of our development.

With the formation of the Research Committee, the Department made clear that we are a community of inquirers and that our faculty is engaged in innovative scholarship and creative work that is contributing significantly to a variety of national and international intellectual and aesthetic conversations. With its adoption of the certificate in Teaching English as an Additional Language, the Department made a statement about the place of English as an international language and the Department's commitment to educating students who can participate in a world in which English plays such an important role.

This is a period of change for English Departments. Change is both exciting and, for many, terrifying. I have been gratified by the Department's openness to change and its willingness to be open where change may take us. I have been honored to serve as the Chair of such a department and I want to thank the faculty, staff, students, alumni and supporters who have worked and are working to make this a department in which those committed to lives shaped by intellectual pursuits can thrive. I am interested to see what we can become.

j. Kastely

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### **Graduate Student Spotlight: Fulbright Recipient Carolann Madden, PhD Candidate in Literature and Creative Writing**



As a Fulbright researcher in the James Hardiman Library Archives at NUI Galway, I am currently researching folklore collecting in the West of Ireland. I am focusing on the archives of three collectors, Lady Augusta Gregory, Heinrich Becker, and Tim Robinson, all of whom are creative writers who have also collected folklore in and around Galway County. My project began with exploring how and why creative writers utilize folklore in their creative work, and it was my own affinity for incorporating it into my

poetry that led me to the first of many classes I would take with Dr. Carl Lindahl at UH. Dr. Lindahl's and my shared interest in Lady Gregory resulted in our co-authoring and presenting a paper for the American Folklore Society on her role as a folklore collector, which also became the foundation of my desire to apply for the Fulbright at NUIG.

I have lived in Galway before, and over the past fifteen years have spent a lot of time on various islands nearby. Exploring the many islands off the west coast of Ireland was something I had hoped to continue during my Fulbright, so one of the first things I did was head down to Dún Chaoin and go camp on Great Blasket. Ireland has a long and deep relationship with the study of its place names, so I was a little surprised to learn that we don't really know how the famous Blaskets got their name. I subsequently became more and more interested in toponymy and its Irish parallel, *dinnseanchas*, which also considers place lore. As such, one aspect of my project involves mapping some of the folklore collected by Becker, Gregory, and Robinson that is related to Galway and the Aran Islands, as well as to Connemara's smaller islands. To do this, I am compiling a digital exhibit, and working with Digital Humanities staff in the archives to create an online map that will geolocate a number of tales according not only to where they were collected, but also to the places named within them. For me, the overarching aim of this study is to try and connect story to place.

When folklore is delivered on the page, it can become somewhat removed from the very world out of which it has grown, tellers are lost, places mythologized. But folklore is rooted in people, rooted in places and landscapes.

There is also a necessarily ecocritical push behind my project. As numerous studies of toponymy assert, we name places that are important to us in some way. With regard to this, in "The Seanchaí and the Database" Tim Robinson writes, "What is the future of a place if no one remembers its name—which is a sign that the place has lost its distinctiveness or usefulness, its role in human life?" This question is both at the heart of, and creates a bridge to, my research which is trying to ask: Is it enough to just remember a place's name? And what happens if we have more information, for example, a body of folklore connected to the place? My sense is that if we not only remember the name of a place, but also the stories connected to it, the place itself may become even more important to us. I think of this as particularly relevant when considering islands and coastal communities. Our islands, especially small islands like many off of Ireland's west coast, are constantly under threat as sea levels continue to rise. Perhaps if we can reconnect these places to the very human impulse to tell stories about the landscape, we can find new ways to access an even deeper concern for their wellbeing and future.

## Literature Faculty Feature: Professor Karen Fang

In her latest book, *Arresting Cinema: Surveillance in Hong Kong Film* (Stanford, 2017), Professor Karen Fang examines the ways in which Hong Kong cinema's portrayal of surveillance departs from the depiction popularized by the West. While Hollywood films tend to treat surveillance with suspicion, Hong Kong cinema paints surveillance with a more optimistic attitude. By illuminating these differences, Professor Fang argues for a revised understanding of global cinema, as well as for how world film can help us confront one of the most pressing political issues of our times.



When Professor Fang visited Hong Kong for the first time, she was struck by the amount of surveillance and how little her friends from Hong Kong seemed to notice. From cameras to security guards, to the sheer amount of signage adorning public transportation, surveillance seemed widely visible as well as inescapable. This initial observation became key to Professor Fang's thinking as she progressed through her graduate studies, during which she became increasingly interested in the history and practice of surveillance and its representation in film.

For *Arresting Cinema: Surveillance in Hong Kong Film* (Stanford, 2017), her research developed across two fronts: the history and practice of surveillance as it was going on in Hong Kong and the history of Hong Kong cinema. As Professor Fang's project took shape, she began exploring the relationship between these fields. From global hits to international favorites, Professor Fang was committed to representing a wide spectrum of films in her book. She spotlights films by directors like Wong Kar-wai as well as New Year's films, or titles which are featured on the most popular movie-going day in the Chinese-speaking world. She was likewise interested in comparing cross-cultural adaptations. In the book's first chapter, she focuses on two examples: *The Departed* (2006), a Hollywood adaptation of Hong Kong's *Infernal Affairs* (2002), and *Backyard Adventures*, a 1955 Hong Kong remake of Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954). Professor Fang highlights the latter as a prominent example of the distinction between Hong Kong's and Hollywood's treatments of surveillance. Where *Rear Window* offers elements of thriller and mystery, *Backyard Adventures* is a musical and a comedy; its characters' relationships to surveillance depart dramatically from the way characters in *Rear Window* react to surveillance.



In addition to teaching Vision Empowerment in Film, Text, and Politics at the University of Houston, Professor Fang has also brought a Hong Kong film class to the undergraduate catalogue and a media theory course to the graduate level. She recently published the leading article for *Surveillance & Society*, in which she focuses on the Hong Kong film *Ten Years* (2015), which grapples directly with surveillance.

### **The Department Mourns the Loss of Dr. Irving Rothman**



Our beloved colleague Irving Rothman passed away on Monday, April 22, 2019. He was 84 years old. Dr. Rothman received an undergraduate degree, a Masters' Degree and his PhD in English Literature from the University of Pittsburgh. In 1967, he began teaching in the Department of English at the University of Houston. He taught at UH for the next 52 years, making him the longest serving member of the English department. In addition to his teaching he served, for a time, as Director of Graduate Studies for the English Department. He was also advisor to the University's ODK Honor Society for many years. He leaves behind legions of grateful students.

Dr. Rothman's primary area of academic specialization was 18<sup>th</sup>-century English Literature. An engaged scholar, he participated in international academic debates in the *Journal of Arts and Letters*. He was awarded a patent from the U.S. Patent Office in 1978 for an editing desk. He published a multi-volume treatise, *The Editions of Daniel Defoe*, and he also recently produced *Barbers and Barbershops: An Annotated Bibliography*, a body of work that spanned decades and pays tribute to his childhood.

Dr. Rothman had a deep and unwavering commitment to his Jewish faith. He and his wife, Hava, were active members of the Congregation Beth Yeshurun, where he served on the Board of Directors. He taught religious school at the synagogue for 40 years. He also routinely offered courses in Jewish American literature in the Department of English at the University of Houston.

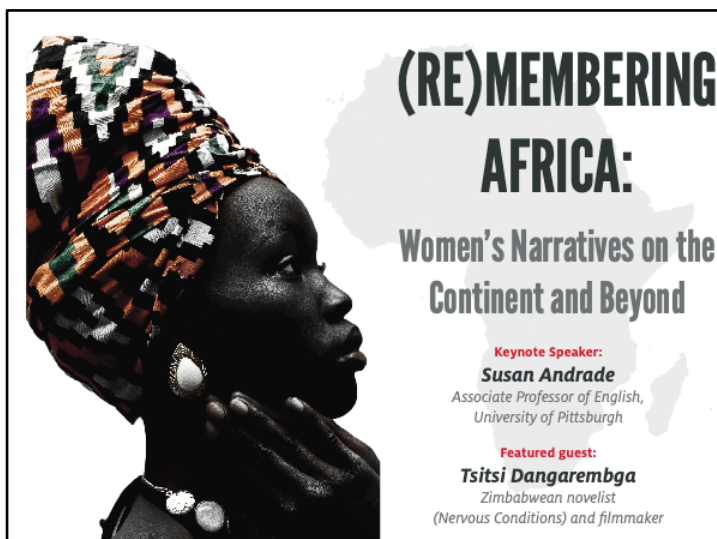
In 1994, he was awarded the Irving L. Samuels Outstanding Teacher Award for Judaic Studies by the Bureau of Jewish Education of the Jewish Federation of Greater Houston. In 1995, he was awarded the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light) Award. Concerned with preserving Jewish heritage, he raised the funds to both rescue a Torah scroll that had survived the Holocaust and to bring it to the University of Houston.

Dr. Irving Rothman possessed a generous spirit. His family, the Houston Jewish community, colleagues in the Department of English and throughout the University of Houston, and friends everywhere will miss this remarkable man.

### **PhD Candidate in Literature Maurine Ogbaa Develops and Organizes “(Re)membering Africa: Women’s Narrative on the Continent and Beyond” Conference**

From March 28-30, the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Houston hosted the conference, “(Re)membering Africa: Women’s Narrative on the Continent and Beyond.” The symposium, organized by graduate students, focused on the writing, film, and visual art of African, African-American, and African Diaspora writers and artists. PhD in Literature Candidate Maurine Ogbaa spearheaded the event.

In addition to panels, talks, and other opportunities to connect, the conference offered an academic workshop by Maurine Ogbaa, as well as a creative writing workshop led by PhD in Literature and Creative Writing student Novuyo Tshuma. Keynote speaker Susan Andrade, Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, delivered the keynote lecture, and Zimbabwean filmmaker and novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga gave a talk which combined theories of physics, metaphysics, and society at



TSU's University Museum, which co-sponsored the event. The weekend's events concluded with a screening of Dangarembga's film, *Nyami Nyami and the Evil Eggs*, and a discussion with Maurine about film, women filmmakers, and being a working creative in Africa. The conference was co-sponsored by the Creative Writing Program; the Department of History; the Department of Modern and Classical Languages; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; African American Studies; the Center for Public History; the Center for Diversity and Inclusion; Texas Southern University's University Museum; and the University Museum. Attendees came from the New Delhi, West Virginia, Sam Houston, Wisconsin, the Greater Houston Area, and elsewhere.

When *Forum* asked Maurine how the conference got started and what its organization entailed, she described its evolving from a discussion in class. In the spring of 2017, Maurine took a course called African Labor History with Professor Karin A. Klieman (Department of History), with whom Maurine became interested in discussing the ways in which history is studied in English classes.

The next spring, Maurine co-taught a course, which culminated in hosting two publishing African writers in the class for a dialogue. Maurine describes this event as “a generative conversation and intellectual argument.” It was so successful that Professor Klieman suggested Maurine organize a conference. Originally, Maurine thought an event of that nature would be much smaller; but with the guidance of Professor Karin A. Klieman, Maurine’s considerations for the conference expanded.

“Our goal was to provide a space for those who were doing what we were doing, and maybe doing it in a place of isolation—people who hadn’t had a place for themselves yet—that’s how it started. We continued talking and sat down for our first formal meeting in May 2018 to start thinking about the mechanics of it [...] After we’d matured the idea a bit more, Professor Klieman told us to approach the English Department. We started talking with J. Kastely, who was interested and optimistic. We had our first meeting with him and other professors in August.”

Not many graduate students can say they have assembled an academic conference, not to mention one of this scale. Between contacting the appropriate offices for approval and support and inviting guests, the process is complex as well as demanding. Maurine generously described some of the process to *Forum*:

“It was an interesting thing to do as a graduate student. You’re perceived to have very little power, which is the nature of things, and it makes you plucky and ambitious, but you also have a different relationship to the politics of a university. You aren’t afraid to approach people under the auspices of the university. A lot of professors have supported this; some of [our success] came from us trying to pitch the idea. We had a lot of cross-disciplinary support and a lot of money coming from English, Creative Writing, History, African American Studies, Women & Gender Studies, Modern and Classical Languages, and the Center for Public History.”

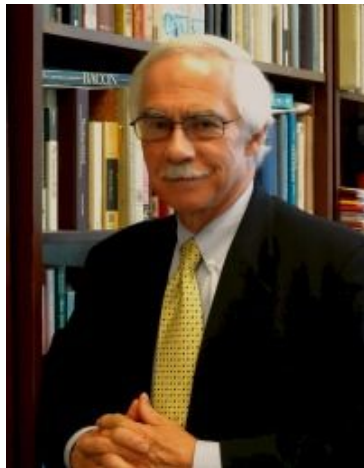
Maurine also describes the experience as a positive learning experience for graduate students. Those who pursue academia and other fields will most likely develop administrative and organizational skills. In addition to other layers of planning for the conference—such as reviewing abstracts, booking rooms, and communicating with various guests—Maurine also gained experience conveying her ideas to various groups of scholars and professionals. Along the way, she had help from the faculty:

“We never could have done this at this scale without faculty helping us. That would have just been impossible. At a certain point, the budget was a huge concern, but we kept going. We definitely wanted to have a conference which became a workshop where discussion happened, but we also wanted to promote the production of African American Literature and Film on the campus—to have folks who are pursuing their undergraduate education know that this production exists. There’s literature, there’s film, there are people working on it. That’s why it was so important to get Tsitsi Dangarembga to come. We invited her partly because she is a novelist and a filmmaker [...] Getting students out there and people in the

Houston community who can come out to see that is really important to us. We really do have that sort of community link.”

Reflecting on the weekend, Maurine describes the event this way:

“We were absolutely impressed by the scholars, writers, and UH community. People attended discussions of academic papers on Friday and Saturday. The director of AAS came and we had drop-ins from others who saw the publicity posters. The number of attendees throughout the weekend shows that there is a real interest in critical production and study of arts and letters of the African Diaspora.”



### **The Department Celebrates Professor Wyman Herendeen**

We offer a fond and grateful farewell to Professor Wyman Herendeen, who will retire from the Department of English as of August 31, 2019 after 21 years of teaching and five terms as Department Chair. In September 1998, Professor Herendeen joined the Department of English to become our chair. In that position, he presided over significant changes that transformed the department. The training of graduate teaching assistants was elevated to a new level of professionalism and their workload was reduced, giving them more time to focus on their graduate courses and make rapid

progress toward their degrees. Professor Herendeen also spurred important revisions to both the graduate and undergraduate curriculum. During his time as chair, the English Department became a Tier-1 research department while, at the same time, retaining its commitment to high quality and caring instruction at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Professor Herendeen was a tireless advocate for the department and, through his efforts, the support for faculty research and student work increased by means of endowments and grants. He conceived and established the Houston Writing Fellows program, which provided five post-doctoral fellowships for competitive applicants. The Houston Writing Fellows taught in Lower Division Studies and provided supervisory support to the Department's graduate teaching assistants.

Professor Herendeen is a nationally recognized scholar in the English Renaissance. His books include: *William Camden: A Life in Context*; *Ben Johnson's 1616 Folio: Collected Essays*; and *From Landscape to Literature: The River and the Myth of Geography*. In retirement, he will remain an active scholar; he is currently at work on a monograph entitled *The Politics of Grammar from Erasmus to Milton*. A dedicated teacher, Professor Herendeen routinely taught courses in Shakespeare, Milton, Renaissance drama, and seventeenth-century non-dramatic prose. His teaching combined deep scholarship with a gentle wit in keeping with the literature and historical period he loved.



He and his wife, Mary, will soon relocate to Washington, D. C. to be close to their daughter and her family. This move will also allow Professor Herendeen to be near crucial archives in the Folger Shakespeare Library as he pursues his research.

We will miss our colleague who was integral to the life of our department for two decades. We wish him well in retirement, and we are grateful for his longstanding devotion to the Department of English and all the ways he has improved our professional lives, enhanced the education of our students, and served the university and city of Houston.

### **Introducing the Online Teaching Training Program for Teaching Fellows** **By Dr. Melanie Salome, Lower Division Studies Administrator**

I first began teaching online in 2010 for a university that was known for its online education programs. This was my first teaching experience—instructing students in the fully online environment. At that point in my life, I was transitioning to a career in academia. I had thought that this would be my foot in the door, so to speak, in gaining experience in that field. I had been a technical writer/application support specialist in the financial software world for more than 15 years and I was ecstatic that my dream of teaching had finally been realized. Based on my professional background I began to teach technical writing online. That was the beginning of my relationship with online teaching and my new academic career.



In my academic life as a student I had never taken an online course and, like so many, I was skeptical about the learning experience in that environment. As I soon found out, the online learning environment was indeed a viable and rewarding experience for me as well as the students. As an online instructor I gained a different perspective on the ways in which professors can impact students. It made me realize that we do not have to look into our students' eyes to know how to help them and understand where their needs are most unfulfilled in the learning process. The students who take online courses can be people from all walks of life—veterans, parents, part-time students, and the traditional student. Depending on where one teaches, students could be from various states across the country to various countries across the globe.

Is it a vastly different experience than the physical classroom? Yes, it is. Is it any less rewarding? Absolutely not!

The reason I say that teaching online is no less rewarding than teaching in the classroom is because all the motivations for both teacher and student remain the same but are merely practiced in a different environment. In fact, I have found that student motivation for learning can actually be much higher in the online environment. So when Dr. Ann Christensen approached me (and several other people) to help on a project she was steering for creating an online teacher training environment, I was on board 110 percent.

Collectively, our team managed to create a first of its kind department specific online teacher training Blackboard site here at UH. Fang Fang, an Instructional Designer from Technology Services (Fang was also vital in the creation of our training site), has noted that no other department on campus has created their own training site, so ours is truly an innovation. What makes our department training site different from others is that it houses sample online classrooms for ENGL1303, ENGL1304, and ENGL2305 courses. There are links to scholarly articles that address common issues and topics related to teaching online, such as ways of improving instructor online presence, providing feedback, and classroom design. Other components of the training include the listing of online tools and resources, along with video walkthroughs of some of the common Blackboard course features. The best part about the training is that you can complete it at your own pace, which allows you to complete it in increments if you wish.

Based on feedback we have received so far, instructors enjoy the training, especially the live examples of course setup and designs, the listing of online tools and resources, and the scholarly articles that reflect upon the teaching of online courses. We hope to have more instructors sign up for the training in order to be eligible to teach online courses. For those Teaching Fellows heading for the job market in the near future, having both the training and teaching online is an added plus to one's overall marketability. The more versatile and flexible we are in terms of learning new skills and expanding our teaching pedagogy, the more desirable we become on the job market. My hope is that TFs in our program are able to take advantage of all the opportunities offered within the department and at UH as a whole.

Any instructor interested in completing the training, please email me at [mrsalome@central.uh.edu](mailto:mrsalome@central.uh.edu).

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## **On Completing the Online Teaching Training Program for Teaching Fellows**

**by Kaj Tanaka, PhD Student in Literature and Creative Writing**



Over December break, I took the UH English Department's online training certification course, and I really appreciated the opportunity. The training, because it takes the form of an online class itself, is a useful preparation for the joys and challenges of the online learning environment, and I recommend anyone who wants to teach after they leave UH complete the training (plus, if you do it soon, they'll give you some cool swag!).

Briefly, the "training" is a Blackboard shell containing a multimedia experience that the trainee navigates for a few hours before writing a brief essay about the experience. It took me an afternoon to complete the course (others might be faster or slower), and I felt it was a good use of my time. It prepared me for both teacher and student experiences in a fully online environment. Full disclosure: I taught online courses before I came to UH, and for a relatively short training, I feel I got a lot out of it. The material is no-nonsense and easy to follow while remaining complex and thought provoking.

I think it's important for anyone who teaches online to understand how it feels to be a student in an online class, which the training simulates. An online learning environment can be liberating and empowering, but it can also be alienating and confusing, and I think it was wise for the department to provide training in the very the form they are preparing us to administer. It helped me understand how to be more sensitive to a student's experience online.

Having spent several years on the job market as an adjunct, I found that having some online training and experience really helps candidates find jobs, and I would only expect the demand for this skill to increase. As the resources for online course delivery become more sophisticated, more schools will be turning to online classrooms.

Online teaching is something I think many of us instinctually resist, but it's worth noting that some pedagogical techniques work better when everyone is connected via computer. And for better or worse, knowing how to teach effectively online is an important skill for anyone who wants to teach, going forward.



I think it's great that the UH English Department understands this and is providing us the opportunity to gain both the training and experience we need to integrate this skill into our teaching repertoire.

**A Reflection on Ecocritic Scholars'  
Visit and Public Talk,  
By Lesli Vollrath, PhD Candidate in Literature**

On Friday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, the English Department's Environmental Humanities Collective hosted Dr. Tobias Menely and Dr. Jesse Oak Taylor for a talk titled, "Stories of Climate Change: From Deep History to the Day after Tomorrow." The English Department also experimented with Zoom video conferencing for the first time, streaming the talk live to audiences at Columbia University, the University of Chicago, and UC-Davis.

Opening with an evocative reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667) that addressed what he termed, "the climatological unconscious," Dr. Tobias Menely (pictured right) argued for the value of a geohistorical reading of literature, a method of reading that focuses on references to climate throughout history.



Dr. Jesse Oak Taylor (pictured left) then offered a close analysis of an array of other climate examples, such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the film *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962), and Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865). As a graduate student currently participating in a Post-Harvey Think Tank at Rice University, I found both the talks and question and answer session to be particularly engaging. Comprised of doctoral candidates from the fields of creative writing, literature, and sculpture at UH and Rice University, the think tank has regularly met throughout the fall and spring semester to examine concerns such as how the humanities can make a contribution to social sciences, how a city can improve its emergency planning response regarding animals, and how green infrastructure can be improved within the city of Houston.



Building on a discussion of these social concerns regarding climate change, I found it productive to hear scholars debate the merits and theoretical points of contention of reading literature through a lens focused on environmental concerns. It was also beneficial to consider how climate fiction, also known as cli-fi literature, might be used as a form of environmental education for students.

**PhD Candidate in Literature Lesli Vollrath** specializes in nineteenth-century American women's writing and teaches the Human Situation course for the Honors College. In addition to the public talk she describes above, she attended the graduate student and faculty lunch with Dr. Tobias Menely and Dr. Jesse Oak Taylor, which provided the opportunity for attendees to discuss and ask questions about the selection of pre-circulated essays from the visiting scholars' co-edited volume, *Anthropocene Reading*.

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### Hurricanes, Floods, and Undergraduate Writing Pedagogy By Soyeon Lee, PhD Candidate in Rhetoric, Composition, and Pedagogy and Recipient of a 2019 CCCC Scholars for the Dream Award

In March 2019, I received the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Dream Scholar Award. As a doctoral candidate in the Rhetoric, Composition, and Pedagogy (RCP) concentration, I am honored to be selected as one of twenty emerging scholars to win this award. The CCCC offers a \$1,000 travel grant to each scholar who has been historically underrepresented and made significant contributions to the field of Rhetoric and Composition.

Above all, I am very glad that my project with undergraduate writers in first-year writing II courses at the University of Houston, which reached out to our community in the aftermath of Hurricane



Harvey, gained nation-wide recognition. Drawing on the rich traditions of community-engaged approaches from our departmental strength and particularly on the critical activist pedagogy upheld by Dr. James Zebroski from our RCP program, this project calls on educators, administrators, and policy makers for attention to the physicality of places and environmental changes, which are developing areas in undergraduate writing education.

In this year's CCCC presentation, I highlighted how potential pedagogical interventions could be enacted in the first-year writing program in the aftermath of a massive natural disaster. Hurricane Harvey and its ensuing floods in 2017 severely affected the lives of community members, students, and faculty members at UH. Houston is located in one of the most racially, ethnically diverse metropolitan areas in the U.S.; its proximity to the Gulf of Mexico and its perennial storms and floods make it one of the most vulnerable urban areas. As a graduate teaching fellow of EN 1304, the second sequence of the first-year writing (FYW) course at UH, I designed an oral history interview-based research project with my students to rhetorically respond to this disaster in the classroom. During the spring semester of 2017, students in my ENGL 1304 course collected stories and voices from their neighbors and other community members, mostly first-responders and residents across the suburbs. The community members my students focused on were often misrepresented or underrepresented in news media coverage in the six months after the hurricane.

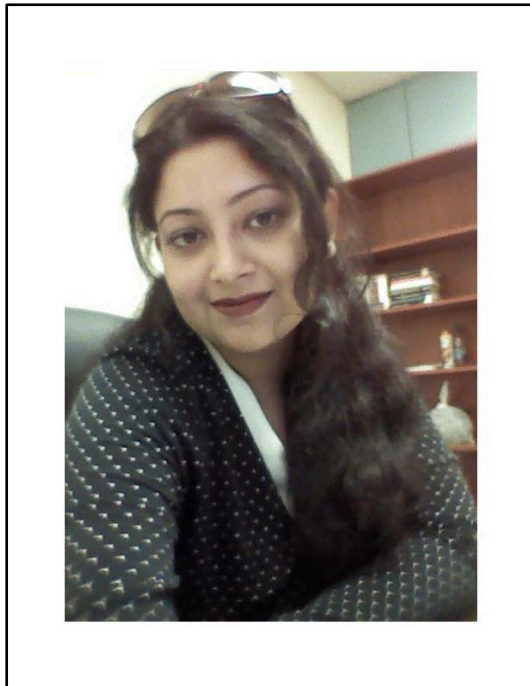
These investigative, critical thinking, and writing activities helped students build their geographical identity and ethical consciousness as emerging writers, researchers, and community scholars.

As a final outcome, students presented their oral history-based research through a conference, in which their interviewees, colleagues, friends, family members, and other instructors across the disciplines were invited. This outreach also occurred through digital spaces, as they contributed to collectively building a digital repository in UH libraries, from which community members and academics equally have access to descriptions and excerpts of those stories (<https://uh-ir.tdl.org/handle/10657/2989>). This crossing-border experience from classrooms to communities through oral history led students to approach writing as performing, i.e., entering the material site, listening, transcribing, translating, mapping, layering, and writing.

It is worthwhile noting that this project grew out of collaborations with other faculty members, experts, and staffs in UH communities. I have organized a series of guest speaker lectures by inviting into FYW classrooms key persons in and out of our department. These visitors include Dr. Carl Lindahl, folklorist and founder of Surviving Katrina and Rita in Houston (SKRH) in 2005, as well as Dr. Terry Tomkins-Walsh at Houston History Archives and Energy and Environmental Collections and Taylor Davis-Van Atta, digital scholarship coordinator at UH Libraries. This pedagogical experiment was also initiated by my conversations with community-engaged works by our faculty members, including Dr. Chatwara Suwannamai Duran and Dr. Nathan Shepley, and further grew into my theoretical engagement with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's notion of "planetarity," which I encountered in Dr. Hosam Aboul-Ela's graduate seminar in spring 2018.

The Dream Award assured me that it is time to respond to a call for action for what scholars term “a pedagogy of responsibility,” in which teachers and students write with local conflicts and problems that are often connected to the global-scale flow and fixity of people, resources, capital, and environmental changes. The first step is to recognize that students in college writing classrooms and residents in communities are already ethically-minded and responsible dwellers, regardless of their citizenship status, languages, and years of residency, for the material, geographical, and social environments they inhabit.

This award also encouraged me to develop further research. During the spring semester of 2019, I worked with ENGL 1304 students on archival research at UH Special Collections to trace the historicity of floods in Greater Houston Areas. I also earned the 2019 Selfe Digital Media and Composition Fellowship (DMAC) at Ohio State University (\$1600), so this summer I will be able to continue developing, alongside leading digital media scholars and colleagues, hands-on digital writing projects with a focus on geography-based disasters and less privileged communities. I am proud to be a recipient of this year’s CCCC award and look forward to working in connecting college writing curriculum to local communities and developing scholarly approaches to natural disasters, social disparity, and writing.



**Martha Gano Houstoun**  
**Distinguished Visiting Professors in**  
**Literary Criticism Deliver Talks at UH**  
**A Q&A with Professor Sreya Chatterjee**

**Forum:** In February, you hosted two visiting scholars from the University of Minnesota to speak at UH. How did the talks by Professor Keya Ganguly and Professor Timothy Brennan intercept with the classes you teach?

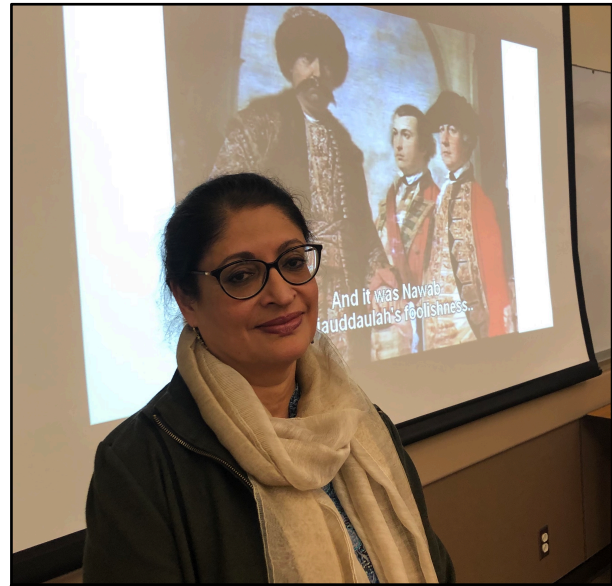
**Professor Chatterjee:** Professor Keya Ganguly’s talk focused on the film “Shatranj ke Khilari” by the globally renowned Indian and Bengali filmmaker Satyajit Ray. The talk was attended by several students from my Postcolonial Literature class. Similarly, Professor Tim Brennan’s lecture on the Palestinian intellectual Edward Said crucially shaped discussions on postcolonial theory and literature in the class.

**Forum:** What were some of the highlights from their visit?

**Professor Chatterjee:** The two public lectures by Professors Ganguly and Brennan were the highlights of their visit. Both events were attended by a large number of students (undergraduate and graduate) as well as faculty members from across departments such as English, History and Modern and Classical Languages.

**Forum:** Were there specific aspects of these scholars' respective talks that were particularly illuminating for your students?

**Professor Chatterjee:** Professor Ganguly and Brennan's visit complemented courses offered by the Department of English in the field of Postcolonial and World Literatures and Empire Studies. Their visit helped to augment the conversation in the undergraduate and graduate classroom around these diverse literatures. Moreover, their visit helped UH undergraduate and graduate students to situate their scholarly interests in relation to national and global conversations and theoretical trends.



Professor Ganguly stands before a scene from *Shatranj ke Khilari* at the conclusion of her talk.

**Forum:** Are there future talks or events that you are you interested in organizing?

**Professor Chatterjee:** I certainly hope to be able to organize many scholarly visits in the coming years.

**Dr. Sreya Chatterjee** specializes in 20<sup>th</sup> century British, Irish and South Asian literatures, Global Anglophone and Postcolonial Literatures, Feminist theory and Women's Writing. She is a member of the English Department's Empire Studies Collective, and an affiliate faculty in the India Studies program.

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**A Profile of Professor Roberto Tejada,  
CAA Vice President and author of *Still Nowhere in an Empty Vastness* (2019)**



Professor Roberto Tejada, Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Distinguished Professor at the University of Houston, is a poet, translator, editor, essayist, photography historian, and critic. He recently completed his tenure as the College Art Association (CAA) inaugural Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion. Noemi Press published his most recent collection of essays, *Still Nowhere in an Empty Vastness*, in March.

Over the course of the 2018-2019 academic year, Professor Tejada worked closely with students in the Mellon Research Scholars Program. Comprised of a select group of UH undergraduates from the fields of Creative

Writing and Art History, the Mellon initiative provides recipients funding as well as the opportunity to interact closely with faculty as they research and assemble their graduate school application materials. According to Professor Tejada, mentorship has an impact when you consider programs such as Mellon Research Scholars. Its offerings tie in with Professor Tejada's leadership with CAA and its mission to support the arts in society.

Professor Tejada has also been responsible for leading the reading group that met in preparation for the visit of poet, performer, and activist Jennif(f)er Tamayo (JT), whose appearance was made possible through the University of Houston's collaborative association with the Cynthia Woods Michell Center for the Arts. In addition to JT's *You Da One*, the reading group read a range of essays on queer theory and performance theory to supplement preparations for her visit. According to Professor Tejada, who was responsible for selecting JT as the UH resident artist, *You Da One* draws on thinking that is germane to performance studies. Her book includes visual images; even its typography, as Professor Tejada describes it, is critical to the space activated in the book. He has called it "a deranging and frightening view into the conscious that is the internet and rape culture," and described it as engaging in questions of the relationship between daughters and fathers, family trauma, and immigrant sorrow. Part tragic and part painfully funny, the book gravitates in large and pressing issues that do not come across in an expository way; contemporary poetry is capacious enough, Professor Tejada contends, to benefit from the ways JT works in writing.

In April, Professor Tejada also participated in the conference Latino Art Now! (LAN!) 2019, for which he participated in two plenary conversations. He moderated one about distinct practices of the Chicana art movement with the celebrated Texas artists Celia Álvarez Muñoz, Santa Barraza,

and Delilah Montoya, a faculty member of the UH School of Art, and spoke on another alongside Josh Franco of the Smithsonian Archives of American Art and art historian and cultural advocate Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, a leading scholar and theorist in the field of Chicano Studies. LAN! is Latino-funded and Latino-run; it brings together members of Houston's Latino communities in a conference for visual artists, art historians, curators, collectors and educators.

*Still Nowhere in an Empty Vastness* (Noemi Press, 2019), Roberto Tejada's most recent collection of essays, was the fourth to enter the titles in Noemi Press's Infidel Poetics Series, which engages with a broadly understood concept of poetics. The essays encompass art history, reflections on history, and statements and manifestos about the kinds of poetry that energizes Professor Tejada's own.



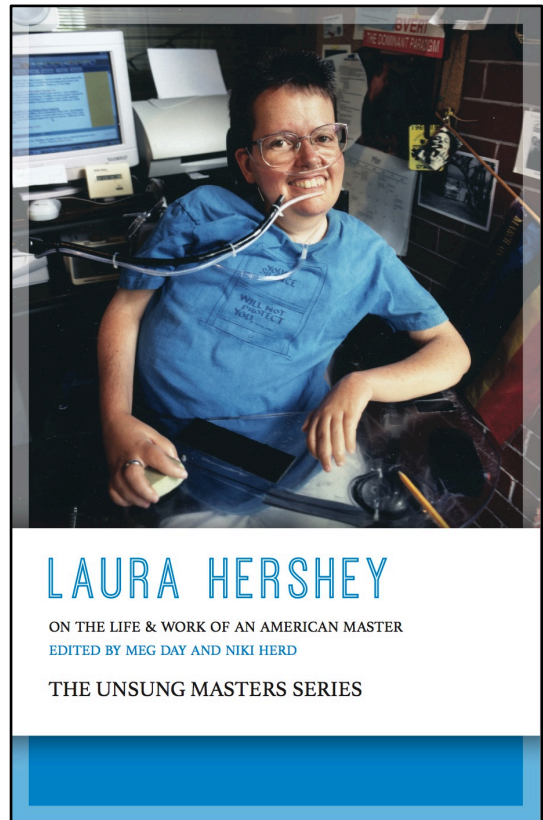
The collection also includes "little histories" and manifestos, as well as talks, such as the one Professor Tejada delivered as his George Oppen Memorial Lecture. One obsession driving the book is the idea of the Americas, or the geographic desire of thinking along hemispherical lines. Professor Tejada sites his 1987-1997 move to Mexico as key to that focus. He is interested in chronicles as a counternarrative to ways the Spanish Empire colonized the Americas and its native peoples, imposing the desires of Europe, which circle back to the ways in which latter-day tourism plays out in Mexico and Cuba. Professor Tejada describes Mexico as ultimately becoming a "mirror of fantasies and daydreams of US American writers."

This summer, Professor Tejada will be serve on the faculty at Naropa University's Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics Summer Writing Program during the week devoted to the topic of "Nomadology and The War Machine."

**The Unsung Masters Series Presents**  
**Laura Hershey:**  
***On the Life & Work of an American Master***

The Unsung Masters Series, now in its eleventh year, is funded through donations made to the Department of English by Nancy Luton. Each volume spotlights an unjustly neglected, formerly out-of-print author, and contains a range of scholarship surrounding his or her work. Interviews, letters, rough drafts, photographs, and other ephemera accompany the selection of author work.

The purpose of the Series is to not only to bring to the attention of new readers the work an important writer, but to give them a sense of the life and character of him or her. The Series is curated by Kevin Prufer, poet and Professor of English at the University of Houston, and Wayne Miller, University of Houston MFA alum and Professor of English at the University of Colorado Denver. Each volume is published through Pleiades Press.



Recent issues have been co-edited by graduate students paired with poets and critics. This year's volume was co-edited by Niki Herd, PhD Student in Literature and Creative Writing, and poet and professor Meg Day (Franklin and Marshall College). What follows is a Q&A with Niki Herd.

**Forum:** What do you admire most about the poet Laura Hershey and her work?

**Niki:** Hershey was fierce and unafraid. She and fellow activists stopped traffic in downtown Denver to protest and advocate for accessible transportation. Hershey called out Jerry Lewis and his Muscular Dystrophy Telethon—at some point she was jailed for this—demanding disabled people be presented in ways that highlighted personal dignity and independence. It was Hershey's courage and commitment to blending social justice and art I most admire. In fact, Hershey's well-known works, poems such as "Translating the Crip" and "You Get Proud by Practicing" remind me of the poetry created from the Black Arts Movement that placed social justice and the empowerment and pride of disadvantaged people as central themes. It's this kind of energy that draws me to Hershey's work.

**Forum:** What was the most challenging aspect of assembling it, and what kinds of skills did you gain from the process that you imagine you will carry over into future projects?

**Niki:** Well InDesign certainly was a challenge. It was like learning a new language. Months before production began, I had taken two InDesign classes offered by UH Technology Training. The classes were two hours long and at some point, early in the second class, everything became Greek to me; it's not a very intuitive program. Essentially, I learned InDesign on the job. It's software I'd been wanting to learn for some time and I'm proud to say I look forward to using those skills again for future projects.

**Forum:** How has your relationship to editing, design, and production evolved since serving as the graduate student editor of this year's volume? What skillset has this opportunity provided you with or perhaps sharpened?

**Niki:** Seeing the big picture is a personal strength, but when working on a project like *Unsung Masters*, detail is incredibly important. During production, I found myself becoming a bit obsessive about the attention to detail needed for copyediting and graphic design. It was a good experience—I can laugh about it now.

Speaking of perfection, what's perhaps unique about the Hershey volume is the consistency of inconsistency. There are so many versions of Hershey's poems in the world—in her archive, published in print and online journals—that a decision was made to publish the most recent drafts available. This means an essayist in the volume may include an excerpt of a Hershey poem in her essay, but the spacing or lineation of that same poem may be slightly different elsewhere in the volume. This was really important to Meg [the volume's other editor] and it seems an expansion of the current state of writing where nothing is fixed; where there's this fluidity from genre to genre, and in this case, poem to poem.

**Forum:** What do you hope readers take away from reading Laura Hershey?

**Niki:** In the early 2000s, Hershey was unable to vote because her polling place couldn't accommodate a wheel chair. In the last presidential election in 2016, a friend was turned away because a polling place couldn't accommodate his wheel chair. Hershey writes about the "violence of the stairs." We have to think about erasure and its various manifestations. If a confederate statue is a symbol of racism to some, what do most sidewalks and buildings represent for those with physical limitations? My hope is that folks recognize their privilege and use their power to champion the basic human rights of a group that remains unseen.

**Forum:** How do you see Laura Hershey's poetry intercepting with, or departing from, your work as a poet? Has being immersed in her biography and body of work influenced the way you think about poetics?



**Niki:** Hershey had engaged in oral history work—some of which chronicled the lives of women, of various nationalities, who were disabled and were advocates in their communities for disability pride. Some of these narratives made it into her work, and I know before she died, Hershey was interested in making oral history a prominent part of her poetry and prose. I too use source texts for my work, so there's that point of connection. Of course, Hershey earned her MFA from Antioch University, as did I. I was once told that Antioch is considered the low-residency version of Berkeley in terms of politics. I can attest to that being true and it makes sense that Antioch would be a good landing ground for any poet writing social justice. When I think of Hershey's work I think language and class. I suspect there's much to be written about her poetry and the poetics of class. Hershey was an educated, white woman, who grew up with a certain amount of privilege, yet her poetry relies upon a very non-academic register—a choice which speaks loudly about who Hershey envisions as her audience. Many of her poems are direct about this choice, and so perhaps now I'm even more cognizant of how language is working in my own poems; who it is letting in and who it is keeping out.

**Academic Research and Live Performance:  
Bringing Old Plays to New Audiences  
By Professor Ann Christensen**



A scene from Resurgens Theatre Company's performance of *A Warning for Fair Women* at the Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse in Atlanta, GA

After the publication of *Separation Scenes* in 2017, my monograph on early modern English domestic drama, I became acutely aware of a need—both in my intellectual life and in the book market: there was no modern affordable edition of *A Warning for Fair Women* (1599), one of 'my' plays in which a wife kills her husband.

With no author attribution to date (though Shakespeare, Thomas Heywood, Thomas Dekker and other playwrights have been proposed), the anonymous true-crime story was available to readers in

only two tricky formats: the black letter EEBO (Early English Books Online) version, which of course has no explanatory notes and where an “s” looks like an “f”; and a dated scholarly edition that is out of print. Because it is hard to find and read, *A Warning* has not been performed since the 16<sup>th</sup> century! An informal survey of colleagues in the US and UK who’ve written on *A Warning* confirmed that a freshly edited and accessible text was clearly needed. Here I trace the route not only to the completed manuscript but to the world-revival of the play on stage!

Luck and networking led me to Brent Griffin, the creative director of Resurgens Theatre in Atlanta, who staged the production last November. When his company was touring with their *Volpone*, Ben Jonson’s scathing satire, an old friend and colleague now on the English and Theatre faculty at Texas State, Joe Falocco, played the pathologically jealous Venetian merchant, Corvino; Joe asked me if *Volpone* should make a Houston detour. “Yes,” I exclaimed, doing my best to garner an audience for the show in the Chelsea Market theatre space. From there, Griffin and I exchanged email messages about my developing manuscript of *A Warning*, and this past September I gave a paper on pedagogical approaches to working with old plays at the Conference on Domestic Tragedies—“Death and Domesticity” that Griffin sponsored. When he decided to add a third play to his season of tragic households, he asked for my draft. That draft developed into his script in the following way:

I had a pre-contract with University of Nebraska Press for a “student friendly edition,” for which I needed friendly students; so, I worked up three curricular and extracurricular facets:

- 1) An independent research project to transcribe the text from blackletter
- 2) Informal table or reader’s theatre readings (2 at UH and a conference)
- 3) A class studied it alongside Shakespeare plays on the syllabus

With institutional support, I mentored a summer student who transcribed the black letter text and did some preliminary historical research with me. UH’s competitive grant for independent undergraduate research, SURF (summer undergraduate research fellowship) gives the student a stipend and a mentor, and the faculty member gets research help. My student, Aubrey Cowley, worked on writing the blocky blackletter script into Helvetica; she became the Poster Child for SURF Posters.

After getting a usable draft of the script together, I test-drove the edition, first with the UH SHX (Shakespeare Club), and then smuggled it into my upper-level Shakespeare class, making the case that because *A Warning* was in Shakespeare’s company’s repertory, our work was legit. Although one student evaluation complained, most enjoyed reading an “unknown” play. In the class, *Warning* got the same treatment as the Shakespearean works—with the addition of a full read-aloud that we recorded.

I was also lucky to have a dedicated core of undergraduates and graduate students and a colleague to do a table reading at UH, and then participants in the summer 2018 meeting of Attending to Women in Early Modern Europe semi-staged a hacked-up version with a full cast (with some doubling).

For this cut and this audience, I stressed feminist issues in the play, such as women's friendship. Often quite animated, the readings in all three settings led to crucial insights about hearing a play like this read aloud.

Some characters are country folk. Thus, they should not speak in an aristocratic "cheerio"-kind of accent.

The classic *Sunset Boulevard* line about "small roles versus small actors" engendered some personality for the random jailers and judges, and the otherwise nameless Lord 1 and Messenger 2. There is much hilarity in tragedy.

The final group project was to create proposals that pitched *A Warning* to a production company—theatre, audio, or film. Each project made explicit something that the students found either important or, in some cases, inexplicable about the play or the drama of the period, such as *Warning's* "dramedy" with Browne's over-the-top soliloquies: "Night, I could stab thee; I could myself", or the fact that all the characters seem to find him a total fox: "Not much is known about Browne except that he is very handsome, so he will be played by Scott Eastwood." A 1990s crime and court room drama drew on murder statistics for L.A. and the "obscure streets" in *Warning*; their court room looks suspiciously like the OJ Simpson trial. Meanwhile the inevitable Wild West adaptation assigned the character a "double life"—as upstanding shopkeeper by day and frequenter of Drury's brothels by night. Another one that played to the melodrama was a Telenovela adaptation because it has soap opera elements.

There is so much to say about the satisfying experience of working so closely for so long with words on the page and hearing them read aloud, watching them interest students, and then becoming fully and expertly embodied on stage. This work extended from modernizing the text and glossing all the allusions, defining the odd or archaic terms, writing an introduction and proving appendices of sources that the playwright used. This work led to two different scholarly presentations and one article, and of course the publication of the edition of *A Warning for Fair Women*. But the jewel in the crown was surely the live and recorded theatrical production. In the interest of space, I will comment on a few highlights:

The director explained that he suits the script to his actors (working exactly as Shakespeare and Co. did). So, for instance, an energetic woman actor commanded the stage as the deceitful neighbor through both physical and facial gymnastics, while other actors carried themselves in quieter and more contained ways. The play calls for a young boy, but the company found a girl who performed "child" well.

Dance, song, and prop conveyed much meaning as two dancers took on the symbolic roles of Lust, Chastity, the Furies, and so on—pushing and pulling the human figures, whom they capture in their gossamer scarves, like marionettes. The murderer holds up a bloodied handkerchief, which is called "an ensign of despair" and "a calendar of bloody letters."

Actors doubled as the production team: the lead woman choreographed the show; another actor designed (and maintained) gorgeous period costumes; the lead male did the flight choreography, and another actor produced the music, which he elaborated from a 1573 ballad that was contemporary with the crime that the play stages. This ballad, “The Lamentation of Mistress Anne Sanders” was sung twice and constituted the musical motif. I had sent it to them as a kind of afterthought and loved that it became so central to the show.

I am thrilled that this years-long process engaged UH students in research, writing, and creative responses to the play; I am lucky that it culminated in a professional production; and I am greedy to expose more students and viewers to The English Department’s Houston fund that supported the production, which has been recorded. I plan to host a public viewing—or better yet—find a way to engineer a live Houston premier once my edition comes out. Thank you for your interest in *A Warning for Fair Women*.

**On Leadership in the Arts**  
**By Wendy Wood, PhD Candidate in Literature**  
**and IAFA Student Caucus Representative**

Every year during spring break, writers and scholars of the fantastic flock to Orlando, FL, for the annual conference of the International Association for the Fantastic in the Arts (IAFA). This year was my fourth year to attend, but this year I went as the Student Caucus Representative. Serving as Representative means I run the student branch of the organization and represent all students on the Board.



The Student Caucus at IAFA already has a strong reputation, and as Representative, I work to uphold that strong tradition. Each year, the Caucus presents panels that are meaningful to students, including ones on how to create classes on fantastic literature or how to stay mentally healthy while a student. This year we hosted panels on how to get a job and how to get published. Additionally, the Caucus always hosts a writing workshop, where a noted editor in the field comes and works with students and their papers. We also organize social events where students can meet both one another and more established scholars in the field. As Representative I plan the panels and oversee the social events. I am also part of the association's Board where I speak for student members.

At UH, I focus on the Victorian period, where I examine the emergence of science fiction as a genre. I study developments in science and technology in the nineteenth century and show how they connect with the new literature of the period. So while the office of Student Caucus Representative means a lot of extra work, it is an incredible opportunity that has already given me so much toward my own project. First, the conference is a great chance for scholarship. IAFA stands out because it actively seeks to bring creative authors and academic scholars together in one conference. Authors come to read sections of their new works and talk about their creative process. Editors from many academic journals attend to both present scholarship and listen for papers that would fit within their journals. Additionally, scholars come to share ideas on fantasy, science fiction, horror, gothic, fairy tales, and other fantastic branches of literature. Many of those that attend come not just from the US but from around the world, making the conference truly international.

Because of the diverse attendance, IAFA provides incredible networking opportunities, especially for students. IAFA is especially unusual in how friendly everyone is and how participants actively connect with each other generally and with graduate students specifically. This year, I heard a number of new attendees say, "At this conference, it is totally normal to walk up to a perfect stranger and strike up a conversation." For me, this has meant striking up a conversation with someone in the coffee line and finding out he is Edward James, the conference's guest scholar. He then spent the next twenty minutes giving me a list of what books and resources would best help me on my dissertation. This year's guest speaker, Mark Bould, asked if he could come to our writing workshop so he could help peer review student papers.

IAFA has been a great opportunity for me, and I am honored to serve as Student Caucus Representative where I can work to continue bringing helpful resources to student members. I look forward to finishing my two-year term and passing along a strong organization to the next Representative.

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Have news to share? Please email Theodora Bishop, our graduate student editorial assistant, at **[uhenglishforum1@gmail.com](mailto:uhenglishforum1@gmail.com)**.





## **The English Department Welcomes Professor Sunny Yang**

Incoming professor Sunny Yang, recipient of fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies and the American Association of University Women, is excited to begin teaching at the University of Houston in the spring. While on fellowship, she has been focusing on the completion of her current manuscript, "Fictions of Territoriality."

The ideas behind her book began taking shape during her graduate school years,

when Professor Yang was studying work that emerged from a period when the United States experienced immense imperial expansion. This period (1844-1914) represented a moment when the country had to define itself and decide who belonged to it. To explore the contradiction between how the US framed itself as an anti-imperial beacon spreading democracy while obtaining territories without offering its inhabitants full Constitutional protections, she examines the ways in which American law and literature produced narratives about race and geography to rationalize its policies. Focusing on the extraterritorial cities in China, the Panama Canal Zone, the Mexican Cession, and Indian Territory, Professor Yang compares how writers from these various regions challenged these ideas by offering new ways of thinking about and classifying territories and peoples.

Her investigation of the opposing narratives that emerged from her period of scholarship relate to her enthusiasm for introducing students to the correlations between legal and literary texts. She believes it is not only important to think about other spaces of Asian American community and identity, but to also study Asian American literature from a comparative perspective. Taking geographical distinctions into one's considerations is essential, as well. While she contends that Asian American literature has been primarily associated with the East and West coasts, she is committed to exposing students to Asian American writers from the South.

We are thrilled to welcome Professor Yang to the University of Houston.

## Graduate Student Accomplishments:

**Walter Barta (MA Student, Literature)** presented a digital humanities project on “Nominalist Determinism in the 18th Century” at South Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (SCSECS).

**Theodora Bishop (PhD Student, Literature and Creative Writing)** spoke on the panel, “Not a Wasted Word: A Practical Field Guide to Plotting and Structuring Novellas” at the Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) in Portland, OR. She also read from her novella, *On the Rocks*, at the Visiting Authors Series at Warren Community College in Washington, NJ. Her poetry is forthcoming in *North American Poetry Review* and her essay on ghosts in Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* and Kelly Link’s “Stone Animals” is forthcoming in *The Writer’s Chronicle*. Her poem, “Matroyshka Doll,” was translated into Polish; the translation and English versions are forthcoming in *The Anthology of Polish-American Writers*.

**Sylvia Garcia (PhD Student, Literature)** presented a paper at the Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Conference in Boston. The paper is titled *Neobaroque Literature: En/gendering Resistance*.

**Sadie Hash (PhD Candidate, Literature)** presented the paper, “Singing She-Songs: Situating Recent Feminist Adaptations of *Beowulf*” at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) National Conference. She also presented the paper “‘Sometimes Yclept Beowulf’: Abusive Fidelity and Exploring Science-Fiction Adaptations of *Beowulf*” at the International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts in Orlando, FL. In May, she will present at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in Kalamazoo, MI; her paper is titled, “Language and Medievalism in William Morris’s Translation of *Beowulf*.” Sadie is the recipient of the 2019 Wyman H. Herendeen Award for Excellence in Scholarly Publication at the University of Houston.

**Subhi Hindi (PhD Student, RCP)** is the 2018 recipient of The Jeanette Morgan Endowment for Excellence in Research and Teaching of Rhetoric and Composition as well as of a Spring 2019 UH English Department Travel Award.

**Jenny Staff Johnson’s (MFA, Fiction)** short story, *Repeater*, was selected as a finalist in the *Texas Observer’s* 2018 short story contest. She read it, along with other contest winners, as part of the 2018 Texas Book Festival’s Lit Crawl.

**Soyeon Lee (PhD Candidate, RCP)** delivered a paper presentation entitled “Writing (in) a Flooded City: Enacting Georhetorical Performance by Undertaking Oral History in a FYW Class” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs) in Pittsburgh, PA. At this same conference, Soyeon also served as a facilitator for the workshop, “Oral History as Transmodal Mapping” as part of “Engaging the Global: Performing Translingual/Transmodal Pedagogies in

Writing Classrooms.” Soyeon is the recipient of a 2019 Cindy & Dickie Selfe Digital Media and Composition (DMAC) Fellowship at Ohio State University.

**Amy Lipke (PhD Student, RCP)** presented a paper about using language acquisition theory to teach first-year composition at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (4Cs) in Pittsburgh, PA. Amy’s research focuses on using linguistics, especially language acquisition theory, to teach writing.

**Grace Wagner (MFA Student, Poetry)** presented a paper entitled ‘Women of the Apocalypse: Pragmatic Feminism at the End of the World’ at the International Association's Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts (IAFA) in Orlando, FL. She also read a prose poem called "Calving" for the Flash Bonanza Graduate Student Reading at the annual Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Portland, OR.

### **Faculty Accomplishments:**

**Professor Margot Backus’s** book, *The Child Sex Scandal in Modern Irish Literature: Writing the Unspeakable*, co-authored with Joseph Valente, University of Buffalo, is forthcoming from Indiana University Press’s interdisciplinary series, “Irish Culture, Memory, Place.” Her article, co-authored with Spurgeon Thompson, “‘War upon War’: The Anti-War Militancy of James Connolly and the Irish Citizens Army,” appeared in a fall 2018 special issue on Ireland and World War I in *Modernist Cultures*. In March, Professor Backus was elected as the American Conference for Irish Studies’ (ACIS’s) Inaugural Executive Board Representative for Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, 2019-21.

A story by **Professor Robert Boswell** appears in the new anthology *Houston Noir*.

**Professor Chatwara Suwannamai Duran’s** “I have many things to tell you but I don't know English”: Linguistic challenge and language brokering” appeared in *Relationships, Reciprocity and Research with Minoritized Communities: Methodological Meta-reflections on Power and Equity*. She also presented, “Because she’s not a native speaker, she doesn’t have the knowledge: Privilege of native speakers in academia” at the Annual Convention of American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) in Atlanta, GA.

**Professor Karen Fang** chaired the inaugural media studies student prize competition.

The chapter, “Something Gained: The Role of Online Studios in a Hybrid First-Year Writing Course” by **Dr. Mary Gray** appears in the recently published anthology, *The Writing Studio Sampler: Stories About Change*. The chapter, which provides context and results from UH’s own hybrid/studio-supported 1303 and 1304 classes, argues for the efficacy of our online studio model as support for first-year writing.

**Professor Kevin Prufer's** newest book, *How He Loved Them*, is a finalist for both the Rilke Prize (for best book by an American midcareer poet) and the Forward/INDIE Prize, for best poetry book published by an American independent press.



**Professors Lauren Zentz** (left) and **Kavita Singh** (right) were pronouncer and judge, along with **Professor Richard Armstrong** (middle) from the Honors College, for the Houston Public Media Spelling Bee. This bee feeds directly into the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which takes place in May of every year and has a grand prize of \$40,000.

### **Faculty and Graduate Student Summer Plans:**

**Professor Margot Backus** will present "Tracking the 'Nearest Deviant' from "An Encounter" to "Nausicaa" at "Joyce Without Borders," the 2019 North American James Joyce Symposium, in Mexico City (June 12-16).

**Walter Barta (MA Student, Literature)** is working on a project on "Genres and Cities of 1771" with Professor Mazella, which they intend to publish this summer.

In May, **Theodora Bishop (PhD Student, Literature and Creative Writing)** will serve as fiction faculty at the Boldface Conference for Emerging Writers (May 20-24) at UH. She will also study with the poet Ada Limón at the Minnesota Northwoods Writers Conference in June (17-23) and, in July, teach an intensive workshop on the novella through Inprint.



**Professor Robert Boswell** is teaching for *Writing by Writers* in Chamonix in the French Alps this summer (June 8 to June 22). He will also be teaching in the Warren Wilson summer residency for ten days in July and will be a visiting writer at Bucknell in August for a week.

**Sylvia Garcia (PhD Student, Literature)** will attend the Institute of World Literature (IWL) at Harvard (July 1-25).

**Sadie Hash (PhD Candidate, Literature)** received a grant from PCA to go to Dartmouth to review the MacKaye Family papers for her dissertation.

**Aisha Sadiq (PhD Student, Literature)** is writing her dissertation on world literature (African American and Pakistani). She will be attending the summer session arranged by the Institute for World Literature (IWL) held at Harvard University.

In July, **Professor Melanie Salome** will deliver a presentation entitled, "Finding a Balance: The Vital Role of Campus Mental Health Support Systems for Students and Faculty" at the Writing Program Administrators Conference (WPA) in Baltimore, MD. In the fall, she will deliver the presentation, "The First Year Writing Classroom and What it means to be College-Ready" at the Rocky Mountain MLA (RMMLA) in El Paso, TX.

In May, **Grace Wagner (MFA Student, Poetry)** will present and lead an intermediate workshop on form at the Oklahoma Writers Federation Conference on Poetry of Witness and Documentary Poetics.

### **Honors Day Award Winners 2019**

#### **Jimmie Katherine Morris Gentile Scholarship in Literary Criticism**

Austin Svedjan

Joshlyn Thomas

#### **Robert and Jennifer Reichel Award**

Juliet Nguyen

#### **Sylvan Karchmer Prize in Fiction**

Aubrey Crowley

#### **Bryan Lawrence Prize in Fiction**

Corina Escalante

#### **Bryan Lawrence Prize in Nonfiction**

Prerana Atreya

**Howard Moss Prize in Poetry**

Lida Hedayatpour

**Bryan Lawrence Prize in Poetry**

Matthew Flores

**Jane Blaffer Owen Scholarship**

Justin Bui

**Khristin Shepler Scholarship**

Erin Cadenhead

**Bessie Monroe Ebaugh Scholarship**

Veronica Ordonez

**Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award for Excellence in English 1303 Teaching**

Soyeon Lee

**Outstanding Teaching Fellow Award for Excellence in English 1304 Teaching**

Michelle Burk

**Award for First Year Writing, ENGL 1303**

Bruno Falcone, Joann Kim, and Fatima Islam

**Award for First Year Writing, ENGL 1304**

Kamran Bhattacharya and Ulviyya Eyvazova

**Wyman H. Herendeen Award for Excellence in Scholarly Publication**

Sadie Hash

**Kathryn Powell Leadership Award**

Aris Brown

Timothea Wiratman

**Excellence in English Scholarship**

Matthew Flores

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Emily Starling

**Gulf Coast Editorial Assistant Award**

Natalya Pomeroy

Aris Brown

### **The Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF)**

Vinh Hoang

Lida Hedayatpour

### **The Houston Early Research Experience (HERE)**

Cristobella Durrette

### **The Mellon Scholars**

Justin Bui

Matthew Flores

Lida Hedayatpour

Suad Othman

Grayson Parks

Devion Reed

Keagan Wheat

### **Honors Thesis**

Peter Scamardo

Stephanie Matthiesen

Ashlie Strickland

Andrew Grisham

Rachael Stemple

Yazia Silva

Alexis Gutierrez

Lydia Mousa

Ketaki Nair

Mandana Naviafar

Laura Quinton

Abigale Ramos

Austin Svedjan

Aubrey Ward

### **Provost's Prize for Creative Writing**

2018 Prose Winner: Jackson Neal, "Requiem for a Lost Cause"

### **Houston Youth Poet Laureate**

Jackson Neal

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