Greetings from the Chair

Dear Alumni,

One of the factors leading many into careers as English professors is the belief that language—and the ways in which it can be used—is a vital part of who we are, of how we think and live. The reasons for your choosing the English major were, I am sure, quite varied, but I hope that your experience at UAlbany led to a common appreciation of the vital role that English in particular and the humanities in general play in our lives.

One of the anticipated pleasures of a teaching career is sharing a love of cherished books and observing students’ similar appreciations, as well as their new reactions. Another satisfaction, of course, is knowing that the field of English Studies and its gratifications are inexhaustible.

One of the unanticipated pleasures of teaching English (at least it was for me as I observed changes in the discipline over the decades) was the recognition that words are never just words and that using them well and carefully is a powerful and rewarding (in several senses of the term) means of acting in the world.

And so, one of the reasons to send a periodic newsletter to graduates is to foster a sense of affiliation among those sharing common values and experiences.

Whatever you might be doing now, we hope that the books you read, the papers you wrote, the faculty you encountered remain with you as sources of enjoyment in the first case, accomplishment in the second, perhaps mixed feelings in the third, and, above all, benefit in relation to all three. We hope that literary study has enhanced your analytical and expressive abilities and facilitated your engagement not only with the written word but also with the world writ large.

And finally, one of the reasons that I write today is to express gratitude for your being part of English at Albany and of a community that continues long after graduation.

All best wishes,

Randall Craig
Chair
Meet our New Faculty!


**Sami Schalk** joined the faculty at University at Albany in 2014 after receiving her PhD in Gender Studies at Indiana University. Her research focuses on the representation of disability in contemporary African American literature. Sami is an active member of the Society for Disability Studies and the National Women’s Studies Association. She is also a poet and Cave Canem fellow. In 2013, Sami was the recipient of an American Association of University Women dissertation fellowship.

**Wendy Roberts** joined the faculty in 2013 after receiving her Ph.D. in English from Northwestern University and her Masters in English from the University of Arizona. She researches and teaches within the field of early American literature with a focus on poetry, evangelical culture, Native American writing, and conceptions of the secular. Her book in progress, “Redeeming Verse: The Poetics of Revivalism,” rethinks the sources of British North American poetry through the everyday poetic practices of the most influential cultural transformation prior to the American Revolution: evangelicalism.
A Visit from Marc Guggenheim

Marc Guggenheim, a UAlbany English Department graduate, class of 1992, who returned to his alma mater Homecoming Weekend as a celebrity guest of the Alumni Association’s Higher Reach Program and a scholar’s event. On Friday October 10, Marc held a lively two-hour exchange with English students and aspiring film writers eager to learn the craft and ins and outs of making it in Hollywood. Marc’s own path to Hollywood success (he is executive producer of the CBS series Arrow based on The Green Arrow) wove through law school, collaborative scripts with his younger brother, working on copy for major comic books, and team efforts for the Spiderman films. He is married to Tara Butters, executive producer of the current hits “Resurrection” and Hawaii 5 O.

Interview with Guanglin Wang

Exchange professor from Shanghai

“There is so much vitality here. You see it in the buildings, the student population. The question is: how do you generate that vitality in the academic sphere? How can we combine classical learning with modern technologies and science? How can we redefine the boundaries and become truly interdisciplinary.”

Professor Guanglin Wang, Dean of the School of International Studies and the Foreign Languages School at Shanghai University and Professor of English, was voicing these thoughts while visiting the University at Albany campus as guest of the English Department. He met with the President, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, faculty, and graduate students during a week filled with lectures, conversations, and a roundtable discussion along with some sightseeing. Accompanying him was his wife on her first visit to the States. Their son attends college in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

According to Professor Wang, the future of the humanities depends on the ability of faculty and administrators to integrate disciplines and fields. “Chinese studies, Western Technology, science, even the history of fireworks and climate change must be incorporated into humanities studies. Blurring of the lines among the disciplines will enrich and reinvigorate education.”

Shanghai University and the University at Albany have signed an agreement for academic and cultural exchange between the two universities. “Shanghai is a big metropolitan city as is New York. The aim here is to minimize the gap between cultures. The Internet has enabled students all over the world to participate in the global community. They go to the same restaurants, visit the same websites, and are finding out they have so much in common.

On the other hand, Chinese students are used to excellent public transportation and are somewhat lost when they come here. In addition American students are dictated by the ever-present media and deprived many times of their own judgments. Chinese students can read English so they have access to other opinions. American students cannot read Chinese. So there are differences.”

Since his days as an undergraduate, Professor Wang has been engaged with British and American writers. His masters’ thesis was on T.S. Eliot and religion and he has translated American writers into Chinese, notably Henry David Thoreau who incorporated 9 pages of Confucius into Walden. He is the author of Being and Becoming: Cultural Identity of Diasporic Chinese Writers In America and Australia and has published numerous articles in leading magazines both at home in China and abroad.
Americanist Lecture Series 2014 – 2015: “Archives of the Past, Archives of the Present”

Nov 5 2014 - Justine Murison, Associate Professor of English (Univ. Illinois – Champagne)
Murison works on religion, medicine, and the history of the novel. In 2011, she published The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (Cambridge), and has co-edited special issues of Early American Literature and American Literary History. Her current book project is titled “Suspensions of Disbelief: Secularism and American Fiction.”

February 25 2015 - Dana Luciano, Associate Professor of English, Director of Women’s and Gender Studies Program (Georgetown)
Luciano’s work focuses on sexuality, affect, and nineteenth-century American literature. Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth America (NYU, 2007) received the MLA First Book Award. Her co-edited volume with Ivy Wilson Unsettled States: Nineteenth-Century American Studies (NYU) was published earlier this year. Currently she has two book projects - one on spirit photography, and another on animacy and eros.

May 4 2015 - Colin Dayan, Robert Penn Warren Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Law (Vanderbilt)
Dayan has made a significant contribution to the study of American literature, Haitian historiography, and American legal scholarship. Her most recent books are The Story of Cruel and Unusual (2007), which exposes the paradox of the eighth amendment to the Constitution, and The Law is a White Dog: How Legal Rituals Make and Unmake Persons (2011), which examines how the fictions and language of law turn persons (and other legal non-entities like dogs, ghosts, slaves, felons, and terror suspects) into “rightless objects.” The Law is a White Dog was selected by Choice as one of the top-25 "Outstanding Academic Books" for 2011.

You are invited to an Intercampus Panel on Art in the Age of Rapid Climate Change - Community Symposium
November 12, 6:30-9:00 pm, University Hall

The symposium will showcase experts from the humanities, natural and social sciences, and the arts to explore how various disciplines are responding to the changing environment. The evening will include a reception, panel discussion, moderated by Dean Edelgard Wulfert, College of Arts and Sciences, and question and answer session.

Panelists:
Professor Tom Cohen founder of IC3 (Institute for Critical Climate Change)
Professor Marc Frasanella, Stonybrook University, Professor in environmental art, architecture and design
Professor John Gowdy Professor of Humanities and Social Science from RPI and winner of the Herman Daly Award for contributions to ecological economics.

The event will begin at 6:30 p.m. with light refreshments, and the main program will start at 7:00 p.m. If you plan to attend, please let Cindy Endres, know via e-mail at cendres@albany.edu or by calling 518/442-4651by November 7, 2014. Please park in the Visitor Parking Lot on Collins Circle and provide the parking attendant with your name.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Dr. Mary Valentis, mbvbooks@aol.com Director, Center for Humanities, Arts, and TechnoSciences (CHATS), University at Albany
Carol Anderson, canderson@albany.edu, University Libraries
Dr. Mary Ellen Mallia, mmallia@albany.edu, Director, Office of Sustainability, University at Albany
Who’s Reading What?
Faculty Nightstand

Rick Barney:
I've just finished Margaret Atwood's Maddaddam Trilogy: volume two, The Year of the Flood, and volume three, MaddAdam; it's a unique end-of-the-world narrative where things don't quite end. I am also currently rereading J. M. Coetzee's The Lives of Animals, where he has laid out a case for animal rights delivered by the fictional persona of Elizabeth Costello, a kind of Coetzee avatar.

Erica Fretwell:
Marilynne Robinson, Housekeeping (1980)

Glyne Griffith:
The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution (1963 edition) by C.L.R. James
Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment by David Scott
The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times by Pema Chodron

Steve North:
French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co.
Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States, by Francois Cusset [trans. Jeff Fort]. Partly out of curiosity, partly as prep for teaching a required course for M.A. students.

Martha Rozett:
I have been reading a very provocative historical novel about Shakespeare by Jude Morgan, called The Secret Life of William Shakespeare. Here are some other books I read recently that are less clearly connected to what I teach: Love in the Time of Cholera by the brilliant South American novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez; Pictures at an Exhibition (a first novel by Sarah Houghteling), a novel about the theft of art owned by French Jewish families during World War II; and a collection of linked short stories by Andrea Barrett, called Archangel. I'll be rereading Dara Horn's World to Come for a book talk I'm giving in a couple of months. All are innovative recent fiction that engage with the past in thought-provoking ways.

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Your gift could support lectures, workshops, scholarships or other community events. To contribute to the English Department through the University online click here. The form will allow you to support “A specific school or program.” Once you tick that dial you will be able to select College of Arts and Sciences, and then enter the English department in the Comments section of the form. You can also make your donation in honor of someone special. Check with your employer to see if there is a gift matching program, too. Thank you for all the ways you support our department.
Visit our department website at [www.albany.edu/english](http://www.albany.edu/english) and find us on Facebook, University at Albany English and Journalism [here](http://www.albany.edu/english). Like our page, hover over the ‘Like’ button and click “Get notifications” to see what’s going on.

Send us your news!
We will soon be featuring alumni and current students. What have you been doing since you graduated? Send us job, education or other interesting information: Englishnews@albany.edu

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