

KEEP-ENG IN TOUCH

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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Dear alumni, current students, and friends of the English Department at Eastern:

This is my ninth and final semester as chair of Eastern's English Department, and therefore, this is my last time writing this newsletter greeting. I have been proud and happy to serve as chair over these last four and a half years. I've been able to meet with so many students, confer with prospective incoming first-years and transfers, advise those pursuing the writing minor, generally getting to know more of our majors and minors than I'd ever had a chance to before.

It has also been extremely satisfying to lead my colleagues—our talented and dedicated faculty—as we've continually sought to make our programs as strong and engaging as possible, while providing all of our students with a rigorous liberal arts education that will reap benefits throughout their lives. I've been happy to see our professors continue to win awards for their teaching and scholarship, publish groundbreaking creative and scholarly work, and act as leaders within the university and in the academic world.

In August, I will pass these duties and joys along to our next chair, Dr. Ben Pauley. He will, I am certain, be an able leader, and I hope you will join me in wishing him the best. You can read more about him and his plans for the next few years later in this newsletter.

To end this greeting, I want to thank the editors of this edition of *Keep-ENG in Touch*, Molly Curry and Kevin LaFrance. They've worked hard to come up with content ideas, recruit and work with writers, and put the newsletter together for publication. Their efforts have resulted in a publication they can be proud of and that I'm sure you will find an enjoyable read.

Graduates, I send you my congratulations and best wishes for a happy future. Continuing students, I hope you have a wonderful summer, and I hope to see you this fall when I will once again be a regular professor.

Dr. Barbara Little Liu
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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS



Kevin LaFrance

I'm so excited to share this newsletter. It certainly was an interesting time to make this, and a lot of emails got exchanged to make it happen.

I'd like to send my thanks to Molly who saved me so much stress when trying to put this newsletter together. I would also like to thank all the writers that took the time out of their busy school schedule to write for this newsletter. They were able to show just all the fantastic events that get hosted at Eastern every semester. Without them, I'd probably be pulling my hair out with how much additional writing I'd have had to do!

I would like to send the deepest gratitude to Dr. Liu for helping with everything. She was always there if we needed her and shaped this into a newsletter we could be proud of. We want to thank all of you, readers of this newsletter and writers of this newsletter. Without all of you, none of this would be possible!



Molly Curry

This semester was a blast. Putting together this newsletter and managing social media as an intern for the English Department was a refreshing break from my classes.

My thanks goes to Kevin for bouncing around creative ideas with me and showing me how to use Lucidpress. He's a real one. A shout out to all the writers who participated as well. It's no easy task to manage writing an article on top of your course load. So we appreciate your hard work and contributions to make this happen.

And of course, Dr. Liu, we thank you for your patience and guidance while putting this together. I'm grateful we caught you in your last semester as Chair of the English Department.

Dr. Mama and The Stories He Told

By Kevin LaFrance

On Wednesday, February 24th at 3:00, Dr. Raouf Mama premiered in a video, telling stories in celebration of Black History Month. The video was uploaded to YouTube and is still accessible though Eastern's YouTube channel. The live premiere of the video was open to the public and both students and teachers attended.

Dr. Mama started the program with a traditional song of invocation in Fon, one of his native tongues. Afterwards, he presented "The Interview with God," an anonymous poem recounting the encounter of a certain individual with God, the questions the individual asked God, and God's answers to those questions. For the question, "What surprises you the most about humankind?" God's reply was, "That they get bored with childhood. They rush to grow up, and then long to be children again." And when the individual asked God for life lessons for God's children, one of God's statements was, "They must learn forgiveness by practicing forgiveness."

The poem was followed by the story of "The Girl with the Large Eyes." It is about a beautiful girl whose village was stricken with a terrible drought. While searching for water along the banks of the river, she met a fish that filled her pitcher with cool, clear water. And so it was that every day she was able to bring her family, to their amazement, cool drinking water, but she never told them where she got it from. Her father's suspicions led him to a rash action and bring the story to an unexpected conclusion.



Dr. Mama telling his stories

The second story was about a hunter and a magic antelope in a drought-stricken village. One day, the hunter went to the Sacred Forest out of desperation and came upon an antelope. He drew his bow and arrow, but before he could shoot the antelope, it spoke, posing a perplexing problem for the hunter.

After the premiere of the video, Dr. Mama hosted a Q and A event on Webex. Students and teachers were able to ask questions on why he chose those stories and also express their own thoughts. He explained that the first story was included in Julius Lester's "Black Folk Tales" and that the second story was first narrated to him by his mother. He intends to retell it one day in one of his books. In reflecting on these stories, Dr. Mama stressed the importance of looking one's problems in the face, not turning away from them. Mama says, "If you face a problem, look it in the eye. You will find a solution." Dr. Mama said that the most important thing is what is happening right now. Since we don't know how long our life is, we must live in that moment, and not be afraid.

What happened to the Girl with the Large Eyes? What did the antelope say to the hunter? To find out, you'll have to watch the video yourself!

*"IF YOU FACE A
PROBLEM, LOOK IT
IN THE EYE. YOU
WILL FIND THE
SOLUTION."*

Eastern and the Bee

By Benjamin Dionne

On Wednesday, March 10th at 6:00, Eastern residential students participated in the first of the Spring 2020 Warrior Cup events. Five students and two judges gathered in the Student Center Theater for our very own spelling bee. Observing students and faculty watched the event over Microsoft Teams, as the judges tested contestants' knowledge of the English language, hoping to win points for their halls for the coveted Warrior Cup.

The judges started off with common but easily misspelled words such as "secret" and "different." Our very first contestant was disqualified after spelling the word "dessert" correctly but failing to repeat the word before leaving the podium. The judges were especially tough on silly mistakes such as

these throughout the competition.

The words got harder as the competition went on. In the following rounds, two students were disqualified for the words "souvenir" and "ambulance." Another contestant was almost disqualified for the same blunder as the first disqualified speller but recovered just before leaving the podium.

With just two contestants left, the word difficulty increased yet again. Our two master spellers dominated on words such as "diminutive" and "flamboyant." Speller One approached the podium and was given the word "acrimonious." They fumbled on the word and ultimately spelled it wrong. Speller Two stepped up to take their shot at the word, but also misspelled it. Both finalists were moved on despite their blunders.

On the very next word, "Dalmatian," speller one got tripped up and misspelled it. But before

Speller Two could approach the podium to spell the word correctly and win the spelling bee, one of the judges accidentally revealed the spelling of the word. In order to make up for the mistake, they gave Speller One a new word, which they spelled correctly, redeeming them and sending them to the next round.

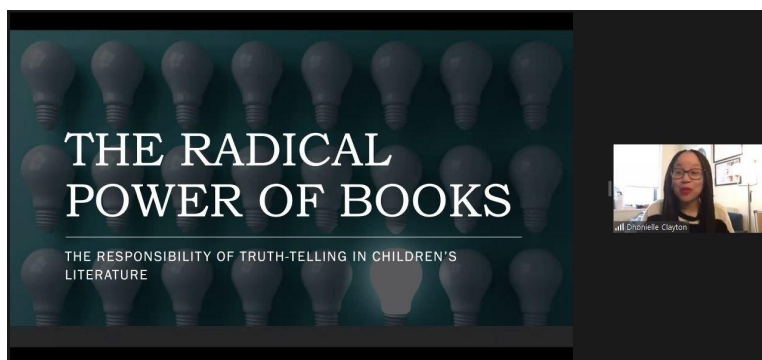
In the end it was a battle between two proficient spellers, going back and forth spelling words like "lieutenant" and "refrigerator." Finally, Speller Two was given the word "camouflage;" they spelled it partially and realized they had made a mistake. They asked the judges if they could start over, and the judges said they could, but they had to use the same letters they had previously said aloud. They completed the word with the incorrect spelling, and the word was given to Speller One. The competitor spelled it correctly and successfully ended the spelling bee. After a competition full of unexpected twists, Ollie Rodgers, a freshman from Mead Hall, won spelling street cred and Warrior Cup points for their hall.

Renowned author Dhonielle Clayton on the Profound Influence of Children's Literature

By Juana Santana

"Live in the present; don't deny the past. Live in the present and know the charge on you is to make this country more than it is today, and that's what I feel books are supposed to do." This is what Dhonielle Clayton, author and chief operating officer of "We Need Diverse Books," shared with the virtual audience of educators, students, and various literature enthusiasts of Eastern on March 10th, 2021 at 3:00. Clayton made a noteworthy presentation as she discussed the importance of literature and its contribution to younger audiences.

Clayton addressed the power of books on children by relating it to her personal experience. She spoke about the struggles that she faced as she attempted to locate characters from her same cultural background. She expressed the importance of having diverse characters which young audiences could idealize. Clayton emphasized the importance of inclusion in books which provides validation to those who often feel underrepresented. With a hopeful tone, Clayton expressed the radical power of books on younger readers. She conveyed the importance of literature and its "indoctrination" which not only



Clayton's Power Point on the subject

portrayed a media of entertainment but also at times depicted who we are and what we're intended to be. Her response to that earth-shattering conclusion rendered the importance of diverse characters in different settings. Clayton spoke of the major advocacy that she generated, as audiences of all backgrounds need urgent representation.

While working as a librarian, Dhonielle Clayton found herself surrounded with instances where this need for representation was progressively more evident. She shared a time when a younger student asked her for a book with characters much like Percy Jackson who shared his cultural background. Much to her disappointment, Dhonielle Clayton struggled to find any books that were remotely near to Percy Jackson's lively adventures with the main character having a different cultural background. She shared various anecdotal circumstances that wowed the Eastern audience. Clayton expressed her general concern

for the past, present, and future audiences that lacked fundamental inclusion in books and how it affected their conditioning and sense of self. A prime example which Clayton emphasized was *To Kill a Mockingbird*; she found it to be a required text in many English courses across the board while equally important books by authors of color are not being taught.

After realizing the massive lack in books that portrayed diverse characters, Clayton stated that she found a new motivation to invest in the diversification of books. Clayton emphasized this urgency, stating “When we don’t give opportunities to certain communities to write books, we don’t get the opportunity to ask questions.”

Clayton created such an engaging atmosphere during the live presentation that many of the educators and students felt compelled to comment on the impact that her perspective was creating. Many commented with encouraging words, while others asked how to incorporate diverse literature in their future classes. The eagerness of the educators and students was immediately reciprocated by Clayton, as she encouraged them to incorporate vast numbers of books that

varied in perspectives and diverse characters. It appeared that Clayton had awakened the Eastern community to become more involved and invested in how to take part in the ongoing issue. She proceeded to develop the subject of her latest project, “We Need Diverse Books,” in which she encourages diverse authors to create books that display their roots and thus provide readers with multiple avenues to new literary “heroes” that share similar identities to their own. Clayton also expressed how she takes part in this work by displaying a couple of books that she has authored, such as *The Belles* and *The Everlasting Rose*, her own contributions to the literary movement that she addressed. Finally, Clayton stated, “When we only get information and world views from one group it determines the types of conversations that we have.” This was a massive statement that spoke to the daring need and obligation that was owed to the future readers to come.

Jorge Juan Rodríguez V and His Visit to English 461

By Emma Lourenco

On April 14, 2021, Jorge Juan Rodríguez V visited Eastern to lead Dr. Liu's English 461 Religious Expressions in the United States class discussion on the topic of the Young Lords.

The Young Lords were a Puerto Rican activist group that worked to provide other Puerto Ricans living in poverty with community programs, and teach self-determination and empowerment. They often used Christian language and ideas to justify their work.

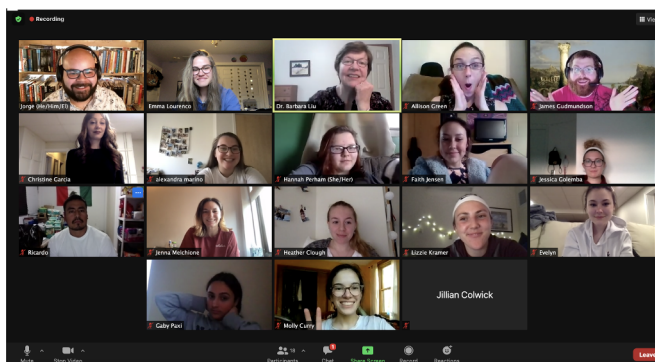
Students in English 461 have been looking at different types of religion in the United States and discussing the history of religion and the many ways it engages and impacts the everyday life of American citizens, and discussion of the Young Lords fit right in.

Rodríguez is local to New England and grew up in affordable housing in Manchester, Connecticut. He is the son of two Puerto

Rican immigrants who came to America one year before he was born. Rodríguez credits a lot of his academic and political interests to growing up in Manchester and being exposed to cultural and ethnic diversity. He has a bachelor's degree in Biblical Studies and Social Theory from Gordon College. He received his first master's in Liberation Theologies at Union Theological Seminary, and is currently pursuing his PhD at Union, studying Modern Religious History. Rodríguez has been busy working on his dissertation on the Young Lords. When he isn't studying, he is the Associate Director of the Hispanic Summer Program that aims to provide educational spaces for Latinx graduate students all over the country.

In preparation for

Religious Expression in the US class



Rodríguez's visit, students in English 461 were assigned works that discussed the Young Lords and their very famous act of occupying the First Spanish United Methodist Church in Brooklyn, NY. After introductions, the class jumped right into discussing a YouTube video that features Young Lord members as they reflect on occupying the church, a chapter focusing on the ins and outs of the Church Occupation, an article that focuses on the importance of the renaming of the church, and the collection of primary texts that gave readers a direct look into the minds of Young Lords members and leaders. The class went around and shared their ideas and interpretations of the texts and Rodríguez engaged in this discussion before going

into his presentation that focused on looking at the Young Lords through a religious lens.

Rodríguez's presentation, entitled "Occupying Abuela's Church" started with a picture of Jesus dressed as a Young Lord. He then went on to give the history of the Young Lords and the events that ultimately lead to the occupation of the First Spanish United Methodist Church in East Harlem, New York. Rodríguez explained the history of the Spanish church and the struggles of finding a space of their own in a time when the Puerto Rican population was dramatically increasing. Rodríguez heavily emphasized the importance in understanding the history and original members of the church in order to fully grasp the role it played in the Young Lords' foundation in New York. Puerto Ricans were suffering from poverty, discrimination, and police brutality. The church, to them, was much more than a building. When the church finally found a place of its own, Dr. Reverend Humberto Carrazana took

leadership and instilled more conservative ways. The Young Lords reached out to Carrazana in 1969, in hopes to host a breakfast service for Puerto Ricans in the community. Carrazana denied the request due to differing political views, but the Young Lords continued to attend Sunday service and reason with board members. On December 7, 1969, the issues came to a head, and Young Lords were attacked by police and arrested. There was an abundance of support from other Young Lords and members of the community. On December 28, 1969, the Young Lords occupied the church and renamed it "The People's Church." They served breakfast, provided education, and held Sunday services. The Young Lords believed the ways they were aiding their community were more Christian than anything the church was doing. This occupation lasted 11 days before they were arrested. However, membership flourished; more women joined after seeing the leadership roles other women held within the

Young Lords. This occupation forever changed the church and encouraged them to look internally and reconstruct.

Rodríguez concluded his presentation by highlighting the fact that one cannot accurately tell the story of the Young Lords without telling the story of religion. The way the Young Lords communicated their beliefs used strong religious language as well as challenged the traditional Christian beliefs. Rodríguez also tied in present day organizations like Black Lives Matter, women's movement groups, and LGBTQ+ groups and how they also sometimes use religious language when fighting for their beliefs. Rodríguez then had a quick question and answer period with English 461 students before waving goodbye virtually. The students in English 461 were able to gain several different perspectives of the Young Lords and the Church Occupation through the meaningful discussion led by Rodríguez.

Dantiel W. Moniz Visits Eastern for a Reading and Discussion

By Kevin LaFrance



Dantiel W. Moniz

On March 24th at 5:00, Professor Taylor hosted a virtual Zoom reading and question session with Dantiel W. Moniz, who read from her debut collection of short stories: *Milk Blood Heat*.

Attendees included students from Taylor's own class, as well as various interested Eastern students. All of it was made possible by the Visiting Writers Series (funded by the Dean of Arts and Sciences) and the Department of English.

Professor Taylor introduced Moniz with words of praise for her stories, which delve into themes such as gender, race,

sex, class, and even mental health. All the stories take place in the state of Florida, specifically within Jacksonville, as Moniz thought her hometown was underrepresented in media, with Orlando and Miami being the more popular choices. After a brief introduction, Moniz read a section from one of her short stories, "Thicker Than Water". The story follows a girl and her brother along with her brother's girlfriend, Shelby, who shows strong confidence in her body—from selling pictures of her feet, to allowing her body odor to be mixed in with her perfume.

Afterwards, Moniz took questions from the audience, with most questions tending to be about either the story or about her writing process. This Q&A continued for the remaining allotted time, as the audience was very intrigued by how Moniz created her stories and how she goes about writing.

In regards to "Thicker Than Water," Moniz finds the piece to be funnier and lighter than her other work. She tends to write darker stories and felt this one was a good way to liven the stories up. She also liked the use of discomfort as comedy and felt Shelby helped bring much of the comedy into the story.

Questions began to shift towards the development process of the collection. One major aspect is that Moniz had not

realized that short story collections have to have their titles be named after one of the short stories. Moniz thought that she could come up with an original name, but later learned that she needed to use one of her stories for the title. She went with *Milk Blood Heat* because of its elemental feel, as it touches on many of the themes presented within the book.

This idea of common themes is what made Moniz realize she could write a short story collection, as many of these stories were originally individual pieces but began to have similarities that would work well in the collection format. She also had to think about what order the stories had to be in, as this order could greatly influence the reader's thought of the overall collection.

One thing she made clear was who she wrote this collection for. She said that the main audience was herself. She finds that people don't care until they care, and the people who discover, read, and love her work are a bonus. She tells her audience that if they want to write, don't write for the market, write what you want to see, and even though that may not connect with everyone, that's OK.

She also went into the hardships of writing and publishing a book. She says that rejection will be commonplace, and you'll have to be ready for that

constantly. Along with criticism, both good and bad. Developing a thick skin is important in the world of publishing and creative writing.

The event came to an end at 6:00, with everyone who asked questions satisfied. Professor Taylor and the audience thanked Moniz for taking the time out of her day, and Moniz thanked everyone for coming to the event, hearing her read, and learning about her writing process.



Cover of Dantiel W. Moniz's short story collection

Meet The New Chair of The English

Department: A Chat With

Dr. Benjamin Pauley

By Nicole Moavero

In light of his election to chair of Eastern's English department (starting next fall), I sat down to chat with Dr. Pauley about his experience at the university, as well as his insights about our English program. Pauley found his niche here at Eastern Connecticut State University in 2004, making this his sixteenth year. When asked what attracted him to Eastern, Dr. Pauley responds, "I was really excited to come to Eastern because of its designation as Connecticut's public liberal arts university."

Here at our university, Dr. Pauley has taught a range of courses including English 202: Intro to English Studies, English 203: Intro to Literary Criticism, and English 125: Intro to Literature. Currently, he is teaching a course on copyright in the digital age, which is new territory for him: "It's a new topic for me. It kind of grows out of some things that I'm interested in, like questions I've looked at in the context of 18th century literature, but bringing them into a totally different context. It's been fun to try something new!" In addition to this course, Pauley also is currently teaching a senior seminar

capstone course: Imagining Monsters. He expressed his great love for teaching this specific course: "What I really like about teaching the capstone seminar is seeing students in their senior year confronted with this project that sounds big and scary, but then gradually realizing that they can totally do it. I'm not saying it happens entirely smoothly, but it's a lot of fun to watch as people make their way into the project and figure it out." Pauley finds English Night every semester especially exciting because he gets to see former students of his at the finish line, presenting their work, and "just killing it."

Pauley's research specialty in the English field is 18th century "mostly" British literature, as he himself puts it. He also works in a field known as bibliography, which he explains as "the study of books as material objects, but looking at old books and trying to figure out how they were constructed. What does that tell us about the role that this book played in the lives of the people who made it, who bought it, who read it, etc.?"

Dr Pauley's undergraduate work was done at a small liberal arts college, Reed College, all the way in Oregon, and he has history teaching at another similar private institution, Oberlin College in Ohio, before taking root at

Eastern. Coming from that background, the idea of working at our public liberal arts school was special to Pauley: “...The idea that there would be a public university that was dedicated to a liberal arts mission, but within reach of everybody in the state of Connecticut, was really, really exciting.”



Professor Pauley

Though Dr. Pauley has not taught a course relating directly to his specialty in a while, he explains that this is because the English major had to be changed from primarily literary studies coursework to reflect the needs of current students, as well as the expertise of the faculty in the English department. There was more to our major than just old texts. Students can now choose from a variety of concentrations within our major here at Eastern: whether their passion is rhetoric, creative writing, literature or teaching, there's a path for every English student. Though this shows a

beautiful and much needed expansion of the program, Pauley admits that the faculty does still struggle with modernizing the major: what classes should always be made available so that English students are getting the education that they need and desire?

However, it is this shift from just literature to a more diverse department that Pauley admires the most about our English program: “Now we've got a major that recognizes that all these fields are connected with one another. The English major is not one thing, and I think that's healthy.” That leads into another aspect of our English major that Dr. Pauley enjoys: the fact that students in the program can try out different things. “I don't think that students end up being too locked into anything, I think there's enough flexibility that if someone decided their junior year ‘I want to do something slightly different,’ they would have a way to complete the major requirements but do it in a way that allows them to pursue the things they're interested in...When you go to school, you should find the thing that makes your brain do cool things for you and then do that.”

When I brought up the million dollar question about what Dr. Pauley plans on bringing to the table in his time as head of the English department, he

first mentioned how much he likes the concept of the “chair” of the English department. He commented, “It’s sort of a metaphor. A chair is something that you sit in, and it’s something that more than one person can sit in over time. I think of being the chair as I’m taking a turn in trying to organize the work of the department and keep things moving forward.”

Dr. Pauley personally wishes to keep working towards making the English major a place for students to find “their intellectual home,” as well as attempting to make the English major more appealing to students in general. He commented on the immense anxiety that students tend to feel about their lives after graduation. Many students tend to worry that studying English won’t get them to where they want to be in life. But English majors, Pauley says, go on to a variety of careers that students may not normally expect, including but not limited to management in a variety of business fields. He explained, “I want to make sure that incoming students are getting the message that, if this discipline allows you to do something that really interests you, you’ll get a lot out of it. The job will come. Finding your *first* job may not be as straightforward as it would be for someone in another discipline, but you will get there.” In

addition, Dr. Pauley spoke on his wish of diversifying the English department during his time as chair. He commented that the diversity in our English department is “nowhere near as proportionate” as the entire Eastern population, meaning that our English department may not be currently including as many different racial backgrounds as there actually are on our campus.

Though this is a new set of responsibilities, Dr. Pauley is taking it in stride and is ready to take his turn in chairing the English department. He is looking forward to continuing the work in making our department even more excellent for current and incoming English majors for semesters to come!

“....When you go to school, you should find the thing that makes your brain do cool things for you and then do that.”

Exposing Eastern Exposure

By Tori Congdon

When creating a body of work as complex as a literary journal, it's important to take care in each and every detail that goes into it: from the amount of poetry, fiction, and artwork that is included, to making sure that these pieces thematically fit together. It even comes down to each and every typo and punctuation mark. For the Creative Writing Club, *Eastern Exposure* is no different.

Eastern's only student-created literary journal is a long-standing tradition that the club annually organizes and distributes for other students, faculty, and staff members across all majors to read and enjoy. In the fall semester of each year, Creative Writing Club accepts student submissions for *Eastern Exposure* up until the end of November. Creative Writing Club accepts various forms of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction and other essays, artwork, and photography that students wish to share. Just like last year, this was not a process that has been greatly affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Just like the grand majority of this year has been for everything else, our weekly club meetings have been taking place via the online platform Microsoft

Teams. The first half of our spring semester is dedicated to reading through *Eastern Exposure* submissions as a club. For this process, we gear the club's interest before splitting into two committees: the poetry committee and the fiction committee. Over half of the submissions we receive are poetry, so eventually the fiction committee turns over to reading through poetry submissions as well.

Each week before club meetings, in our reminder emails, we included two packets of 10-15 poems for those in the poetry committee, and two to three pieces of fiction for the fiction committee to read before the meeting. During meetings, our time is reserved for looking at each piece of writing, and much like a writing workshop, talking about the strengths of the piece, the weaknesses, and overall why or why not to put it in *Eastern Exposure*. Although this may sound tedious, being able to read through so much student work is an inspiring experience. A key part of reading through these submissions is that they are all anonymous, so that way there is no prior bias towards work based on who wrote it. This allows those who are members of the club to submit work to *Exposure*, too.

Of course, work submitted to *Eastern Exposure* this year has been heavily

influenced by COVID-19; the term “pandemic art” has come to mind a lot in regards to what’s been submitted. Not only has the pandemic had an impact, but other social and political events have influenced works, too. Because *Eastern Exposure* reflects the student body and thus student issues, these were topics we found unavoidable to include in this year’s issue. However, when selecting work, it wasn’t the only thing that we, as a club, kept in mind. Instead, our overall theme for this issue has been the idea of growth: how do we, as a society, still grow through a pandemic? How do we grow from the issues that beg for a call



Cover of 2021's Eastern Exposure

Art by Safiya Palmer

to action? How do we continue on after this?

Putting an entire literary journal together in the course of a semester is painstaking work, but it’s also an important tradition that allows all students to show off their hard work, represent the finest of Eastern, and also share why creating art like this is important. As I wrote in the editor’s note for this issue, people would not have survived the pandemic if it weren’t for the arts, which is why it is such a privilege to still be able to create *Eastern Exposure* this year, in spite of the virtual obstacles that we have faced.

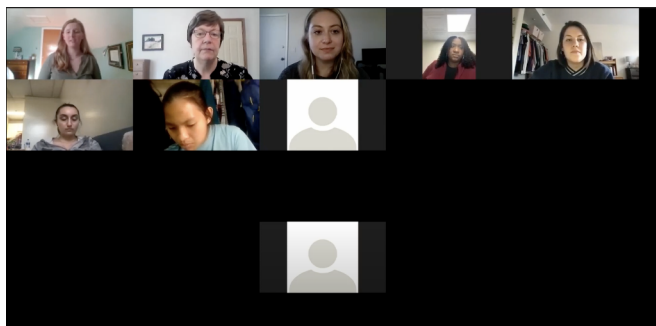
It may not be Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, but *Eastern Exposure* is our small testament to the wonderful art that has been created within the past year. *Eastern Exposure* will be made available at the end this semester. Be sure to check it out!

"...being able to read through so much student work is an inspiring experience."

English Major Alumni Speak About Their Not So English Major Jobs

By Jordan Chenette

On April 6th, 2021, the English department hosted a virtual installment of the annual English-at-Work panel. Held via Zoom, this panel featured three graduates who were using their English degree in a career that would not typically be assumed for the major. This event was meant to spotlight the variety of careers students can look toward pursuing after graduation and featured three graduates: Kelly Galligan, Marcia Lee, and Jessica Link. You can find the entire event on Eastern's YouTube Channel!



The Alumni Panel

Galligan, who graduated in 2016, initially entered the workforce as a marketing coordinator for a civil engineering and marketing firm. This sparked her interest and passion for simplifying business jargon into more digestible language for the everyday reader. Two years later, she took a job as a proposal writer for the CVS health

company Aetna and has been with the company ever since. With this job, Galligan must be creative and respond to strategic questions, which she lists as her favorite part. One of the biggest challenges in her job is something every English major can relate to—staying within the required word limit!

Lee graduated in 2013 and has since held many jobs in the field of finance. Directly following graduation, she worked for Suncap Federal Credit Union in Hartford, CT, first as branch manager, then as marketing manager. Through these positions, Lee gained experience with community outreach, business development, new talent acquisition, and more. Lee cites her most rewarding experience at Suncap as her opportunity to write, develop, and teach the company's financial literacy program. She remained with Suncap until 2020, when she accepted a position with Radius Bank (now Lending Club Bank) as their Core Operations Platforms Manager. In this role, Lee ensures the security and functionality of this online bank's operating system. Similar to Galligan, Lee cites creative freedom as one of her favorite things about her current job. She also added the flexibility of her job and ability to work from home as an area of enjoyment.

Finally, Link graduated from ECSU in 2014 and entered into the world of education as a pre-school teacher, before turning to a more corporate career path. After her time in the classroom, Link began working for Hitachi Capital America Corp. as a Credit Application Specialist in the transportation finance division. In 2018, she was promoted to Documentation Specialist, where she created and reviewed documents for funding. Additionally, Link was a founding member of the Women's Networking Group at Hitachi. She was recently hired by North Mill Equipment Finance LLC as a Contracts Administrator. She cites how she gains fulfillment from the room provided to continually grow and improve in her career and craft.

"...always keep your job search status as 'actively seeking.'"

For a degree that is typically associated with two careers, teaching or writing, these three graduates prove the versatility of jobs that are possible for English majors. When asked how they feel like their time at ECSU prepared

them for their career, the answer was unanimous: the acquisition of comprehension and communication skills has been critical in their success. It is this skill set that sets English majors up for a variety of careers. The panelists also had good advice for students looking to explore this variety. When looking for a career after college, Link suggested to think about your specific skill set, rather than just Googling "careers for English majors."

All three panelists had one outside resource that greatly impacted the course of their professional careers: LinkedIn! Each panelist had accepted job offers that came to them through this platform, allowing them to advance in their field. Lee offered a great piece of closing advice regarding this platform: always keep your job search status as "actively seeking." Galligan, Lee, and Link are each a testament to the positive opportunities that await ECSU students after graduation, as long as they remain open and welcoming to them. Given the encouraging words and messages of gratitude shared by the virtual audience at its conclusion, it's fair to say that the students benefited from the wisdom of the panelists!

Spring 2021 English Night

By Molly Curry

On Thursday, May 6, the Spring 2021 English Night semiannual awards and capstone presentations took place at 5:30 pm on Zoom. The event was led by Dr. Barbara Liu, the chair of the English Department. It was Dr. Liu's last year as chair and last time hosting the English Night event.

The evening began with awards for graduating English majors. There were 6 awards in total including the Award for service to the department which went to Julie Ornberg. This award goes to students who have served the English Department with projects, coordinated events, and organizing student clubs. Julie Ornberg received this award for her cheerful and diligent work in the English Department office for the last 4 years.

The second award was the Lifelong Learning award which went to Nicole Marquis. This award is for students who are returning or continuing their education. Nicole was nominated by Dr. Pauley and Dr. McDonnell for her passionate pursuit of knowledge.

The third award was the Award for Contributions to the Cultural Life of the Campus. This award is given to

students who are active in literary publications, theater, or other artistic events on campus. This award was given to Liz Colón for her involvement with OLAS and the National Organization of Women, and her frequent participation in Fine Arts Center events.

The next award was the Award for Excellence in Teaching or Tutoring. This award is for students who have shined in teaching internships, the Writing Associates program, or other teaching experiences. Oscar Garcia received this award in honor of his work as a tutor in the writing center as well as English 100P and as a Teaching Assistant in other classes.

The fifth award was the Award for an Outstanding Future Educator. This award goes to a student who has performed with excellence while

completing a double major in English and Early Childhood, Elementary, or Secondary Education to prepare for a teaching career. This award was given to Julia Mackinnon who is double majoring in English and Secondary Education. She was nominated by Dr. Speicher for her "exceptional content knowledge, enthusiasm for learning, and intellectual curiosity."



The final award for graduating seniors was the Award for Academic Excellence. This award is given to students who exceed in superior ability and dedication to English Studies. The award was given to Natalie Devlin, an English major with a concentration in secondary education. On top of her English major, Natalie is also a major in history and social science with minors in anthropology and business administration, while still maintaining a high GPA.

The event was turned over to Dr. Ferucci who presented the awards for first year writing students. Each semester, two first year writing students (students in ENG 100 or ENG 100P), are honored for innovative, creative, researched or uniquely articulated writing pieces. The award was given to Page Stegna for her piece "Book Censorship and the Right to Read" and Christiana Blank for "What if I Pursued My Childhood Novel?"

After the awards were presented, Dr. Liu introduced Dr. Clermont Ferrand and Dr. Pauley to talk about their capstone class and introduce their capstone presenters. Dr. Clermont-Ferrand began with an introduction of her capstone seminar, Gender and Sexuality in Medieval Literature. Their capstone assignment was to engage with 2 primary works from the years 700 to 1400 and apply a critical literary theory to them.

Presentations started with Tori Congdon who presented her capstone project "I'm a Mirrorball: Gender Nonconformity, Homosocial and Homoerotic Bonding, and Phallic Imagery in *The Canterbury Tales*". Her presentation discussed the varying expressions of gender in Chaucer's characters, and how they mirror his own beliefs about sexuality and gender. Tori ended her presentation by raising the question: "What are we missing from history, if we refuse to acknowledge the importance of gender?"

Next to present was Maxwell Chace with his project "For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd": Transgression and Hegemonic Masculinity in Chaucer's 'Miller's Tale'". Max read a condensed version of his thesis paper that engaged with different scholars and concluded that the Miller's Tale was not simply an exploration of boundaries, but a manifestation of Chaucer's sexually transgressive self.

After his presentation, the floor was opened to questions for Maxwell and Tori.

Next, Dr. Pauley was invited to introduce his seminar, Imagining Monsters. Students in that seminar looked at Monster stories and how they reflected the cultures that have produced them. They analyzed monster stories from the Anglo-Saxon period up to current times. The first to present their Imagining

Monsters capstone project was Lisa Rondinelli with her original creative writing piece *The Pride Before the Fall*. The genre was dystopian, futuristic, and sci-fi. Her book features a young girl, Eve, who volunteers to go to space to help find a solution to Earth's sustainability crisis and returns to find Earth impacted by an explosion that has mutated humans and divided society into factions. Lisa ended her presentation by reading a short excerpt from her novel to the attendees.

Next Julie Ornberg presented her capstone project "Celebrity Skin: The Contrasting Representation of the Serial Killer". Julie began her presentation by reading the introduction of her essay about how serial killers in fiction are so compelling because they show how humans can be monsters in real life. Her paper analyzed depictions of serial killers in popular culture and how society encourages the fascination with these individuals.

The floor was opened to questions and the capstone presenters offered advice about their writing process to other students in the meeting. Dr. Liu concluded the event by thanking the presenters and everyone who attended.

Don't forget that these presentations can be seen in their entirety on Eastern's YouTube channel so don't miss it! The excellent work of these students is worth a watch.

English Majors to Receive Awards for Excellence

Liz Colón received the Award for Contributions to the Cultural Life of the Campus. Colón received the award for being actively involved in literacy publications, theater, or other literacy and artistic events on campus.

Julie Ornberg received the Award for Service to the Department. Ornberg was a student who helped with department projects, coordinated events, or organized student clubs that have a connection with English studies.

Julia MacKinnon received the Award for an Outstanding Future Educator. MacKinnon displayed and achieved an academic excellence while completing a double major in English and Early childhood, Elementary, or Secondary Education in order to prepare for a career in teaching.

Nicole Marquis received the Award for Lifelong Learning. Marquis was a student who showed a steady love for literature, writing and the pursuit of knowledge.

Oscar Garcia received the Award for Excellence in Teaching or Tutoring. Garcia was given the award for how he excelled in the teaching internships, the Writing Associates program, or other teaching experiences.

Natalie Devlin received the Award for Academic Excellence. Devlin was given the award for they have demonstrated superior ability in and dedication to English studies.

Page Stegna and **Christiana Blank** received the First-Year Writing Awards. These two were awarded for their ENG 100 or ENG 100P writing as innovative, creative, splendidly researched, or uniquely articulated.

Thank you to our contributors!

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