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FALL 2013



NOTE FROM THE CHAIR



Dear Friends.

I am delighted and honored to begin my first semester as the new chair of the English Department. This is my sixth year at the University at Buffalo, and although it's hard for me to believe, my twenty-first year as faculty in higher education. After receiving my PhD from Duke University in 1992, I started my career at North Carolina State University, and then moved to the University of Notre Dame, where I taught from 1995 until 2008, when I came to UB.

As a new chair, I'm excited to be leading such a remarkable and vibrant department at a critical moment in the history of UB and the history of higher education in the US. Our Provost Chip Zukoski recently announced a bold, new vision for the university which involves strengthening UB's impact as a leader in scholarship and research across the globe; increasing the overall size of the faculty while building a diverse, 21st century cohort of scholars, teachers, and researchers; and ensuring the highest level of teaching for our undergraduate and graduate students. We have already seen the effects of the Provost's plans in the English Department. This year, we are hiring two African Americanists, and we have high hopes for similar hires in the coming years.

While these are exciting times at UB, we also face very real challenges. As a result of the bad economy of the past six years, politicians and pundits have been asking about the value of an education in the humanities. In newspapers, magazines, and blogs across the country, people now talk about a crisis in the humanities, as the humanities are cast as a financial luxury that we can no longer afford.

From my perspective, we need the humanities now more than ever, and the current crisis in the humanities is a great opportunity to explain why. At the heart of the humanities is risky thinking. As scholars and life-long students of literature and culture, we constantly test truth claims based on tradition and custom, and we base our knowledge on discovery and innovation. This has very real implications for public life. The humanities are the part of the university that most directly confronts the challenges of living together in a culturally diverse and technologically complicated world. Without the humanities, we simply lack the tools we need to deal with contemporary life.

The English Department at UB is a place where risky thinking happens. As an English Department, we prize innovation—one of the Provost's main themes—in our scholarship, creative work, and teaching. That's what attracted me to the Department when I decided to come here six years ago, and that's where our future lies. I believe we have very good reason to look forward to the coming years with hope and optimism as the Department continues to flourish and grow.

Cheers, She Hamilt

Graham Hammill

NEW BOOKS

Associate Professor Dimitri
Anastasopoulos's second novel,
Farm for Mutes (Mammoth Books,
2013), takes a remorseless look
at a digital age infatuated with
reproduction and presentation,
performance and media. The story
pries into the lives of one surveilled
couple—an audio restoration expert
and his germaphobic wife—and their
eavesdropping visitor.



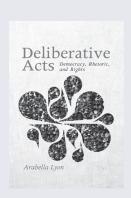
SUNY Distinguished Professor Bruce Jackson's Inside the Wire: Photographs From Texas and Arkansas Prisons (University of Texas Press, 2013) presents a profoundly moving, irreplaceable portrait of the southern prison



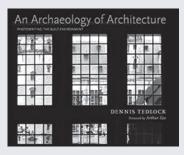
farm from 1964-1979 and the men who lived and labored on these relics of the American slave plantation.

Associate Professor Arabella

Lyon's Deliberative Acts: Democracy, Rhetoric, and Rights (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013) develops a new, cogent theory of performative deliberation and conceives of human rights as relationships among people and as ongoing political and historical projects developing communal norms through global and cross-cultural interactions.



McNulty Chair in the Poetics Program Dennis Tedlock's An Archaeology of Architecture: Photowriting the Built Environment (University of New Mexico Press, 2013) draws on his long experience as an



anthropological fieldworker. Ranging from Greece to Guatemala, New York to San Francisco, the book combines image and text to explore the built environment.

FACULTY NEWS



SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor Diane Christian was awarded the UB President's Medal for outstanding service to UB in May. Since 1990, the award has been given in recognition of "outstanding scholarly or artistic

achievements, humanitarian acts, contributions of time or treasure, exemplary leadership or any other major contribution to the development of the University at Buffalo and the quality of life in the UB community."

The merits of Diane's extensive and ongoing service are made clear by a simple list of the committees on which she has served, but more importantly by the leadership, integrity, commitment, and energy she brings to these committees. She has served on two presidential committees and a provostial search committee, and she chaired a search for the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education; she has chaired crucial University-level committees, including the Faculty Senate's Academic Planning Committee, the General Education Task Force (as co-chair), and the Middlestates Evaluation Steering subcommittee on "Missions, Goals, and Objectives." Diane's leadership is equally clear on the committees she did not chair: she has given ongoing service on the UB Excellence & Equity Committee, the UB Provost Council on Strategic Strength Planning, the CURCA Research Awards Committee, the UB Women's Studies Advisory Council, the UB Campaign Outreach Committee, the University Honors Council, and the University Committee on UB.

Testimonials to the significance of her leadership demonstrate Diane's commitment to service. Those who have worked with her frequently on committees value her judgment, her fairness, and her good-humored willingness to do the gritty, non-glamorous work required to reach the best possible result for the University. One notes that "her achievements in the service area have made UB a much better learning community for scholarly work and the education of our students." It is rare in academia to find a distinguished teacher, scholar, and public intellectual committed to community cultural life who is so dedicated to making her academic home an institution of the highest caliber. Diane's record of service to UB and to the Buffalo community is unsurpassed in its leadership, integrity, and commitment to developing and realizing the best ideas.

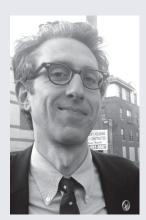
Damien Keane has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor. Since Damien was hired in 2005, he has received a year-long fellowship at the Cornell University Society for the Humanities, completed a book manuscript, and published six essays in such notable publications as the Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Poetry and the Princeton University Library Chronicle. His manuscript, "Ireland and the Problem of Information: Modernism, Diplomacy, and Sound," examines how the power to make distinctions between literary objects and political information was a central concern in Irish culture during the years surrounding World War Two, when global political crises filtered through new means of dissemination, namely the radio, inexorably changed the limits of the literary world.

In his next book project, tentatively titled "Institutions of Access," Damien will further pursue his interests in information dissemination, sound studies, and historicized politics. The book will consider the tensions of public access and specialization that began to be manifested with particular force in the mid-twentieth century, proposing that the radio and the library function as material indices to these much deeper and more profound contexts for political authority.

Chairing three dissertation committees, serving on eleven others, and offering seven independent study courses, Damien's committment to graduate teaching and mentoring is remarkable. Graduate students describe him as an "unfailing advocate and an unparallelled reader"; one graduate advisee states that he was her most valuable professor during her six years at UB: "my

model for how to move forward in my chosen profession in an ethical and honorable manner." Undergraduates give equal praise, describing him as "truly an exceptional educator," saying they have been left "awestruck" by his knowledge, and claiming that his writing assignments are "relevant and fun!"

The Department is delighted that Damien will continue with us, now as an associate professor with tenure.





Professor Joseph Valente, Director of Graduate Admissions, has been awarded the rank of UB Distinguished Professor in acknowledgment of the range and significance of his research and publications. Joe came to UB in 2010 after fifteen years at University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. He has published three groundbreaking monographs in the field of Irish Studies—*The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880-1922* (University of Illinois Press, 2011); *Dracula's Crypt: Bram Stoker, Irishness, and the Question of Blood* (University of Illinois Press, 2002); and *James Joyce and the Problem of Justice: Negotiating Sexual and Colonial Difference* (Cambridge University Press, 1995). He has also published a number of influential essays, including "Thrilled by his Touch: Homosexual Panic and the Will to Artistry in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,*" which has been reprinted four times. Currently, he is working on both a collection of essays, *Yeats and Afterwords*, co-edited with Marjorie Howes, and a monograph titled "Exceptional Subjects: Autism and Moral Authority in Modern Literature."

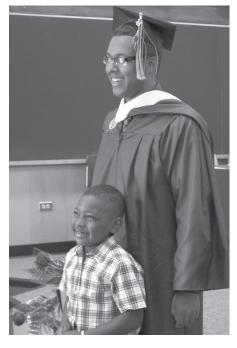
COMMENCEMENT



The English Department Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony took place on Friday, May 10 in Clemens 120 from 11:00-1:00. Diane Christian (left), SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor, and Carlton N. Brock III (below), Creative Writing Focus student and former President of the English Club, addressed the seniors and their families.

"The spirit of the moment is weird.
But I'd rather everything be weird
than standard. Because I can
remember something special about
every weird day I've had as an
English major more than any
standard day. Those weird experiences that I've had with all of you
are one of a kind. And as Edward
Farhat once said, 'The value of
being one of a kind is overlooked by
most, and appreciated by few.'"

—Carlton Brock







Rachelle Toarmino, BA '12

Undergraduate Student News

In addition to the students in the Spring 2013 Newsletter, the following have also been honored:

CONGRATULATIONS TO

Chelsea Coye, recipient of the Scribblers Prize.

Lexa Hunt, recipient of the Axelrod Memorial Award for poetry and the Friends of the University Libraries Prize.

Jennifer Johnson, recipient of the George Knight Houpt Prize.

Richard Kerwin, recipient of an honorable mention for the Friends of the University Libraries Prize.

Kelly Schucker, recipient of an honorable mention for the Creative Non-Fiction Prize.

Sushmita Sircar, recipient of the Joyce Carol Oates Prize for Fiction and a Cook, Hammond, and Logan Prize for her story "Linguistic Obsessions."

Alex Thayer, recipient of an honorable mention for the Joyce Carol Oates Prize for Fiction.

Christopher Wild, recipient of an honorable mention for the Creative Non-Fiction Prize.

List of Phi Beta Kappa (ΦΒΚ) inductees:

Catherine Aughey Bradley Hahn Ya-Tai Hsueh Jennifer Johnson Brittany Maxon Paige Melin Julie Spendal Curtis Warner Kevin Westermann Elizabeth White

List of Sigma Tau Delta (ΣΤΔ) inductees:

Rebecca Bratek Shannon Evans Yujin Kang Alyssa Keuchler Jessica Wagner Eric Cortelessa

Featured Student



Farhana Hasan, current senior English major, is using her passion for reading, writing, and literature to connect UB's Department of English and the Buffalo community. Last spring, she received recognition for her academic achievements in nominations to the Phi Beta Kappa Honors Society and for a Truman Fellowship. She was also recently elected as vice president of the English Club.

In addition to her work at UB, Farhana has dedicated herself to volunteer work with refugee and non-refugee communities on Buffalo's East Side, volunteering at various low-income daycares, reading stories to children, and working at East High School as an Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Program (ISEP) student mentor in an ESL class led by UB Chemistry Professor Joseph A. Gardella.

Of her experiences volunteering in Buffalo, Farhana writes: "Although I grew up in Brooklyn, I never really understood the problems associated with an urban public school until I witnessed the immense poverty of (some) of the residents on the East Side. I initially started my college career wanting to become a high school English teacher in an urban public school

setting. As time went by, and my interests and goals expanded, I found myself spending a lot of time tutoring refugee kids (all ages) in my neighborhood with their reading and writing for subjects ranging from social studies to science. By tutoring the children, through conversations, I began to hear about many of the problems that their families were facing. This has led me to organize several clothes drives, help fill out employment forms, and assist refugee families to connect with and seek out services that are being offered by different organizations in Buffalo."

Speaking on her relationship to English and her plans for the future, Farhana writes: "The ability to read and write is something that I personally hold very sacred and essential. My basic goal in life is to make this asset accessible by teaching as many people as possible how to read and write English. I would like to become an 'urban' English teacher in the broadest sense possible. In the future, I hope to teach English classes (language-specific, writing, literature) to both ESL and non-ESL students."

ENGLISH CLUB

Newly elected English Club president Kapila Kapoor and vice president Farhana Hasan are extending the Club's efforts in the UB and Buffalo communities. Last spring, the English Club read to children in the Central Public Library. Noting the recent increases in refugee populations in Buffalo, the Club has decided this fall to coordinate a volunteer one-on-one tutoring program to help improve the literacy and writing skills of students in the Buffalo Public School system's ESL programs. Working with support from professors Randy Schiff and Barbara Bono and with Mara Huber, Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education, the Club hopes this literacy and writing program will quickly grow to include non-ESL students in the Buffalo Public Schools.

On campus, the Club plans to hold several events for UB English majors in the coming months. In addition to the usual events, such as movie night, Paper Panic, and a Halloween party, the English Club will hold an open-mic event open to all UB students and perhaps including a few established poets and fiction writers. Additionally, the Club is organizing an interdisciplinary conference where faculty and students can present their research. The goal of the event is to give undergraduates who have never attended a conference the opportunity to showcase their research and creative interests, get broader feedback on their work, and explore and participate in a professional research environment.





Kapila Kapoor writes: "This year we plan on making some changes and focusing on binding together the Buffalo community with the UB English department. One of our biggest issues centers around the extremely low graduating rate of Buffalo Public Schools. Therefore, our goals for this year include working with both ESL and non-ESL Buffalo Public School students to improve their reading/writing skills. We are passionate and proud of the knowledge we have learned through the English department and feel it is important to apply these skills while also helping others. Second, and equally important, we want to engage in more student activities and build stronger relationships within the department. This will include special-topic based panels, poetry readings and volunteer work for the Buffalo Public Schools. Overall, we are very excited about this year!"









The 2013 English Club Board (I-r): Kapila Kapoor (President); Farhana Hasan (Vice President); Melissa Pavlovsky (Secretary); Andrew Grabowski (Treasurer).

New Creative Writing Certificates

New Undergraduate Creative Writing Certificate Program

Everyone writes.

We're social beings. We tweet. We blog. We post status updates. We send e-mails that describe and shape descriptions of our day-to-day life for friends, family, and colleagues.

Everyone writes.

But sometimes we put words on a page and we're not sure what they are.

Open to students from all majors, the new undergraduate Creative Writing Certificate is designed to give students a workshop space where they can explore what kind of writing they do. What shape it can take. What their writing might become.

Informed by UB's history of innovation in the arts, the writing workshops and literature courses in the Creative Writing Certificate program arise from our faculty's shared belief that writing is a capacious act—an intervention—in the worlds (personal, local, global) that surround and influence each of us. In our classes, we present writing as a situation layered by critical examination, inventive thought, wild speculation, complex, often paradoxical feelings, multiple, entangled media platforms and social circuits, differing perceptions of time, and an ongoing translation of languages, as much as people and cultures.

Our new Creative Writing Certificate invites students to view writing as an investigative, exploratory process in its own right: a mode of inquiry that arises from the books we read, the lives we lead and imagine, the cultural landscapes we traverse and experience, as much as the problems we'd like to solve. Our faculty are excited to read what each student has to share.

NEW UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Beginning this fall, the English Department has launched two new certificate programs:

- Undergraduate Creative Writing Certificate
- MA Certificate in Innovative Writing

For more information on the MA certificate program, see the spring newsletter.

The undergraduate Creative Writing Certificate is comprised of 6 courses: Introduction to Poetry & Prose (ENG207), three writing workshops in the genre of the student's choice, a contemporary literature elective, and a capstone course. Students are encouraged to participate both as writers and editors of *NAME magazine*, the English Department's literary journal, and to submit their work for publication when they take the most advanced courses in the program. The Creative Writing Certificate program particularly encourages students from outside the humanities to take our courses.

The new Creative Writing Certificate is specifically designed to support young writers. Our distinctive mentorship program encourages conversations between faculty and students, between peer writers, as well as between students and the many guest writers who visit UB each semester in our nationally regarded Exhibit X Fiction Series and Poetics Plus Series.

The new Certificate program is founded, above all, in a supportive community of writers who participate equally in the workshop experience. Faculty writers endeavor to see the promise in each student's work. And we encourage our students to see the potential in the workshop space they develop together. Our shared task is to help students to discover the idiom of their art: to evolve their worlds as *words*.



GRADUATE STUDENT NEWS

Congratulations!

Department Dissertation Completion Fellowships

Keiko Ogata was awarded a Robert and Carol Morris Dissertation Completion Fellowship. Her dissertation is titled "Domestic Wilderness: the Gothic, the Feminine, and Skepticism toward American Community."

Justin Parks was awarded the **Louis and Joan Slovinsky Dissertation Completion Fellowship** for his dissertation on "Extending the Document: American Poetry and the Cultural Politics of Depression Documentary."

Steven Ruszczyck was awarded a Robert and Carol Morris Dissertation Completion Fellowship. His dissertation is titled "Queer Life: On Pornography, Genre, and Sexuality in American Literature, 1960-1999."

Maria Almanza was awarded a CAS Dissertation Fellowship for "Auxiliary Organs: Modernity and the Prosthetic Relations."

David Hadbawnik was awarded a CAS Dissertation Fellowship for "Languages Strange: Speech, Prosody, and Poetic Authority from Chaucer to Spenser."

Sean Reynolds was awarded a CAS Dissertation Fellowship for "The Compulsion to Translate: Dead Languages and the Poet-Translator in Postwar America."

Nicholas Hoffman was awarded a Humanities Institute Dissertation Fellowship. His dissertation is titled "Information Technologies and the Discourse of Public Virtue in the English Renaissance."

Morani Kornberg-Weiss was awarded a Ruth and Isadore Bob Young Dissertation Fellowship from the Institute of Jewish Heritage and Thought. Her dissertation is entitled "The Transnational Lyric and the Protest of Poetry: Israel/Palestine after 1948."

David Squires was awarded a Gender Institute Dissertation Fellowship for "Adapting the Archive: Modern Literature and the Rise of Library Science."

CREATIVE WRITING AWARDS

Emily Anderson received an honorable mention for the Joyce Carol Oates Prize for Fiction.

Kristina Marie Darling was awarded the Dan Liberthson Poetry Prize for three poems from her manuscript "Melancholia (An Essay)."

Alison Fraser was awarded the Academy of American Poets Prize and received a Cook, Hammond, and Logan Prize for *Animalia*, forthcoming from dancing girl press.

Jacob Schepers shared the third annual Outriders Poetry Project Competition Prize with Linda Stern Zisquit. Jacob's book is "A Bundle of Careful Compromises."

PLACEMENT NEWS

Since the Spring 2013 Newsletter, the following students have received employment offers:

Jacob Bodway has accepted a tenure-track position at Monroe Community College.

Megan Faragher, PhD '13, has accepted a tenure-track position at Wright State University (Lake Campus).

Jaecheol Kim, PhD '11, has begun work as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English at Hansung University, Seoul.

Jason Marley has accepted a position as a lecturer at Georgia Southwestern State University.

Minna Niemi, PhD '12, has been awarded a 3-year postdoctoral fellowship by the Academy of Finland.

The Opler-Doubrava Fifth Year Fellowships were awarded to Sara Gutmann, Jung-Suk Whang, and Tina Žigon.

TROLL THREAD COLLECTIVE at the MoMA

The TROLL THREAD COLLECTIVE (Holly Melgard; Chris Sylvester; Divya Victor, PhD '13; and Joey Yearous-Algozin) read at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City as part of *Artists Experiment*, a program curated by Kenneth Goldsmith, the Poet Laureate of the MoMA. The event, "Transform The World! Poetry Must Be Made by All!," was part of MoMA's celebration of National Poetry Month. For a full hour, the galleries came alive with the sounds of spoken word, as poets read their own works and those of others. UB graduate students read alongside prominent American poetry organizations such as The Bowery Poetry Club, Gauss PDF, The Poetry Foundation, Ugly Duckling Presse, and others.

FEATURED ALUMNUS

Mark Hass (BA 1975)

From UB to Beijing

Mark Hass, President and CEO of the public relations firm Edelman U.S., is a testament to the creativity, ambition, and hard work of those who pass through UB's Department of English. As Mark writes, however, he almost didn't join the department: "When I entered college, my career aspiration was to be a doctor, but my personal passion was the written word and storytelling. I was pre-med until my sophomore year, but washed out after organic chemistry. And, thank goodness, because I was then able to follow my passion in the English Department."

After completing his undergraduate degree at UB, Mark continued his study of the written word and storytelling at the University of Maryland, earning a master's degree in journalism, and began a sixteen-year career in print news. He worked as a reporter and editor for newspapers in Detroit, Miami, Syracuse, and Detroit. Mark's career in journalism culminated with a very successful appointment as the assistant managing editor of *The Detroit News*. In Detroit, he was part of the team that created the one of the nation's first comprehensive newspaper websites in 1993 and, even more notably, his staff won a Pulitzer Prize in 1991 for dogged reporting that disclosed flagrant spending abuses at Michigan's House Fiscal Agency.

In 1996, Mark left journalism to explore his passion for words and a career in communication further through digital media, founding the public relations firm Hass Associates, Inc. Hass Associates grew to be Michigan's largest public relations firm, and Mark became known as a champion for innovative work with social networks and mobile technologies. The firm's successful work with integrating online strategies into the communications activities of global companies has led to Mark's successful rise in international business and public relations.

After Hass Associates was acquired by the French marketing conglomerate Publicis Groupe, Mark became the Chief Executive Officer at several international public relations firms, including Manning Selvage & Lee Worldwide; MH Group Communications, another firm which he founded; and Edelman China. In China, Mark oversaw offices in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou that represented clients such as Johnson & Johnson, Nike, Pepsi, Starbucks, Wal-Mart, General Electric, and Shell. In 2012, he moved from China to New York City and became the President and CEO of Edelman U.S. He now oversees fifteen offices and over 2,400 employees in the firm's largest region.

Mark has also committed himself to service in his fields of public relations, journalism, and communications. He has served as a Director of the Council of Public Relations Firms, and is a trustee of the Institute for Public Relations, a member of the Arthur Page Society, a trustee of the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications, and serves as a board member for several New York-based not-for-profit organizations.

Remembering his time at UB English, Mark writes: "The University had a great English Department in the early 1970s; maybe none was better. Working there were people like Robert Creeley, Leslie Fiedler, Irving Feldman, John Barth and others who were internationally known and inspirational for a young student to be around. It's worth noting, though, that the most impactful experiences I had with faculty were with people who, at that time, were less well-known outside the university. Diane Christian and her 'Bible as Literature' class reframed for me how I have viewed the bible and storytelling throughout my life. Shakespeare has been a relevant writer and thinker to me for forty years since I sat in Richard Fly's Shakespeare classes. Mac Hammond tried to make me a poet (unsuccessfully), but did succeed in giving me a life-long love of language that has in many ways defined my professional career. And Max Wickert gave me several untraditional opportunities to explore and improve my writing, for which I will always be grateful. Especially when I recall that all this great learning took place in a trailer across from Goodyear Hall, I realize it was quite a time to be at Buffalo.

"I am thankful I was a liberal arts major, that I was able to experience ideas and knowledge from such a broad range of disciplines during my days at UB. It taught me to think and communicate, two tools that have served me throughout my life."



Mark leads the U.S. operations of Edelman. Photo courtesy of Edelman.

ALUMNI AND EMERITI FACULTY NEWS

Joe Brennan, PhD '96, is leaving his role in University Communications to become Vice President for Strategic Communications at the University of Iowa.

Daniel Collins, PhD '06, a Nichols School faculty member, organized the Nichols School English Club student conference "On Shakespeare." Approximately twenty high school students from Nichols and other local high schools delivered papers on a wide variety of topics in Shakespeare studies. Panels were moderated by early modern undergraduate and graduate students from UB English and featured a keynote address from Associate Professor Barbara Bono on "Hamlet's 'To be or not to be': Three Film Versions—and a Coda."

Megan Dressel, BA '13, is attending the Speech and Language Pathology MA program at Syracuse University.

Erwin Ford, PhD '88, is currently an Associate Professor of English at Albany State University. Ars Lyrica and the Harvard Center for European Studies recently published his piece "JS Bach's Lost Son," and his book, *Improper Bostonian: The Life and Work of George V. Higgins*, was published by Mellen Scholarly Publishers.

Brad Hahn, BA '13, who is also majoring in Geography and Political Science, won the 2013 Samuel Paul Capen Award of the UB Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, Omicron of New York.

Jaecheol Kim, PhD '11, had an essay, "Cognitive Cartography in the Neocolonial world: Jameson's 'Third-World Literature' and Ngũgĩ's *Petals of Blood*," published in *Texas Studies in Language and Literature*. A second article, "National Messianism and English Chorography in *King Lear*," appeared in *English Studies* (UK).

Patrick Reidy, BA '12, is attending Syracuse University's English PhD program on a five-year fellowship.

Cassandra Rivais, BA '13, won the Class of 1972 Honors Thesis Prize and received an honorable mention for the Scribblers Prize. Cassandra currently attends Albany Law School.

Caitlin Tremblay, BA '10, is a music writer and journalist based in Brooklyn, NY. Currently, she is a writer and Web Editor at Thomson Reuters. Her website is http://caitlintremblay.com/.

Maddie Morcelle, BA '12, writes: "Since graduating from the English Department, I have attended Washington & Lee University, School of Law (Class of 2015), where I have served as an Honor Advocate and as VP of Education to the Women Law Student Organization. This summer, I am serving as a summer fellow at Harvard Law's Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation. This involves a lovely combination of advocacy, research, and WRITING! I treasured my time in the English Department, and would love to give back in any way that I can."

Professor Neil Schmitz has retired after 47 years of teaching in UB's Department of English. During his time at UB, Neil has become a beloved and recognized teacher and scholar of American literature, receiving a Guggenheim Fellowship and a SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, among other awards. His books, Of Huck and Alice: Humorous Writing in American Literature (University of Minnesota Press, 1984) and White Robe's Dilemma: Tribal History in American Literature (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), represent the innovative and idiosyncratic mind that has helped shape the department's distinctive and creative approach to scholarship. Of Neil, Stacy Hubbard writes: "Neil is more fun than anybody to talk to about books. If I read something new and wonderful, Neil is the person I want to tell. If I reread something old and wonderful, Neil is the one I want to consult for odd angles, fresh perceptions. I know that in retiring, Neil is simply, like Gertrude Stein, going to 'begin again as if to begin,' rather than actually retiring from anything."

Chris Sicks, BA '90, published his first book, *Tangible: Making God Known through Deeds of Mercy and Words of Truth*, this September with NavPress. Chris serves as Pastor of Mercy at Alexandria Presbyterian Church in Virginia. For the past 20 years, he has worked, as he puts it, "to make God's love tangible to refugees, homeless men, addicts, and needy children in the Washington, DC area." He is a graduate of Reformed Theological Seminary, a member of the Christian Community Development Association and Evangelicals for Social Action.

Linda Stern Zisquit, Interdisciplinary MA '77, won the third annual Outriders Poetry Project Competition (shared with Jacob Schepers) for her book "Return from Elsewhere." While at UB, she studied creative writing under Robert Creeley.

Emeritus Professor David Wilbern published *The American Popular Novel After World War II: A Study of 25 Best Sellers, 1947-2000* (McFarland, 2013). The book is a selective study of popular fiction from after the war to the end of the century, focusing on core cultural issues such as the Cold War, the Sexual Revolution, feminism, Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, business, lawyers and criminals, science, and religion.

Emeritus Professor Howard Wolf has donated his papers to the Amherst College Frost Library. The collection consists of 114 linear feet of Howard's literary manuscripts, correspondence, and other matter relating to his writing of short fiction, novels, poetry, plays, travel writing, and criticism.

In Memoriam

Dennis Grunes, PhD '74, literary critic, poet, and historian of world cinema, died in Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital, in Portland, Oregon, on June 15, 2013. According to his elder brother, Rodney, the cause of death was aspiration pneumonitis, owing to end-state renal disease.

Although Dr. Grunes (pronounced GREW-niss) was not famous as a mass-media critic, his literate, informed, and, often, deeply moving writings on film were avidly followed by working filmmakers, other critics and historians, and armchair cineastes throughout the U.S. and abroad. His film blog grunes.wordpress.com (established in 2007) contains thousands of critical entries—most of them precisely 300 words long. He evaluated films as old as 19th-century Russian, French, and American silents and filmmakers as far-flung as those of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, and he found masters and masterpieces to appreciate in every category. He was also a vigorous partisan of nonpareil independent filmmakers of the past quarter century—notably Chris Marker, Jon Jost, and Gus Van Sant.

Dennis Scott Grunes was born on January 31, 1948, in Brooklyn, NY. He earned his BA in English at SUNY Binghamton in 1969 and his PhD in English, with a minor in film, at UB in 1974, where his mentor was Leslie Fiedler. His thesis, "The Romantic Brother," was a study of fraternal myth and motifs in Blake, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and others.

In 1980, Dennis moved from Buffalo to Portland, Oregon, and began to write for general audiences on various arts, publishing over 100 reviews and features in local magazines. He taught literature and composition at Portland State University and, by mail, for the Oregon State Board of Higher Education. Dr. Grunes never married. He is survived by his brother; his sister-in-law, Judith; and his nephews Jeff and Eric and their families.

In 2010, Olivier Stockman, of the Sands Films Cinema Club, London, published a compendium of Dr. Grunes's film writings, *A Short Chronology of World Cinema* (still in print). In his foreword, Mr. Stockman wrote: "Searching for information about films I have not seen, I came across someone who seems to have seen everything. I then discovered that Dennis Grunes has written about almost each film he has seen during the last 40 years or so. This massive work cannot be improvised nor even commissioned: it is a lifetime commitment.

Taken individually, each entry is, at the very least, an introduction to a film, but edited together and classified by year, these neat 300-word entries become a remarkable survey of the history of world cinema. Publishing this book became therefore the natural continuation of the club's activity and purpose."

Dr. Grunes loved cats. Contributions in his name may be made to The House of Dreams, a no-kill cat shelter, in Portland, Oregon.

Obituary contributed by **Mindy Aloff**, MA '72



Dennis Grunes in 2007. Photograph courtesy of **Margot Fein**.

Robin Christopher Roark, PhD '90, died at his home in Cleveland Heights on June 15, 2012. Chris was fifty-one. He is survived by his wife Amy and their children, Owen, Vincent and Rosalind. He also leaves behind his two sisters, Beth and Jennifer. Since 1990, Chris had been a member of the English faculty of John Carroll University where he taught courses in Shakespeare and African American literature, became an associate professor, and for three years served as department chair.

Of Roark, **Jim Caton**, MA '90, writes: "I met Chris in a student flat on Norwood Avenue one sweltering August day in 1984. He was a kid from Philly, a lanky 6'2", orange hair and kind smile above a worn gray t-shirt and loose jeans. For all I know, the same gray t-shirt and jeans he was wearing the last time I saw him, walking away across the lawns of Cleveland's Natural History Museum with Amy and the kids. Chris was a baller, holding the distinction of having been kicked off the Lafayette JV team for taking a bounce shot from the free throw line. 'I had to make a point,' he told me with his self-mocking laugh. Something like the point he made on the last day of every course he taught at UB, when he would walk into the classroom in a gorilla suit and in a muffled voice spend the hour sweating, reading from Shakespeare and summing up what the course had attempted.

"As a scholar, Chris was a Shakespearean first and last. Like me, he'd done factory work as an undergrad, but Chris had worked wearing a Walkman and soaking up the Caedmon recordings of the plays. On a drive from Poughkeepsie to Buffalo, worried about his dad who had just had open-heart surgery, Chris talked for eight uninterrupted hours about Shakespeare's fools, the idea of service in the plays, and what the critics tended to get wrong. He didn't repeat himself, and it wasn't boring, and as I drove I watched the clock the way you count the innings during a no-hitter. Like all Shakespeareans, he saw the plays in the world, and among his many publications are such titles as 'Hamlet, Malcolm X and the Examined Education' and 'After Abu Ghraib: Gloucester's Blinding Reconsidered.'

"I never knew a more restless or a more honest intellect, a more earnest and talented teacher, a more examined life or a more whole person. Chris was transparent and searching, ethical and compassionate in word, thought and deed. I only knew him thirty years, but from what I saw he was never once venal, never once prideful, never self-deceiving. When we were young and stupid, he was never stupid. His death is recent, and the wound is raw, and it's difficult not to effuse with praise. But while Chris had his faults, his faults never were worth mentioning. And I was a better person when I was around him. Chris and I went a couple years without seeing each other, the years when we were staying up nights with newborns. When I finally did make a trip to Cleveland, I got out of the car and walked up to the porch to hear a voice I'd never heard before. It was Chris talking to his kids. It was Chris, ridiculously happy."

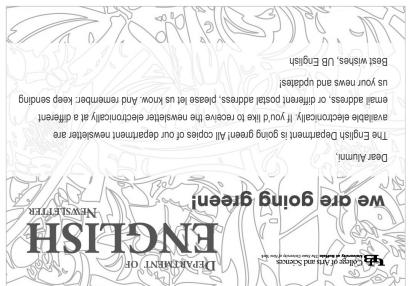
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