Welcome and News

Welcome to the 2012-13 school year! We host an award-winning creative writing faculty, which includes last year’s National Book Award Winner for Fiction, Jesmyn Ward. Dr. Steven Trout, our department chair, has just established an interdisciplinary center for War and Memory that is based on campus. Faculty members Dr. Patrick Cesari and Dr. Becky McLaughlin are hosting the “Captivity Writing Unbound” conference at USA this fall. And our Stokes Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing and the director of that program, Dr. Sue Walker, will be giving the tenth annual Hamner Lecture for the Graduate Program in English this fall.

We welcome several new students in 2012, including Stefanie Bencsath, Daniel Commander, Amber Curtis, Dana Johnson, Bethany Koscheski, Meghan Lundberg, Abigail Pagan, and Ashley Yates. Congratulations to our recent graduates: Natalie Cochran-Murray, James Kimbrough, Michael Mason, Emily Singh, Sharon Varner, and Heather Wilkins. Natalie Cochran-Murray, Michael Mason, and Heather Wilkins are serving as Instructor-Interns for the English department this year.

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Graduate & Teaching Assistants for 2012-13

Graduate and Teaching Assistantships are competitive positions awarded each year by the department. Graduate Assistants for this academic year are Stefanie Bencsath, Daniel Commander, Amber Curtis, and Bethany Koscheski. GAs work in the Writing Center and assist in faculty research. Teaching Assistants for this academic year are Marlena Braun, Elizabeth Butt, Matt Crutchfield, Melissa Kmiec, Danielle McWhorter-Williams, Abigail Pagan, and Jamie Poole.

“Captivity Writing Unbound” Conference at USA

Pat Cesarini and Becky McLaughlin are pleased to invite you to “Captivity Writing Unbound,” a small interdisciplinary conference to be held at USA’s Baldwin County campus October 11-13, 2012.
The conference has been made possible with the generous support of Steve Trout, English department funding, and Justin St. Clair’s skills as web master. The aim of the conference is to explore and extend the traditional boundaries of the study of captivity writing. Thirty papers have been chosen for inclusion in fifteen panels, which will be presented sequentially rather than concurrently in order to foster substantial exchange of ideas and perspectives among participants. These papers make use of a wide range of theorists—Butler, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault, Heidegger, Kristeva, Lacan, for example—and an equally wide range of approaches and/or lenses—genre, geography, history, theory, and/or metaphor—to discuss topics ranging from uterine captivity to the Vietnam War memorial and materials as disparate as liturgical documents from 11th-century Iberia and Zimbabwean Tsitsi Dangarembga’s semi-autobiographical novel Nervous Conditions.

On the opening day of the conference, Early American scholar Michelle Burnham, author of Captivity and Sentiment: Cultural Exchange in American Literature, 1682-1861, will deliver the keynote address, tentatively titled “Going Off the Map: The Geopolitics of Captivity from Cabeza de Vaca to Katniss Everdeen.” She will also deliver a talk on globalizing American literature at USA’s Mobile campus on October 10th. All are welcome to attend the talk.

Students will be allowed to register for the conference at a discounted rate of $20 (please give checks or cash to Dr. Cesarini or Dr. McLaughlin rather than registering through the website). All who are interested are encouraged to volunteer their help as panel leaders and respondents—and perhaps as van drivers to and from the Mobile airport.

For further information about the conference, please see the website located under Events on the English department’s home page.

2012-2013 Events & Activities

2012 Hamner Lecture: Dr. Sue Walker
Marked With An X: James Dickey’s Chaismic Ecology, Deliverance And Beyond

Dr. Sue Walker will deliver the tenth Eugenie L. Hamner Lecture for the Graduate Program in English this fall. Check the English website for updated event information. This lecture recognizes the great intellectual contributions of Dr. Eugenie “Genie” Hamner, retired faculty member, to USA’s English department and to the Mobile community. Each fall, a member of the Graduate Faculty in English delivers the lecture.

Sigma Tau Delta
USA has a chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society. Please contact Dr. Kern Jackson for more information about the organization and its service work.

Poetry Events
What’s in the works? A Mobile River Sound Walk in the fall (TBA), numerous events related to the Southern Literary Trail in 2013, but stay tuned.

IMC
The Independent Music Collective (IMC) is a student organization at U.S.A. dedicated to improving Mobile’s music scene. Each semester the IMC hosts several concerts, attracting regional and national acts that otherwise might not stop in Mobile. The organization is actively soliciting new members, and officer positions are available. Please visit http://www.musicinmobile.org/ for more information on the IMC.

IMC Concert
On Thursday, September 13th, the IMC presents an evening with Will Johnson (Austin, TX) and Anders Parker (Burlington, VT), live at Satori. Johnson is the lead singer / principle songwriter for indierock favorites Centro-matic and South San Gabriel. Anders Parker fronted Varnaline in the 90s, and teamed up with Jay Farrar as Gob Iron a few years back. Both Johnson and Parker are members of the supergroup New
Multitudes. Doors open at 8.00pm, showtime is 8.30pm.

Oracle Fine Arts Review
2012 Issue available in HUMB 240

2012-13 Staff:
Editor-in-Chief: Rachael Fowler
Fiction Editor: Amber Taliancich
Non-Fiction Editor: Blake Cunningham
Poetry Editor: Erica Mims
Art Curator and Art Director to be named

Editorial Boards
Editorial and Art Board memberships are open to all students. If you are interested in serving on the Art, Fiction, Nonfiction, or Poetry Boards for the next issue or in being a part of the design team for the next issue, email your area or areas of interest along with your name and phone number to oracle@southalabama.edu

Submissions
USA’s literary and fine arts magazine publishes student and community work in areas including Fiction, Painting, Creative Non-Fiction, Illustration, Poetry, Photography, Stage or Screenplay, Printmaking, Essay, and Sculpture. Submissions for the next issue are due on Monday, October 15, 2012. Look for more information at www.southalabama.edu/oracle/

Writing Outreach
The Freshman Composition Program within the Department of English at USA sponsors free-of-charge information sessions for students and others who need additional assistance with particular writing skills. The goal of the Writing Outreach program is to reinforce necessary skills that are often not covered in class discussions due to time constraints. Writing Outreach is open to all university students, staff, and faculty, as well as interested members of the community. English graduate students help organize this series each semester. More information available on the English website.

African American Studies
The African American Studies Program will make several local history site visits. On August 27, they will attend the Mojo Jazz Jambalaya event where The Morris Men featuring Jo Jo Morris & Bryan Morris will play at the Gulf City Lodge. On September 22, they will visit Selma, AL to take the Footprints to Freedom Tour of the National Voting Rights Museum and the Slavery and Civil War Museum and reenact the famous crossing of Edmund Pettus Bridge, the scene of “Bloody Sunday.” On November 10, they will attend the Wright Family Syrup Making Festival in Daphne, AL. The final site visit in November will be to Union Baptist Church in Plateau for service and Sunday dinner hosted by the congregation. Please contact Dr. Kern Jackson about these events.

Mystery Conference: Daddy’s Girl Weekend
The 2013 Daddy’s Girl Weekend (named for a character in the Bones mystery books) hosted by Carolyn Haines will be held at the Battlehouse Hotel April 4-7. Bestselling young adult author Chris Grabenstein will be a featured guest, along with other industry professionals. Before becoming an author, Grabenstein was a stand-up comic working with Robin Williams, Bruce Willis and many others. His highly acclaimed books engage middle-grade and young adult readers. He also writes adult mysteries. Grabenstein will offer conference attendees a rare opportunity to learn about the YA and adult markets from someone who knows them from many angles.

Graduate Classes
Course Descriptions
Check the English website for the most recent list of grad class descriptions: http://www.southalabama.edu/english/programs/grad_class.htm
You can get current schedule information and register through the PAWS website: paws.southalabama.edu
Congratulations to Graduate English Scholarship and Prize Winners, 2012!

Natalie Cochran-Murray
Dr. Lloyd Dendinger Memorial Scholarship for a Graduate Essay in American Literature

Michael Mason
Dorrill Award for Outstanding Literature Thesis

Melissa Kmiec
Graduate Endowed Scholarship

Natalie Cochran-Murray
Shelley Memorial Scholarship for Graduate Poetry

Elizabeth Butt
Dr. Patricia Stephens Memorial Scholarship

Elizabeth Butt
Steve and Angelia Stokes Scholarship for Graduate Poetry

Matt Crutchfield
Steve and Angelia Stokes Scholarship for Graduate Fiction

Melissa Kmiec
English Department Graduate Student Essay Contest Winner

Foreign Language Proficiency

Don’t forget to plan to meet the foreign language requirement! All graduate students should work to meet this requirement in the FIRST YEAR of coursework, prior to registering for Thesis Hours or preparing for the Comprehensive Exam. This requirement can be met by taking the Foreign Language Translation Exam in an approved language or by taking approved coursework. Except for Spanish (which can be arranged with Dr. Harrington), other languages can be arranged through the Foreign Languages department office. See the complete policy on the website, and contact Dr. Harrington if you have any questions.

Thesis/Comprehensive Exam

Students in the Literature Concentration can choose to write a Thesis or to take a Comprehensive Exam to complete the MA. All Students in the Creative Writing concentration must write a thesis. Please review the latest version of the Thesis Checklist (available on the English Graduate Website) for information about how to form a committee, sign up for Thesis Hours, submit a Prospectus, and prepare for the Thesis Defense. Please contact Dr. Harrington for assistance with thesis and exam procedures.

Graduate Essay Winner 2012
Melissa Kmiec

“Trying to Die and Not Dying”: On the Road, Lolita, and Cold War Gothic

This essay discusses Cold War American texts that participate in the Gothic tradition, emphasizing the effects visual and transportation technology have on the way people perceive the world. It argues that Gothic is a mode which gives expression to the psychological changes that occurred as these innovations continued to develop and shape everyday life. A central pairing in Gothic texts creates visual “shocks” by juxtaposing vivid, grotesque illustrations of violence and death with moving or metamorphosing images. This pattern reflects the massive reorganization of Western society that begins in the modern period and culminates with the emergence of mass culture. Focusing on transmutations of Gothic in Cold War American literature—for instance, by reading “kitsch” as a manifestation of the reanimate corpse—this analysis locates the Gothic pattern of visual shocks in the American road narrative of the mid-twentieth century. Primary texts include Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita and Jack Kerouac’s On the Road. –M.K.

Thesis Deadlines 2012-13

Fall Thesis Deadline: Defend by 10/15/12
Summer Thesis Deadline: Defend by 6/10/13

English students must defend by the deadline in order to make any required revisions in time for the Graduate School First Submission deadline. Please contact Dr. Harrington for thesis advising.
Regional Conferences and Lectures

Listed below are a few general conferences that welcome graduate student submissions, though many conferences are supportive of student work. Graduate students with accepted paper presentations or readings at academic or creative conferences can apply for limited travel assistance from the English department. Forms are available in the English department.

Louisiana State University English Graduate Association hosts the Mardi Gras Graduate English Conference in Language and Literature during Mardi Gras week each year.

University of Florida English Graduate Organization's Annual UF-EGO Interdisciplinary Conference takes place in Gainesville each fall: https://sites.google.com/site/egogators/conference/2011

The South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference will be held November 9-11 in Research Triangle Park, Durham, North Carolina. SAMLA is one of the Modern Language Association’s regional conferences. Look at the conference website for more details about the panels (www.samla.gsu.edu). If you are interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in English, consider joining MLA or SAMLA.

The Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association national conference will be held in Washington, D.C., March 27-30, 2013. Please see the website for more information: http://pcaaca.org/conference/national.php

Hudson Strobe Program in Renaissance Studies at University of Alabama will host a series of lectures this fall and the third SE Milton Seminar. These events are free, and interested students and faculty are encouraged to attend. Please check the website for specific lecture dates and titles.

English Graduate Faculty Research

Nicole Amare

Nicole Amare has a book coming out in 2013 (with Alan Manning) called A Unified Theory of Information Design: Visuals, Text & Ethics. This book, to be published by Baywood Press, proposes a unified language for visual design using C.S. Peirce’s theory of semiotics. She and Barry Nowlin are currently working on a textbook with Pearson Education titled Critical Thinking/Critical Writing.

Larry Beason

Larry Beason’s areas of specialization include composition, rhetoric, sociolinguistics, and science fiction. He directs the Freshman Composition Program. In spring, the sixth edition of his Commonsense Guide to Grammar and Usage was published, and the second edition of his McGraw-Hill Guide to English Grammar and Usage is coming out this September. Dr. Beason is finishing a forthcoming article contrasting online and academic reactions to usage errors, and he is working on an article and presentation on the theoretical and practical connections between technical writing and computer gaming.

Patrick Cesarini

Patrick Cesarini is currently planning a conference—in collaboration with Becky McLaughlin—entitled "Captivity Writing Unbound," which will take place on USA’s Baldwin County campus on October 11-13, 2012. For his part, this event grew out of Dr. Cesarini’s interest in colonial Indian captivity narratives, and in genre theory, which he and Dr. McLaughlin hope will produce some productive scholarly cross-talk, as well as an eventual collection of essays from the conference. Dr. Cesarini is also conducting his own research on the ways that captivity writing ‘travels’ among literary and non-literary discourses, over time and across cultures and subjects.

Bob Coleman

Bob Coleman is currently working on three research areas. The first is in digital humanities: he is one of the editors for the Digital Yoknapatawpha Project,
which is building a data map of characters, events, and locations for much of Faulkner's fiction: http://faulkner.drupal.shanti.virginia.edu/ (Professor Steve Railton of the University of Virginia is the lead editor for this project). The second research project is a book on southern writer James Branch Cabell (who published novels, short stories, poetry, literary criticism, and non-fiction between 1904 the mid 1950s). His third project examines U. S. literary representations of Spain, the Spanish-American War, and the Spanish pre-history of what has become U. S. North America.

Carolyn Haines

Carolyn Haines’s newest novel, Bonefire of the Vanities, the 12th Sarah Booth Delaney Mississippi Delta mystery, was published in June by St. Martin’s Minotaur. During the summer she finished the first draft of the 2013 novel, Smarty Bones, which will be released in May. In other publishing news, Prof. Haines’s agent sold her new—scary—book (which she read from at the Hamner lecture), which has been retitled The Darkling and will be published by Pegasus Books in April under the pseudonym R.B. Chesterton.

Last spring the second annual Daddy's Girls Weekend was held at the Malaga Inn. Graduate and undergraduate creative writing students attended the writers' conference and met publishing professionals from New York and Los Angeles who gave the students insights on the changing publishing and film industry. The 2013 Daddy's Girl Weekend (named for a character in the Bones mystery books) will be held at the Battlehouse Hotel April 4-7.

John Halbrooks

John Halbrooks works on medieval literature and related interests. He has published on Beowulf, P. D. James, Aelfric, The Battle of Maldon, W. S. Merwin, and the Troubadour poets. He is currently at work on a book on heroism as an anachronistic concept in constructions of the Middle Ages. This fall he is on sabbatical.

Ellen Harrington

Ellen Harrington’s research examines gender in nineteenth-century popular fiction and the influence of these genres and criminal anthropology on the work of Joseph Conrad. Her essay on the new BBC Sherlock Holmes series, “Terror, Nostalgia, and the Pursuit of Sherlock Holmes in Sherlock,” was just published in the anthology Sherlock and Transmedia Fandom (McFarland). Her essay on Conrad’s take on the iconography of the Victorian female suicide, “Suicide, Feminism, and ‘the miserable dependence of girls’ in Joseph Conrad’s ‘The Idiots,’ The Secret Agent, and Chance,” will be published in the Autumn 2012 issue of The Conradian. Her essay “‘Dead men have no children’ in Conrad’s ‘The Idiots’ and ‘Amy Foster’” will be published in a special issue of Conradiana. Currently, she is continuing work on a larger project on heroines in Conrad’s later novels.

Richard Hillyer

Richard Hillyer mainly teaches Renaissance literature, especially Shakespeare’s plays. Additional interests include the history and historiography of the British Civil Wars, the theory and practice of versification, and the poetry of W. H. Auden. He has published articles on Ben Jonson, Edmund Waller, and the Royal Society, as well as books on Edmund Hobbes and Sir Philip Sidney. All his scholarly effort of late has gone towards trying to complete a book on semantic range with the projected title “Care” in All Its Dimensions: A Survey. Palgrave Macmillan has the right of first refusal. He plans to submit it either this fall or next spring. He has already begun thinking about a new book, tentatively titled Rival Cultures: Science and “The Gay Science.”

Kern Jackson

In October, Kern Jackson will be presenting for the first time at the American Folklore Society’s 2012 annual meeting in New Orleans. The theme is “The Continuity and Creativity of Culture,” and his paper is titled “Going to the Boomalatta: Narrating Mirthful Indolence at Black Mardi Gras in Mobile, AL.” This fall Dr. Jackson will lead a team of local scholars to do the primary research and text explanation for the Historic Mobile Preservation Society’s Cook’s House Restoration Project. He will also be completing interviews for the Bayou La Batre - Coden Historical Foundation video work lore and traditions video oral history project. Also, he initiated a video oral history project of the Crosby Water System in Lowndes County, Gordonville, AL.
Becky McLaughlin

Becky McLaughlin was on sabbatical in the spring, during which time she worked on a collection of short stories and a series of sound recordings (flash fiction and word collages set to music). She also delivered a paper, “Mary Rowlandson’s ‘Savage’ Hunger: Learning to Desire by Learning to Eat,” at the Southwest Texas Popular Culture Association in Albuquerque.

Christopher Raczkowski

Chris Raczkowski’s research and scholarship focuses on Anglo-American modernism, modernity and the modernist novel more precisely. His most recent publication "Chester Himes, Franz Fanon and the Literary Decolonization of Harlem" was published in the academic peer-reviewed journal, LIT: Literature, Interpretation, Theory (Spring 2012) and he is currently at work on a book length manuscript titled "Criminal Modernism" that investigates the historical, aesthetic and rhetorical importance of crime to American modernism.

Justin St. Clair

Justin St. Clair teaches courses in postmodern and contemporary fiction and much of his research occurs at the intersection of contemporary fiction and media studies. His most recent article, “Mahfouz and the Arabian Nights Tradition,” appeared in the MLA’s Approaches to Teaching the Works of Naguib Mahfouz (2012). This fall, he will complete his book, Sound and Aural Media in Postmodern Fiction: Novel Listening, which is under contract with Routledge.

Steven Trout

Steven Trout just finished his first year as chair of the department, and he even managed to complete some scholarly work. In April, 2012, the University Press of Kansas published Scarlet Fields: The Combat Memoir of a World War I Medal of Honor Hero by John Lewis Barkley. Trout edited this account, which has been out of print since 1930, and in June he spoke at an official launch event for the book held at the National World War I Museum in Kansas City, Missouri. He also wrote a lengthy introduction for World War I in American Fiction: An Anthology of Stories, 1914-1940 (co-edited with Scott D. Emmert and currently under consideration by Kent State University Press) and completed a book proposal for the University Press of Kansas; the latter describes his latest solo project—a cultural history of the Vietnam Veterans memorial located at Angel Fire, New Mexico. Throughout the spring semester Trout worked with Hannah Bruner, an exceptionally talented English major, on the Summer 2012 issue of The Willa Cather Newsletter and Review. Items that will appear in print during the coming academic year include War+Ink: New Perspectives on Ernest Hemingway’s Early Life and Writings (Kent State University Press), a collection of essays that Trout co-edited with Hemingway scholars Steve Paul and Gail Sinclair.

Sue Walker

Sue B. Walker is a full professor at USA and the Director of Creative Writing. She has two areas of specialty, Southern Literature and Creative Writing, and she writes:

This is my letter, grad letter, not to the world, not to Ella Minnow Pea, (read that out loud) not a progressively lipogrammatic epistolary fable, but listen, if you will—I mean google 2RiverView and you’ll hear what I’ve been up to at “2:55 a.m.” —or as Mary Oliver said, tell me your “Despair,” and I’ll tell you mine—if you listen in. Or maybe, read what I say Eudora Welty said in a Suite of five poems just published in the Eudora Welty Review or should you know what it means to miss New Orleans, read my lines on Tennessee Williams in The Southern Quarterly. And about poetry, if you won’t or if you will, see what I say about The Academisation of Avant-Garde Poetry – conversation—what’s in a “Z” —there in The Argotist Online—and know I’m enamored of prose poetry—am making robopoems and taking sound walks along the shores of Staten Island. Table Five, a collaborative epistolary experimental novella (by Melissa Dickson, John Summerfield, Scott Wilkerson, and Sue Walker) was published by the Georgia Halawaukee School for the Exegetical Arts. The Chiasmic Ecology of James Dickey will soon be out from Mellen Press—more about that anon.

Jesmyn Ward

Jesmyn Ward’s second novel, Salvage the Bones, won the National Book Award for fiction in 2011. She has been working on her memoir, which is about an
epidemic of deaths of poor young black men in her rural community; this book will be released next year.

**Student and Alumni News**

**Creative Writing Updates:**
Did you listen in, listen up, indeed listen to poetry at the May 16 2012 Reading at Satori? Had you been there, you would have heard Patty Jameson, Theresa Corbin who has recently published in *Boomers*, the Baldwin County publication edited by Jessica Jones, one of our former Creative Writing graduate students. Or you would have heard Kennon Barton, Deborah Ferguson, Mike Odom, Brandon Boykin, and Corey Harvard, this year’s editor of *Oracle*. A recent article of his was published in *Sense* magazine. About *Oracle*, don’t go home without it. Meghan Brewer was recently published in *The Dead Mule*. And on Bloomsday, June 16, the first Mobile Bloomsday Reading was held at Satori—a commemoration and celebration of James Joyce and Leopold Bloom of *Ulysses*. On July 20, in Huntsville, at the Alabama Writer’s Conclave, I read from my verse-novel-in-progress on the Yellow Fever epidemic in Mobile, 1878. Rachael Fowler joined me in conducting a poetry workshop for high school students at the Montgomery City Council Public Library, Montgomery, Alabama on July 26. –Sue Walker

**Frank Ard**
Frank Ard, a graduate of the English M.A. program, has just begun the low-residency Stonecoast MFA program at the University of Southern Maine and is beginning work as an adjunct instructor at Santa Fe College, a community college in Gainesville, FL.

**William Christopher Brown**
Chris Brown, a graduate of the English M.A. program, has just moved to Crookston, Minnesota to be a Lecturer of Composition at the University of Minnesota, Crookston for the 2012-2013 academic year. He is hopefully in his final year at Indiana University-Bloomington. He has completed a draft of his dissertation, tentatively entitled *King De-centered Histories: Co-rulership in Medieval English Verse Chronicles, 1199-1338.*

**Stephanie Evers**
Stephanie Evers, a graduate of the English M.A. program, is pursuing a Ph.D. at the university of Florida with a focus in Children’s Literature.

**Dean Harrison**
A former student of Carolyn Haines, Dean Harrison, has obtained a publishing contract for his horror novel. *These Unquiet Bones* will be released in Spring 2013 by Odium Media, the horror imprint of Omnium Gatherum. Harrison graduated from USA in 2007 with a degree in criminal justice but returned in 2010 to take additional classes, including creative writing. He is currently working on his second novella. His first novella was published in the anthology *Twisted Tales from the Torchlight Inn*. A short story will also be published this year in *Christmas in Hell*, an anthology.

**Mike Odom**
Currently in the English M.A. program at USA, Mike Odom was recently promoted to editor at The Fairhope Courier. He won Alabama Press Association Better Newspaper Contest awards in each of the past five years, including three first-place awards, two in the Freedom of Information-First Amendment category (plus a second-place in that category last month); the O’Dwyer Family and Siler scholarships in fiction and nonfiction at the Squaw Valley Community of Writers (2012, 2008); scholarships in nonfiction and poetry at the Writers in Paradise conference at Eckerd College (2011, 2009); and a creative-writing support scholarship from the Elizabeth George Foundation (2009). In addition, he was a Maynard Fellow in Multimedia Editing at the University of Nevada at Reno in June 2011 and a Knight Digital Media Fellow at UC Berkeley in January 2011.