

English

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

The English Department



From Freshman Writing to the undergraduate degree and advanced graduate work, the Department of English offers students the means to understand and interact with the world around them by strengthening their proficiency in reading, writing, and interpretation. A variety of courses in expository writing, language, and rhetoric develop critical communication and thinking skills. Creative writing courses encourage students to recognize and hone their artistic abilities in both prose and poetry. Courses on literary themes, history, theories and criticism provide students with tools to explore literary traditions and practices, and to develop an understanding of the impact and value of literature in our own world.

Career Opportunities

An English major opens an increasing number of career doors as writing, reading, and analytical skills become more important in our information-based economy. Many of the Department's graduates go on to teach in public or private schools, while others pursue advanced degrees that lead to college teaching careers. Still others work in journalism (including the burgeoning field of online journalism), publishing, technical writing, government, and social service organizations. A background in English is attractive to law schools, business and medical schools, as well as to employers in the sciences and industry.

The Community

Besides its course offerings for students, the Department sponsors and performs a number of services for the Mobile area. The Creative Writing program's annual Eugene Walter Writers Festival presents readings and lectures by writers and scholars from around the country. The Department also enhances the cultural offerings of our community by organizing poetry and fiction readings and inviting guest speakers.

Contributing to Scholarships and Curriculum Development

The Department has been fortunate to receive generous donations from community members who wish to support the highest levels of student scholarship and to encourage excellence in student writing and research. A list of current scholarship funds appears on page 3 of this newsletter. We invite the community to help us serve the mission of promoting educational achievement by contributing to our existing scholarship funds or by establishing new awards. Donating to scholarship and curriculum development funds honors the donor or honoree and provides needed opportunities for award recipients. Please contact the Development Office at (251) 460-7032 for more information about contributing to English Department scholarships and curriculum development.

English Department Programs

Beyond the regular undergraduate English major and minor, the Department offers the following programs:

The **Freshman Composition Program** is aimed at preparing students to write effectively in a range of college courses, and ultimately in their future careers.

The **Minor in Professional Writing** provides students with theory, techniques, and practice that enable them to write proficiently as professionals and to understand the rhetorical nature of written communication, especially non-academic texts.

The **Master of Arts** degree program in English is designed to meet the needs both of students pursuing a terminal M.A. and those planning to work toward the Ph.D. and a career in university teaching. The terminal M.A. also serves such career tracks as junior college or secondary-school teaching, and writing or editing in the business world. Creative writers find the degree meaningful for careers both within and outside of the academic profession.

*The English newsletter is wholly funded by the University of South Alabama Foundation.
The English Department is committed to curriculum development, student recruitment and retention.*

Undergraduate Scholarship Winners



Meagan Davis - Poetry Writing (Stokes Scholarship)
Barbara Bateman (Richardson Memorial Scholarship)
Elizabeth Harrell (Holmes Scholarship)

Caitlin Channell, *Recipient of the Shelley Memorial Scholarship for poetry in 2004*

On her interests in writing and English:

"I began writing poetry when I was six years old. In my sophomore year, I declared myself a

Creative Writing major, with a concentration in poetry. I've felt that I was taken under wing by English faculty who have encouraged me and helped me navigate my undergraduate studies. I've received great mentoring in the Department and opportunities to achieve. At present, I've applied to graduate schools for poetry and creative writing, and I'm waiting to find out whether I've been accepted."

On the advantages of majoring in English:

"I've enjoyed the English major – it's been challenging and rewarding. Majors have the opportunity to do a lot of reading, writing, and research outside of the classroom. An English major receives a very rounded education. If a student likes literature and wants to read and analyze it, I highly recommend this major."

On receiving the Shelley Memorial Scholarship:

"Getting the scholarship was an affirmation of my ability to write. The scholarship was juried by an objective group who read my work and approved of it. I submitted about 14 poems for the competition. I already have academic scholarships at South, but the Shelley Scholarship made it that much easier for me to cover expenses and focus on my studies."

Graduate Scholarship Winners



Joseph Campbell (Stokes Scholarship) Deborah Ferguson (Stokes Scholarship)
Netisha Goreed (Shelley Scholarship) Andy Baker (Holmes Scholarship)

Deidre Dowling, *Recipient of the Stephens Memorial Scholarship as a graduate student
Recipient of Shelley Memorial Scholarship in poetry as an undergraduate student
Recipient of Stokes Scholarship in poetry as an undergraduate student*

On her decision to become an English major at USA:

"I was an undergraduate at South from 1999-2002. As an undergrad-

uate, I wrote an honors thesis entitled 'Motherly: A Collection of Poetry, Fiction and Creative Nonfiction on the Art of Motherhood.' It was about a new and evolving cultural idea of motherhood, where the conventions no longer held and alternative models were becoming available. I was inspired to write it because I gave birth to Daina, my daughter, in my junior year at USA."

On her decision to become an English graduate student at USA:

"The reason I'm now getting a Master's in English at South is that I love literature and I love writing. I've especially appreciated the way that the faculty are open to reading my work and that they're so encouraging. They want us students to produce writing that we're proud of and that we can get published. My Master's thesis now is on motherhood in the writings of Anne Sexton – on the tension between the traditional institution of motherhood and contemporary female identity. I'm planning to further pursue the topic of women's writing in a Ph.D. program. I've already applied to doctoral programs and I'm waiting for their decisions."

Her advice to undergraduate students considering the major:

"To an undergrad, I would say: don't expect to end your education with a B.A. – plan on going to graduate school. Don't wait too long to go back to school for a higher degree. Those with humanities bachelor's degrees particularly need to go on for more schooling. If a student is considering getting an M.A. or Ph.D., the student should spend a lot of time studying literature as an undergraduate. For those considering getting a graduate degree in creative writing, be sure to get as much creative writing experience as possible while you're still an undergraduate."

On receiving her scholarship awards:

"The scholarships put a nice dent in my fees and expenses. And the teaching assistantship position was the best financial aid deal I ever got: for those who become assistant teachers, the school waives tuition, including out-of-state tuition, for up to ten credit-hours per semester, and students receive a \$3000 stipend each semester (which is well worth it for teaching one class one semester and two the next). The scholarships have been very important to me so that I could move forward with my academic program in a timely way. There are many students willing to do the work and who have the talent, but they don't have the opportunity to enroll as students because they aren't financially able."

English Department Awards & Scholarships

The following is a list of the English Department's existing scholarships. We invite you to consider contributing to one of these or establishing a new scholarship or curriculum development grant.

Steve and Angelia Stokes Scholarships

Two Fiction Awards (one graduate and one undergraduate) and two Poetry Awards (one graduate and one undergraduate) to be given spring semester. \$1,000 per award. Applicant must be full-time, have taken one poetry course prior to applying, and have a 2.5 or above GPA.

Shelley Memorial Scholarship

Donated by President and Mrs. Gordon Moulton in honor of her mother, this \$500 Annual Scholarship recognizes excellence in Poetry. Scholarships will be awarded fall semester to an undergraduate and a graduate student for creative writing. Applicant must be full-time, have taken one poetry course prior to applying, and have a 2.5 or above GPA.

Bobby Holmes Scholarship

Poet and writer Bobby Holmes was student editor of the journal *Negative Capability* as a USA student. Donated by his parents and friends in his memory, the Bobby Holmes Scholarship provides a yearly award for the Editor-in-Chief of Oracle. Dr. Larry Holmes, Bobby's father, is a history professor at USA.

Katherine Lawrence Richardson Memorial Scholarship

\$1,400 to be applied toward tuition and fees awarded to a rising

senior. Applicant must be full-time English or Secondary Education major and have a 2.5 or above GPA.

Dr. Patricia Stephens Memorial Scholarship

\$500 awarded annually to a graduate student for the best essay in Renaissance and/or 17th or 18th century studies in even years, and for a non-designated area of study in odd years. Donated in 2000 by Ms. Lana Silverthorn.

Lloyd Dendinger Memorial Scholarship

Named after a former faculty member in the English Department, the scholarship provides a \$50 annual award for an outstanding graduate student essay in American literature.

English Department Endowed Scholarship

Provides an annual award of \$400 to an outstanding second-year graduate student who is nominated by the faculty.

English Department Graduate Student Essay Contest

Provides an annual award of \$50 for the best graduate student essay written during the previous academic year.

Janet Mahan Summer Humanities Scholarship

Funds summer tuition for a high school teacher of English or History returning to pursue additional work in either discipline. Contact the History Department to apply.

Alumni News

Joe Formichella, author, graduate of USA's English Graduate Program

Author of: [The Wreck of the Twilight Limited](#) (Fiction, August 2004, MacAdam/Cage)

[Here's to You Jackie Robinson: The Legend of the Prichard Mohawks](#) (Nonfiction, May 2005)

On his experience in USA's English Program:

"I came to the University of South Alabama as an undergraduate from 1978-81, and I graduated with a B.S. in medical technology, even while I was writing in the closet. I enrolled as a graduate student in the USA English Department and completed my degree in 1991. My faculty mentors were tremendously supportive of everything I did and pushed me to write creative and scholarly work."

"South was very nurturing for me. It was a good place – there was a lot of interaction between the graduate students. We used to meet and swap writing and promise to be tough on each other. We were all editors of each other's poetry and fiction manuscripts."

Tom Franklin, graduate of USA's English undergraduate program and Master of Arts program

Author of [Hell at the Breech](#) (2003; paperback edition, 2004)

On his writing teachers in USA's English program:

"What you always had there [at USA] is a really good writers' community. During my years at South, the writers would get together to read each other's work. It was a tight group. You need that when you're trying to do something as hard as writing. We had the writing in common, and the faculty fostered a sense of community. Whether you are writing creatively or critically, you need that community to talk things out."

On the usefulness of an English degree:

"I know from working in the writing lab at USA that writing is still one of the single most important skills that a student can learn at the university, and it's continually slipping through the cracks. Even those who are not writers or scholars need to be able to write résumés, cover letters, professional correspondence, and so on. In this kind of writing, you've got a sentence or a paragraph to be able to get yourself noticed and to make an impression. Even technological or business fields demand writing proficiency. Everyone needs to develop these skills. And the skills are gained by studying how good writing is done and trying to get your own words down on paper."



"There aren't any better students anywhere. Mobile grows them good down there! The people who are enrolled at South have gone through things in their lives. They just need someone to toughen them up as writers. They've had lives. They have real stories to tell. That's the kind of students you get down there."



Events, Programs, and Faculty

Bruce Alford, Asst. Prof., specializes in creative writing, including fiction and poetry.

Nicole Amare, Asst. Prof., specializes in professional communication and rhetoric/composition, with interests in gender studies and late American literature.

The Eugene Walter Writers Festival is sponsored by the USA English Department. Students and faculty participate in this event, which brings professional literary agents, representatives from publishing houses, and acclaimed writers to Mobile.

Department Events on campus, such as readings given by local and internationally known authors, give students access to the current literary world. Recent lecturers include Sonia Sanchez, Terry Cline, K.L. Cook, Wade Hall, Roy Hoffman, T.R. Pearson, Brewster Robertson, Pat Schneider, Alexander McCall Smith, W.D. Snodgrass, Les Standiford, Sena Naslund, Helen Scully, Linda Busby Parker, and Judith Richards.

Oracle, USA's fine arts publication, won the 2004 University & College Designers Association Award of Excellence. Students are encouraged to submit their writing for publication in this journal, to serve on editorial panels, and to participate in its design and production.

USA's **English Graduate Organization** (EGO) is a forum in which students and graduate faculty work together to create an effective students' advocacy and interests organization.

For more information on the English Department's programs, or to discuss contributing to a scholarship or development fund, please visit our Web site at www.southalabama.edu/english/ or call us at (251) 460-6146.

Larry Beason, Assoc. Prof., is Director of Freshman Composition and specializes in writing pedagogy.

Pat Cesarini, Asst. Prof., specializes in American literature from the colonial period to 1900, with particular emphasis on religion and historicist concerns.

Adam Cohen, Asst. Prof., specializes in Shakespeare, early modern literature, early modern cultural studies, and the history of science and technology.

Bob Coleman, Asst. Prof., specializes in United States literatures, literary aesthetics, criticism and theory, and the history of rhetoric. He serves as Assistant to the Chair and Graduate Coordinator.

Annamarie Guzy, Asst. Prof., specializes in composition pedagogy, professional communication, honors education, and gender studies.

Carolyn Haines, Instructor, specializes in fiction writing.

John Halbrooks, Asst. Prof., specializes in medieval and Renaissance literature.

Ellen Burton Harrington, Asst. Prof., specializes in British Victorian literature, detective and sensation fiction, and 19th century gender and colonial contexts.

Jean McIver, Professor

On accomplishments in the English Department and African-American Studies since she first began to teach at USA:

"One of the most profound changes since I first arrived here has been the expansion of the curriculum. This was a staid department when I arrived, with limited breadth. I'm also proud of the students who have made a mark and contributed to the Department, and those whose education we've furthered and whose careers we've helped to launch."

On what she would say to students considering enrolling in English Department:

"I would say to prospective students that the preparation they receive in the Department can provide any number of openings into a wide variety of careers: besides writing and academic careers, professional schools, law, and even the business world all have increasing appreciation for people with a humanistic background. Our faculty keeps getting stronger and is able to prepare students for whatever prospective educational track or career they choose."

On the English Department's scholarships:

"The scholarships are testaments to the generosity of the people who fund them and their concern for educational excellence. Funding a scholarship shows that donors believe in our program and what we can do for students."

Cristopher Hollingsworth, Asst. Prof., specializes in poetry and poetics, 19th-century British literature, and modernism.

Kern M. Jackson, Asst. Prof., specializes in African American and Southeastern United States folklore and oral narrative as culture and performance.

Alice Kracke, Instructor, is writing her dissertation on transatlantic black writing from 1760-1830.

Alesia McFadden, Instructor, specializes in 20th century African-American writers.

Jean McIver, Full Prof., specializes in 20th century British and American literature with a special emphasis on African American literature. She serves as Director of the University's African American Studies Program.

Becky McLaughlin, Asst. Prof., is a generalist with particular interests in psychoanalysis and sexuality. She serves as Undergraduate Coordinator.

Moira Amado Miller, Asst. Prof., focuses on representations of women and women's sexuality, especially as these intersect with civic discourse, legislation, and regulation.

Barry Nowlin, Asst. Prof., is a generalist in American and Southern literature with specializations in assessment, instructional design, and composition research.

Linda Payne, Assoc. Prof., specializes in the women writers of the Restoration and 18th century. She serves as Director of the College's interdisciplinary Gender Studies Program.

Karen Peterson, Instructor, teaches British and American literature and specializes in Greek mythology, tragedy and epics.

Lincoln Shlensky, Asst. Prof., specializes in postcolonialism, Holocaust literature, and modern francophone and Hebrew literatures.

Linda Spain, Instructor, teaches medieval and Renaissance English literature.

Sue Walker, Full Prof. and Department Chair, specializes in American/Southern literature, ecology, literature and medicine, and poetics, including poetry writing.

Tom West, Asst. Prof., specializes in rhetoric and composition, nonfiction writing, popular culture, and science fiction.

