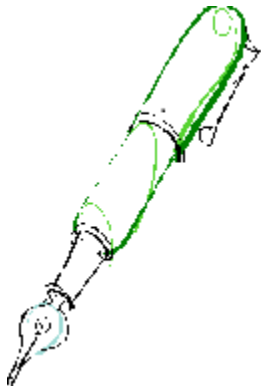


# GradLetter 2011-2012

Graduate Newsletter · Department of English · University of South Alabama

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## Welcome and News

Welcome to the 2011-12 school year! Our department has added two new, accomplished faculty members, our chair, Dr. Steven Trout, and a new creative writing professor, Dr. Jesmyn Ward. Several graduate students with diverse interests have entered since last fall: Kennon Barton (creative writing, including music), Randy Blackmon (fiction writing), Marlena Braun, Meghan Brewer, Matt Crutchfield (creative writing), Blake Cunningham (poetry and interviews), Catherine Franklin, Megan Hartman, Alice Jackson (fiction and nonfiction), Ashley Kidd, Jennifer Shelby (Postmodernism and Latin American Boom), and Katherine Sundy (British Literature from the Restoration to 1950; Literature of the American South). Be sure to introduce yourself to our new faculty and students.

Congratulations to our recent graduates: Frank Ard, Leon Bigham, Marylyn Buschell, Jeremy Daughtry, and Tiffany Miller. Frank Ard and Kimberly Daniels are recent graduates of our program serving as Instructor-Interns for the English department this year.

## Graduate & Teaching Assistants for 2011-12

Graduate and Teaching Assistantships are competitive positions awarded each year by the department. Graduate Assistants for this academic year are Marlena Braun, Matt Crutchfield, Jamie Poole, and Jennifer Shelby. GAs work in the Writing Center and assist in faculty research. Teaching Assistants for this academic year are Emily Bingham, Elizabeth Butt, Natalie Cochran-Murray, Michael Mason, Emily Singh, and Heather Wilkins. TAs are teaching EH 101 classes this fall.

## English Graduate Organization (EGO)

EGO provides a forum for students to socialize, to plan events, and to petition the department to address concerns of graduate students. While it was once quite active, this organization has not been meeting recently. If you are willing to organize a meeting, an

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event, a research forum, or a study group for English graduate students please get in touch with Dr. Harrington as soon as possible.

## New Faculty in the English Department

### Steven Trout Chair of the English Department

A native of Kansas City, Missouri, Steven Trout received his BA and MA (both in English) from the University of Missouri-Kansas City and his PhD (English) from the University of Kansas. Before joining the faculty at the University of South Alabama, he taught at Fort Hays State University, where he served as Chair of the Department of English and Interim Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Trout's research focuses on the cultural history of the First World War and on modernist fiction, particularly the writings of Ernest Hemingway and Willa Cather. His books include *Memorial Fictions: Willa Cather and the First World War* (University of Nebraska Press, 2002) and *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919-1941* (University of Alabama Press, 2010). He is an elected member of the Board of Governors for the Willa Cather Foundation (a.k.a. the Willa Cather Society) and a co-editor of *The Willa Cather Newsletter and Review*.

### Jesmyn Ward Assistant Professor

Jesmyn Ward is a former Stegner fellow at Stanford and Grisham Writer-in-Residence at the University of Mississippi. Her novels, *Where the Line Bleeds* and *Salvage the Bones*, are both set on the Mississippi coast where she grew up. Bloomsbury will publish her memoir about an epidemic of deaths of young black men in her community. She is an Assistant Professor at the University of South Alabama.

## 2011-2012 Events & Activities

### 2011 Hamner Lecture

#### Steven Trout: "Defying Mr Prejudice: Horace Pippin, the Harlem Hellfighters, and African-American Memory of World War I"

Drawn from my recent book, *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919-1941* (University of Alabama Press, 2010), this lecture will focus on the work of Horace Pippin, an African-American painter who was severely wounded while serving in the famous "Harlem Hellfighters" regiment in World War I. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Pippin produced a series of paintings drawn from his experiences on the Western Front; in the process, he challenged popular assumptions about African-American soldiers. This lecture will trace Pippin's deep involvement with war commemoration and the way in which his modernist art grapples with issues of collective, as well as personal, memory. -S.T

Dr. Steven Trout will deliver the ninth Eugenie L. Hamner Lecture for the Graduate Program in English this fall, tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2011. Check the English website for updated event information. All students are encouraged to attend and support our program!

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

**OCOP (One City One Prompt)** in conjunction with *Sense* magazine will host a writing event in Mobile, tentatively scheduled for November 12, 2011. Please contact Dr. Sue Walker for further information.

The **National Poetry Out Loud Project** needs student volunteers to go into the schools to facilitate poetry programs related to POL. Dr. Walker is the Region Five Coordinator for the project.

The **National Dead Poets of America** reading at the Church Street Graveyard will be organized by Dr. Walker.

### 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 Monday, October 24th, the inimitable country bluesman **Charlie Parr** (Duluth, MN) will be appearing at Satori. Over the past decade, Parr has released eight LPs to critical acclaim, appeared on *Prairie Home Companion*, and won over fans from Paris to Perth. His latest, *When the Devil Goes Blind*, is out now. Showtime is at 7 p.m.

### 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.

### USA Horror Club

The Horror Club will post the schedule for fall 2011 movie nights after the semester starts. Contact Horror Club Faculty Advisor Dr. Annmarie Guzy for more information.



**Oracle Fine Arts Review**  
**2011 Issue available in HUMB 240**

### 2011-12 Staff Needed:

Editor-in-Chief, Art Director, Art Curator, Fiction Editor, Non-Fiction Editor, & Poetry Editor positions are open. Please submit cover letter, resume, and brief sample for the position (art, design, or writing). Indicate if you are willing to be considered for more than one position. Students applying for editor/director/curator positions should be available for regular meetings during weekdays. These positions require a greater time commitment than editorial board positions.

Applications due Friday, September 12, 2011, to Diane Gibbs in the Art Department ([diane.gibbs@gmail.com](mailto:diane.gibbs@gmail.com)) and Ellen Harrington in the English Department ([eharrington@usouthal.edu](mailto:eharrington@usouthal.edu)).

### 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 the Oracle Faculty Advisors at: [diane.gibbs@gmail.com](mailto:diane.gibbs@gmail.com) and [eharrington@usouthal.edu](mailto:eharrington@usouthal.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 **Friday, October 28, 2011**. Look for more information at [www.southalabama.edu/oracle/](http://www.southalabama.edu/oracle/)

## Congratulations to Graduate English Scholarship and Prize Winners, 2011!

### **Frank Ard**

Bobby Holmes Scholarship for the Editor-in-Chief of *Oracle*

### **Natalie Cochran-Murray**

Dr. Patricia Stephens Memorial Scholarship for a Graduate Essay in an Unspecified Field

### **Natalie Cochran-Murray**

English Department Graduate Student Essay Contest Winner

### **Katherine Hammett**

Steve and Angelia Stokes Scholarship for Graduate Fiction or Nonfiction

### **Michael Mason**

Dr. Lloyd Dendinger Memorial Scholarship for a Graduate Essay in American Literature

### **Sharon Varner**

Steve and Angelia Stokes Scholarship for Graduate Poetry

### **Heather Wilkins**

Shelley Memorial Scholarship for Graduate Poetry

## 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.

## Literature Mid-Program Reviews

The Literature Mid-Program Review takes place when a student in the literature concentration has completed at least one-half of the coursework (at least 18 hours) for the M.A. degree, and it is required to proceed with the degree. The student must request the review from his or her thesis director or comprehensive exam mentors in the first month of thesis hours or examination preparation. At the LPR, the student and faculty members will discuss a representative paper that the student submits, the student's progress, and strategies for completing the Master's degree in English. The LPR will help each student assess her or his strengths and any weaknesses; additionally, it allows each student to discuss grades, faculty comments, and other concerns such as post-degree options. Please contact Dr. Harrington for more information.

## 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](http://www.southalabama.edu/english/programs/grad_class.htm)

You can get current schedule information and register through the PAWS website:

[paws.southalabama.edu](http://paws.southalabama.edu)

## Thesis Deadlines 2011-12

**Fall Thesis Deadline:  
Defend by 10/17/11**

**Spring Thesis Deadline:  
Defend by 3/9/12**

**Summer Thesis Deadline:  
Defend by 6/11/12**

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.

## Student and Alumni News

News about current students and recent MA graduates can be found on our Student and Alumni Accomplishments web page:

<http://www.southalabama.edu/english/alumni.html>

## Student Mailboxes

**Please check your student email address and your departmental mailbox regularly.**

Each English graduate student has a mailbox for departmental mail in the main office (HUMB 240) to the left of the front door. Boxes for graduate assistants and teaching assistants are located with the mailboxes for adjunct faculty. If you are in the department for evening classes after the office is locked, please ask your professor to unlock the door for a few moments either before or after class so that you may check for mail. (Boxes for the current semester may not be updated until the end of the first week of classes).

## Conferences

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 in Atlanta, Georgia, November 4-6. The conference features a special focus on "The Power of Poetry in the Modern World." 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](http://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 Boston, April 11-14, 2012. Proposals in a wide range of topic areas are due on December 15, 2011. Please see the website for more information: <http://pcaaca.org/conference/national.php>

## English Graduate Faculty Research

### Nicole Amare

Nicole Amare continues her research on visual rhetoric and has a new book forthcoming with Baywood Press entitled *A Unified Theory of Information Design: Visuals, Text, and Ethics*. This work proposes a universal rhetoric for visuals and texts based on the semiotics of philosopher C.S. Peirce. Also with Baywood Press, Dr. Amare has a chapter called "Teaching Form and Color as Emotion Triggers" that is forthcoming in Eva Brumberger and Kathy Northcut's *Designing Texts: Teaching Visual Communication*. This chapter discusses how form and color do indeed have consistent meaning across cultures when analyzed with criteria that are neutrally evaluated. Finally, in October, she will travel to Cincinnati to present a paper on Peircean ethics and sustainability at the International Professional Communication Conference.

### Larry Beason

Larry Beason's areas of specialization include composition, rhetoric, sociolinguistics, and science fiction. He directs the Freshman Composition Program. In spring, he presented a paper ("Grammar Sharks in Online Communication: Just When You Thought Gaming Forums Were Safe") at a conference of the Far West Popular Culture Association. He published an article ("Fostering Quality through Sense of Place") in the WPA Journal and is completing the sixth edition of his grammar textbook. Currently, he is working on a paper examining teachers' responses to students' use of research.

### Patrick Cesarini

Patrick Cesarini teaches courses in colonial American and antebellum American literatures, and in literary theory. He is especially interested in the intersections of literature, history, and religion, in postcolonial theory, and in the American pragmatic tradition. His current projects include a study of John Eliot's

1660 Indian Bible, a study of Walt Whitman's relations to literary modernism, and a projected anthology of American short fiction from the early national period to the Civil War. In the spring he will be teaching the graduate Introduction to Literary Theory.

### Annmarie Guzy

Annmarie Guzy's article "Why Honors Students Still Need First-Year Composition" was published in *Honors in Practice* in April 2011. "Harry Potter and the Specter of Honors Accreditation" is under review at the *Journal of the National Collegiate Honors Council* for a special forum on the institutional impact of honors. She will be presenting papers on "Gender and First-Year Honors Composition: Enrollment, Errors, and Inferences" and "Pimp My Class: The Uses (and Abuses) of Pop Culture Content in Honors Courses" at the National Collegiate Honors Council annual conference, October 18-23, in Phoenix, AZ.

As advisor of the USA Horror Club, Dr. Guzy was a featured guest at Mobicon XIV, Mobile's annual sf/fantasy convention, in May 2011. In addition to leading the club's annual session, she gave two presentations, "Horror's Top 10 Final Girls" and "Horror's Best New Trend: The Retrospective Documentary." She also attended a book signing for *Blood Secrets* by Jeannie Holmes, an alumna of the graduate program and the 2006 Horror Club president, on July 2 at Page & Palette in Fairhope.

### Carolyn Haines

Over the summer Carolyn Haines, fiction coordinator, published the 11th book in the Sarah Booth Delaney Mississippi Delta mystery series, *Bones of a Feather* (Minotaur). The book launched in June, and the paperback of *Bone Appetit* (Minotaur) went on sale in May. Haines will release a new crime novel, *Skin Dancer*, in August. While most of her books are set in the South, *Skin Dancer* takes place in South Dakota. Haines has established a talent coalition, 365scribes, to help authors with a back list move their older titles into e-books and print on demand.

### 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 spring he presented a paper on such constructions in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* at The University of Manchester.

### 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 "'Dead men have no children' in Conrad's 'The Idiots' and 'Amy Foster'" will be published in an upcoming Conrad anthology from Texas Tech University Press. Her essay on the new BBC Sherlock Holmes series, "Terror, Nostalgia, and the Pursuit of Sherlock Holmes in *Sherlock*," will be published in the *Transmedia Sherlock* volume forthcoming from McFarland. Currently, she is continuing work on Conrad's heroines in "Suicide, Feminism, and 'the miserable dependence of girls' in Joseph Conrad's 'The Idiots,' *The Secret Agent*, and *Chance*" and in a larger project on Conrad. She is teaching a graduate/undergraduate special topics class on Joseph Conrad this fall.

### Richard Hillyer

Richard Hillyer mainly teaches Renaissance literature, especially Shakespeare's plays. His 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, and books on Thomas Hobbes and Sir Philip Sidney. He is currently writing a book on the semantic range of "care" and its derivatives. For this project, he needs a working familiarity with just about everything under the sun—exhausting research, but also exhilarating. He next teaches a graduate course in the spring of 2012: Shakespeare's comedies and romances.

### Cristopher Hollingsworth

Beyond his abiding interests in the origins of Romanticism and the Romantic roots of contemporary styles of authenticity, Cristopher Hollingsworth continues work on Carroll's *Wonderland*. In October, he is delivering a paper about the use of *Wonderland* in contemporary women's autobiography. Recently, he has become fascinated with a model of literary reading as an experience located in moments. To this model of reading he opposes informational and occupational reading. In Fall, 2011 he is teaching 502, Graduate Writing and Research; the focus is the picaresque.

### Becky McLaughlin

Becky McLaughlin's main area of interest is human relations—how we interact with one another in situations involving language, sexuality, religion, and ethics, for example—and she finds that reading literature, viewing films, and analyzing cultural phenomena can all be exciting ways to gain a better understanding of how and why we do what we do, be who we be. The theoretical lens most useful to her is psychoanalysis, which rubs elbows with feminism and deconstruction and which turns up to one degree or another in everything she teaches and writes. In her classes, she emphasizes close reading, and thus her pedagogical gesture is not the grand sweep or whirlwind tour but the slow, steady assault on sentence and paragraph. Although the academy demands that she write and publish scholarly articles, she finds other types of writing equally fruitful for exploring issues important to her, and so she also writes and publishes creative nonfiction and fiction.

The titles of forthcoming publications give a pretty accurate picture of the diversity of Dr. McLaughlin's writing pursuits: "Gothicizing the Apotemnophile: Live Burial, Secret Desire, and the Uncanny Body of the Amputee Wannabe" will appear in a special issue of *Textus* devoted to new frontiers in the gothic, and any day now she should be receiving a copy of *Faith and Spirituality in Masters of World Cinema*, in which appears "'Oh, maybe I was wrong': Doubt, Conversion, and Redemption in *Breaking the Waves*." "Crying's Diaper" and "Growing Up Out of Place" are two

pieces of creative nonfiction that will appear in edited collections, one on trauma and autobiography and the other on the aftermath of the Civil Rights movement. Although she very infrequently writes about pedagogy in an explicit way, she will have an essay, "Chaucer's Cut," included in the MLA's *New Approaches to Teaching Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* due out in 2012.

### Christopher Raczkowski

Chris Raczkowski's research focuses primarily on modernism and crime. He has written and published on Dashiell Hammett, William Dean Howells, the films of the Coen Brothers and Chester Bomar Himes. His current work is on the Harlem Renaissance and technology. His broader teaching interests include twentieth-century American literature and culture, Anglo-American modernism, the proletarian novel, and literary realism.

### Justin St. Clair

Justin St. Clair teaches courses in postmodern and contemporary fiction. Much of his research occurs at the intersection of contemporary fiction and media studies. Three of his articles were published in the spring: "Soundtracking the Novel: Willy Vlautin's Northline as Filmic Audiobook" (in *Audiobooks, Literature, and Sound Studies*, edited by Matthew Rubery), "Borrowed Time: Thomas Pynchon's *Against the Day* and the Victorian Fourth Dimension" (in *Science Fiction Studies*), and "Binocular Disparity and Pynchon's Panoramic Paradigm" (in *Pynchon's Against the Day: A Corrupted Pilgrim's Guide*, edited by Jeffrey Severs and Christopher Leise). This fall, his essay on the enigmatic folk musician Wee Willie Shantz is appearing in *Big Muddy*.

### Steven Trout

Steven Trout, chair of the English department, describes his most recent large-scale scholarly project as a proverbial "labor of love." In 2010, he received an advance contract from the University of Kansas Press and the National World War I Museum to edit a new edition of *No Hard Feelings!*, a World War I memoir by Medal of Honor recipient John Lewis Barkley. Trout worked with Barkley's daughter, Joan

Barkley Wells, to resurrect this book, which has been out of print since 1930. Featuring a detailed introduction and nearly seventy annotations, the new edition will be published in April, 2012. Other forthcoming publications include "Hamilton and Higher Education: Revisiting Willa Cather's *The Professor's House* as an Academic Novel" (this article will appear in the Fall issue of *The Willa Cather Newsletter and Review*) and *War+Ink: New Perspectives on Ernest Hemingway's Early Life and Writings* (co-edited with Steve Paul and Gail Sinclair and scheduled for publication by Kent State University Press in early 2013).

### 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. Dr. Walker has just completed a critical book on James Dickey, which she is editing before sending it to be published. An article on James Dickey's "The Lyric Beasts" is forthcoming in the *James Dickey Review*, and an article on the state of poetry in the twenty-first century is forthcoming in *Argotist Online*. She has recently published in *Sense* magazine. A chapbook of poetry has recently been published by the *Dead Mule School of Southern Literature*. She is currently the President of the Alabama Writer's Forum and the Vice President of the Alabama Writer's Conclave. Dr. Walker is National Letters Chair for the National League of American Pen Women and will be giving a workshop and a reading at the Biennial in April 2012. She is the Poet Laureate of Alabama.

### Jesmyn Ward

Jesmyn Ward has been working on her second novel, a work of literary fiction called *Salvage the Bones*, which will be released by Bloomsbury on September 1st. She's also been working on her memoir, which is about an epidemic of deaths of poor young black men in her rural community; this book will hopefully be released next fall. She's also been working on short stories and has one that she hopes will be published soon.