Message From the Department Head

Dear UIC English colleagues, students, alumni and friends,

This past year has been an active one for the English Department, with both faculty and graduate students (not to mention alumni) publishing new books and winning a wide range of awards. Sunil Agnani’s *Hating Empire Properly* won the Harry Levin Prize for best first book from The American Comparative Literature Association; Roger Reeves’s *King Me* won the Larry Levis Reading Prize for the best first or second book of poetry from Virginia Commonwealth University, and two current (Assistant Professor Mary Anne Mohanraj and graduate student Laura Krughoff) and one future (Professor Peter Coviello) members of the Department were nominated for Lambda prizes. In addition, Rachel Havrelock was honored by the State Department for her contributions as an alumnus of the Across Borders Fellowship program and Alfred Thomas was honored by our own students for his brilliance as a teacher. We’re proud of all of them, as we are of the many others who have also accomplished great things this year, some of which are described below.

2013-14 is also turning out to be a year of significant change. Peter Coviello, the author of two important books on American literature and of many articles in journals like *American Literature*, *Raritan* and *The Believer*, is joining us from his previous position on the faculty of Bowdoin College. And twelve of our Ph.D. students – with offers from schools like Amherst College, the University at Buffalo (SUNY), Binghamton University (SUNY), Beloit College, the University of Puget Sound, the College of Du Page, the University of North Carolina and Washington University in St. Louis – have accepted teaching positions or post-docs that will be taking them away from UIC. We’re sorry to see them go but delighted to see them embarked on such promising careers.

Finally, I’ll remind all readers of the newsletter that they are encouraged to send us news for the next publication: please send all items to englishnewsletteruic@gmail.com.

Best wishes,

Walter Benn Michaels,
Department of English Chair
The English department has much news to boast about for the 2013-14 academic year. For starters, Sunil Agnani won a Humanities Research Center Fellowship awarded by Rice University.

Lennard Davis’ highly anticipated The End of Normal: Identity in a Biocultural Era is forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press, 2013.

Passing a pretty amazing milestone, Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein’s They Say/I Say has now sold over a million copies. Newly released as a third edition, They Say/I Say is in use at over half the colleges and universities in the United States.

Lennard Davis and Rachel Havrelock have been reaching wider audiences as bloggers for The Huffington Post, posting columns on topics like “Have a Little Diversity With Your Chicken Sandwich: Chick-fil-A and the Contradictions of the Diversity Agenda,” (Davis) and “Where Exactly is Biblical Israel?” (Havrelock).

Rachel Havrelock was awarded the Alumni Impact Award for State Department Fellows. Alumni Impact Award recipients discussed their work at the Spring 2014 Professional Fellows Congress in Washington, D.C.

Anna Kornbluh’s book on the Victorian novel, Realizing Capital, is available now from Fordham University Press, 2014. “The underlying premise [of Realizing Capital] as Zizek writes, is that ‘the psychic life of capital, the way individuals experience and fictionalize financial circulation, is a key ingredient of economic reality itself, since the reality of the financial capital is itself structured like a fiction.’”

Lots of other new work has just come out this past fall, including Cris Mazza’s Something Wrong with Her (Jaded Ibis Press), and Mary Anne Mohanraj’s The Stars Change (Circlet Press), illustrated by Jak Kort.

Walter Benn Michaels was one of two people appointed to lead a National Humanities Center Summer Institute in Literary Studies.

Christina Pugh earns the 2013-2014 UIC Teaching Recognition Award, a peer honor conferred by UIC’s Council for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

Roger Reeves is the recipient of the Hodder Fellowship. The Hodder Fellowship is awarded to “writers and non-literary artists of exceptional promise to pursue independent projects at Princeton University during the 2015-2016 academic year.”

Aside from being a Distinguished Visiting Professor this year at the University of Cologne, Joe Tabbi has also been invited to be a permanent guest Professor at the University of Coimbra in Portugal.

And, Alfred Thomas’ new book, Shakespeare, Dissent and the Cold War, is forthcoming from Palgrave/Macmillan, 2014. Thomas was also named winner of the 2013 Silver Circle Award. Since 1969, the Silver Circle Award has been presented to UIC’s best teachers.

New Faces

In the Fall of 2014, Peter Coviello, will join the Department of English. Professor Coviello has been at Bowdoin College since 1998, where he specializes in 19th century American literature and queer studies.

He is author of Intimacy in America: Dreams of Affiliation in Antebellum Literature, and of Tomorrow’s Parties: Sex and the Untimely in Nineteenth-Century America. Coviello’s work also appears in PMLA, ELH, Raritan, American Literature, GLQ, and MLQ as well as in other venues like Frieze and The Believer.
Graduate Student News and Publications

The graduate program in English offers the PhD degree in English Studies and the PhD in Creative Writing. The program is specifically designed to encourage innovative work in writing and teaching, leading to careers in academic professions. Indeed, quite a few of our graduate students were offered teaching positions in other universities for the 2014-2015 academic Year:

After completing the PhD in English, Surbhi Malik is an Assistant Professor at Creighton University. In addition, Aneeeka A. Henderson is a Robert E. Keiter 1957 Postdoctoral Fellow and Visiting Assistant Professor of Women’s and Gender Studies at Amherst College.

Kevin Smith is an Assistant Professor of Film Arts at Chemeketa Community College, in Salem, Oregon. And Tim Henningsen has joined the Department of English at the College of Du Page as an Assistant Professor.

Coming out of the PhD program in Creative Writing, D. Star Costello is a Professor at Vilnus University, Megan Milks and Jennie Berner are Visiting Assistant Professors at Beloit College and North Central College, respectively. Laura Krughoff will join the English Department at the University of Puget Sound as an Assistant Professor of Creative Writing, and Brooke Wonders will join the faculty at the University of Northern Iowa as an Assistant Professor of Creative Nonfiction.

Danielle Christmas was offered several jobs, from such universities as University of Buffalo and Binghamton University, both part of SUNY system, and earned a Mellon / ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies. Following a visiting scholar residency at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum this summer, Danielle will begin her appointment as a Carolina Postdoctoral Fellow at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (2014-2016), in September.

Ryan Brooks was awarded a Teaching Postdoctoral Fellowship in Contemporary American Fiction at Washington University.

A recent recipient of the Adam Smith Fellowship, Jason Douglas delivered “Fictions of American Capitalism and the Narratives of Economic Theory” at a conference in France. Adam Smith Fellowships are awarded to graduate students attending PhD programs in a variety of fields including economics, philosophy, political science, and sociology.

Julie Fiorelli has received the Dean's Scholar Award for the 2014-2015 school year, a graduate college fellowship intended to provide the most distinguished, advanced-level graduate students with a period of time dedicated solely to the completion of their programs.

This past Fall, Lindsay Marshall received the Chancellor's Graduate Research Fellowship. The fellowship, which supports interdisciplinary scholarship, will assist Lindsay as she continues working on her dissertation project, “Life in Recovery: Addiction, Rehabilitation, and the Limits of Disease Discourse.”

Laura Krughoff’s first novel, My Brother’s Name, was released by Scarletta Press in 2013 and has been named a finalist for a Lambda Literary Award. Her short fiction has appeared in qu.ee/r Magazine and her essays have appeared in The Huffington Post and The Chicago Sun-Times among other places. She was invited to the Virginia Festival of the Book to participate in a panel with Stephen Jimenez and Ariel Gore on the future of queer literature and to read from her fiction.


Snežana Žabić’s most recent book, Broken Records, will be forthcoming in the winter of 2014 via Punctum Press.

“The Plantation-Auschwitz Tradition: Forced Labor and Free Markets in American Holocaust and Slavery Narratives,” Danielle Chirstmas’ essay, has been accepted for publication in the journal Twentieth Century Literature.

Julie Fiorelli’s essay, “Imagination Run Riot: Apocalyptic Race War Novels of the Late 1960s,” is forthcoming in Mediations.
Graduate Student News and Publications

Poetry from Beth McDermott is forthcoming in journals such as So to Speak, Storm Cellar, Red Earth Review and Watershed Review. McDermot also has a review forthcoming in the William Carlos William Review.


Brooke Wonders’ essays are forthcoming from North American Review and DIAGRAM, and her fiction will appear in Apex Magazine.

The first issue of The Account: A Journal of Poetry, Prose, and Thought, an independent journal of new writing and art, debuted this past October and has received much attention since. The second, Spring 2014, issue of The Account can be found online. The Account’s editorial masthead includes Jessica Berger, Annah Browning, Chris Bryson, Tyler Mills, Brianna Noll, and Brooke Wonders.

Julie Fiorelli recently presented her work at conferences of the Society for Novel Studies, Critical Ethnic Studies Association, and Marxist Literary Group.


Kate Sjostrom presented at the 2013 National Council of Teachers of English’s annual convention. Kate served as a member of the panel, “Contemporary Poetry in Grades 6-12: Developing Independent Voices, Dialogic Communities, and Critical Literacies.”

The Anne Hopewell Selby Memorial Fund

Relatives, colleagues, and other friends of the late Anne Hopewell Selby, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Illinois at Chicago, have established a fund in her memory for awards for distinction in Graduate Studies in English. Annually the department of English designates one graduate student enrolled in the department who has demonstrated outstanding scholarship in English to receive an award, which is paid from the income derived from the memorial fund. The student so designated is selected by a committee appointed by the Director of Graduate Studies on the basis of a substantial critical essay (an essay written for a course during the academic year, an MA Thesis/Project, an approved Dissertation Prospectus, or a PhD Dissertation chapter) submitted to the committee. Students in all specializations are eligible for the award, presented at the department’s annual spring celebration.
Alumni News and Letters

Song of the Shank (Graywolf Press 2014), Jeff Allen’s new novel, is receiving glowing reviews and is featured as the cover review on The New York Times Book Review in the Sunday, June 22nd paper. The novel is loosely based on the life of Blind Tom, a nineteenth century African American piano virtuoso and composer. A Chicago native, Allen attended UIC from 1980 to 1992, graduating with a PhD in English (Creative Writing). Today, he serves as Professor of English at Queens College of the City University of New York and an instructor in the Writing Program at The New School.

In addition to Song of the Shank, Jeff Allen is the author of two collections of poetry, Stellar Places (Moyer Bell 2007) and Harbors and Spirits (Moyer Bell 1999), and two works of fiction, the novel Rails Under My Back (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000), which won The Chicago Tribune’s Heartland Prize for Fiction, and a collection of stories Holding Pattern (Graywolf 2008), which won The Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence. His other awards include a fellowship at The Cullman Center for Scholars and Writers at The New York Public Library, a Whiting Writers’ Award, and a grant in Innovative Literature from Creative Capital. Allen has taught or given readings and lectures at many venues around the world, including Lagos, Nairobi, and Russia. At the Norman Mailer Center’s Writers Colony, Allen serves as fiction director. He is married to Zawadi Kagoma, originally from Zanzibar, and is the father of three children, including James Kagoma Allen, a newborn of seven months.

Rhiannon Falzone (UIC LAS B.A. English, Class of 2007) graduated in March with a M.A. in Writing and Publishing from DePaul University. Rhiannon has three sports articles published on ChicagoSide, and is working on three more articles. More recently, Rhiannon has begun writing a first book. More information is available at Falzone’s blog.

A graduate from University of Illinois Chicago Circle’s first graduating class, Rochelle Lynn Holt (’67) announces her latest publication, Lost in an Echo. Designed by Scars Publications, Lost in an Echo is a novel journal about an aging dancer who confronts new purpose through a year of reflection. To find out more, visit her website. Of course, you can purchase her work on Amazon, but she receives no payment. Anais Nin was her friend.

Katherine Hein earned her Masters of Arts in Teaching from Coastal Carolina University near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. In 2009, she became a member of Coastal’s faculty teaching English Composition, Critical Thinking and Literature.

Pamela Suba Poynter (Class of 1970) lives in Newton, Iowa, and now serves as the Academic Coordinator for the Departments of Art, Music and Theatre/Dance at Grinnell College.

Dear English Department, I earned my B.A. in English with distinction in English, and it has served me well. Since that time, I’ve earned an M.F.A. in Creative Writing and an M.A. Ed. in Educational Technology. I currently run a learning center for students with disabilities at San Diego State University, and I’ve recently given a presentation on serving students with disabilities in campus writing centers at the annual conference of the International Writing Center Association. I began my career in writing center work as a writing center tutor during my junior year at UIC. Thank you!
--Julie Campbell Moss (Class of ’96)

Greetings Dept. of English,
I did not land lightly in UIC’s English program--I crashed, (“head injuries,” etc.). When I finally decided to major in English, I had trouble communicating. And that is why I’m so grateful for Sharon, my tutor in what I believe was called The Language Lab. She taught me that there are many ways of expressing myself in the written word, and she believed in me.

Since then, I’ve had poetry and fiction published in such publications as the Oyez Review, and the Dan River Anthology; and then, in 2006, I was published in Masques V. And, coming out now in places will be the same story, published in yet another anthology, All American Horror of the 21st Century: The First Decade 2000-2010.

I benefited a great deal from the English classes at UIC. I learned about believing in myself and my writing from Sharon. Both of these imputes have helped shape me to become the going places kind of writer I am today. I am grateful to have gotten my B.A. in English from the UIC. Cordially,
--Mark Powers (Class of 1979).
Hello, I just wanted to share that I completed my Ph.D. in Education Policy Studies at UIUC. I hope to be able to donate once I am gainfully employed. Thanks! --Matthew Linick.

This is the first newsletter I’ve ever received. Quite nice. I was in first graduating class at University of Illinois Chicago Circle 1967. Encouraged by Ken Biddle in writing, I went on to become an English teacher and writer. Good luck with the newsletter and your [Professor John Huntington’s] eventual retirement. --Rochelle L Holt.

Hi, I just saw the newsletter and it reminded me of the days in the late ’70s when I was John Huntington’s Teaching Assistant for a science fiction course. Now look what I have gotten myself into. --Len Strazewski, Interim Associate Provost, and Associate Professor of Journalism, Columbia College Chicago

My favorite memory from UIC is from my senior year, Tom Hall, then Chair of the English Dept., held class in his office where he had a cake decorated to celebrate King Alfred’s death day. I will always remember wondering what kind of reaction he must have received from the bakery department at Dominicks when he asked for that type of decoration. Thank you for all you do, --Katherine Hein, (Class of ’99).

I finished my undergraduate degree at Chicago Circle at a time when the Vietnam war was on, the upper walkways worked, and sandwiches were great on Taylor Street. I took Prof. Buxbaum’s American Lit. course, Paul Carroll’s poetry writing workshop and a workshop in the alternative U. There, I met many future friends who all became writers and poets. This all changed my life. Annoyed that I couldn’t continue at Circle because I didn’t have enough English credits, I blew off higher education and got a job. Meanwhile, I helped to start Yellow Press and organized poetry readings at the Body Politic Theater. After relocating to New York city to write poetry, I earned my MA in English at CCNY, was involved in the Poetry Project and then worked as Allen Ginsberg’s secretary for the last 20 years of his life. Today, I teach English at Heschel High School in NYC and co-manage Ginsberg’s estate. I hope to one day teach a Beat course at the university level. Yours truly, --Bob Rosenthal (Class of 1972).
UIC English Unveils Student Awards

The Department of English announced the 2013-2014 academic year award winners during the year-end celebration held near the end Spring of 2014. Graduate student awards go to Julie Fiorelli, Anne Hopewell Selby Award; Lindsay Marshall, Department of English Distinguished Teaching Assistant Award; Sein Oh, Gloria Fromm Award; and Jen Phillis, John and Nicole Shipley Scholarship.

Undergraduate student awards were presented to Thomas Bradach, Anne Hopewell Selby Award; Caitlin Enos, Robert and Corinne Silver Award; Guadelupe Garcia, John and Jeanne Newton Scholarship; Eric McClure, Paul Carrol Creative Writing Award; and Chase Sanders, Ernest C. Van Keuren Award.

The Program for Writers Awards presented James Tadd Adcox, winner of the Paul Carrol Award; and Tyler Mills, winner of the Goodnow Award in Poetry.

English Education awards were presented to Peter Tavolacci and Zainab Salah, and their respective faculty mentors Joseph Scotese and Paul P. Mirek, Woods-Lindley Prize.

Although UIC is a public university, many of its resources for ensuring the highest quality education for both undergraduate and graduate students come from the generous donations of individuals, businesses, and foundations. Your contribution to the Department of English General Fund expands student support and travel. To make a contribution, please visit the department website.