



New York University

Undergraduate English Newsletter

Fall 2004 Volume 2, No. 1

FROM THE (NEW) DUGS

These are exciting times to be taking over as DUGS, and, with your help, I hope to build on the excellent foundation laid by Cyrus Patell during his tenure. Please join me in thanking him for his innovative, conscientious, and thoughtful guidance of the program for the last three years. With a vital and energetic group of students, a growing and enthusiastic faculty, and with the invaluable help of Kristen Elias, the undergraduate Program Administrator (and newsletter editor), we can maintain and enhance the department's well earned reputation for excellence in undergraduate education.

This issue highlights some ongoing revisions to the advisement process (especially in the areas of internships, independent study, and various permissions). It also announces some recent faculty publications and awards and departmental student prizes, and lists the few remaining open fall courses, along with featured spring courses, faculty on leave, and new faculty. Tentative plans for the spring issue are to highlight the honors theses, academic awards, and the important departmental hiring initiative that should result in six new tenured faculty over the next two years.

Fall Courses Still Available

British Literature II / V41.0220 / Prof. Deer

Survey of English literature from the Restoration to the 20th century. Close reading of representative works with attention to the historical, intellectual, and social contexts of the period. Recitation required. *Core requirement.*

American Literature II / V41.0235 / Prof. Shaw

This course offers a survey of American literature since 1865 across a broad range of genres (poetry, novels, letters, manifestoes, autobiographies, travel narratives, essays, and journals). Oscillating between close textual readings and larger cultural contextualization, we will first explore modernism as a plural and contested phenomenon before branching out into a range of postwar literary (and cultural) movements. Our analysis will frequently return to the politics and aesthetics of representation and documentation.

FALL SEMESTER CALENDAR



- 7 September:** Fall classes begin
- 27 September:** Last day to add or drop a class
- 1 October:** Graduation application deadline for January, 2005 candidates
- 3 November:** Application deadline for advanced creative writing courses
- 8 November:** Application deadline for independent study proposals
- 15 November:** Spring 2005 registration begins
- 25-28 November:** Thanksgiving recess
- 14 December:** Last day of classes
- 16-23 December:** Final exam period
- 24 December:** Winter recess begins

Tracking literary historical debates around these topics will in turn open up wider, shifting discourses of race, religion, science, gender and class. Authors will likely include Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, W. E. B. Du Bois, Gertrude Stein, Henry James, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes, Alain Locke, Muriel Rukeyser, Zora Neale Hurston, Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Frank O'Hara, Amiri Baraka, Bernadette Mayer, Lyn Hejinian and Pamela Lu. *Counts toward elective requirement.*

Intermediate Poetry Workshop / V41.0817.003

Intermediate workshop designed to help students refine their approaches to the writing of poetry through peer critiques, craft readings, and individual conferences with the instructor. *V41.0815 is the prerequisite for this course. Counts toward Creative Writing minor.*

Revised Department Policies and Procedures

Independent Study proposal applications are now available online and at the English Department. Students will need to collaborate with their instructor to complete the forms, which are due to the DUGS, for the spring 2005 semester, on November 8, 2004.

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Undergraduate English Program

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Internship applications are available online and at the department. Students must be a major or minor to receive internship credit and must have completed at least one English course prior to applying. The last day to turn in an approved internship application for Fall 2004, is September 27.

Departmental permission forms are now available online and at the department. These forms cover specific exceptions that students typically seek: Permission to enroll in a closed class; permission to enroll in a course when the prerequisite has not been met; permission to have more than one study abroad course count toward the major or minor; and permission for course substitutions. These forms must be signed by the appropriate person(s).

Faculty News

NEW FACULTY MEMBERS

Professor John Archer, who specializes in Renaissance drama; early modern literature and culture; the history of subjectivity; and literary theory

Professor Crystal Parikh, who specializes in emergent literatures; American/ethnic studies; and feminist and minority discourse theory

Professor Lytle Shaw, who specializes in 20th-century American poetry, and literature and the visual arts

NEW DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Department Chair:

John Guillory

Acting Department Chair (04-05):

Una Chaudhuri

Director of Graduate Studies:

Martin Harries

Director of Undergraduate Studies:

David Hoover

Director of Undergraduate Studies,
Dramatic Literature:

John Archer

FACULTY ON LEAVE/SABBATICAL

The following professors are on leave or sabbatical during the fall 2004 term. If your departmental advisor is listed below, please consult the

department to be given an interim advisor: **Christopher Collins, Ernest Gilman** (teaching at NYU Florence), **Dustin Griffin, John Guillory, Paul Magnuson, Cyrus Patell, Ross Posnock, Jeffrey Spear, Gabrielle Starr**, and **Bryan Waterman**

AWARDS

The English Department's **Cyrus Patell** (outgoing DUGS) was one of five winners of the 2003-2004 Distinguished Teaching Award.

From NYU Today (May 13, 2004):

"[Prof.] Patell has been with NYU's English department for 10 years, during which time he has mentored an impressive 17 students who have received their Ph.D.'s. Of the 17, nine currently hold tenure track university teaching positions. As a result of Patell's academic leadership, the undergraduate curriculum has been reconstructed and enhanced in recent years. He also uses his talent and skills with undergraduates by serving as a faculty-in-residence at University Hall.



The 2004 Distinguished Teaching Award winners, from left: Dennis P. Tarnow, James A. Colaiaco, Deborah J. Borisoff, Stephen Wanhg, and Cyrus R.K. Patell. (Photo from NYU TODAY, May 13, 2004)

The English Department's **Elizabeth McHenry** was a winner of the 2003 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award (in the non-fiction category) for her book *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies*.

The Hurston/Wright LEGACY Award™ is the first national award presented to published writers of African descent by the national community of Black writers.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A Concise Companion to Postwar American Literature and Culture, edited by **Josephine G. Hendin** with contributions from **Pat C. Hoy II**, **Perry Meisel**, and **Cyrus R.K. Patell**

Heartbreakers: Women and Violence in Contemporary Culture and Literature, by **Josephine Hendin**

Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies (New Americanists), by **Elizabeth McHenry**

Lyric Generations: Poetry and the Novel in the Long Eighteenth Century, by **G. Gabrielle Starr**

Departmental Prize Winners, 2003-2004

Jenny Victoria Brown, co-winner of The Estelle M. Holmes Award in American Literature for her thesis "The Drums in Our Street: New York Bohemian Poetry of World War I and its Visions of Patriotism."

Alicia Christoff, co-winner of The Frederick Seward Gibson Prize for her thesis "The Poetics of Confession: The Promise and Disavowal of Self-Presence."

Siobhan Ciminera, winner of The William Bush Baer Memorial Prize for excelling in English and contributing to the life of the campus during four years.

Erica N. Fretwell, co-winner of The Estelle M. Holmes Award in American Literature for her thesis "Resistance and Relocation: Child's and Sedgwick's 'Uncanny' America."

Brendan Kelly, co-winner of The Seth Barkas Prize in Creative Writing.

Elena Landriscina, co-winner of The Frederick Seward Gibson Prize for her thesis "The Space and Silence of Gertrude Stein."

Fred Nicolaus, co-winner of The Seth Barkas Prize in Creative Writing.

Nicole S. Pasulka, co-winner of The Frederick Seward Gibson Prize for her thesis "Subordinating Narratives: Sadomasochism and Female Identity in the Work of Kathy Acker and Mary Gaitskill."

Lindsay V. Reckson, winner of The Dean Archibald L. Bouton Memorial Award for Research in English for her thesis "Art and Magic: Edith Wharton's Sleight of Hand." Lindsay was also the winner of The Roger Lee Deakins Prize in English and American Literature, which honors the student judged to be the outstanding scholar of English and American Literature in the senior class. It is the highest honor bestowed by the Department.

In addition, Lindsay was the first place winner in The Thomas Wolfe Memory Poetry Competition
Kendra Sullivan, second place in The Thomas Wolfe Memory Poetry Competition.

Congratulations to all of our prize winners and especially to Lindsay Reckson, who was named the 2004 CAS valedictorian. With Lindsay's permission, we have reproduced the text of her graduation speech below:

“**P**resident Sexton, Dean Santirocco, distinguished faculty, family and friends, and my fellow graduates:

The graduation speech is a convention that I don't feel quite comfortable with. While I don't wish to belie the earnest sentiments of this occasion, I have to acknowledge that this speech, like any other form of language, is constructed to suit a particular moment and a particular audience. The context of this address--the fact that it is ultimately a chance to communicate some last tidbit of wisdom to complement the education we have just received--usually calls for advice-giving, quotations from great thinkers, and sentimental anecdotes. To be perfectly honest, none of these have ever been very useful to me, and I promise to avoid them as much as possible.

So forging ahead with this genre, minus the advice, the quotes, and the anecdotes, I must stick to what I know, and that is reading. It seems an appropriate topic for graduation, given that this is what is generally known as the closing of a proverbial "chapter" and the opening of new one. As a student of literature, I've spent four years in a series of stories, working my way in and out of them, learning how and why fictions are made. Often I have felt as if these fictional worlds are safer and more satisfying than the world that we live in. Occasionally it has been difficult to keep from being completely absorbed in them, and thus missing what is going on around me.

Instead of literature, perhaps you have been reading through the lens of a chemistry experiment, or a mathematical proof, a case study or a legal document. It does not matter what subject we have studied. My challenge to all of us, including myself, is to look beyond the scope of academia's specific disciplines and to consider our experience of the world as a text that can and should be read critically. In a time when everyone is available at the push of a cell phone button and we have live feeds from combat zones, I hope that we will all refuse to be passive receptacles of the information we are given. Instead, let us take a moment to read it closely, to question, to break down what appears to be directly meaningful. As Mark Twain said, "To eat is human, to digest, divine."

This is not to say that we should refuse advice, deconstruct everything around us and discount meaning altogether; in fact, perhaps now more than ever we need meaning to counteract what so often seems like meaningless conflict and loss. My point is that we must be vigilant about the meanings we construct and how we construct them. If we must be sentimental about graduation--if we must have seize the day, road-less-traveled, eat more ice cream nostalgia--let's do it self-consciously. The kind of meaning I

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want to embrace is the kind that we have the power to construct simply by stepping back from the world to ask questions, so that we might re-enter it with a more productive and worthwhile interpretation.

The best part of this genre is the opportunity to say thank you, and now comes one of those anecdotes I promised I wouldn't tell--but you should step back from this speech and notice I've broken all of my promises. The first poems I ever read were from an anthology of love poems that my parents gave me on Valentine's Day in 1991, when I was nine years old. I can trace a direct correlation between those poems and my stubborn sentimentality, which often trumps the critical self I've tried to present in this speech. But sentimentality, like a bad love poem, has its place, and I will risk undoing the entire point of my speech to tell you that my mother and father are the two most incredible people I know, and their love for me, and for each other, constantly amazes and inspires me. I'm here because they taught me never to be satisfied with someone else's answers--even theirs--but to discover my own, and to keep discovering new ones. For that, and for the book of cheesy poems, I am more thankful than I could ever express. I hope you will join me in applauding all of our mothers and fathers for the tremendous work they did to get us to this point.

Congratulations to all of you. I hope you read well and read wisely, with a little caution, a lot of joy, and an open mind. And may your next chapter be a great one."

Featured Spring 2005 Courses

The Department plans to offer the following elective courses during the Spring 2005 term: Representations of Women; Literature and Psychology; Shakespeare II; Chaucer Colloquium; Milton Colloquium; Drama in Performance; 20th-Century African American Literature; Romantic Movement; Colloquium: 18th-Century British Writers: Pope and Swift, Nineteenth-Century British Novel; British Literature of the Transition; American Literature II; 19th Century American Poetry; American Romanticism; Contemporary British Literature; Colloquium: James Joyce; Faulkner and Hemingway; Italian American Life in Literature.

Seminars are planned for the following areas: 17th-century British literature; 18th-century British literature; 19th-century British literature; critical theory; folklore and children's literature; poetry and poetics; and New York literature and culture.

A full listing of courses scheduled for Spring 2005 can be found in the "Course Information" section of the undergraduate website:

(www.nyu.edu/fas/english/undergrad).