

WORDHORD

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Northwestern College
English Department Newsletter

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Writing Internship in Baltimore

by Abbey Slattery - Writing & Rhetoric and Literature '18

This summer, I had the opportunity to work in Baltimore, Maryland, at the city's arts council—a nonprofit called Baltimore Office of Promotion and the Arts. I worked on the tenth floor of a building in the heart of Downtown Baltimore and, wow, it was wild. As the communications/social media intern, I had the chance to see a side of Baltimore that most people might not associate with the city.



For my internship, I helped the communications department with things like updating websites, finding social media handles, and drafting press releases. Sometimes my days would consist of spending hours searching Instagram and Twitter to find the handles of local food vendors and compiling them into an Excel sheet. Other days, I would be assigned press releases to draft and emails to send to local artists and authors. For these tasks, the skills I learned in my Media Writing and Writing in the Professions classes proved to be invaluable, and I definitely would have been floundering without that prior experience.

Aside from the less glamorous busy work, my internship revolved around two of BOPA's big events, the first of which was Artscape. Artscape is the largest free arts festival in the country—bringing in anywhere from 350,000-400,000 people—and gathers local food and drink vendors, along with artists, musicians and performers.

The festival took place at the end of July, and I was one of a handful of people in charge of running social media accounts for the weekend. Basically I bopped around

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Spring '18 Course Offering

Women Writing America – Fact and Fiction

ENG 480 (2 credits)
Tuesday/Thursday
12:05 PM - 1:35 pm
Dr. Ann Lundberg

You know that Wonder Woman came from Paradise Island (Themyscira) to save the world, but do you know her American genealogy? A long line of wonderful women writers made her possible. This course explores how American women have represented themselves in both factual genres (poetry, memoir, autobiography) and fictional genres (short stories, novels)—with a few nods towards how they have been depicted by men (notably as witches and Wonder Woman). We'll also look at the many ways in which fact and fiction blur in this literature, considering how women take on the disguises of fiction in writing their life stories and how they adopt, adapt and reject fictional and masculine formulas for their lives. We'll discuss how literature reveals women in the roles of witches, victims, survivors, heroes, wives, mothers, lovers, sisters, workers, slaves, sexual objects, farmers, immigrants, warriors, and perhaps most importantly, writers of their own experience who redefine what is possible for women in America.



Yes, one of our readings is actually the Wonder Woman comic from 1941-45.

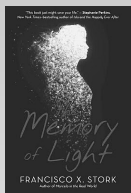
Writing Internship in Baltimore (continued from page 1)

the festival and took Instagram shots and wrote tweets about what was happening. I even got some free food from the vendors, which is the biggest perk you can get from any job. It was a great experience and certainly telling of the power and importance of social media.



The second event that we spent the summer prepping for was the Baltimore Book Festival. The festival features local and national authors in different genres, from romance, to science fiction, to children's literature. The featured author this year is Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, which is mind-blowingly cool, and I wish I could have stayed on long enough to see her speak.

My experience at BOPA was unlike any summer I've ever had, and it was so rewarding to see the work that they're putting into a city they love—especially a city that doesn't have the best reputation. Working there helped ignite my passion for investing in communities, especially the arts scene. I'm not sure in what capacity I'll use the professional and personal skills I learned this summer, but it taught me how much of a difference it can make when people take pride in their city and pour their best into making it come alive.



One of the assigned books in Young Adult Literature last spring was *The Memory of Light* by Francisco X. Stork. This novel is told from the perspective of Vicky, a teen who survived a suicide attempt and is recovering at Lakeview Hospital along with other teens coping with mental illness. Beautifully written, this book includes many themes that matter to young adults: forging friendships, refining relationships with family members, finding a place in the school community, and discovering one's authentic self.

Having visited Northwestern in 2013, this author was familiar with Northwestern. Therefore, Stork agreed to Skype in to our class on Tuesday, April 25, spending 45 minutes in conversation with some of his newest readers.

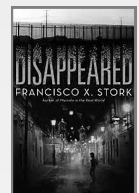


Students enjoyed hearing his answers to their questions: Why did you write from the perspective of a girl? Why did the character Jaime get such a short appearance—why include him at all? Was Galileo the cat a symbol of hope?

Before Cody DeKruyff had the chance to ask his question, Stork complimented Cody's beard. Cody was thrilled. This comment from Stork was just one way he showed his interest in us as readers and people.

This celebrated author demonstrated such a humble and open personality. He took the opportunity to ask students questions, such as what they thought of Vicky's dad. He shared how his own journey with mental illness affected his writing of the book and concerns he had about its effect on readers.

The class loved hearing his excitement over the new book he has coming out this fall, a book in a genre new to him—mystery. Senior Liz Meier especially appreciated what Stork said about this project: "With each new book, I try to challenge myself as a writer and as a person."

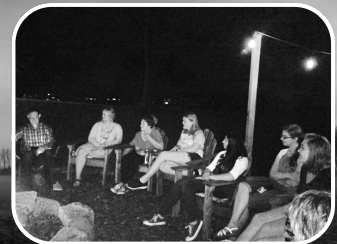


Skyping with an author—something we all hope to do again.



English Department Bonfire

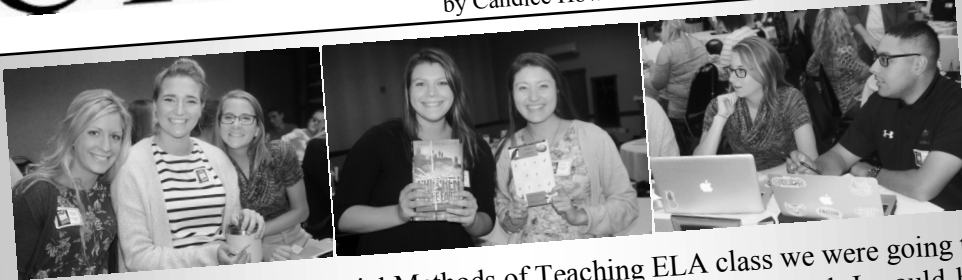
English professors, students
and Friends of English at the
Fynaardt farm





Students Impacted at Conference

by Candice Howell - English Teaching '18



The day Professor Nonhof told our Special Methods of Teaching ELA class we were going to be attending the Iowa Council of Teaching English Conference, I was less than excited. I would have to miss class, sleep with a stranger, and spend time with people I didn't really know. However, attending ICTE proved me completely wrong through the ways I bonded and connected with students on the trip, the knowledge I gained from teachers' input, and the new and fun ideas I received from keynote speakers and breakout sessions. I gained a newfound energy for a future in teaching English.

During the breakout sessions, different teachers from all over Iowa spoke on their passions and practices inside the ELA classroom. Meghan Vermeer and I attended a mini session about creating a positive environment in the classroom. Rachelle Lipp, a second-year teacher at Atlantic High school, talked about methods she uses like encouraging emails or an appreciation writing once a month where students write down something they appreciate in each of their classmates. Megan later explained that she "want[s] to establish a safe, creative environment for students to interact with their peers and with me." I couldn't agree more.

Another session many enjoyed was "Shaking up Shakespeare." Jess Cakrasenjaya, a teacher from Ames, along with three others, shared how to make Shakespeare enjoyable for students. One teacher mentioned that she always "spoiled the play" so that the students were able to understand more of the plot, but were pushed in the direction of learning.

Along with the breakouts, we had two keynote speakers, Christine Dawson and Thomas Newkirk. Dawson talked about writing and how we need to push ourselves in our writing so we can push our students. Newkirk talked about narratives and the different ways we can incorporate family, humor, etc. into our stories.

During the conference, there were many opportunities where, as a group, we connected well. Many of us made use of the pool and shared funny and personal stories. Although we attend class with each other about every day, it was interesting to learn more about one another as people and to appreciate each other's stories in a casual environment.

Finally, many students found out something about themselves during this conference that confirmed their future careers in education. Mallory Bjork explained that this conference "inspired me to think about my future students and how I don't want to teach the standard novels just because they have been taught every year." Marie Jeppesen shared, "Going to this conference makes me feel happy about a potential path in high school teaching."

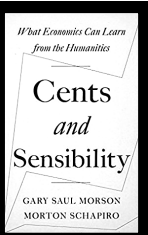
Overall, we were able to connect as a department and learn from current teachers and published authors newfound ways to teach the language that we all love. After attending this conference, I want to come back, and am glad that my initial reaction was proven wrong.

OutWord Bound

A new feature connecting the English Major to the job market

BOOK REVIEW

by Victoria Horn
Writing & Rhetoric/Literature Major '18



Cents and Sensibility

Every English major has heard “So... what are you going to do with your English major?” And if, like me, you want to write and publish fiction books and poetry, the so-called practical world seems to be screaming, “Why would you major in *English*? Do you *want* to live in a cardboard box?”

However, in their book *Cents and Sensibility: What Economics Can Learn from the Humanities*, Morson and Schapiro argue that the skills developed in studying the humanities are exactly the traits employers are frantically searching for. Morson is the Lawrence B. Dumas Professor of the Arts and Humanities at Northwestern University, and Schapiro is the university’s president and one of its professors of economics. Despite their seemingly opposite fields, the colleagues come together to explain how economists

Authors: Gary Saul Morson and Morton Schapiro could better understand their target audiences by implementing the humanities’ intimate, complex knowledge of the human condition.

The authors describe disparity between the fall in humanities majors and the rise in demand for the skills they offer: “[A]t Stanford about 45 percent of faculty members in the main undergraduate division come from the humanities, while only 15 percent of its students do” (201). Clearly, there is something valuable about the ways of thinking one learns by studying the humanities.

Morson and Schapiro declare that the value of studying the humanities, particularly literature, lies in being able to enter fully into someone else’s experience, and thus, practice empathy by working through particular moral dilemmas: “Many disciplines, including economics, can teach that we *ought* to

empathize with others. But these disciplines do not usually involve actual *practice* in empathy” (223, italics added). The most valuable and applicable asset of the humanities, for Morson and Schapiro, is the constant practice of modifying one’s understanding of a particular person or group based on encounters with them through reading.

I would encourage you to pick up a copy of *Cents and Sensibility* and give it a thorough read, if only to recommend it to someone else. Morson and Schapiro did not write the book to preach to our choir, but rather, to open up a dialogue between two seemingly opposite fields of study about how we can mutually benefit from valuing the other’s work. And to me, there is nothing more Christ-like than that.

HONORS RESEARCH ON PORES AND POETRY



Marie Jeppesen - English Teaching '18

This semester, I have delved deep into the lives of two Renaissance poets through my Honor’s Research Project and have begun to understand the in’s and out’s of scholarly researching and writing. Being in the Honor’s Program has a lot of different perks, like a few separate courses and cloth napkins at the fall banquet, but this final project is what got me interested in the Honor’s Program in the first place.

I love how English courses at NWC allow us to read such a large quantity of great literature over one semester, but in each of those courses I was left with the feeling that I could be reading, writing, and researching on each text alone for several months afterward. This project has finally given me the chance to do exactly that. The research began, at the suggestion of Dr. Ken-sak, with one small allusion from Andrew Marvell in his poem “To His Coy Mistress” to Richard Crashaw in “On the Name of Jesus.” That allusion, though, has

grown into research on the Renaissance views of religion, politics, philosophy, bridal mysticism, self-representation, particles, pores, and beyond. Being truly honest, the scope of our research has grown larger than I thought possible; however, with the help of a patient and enthusiastic supervising professor and a lot of self-discipline, I am well on my way to creating a cumulative work that could possibly allow me to enter the conversation of literature research.

Book Recommendations by Carissa Tavery - English Teaching '18

Last spring, I wanted to expand my repertoire of authors and figured those who have dedicated their life to studying literature would have the best recommendations. When I was asked to share this list with the Wordhord audience, I supplemented the list with a few recommendations outside of Kepp Hall. I contacted the chair of each department at NWC and asked them the same question. They did not disappoint. Reading is so much a mix of personalities, knowledge, entertainment, and personal preference. It amazes me that while the people are often so differentiated by the courses they teach, they have a common love of books (and sometimes common titles too).

Jeff Barker, Theatre Department



- C.S Lewis, *Space Trilogy*
- Dennis Covington, *Salvation on Sand Mountain*
- Anything written by Bill Bryson
- Anything written by Jon Krakauer

Keith Fynaardt, English Department



- Richard Ford, *Independence Day*
- Don DeLillo, *Underworld*
- *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*
- Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*

Laura Heitritter, Education Department



- J.P Das, *Reading Difficulties and Dyslexia: An Interpretation for Teachers*
- Brene Brown, *Braving the Wilderness*
- Angie Thomas, *The Hate U Give*

Thomas Holm, Music Department



- Chuck Colson, *The Good Life*

Kim Jongerius, Physics and Math Department



- Elizabeth Moon, *The Deed of Paksenarrion* (trilogy)
 - Charles Seife, *Zero: the Biography of a Dangerous Idea*
- (Note: Seife was Professor Kensak's college roommate!)

Michael Kensak, English Department



- Steven Pinker, *The Stuff of Thought*
- Kent Nerburn, *Neither Wolf Nor Dog*
- Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*
- Stanislav Lem, *The Futurological Congress*
- Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*

Ann Lundberg, English Department



- Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*
- Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine*
- Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*
- Thornton Wilder, *The Bridge of the San Luis Rey*
- Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Samuel Martin, English Department



- Lidia Yuknavitch, *The Book of Joan*
- Joshua Max Feldman, *The Book of Jonah*
- Louise Erdrich, *Last Report of the Miracles at Little No Horse*

James Mead, Religion Department



- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
- Abraham Heschel, *God in Search of Man*

(Continued on page 7)



Book Recommendations

NWC Professors' lists of must-read books (continued from page 6)

Scott Monsma, Criminal Justice Department



- Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
- Ann Leckie, *The Imperial Radch*
- Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: a Forgotten History of How our Government Segregated America*
- Peter Enns, *The Bible Tells Me So: Why Defending Scripture has Made us Unable to Read It*

Kim Van Es, English Department



- Leon Uris, *The Exodus*
- Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
- Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be*
- Don Postema, *Space for God*

Joel Westerholm, English Department



- Hilary Mantel, *Wolf Hall*
- Mary Oliver, *Why I Wake Early*
- Derek Walcott, *White Egrets*
- Amitav Ghosh, *The Ibis Trilogy* (3 book series on the Opium Wars)
- Kate Atkinson, *A God in Ruins*
- A. S. Byatt, *Possession*
- Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground*
- Christina Rossetti, *The Complete Poems*
- Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*



DEEP SONG

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4TH

6 P.M.

TOWN SQUARE COFFEE HOUSE

FEATURING
RANDY BOYAGODA
Acclaimed Author of
"Beggars' Feast"



Canadian novelist Randy Boyagoda read from his forthcoming novel, *Original Prin*, at a recent Deep Song Reading Series event. Boyagoda has written two novels. *Governor of the Northern Province* was published in 2007. *Beggars' Feast*, published in 2012, received international recognition around the world. *Original Prin* is slated for publication in 2018 and will tell the story of a Catholic professor posted to a Middle East country where he encounters a Muslim man from Boston who's on his own journey.



Northwestern played a significant role in preparing me for the various facets of my career.

Every once in a while, I go into a mild panic when I realize how many years it's been since my time at Northwestern. Can it really be so long ago? Thirteen years? *gulp*

But when I stop to think about how much has happened in those years, the amount of time is a little less surprising. I've been blessed to have had some fantastic experiences as a young adult (wait, do I not count as "young" anymore?) including several years as a reporter during which I did everything from fly a plane to ride a hot air balloon to interview presidential candidates. From there, I moved on to serving as a communications coordinator for an awesome nonprofit.



And in recent years, I've had the immense fun of living out my dream of being a published author. I'll never forget that phone call from my literary agent in 2012, letting me know I'd been offered my first book contract. I *may* have squealed a little. Okay, fine, a c-r-a-z-y lot. I've written six novels and four novellas, with a fifth on the way this Christmas. Last year, Publisher's Weekly named my spring 2016 release to one of their Top Ten lists, and my latest novel was just named a 4.5-Star Top Pick by RT Book Reviews. (Cue: more squealing.)

Northwestern College played a significant role in preparing me for the various facets of my career. All those English classes gave me the opportunity to interact with so many different voices, writing styles, and literary genres. Serving as editor of the *Beacon* broadened my reporting chops and editing experience, and working on the *Spectrum* honed my critical eye. Class presentations prepared me for the variety of speaking engagements I do today as an author.

But if I had to pinpoint the two biggest things my college classes did for me, I'd say this:

1. **At Northwestern, I learned how to learn.** As a novelist, especially, I'm constantly required to write about things I really know nothing about! I'm in a continual state of learning . . . and then I have to take that learning and put it into words, living it out through my characters. College prepped my brain for this in a big way.
2. **My college years were so influential in developing my writing voice.** At Northwestern, I was given opportunity after opportunity to try on different voices, whether it was writing a sonnet in poetry class or an essay in *The Rhetoric of Persuasion* or an article for the *Beacon*. I'll especially never forget taking a fiction class my senior year. In that class, I somehow felt both more challenged but also more comfortable in my writing skin than ever before.

I'm so thankful for the way Northwestern helped prepare me for thirteen years and counting of career, writing, and life experiences. It's definitely something I never want to take for granted...no matter how many years go by!