



# Wordhord

Spring 2013

Northwestern College  
English Department Newsletter

Volume 11, No. 2

**“Cardboard magazine connects readers in a creative Christian community to...encounter and shape our understanding of contemporary culture, the arts and entertainment...”**

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

NCTE	2
Course Offerings	4
Schedule Changes	4
Graduate Profiles	6
Summer Reading	12
Alumnus Report	16

## **CARDBOARD MAGAZINE To Launch as iPad App**

By Abbie Goldschmid

The vision has come to fruition: *Cardboard* magazine will release its premier issue May 2013. *Cardboard*, which began as a class project during Professor Sowienski's first Publishing course in Fall 2011, has graduated from a hope to the reality of a national magazine.

The Introductory and Advanced Publishing classes have developed stories exploring topics such as homosexuality, alternate churches, mission work, pornography, body image and the active, saving grace of Christ at work. These stories will come to life under the leadership of Professor Logan in the Multiplatform Communications Class as they develop a new iPad App that will be used for issues to come. Both groups of students are working collaboratively to finally make *Cardboard* magazine a reality.

Progress on the magazine continued over the semesters through social media, primarily through the blog [CardboardMagazine.com](http://CardboardMagazine.com). The blog offers stories written by the same authors and editors who will contribute to the magazine. There have been over 170 posts and 21,000 views, and those numbers will grow as the blog will continue past the launch of the App.

*Cardboard* magazine connects readers in a creative Christian community to focus on spiritual growth, to encounter and shape our understanding of contemporary culture, the arts and entertainment, and to provide a practical, hands-on approach to helping those in need, from the campus to the global community. The writers of *Cardboard* are striving to inform, encourage and entertain without becoming just another pop culture magazine. Their passion is Jesus Christ and the mission is outreach to Christian college students.

In order to best represent the important issues, the readers of *Cardboard* will be excited to find that they are not being preached to, but talked with; the author is

(Continued on page 3)

iPad  
04:04

# Talkin' Books in Sin City

Las Vegas—bright lights, gambling, musical shows, gambling, racy billboards, gambling, calling cards, gambling, and English teachers.



English teachers in Vegas? Yes! Not one, not ten, not one hundred, but THOUSANDS of English teachers converged in this crazy city for the National Council of Teachers of English Annual Convention (NCTE) this past November.

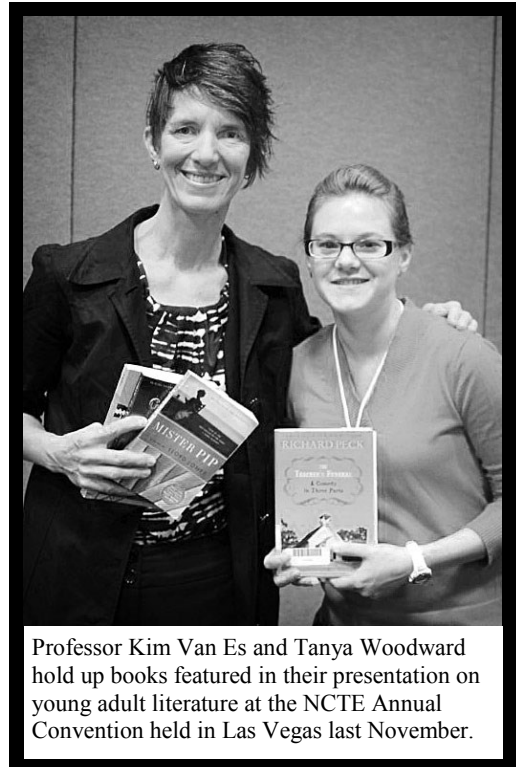
Representing Northwestern College were Professor Kim Van Es and senior English Teaching major Tanya Woodward. They were there not only to attend the inspiring sessions but to present one of their own with colleagues from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Winthrop University, Fort Mill, South Carolina.

The panel was titled “Daring to Dream: Beginning Teachers and Teacher Educators Keeping Young Adult Literature Alive in the Secondary English Classroom.” Professor Van Es and Tanya talked about amassing and performing a repertoire of young adult books. They encouraged teachers to create electronic books cards in genre categories and to deliver short book talks, inviting their students into good books. Tanya’s book talk on Richard Peck’s *The Teacher’s Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts* was a hit.

Other highlights of the trip included the following:

- ◆ Tanya attended a lunch featuring children’s author Lemony Snicket (Daniel Harder), author of *A Series of Unfortunate Events*. After hearing Harder talk about his father who escaped Nazi Germany, Tanya understands better why the series’ main character asks so many questions. Once Harder asked his father, “Do you consider yourself to be brave because you escaped the Nazis?” His dad responded, “Do you think that I’m braver than the ones who didn’t escape?” Questions were a part of Harder’s Jewish upbringing.
- ◆ Professor Van Es appreciated Dr. Susan Groenke’s defense of SSR (Sustained Silent Reading) in schools. Groenke summarized the research on SSR and shared examples of letters to parents explaining the practice and her classroom’s book selection policy.
- ◆ Both Tanya and Professor Van Es were inspired by keynote speaker Dr. Ken Robinson, whom Tanya had seen on a video in Dr. Brower’s Philosophy of Education class. Robinson sounds the call for creativity over conformity in schools.
- ◆ At the publishers’ booths, we ran into three teachers from Boyden Hull whom alum Maria Oltmans had talked into attending NCTE!
- ◆ Of course, as is the NW tradition at NCTE, the Northwestern contingent came home with loads of free books (Tanya’s total: 75).

The other highlights of what happened in Vegas need to stay in Vegas.



Professor Kim Van Es and Tanya Woodward hold up books featured in their presentation on young adult literature at the NCTE Annual Convention held in Las Vegas last November.



# Deepsong Reading Series

Wednesday, March 20  
7 pm  
Te Paske Gallery



**Tricia Currans-Sheehan**

Short Fiction Writer  
Briar Cliff University

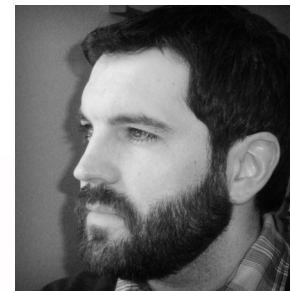
Author of  
*The River Road*  
and  
*The Egg Lady & Other Neighbors*

Wednesday, April 24  
7 pm  
Te Paske Gallery

**Daniel Bowman Jr\***

Poet & Novelist  
Taylor University

Author of  
*A Plum Tree in Leatherstocking Country*



\*Spectrum Judge

## Future Opportunities

# FALL COURSE OFFERING

## ENG 380 Special Topics in Writing Fantasy, Folktales, and Fabulism

Dr. Samuel Martin

Tuesday/Thursday (1st half) 12:05 pm - 1:35 pm

*Fantasy, Folktales, and Fabulism* is a junior-level, fiction writing workshop designed for aspiring authors interested in creating far-fetched tales of sprightly seriousness. Though fantasy literature is often criticized as being escapist and unconcerned with real life, we will work from the premise that good fantasy stories always



return us to our own worlds with fresh insight into the weirdness and wonder of human nature. We will begin by discussing the art of writerly wizardry: the elements of craft and technique needed to create convincing worlds and conjure believable characters. And we will spend the rest of our time work-shopping

our own stories and discussing classic and contemporary fairy-tales, from the Brothers Grimm to J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin to Neil Gaiman. A final portfolio, the presentation of a critical reading of at least one author, and participation in peer critiques and group work will form the basis for evaluation.

Please keep in mind that this course is for writers who are *not* content with the comfy cottages of safe storytelling; our goal is to pass through imagination's dark wood in search of stories that illuminate what it means to be human. There's no telling what we'll find.

### ***Scheduling Alert***

## **2013-14 ACADEMIC YEAR**

We've made the following adjustments for the coming academic year, of which you should be aware as you shape your schedules:

- Neither **ENG 401 History and Theory of Rhetoric** nor **ENG 297 Rhetoric of Persuasion** will be offered next year.
- **ENG 380 Special Topics in Writing** will be offered *once*, in the Fall term.
- **ENG 387 Special Topics in Rhetoric** will not be offered.
- **ENG 480 Special Topics in Literature** will appear as usual in the Spring term; students should be aware that the class *may not be offered* the following year.

Gather ye Special Topics while ye may.

# FALL COURSE OFFERING

## ENG 420 Advanced Writing Project

Dr. Samuel Martin

Meets by Arrangement

The Advanced Writing Project (AWP) is an opportunity for senior-level students to work with a faculty mentor on their own creative projects, with the aim of producing publishable work. Ideally, students taking AWP will have already taken an introductory and even an intermediate course in the primary genre (fiction, poetry,

creative nonfiction) that will be the focus of their project. Over the course of the semester, students will read and report on at least 10 works related to their genre; they will also meet weekly with their instructor to discuss new works-in-progress and recent revisions. This course is designed to mentor young writers in all stages of the creative

process, and to prepare them for MA- or MFA-level work in Creative Writing.

Students who have taken this course in the past have gone on to publish in NWC's literary journal *Spectrum* as well as in online journals like *The Newer York*.



Students in American Literature I celebrate not reading *Moby Dick* by consuming white whale cookies. They also listened to “*Moby Dick* in One Minute” and heard Dr. Lundberg read from “The Whiteness of the Whale” as a whole pod of whales met their end in a sea of coffee. Pictured left to right: Tanya Woodward, Mary Lowry, Christine Williams, Kiersten Van Wyhe (seated).

# SENIOR PROFILES

*Each spring, a Wordhord staff member contacts all seniors graduating from the department, asking them to write briefly about their experiences and plans. This year for the first time ever, all our seniors submitted profiles.*

## **Elisa Banninga** *Writing & Rhetoric/Political Science Minor*

I came to Northwestern viewing it as a step on the way to law school. And in a way, it has been. I have been offered two fantastic scholarships to two equally good law schools (University of Iowa, and University of Nebraska, Lincoln), and I find myself facing one of the best kind of choices: the better of two goods, so to speak.

What I didn't realize four years ago, however, was how deeply attached I would get to a small campus in a town few people have heard of. I often find myself sitting in my little studio apartment in Chicago (a transition of another kind), surrounded by enormously tall buildings and very little sky, missing the openness of good old NWC.

And, yes, those with a poetic mind, I am well aware of the double meaning of "openness". I chose that word for a reason. I hadn't realized until I left campus how much of a blessing it was to have so many



Elisa at Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago

different types of people around and know that if I didn't connect with someone, that was okay, because we all opened up to each other and cared about each other regardless of our differences.

This was especially true in the English Department. Despite the depressing lack of overlap between courses in the Literature and Writing programs, the students in each mingled very well. We knew we belonged together, however different our personalities may have been. One big happy group that got irritated every time we found a grammar mistake in an important document, and found joy in simply reading a good book, writing a poem or short story, or reading what

our friends had written in the Beacon every week. I may never find such a community again, but I was thoroughly blessed to belong to it, and I know the rest of you are too.

## **Mary Lowry** *Literature/Mathematics!*

G. K. Chesterton was a marvelous man. A theologian who wrote mystery novels on the side and in the middle was known as "the prince of paradox." In a newspaper article, Chesterton once claimed that "the world will never starve for want of wonders; but only for want of wonder." Looking back on my years spent in the English department, I am incredibly thankful for the wonder the study of literature has given me. Wonder that we manage to communicate anything at all with the mess that is language. Wonder at the variety in humanity, the variety of lives, of choices, of cultures. And wonder at words, their strange and beautiful power.

As I look to the future, I can only speculate about where I will be or what I will be doing. But I know that I will take the appreciation of language, learning and literature with me to whatever end.



Mary Lowry

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Nathan Mastbergen

*English Teaching*



Nathan Mastbergen

### Out of the Granberg Mold

I didn't become an English major until my second semester. Walking into my first class and seeing that I was the only male made me realize that I wasn't your *typical* English major. In my next class, I sat around a table and sipped cold water out of a mug to disguise the fact that I wasn't drinking coffee. An extrovert and athlete who didn't start liking books until late high school and was consequently far from being well-read, I struggled with not fitting into the Granberg mold.

I strained to conform but then began to see that there was no need. From Westerholm's multisided paperweight to Fynaardt's analogy of multi-ethnic prairie grass, the department revealed that diversity was valued though it wasn't always evident among English majors themselves. I then found comfort in being a different kind of English major who drank Gatorade, wore soccer 3/4 pants, and sometimes traded an afternoon with a good book for one with good people. I learned that there were no prerequisites for loving English, and when I finally walked out of Granberg for the last time, condensation collected in the corner of my eye.

Now, Granberg has fallen and my time here at Northwestern has almost come to an end. However, as I go from here and look to begin a teaching career, I hope to pass on what I've learned – not only about symbolism and irony, but about the lessons that words can teach us like the value of something different even if it is a loud-mouth jock wanting to major in English.

## Sarah Lichius

*Literature*



Sarah Lichius

"We all tell stories. We share events which happened during the day. We recollect memories like raking up fallen leaves. Sometimes we go through the effort to write down our thoughts and responses to these. And sometimes we construct entirely new stories, hoping they will impact someone who receives them.

Stories create bridges, facilitating connections between people regardless of distance or time. I can read the same story my grandmother did when she was my age, or better yet she can tell me a story from her life when she was my age. By telling stories we can strengthen connections. Stories can also transport us to an entirely new time or place, lifting us up when we feel trapped or giving us a new perspective. They can tell us about a way of life or way of thinking from decades or centuries ago. Whether stories are factual or fictional, they entertain; teach us about ourselves and others; and impart truths. We use language to comprise stories. Language constantly evolves, and words are only an approximation. But words and language despite all their inefficiencies, and the difficulties they present, can still be beautiful.

The English Department at NWC, the students as well as the professors, helped me to expand my ideas about stories and language; to appreciate my own story; and to see stories drastically different from mine still have immense value. As a result, in whatever way presents itself, I would like to spend the rest of my life helping people utilize language to tell stories. I want to serve others and to work with them to tell a story, to tell the best version of that story, and just maybe to impact someone else through that story told with beautiful language. And I'd like to thank the English Department for inspiring me to do so."

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Kristin Trease

*English Teaching*



Kristin Trease

Every one of us could talk about the same shared memories that go along with being a part of the same small department: coffee with Westerholm, farm talk with Fynaardt, word origins with Kensak, round table discussions, and a love of written word.

Granberg is where I learned to think and talk about books in a community of learners. Where my ideas and notions about the world around me drastically shifted. Where I learned the power of words both written and spoken. And while this kind of community is not likely to be found outside of Northwestern, it is one I would like to model elsewhere, whether in my own classroom or with the group of people I find myself living with and around. Possibilities are limitless with strong coffee and a good book.

## Eric Sandbulte

*Writing & Rhetoric/  
Political Science Minor*



Eric Sandbulte

I have Northwestern to thank for giving me so many opportunities to write with local papers. For two separate classes, I was able to work with the *Sioux Center News* and the *Capital Democrat*, publishing several articles for each. In a job market that increasingly demands experience, these were opportunities to learn first hand. Being able to work with my own community's paper, the *Sioux Center News*, was especially a rewarding opportunity.

An important part of my education towards writing and rhetoric occurred outside of Northwestern, however, when I interned with the *Le Mars Daily Sentinel* this past summer. Being able to work with one of the area's larger local newspapers was thrilling and encouraging. I edited articles that were to be printed for that day, tagged along with a journalist for the first few weeks and then I began doing my own interviewing and writing.

Without a doubt, the people and the history were the most fulfilling parts of the internship. From researching the histories of several local buildings to interviewing a woman who was crossing the country on horseback with her dog, all for raising cancer awareness, you find out a lot about the area and the people that come about.

## Kate Wallin *Writing & Rhetoric/Political Science*

In the past four years, I thought I would major in business, social work, public relations and, considered for a day, becoming an ecologist. But that was all before I was reminded of what I *really* loved: writing. Taking my first poetry class with Weston Cutter, fall semester of my sophomore year, changed my life and I officially became a Writing and Rhetoric major. Since then, I have learned how to brew a cup that's more coffee than grounds, read ten books in eight weeks, understand how associative poetry is like sky-diving, study



Kate Wallin

liturgy and the Greeks and the rhetoric of Tina Fey, call myself a poet and not take myself so seriously. Northwestern and I have both changed in the last four years, more that I could have ever imagined, but it was really within the basement walls of Granberg that I learned to love words and myself and the little corners of this great, wide world. In the next year, I'll be carrying that love with me to a sleepy village in Maine and a big city in South Korea, where I'm applying to teach... what else... English and writing.

# SENIOR PROFILES

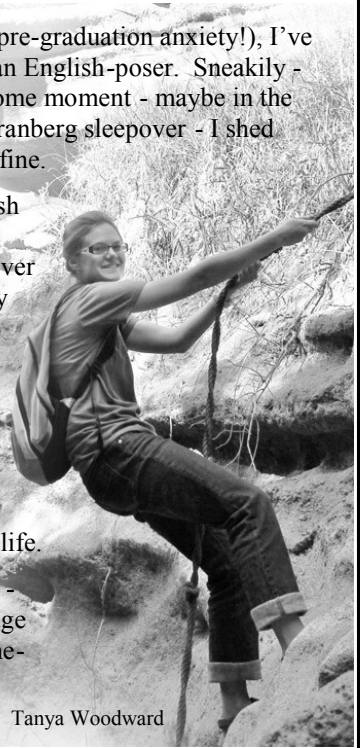
## Tanya Woodward *English Teaching*

After switching my major, one semester before being done with classes (no - it wasn't pre-graduation anxiety!), I've spent the better first half of my 1 ½ years in the English Department, feeling a little like an English-poser. Sneakily - I'd drink cups of coffee and quietly lift snacks out of that glass jar. But somewhere, in some moment - maybe in the middle of washing coffee cups after Wednesday night's Ag. Imagination or crashing a Granberg sleepover - I shed those poser-feelings and fully embraced all it means to be part of something you can't define.

My transition into English, with all its rough and bumble starts, came exactly as English was transitioning - a new identity, a new building (or buildings) with a new set of vistas, a pioneer set of classes. And all my favorite moments have been those transitions. I'll never forget sitting in Granberg on the last Thursday of the semester - hearing the walls literally come down around me as I was waiting for Professor Kensak and attempting to have one last cohesive thought about Shakespeare. But, my favorite memory of all was coming back to fall classes in Doorenbos - and making new memories in place full of old, fond ones. The very room I had laughed and cried and philosophized with my good friend Liz was our new Renaissance Literature classroom - this small, dimly light room became a rite of passage, a coming home. It didn't matter how upset I was about losing Granberg, because I was coming home to English. Perhaps, what I have loved and learned best about English and good literature, is that it moves with you in all seasons of life.

What new transition will I embark with English upon? As much as I love to plan ahead - I can't tell you. But strangely, I'm content with that for now. I can tell you that the voyage recipe involves something with teaching, maybe something with ESL, and hopefully something with international travel. And whatever *it* is, a slew of lessons well-learned and stories well-written promise to accompany me.

Tanya Woodward



## Ashlee (Eiesland) Koedam *English Teaching*

### Belonging

The day I made the decision to come to Northwestern, I wasn't entirely sure it was the right one. For reasons which I will not go into here, I wasn't convinced that Northwestern College was the right place for me. In chapel, in the dorms, in the caf, nearly everywhere, I felt alone. (Those who know me well may wonder if I was just being my over-dramatic self, but this time, I promise, I wasn't).

I had College Writing in Granberg Hall the fall of my freshman year, and it was only there that I felt a small semblance of belonging.

I had Introduction to Literary Studies in VPH the next semester, and there, too, perhaps even a little bit more, I felt an ease. I felt the (slight) capability to let go of my inhibitions and insecurities.

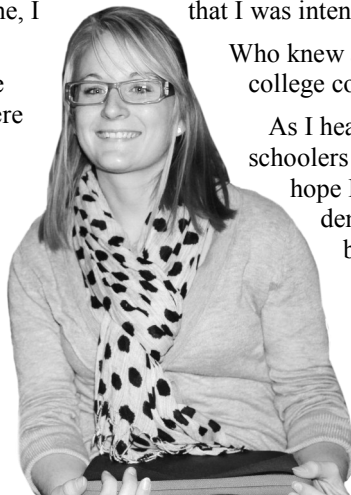
For some reason, (God only knew why then, but I think I have some ideas now) I came back to Northwestern the next year, though there were certainly points that I was entirely convinced that I would not. When I

came back, I slowly began to realize that whenever I entered an English class I could become, not the "me" that the rest of Northwestern wanted me to be, but myself for who I truly was. This occurred slowly: class by class, year by year. But, by my last semester, I believe that I had become somebody; I became the Ashlee (Eiesland) Koedam that I was intended to be.

Who knew a single department at a small liberal arts college could do all that?

As I head forward in life to write and teach high schoolers (this presuming someone will hire me), I hope I can create an environment where my students can become somebody, where they can become themselves.

I want to end with saying, I'm an introvert. Thus, I do not like to burden people with my face-to-face social awkwardness, and probably haven't told most of you this: If you are reading this (since this is, after all, the English newsletter), you have impacted me, and I am grateful.



Ashlee Koedam

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Thomas Westerholm *Writing & Rhetoric/Journalism Minor*



Thomas  
Westerholm

When I went to college for the first time, I was fresh out of high school with no real idea what I wanted to do with my life. One of the best decisions I've made was taking a few years off to figure out exactly what direction I wanted to go and which field I wanted to study. When I returned to college, I was pretty certain about what I wanted to do, which was to my advantage since I could take the classes that I knew would pertain to me. I knew that I wanted to be a journalist, and I knew the main subject I enjoyed covering (Hint: it rhymes with shmasketball).

But one of the biggest surprises I experienced at college was that I

wasn't as one-dimensional as I imagined myself to be as a writer. I thought that I should limit myself to non-fiction, especially non-fiction that allowed me to demonstrate my snarky sense of humor. But as I attended classes like *Intro to Narrative & Verse* and *Feature Writing*, I discovered that I could write plenty of other genres as well, and perhaps more importantly, I immensely enjoyed writing them.

I still love writing about basketball, and I still want to make a career out of it somehow. But I've learned the value and pleasure of other types of writing, which was a very nice surprise.

## Kati Heng *Writing & Rhetoric/Journalism*

If you're looking for a short and sweet little promo about how great NWC is and how every single prospective student should enroll immediately, look elsewhere. I'm going to lay it out straight what you'll get if you come to NWC and major in English:

**1** *You're gonna get bored in Orange City.* What this means for the English major: You'll be reading. A lot. You'll use these years not just to do the assigned reading, but to find and devour the classics, poetry, online lit journals and blogs. I'm sure I've read more books in the past four years than the rest of my years combined.

**2** *You'll get slapped in the face with a reality check.* We have so many different profs here. Unless you're Thoreau, at least one of them isn't going to love your writing style right off the bat. You're gonna have to work on your writing, try new styles and ways of writing that you'll think are stupid. You'll learn to appreciate it, but it could be awhile before that happens.

**3** *If you decide to do any English activities (Beacon, Spectrum, etc.), you'll sacrifice having a life.* But, on the plus side, you'll get a whole new set of friends and a ton of late-night stress-laughter memories that'll stick with you for years.

**4** *You're gonna get lonesome when you go.* Probably the only reason I stayed at NWC for four years is the English Department. The professors here are the most challenging, ego-destroying, down-to-earth, caring and wonderful people you can hope to meet. Talking about books for an hour and a half in the morning is rough, but you'll never get the chance to hang out in a room with people who've read what you've read and need to share like this again. Never again will you have this hub of English nerds and friends.

*Kati Heng plans to live and work in Chicago after graduation and hopes to do freelance writing while working at a Starbucks or some similar place.*



Kati Heng

# SENIOR PROFILES

## Linden Figgie

*Writing & Rhetoric/  
Biology Health Professions*

There are three questions that seem to always come up in my initial conversations with people. Number one: Was I named after the Linden tree? The answer: No. Although I do think it has something to do with my



passionate and undeniable love for nature and the outdoors. Number two: How *on earth* did I end up in Iowa from Washington State? The answer: I wish I knew. God does, and I'll gladly leave the details to him. Number three: As a biology and writing & rhetoric double major, do I want to write science textbooks for the rest of my life? I wait for the classic head jolt and surprised comment on the uniqueness of the combination and then assure them that, as thrilling as it sounds, that was not my childhood dream. In fact, the thought never crossed my mind, in the same way the thought of being a Writing & Rhetoric major as a freshman wasn't in my cards.

That's what college teaches you: be ready for the unpredictable. The toughest part is that you can't prepare for it. You can't mark unpredictable on your planner or on a "To-do" list, something I do obsessively. So obsessively, in fact, that I will often write things I've already done on my to-do list just so I can check off the little box I draw next to each item. All I know for certain, is that I'm checking off "Graduate!" from my list and looking forward to more reasons to write down words I love, remember quotes that inspire me, and ponder questions that baffle me. Who knows? Maybe in five or ten years, I'll be the author of your child or nephew or granddaughter's biology textbook. For now, I'll be pursuing a passion in youth leadership and community development, where I can explore and advocate the importance of identity-searching, risk-taking and love-sharing.

## Shelby Vander Molen

*Writing & Rhetoric/Theatre*

A list of bullet-point memories from a girl who otherwise doesn't much like bullets:

- ♥ College writing with Dr. Kensak: the class that reminded me how I *actually* want to be a writer. A switch of major swiftly followed.
- ♥ Learning to drink coffee and eat words in the basement of Granberg (may she rest in peace). Thank-you, Weston Cutter's poetry class.
- ♥ Turnwall's Rhetoric of Persuasion class where I was allowed to rantily write against NWC's unhealthy eager ethos toward ring-by-spring relationships.
- ♥ Sowienski's rhetoric night class: I never felt more affirmed for memorizing rhetorical tropes.
- ♥ Office conversations with Fynaardt about literature and film class, a place where I was told the world needs more "courageous students."
- ♥ Lundberg's History & Theory of Rhetoric, a class which made me mourn not discovering her kindred genius earlier.
- ♥ An iconic creative writing seminar with Sam Martin and friends in a cozy church with tea.

\*Sorry, Westerholm. Our paths just never crossed, though I've certainly appreciated the guitar music sometimes humming from behind your door.

As for the future, I like to fantasize about Women's Studies at Oxford. But for now, that is only a pie-in-the-sky daydream. The immediate future after graduation includes working for a year, maybe two in a city - probably Seattle. During that "year-off," as we like to call it, I will be writing and trying to figure out where, when, and what I can start studying next.

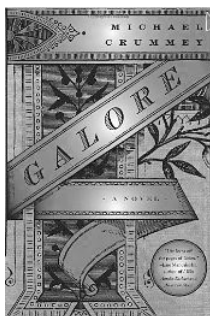


# Summer Reading

## Suggestions from the NWC English Department Faculty

### An unofficial Newfoundland trilogy

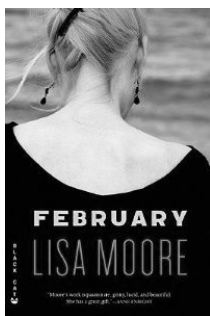
Dr. Sam Martin



#### *Galore*

Michael Crummey

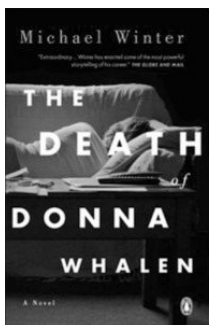
When I think of outport Newfoundland and my time in Deep Bay, Fogo Island, I think of this novel. From my mainland CFA (Come From Away) perspective, it seems to capture the hardship of outport life but also its humor, drama, vitality, and mystery. This is northern hemisphere Marquez: hilarious and heartbreaking.



#### *February*

Lisa Moore

This novel makes 1980s St. John's, rocked by the tragic sinking of the *Ocean Ranger* oil rig, burn in a reader's memory like a hot Singapore sun, or the coiled bottom of a stove-top espresso maker. (Read the novel and you'll get it.) Moore is one of the most artful writers I've ever read.



#### *Death of Donna Whalen*

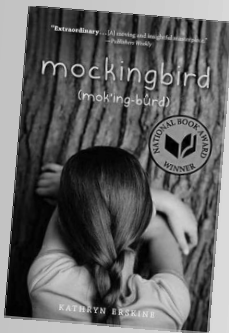
Michael Winter

This book is about a real-life murder committed two streets from where I live in the Rabittown area of St. John's. I'm haunted by it when I think of walking past the empty lot where the apartment building that Donna Whalen lived in used to stand. Winter has taken the court transcripts of the trial and, without adding any of his own words, arranged real-life testimonies into a gripping work of documentary fiction.

## Two books for adolescents - and adults too

### Professor Kim Van Es

Have you ever wondered what the world looks like from the point of view of someone on the autism spectrum? Recently I was introduced to two books that helped me imagine that perspective.



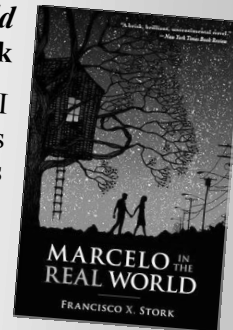
### ***Mockingbird*** **Kathryn Erskine**

*Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine features 10-year-old Caitlin who, along with her father, is trying to process the death of her brother and her mother. This girl with Asperger's Syndrome is definitely the hero as the story as she, in her unique way, expresses both empathy and healing. A beautiful story beautifully told. (A bonus is an allusion to Harper Lee's classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which everyone should read multiple times.)

### ***Marcelo in the Real World*** **Francisco X. Stork**

Whereas *Mockingbird* can be appreciated by middle schoolers and up, I would recommend *Marcelo in the Real World* to high school students through adults. The main thing that sets 17-year-old Marcelo apart is that he regularly hears mental music, which sometimes keeps him in his own world. His parents think that it's time for Marcelo to experience more of a "normal" world by working at his dad's law firm for the summer before transferring to a public school in the fall. Seeing the world from Marcelo's angle was enlightening, including the way he thinks about issues of faith. Author Francisco X. Stork is an author to follow and someone I'd like to bring to Northwestern. You can read an interview with him at:

<http://sojo.net/magazine/2013/01/vehicles-grace>



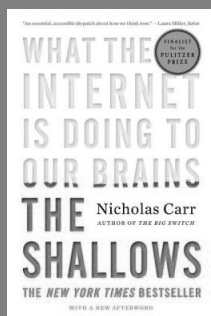
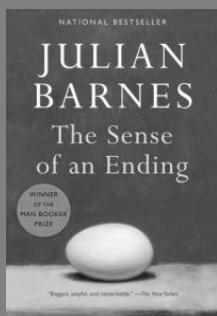
# More Reading Suggestions

## Recommendations

Dr. Joel Westerholm

### *The Sense of An Ending* Julian Barnes

*The Sense of an Ending* (Knopf) won the Man Booker Prize in 2011. It's short, more novella than full-length novel, easily readable in a sitting. And you might then start re-reading immediately; it's that good. A wonderful meditation on how we tell our life stories, versus how others would tell the same events.



### *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains* Nicholas Carr

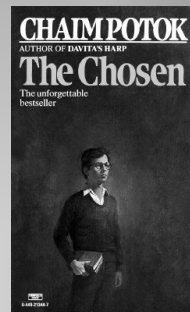
Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to our Brains* (Norton—thanks, Sarah Licius) may overstate his case—but not by much. Any of us who are finding concentrating on things a progressively more difficult task might well want to re-think the amount of time we spend reading web pages designed to distract us from what we want to pay attention to. Of course people have always mistrusted the effect new technology has on our ability to think. But this time, we may have gone a step too far.

## Chaim Potok *The Chosen* is the Right Pick

Professor Richard Sowienski

### *The Chosen* Chaim Potok

I'll be teaching First Year Seminar next fall, and I thought I would get a head start on the selected readings. The first book I picked from the stack was *The Chosen* (1967), by Chaim Potok, a National Book Award finalist. The novel deserves its praise, and it's an excellent selection, not only for Northwestern students, but also for all our faculty and friends.



It's the story of two boys growing up in Brooklyn, Reuven, an Orthodox Jew and son of a rabbi, and Danny, son of a tzaddik, a cult-like leader for Hasidic Jews. Their friendship develops in spite of the differences, suspicions, and disregard (if not hatred) of their two sects - set against the backdrop of World War II, the dawning horror of the Holocaust, and the eventual establishment of a Jewish state.

One scene that comes to mind centers on Reuven's visit to Danny's synagogue one Shabbat day. Danny's father grills him extensively on the writings of Jewish scholars over the centuries: "I was witnessing a kind of public quiz, but a strange, almost bizarre quiz, more a contest than a quiz, because Reb Saunders was not confining his questions only to what Danny had learned during the week but was ranging over most of the major tractates of the Talmud and Danny was obviously require to provide the answers."

In reading the scene, I was absorbed with the "contest" with same intensity as if Potok were describing an epic battle on the gridiron. (And I was convicted of my own pathetic Biblical studies.) This is the reason I read novels: engaging characters, a look into a little-known world, a compelling story line, and a specificity that opens to big themes and big questions - a universality that somehow becomes pertinent to my own life.

**Reader Alert!**

**Dover Book Sale**

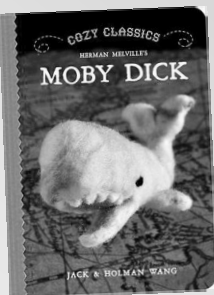
**Buy One  
Get One Free**

**NWC Bookstore**



## Recommendations

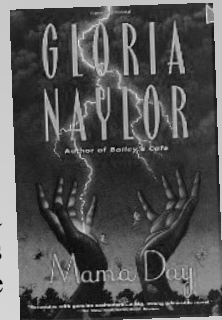
**Dr. Ann Lundberg**



**Cozy Classics**  
***Moby Dick***  
**Herman Melville**

One of my favorite Christmas gifts received this year, this edition of the classic offers the novel in 12 words. My favorite word is “smash” wherein the white whale rams the Pequod, followed probably by “float” depicting Ishmael on Queequeg’s coffin in the wake of the oceanic debacle. Or maybe “mad” and the fierce depiction of Ahab.... All characters are represented in needled felt, thus the “cozy” part of classics. A great gift to set infants on the right reading path in life or for the *Moby Dick* averse, as is yours truly.

***Mama Day***  
**Gloria Naylor**



As with reading *Moby Dick*, this novel was first assigned to me by one of my students. The result of this reading was far happier: no whales and a tighter plot structure conveyed in the voices of two powerful black women: Mama Day and her niece Cocoa (Ophelia). Set in Manhattan and “Willow Springs”, a small island off the South Carolina-Georgia coast, the novel taps into both urban and rural black experience. Mama Day maintains the “other place” in the woods bequeathed to the generations to the offspring of Bascombe Wade and his slave Sapphira and the place where Mama Day practices her healing arts, and draws down lightning from the heavens. Cocoa has left this island and its powerful, mysterious, and painful history for the island of Manhattan where she meets George, the third voice telling the tale in the aftermath of events. The “literariness” of the novel – the symbolism of island, water, and bridge; the multiple Shakespearean allusions; the magical realism – offer the rewards English majors and their ken enjoy. That and it’s a good story, a love story, and the story of generations linked by a profound sense of place.

# *Reflections on my Journey to Gratifying Employment*

*by Emily Brewer, 2011 grad*

When I graduated from Northwestern in December 2010 with a Writing & Rhetoric major and a minor in Public Relations, I already had a job interview lined up. The opening was for a proofreader with an herbal remedies company near my hometown, and I was excited – how wonderful that I wouldn't have to worry about searching for a job after college!

But when I found out the job would entail reading lists of Latin herbs eight hours a day, I turned down their job offer. A couple other offers came and went in what would become seven months of endless searching, submitting applications and receiving the "Thank you for applying but we've hired someone else" emails. With loan repayments looming, it was a discouraging and monotonous process.

In July 2011, my mom pointed out a help wanted ad in our local newspaper. Greene County Medical Center, the hospital in my hometown of Jefferson, Iowa, was looking for a temporary file clerk – someone to scan old personnel files into the computer – and it was supposed to last six months, tops. Thinking it would buy me time to keep searching while also providing necessary income to make student loan payments, I applied on a whim and ended up getting hired.

The following December, when the position was supposed to end, my director hired me on as a permanent employee and my desk moved into Human Resources. I mainly did office work – making copies, filing, scanning and doing small projects for other departments.

Then in 2012, when the medical center celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I helped the Community Relations director on a lot of "arts and crafts" projects. I was part of the committee that designed a 4'x36' 75-year timeline, I wrote three pieces for (and assisted in proofing) the anniversary magazine publication and I helped design the float for Jefferson's annual Bell Tower Festival parade.



Emily ('11) at her desk as the Community Relations Assistant for the Greene County Medical Center

The challenge of "arts and crafts" was more enjoyable than the daily office work, so I didn't hesitate in applying when a Community Relations Assistant position was created. I was accepted for the position in September 2012 and, almost two years after graduating college, I could finally say that I was doing something I went to school for!

My job duties as Community Relations Assistant vary from day to day. Everything with the medical center's name or logo on it goes through my department – press releases, newspaper ads, internal and external newsletters, brochures, etc. A majority of my time is spent keeping the website up-to-date, managing our social media and designing ads and brochures. Every day brings new challenges and I have enjoyed learning the software and style guides necessary to do my job well.

Two years ago, I never would have thought that I would end up finding a job – that I enjoy doing – in my hometown. The writing, editing and layout skills I learned at Northwestern have prepared me for success no matter where I end up, and I am continually thankful.