

# WORDHORD

Spring 2016

Northwestern College  
English Department Newsletter

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**“Tim ... talked about the spiritual significance of place and the way that people and cultures engage spaces to turn them into places.”**

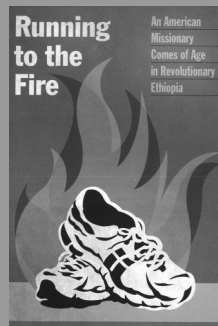
## Reflections on Tim Bascom at NWC

by Amie Adams

On Tuesday, February 9, the English Department hosted author and professor Tim Bascom. Bascom is the author of the novel *Squatters' Rites*, the essay collection *The Comfort Trap*, the memoir *Chameleon Days*, and most recently *Running to the Fire: An American Missionary Comes of Age in Revolutionary Ethiopia*. He has won the Bakeless Literary Prize in nonfiction and an Editor's Prize from *The Missouri Review*. Bascom graduated with his MFA from the University of Iowa and is currently the Director of Creative Writing at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa.



Additionally, Tim Bascom is the judge of this year's edition of *Spectrum*, Northwestern's literary magazine.



During Bascom's visit he joined Dr. Martin's poetry class and hosted a discussion about poetry and essay writing. Later that evening he gave a Deepsong reading from his latest memoir *Running to the Fire*. This book combines a captivating narrative told by a teenage missionary kid with insightful reflections from the voice of an author which allows readers to follow the story from the 1970's to the present. It takes readers on a journey to the mountains of Ethiopia and the streets of the capital while exploring the relationships between missionaries, their families, mission organizations, and the surrounding culture.

In both his class visit and reading, Bascom focused on the significance of place. He talked about the spiritual significance of place and the way that people and cultures engage spaces to turn them into places. In *Running to the Fire* this theme is especially significant because he explores the different meanings that native Ethiopians

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## Fall Course Offering

### ENG 387 Rhetorical Women

Dr. Ann Lundberg  
Monday/Wednesday/Friday  
11:50 am—12:50 pm  
(2nd half) - 2 credits

This short course will examine both the silences of women in the history of rhetoric and their contributions to the theory and practice of a women's rhetoric from Pericles' lover and advisor Aspasia to contemporary topics such as the rhetoric of silence. No surprise, we'll be particularly interested in women's rhetorical roles within Christianity.



*Bascom* (Continued from page 1)

and missionaries assign to place. He also describes the history of the land his house sits on, tracing it back through the previous owners, the golf course of nearly a century ago, and the Native Americans who inhabited the space before that. He challenges his readers to think of place in this way, "Perhaps we could cross the borders, doing it as humbly as possible, attuned to every meaning that might already exist, trying to encounter the landscape as an already defined place." This idea was just one of the many insights Tim Bascom shared with the Northwestern community during his visit.



### English Department Book Sale and Coffee House

In celebration of Charlotte Brontë's 200<sup>th</sup> birthday, the English Department will be hosting a book sale and Coffee House. Funds go to the English Scholarship.

When: April 21, 2015 3:30- 4:30 pm

Where: Kepp Hall kitchen & environs

Book Prices: Fifty cents to two dollars  
(Freebies a real possibility)

Drinks & Munchies: Free



# *Words on the Web: The Art of Blogging*

*During the fall 2015 semester, Dr. Samuel Martin offered a course on The Art of Blog Writing. This two-credit workshop was devoted to online writing, reviewing and commentary. Martin's students personally designed the following culturally-relevant blogs.*

**The Social Media Mask**—Jordan Syverson  
<https://thesocialmediamask.wordpress.com>

The Social Media Mask is a blog written by Jordan Syverson, a college sophomore at a small Christian college in Iowa. Currently, she is studying public relations and graphic design.

Over the past few years, Jordan has realized how much social media has had both a positive and negative impact on her life and the lives of thousands of others. By joining the cultural conversation about social media, the psychological dependency on media, the dangers of media, and how we portray ourselves on social media, Jordan strives to help others find balance and unveil our social media masks which are so prevalent in our world today.

**For the Love of Cows**—Amber Beyer  
<https://freeforthe loveofcows.wordpress.com>

For the Love of Cows is an online blog conversation advocating for and educating about the behind the scene life of a dairy farmer. It features information and stories from her own experiences and the experiences of other dairy farmers. This blog walks through Amber's journey of city girl to dairy farmer and how milking cows has changed her life for the better.

**Fearlessly Feminist**—Nicole Montgomery  
<https://fearlesslyfacingfeminism.wordpress.com/>

Nicole's blog, much like other feminist blogs, seeks to encourage women and girls who feel as though they've been discouraged from using their intellect to accomplish great things. However, unlike other blogs, she comes from the perspective of a teacher and talks about the ways feminism in the classroom can be a really wonderful way of being an advocate for students. Nicole explores various topics related to feminism from Barbies all the way to women's health rights, breaking down why supporting our girls and women is something teachers are called to do.

**Responsible Travel for Ordinary People**—Amie Adams  
<http://ethicaltravelblog.wordpress.com>

Amie's blog explores how ordinary people, particularly Midwesterners, can engage in responsible travel. Whether you are taking a spring break road trip, going to grandma's house, or on a business trip, the goal of this blog is to offer simple suggestions that will make your trip more environmentally-friendly (and even save you money!) as well as to address some of the larger issues regarding tourism and travel.

**Braving Inequality**—Nicole Opgenorth  
<https://bravinginequality.wordpress.com/>

Nicole's blog, Braving Inequality, is a conversation about marriage, racial, and gender inequality in the United States. She chose to discuss this topic from a Christian perspective sharing what she has seen the Church do well and what the Church needs to work on. Nicole wanted to create a safe, open place to talk about a difficult topic. She has enjoyed researching these issues, sharing what she has learned, and talking to other people on campus about their thoughts and experiences.

**Just A Carpenter's Kid**—Jamie Jongerius  
<http://justacarpenterskid.blogspot.com/>

Just A Carpenter's Kid is a blog about college, faith, and random thoughts on life in general, written by a carpenter's kid born and raised in small town Iowa.

# Senior PROFILES

## Allison Mulder

*Writing & Rhetoric Major; Literature Minor*

Starting college as an aspiring writer, I worried about finding time to write fiction alongside my schoolwork. Now, as a senior, my name is on an eligibility list for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer in science fiction or fantasy. It's a lot less impressive than it sounds—my eligibility is just a technicality, and my chances of actual nomination are infinitesimally small—but an anthology of Campbell-eligible writers *will* hopefully include the short story I published in a professional magazine this past November. That story started in an Honors seminar on Horror. An Intro to Narrative & Verse class led to a different short story which won the fiction prize in *The Albion Review*, a national undergrad lit journal. For my Honors Research project, I researched, drafted, and partially revised a novel for children. Another novel I'm revising is almost ready to submit to literary agents—I'm closer than I've ever been. That novel started in the Fantasy and Fabulism class I took at the beginning of my sophomore year.

Not only has my time at Northwestern helped build on my writing talents and polish my fiction, it also gave me a taste of working on the other side of publishing as I copy edited and managed short story submissions for our own literary journal, *Spectrum*, two years running. Copy editing for the *Beacon* and working as a writing tutor fleshed out my skills in other areas and the rest of my classes (plus an Honors trip to Greece and the PR internship I did with Easter Seals during Chicago Semester) have all prepared me for any job I get after graduation anywhere I end up.



Allison Mulder

Beyond all that, the people I've met at Northwestern—especially in the English department—have encouraged and taught me at every turn. Classmates who work-shopped my stories, fellow writers who submitted to *Spectrum*...and any professor who thought it might be fun to replace an essay with a short story wound up receiving twenty pages of a future novel. Now, as I begin the job search, I set out equipped with the friendships I've made, the experiences I've had, and my passion for writing fiction, which has only grown stronger in the four years since I began.

# Senior PROFILES

## **Justine Johnson**

*Writing & Rhetoric Major*

At the beginning of my time at Northwestern, everyone wanted me to write novels. I quickly discovered in Professor Sowienski's classes, however, that I love telling true stories, even though I had been playing pretend my entire life. After taking a journalism class, I realized how much I loved copy editing and reporting facts for the benefit of the people.

So I dropped my obligatory "practical" Business major and added a Journalism minor as a sophomore. It was one of the best decisions I have ever made. That same year, I took Sound Design with Drew Schmidt in the theatre and found another love—design. It was my new interest in sound that led me to fall utterly in love with filmmaking, specifically editing and sound design for film.

I spent junior year making seven short films, an experience which both wrecked me and changed my life in beautiful ways I could never have predicted. I took writing classes with Dr. Martin and picked up four different classes with Dr. Lundberg, leading me to be in class with Dr. L more in a week than most English majors can probably claim to have been. I especially loved Dr. Martin's Narrative and Verse class and Dr. L's African American Lit class. Those two courses taught me to view both writing and reading in new, beautiful ways.

This year I have finally had the privilege of taking a Fynaardt class and a Westerholm class. Each new professor has added more seasoning to my wide variety of experiences to digest, as well as increased my excitement about writing. On the design side of things, I sound designed for the children's show in the fall, which was a beautiful long



Justine Johnson

moment for me. Currently I'm plugging away at three jobs, four classes, and as much snuggly friendship time with my favorite people as possible. All of it is lovely.

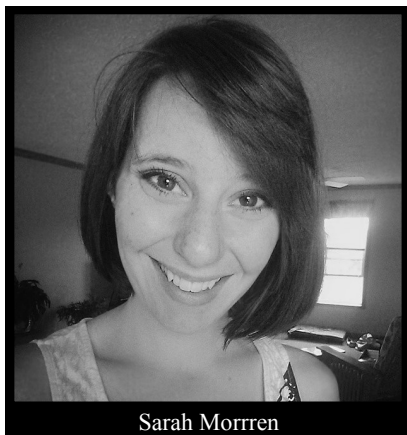
I don't know for sure what is next. Probably something with public relations and journalism, but we'll see what God drops in my lap. I will always write, and I will never stop pursuing my passion for filmmaking and storytelling. As long as I am telling other people's stories well, I am excited.

Northwestern has been a flipping awesome adventure. Thanks for loving me, Kepp Hall and those who inhabit it. I shall miss you all. Make good art, okay?

# Senior PROFILES

## Sarah Morren

*English Teaching Major*



Sarah Morren

You know when something just feels right? Well that's where I'm at in my life. I love English, and I love teaching. The most awesome part is that I get to do it every day! While at NWC I've had the chance to teach in Denver, CO as well as Seoul, South Korea. Both have been wonderful experiences (seriously, go on a Summer of Service or Semester Abroad!). I wouldn't have had these same experiences if it weren't for my classmates and professors pushing me. I've come to find that, out of my whole college experience, it will be my professors that I miss the most. They have been a constant source of encouragement. They never let me settle for less because they knew what I was capable of. Of course there were lots of shenanigans and baked goods to keep me around. Those same baked goods and professors will pull me back for an alumni visit every once and a while. As I set off on this journey to South Korea or wherever else God takes me, I know that I was pushed here to be the best teacher I can be, and that leaves me feeling confident. I'm so thankful that I've had the opportunity to pursue my passions and find fulfillment in my career.

## Trevor Delamater

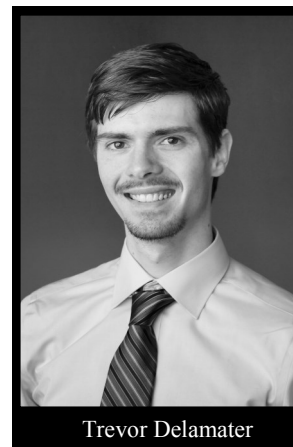
*Writing & Rhetoric Major*

My journey begins with a confession: As a teenager, I thoroughly disliked English. While I got good marks in English classes, writing was a stressful chore, and grammar, while easy for me, seemed as boring as my Siberian husky's kibbles. And yet, I was a writer.

It is only now, in fact, that I can see this. The stories, journals, and scraps of poetry that I dared share with no one were all jack pine seeds that slumbered under my mind's leafy humus. Thanks to some kindly encouraging teachers in high school, I entered Northwestern as an English minor, where the frightening prospect of Art of the Essay and Intro to Narrative and Verse workshops kindled my mind with terror.

The ability of my professors here to simultaneously encourage and goad me to take my craft further amazed me, however, and due to their heartfelt critiques and exhortations, I learned not only about writing, poetry, and rhetoric, but to consider myself a writer with words worth sharing. I thank them and my classmates for teaching me and helping me to recognize the seeds that had been in me all along.

In regards to my future, the short term will probably find me in my beloved Minnesota. Beyond that, I would like to continue traveling and learning. Maybe I'll document the life of the rarely seen sand dragon in Tierra del Fuego. You never know, but that's part of the adventure.

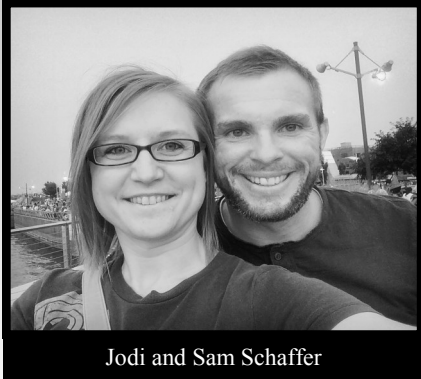


Trevor Delamater

# Senior PROFILES

## Samuel Shaffer

*English Teaching Major*



Jodi and Sam Schaffer

The English Department at Northwestern College is an inviting place where students from a variety of backgrounds and stages in life can come and grow together. Therefore, when I began my education at NWC I was vigorously welcomed by warm and friendly faculty and students. We engaged in the hard work of interpreting literature, seeking to decipher the blatant and hidden meanings behind words and phrases. We unceremoniously debated, often vehemently, to validate our own positions on literature while at the same time applauding the efforts of our peers when their discoveries genuinely challenged our own. Time and again I found myself engrossed in a book that I would never have thought to have read. Oftentimes it was that same book that challenged me to write essays and short stories that I've come to treasure.

The training and mentorship I've received has prepared me to confidently pursue English teaching. Even after graduation I receive occasional encouraging emails that empower me as I search for an English teaching position. Thank you NWC English Department and students for your devotion to the legacy of letters.

## More Graduates

**Jacob Christiansen** *Writing & Rhetoric '15*

**Brianna Darling** *English Teaching '16*

**Peirce Jordan** *Writing & Rhetoric '15*

**Kelly Kruse** *Writing & Rhetoric '15*

**Theresa Larrabee** *English Teaching '15*

**Lydia Steenhoek** *Writing & Rhetoric '16*

**Erin [Brasser] Vande Vegte** *English Teaching '16*

**Caleb VanderBaan** *Literature '16*

## ALUMNI NOTES

► **Theresa Larrabee**, (*English Teaching '15*) accepted a teaching position at Valley Christian High School in San Jose, California. She started in January.

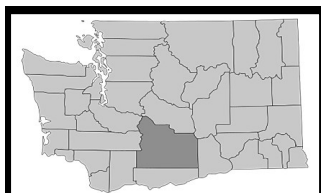
► **Abbie [Goldschmidt] Amiotte** (*Writing and Rhetoric '15*) and her husband Brett welcomed their daughter Evelyn, who was born in November.



# Not What I Expected

by Kristin Trease *(English Teaching '13)*

About once a week, a student asks me, “Ms. Trease, where did you go to college?” When I answer Northwestern College in Iowa, the follow up question is almost always, “How the heck did you end up in White Swan?”



Yakima & the reservation are located on the east side of the Cascade Mountains in southern Washington state.

Pure dumb luck!

That’s what happens when a group of friends migrate from the Midwest to Washington, aiming to stay in the Seattle theatre scene, leaving the teachers among us to apply for whatever open positions were available. I didn’t even know where White Swan was until I drove onto the Yakama Indian Reservation for the interview. So that’s how I ended up here, living in Yakima, WA, commuting forty minutes one way every day. Pure dumb luck!

White Swan High School is a tiny collection (216 at last count, but enrollment changes weekly) of mostly Native and Hispanic students, plopped down between a ridge of tribal mountain land and miles of fruit orchards. My kids (as I have come to think of them) find themselves in the throes of typical teenage woes, compounded with the struggles that accompany living on a reservation or being the children of undocumented migrant workers. Daily, I am faced with heart-wrenching stories of their lives outside of school, and I am charged with supporting them through challenges and turmoil that I never imagined were possible in the modern age; yet, here they are, day after day, sitting in my class. Groaning because I’m making them read for “Twenty whole minutes, Ms. Trease, are you *serious*?!”

My school is working against some astronomically high barriers. Recent data from the state indicated that ours were the highest rates of absences in the entire state; our test scores place us in the lowest percentiles; our graduation rates are far lower than schools that mirror our demographics in other parts of the state. Despite these bleak statistics, mine is truly a turnaround school. Over the past two years, we have seen drastic changes in policy, school culture and climate, attendance, and test scores across the board. It has been a slow, arduous process, but one I am so grateful to be a part of.

These students have become my kids, and this school has become my family. My best friend is the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade teacher to my 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> graders in the English department. The administration listens and cares amidst media blitzes in other regions and states that vilify administrations who seem to sacrifice true learning on the almighty altar of test scores. Even on my worst days, I feel loved by the teenagers sitting in my room, still grumbling that I’m making them write in complete sentences.



Kristin Trease takes time for a photo with her White Swan High School students

This is not where I expected to be after graduating almost four years ago and packing up my car to drive westward. But I cannot imagine my life anywhere else right now. I love my kids in my little corner of the reservation. And if I’m honest with myself, I know they love me, too. Despite the fact I assigned them homework this weekend.