

# BYWORDS

Department of English Newsletter

November's sky is chill and drear;  
November's leaf is red and sear.  
- Sir Walter Scott

[www.english.umd.edu/bywords](http://www.english.umd.edu/bywords)

## HIGHLIGHTS

What better way to end the semester than a celebration with dear colleagues and old friends? The final Writers Here & Now of the fall semester will be held on Wednesday, December 10th at 7:00PM. WH&N will link two of the department's talented professors (**Merrill Feitell** and **William Henry Lewis**) with two of our most successful recent alumni (**Paul Otremba** and **Kevin Craft**). We will see you there!

More information is available here.

## FOR YOUR CALENDAR

**Digital Dialogues** concludes the semester with upcoming presentations from Ann Weeks on November 18th ("The International Children's Digital Library: An Introduction for Scholars"), Clifford Lynch on November 25th (Title TBA), Elizabeth Bearden on December 2nd ("Renaissance Moving Pictures: From Sidney's Funeral materials to Collaborative, Multimedia Nachleben"), and Katie King on December 9th ("Flexible Knowledges, Reenactments, New Media"). The Digital Dialogues series is held each Tuesday at 12:30 in the MITH Conference Room, B0135 McKeldin Library. Visit [mith.umd.edu](http://mith.umd.edu) for more info.

MFA Students in poetry (Jen Dempsey, Steven Kleinman, Adam Pellegrini and Katherine Young) and fiction (Basit Chaudhry, David Green, and Jacqueline Orlando) will read from their work for the **Mock Turtle Reading Series**. The reading will be held at the Wonderland Ballroom in Washington, D.C. on Friday, November 21st at 6:30PM. Visit the department calendar for directions.

**Theory Colloquium** will be held on Friday, December 12th at 3:30PM in Francis Scott Key Hall Room 1102. This will conclude a semester's discussion on critical theory and war.

**December Commencement** will be held on Sunday, December 21st at 4:00PM in the Elise & Marvin DeKelbourn Concert Hall in the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center. Click here for more info.

## FOR YOUR REFERENCE

Various documents for use in the classroom created by our senior lecturers are now available online at the PWP Homepage. Click on "For Instructors" and scroll down to "Current Issues."

The Graduate Studies Program has launched a Facebook Page with information for current students, alumni, and prospective students. There is a discussion page for GEO events and information about the program. Become a fan today!

## UPCOMING DEADLINES and DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

**Textbook orders** for Winter and Spring 2009 courses are due **December 1st** to the University Book Center. Click on "faculty" and then "adoptions form." Please send a copy of your order to Isabella Moulton at [imoulton@umd.edu](mailto:imoulton@umd.edu). The students and the book stores will very much appreciate your prompt attention to the due date of December 1st.

**Research Support Awards Deadline:** Please submit your application to Nicole Menton by 4 p.m. on **Monday, December 8**. Guidelines may be found here.

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

*The next edition of Bywords will be released on Tuesday, December 16th. Please send us any and all updates on new publications and accomplished accomplishments by **Thursday, December 11th.***

*We especially want to hear your reflections on ARHU's Semester on War and your plans for winter break as well as the usual info on lectures and publications. Please include dates, locations, and titles of papers in your news submissions.*

**Bywords E-mail:** [englweb@umd.edu](mailto:englweb@umd.edu)

## GEO Announces DC-Area Graduate Conference

Chaired by MA/PhD student Joseph Kautzer and advised by Director of Graduate Studies Kandice Chuh, the GEO Conference Committee is pleased to announce its 2nd annual conference theme.

**“(Media)tions: Translating the Body Politic”** will bring together multiple disciplines, genres, and eras for a discussion of how the arts and sciences translate socio-political experience.

GEO has posted a Call For Papers at several DC area graduate programs and is expecting plenty of interest in this important and timely topic. Paper and panel proposal abstracts are **due December 15th**.

Several possible topics have been proposed:

- Media and the discourse of power
- Literature and aesthetics of war
- Rhetoric of science in the public sphere
- Issues of censorship and propaganda
- Politics of canonization

The conference will be held on February 27-28 in conjunction with the English Department's graduate student recruitment day.

More information is available on the conference website.

*More articles on recent department activities are available on the website! If you have an idea for an article, please e-mail [engfweb@umd.edu](mailto:engfweb@umd.edu)*

## Conference On American Empire and Imperialism Held at Maryland

On November 7th and 8th, a team of graduate students from Robert Levine's Spring 2008 seminar held a national conference on the theme of "Rethinking Empire and Imperialism in 19th Century American Literature." Twelve professors and forty students from nineteen universities participated.

Amy Kaplan (University of Pennsylvania) delivered a keynote address and Jesse Alemán (University of New Mexico) delivered a plenary session with a response from Caroline Levander (Rice University). "These are some of the leading scholars who have been shaping the critical conversation on these big issues," says Levine.

The reins were turned over to graduate students who were put in charge of all details related to the conception, promotion, and development of the conference. Ph.D. student Sarah Sillin was among the conference organizers. Sillin says, "This conference gave us a chance to see where this scholarship is headed and to hear feedback on our work." Topics ranged from racial ambiguity and national identity in James Fenimore Cooper to political cartoons during the Spanish-American War.

Director of Graduate Studies Kandice Chuh says, "The highlight of the conference for me was in hearing the work of our students and recognizing their genuinely original research and lively critical thinking." Chuh says that Maryland's students did an excellent job representing themselves and the University, and that the experience is critical for the development of literary scholars. "The opportunity for students not just to participate in, but to organize and engage with other students and faculty, is a hugely important way of situating one's scholarship within intellectual communities."

Networking done at the conference will serve as a springboard for further academic opportunities. Says Sillin, "[Ph.D. student] Christy DeSanctis and I are working on putting together with one of the participants from Cornell and another graduate student. Hopefully, we'll be able to present at the American Literature Association's conference. Regardless, our conference motivated me to figure out what my work has in common with that of other students and to talk through these ideas."

The conference committee consisted of Fernando Benavidez, Christy DeSanctis, Mark Hoffmann, D. Seth Horton, Joseph Kautzer, Tasos Lazarides, Rebecca Lush and Sarah Sillin.

A recap of the conference and more photos are available at the Graduate Studies blog.

## FACULTY NEWS

**Maud Casey, Michael Collier, and Howard Norman** have been announced as winners of 2008 Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) summer awards. This marks the second year in a row that the department's incredibly talented creative writing faculty have won three of the seven available awards.

**Lea Chartock**, Director of the Professional Writing Program, participated in McKeldin Library's "War in Literature: A Marathon Public Reading" on November 11th. Lea read passages from the 1939 novel *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo.

**Kandice Chuh** chaired a session on "Theories of American Studies: Race" at the American Studies Association Annual Meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico, October 16-19. **Ralph Bauer, Caroline Egan, and Robert Levine** also represented the English Department as part of a large UMD contingent. Bauer gave a paper entitled "Prophecy and Creole Knowledge in the Colonial Americas: The Great Comets of 1680-81," Egan gave a paper entitled "Cormac McCarthy's Border Trilogy: At the Crossroads of Gender, History, and Literary Form," and Levine gave a paper entitled "The Cultural Work of Edward Everett Hale's *The Man Without a Country*."

Why is grasping complexity crucial to our individual and collective survival? Find out by joining **Kelly Cresap's** teleseminar discussion of the John Fowles novel *Daniel Martin*, sponsored by the Plexus Institute. The first of five phone-bridge discussions is set for Monday, November 10 at 8:30PM. Discussions will continue on alternate Monday evenings through January. Click on the "Complexity group" thread at this site for more details.

One of **Melanie Faith's** students wrote to explain how her cover letter and personal statement (written and edited in Melanie's class) helped her secure a job: "A doctor I work with had

offered to write a recommendation letter for me. I gave him my personal statement, resume [and cover letter]. And he was very impressed with the way that I handed it to him, with everything together and a cover letter on top. After going through it he said that of all the students he'd worked with, my statement was one of the few he considered to be well written such that he actually learned something about me as a person. He seemed to be very impressed, and all of this just reminded me of you and how your class actually helped me in putting all of those materials together! I am very happy that I came away with pieces that I could, and did, actually use in real life."

**Monica Jacobe's** reading series, *A Space Inside*, features several local and regional writers this fall and winter. On Wednesday, November 19, poets Brandel France de Bravo and Sandra Beasley will share their work; in December, the series will feature fiction writer David Taylor. *A Space Inside* provides a space where developing DC-based writers can be heard at Riverby Books at 417 East Capitol Street, SE in Washington. For more information, please call (202) 543-4342

**Robert Levine** was interviewed by the *Diamondback* about his comparison of the racial (or post-racial) views of Frederick Douglass and Barack Obama on November 12th.

You can still catch **Reiner Prochaska** performing the role of Dr. Rank in a new translation of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* at the Maryland Ensemble Theatre from October 24 through November 22. The script, translated by Norwegian actress and Ibsen scholar Vibeke Havre, sets the events in the Helmer Household during Christmas 2007 somewhere in the United States. For more information visit [www.marylandensemble.org](http://www.marylandensemble.org) or call the box office at (301) 694-4744.

## HISTORY of the ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

*As we approach the 150th anniversary of Maryland English next year, Bywords will celebrate our long legacy and the important role of the department in the university.*

In 1885, J.A. Chambliss, A.M., was appointed the second Chair of English, History, and Philosophy. The department also hired a second professor, B.J. Wilson, to teach rhetoric. Chambliss committed a new mission statement on the philosophy of the department to the catalog: "It is intended that graduates of the college, whatever else they have learned or failed to learn, shall be able to use their mother tongue, orally and in writing, with correctness, ease, and force... [during the course of study, students will gain] a useful acquaintance with the history of the language and the treasures of its literature." Course sequences are described as involving a "persistent drill in analysis of sentences, in word-building and derivation, and in the elements of style... followed by a historical and critical study of literature." The 1885 catalog notes that at this time the library contains an "impressive" collection of 2000 volumes and 13 periodical subscriptions.

## STUDENT NEWS

**Andy Black** (PhD) and **Janet Hearn** (MA) presented papers at the Milton 400 Conference at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire, held November 7-8. Janet presented a paper entitled “‘Harsh, and of Dissonant Mood’: Milton’s Discordant Music in *Samson Agonistes*.” Andy’s paper is entitled “‘Shameful Garrulity’: A Gorgianic Reading of *Samson Agonistes*.”

**Heather Brown** and **Heidi Scott**, both doctoral students, were awarded 2008-09 CTE-Lilly Graduate Teaching Fellowships. Only eight fellowships were awarded this year out of a pool of 25 applicants. Heather and Heidi will meet with other fellows during the year to discuss pedagogical and educational issues at Maryland.

**Tim Crowley**, a doctoral student, has been awarded an ARHU Graduate Student Travel Award. This award will help Tim defray expenses related to his participation at the Renaissance Society of America conference in Los Angeles in the spring.

**Daniel DiGuardi**, **Rebecca Lush**, and **T.J. Moretti** all have had articles recently accepted for publication. A full article on their recent work is available [here](#).

First-year undergraduate **Megan Hiltz** is the newest assistant in the Professional Writing Program office. She plans to pursue journalism as a major, and her extracurricular interests include pharmacy work and fire prevention. Megan’s hours are Monday-Thursday, 10:00-12:30PM. Be sure to stop by and say hello.

**Natalie Phillips** presented a paper at the North American Victorian Studies Association conference at Yale University on November 15th. Her paper, for a panel on “Politics of Poetic Form,” was entitled “Selective Nationalism in an Era of Empire: Italy, India, Barrett Browning.”

*Visit [www.english.umd.edu](http://www.english.umd.edu) for more news updates and upcoming events!*