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Fall 2017

### Syntax, Newsletter of the Suffolk University English Department, Issue 1, 2017

English Department

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# Syntax

Newsletter of the  
Suffolk University  
English Department

Issue 1 Fall 2017



Pulitzer Prize-Winning Poet **Yusef Komunyakaa** reads at the Suffolk Poetry Center during January's Writers Residency events, including a reading, interview, audience Q&A, writers' roundtable, and academic discussion of W.E.B DuBois's "Sorrow Songs" and its relation to African American poetry. Poet **Jane Hirshfield** will come to Suffolk for next year's event on Feb. 7.

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## Welcome new Writing Director, writing faculty

### *Rich Miller steps down as Writing Director after 16 years*

Rich Miller has stepped down as Director of Composition after 16 years. During that time, he hired more than 125 part-time teachers to teach First Year Writing Courses, and offered more than 160 writing teacher workshops. In celebration this summer, he bought his tenth guitar, a butterscotch Fender Telecaster he's named "The Director" in honor of stepping down from the role.

Taking his place is Pamela Saunders, who joined us this year along with three new full-time instructors (listed at right).

Saunders earned degrees in English and Music Performance (BA, University of Washington), and English/ Writing Studies (MA/PhD, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and brings experience with Writing Centers and Writing Program Administration.

Two things, she said, are major advantages this program already has. The first is the two-course sequence of First

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**Nicholas Frangipane** completed his Ph.D. at the University at Buffalo in June 2016, writing a dissertation on shifting conceptions of truth in 20th century and contemporary literature. He's taught writing classes at Boston College, the University at Buffalo, Lasell College and Wentworth Institute of Technology.

**Katherine Horn** has a PhD and MA from Tufts University. She's been teaching since 1994. Before joining Suffolk, she taught at Framingham State University, Tufts, and Illinois State University.

**Jon D. Lee** has a PhD in Folklore from Memorial University of Newfoundland, and an MFA in Poetry from Lesley University. He is the author of three books, including *An Epidemic of Rumors: How Stories Shape Our Perceptions of Disease*, and *These Around Us*. His latest book of poems—*IN/DESIDERATO*—recently came in as a semifinalist for The Washington Prize. He is entering his 19th year of teaching, including ten years teaching part time at Suffolk.

# Events Calendar

## Department Meetings

Poetry Center 12:15-1:30 p.m.  
Tuesdays: October 17,  
November 14, December 5

## UCC Meetings

Tuesday, September 26; Tuesday,  
October 31; Thursday, December 7

## EPC Meetings

Thursdays: Sept. 21, Oct. 12, Nov.  
2, Nov. 16, Nov. 30; Wed., Dec.  
13 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

October 4: Poetry Center **Poetry  
Reading** Wendy Drexler, Holly  
Guran, and Susan Donnelly. Free  
to public. 7 p.m.

October 9: Suffolk Holiday  
(University Closed)

October 10: "Suffolk Monday"  
(Monday Classes Held)

October 12-15: Family Weekend

October 18: **Story Slam** at the  
Modern Theatre hosted by Norah  
Dooley. Doors at 6:30, show at 7  
p.m. Free for Suffolk Students, \$5  
general admission.

October 31: **Film Screening** of *9  
Man*/Nov. 2: **Discussion** with *9  
Man* director Ursula Liang. Both  
events at 9:45-10:40 in 20  
Somerset room 414. Both are free  
and open to the public.

October 31: **English Department  
Open House**—12:15-1:30 p.m. in  
73 Tremont room 8060

Nov. 6: **David Ferry Reading**

Nov. 10: Veterans Day Observed  
(University Closed)

Nov. 22-24: Thanksgiving Break

Dec. 12: Last Day of Classes

Dec. 22: Final Grades Due 2 p.m.

Feb. 7 Poet Residency event in the  
Poetry Center with Jane Hirshfield  
(Time TBA)

## Letter from the chair

# Reflection, even if there was little rest

There are two components to training: working out and recovering. If you're logging miles for a marathon, trying to increase your vertical leap, or maxing out on the weight bench, your days off are almost as important as your high intensity days. English faculty know how to appreciate a metaphor, so you probably realize that we haven't been training for the Olympics. We've been tremendously active for a few years, and this year we took a rest to take stock of our accomplishments and plan for the future.

I won't bore you with details, but the dean's office makes sure every department at Suffolk has one of these rest-and-reflection periods every five years. We had a series of meetings, among ourselves and with administrators from inside and outside Suffolk, and we learned a great deal! We became closer and emerged more convinced than ever that we are growing in positive directions. Statistics support our positive feelings: the number of English majors and minors is rising, even as other departments experience declines. We've worked hard to expand course offerings in creative ways: new courses on Horror literature, *Mad Men*, literary publishing, and Jane Austen have proven highly popular. Our colleagues are planning more new courses in law and literature, literary London, digital humanities, and teaching English.

Our students had an impressive year, sometimes completely on their own. The honors thesis writers produced some spectacular work (one thesis won a college-wide award), another great issue of *Venture* was born, some landed enviable internships, and others earned gainful employment or acceptance to graduate school. We had cool events on campus to stimulate their minds: readings from poets (including the Pulitzer Prize-winning Yusef Komunyakaa) and prose writers, a lecture on the history of the book, and a collaboration with the nonprofit writing organization 826 Boston, to name a few.

This year was marked by growth and change. The spectacular Lauren Burch has stepped into the role of Administrative Coordinator as though it was created with her in mind. We hired four full-time writing instructors, Ashlie Liss, Ruth Prakasam, Jason Tucker, and Valerie Vancza, followed by three more in Fall 2017, Katherine Horn, Nick Frangipane, and Jon Lee, who's taught with us part-time for several years. After sixteen years as College Writing Director, Rich Miller decided to hand the reins over to a new colleague (welcome Pam Saunders) so he can pursue different projects in teaching and research.

In literature, Hannah Hudson joined our ranks last fall and hit the ground running, both in scholarship and teaching, based on her specialty in 18th and 19th century British lit. She and several other colleagues represented us well at national and international conferences from South Carolina, to Canada, to Iceland.

I guess the metaphor fell apart a little there: as you can tell, we really didn't pause to recover this year. We are as busy as ever, but it was nice to reflect a bit on where we've been and where we're going. I'm very pleased!

# What's new with this newsletter

Welcome to the first issue of the new Suffolk English Department Newsletter. It builds on the previous series Stu Millner produced for many years. We're calling this one *Syntax* because it shows something about how we arrange ourselves, how arrangements make meaning, and how all the parts are crucial to those meanings and their making. We want to hear everything everyone does between issues: full time or part time, big things or little things. We're making room for a few bigger stories, too. We want every issue to share ideas and innovations in teaching, assignments, and course design, as well as in your own research, creative work, and beyond. Tell us what you're doing that worked well. We'll publish during the first few weeks of every semester. Help us get ready for the spring issue. Send your news and newsletter story ideas to [jwtucker@suffolk.edu](mailto:jwtucker@suffolk.edu).

# English faculty reach milestone teaching anniversaries



Left: At a faculty recognition ceremony in May, Elif Armbruster, Bryan Trabold, and Peter Jeffreys celebrate ten years each at Suffolk.



Right: Stu Millner and Department Chair Quentin Miller hoist a cake in honor of Stu's 50th year of teaching at Suffolk.

## Teaching innovation

### *Mad Men* focus of department's first VPATH class

Peter Jeffreys did a lot of work that could have gone nowhere. But he did it anyway. Because that's the only way new, vital, interesting things happen. Because that's how the future gets made. And in trying to make it, he set what he's been told is a record. He worked for more than a year to create ENG 266 "*Mad Men*: Reading Visual Narratives." It filled enrollment with 25 on the wait list before the end of the first day of pre-registration.

Creating the class took special consideration, since it has become the English Department's first class to carry a VPATH designation (Visual and Performing Arts: Theory and History).

"I wanted to have this template established for others in the English faculty down the road," Jeffreys said. "We may have to learn some new approaches and some new theories, but we're well suited to reading visual texts in literary ways. It's a great opportunity for students to critically consider the things unique to visual storytelling, but to bridge those things so they can also come back to written texts and see that, in both, we talk about character analysis, imagery, motifs, and negotiate various schools of critical thought. I wanted this class to approach quality TV in a literary way, and to show that this was something that we could do."

#### WE'RE ALL STILL LEARNING TO READ

To become a VPATH class, a course has to address formal features of visual narrative. This has to be a dominant feature, rather than a small addition tacked onto something else. To get there, Jeffreys had to acknowledge how much there was to know in order to do the class well. He had to develop his own visual literacy, and immerse himself in a whole world of scholarship he'd never seriously entered before.

He needed to find course texts that were the right pitch to

be accessible to first-year students (another VPATH detail), but that also brought strong critical language and thought to the discussion. In the process, he added more than 20 books on visual literacy in general and analyses of the show *Mad Men* in particular to Suffolk's library collections. Those will support his own students, as well as faculty looking to do something similar.

Teaching a TV series as if it were a novel is a useful and compelling approach, but it does present some practical challenges and opportunities.

He required students to buy the first two seasons of *Mad Men* as primary texts. Doing it this way matters, because these include special features like episode recaps and discussions by the writers, which students use in their analyses, and as models for writing their own episode recaps.

#### FIELD TRIPS, TOO

The other required theoretical texts for the class offer introductory concepts in visual literacy, and provide context, allowing connections to events around Boston. The class will visit the MFA, which happens to have exhibits of some of the cultural manifestations that run throughout the show: "Summer of Love," is on display there now, along with work by Mark Rothko. They'll see Harvard Library's exhibit about the Kennedys.

"That's a wonderful thing about Boston," he said. "Opportunities like that pop up here all the time, and we can use them to connect what we do in class the broader world."

In the show, he said, we see how counter culture was co-opted by advertising, the rise of the white middle class in

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# PUBLICATIONS

## Elif Armbruster

An essay on space and place in Laura Ingalls Wilder and Willa Cather for an edited collection on Wilder.

## Wyatt Bonikowski

Short story: "Science Project" in *Atticus Review* online.

Short story: "Teenage Boy in Polaroids" *New World Writing*.

## Tom Connolly

Article: "'Re-righting' Finland's Winter War: Robert E. Sherwood's *There Shall Be No Night[s]*" in *The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*.

Article: "The Element of Risk in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*" in *The Ostrava Journal of English Philology*.

## Leslie Eckel

with Clare Frances Elliott edited and published *The Edinburgh Companion to Atlantic Literary Studies*, a collection of 27 original scholarly essays on literary networks across national boundaries, stories of mobility and migration, legacies of slavery, fluidity of gender and sexuality, social reform and political revolution, and ecological awareness that shaped the Atlantic world as a unique cultural system. It features Eckel's essay "Crosscurrents of Black Utopianism: Martin Delaney's and Frederick Douglass's Countercultural Atlantic."

## Nicholas Frangipane

"Two Sides to the Story: Multiple Versions and Post-Postmodernist Epistemology." *Poetics Today* (2017) 38(3).

## Hannah Hudson

Article: "Byronic Advertising: Celebrity Romantic Biography, and the *London Magazine*" in *The European Romantic Review* 27:6, 2016, pp. 747-767.

[dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2016.1235823](https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2016.1235823)

Introduction to *Count Roderic's Castle* (Minerva Press, 1794). Valancourt Books, 2017. This is the introduction to the new edition of the 1794 gothic novel *Count Roderic's Castle*, which was originally published by the Minerva Press and hadn't been in print for more than 200 years before this edition came out in January. She also spent this summer working on a book project about the Minerva Press, with the support of a summer research stipend.

## Peter Jeffreys

He is gathering essay proposals for the forthcoming MLA volume *Approaches to Teaching the Work of C.P. Cavafy* which he is co-editing, as well as overseeing the Greek translation of his book *Reframing Decadence: C. P. Cavafy's Imaginary Portraits* which will be published by Crete University Press in 2018.

Poem: "Seraph" in *Paradise in Limbo Literary Arts Magazine*.

Poem: "Arrangement in Black and Gray: After Whistler" in *Ergon: Greek-American Transnational Arts and Letters*. A Greek translation was published in the Greek newspaper *Ηχώ των Λαγκαδίων* and appears on the Greek Cultural Website *Άνθη της Πέτρας*.

<http://anthitispetras.gr/index.php/el/blog/item/man-eleni>

## George Kalogeris

"Resistance as a Form of Embrace," review of Peter Cole's new book of Selected Poems and Translations, *Hymns and Qualms*, for *Writing Matters* (Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers), October 2017. He's finishing his book of poems and translations, *Guide to Greece*, forthcoming from LSU press fall 2018, and working with the Athenian poet Maria Zervos, who is translating some of his poems into Greek for publication in Greek journals.

## Jon D. Lee

Poem: "Your Great-Grandfather." *Connecticut River Review*, 2017, pp. 44-45.

"Review of Diagnosing Folklore: Perspectives on Disability, Health and Trauma." *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 130, no. 516, Spring 2017, pp. 231-232.

Craft essay: "On the Motion and Meaning of Humor in Poetry." *The Writer's Chronicle*. Forthcoming, 2018.

## Fred Marchant

Poetry collection: *Said Not Said*, Graywolf Press 2017. This was his fifth book of poetry. It earned a starred review in *Publisher's Weekly*, and other very positive reviews in *Booklist*, *The Rumpus*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

## Quentin Miller

Short story: "The Body Painter," *Every Day Fiction*, May 2017.

Short stories: "Inside" and "Creation, Destruction" in *Microfiction: Monday Magazine: Best of 2015*.

Article: "South By Southeast: James Baldwin in Provence" in *Diasporas, Cultures of Mobilities, "Race"* (ed. Corrine DuBoin and Claudine Raynaud,) Presses Universitaires de la Méditerranée, 2016 (167-179).

Article: "Updike's 'Trust Me': Of Anthologies, Indifference, and Dollar Bills," in *The John Updike Review*, 4.2: spring 2016 (95-99).

Review essay: "Master of the Blues," *Times Literary Supplement*, June 2, 2017. This essay reviews Albert Murray's *Collected Essays and Memoirs*.

Essay: "Tipping Point: Since When Does Everybody Get a Tip?" *wbur.org* Feb. 27, 2017.

## Amy Monticello

Essay collection: *How to Euthanize a Horse*, won Arcadia Press Chapbook Prize in Nonfiction, forthcoming fall 2017. Regular columns (15 new) at *Role/Reboot* ranging in subject from parenting to financial well-being to women living in Trump's America to HBO's *Big Little Lies*. These were frequently syndicated at *The Establishment*, *Everyday Feminism*, *Ravishly*, and *Alternet*. Archive: [www.rolereboot.org/author/amonticello](http://www.rolereboot.org/author/amonticello)

Essay: "Raising Sensitive Children to Future Leaders." *Quiet Revolution*. Feb. 2017. [www.quietrev.com/raising-sensitive-children-to-be-future-leaders/](http://www.quietrev.com/raising-sensitive-children-to-be-future-leaders/)

Craft article: "On the Ethics of Writing About Your Children." Co-written with Michelle Herman, Heather Kirn Lanier, and

Joe Oestreich. *Creative Nonfiction*. Issue 60. Syndicated at *Literary Hub*. [www.lithub.com/on-the-ethics-of-writing-about-your-children/](http://www.lithub.com/on-the-ethics-of-writing-about-your-children/)  
Essay: "Spinning." *Roar: Literature and Revolution by Feminist People*. March 2017.  
[www.roarfeminist.org/2017/03/07/spinning/](http://www.roarfeminist.org/2017/03/07/spinning/)

### Bryan Trabold

Signed book contract with the University of Pittsburgh Press to publish his book on opposition journalists in apartheid South Africa.

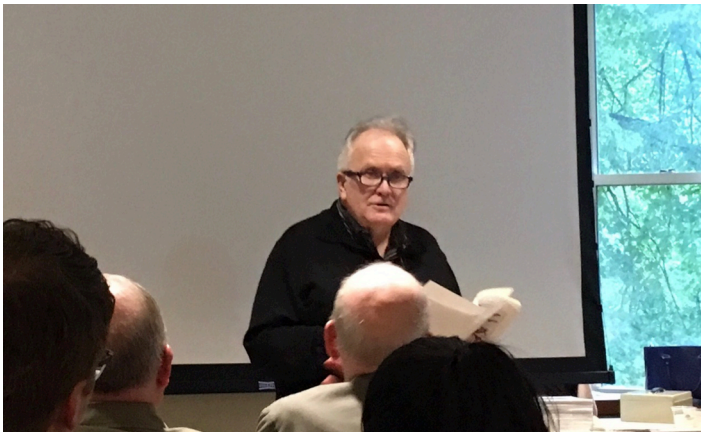
Article forthcoming in *African Journalism on the Weekly Mail*, an anti-apartheid newspaper.

### Da Zheng

Article: "Shih-I Hsiung on the Air: A Chinese Pioneer at the BBC During World War II" in *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*.

Article: "Lady Precious Stream Returns Home" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society China*.

## Marchant Day in Boston



Fred Marchant reads his new book of poetry *Said Not Said* on Wednesday, May 17, 2017 in the Poetry Center. Last December, on Christmas Eve, Marchant got the distinct honor—even for him—of having his 70th birthday proclaimed Fred Marchant Day in the City of Boston. As Greg Gatlan reported in his *Suffolk News* article "Ode to a Poet on His Birthday," "During a brief campus ceremony... Tom Johnston of the Mayor's Office of Arts and Culture and Boston Poet Laureate Danielle Legros Georges read the proclamation signed by the mayor." Read it in full here: <http://www.suffolk.edu/news/69768.php#.WbmBT9OGORs>  
Marchant is a professor emeritus. He retired in 2013, having taught in Suffolk's English Department for more than 31 years. He's the founding director of Suffolk's Poetry Center, which is still a vital, well-used, and well-loved venue for academic and literary events and readings. Marchant continues to be very active, not just in publishing, but as a connector of people and institutions across the world of poetry and creative writing.

## Cerrone's *The Hunger Saint* weaves research and narrative, gets political, gets good reviews

It starts like this: "Sicily, 1948. The Miners draped a soiled loincloth over the face of old Misciù and continued to work. No one was allowed to move the body until the shift's end."

Olivia Kate Cerrone's novella *The Hunger Saint* is the result of more than five years of historical research, including oral histories conducted among surviving sulfur miners still living in Valguarnera Caropepe of Enna, Sicily in Italy.

It takes on child labor, indentured servitude, and immigration in Italy in the years following World War II. As with all historical fiction, there's a focus on the past, but through a clear-eyed awareness of the present. As reviewers have observed, the issues she raises are anything but safely distant history. They are with us, actively causing global suffering.

"For this reason," says a reviewer, "as well as its vivid prose and memorable characters, *The Hunger Saint* is a valuable read. You can see more of that review at:

<https://historicalnovelsociety.org/reviews/the-hunger-saint/>

There's also this review at *Kirkus*:

<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/olivia-kate-cerrone/hunger-saint/>

Also check out her interviews at *The Rumpus*:

<http://therumpus.net/2017/08/the-rumpus-interview-with-olivia-kate-cerrone/>

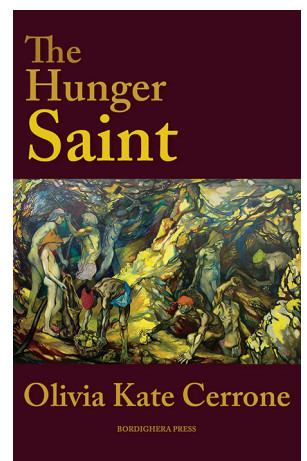
And this interview in the *San Francisco Book Review*:

<https://sanfranciscobookreview.com/interview-olivia-kate-cerrone-author-hunger-saint/>

See also this interview she did with **Fred Marchant** for *The Brooklyn Rail* about his book *Said Not Said*:

<http://brooklynrail.org/2017/04/books/Fostering-A-More-Socially-Conscious-Narrative-Olivia-Kate-Cerrone-with->

*The Hunger Saint* draws from years of historical research and oral histories of former miners still living in Sicily. It follows Ntoni, a twelve-year-old boy forced to labor in Sicily's sulfur mines to support his family after his father's death. Faced with life-threatening working conditions, Ntoni must choose between escaping the mines and abandoning his family.



# Creative Writing Students tutor at 826 Boston through service learning/CI class

Wyatt Bonikowski already knew about 826 Valencia—the writing and literacy nonprofit focused on serving typically underserved young people ages 6-18. He moved to Boston around the same time the organization opened its local offices, called [826 Boston](#).

He'd always thought he'd like to work with them from his position as a college professor, but he couldn't figure out a way to make it work with the existing courses he taught. Then, Suffolk's Creativity and Innovation (CI) course model emerged and presented the right opportunity.

"I called my class 'Creative Writing & Literacy,'" he said, "which matched 826's core mission to enable young people to develop literacy and develop their own voices through creative writing and tutoring. It made me think how my students could develop their own voices by encouraging younger people to develop theirs. But I had to set it up in a way that served 826 and what they needed to do, and that was organic to what they did, rather than imposing something I came up with on my own that wasn't going to fit."

A key part of making that fit was starting conversations with the leadership of 826 Boston very early in the planning. This was well outside anything he had done previously, but Suffolk's creative writing program had already met with people from 826 to discuss other things, and some Suffolk people had already served as volunteers. Those prior connections were useful in building this new partnership.

He applied for and won a course development grant, which allowed him to buy materials and books, and plan the course deliberately over the summer. Later, he got the course designated as a service-learning course, which meant, among other things, that students were required to do 15 hours of service outside class. He had to work with 826 Volunteer Manager Jennifer Javier to plan what that service might look like, how to get his students through the training that 826 requires of all its volunteers, and work out a final project they could all do as a class that would still be helpful to 826.

That final project had students design, propose, and lead workshops at 826 during Boston Public School's April break.

## FINDING PARTNERS

"There are so many places that Suffolk already has a partnership, or at least some relationship that we might not know about, he said. "I'd say that if you want to get started working with some outside organization like this, you could contact Suffolk's Center for Community Engagement."

## Literary Journal Practicum

### New class through *Salamander*

Having recently established a course in Literary Publishing, designed and piloted by Amy Monticello, Suffolk's English Department is offering a more specific course designed to give them both theoretical understandings of what it means to produce a literary journal, and hands-on practice in actually making it happen. *Salamander*, the nationally recognized and respected literary journal that's made its home in the Suffolk English Department for 13 years, has offered student internships each semester before shifting to this classroom model. The new way has some significant advantages.

"With the individual internship model, students did a lot of work and got a lot of good experience," said Jennifer Barber, the magazine's founder and editor, "but this way students will really be able to discuss submissions with each other all semester. It will be much more collaborative and give them experience making difficult editorial decisions as a team."

Interns have always spent a lot of time working through the slush pile, but now, together, students will read authors' cover letters and submissions, and learn the expected etiquette and communication that makes a strong (and a troublesome) relationship between writer and editor.

"I was pleased to see that there was a lot of interest in the course," Barber said. "There's a hunger students have to find ways to apply the English major to their future. Between this practicum class and Amy's literary publishing course, they can get a sense of how publishing works and how they might find their own place within it. I'm glad that we can build this bridge to a field that's out there."

There will be "Brass Tacks" lessons—with the help of *Salamander* Managing Editor Katie Sticca—on funding, submissions, how to solicit and find quality content. Other lessons will focus on cultivating an editorial ethos for the journal, considerations of genre, anthologies and awards, the larger ecosystem of literary publishing and where literary journals fit into it. Students will study other journals, researching how all these things at *Salamander* bear out elsewhere. They'll also pick an individual writer and track their publishing history across the various journals they've contributed to throughout their careers.

Two recent English major alumni have gone on to found their own literary journals. Dan Carey started *Paradise in Limbo*, and Corey Howard founded *Hollow*.

The next issue of *Salamander* (cover shown at right) is due out in December. The other issue of the year is published each June. Visit <http://salamandermag.org/>.



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## Sigma Tau Delta taps new members



In March, 2017, our Eta Upsilon Chapter of the Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society inducted new members for their outstanding academic achievements: Kendra Asaph, Remy Ross Fujioka, Heather Marshall, Ariana Messana, Sofia Nicole Ohryniewicz, Nancy Pocoli, Julia Potapoff, Anna Pravdica, Kristen Sallaberry, Kayla Shearns, and Mena Vollano. Faculty sponsor Dr. Elif Armbruster hosted the initiation ceremony in the Poetry Center, where Dr. Anthony Merzlak gave a speech he called "What I've Learned After 40 Years at Suffolk."

## Honors students present thesis research and creative projects



The English Department congratulates 2017's Honors Thesis writers on their absolutely stellar presentations! From left, Brenna Lopes (advised by George Kalogeris), Emma Hughen (advised by Leslie Eckel, Honors Coordinator), Gail Coogan (advised by Amy Monticello), Angelika Pellegrino (advised by Lisa Celovsky), and Noah Ford (advised by Bryan Trabold). Emma Hughen's thesis went on to be named a finalist for the National Collegiate Honors Council Portz Scholar Prize. We don't have a photo, but on Dec. 16, 2016 two other students also gave excellent presentations of their own honors theses: Jessica Hardin (advised by Kenneth Greenberg and Wyatt Bonikowski) and Emma Tarquinio (advised by Thomas Connolly).

## Teaching news

*We're really interested in news about teaching. Send updates on your bright ideas to [jwtucker@suffolk.edu](mailto:jwtucker@suffolk.edu).*

**Elif Armbruster** taught five courses ranging from Seminar for Freshmen on "Woman Warriors" to an American Literature seminar open to all undergrads. An essay on space and place in Laura Ingalls Wilder and Willa Cather for an edited collection on Wilder became the basis for a new course on "Women Writing the American West," running Fall 2017. Dismayed by Trump's reference to Hillary Clinton as a "nasty woman" during the campaign season, Elif was inspired to consider "nasty women" as a subject of study, which led to the creation of another new course on "Witches and Wizards in American Literature," which is running as a Seminar for Freshmen in Fall 2017.

**Tom Connolly** offered a new twist in his spring screenwriting course. Students read Matthew Lewis's infamous gothic novel *The Monk* and worked in groups to create scripts for both feature film and mini-series versions.

**Hannah Hudson** taught several new classes last year, including the seminar "Jane Austen: Page, Stage, and Screen," which examined Austen's novels and their contemporary adaptations, from *Clueless* to *Eligible*.

**Fred Marchant** continues to teach poetry workshops in the Boston area and beyond. He teaches regularly in the Colrain Poetry Workshops in Vermont and on the West Coast. He also teaches once a year in the Veterans Writing Group in the San Francisco Bay Area, a group founded and still led by Maxine Hong Kingston. He annually teaches in workshops sponsored by the Joiner Institute, the Fine Arts Work Center, and the Hudson Valley Writers' Center.

**Amy Monticello** piloted Literary Publishing, a new course in the English Department (ENG 376) in Spring 2017. Students learned about the economics driving publishing trends in creative writing, the significance of literary journals, and how to market small press books using book reviews, author interviews, and book trailers, which students made for selected authors using iMovie.

**Bryan Trabold** developed a new course last year "The Literature of War."



# Steal This Lesson

What we're stealing: **Literary Imitation Assignments**  
Whom we're stealing from: **Hannah Hudson**

Hannah Hudson still does close reading and other traditional literature class assignments. But to get her students to engage with the same material in different ways, she developed this literature imitation assignment, which she continually modifies and uses in different ways. This is one baseline form:

1. Students choose 20 lines of a poem and carefully study the formal qualities: rhyme, meter, tone, metaphor, etc.
2. Students imitate those 20 lines, replicating all of the formal qualities carefully. They have complete latitude in content, but you should be able to tell the connection between the content of the imitation and that of the original. Sequels, response poems, and role reversals are common strategies.
3. Students then write a 3-4 page paper explaining their own goals and methods, and analyzing the original poem.

"I'm open to anything as long as I can see some connection between the two," Hudson said. "I do make it clear that I'm not expecting them to write the world's best poem. It's not about that. It's about understanding the poem and the tools of poetry that you're trying to analyze. So students definitely do come away with a different understanding of the constraints of specific poetic forms through trying to work within them."

Sometimes, it's true, there's not a lot of connection between the imitation and their analysis of the original poem. Students have different strengths, and Hudson routinely sees a student who writes a weak analysis also write a strong imitation poem, and vice versa. Whatever happens, they come away almost always saying that writing poetry wasn't as easy as they thought it would be.

"I'm trying to experiment with assignments where students feel like they're doing something other than just reporting or deferring to an established scholar's analysis. I'm really trying to get around that constant problem of students just trying to

give me what they think I want, and not claiming their own agency and their own voice in engaging with texts. This may be particularly important when we're looking at historical texts that can feel so far removed from them."

This, and other similar innovative assignments, have a lovely side effect of lessening plagiarism, since students have to do such unique work that isn't readily available from online essay mills, and since the instructor would typically see the student's process at work, and prioritize it over the product.

"It also keeps things fresh for me," she said. "When I can come in excited and engaged and just knowing we're going to do something new with this material from the 18th Century, it makes for a better environment for all of us, and it makes it easier to get the students through those parts of the class that, inevitably, won't be as much fun. Not everything can be fun."

The analytical and reflective component provides a place for students to narrate their struggles, but also engages them in a written analysis, keeping the focus on things more at home in a literature class than a creative writing class. Hudson has a whole repertoire of these assignments (like analyzing a historical news article as if they'd reproduce it in a literary anthology, which leads to questions about how that story was made, how its language might have meant something different in context, and how to reproduce it for a contemporary audience, including introductory and analytical prose). This kind of teaching usually means constantly developing new assignments. It also means deciding how to grade in a way that incentivizes the kinds of engagement you want without creating a big fear of punishment for mistakes along the way.

*You're going to see this column again. Every issue, we'll feature someone's teaching-thing that worked well, shows something interesting, or offers us something we can steal, modify, and use to our own purposes. Look at your lesson plans, your assignments, and the dark corners of your mind where you put things you really should have written down but didn't. You don't have to write something complete. Just email [jwtucker@suffolk.edu](mailto:jwtucker@suffolk.edu), and I'll come talk to you. Together, we can put it in a form that would make sense here.*

### VPATH continued from p. 3

America as a contemporary issue, and a way that it oddly and ironically provides a glimpse of the white supremacy on which it was built. It is also, he said, a “masterful piece of television narrative deserving of aesthetic appreciation,” and it asks us to feel nostalgia for that time, even if you never lived through it.

“So in a lot of ways, our traditional literary techniques are useful here,” he said. “But we’re talking about texts that you can’t read the same way you would a poem. You’re immersed in a whole reality that’s different. But this is literature too. The same charges made against visual media were levied against the novel throughout its history.”

The class is running now, and will run again in the spring.

The UCC committee puts out a call each September for proposals on VPATH classes. It’s a good time to start planning for next year. Jeffreys described the process as teaching the course a full year in advance, down to the writing prompts and a clear arc of the course from beginning to end.

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### WRITING PROGRAM continued from p. 1

Year Writing that all University students take. This aligns with our understanding that writing is a highly complex set of skills that take a tremendous amount of time to develop, but it also aligns with what current scholarship says on the subject.

“Having a two-course sequence sends the message that we understand and respect how important writing is, and how much time you have to devote to developing writing skills. That’s considered a best practice, however many universities actually do it that way,” Saunders said. “And it’s an approach that follows directly from my field’s understanding of how students learn to write. We know that writing students need more than fifteen weeks. And the more time they spend deliberately focused on developing their writing, it increases the likelihood that they’ll transfer those writing skills to their work in other disciplines.”

The other thing she observed as a strength of our program is the fact that all faculty, including tenure and tenure-line faculty teach First Year Writing classes.

“I want us all to stay in touch with our own processes, and teach our students from that place,” she said. “The faculty in the English Department have spent their careers writing and thinking about writing. They’ve developed their own processes, and they know from experience that a writing process doesn’t usually look as linear and formulaic as writing textbooks can make it seem.”

During a late-summer writing instructors’ meeting, Saunders led the room in an exercise where each teacher drew their own writing process with pictures. The results were funny and doodly, for the most part, but they also do something useful. They let us all see each other’s messy

Pitching a new class isn’t easy, even if we have bureaucratic pathways established to invite us to do it. Avenues like the Creativity and Innovation (CI) courses still require meticulous attention to curricular requirements, and a carefully planned class, rationale, assignments, and even daily activities. It’s a tremendous amount of work; it takes you away from your own research, creative work, service, other teaching, and life. And you might do all that work only to have the class go nowhere. It’s a risk, and one that takes a lot of effort. But like our students with the risks we encourage them to take, and all the labors we promise them will make them wiser, better, more capable, more in possession of themselves, more empowered to navigate the world and invent better ways of living in it, we should acknowledge this risk and this work, and we should do it anyway.

And there’s another risk when we stretch from the center of our content areas toward the unfamiliar edges: we risk becoming different. We risk the discomfort of change. Call it growth. Call it a well-earned. Call it something to celebrate.

processes, and they let us remind ourselves of how our process actually looks, even the embarrassing and frustrating parts.

It was an exercise that one of her teachers had her class do in grad school. Everybody made fun of it at first. But then the logic became clear. To stay in touch with the real writing processes you go through helps you focus on process for your students. It also helps us remember to present students with a wide array of tools and possibilities, but to encourage students to try things out and empower them to develop writing processes of their own, just as we did as faculty. It’s also appropriately humbling to stay in touch with all the ways our own writing processes work, and all the ways they don’t.

### A CHOICE OF TEXTBOOKS

In that spirit of moving away from more prescriptive modes of writing pedagogy, Saunders is making one significant change to the curriculum: rather than assigning one textbook for all sections of First Year Writing to use, she and the recently-formed Writing Committee will curate a short list of options instructors may choose from.

“I’m so indebted to the work Rich did to develop this program,” she said. “And I want to keep building on that where I can. I want the writing program to be a space where innovative things happen. To give textbook options is an invitation for faculty to pair their expertise with texts that are exciting and engaging because they explore different arenas for writing. They give you a vehicle and support for your innovative idea, and they match who our students are.”

In that spirit: come share ideas at the writing instructor workshops throughout the year. Watch your email for details.

# Presentations, Conferences, Readings, Talks, Awards, Honors

**Elif Armbruster** presented a paper at the American Culture/Popular Culture Association ("Why Reading Laura Ingalls Wilder is Important Today"), the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States Association, and the American Literature Association in Boston, where she presented "Pioneering Girls: What Laura Ingalls Wilder Can Teach Us." Her topics across these presentations included late 19th/early 20th Century American authors Willa Cather, Nella Larsen, and Laura Ingalls Wilder. She also attended the Nineteenth Century Studies Association (NCSA) conference in Charleston, SC, and chaired a panel on Children's literature. Elif was elected Vice President of the NCSA, on whose board she has served since 2014.

**Jennifer Barber** received a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for the summer of 2017 residency period, and will be worked on a new poetry collection there. This past academic year, she did readings from her 2016 collection *Works on Paper* at the Cambridge Public Library, Simon's Rock College in Great Barrington, MA, Trident Bookseller in Boston, for the Café Muse series in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere. She read for "Mediterranean Night" in the Suffolk Poetry Center. She was a participant with George Kalogeris, David Ferry, Fred Marchant, and Suffolk student Nehizena Young-Edo on a panel about ekphrastic poetry at the Mass Poetry Festival in Salem, MA. She also participated in the book fair at this year's AWP Conference in Washington, D.C. and at the Boston Book Festival.

**Olivia Kate Cerrone** presented a paper "The Unraveling of America: Don DeLillo in an Age of Post-Truth, Violence and the Media" in a conference called "The Body Artist: A Conference on Don DeLillo," which was held at the NEW School in New York City in April. She read from her new book *The Hunger Saint* as the featured reader at "Mediterranean Night" in the Suffolk Poetry Center.

**Tom Connolly** travelled to the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs in February for a weekend of lectures, informal talks, and interviews about Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape." This was part of the Prologue series presented by TheatreWorks, the resident theatre company there. In April, he gave another talk on "The Hairy Ape" in Charleston, SC.

**Leslie Eckel** is a featured scholar in a forthcoming documentary film about the transcendentalist Margaret Fuller.

**Hannah Hudson** presented the paper "Women and Biography in Eighteenth-Century Magazines," for the roundtable, "Women's Periodicals and Print Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century," at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) annual meeting in Minneapolis, MN in March 2017. This focused on early magazine biographies of famous women. Spoiler: women didn't get profiled nearly as frequently as men did.

**Peter Jeffreys** delivered a paper "Fraternal Letters: Exploring C.P. Cavafy's Intimate Exchanges" at the Athens Institute for Education and Research Annual International Conference on Literature (June 5-8). He also conducted extensive research at the Cavafy Archive (Onassis Foundation, Athens) for his current work in progress, a literary biography of the Alexandrian poet.

**George Kalogeris** read for "Mediterranean Night" in the Suffolk Poetry Center.

**Gregory Lawless** read with fellow Suffolk English Faculty Amy Monticello and Ben Tanaka in Nov. 2016 at the English Department Faculty Reading with Professors and Writers.

**Jon D. Lee** Graduated from Lesley University with an MFA in Poetry in January 2017.

**Fred Marchant's** 70th birthday was declared "Fred Marchant Day in the City of Boston" by mayor Martin Walsh in a ceremony last December. He read for "Mediterranean Night" in the Suffolk Poetry Center, and continues to give readings both locally and beyond, including at the Blacksmith House in Cambridge, MA; the Hudson Valley Writers' Center in Sleepy Hollow, NY; and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, MA. He gave a launch reading for his new book *Said Not Said* at the Suffolk Poetry Center. Along with his Suffolk poetry colleagues Jennifer Barber, George Kalogeris, David Ferry, and student-writer Nehizena Young-Edo, he offered a combined reading and discussion of ekphrastic poetry—poems that respond to visual art—at the 2017 Mass Poetry Festival. Marchant continues to work with members of the Suffolk English Department's Creative Writing Program to sponsor programs at the Suffolk Poetry Center. In January, Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa was in residence for two days, giving a reading, and participating in round-table discussions.

CONTINUED ON P. 11

**Quentin Miller** received the Dean's Award for Excellence in Scholarship last spring. He presented on a roundtable panel discussing John Updike's Rabbit Tetralogy in the Trump era. He delivered the paper "Rabbit Runs On: Stuttering as Continuity and Transition in the Rabbit Novels" at the fourth biennial John Updike Society conference in Columbia, S.C. where he met our former colleague, Wang Yue (AKA Susan). He was an invited speaker at the Communities in Conversations Symposium at Rhodes College in Memphis, which focused on the work and legacy of James Baldwin. He delivered the keynote speech at the Venture launch party in April. He was named to the editorial board of *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* as a consulting editor. He also gave a post-film screening talk at the Coolidge Corner Cinema on the Raoul Peck film *I Am Not Your Negro* in February. There's a pretty well-produced YouTube video of it: <https://youtu.be/ho-7hB4SvTM>

**Amy Monticello** presented at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Washington, D.C. on the difficulties of writing minor characters in nonfiction. She traveled to Reykjavik, Iceland in June to present at the NonfictionNow Conference on issues of gender in publishing raised by Karl Ove Knausgaard's *My Struggle*. She traveled to Cortland, NY to give a reading from her memoir-in-progress at SUNY Cortland as part of their Distinguished Voices in Literature reading series. She read with fellow Suffolk English Faculty Gregory Lawless and Ben Tanaka in Nov. 2016 at the English Department Faculty Reading with Professors and Writers.

**Ben Tanaka** read with fellow Suffolk English Faculty Gregory Lawless and Amy Monticello in Nov. 2016 at the English Department Faculty Reading with Professors and Writers.

**Rita Watson** read for "Mediterranean Night" in the Suffolk Poetry Center. She also writes the regular column "[With Love and Gratitude](#)" for *PsychologyToday.com*.

**Da Zheng** gave presentations on Shih-I Hsiung at conferences in Canada and Boston College. In December 2016, he was invited to speak about Chiang Yee and Boston at Bedford Lyceum in Massachusetts.

### ***Salamander***

Two stories from recent issues of *Salamander* will appear in the *O. Henry Prize Stories 2017*, and a third story, from *Salamander's* Winter 2016 issue, was selected for *Best American Short Stories 2017*.

### **LAST YEAR'S GUEST LIST**

We had a superb reading and lecture series in the past year. The **Mandl Lecture** in April, featuring Professor **Joseph Black** from UMass Amherst was one of the best ever, looking at the material history of books and reading.

The Poetry Center reading series brought excellent readings from **David Ferry**, **Jon Loomis**, **Alan Shapiro**, **Zoe Zolbrod**, and **Paul Tremblay**, as well as the brief but engaging residency by **Yusef Komunyakaa**. Thanks to all those who worked hard to make these readings possible, and to take good, hospitable care of our guests during their visits with us. Keep watching for announcements for this year's guest readers and lecturers!

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### **THE INTERTEXTUALS: A STUDENT LITERARY SOCIETY**

This student-led group holds discussions and events on various literary topics for both writers and readers. For details, contact President Sami Abou-Mayaleh at [saboumayaleh@su.suffolk.edu](mailto:saboumayaleh@su.suffolk.edu) or VP Nathan Espinal at [nespinal2@su.suffolk.edu](mailto:nespinal2@su.suffolk.edu).

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### **VENTURE STARTS 50TH YEAR, OPEN FOR SUBMISSIONS**

*Venture*, Suffolk's student-run literary journal, is open for submissions at [submitttoventure@gmail.com](mailto:submitttoventure@gmail.com). Guidelines at [SU Connects](#). Find their Facebook page at [Suffolk's Venture Literary/Arts Magazine '17/'18](#). *Venture* will hold a literary [open mic](#) 5-7 p.m. on Sept. 29 in Sawyer Library themed "New Beginnings." You can read your own work or that of other authors. **Free pizza**; first come first served.

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SERVICE LEARNING continued from p. 6

Dennis Harkins is the director of CCE, which is involved with Service-Learning courses in working with community partners and Suffolk instructors. That's a good place to start.

Students had to do significant reading before class, but also to study lesser-known literacy narratives, and to write their own. This helped them to see how their own lifelong literacy journeys could be very different from those of the students they'd serve at 826 as volunteers, and to teach accordingly.

"In writing their own literacy narratives, students reflected on the opportunities they had and the support they received from parents and teachers that enabled them to become the readers and writers they now are," Bonikowski said. "I wanted them to recognize the value of a supportive environment for developing the voices of the students who come to 826

Boston, most of whom have not had the same opportunities."

While most of his students were inexperienced working with children, or with service or volunteering at all, as they began to build personal relationships with their own students, they came to glimpse some of the same things that keep us teaching, that keep us convinced what an important thing it is for reasons and for people far, far beyond ourselves. Several of those students said they wanted to continue volunteering at 826 after the class ended. Since they already did the cumbersome work of training and getting oriented through the class, continuing the same work seemed relatively easy.

See also Greg Gatlin's "Writing a Recipe for Creativity" in *Suffolk News* [suffolk.edu/news/72304.php#.WcK\\_ndOGORs](http://suffolk.edu/news/72304.php#.WcK_ndOGORs)



# From three faculty, on their pending retirements

Even though the big retirement party won't happen until the spring semester, we've asked for a few early parting words from three long-time faculty who'll be retiring from the Suffolk English Department after this year. Keep an eye out for details as the party plan comes together!

Meanwhile, take a minute to congratulate each of them on their long careers, chat with them about all the changes they've witnessed, and consider the incalculable influence they've surely had on so many students, faculty, and others across the decades.

## Anthony Merzlak — 47 years of service

I've put in 47 years. I was chair from '97-'13, and especially enjoyed being part of building the next generation of Suffolk English. Teaching feelings are hard to summarize. I guess the opportunity, over so many years and generations of Suffolk students, to profess and share my love for Shakespeare and the Romantics says it as best I can. I and my partner, Pat Geran (Suffolk *summa* '85) visited a galaxy of new places on a June Baltic cruise. I'm really glad that Stu, Gerry, and I are going out together!

—Tony

## Stuart Millner — 50 years of service

I wish to thank everyone I've ever met at Suffolk, from students, to faculty, to administrative professionals, right up the line! I can easily sum up my experience in one phrase: "Fifty Years of Joy!"

—Stu

## Gerald Richman — 36 years of service

At the end of spring semester 2018, I plan to retire after teaching at Suffolk for more than 36 years. It has been a great run, and I am grateful for the opportunity to learn from thousands of students and dozens of colleagues. While most of the courses I have taught have been in the English Department, I've also taught in the Seminar for Freshmen and Integrated Studies programs. I can't imagine a better career than getting paid to read and discuss the greatest works of English, American, and world literature.

Next summer, for the first time in more than forty years, my reading will not be directed to prepare for fall classes. I'll be on my own to read randomly—almost. I plan to continue working on three scholarly research projects:

*Annotated Bibliography of Works of Literature Set in Boston* will never be completed as long as new poems, plays, and stories are set in Boston, but you can view it in progress at [web.cas.suffolk.edu/richman/Boston/bosbib.htm](http://web.cas.suffolk.edu/richman/Boston/bosbib.htm).

"Restorative Justice and Chaucer's 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' is an article I started last summer and hope to finish quickly after retirement.

*The Suffolk University Companion to Beacon Hill* (a tentative title) is a comprehensive scholarly book-length account of the history, geography, literature, architecture, people, and institutions of Suffolk's Beacon Hill neighborhood from 1630 to the 21st century.

While I will miss teaching, I am looking forward to the freedom to devote myself to research and writing.

Thanks,  
Gerry



## Visiting Scholar studying Chinese American Autobiography

Chen Fan (Monica is her English name) is a visiting scholar invited by the English Department and CAS. She will participate in activities related to English Department, Asian Studies Program, and Rosenberg Institute. She will be here from Sept '17 to Aug. '18. She has no teaching assignments, but may audit some courses. We plan to ask her to give a talk sometime in spring 2018 on her own research and the research projects of her school in Shanghai. She is a PhD candidate of comparative literature and culture theory, and researcher in Life-writing Center at Shanghai Jiao Tong University. Fan's bachelor degree was on English education and then received master degree of English language and literature from Nanjing Normal University, China, and another one of English literary studies at Durham University, UK, respectively in 2011 and 2012. During this period, she studied women novelists in the eighteenth century and Virginia Woolf for different degrees. At present, her focus is autobiographical studies on letters of modern Chinese Americans. In these private texts, individual history is emphasized, and the living conditions, identity crisis, diaspora, and trauma of oversea Chinese can be observed.