CLAS is for everyone: making tutoring routine for all writers

English Instructor Jamie Bondar has joined CLAS and will oversee its writing tutoring and English Language workshops. Officially, he’s Program Manager in Student Academic Support Services, as well as a senior lecturer in the English Department. He’ll bring his experience in writing pedagogy to the support side, along with Bryan Trabold, who trains all student writing tutors in ENG 321 during their first two semesters of working with CLAS. If you’ve got strong student writers who might make good tutors, Bondar asks that you put them in touch.

Part of the philosophy Bondar will build from he says is well captured by Stephen North’s famous words, “The job of a writing tutor is to produce better writers, not better writing.” That means emphasizing process over product, and prioritize the students’ growth.

“It’s very important that faculty teach students to think of this as a fitness center, not an emergency room,” Bondar said. “We really need to change the mentality that the CLAS is a place you take your paper to be proofread a couple of hours before it’s due.”

The renowned poet Jane Hirshfield led a writer’s roundtable discussion and gave a poetry reading to a packed house at Suffolk on Feb. 7.

English faculty innovate in CI classes

Five English faculty are teaching Creativity and Innovation courses this semester. These are a chance for interdisciplinary work, and for testing out new things. The emphasis is on creative problem solving, making, trying, failing, failing again, and failing better (h/t Samuel Beckett). Calls for proposals for the full AY 18/19 just closed. Start planning now to submit your proposals in SP19 for the following academic year. For more, contact Pamela Lambrukos at pelambrukos@suffolk.edu or our own Amy Monticello (who serves on the CI program steering committee) at amonticello@suffolk.edu. Here’s what people are teaching this semester:

Wyatt Bonikowski: CI-149 (SL) Creative Writing and Literacy

This course partners with the non-profit literacy organization 826 Boston, which works with students aged 6-18 on reading and writing skills. Suffolk students will examine their own literacy narratives, volunteer with 826, and lead creative writing workshops with their students.
Events Calendar

Department meetings
Poetry Center 12:15-1:30 p.m.
April 3, April 24

UCC: March 8, April 5, May 1

EPC meetings : March 20, April 10, May 3 (10 a.m.-1 p.m.)

First Year Writing workshops
Poetry Center 12:15-1:30
March 1, March 27, April 19

FT Writing Committee meetings
Room 8060 12:15-1:30
February 22, March 20, April 26

March 1: Salamander 25th Anniversary Celebration/reading

March 6: Lecture by Monica Fan on autobiography in the letters of Modern Chinese Americans 3:05-4:20 in 73 Tremont 5050

March 8: Gerry Richman Lecture on the Literature of Beacon Hill 4:15-5:30 in the Poetry Center

March 11-17: Spring Break

March 26: English Dept. Awards & Sigma Tau Delta Ceremony

March 27: Reading — Laura Van Den Berg

March 29: Grad School Info Session

April 13: Honors Thesis Presentations

April 14: Reading featuring Marjorie Salvodon from Suffolk's World Languages & Cultural Studies Dept.

April 16: Patriot's Day (Suffolk Closed)

April 17: Suffolk Monday

May 2: Last Day of Classes
May 3: Reading Day
May 11: Final grades due by 2 p.m.
May 18: Senior Brunch

Leadership is all of us: Letter from the Chair

I'm writing this letter the Friday after Martin Luther King day. It's always a day of reflection for me. This year I found myself reflecting on leadership. I mourned the absence of a prominent national figure like King who spoke consistently, courageously, and sensibly throughout a turbulent era in history. I felt a sense of deep shame at the travesty of a leader who currently squats in our nation’s highest office. Last semester began just after a group of white supremacists descended on Charlottesville, Virginia to spew hatred by ghastly torchlight. A counter demonstrator was murdered for trying to speak out against this hatred. Our nation’s leader refused to denounce the neo-Nazis who orchestrated this appalling event, claiming there were “very fine people on both sides.” It's hard not to be dispirited. Even my acquaintances who are privately elated that their stock portfolios are rising cannot feel proud of the direction of our country. It's difficult to know which way to turn for solace. I don't necessarily consider myself a leader. A department chair is more of a herder of cats. I'm the guy who was daydreaming when someone asked for a volunteer to chair the department and didn’t realized that everyone else stepped back, making it look like I stepped forward. I'd suggest that I am a leader in the sense that everyone in our department is a leader. Teaching is the most important form of leadership we have. So this time, I simply want to acknowledge the efforts of all of the intellectual leaders who make up our department. I will single out three: At the end of this semester, Professors Tony Merzlak, Stu Millner, and Gerry Richman will enter into the glorious phase of career known as retirement. Collectively they have dedicated over 100 years of their careers to leading Suffolk students. If you’re feeling overwhelmed by the crisis of leadership in Washington, I invite you to redirect your attention to the efforts of English professors like them: true leaders in dark times. — Quentin Miller

What’s new in this newsletter

Welcome to the second issue of Syntax. We do so much in this department that, to keep up with even a portion of it, we’re publishing the newsletter every Spring and every Fall semester. And we still can’t fit in everything that’s happening. This issue could have easily been twice as long. Thanks to everyone for the warm response to the first issue of this new iteration, and to everyone who’s agreed to talk with us about what they’re up to. Apologies for the short space. (Sorry Gerry!) We’ll keep reporting the usual roundup of publications and accomplishments, and bigger stories on specific projects, course development, teaching strategies, and any other way we can think of to acknowledge and share the work that goes on around here, even if that work doesn’t fit neatly under any of those labels. Tell us about the innovation and the caretaking, the short term and the long term, the new directions and the essential work of maintenance you all do to make this department what it is. Help us get ready for the Fall issue. Send your news and story ideas to jwtucker@suffolk.edu.
Teaching Innovation

Students see the world they live in through literary witches and wizards

When Elif Armbruster first designed her Seminar for Freshmen course “Literary Witches & Wizards,” she didn’t anticipate such a clear division in the ways male authors wrote such characters, and the ways women wrote them. Poe, Hawthorne, Shakespeare, Arthur Miller, all worked magic and witchcraft into their writing, but reading across all these texts revealed a pattern of witches whose incomprehensible powers were dangers to be feared. In contrast, Edwidge Danticat and Zora Neale Hurston drew from Haitian Voodoo culture to cast such power differently.

“It showed that in other cultures, the supernatural, even raising the dead, isn’t necessarily a negative thing,” Armbruster said. “We noticed a lot of themes of subversive power and politics encoded into the texts we read,” see page 6

Students stop by the Bewitched statue during their tour of Salem, MA and its witchy attractions. From left: Reagan Bennett, Chianna Califore, Hayley Coveney, Victoria Williams, Melta Sully (behind the statue), Ruya Caglar, Prof. Elif Armbruster, and Rachel Lasaracina.

CI Courses

George Scala: CI-163-A Skepticism and Rationality
This course encourages skepticism by requiring evidence before accepting claims. Students are urged to identify the most-likely-to occur opportunities for deception in their major fields and draw from the tenets of classical rhetoric, logic, and the scientific method in order to develop safeguards. Frequent collaboration with classmates will allow for dynamic solutions to small and large-scale contemporary problems ranging from the personal (e.g. used car prices and avoiding fraud) to the universal (e.g. “fake news” and God).

Nick Frangipane: CI-159 Building a Better T
This course will study the MBTA and other mass transit systems in order to propose creative solutions to the T’s most pressing problems. We will read articles about the T and other transit systems, look at interactive maps that express different kinds of data, visit local stations, and apply critical thinking skills to those issues. Students will use writing and visual representations of their ideas, both alone and in group projects.

Amy Monticello: CI-H139-A Literary Citizenship
This course immerses students in literary culture through writing, editing, reviewing, and publicity. Students will practice creative writing, and learn how writers find publishing venues, how authors build platforms for their work, and how literature reaches the public. Industry professionals will speak to the class about the trends, and futures of literature and literary publishing. Student projects include book reviews, author interviews, social media campaigns, and literary events. We will also work as a class to launch a new digital literary journal at Suffolk.

Jason Tucker: CI-H161A Making History
Students in this course will analyze the rhetoric of some of Boston’s acts of public memory, and then make their own. We’ll examine the narratives currently dominating our telling of Boston’s history and current identity. Then we’ll work in groups to create digital archives that add to this city’s telling of its history and itself, emphasizing underrepresented perspectives, unequal relationships of power, and the things we leave out of the stories we prefer to tell.
Four Textbook Options for WRI 101 and 102

Beginning in Fall 2018, WRI 101 and WRI 102 instructors will choose from one of four textbooks. Each is available in both print and ebook formats, comparable in cost, includes a citation style guide, and addresses core rhetorical terms and concepts at the foundation of Suffolk’s First Year Writing Program.

Each is meant to pair with primary text readings of the instructor’s choice. Readings for WRI 101 should be non-fiction and in essay format. Readings for WRI 102 should be at least 75% non-fiction and in essay format. 102 instructors may require a single novel in addition to the selected essays. There is a general preference for essays that are available online.

For further support, contact any member of the Full-Time Writing Committee and visit our WRI 101 and 102 Super Shells on Blackboard.

The **Academic Writer** by Lisa Ede (4th Edition, Bedford/St. Martin’s) offers a good theoretical framework and specific instruction; it introduces the rhetorical triangle and logical fallacies, alongside specific guidance on hands-on elements like introductions and thesis statements. Sections labeled “note for multilingual writers” modify the content for this well-represented population. Numerous sample student papers provide useful models for assignments. All of this makes for an accessible and easy transition from our previous textbooks. Our Macmillan/Bedford St. Martin’s rep. will visit on March 22 from 11:30 am-1:30 pm.

**Everyone’s An Author** by Andrea Lunsford, et. al, (2nd Edition, Norton) is a student-centered and comprehensive text. Earlier chapters neatly fit WRI 101 with much time spent on invention, revision, thinking rhetorically, and entering the Burkan “conversation” collaboratively. Many models fill this textbook, including research-oriented material suitable for WRI 102 and sections on visual rhetoric and multi-modal writing. It includes a section on basic grammatical concepts and common errors, and offers an easy transition from our previous textbooks, being rhetorically complete but still easily accessible in its tone. Our Norton rep. will be in room 8060 on March 8 from 11 am-2 pm.

**Writing Analytically** by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen (8th Edition, Cengage) offers a rigorous and thorough introduction to rhetorical concepts, and in applying them to reading, writing, and thinking. It emphasizes suspending judgment, seeking complicating evidence, identifying rhetorical patterns, and reasoning backward to uncover the implicit assumptions, philosophies, judgments, etc. on which any piece of rhetoric is built. It offers a theoretical framework illustrated across a range of written and visual texts, and practical approaches that can be readily adapted into class lessons and activities. It actively cultivates interdisciplinary approaches, including voices from across the curriculum. It includes a section that considers the rhetorical functions of grammatical choices. Our Cengage rep. will be in room 8060 on March 7 from 11:30 am-1:30 pm.

**Compose, Design, Advocate** by Anne Frances Wysocki and Dennis A. Lynch (3rd Edition, Pearson) emphasizes multimodality and design, which includes traditional writing practices but also other types of composing, focusing on rhetorical choices. When we move away from traditional academic essays as the default, we see things differently. This switch defamiliarizes the choices students make as writers, and brings them to higher levels of awareness of all the choices they make when they compose. This book is an easy introduction into a multimodal course, and won’t require pre-existing expertise. Importantly, it reminds us not to conflate multimodal with digital, since any mode that isn’t writing can be considered under the umbrella of multimodal. Think dioramas! Sculptures! Speeches! We are floating the idea of putting together an Honors section of WRI 102, and are considering this as the textbook for that course. Our Pearson rep. will visit on March from 11:30 am-1:30 pm.

JENNIFER BARBER: Délivrances translated into French by Emmanuel Merle (La Rumeur libre, 2018).


LISA CÉLOVSKY: “Medium as Message: Chivalry in Wroth’s Urania.” Sidney Journal 34.2 (2016): 91-116. Attended the National Collegiate Honors Council Conference in Atlanta (Nov. 2017) and is on the planning committee for the 2018 conference in Boston; developed a new honors fall welcome program, “Honors Urban Adventure” to introduce students to ways of critically reading their new home in Boston. Gerry Richman designed one of the ‘Adventures’ that the new freshmen embarked upon in the West End.


DAVID FERRY: Qui est là? translated into French by Peter Brown, Emmanuel Merle, and Caroline Talpe (La Rumeur libre, 2018).


GEORGE KALOGERIS: Book of poems Guide to Greece (Louisiana State University Press, 2018)

JON LEE: Poem “[You were pushpulled from the womb Juliette],” Sierra Nevada Review, May 2018.


Witches
continued from page 3

much of it connected to gender.”

Framing the FA17 version
of the course with critical essays
from scholars like Jessica Valenti and
Kristen J. Sollée gave a contemporary
theoretical lens of politics, power, and
gender through which to read the
course texts, and for students to apply
to their own lives.

"An SF class is sort of an
introduction to college," Armbruster
said. "One of its purposes is to cultivate
citizens of the world—to understand
how experiences inside and outside the
classroom are connected. Here we use
the classroom to help them read texts
effectively, but also to see themselves
more clearly, and then to become more
aware and empathetic to people differ-
ent from themselves."

The assignments drew from
conventional literary analysis, but
also from the personal essay. An early
assignment asked students to explore
a time they'd either subscribed to an
assumption about another person, or
had others make assumptions about
them. Students used the course read-
ings in their personal writing, allowing
them to draw far deeper conclusions
about gender, sexuality, class, race,
body, and more, thus synthesizing
those texts with the evidence of their
own lived experiences.

"It was empowering for the
women in the class, but the men
seemed to get something deeply im-
portant out of it as well," she said.
The class took a trip to Salem,
MA, on Friday the 13th of October.
Armbruster was also invited
speak to the “Women in IT” at Suffolk
on "The Benefits of Being a ‘Nasty
Woman,’” in December. Following this,
her panel and roundtable on "‘Unruly
Tongues’ and ‘Nasty Women’ in Amer-
ican Literature” have been accepted to
the American Literature Association’s
annual conference in May.

poverty homelessness addiction recovery trauma mental illness
abuse disability pain shame incarceration grief insecurity mistrust

Bringing creative writing to
those who need it the most

You’ve probably heard that creative writing workshops are just a
weak imitation of therapy. You might’ve heard—from certain writers—that
this is backwards: it’s therapy that’s the poor mimicry of writing.

Probably it's neither. Probably they’d do well to work together.
That's the position they take at Writers Without Margins, a Boston non-
profit dedicated to bringing the literary arts to those who would other-
wise have no access to formal classes or resources. They work with largely
homeless and disadvantaged, underserved, and underheard populations.

"We are not social workers or therapists. We don't try to step into
those roles," said Olivia Kate Cerrone, a writing instructor in the Suffolk
English Department since 2015, new Program Manager for INTO at
Suffolk, and volunteer Creative Writing Workshop Facilitator at Writers
Without Margins. "But we do try to serve a particularly disadvantaged
population with more nurturing, focusing on creating a safe and empow-
ering space, to be a consistently available presence for people whose lives
can be highly unstable, and to build trust with them."

Cerrone started teaching these workshops in 2016 while also ad-
journing both at Suffolk and Bunker Hill Community College. The differ-
ent pedagogical needs quickly became apparent.

Usually, a workshop-intensive class demands regular attendance,
which may not be possible for many of these students. Some come every
class. Some come when they can. Some are intensely involved for a class
or two, then disappear. Some find permanent housing or more stable sit-
uations, and continue coming because the classes have become so much a
part of their lives and their well-being.

"I've seen so many people at first feel like they aren't even entitled
to their own story," Cerrone said. "So much of their lives might have been
out of their control for so long that they feel like they can't even trust
themselves to claim that ownership. But I've also seen, over the course of
a workshop, people claiming that ability to say 'this is my story and this
is how I'm going to tell it.' There is so much internalized pain and shame
and trauma. Writing helps people work through that. Revision is a way to
work through ideas and find a sense of clarity."

The workshop leaders are all working writers who have some sense
of community activism, and who share a belief in the power of writing to
heal the individual, to build community, to allow dispossessed people
to cultivate agency over themselves, and to regain a sense of trust in them-
selves and in a community around them.

"Writing is path to personal awareness," Cerrone said, adding that
she’s happy to make connections if anyone wants to get involved or form a
partnership (ocerrone@suffolk.edu). Visit writerswithoutmargins.org.
Steal This Lesson

Full Time Writing Lecturer Ruth Prakasam led an engaging FYW workshop last fall about working with international students. One of the things she found in both research and teaching experience is that there’s tremendous power in giving students individualized attention.

“Conferencing is an essential component of how I structure my classes, and I consider it a vital teaching method for the ELL population,” Prakasam said. “I hold at least one 10 minute individual conference for each large paper assignment in both WRI 101 and WRI 102. Sometimes there are two conferences attached to a particular assignment, scheduled at different stages of the writing process.”

She explains that this allows native and non-native speakers an opportunity for one-on-one feedback and to ask questions that they may be too shy to ask during class. Since these happen more than once during the semester, students start to ask targeted questions about the assignments and/or their in-progress drafts.

Since time is a precious factor for all instructors, she also suggests group conferences as another way to work closely with students if you want to see them more than once a semester. It can help accommodate difficult schedules for both faculty and students.

“At the group conference, I explain several areas that I want students to focus on as they work on their drafts with a few minutes towards the end of the 15 minute session to answer questions,” she said. “Another way to group them, as suggested by one of our part-timers, Rosie Sultan, is by their particular writing challenge(s).”

Prakasam often uses a self-assessment worksheet with sentence beginnings the student may complete before the conference: “When I started my draft, I... So after that, I... Now that I have a rough draft/1st Draft, I am pleased with... But I am still frustrated with... I really hope that my peers can help with... And I may need to ask my professor about...”

“Students complete this Note before they complete the Peer Review and first give it to their peer reviewer. After the peer review is completed, the Note is handed to me. I read the Note before our individual conferences. It provides me with a clearer sense of their process, the area of the assignment that is difficult, where they feel their peers can assist them, and where I can assist them. For those with only cursory responses, I ask them to elaborate on the partially or incomplete statements. And for students who come with few or no questions to ask, the Note provides specific areas to target as we begin the session, which many times prompts students to ask related questions. They should approach this exercise as a nonjudgmental self-evaluation because that is how I will be reading it. Particularly for students like ELLs, who are more hesitant to speak in class or share their informal writing within groups, this NOTE gives them the opportunity to reflect upon their writing process and builds their confidence that they can express in writing their thoughts about their draft.

Share and steal FYW materials on BB Super Shell

So that we can share our resources, the FYW program holds regular pedagogy workshops to discuss key challenges and strategies. See the emails or any FYW member for specific dates and times.

In that spirit, our Blackboard Super Shells for WRI 101 and 102 let us share teaching materials, lessons, and strategies. With the recent changes to the FYW program, we've been updating the content there with fresh syllabi, assignments, journal and exam prompts, reading lists, and lesson plans—innovative responses to new program guidelines. But it can only be as good as what goes into it. If you teach any FYW classes, please send your syllabi, modified assignment prompts, awesome lessons, readings, images, and anything else that worked well. You can even do it anonymously. Email WRI 101 materials to Katherine Horn (khorn2@suffolk.edu) and WRI 102 things to Ashlie Liss (aliss@suffolk.edu).

“The FYW Workshops and the Super Shell are spaces where my own pedagogical approaches are constantly challenged and improved,” Liss said. “It’s a generous group: instructors are willing to share ideas with others, but also to listen and ask productive questions. The Workshops are supportive environments where we can test out ‘risky’ pedagogical concepts with colleagues who appreciate how much care goes into building effective classes for our first-year student writers.”
**In-house publication anniversaries**

**Salamander turns 25; Venture turns 50**

Staying alive for 50 years is no small feat for anyone, but it's especially noteworthy for a literature journal. This year, Suffolk's undergraduate literary and arts magazine, *Venture*, marks its half-century milestone, and looks to social media in planning its future.

"I wish I’d known about the Venture club sooner," said Editor-in-Chief Sofia Ohrnynowicz. "Campus offers a lot, but a lot of clubs are no longer active, and the list of them can be difficult to navigate, let alone to find something you’re interested in."

In recruiting new members, promoting events, and soliciting manuscripts and artwork, social media has been a huge advantage for the latest roster of Venture members. With co-editor Donnovan Skepple taking lead in PR and marketing, the magazine has centralized its identity onto its Facebook page, which makes it easier build an ongoing relationship with readers, with friends, and with the campus at large.

"That also helps us push for a diversity of genre as well as identity in what we publish," Ohrnynowicz said. "We're supposed to represent Suffolk's students as they are, not as some image we impose on them."

Submissions are closed for this year (The deadline is usually in February), so now is the time for students to start working on submissions for next year.

Ohrnynowicz holds up her experience here as invaluable to her aspirations for a career in publishing, having gained first hand experience in how the process works and what it takes to carry something from an idea to a finished book out in the world.

*Venture* will hold a celebration on April 20 in honor of its anniversary. Details are still in the works, so see their Facebook page for the latest.

*Salamander*, the nationally recognized literary journal run out of our own department, celebrated its 25th anniversary on March 1 with a reading in the Suffolk Poetry Center featuring memoirist Jane Brox, poet Andrea Cohen, and poet Natalie Shapero.

There will be a bilingual reading with authors and translators at 1 p.m. on April 14 to celebrate David Ferry’s *This Side of the River* (as *Qui est la?*), translated by Peter Brown, Emmanuel Merle, & Caroline Talpe, and *Salamander* editor Jennifer Barber’s *Given Away* (as *Délivrances*) translated by Emmanuel Merle. Suffolk World Languages Professor Marjorie Salvodon will also read from her lyric memoir about language and individual history.

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**CLAS**

Bondar encourages faculty members (especially those teaching 101-102) to make sure their students know about writing support in CLAS. Students can make ½ hour or full hour appointments with both peer and professional tutors (many of whom also teach in the English Department). Students who struggle with writing should make weekly appointments to work with a tutor at all stages of the writing process or to work on a specific sentence-level concern in each session.

CLAS tutors provide assistance/guidance to students at any writing phase, including brainstorming, outlining, content logic, and revision.

One way faculty can help the CLAS support students is to identify specific sentence-level for a particular student. If a writing instructor sees that a student struggles with verb tenses, s/he should suggest that the student set up a couple of writing tutoring appointments to work on that issue. These appointments don’t have to be tied to a specific assignment.

"We can support students by doing much more than giving feedback on drafts of essays," Bondar said. "Tutoring hours are 9:30-7 Monday through Thursday and 9:30-4 on Fridays.

Faculty should also encourage their English language learners to attend the English language workshops that could be of benefit to them.

Also, encourage students strong in writing to become writing tutors, which are paid positions. Scholarships are also available. Application deadline: March 19 at 4 p.m. Visit suffolk.edu/academica/3065.php.

**CLAS English Language Workshop schedule for SP18:**

- Conversation: Tom Filbin, Tuesdays 3-4, Stahl 9012
- Pronunciation: John Zakrosky, Thu. 12:15-1, Stahl 9012
- Verbs, Articles, and Sentence Structure: George Scala, Mon. 10-11, Stahl 9012
- Reading Comprehension: George Scala, Wed. 11-12, Stahl 9012
- Slang and Idioms: Suzanne Morris, Wed. 2-3, Stahl 9012

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