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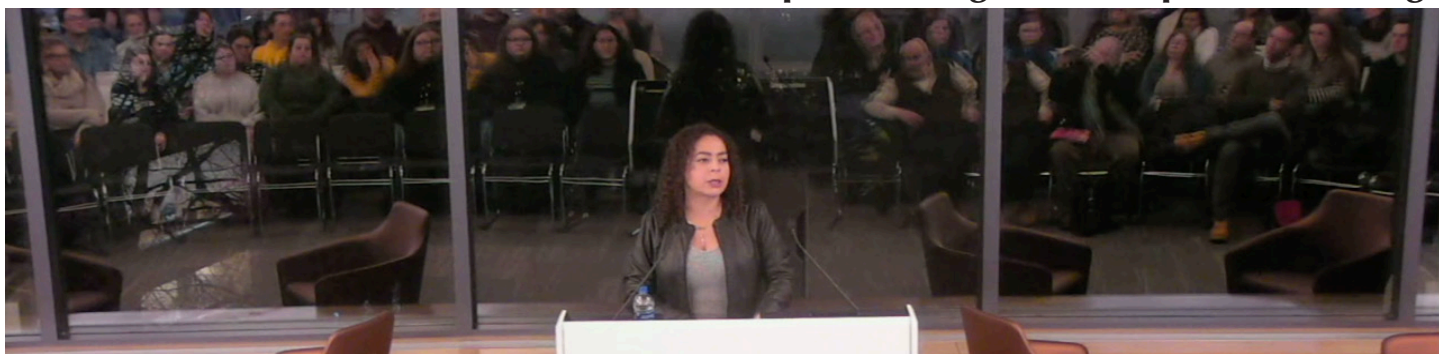
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Syntax

Newsletter of the
Suffolk University
English Department
Issue 6
Spring/Fall 2020

From the Before Times: Remember when Jaquira Díaz gave an in-person reading?



You can see in the blurred reflection in the glass behind her, the front rows of the crowd of people who came out for Jaquira Díaz on January 21 or Suffolk's marquee reading of the year. Those were safer times for gathering in person, of course. You can safely relive them by watching the recording of this reading at <https://suensemble.suffolk.edu/hapi/v1/contents/permalinks/St8m2BZr/view>. Díaz is the author of the memoir *Ordinary Girls*, which won the Whiting Award for Nonfiction, among other awards.

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Teaching through the pandemic

ENG faculty showed up and did difficult things

We all remember how we abruptly took all our in-person courses into online triage when we left for Spring Break 2020 and never came physically back. Then, on short-order, we invented a new summer First-Year Writing course, held fully online for incoming students before any of them even arrived Suffolk. Twelve of us taught 15 sections of it to 195 students. (Read on for evidence of its smashing success.) Then, many of us taught on campus during FA20, either in hybrid or "hyflex" modes. Some also taught online courses, but were already on campus for the face-to-face classes anyway, and so taught several online courses from the physical campus too. In addition to much safely-distant online teaching during FA20, we taught 10 ENG courses and 44 WRI courses in hybrid or hyflex modes. Several full and part-time ENG faculty also taught courses in the Creativity and Innovation and First-Year Seminar programs in on-campus formats. We followed protocol. We were COVID tested once or twice weekly. In a combination of luck and diligence from instructors, (most) of our students, and Suffolk's administration, particularly Sebastian Royo and the Integrated Response Team, none of us turned up COVID positive throughout the semester.

Continued on p. 10

FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR, BRYAN TRABOLD

It's hard to describe the past year (I refuse to use the word "unprecedented"). I'd like to celebrate the extraordinary contributions of the English department and reflect on challenges we face moving forward.

Prior to this year, I didn't think my admiration and respect for English faculty could possibly increase any more. I was wrong.

When Suffolk suddenly had to shift to online teaching in March, English faculty did so superbly. Reading everyone's teaching evaluations, I was genuinely moved by the many positive comments students had for their professors during this chaotic period, specifically identifying their innovation, creativity, and not surprisingly, empathy and compassion.

In the summer, when Suffolk piloted the Summer U program (proposed by Provost Julie Sandell; masterfully planned and executed by Dean Lisa Celovsky) again, English faculty rose to the occasion. It's important to remember the anxiety everyone felt at the end of the spring and in those early weeks of summer. What would enrollments be in the fall? Would students come to college during a pandemic? When we offered a free, four-credit summer course to all admitted students, we had no idea how many would take advantage of it. The results exceeded our most optimistic expectations: 195 students enrolled in this first-year writing course built on the innovative project-based learning pedagogy piloted by several writing faculty the previous year. At the end of the course, students expressed their gratitude for working closely with a professor and a writing tutor, and for the friendships they made before the school year even began. An astonishing 94% of students who took Summer U went on to attend Suffolk in the fall.

To fulfill Suffolk's commitment to offer first-year

students two in-person classes, English again rose to the challenge. English faculty taught 54 sections in the Hy-flex and hybrid modes—an extraordinary contribution to the overall number of in-person classes Suffolk offered in the fall. To teach these classes, faculty had to participate in intensive training during the summer, and then wear masks, use microphones and PPE, and get tested weekly when teaching in the fall.

Faculty who taught online courses faced different but formidable challenges of their own. Many spent the summer learning new software and exploring strategies for effective and engaging online teaching.

Regardless of modality, faculty with young children experienced significant hardships juggling the intensity of working during a pandemic while daycares and schools were closed, and, when opened, assisting their children with online education.

At every stage of this very difficult and demanding year, English faculty went above and beyond to serve Suffolk students and the institution. As we move forward, the country is not only coping with a pandemic, but a democracy in crisis, a crisis made painfully apparent on Jan. 6 when insurrectionists stormed our nation's Capitol. As educators, we play an extraordinarily important role in helping to repair and revive our democracy. Consider the ways of reading, writing, speaking, thinking, and behaving that we promote in English classes: building claims from facts and evidence; acknowledging complexity, nuance, and ambiguity; and disagreeing with others respectfully.

It's been a long, hard year, and we have challenging days ahead. But I can state with complete sincerity that there's nowhere I'd rather be than working with my colleagues in English to educate future citizens here at Suffolk, an institution committed to access, opportunity, diversity, critical thinking, and civility.

FROM THE EDITOR, JASON TUCKER

So. Some things have been happening. For quite a while now. You know. They've happened to every last person, place, and thing. All the nouns, really. It's all we talk or think or read or watch in disgust and revulsion and with that-little-flame-of-hope-we-can't-admit-is-there-for-fear-of-smothering-it about.

I know the last thing any of us wants is to relive last year when, as Amy's and my young daughter said, "2020 is following us like a yammering goat."

The crises forced less urgent emergencies to skip a turn, so we were unable to produce a SP20 issue of *Syntax*. So, this one is almost twice the size as usual. Also, you might notice some old news here, but we try to pick up at the moment the last issue left off, so that means backing up until about Halloween-before-last.

As miserable as it is to feel stuck in that miserable year, this incomplete-yet-oversized issue is a testament to what we did in spite of all that. We showed up. We kept it all moving. We kept working. We adapted. We all lost some things. Some of us lost a lot.

In one or another or even several simultaneous kinds of protracted grief, we changed, and in some ways we changed forever, but we're still here, still doing what we do, still being brilliant and diligent and necessary and compassionate and broken down and kinda put back together and still changing, and for the most part stupidly lucky to still have this place and to have each other, to still have our students, to still have what we do, and to find in the dark and chaotic, desperately lonely, purposefully disinforming times ever more powerful reasons to keep doing it.

SUFFOLK ENGLISH ALUMNI UPDATES

ANDREW BUTLER

Honors English 2010, he began taking classes this January 2020 at Boston University in Project Management and is working towards a Masters in Science in the field.

KERRY KURDZIEL

Honors English 2013, she is working in advertising, wants to apply to grad school in English, and is taking classes at Boston's Grub Street in poetry writing.

BRENNA LOPES

Honors English 2017, she graduated last December from the University of Glasgow with a Master of Letters in Eighteenth Century Literature. She wrote a master's thesis entitled "'But poets have never been botanists': Poetic Imagination and Scientific Inquisition in the Poetry of Charlotte Smith," which received an "A" and earned her a master's with distinction (equivalent to our high honors/summa cum laude).

She writes: "My love of eighteenth century literature began

during my very first literature class with Marlene McKinley (in which she read aloud an excerpt from William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence* that verily stole my heart from my chest) back in my junior year at Suffolk, and grew with every subsequent course taken. My time as a Faculty Assistant in the English Department post-graduation cemented my love of academia, and, bolstered by the encouragement and support of my professors and peers. I applied for a master's abroad, never imagining that I'd get accepted into one of my top-choice schools and get to spend a year living, studying, and writing in Scotland. I came home to Boston in August of last year, and accepted a job at Harvard Business School as a Faculty Support Specialist this past October. My degree and my new position are both largely a result of my time in the English Department. I can look back and remember courses, conversations with professors, and even readings that sent me down the paths that ultimately converged right here, to me sit-

ting at my desk, writing about another degree achieved and a new job acquired. I am so very grateful for all I've learned and, as always, am very proud to have studied English at Suffolk University."

KATE MIANO

Honors English 2019, she had a poem, "Memory Keeps Time," published at overheardlit.com and is applying to the Museum of Fine Arts for a job in publishing. Link to her poem : overheardlit.com/identity-issue?pgid=k5wnfki0-e9f9f-de5-269b-486d-9cc1-801f018f7a0b

JULIA POTAPOFF

Honors English, 2018, she landed a job as a departmental assistant at NYU in NYC (her dream!) where she has already begun taking classes in English Education towards a Masters degree.

If you're a Suffolk English Alum, no matter the year, write to us and let us know what you're up to. Your professors would love to hear from you. You can also email the newsletter at: jwtucker@suffolk.edu



Facts are real, even in fiction, even when you can't be sure about them

In Nov. 2019 Nick Frangipane gave a talk based on his scholarly book, *Multiple Narratives, Versions, and Truth in the Contemporary Novel*. Drawing from his research interests throughout his own undergraduate and graduate education, it focuses on questions of fact vs. narration in literary fiction, and what you can and cannot safely deduce from multiple versions of the same story. These questions are also central to many courses he teaches in First-Year Writing and in his First-Year Seminar course "What Is a Fact?" For more, see p. 4 of *Syntax* Issue 5 from FA19, and this story in *The Suffolk Journal*: <https://thesuffolkjournal.com/28001/ac/artscampus/english-professor-discusses-different-versions-of-truth-in-literature/>

2020 Honors thesis presentations, via Zoom



On April 23, the English Department's Honors Thesis students presented their work, of course, via Zoom. From left, from top: Melanthi Vasiliadis, Professor and Honors English coordinator Leslie Eckel, Jacqueline Janusis, Tess Baucom, Rachel Stroia, Alyvia DeAcetis, Madison Hindley, and Rosalie Pothier. Stroia's project won the English Department's prize for Excellence in Honors and the prize for the entire Humanities Division in CAS. It went on to an even richer life after that (see right).

TESS BAUCOM: "Medea Undefined: A Vengeful Hero, a Gruesome Villain, or a Vindicated God?"

Advisor: KAYLIN O'DELL

ALYVIA DEACETIS: "Life, Death, Time, and Electricity in Sylvia Plath's 'Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams' and The Bell Jar."

Advisor: WYATT BONIKOWSKI

MADISON HINDLEY: "Caught Between Two Worlds: Edna and Lily's Search for Place in The Awakening and The House of Mirth." Advisor: ELIF ARMBRUSTER

JACQUELINE JANUSIS: "The Aftershocks of Isolation: Elizabeth Bishop's lyric voice as a guide for a young poet." Advisor: GEORGE KALOGERIS

ROSALIE POTHIER: "The Horror of Stephen King's Stereotyped Female Characters."

Advisor: WYATT BONIKOWSKI

RACHEL STROIA: "'I Am the Sole Author': Challenging the Dictionary of the Social Self in Zadie Smith's NW" Advisor: Professor Peter Jeffreys

MELANTHI VASILIADIS, "'A Double Obscurity': A Platonic Reading of The Handmaid's Tale."

Advisor: ELIF ARMBRUSTER

Stroia publishes & presents scholarly work from her Suffolk English classes

English Major and Spring 2020 Suffolk University graduate Rachel Stroia was invited to present her honors thesis project at Johns Hopkins University's Richard Macksey National Undergraduate Humanities Research Symposium.

While the symposium was originally planned to take place in person, the pandemic required it to become a virtual event instead.

That also means you can view an abstract and download a PDF of her project, "'I Am the Sole Author': Limits of Social Mobility and Self-Knowledge Zadie Smith's NW," at this link (copy and paste into a browser if it doesn't work): mackseysymposium.org/virtual2020/all/presentations/55/

She writes:

"I examine Zadie Smith's critique of postmulticulturalism and neoliberalism in contemporary London, and how each extreme affects the self-knowledge and development of her characters in the novel. I also discuss how the inconsistent, experimental stylistic form of her novel is reflected in the identities of her characters.

"I first became interested in Smith after reading *On Beauty* in Professor [Peter] Jeffreys' Readings in Postcolonial Literature class last Spring. I was drawn to her cultural commentary and literary style. As a philosophy minor, I was thrilled that I could apply that work in my thesis as well!

"Through the lens of Smith's cultural critique of the glib celebration of multiculturalism and of the neoliberal economics in London, I am looking at the limits of self-knowledge and social mobility for the individual as well as the extent to which identity is formed from the interior versus the exterior."

Professor Jeffreys served as her honors thesis director, and is deservedly proud of her.

Stroia also had an essay published in this year's issue of the *Sigma Tau Delta Review*.

She joined Sigma last Spring and Professor Elif Armbruster suggested that she submit her critical work to their journal. She submitted an essay from Professor Jeffreys' postcolonial literature class, which she titled "The Ambivalent Critique of Imperialism in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*."



Performing via Zoom at Salamander's 50th issue celebration reading on October 30, from left: José Angel Araguz, Joan Naviyuk Kane, Rajiv Mohabir, and Anne Kilfoyle.

Salamander marks #50

On Oct. 30, 2020, *Salamander* literary journal, based in Suffolk's English Department, held a Zoom-based version of the 50th issue celebration reading that, like all our events this year, was originally planned as in-person.

Those who Zoomed in saw guest readers (see above photos), and a moment of memorial for former *Salamander* board member and contributor Leslie McGrath, who died in August. José Araguz read one of her poems.

Araguz, now in his second year at both Suffolk and *Salamander*, took over following Jennifer Barber, who founded the journal in 1992 and had served as editor in chief until 2018. We talked to him about what it meant to lead a journal with such a long history and strong community across this time of massive cultural pivot, and into the future.

Having survived 20 years and three degrees in the creative writing world, he's seen it's still made up of predominantly white spaces, and has seen good and bad examples of how to negotiate that in publishing.

"You still find quite a bit of gatekeeping," he said. Katie [Sticca, managing editor] and I both agree: no, let's open the gate, let's let peo-

ple in. There is a wonderful established community here. We want to build on that strength and the diversity that *Salamander* has already given space to. Work toward even more inclusivity won't be at the cost of that community. We are a place for established and emerging writers, and want to provide space and platforms for writers from marginalized communities to speak for themselves. This cultural moment calls for centering voices from within the communities they try to represent."

Sticca has been *Salamander*'s managing editor for 10 years. She sees this time as an opportunity to integrate more of an online and social media presence, in addition to the work of the print editions.

"We live in a global world," she said. "We have more exposure to global writers and they have more exposure to us. We have international writers in every issue."

In the past ten years, the journal has almost doubled its print distribution, in both big box and indie bookstores around the world.

The plan is to rotate what is freely available online. You can view selections from recent issues, and subscribe or order print editions, at salamandermag.org.

Students have a unique chance to work on a widely publicized, professionally run journal, which is uncommon for undergraduates. They're open to working with students from any discipline, not just

Managing Editor Katie Sticca



English majors. "If students are enthusiastic about it, there's is going to be a place for them," Sticca said.

There's far more to magazine editing than proofreading. There's data management, publishing design, website upkeep, organizing, communications, social media management, marketing, and more. In addition to internships, there's a practicum class with *Salamander*: ENG 476.

Araguz also extends those goals of inclusivity to the magazine's artwork. Cover #50 features work by disabled artist Emily Forbes; cover #49 was by Karla Rosas (aka Karlinche), a self-described "undocumented" visual artist.

As all editors know, a journal is made up of what gets submitted. Here, 90 percent of what's published comes from submissions, rather than solicitations.

"We are our contributors," Araguz said. "Our community is based on who writes with us and who shares space with us."

Issue #51 drops in Jan. 2021.

On "The 1619 Project"

What we talk about when we talk about America & slavery

On November 19, 2019, the History Department, Suffolk University Historical Society, and the Black Student Union presented a panel discussion on "The 1619 Project," *The New York Times Magazine's* series marking the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery. Suffolk University Faculty, from left, History Professor Lester Lee, English Professor Quentin Miller, and Professor Robert Bellinger, History Professor and Director of the Black Studies Program each fielded questions from two student moderators: Suffolk University Historical Society President Chianna Calafiore and Black Student Union President Leah Grannum. Generally, the panelists agreed that the public-facing conversation "The 1619 Project" is an essential thing to center in popular discourse, even if it can't quite capture the complexity, nuance, and theoretical understandings that have happened in the literary and scholarly fields that critically examine race. They all shared common, fundamental goals with the project, urging us all to understand contemporary America (and indeed, America all along) with slavery and its descendant histories among the things at the center. "Embrace the larger swatch of the American story," Bellinger said. "Consider the wide-ranging reality of the past." Of course, the panelists all observed contemporary racism and resistance to it, discussing the lineage of their study of past works and events to more current efforts toward racial justice, ultimately calling for people and institutions to have the necessary hard conversations, but also to put more than words into the world, and to let actions be informed by the knowledge we have of our own past. As The Equal Justice Initiative often says when retelling past events: "To overcome racial inequality, we must confront our history."



Watch: Reading and Q&A with author Amber Sparks



Author Amber Sparks gave a reading and talk at Suffolk on March 3, 2020. Unfortunately, due to technical difficulties, only the last part of her reading and the following Q&A were recorded, but you can watch those parts here: <https://suensemble.suffolk.edu/Watch/z8Z7RkDx>. She also explains the t-shirt.

Sparks is the author of the short story collections, *And I Do Not Forgive You*, *The Unfinished World*, and *May We Shed These Human Bodies*. Her genre-bending approach to fiction draws on fairy tales, myths, history, and everyday life to create stories that are creepy, hilarious, and profound. Her latest collection confronts our current political climate, challenging the cultural myths and social expectations that shape women's lives. Read samples of her work at her website, ambernoellesparks.com/stories-and-essays, and follow her on Twitter at @ambernoelle.

Watch: José Angel Araguz's Faculty Lecture Series Poetry Reading



Creative Writing Professor and *Salamander* Editor-in-Chief José Araguz gives an engaging poetry reading at his Faculty Lecture Series event on December 5, 2019. Following an introduction by poet Quintin Collins, assistant director at the Solstice MFA Program at Pine Manor College, Araguz wove themes that ranged from elegies to Latinx poetics, styles that ranged from somber to funny, subjects that ranged from people he's known in life to those he's known in art, and regardless of all the other artful modulations, the spirit of all the pieces did not stray from the sincerity that threads throughout all of his work. Watch the full reading at <https://suensemble.suffolk.edu/hapi/v1/contents/permalinks/x2H3Len7/view>

Watch some more: Longley, Ferry, and Kalogeris talk poetry, read poetry



We know we mentioned this is the last issue, but we didn't have the recording to share at the time. Now we do. Michael Longley (left) and David Ferry (center) talk and read poetry with Professor George Kalogeris (right) for "A Dialogue In and About Poetry" Suffolk's Poetry Center on Oct. 10, 2019. Shaped by both classical poetic traditions and the those of his lifelong home in Belfast, Ireland, Michael Longley has had a long, celebrated career as a poet. His wife, Edna is an accomplished critic who'd just been inducted into the American Association of Arts and Sciences before this talk. Ferry is acclaimed American poet and translator, a Distinguished Visiting Scholar and the winner of the National Book Award (2012), the Bobbitt National Prize for Poetry (2000), and the Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts (1996). Watch the full recording at: <https://suensemble.suffolk.edu/hapi/v1/contents/permalinks/x5L6MaXo/view>

Class Profile: ENG 170 "Narrative and Medicine"

Stories told by doctors, patients, and others give nuance to the too-simple narratives we often tell about health and medicine.

When the pandemic closed Suffolk's campus in the middle of SP20, Amy Monticello's "Narrative and Medicine" class was in the middle of reading Eula Biss's *On Immunity*, which both turns over our history of science and pseudoscience about vaccines and contagious illnesses and unpacks how we talk about them. The immediacy of yet-unsettled medical questions, and the storm of disinformation that accompanied the virus, immersed students in a constant stream of real-world examples of how storytelling and medicine are deeply entwined. Bad information, as Biss writes, reproduces like a virus, and like a virus, it needs a host. Even still, through both well- and cruelly-intentioned participants, viral bad information continues to find eager American hosts. It's clear in Biss's book, in Monticello's class, and in every aspect of American life lately, that critical attention onto language, metaphor, storytelling, and rhetoric is as important to public health as are the hard-science fundamentals of medical research and practice. Indeed, humanities and sciences are inseparable.

"Some of the students planned a career in medicine," Monticello said. "Others had some experience with illness or disability, whether it was themselves or someone close to them. And we all knew that if we had no direct experiences in this subject yet, we eventually would. So each segment of students identified with different stakeholders in the readings. One great thing to come out of that was to humanize both doctors and patients in good ways. We saw cases where doctors may not have known better than patients

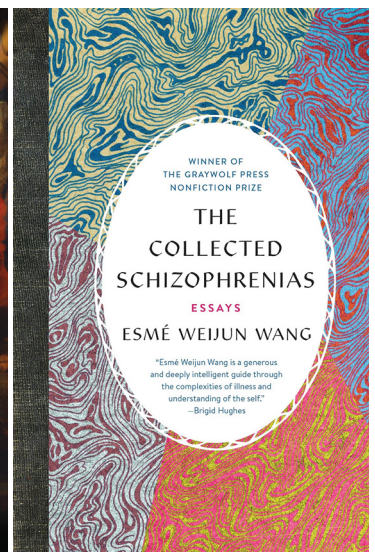
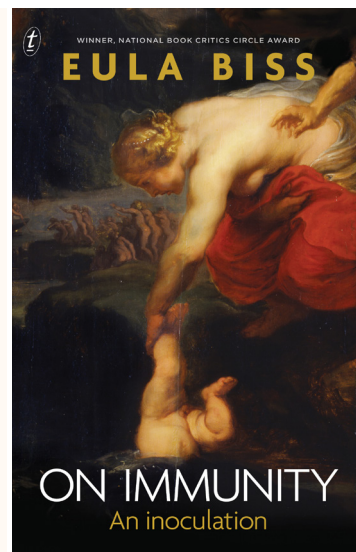
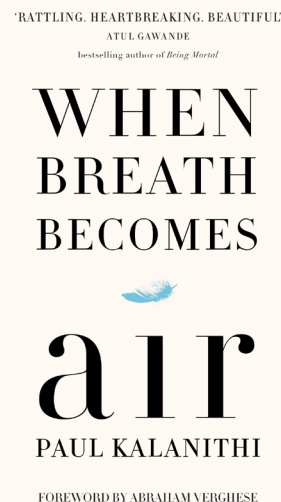
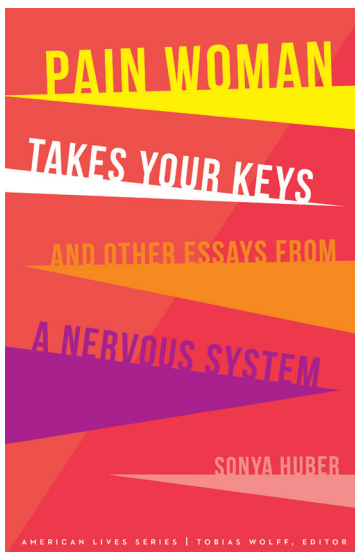
what they were experiencing in their own bodies. We saw insider depictions of medical professions most patients aren't made aware of. We also saw that medicine isn't always benevolent, that people make mistakes, that relationships between medicine and politics and power can be problematic, that cultural attitudes like the undervaluing of women's pain—particularly Black women's pain—are always present even in attempts to keep the issues purely clinical, and that so much is lost when we only consider one perspective. These topics can be uncomfortable, but they deepened our discussions about medical ethics."

Students both analyzed representations of health issues in literature and media, and created their own medical narratives. As models, they had course texts from authors that illustrated how the process of diagnosis isn't just listing systems, but how things like chronic pain rewrite one's entire life, and that a narrative must include all of that to arrive at effective treatment. The aspiring medical students in the room were grateful for that expanded perspective.

An entire field called "narrative medicine" draws on just this philosophy.

"I wanted to show that storytelling is not just something to study in some esoteric way," Monticello said, "but it performs socially and within specific professions. It works against stereotypes and assumptions. It gives us more agency to define our own stories, and to hear the stories of others with empathy, which turns back to let us consider our own stories in new ways."

This course will likely run again in SP22.



Class Profile: ENG 389

"History of the Book"

Students learn how printing technology has always shaped reading and writing

Fortunately, by the time Spring Break 2020 arrived, and the COVID-19 pandemic with it, Hannah Hudson's "History of the Book" class had already finished most of its field trips. They visited the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, Huskiana Press at Northeastern University, and the Boston Athenaeum to get their hands on the history of book printing technologies and texts they produced. Beyond touring interesting but obsolete hardware, the class emphasized how the ways books and other texts were physically made has everything to do with how meanings and even societies are made.

"We're often trained to focus on the content," Hudson said. "Inadvertently that might train us out of also thinking about the physical object, and therefore important parts of the historical context. Focusing on the physical book reminds us that everything is influenced by materials, by how indoor lighting—candles vs. gas vs. electric—affects how people read, by the cues we take from paper size and quality, by the constraints of a press, by the financial constraints both printing and buying printed texts, by the gatekeeping that has always been a part of publishing, by censorship and propaganda, and by the controlled access to literacy itself. It shows the liberatory power of print, but also its suppressive power, through censorship and propaganda."



Above: During a class field trip to The American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, MA, Professor Hannah Hudson and student Jordan Perry examine the physical properties of antique books, and how those physical features shaped how texts were written, published, distributed, and read. Photo courtesy, The American Antiquarian Society. Below: A letterpress print students made during their visit to Huskiana Press at Northeastern University. They used movable type to print this handbill on a press from 1896.

When in-person classes were suspended, hands-on projects had to be done at home. Students and Hudson herself improvised making paper at home from whatever was on hand, which mirrored many people's historical experience, as paper was expensive and scarce. They also tried writing with quills and reading by candlelight.

Students also had to create a contemporary edition of a historical text, had to read theory about different editorial versions of the same text, and articulate one editorial principle they used. This way they came to understand questions of providing context, annotations, or other changes to make it accessible to a modern audience vs. fidelity as an exact transcript of the original. Students said it was much more work than they'd expected.

There was the question of what

How times wills like the petals of a rose
A furious feasting frenzy
of lively, livid leeches
 Please refrain from coughing!!!
WASH YOUR HANDS
 COVID-19 is no fun. Be careful
MY MADNESS IS GROWING.
As the rocks piled high, he begged
for more weight.
Most souls cry tears not
blood. Souls sit alone
beyond.
Tick Tock Goes the Wood Block
 I met a traveller from an
ANTIQU land,
 As she **read** her **book**
 she **fell** into the **LAKE!**
Start from the beginning, tell me
everything that you know.
 My **HOPE RISES** with the **SUN.**

a book is, and what material realities define texts in the digital age.

"Like The Book of Kells," Hudson said, "There is this idea of art persisting through time. The book can physically survive. It's people saying 'this remains of us.'"

Continued from p. 1

Our new SummerU courses built on work begun the year before, when the First-Year Writing Program piloted a Project-Based Learning (PBL) curriculum for several sections of WRI 101. Both our pilot and Suffolk's Summer U program (based on that PBL curriculum) yielded great results. Summer U has had a 94% success rate in retaining students who participated.

As described in "Ram Writers" (<https://www.suffolk.edu/news-features/news/2020/10/01/12/07/ram-writers>), students reported very positive experiences. One said "I'm not a big writer, but I felt like after this class I have an urge to write."

From a student survey at the end of Summer U:

"The biggest factor that contributed to [my] continuation in the course was the engaging materials that the professor assigned for reading, writing, and group work. He never failed to make sure the course was relevant. The theme of the class is something new to me, and something many people do not discuss! It was refreshing to be in a class where I wanted to be there!"

"My experience this summer exceeded my expectations of Suffolk University. My professor was extremely nice and taught very well. I learned many new things, especially about my research strategies and writing techniques."

Students who completed our Summer U WRI 101 course overwhelmingly reported that they felt connected to their professor (174 out of 184 survey respondents) and to their peers (146 out of 184 respondents), and that the Summer U course prepared them for the Fall semester at Suffolk (168 out of 185 respondents). 75 out of 102 respondents reported that their WRI 101 PBL course changed their thinking about the research they might do in WRI 102.

With that success, Summer U is likely to become a regular offering, even beyond the pandemic.

Elsewhere, we worked to unify students in the room with those on Zoom; we turned physical field trips into virtual field trips; we worked a lot of bugs out of a lot of hardware and software; and we all chronically felt the psychological weight added to every small decision, every course design choice, every extra-anxious and awkward Zoom, every route through every building, every sign of distress in our students we had to watch for more closely than ever, even as we were physically so much farther away from them. Most days, we mostly succeeded. Some days, we just got through. But we got through. FA 20 ended. And as SP21 promises more of the same, we're going to keep getting through.

Brief interviews with English Alums

Kyle T. Sullivan, English B.A. 2010

STX: Describe your career since you graduated from Suffolk.

KTS: After college I received a J.D. from Boston College Law School, where I interned at the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Attorney's Office. I have worked in financial services since graduating from BC and I currently work as an associate attorney in the investment management practice group of an international law firm.

STX: In what ways has your course work/degree in English helped you in your professional life?

KTS: The ability to read and think critically, and to communicate clearly, are the essence of any law practice. Suffolk's English department helped me hone these skills. I use them all day, every day as a lawyer.

STX: What advice can you offer for students who are interested in an English major, but whose parents are skeptical of its value toward their future careers?

KTS: The critical-thinking and communication skills that an English major learns have virtually unlimited applications in the "real world." I've found that it is precisely these skills that set people apart in professional settings. English majors who remain open to a variety of career opportunities will find that their education is a tremendous asset and in no way a hindrance.

STX: What advice do you have for current English majors as they think about transitioning from college to the workforce?

KTS: It's no secret that there aren't enough seats at the table in academia for every graduating English major, even if that's what we all want. But don't be discouraged! Try your hand at anything and everything. Before long you'll find interests that you didn't know you had, and the skills you learned as an English major at Suffolk will help you flourish.

STX: Describe something you learned the hard way that your advice here could help current undergrads learn the easy way.

KTS: Don't focus on one "goal," be it a career in academia, writing, or anything else, to the exclusion of other opportunities. Keep an open mind and you'll be pleasantly surprised by where you find yourself.

Q. Miller Again Hears the Call of the Isle

Postponed, study abroad course in Ireland will run in SP22

Shocking though it may seem, I was once twenty years old. Like many twenty-year-olds, I was a little impulsive. This was pre-Internet, so the flow of information was slow. You had to read pieces of paper thumbtacked to bulletin boards if you wanted to hear about cool things around campus.

My younger self spotted an announcement. I knew my college had a year-long program in Ireland, but I never seriously considered studying abroad. A massive idea sprouted in my head and took instant root. Why not apply, thought I? Only one problem: the deadline was the next day!

No problem, it turned out: I applied, I was accepted, and the excitement began.

I was the youngest of five children in an era when one parent worked and the other raised the kids. My parents didn't have extra money or extra time, and I'd never been out of the country before. But that trip would change my life in profound ways. I covered western Europe and even ventured beyond the Iron Curtain (which was still a thing). That year, more than any other year in my life, turned me into me.

What this travel did for me

People have different responses to travel. For some, it's escape; for others, relaxation. When I was twenty, it was all about discovery. My journey to Ireland (and the European countries that were just a ferry ride or short plane hop away) was pure education. I became one of those frenzied American youths who shuttled from country to country to take in as much culture as I could: museums, food, film, architecture, music... I devoured all of it. I slept on the luggage racks of trains to save money on hotel fare. I learned how to ask about student discounts in ten different languages. I borrowed a guitar from a street performer and sang two songs for money. (I made about a buck). It was all about squeezing as much experience into one year as I possibly could.

While in Ireland, I developed a few tastes: traditional Irish music, Guinness, and literature. I wrote my master's thesis on James Joyce and thought I would continue to focus my research on the Emerald Isle as I entered my Ph.D. program. But I'm impulsive, remember? My field shifted to American literature.

But I kept looking back. With the retirements of my Suffolk colleagues who taught Irish literature (Pro-

fessors Mandl, Millner, and McKinley), I felt the urge to dust off my notebooks and develop a new course. Further, I thought our English majors deserved the kind of study abroad experience I had, even if only on a small scale.

Hence, this new course.

ENG 120:

"From Ireland to America (and Back Again) studies Irish and Irish-American literature."

If there is a theme to modern and contemporary Irish literature and history, it involves migration, both from and to Ireland. Ireland has always been characterized by invasion and exile. Classic Irish books confront this reality as a persistent theme. Joyce's great story collection *Dubliners* is all about fantasies of flight and painful return. Many Irish citizens have come to America—especially to Boston—for what the Land of Opportunity promises. And yet, much literature written by Irish Americans frames a longing for the old country. You may leave Ireland, these works say, but you never really do. This is how culture is preserved.

In this course, students will...

In my course, nineteen students and I will read literature from both sides of the Atlantic to trace the back-and-forth movement that reveals the pressure and beauty of what it means to be from Ireland. In addition to reading classics from the Irish tradition, we'll analyze contemporary works from those whose ancestors left their homeland—often with great emotional pain—to build a life in America. During spring break, we'll travel to Dublin, not only to encounter attempts to preserve Irish literary heritage, but also to experience the trip back and forth across the Atlantic reflected in the literature we read.

Now that I'm twenty-eight, I have a different perspective on travel, on Ireland, and on literature, but I haven't lost my desire to learn from books and from travel. I'm looking forward to this leg of the journey with the students who will join me. I hope it is, for at least some of them, their first trip abroad—and far from their last.

— Quentin Miller

Conferences, awards, talks, teaching news, research, travel

JOSÉ ARAGUZ taught in his first residency as part of the Solstice low-residency MFA Program at Pine Manor College in January, 2020. During the ten day residency, he taught the craft class "Creating the Moon: Poetic Authority and Hybrid Forms," led four graduate level poetry workshops, and participated in a faculty reading.

He also recently read as part of The Liminal Reading Series at the MIT Press Bookstore with poet Ariana Reines on February 8. He also participated in a #TAKEOVERTUESDAY on April 28 through the Instagram account of the literary magazine *Pretty Owl Poetry*. The event involved a series of "day in a poet's life" posts, a question and answer session about writing craft, and an Instagram Live poetry reading later in the evening.

He also participated in the "2020 Vision—Writing Social Justice for Today" virtual panel hosted by the Solstice Low-residency MFA Program as part of their summer residency in July.

He participated in "The New Faces of Indie Publishing" panel representing *Salamander* during the 2020 Association of Writers & Writing Programs (AWP) conference in San Antonio, TX.

He also recently served as a judge for the Oregon Poetry Association's "Spanish Language Contest"; a guest poetry juror for the Delaware Division of the Arts Writers Retreat; a writing contest judge for the Morse Hamilton Prize given by Tufts University in Boston; a poetry panelist for the MAAF New Jersey State Council for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowships.

SALAMANDER MAGAZINE had its issue #49 release party on Feb. 20. It published its 50th issue this past July, including work by Rajiv Mohabir, Anne Kilfoyle, Joan Naviyuk Kane, and Kathryn Nuernberger, among others. They hosted a virtual reading celebrating the issue on Oct. 30 featuring Mohabir, Kane, and Kilfoyle (see this issue of *Syntax*, p. 5).

The journal is also happy to share that past contributors Beth Suter and Julia Story had their previous *Salamander* poems featured in Mass Poetry's online series *The Hard Work of Hope* in fall 2020.

ELIF ARMBRUSTER spoke with NECN "Suffolk in the City" student reporter Sean Cushing about the book *Little Women*, how Greta Gerwig retold the story for a contemporary audience using a feminist lens and how the lead actors differed from earlier portrayals. The piece ran on Dec. 18th, which was declared "Little Women Day" in Boston. She presented a paper at NeMLA in Boston in March. She served on a panel commemorating the 100th anniversary of the death of William Dean Howells and spoke on "The Modernity of A Modern Instance: From 'Equity' to Excess." She wrote a book review essay of three #MeToo memoirs which is under review at *Journal of Women's Studies*. Last fall, she brought award-winning memoirist (*The Body Papers*), Grace Talusan to Suffolk, when she both visited her English and SF "Nasty Women and Rebel Girls" classes and led a writing workshop in the Poetry Center. Afterwards, she interviewed Talusan during an event at the Boston Athenaeum to launch of the pa-

perback of her memoir. Armbruster brought her "Nasty Women and Rebel Girls" ENG and SF students to hear Boston College Professor Lori Harrison-Kahan discuss her work on Miriam Michelson's journalism. She also took students in those classes to the Museum of Fine Arts, "Women Take the Floor," exhibit, commemorating 100 years of suffrage. Finally, she accepted the invitation to be the faculty sponsor for the new NARAL-Pro Choice group at Suffolk.

WYATT BONIKOWSKI's Creativity and Innovation course, Creative Writing and Literacy, is a service learning course in which Suffolk students work with creative writing students at the nonprofit 826 Boston, and, as we all did, had to adapt quickly to going online as the pandemic hit. Read more on Suffolk's website at suffolk.edu/news-features/news/2020/04/28/15/39/undergraduate-tutors-innovate-ways-to-connect-with-their-elementary-age-pupils. 826 Boston also did a story on their website at: <https://826boston.org/news/april-break-2020/>

BARRETT BOWLIN ran a panel with Heather Bartlett and Kathryn Henion, as part of Ithaca, New York's Spring Writes Literary Festival, called "Total Submission: Understanding the Kinks and Quirks of Literary Magazines."

Since it became a Zoom event, like so many others, you can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRZpblb-2yA&feature=youtu.be>

LESLIE ECKEL taught a new Honors Seminar in English on American Writers Abroad in Spring 2020, which followed themes of consumption, liberation, and critique in the writing of Ernest Hemingway, James Baldwin, Margaret Fuller, and others.

She taught the Literary Criticism Seminar on "Chasing Moby-Dick" in Fall 2020, during which students took virtual field trips to Herman Melville's home, Arrowhead, in the Berkshires and the New Bedford Whaling Museum.

She also presented a paper titled "From Community to Cult: Utopian and Dystopian Failure at Oneida" at a virtual conference organized by C19: The Society of Nineteenth-Century Americanists in October 2020. She joined the team of general editors for *The Collected Writings of Margaret Fuller*, currently under review at Edinburgh University Press.

HANNAH HUDSON presented "Reviewing Before Genre: Gendered Reception, the Gothic, and The Public Good" at the Aphra Behn and Frances Burney Societies Conference at Auburn University, Alabama. This research explores the way that eighteenth-century book reviewers used gendered language and claims for public moral benefit to delineate the boundaries of new and emerging literary genres.

QUENTIN MILLER presented on a roundtable panel at the MLA Convention in Seattle in Jan.; the topic was "Finding Work for the Devil: James Baldwin on Film." He gave a paper titled "Chiaroscuro in The Work of Beauford Delaney and in Baldwin's 'Sonny's Blues'" at a symposium on James Baldwin and the painter Beauford Delaney in

Knoxville, Tennessee in February. Finally, he spoke on a roundtable at Suffolk sponsored by the Black Student Union and the History Club on the "1619 Project," a work of recuperative journalism by the *New York Times*.

AMY MONTICELLO earned tenure and was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor.

KAYLIN O'DELL presented a chapter from her book project at the Jan. Modern Language Association Convention in Seattle. The chapter is titled "Make Merry the Mind: Gathering Wisdom and Experience in the Old English Solomon and Saturn Dialogues."

RUTH PRAKASAM presented "Translating Identities: An Englishwoman's Residence in India" on a Roundtable, "Unflattening the Encounter: Translation, Travel, and Place" at the Northeast MLA in Boston on March 7.

ANITA SHARMA was named a 2019-2022 Barr Foundation Fellow for Civic Leadership by The Barr Foundation. (<https://www.barr-foundation.org/barr-fellowship>), and she was named a Top Women of Law- Circle of Excellence- Honoree by Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly (<https://masslawyersweekly.com/top-women-of-law/honorees/>).

BRYAN TRABOLD gave a talk as part of Boston University's African Studies Center Walter Rodney Lecture Series on Oct. 21, presenting from his book *Opposition Journalism: The Weekly Mail and the New Nation in Apartheid South Africa*.

Writer Grace Talusan talks with Professor Elif Armbruster and Suffolk Students



On March 3, 2020—during the unmasked Before Times—the Boston Athenaeum hosted a conversation between Professor Elif Armbruster (left) and Grace Talusan, author of *The Body Papers*, a memoir of her immigrant family, childhood trauma, confronting a family history of cancer, and claiming/ reclaiming her identities and experiences as an adult. The event was part of a series titled "Women, Agency, and the Meaning of Home." An excerpt from this full-length nonfiction work was also published in *Salamander* Issue #47 (Fall/Winter 2018-2019). Even farther in the past (but still since the last issue of *Syntax*), on November 21, 2019, Suffolk's First-Year Seminar program sponsored another event in Suffolk's Poetry Center with Talusan, in which she led students in several generative writing exercises and a craft talk about writing.

Scholarly, Creative, and Professional Publications

JOSÉ ANGEL ARAGUZ

Poem: "American Studies" in *Dear America: Letters of Hope, Habitat, Defiance, and Democracy* edited by Terrain.org editors Simmons Buntin, Elizabeth Dodd, and Derek Sheffield, published by Trinity University Press on the 50th Earth Day. <https://tupress.org/9781595349125/dear-america/>

Poem: "La Llorona Watches the Movie 'Troy'" included in the anthology *The Breakbeat Poets Volume 4: LatiNEXT*, published by Haymarket Books, 2020.

Poems: "The Things to Fight Against" and "Selena: a study of recurrence/ worry" were included in *Dreaming: a tribute to Selena*, an anthology dedicated to the slain Tejano singer published by FlowerSong Books, 2020.

Poem: "When a colleague says 'I respect your background, you know, wherever you are from'" in *NCTE English Journal*.

Poem: "Confessions of a Former Scarecrow" in *Prairie Schooner* Volume 94 No. 3, Fall 2020.

Poems: "Wax Lips" and "Pavlovian" in *The Laurel Review* Issue 53.1, Spring 2020.

Poems: "Negative" and "To a Corkscrew" in *Spacecraft Project* <https://spacecraftproject.files.wordpress.com/2020/09/negative-and-other-poems-by-josecc81-angel-araguz-1.pdf>

Poems: "Youth" and "To Silence" published in *Pangyrus*.

Interview by John Sibley Williams for the *Grist Writing Life Blog*: "'There is a darkness to the reverie': An Interview with José Angel Araguz." <https://gristjournal.com/there-is-a-darkness-to-the-reverie-an-interview-with-jose-angel-araguz-by-john-sibley-williams/>

Book reviews: On his blog, *The*

Friday Influence (thefridayinfluence.com), Araguz reviewed: *MyOTHER TONGUE* by Rosa Alcalá (poetry); *Primitivity* by Amy Sayre Baptista (fiction); *Word Has It* by Ruth Danon (poetry); *Cenote City* by Monique Quintana (fiction); *Slingshot* by Cyrée Jarelle Johnson (poetry); *Heart Like a Window, Mouth Like a Cliff* by Sara Borjas (poetry); and *Life, One Not Attached to Conditionals* by Laura Cesarco Eglin.

Poem: "Gloves" featured by poet Amy Miller in a creative writing educational video produced by "We Are Story: with Kirsten Giroux" as part of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's Education/Engagement department.

ELIF ARMBRUSTER

Essay: "Ants Becomes Giants: The Pioneering Perspective of Laura Ingalls Wilder" in *Gendered Ecologies: New Materialist Interpretations of Women Writers in the Long Nineteenth Century* by Clemson University & Liverpool University Presses.

Essay: "Reading in Three Dimensions: Using Material Culture to Teach The House of Mirth and The Age of Innocence". In Ferda Asya's (Ed.), *Teaching Edith Wharton's Major Novels and Short Fiction* (pp. 15). New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030527419#aboutAuthors>

Essay: "Teaching the #MeToo Memoir: Creating Empathy In the First Year College Classroom," in *#MeToo and Literary Studies: Reading, Teaching, and Writing about Sexual Violence and Rape Culture*, Mary Holland & Heather Hewett eds. London: Bloomsbury U.K.

WYATT BONIKOWSKI

Short story: "Seas of the Moon," in the current issue of *Lake Effect* #24.

Academic article: "'The Juniper Tree'

as Primal Scene: English-Language Literary Adaptations Since 1985," in the current issue of the journal *Marvels & Tales*, 33.2. See abstract at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.13110/marvelstales.33.2.0235?refreqid=excelsior%3A021c88cfd5c3f7d512c2d-9da883c5b83&seq=1>

BARRETT BOWLIN

Essay: "Still Alive, Mostly" published in *The Fiddlehead* 281(1), Autumn 2019. Print.

Essay: "Slow Learner" published in *Waxwing*, Issue 19, Fall 2019. <http://waxwingmag.org/items/issue19/42-Bowlin-Slow-Learner.php>

Essay: "Where you're from" forthcoming in *Barrelhouse*, Spring 2021.

Flash nonfiction: "Red Hands" published in *Hobart*, May 22, 2020. https://www.hobartpulp.com/web_features/red-hands

Essay: "Spaz" published in *Stone Canoe* 15.1; Winter 2020.

Short story: "Heavy Petting," *The Saturday Evening Post* Nov. 20. <https://www.saturdayeveningpost.com/2020/11/heavy-petting/>

Fiction: "Snuff Film" forthcoming in *The Shanghai Literary Review* 6.1, Winter 2021.

Flash fiction: "Rough Beast" in *Coffin Bell* Vol. 3 Issue 3. <https://coffinbell.com/rough-beast/>

Author interview: "No Shortage of Creepy: an Interview with Jennifer Pashley" published in *Fiction Writers Review*, December 1, 2020. <https://fictionwritersreview.com/interview/no-shortage-of-creepy-an-interview-with-jennifer-pashley/>

Author interview: "Hurts and Old Feelings: an Interview with David James Poissant" published in *Fiction*

Writers Review, June 29, 2020. <https://fictionwritersreview.com/interview/hurts-and-old-feelings-an-interview-with-david-james-poissant/>

Author interview: "Not So Deadly Serious: an Interview with Amber Sparks" published in *Fiction Writers Review*, February 10, 2020. <https://fictionwritersreview.com/interview/not-so-deadly-serious-an-interview-with-amber-sparks/>

HANNAH HUDSON

Academic article: "Imitation, Intertextuality, and The Minerva Press Novel," in *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840* 23 (Summer 2020), pp. 149-167.

Book chapter: "Gothic Before Gothic: Minerva Press Reviews, Gender, and the Evolution of Genre," in *Women's Authorship and the Early Gothic: Innovations and Legacies*, ed. Kathleen Hudson, University of Wales Press, 2020, pp. 43-64.

Book review: "Review of *Writing in Public: Literature and the Liberty of the Press in Eighteenth-Century Britain*," by Trevor Ross (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2018). *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 33.1 (2020), pp. 148-150.

PETER JEFFREYS

Poem: "The Spoils of Ibrahim" published in *Mediterranean Poetry*. <https://www.odyssey.pm/contributors/peter-jeffreys-2/>

Poem: "Saint Sophia's Seraphim" in *The National Herald*: https://www.thenationalherald.com/archive_guest_columnists/arthro/poem_saint_sophia_s_seraphim-603621/

A Greek translation will appear in the Greek literary journal *Χάρτης*: <https://www.hartismag.gr/periehomena>

GEORGE KALOGERIS

Composer Paul Brantley has set one

of Kalogeris's translations to music, a lyric by Friedrich Hölderlin, and has been performing it online. It's entirely instrumental, but inspired by the poetry. Listen to "Hölderlin Renderings" at <https://soundcloud.com/paul-brantley-music/holderlin-renderings?in=paul-brantley-music/sets/vocal-chamber-music-demo>

JON LEE

Poem "Plague Anatomy" published in *The Lily Poetry Review Anthology* <https://lilypoetryreview.blog/news/new-anthology-released>

Poem: "[My father's father fought in WWII--]" forthcoming in *The Limberlost Review* in early 2021.

Poem: "In Purgatory Chasm State Reservation" published in *Sugar House Review*, vol.11,2019,p22.

Craft essay: "The Rise of the Post-Human Poem," accepted by *The Writer's Chronicle*.

QUENTIN MILLER

Literature anthology: 12th edition of the *Compact Bedford Introduction to Literature*, Bedford St. Martin's / Macmillan, 2020, co-edited with Michael Meyer

Literature anthology: 4th edition of *Literature to Go*, Bedford St. Martin's / Macmillan, 2020, co-edited with Michael Meyer.

Academic article: "Behind Bars: The Current State of U.S. Prison Literature," in *Incarceration and Race in Michigan: Grounding the National Debate in State Practice*, ed. Lynn Orilla Scott and Curtis Stokes, Michigan State University Press, 2019.

AMY MONTICELLO

Essay: "My Only Child Scatters My Ashes" published in *CALYX* Vol. 31 No. 3 Winter/Spring 2020.

Essay: "Scorched Earth" published in *Hoxie Gorge Review* Issue 3, Winter

2020. <https://hoxiegorgereview.com/amy-monticello/?fbclid=IwAR2n-VFta2VzssjcqdlqCL0lk6DQyJKwM-kOfpwskwuwkrAlnKk18NRBaehA>

Essay: "Fancy & Me" in *Esperanza* Summer 2020.

Essay: "Not Nothing" accepted by, *Brevity*, forthcoming May 2021.

KAYLIN O'DELL

Academic article: "Modern Marginalia: Using Digital Annotation in the Composition Classroom," published in *Computers and Composition* in April. See abstract at <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S8755461520300311?via%3Dihub> See also this issue of *Syntax* p. 12.)

GERRY WAGGETT

Short story: "Suicide Insurance" in online mystery magazine *Mystery Weekly* in the August issue, shows that winning the lottery is not always the best thing that can happen to a person, especially not a pair of brothers who rob liquor stores for a living. Waggett said story was inspired by playing the numbers for his mother as well as teaching Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" in his literature classes. <https://www.mysteryweekly.com/issues/suicide>

Short story: "Up the Chimney He Rose," in the December issue of *Mystery Weekly Magazine*. This one is a locked-room mystery set during the holiday season. He said he'll be sending copies of the magazine out in lieu of Christmas cards. <https://mysteryweekly.com/issues/upchimney>

DA ZHENG

Biography: *Shih-I Hsiung: A Glorious Showman*, published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. The book chronicles the life and work of Chinese playwright and novelist Shih-I Hsiung.

Steal *This* Lesson

Amid the noise of so much poorly designed and poorly used software many have been flinging at the wall of pandemic pedagogy, here's one free program some ENG faculty have found to be useful for what we do.

We're all rightly resistant to the clumsy practice of throwing technology into our courses just because we have it or because someone else has a crush on it. Any tool should have a purpose that works toward the goals of specific courses and lessons. And the benefits of using it have to outweigh the cognitive burdens of learning to use it.

In pandemic times, when so much happens digitally, even the smallest added weights feel so much heavier, so we may be more prone to stripping our courses down, rather than packing more stuff in.

But Perusall is one program that several ENG faculty have found to actually be helpful when trying to get students to analyze texts, especially in the digital environments that dominated the previous year, will likely dominate the next, and will remain be a permanent part of higher ed. And if you are currently teaching at Suffolk, you already have access to it. It's already available in the Tools menu in each course's Blackboard page.

It's a tool that lets you annotate documents like PDFs and even whole web pages (Perusall makes a copy). But it allows you a lot of control over how that happens. You could annotate something to present to students; you could have students use it in their own annotations for research, you can create individual, group, or whole-class assignments and discussions using its annotation functions.

So, rather than, say, a Blackboard discussion thread, a conversation of marginal annotations among the whole class, and the professor as well. All of us who have struggled to get students talking in synchronous Zoom meetings know the pain of all our preparation and leading questions landing in that chasm of dead digital silence.

As cartoon chicken Foghorn Leghorn once said when another character didn't laugh at his jokes, "I'm cutting, but you ain't bleeding!"

"If your class isn't talking, this is a good way to get them talking," said Kaylin O'Dell. "It's a supplement to discussion that, this semester, has turned into a more primary mode. And it's preparatory work we can then use during class time to build verbal discussions and activities."

In her Medieval course, she's used Perusall to have students annotate PDFs of documents they oth-

The screenshot displays the Perusall web application interface. At the top, the Perusall logo is followed by a breadcrumb trail: "test course > Ieshia Evans Image". To the right, there's a "Page 1" indicator, a refresh button, and a search icon. Further right are links for "All comments", a help icon, and a user profile for "JT Jason Tucker".

On the left, a sidebar titled "test course" contains a list of navigation items: "My Courses", "Course home", "Settings", "Gradebook", "Student view", "Notifications", "Notes", and "Add to my calendar". Below this is a "Readings" section with a "Library" list containing "Ieshia Evans: Meet the P..." and "Ieshia Evans Image", which is currently selected. At the bottom of the sidebar is a "Chats" section.

The main content area shows a photograph of a woman in a long, patterned dress standing in front of a line of police officers in riot gear. The image is annotated with several circular markers. A right-hand panel titled "All conversations" displays a list of annotations made by users, including comments like "All the officers' faces are hidden while Evans' face is defiantl...", "Ieshia Evans holds a poised, dignified posture.", "Evans holds her arms firmly, but deliberately offering the...", "Both police approach cautiously, but their recoiled posture s...", "The imbalance of the image, with Evans alone on one sid...", and "As Teju Cole observed, her skirt billows around her, reminis...".

erwise couldn't access.

She also found it useful in getting students to discuss Geoffrey Chaucer's "The Miller's Tale."

"I get them into breakout rooms at the start of class, where they look at the annotations. I'll go through them beforehand and prompt specific students to talk about their specific annotation. 'You had a good one! Say more!'"

"They each focus on really specific things, even if they're all looking at the same passage, so I ask groups to look through annotations and use them to pull all the data they can from the passage, then I ask, 'Now, what kinds of arguments could you make based on what you pulled? That's when the purpose hits, because that's what I'm asking them to do in their papers too.'"

Sometimes, after small group work in breakout rooms, she pairs that group with another so they can share and discuss their separate findings.

Low-stakes uses like these can be great for class activity, but you can also create Blackboard assignments small and large involving Perusall.

"It's been kind of a lifesaver in Medieval Lit, and it helped me see where they are and what they are and aren't understanding. Then I can give them nudges and specific attention if they don't quite understand a text or are struggling with some context.

Last April, O'Dell published a paper based on research she did with undergraduates at Cornell University on student engagement and using annotation software in the composition classroom. The software was different but both in terms of the privacy issues and the functionality, she assures us Perusall is a vast improvement over what was available even in recent years.

She recommends: Set up Perusall in advance of when you want to use it. You don't have to have it ready at the beginning of class, just when students will need it. Also: Be active when you're doing annotations. Ask questions and prompt answers. Answer student questions in their annotations. In social media fashion, you can tag them in a comment, and use that to prompt them to interact with other specific students or address specific things. You (and they) can also use emojis, links, and other features of internet culture. Showing them that the annotation conversation can be a lively and active space energizes and motivates them, shows them that you value this activity, and models how scholars and professionals struggle together to make meanings of information.

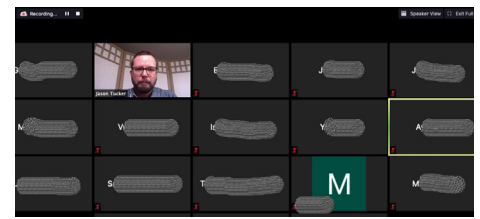
Another use

Amy Monticello used Perusall in FA20 to assign students to annotate a PDF of the course syllabus before the first class. That way, they had to read it, but they also had to locate specific things and pose clarifying questions.

The tool is already in Blackboard. To create an easy link in the menu for your course, go to a specific course's Blackboard page, click the + symbol at the top of the left menu. Choose "Tool Link," under "Type," choose "Perusall" from the drop menu, and click "Available to Users."

Using written text for this is simple. To annotate an image you'll need to make it into a PDF, since it won't accept typical photo file types. If a website you link to has an image, the image will display, but for websites, the annotation feature will only work on the written text. To annotate an image, download it, export it as a PDF, then upload to Perusall.

Coping with muted cameras



Do you often feel alone in the Zoom void? Do you make this face too? It's not just you. Everywhere, faculty struggle with muted cameras. We can't force students to turn them on, but can encourage. There are issues of bandwidth and privacy for students' home situations. On the other hand are many reasons we need to see students faces. English faculty generally agreed that making our reasons plain to students helps. With muted cameras, we can't see if our efforts are working. If we see confused or disengaged faces, we can pivot. If we see a nod or other sign of attention, we can build on it, get energy from it, see who may have an idea but need to be called to share it. A whole layer of visual conversation and classroom socialization is lost with muted cameras. Those in the room can't choose to hide their faces. If Zoom and room expectations are the same, then unnecessarily muting cameras is unfair. Class is better, we teach better, and we serve our students better when we can see their faces. As with disability accommodations, we must offer other means of participation. Requiring more verbal engagement or the Zoom chat function are options. Some schedule meetings with each student to build a rapport early on. Briefly muted cameras are different from those muted for weeks on end. It seems the greatest successes came to faculty who worked to build a culture of the class from the beginning where cameras were on, and everyone knew good reasons why beyond "because I said so."

Pandemic pedagogies

A few faculty discuss teaching in digitally mediated classrooms

1. In teaching online and/or in a blended synchronous classroom, what have you lost? What can you not do that used to work well face-to-face?

ELIF ARMBRUSTER: The only thing I feel we've really lost is spontaneous laughter, something I and my students miss hearing. Many students are still laughing, but we can only see this not hear it!

WYATT BONIKOWSKI: I've lost the sense of spontaneity that comes from freely flowing in-person conversation. Zoom can be very stilted. Everyone is muted to prevent feedback, but it also prevents the sound of laughter, the spontaneous interjection. For me, at least, this means class discussion--which has always been a primary component in my teaching--is more formal and more awkward. Some of this is offset by the chat that can happen on the side, but Zoom often feels much quieter than an in-person classroom.

LESLIE ECKEL: Large group discussions have been tough via Zoom! The platform seems to widen the gap between those students who are super engaged and ready to answer every question and those who prefer to listen quietly (and often invisibly) in class. Small group tasks in breakout rooms, which then feed into a larger class discussion, have been working a bit better.

PETER VILBIG: For me the biggest missing factor is not having those easygoing moments before and after class or during transitions where you can chat a bit. Those moments are so beneficial for trust building.

GERRY WAGGETT: I'm sure we all feel this way, but the lack of a personal connection is a big loss. Even that moment when students are walking into the classroom, and I wish them good morning by name starts the class off on a tone I like. Unfortunately, I can only do that for the select few who come to the classroom. I can address the students on the screen by name, but the personal touch is lost.

2. In teaching online and/or blended synchronous, what have you gained? What can you do that you could not do in your face-to-face classes?

ELIF ARMBRUSTER: What my students and I have gained is a safer space for the shyer or more anxious students who feel more sure of themselves, either with video off or by sending me comments and questions in the Zoom chat rather than having to speak up in front of everyone else. There also seems to be a more immediate, one-on-one connection with students because they can focus on you, the teacher, and you alone if they wish. Overall, I would say there are fewer distractions for the students in terms of not being distracted by what students next to and around them are doing (such as whispering or trying to look at their phones).

WYATT BONIKOWSKI: Because I assign weekly discussion board posts, I feel like I can hear from more of my students about their informal views of the texts we're reading than I would in an in-person class, where I would rely more on in-class discussion. With discussion posts, the quieter students in class have more of a voice.

GERRY WAGGETT: I find that I'm not as much of a stickler for punctuality anymore. As someone who worries about my own equipment when teaching from home and my internet connection, I realize that some students may not be able to sign on easily. Also, because they are not walking into the classroom while I'm talking, I don't worry about the distraction.

3. What new assignments, lessons, activities, etc. have you developed to cope with our current constraints?

ELIF ARMBRUSTER: We have a lot more "discussions" on the Discussion Board in BB than I previously had in my online courses and more frequent "how are you doing?" check-ins. I am connecting the coursework with the contemporary environment much more than I might typically, such as asking students to have a "presidential debate" of their own and/or watching and noting rhetorical devices in the actual presidential debate (if you can call that a debate!), and writing obituaries for Ruth Bader Ginsberg, based both on what they knew and what they found from research.

My courses have also made plentiful use of the amazing new archive at Harvard's Schlesinger Library on #MeToo (launched in May 2020). It is phenomenal, and my students loved spending virtual time there and researching specific topics.

WYATT BONIKOWSKI: I have been experimenting with collaborative assignments that can be done asynchronously or synchronously, depending on the purpose of the assignment. For example, to get students to pay attention to the unusual language H. P. Lovecraft uses in his horror stories to describe the indescribable, impossible creatures he creates, I have each student choose an unusual word from his stories and add it and its dictionary definition to a Google doc. The next step is to create a Lovecraftian scene, set in the present day, in a separate Google doc, with each student writing one sentence using one of these words (NOT the word they originally chose).

I also assigned presentations, both individual and group, to allow students to explore topics related to the course but not covered in class. So far it seems that doing presentations on Zoom is less nerve-wracking than in front of an in-person class.

LESLIE ECKEL: I did the virtual trip to Melville's Arrowhead, and it went pretty well. The students were very interested to learn more about Melville's life, especially his time living among "cannibals" in the South Pacific, but the Zoom connection kept dropping on their end, which meant we couldn't walk through some of the rooms in person.

GERRY WAGGETT: To compensate for not being able to give quizzes, I've been assigning more response papers to assess that the reading is being done. This is in addition to the Journals, which call for more reflection on the reading. The result has been an overload of writing on both ends, which tends to confuse the students.

4. What are you noticing in our students that's different from previous years?

ELIF ARMBRUSTER: They seem more present and accounted for; I have had a 0% absent rate thus far, 5 weeks in! They seem less distracted and more committed, perhaps because they have far fewer demands and distractions on them, including even, a social life. Seems to work being at home or being in a single.

PETER VILBIG: activities have to have really clear instructions and clear goals with responsibility assigned, since you can't monitor things the way you can in the live classroom.

GERRY WAGGETT: Students are experiencing a lot more

uncertainty. They need assignments spelled out in minute detail and often repeated by me in class.

5. If you are teaching a hybrid or "hyflex" class that has students attending both in person and online, what are the strengths and weaknesses of that model, as you're experiencing them?

PETER VILBIG: So far I'd say my first experience teaching a hybrid class has been going reasonably well. The classes feel like real classes. There's discussion, to and fro, some of the same nice moments (and awkward ones) as a typical in-person class. In the live classroom it's so comparatively easy to pick up on ways students might be getting off track. It's much harder on Zoom, and the shuttle between in-class and Zoom even makes picking up on the in-class situation more challenging. The Zoom breakout rooms are key, and I've gotten students pretty used to my visiting the rooms, and my feeling is they're by and large buying into the need to stay on point.

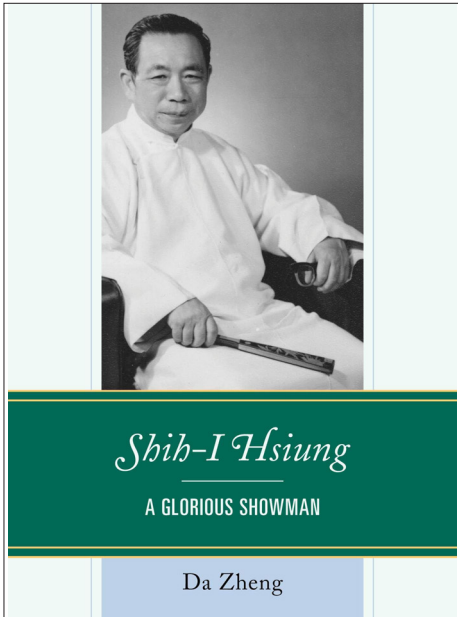
Another issue is how divided the in-class students are from the Zoomers. I'm guessing I'm the last to figure this out, but next week I'm going to have in-class students join the Zoom sessions so I can have them work with other students in the breakout rooms.

As far as benefits go, I think the format both requires and offers a chance for students to be more proactive. I'd like to see the classes set up their own messaging board—I don't think either has done that yet. I may encourage it, and discover whether there's any interest. I'd want that to be something they did on their own.

GERRY WAGGETT: One of the problems with the issue I struggle with is favoritism. I find myself fighting against the instinct to play to the room versus the camera. I try not to give the students in the classroom first shot at answering questions. The lack of connection proves even truer for students who view your class asynchronously and communicate with you solely through email. I've been dealing with this last group by setting up Zoom conferences one-on-one with my asynchronous students.

Peer review is harder with asynchronous students. It's not easy to keep track if a student has their paper ready for review or is giving adequate time to review the other student's work. I've tried to incorporate them, but have had to reassign students to different partners when the asynchronous student doesn't respond or doesn't respond in a timely manner.

Da Zheng publishes biography; prepares for retirement



On Dec. 3, 2020, Da Zheng gave his final open lecture performance as a Suffolk English professor. He plans to retire at the close of the Spring 2021 semester. Held via Zoom to a sizable audience from across the university, Zheng's talk highlighted his new book, which examines the transnational and transcultural life of Shih-I Hsiung, a playwright and scholar who

bridged Chinese and Western cultures in the mid-20th century.

The book (left) took years of exhaustive research and compiling a mountain of documents and other primary texts, as well as examining Hsiung's creative work. The photo (right) was taken in 2011, in front of the Iffley Turn House in Oxford, England, where SI Hsiung and his family lived from 1943–1949.

Zheng started at Suffolk as an instructor and tutor in 1991 and became full-time faculty in 1994 after graduation from Boston University.

In his long career here, he has taught a broad range of subjects, including courses in English Lit., American Lit., World Lit., and of course his area of specialty, Asian American literature.

He's published extensively. His books include *The Silent Traveler in the West*; *Chiang Yee*, *The Silent Traveler from the East: A Cultural Biography*; and *Moral Economy and American Realistic Novels*. His book on Chiang Lee won the Chinese American Librarians Association's



"Best Book" award. He currently has two books under contract. He's published articles in both English and Chinese, in a broad range of journals, and has delivered papers both nationally and internationally, at conferences in Canada, England, Scotland, Ireland, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan.

He has given extensive service to Suffolk University, most notably as the Director of the Asian Studies Program.

He also served on a broad range of committees for the college and the English Department.

Marlene McKinley retires



Professor Marlene McKinley retired following the SP20 semester after 44 years at Suffolk. Joining the department in September 1976, she created the department's Medieval literature course, and taught first-year writing, British literature, American literature, and Irish literature classes. In 1982 and again in 1988, Pro-

fessor McKinley took students to Ireland and England for a two-week literary tour. She published articles on the work of Tolkien and the novels of Charles Williams, wrote biographical sketches on William Thomas McKinley, and created material to accompany a significant amount of his musical scores. She has delivered papers at numerous national and interna-

tional conferences, including in Canada, Germany, and Australia. She was a guest university lecturer on Medieval literature to undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. She participated in a one-hour radio broadcast for ABC National Radio of Australia, "Literary Dreams and Visions." She gave a radio interview on J.R.R. Tolkien, in addition to reading passages from Tolkien's work, in Cologne, Germany, among other achievements. She was a member of several college and department committees over the years.

Most notable in her service was founding Suffolk's chapter of the English Honor Society Sigma Tau Delta and serving as Eastern Regent. In this capacity, she organized and hosted an Eastern Regional Conference held at Suffolk University and the Parker House. As part of the Sigma Tau Delta Lecture Series, Professor McKinley was able to bring various prominent speakers and visitors to campus, including Edward Albee, Grace Paley, Robert Pinsky, and Henry Louis Gates, Jr.