



THE ENGLISH AGGIE

November 2013

www.english.tamu.edu

Texas A&M University— Department of English Undergraduate Studies

Mechanical Engineering...and English?

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Spring 2014 Schedule

Next semester's course schedule has been posted on Howdy. Visit one of your Undergraduate Advisors to make sure you're taking the classes you need to graduate so that when preregistration begins on November 14th, you'll be prepared!

I'm willing to bet that I am the first engineering major to be writing for the English Aggie. Yes, you read that right. My name is Ashley Simmons, and **I am a mechanical engineering major and English minor**. I am one of a rare breed. All right, I won't go that far – but my major and minor combination is rather unusual, as I've come to realize, particularly in the past several months. I spent the summer introducing myself to dozens of new people during my engineering internship and got more than a few surprised looks when I mentioned the details of my degree. At first glance, engineering and English seem like polar opposite academic pursuits, but they exist comfortably side by side in my life.

Literature and writing are my greatest passions, and my English minor is a concession to those interests. Amidst an intense and often, shall I say, dry degree program of math and science, my English classes have been beacons of excitement and fun. Reading poetry and writing papers probably wouldn't be fun for most engineering students, but I'm far from typical.

(Continue reading on Page 2)



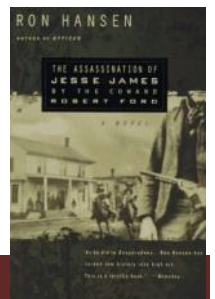
*By Ashley Simmons
MEEN major
English minor
Class of 2013*



author **Ron Hansen** to visit campus

Ron Hansen is a successful novelist and an English professor at Santa Clara University in California. Dr. Hansen will be on campus to visit with students and faculty on November 6-7. For more information about his novels and visit, read more on **Page 7**.

Public Reading, November 6th, 7 pm, LAAH 453



Mechanical Engineering...

(Continued from Page 1)

and English?

By Ashley Simmons, Class of 2013

I chose to major in mechanical engineering despite my natural inclination to the humanities because of the great practicality of science and technology-based degrees – a more predictable job market being the largest draw. I also saw it as an opportunity to become well-rounded; I knew I would always have a strong desire to study literary subjects outside of school, so I pursued engineering in the formal setting of university in order to gain a solid foundation of technical knowledge.

It's no big secret that engineers often have a deservedly bad reputation when it comes to writing, which is a shame, because the best design or technological innovation is essentially worthless if its creator is unable to communicate the necessary details in a written report. To be fair, the standard engineering degree program affords little opportunity for practice, apart from a few scattered assignments here and there, and one technical writing class. In my opinion, however, it's not only technical writing practice that makes one an effective communicator – it's an appreciation for and understanding of language in general, and those are qualities that I think are best nurtured in English classes. I have enjoyed writing every one of my English essays over the past few years, primarily because I have found subjects that intrigue me. I feel compelled to present my arguments and evidence as clearly and effectively as possible in the interest of doing justice to my topics. I have expanded my writing skills and command of language in a way that I could never achieve through technical writing practice alone. It is this kind of fluency in the written word that personifies expert communicators, and communication is critical in the workplace, no matter the industry.

My unique combination of major and minor and the skills they have provided me with is something that I hope will make me stand out to employers as I move into a career.

“...it's not only technical writing practice that makes one an effective communicator – it's an appreciation for and understanding of language in general, and those are qualities that I think are best nurtured in English classes.”



In fact, it's already garnered me some attention this past summer. From June to August I had an internship with a small oilfield tools and services company in Houston, and at the end of the term we interns gave presentations highlighting our work, including, of course, some bits of personal information. I proudly revealed my English affiliation during my slideshow, and I was later approached by not one, but two managers about technical writing positions for next summer; they were intrigued by my dedication to English and writing

alongside my engineering education.

I don't know precisely what the future holds for me, but I can be sure that wherever I go, and whatever I do, I will strive to use my combined English and engineering talents. My personal love of books and writing will hopefully yield a novel or two (or three), and my hard-earned technical skills will hopefully build a successful career in the oil industry. Until then, I will keep carrying my Chaucer textbook into my Solid Mechanics class, and I will continue to understand more of *Ulysses* than I do anything of differential equations. While my chosen profession may be engineering, my innate passion will always be English.

Fall 2013 Course Highlights

SENIOR SEMINARS

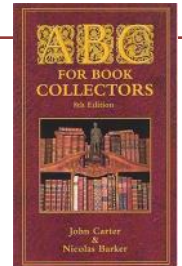


ENGL 481—The Gothic in Literature and Culture With Professor Dennis Berthold

This course will examine one of the most fundamental and popular literary subgenres, the Gothic, in both its British and American manifestations. We will ask questions such as “What is the Gothic, and how did it originate as a literary mode?” and “Why has the Gothic enjoyed a renaissance today (think *Twilight*) and what does that tell us about contemporary culture?”

ENGL 481—History of the Book With Dr. Craig Kallendorf

This is a senior seminar on the history of the book, with a focus on how this information can deepen appreciation of literary and rhetorical texts for English majors. We shall consider how the concept of the book has evolved from clay tablet to illuminated manuscript to printed volume to computer text.

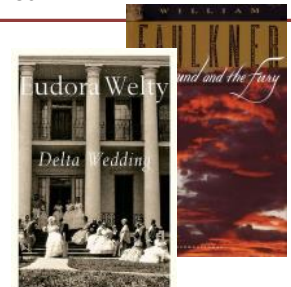


ENGL 481—The Convent in Literature and Film With Janet McCann

This class will look at the particular kind of women's spaces designated as convents as they are represented in literature and film. We will read essays on women's spaces and also descriptions of convents by those who lived in them, and will seek to define the values that underlie these constructions of a life space, and what benefits and disadvantages they incurred.

ENGL 481—Mississippi Modernism With Professor David McWhirter

This senior seminar will focus on the work of American modernist writers William Faulkner, Eudora Welty, and Richard Wright, all born in Mississippi between 1897 and 1909, whose distinctive ideas about and varied representations of “The South” reflect the radically different subject positions from which they experienced and wrote about it.



ENGL 481—American Trauma Fiction With Dr. Larry Oliver

This course will introduce students to trauma theory and explore diverse works of American literature through that conceptual framework. Among the questions we will investigate are “How is trauma related to memory, place, and cultural context in the readings?” and “Is there a distinctive literary ‘trauma style’?”

ENGL 481—The Global, The Local, The Cultural, The Material With Dr. Nandini Bhattacharya

This course looks at the ethos of neoliberal globalization and its political and cultural manifestos, includes debates and discussions about globalization by distinguished writers, and examines literary and cultural productions around the globe that tackle the subject of globalized society and culture.



ENGL 481: Other Topics

◇ **Ranters, Quakers, Others** with Professor Nandra Perry

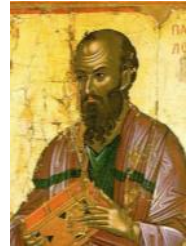


SINGLE AUTHOR COURSES

ENGL 415—Letters of Paul: Classical and Biblical Rhetoric, Women, Liberty

With Dr. C. Jan Swearingen

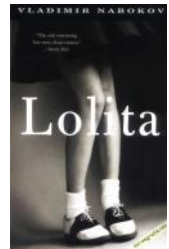
In this course, we will study several of the Apostle Paul's letters, which had a profound impact upon colonial and later American sermons and speeches. We will also study the profound influence of Paul upon later writers, including Augustine and Donne, Equiano, and Frederick Douglass.



ENGL 415—Vladimir Nabokov

With Dr. Apostolos Vasilakis

This course will focus on the work of Vladimir Nabokov. We will follow Nabokov's progression and development as a writer, examine his Russian, European and American period, and see how his narratives constantly address questions of time, memory, and alienation.

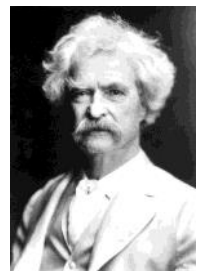


OTHER VARIABLE COURSES

ENGL 373—American Realism and Naturalism

With Professor Dennis Berthold

This course will examine how American literature changed after the Civil War from a predominantly romantic aesthetic to a predominantly realistic one. We will seek a better understanding of these broad terms and how they took literary form as a result of American encounters with European literature, Darwinism, social unrest, and other political and social changes that affected the United States from about 1860-1920.



ENGL 414—John Milton

With Professor Donald Dickson

The aims of this senior-level course are to trace Milton's development as a poet, to explore his poetry and prose as an expression of his own radical libertarianism, and to historicize his life within the context of Puritan utopianism and the English civil war.

Parrish Study Abroad Scholarship

The Undergraduate Studies Office of the Department of English invites applications for the **2014 Linda and Paul Parrish Award for Undergraduate Study Abroad**. A fund of \$1,200 is available to support one student studying or carrying out a research project outside of the United States in calendar year 2014.

To Apply: A statement describing the study abroad program or research project for which you are applying should be submitted to the Undergraduate Office (LAAH 352) by November 27, 2013. Financial need will be taken into consideration in making the award. The applicant should therefore include a statement explaining his or her financial need for the scholarship.



Awards will be announced by mid-December. All projects involving study abroad must be certified through the University Study Abroad Program application process.

Deadline to apply: November 27, 2013

How well do you know your New English Faculty?

The English Department grows a little with each passing year, and it is with great pleasure that we welcome our new English faculty to the department! Though some have been around for several semesters already, we thought it fitting to formally introduce you to the new instructors in the English department—one of whom might just be teaching your class!

BEGAN TEACHING FALL 2012



Dr. Candice Melzow

Dr. Candice Melzow may be a familiar face to many students of English because she taught classes as a Ph.D. student at Texas A&M before officially becoming part of the faculty in fall 2012. Originally from Victoria, Texas, where she received her B.A. and M.A. in English, Dr. Melzow enjoys studying many different aspects of rhetoric, including “multi-modal” and digital rhetoric, which have to do with diverse ways we use rhetoric with a focus on technology (for example: the blogosphere).

While an undergraduate at the University of Houston at Victoria, Dr. started working in the University Writing Center, and spent the next five years

Currently teaching:

- ENGL 104: Composition & Rhetoric
- ENGL 354: Modern Rhetorical Theory
- ENGL 461: Advanced Syntax and Rhetoric

helping students improve their writing. Aside from teaching, Dr. Melzow enjoys kayaking, reading, and spending time with her dogs and cat. One of her favorite authors is Margaret Atwood.



BEGAN TEACHING FALL 2013

Dr. Laura Estill ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

When **Dr. Laura Estill** began working on her undergraduate degree at the University of Windsor in Ontario, she intended to become an actress. However, she quickly discovered that she was as interested in the context of the plays as she was in performing them and ended up double majoring in Drama and English. Originally from Guelph, Ontario, Dr. Estill received her M.A. from University of Toronto, and her Ph.D. from Wayne State University in Michigan.

Something that drew Dr. Estill to Texas A&M is the World Shakespeare Bibliography, of which she is now a co-editor. Her favorite Shakespeare plays are *Richard II* and *Titus Andronicus*, but her favorite modern works of fiction include *Harry Potter*, as well as works by Diana Gabaldon and Djanet Sears (*Harlem Duet*). Dr. Estill also enjoys knitting, yoga, and taking walks with her dog, Zee, and owns a Shakespeare Kleenex box which she displays proudly in her office.



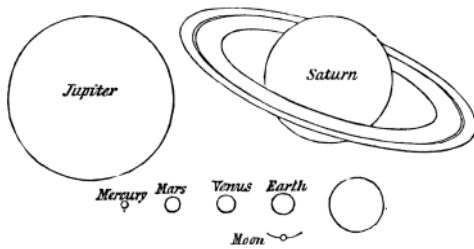
Currently teaching:

- ENGL 312: Shakespeare
- ENGL 412: Studies in Shakespeare

Dr. April Kinkead

Originally from Ft. Worth, Texas, Dr. April Kinkead received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from UT Arlington. If you have her as a professor in ENGL 104, you may know something about her two favorite writers, rhetorical theorists Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche. Dr. Kinkead's intriguing research on rhetoric delves into the history of Black Rhetoric, looking all the way back to the ways Egyptians used rhetoric.

Some of Dr. Kinkead's hobbies include cooking (she enjoys modifying traditional southern recipes and making them vegan or gourmet), weightlifting, and ballroom dancing. She is also interested in the Rhetoric of Science, and would describe herself as a theoretical astrophysicist. One of her heroes is Neil deGrasse Tyson, an astrophysicist and science communicator who has been described as "the next Carl Sagan." Among other things, Dr. Kinkead admires his efforts to simplify the complex ideas of scientists



into language that everyone can understand, and sees the need for communicators in the science world as a prime opportunity for students of rhetoric.



Currently teaching:

- ENGL 104: Composition & Rhetoric
- ENGL 301: Technical Writing

Dr. Ramesh Pokharel



One of our new instructors comes all the way from Nepal! Dr. Ramesh Pokharel received his B.A. from Tribhuvan University in Nepal, as well as a M.A. in English. He received an M.A. in Philosophy from Pokhara University in Nepal, and received his Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from The University of Texas at El Paso.

Dr. Pokharel is interested in multiple aspects of Rhetoric, including the History of Rhetoric, Rhetorical Theory, the Rhetorical Situation, and World Rhetoric. His favorite authors include Jan Swearingen, Peter Elbow, Andrea Lunsford, and Lloyd Bitzer.

While his hobbies include listening to music, singing, and traveling, Dr. Pokharel also loves meeting and getting to know people from different cultures and of different nationalities.

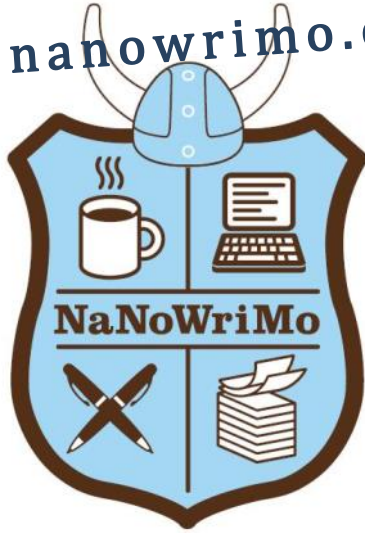


Currently teaching:

- ENGL 104: Composition & Rhetoric
- ENGL 203: Intro to Literature
- ENGL 301: Technical Writing

Meet the rest of our new instructors in next month's edition of *The English Aggie* newsletter!

Join the madness at
nanowrimo.org



Yes, we know it sounds crazy, and so do all the staff members and most the participants at NaNoWriMo.org. After all, who in their right mind would commit to writing 50,000 words in 30 days—and in November, of all months?

A description of the month-long event on the website reads, **"National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) is a fun, seat-of-your-pants approach to creative writing.** On November 1, participants begin working towards the goal of writing a 50,000-word novel by 11:59 p.m. on November 30. Valuing enthusiasm, determination, and a deadline, NaNoWriMo is for anyone who has ever thought fleetingly about writing a novel."

While some writers might be annoyed at the focus on quantity over quality (participants are often prompted to "just write," ignoring punctuation and grammar in order to simply pound out as many words as possible), the process of writing a novel in a

NaNoWriMo image source: <http://www.wired.com/geekmom/2012/10/nanowrimo-2012/>

Girl writing image source: <http://jeslindsay.blogspot.com/>

Do you have what it takes to
write a novel
in **one month?**



*I should probably be
doing homework...*

month forces perfectionists who might never get their story finished to see their project through to the end.

There is nothing quite like reaching the finish line on November 30th and realizing that you are, in fact, a novelist.

While writers can accept the challenge without signing up officially, NaNoWriMo.org provides excellent resources for participants, including a social forum that allows writers to discuss ideas and offer encouragement to others. It also allows you to connect to your local NaNoWriMo group for social events and "write-ins." (See information about the BCS Group on their Facebook page—link provided below.)

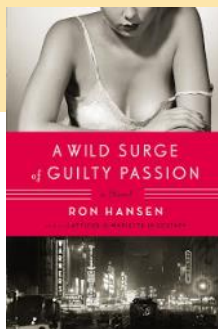
If you work out the math, it's only 1,667 words each day to make it to 50,000 by the end of November. So even though you probably should be writing those term papers or studying for finals, don't be afraid to try something new.

Local NaNoWriMo Group:



<https://www.facebook.com/BCSWrimos>

visiting author Ron Hansen



The distinguished novelist **Ron Hansen** will visit the A&M campus November 6-7. He has enjoyed wide readership and critical acclaim for his fiction, beginning with the "serious" Westerns *Desperados* and *The Assassination of Jesse James* (recently made into a movie starring Brad Pitt). Hansen is most celebrated for his ability to combine the fruits of detailed historical research with a sensitive and probing imagination that investigates the subtle, and often tragic, workings of human nature. His novels include *Mariette in Ecstasy*, *Hitler's Niece*, *Atticus*, *Exiles*, and *Isn't it Romantic?* Mr. Hansen's most recent book, *A Wild Surge of Guilty Passion*, recreates the infamous Snyder-Gray Murder Case.

Hansen will meet with undergraduate classes on Wednesday, November 6, and will appear at other events that day and the next (see right). Take advantage of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear—and meet—one of America's leading writers.

Public Reading

November 6th, 7pm, LAAH 453

Informal "Meet and Greet"

November 7th, 9:30-10/11 am, LAAH 352

These are a few of our **FAVORITE** THINGS: **SCARY STORIES**

For each edition of *The English Aggie*, we will feature a section of “favorites.” Students will have the opportunity to respond with their “favorites” on the Texas A&M English Undergraduate Facebook Page.

<p>◇ <i>Watchers</i> by Dean Koontz Submitted by Neallie Payne</p> <p>◇ “The Fall of the House of Usher” by Edgar Allan Poe Submitted by Rachelle Cates</p> <p>◇ “The Pit and the Pendulum” by Edgar Allan Poe Submitted by Molly McGee</p>	<p>◇ <i>Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark</i> by Alvin Schwartz Submitted by Carly Johnson</p> <p>◇ “Call of Cthulhu” by H.P. Lovecraft Submitted by Phillip Garner</p> <p>◇ “Tell-Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe “The Most Dangerous Game” by Richard Connell Submitted by Hayley Ellisor</p>
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“Believe only half of what you see and
nothing that you hear.” — Edgar Allan Poe

Resources

Are you looking for a job or already beginning to think about applying for internships? We want to help!

The **English Undergraduate Webpages** have a page full of information about different career resources, as well as updated job and internship opportunities both on and off campus.

The **Career Center** and the **Student Employment Office** are also valuable resources for job hunting, and for educating yourself about topics like resume writing and what to wear to a job interview.

Our website:

- <http://www.english.tamu.edu/undergraduate/internships>

The Career Center:

- <http://careercenter.tamu.edu/>

Student Employment Office:

- <https://jobsforaggies.tamu.edu/>

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

OUR LOCATION

Texas A&M University
LAAH 352
College Station, TX
77843
(979)-845-8357

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday– Friday
8 a.m.— 12 p.m.
1 p.m.— 5 p.m.

Email: Undergrad-office@tamuenglish.org

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Editor: Molly McGee '15