

Fall 2017

#bsuenglish: Semester in Review

Letter from Professor Cathy Day

Greetings to all the Ball State English alumni who are receiving this newsletter! Did you know that we have a new president? His name is Geoffrey S. Mearns, and he's a former English major. This proves our point that you can do anything with an English major--even become the president of Ball State University.

I'm Cathy Day, the Acting Chair of English, and I've got good news for you: even though English departments all over the country are

experiencing a drop in majors and minors, our numbers are up. See for yourself.

Today I want to 1.) tell you how this happened and 2.) ask for your help so that it can continue to happen!

How this happened

1.) We made it easier to major and minor in English.

About 8 years ago we changed our majors from 48 to 36 credits (except for the English Ed major, which is still 48), and we changed our

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minors from 21 to 15-18 credits.

We responded to the university's call to improve "time to graduation" proactively instead of reactively.

2.) We introduced and marketed our highly appealing minors.

We have six minors: Creative Writing, Professional Writing, Film/Screenwriting, Literature, Linguistics, and TESOL. And (fingers crossed) in 2018, we'll add one more: Linguistics and Global Communications, for students in all majors aiming for careers in global and international settings.

The Result: English minors have grown 138% overall in the past five years!

3.) We are visible and have a lot of community.

We don't have a huge programming budget, like say, Butler University. But we do have lively co-curricular programming that's well attended by students all over campus.

The African-American Studies minor is **back at Ball State**, and the English department's Dr. Emily Rutter played a big part in that. They brought **Dr. Angela Davis** to campus and filled Emens auditorium.

We have a department blog and social media.

The Result: Our department Twitter account has more followers than any other academic department on campus, and our events are often standing-room only.

4.) We address our students' concerns about "What am I going to do with this degree?"

We now have seven regularly offered immersivelearning classes.

We feature alumni success stories on our blog, which are then archived on our "Life After Ball State" webpage. We'd love to tell your story, too!

We created the **Stars to Steer By** career series to show our students all the things they can do with their degree.

The Result: In the last three years, English student engagement with the Career Center is up 190%.

As you can see, we work hard to push against the perception that English is "impractical" or a "dead-end street." We're telling our story to prospective students, their parents, and current students-and it's working!

How you can help us?

- Think of yourself as an English ambassador.
- Share articles like these on social media.
- Talk to college-bound students and their parents.
- When you hear someone repeating the myths about English and the humanities, politely correct them.
- Talk to the recruiters at your place of business and make sure that they don't dismiss English majors out of hand.



Cathy Day

- If you do the hiring, get in touch with us when you have an internship or job available.
- Better yet, join this Facebook group and share this hiring news yourself.
- Share your career journey on our blog or in person for our career series!
- Volunteer for the Practice Interview Program at the Career Center. English majors love talking to fellow English majors.
- And certainly, a gift to the department really helps.

We pay for pizzas, speaker honorariums, printing costs, prizes for student achievement, and so much more out of "Fund 2701 English General Fund."

Enjoy this newsletter--which, I might add, was designed and written entirely by English majors. Except for this letter from me, of course!

All best, Cathy Day cday@bsu.edu (765) 285-8584

Professors Felsenstein, Habich, and Trechsel retire.

Three esteemed members of the English Department faculty retired in 2016-17 after long and successful careers in the classroom and as researchers.

Frank Felsenstein taught eighteenth-century British literature, Holocaust studies, History of the Book, and other classes for us and for the Honors College. Dr. Felsenstein joined us in 2002. He is known internationally for his 1999 book Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830. His distinguished research career continued here and included the design and creation of the What Middletown Read database. which allows researchers to search library records of the Muncie Public Library from the turn of the twentieth century. An accompanying scholarly volume, What Middletown Read: Print Culture in a Small *American City,* co-written with Ball State History Professor James Connolly, came out in 2015.



Dr. Frank Felsenstein

Robert Habich taught American literature with us for 33 years, during which he became a renowned expert on Ralph Waldo Emerson, his circle, and his legacy. Dr. Habich's accomplishments include two books

on these topics,

the most recent

in 2011: Building
Their Own Waldos: Emerson's
First Biographers and the
Politics of Life-Writing from
the University of Iowa Press.
Dr. Habich taught American
literature surveys and courses
in Transcendentalism as well as

senior seminars on America's Gilded Age. He won Ball State's Excellence in Teaching Award in 1993.

Frank Trechsel taught linguistics in our Department for 24 years. Working mainly with graduate students, Dr. Trechsel taught courses on morphology, syntax, and phonetics and phonology. Dr. Trechsel's formidable research career focused on the study of two endangered languages spoken in Mexico, Misantla Totonac and Tepehua. With his wife and research partner Carolyn McKay, Dr. Trechsel spent several months each year in Mexico working with native speakers of these languages. The couple have published



Dr. Bob Habich and Dr. Frank Trechsel

extensively on the languages in books and articles that reveal the grammar, syntax, and other features of these languages.

What are they doing now?

Dr. Felsenstein, who lives in Morris, New Jersey, has traveled extensively since last spring but has also found time to publish two articles in *The Times of Israel* and to write a lengthy book review for *Jewish Quarterly Review*. He continues to work on a family history based on his parents' experiences as refugees from Nazi Germany.

Dr. Habich is at work researching some family history. He is also completing an edition of Emerson's essays intended for use in college classrooms.

Dr. Trechsel's collaboration with Dr. McKay on the Mistantla Totonac and Tepehua languages continues.

Some faculty Good News



Dr. Emily Rutter

In May, Dr. Emily Rutter signed a publishing contract with University of Alabama Press for her book *Constructions of the Blues Muse in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*, which will be in print Fall 2018. In June, Rutter presented "Archives of Feeling

in August Wilson's Fences and Denzel Washington's Filmic Adaptation," a paper drawn from her second book project, at the Sports Literature Conference at West Liberty University.

Molly Ferguson was elected president of the Midwest Regional American Conference for Irish Studies. In October, she presented a paper, "'To say no and no and no again': Fasting as Resistance in Emma Donoghue's The Wonder" at the Midwest ACIS at the University of Missouri.

Jill Christman's book Borrowed Babies has been adapted into a play by Ball State professor Jennifer Blackmer.

The play will be produced at



Dr. Molly Ferguson
Ball State University in Spring
2019 in Strother Studio with
Karen Kessler directing.



Students and alumni make their mark

Student News

Undergraduate student Levi Todd's panel "Slam Academy: The Importance of Spoken Word in Poetry Curricula" was accepted at the Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference in Tampa, FL. Note:

the acceptance rate for panels at this conference is only about 35%. Todd is the founder of **Reacting Out Loud**, an independent organization uplifting poetry in the Muncie community.

Anthony Salazar's article

"Curing the Vampire Disease with Transfusion: The Narrative Structure of Bram Stoker's Dracula" was accepted for publication by English Language and Literature Studies.



Anthony Salazar

Alumni News

Elisabeth Buck (PhD in Rhetoric and Composition, 2016) is publishing her monograph *Open-Access, Multimodality, and Writing Center Studies* through

Palgrave Macmillan.

Kelsey Englert (MA in English, 2014) had her flash fiction piece "Textbook Endings" published in *Passages North*. She was also featured in our Grad School Confidential series in 2015.



Kelsey Englert

Get to know this year's new faculty members



Angela Cox
comes to us from
the University of
Arkansas, where
she received her
PhD in Rhetoric

and Composition.

Her research is on definitions of genre and popular fantasy media.

Dr. Cox also does research on National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) and has participated every year since 2005.

She teaches first year writing courses.



is a specialist in early and nineteenth-century

American

literature. He comes to the English Department from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he recently finished a dissertation on early U.S. life writing.

His research and teaching combine a queer studies approach with material text methodologies to reimagine the relation between archive and canon. His scholarship has appeared in *Early American Literature* and is forthcoming in *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life*.



Kathryn
Ludwig comes
to us from Purdue
University, where
she earned her
PhD in English,

specializing in twentiethcentury American literature and Jewish philosophy.

She has published articles on the topic of the postsecular in contemporary literature and is an officer for the American Religion and Literature Society.

She teaches courses in composition and literature.



earned her BA
in Graphic
Design and
Master's degrees
in Journalism

and English here at Ball State University.

She is currently working to complete her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition. Her dissertation involves incorporating the Ball State Common Reader in first-year writing courses. Greene teaches classes in the Writing Program.



Sreyoshi
Sarkar comes
to us from
Baltimore,
Maryland.

She earned her doctoral degree in Postcolonial literature and media from George Washington University this past summer.

She specializes in South Asian studies, gender, and eco-criticism, and has published works in journals like *Commonwealth Essays and Studies*, *South Asian Review*, and *Green Letters Journal*. She teaches courses in world literature and film studies.



Morgan C.
Leckie comes to
us from Miami of
Ohio's graduate
program in
Composition and

Writing, by way of California.

Her research is on digital feminist rhetorical practices and reproductive justice advocacy.

She teaches first-year writing and professional writing. This fall Leckie taught one section of Jacket Copy Creative, our department's immersive-learning class that functions as our in-house PR firm.

Get to know this year's new faculty

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Eastern Kentucky
University. She earned her MA
in Rhetoric and Composition
at Ohio University in Athens,
OH, and she earned her PhD in
Rhetoric and Writing at Bowling
Green State University.

Brianna specializes in new media, especially social networking, and researches the intersections between technology, mobility, and writing. Brianna teaches firstyear writing and document design.



Laila Aghai comes to us from San Antonio, Texas. She earned her

PhD in Culture, Literacy, and Language from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Aghai is working on a manuscript on translanguage and TESOL and she enjoys music and studying foreign languages.

She teaches graduate and undergraduate linguistics courses--both face to face and online.

New Sigma Tau Delta Members:

Allison Akers

Taylor Baugh

Sarah Bredar

Macy J. Byerly

Kate Carnahan

John Carter

Erin Goff

Madison Hart

Melissa Jones

Corinne Lankowicz

Hannah Partridge

Noah Patterson

Carli Scalf

Taylor Townsend

Troi Watts

Sigma Tau Delta chapter founded

In Fall 2017, the Ball State English department chartered the Alpha Chi Upsilon chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international English honor society with over 875 chapters in the U.S. and abroad. Faculty sponsors and professors Cathy Day and Mary Lou Vercellotti invited all English majors with an overall and major GPA of 3.5 or above and all active graduate students with a 3.7 GPA or above to apply for membership.

This is the only student group in the English department that includes both graduate students and undergraduates, as well as students from every area of English studies (teaching, creative writing, literature, rhetoric and composition, and linguistics/TESOL).

The benefits of membership are substantial, including stipends for unpaid internships, an online alumni network, publication opportunities for both critical and creative work, internships at Penguin Random House and in Washington, D.C., and thousands of dollars in scholarship and award opportunities.

One especially noteworthy benefit of membership is that students are invited to submit papers and creative work for presentation at Sigma Tau Delta's annual spring convention, which will be held in Cincinnati on March 21-24, 2018. Students selected to present their work in this national venue also have the opportunity to win convention writing awards and to attend presentations and workshops by nationally recognized authors.



ENGLISH

HONOR SOCIETY

Department comes together for UES + PCM



Kathryn Powell

The **Practical Criticism Midwest** (PCM) and Undergraduate **English Studies** (UES) Conferences held on October 13 were attended by over 85 students, faculty, and guests. The graduate students have run PCM in the past, but this year, we added the undergraduate student conference

Differences in The Speech Act of Thanking in Saudi Arabic."

The keynote speakers featured four alumni (Leslie Erlenbaugh, Emily Groch, Ashley Mack-Jackson, Aaron Nicely) who shared their experience finding careers with English degrees. The conference ended with the doggerel contest. This year's winner was Hannah Bovino, who presented her poem, "I'm sorry iPhone." The conference



Abdullah Albalawi

to it and also opened up the conference to participants outside BSU English. We welcomed students from Ivy Tech, Anderson University, and IPFW.

Many undergraduate students spoke to how exciting this experience was, with some expressing that they want to present their work next year. The best presentation awardees were **Kathryn Powell** (UES), who presented her creative work, "The Listening Horizon" and **Abdullah Albalawi** (PCM), who presented his research, "Gender

overall was a fun and educational experience where students, faculty, and alumni could meet and interact.

This year's conference chair was Angela Tomasello (MA Linguistics Student), who led the graduate student volunteers. Prof. Silas Hansen (Conference Faculty Advisor) and Dr. Megumi Hamada (Assistant Chair of Programs) helped organize the conference.

Department and community write together

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) is an annual, global event in which participants attempt to write a 50,000 word novel in 30 days during November. Ball State's English department partnered with **Dr. Angela Cox**, the Ball State community and the Muncie community to write.

With over 60 members on our leaderboard we accumulated over 300,000 words after the first week.

The department created a series of incentives to get students, faculty, and community members writing.

Perks included:

- At 1 million words, Prof. Silas Hansen sings "9-to-5" by Dolly Parton.
- At 2 million words, Dr. Ben Bascom gets a tattoo.
- At 3 million words, the English Department hosts free breakfast in Robert Bell for English majors and minors.

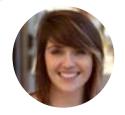
Our first two writers to get to 50,000 words were **Audrey Bowers** and **Allie Hartman**. Both received NaNoWriMo scarves as the first two winners of the # MuncieNaNo project!

At the time this newsletter went to press, we were at 932,314 words.

Congrats on winning to all participants!



You are our "Stars to Steer By"



Becca Wolfley

Becca Wolfley graduated from Ball State University with a BS in Advertising and a minor in Creative Writing in 2015. After graduation, she worked as a content writer and manager for tech company Lesson.ly until May of 2016. She then became the digital copywriter for The Children's Museum of Indianapolis a month later. She continues to work as a creative for the museum's marketing department while moonlighting as a freelance copywriter.

"From my experience as an Ad major, many of my peers didn't know how to tell a single story in various ways. I suppose that's how I got here—I was one of the few that could. I thank my creative writing classes for that."

Read more about Becca.



Bryan Lubeck

Bryan Lubeck graduated from Ball State University with a major in English in 1989. He has gone on to executive marketing positions with several Fortune 500 companies and to a successful career in music.

"My competition were IT guys with ponytails and Def-Leppard t-shirts, and I walk in with a suit and tie and I'm able to very succinctly articulate both in written and verbal forms, very specifically, how the internet was going to help their business. I was the only one in that area who understood how it was all going to work together."

Read more about Bryan.



Sean Andres

Sean Andres earned a BS in Secondary English/Language Arts Education from Ball State University in 2008 and a MS in Marketing from University of Cincinnati, with a focus on diversity marketing from applied feminist and race theory. His favorite author is Margaret Atwood, and he loves to be outdoors when he's not writing, researching, and working.

"I took a proposal writing job at a healthcare staffing company. I was writing, which is what I'd always loved to do. But it was writing proposals, which consisted mostly of cutting and pasting into a Word document. Luckily, the staff saw the creative side of me and assigned me to write marketing copy and internal and external communications."

Read more about Sean.

Become a Star for English Majors

We call these alumni success stories "Stars to Steer By." If you'd like to be one of our "stars," email us at **bsueng@bsu.edu** or call **(765)-285-8580**

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Jared Linder

Jared Linder is a two-time
Ball State graduate, once as an
undergrad with the English
department and again as a
graduate student earning
an MS in Information and
Communication Sciences at
the Center for Information and
Communication Sciences (CICS).
He is a recent graduate from
the MBA program at Butler
University. He also serves as the
Chief Information Officer for the
State of Indiana's Family and
Social Services Administration.

"Above all things, I am a critical thinker. They teach those skills in classes like 20th-century American literature more than they do in Math 400. When I analyze my life and next steps, I find myself peering through Herman Hesse's Siddhartha and Joseph Heller's Catch-22. Those are special places to go that only English majors know about."

Read more about Jared.

Series shows students the way

With our "Stars to Steer By" lecture series, co-sponsored with the Ball State Career Center, we strive to inspire liberal arts students by showing them the various things they can do with their degrees. At these events, we love to feature accomplished humanities graduates, especially Ball State alumni, to help give our students knowledge, preparedness, and hope for the future.

On August 30, Assistant Director and Career Coach Eilis Wasserman and Prof. Cathy Day kicked off the Fall 2017 leg of the series with "Finding Your Way with a Humanities Degree." They talked about developing personally and professionally, overcoming the stigma that is often attached to majoring in liberal arts, and discovering one's passions.

On September 27, Morgan Gross, a PhD candidate in English, and other graduate students embarked on the panel discussion, "Grad School: What to Expect and How to Prepare."

On October 18, Prof. Cathy Day presented "Yes, You're Qualified for that Job: Translating Your Humanities Skills." She presented a series of job ads and demonstrated to the audience that they were qualified and could apply by translating the language of academia into the language of the working world.

On October 20, Ball State graduate Becca Wolfley visited

Professor Day's section of Jacket Copy Creative. Wolfley stressed the importance of branding and networking for post-college success.

On November 8, Graham Brown, owner of **United State of Indiana**, a clothing company that helps Hoosiers express their love of Indiana, joined us for "Your Job is to Have Fun: The New Era of Entrepreneurship." Brown, a 2010 graduate of Anderson University, spoke to our students about how to make it in



Graham Brown speaking to students

the real world as a creative.

In Spring 2018, the series continues with topics including "Networking for Introverts".

Spoken-word poet fills Student Center

The audience was entranced by the talented poet, **Mahogany Browne**, on September 27.

Browne is a Cave Canem fellow, founder of Penmanship Books, and Poetry Program Director of Nuvorican Poets Café. She is the author of several collections, including the NAACP Outstanding Literary Works-nominated book Redbone and Dear Twitter: Love Letters Hashed Out On-Line. She is also an Urban Word NYC Poet-in-Residence (as seen on HBO's Brave New Voices), founder of Women Writers of Color Reading Room (housed on Pratt Institute), and facilitates

performance poetry and writing workshops throughout the country.

The English department sponsored this event, along with the African American Studies

Program, the Multicultural Center, the Office of Institutional Diversity, and the Department of Sociology.

Full house for Mahogany Browne reading



Graduates take the next step in their careers

What can you do with a degree in English? Here's a sampling of job placements for recent #bsuenglish graduates.

Communications & Marketing

Luke Bell (BA in CW 2016) Writer & Social Media Manager, Fanning Howey Architects, Indianapolis, IN

Lauren Birkey (BA in English Studies 2017) Copywriter & Designer, Spotted Monkey Marketing, Muncie, IN

Ellie Fawcett (BA in Literature 2017) Marketing Specialist and Content Writer, Englin's Fine Footwear, Muncie, IN

Publishing

Daniel Brount (BA in CW 2016) Page Designer/Copy Editor, Gatehouse Media, Austin, TX

Brandon Buechley (BA in CW 2016) Marketing Assistant, Cardinal Publisher's Group, Indianapolis, IN

Caroline Delk (BA in CW 2017) Remote Intern, Brent Taylor, Triada Literary Agency, Sewickley, PA

Audrey Hirons (BA in CW 2016) Article Editor, ZergNet, Carmel, IN

Niki Wilkes (BA in CW 2015) Marketing Coordinator, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN

Libraries

Gabriel Barr (BA in CW 2017) Circulation Assistant, Maring Hunt Library, Muncie, IN

Other cool jobs!

Courtney Conley (MA in CW 2017) Administrative Assistant, Bose, McKinney, Evans LLP, Indianapolis, IN

Samantha Taft (BA in CW 2017) Membership Manager, Potawatomi Zoo, South Bend, IN

Teaching

Lauren Eades (BA in English Ed

Graduates take the next step in their careers

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2017) English teacher, Castle High School, Newburgh, IN

Katie Freeman (BS in English Ed 2017) English teacher, Lapel High School, Lapel, IN

Troi Genders (BA in English Ed 2017) English teacher, James A Garfield 31 Indianapolis, IN

Olivia Germann (BA in Literature 2017) Teacher, Great Achievers Program,

Maring-Hunt Library, Muncie, IN

Cate Hoppes (BA in English Ed 2017) Language Arts and Speech Teacher, Zionsville Community Schools

Cassie Lindemeyer (BA in English Ed 2017) English Teacher, Highland Middle School, Anderson, IN

Joel Summer (BA in English Ed 2017) Teacher, Sebring Middle School, Sebring, FL

Graduate School

in Creative Writing

Jeremy Flick (BA in CW 2014, MA in CW 2016) is pursuing an MFA in Poetry, University of KY, Lexington, KY

Meagan McAlister (MA in CW 2017) MFA in fiction writing. Brittany Means (BA in CW 2016) MFA in Creative Nonfiction, University of Iowa

Casey Middleton (BA in CW 2017) and Rachel Lauve (BA in English Ed) MA program Creative Writing, Ball State University

Drew Miles (BA in CW 2017) MFA in Creative Nonfiction, University of South Florida

Allison Tunstall (BA in CW 2017) MFA in Creative Writing, George Mason University in Fairfax, VA

Robert Young (BA in CW 2015, MA in CW 2017) MFA in Poetry, University of Massachusetts-Boston in Library Science

Haley Gillilan (BA in English Studies 2017) MA in Library and Information Science, University of Missouri

Stef Clark (BA in CW 2017) MA in Library & Information Science, University of Washington in Seattle



in Literature

Kathryn Hampshire (BA in Literature 2017) MA in Literature at IUPUI in Indianapolis, IN

Rachel Wright-Marquez (BA in English Studies 2017) MA in Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy, Michigan State Univ., East Lansing, MI

Law School

Blake Lehr (BA in English Studies 2017) Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Andrew Wurdeman (MA in CW 2017) University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Tell us your placement story

- Email us at
 bsueng@bsu.edu
 and tell us about
 you or someone
 you know
- Tweet at us using the hashtag#mynextstepbsu
- Connect with Prof.
 Cathy Day on
 LinkedIn

Multi-genre writers share work on campus

Two great writers visited Ball State this fall: Kelcey Parker Ervick on October 26th and Ira Sukrungruang on November 15th.



Kelcey Parker Ervick

Ervick's artistic flourish is present in all her works, among them her newest collage *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová*, a book that Rose Metal Press calls "artistic, rebellious, and unapologetically intelligent". *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová* is a biographical collage of found texts, footnotes, fragments, and images by and about the Czech fairy tale writer, whom Milan Kundera calls the "Mother of

Czech Prose."

Ervick is the winner of the 2011 Next Generation Indie Book Award and has received grants from the Indiana Arts Commission as well as the Sustainable Arts Foundation.

In addition to the 2011 Next Generation Indie Book Award in Short Fiction, Evrick was a finalist for the 2012 Best Books of Indiana in Fiction.

You can learn more about her at her **website**, and see some interviews **here**.

Ira Sukrungruang is the author of the memoir *Southside Buddhist* that author and scholar Shawn Wong calls a "mesmerizing look at the landscape of America from the 'southside' of most everything and everywhere."

Sukrungruang is also the author of the memoir *The Adventures of Buddhist Boy,* the short story collection *The Melting Season,* and the poetry collection *In Thailand It Is Night.* He is the coeditor of two anthologies on the topic of obesity: *What Are You Looking At? The First Fat Fiction*

Anthology and Scoot Over, Skinny: The Fat Nonfiction Anthology.

On *The Melting Season*, fellow author Anne Panning states, "Sukrungruang writes with compassion, humor and tenderness about the sting of cultural exclusion and isolation."

Check out his **website** and some of his **interviews**.

Ira Sukrungruang signing books



Save the Date for InPrint 2018!

Be sure to come out to see these writers read from their work March 28

Carolina Ebeid (poetry)

Nick White (fiction)

Jan Shoemaker (creative nonfiction)

Kristen Elias Rowley (Editor, Mad River Books/Ohio State University Press)