



# Department of English Graduate Student Newsletter

## Letter From the Director of Graduate Studies

Dear Graduate Students:

In the threatening moment, with a bad economy and war, we do not need more distractions. The department chair has asked me to assure you that your teaching assistantships and research or lab assistantships are not under threat. The university appears ready to weather the cuts asked for by Governor Purdue without touching the instructional or staff budgets. And your work is very important to the university community, which values it more than you know; each year strong pleas are made to increase the stipends you receive, and next year, in fact, was to have been the year when funds should have materialized, if not for the loopy economy.

And since we are on topics of work and compensation, I will pass along some suggestions to ponder over as you approach closure in your graduate programs and enter the job market. Since you are always at least “approaching” such closure, it does not hurt to think far ahead; indeed, some recent graduates who have succeeded very well in the job market told me to remind those approaching the flight deck to begin early to: 1) construct a teaching portfolio that shows dedication, invention, and achievement; 2) compose a sample letter of inquiry about job openings and have the letter vetted by faculty on our New Appointments Committee; 3) develop a sound standard C.V. that shows not only your experience but your achievement in the course of getting your experience; 4) gather sample syllabi of courses you might like to teach some day (you can find plenty on the World Wide Web) so that you have answers about such matters in interviews with prospective employers; 5) ponder whether a course or two in other departments would give you a leg up on job applications at certain institutions,

depending on your specialization or your likely teaching assignments: e.g., the Historiography course in our sister department, if culture and history are part of your interest; one or two courses from Applied Linguistics that would credential you in a small or larger way to be more

effective with student populations that have high percentages of non-native speakers. Below I will list some Applied Linguistics courses that might be of interest—though the list is not exhaustive and you should consult a Graduate Catalogue to see the entire list of offerings—including a few doctoral level courses in that department that might prove especially useful to students primarily interested in theory or linguistics.

Among the graduate courses in Applied Linguistics recently recommended by that department’s chair are the following:

AL 8240: General Linguistics: An introduction to linguistic theory focusing on subtopics of particular relevance to language teachers: phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics

AL 8250: Second Language Acquisition: Survey of the complex variables underlying second language acquisition and the various perspectives that inform second language acquisition theories. Current theories of second language acquisition and their implications for second language teaching.

AL 8330: Intercultural Communication: An overview of intercultural communication including cultural differences in pedagogy and the role of culture in second language acquisition.

AL 8450: Approaches to Teaching ESL/EFL: An overview, description, and analysis of methods and approaches in second language teaching. Focus on theoretical perspectives, major issues, and current controversies. Examination of the historical and theoretical foundations. Particular attention to long-term development of language teachers as decision-makers

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and problem-solvers.

AL 8470: Sociolinguistics: The fundamental concepts of sociolinguistics: the study of the interplay of linguistic, social, and cultural factors in human communications. Relation of those concepts to the concerns of language teaching, particularly the teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

AL 8490: Second Language Reading: Theory and Practice: Examination of recent research and theory in second or foreign language reading; applications to the practice of ESL/EFL pedagogy. Analysis of a number of reader and text factors that play a role in second language reading. Focus on adult learners as well as reference to younger readers.

AL 8530: Issues in Second Language Writing: Theories and practices underlying the teaching and

### New MA Exchange Program

The Department of English is initiating an exchange program at the Master's level with the University of Northumbria in Newcastle, UK. The program is specifically intended for students with interests in British and American Cultural Studies, and will begin as early as the spring semester of 2004. Interested students should contact Calvin Thomas.

learning of second language writing. Emphasis on developing the background necessary for graduate students to examine and refine their own pedagogical positions on the teaching of writing.

It has occurred to me for a long time, for example, that we who have responsibility for teaching—not just refreshing—student knowledge of reading strategies and results ought to know more about the practical, as well as the theoretical, aspects of teaching reading. And in a very recent issue of *The Chronicle Review* (Jan. 17, '03), a magazine supplement to the weekly *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Elaine Showalter writes an essay about increasing our knowledge of the scholarship of teaching in order to revitalize the teaching of literature.

In future issues of the Graduate Newsletter I will report on courses in other departments recommended by their specialists as potentially stimulating or useful for students of writing in English. All of our programs allow you to take two courses out-

side the department as a part of the program; and all our prescriptions for courses are, of course, the minimum number required for a degree program. You may give yourself extra credentials at any time—while writing the dissertation, for example, or while working the job market—by adding courses from our department or other disciplines that will help lift you out of the job market crowd and make you the more marketable candidate.

And, finally, I have copied onto my computer a very useful set of recommendations for effective journal-article writing, prepared by Professor Annette Kolodny of the University of Arizona. If you are interested in a copy, e-mail me and I'll send one back to you.

All best,

Tom McHaney

Kenneth M. England Professor of Southern Literature

### News & Notes

In November, **Mike Dockins** was nominated for a Pushcart Prize by *The Worcester Review* for his poem "Wrestling a Crocodile." He has poems forthcoming in *The Gettysburg Review*, *The Seattle Review*, and *Nimrod*, and an essay on Annie Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* forthcoming in *The Massachusetts Review*. He is currently seeking publication for his first book of poems. Mike is co-founder and co-editor of a new journal of poetry and poetics called *Redactions*, the premier issue of which will be available this month. Mike, along with **Chad Prevost**, will be on a panel of poet-songwriters this spring at AWP (original tunes available at [www.mp3.com/clop](http://www.mp3.com/clop)). Mike recommends the prose poems of Louis Jenkins and the last two albums by The Get Up Kids. It's taking him forever to adapt to Atlanta, but he lives on a really cool street in Midtown.

**Heather Palmer** chaired two special sessions panels on *Composition and Psychoanalysis* at the 2002 SAML A Convention and presented a paper at one of these panels. She plans to begin collaborative work with the panel participants to eventually form and edit a collection of essays.

**Ruth Summar** chaired a special sessions panel entitled *Literature and Science* at the 2002 SAML A Convention and presented her paper "Striking Discord: Ominous Imagery and the Catalyst of Disor-

der in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*." Last semester, Ruth published biographical entries for Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and Mary II for the Alexander Street Press *British and Irish Women's*

### 2003 GEA Writing Competition

We are seeking submissions in the following categories:

British Literature  
American Literature  
Rhetoric and Composition  
Poetry  
Fiction  
Interdisciplinary Studies

Gift certificates worth fifty dollars will be awarded to the winners in each category. For a submission form or more information, please contact one of the following. **Deadline: April 10.**

Dan Mills - dmills1@mindspring.com

Marc Pietrzykowski -

mpietrzykowski@student.gsu.edu

Matt Garbett - mgarbett1@student.gsu.edu

*Letters and Diaries Project*, and she is currently working on biographical entries for lesser-known eighteenth-century women writers. In July, Ruth plans to present her paper "Liminality and Spatial Practice: Corporeal and Textual Contestation in *The Book of Margery Kempe*" at the upcoming annual International Medieval Congress at the University of Leeds.

Congratulations to **Dan Marshall**, whose short story "Burnt Air" won first place in the fiction category of the 2003 Agnes Scott Writers' Festival Contest.

Congratulations also to **Michele Rozga**, whose poems "Forgot," "The Meeting," and "After Listening to Billie in the Country," won first place in the poetry category of the contest.

Other finalists in the contest include Brigitte Hoarau, author of a short story titled "Slipping"; Heather Russel, author of a short story titled "Bullies and Snitches"; and Chad Prevost, author of a personal essay titled "Winging It: Leaps from Greenwood Lake."

All of these pieces have been published in the Agnes Scott Writers' Festival Magazine 2003.

## Important Graduate Matters: Examinations, Graduation, and Non-Thesis Papers

The Graduate Office in English has communicated with several of you who have indicated your desire to take one or both Ph.D. or M.F.A. examinations this spring. If you do plan to take examinations and have not notified us, do so immediately, in writing. You should also identify at least the "chair" of your examination committee—that is, the person with whom you are working to prepare for your exam—and ideally the entire committee of readers. Let us know, as well, whether or not you wish to write your exam on a computer work station.

And for all of you looking ahead to the examinations, be sure to begin meeting with someone in your specialist and secondary fields to construct reading lists and to help your examination committee prepare an examination that will not only demonstrate your knowledge and skills in a field but also lead into the dissertation topic you find most compelling.

For those ready or nearly ready to take the M.A. comprehensive examinations, remember that you must inform me (or my assistant, Michele Yulo) in writing of your intent to take the exam, preferably a semester ahead of time and absolutely early in the semester when you plan to take it.

Remember, you are required to notify the university's Graduate Office of your intent to graduate at least two semesters before the event occurs. There is a fee to pay at the time you declare the term in which you plan to graduate.

As an aside, I will re-state what is standard practice for the Non-Thesis Paper as a capstone of the M.A. program. This is conventionally derived from a paper the student has written in a class; the student is then expected to bring it back to the appropriate instructor, who will suggest a second reader, and then both readers will make comments and suggestions for some expansion, revision, and polishing of the paper's content, the quality of its prose, and the proper form of its scholarship, citation, and documentation.

The paper should be 16 or more pages (but, ideally, not at such length that it becomes the equiva-

lent of a thesis). The student should get revisions back to the first and second readers three or four weeks before the end of the semester's classes. When it has been checked and signed by both readers on the title page (available at the staff assistant's desk outside my office), it comes to the Graduate Director, who also reads it and may note lapses of proofreading or manuscript style. After the last corrections, the Graduate Director notifies the Graduate Office of Arts and Sciences that this requirement is met. It is important, as you see, not to wait until the last minute to finish revisions and polishing. The paper should be approved and ready for the Graduate Director's final approval at least two weeks before semester grades are due.

### Fall 2003 Examination Dates:

M.A. Examination: October 4, 2003  
 Ph.D./MFA Examination: October 18, 2003  
 Ph.D./MFA Examination: October 25, 2003

### Spring 2004 Examination Dates:

M.A. Examination: March 13, 2004  
 Ph.D./MFA Examination: March 27, 2004  
 Ph.D./MFA Examination: April 3, 2004  
 (All exams will be held in the Troy Moore Library, room 939 GCB.)

### Creative Writing Series Reading

*The GSU Review* presents a reading by Steve Almond, author of *My Life in Heavy Metal: Stories* on Thursday, April 17, at 7:00 p.m. The reading will take place in the Troy Moore Library (room 939 GCB) and is free and open to the public. Following the reading, Steve will sign copies of his book, which will be available for purchase. For more information, contact the *GSU Review* office at 404-651-4804.

### SAMLA Convention

The 2003 South Atlantic Modern Language Association (SAMLA) Convention is being held November 14–16, 2003, at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. If you are interested in volunteering for this year's convention (and having your registration fee waived), please contact Lori Howard (910 GCB;

phone: 404-651-2693; email: samla@samla.org). For more information about SAMLA, our journal—the *South Atlantic Review*—or our annual convention, please visit [www.samla.org](http://www.samla.org).

### Summer 2003 Course Offering

**ENGL 9050: Topics in Literary Theory: Foucault**  
 M/W 4:30–7:30 p.m. (Thomas)

### Summer 2003 Registration Dates

April 21-May 7 (Early Registration for All Sessions)  
 May 12-13 Late Reg (May Session)  
 May 19-30 (Regular Reg for 7 and 6 week sessions)  
 June 5-14 (Late Reg 7 and 6 week sessions)

The Summer 2003 Schedule of Classes will be available online on April 7th.

English classes run on the 7-week schedule unless they are May Session classes. (The College of Education uses the 6-week summer session.)

### Final 2003 Lecture

*Susan Cannon Harris* (University of Notre Dame) "Labor Pains: Sean O'Casey, The Abbey Theatre, and Ireland's Other Martyrs." 12:30 p.m., Friday, April 11, 2003. Troy Moore Library (939 GCB).

### Music Review

by Beau Johnson

#### Charles Atlas *Worsted Weight* (Ochre Records)

From beginning to end, the new album *Worsted Weight* by Charles Atlas encapsulates the listener in an environment that, for lack of a better term, can best be described as a sonic blanket. The album opens with "the deadest bar," a track whose strength lies in slowly unfurling different elements that ebb and flow seamlessly from one to the other, which serves as a ready reference for the album as a whole. The strength of this album lies in the graceful expression of quiet beauty. Throughout the album's sixty-one minutes, what is most notable, aside from an absence of vocals, is the almost mathematical precision applied to the placement of the different elements of the songs on *Worsted Weight*. Nothing is ever too pronounced;



## Keep in Touch

Has your mailing address, telephone number, or email address changed recently? If so, please be sure to update your information on GoSOLAR.

nothing ever stands too far out; everything is anchored by a restraint that adds texture and power to the music.

The album's foundation is centered on guitar and keyboard, but is oftentimes augmented by human voice, drum machine beats, piano, and even horns.

Charles Atlas has always been focused on creating an atmosphere with their albums, and with *Worsted Weight*, their fourth album, they seem to have reached a new level of ability. Stand-out tracks include "one foot under" and "italian air." These tracks continue the trend started with "the deadest bar" but are not simply rehashes of that song's style because of their emphasis on other instruments and different sonic progressions. All in all, Charles Atlas delivers an album that consistently delivers a welcome beauty and significance that is a welcome addition to the world of drone.

## German Exchange Program

We are looking for a qualified undergraduate or graduate student to represent Georgia State University at the English/American Studies Department of Johannes Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz, Germany (October 2003 through July 2004). Knowledge of German is desirable but not required, since classes are conducted in English.

The stipend includes:

1. A full tuition waiver
2. \$3,000 assistantship (2semesters)
3. Transfer of credits to GSU upon return

If you have an M.A., you can earn additional income by teaching introductory classes. Inexpensive on-campus accommodations are available. Contact Dr. Smolinski (rsmolinski@gsu.edu) ASAP.

## Fall 2002 Degree Recipients

Melissa S. Cooker, M.A.

Natalie B. Dixon, M.A.

Lawrence A. Brown, Ph.D.

Susan Thomas, Ph.D.

## Department Websites

### Department of English Homepage

[www.gsu.edu/~wwweng](http://www.gsu.edu/~wwweng)

### *Eudora Welty Newsletter*

<http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwewn/>

### *Five Points*

[webdelsol.com/Five\\_Points](http://webdelsol.com/Five_Points)

### *GSU Review*

<http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwrev/>

### Rhetoric and Composition

[rhetcomp.gsu.edu](http://rhetcomp.gsu.edu)

### *South Atlantic Review*

<http://www.samla.org/review.htm>

### *Studies in the Literary Imagination*

[www.gsu.edu/~wwwsl](http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwsl)

### Writing Across the Curriculum

<http://www.gsu.edu/~wwwwac/>

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