

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

FALL 2022



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH • FALL 2022 • VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 1



Department of English



MEMPHIS

WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back to all of our faculty and staff! There are a lot of exciting events happening this fall, so first and foremost make sure you're following our brand new Instagram account (@uofmenglish) to stay up to date. We're excited to welcome several new faculty members this year and to announce the reorganization of our staff. Welcome Dr. Tori Thompson Peters to the WRTC faculty; Dr. J. Elliott Casal to the Applied Linguistics faculty; and Shanna Cameron, Nicholas Gorrell, Adam Ruh, and Veverly Edwards to the teaching faculty! Bridget Wells is now serving as our Assistant to the Chair and Department Registrar, Bethany Webb will join the department as our Undergraduate Advisor, Sherry Lusk has joined the department as our Undergraduate Assistant, and Emily Gillo is now serving as an Instructor and Marketing & Communications Coordinator.

This fall, we'll welcome a number of speakers and authors to our campus, including Arthur Flowers, Nnedi Okorafor, and Howard Rambsy.

You'll also notice that a significant amount of work has been completed in Patterson Hall over the summer, including all new classroom furniture on the second and third floors, a renovation/upgrade to our multi-purpose room (PT 456), and a renovation to our part-time faculty office space (PT 425). This year we're hoping for even more involvement with the marketing and promotion of all of our amazing programs here in the English department! We have plans to complete a second round of promotional posters, a graduate program viewbook, and an even stronger push involving course promotion and retention. As always, if you have project suggestions or inquiries, don't hesitate to get in touch with Dr. Tucker, Ms. Wells, or Ms. Gillo!

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



The hip-hop artist Nas begins his 1996 song “If I Ruled the World” with a single word: imagine. Along with Lauryn Hill’s memorable voice on the chorus, the possibility that accompanies the word animates the song and encourages us to look beyond our current circumstances, to push ourselves, to rethink (and perhaps even reshape) the assumptions that inform our daily lives and the larger systems and institutions that impact us. I return to the song 26 years after its release because for all the talk of innovation, imagination remains the seed from which innovation grows and in the Department of English at UofM, imagination sits at the center of our work as teachers, researchers, and innovators.

It is our imagination that drives our pursuit of innovative approaches to teaching to multiple audiences, celebrating multiple rhetorical and linguistic traditions, and engaging discussions across multiple platforms. It is our imagination that drives our research into the potential of the New South, the worlds of science fiction and mythology, and the digital universe that we have only just begun to discover. Our recently promoted full professors, Drs. Lyn Wright and Carey Mickalites, mix the values of critical inquiry, fact-based interpretation, and broad-minded inclusion that, along with innovation and imagination, are the hallmarks of our department. Never, perhaps, have these values been more necessary than now. After all, we live in interesting and volatile times, ones filled with communities not simply engaging in opposing arguments but communities living or writing in seemingly different realities. Hyperbole has become fact and taken the place of nuance, and we no longer wish to share the same information or use the same source material from which informed arguments pull. In a world with so many platforms able to reach audiences across the world with unprecedented speed, examining the implications of tone and content have never been more crucial to shaping the discourse around which enduring decisions are made.

Perhaps it was always this way. But the way forward must be the turn towards the skills and values that English offers. Too many people feel that they have been left behind, or that we are caught in a loop that cannot be overcome while ignoring the real pain of too many. Imagination offers us a path forward; not an escape, but a road map, one that we might not otherwise see. We are extremely excited to welcome our new faculty and staff, all of whom you will be meeting in the following pages. Some of them have been in the department for years and others are brand new to Memphis. Yet they all share a passion, commitment, and proficiency that will continue to move us forward towards an inclusive, public-facing department invested in teaching excellence, innovative research, and student-centered, community-based service.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

This fall's events reflect the values of our department. October's Shaheen Lecture events – which include Drs. Florence Dore and Emily Lordi – combine an inquiry into the cultural impact of modernism on the 100-year anniversary of James Joyce's *Ulysses* with the innovations to the form itself. In preparation for Afrofuturist writer Nnedi Okorafor's visit to Memphis, we will co-host two events on October 3rd and 17th and explore the imagination and inclusion that accompanies the popularity of science fiction and the rise of Afrofuturism into the mainstream culture. Our two guest author readings this semester, one by Arthur Flowers and a memorial reading in honor of the late fiction writer – and former Writer-in-Residence at UofM – Randall Kenan extend our embrace of imagination and inclusion. In both instances we are eager to celebrate their contributions to African American literary traditions and experience how their chronicles of the lives of marginalized communities restructure our own ideas of our past, present and future. Dr. Howard Ramsby's visit in November promises to involve and exploration of the potential the digital humanities have for equity and innovation after decades of a digital divide.

As we return to in-person classes and continue adjusting to a pandemic not yet past, we will begin to find new ways to integrate the benefits of the remote without ever discarding the intangible and valuable elements and practices that were such a key feature of English classes before 2020. I am grateful for the work of my predecessor Dr. Josh Phillips who guided the department through the beginning of the pandemic and helped me transition into the chair's role in the fall of last year. He, the diligent staff, and the incredible faculty have brought us to an exciting moment in the department's history at the just the right time.

The impact of English is everywhere and for everyone.

Imagine the possibilities. ”

*-Dr. Terrence Tucker
Chair, Department of English*

The background of the top section is a dark blue-tinted image of the Memphis skyline, featuring the Great Sun Tower and other city buildings. Overlaid on this image is the word 'MEMPHIS' in large, semi-transparent, light blue capital letters.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY!

DR. J. ELLIOTT CASAL, APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Dr. Casal is an applied linguist with interests in corpus linguistics and corpus-based language teaching. Dr. Casal earned his Ph.D in 2020 from Pennsylvania State University and likes to spend his free time reading science fiction, cooking, playing board games, and hiking.

DR. TORI THOMPSON PETERS, WRTC

Dr. Peters teaches courses in technical and professional writing and rhetoric. Her research focuses on the rhetoric of health and medicine, science and technology studies, and rhetorical history. Dr. Peters earned her Ph.D in 2022 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

SHANNA CAMERON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TEACHING

Ms. Cameron teaches courses in technical and professional communication and first-year writing. Her research interests include the rhetoric of health and medicine, feminist theories and practices, and social justice/activism. Ms. Cameron is a Ph.D candidate at the University of Memphis.

A background image of the Memphis skyline, featuring the Mississippi River and various city buildings, with the word 'MEMPHIS' in large, semi-transparent letters across the top.

WELCOME NEW FACULTY!

VEVERLY EDWARDS, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TEACHING

Veverly M. Edwards teaches a variety of subjects in the Department of English. Creative Writing and African American Literature are her passions. She's also a graphic artist, mostly self-taught. Veverly has an MFA in Creative Nonfiction Writing and has participated in art exhibitions with Beale Street Art Crawl, Arkwings, and Crosstown Arts.

DR. NICHOLAS GORRELL, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TEACHING

Nick Gorrell teaches courses in literature and composition. He has a Ph.D in English from the University of Mississippi and his research interests are centered around Southern music traditions, particularly blues and country, and their interactions with one another and influences on literature. Nick loves to collect records, and some of his favorite films are *The Good Thief* and *Hard Eight*.

ADAM RUH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF TEACHING

Adam Ruh teaches composition and literature courses. His research areas include Native American literature and 19th century American literature. He has a Masters degree in English with a concentration in American Literature. In his free time, Adam enjoys wildflower gardening.



WELCOME NEW STAFF!

EMILY GILLO, INSTRUCTOR & COORDINATOR OF MARKETING

Ms. Gillo serves as the departmental Marketing Manager and Event Coordinator. She maintains the department website, creates digital and print marketing materials, and manages all social media accounts. Ms. Gillo also teaches freshman composition. She spends most of her free time with her two dogs, Lyra and Sirius, watching scary movies.

BRIDGET WELLS, ASSISTANT TO THE CHAIR & REGISTRAR

Ms. Wells transitioned in 2022 from the English Department's academic advisor to the Assistant to the Chair and Department Registrar. Ms. Wells provides administrative support and serves as an information resource to faculty, staff, and students. She assists with scheduling, hiring, and maintaining departmental data. Outside of UofM Ms. Wells volunteers with a rescue for pet rabbits and enjoys spending time with her own bunnies.

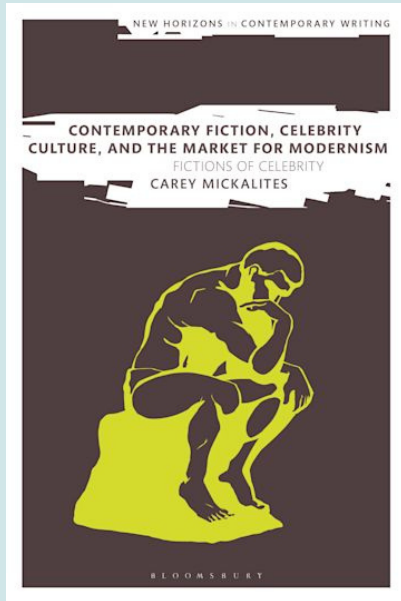
BETHANY WEBB, ENGLISH ADVISOR

Ms. Webb will join the English department in September 2022 as the Academic Advisor for our undergraduate majors. Ms. Webb will be advising our majors, representing us at Discover Your Major Day, and assisting students with course permits and registration.

SHERRY LUSK, UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

Ms. Lusk joined the English Department in August 2022 as the Undergraduate Assistant and Administrative Secretary. Ms. Lusk will be assisting with undergraduate committees, curriculum, and assessment and will be working in our front office.

FACULTY MEMPHIS BOOKSHELF



CONTEMPORARY FICTION, CELEBRITY CULTURE, AND THE MARKET FOR MODERNISM

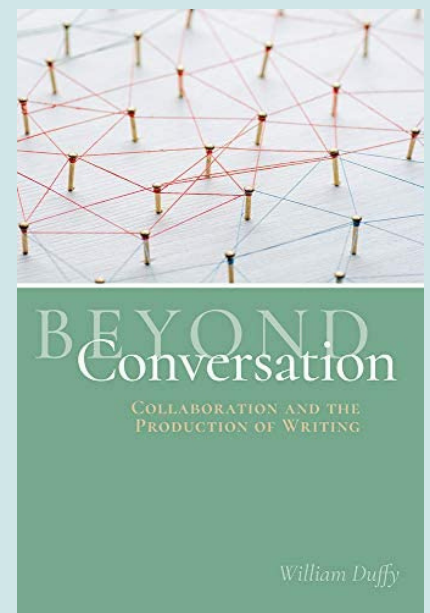
DR. CAREY MICKALITES

"Arguing that contemporary celebrity authors position their work and public personae within a received modernist canon to claim and monetize its cultural capital in the lucrative market for literary fiction, this book also shows how the corporate conditions of marketing and branding have redefined older models of literary influence and innovation."

BEYOND CONVERSATION: COLLABORATION AND THE PRODUCTION OF WRITING

DR. WILL DUFFY

"In *Beyond Conversation*, William Duffy revives the topic [of collaboration] and connects it to the growing interest in collaboration within digital and materialist rhetoric to demonstrate that not only do the theory, pedagogy, and practice of collaboration need more study but there is also much to be learned from the doing of collaboration."



FACULTY BOOKSHELF

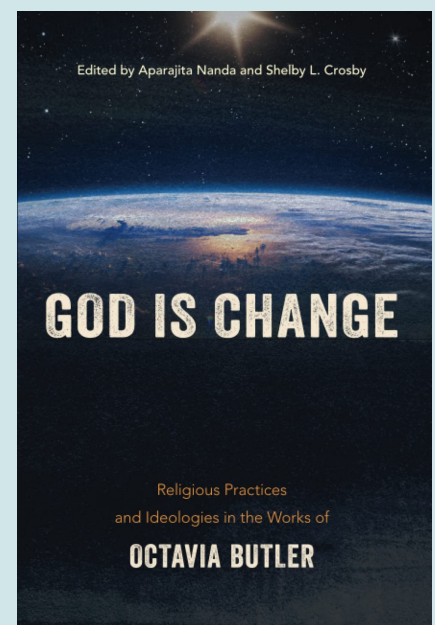


DIVERSIFYING FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY DR. LYN WRIGHT

"An increasingly important field of research within multilingualism and sociolinguistics, Family Language Policy (FLP) investigates the explicit and overt planning of language use within the home and among family members. However the diverse range of different family units and contexts around the globe necessitates a similarly diverse range of research perspectives which are not yet represented within the field."

GOD IS CHANGE: RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND IDEOLOGIES IN THE WORKS OF OCTAVIA BUTLER DR. SHELBY CROSBY

"The editors of and contributors to God Is Change heighten our appreciation for the range and depth of Butler's thinking about spirituality and religion, as well as how Butler's work offers resources for healing and community building. Essays consider the role of spirituality in Butler's canon and the themes of confronting trauma as well as experiencing transformation and freedom."



UPCOMING EVENTS



ARTHUR FLOWERS POETRY READING/PERFORMANCE

Reading: September 22nd

Performance: September 23rd



NASEEB SHAHEEN LECTURE

Florence Dore

October 6th



NASEEB SHAHEEN LECTURE

Emily Lordi

October 13th

UPCOMING EVENTS



BLACK SOUTHERN WRITERS AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENT

Lambuth Campus

October 22nd @ 1:00pm



NNEDI OKAORAFOR, AFROFUTURIST NOVELIST

October 26th

October 27th



HOWARD RAMBSY, DIGITAL HUMANITIES

November 10th

November 11th



RANDALL KENAN MEMORIAL READING

November TBD



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MEMPHIS

Department of English

TEACHERS, CREATORS, INNOVATORS



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