



Department Launches Two New Graduate

Two new graduate degree programs are up and running in the Department of English. The Ph.D. program in Applied Linguistics and Technology is beginning its second year, and a new M.F.A. in creative writing and the environment has been launched this fall.

Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Technology

People around the world are studying English and increasingly doing so using computers and other kinds of technology. This means there's a growing demand for professional expertise and research in computer-assisted language learning—exactly the niche that the new Ph.D. program fills.

According to Dan Douglas, professor of English and program coordinator, while some other schools offer a computational emphasis in linguistics, the program at Iowa State is unique: "None is as focused on applied aspects such as learning and assessment as Iowa State is."

Faculty plan to admit five outstanding students each year. The



Dan Douglas with linguistics students

ten students in the program who come from Bulgaria, Brazil, China, Korea, Moldova, Serbia, and the U.S. are interested in answering questions such as: How can we most effectively use technology to speed up vocabulary learning? What's going on in someone's head when they are learning a language from a computer? How can we use technology to make language tests more reliable and valid?

Carol Chapelle, professor of English and one of the program's founders, explained that the program was in part a response to requests from around the world for such a doctoral program and to the need for research in the area. "Publishers and schools are developing on-line courses for English language learning but little research exists to help make these courses as effective as possible." Faculty and students at Iowa State are filling that gap.

Read more about this new program at http://www.public.iastate.edu/~apling/phd_homepage.html.

M.F.A. in Creative Writing

Like its Ph.D. counterpart, the new M.F.A. in creative writing is one of the few of its kind at any college or university in the country. The old M.A. in English with a specialty in creative writing has been eliminated in favor of the new master's with an emphasis in creative writing and the environment.

"The recognized strength of this university is science and we wanted to develop a program that would take advantage of those resources at Iowa State," said Steve Pett, associate professor of English. "At the same



MFA directors Steve Pett and Debra Marquart

time we want to develop great writers. To us this new master's seemed like a good marriage."

The three-year, 54-credit program leads to the terminal MFA degree and emphasizes creative writing (poetry, fiction, and non-fiction) about the environment. Students will be required to take 15 hours of environmental courses outside of English, write a thesis (book-length project), and pass an oral examination of the thesis.

"We think this program will offer an original and intensive opportunity for gifted students of nonfiction, fiction, poetry, and drama to document, meditate on, celebrate, and mourn the transformation of our world," said Pett, who is co-directing the program with Debra Marquart, associate professor of English. "We're hopeful that students will be able to use fiction writing and poetry in a way that will look at 'place' and how it influences the world around us."

Read more on the new M.F.A. at http://engl.iastate.edu/programs/creative_writing/mfa. □

From the chair

Greetings from the Department of English! Here in the department, we are busily preparing to end fall semester, getting ready for spring classes, and celebrating the holidays with family and friends. Since connecting with friends and sharing news is an important part of the season, I'd like to share with you some of the new developments in our department since our last newsletter:

Developments

- ◆ Our new Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Technology, which began last fall, has now enrolled its second class of students. Our TESOL Master's program continues to thrive.
- ◆ ISUComm, an all-university communication-across-the-curriculum program, has been approved and our faculty are revamping our First-Year Composition courses.
- ◆ The new MFA in Creative Writing and Environment enrolled its first class this fall.
- ◆ The literature faculty have redesigned the undergraduate curriculum to deepen students' understanding of literary history and broaden this canon.
- ◆ Our Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Professional Communication continues to thrive, with faculty and graduate students winning major awards in the field.
- ◆ Our Speech Communication program, now housed in Carver Hall, has had all three of its tenure-track faculty achieve promotion and tenure.
- ◆ Our undergraduate program in Technical Communication has a fully operational curriculum that is attracting both majors and minors.
- ◆ Faculty in Communication Studies, which uses a social science approach to examine a wide range of

communication issues, joined our department.

Our faculty—including four new members we want to introduce to you—have been busy writing, getting grants, and getting awards for outstanding teaching and writing, as you'll read about in the pages ahead. We also remember here the passing of several of our retired colleagues, including David Bruner, Leonard Feinberg, Hazel Lipa, Jack Speer, and recently, Bob Hoover. We join their families and friends in mourning their passing and celebrating their accomplishments. Their many years of service to the department touched the lives of innumerable students of literature, rhetoric, and writing.

We're proud of our students and especially happy to share with you some their stories here, including Andrew Krull, whose First-Year Composition assignment was published in *Newsweek*, and two other students with New York internships. Finally, I'm sure you'll enjoy reading about where a major in English has taken some of our alumni.

We want to hear your stories too. Please send us your thoughts and memories of the department and faculty as well as news about yourself.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Charlie Kostelnick
Department Chair



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Transitions

Memorials

DAVID BRUNER

David Kincaid Bruner died in Ames in June, 2005 at the age of 92. He was on the Faculty until his retirement in 1982 as an emeritus professor of English. Professor Bruner taught composition and literature courses and classes in British literature, drama, and existentialism. Believing that education was not confined to the classroom, he hosted a popular and long-running lecture series, "Books and Coffee," held at the Memorial Union.

LEONARD FEINBERG

Leonard Feinberg, Distinguished Professor of Sciences and Humanities, died at the age of 92 in San Diego, California. Well known as an authority on humor and satire, professor Feinberg brought international recognition to the English department at Iowa State. He taught creative writing, literature and graduate courses in satire. A witty and engaging storyteller, professor Feinberg served as a model of what a teacher/ scholar could be.

ROBERT HOOVER

Robert Hoover died in Ames in September of 2006 at the age of 80. He had been an assistant professor in the English department at Iowa State for over thirty years. He taught composition and propaganda analysis and was also an accomplished artist.

HAZEL LIPA

Hazel Lipa died in Ames in October of 2005, just a few days before her 98th birthday. She taught for thirty-three years in the English department: composition, literature, creative writing and the first course ever offered at ISU in television script writing.

JOHN (JACK) SPEER

Jack Speer died in 2003 at the age of 89. Until his retirement from the English department in 1985, professor Speer taught composition and British and world literature and counseled generations of students who were considering graduate work in the discipline.

<http://www.facsen.iastate.edu/Policies/memorialresolutions.htm>

New Faculty Arrive on Campus

Four new tenure-track faculty have joined the department of English as assistant professors in the 2005-2006 academic year. To read more about these faculty and others in our department, go to <http://engl.iastate.edu/directory>



Mohammad Haji-Abdolhosseini is with the Applied Linguistics and Technology and the Human Computer Interaction programs and came to us via the University of Toronto where he received his Ph.D. Mohammad specializes in computational

linguistics and natural languages and teaches courses in theoretical and computational linguistics.



Linda Shenk, a new member of the Literature area, holds a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. She is especially interested in matters Elizabethan, including court poetry, Queen Elizabeth I, the focus of much of her recent research, and of course,

Shakespeare, which she is currently teaching.



Maya Socolovsky holds a doctor of philosophy from Oxford University and has joint appointments with English and the Latino/a Studies Program. She has written on U.S. Latino and Ethnic American literature and is especially interested in issues

of trauma in U.S. Latino/a literature. She teaches courses in multi-cultural U.S. literature and U.S. Latino/a literature.



Adela Licona holds a Ph.D. in Rhetoric from Iowa State. Her interests include cultural and women's studies, Chicana theory, and feminist rhetoric. She currently teaches rhetorical analysis and much of her research deals with the intersection of

culture and rhetoric.

Faculty

Nowhere girl

Debra Marquart says she has been working on her latest book for 14 years.

In reality the associate professor of English has been writing *The Horizontal World: Growing Up Wild in the Middle of Nowhere*, since she could put pen to paper.

“I knew I had grown up in an unusual place—the middle of North Dakota, in this ethnic enclave, surrounded by this older generation of people who had emigrated from Russia,” she says. “When I went to college, I began to realize that not everyone had grown up like me, working in the fields, hauling rocks.

“So when I started writing, I made a few forays into that material. I was surprised to find that people were interested in it.”

The book began to build momentum after the death of her father 10 years ago. “It wasn’t until my father died that I began to really shape the material into a book. Somehow the loss of my father caused the material to come into focus in a new way,” she said.

Marquart’s childhood as the youngest of five children was spent on a North Dakota family farm where her family had lived for generations. From a very

early age she knew farm life wasn’t for her. “The only jobs I saw around me were farmer, banker and priest,” she writes. “The prospects for women were worse—teacher, housewife, nun. Not one of them an occupation I imagined for myself.”

Putting that life in “the rearview mirror” was Marquart’s goal. The first half of *The Horizontal World* depicts that quest in a series of essays that mold together into a 250-page memoir published by Counterpoint.

“My own personal story is not that important to the book, because it’s really a book about a place—North Dakota, the Midwest, my hometown, the farm I grew up on. It’s a book about the larger patterns or myths that determine the quality and direction of our lives,” she says.

The Horizontal World has been well received in reviews in *The New York Times Book Review* and *Chicago Tribune* and was selected by *Elle* as its August 2006 “Must Read” pick.

Read more about *The Horizontal World* at www.las.iastate.edu/marquart0821.shtml. □



Debra Marquart tackles her childhood in North Dakota in her latest book.

Recent Faculty Achievements

Volker Hegelheimer, associate professor, was named Liberal Arts and Sciences Master Teacher for outstanding teaching and innovations in computer-assisted language learning.

Laura Mielke, assistant professor, won the Iowa State University Award for Early Achievement in Teaching and was named a recipient of the Cassling Family Faculty Awards for outstanding teaching in literature.

Mary Swander, Distinguished Professor of English, was named one of three recipients of the Des Moines Public Library Foundation’s 2006 Author Awards on October 12th. Her most recent book is *The Desert Pilgrim*. Swander was also named Iowa State’s 2006 Distinguished Arts and Humanities Scholar and gave a talk in the Memorial Union Great Hall on October 25th.

Christiana Langenberg, academic advisor and lecturer, has received the Panliterary Award for Fiction for her story “Maura Takes the Multiple Choice Test of Her Life So Far,” featured in the multi-modal literacy journal, *Drunken Boat*.

Neal Bowers, Distinguished Professor of English, was selected the first Lecturer in the LAS Dean’s Lecture series. His lecture, entitled “Dead Poet Talking,” was given November 8th in the Sun Room in the Memorial Union.

Bowers is the author of eight books including a novel, *Loose Ends*, published by Random House in 2001.

Summer in the city for two English interns



Nickie Dix

Communications Studies
MTV Networks
New York

Duties: Event planning for MTV, VH1, Comedy Central, Nick @ Night and TV Land.

Background: Dix got her internship by being persistent. A Comedy Central executive spoke on campus last year and told Dix to send her resume to the network. She did—four times—and she also called twice before she got the first of three interviews that led to her internship. Dix says: “This was an even better experience than I expected it to be. I was surprised at the amount of responsibility I was given. They didn’t see me as an intern.”

Read Nickie Dix’s story at www.las.iastate.edu/newnews/dix0821.shtml.



Kelli Todd

English
Vogue Magazine
New York

Duties: Assisted in the accessories department at *Vogue*, preparing for photo shoots for the magazine and helping develop storyboards.

Highlight: Started internship right before the release of “The Devil Wears Prada,” the movie written by a former *Vogue* staffer about an overbearing *Vogue* editor. “Until the movie came out it was pretty much ‘hush-hush’ around here. We couldn’t talk about it.” Weeks later Todd delivered accessories to the *Vogue* editor depicted in the movie. “I didn’t know what to expect and was a little nervous but she was so nice to me.” Todd says: “It was worth it for the experience—both the job and life experience.”

Read Kelli Todd’s story at www.las.iastate.edu/newnews/todd0821.shtml.



Newsweek publishes First-Year Composition student essay

The assignment started out simply enough. During the 2005 fall semester, Jennifer Veltsos, a second-year Ph.D. teaching assistant, was helping her First-Year Composition students learn how to compose arguments.

For Andrew Krull, a chemistry major, that argument was a narrative. “When my teacher handed out the assignment, she said it would be fun to send this into “My Turn,” Krull explained in the *Ames Tribune*. “I had never heard of “My Turn” before. I didn’t read *Newsweek*.”

Krull decided to experiment with irony in his essay, similar to a sample narrative the class had read by David Sedaris. The result was a humorous reflection on the lessons he learned from his older brothers, lessons often learned the hard (even painful) way.

When Krull’s grade on the assignment was lower than he expected, he decided to take Veltsos up on her suggestion. He revised the essay over Thanksgiving Break and submitted it to *Newsweek*. To his surprise, the magazine accepted his essay, turning his homework into a \$1000 payoff and a photo shoot with his brothers.

Eight months later (Aug. 14, 2006), Krull can call himself a nationally published author. Read his essay, “Celebrating the Pity of Brotherly Love,” on-line at www.msnbc.msn.com/id/14208056/site/newsweek. □

Ramsey Tesdell Named Outstanding Senior and Rotary Scholar

Ramsey Tesdell, an English department Technical Communication major who graduated last spring, received a few extras besides his diploma last May. He was one of only five seniors in the class of 2006 to receive the Wallace E. Barron All-University Senior Award for outstanding academics and university/community achievement and the promise of continuing these qualities as alumni. He was also named a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar and this September began a year long scholarship in Jordan where he is studying Arabic and sociology.

Tesdell, who distinguished himself while at Iowa State as an honor student, Destination Iowa State team leader, founder of A Time for Peace, President of the Society for Technical Communication, and winner of numerous awards, including the Gib and Nancy Stanek Leadership Award.

Tesdell is the son of English department alumnus, Lee Tesdell, (Ph.d. 1999; MA 1982)

Keep updated on Ramsey Tesdell’s work and travel in Jordan via his blog at www.blog.tesdell.org

Alumni

One paragraph. For Gina Ochsner that's a good day's work.

"I like to think about what I'm writing," she says. "I typically only work two to three days a week. It's slow going."

The fact that she's writing at all continues to amaze Ochsner. After graduating from a small Quaker college in her native Oregon, Ochsner decided to enroll at Iowa State in the Department of English's creative program.

That was a huge leap of faith.

"I loved writing," she says. "I still do. It's really exciting to see worlds collide and see a story start to emerge. But I didn't know if I had any talent

Dark horse writer

as a writer. So I had to get away from everything that was so familiar to me. Iowa was a good place to go. If I would have stayed here (Oregon) I don't think I would have continued writing."

Ochsner struggled at Iowa State and surprised herself (and even her professors, she says) by graduating with a master's degree in English in 1994. "It was a challenge," she said. "I almost didn't make it."

That self-doubt continued even after she moved back to Oregon and started writing short stories and getting them published in such publications such as *Prairie Schooner*, *Iron Horse Review*, and *Phoebe*.

She also started winning awards including the Ruth Hindman Foundation Prize, the Raymond



Success has come as a surprise to alumna Gina Ochsner.

Carver Prize, and the Chelsea Award for Short Fiction.

So when she got a phone call one day she didn't give the person on the other end an opportunity to talk. "I thought it was a telemarketer," Ochsner said. "I was changing a diaper and hung up on him."

Moments later he called back.

"I thought 'what the nerve,'" Ochsner said. "But he said 'don't hang up, I'm an editor and you've been selected for the Flannery O'Connor Award (for short fiction).'"

Still Ochsner didn't believe him.

"We have a family friend who likes to joke and I thought it was him," she said. "Then I thought they wanted another Gina Ochsner."

"I didn't believe it until the book was in print."

That book is *The Necessary Grace to Fall*, a series of 11 short stories that takes the reader "from the Czech Republic to Alaska, from Siberia to West Texas as they stake out territories straddling the border between life and death."

Ochsner has published a second book, *People I Wanted to Be*, published by Houghton Mifflin.

Her success got her thinking. Could she help other similar aspiring writers at Iowa State?

"My dad and I were shooting the breeze one day and we talked about creating an award for people like me,"

she said, "students that weren't very good academically but who have a lot of heart and were hard workers. I wasn't the first person you would tap on the shoulder and say would have a lot of promise."

With the creation of the Dark Horse Award, Ochsner hopes to encourage other Iowa State writers.

Maybe someday they will make it in publishing like Ochsner. She's working on a full-length novel that has gotten a jump-start from the National Endowment for the Arts. She is one of 50 writers awarded a 2006 NEA Creative Writing Fellowship.

Even with all her success, Ochsner almost didn't apply for the fellowship. "I was nervous about applying for a grant from the NEA," she says. "I had tried several times before without success and each time I received news that my material was passed over I interpreted that as a sign that my work was not worthwhile, that my continuing to write was a silly and vain pursuit."

She decided to give it one more try and was awarded with a \$20,000 fellowship which she used to travel to Russia and Latvia to research her upcoming novels.

Read Gina Ochsner's complete story on-line at www.las.iastate.edu/alumni/oschner. □

Michigan State prof first departmental alumni award recipient

The Department of English bestowed its first alumni award during Homecoming celebrations this October on **Stephen Carl Arch**, a 1982 alumnus (B.A. in English) from Okemos, Mich.

Currently a professor of English at Michigan State University, Arch teaches courses in early American literature, the novel, and literary criticism.

Arch is the author of *Authorizing the Past: The Rhetoric of History in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Northern Illinois UP, 1994) and *After Franklin: The Emergence of Autobiography in Post-Revolutionary America, 1780-1830* (UP of New England, 2001). His essays have appeared in *The William and Mary*

Quarterly, *Early American Literature*, and *Studies in American Fiction*. He is currently editing two James Fenimore Cooper novels, and writing a book on American literature in the Age of Jackson.

In 1996, he held the Walt Whitman Chair in American Literature at the University of Nijmegen (the Netherlands), one of only three chaired positions in the Fulbright Scholars Program. He has also been the recipient of Wilson and Dupont Fellowships.

His graduate students have already taken tenure track positions at several prestigious universities and colleges.

Arch earned his Ph.D. from the University of Virginia. □



Archivist honored by LAS College

Sorting through endless stacks of mundane government memos is the life of a federal archivist, a career many would shun because it sounds boring.

But correspondence, maps, sound recordings, and photographs have always interested Trudy Peterson ('67 English)—even the mundane ones.

In a career that has spanned working in the

Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa, to being the acting Archivist of the United States, Peterson has worked with history virtually every day of her professional career.

"I go into an archives almost every day," she says. "I really like reading someone's letters; it's the raw material of history. There is a vibrancy of being in touch with a piece of history."

Peterson rose through the ranks of the National Archives to become the deputy archivist (the senior civil servant) before serving as the acting Archivist of the U.S. for two plus years in the Clinton Administration.

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences recognized Peterson in 2005 with its highest honor: the Citation of Merit.

Read more about Peterson at www.las.iastate.edu/alumni/peterson.shtml. □

English accountant

Donald Wolfe has had a long and successful business career with the accounting firm of Deloitte and Touche in Los Angeles.

Despite that, in his heart Wolfe will always remain an English major.

"My English degrees (B.A. '74 and M.A. '81) have made a big difference in my accounting career," he says. "My majors have allowed me to communicate, which

is critical for you to be successful."

Read more about Wolfe at www.las.iastate.edu/alumni/wolfe.shtml. □



Making a difference

Please tell us about yourself and your activities. If you know of alumni or others interested in receiving this newsletter, please send their names and addresses to: Sheryl Kamps, English at Iowa State, 203 Ross Hall, Ames, Iowa 50011-1201 or email alumnews@iastate.edu.

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For more information about making a gift to the Department of English or including ISU in your estate plans, please contact Stephanie Greiner at 515-294-8868, greiner@iastate.edu.

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