



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
2019 NEWSLETTER**

California State University, Long Beach

Introduction

FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Before writing these “notes,” I usually look back at earlier issues of our newsletter, and I reflect on our continued successes. Reading a draft of this current newsletter, I am so pleased to see how strong our department continues to be. Our faculty, staff, students, and alumnae are outstanding, exceptional, professional, productive, creative, and busy.

This year we faced departures as one faculty member, Nancy Sheley, entered retirement (check out social media for her photographic journal of travel to India). Dianne Vipond and Ray Zepeda entered their Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), not to retire but to continue writing and publishing (Ray in Idaho) during the semester they are not teaching with us.

Against their leave-taking, we continue to hire new faculty, and to be given tenure-track positions. You will read about the appointment of Dr. Tina Matuchniak as Director of our new University Writing Center (UWC). Our wonderful newer faculty have already become quite active with our students and are taking on leadership positions within our College and University. As they resurrect courses (see Rene Treviño on Edgar Allen Poe), or win prestigious awards (see David Hernandez), or work with Chicana/Latina Studies to produce the Viramontes Lecture Series (Dennis Lopez, Araceli Esparza, Rene Treviño, and Kiki Shaver), our faculty are everywhere on this campus.

Now for the real focus of this newsletter—our students. We recognize our fantastic current and former students who are reading this newsletter—perhaps pursuing doctoral degrees, working in any number of organizations and businesses, writing and publishing creative works, and, of course, teaching our curricula to students from kindergarten through the university levels. As you peruse this newsletter, you will note their many accomplishments. Our students include authors (read Flor Edwards and Zara Raheem), scholars (EGSA), editors, and publishers (*RipRap* and *Watermark*).

We continue to be one of the most desired degrees at CSULB. With 869 undergraduate majors and minors, our Literature, Creative Writing, and Rhetoric and Composition options remain very strong, which I find both amazing and pleasing in light of the current assault on the Liberal Arts. We continue to produce highly-sought-after teachers through our English Education option. We also continue to have one of the strongest graduate programs in the CSU, with 120 students in our English MA plus 24 students in our MFA program.

Another area where we are seeing rapid growth due to student interest and commitment is our Certificate in Professional Writing, with many of our students combining their English studies with completion of this Certificate. Under the direction of Professors Gary Griswold and Jennifer Smith, we have expanded the number of internships offered through this program, and we are particularly pleased when our alumnae seek our students for these internship opportunities to gain real life work and writing experiences.

Common to all of our successful graduates in today’s marketplace and the academic community is their claim to being outstanding writers—skills they have honed through majoring in English. If you have an opportunity to read a current issue of *Rip Rap* [creative works] or *Watermark* [critical essays], you see the very talented students we so admire and graduate. If you are near the university this summer, when parking is always available, we urge you to come by the office, say hello, and pick up the latest editions of these very professional publications.

Please enjoy reading our newsletter, and stay in contact with us.



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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT 2019 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEES

The Beatrice and John Janosco Memorial Scholarship

*is awarded in poetry to **Samantha Satre***
for the poems “Imitation Crab,” “Hereditary,” and “Serpents.”

The Bill Jaquith Memorial Scholarship

*is awarded for the best scholarly essay to **Bianca Tolentino***
for academic merit.

The Gerald Locklin Writing Prize

*is awarded for poetry, short story, or essay to **Francesca Marquez***
for the essay “An Explication of Horrific Mental Captivity in Emily Dickinson’s ‘I Felt a Funeral, in my Brain.’”

The James I. Murashige Jr. Memorial Scholarship

*is awarded for the best short story to **Zara Raheem***
for the short story “Girls Like That.”

The Mary Purcell Scholarship

*is awarded for the study of 17th- and 18th-century literature to **Christine Constanza***
for the essay “[D]ev’lish machination’: the Tuscan Son in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*.”

The William T. Shadden Memorial Graduate Award

*is awarded for poetry to **Letitia Deon***
for the poems “Cleithrophobia,” “Cracked Porcelain,” and “Decisions Made and Determined by the Tortured Mind.”

The William T. Shadden Memorial Undergraduate Award

*is awarded for poetry to **Kameron Vincent***
for the poems “Catfish,” “Voodoo Queen,” “Sing’in the Blues,” and “Little Shotgun House.”

The John B. Williams Scholarship for English Education

*is awarded for the best essay relating to literacy or the teaching of English to **Amanda Sosa***
for the essay “Diversity: Igniting Difference.”

The John B. Williams Scholarship for Literature

*is awarded for the best essay in literary research and writing to **Jacob Tapp***
for the essay “Social Contracts in *Waiting for Godot*.”

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT 2019 HONOREES

Phi Beta Kappa Awardees

Carter Elwood
Nicholas Schroeder

Distinguished Undergraduate Students

Carter Elwood
Robin Gaitan

Outstanding Undergraduate Students

Marcelle Garcia	Jeremy Milling
Joe Gutierrez	Brooke Pellam
Ariel Hamel	Gloria Ramirez
Shivani Parmar	Justin Zabilski

Distinguished Graduate Students

Michelle Anguka (MA)
Jillian Sutton (MA)

Outstanding Graduate Students

Nina Calabretta (MA)	Nicole Hakim (MFA)
Margaux Corsini (MA)	Christopher Maye (MA)
Christine Costanza (MA)	Elisabeth Oliver (MA)
Letitia Deon (MFA)	Maitlyn Reynolds (MA)
Kelsey Gutierrez (MFA)	

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS 2019 HONOREES

Dean's List of Graduating Master's Students Honoree

Julie Kim (MA)

Best Master's Thesis Awardee

Zara Raheem (MFA): *The Intersection* (short story collection)



STUDENT PROFILE: FLOR EDWARDS

Flor Edwards is a current student at CSULB and is working on an MA in English with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition. She expects to complete the program by fall 2019 or spring 2020. In this interview, she shares her experience at CSULB, information about her latest published memoir, and her plans after graduation.

Q: Why did you choose to attend CSULB and how would you describe your experience there so far, more specifically in the English Department?

A: So far, I love the program. I chose CSULB because it fit my schedule and I had heard many good things about the program. The professors have all been great and the classes are exactly what I need and what I was looking for. I have another master's (MFA) in creative writing, but I wanted to go the research route to prepare myself to teach and perhaps pursue a PhD in rhetoric as well. CSULB seemed like the perfect match and so far, it has not disappointed.

Q: What classes, to date, have been most useful to your career goal?

A: All the classes, so far, have been great. But this semester I have been fully immersed in all graduate level English courses – rhetoric, theory, and pedagogy – and they have been most helpful for my future goals of teaching, researching, and writing.

Q: Last year, you released a memoir. What is it about and what inspired you to write it?

A: My memoir I published last year is called *Apocalypse Child: A Life in End Times*. It is a first-person narrative of my formative years growing up in the Children of God cult, a highly insular, controversial movement that sprung up from the 60s counterculture era. Some would call it a “new religious movement,” others call it a “cult” or a “sect.” It has elements of all, but for me, it was my childhood, and I felt the only way I could preserve it was to tell it the way I wanted to or else the media would keep spinning it into a story of sensationalism. That is what ultimately led me to finally start writing my memoir.



Q: What are your plans after you graduation?

A: After I graduate, I would like to get a position teaching and perhaps go on to pursue a PhD (but I will wait a year to decide that). I would also like to get started on my next book.

Q: Are there any other works that you have published in the past? Are there any that you are currently working on?

A: I have been published in *Narratively*, *New York Magazine*, and *Huffington Post*. I have been quite busy with book promotion this past year but I plan to start on something new soon!

STUDENT PROFILE: ZARA RAHEEM



Zara Raheem is an MFA student in Creative Writing at CSULB. She recently won the College of Liberal Art's Best Master's Thesis Award, and is set to release her first novel in July 2019. She has been recognized by the Literary Women's Emerging Writers Program, which supports local up-and-coming writers. In this interview, she discussed her experience as an MFA student as well as her forthcoming novel. Raheem will complete her program this May.

Q: How has your experience in the Creative Writing MFA program been so far?

A: What I love so much about this program is that it has afforded me so many opportunities beyond the coursework itself—from serving as an editor on *RipRap*, to reading at open mic events, to participating in workshops led by renowned writers like Aracelis Girmay and Cherríe Moraga, to teaching the English 100 course. All of these experiences have enriched my learning in more ways than I could have anticipated.

Q: Which courses have influenced you the most?

A: My fiction writing workshops have been most influential during my time in the program. The small class sizes and workshop format is the perfect setting to help develop our craft and refine our abilities as writers. The opportunity to share our work and receive critical feedback from our peers and professors has been an invaluable experience. I feel that I have grown tremendously under the guidance of esteemed faculty members like Dr. Stephen Cooper, Professor Lisa Glatt, Professor Ray Zepeda, and Professor Suzanne Greenberg—all of whom I deeply respect and admire. Although every class I have taken these past two years has shaped and influenced me in some way, I feel particularly grateful for the support, community, and friendships cultivated through these workshops.

Q: You recently won the best Master's Thesis. Can you tell us what the thesis is about?

A: My thesis is a collection of ten short stories that center around the South Asian diaspora, the Muslim American experience, and the struggles and hardships faced by first-and-second generation immigrants. These stories feature a range of characters from agoraphobic housewives to impoverished farmworkers to abusive fathers; however, they are linked thematically through universal explorations of love, beauty, friendship, identity, and self-acceptance.

Q: You will soon be publishing your first book. Can you tell us what the book is about?

A: My debut novel, *The Marriage Clock*, will be published by William Morrow/Harper Collins in July 2019. It is about a young, Muslim-American woman who, in her attempts to overcome cultural expectations, strikes a deal with her parents: she'll have three months to find her future husband or else they will arrange her marriage for her. It's a fun yet thought-provoking look at the universal struggles of modern dating, but also a story that will (hopefully) challenge young women to resist the social pressures of marriage and family in order to discover their own definitions of independence, fulfillment, and happiness.

ALUMNUS PROFILE: MIKE PALLOTTA

Mike Pallotta is an alumnus of CSULB who received his BA in English, Creative Writing in 2011. He currently holds a job at *DC Comics* in Burbank, California, where he is a Creative Executive in Consumer Products within the Creative Affairs Department. In this interview, he shares his experience as a CSULB and *DC* employee, and he gives advice to current CSULB students.

Q: Why did you choose to attend CSULB and how would you describe your experience here?

A: CSULB seemed like a natural fit for me. Writing for the *Union Weekly* newspaper gave me the creative outlet that I needed outside of classwork, and it allowed me to be connected to the campus in a deeper way than I would've been otherwise—whether covering a department for a feature article, driving a cart around campus delivering papers, or seeing campus politics unfold right in front of me at a meeting. I went to campus events, art gallery shows, *The Nugget*, movie screenings, *El Pollo Loco*, basketball games at the Pyramid, as well as my classes. It was a microcosm of a community that I loved. I loved it so much I was there on nights and weekends like all the staffers had been for years before me, documenting it all in a weird, rebellious newspaper. So, I'd say I liked my experience there.

Q: What is your current career and how did you prepare yourself to be the best candidate for it?

A: My job title is Creative Executive, Consumer Products working within the Creative Affairs department at *DC*. Essentially what that means is I provide creative input and approvals on product related to *DC* characters, including action figures, vinyl figures, statues, board games, apparel, basically anything you'd find in a mass market retailer. The "Consumer Products" umbrella is so large, in fact, that we also provide creative input all over the world on theme parks, museum exhibits, live shows, and other experiential entertainment that includes *DC* characters. Although I didn't know it at the time, I'd been preparing for this job every time I read a comic—and I've read thousands. I worked at *Amazing Comics & Cards* for a couple years, I read as many of *DC's* books as I could each month, and dug through comic boxes at conventions multiple times a year. I even started a publishing company with some friends after college to create and print our own comic books.



Q: Which of your classes at CSULB became most helpful to what you do now?

A: The creative writing workshops, without a doubt. Those were an immense help. By reading my writing aloud and listening to others' I was able to learn how to both take and give criticism.

Q: Who were the professors that influenced you the most?

A: Tyler Dilts, Ray Zepeda, and Meg Pennington were like three cartoon wizards. Each has such a unique personality. Tyler is this warmhearted coach who knows exactly what tools his students need to write a coherent story, and he can cater his advice perfectly to each writer. Ray is this calm, older man who knows when to listen, when to talk, and when your writing needs to cut to the chase. And Meg is this firecracker bursting with joy and a deep love for literature who appreciates ingenuity and a sense of humor.

ALUMNUS PROFILE: MIKE PALLOTTA

Q: What do you like most about your career? Are there any challenges?

A: The biggest challenge is the amount of work. I mean, that laundry list above is just the tip of iceberg that makes up my team's to-do list. It's . . . a lot. We're constantly shifting gears from reviewing product submissions, to rewriting scripts for attractions, to providing notes on newly created artwork. But, that's also what I love about it. The work is incredibly fulfilling.

Q: Do you have any advice to CSULB students who are trying to pursue a similar career path as yours?

A: Find an outlet for your creativity outside of what you're assigned at CSULB—what you **HAVE** to do—to work on what you **WANT** to. Sure, read the assigned books, finish your writing for class, but make time to work on your own projects. Try to commit to projects that you can't back out of, so that you **have** to finish what you start. Be fluid about your goals and willing to adjust to change. I didn't necessarily know exactly what I wanted to do to get on this career path, and I couldn't have imagined I'd end up with this particular job, but I knew what I liked and the direction I wanted to go and I kept moving forward. Focusing on my creativity and learning everything I could, both in my English classes or at the *Union Weekly*, kept me going in the right direction and got me here.



ALUMNI NEWS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Kevin Cody (MA, 2017) was accepted into the PhD program at University of Oregon.

Ralph Clare (MA 2001; MFA, 2003; PhD, State University of New York, Stony Brook) has earned tenure and promotion to associate professor in the Department of English at Boise State University. His latest publications include “The End of Postmodernism,” in *American Literature in Transition, 1990-2000* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); “Freedom and Formlessness: Ben Lerner’s 10:04 and the Affective Historical Present,” in a 2018 special issue of *Open Library of the Humanities*; and *The Cambridge Companion to David Foster Wallace* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), a collection of essays that he edited and introduced. At the MLA Convention this year, he chaired a session, “Why Kathy Acker Now?,” and presented a paper, “Kathy Acker: Transgeneric Literature for the Trump Era.”

D. Berton Emerson (MA, 2005; PhD., Claremont Graduate University, 2011) is in the third year of a tenure-track appointment as assistant professor of English at Whitworth University.

Olayinka Gbonegun (MA, 2017) was accepted to the MPhil (Master of Philosophy) in Comparative Literature program at Trinity College, Dublin.

Nancy Giang (MA, 2015) was accepted into the highly competitive UCLA Law Fellows program, Spring 2019.

Amin Nash (BA, 2015) has entered the MA program in English at Claremont Graduate University.

Sarah Nolan (BA, 2008; MA, 2010; PhD, U Nevada Reno, 2015) has accepted the position of Instructor in the Program for Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Alexandra Rowe (MA, 2018) published her paper “Absurdism is Ecocritical and Ecocriticism is Absurd: The Joy of Eternal Damnation” in *The Journal of Camus Studies*, 2017.

A.J. Schmitz (BA, 2005; MA, 2011) was just awarded the Outstanding Dissertation Award this year at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Paul Tayyar (MA, 2001; Ph.D., University of California, Riverside, 2007), now Professor of English at Golden West College, has been awarded a 2019 Wurlitzer Fellowship for Poetry. His most recent publications include a novel, *The Prince of Orange County* (Pelekinesis, 2018), and a collection of poems, *Immigrant Songs* (WordTech, 2019).

Rose Viña (MFA, 2013) will publish the children’s book *Ice Breaker: How Mabel Fairbanks Shattered the Color Barrier in Figure Skating* in October 2019.

Kacie Wills (MA, 2013) will begin work as an Assistant Professor of British Literature at Illinois College in the fall. She received two major research grants this year: The Keats-Shelley Association of America’s Pforzheimer Research Grant and the Huntington Library’s Dibner Fellowship.

NEW UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER & DIRECTOR

We would like to announce that Dr. Tina Matuchniak has accepted our offer as an Assistant Professor in the Department of English and as our new Director of the University Writing Center. Her impressive list of accomplishments includes membership in Phi Beta Kappa at the completion of her BA in English at CSULB, followed by awards for her research and publications during her graduate and doctoral programs—e.g., CSU Chancellor’s Doctoral Incentive Program (CDIP) fellowship (\$30,000) and UC/UCI Dissertation Fellowships (\$40,000).



As a lecturer in our department for the past 19 years, Dr. Matuchniak has been a stellar teacher—recognized by CSULB with the Distinguished Faculty Teaching Award in 2007. While completing her doctorate at UCI and concurrently teaching in our department, Dr. Matuchniak was the Director of Research for a \$13,000,000 grant for the UC Writing Project; in this capacity she managed operations and budgets, served five school districts from Santa Barbara to San Diego, including 300 secondary school teachers and 10,000 students. With an MA degree in Language Minority Education from CSULB, and her PhD in Languages, Literacy and Technology from UC Irvine, coupled with a BA in English (CSULB) and a BS in Chemistry from Sophia College, University of Bombay, she will add significantly to our department’s rhetoric, composition, and literacy efforts and our global community.

This summer, CSULB’s current writing center, the Writer’s Resource Lab, will be transitioning into a new facility in CSULB’s new Student Success Center and taking on the new name of the University Writing Center. As a former tutor in the Writer’s Resource Lab during both her BA and MA studies at CSULB, as well as a year as its interim director while a lecturer, Dr. Matuchniak feels right at home. She states, “I am thrilled to be taking the gem that is the Writer’s Resource Lab, a program that has so successfully serves CSULB students for more than 20 years, and transforming it into the University Writing Center.”

CSULB’s University Writing Center will be opening for the fall 2019 semester.



FACULTY NEWS & PUBLICATIONS

Faculty News

Dr. Susan Carlile presented the papers, “Think *National Geographic*, Rather than *Cosmopolitan*: The Environment and the Mid-Century English Women’s Magazine,” at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies in March 2018 and “The Satiric Voices of Charlotte Lennox,” at the same conference in March 2019. She also participated in the podcast “*Charlotte Lennox: An Independent Mind*, University of Toronto Press, 2018” by Mark Klobas on *New Books Network* on March 9, 2019.

Stephen Cooper was a featured reader at the 30th anniversary reading for *Santa Monica Review*, held at Santa Monica’s Annenberg Beach House, October 2018. He was an invited guest of Fundación Malcolm Lowry in Cuernavaca, Mexico where on November 2, 2018 he offered a Day of the Dead talk on Lowry’s novel *Under the Volcano*. For an April 2019 symposium on the Italian diaspora at the Italian Cultural Institute in Los Angeles, he presented a talk entitled “John Fante’s *Ask the Dust*: Many Voices, Many Views.” Stephen’s five-year collaboration as writer and co-producer with Warsaw-based director Irek Dobrowolski culminated in November with the world premiere of *Struggle: The Life and Lost Art of Szukalski* at the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam. In December, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art held a special one-night screening hosted by Leonardo DiCaprio and followed by a gala reception. The film is now streaming on Netflix.

Dr. Gerald Egan organized and presided over a panel, “Cycles of Fashion, Constructions of Victorian Authorship,” at the North American Victorian Studies Association (NAVSA) 2018 Conference in St. Petersburg, FL, October 2018. He also organized and presided over the panel “Material Intersections: Fashion and Romantic Authorship” at the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR) 2018 Conference at Brown University, Providence, RI in June 2018. At the NASSR 2018 conference, Dr. Egan presented a paper, “Byron Incognito: Authorial Subjectivity and ‘the dress of an Albanian.’”

Suzanne Greenberg was a Featured Reader for the *Santa Monica Review*’s Spring 2019 Launch Reading, March 2019.

Dr. George Hart presented a paper, “Larry Eigner’s Ecrippoetics,” at The New Disability Poetics Symposium, University of Pennsylvania, October 2018.

David Hernandez was a Featured Reader for *Coast to Coast: 60 Years of Poetry Northwest*, as part of the AWP Conference in Portland, OR on March 29. He was also the Visiting Writer at Mt. San Jacinto College on April 17.

Dr. Beth Lau (Professor Emeritus) received a Distinguished Scholar Award from the Keats-Shelley Association.

Patricia Loughrey’s musical, *Sonata 1962*, was produced off-Broadway at the New York Musical Festival (NYMF) in the summer of 2018. Loughrey wrote the book and co-wrote the lyrics for the LGBTQ+ musical set in 1962 - a time when homosexuality was viewed as criminal and curable. The show, nominated for eight NYMF awards including Best Musical and Best Book, received a special citation for arts advocacy.

Norbert Schürer completed his third one-year term as Chair of the Academic Senate at CSULB and is stepping down from the position. Under his tenure, among other achievements, the Academic Senate passed a new General Education policy. For his efforts in shared governance, Norbert received the Nicholas Perkins Hardeman Academic Leadership Award from CSULB.

John T. Scenters-Zapico presented the Keynote address, “Small m to Big M-Mobilities: a Model,” at the Thomas Watson Conference on Rhetoric and Composition at University of Louisville in October 2018. He also presented the papers, “What Do CSULB Alumni, Instructors, and Students Think About the Role of Writing on Campus and in Their Professions?” at the Senior College and University Commission Academic Resource Conference in 2019 and “Measuring & Understanding the Writing Experiences & Perceptions of Students, Alumni, & Instructors” at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities: Academic Affairs Summer Meeting in July 2018.

FACULTY NEWS & PUBLICATIONS

Faculty Publications

Carlile, Susan. *Charlotte Lennox: An Independent Mind*. University of Toronto Press, 2018.

Cooper, Stephen. "The Lash of Saint Francis," *Santa Monica Review*, Fall 2018.

Esdale, Logan and Deborah M. Mix, editors. *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Gertrude Stein*. Modern Language Association of America, 2018.

---. "Barbara Will, Unliking Stein, and Scholarly Malpractice." *Jacket2*, Summer 2018, jacket2.org/article/barbara-will-unliking-stein.

---. "Solveig Daugaard's Collaborating with Gertrude Stein: Media Ecologies, Reception, Poetics." *Samlaren*, vol. 139, 2018, pp. 232-35.

Greenberg, Susanne. "Please Come See Us Again," *Santa Monica Review*, Spring 2019.

Griswold, W. Gary. "Remediation Via Mandate: The California State University's Early Start Initiative as Manifestation of Systematized Bullying." *Defining, Locating, and Addressing Bullying in the WPA Workplace*, edited by Cristyn L. Elder and Bethany Davila, University Press of Colorado, 2019, pp. 173-189.

Hernandez, David. "Moose in Snow," *FIELD*, Spring 2019.

---. "Words without Thoughts Never to Heaven Go," *Arguing about Literature 3/e*, edited by John Schilb and John Clifford, Bedford/St. Martin's, forthcoming Fall 2019.

---. "It's Only Vanishing Cream" and "In California You Chew the Juice Out of Grapes and Spit the Skin Away, A Real Luxury," *The Southern Review*, forthcoming Fall 2019.

Schürer, Norbert. "Fanny's Fortunes: Sexuality and Commerce in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*." *Eighteenth-Century Life*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2019, pp. 58-75.

---. "Transnational Print Trade Relations." *Samuel Richardson in Context*, edited by Peter Sabor and Betty Schellenberg, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 91-99.

Treviño, Rene H. "Absolving La Llorona: Yda H. Addis's 'The Wailing Woman.'" *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 36, no. 1, June 2019, forthcoming.

Van Elk, Martine "Blessed art thou reader if you are not of that sex': Public Femininity in the Seventeenth Century." *Michaelina Wautiers, 1604-1689: Glorifying a Forgotten Talent*. Ed. Katlijne van der Stighelen. Schoten: BAI, 2018. 120-33.

Wegener, Frederick. "Shall Female Physicians Treat Male Patients?': Doctoring the Other Sex, 'Love-Sickness,' and Representations of American Medical Women, 1850-1900," *Arizona Quarterly*, Winter 2018.

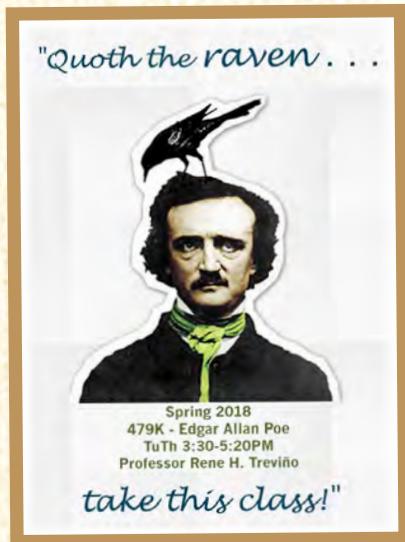


Chapter 5

Our Courses

FEATURED COURSE: ENGLISH 479K

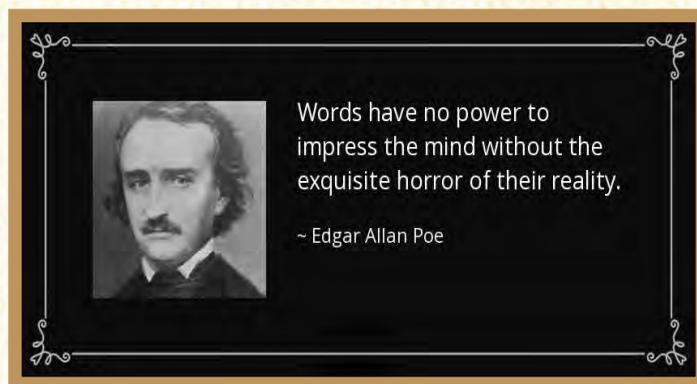
Dr. Rene Treviño's course, English 479K: Edgar Allan Poe, covers more than just the legacy of Poe as the "gothic master." According to Dr. Treviño, Poe considered himself a poet primarily, but he struggled with placating 19th-century audiences to make a living versus writing for posterity. This course delves into that tension in Poe's work, studying him more within a cultural context alongside his contemporaries—such as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Harriet Prescott Spofford—and as an ambitious writer dedicated to perfecting his craft—he tried his hand at all major literary genres and even invented one. Students learn, as Dr. Treviño states, "how to be familiar with Edgar Allan Poe's writing [while] demonstrating the ability to relate it to national literatures and transnational traditions." This framework helps students demystify Poe's legacy and develop a more historically accurate vision of the artist; a vision that is much more complex than the drug-addled, drunk, and slightly deranged persona that is typically referenced in popular culture.



English 479K begins with readings concerning Poe's biography and the legacy of his work to foreground Poe historically. As the semester progresses, students get a sense of the spectrum of his cultural and literary impact. Readings include his literary criticism, his foray into the genre of detective fiction, and his attempt at the novel: *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838). Later in the semester, the course explores Poe's use of humor, as well as his complicated and sometimes problematic depictions of gender and race. For example, though Poe claimed an apolitical stance in his writing, declaring that it was not the role of the poet

to speak of politics, the racial tensions of the Antebellum era still make their way into his work. One of Dr. Treviño's former English 479K students, Mikey Bachman, even stated that "[this] class helped to inspire my interest in race studies. Some of the material we covered in the class was particularly inspiring, and the idea of the importance of race studies in relation to literature has stayed with me."

In fact, many students from the class praised how Dr. Treviño guided them through Edgar Allan Poe's impact on the early-nineteenth-century literary world and inspired them to analyze how this translates to the minds of modern readers. As Dr. Treviño puts it: "Poe's life and professional writing career were relatively brief, but his legacy has been long lasting."



EGSA'S RE/INVENTIONS CONFERENCE

On November 29, 2018, CSULB's English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) hosted its 8th Annual Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference: Re/inventions. The theme of this year's event was memory.

Dr. Rebeca Helfer, Associate Professor of English at UC Irvine, gave the keynote address, "The Art of Memory." By tracing the history of locational memory, also known as "mnemonics," from its traditional origins to the present, Dr. Helfer suggested that "the art of memory was always more than a method for memorization or recollection."

Dr. Helfer claimed that "art of memory represents a poetics, an interdisciplinary art of storytelling by which the past is remembered, one which has influenced literary theory and practice from Plato to the present," focusing mainly on the early Modern period and Renaissance English writing.



EGSA, which is driven by students, created Re/Inventions as a forum for graduate and undergraduate students interested in sharing academic research within a conference setting. The event welcomed several of our own CSULB colleagues, visiting scholars from our local CSUs and UCs, and presenters from other respected institutions like The University of Texas

and Rutgers University. This year's conference saw a turn-out of over 150 attendees and 26 panelists. Many EGSA members are graduating this year, so continuing students are urged to sign up and contribute to the program. Anyone interested in joining EGSA or volunteering for the Re/Inventions conference can contact the organization at egsa.csulb@gmail.com



FEATURED EVENT: 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF MARY SHELLEY'S *FRANKENSTEIN*



After two hundred years, English novelist Mary Shelley continues to capture our imagination with the gothic novel *Frankenstein*, a chilling and timely narrative that goes beyond monster clichés and creates cautionary tales of ambition, alienation, and the pursuit of knowledge. In celebration of the bicentennial of the book's publication, Dr. Susan Carlile hosted an event to honor the novel's legacy through film. She believes that “anniversaries are moments to stop and think about what a piece of art can do to our way of thinking,” and we should celebrate when an author or work has such a lasting impact on society.

The *Frankenstein* Event celebrated Shelley's amazing accomplishment by showing Nick Dear's stage adaptation of the classic from the National Theatre Live. The adaptation features Benedict Cumberbatch (*Hamlet*, BBC's *Sherlock*) and Jonny Lee Miller (*Elementary*, *Trainspotting*) alternating between the roles of Victor Frankenstein and his creation. The actors' astounding performances complement each other perfectly and constantly makes us ask which of the two characters is the true monster: the mutilated Creature or Victor Frankenstein himself with his disregard for ethics and obsession with artificial perfection.

A specialist in 18th century British literature, Carlile says that she understands that many people are not especially keen on the era. However, she hopes that the event was an effective introduction to both this literary period and the enduring novel, and that it helped the audience develop a “deeper and more nuance way of thinking about the narrative.”

Ultimately, Carlile's main purpose for hosting the event is to bring together the English Department for entertainment and discussion. Carlile believes *Frankenstein* serves as a text that is of interest for various areas of study within the English Department. She says, for example, “creative writing majors thinking about writing a novel can use the novel as inspiration; rhetoric and composition majors can explore arguments in the narrative; and English education majors can consider teaching the text in their own classroom.”



FEATURED EVENT: VIRAMONTES LECTURE SERIES
FEATURED EVENT: VIRAMONTES LECTURE SERIES

Internationally-acclaimed and award-winning poet, essayist, playwright, and activist Cherríe Moraga was this year's featured speaker for the 5th annual Helena María Viramontes Lecture in Latina/o Literature, held on April 18, 2019. A recipient of numerous awards and honors, including the United States Artist Rockefeller Fellowship for Literature (2007) and The Critic's Circle Award for Best Original Script (1992), Moraga has published dozens of works, which include the titles *This Bridge Called My Back* co-edited with Gloria Anzaldua (1983), *Loving in the War Years* (1983), *Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood* (1997), and numerous plays, including *Heroes and Saints* (1994). She is currently a professor in the English Department at the University of



California, Santa Barbara. During her appearance at CSULB, she read pieces from her newest memoir, *Native Country of the Heart* (2019), in which she shared accounts about her family and personal life journey, including her coming out as a Chicana lesbian, and discussed issues in feminism, queerness, social rights, and cultural identity. In addition to the public reading, which was attended by over 400 students and faculty members at the University Theater, Moraga held a book signing, a creative writing workshop for students, and an author's reception on the same day.

The Helena María Viramontes Annual Lecture in Latina/o Literature series is a collaboration between the departments of Chicano and Latino Studies and English, created for students, faculty, staff, and community members to engage with and discuss issues surrounding Latina/o literature and culture.

Committee members work year round to bring an influential

Latina/o writer and/or scholar in the field to feature as a guest speaker. The committee consists of Dr. Anna Sandoval (CHLS Dept. Chair), Dr. Maythee Rojas (CHLS), Dr. Dennis Lopez (English), Dr. Araceli Esparza (English), Dr. Rene Treviño (English), Dr. Jeannette Acevedo Rivera (RGRLL), and Kiki T. Shaver (CHLS/English)



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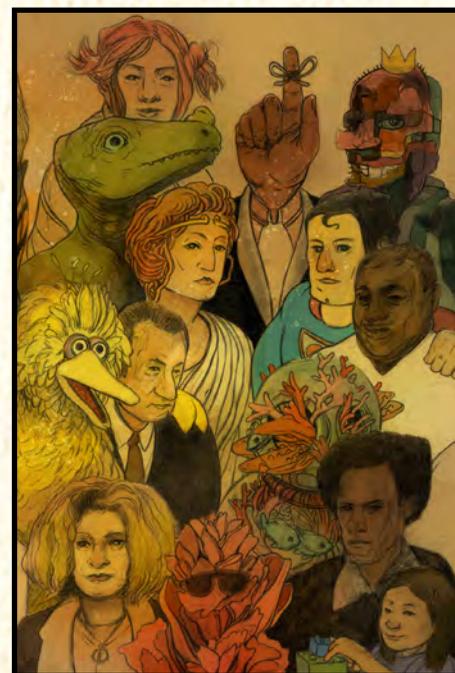
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