

UIUC English Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Bulletin

Fall 2017

Edited by Dave Morris, Senior Lecturer in English

Given the accelerated contraction of the tenure-track job market (and indeed, of the tenured profession generally), it seems appropriate to take a closer look at the long-standing yet growing national pool of adjunct and NTT faculty, many of whom have long been engaged in professional and professionally-relevant work across the country. Because there exists no specific venue in our department for announcement of the creative, research, teaching, professional development, and community work of the NTT faculty, we decided to solicit voluntary contributions from NTTs describing their professional efforts outside of their day-to-day teaching responsibilities.

We knew this work would be interesting; we did not expect how delightful it would be to see the wide range of NTT efforts that you will see below. Several of our NTTs continue to publish scholarly work and attend conferences; highlights in this area include **John Claborn's** new book, *Civil Rights and the Environment in African American Literature, 1895-1941* (Bloomsbury Academic Press); articles and article projects by **Kyle Garton-Gundling, Shawn Gilmore, Heather McLeer, and Jordan Sellers**; and professional conference presentations by **Amanda Bales, Dana Kinzy, Heather McLeer, and Dave Morris**. Our creative writers have been prolific in publishing poetry, stories, and creative non-fiction. **Amy Hassinger** recently published her third novel, *After the Dam*; **Julie Price** won the Rattle Prize for her poem, "Veins;" and **Mary Hays** recently completed an MFA alongside publishing several short stories. **Mary Hays** and **Syd Slobodnik** are both frequent contributors to local media in the form of columns, radio, and public television. NTTs participate in local community organizations and events in a variety of ways. **Mary Rose Cottingham** frequently appears in local theatre productions; **John Rubins** contributes both mechanical and artistic labor to the local Bike Project; and **Andrew Moss** has created and run some impressive programs in local primary and secondary schools. Some of us have taken on the daunting tasks of engaging with the tangled levers and pulleys of UI's institutional apparatuses: **Shawn Gilmore, Dana Kinzy, Dave Morris, Jordan Sellers, and Kirstin Wilcox** have embraced various administrative and committee roles in the hopes of sustaining and improving some of UIUC's academic programs. Finally, *all* of our NTTs engage in both short and long-term efforts to improve our teaching and the conditions under which it happens; highlights in this list can be seen in the form of professional conference attendance, special course design and teaching (**Gail Hapke** and **Andrew Moss**), and student advising (**Jordan Sellers** and **Kirstin Wilcox**). Finally, UI's satellite program at Zhejiang International University in China wouldn't run without the expert labor of our NTTs; in spring, **Kent Quaney** will join our colleagues **Marilyn Holguin** and **Ryan Flannagan**, both of whom have already been there for some time teaching our rhetoric courses.

Below are more detailed accounts of professional work done by many of our NTTs. The work represents just a tiny fraction of the work done by non-tenured faculty across the country. As the significance of NTT work grows, I'm left with a question: if we've accomplished all of the work below, what might we be capable of with more—or any—institutional support?

Amanda Bales has been teaching with us for a couple of years now, and she's active in scholarship around rhetoric and the teaching of rhetoric. In October, she delivered the paper "Encouraging Second Person Narratives as Rhetorical Tools of Resistance" at the biannual Feminisms and Rhetorics conference. Additionally, Amanda has published several poems and short stories. Four poems ("Lake Tenkiller, 31st Birthday"; "Checkout Time"; "Walking Back"; "a man needs a fish like a woman needs her heroine") were included in the anthology *Green Country: Writing from Northeastern Oklahoma* published by Soddensbank Press. Her poem "Brisance/Advice for Beheading a Chicken" appeared in the *Beloit Poetry Journal*. Four short stories have appeared in four different journals: "Getting By" appeared in *Raleigh Review*; "[Oralism](#)" in *apt*; "What is Taken" in *Southern Humanities Review*; "[Fault](#)" in *Pithead Chapel*. "[In the American Red Cross Studio for Portrait Masks](#)," a piece of experimental non-fiction, was published in *1966: A Journal of Creative Nonfiction*.

John Claborn, who teaches courses in BTW, Rhetoric, and film, recently published his book *Civil Rights and the Environment in African-American Literature, 1895-1941* with Bloomsbury Academic Press (formerly Continuum). Here is the book's back cover blurb: "The beginning of the 20th century marked a new phase of the battle for civil rights in America. But many of the era's most important African-American writers were also acutely aware of the importance of environmental justice to the struggle. *Civil Rights and the Environment in African-American Literature* is the first book to explore the centrality of environmental problems to writing from the civil rights movement in the early decades of the century. Bringing ecocritical perspectives to bear on the work of such important writers as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. Du Bois, the writers of the Harlem Renaissance, and Depression-era African-American writing, the book brings to light a vital new perspective on ecocriticism and modern American literary history."

Mary Rose Cottingham, our colleague who teaches courses in rhetoric and literature, was recognized last fall with an English departmental teaching award and a nomination for the LAS Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. She works frequently as a freelance editor, and works especially in that capacity with faculty and students in the department of Environmental Engineering. Mary Rose is passionately active in the local theatre scene. She started studying acting about 13 years ago and has been acting in local venues (Parkland College Theatre, Krannert Summer Studio, The Station Theatre, and the Rantoul Theatre Group). Most recently, she appeared in Parkland's production of *Much Ado about Nothing*.

Kyle Garton-Gundling, one of our lecturers who teaches Rhet105, pursues an active research agenda in post-1945 American literature. His article, "Beat Buddhism and American Freedom," appeared in the spring issue of *College Literature*.

Shawn Gilmore, Senior Lecturer, continues to teach a variety of courses across our BTW and ENGL offerings, which he greatly enjoys. He has also continued his research and writing on comics, and will have a book chapter on Art Spiegelman's relationship with Modernism in his pre-*Maus* work in the forthcoming *The Comics of Art Spiegelman*. Shawn served as the first president of the Non-Tenure Faculty Coalition, Local #6546, and is now its secretary, and has written about the union's formation and first contract struggle in a piece that will appear in the collection [Professors in the Gig Economy](#) in the spring. He also represents our department in UIUC's Academic Senate, and is serving as chair of the University *Statutes* and Senate

Procedures committee. To get a sense of this work, see this recent [piece](#) in Inside Higher Ed on the renaming of our College of Business. Finally, and most importantly, he maintains an ongoing project to document occurrences of the "it's-all-connected" conspiracy wall that appears in film and television when, for example, a reporter or cop has to go rogue to prove all of the narrative details can best be connected by string on a wall; this work can be found on the [Narrative String Theory tumblr](#), and submissions or related types are more than welcome.

Gail Hapke, our colleague who teaches classes in Rhetoric, BTW, and Literature, has in the past taught some special English courses, including Descriptive English Grammar and Publishing and Editing, the latter of which she will teach next semester.

Mary Hays, our longtime colleague, finished her MFA last spring. Many of us enjoy reading her column, "[Letters from Birdland](#)," which has been appearing weekly in the *Champaign News Gazette* since 2008. She's published a number of short stories in the last few years. "[Hannah: Six Months Later](#)" was published in *Every Day Fiction* on October 15, 2017. "[Tribute in Black, White, and Grey](#)" won first prize for fiction in *Sixfold*; it was published in their summer 2017 issue. "A Woman Is Wearing Her Prettiest Dress" appeared in *Quiddity*, Volume 10, 2017. "The Sidewinder and the Buffalo Child" is anthologized in *Chasing Magic* May, 2017. *Every Day Fiction* featured "[Maybe in a Tornado](#)" on February 25, 2017 and "[The Bird's Nest](#)" on May 30, 2017. "Encounter" was published in the winter 2015 issue of [Broad! a gentleperson's magazine](#). (Find it on page 59.) "[Horse Dreams](#)" appears in *Short Fiction Break*, August 13, 2015. For a longer list of Mary's stories, poems, and nonfiction, see [Mary's website](#).

Amy Hassinger joined us in August as a lecturer in Creative Writing. She published her third novel, *After the Dam*, last fall. She also published a couple of short pieces in the *New York Times* last year--one of which was an op-ed on the state of higher education in Illinois. Her personal essay on the disturbingly slow response of the healthcare industry to a life-threatening back infection ("[Matter Over Mind](#)") appeared last fall in *Catapult*. This fall she's given readings, workshops, or talks in Los Angeles, Brownville, NE, Washington Island, WI, and at SUNY Oswego (NY). For more, see [amyhassinger.com](#).

Dana Kinzy has been serving as Interim Associate Director of Rhetoric this year, which has been really rewarding for her because she's been able to do a lot more teacher development work, which is in her academic wheelhouse. She's also teaching Rhetoric 101 for the first time. In June, Dana led a 75-minute workshop titled "Stance-Taking: Writing to Know One's Mind and Keep One's Bearings in an Increasingly Confusing World" at the Assembly on Expanded Perspectives in Learning conference in Estes Park, CO. In October she presented a more formal paper on her research on Stance-Taking as a teaching technique at the Feminisms and Rhetoric Conference in Dayton, OH. She's been participating in the cross-disciplinary Inclusive Pedagogies reading group and in a creative nonfiction writing group. Dana is also taking Adult Beginning Ballet through the Champaign Park District, so she has plenty of opportunity to laugh at herself.

Heather McLeer recently finished her PhD here at UI, and joined us as a lecturer in the fall. In her non-teaching time, she's working on an article, doing freelance proofreading/editing work (mainly dissertation/thesis chapters and article manuscripts for grad students and faculty), and

preparing proposals for two conferences next summer. Along with several other UI English grad program alumni, Heather participates every June in the AP English essay grading event.

Dave Morris, who teaches courses in rhetoric, occasionally film, and even more rarely literature, has taken on two new challenges this year: teaching Rhet 101/102, and working as an Assistant Director of the Rhetoric program. For the latter job, he's doing a little work with the new rhet instructors, writing a small section of the new rhetoric program textbook, and working with Kristi McDuffie to design and pilot an online summer section of Rhet105. Dave continues (albeit slowly) to pursue a research agenda in religion and contemporary utopian/dystopian literature; he recently delivered the paper "Poetics of the Hijab: Muslim Women's Bodies in Secular America" at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association in Chicago. Along with several other alumni of our grad program, Dave participates every summer in the 7-8-day marathon AP English essay grading event. He spends quite a bit of time thinking about how he and his colleagues fit within the rapidly changing profession of college English.

Andrew Moss co-founded and coordinated Summit Afterschool Program at Stratton Elementary school from 2011-2014. Over 4 years, the free program served over 75 families, recruited over 40 volunteers from the U of I and Champaign-Urbana, and partnered with 4 U of I service learning and graduate courses. Last year, Andrew developed a new course: BTW 263 -- Cross-Cultural Communication. Drawing from sociological and anthropological approaches to understanding international cultures, it asked students to practice professional writing skills while developing original research about the global world of business. For the past two years, Andrew has developed and guided a partnership between Centennial High School and the Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI). As part of this partnership, Andrew also teaches topics such as developing research questions, qualitative research methods, and composing arguments in Centennial HS classrooms. Students in this program from Centennial High School have produced original ethnographic research and presented their work at two EUI conferences.

Julie Price is mostly interested in writing poetry, but is also working on a nonfiction book that cannot decide which direction it wants to take (so it purposely torments her). Though she's "notoriously lazy about sending out submissions," she's published a few poems in the past couple of years. One of them, "[Veins](#)," won the Rattle Poetry Prize last year, which got her \$10,000 for one poem (chosen blindly from about 4,000 poems): "which means our vacation was way better than usual. (In that it existed.)" Julie has been nominated four times for a Pushcart Prize. In teaching, she's particularly interested in the writing that students do about traumatic things they've experienced, and how they use the writing to process trauma. This kind of subject matter surfaces constantly in CW classes, so she tries to make a workshop environment where it is accepted sensitively and tactfully and yet still genuinely critiqued. In her non-writing, non-teaching life, Julie does yoga and shamelessly indulges in any TV show remotely having to do with tiny houses. She visits her 95-year-old mom every couple of weeks in Indiana. She also spends every minute possible with her husband "because he's nice. But also deeply sarcastic. Which is like catnip for me." Julie has a website (designed by her husband Scott), www.juliepricepinkerton.com, where you can read some of her work "and see a cool picture of a flower that turned out way better than it should have, only because I accidentally had the flash on."

Kent Quaney comes to the U of I via the University of Southern Mississippi Center for Writers where he completed his PhD in fiction writing. He has been teaching rhetoric here for two years, and this coming spring will be teaching at Zhejiang International University in China as part of a co-project of our Rhetoric and Engineering programs. Beyond teaching, Kent has recently finished his first novel, a surfing tale set in Australia, and has his fingers crossed as he begins the submission process.

John Rubins, our colleague in Creative Writing, has been volunteering with The Bike Project for several years, teaching people how to repair their own bikes to help build a more sustainable, healthier, and happier community. The bike project has over seven hundred current members, and people are welcome to join, buy, fix, and even build bikes with volunteer help. In addition to writing and publishing short stories, John has been pursuing two fascinating creative projects: he designed and built a bicycle-driven automaton that draws a picture of a bicycle, and he's in the process of making a bicycle-powered installation piece. The former was inspired by an activity John does with his 200-level writing students: he asks them to draw a bicycle, and uses their difficulty ("hilarity, shame, and humility," he puts it) to draw the distinction between the ability to identify and the ability to describe (something many beginning writers have trouble recognizing).

Jordan Sellers, in addition to teaching Rhet105 and Rhet233, is advising multiple students on writing projects. One of his current students is writing a James Scholar essay for Rhet233 assessing UI's campus sexual assault programming and prevention resources. He's also advising one of his former students (a non-English major) as the student revises a James Scholar essay for submission to an undergraduate research journal. Additionally, he's advising multiple students through the process of applying for research positions and internships. Beyond writing recommendations, Jordan has a pretty steady stream of former Rhetoric students who seek him out for writing feedback and advice as they apply for scholarships and various competitive awards. He's serving this academic year on the Rhetoric Advisory Committee and helping out with the Undergraduate Rhetoric Essay Contest, the Rhetoric Teaching Award, and the new Rhetoric Program textbook project. Jordan completed a major chapter and article project on John Thelwall this summer and is now in the process of drafting his final dissertation chapter.

Syd Slobodnik has been an active writer and radio and television commentator in the Champaign-Urbana community for around 40 years. He has written for Illini Media publications since 1975 as an undergrad, then as a grad student, and since 1989 or so for *The Buzz*. His Illini Media site with many of his articles on film and Chicago and Champaign theater [can be found at this link](#). For many years, Syd did a locally produced weekly cable show called "The Critics' Choice," on which he and his co-host Jeff Nelson reviewed film and theatre in CU and Chicago. That show transferred to WILL-channel 12 and ran from 1998-2001. Syd continues occasionally to do a similar film review program on the Parkland Channel called, "If You Liked, You'll Love" where he and his co-host Matt Hurt review a recent film and compare it to a great old classic. Syd started teaching in this department as a TA in 1981 and became an NTT in 1989. He's taught a variety of courses in rhetoric, literature, and film, including an online section of Intro to Film that is offered in the summers.

Rebecca Weber has taken a short leave of absence, but will be back teaching with us next semester. In the meantime, she's helping to write the new rhetoric program textbook.

Kirstin Wilcox, as many of us know, has over the past few years expanded the services and role of English advising. She's helped students secure internships, practice interviewing, and find post-graduation jobs. Largely because of these efforts, English majors have the highest rate of post-graduation employment across the entire campus! Kirstin is also part of an IPRH taskforce in emerging areas in the humanities. A major part of this work involves writing Humanities into the university's 'strategic plan.'