Welcome to our PhD Alumni Spotlight, where we showcase some of our amazing alumni, learn about their time at UW and get their advice. Thanks for stopping by and helping to acknowledge our wonderful graduates!

CLASS OF 2017

ALISSA BOURBONNAIS
English Faculty, Spokane Falls Community College, Pullman, WA

"Think long and hard about how your dissertation relates to the kind of job you actually want ... It's not enough to choose what you feel most passionate about writing on for the next few years. You must be able to articulate how your research will show search committees at your ideal job that you can do the kind of work they need done."

Professional accomplishments: "I'm honored to have received a college-wide teaching award after my first year on the tenure track at SFCC; I'm also excited to have an essay entitled “Dancing with Memory in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home” forthcoming in the Critical Approaches to Comics Artists series."

ANN SHIVERS-MCNAIR
Assistant Professor and Director of Professional & Technical Writing, Department of English, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

"I chose UW's Language and Rhetoric PhD program because I was impressed with the range and quality of projects that graduate students and faculty were working on, the embrace of interdisciplinary work, and the spirit of collegiality in the program. All these impressions held true in my experience, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to read and engage across fields and disciplines, to design a challenging and rewarding dissertation project, and to learn in a generative, gracious intellectual environment."

Professional accomplishments: Serves as associate editor of Technical Communication Quarterly; along with coauthor Clarissa San Diego, received the Society of Technical Communication's Frank R. Smith Distinguished
Article Award for 2017 article, "Localizing Communities, Goals, Communication, and Inclusion: A Collaborative Approach"

Learn more about Ann Shivers-McNair

MERI WIMBERLY
Professor of English and Humanities, Regional Program Coordinator of Arts and Sciences, Stratford University, Falls Church, VA

“Be creative in your job search: There are lots of opportunities out there, even if the market seems narrow!”

Professional accomplishments: Curriculum design of several English and humanities courses; building arts and sciences faculty teams on four campuses; creation of training program for faculty

CLASS OF 2016

RACHEL ARTEAGA
Assistant Director, Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle, WA

“The opportunity to work closely with UW faculty to develop my research, writing, teaching, and administrative capacities was a valuable aspect of my experience as a doctoral student at UW. As valuable was the opportunity to think expansively about the meaning and value of my work in higher education, through involvement in programs such as the Certificate in Public Scholarship and the UW in the High School.”

Professional accomplishments: "In my role at the Simpson Center, I directly support humanities research, teaching, and infrastructure. Central to my work during this time has been the development of a cross-institutional humanities partnership between two-year colleges in Seattle and the University of Washington."

Learn more about Rachel Arteaga
RACHEL KUNERT-GRAF  
Adjunct Faculty at Antioch University & Shoreline Community College, Seattle, WA

"Prioritize your happiness and well-being. Good teaching and good scholarly work will follow from that. And, if you find that too hard to do, it's okay to make changes to your project. In graduate school I thought there were only two paths--research university scholarship or leaving academia--but I've found a happy life in Seattle, teaching and publishing because I enjoy both. If you want to talk to someone who's opted for this middle road, feel free to get in touch."

Professional accomplishments: "I've published three articles, but the one that started my dissertation is what I'm most proud of: "Lynching Iconography: Looking in Graphic Narrative" in INKS Vol 2.3. It's about why it is so hard to really engage with racial violence in visual mediated society, and I argue that comics provide useful lessons in how to look ethically."

Learn more about Rachel Kunert-Graf

JANE WONG  
Assistant Professor, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA

“Take risks! Part of my dissertation had a digital humanities component and I was so excited to try new scholarly approaches.”

Professional accomplishments: Solo exhibit at the Frye Art Museum titled "After Preparing the Altar, the Ghosts Feast Feverishly"; published two books of poems: Overpour (Action Books, 2016) and How to Not Be Afraid of Everything (Alice James Books, 2021); 2017 James W. Ray Distinguished Artist Award

Learn more about Jane Wong

CLASS OF 2015

SHARON MITCHLER  
Professor of English and Humanities, Centralia College, Centralia, WA

“As a non-traditionally aged graduate student, (I began the Ph.D program at 46), I had already taught in community colleges for fifteen years. I knew course work in American literature, rhetoric and composition, and research techniques would be ideal for my next professional goals. I was not only allowed, but encouraged by all the faculty I worked with to structure my course work to fulfill my long term goals.”

Professional accomplishments: Chair of National Two-Year College English Association, Centralia College Exceptional Faculty Award, multiple publications in the journal Teaching English in the Two-Year College (TETYC)
SHON MECKFESSEL

English faculty and Writing Center Director, Highline College, Des Moines, WA

“Don’t put all your eggs in the research basket, and realize that the rewards of public scholarship and serving disprivileged students are often greater than the higher-status options. Never forget that your research and teaching are still labor, and that there’s one reason we have weekends.”

Professional accomplishments: "Serving students, becoming tenured faculty at the fifth-most diverse college in the country, directing a vibrant and highly collaborative peer tutor writing center... [and] publishing "Nonviolence Ain’t What It Used To Be: Unarmed Insurrection and the Rhetoric of Resistance," expanding on my dissertation research."

Learn more about Shon Meckfessel

ARENDT OAK SPESER

Publisher, Andante Books, Port Townsend, WA & Rome, Italy

“Relationships to faculty were, without question, the most valuable aspect of my experience as a graduate student.”

Professional accomplishments: "I have taught adjunct at multiple two-year colleges around the Puget Sound and Olympic Peninsula; co-directed study abroad programs in Rome for the UW; served as Executive and Academic Director for an education and culture nonprofit in Jefferson County that provided free college-level humanities courses to low-income adults; started an independent publishing company; and most recently, published my first book (The Book of Dudley)."

Learn more about Andante Books

CLASS OF 2013
RAJ CHETTY
Assistant Professor, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA

“Seek supportive faculty mentorship, develop supportive communities, and advocate for each other.”

Professional accomplishments: Received tenure at St. John’s University (2019); proposed an Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at St. John’s University, which has now been approved, as a department, in development now (2019); co-edited a special issue of The Black Scholar, “Dominican Black Studies” (2015)

Learn more about Raj Chetty

CHRISTOPHER B. PATTERSON (KAWIKA GUILLERMO)
Assistant Professor, The Social Justice Institute, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

“Don't be ashamed if you find more pleasure in some parts of academia than others. Some will be great educators, some great researchers, some great writers, some great editors, some great organizers, and some will leave the ivory tower for richer pastures. These are all important contributions and can be transformative given the right contexts.”

Professional accomplishments: "I have published an academic book (Transitive Cultures) on Southeast Asian migrant literature and global multiculturalism, and a novel (Stamped: an anti-travel novel) about marginalized Americans traveling in Asia. I am also proud of winning a faculty of arts teaching award in 2018, and founding the New Books in Asian American Studies podcast.”

Learn more about Christopher B. Patterson

CLASS OF 2012

EDMOND Y. CHANG
Assistant Professor of English, Ohio University, Athens, OH

“Don't silo yourself, be open to a wide range of people, perspectives, periods, canons, departments,
disciplines, and communities. Grad school can be very isolating: be purposeful in building community across circles. Keep grad pub alive.

**Professional accomplishments:** Published “Playing as Making” in *Disrupting Digital Humanities*, edited by Dorothy Kim and Jesse Stommel (Punctum Books, 2018); published “Queergaming” in *Queer Game Studies*, edited by Bonnie Ruberg and Adrienne Shaw (University of Minnesota Press, 2017); developed ENG 2100: "Critical Approaches to Fantasy" course, which was featured in Ohio's *Arts & Sciences Forum*

Learn more about Edmond Y. Chang

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**MARIA DEBLASSIE**

*Full-time English faculty at Central New Mexico Community College & part-time humanities at the UNM Honors College, Albuquerque, New Mexico*

“The teaching program in the English Department was outstanding! I really loved the community they fostered and the practical pedagogy they not only taught us but also practiced themselves. I also loved working with the various TRIO groups and other minority groups on campus. Together, we fostered such a strong sense of community and created life-long support networks.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Received New Mexico State TRIO Achiever Award (2019), CNM Distinguished Faculty Award for CHSS (2018), and CNM CHSS Faculty Excellence Award for Innovative Teaching Practices (2017); published *Everyday Enchantments* (UK Press Moon Books, 2018), which won the Pinnacle Book Achievement Award for the New Age Category in 2018

Learn more about Maria DeBlassie

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**TRAYNOR HANSEN**

*Instructor of Writing and English, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA*

“When I was teaching as a graduate student, I didn't fully realize how good UW's EWP and IWP programs are... the training, exposure, and experiences I received at UW have made me a better teacher—not just of writing, but in the way that writing informs all of my courses. I also had the opportunity to teach several undergraduate courses across the curriculum... which helped to turn me into something of a generalist. This has given me a flexibility that has suited me well at a smaller liberal arts college.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Received Academic Innovation Research Grants focusing on ePortfolios at SPU; director of several University Scholars (Honors) projects
MISCHA WILLETT
*English Faculty, Seattle Pacific University, Seattle, WA*

“Learn to use LaTeX; start building your email list early.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Published *Phases* (Cascade Books, 2017)

Learn more about Mischa Willett

ADELE ZHANG
*Career Coach, Foster School of Business, University of Washington, Seattle, WA*

“Plan for your career years ahead; design several career paths for yourself; networking inside and outside of your comfort zone helps you make better decisions; be humble and curious.”

Learn more about Adele Zhang

CLASS OF 2011

JANE J. LEE
*Associate Professor of English, California State University - Dominguez Hills, Carson, CA*

“I think about my time at the UW with great fondness and gratitude...I learned everything that makes me a scholar today through my courses and its wonderful professors; in hallway conversations with friends; at receptions for lectures, huddled around refreshments; at chance restaurant meetings with colleagues in other departments. What I valued most about being at the UW was the great diversity of very intelligent opinions I encountered every day, within and outside the classroom space.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Achieved tenure; published article “Queer Inventions: Rupturing Narrative Hegemony in Sarah Waters' *Fingersmith,*” which is available via open access at Nineteenth-Century Gender
STUDIES; faculty coordinator for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship Program at CSUDH

Learn more about Jane J. Lee

SARAH READ
Director of Technical and Professional Writing and Assistant Professor, Portland State University, Portland, OR

“Hoe your own row--At UW there are world-class resources but you often have to seek them out yourself and many are competitive, so be prepared to apply multiple times.”

Professional accomplishments: Research that explores how technical reporting and documentation practices serve and shape the missions of technical organizations, for example at a supercomputing center in Chicago that serves scientists from around the world; published award-winning research in Technical Communication Quarterly, The Journal of Writing Research, Journal of Business and Technical Communication, and College Composition and Communication

Learn more about Sarah Read

JENTERY SAYERS
Associate Professor, English and Cultural, Social, and Political Thought, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC

“Don't neglect your hobbies and support networks. They can boost your health, teaching, and research.”

Professional accomplishments: Developed The Maker Lab in the Humanities (MLab) at the University of Victoria; published Making Things and Drawing Boundaries: Experiments in the Digital Humanities (University of Minnesota Press, 2017)

Learn more about Jentery Sayers

TIMOTHY J. WELSH
Associate Professor of English, Loyola University New Orleans, New Orleans, LA
“The part of my UW experience that meant the most to me was finding community with the other graduate students. I was able to meet other graduate students at UW who were willing and excited to collaborate, study, and write about videogames from the perspective of literary theory. Without question, if that community hadn't been there I probably wouldn’t have pursued videogame studies this far and now it is central to my career.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Published *Mixed Realism: Videogames and the Violence of Fiction* (University of Minnesota Press, 2016); helped grow the International Conference Series on *Games and Literary Theory*

Learn more about Timothy J. Welsh

**CLASS OF 2010**

RAHUL KRISHNA GAIRONLA

*The Krishna Somers Lecturer in English & Postcolonial Literature and Fellow of the Asia Research Centre at Murdoch University, Perth, Australia*

“Seattle indelibly and culturally shaped me...It is surreal to reflect that I graduated less than a decade ago, am coming up on 35 articles in peer-reviewed publications, three published book projects, a second monograph project, supervision of doctoral students, university teaching on three continents, and invited talks between and beyond. I never could have accomplished any of this without the rigorous guidance, kind mentorship, and lovely collegiality that I experienced at the UW.”

**Professional accomplishments:** "I am particularly proud of my second book project titled *Homelandings: Postcolonial Diasporas and Transatlantic Belonging* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2016) which emerged from my PhD thesis, and a co-authored book titled *Migration, Gender and Home Economics in Rural North India* (Routledge, 2019). I'm also honoured to have received four DAAD (German Academic Exchange) Awards offered to attend European Summer University in the Digital Humanities events at Leipzig University in 2017, 2018, and 2019."

Learn more about Rahul Krishna Gaironla

PAUL JAUSSEN

*Associate Professor of Literature, Lawrence Technological University, Southfield, MI*

“Build a community. Attend conferences, send your work off for publication, develop friendships in the field. And remember that writing, reading, and thinking happen everywhere--forge relationships with people outside of academia.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Published *Writing in Real Time: Emergent Poetics from Whitman to the Digital* (Cambridge UP, 2017); published essays in *New Literary History, Comparative Literature,*
Contemporary Literature, and ASAP/J; co-founder of Humanity+Technology, a public lecture series at Lawrence Tech that focuses on the interaction of humanities and STEM

Learn more about Paul Jaussen

CLASS OF 2009

AMANDA GOLDEN
Associate Professor of English, New York Institute of Technology, Old Westbury, NY

“I am grateful to have worked with faculty who were so supportive of my interests in literary archives, poetry, marginalia, and Sylvia Plath’s reading. The seminars I took were inspiring and I loved designing and teaching courses in topics ranging from Modernism and Material Culture to The Fifties.”


Learn more about Amanda Golden

MATTHEW LEVAY
Associate Professor of English, Idaho State University, Pocatello, ID

“Read as widely as possible beyond your coursework, and enjoy the process of preparing for comprehensive exams, which is probably the most time you’ll have to dedicate to concentrated reading and research. Take advantage of on-campus opportunities--visiting speakers, colloquia, and public programming--and get involved when and where you can."

Professional accomplishments: Published Violent Minds: Modernism and the Criminal (Cambridge University Press, 2019); edited special issue of the Journal of Modern Periodical Studies on “Seriality” (vol. 9, no. 1, 2018); Director of Graduate Studies at ISU’s Department of English

Learn more about Matthew Levay
“Build and make use of your social networks. Form writing groups, consider co-authoring with someone in your cohort, reach out to someone whose work you admire-- they may even suggest working together! (I've done it, and it's happened to me as well)"

Professional accomplishments: "I'm most proud of my 2nd book, which came out last year. It features research from scholars in 7 different countries, several of whom were former refugees, themselves. I'm also proud of two pieces I wrote for Inside Higher Ed, which many people have said resonated with them."

Learn more about Shawna Shapiro

CLASS OF 2008

TODD ANDREW BORLIK
Senior Lecturer in Renaissance Literature, University of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, UK

“The generous support and encouragement I received from my mentors while writing my dissertation gave me the courage to send it out to a press for publication."

Professional accomplishments: Published Literature and Nature in the English Renaissance: An Ecocritical Anthology (Cambridge University Press, 2019); received Teaching Award: Diversity Award for Curriculum Design for "Global Shakespeares" module

Learn more about Todd Andrew Borlik

CLASS OF 2007

KELLIE HOLZER
Associate Professor of English and Chair of the Women's & Gender Studies Program, Virginia Wesleyan
“Go beyond a narrow specialization, think broadly, take advantage of interdisciplinary opportunities at the UW, or consider completing a certificate in Textual & Digital Studies, Feminist Studies, or other such program.”

**Professional accomplishments:** "I'm most proud of my research on Victorian matrimonial advertisements, developing and teaching a new undergraduate course on queer literature for Virginia Wesleyan University, achieving grants to support a digital pedagogy initiative at my university, and serving as a Board Member for the Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States for the past ten years."

**LESLEY LARKIN**  
Associate Professor of English and MA Program Director, Northern Michigan University, Marquette, MI

“Develop skills that will serve you in faculty and non-faculty professional paths. Develop a writing practice that works for you (it doesn't have to look like anyone else's!). Pursue projects that you feel excited about, that you can see yourself spending years reading, writing, and talking about.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Published *Race and the Literary Encounter: Black Literature from James Weldon Johnson to Percival Everett* (Indiana UP, 2015)

**AMY REDDINGER**  
Dean of Arts & Sciences, Bay de Noc Community College, Escanaba, Michigan

“Make life and career choices based on your passions, core values, and well-being.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Created a rural, community-focused LGBT+ Center while faculty in the University of Wisconsin system; received the Chancellor's Excellence in Teaching Award at the University of Wisconsin Colleges; started a Potawatomi Language project with local tribal communities at Bay de Noc Community College

**CLASS OF 2005**
ALISSA G. KARL
Associate Professor of English and English Graduate Director, The College at Brockport SUNY, Brockport, NY

“Graduate school taught me to be resourceful and have the stamina to finish long, complex projects independently. While this is crucial, it's just as important to cultivate how you work with others. Whatever destination you have in mind after graduate school, think about what kind of colleague you want to be and how you'll get things done collaboratively.”

Professional accomplishments: Published Modernism and the Marketplace (Routledge, 2009); co-edited Neoliberalism and the Novel (Routledge, 2016) and Rereading Empathy (forthcoming); “I'm proud of the work I do with my students, in particular first-generation and working-class students; I hope that I am helping to boost their confidence and sense of agency along with their academic abilities.”

CLASS OF 2004

HEATHER C. EASTERLING
Professor of English, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

“I was extremely lucky to land in a program with not only outstanding first-year composition and TA-training programs, but also ample opportunities beyond first-year writing to teach undergraduate classes. I was an experienced teacher, hitting the job market, and this experience had helped me to understand the kind of job and career I was seeking.”

Professional accomplishments: "My 2017 article in Early Theatre - culmination of a number of years of working out ideas and significance with city pageantry; current project editing a volume for Arden on The Taming of the Shrew and current conversations...[and] my years of service, development, and leadership for Gonzaga's Center for Teaching and Advising, of which I was also a founding member."

COLBEY EMMERSON REID
Professor and Chair of the Department of Fashion Studies, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL

"Flexibility, interdisciplinary thinking, and openness to alternative pathways and packagings have all served
me well --spend real time in another discipline and learn it well to make your degree more marketable and figure out what really is (and isn't) transferable."

**Professional accomplishments:** Coedited *Design, Mediation and the Posthuman* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); received Henry James Review best essay award for "The Statistical Aesthetics of Henry James" and Textual Studies Association best essay award for "Mina Loy's Design Flaws"; founded and directed a Fashion Lab for academic-corporate partnerships in research and design at Columbia College Chicago

CODY WALKER
Director, Creative Writing Sub-concentration, Dept. of English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

“It took me a few months...but eventually I found folks (both faculty members and classmates) whose interests aligned with mine. Fifteen years later, I'm still in touch -- to my great good fortune -- with many of them.”

**Professional accomplishments:** Published three poetry collections: *Shuffle and Breakdown* (Waywiser, 2008), *The Self-Styled No-Child* (Waywiser, 2016), and *The Trumpiad* (Waywiser, 2017)

Learn more about Cody Walker

CLASS OF 2002

HELANE ADAMS ANDRONE
Professor, English and Chair, Interdisciplinary and Communication Studies, Miami University Hamilton, Hamilton, OH

“Reach across disciplinary lines to find connections and collaborations with other graduate students, communities, and exposure to multiple perspectives. Practice managing diverse perspectives in the classroom...and take every opportunity to learn and apply classic and creative teaching methods.”


Learn more about Helane Adams Androne
JOSHUA “JB” FISHER
Instructor, Portland Community College, Portland, OR

“Be flexible. Life has many chapters.”


Learn more about Joshua “JB” Fisher

ANIKO IMRE
Professor of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

“Seek out all the help you can get but, in the end, trust your own best judgment. Nobody is in your shoes and everyone has a different trajectory. Also, just write the damn thing.”

Professional accomplishments: Published *TV Socialism* in the Console-ing Passions series (Duke University Press, 2016); *Identity Games: Globalization and the Transformation of Post-Communist Media Cultures* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009); received Inaugural Catharine Stimpson Prize for Outstanding Feminist Scholarship, University of Chicago Press; received School of Cinematic Arts Inaugural Faculty Appreciation Award

Learn more about Aniko Imre