

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

# **NEWSLETTER**

**FALL 2024**



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH • FALL 2024 • VOLUME 3 • ISSUE 1**



Department of English

# MEMPHIS

# WELCOME BACK!

Welcome back to all of our faculty and staff! There are a lot of exciting events happening this fall, so first and foremost make sure you're following us on Facebook and Instagram ([@uofmenglish](#)) to stay up to date.

We are thrilled to welcome [Dr. Nicole Smith](#) to the African American Literature concentration, [Dr. Andrew Donnelly](#) to the Literature concentration, and two WRTC Visiting Assistant Professors: [Dr. Chloe Robertson](#) and [Dr. Shiva Mainaly](#)! This fall, we'll welcome speakers and authors to our campus, including a craft interview and poetry reading with francine j. harris hosted by *The Pinch Presents*.

You'll also notice a new addition to the second floor (PT 229) of Patterson Hall: the Digital Media Lab! Many departments and collaborators across campus worked diligently throughout the summer to put together this much-needed resource for UofM students and we are looking forward to utilizing the space this year.

UMEGO is also back in full swing as a registered student organization; please take some time to look at their [updated webpage](#) and the new [Academic Conferences 101 webpage](#) (created in collaboration with faculty and UMEGO), and feel free to reach out to the 2024-25 officers!

This year we're hoping for even more involvement with the marketing and promotion of all of our amazing programs, courses, and events here in the English department. As always, if you have project suggestions or inquiries, don't hesitate to get in touch with [Dr. Tucker](#) or [Ms. Gillo](#).

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR



Entering the 2024-2025 academic year in the middle of an election year, it remains clear that we need English now more than ever. In an ecosystem filled with rampant misinformation, divisive arguments, and hyperbolic attacks, **close readings, quality research, and civil discourse remain critical** to an informed citizenry in an advanced democracy. Despite the attention other fields receive or the investments believed to be necessary to compete globally, English remains key to the future of our students, our community, and our society. **In the age of automation, we still crave a human element.**

Yet for years English and the humanities have been marginalized at the exact moment when our public discourse has eroded dramatically. It is not an accident that our fractious social and political climate, driven by vilification instead of persuasion, often makes us feel as if we live in a different universe than our neighbor. **The solution lies in a widespread embrace of the humanities**, whether as a curricular presence throughout the college experience or as a vital part of our social, economic, and political life. The core skills of empathy, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration are embedded throughout our curriculum and in the department more broadly. Yet many still fixate on what exactly one can do with an English degree. Thankfully, we decided to provide part of that answer on our [career page here](#). English acts as a launching pad that takes students in a variety of traditional and unexpected directions. For instance, last year **humanities majors had a 52% acceptance rate into medical schools** despite being only 3% of the applicants. What the combinations of core skills and multiple career opportunities reveal is how the portability of the humanities not only offer students a path toward career preparation but career satisfaction.

Beyond questions about skills and careers and politics, **English still shapes the culture**. Despite the many streaming services and hundreds of channels that have signaled the end of monoculture, those services have collectively leaned into medieval fantasy, using the works of George R.R. Martin or by J.R.R. Tolkien to create runaway critical and popular films and television series. **They dare us to imagine a world rich in language, imagination, and possibility**, one comparable to our own. Netflix's world of Bridgerton, based on Julia Quinn's novels, offers an expansive and inclusive vision of Britain during the reign of King George and Queen Charlotte. These shows ask us to rethink questions about British colonialism and the histories we have constructed around it. It is increasingly impossible to ignore that our favorite films, our most riveting television shows, our most profitable series, are based on literature.

# LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Simply put, **the road to ethical uses of technology, career satisfaction, and civil discourse runs through English.** Indeed, who can help us imagine the future better than **our creative writers?** Or communicate in an increasingly global world **without linguistics?** Or navigate a digital world – one increasingly influenced by AI – **without digital literacy?**

We are extremely excited to welcome our new faculty and staff, all of whom you will be meeting in these pages. Some of them have come from across the country while others were born an ocean away. Yet they all share a passion, commitment, and talent that will continue to **move us forward towards an inclusive, public-facing department** invested in quality student mentorship, innovative research, and student-centered, community-based service.

On the other end of the spectrum, our recently promoted full professors, Drs. Rebecca Adams and Will Duffy exemplify this department's **commitment to teaching excellence and stellar research.** They embrace innovative approaches to critical inquiry and inclusive, fact-based interpretation that are key tenets of our department.

Last year hip-hop celebrated its 50-year anniversary. A cultural phenomenon that was dismissed early on, hip-hop is deeply rooted in African American literature and music from the poetry and soul music of the Black Arts Movement to the jazz, art, and fiction of the Harlem Renaissance. Its impact fueled the late 20th century and **sits at the center of contemporary African American literature.** As part of the department's interest in the impact of hip-hop on contemporary African American literature we have partnered with the Marcus Orr Center for the Humanities (MOCH) to host the Hip-Hop GenX Class Reunion. **We are a big tent major with a deep curiosity** and an interest in recovering stories before they are lost, while trying new and exciting approaches in anticipation of the future. **We always have room at our table for one more.** ”

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

# WELCOME NEW FACULTY!

## **DR. ANDREW DONNELLY**

Andrew Donnelly is a literary and cultural historian specializing in the periods of the U.S. Civil War and Reconstruction and in the field of Southern Studies. Previously, he was a Mellon/ACLS Public Fellow, serving as the education programs manager for the [National Book Foundation](#). He is also the founder of the [Freedom Summer Collegiate](#) program for the [Freedom Project Network](#), which brings PhD students and university faculty to teach summer college-bridge courses for high school students at the [Freedom Projects in Mississippi](#).

## **DR. SHIVA MAINALY**

Shiva Mainaly is a Visiting Assistant Professor of Technical Communication. His research focuses on digital & ambient rhetoric, technical communication, and affordances in AI, as well as science communication rhetoric.

## **DR. CHLOE ROBERTSON**

Chloe J. Robertson is a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Memphis. She teaches courses in document design, engineering communication, and professional editing. Her areas of research include cultural rhetoric(s) and technical communication.

## **DR. NICOLE SMITH**

Dr. R. Nicole Smith is an Assistant Professor, teaching in the African American Literature concentration.

# UPCOMING EVENTS



## **THE PINCH PRESENTS... FRANCINE J. HARRIS**

for a craft interview and poetry reading this fall. Date and location are TBD, stay tuned!



## **MOCH X MEMPHIS PUBLIC LIBRARIES: HIP HOP GEN X CLASS REUNION**

September 21st | 1-4pm | Orange Mound Library



## **DISCOVER YOUR MAJOR DAY**

October 3rd | 9am-2pm | UC Ballroom

## **ENGLISH DEPT. OPEN HOUSE**

October 9th | 3:30-5:30 | PT 456

## **...PLUS MUCH MORE!**

Be sure to follow us @uofmenglish on Facebook & IG to stay up-to-date!

# AWARDS & ACCOLADES

## **J. ELLIOTT CASAL**

Michael K. Harless Faculty Excellence Award

## **LORI COHOON**

CAS Research Council

## **KATIE FREDLUND**

MOCH Charles and Catherine Freeburg Fellow, Spring 2025

## **MARK MAYER**

2024 Early Career Research Award

## **KATHY LOU SCHULTZ**

2024 CAS Distinguished Research Award in Humanities

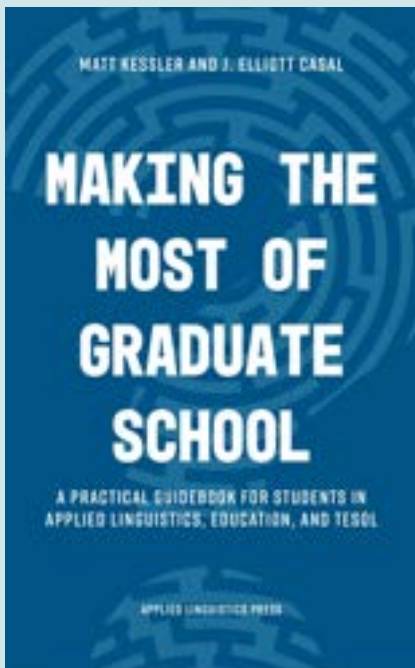
## **MARCUS WICKER**

2024 Alumni Association Distinguished Research Award in  
Humanities

## **LEAH WINDSOR & J. ELLIOTT CASAL**

Team Research Grant Program Recipients

# FACULTY BOOKSHELF



## **MAKING THE MOST OF GRADUATE SCHOOL: A PRACTICAL GUIDEBOOK FOR STUDENTS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS, EDUCATION, AND TESOL**

**MATT KESSLER & J. ELLIOTT CASAL**

Because graduate school is a challenging endeavor for almost everyone, this book covers common issues that most students face throughout their programs. The goal is for both master's and doctoral students to experience less stress and anxiety, and to walk away from this text with concrete tips and strategies for successfully navigating their respective graduate school experiences.

**CASAL, J.E., & KESSLER, M.** (2024). Introduction to special issue: Assessing the effectiveness of corpus-based approaches to English language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*, 58. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.3331>.

**GILLO, EMILY.** "Review of Disobedient Aesthetics: Surveillance, Bodies, Control by Anthony Stagliano." *Computers & Composition Online*, June 2024.

**SANTO, COURTNEY.** "If/Then." *Best American Essays 2024*, Ed. Wesley Morris, October 2024. ISBN: [9780063351554](https://www.wiley.com/9780063351554).

**SCHULTZ, KATHY LOU.** "An Epistemology of Self-Knowing: Suzanne Césaire, André Breton, and Caribbean Surrealism." *African American Review Special Issue on Afro Surrealism*.

**SKAJA, EMILY.** "50 Ways to End a Poem." *Lit Hub*. April 12, 2024.

**SKAJA, EMILY.** "Three Poems by Emily Skaja." *American Poetry Review*, July/August Issue, 2024.



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## **ANDY ROSS**

Andy Ross is a graduate of our MFA program, specializing in fiction, and also frequently teaches with us part-time. His book, *The Realms of Oblivion: An Excavation of The Davies Manor Historic Site's Omitted Stories*, was released by Vanderbilt University Press in July 2024! *The Realms of Oblivion* “illuminates the ongoing need for a deep and honest reckoning with the history of the South and of the United States, on the part of both individuals and community institutions such as local historic sites and small museums”. [You can read more about Andy and his new book here!](#)

## **MYERS ENLOW**

Myers Enlow graduated from the Literary and Cultural Studies PhD program in May of 2024 and began a tenure-track position as an Assistant Professor of English at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska this fall!

# TEACHERS, CREATORS, INNOVATORS



If you are interested in becoming a donor, please contact us at [tttucker@memphis.edu](mailto:tttucker@memphis.edu)

*The University of Memphis is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action University. It is committed to the education of a non-racially identifiable student body.*

