

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2025



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH • FALL 2025 • VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 1



Department of English

MEMPHIS WELCOME BACK!

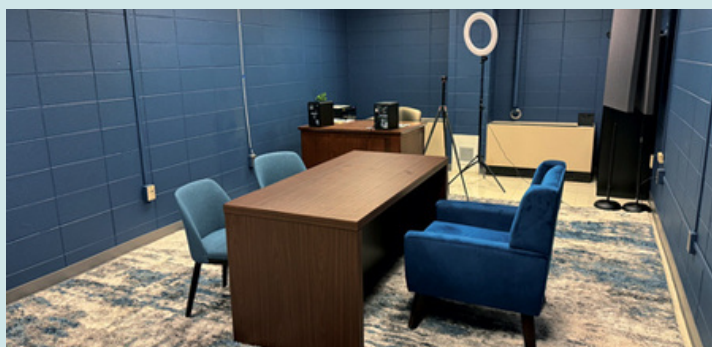
Welcome back to all of our faculty and staff! There are a lot of exciting events happening this fall, so first and foremost make sure you're following us on Facebook and Instagram ([@uofmenglish](#)) to stay up to date.

This semester, we'll welcome speakers and authors to our campus - just to name a few, [The Pinch Presents](#) will host **Keetje Kuipers** for a poetry reading on September 12th and **Ron Mitchell** for a literary publishing presentation on October 17th, and the [Naseeb Shaheen Memorial Lecture Series](#) will welcome **Dan Sinykin** from Emory University later in September.

We're excited to welcome **Dr. Chloe Robertson** as an Assistant Professor in the Writing, Rhetoric, & Technical Communication program, as well **Dr. Sarai Walker**, who will be joining us as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Creative Writing this year!

We're also excited to announce the completion of a **podcast studio in Patterson Hall 115**. We are incredibly grateful for the **Shaheen Committee's** input on decisions for this new feature, and we **extend our sincere thanks to Adam Sneed and Matt Farmer** for their service as our podcast producers for the fall semester. We are looking forward to using this space to record episodes with our fall guests (Keetje Kuipers, Dan Sinykin, and Ron Mitchell to name a few), and **if you have other ideas for podcast episodes** please contact [Emily Gillo](#), [Adam Sneed](#), or [Matt Farmer](#).

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



As we begin the 2025-2026 school year, **universities find themselves under unrelenting scrutiny, misrepresentation, and attack.** As many outside academia initiate cuts to external funding and attempt to censor classroom content, the very value of a university degree persists as a common topic of conversation. Often weighed against the salaries graduates receive and the debt they often incur during college, the drumbeat of college affordability often implies that fault lies with the universities as opposed to the steady underfunding of public universities or the increase in loans and decrease in grants. Yet the continuing devaluation of reading, attacks on expertise, and perhaps most importantly, the reduction of the degree as solely a route to a job fundamentally misunderstands the purpose of the university. Despite charges to the contrary, universities have evolved for centuries to meet the needs of the society that existed at the time, and English has always been at the center of that journey.

The need for English is everywhere in society, even when many marginalize or underappreciate it. Misinformation, polarization, and hyperbole fill conversations in the news, on podcasts, and across social media, making the need for close readings, in-depth analysis, and nuanced discussion vital to reversing these trends. Indeed, employers consistently proclaim a need for the very career competencies embedded in the English degree. Pop culture is filled with literary references even as we require less reading in schools. Linguists even play a key role in this summer's *Superman* film. This need arises because even as we evolve, the pillars that serve as the foundation of our English department remain crucial to producing citizens in a democracy that requires informed, thoughtful, and empathetic participants.

Those pillars – **imagination, innovation, inquiry, interpretation, and inclusion** – make our degree highly portable and, contrary to mainstream assumptions, offer students **countless job opportunities**. More importantly, these pillars help students understand that a job or career is not the endpoint. So while the creation of our new BA/JD program for students interested in law school answers questions about the types of careers our majors can have, we know that it serves merely as the beginning of their lives as citizens. Even though our students now have the opportunity to **receive paid internships** that will likely lead to future jobs, their reflections and interpretations of those experiences will shape their lives years after they receive their first checks. And as students receive tuition grants to pursue the **ESL with licensure track** that will result in immediate employment, they learn the centrality of inclusion in teaching multiple student populations with divergent experiences and language traditions.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

As we enter the final stages of a curriculum revision that will create a major for the 21st century, these pillars remain the guiding light that binds us to the foundational past of English while encouraging us to **move in bold and exciting directions**.

We are extremely excited to welcome our new faculty and staff whom you will be meeting in these pages. Some of them are returning after having been away while others are returning in roles different than the ones they had last year. 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.

We are also excited about the promotion of a member of our teaching faculty, [Dr. Dean Clement](#), to Associate Professor of Teaching. Like the other members of our teaching faculty, Dr. Clement exemplifies this department's commitment to teaching excellence and steadfast department service. Along with our newly tenured and promoted associate professor [Dr. Eric Schlich](#), our faculty encourage our students' creativity, thoughtfulness, and community building that will lead to fulfilling careers and lives. Our recently promoted full professor, [Dr. Donal Harris](#), embodies the type of public-facing work that is part of our department's evolution and our embrace of innovative approaches to critical inquiry and fact-based interpretation.

We are evolving, which means some things will be different. Thankfully, some things will remain exactly the same: **The effort of our teachers. The quality of our research. The commitment of our service.** There is great value in all three. At the end of this summer's blockbuster film *The Fantastic Four: First Steps*, Sue Storm tells her husband that their son "is not us. He's more." Instead of limiting ourselves to one definition of the notion of value, we believe the degree can be more than we can imagine. ”

-Dr. Terrence Tucker
Chair, Department of English

SPRING & SUMMER 2025 RECAP



*Learning from Fear
UMEGO Conference*



*English Department 2025
Awards Ceremony*



*Deb Talbot Summer
Institute for English
Educators*

SPRING & SUMMER 2025 RECAP



*Will Duffy in Nepal for
invited Lectures at
Tribhuvan University and
Pokhara University*



*Creative Writing
Workshops @ novel.*

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FALL 2025 EVENTS

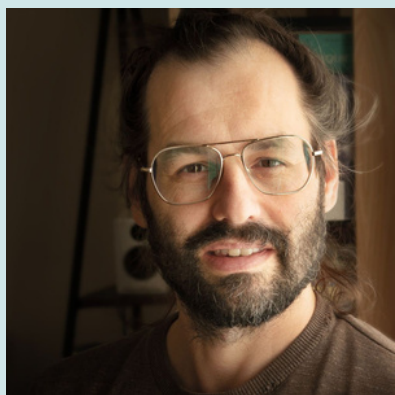


THE PINCH PRESENTS...

Keetje Kuipers, poetry reading

September 12th

1:00pm | Patterson Hall 456

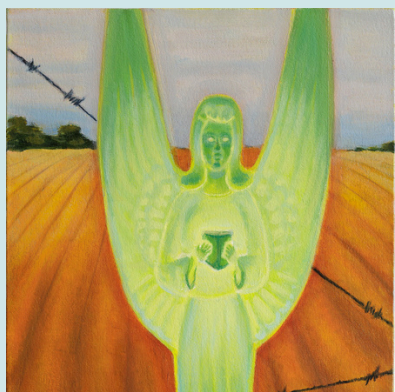


NASEEB SHAHEEN MEMORIAL LECTURE SERIES

September 25th | 5:30pm | UC River Room

September 26th | Time & Location TBA

Dan Sinykin, Emory University



THE PINCH ISSUE 45.2 RELEASE PARTY

September 27th

6:00pm | novel. bookstore

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FALL 2025 EVENTS

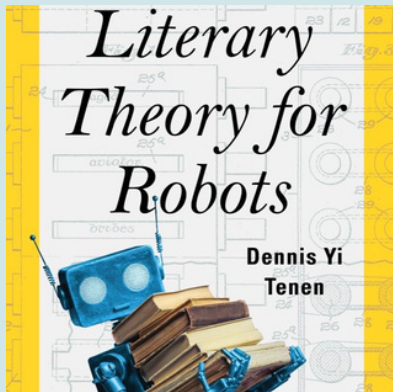


THE PINCH PRESENTS...

Ron Mitchell, literary publishing presentation

October 17th

12:00pm | Patterson Hall 448



AI COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE BOOK CLUB

November 21st

9:30am | UC Bookstore Starbucks

*Reading/discussing *Literary Theory for Robots**



FACULTY RECOGNITION

DR. J. ELLIOTT CASAL

Fine Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Support Program: “It is important to consult’ a linguist: Verb-Argument Constructions in ChatGPT and human experts”
Graduate Student Association Mentor Award, 2024-2025

DR. DONAL HARRIS

American Council of Learned Societies (ALCS) - Sustaining Community Connections
Grant (\$12,000 for Temple Israel)

DR. KATHY LOU SCHULTZ

College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Research Award in the Humanities

PROF. MARCUS WICKER

South Arts Literary Fellowship for Tennessee
Named Joe Orgill Professor of English

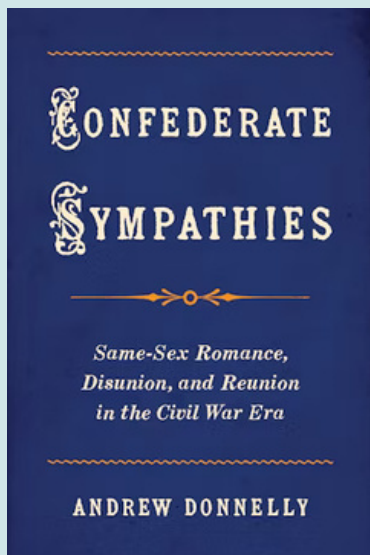
DR. LYN WRIGHT

2025 William Dunavant Professorship
Distinguished Research in the Humanities
Named Coordinator of Applied Linguistics

FACULTY PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHT

DR. ANDREW DONNELLY

Confederate Sympathies: Same-Sex Romance, Disunion, and Reunion in the Civil War Era



The archive of the Civil War era is filled with depictions of men's same-sex affections and intimacies. Across antebellum campaign biographies, proslavery fiction, published memoirs of Confederate veterans and Union prisoners of war, Civil War novels, newspaper accounts, and the war's historiography, homoerotic symbolism and narratives shaped the era's politics, as well as the meaning and memory of the war. The Civil War, in turn, shaped the development of homosexuality in the United States. In a book full of surprising insights, Andrew

Donnelly uncovers this deeply consequential queer history at the heart of nineteenth-century national culture. Donnelly's sharp analytical eye particularly focuses on the ways Northern white men imagined their relationship with white Southerners through narratives of same-sex affection. Assessing the cultural work of these narratives, Donnelly argues that male homoeroticism enabled proslavery coalition building among antebellum Democrats, fostered sympathy for the national retreat from Reconstruction, and contributed to the victories of Lost Cause ideology. Linking the era's political and cultural history to the history of homosexuality, Donnelly reveals that male homoeroticism was not inherently radical but rather cultivated political sympathy for slavery, the Confederacy, and white supremacy.

[READ MORE AND ORDER HERE!](#)

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