



THE ENGLISH AGGIE

April 2014

www.english.tamu.edu

Texas A&M University— Department of English Undergraduate Studies



Jaclyn in Qatar

Why is there a camel on the front page of *The English Aggie*?

Valid question. It's because in February, Jaclyn Upshaw-Brown took a trip to Qatar to learn about study abroad opportunities for English majors. On her trip, she learned about the diversity exposure, internship opportunities, and exotic experience studying abroad in Qatar entails (including camel races, Arabic calligraphy, and a desert safari).

Read more on Page 2!

So what happens after college?

Former student Courtney Beasley writes, "Most of us experience a moment of panic when we realize we're going to have to find a job after college—especially if we majored in English.

"Mine came during my undergraduate days at Texas A&M, when I was attending the business career fair. I was engaged in a casual conversation with an oil and gas company representative, and when he asked about my major, I told him. His response? 'I don't think we've ever hired an English major to do anything.'"

Although your experience may have not been as dramatic as this, sometimes English majors fret about finding employment after college in a field that interests them. While there are many options for English majors, this edition of *The English Aggie* suggests Technical Editing and working in a corporate setting as a few alternatives to traditional employment options. Hopefully these articles from Courtney Beasley (Page 6) and a current English major, Anna Highfield (Page 5) will give you a few ideas about what you want (or don't want!) to do after college.

Preregistration begins April 10!

- Check out the course descriptions on Pages 3-4.
- Start planning your schedule for next semester.
- Make an appointment to talk to your English advisors! →



→ <http://www.english.tamu.edu/undergraduate-studies>

what you can learn from **JACLYN'S JOURNEY TO QATAR**

1. Diversity doesn't mean 'we have nothing in common'

In one of her blog posts, Jaclyn commented that TAMU exchange students were "pleasantly surprised by the degree to which they have been able to connect with students from the many cultures represented at TAMUQ. They noted that they had been prepared for major differences between themselves and the other students, but they were not prepared for how much they have in common with their peers here."

2. Small classes are awesome!

The campuses in Qatar boast small, discussion-based classes (usually 25 students at the largest) and opportunities to meet people from all kinds of cultures and backgrounds. Jaclyn visited a class taught by Dr. Nancy Small, a member the TAMU College Station English Department. In her blog, she remarked that she appreciated how Dr. Small "incorporated projects on campus that allow her students to practice the technical communication skills they are learning in the classroom." So, if you're looking to an engaging alternative to the 250-student sections of core curriculum classes here on the main campus (think POLS, HIST, ANTH, natural sciences, and so forth), a semester in Qatar may be a great way to knock out some of those requirements while having an amazing international experience.

Read more about Jaclyn's trip to Qatar at englishag-gie.blogspot.com. If you are interested in studying abroad in Qatar (or elsewhere), email jbpushaw@tamu.edu.

3. Internship and Research opportunities abound

In talking to Dr. Troy Bickham, Program Chair of Liberal Arts at TAMUQ, Jaclyn learned about possible internship opportunities for English majors in programs there, including, according to her blog, "an upcoming oral histories project and a new undergraduate journal, where student interns could gain valuable experience with editing and publishing." Other offices at TAMUQ have suggested internship possibilities related to marketing, education, writing and editing – any of which would be great experience for an English major.

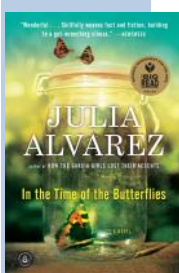
4. Exotic equals exciting!

What's it like to step into an airport where most of the signage is in a different language? "I'll admit it was a little unnerving at first," Jaclyn said. "But you take a deep breath, use your critical thinking skills to figure out where you need to go, and, when all else fails, ask for help! The first thing I learned was that Texas is definitely not the only place where people are friendly enough to point you in the right direction."

While in Qatar, Jaclyn visited the camel racetracks, went on a desert safari (including a camel ride), and enjoyed the remarkable scenery and landmarks like the Museum of Islamic Art and the Sheikh Faisal Museum to view vast collections of various interesting artifacts. If you decide to study abroad in Qatar, you'll find yourself falling in love with the unique culture, architecture, and people. And now that we've found a little more information about opportunities for English majors, you should consider applying and seeing what Qatar has in store for you!

Brazos Valley Reads *Presents*

A reading and discussion with author Julia Alvarez



Set in the Dominican Republic during a time of revolution, *In the Time of the Butterflies* is a story about the three Mirabel sisters—known as "las mariposas," or "the butterflies," in the underground—who are ultimately murdered for their actions against the Trujillo dictatorship.

Author Julia Alvarez's family lived in the Dominican Republic for several years until her father got involved in the underground during the Trujillo dictatorship. Her family departed four months before the Mirabel sisters' assassination, giving Alvarez the opportunity to experience the transition to U.S. culture. This led to her writing other works which reflect on questions of assimilation and identity.



TUESDAY, APRIL 1, 2014, 7:00 PM, ANNENBERG PRESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE CENTER

Fall 2014 Course Highlights

SENIOR SEMINARS

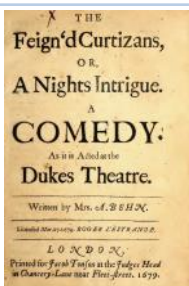
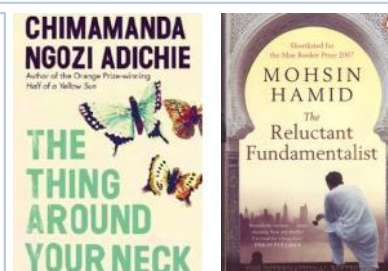


ENGL 481—Prison Literature With Dr. Jerome Loving

When writer Norman Mailer first began a correspondence with Federal Prisoner 87098-132, Jack Henry Abbott, he had no idea of the significance of their letters. Abbott, a “state-raised” convict who had spent his youth and adult years to age 38 in prison, was released from prison in 1981 with Mailer’s help, only to kill again and be returned to prison. We will read and study several books focusing on prison literature in this course, including two books by Norman Mailer.

ENGL 481—Transnational Literature With Dr. Marian Eide

In the context of this course, the term “transnationalism” will describe literature that fosters international interchange, crosses borders or inhabits borderlands, reflects on the cultural exchanges between imperial culture and colonized expression, and recognizes diversity within a nation.

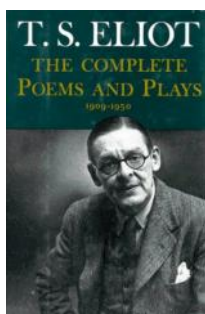


ENGL 481—Restoration Drama With Dr. Margaret Ezell

This seminar will explore how English theatres in the mid-1600s created new forms of theatrical entertainments. We will also look at how the theatre of the last part of the seventeenth century adapted earlier dramatists including Shakespeare to suit contemporary tastes. The list of plays we will study includes John Dryden’s *Marriage a la Mode* and Aphra Behn’s *The Feigned Courtesans*.

ENGL 481—Law and Literature With Professor Michael Collins

As a way of exploring “Law and Literature,” this class will analyze works that represent, theorize, or condemn all or part of the cycle of justice. At a larger level, this class will explore the impact of legal systems on societies like that of the United States by studying texts such as Franz Kafka’s *The Trial*, John le Carre’s *A Most Wanted Man*, Michel Foucault’s *J*, and others.



ENGL 481—Eliot and Faulkner With Dr. William Clark

No one grasped the dehumanizing trends of modernity in the twentieth-century more fully than T.S. Eliot, and nowhere was his legacy more fruitfully realized than in the American South, a “colonized” region where traditional communities were suddenly forced to confront the challenge of rapid, incremental change. This seminar will examine the continued vitality of the traditionalist impulse in American letters against the backdrop of significant cultural and political developments.

ENGL 481: Other Topics

◇ **Caribbean Literature** with Professor Shona Jackson

SINGLE AUTHOR COURSES

ENGL 415—Louisa Alcott With Dr. Claudia Nelson

In this course, students will study Alcott's *Little Women* and its sequels from various critical and theoretical approaches, potentially including biographical criticism, New Historicism, feminist and queer theory, questions of canonicity, and more.



ENGL 415—Henry James With Professor David McWhirter

Long considered a major American *and* British novelist in the late 19th and early 20th century, Henry James also authored novels and stories over a long period of time, allowing literary critics a brilliant glimpse into the development of realism and modernity, as well as the era's changing attitudes. Students in this class will read several of his novels and short stories including *Portrait of a Lady* and *The Turn of the Screw*.

MAJOR SPECIFIC COURSES

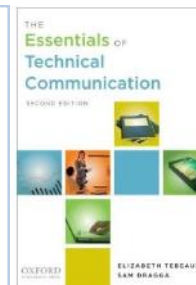
ENGL 210: 590—Technical Editing for English Majors only With Ms. Cecelia Hawkins

Are you

- working toward a Professional Writing Certificate?
- considering a career in editing or publishing?
- planning to take a technical editing class in future semesters?
- interested in service learning?



Enroll in **Section 590** of ENGL 210 and sharpen your writing and page design skills while preparing workplace documents like grant proposals, reports, manuals, and informational pieces for local non-profits!



ENGL 348—Poetry Workshop With Dr. Janet McCann



This course will focus on the connection between poetry and computers. In addition to standard poetry writing assignments usually given in this course, students will complete poems enhanced and created by use of computer software and information, including one project focusing on multi-media poetry (combining text and image using software programs). No previous computer knowledge required!

ENGL 396—Texas Literature With Dr. Amy Earhart

This course provides an introduction to Texas Literature and Media. We will read fiction and non-fiction written by and about Texas and engage with non-textual materials including film and song. The course will explore the development of Texas identities and responses to the rich cultural diversity within the state.



EXPLORING THE PROFESSION OF

Technical Editing

A common theory circulating among undergraduates these days is that after a long and unsuccessful job hunt, most English majors will eventually become teachers. Though teaching is a highly desirable and admirable profession, this urban legend could not be further from the truth. There are many opportunities for English majors to discover, including the unique profession of technical editing.

By Anna Highfield

Putting the “Technical” in Technical Editing

The difference between an editor and a technical editor is simple: technical editors work with specialized subjects. Though many established technical editors have a strong grasp of their designated field of work, many started from scratch with little foundation in their specialized fields. No one understands this notion better than Amy McWilliams, the current Editor for the Publications Department of the International Ocean Discovery Program. Though Amy is now well-immersed in the oceanic research community, she didn’t always have such a firm understanding of the scientific field. Amy expressed that “there was about a two year learning curve” when she began her current job. Though this may seem discouraging to the average English student, her story is not uncommon.

Getting into the Field

Roberto Molar, who recently graduated from Texas A&M with his bachelor’s degree in English, is currently a student in the master’s degree program of science and technology journalism in the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences. Though this program sounds strenuous, Roberto began his journey as many English undergraduates do—loving the creative process of writing but unsure of where the road would take him. It wasn’t until he landed an internship for the Texas Sea Grant College Program as a technical writer that he realized writing for a specialized subject was rewarding in its own right. For Roberto, using his written communication skills to bridge the gap between scientific jargon and

common language is his way of contributing to the scientific community.

A Day in the Life of a Technical Editor

Many people hear the word “technical” and immediately think of one word: monotony. In actuality, variety is one of the reasons Shannon Davies loves her job. As the Editor-in-Chief of the Texas A&M University Press, Shannon has been instrumental in the creation of various publications for the university. On any given day she might complete a series of edits with her team, work with the Acquisitions Department to find a new manuscript to publish, or meet with an author to discuss editorial changes. Much of technical editing involves working alongside authors to focus the direction of their work. Editors must walk a fine-line between sensitivity and directness when querying authors. While she admits that technical editing is not “the most glamorous job,” it makes a great fit for those who are detail-oriented, consistently work hard, and enjoy a fast paced work environment.

Hard Work Pays Off

As the new Editorial Coordinator for the non-profit organization Children at Risk, fellow Aggie Marissa Madsen stresses that hard work is the reason she has her current job. For Marissa, technical editing is all about finding and working for your niche. Whether you’re interested in technical editing or not, Marissa urges all English Aggies to “work really, really hard and it’ll all work out.”



Senior Anna Highfield (pictured right) wrote this article in Ms. Cecelia Hawkins’ course, ENGL 320: Technical Writing and Editing, in which students are introduced to technical editing as a profession and learn practical copyediting and author/editor communication skills.

10 YEARS LATER:

A Success Story from a Former Student

Courtney Beasley graduated from A&M with a degree in English in December of 2003. Like today's English Aggies, she faced a world that focused on the apparent limitations of an English degree. In this article, she shares her experiences and offers some practical advice for English majors who are willing to work hard to achieve their goals.



by Courtney Beasley, '03

When a career fair recruiter scoffed at my major, I was crushed. I already knew that everyone assumed the only thing I could do as an English major was teach, but I had hopes of landing a job in Human Resources. However, as I walked out of the business school, I felt my eyes tear up. I couldn't help but think, "Have I chosen the wrong degree? Am I going to find a job?"

Entering the Workforce

I knew my parents were expecting me to stand on my own two feet now that college was over, so I made finding a job my top priority. About three months after graduation, I accepted an HR customer support position at a large staffing company. I was responsible for running contractor payroll weekly, as well as processing employment forms, contesting unemployment claims, and various other HR duties—many of which I strongly disliked. However, I realized that, with the 2004 economy making entry level HR positions difficult to find, I had to start somewhere. In my first year at this job, I made less than \$15 an hour, but I can see, looking back at this position, that this particular job taught me a great deal and led me to develop a strong work ethic. Most importantly, it taught me that dealing with payroll was not what I wanted to be doing for the rest of my life, and that I needed to find a job where I could invest my energy in something I enjoyed and at which I excelled.

Current Occupation

Currently I work for an offshore drilling company as a Senior HR Generalist supporting International Operations in Nigeria and Brazil. I love my job! I get to see many facets of Human Resources, including employee relations, training, visas, and staffing issues. My job also offers opportunities to travel. Last year I was offered a temporary assignment in Dubai to support the Middle East Africa business unit with training compliance. I was based in Dubai for five months and traveled to South Africa, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and

Angola. It was an amazing experience; I never dreamed I would see so much of the world!

The Value of an English Degree

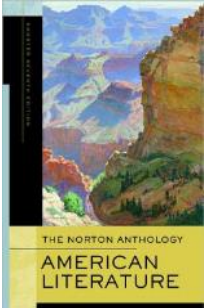
English majors often possess and develop "soft skills" in college (which make us more relatable and better at communicating). These skills and the ability to communicate well are invaluable in business because companies need people to effectively lead, influence, and manage others and situations. Pursuing an English major also allowed me to broaden my perspective of the world through reading literature, writing, and participating in classroom discussions. With literature, you devote time to analyzing characters and seeking to understand the "big" picture in any particular work. This translates directly to working at a business, where being able to see the big picture and understand each person's needs is incredibly important.

Advice

- 1. Attend grad school sooner rather than later.** I enrolled as a full-time grad student while working full time when I was 27, and I regret not attending earlier. In the business realm, my graduate degree definitely increased my earning potential and knowledge of business topics.
- 2. Don't expect to find your dream job right out of college.** Instead, seek a job that will help you figure out what you really want to do. Any job that lets you know what you like or dislike doing has served its purpose. Keep the end goal in mind and remember that setbacks aren't always setbacks—often they are redirects which can lead to something better.
- 3. Don't let others' opinions negatively affect your choices.** You get the final say over the direction of your life and career. I wish I could have another conversation with that career fair recruiter and show him where my career has taken me. It's a good thing I didn't let his discouraging words get in my way!

visiting scholar

DR. ROBERT LEVINE



ALMOST EVERY ENGLISH MAJOR HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY THIS PROFESSOR FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND WHO RECENTLY SPENT A WEEK VISITING THE TEXAS A&M CAMPUS.

HOW, YOU ASK? READ ON.

The Department of English hosted a prestigious visiting scholar during the week of March 17—the one and only Robert Levine, who in December of 2013 became the youngest scholar to receive the **Hubbell Medal in Literature**.

Currently a professor of English at the University of Maryland, where he was the founding director of the Center for Literary and Comparative Studies, Levine is the general editor of a textbook many English Aggies will recognize from American Literature courses—the five-volume **Norton Anthology of American Literature**. His work in the field of American and African-American literature especially is highly regarded, and has received recognition in many literary circles. His book *Martin Delany, Frederick Douglass, and the Politics of Representative Identity* won an Outstanding Book Award from *Choice* magazine in 1997, and he has also received fellowships from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

A prolific writer, Levine has also authored more than fifty-five peer-reviewed articles, five edited collections of essays, and the books *Dislocating Race and Nation: Episodes in Nineteenth Century American Literary Nationalism* (2008) and *Conspiracy and Romance: Studies in Brockden Brown, Cooper, Hawthorne, and Melville* (1989). He is currently under contract with Har-

vard University Press to write a history of Frederick Douglass's autobiographical writings and cultural legacy, and he is editing two volumes of Douglass's writings for Yale University Press.

In addition to his prestigious and extensive academic work, the citation from the Hubbell Committee, which was read at the award ceremony, reveals that Levine is a man of character and a worthy scholar. The citation reads, "Above and beyond all else, Professor Levine is a devoted mentor to other scholars in the field. He has a gift for recognizing and encouraging people's gifts, and he seems never so happy as when he is helping people develop ideas, find their way towards publication, or building communities of interest. In his work organizing sessions, or entire conferences, in organizing talks and other forums, or simply in reading drafts, commenting on ideas, or discussing ideas over email, Professor Levine seems both selfless and tireless in his interest in other scholars, and genuinely pleased when his mentoring takes him into unfamiliar intellectual territory."

The Department of English at Texas A&M is grateful to Dr. Levine for visiting as a Faculty Fellow, and for his contributions to the world of Literature. And the next time you're leafing through your (very large copy of the) Norton Anthology of American Literature, look for his name!

Dr. Levine gave the Fall 2013 Eminent Scholar Lecture on "Frederick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Civil War" on Oct. 23, 2013. An audio of his presentation is available on the TIAS web site at <http://tias.tamu.edu/>

These are a few of our **FAVORITE THINGS:** Literary Quotes

For each edition of *The English Aggie*, we will feature a section of “favorites.” English Aggies will have the opportunity to respond with their “favorites” on the Texas A&M English Undergraduate Facebook Page.

<p>◇ “It’s quite an undertaking to start loving somebody. You have to have energy, generosity, blindness. There is even a moment right at the start where you have to jump across an abyss: if you think about it you don’t do it.” —Jeane Paul Satre, <i>Nausea</i> Submitted by Danielle Shalom Dyke</p> <p>◇ “Words are pale shadows of forgotten names. As names have power, words have power. Words can light fires in the minds of men. Words can wring tears from the hardest hearts.” —Patrick Rothfuss, <i>The Name of the Wind</i> Submitted by Rachelle Cates</p> <p>◇ “Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself.” —Virginia Woolf, <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> Submitted by Angela Ghazizadeh</p> <p>◇ “Truth was in our hearts, strength in our arms, and fulfillment in our tongues.” —<i>The Fenian Cycle</i> Submitted by Katy Wilmotte</p>	<p>◇ “Those of us who had been up all night were in no mood for coffee and donuts.” —Hunter S. Thompson Submitted by Professor Larry C. Heinemann</p> <p>◇ “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” —Jesus, <i>Gospel of John</i> Submitted by Adrian Monjaras</p> <p>◇ “I’m used to seeing age differences over a century or more. Love normally wins out.” —Paula Myo, <i>Pandora’s Star</i> by Peter F. Hamilton Submitted by Brent C. Green</p> <p>◇ “But she could love Charles Wallace.” —Madeleine L’Engle, <i>A Wrinkle in Time</i> Submitted by Adelia Humme</p>
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English Dept. Events

FIRST EVER ENGLISH DEPARTMENT PLAY!

The Play of the Weather (1533), by John Heywood, is an early Tudor interlude, a play designed to be performed in the banqueting hall of a great house after or between courses of a meal.

The Department of English, with the sponsorship of the Academy for the Visual and Performing Arts, is hosting an experimental production by the students of Dr. Mize's ENGL 607 class with the assistance of students from Dr. Wollock's ENGL 313 and Dr. Perry's ENGL 231 classes.

There will be two public performances in LAAH 453: the first on **Sunday, March 30, at 3:00**, and the second for all registered participants in the Presents of the Past symposium (see below), at **12:45 on Saturday, April 5**.

THIS PUBLICATION BROUGHT DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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