David Levinson comes to Texas A&M with a vibrant and varied background. This past fall, he moved from Berlin to College Station to act as the writer-in-residence here in the English Department. Originally from San Antonio, Mr. Levinson went to Columbia University as an undergraduate and The New School for his graduate degree. Including his time in school, Mr. Levinson lived in New York City for over 20 years before coming back to Texas. He has taught at schools across the country, including NYU, George Washington University, Gettysburg College and the University of Texas at Austin.

Currently, he teaches Elements of Creative Writing. Mr. Levinson is the author of the story collection *Most Of Us Are Here Against Our Will*, and his novel, *Antonia Lively Breaks The Silence*, is expected to be released in June 2013. He’s been nominated several times for the Pushcart Prize and won an award for fiction in The Atlantic Monthly. When he is not teaching, Mr. Levinson enjoys reading on his new iPad; some of his recent favorite authors are Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler.

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**Brazos Valley Reads Presents:**

*Leaving Atlanta* is a coming-of—age story set during the infamous Atlanta child murders from 1979—1980. The novel is told from the perspective of fifth-graders living through this crisis.

Jones is a recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award in Fine Arts from the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and is a professor at Rutgers-Newark University. In addition to *Leaving Atlanta*, Jones is the author of *The Untelling* and *Silver Sparrow*.

If you are interested in reading *Leaving Atlanta*, there are several extra copies located in Evans Library in the Best Seller Collection on the first floor.
So, you’re new here?
An overview of the Liberal Arts and Humanities Building.

After much anticipation, classes have finally begun in the Liberal Arts and Humanities Building, a far cry from our beloved Blocker. To help you acclimate to life on the other side of campus, we have provided some helpful hints for navigating your way around. Below are pictures and tidbits of things you might find useful during your time here!

**STAIRS**
The stairs found at the main entrance, end at the third floor. However, there are two staircases on either side of the building that reach the fifth floor. Or, you could always just use the elevator!

**RESTROOMS**
The restrooms are located in the same place on every floor. From the elevators, take an immediate left and they will be on your left-hand side.

**SEATING**
There are various tables and benches scattered throughout LAAH. For some more scenic seating, visit the courtyard located on the east side of the building.

**PRINTING**
Although there is no longer a computer lab in the building, there are a number of places to print nearby. Some convenient options include Evans Library, The Annex and The Student Computing Center.
A Tour Around LA-AH!

COFFEE

Although the convenient coffee bar in Blocker is no more, there is still a host of options around. Langford, the architecture building, has a trendy coffee shop on the ground level. Other nearby coffee and food options include Poor Yorick’s and The Pavilion.

CHEF TAI

The Chef Tai Food Truck is one of the best perks of our new location! The truck is open MWF from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. You can visit cheftai.com/menu to see an up-to-date list. Although the menu changes, there are a few items that remain constant: the tacos, the rice bowls and the truffle parmesan fries. Currently, Chef Tai takes cash and credit cards. They are hoping to begin accepting Dining Dollars within the next month.
Ashley Stacy

“A Pleasant Dream” : Evaluating Social and Stage Theatricality in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*

**Summary:** The theater was a controversial institution in Jane Austen’s time, and questions about how fictional stories (video games, movies, novels, or plays) can affect us and our behavior are still very relevant today. I used the characters of Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price, the heroines of Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, to discuss Austen’s attitude toward both actual theater (plays, stage productions, actors, etc.) and theatricality in everyday life, something that can probably best be explained by the term “social performance.”

**Excerpt:** Two underlying assertions preface any critical judgment Austen passes on the theater through her novels. First, she provides much evidence that theatricality is unavoidable in the world. *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* (and the rest of Austen’s novels) show that created fictions, whether in the form of novels, stage plays, or the pretensions people put on, are pervasive. We all “perform” social roles, whatever our character or personality, whether we want to or would rather not, and whether we are willing to admit it or not.

Cecilia Morales

“Off Stage Rivals—Jealousy’s Manifestation in Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*”

**Summary:** The paper draws on the many individual jealousies between Austen’s characters in order to comment on the larger social competition underlying Austen’s society. It argues that while genteel life depends on the ability of characters to keep their jealousies backstage, this society is structured in such a way that makes jealousy inevitable. A character’s ability to keep jealous impulses tempered and out of the spotlight is closely related to Austen’s approval of that character and that character’s final success in this competitive world.

**Excerpt:** Fanny’s ability to be passive in the midst of a society that warrants active jealousy makes her one of the most virtuous of all of Austen’s characters... Counter intuitively, Fanny’s ability to avoid a messy and public competition for a husband is actually what makes her so successful in her marriage. Her virtue becomes the foundation for her deep, abiding love for Edmund. “Love is in some real sense the reward of virtue” (Ruderman 187).

Phi Beta Kappa

Phi Beta Kappa is a premier national honor society for the Arts and Sciences. Phi Beta Kappa recognizes the very best students in Arts and Sciences at member campuses. Of the 39 inductees from Texas A&M University this fall, nine are English undergraduates. Their names are listed below:

- Sarah Alarcon
- McGuire Boles
- Katherine Brandeberry
- Meagan Brown
- Brittany Hamilton
- Shelby Lee McKechnie
- Laura Oatman
- Hannah Sears
- Ashley Stacy
IN PRAISE OF THE AGGIE ENGLISH MAJOR

Dr. Jerome Loving, Distinguished Professor in the English Department, wrote an article for The Battalion about the career paths available for English majors. If you missed it the first time, here is your chance to read it below.

I had been teaching here a number of years before I realized the kind of questions the typical Aggie English major has to put up with, even today. It was when my son became an English major at A&M. He never took a business course, and today he is a successful television executive and vice-president.

As an undergraduate, after returning from class one day, he told me that he was going to get a T-shirt made with the words, “No, I’m not going to teach!” Well, he didn’t become a teacher, but he certainly could have been one—as he has taught me many things as an adult. As an English major David Loving, Class of 1990, has done very well in the world.

“So you are going to be a teacher” seems to be the general response when an English major reveals his or her major to somebody on campus. For one thing, it indicates the low esteem in which teachers are sometimes held today (the folks who teach our kids). Yet most of us can recall a favorite teacher, perhaps even an English teacher in high school.

The question also suggests a disregard for anything but the bottom line. “I can’t believe your parents are wasting their money on that degree.” “You’re too smart to be an English major.” “Are you going to make any money off of that?” “You’re going so far away just to study English?” Female majors are informed, “An English degree really means an MRS. Degree.”

Texas A&M is a great university and known for a great many things, including being a hands-on, utilitarian school. It’s always been an uphill struggle not only with the students but some faculty members as well, usually outside the College of Liberal Arts, who seem to resist the idea that a university education should be anything more than a pre-professional curriculum.

Recently, I received a “fan letter” from a reader of my edition of Edgar Lee Masters’ Spoon River Anthology. He had earned his Ph.D. at A&M in the 1980s and recalled to me “the general hilarity” in his department “that met the idea of [having] a faculty of ‘Liberal Arts.’” So the problem has long gone beyond the student population. A full-fledged university must be strong in the arts as well as the sciences.

It has been said that you come to college not simply to earn a living but to learn how to live. That means surviving in a complex world, sometimes a dark wood in which there is danger behind every other tree. English majors read novels and poems and plays about life in all its facets. They study life and learn how, as one might say of a Henry James novel, to look for “the figure in the carpet.”

Life is a life-long puzzle, and they learn how to read people—situations and settings. English majors learn how, of course, to write correctly but also to speak, to articulate problems and solutions. When my son returned to A&M about ten years ago along with five or six other successful Liberal Arts majors to talk to current Liberal Arts students about their future, the major point taken away from the program was their ability to maneuver successfully in a challenging environment.

You have only to consider the backgrounds of many of the leaders of business and industry to discover that they either came out of a Liberal Arts background or at least a curriculum generous with electives in the arts and social sciences.

Take for example our own chancellor, John Sharp, who has held such eminent positions in the state as membership in the Texas Legislature and the Railroad Commission, and the position of State Comptroller. Sharp earned his B.A. degree in Liberal Arts at Texas A&M.

He and others like him, former students of English and other subjects under the heading of the Liberal Arts, become our leaders, because they generalize before they specialize. So the next time you think about Aggie English majors, don’t suppose they will necessarily turn out to be teachers (though I hope many will). Think about what you might be calling one of them in another ten years. It just might be Boss.
Poet Spotlight:
David Johnson

David Johnson’s poem, “Cold Weather,” was featured in the fall 2012 English 348 class anthology Poetry of Place: Mind Body and Soul. Students in the class worked to create and edit poetry throughout the semester. Students in the class as well as other English majors submitted poetry for the anthology. The result is a compilation of outstanding undergraduate poetry.

David served as a co-editor for the class anthology, in addition to submitting two of his poems. Outside of class, David works as the assistant editor of the on-campus publication Callaloo. David enjoys writing contemporary, free-verse and persona poetry. Some of his favorites poets include Charles Bowkowski and Ilya Kaminsky.

Cold Weather
By David Johnson

Sometimes I miss you, and this cold weather keeps reminding me of you—not that you had a heart of ice, but that you knew how to keep mine warm.

But I suppose the seasons change, and people change—You changed.

I changed.

We tore and set each other ablaze like old unwanted photographs, and I’ve learned love is recycled like paper.

I’m sorry ghost, but I can’t let you haunt me anymore. I can’t torture myself with what-if’s or hang memories above my head like mistletoe and expect you to meet me there anymore.

Sometimes—

I miss you, and this cold weather keeps talking about you.

The Gordone Awards Competition is a creative writing competition open to all undergraduate students. The contest accepts writing in submissions for three different categories: Undergraduate Fiction, Undergraduate Poetry and Undergraduate Memoir/Creative Nonfiction. Winners will receive a $250 prize. All entries must be submitted by March 22 at 5 p.m. For more information, visit the English Undergraduate website.
Embedded Honors Courses, Explained!

Amy Weissler is a sophomore psychology major from Dallas, Texas. Below, she has written about her experience in an embedded English honors class.

This past semester, I had the opportunity to take English 231: A Survey of early English Literature as an honors course. This honors class was embedded in a large 200-person section and both honors and non-honors students were taught the same material. Because it was an honors course, we had to earn the honors credit in some way outside of class. Dr. Ezell provided us with the unique opportunity to work in the Cushing Memorial Library with the rare books collection.

Along with five other classmates also enrolled in the honors section, Dr. Ezell and Dr. Samuelson taught us what it was like to handle rare books. They had access to certain types of books that were written during the time period we were studying. They even taught us how to use a printing press that would have been used to print one of these books in the 1500s. Dr. Samuelson was a valuable resource to us because he oversees the rare books collection at Cushing Library. He was able to guide us around and show us rare books that he had acquired from around the world. My favorite book that he showed us was Shakespeare’s Second Folio. The copy in Cushing is one of three published copies around the world. It was so meaningful to actually be able to hold an original printed copy of Shakespeare’s work. It made such a difference in my learning experience and understanding of how early English literature was produced, distributed, and viewed. Each month, Dr. Ezell would assign us a topic to write about using works that we had read in class along with the larger section, but incorporating the work we had done in Cushing during that month. For example, one of the topics was to analyze a text that we had read in class and compare it to reading the actual text in Cushing. I analyzed works by John Donne. I read some of his works in our textbook and then had the wonderful opportunity to read them from the original copy. It really made a difference in my understanding of the work to be able to read the original published version, the way the author originally intended it to look.

LIVE! in London

Students enrolled in English 390: Urban Letters—London in Literature will travel to London over Spring Break. Here is a preview of two plays they plan to see! Be on the lookout for more information on their trip in the Fall 2013 edition of The English Aggie.
These are a few of our **FAVORITE THINGS**: VACATION DESTINATIONS

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

◊ “New York City.” - Molly Livingstone
◊ “My dream vacation would be traveling Europe, but spending the week in Galveston with my family will be just as wonderful!” - Adrienne Meade
◊ “London, England; I am so blessed to be able to take a trip this spring break with my English 390 class.” - Phylicia M. Taylor
◊ “I love going to Florida! It has awesome weather during spring break and I’ve been dying to visit the Wizarding World of Harry Potter in Orlando, Florida.” - Elizabeth Anderson
◊ “I would have to say that my perfect vacation spot would be the Canadian rockies. There are small streams in those mountains that add the perfect level of music to any book.” - Randy McDonald
◊ “Estes Park, Colorado is my favorite vacation spot! It’s such a fun place to relax, hike, and fish with the family, and the Rockies are amazingly beautiful”. - Maddie Keyser
◊ “Cayman Islands—life stands still.” - Elise Brunsvold

**Upcoming Events**

**English Faculty Graduating Senior Award**

A student graduating in December, May, or August of an academic year is eligible to apply for the English Department's *Graduating Senior Award*, provided the student has at least a 3.5 GPA overall and a 3.75 GPA in the major in TAMU completed coursework. The winner receives a check for $250.00 and a certificate of recognition at the Department’s annual awards reception in April.

Applicants should complete the form link found on our website, print it and submit it, along with supporting materials, to Tammy Whisenant in the UGO, LAAH 352, by 5:00 on March 8, 2013.

**Grand Opening: Liberal Arts and Humanities Building**

The grand opening of the LAAH Building is scheduled for Friday, April 19. Mark your calendars and join us in celebrating the English Department’s new home. More details to be announced soon.

**THIS PUBLICATION BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

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<td>College Station, TX 77843</td>
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<td>(979) 845-8357</td>
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