



THE ENGLISH AGGIE

May 2014

www.english.tamu.edu

Texas A&M University— Department of English Undergraduate Studies

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO

English at Texas A&M

*It has been said that you come to college not simply to learn how 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...***

-Dr. Jerome Loving, English Professor at Texas A&M University

READING. WRITING. WHAT DOES STUDYING ENGLISH MEAN TO YOU?

While the courses you take are a large part of your education as a student of English here at A&M, they certainly don't encompass the entire college experience. Next semester, you could find yourself applying for an undergraduate research opportunity like **Katy Wilmotte** (pg. 4) or observing teachers in College Station schools like **Rebekah Roorda** (6). You might be co-instructing a course about C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien like **Randal McDonald** (2), or reading your short story aloud at a meeting of **the Inking Society** (3).

Opportunities abound for those who seek them. Working with old and rare books at Cushing Memorial Library, or submitting creative work to **The Eckleburg Project** (3) might seem like

unattainable goals right now, but if you apply for everything and "follow your bliss" (advice from Joseph Campbell by way of **Alexandra Matheny**, pg. 6), you're sure to have experiences as unique and exciting as those of your favorite fictional characters.

Our university and English Department has a variety of information about finding creative outlets, internship and career resources, and essentially anything else you'll ever need to know as an English major. So don't lose heart—go find your niche.

Whatever you do, don't be dismayed by those doubters who look you in the eye and inquire, "So, what are you going to *do* with that English degree?" Instead, look right back at them and say, "That's what I'm in college to find out."

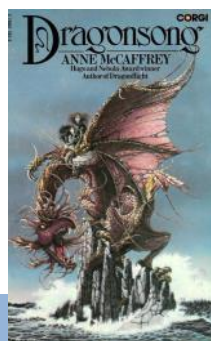
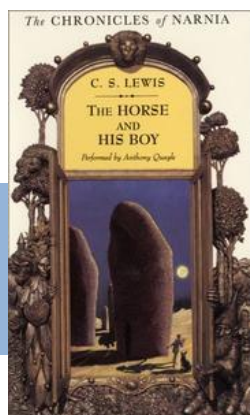
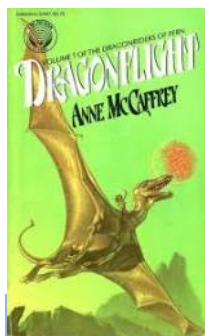
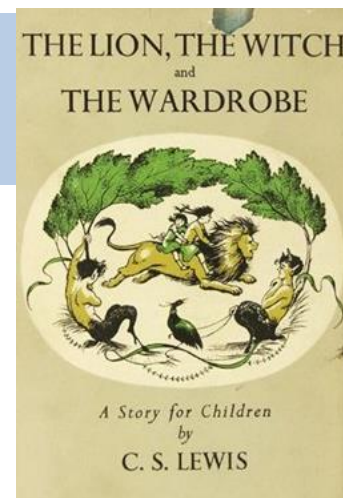
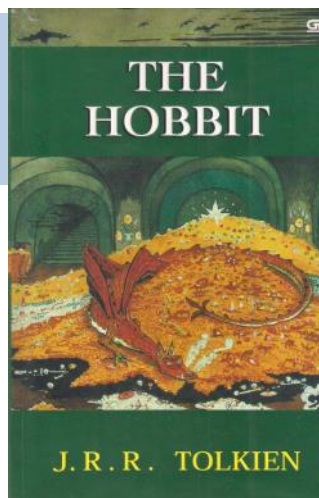
Special English Seminars for Fall 2014

Interested in taking a fun seminar course that meets once a week? Check out these UGST courses, which can be taken as an elective (or as an excuse to read and study some of your favorite books!). These courses are the culmination of an undergraduate's Teacher Scholar capstone project, and will be taught by a student under the supervision and tutelage of the student's faculty advisor.

UGST 285.501: Survey of Lewis and Tolkien with Dr. Elizabeth Robinson and Randal McDonald

Tuesday, 2:20-3:35 pm

This course intends to offer students the opportunity to explore and discuss the fantasy writings of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. The students will read a variety of works including *The Hobbit*, *A Leaf by Niggle*, Excerpts from *The Silmarillion*, *Till We Have Faces*, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, and *The Last Battle*. The students will engage these works in a discussion driven format, while also being exposed to the theoretical works of both Lewis and Tolkien. Final evaluation will be primarily derived from the discussion element, with a brief research essay to be submitted as well.



UGST 285-502: The Hero's and Heroine's Journey with Dr. Elizabeth Robinson & Adelia Humme

Thursday, 12:45-2:00 pm.

This one-hour seminar course will compare the Hero's Journey (following Joseph Campbell's model) and the Heroine's Journey (following Valerie Frankel's model) in *Dragonflight* and *Dragonsong*, by Anne McCaffrey, and *The Horse and His Boy*, by C. S. Lewis. *Dragonflight* will serve as the centerpiece of this course, which will consider topics such as the animal companion and gender roles in fantasy.

Students will be evaluated based on participation (including reading responses and class discussion) and one

UGST 285-503: Connection and Communication with Dr. Donnalee Dox and MJ Stevenson

Wednesday, 1:20-2:35 pm

MJ Stevenson will be teaching a one hour seminar exploring various dimensions of connection. To do this, we will explore the various means of communication, their effectiveness and diversity, and the role of such efforts in our understanding of our selves, others, and the world around us.



English Student Organizations

Looking for a community of writers?

THE INKLING SOCIETY

The Inklings Society is a group of writers that meets weekly to discuss original creations and engage in a book discussion. Named after the famous group of which J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were once members, the Inklings Society offers a community of discussion, peer critique and review, and support for writers at Texas A&M.

Facebook: The Inklings Society: Texas A&M English Society

THE POETRY CLUB OF TEXAS A&M

This group of poets meets on campus every other week to share and discuss their work. This year they have also volunteered at the Bryan Library, performed at Revolution, and attended various poetry-related events.

Students interested in joining should contact President Anthony Norville, at anthonymorville@tamu.edu for more information about meeting places and times.

Facebook : The Poetry Club of Texas A&M

Want to be published or gain publishing experience?

THE ECKLEBURG PROJECT

The Eckleburg Project is the official undergraduate literary magazine of Texas A&M University. In their magazine, they feature poetry, prose, and art submitted by undergraduates at A&M. According to their Facebook page, "The mission of *The Eckleburg Project* is to provide a medium for the creative writers and artists of Texas A&M University to express themselves."

If you're interested in applying to join the editorial board or submitting your own creative work to *The Eckleburg Project*, visit their website (www.theeckleburgproject.com).



Interested in joining an English honor society?

SIGMA TAU DELTA

Sigma Tau Delta is an international English honor society open to English majors with a 3.0 overall GPA and a 3.0 major GPA. Applicants must have completed at least three semesters here at A&M and during that time have taken two college-level literature courses. Members are eligible to wear honor cords at graduation.

For information on how to join Sigma Tau Delta, visit <http://bit.ly/1i31XWG>.

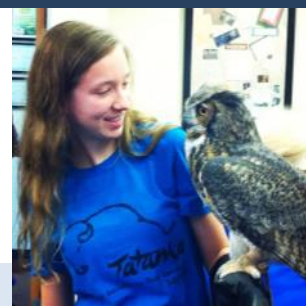


A FRESH(MAN'S) PERSPECTIVE ON

UPREPS

(Undergraduate Professional and Research Experience Programs)

During her freshman year, English major Katy Wilmotte discovered an opportunity to expand her horizons through undergraduate research and deepen her appreciation for history and literature through studying ballads. Read about her experience in the article below.



By Katy Wilmotte, '17

While looking on the English website in the fall semester, I saw an opening for an Undergraduate Professional and Research Experience Program (UPREP) which involved research on medieval ballads with Dr. Wollock. Upon seeing the word 'medieval,' my inner history/English nerd did a very happy dance and I applied, since I knew this UPREP would combine all the things I already loved to read about.

Fortunately for me, my UPREP was an extremely flexible one; unlike some UPREP students, I didn't have a specific set of tasks to complete every week, but instead was allowed to read pretty much anything that was classified as a ballad as long as I kept a record of what I did for the UPREP and how long it took. Students are expected to dedicate up to 100 hours to a UPREP by the end of the semester, which translated for me into 10 hours of reading per week—a pretty hefty chunk of time.

It was extremely worth it though, because the ballad UPREP has sparked my interest in a variety of new fields. There are ballads in nearly every language, and I am excited to read more about them in the future. Even better, I got to spend a lot of time becoming even more obsessed with literary figures like King Arthur and Robin Hood (both of whom I would date in a heartbeat). They feature in tons of ballads, and because of this project, I had an excuse to research them at great length. **I discovered that no matter what you focus on in your UPREP, you are bound to come across something that interests you.**

I ended up learning an encyclopedia's worth of information this semester, including facts about Scottish border history, borderland superstitions, cattle-raiding techniques, English monarchs, Spanish heroes, Robin Hood legends, vegetable lambs (no, really, go look it up), and more random history facts then you can shake a stick at. Skill-wise, I

learned a lot about time management, which is absolutely essential for a UPREP. 100 hours is a lot more than you think, and if you don't start chipping away at it early, you will find yourself completely overwhelmed when it gets down to the last few weeks.

That being said, being a UPREP is a lot of fun and gives you a kind of experience that is unequalled—you are getting to do one-on-one research with a professor, a thing most students don't get to do until grad school. However, you have to be willing to work hard and most importantly, develop good time management skills. You must be self-motivated; your professor may not dictate every little task you need to complete, so you need to be on top of things and figure out what you need to do each week. Also, make sure you are actually interested in the topic you apply for so that you can happily focus on researching it for a whole semester.

An incoming freshman might be intimidated to apply because of the time commitment associated; however, I found that it was a great decision to apply for a UPREP freshman year because it taught me that I could manage my time well and accomplish challenging tasks. I used to have doubts about how much I take on, and my first semester I was afraid of overloading myself. But this semester taught me that not only could I take 17 hours, I could also engage in a UPREP and still have fun!

The bottom line: **be self-motivated.** Be willing to do things you aren't explicitly asked to do. And have fun! UPREPs are meant to break you out of the undergraduate box by letting you research a subject that interests you. Take advantage of the opportunity and have a good time doing it. Who knows? You too may end up falling in love with an 800 year old legend. (Or king. Or bandit.)

A TRIBUTE TO OUR RETIRING ENGLISH PROFESSORS

DR. JIMMIE KILLINGSWORTH

"Unscrew the locks from the doors! Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!" -Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Dr. Killingsworth came to Texas A&M in 1990, served as the English Department Head for four years, and has contributed to both the literature and rhetoric sides of the English Department during his time here. His work on Rhetorical Studies and Environmental Literature are especially significant. After retiring, Killingsworth will move to northern New Mexico to write, play music, and continue editing a University Press series on nature and the environment.



DR. HARRIETTE ANDREADIS

"It's not what we eat but what we digest that makes us strong...not what we read but what we remember that makes us learned; and not what we profess but what we practice that gives us integrity." -Francis Bacon

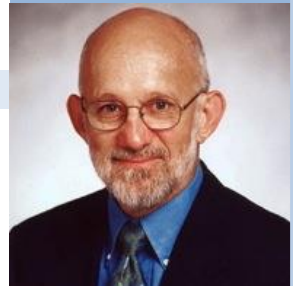
As the founder of Women's Studies and an inspired teacher, Dr. Andreadis has been an integral part of the English Department for the almost forty-year duration of her time here. When she retires, Andreadis plans to "think [her] own thoughts" and catch up on her reading! She also hopes to travel, practice her photography, and keep up a few projects on the side.



DR. DENNIS BERTHOLD

"Whatever fortune brings, don't be afraid of doing things." -Herman Melville

Dr. Dennis Berthold has made innumerable contributions to the world of nineteenth-century American literature, specifically relating to Herman Melville. He has been at Texas A&M for forty-two years, and has taught courses on literature of the sea, Gothicism, and others while still staying heavily involved in research and serving as the president of the Melville Society.



DR. JAMES HARNER

"I have done the state some service..." -Othello (William Shakespeare)

After 25 years at Texas A&M, Dr. Harner is retiring. Although he has instructed various classes, his major contributions to A&M and the English community are the *World Shakespeare Bibliography*, which received the Besterman medal in 1996, and the *Literary Research Guide*, which was named one of the TLS Books of the Year in 2008. After retiring, Harner plans to move to Richmond, VA and become "a fulltime grandfather."



DR. PAUL CHRISTENSEN

"At the end of science and technology lies a body of myths and ancient truths waiting to be rediscovered."

Dr. Paul Christensen is a renowned poet, essayist, literature critic, and for a while, was the coordinator of creative writing at Texas A&M. According to Dr. Janet McCann, "[Christensen's] projects, such as the radio program Poetry Southwest...brought creative energy to the department. His reading series, festivals, and creative teaching techniques gained us recognition and attracted many fine students." Christensen currently lives in central Vermont, and plans to keep writing.



Full stories and memories about these professors from other faculty members will be posted on www.englishaggie.blogspot.com.

We Want to Teach!

ENGLISH MAJORS REBEKAH ROORDA AND
ALEXANDRA MATHENY SPEAK

Teaching often receives a bad reputation as a career, with clichéd statements such as, “Those who can’t do, teach” casting a bad light on education. However, many English majors are excited about impacting future generations with the skills they learned in college and about having the freedom to choose where they would like to teach, whether it is high school or universities. Read about why English majors Rebekah Roorda and Alexandra Matheny want to teach in the article below!

REBEKAH ROORDA: HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

As the fourth generation in a line of English teachers on her mother’s side, Rebekah Roorda is pretty sure that teaching is in her blood.

Inspired in high school by English teachers who cared about her and were committed to developing students as individuals, Rebekah is eager to use skills she’s learned at A&M to impact future generations for the better.

Why Teaching?

One reason teaching attracts Rebekah is because it is an exciting and dynamic career—every day is different when you’re a teacher.

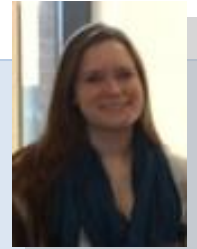
“Specifically,” she writes, “I am excited to teach *English*. I’m passionate about reading and writing, and I want my students to know how lessons can actually apply to the real world. For example, analyzing literature teaches critical thinking and analysis skills that no other subject can teach. Literature also exists so that we can understand more about the human experience. What could be more relevant than that?”

Preparing for the Future

While still here at A&M, Rebekah has taken steps to prepare for her career in teaching. She explains, “I’m a part of Texas A&M’s post-baccalaureate program, which means that I am an English major who gets the opportunity to take some education classes during her undergraduate career. After I graduate with my English degree, I will be a part of a program to receive my master’s degree in Education Curriculum and Development.”

Rebekah has also been able to observe teachers and classrooms in College Station schools and interact with students. She remarks, “In many of my English classes at Texas A&M, I often ask myself ‘How will I be using this in my classroom?’ I’ll start to develop lesson plans in my head and think through how I want to set up my classroom.”

Rebekah hopes to teach high school English in the Houston public school system. Her goal is to reach freshmen and sophomores and, with her passion for reading and writing, “get them excited about English.”



On the other side of teaching, senior Alexandra Matheny intends to teach fantasy literature at the university level. Alexandra is currently a member of *The Eckleburg Project* blog team and has also written multiple novels, a movie, and a variety

of short stories. Her love for fantasy literature, including works by authors such as Neil Gaiman, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis, has inspired her to pursue higher education that will hopefully result in a position where she can teach classes on these and other fantasy authors at a university.

Why Teaching?

Originally a theatre major at Texas State, Alexandra transferred to A&M and is currently pursuing a double major in English and psychology as well as a history minor. Her philosophy on the future echoes Joseph Campbell when he writes, “I say, follow your bliss and don’t be afraid, and doors will open...” Explaining why following your bliss (especially in the context of teaching) is important, Alexandra says, “You can tell who loves [teaching] and who is just making a living at it.” Thus, her goal is to teach what she loves—fantasy liter-

ALEXANDRA MATHENY: UNIVERSITY-LEVEL LITERATURE

ature. She admits that her decision to teach at the university level was influenced by passionate English professors here at Texas A&M including Dr. Elizabeth Robinson, Dr. Vasilakis, and Dr. Perry. She admires how these professors stimulate interest in course topics and foster an environment for learning and discussion.

Like our own professors, one of Alexandra’s goals would be to inspire and challenge students to love the classics and enjoy reading. Alexandra, like most English majors, believes that reading is an integral part of life, and, quoting George R.R. Martin, says, “A reader lives a thousand lives before he dies...the man who never reads lives only one.”

Preparing for the Future

Currently, Alexandra is preparing for the GRE by reading and studying an extensive list of books. While she does not know where she wants to go for her master’s, she hopes to earn her Ph.D. at Oxford or Cambridge and then teach at a university in England. Her advice to English majors is this: “Do what you love. Follow your bliss. Don’t teach if you’re not excited about teaching—your students will be able to tell the difference.”

TECHNICAL EDITOR Q&A

By Sophie Weber, '14

What do technical editors do?

A technical editor assesses and revises material for tone, clarity, conciseness, and consistency. Primarily, technical editors revise for comprehension, not content, meaning they only correct for things like grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting. Although the title of “editor” is usually associated with publishing, technical editors actually work in a wide variety of fields including engineering, technology, legal and financial services, and medicine.

What tasks do technical editors perform on a day-to-day basis?

Technical editors review a variety of materials, including printed manuscripts, online or web-based materials, and academic journals and reports. Following a standardized style manual, such as the Chicago Manual of Style, technical editors begin by editing for basic grammar, punctuation, and clarity. Next, they review all graphs, pictures, and citations to ensure they are clear, understandable, and consistent.

What skills should I develop for a technical editor career?

1. *Excellent communication skills:* As a technical editor, you may have to query the author of a piece of text or work with them through the edits, so it is important to develop and nurture the author/editor relationship through constructive criticism.
2. *An eye for detail:* Editing text can become monotonous, so it's important to be able to recognize small but significant grammar, punctuation, and formatting errors.
3. *Proficiency in software:* Technical editors utilize a variety of programs for editing, including Microsoft Office and Adobe Suite. All Texas A&M campus computers give students access to Microsoft Office and Adobe Suite, so take the opportunity to explore these programs while still in school.

How do I get into the field?

- *Broaden your academic interests:* Many technical editors work in fields outside of English, so consider completing a minor, or taking several courses in a non-English field that interests you. Employers consider a basic understanding of science or technology an asset when choosing editors for editing scientific or technical documentation.

- *Gain real-world experience:* Seek out new businesses that can't afford professional editing services and offer your services free or for a reduced rate. Consider a tutoring job to begin developing your constructive criticism skills and honing your writing talents.

How do I prepare for an interview for a technical editor position?

Become familiar with at least one standardized style manual. The Chicago Manual of Style is a good place to start – many publishing companies, including the Texas A&M University Press, use this manual. Be sure to draw attention to any experience you have with a style manual (yes, even the MLA style manual counts) in your résumé. Also, prepare for an editing quiz – most companies will test your skill level when hiring, so brush up on your grammar rules and basic copyediting symbols.



ENGL 320: TECHNICAL WRITING AND EDITING

Senior English major Sophie Weber (pictured second right on the top row) was a student in Ms. Cecelia Hawkins' Technical Writing and Editing course, where students learned about the profession of Technical Writing and Editing and participated in practical, realistic projects to help them gain experience and see if they

might be interested in pursuing such a career. These projects included writing an article with information from technical writers and editors who spoke to the class, composing a Style Manual for *The English Aggie* newsletter and proofreading the April edition, and contracting with a local non-profit to complete an edit-

ing or writing project. Any English majors or minors who are uncertain about future career paths are highly recommended to take this course, both to improve their copyediting and writing skills and to learn if this profession might be a good fit for them.

These are a few of our **FAVORITE THINGS:** Lines of Poetry

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.

◇ “We were beautiful and dangerous.” —Yusef Komunyakaa (“Slam, Dunk & Hook”) —Submitted by Professor Larry C Heinemann

◇ “Life, to be sure, is nothing much to lose, but young men think it is, and we were young.” —A.E. Housman (“Here Dead We Lie”) —Submitted by Former Student Lee Sullivan

◇ “To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.” —Alfred Lord Tennyson, (“Ulysses”) —Submitted by Molly McGee

◇ “The caged bird sings with fearful trill of the things unknown but longed for still, and his tune is heard on the distant hill for the caged bird sings of freedom.” —Maya Angelou (“I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings”) —Submitted by Gabriella Pallares

◇ “Our hearts were drunk with a beauty our eyes could never see.” —George William Russell (“The Unknown God”) —Submitted by Annabeth Reeb

STUDY ABROAD



Image taken by Jaclyn Upshaw-Brown

Interested in studying abroad?

Our English Department has formed a connection with the university in Doha, Qatar (pictured above), where study abroad students may take classes and apply for jobs and internships that will help develop their writing skills.

Opportunities abound for study abroad experiences. Email Jaclyn Upshaw-Brown (jbupshaw@tamu.edu) if you are interested in studying abroad.

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