



THE ENGLISH AGGIE

September 2015

www.english.tamu.edu

Texas A&M University–The Department of English Undergraduate Studies

“September” by
Helen Hunt Jackson

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow nook;
And asters by the brook-side
Make asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.
By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best of weather,
And autumn's best of cheer.

But none of all this beauty
Which floods the earth and air
Is unto me the secret
Which makes September fair.

'T is a thing which I remember;
To name it thrills me yet:
One day of one September
I never can forget.



Source: Texas A&M University

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Welcome, New Faculty!

-NEW FACULTY PROFILES-

Professor Andrew Pilsch

Professor Andrew Pilsch was born in California and has lived in eleven states during his lifetime—due to his father being in the Air Force. He and his wife, Professor Shauna Ross, have moved from Arizona State to teach English at Texas A&M. Pilsch received his Bachelor's degree from Georgia Tech in Computer Science, as well as in Science, Technology, and Culture, followed by his Master's from Penn State in English. Pilsch has a specialization in rhetoric and enjoys the study of digital communications, as well as human/technology interaction. This will be Professor Pilsch's tenth year teaching at the university level. He says he is excited for the opportunity to work in the Texas A&M English Department.



Professor Pilsch's favorite novel is *Neuromancer* by William Gibson because of the impact it had on him as a high school student. Pilsch was (and still is) fascinated by the manner in which Gibson spoke about the influence of technology. His favorite author is literary critic Frederic Jameson, who discusses various cultural phenomena within society. Pilsch says that one of his most beloved memories as an undergraduate student was working as a science fiction collections researcher at Georgia Tech. In one specific instance, Paul Di Filippo, a renowned science-fiction writer, complimented his team after being hosted by them for a speaking event, saying they were "the best graduate students he's ever worked with." Pilsch felt honored to have been evaluated at the graduate student level—especially as a young undergraduate.

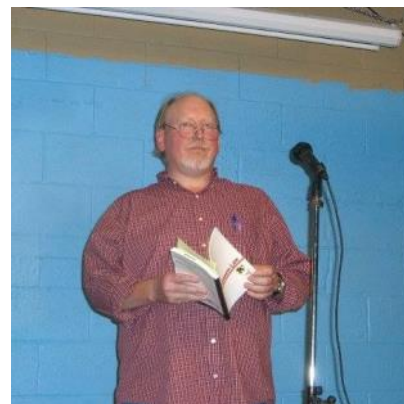
Professor Pilsch is interested in exploring how it is that the English major of today works within our twenty-first century society.

Dr. Lowell "Mick" White

Dr. Lowell "Mick" White was born in Ohio and grew up in West Virginia and Minnesota. Both of his parents were professors. Dr. White received his Bachelor's degree from the University of Texas in History and his Master's from Texas A&M University in English. In 2010, he received his Ph.D. from A&M in English. He has taught as both a graduate assistant and post-doctorate lecturer at A&M and as a professor at Pittsburgh State, totaling ten years. Dr. White chose to return to A&M because he missed Texas and the friendships he had built. To him, Texas is home.

Dr. White's favorite novels are *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway and *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole. Dr. White enjoys Hemingway's novel because of the way it changed his life. As a seventh grader, he remembers how he "opened the book and magic came out." He also enjoys Toole's work because he feels that it truly has everything any reader could want. Dr. White enjoys reading and writing and is the published author of three books. Dr. White's favorite (and funniest) college memory occurred during a class lecture freshman year. A student was reading the campus paper and, in order to get his attention, the professor decided to throw a huge chalkboard eraser at him!

Dr. White is very happy to be back at Texas A&M, and he wants his students to know that he does remember what it's like to be a student. He says, "I do have empathy."



Dr. Nicole duPlessis

Dr. Nicole duPlessis was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and lived there for the first twenty-two years of her life. She received her Bachelor's degree from the University of New Orleans in English, with a minor in History. Dr. duPlessis received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M in 2008, after writing her dissertation on the author C.S. Lewis. She taught from the fall of 2000 until 2011. For the past three years, Dr. duPlessis has been teaching staff about business, writing, and technology. The coolest thing Dr. duPlessis says she got to do while at her last job was write and record technology tips that were aired on KAMU FM. These tips explored the idea of incorporating technology into classrooms. Dr. duPlessis says she loves Texas A&M because "there is so much enthusiasm," accompanied with high standards and great staff.

Dr. duPlessis lives with her husband (who is a curator at Cushing library) and her three children (one boy and two girls). Dr. duPlessis' favorite author is Tolkien and her favorite series is *The Hunger Games* trilogy. When asked why *The Hunger Games* is one of her favorites, Dr. duPlessis responded simply that it is a lot more important than people realize and that the series explores themes of great significance to society. She is fascinated by dystopian literature and her essay on the subject, "Age of Dystopia," will be published in the spring. For fun, Dr. duPlessis enjoys sewing, blogging, and reading.

One of her favorite experiences as a UNO student was a course taught by author and poet, Richard Katrovas. She remembers her interaction with professional poetry and her professor's analysis of it. Dr. duPlessis fondly recalls showing one of her poems to Professor Katrovas and him responding that it was "a fuzzy little adolescent poem [written] by a fuzzy little adolescent poet." When asked what she would like her students and readers to know about herself, Dr. duPlessis responded that "it's been an interesting and roundabout journey." She says that every stage of her life has brought something new and exciting. She would like to warn readers to expect the unexpected out of life. She asks us to "be versatile and know technology."

*We hope you enjoy your time
here at Texas A&M!*

Professor Shawna Ross

Professor Shawna Ross was born in a small Florida town, but grew up in Knoxville, Tennessee—a college town quite similar to College Station. Ross attended several colleges as an undergraduate, including a small liberal arts college in Georgia called Berry College, a study abroad program at the University of Reading in England, and the University of Tennessee, where she received her Bachelor's degree in English. She received her Master's in English from Penn State, where she met her husband, Professor Pilsch. She and her husband have recently moved from Arizona, where they had been teaching for three years. Professor Ross began teaching in 2005 and has taught at both Pennsylvania State and Arizona State. When asked why she and her husband decided to move, Ross explains that there is an exciting atmosphere at Texas A&M—an atmosphere where just about anything can happen. Professor Ross is thrilled to be joining the English Department's faculty!

Professor Ross is a person who enjoys a challenge—whether that be in her reading or in the projects she takes on during her free time. While her husband enjoys cooking, Professor Ross enjoys baking and creating complicated, exigent layer cakes that take an entire day to create. Her favorite novel is *The Ambassadors* by Henry James. She also enjoys books written by author Katherine Mansfield. Ross appreciates dense texts that use experimental prose. When asked why she enjoys "tough" reads, Ross responded that she loves unpacking the demanding text. She says that due to the material's difficulty, it makes the experience all the more victorious and satisfying when it is finally understood in its totality. Professor Ross loves reading. When discussing the volumes of novels within her office, she declared that, not only are books great stories to enjoy and collect, but that they are also a great way to keep track of your own personal history. She can recall the exact stage of life she was at while reading specific novels and sometimes even the precise feelings she experienced as she read through them.

Professor Ross' favorite college experience occurred during her freshman seminar over Plato. In that class, she was able to grow in her peer experience. Within that classroom, Ross says the professor and the students conversed freely and fairly. Ross was blown away by the idea that people respected one another's varying opinions so extensively. In a way, Ross feels that this encapsulates the collegiate mentality fairly well. Professor Ross would like students to know that she is deeply interested in learning and research. She hopes to one day provide opportunities for undergraduate research—specifically with a project regarding the voyages of Henry James during the late nineteenth century.

Studying in Morocco

-MARIA SALAS-



Chefchaouen

Picture this: waking up at five in the morning to the sound of the adhan (call to prayer) coming from the mosque down the street. I didn't have to be up for another two hours, but I lay awake for those next ten minutes, while many devout Muslims rose from their slumber to dedicate fifteen minutes to prayer. This was what my summer was about. I had been given the wonderful opportunity to study abroad in Meknes, Morocco for ten weeks in a hands-on program that allowed me to speak and learn Arabic daily, travel throughout the country, and most importantly, eat a lot of delicious food! I spoke Arabic with my host family and with my Moroccan friends, with taxi drivers and with local shopkeepers, as I bargained with them at the souk (flea market).



Beach in Rabat



Ruins of Volubilis

I studied Arabic culture and history as we took trips to the different imperial cities in Morocco and I shared meals with special friends and family that I will never forget. One of my most favorite trips occurred when we went to the Sahara. It was the longest drive, by far, but it was well worth it. Getting to experience pure silence under a literal blanket of stars is one of the memories I will forever cherish; of course, riding a camel is also right up there as one of the best memories I have! Morocco holds a special place in my heart. As an English major, many people don't think that pursuing an Arabic minor makes sense, but when you push yourself out of your comfort zone and try something new, opportunities open up in places you'd least expect them. Take a chance and begin researching any study abroad you might be thinking of!



Chefchaouen



Tangier

I'm most thankful to Dr. Vasilakis for always encouraging me to pursue study abroad and I'm thankful to Dr. Ayari for always pushing his students to learn Arabic.



Riding a camel in Merzouga (Sahara)



Souk in Rabat



Chefchaouen

STUDY ABROAD IN *Dublin, Ireland*

ENGL 481 - Senior Seminar - James Joyce - Spring 2016

Dr. Marian Eide

For more information, contact the English Undergraduate Office at:

undergrad-office@tamuenglish.org

or wait for the Departmental e-mail sent to your inbox!

Essay Contests

THE ENGLISH RESEARCH ESSAY CONTEST

The English Research Essay Contest recognizes and rewards outstanding undergraduate research writing with a prize of \$250.

Eligibility:

- Researched essay over any literary subject or writer, between 2500 and 5000 words
- Written for a 300-400 level English class at TAMU by an undergraduate student during the calendar year of 2015

An essay may be nominated either by its author or by a professor. Entries should follow MLA conventions, with a separate title page including name of submitter, UIN, email address, name of the instructor and course, and term composed. **The student's name should be removed from all pages except the title page.** Only one entry per student.

All entries must be submitted to Tammy Whisenant (t021325w@tamu.edu) as an attachment via email by **December 18, 2015 at 5 pm.**

RHETORIC & DISCOURSE STUDIES ESSAY CONTEST

The Rhetoric and Discourse Studies Essay Contest annually recognizes and rewards outstanding undergraduate writing with a prize of \$250.

Eligibility:

- Address rhetoric, linguistics, or discourse studies in some way, between 2500 and 5000 words
- Written for an English or Linguistics class (except ENGL 104, 203, 209, 210) at TAMU by an undergraduate student during the calendar year of 2015

An essay may be nominated either by its author or by a professor. Entries should follow MLA or APA convention, with a separate title page including the name of submitter, UIN, email address, name of the instructor and course, and term composed. **Name should be on title page only.** Only one entry per student.

All entries must be submitted to Tammy Whisenant (t021325w@tamu.edu) as an attachment via email by **February 5, 2016 at 5 pm.**

The English Faculty Graduating Senior Award

(For Dec. 2015, May 2016, or Aug. 2016 graduates ONLY)

**Deadline: March 4,
2016**

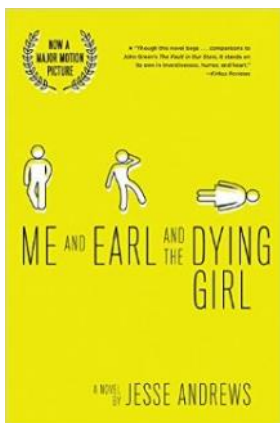
Applications can be found and downloaded online under the "Undergraduate" tab of the English Department homepage!

**Be watching for
2016 UPREP
opportunities!**

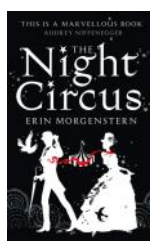
These are a few of our **FAVORITE THINGS:**
Summer Reads

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 and Twitter Pages.

EDITOR’S PICK:

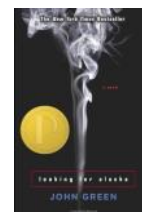


“My favorite summer read was *Me and Earl and the Dying Girl* by Jesse Andrews. I appreciated the author’s sarcastic writing style and how it felt like I was listening to an actual person tell me a story.”
 -Sarah Jacobson, ‘17



“I love *The Night Circus* by Erin Morgenstern. I liked the writing style, its beautiful imagery, and that it keeps you engaged and guessing until the end.”
 -Brooke Hendrix, ‘16

“I both liked *Looking for Alaska* by John Green and I didn’t... I noticed he has a pattern going on [in his novels] which I’m interested in as a writer...”
 -Dillon Rouse, ‘16



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