



“Don’t divide yourself, because other people will try to. Say who you are because no one will name you kindly.”

—Elizabeth Alexander (1962-)

OUTSTANDING GRADUATES FOR FALL 2008

The following six students were selected this past semester as outstanding graduates of SUNY New Paltz. Each one was chosen by the English Department on the basis of his or her GPA and the quality of their coursework in English, and were recognized at a ceremony presided over by Provost Lavallee and President Poskanzer. All Outstanding Graduates will be honored with a bookplate in the library’s collection.

Kelli Palinkas

When I began college, after more than twenty years in the business world, I imagined that when I was finished I would walk away knowing just about all there was to know about literature and writing. Instead, I have been given glimpses of different authors, styles, genres, literary movements, and criticism, along with the knowledge that there is even more that I haven’t even touched on.

Lea Weiss

When I returned to SUNY New Paltz to complete my education degree (after earning my first master’s degree in oriental medicine), I had not anticipated staying to complete my master’s degree in English. I realized, however, that I simply could not stop attending classes, despite my responsibilities as a full-time English teacher, and I found that rather quickly I had planned independent studies and thesis projects necessitating if not semesters, then years of continued study.

Nick Haines

I graduated with an MA in English this past fall. Aside from reading and writing, I enjoy writing music and playing with my band. I have benefited from my time at New Paltz very much; with the help of the wonderful professors, especially professors H.R. Stone-

back, Dan Kempton, and Stella Deen, as well as the other students that have made up the department, I feel that I have grown not only as a student of literature but personally as well.

Andrea Lynne Gamalski

I am incredibly grateful for the overwhelming support and encouragement I received at New Paltz. The professors are top-notch facilitators, who posit intriguing discussion questions and essay topics. As an adult student and parent, I found my professors were understanding and compassionate while constantly challenging me to produce the most polished, thoughtful, well-crafted work possible.

Eric Hess

I started in the MA program in the fall of 2006 after working at a blood bank for a couple of years. I really enjoyed my time at New Paltz; I made a couple of good friends, and the faculty was very supportive and nurturing. They sparked my interest in a number of areas I hadn’t previously considered studying: Middle English literature, eighteenth-century literature, and rhetoric and composition studies. I am currently exploring my post-graduate options in addition to learning the banjo and reading about crows.

Carrie Mackey

In 2000, I received a BS in Environmental Geosciences from Lafayette College, and now I have received a BA in English with a concentration in Creative Writing from SUNY New Paltz. My experience has made me a better writer, and I hope that I may someday use both of my degrees together, perhaps with an environmental magazine.



Clockwise from top left: Kelli Palinkas, Andrea Gamalski, Eric Hess, Carrie Mackey, Nick Haines, Lea Weiss

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Faculty Profile: Robert Waugh

Professor Robert Waugh recently lamented that he didn't get nearly as much done over his winter break as he had hoped to. And with a man working on so much at once, it's easy to see how this could weigh heavily on his mind.

In addition to his duties as professor, Waugh currently has four different critical works at various stages of completion. One book, a four-chapter piece that looks at Arthur Conan Doyle's four Sherlock Holmes novels, is waiting to be sent out for publication. The second book Waugh is working to complete will deal with the first ten years in the creative life of writer Jules Verne. The third book—which he has been working on since the 1970s—is currently being reworked and deals with the complete mythos surrounding the works of J. R. R. Tolkien and is titled *The Burden of Middle Earth*. The last will be Waugh's second compilation of essays dealing with the works of the master of weird fiction, H. P. Lovecraft.

All of these works come as result of a long career as a professor of English—he has been a faculty member at SUNY New Paltz since 1968. Waugh received his BA in comparative literature from Indiana University, and he chose this major, he says, because he couldn't decide between studying English or studying German. He would go on to receive his Ph.D in comparative literature from Harvard in 1972. Waugh says he initially accepted a job at New Paltz because, he says, "it was a job." Prior to applying to the position Waugh had never

heard of the state school nestled at the foot of the Shawangunks, but was quickly won over by the area. "I still very much remember coming in on the bus," says Waugh, "and saying to myself 'Well, this is wonderful.'"



The scenic beauty of the area is not, however, what kept Waugh here for more than 40 years. "The department has always been very welcoming," says Waugh. "I could essentially teach what I wanted to teach." And he has. Waugh has taught courses from science fiction and modern fantasy to James Joyce and Greek and Roman Literature. "I've really been all over the place," he says.

Waugh's interest in science fiction and fantasy would eventually lead him to discover the work of Lovecraft, though for Waugh it was not love at first read. "He didn't fire for me at the time," he says. It was an opportunity in the late 1980s to begin an H. P. Lovecraft forum that would spark Waugh's scholarly interest in the man's work. The forum, which continues to be held here each year in October, provided an opportunity for Waugh to present essays on the works of Lovecraft which have since been compiled into a book entitled *The Monster in the Mirror*. Waugh is currently working on a second collection of essays about Lovecraft's works. "I like complex, challenging fiction," says Waugh, about his interest in Lovecraft. "I like extreme fiction." Waugh will take this interest of the complex, challenging, and extreme to a course he is teaching on the works of Thomas Pynchon this spring.

Advice from Professor Waugh

- ◆ I realize that when I'm writing, I'm trying to become human. Writing helps you along the way towards becoming human. I have no idea what it is to be human, but my ignorance is a part of the fun of being alive.
- ◆ Do your best to do what you'd like to do. If we don't do what we enjoy, it's no life.
- ◆ You'll never read all the books that you've bought—but that's okay, books are promises.
- ◆ When you meet a writer's block, change your habits, your paper, write upside down. Keats would "Adonize," Schiller would smell rotten apples.

Department Blog Up and Running

In an effort to improve communication with faculty, students, and alumni, the English Department launched a blog—"English @ New Paltz"—in mid-December.

Thus far, the blog has provided recaps of lectures and department events, given notice of upcoming events, featured videos and photos that captured lectures and readings, highlighted the successes of faculty and students, and provided its readers with some general news around the department, the campus, and the town.

Following the blog's launch Professor Thomas Olsen, chair of the English department, said, "It will prove an excellent way for English majors and minors, as well as faculty, to stay on top of all the great things going on in this department."

So far the blog has done just



that. It has been able to keep those who are interested abreast of the most current information the English department has to offer in a format that can be updated in real time. The blog will be a great place to check for information about upcoming events in the department, information about events you may have missed, and important information and reminders about registration, class schedules, calls for papers, and department requirements.

The blog's layout is clean, easy to navigate, and its functionality continues to develop. At this moment, the department is looking for ways to add podcasts of student and faculty poetry and short prose readings, as well as lectures and events of interest happening in and around the department.

To visit the department's blog, go to englishblog.newpaltz.edu or follow the link on the English Department's home page.

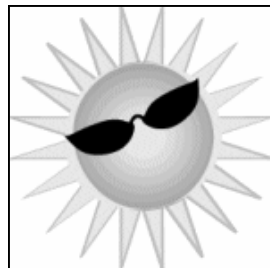
A Hot Selection of Summer Courses in Store

This year, the English department will offer a wide array of summer courses for its students that are sure to satisfy almost any interest. Summer classes can help students catch up on courses they may have missed, can help relieve the pressure of a heavy workload during the regular semester, and offer a means to get ahead by adding a course.

Summer can also prove an interesting time to take a course, as for some students that time of year is less busy than the fall and spring. "One great benefit of summer classes is that they are *very* focused," says Thomas Olsen, chair of the English Department. "Once enrolled, students usually feel that they are totally immersed in the content and experience of the course. But with that comes a need for some caution: I advise students not to over-plan, since summer courses move at two to three times the pace of regular semester courses."

For undergraduates, the department is tenta-

tively offering 15 classroom courses during the two summer sessions, including Studies in



Drama, Creative Writing I, Contemporary Issues in Literature, and American Humor. In addition, there will also be 15 online courses available including Women in Literature, The Novel, and The Beats.

Graduate students are being offered four options over the two sessions: Forms of Autobiography, Contemporary Short Fiction, Shakespeare, and Realism and Naturalism.

The list of summer courses is not yet finalized and firm plans should not be made until the official schedule is released in the early spring. Summer Session I runs from May 26 to June 29. Summer Session II runs from July 6 to August 7. Online courses will be held May 26 to July 28. A complete draft of available summer courses is available on the English department's blog at englishblog.newpaltz.edu.



Graduate Symposium: Virginia Woolf

The call is out for submissions for this year’s Graduate Symposium, an annual forum for graduate students and visiting lecturers to flex their academic muscles. This year’s event will focus on the richly complex works of Modernist writer Virginia Woolf.

“The Symposium is the crowning event of the graduate program year,” says department chair, Professor Thomas Olsen. “For more than two decades, we have been treated to some great graduate-student papers and keynote lectures from scholars with, literally, international reputations. It’s always been an intellectual treat and a lively event for all concerned.” Student papers are published in *The Shawangunk Review* the following year.

Symposium Director Professor Stella Deen says she selected the topic because Woolf’s “well-known literary innovations were always driven by her changing vision of truth.”

Graduate students are invited to submit 10-page papers for the annual event, to be held in April. Essays on any aspect of the work of Virginia Woolf are welcome. Please send inquiries about your project to Stella Deen, deenm@newpaltz.edu. Please plan to submit hard copies of draft papers to Professor Deen by February 23.

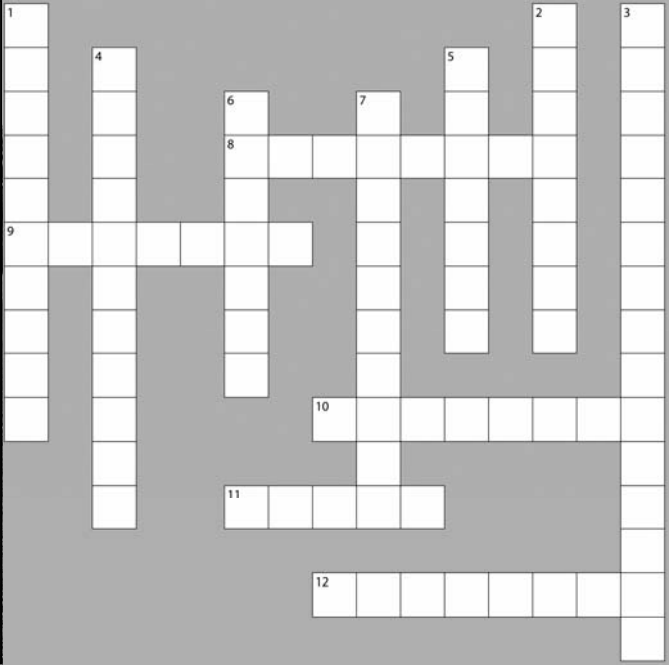
A Crossword for the Road

ACROSS

- 8. William Least Heat-Moon’s 1982 road story, *Blue* _____
- 9. William Faulkner’s story about a trip to Memphis in a stolen car
- 10. The female inspiration for Don Quixote’s journey
- 11. A mythic journey fraught with obstacles
- 12. Confederate soldier travels home to his lady love: *Cold* _____

DOWN

- 1. Destination of Chaucer’s pilgrims
- 2. Hero of the West’s first great road story
- 3. Hunter S. Thompson’s classic work about a series of wild trips to Las Vegas
- 4. Huck Finn promises to “light out for the _____”
- 5. John Steinbeck’s *Travels with* _____ (1962).
- 6. Cormac McCarthy’s post-apocalyptic road novel
- 7. Kerouac’s road story in which the narrator finds Buddhism



Correct, completed crosswords received in the English Department Office (ask for Ethel) by Monday 2/9 will be entered into a drawing. The winner will receive a copy of Homer’s *The Odyssey*.

ALL STUDENTS MAY APPLY.

Footnotes

- 1. At press time, several English courses still had seats available. See www.newpaltz.edu/english/classes.
- 2. Don’t forget that the no-fee online **add/drop period ends on January 26.**
- 3. February 9 is the end of 50% tuition refund, and end of Spring '09 registration period.

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