



The English Times: December 2020



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FACULTY NEWS



The English Department's new faculty member, Professor **Justin Shaw**, had a conversation with [A Bit](#)

[Lit](#) discussing the links between early theories of race and melancholy. The conversation looks at understanding and dismantling ableism and anti-black racism: [Watch it here!](#)



On November 2nd, *USNews.com* published an article about Creative Writing degrees. Clark University's own professor of Introduction to Creative Writing and Director of Prestigious Fellowships and Scholarships, **Jessica Bane Robert**, suggested that "creative imaginative types who have stories burning inside them and who gravitate toward stories and language might want to pursue a degree in creative writing." The article delves into the value and purpose of a Creative Writing degree. You can read the full article [here](#).

HALLOWEEN IN 2020: Some fun with death and fear, anyone?

The Associated Press released an article on October 27th about Clark University's Dean of Faculty, **Esther Jones**. This article examines Dean Jones' take on Halloween and how our perception of the holiday connects to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Dean Jones studies medical ethics, speculative fiction, and African American literature. She believes that "everything that we thought was so strong and resilient and would not change is changing in front of our very eyes," including Halloween.

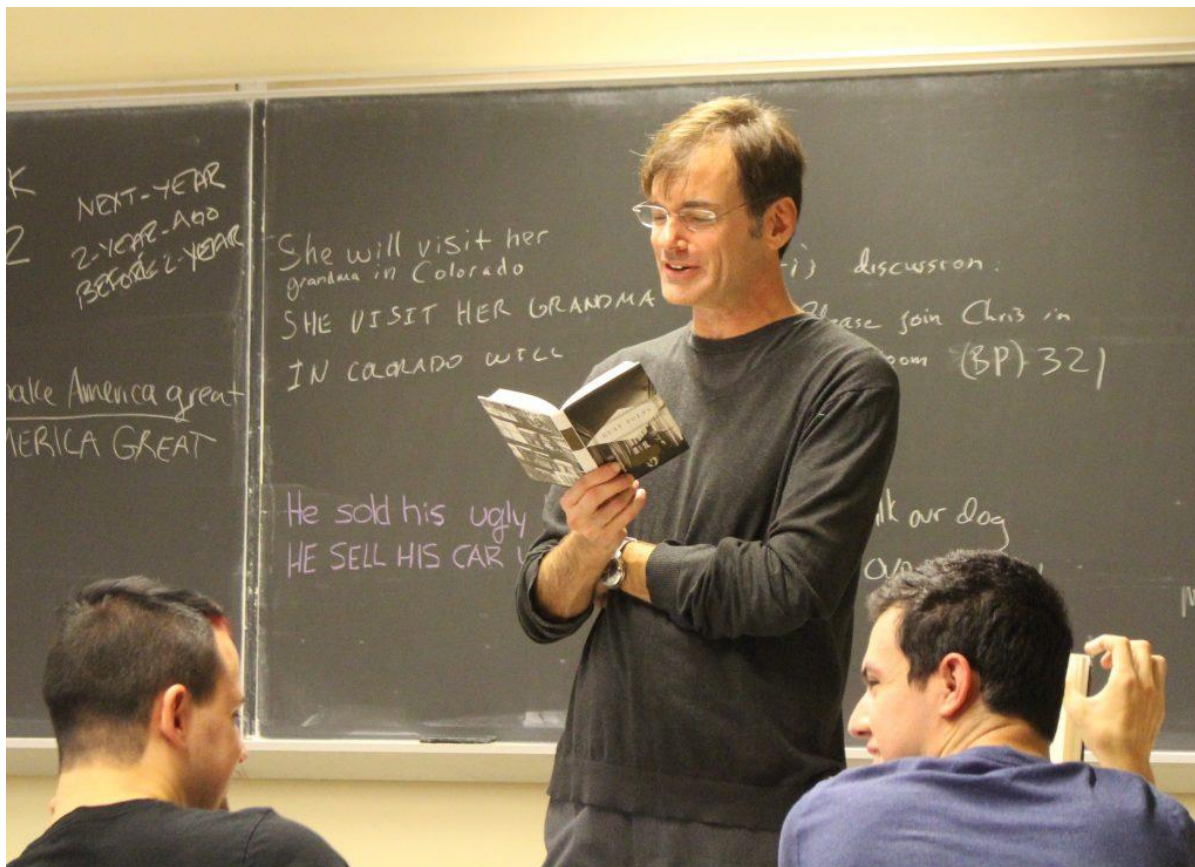


In a nation long-fueled by fears that have only escalated this year with the pandemic, political division, and racial injustices, this year's Halloween is an "unusual moment." We are learning that the masks and facades that we assumed would come off on November 1st are not so impermanent, and that the lines between performance, play, and real life can become blurred. This interview builds on her work in her article, "[Science fiction builds mental resiliency in young readers](#)," that was published on *The Conversation* in May. This AP article also appeared in dozens of media outlets including the *Beijing*

News, *Voice of America*, *Taiwan News online*, and *The Anchorage Daily News*. You can read the full interview [here](#).



The American Antiquarian Society blog recently published a webinar by Ashley Cataldo, AAS curator of manuscripts, and **Meredith Neuman**, Associate Professor of English at Clark University, discussing seventeenth-century New England manuscript culture. You can learn more [here](#).



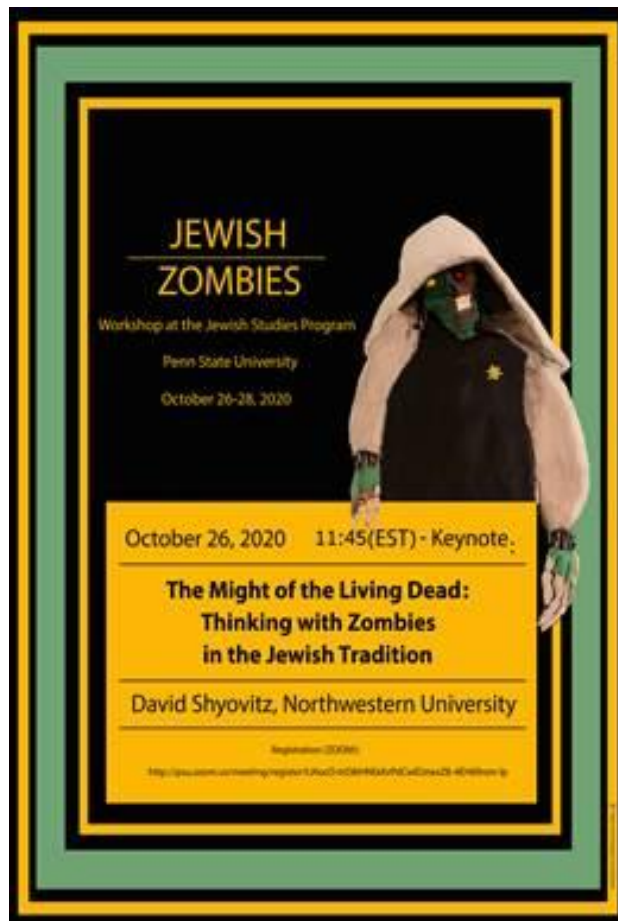
Last spring (2020), students in Professor **Michael Carolan's** English 202, *Imagining Place: Writing Health, Science and the Environmental*, went online because of the Coronavirus pandemic. That didn't stop productivity. Six students published essays they wrote for the course in the Commentary section of the Sunday issues, May 2 and May 9, of the Worcester Telegram & Gazette.

Students in Professor Carolan's new course, English 102: *From Cli-Fi to Frankenstein: Reading and Writing Climate Narrative*, in Fall 2020 wrote essays on Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. To help, the class heard guest lecturers on zoom: Professor Lisa Kasmer, English Department Chair, on Shelley, and Professor Esther Jones, who is serving as Dean of Faculty, on Butler.

Students in Professor Carolan's course, English 101, *Introduction to Creative Writing*, write short stories and read and write critical papers on classic short fiction through the ages. In Fall 2020, they enjoyed a lecture from Professor James Elliott, who retires this spring after 50 years at Clark, on the beloved masterpiece of experimental fiction, Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." Professor Elliott's course, *The Short Story*, has been a staple of the Clark English major.

STUDENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

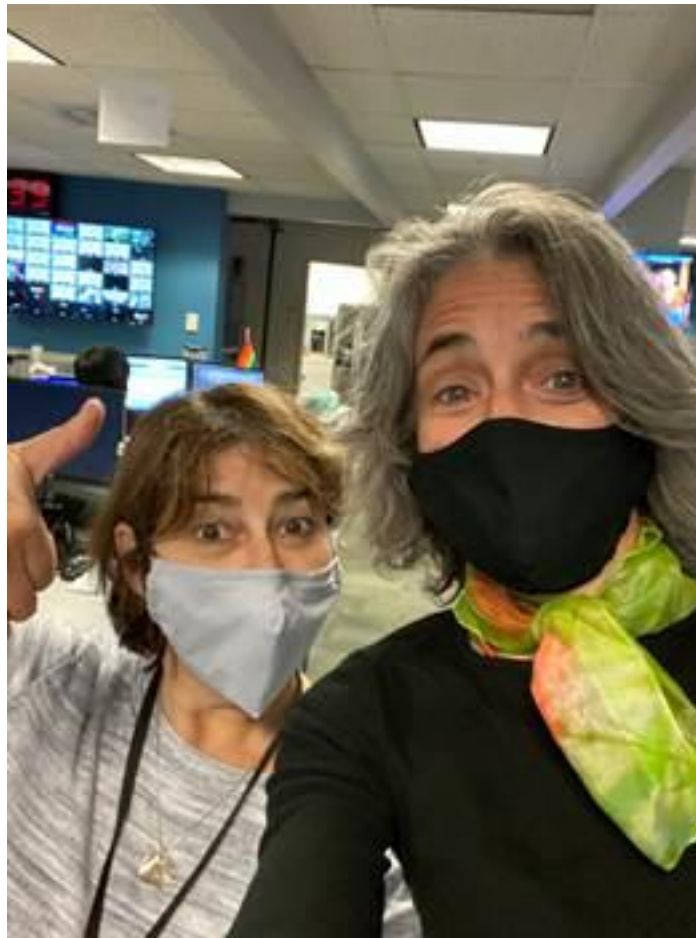
- **Haley Berkowitz's ('22)** essay "[Opinion: When the Climate Clock hits zero, where will I be?](#)", written for Prof. Michael Carolan's English 202 Imagining Place: Writing Health, Science and the Environmental, was published in the **Telegram.com** 11/27/2020.
- A virtual reading of **Brett Iarrobino's ('22)** play "[Poor Connection](#)" will be presented on Dec. 14th by Undiscovered Works as part of their monthly storytelling event.
- **Loretta Chekani ('71)** shares that her novel *Ten Things I Hate About Duke* will be published as an Avon Historical Romance novel by HarperCollins Publishers on December 1, 2020. This novel is her twenty-third full-length historical romance novel, and will be published under her pen name, Loretta Chase.



- **Azariah Kurlantzick (B.A. '20)** presented on a part of their Honors thesis as part of a workshop on Jewish Zombies organized by Penn State's Jewish Studies Program. Their session was chaired by Karen Grumberg, author of *Hebrew Gothic* and the presentation was titled "I am Half Dead': The Gothic in I.L. Peretz's 'The Dead Town.'" Azariah has secured the position of Journals Publishing Assistant, Psychology & Human Behavior with John Wiley & Sons.
- **Dono Sunardi (MA '11)** is a lecturer at English Letters Study Program of Universitas Ma Chung (www.machung.ac.id). He teaches the classes of Literary Appreciation, Translation & Interpretation, Drama, Stylistics, and Report Writing, and has translated books for several major publishers in Indonesia, translating books of over 100 titles of a range of book genres from English to Indonesian. He was invited to speak in seminars and workshops on translation: most currently, a seminar held by the Faculty of Language and Arts of my university where he presented on the topic of "What's in the Mind of a Translator? An Insider Perspective." Dono spoke in universities in Indonesia like Sanata Dharma University, Universitas Wijaya Putra of Surabaya, and STKIP PGRI Bangkalan.
- **Helen Clare Taylor, PhD (MA '87)** has been Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs here at Louisiana State University Shreveport for one year now. She got her MA in English at Clark after coming over from England with a group of other graduate students from England. Clark President David Fithian was actually one of her students in his freshman year!



- **Shalyn Hopley, (B.A. '14)** is back at Clark as of October 2020. After spending 6 years working at other universities across the US and completing her master's degree in Higher Education and Student Affairs, Shalyn is now working in the Office of Academic Support under the Dean of the College office.



- **DJ Moran, (B.A. '91)** is a news writer for ABC in New York City, covering everything from the Covid crisis to government goings-on, with everything imaginable (and a lot I never could have imagined) in between. I feel incredibly blessed to love what I do, mostly because I work alongside amazingly bright and dynamic people. This photo was taken on the morning of Election Day 2020. I'm on the right, next to ABC News Radio Anchor Cheri Preston.

THE NEXT CHAPTER BLOG POSTS

Check out the new English Department Blog [The Next Chapter](#)

The English Virtual Open House

Though the Department couldn't gather in Anderson House for traditional festivities, last month's first virtual English Department Open House was still a big success. About 35 people gathered on a Zoom call to meet the new faculty members, reminisce on their times in college, and hear about the experiences of

Clark employees who were English majors. There were lots of chats sent back-and-forth, a few prizes given out (you're hearing from the proud new owner of an Anderson House baseball cap!), and most importantly, there were lots of answers to the question that every English major inevitably gets asked: what do you do with an English degree?



That answer is remarkably broad. Read more [here](#).

Benjamin Garcia Reading and Workshop September 2020



POETS AND WRITERS READING SERIES

Benjamin Garcia

AUTHOR OF *THROWN IN THE THROAT*

Benjamin Garcia received his MFA from Cornell University and currently works as a sexual health and harm reduction educator in the Finger Lakes region of New York. His first collection of poems, *Thrown in the Throat*, was selected for the 2019 National Poetry Series by Kazim Ali.

BENJAMIN GARCIA WORKSHOP

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM (EST)

Join Us Via Zoom!

[HTTP://BIT.LY/ENGDEPT-BENJAMINGARCIA](http://bit.ly/engdept-benjamin Garcia)

In the second installment of the Clark Poets and Writers Reading series, Latinx poet Benjamin Garcia gave a reading and led a workshop. Benjamin Garcia's first collection, *Thrown in the Throat* (Milkweed Editions, August 2020), was selected by Kazim Ali for the 2019 National Poetry Series. Read the blog post on it [here!](#)

Why did so many Clark Employees Major in English?



In October, curious about the number of Clark employees who use skills related to the English major, we reached out via email to Clark employees to see who had majored in English as an undergrad. We were pleased at the variety of responses we received. Interestingly, the English major was useful in a variety of contexts. Read the full blog post [here!](#)

DEPARTMENT EVENTS & NEWS

STUDY BREAK KITS



The English Department prepared grab-and-go Study Break Kits as a little end-of-F'20 treat for students. The kits contained all the fixings to make a gingerbread person and a nice cup of hot chocolate! Students were asked to submit selfies with their gingerbread creation to the Department's gingerbread person decorating contest. The winning entries (clockwise) are Henley Ballou '22 with Virgingerbread Woolf and a copy of *Orlando*, Zoe Chakoian '21, Jamie Smith '21, and Christina Rose Guerrini '23 with Charlotte "Gingerbread" Brontë ! Stay safe this winter and Happy Holidays!

CHOWDER FEST



This year's English Department Chowder Fest took place virtually. The annual event features Clark English alum who share the impact their English major had on their career journeys. Clark students had the opportunity to pick up a grab-and-go Chowder Fest Kit beforehand so they could enjoy their soup while at home during the event. The alumni guest speakers included **Lee Gaines '11, Kulani Abendroth-Dias '13, Cara Gross '13, and Bryan Tamburro '97.**



Lee Gaines '11, is an award-winning journalist whose work has been featured on multiple national broadcasts, including NPR's All Things Considered, Morning Edition and Here & Now. Lee was hired in late 2017 as the education reporter for Illinois Public Media and Illinois Newsroom. Prior to her work at IPM, Lee wrote for newspapers and magazines in Chicago and nationally. Her work has appeared in the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Reader, Chicago Magazine, the Pacific Standard and the Marshall Project.



Kulani Abendroth-Dias '13 is currently a Strategic Analyst within the Executive Directorate of the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) in Paris, France, and a Graduate Professional with the Security and Technology Programme at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) in Geneva, Switzerland. She is also pursuing her PhD in International Relations/Political Science at the Graduate Institute for International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, Switzerland. Kulani works at the intersection between social psychology, economics, and emerging technologies.



Cara Gross '13 integrated her passions for stories and environmental advocacy with her senior honors thesis, which analyzed imaginative literary representations of, and solutions, to climate change. She worked on organic New England farms and for 1.5 years as a Farmer's Market Manager for the environmental non-profit Grow NYC. She then worked as a tax & estate paralegal for 2 years before finding her way into the literary world as a Contracts Assistant for Farrar, Straus, and Girous. Cara now works in the Business Affairs Department of Trident Media group, a prominent literary agency in NYC.



Bryan Tamburro, '97, is a graduate of Clark University, where his global interests were encouraged both academically and professionally. He expanded his work in university development at MIT and then Carnegie Mellon University where he developed and implemented an international advancement program. After its successful implementation, including facilitating CMU's entrance into the World Economic Forum's conversations in Davos, he embarked on his entrepreneurial journey. Since 2010, Mr. Tamburro has been a successful energy entrepreneur and has developed a strong reputation for crisis management. Currently, he heads the operation for the only natural gas fired power plant in Afghanistan.

GRAPHIC IMAGINATION: A CONVERSATION WITH FRED CHAO



Sponsored by the Higgins School of Humanities funding for virtual classroom visits, **Prof. Jin Lee** invited [Fred Chao](#) to speak with her two ENG 20 Intro to Literature classes and the Clark community. Fred Chao discussed the writing, illustrating and publishing process for of his graphic novel, [Johnny Hiro { half asian/all hero }](#), read by Prof. Lee's classes. Fred Chao is a graphic / print production designer and illustrator for such clients as Apple Inc., HarperCollins Publishers, First Second Books, Disney Magazines, and Henry Holt Publishers.

WINSTON NAPIER CONFERENCE



- **The Winston Napier Conference: Then and Now**, part of Clark University's African American Intellectual Series, took place virtually from October 23 – 25. Co-sponsored by the Higgins School of Humanities, the Office of the Provost, the Department of English, the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, and the Center for Gender, Race, and Area Studies and convened by **Professor Kourtney Senquiz**, the Winston Napier Conference celebrated the 20th anniversary of Professor Napier's foundational [*African American Literary Theory*](#). Former students, colleagues, friends, and family shared warm remembrances of Professor Napier. The conference featured a poetry performance by **Nicole M. Young**; a roundtable discussion led by **Dr. James Smethurst** and **Dr. Kristina Wilson**; a keynote by **Dr. Peniel Joseph**, followed by a conversation with **Dr. Ousmane Power-Greene**; and conversations about the Genius Children concert series by **Dr. Benjamin Korstvedt** along with closing remarks from **Dr. Esther Jones**, Dean of the Faculty and E. Franklin Frazier Chair.

A READING & CONVERSATION WITH HONORÉE FANONNE JEFFERS



- Sponsored by her Cotton Fund allotment, **Professor Meredith Neuman** invited award-winning poet [Honorée Fanonne Jeffers](#) for a reading and conversation with Prof. Neuman's ENG 225/325 American Print Culture class and the Clark community. Dr. Jeffers read from her recent book, [The Age of Phillis \(2020\)](#). Based on over a decade worth of research, *The Age of Phillis* fills in biographical gaps in what we know about the remarkable life of Phillis Wheatley Peters, often called the mother of African American literature.

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If you have any news to share with us, please write a couple of lines about it and send it to [Sophie Stern](#) or to Professor [Lisa Kasmer](#), Chair. Also please remember to send us photos along with the text/post. Now that we are on Facebook, we try to share photos with every post!