

The English Times: Fall 2021



The English Department remains committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our classrooms, and our DEI statement can now be found on our department website linked [here](#).

FACULTY NEWS



Congratulations to **Professor Meredith Neuman** on completing a successful first semester as Chair of the English Department!



Professor Justin Shaw spoke at a variety of conferences in the spring and summer pertaining to his research. They are detailed below:

An invited lecture on the influence of Isaac Newton's physics and racial science on John Dryden's play **All for Love, or the World Well Lost** for the Mahindra Humanities Center Shakespeare Seminar at Harvard University in January. This is based on a forthcoming publication. The title: **"Confused Aggregate": Disciplining Race and Science in Dryden's Shakespeare**

A talk on my research on the intersections of anti-blackness and disability in both Shakespeare and our modern world for the Folger Shakespeare Library/Folger Institute Seminar on Premodern Disability Studies and Activism at Emory University in early March. The title: **Speak of Me: Race, Disability, and the Limits of Care in Shakespeare**

A talk on a prominent panel for the 2021 Shakespeare Association of America Meeting last week on the limits of access and accessibility for Black and Brown people in both Shakespeare and in the academy. The title: **Who Can Know Shakespeare?: Toward a More Accessible Academy**

Additionally, Professor Shaw gave a Normand Berlin Memorial Lecture at UMass Amherst. Information about the event can be found [here](#).

Professor Shaw teaches an Advanced Shakespeare seminar in the fall that was a great

success this year. For one of the classes, Professor Shaw invited a guest speaker who also graduated from his undergraduate institution, Morehouse College. The writer of [Fat Ham](#), James Ijames, spoke to Professor Shaw's class via zoom about his play. The Public Theater describes the play as: "Critically-acclaimed playwright [James Ijames](#) reinvents Shakespeare's masterpiece with his new drama, **FAT HAM**. Juicy is a queer, Southern college kid, already grappling with some serious questions of identity, when the ghost of his father shows up in their backyard, demanding that Juicy avenge his murder. It feels like a familiar story to Juicy, well-versed in Hamlet's woes. What's different is Juicy himself, a sensitive and self-aware young Black man trying to break the cycles of trauma and violence in service of his own liberation. From an uproarious family barbecue emerges a compelling examination of love and loss, pain and joy."

...



Professor Jessica Bane Robert's recently published poem "To Eat This Paper" in *Epoch*:

To Eat this Paper

~After Thích Nhất Hạnh

I sat down to eat this paper
and with it, feel the rain and sun
travel down my throat.
I wanted to taste pulp and bark and
the space between pulp and bark
where the beetle and ants lived.
I ate the paper to revisit the logger's parents,
to see them at the breakfast table
over oats and wheat bread
talking of their son's bright future.
I swallowed to know the logger
more intimately, the sawdust
in his beard, the rough of his hands
the way he appreciates
each long body
before he lays his chain
at her base and says, Thank you.
Good-by.

I ingested to taste the freedom
and interconnectedness of ash, pine, and oak.
To know their strength, flexibility, rootedness.
I ate the paper to remember wind, clouds,
and the sting of the last snow
after my body had warmed in April.

I tasted dirt and each trace mineral—
nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium.
I swallowed the bones of cats and dogs—
ancestors buried in the hidden cemetery
of my woods. I chewed the paper
in small nibbles, wetting each piece
with my tongue so I could erase words
but know more intimately the fibers of creation.

I feasted on humus, decay,
and slowly began to remember
that I was alive and folded into all things.



Dean **Esther Jones**' March 23 interview on WURD Radio's "Reality Check" program about so-called COVID "vaccine hesitancy" among black Americans has been archived online. Access it [here](#).



Professor Mandy Gutmann-Gonzalez's work was featured in an [exhibit](#) at the Hesse Flatow Gallery in New York City from November 18th to December 18th. Their project in *Affective Histories: Salem Songs* uses 17th century court records of the Salem Witch Trials as a sounding board to uncover the power and violence residing within the language of the legal system.



Professor Regie Gibson is performing in a production of *The Christmas Revels* at Harvard University's Sanders Theatre! This is the 51st year of the revels, and it is

Professor Gibson's first time being part of it! He is not only appearing in the play as two characters, but he wrote for the play as well.

“*Christmas Revels* takes place in the present day at the George and Dragon, a 17th-century English pub famous for its annual Christmas carol party and saved from economic extinction by an American couple. Sadly for the carolers, last year’s celebration had to be canceled due to the pandemic. The regulars are looking forward to reestablishing the traditional sing-along but the hiccup in tradition has disturbed the space/time continuum and triggered an audit by a fussy Revels bureaucrat from the 17th century. Along with his Elizabethan entourage he will be making an official visit to the 21st century to put things back in order.

Will the current managers of the George and Dragon be able to regain their license for revelry? What will Elizabethans think of the modern song list? What happens when music and dance from the Renaissance collides with the horn section of a pub band and the street-wise locals from the 21st century? In our telling of the story, old and new ways meet, and the world gets a little bigger.”

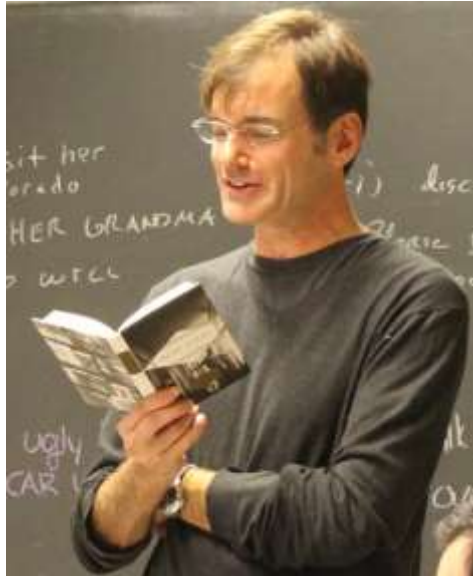
Professor Gibson plays two characters: Reginald the account and Room, the character who emcees a hip hop battle between St. George and The Dragon, which Professor Gibson wrote, in addition to a bulk of Room's lines. Professor Gibson was also a consultant on the music included during this hip hop smackdown, and he advised his fellow actors on how best to deliver the lines. He also wrote the rap battle that takes place between St. George and the Dragon and served as an editor on the entire script. This is the first time in half a century the Revels have done anything with hip-hop!

Tickets are now on sale for both in-person and online attendance. The performances are taking place in-person from December 17-29 and virtually from December 30-January 9.

Patrons who are attending the performance in-person must wear a mask during the performance and present proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test with a valid photo ID. This is a great way to celebrate the holiday season and support a member of the English Department!

[Here](#) is the link for more performance related information, including performance dates and COVID-19 protocols.

...



Professor of Practice Michael Carolan was mentioned by the Massachusetts Historical Society, established in 1791, in its June 2020 Annual Report as providing editorials authored by Clark University students on the COVID-19 pandemic. At the request of the Society for pandemic-related public writing, Michael sent essays from six Clark students in his Spring 2020 English course, “Imagining Place: Health, Science and Environmental Writing” that were published in the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* in May 2020. The students are: Marlee Faranetta, Cason Lee, Nathaniel Mattera, Nina Nguyen, Connor Rulnick and James Sadowsky.

Professor Carolan published an article in the Autumn issue of *Sea History: The Art, Literature, Adventure, Lore & Learning of the Sea*, the National Maritime Historical Society’s pre-eminent, four-color, quarterly journal of advocacy and education. It may be found at: https://issuu.com/seahistory/docs/sh_176_autumn-2021?fr=sYTc5MDMoNDk2MQ

...



Professor Elizabeth Blake was recently mentioned in Clark in the News for the article that she authored for *The Conversation* about Betty Crocker's 100th birthday. Please see below!

[Betty Crocker turns 100 – why generations of American women connected with a fictional character](#)

The Conversation 11/10/2021

Professor **Elizabeth Blake** authored this article for The Conversation. It states, “...women often wrote to Betty Crocker and saved the letters they received in return. Many of them debated whether or not she was, in fact, a real person. In my academic research on cookbooks, I focus primarily on the way cookbook authors, mostly women, have used the cookbook as a space to explore politics and aesthetics while fostering a sense of community among readers.” The article ran over the Associated Press and was republished by dozens of news outlets including **Yahoo news, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Smithsonian Magazine, the San Antonio Express-News, Haaretz.com, the Houston Chronicle, Greenwich Time**, and others.



On June 8, we said goodbye to **Professor Elliott** who worked in the English Department at Clark for over thirty years. Professor Elliott shared a close relationship with his students and his decision to donate his books from his office to the students at

Clark University was representative of this close relationship! The English Department was able to donate a large majority of his books to Clarkies with the surplus donated to the Worcester Public Library. Thank you, Professor Elliott for your years of research, teaching, and service to the University!

. . .

STUDENT AND ALUMNI NEWS

- **Kira Houston (year)**, a creative writing minor, published his short story "[The Face Painter](#)" in the Angel City Review, an online literary journal
- **Monica Sager's ('21)** [interview](#) with David Fithian:

- Multiple students were recognized at the NEMLA Undergraduate Forum from the English Department. Congratulations to:
 - Milena Germon who tied for 1st in the Membership Choice Award and won 1st Prize for Most Compelling Research in Women and Gender Studies (Awarded on Behalf of the Women's Caucus)
 - Alexandria Ross who received an Honorable Mention

- **Matthew Colpitts ('06)** was recently appointed the Founding Head of School and President of a startup school in the Seattle area. His linked bio for the position is [here](#).

- **Michelle Volberg ('08)** recently founded HelloOtter, a video conferencing platform.

From Volberg:

"HelloOtter is the first video conferencing platform with native filters ranging from a glowing tan and eye makeup to bunny ears & a school of fish around your head, hundreds of backgrounds to set the tone for your virtual space, improved security features, virtual gifts, and live otters (you read that right.) HelloOtter offers live connection to real otters

via otter-cams which benefit various nonprofits across the country, starting with the Georgia Aquarium.

I saw that common business-use video conference platforms offered no opportunity for real social engagement, with virtual playdates and happy hours often leading to empty screens and stagnant conversations. HelloOtter's on-screen manipulatives facilitate active participation and interaction.
You can check us out @ hellootter.com"

Additionally, "any current or alumni Clarkie that would like access for free, we would happily provide! Please ask anyone that wants a free subscription to email us at recruiting@hellootter.com and put "Clarkie" in the subject line."

- **Alexandria Ross ('21)** recently started an MFA program at Eastern Washington University in Spokane, WA. They are interning with the publishing company associated with the university, Willow Springs Books, and she is helping to launch a new poetry prize, the Emma Howell Rising Poet Prize! It is a first book contest for poets under 35. The link for more information is [here](#).
- **Davina Tomlin (BA'20, MA'21)** completed a one year internship with the Macmillan Publishers Audiobooks Department and has moved to a full-time position as Marketing and Publicity Assistant at the Macmillan podcast department's Quick and Dirty Tips Podcast Network.

THE NEXT CHAPTER BLOG POSTS

Check out the new English Department Blog [The Next Chapter](#)
The Next Chapter welcomes blog posts from alumni guest writers. Please contact GA_English@clarku.edu or Professor [Meredith Neuman](#), Chair to submit a post.

The English Department Annual Chowder Fest

In October, students and faculty gathered for a socially-distanced night of Chowder. Two English alum's joined from a zoom call, whereas two other speakers attended in-person. The event was a big success. To read more about the event, Monica Sager's article is linked [here](#).

Professor Tim Connolly DA Spokesman Retirement

Professor Tim Connolly recently retired from his job as a DA spokesman. To read more

about his career path as a journalist, DA spokesman, and teacher, Monica Sager's article is linked [here](#).

DEPARTMENT NEWS & EVENTS

Department DEI Statement

Words and stories have the power to shape what we know and what it is possible to imagine. This is a belief that informs the research and teaching of all of the faculty in the Clark Department of English. In naming and recognizing the power of literature, we acknowledge the ways the discipline of literary studies has been complicit in oppressive ideologies. We commit to using our own power as scholars and teachers to resist and dismantle systems of oppression. As a department, we affirm that Black Lives Matter. Asian Lives Matter. Indigenous Lives Matter. Latinx Lives Matter. Undocumented Lives Matter. Trans Lives Matter.

Our approach to literary study is shaped by commitments that include, but are not limited to, anti-racism, disability justice, feminist practice, anti-classism, and the affirmation of LGBTQ+ identity and experience. In ever-evolving ways, these commitments shape the Department's curriculum, as well as faculty syllabi, teaching methods, and approaches to individual texts.

Read the English Department's DEI Statement [here](#).

DEI Committee Student Representative Bios

DEI Committee and Student Rep. Bios:

The English Department is in the process of forming a new committee, broadly dedicated to ensuring that departmental practices and procedures are conducted with the same spirit of intersectional social justice that animates our intellectual endeavors, and to making the Department a welcoming and affirming environment for all students. Our approach is shaped by commitments that include, but are not limited to, anti-classism, anti-racism, disability justice, feminist practice, and the affirmation of LGBTQ+ identity and experience. To help this committee have the best interests for students, we have welcomed two new student representatives.



Student Rep.s: Matthew Thomas Young and Christina Rose Walcott née Guerrini

Matthew Thomas Young is a junior at Clark double majoring in English and Screen Studies. After college, he plans to participate in the MAT program and pursue education.

Christina Rose Walcott is a junior at Clark double majoring in English and History. After college, she hopes to pursue graduate school in history. On campus, she is involved in Clark Keys a cappella and Clark Musical Theatre.

New Inductees into Sigma Tau Delta

At our annual Spring Fling, we inducted new members into Sigma Tau Delta, our chapter of the International English Honors Society!

Hope Briden

Leah Brooks

Lauren Farrell

Kate Godfroy

Christina Rose Walcott née Guerrini

Ashley Hayes

Emma Marton

Willow McKeon

Thea Mouzakes

Veronica Rodgers
Tiffany Vo
Matthew Thomas Young
Audrey Salmons
Erica Pellegrino
Gaby DiPinto

Sophia Dahlin Poetry Reading and Workshop



As part of the Clark Poets and Writers Reading series, poet Sophia Dahlin gave a reading and led a workshop. Sophia Dahlin's work has appeared in many journals, and she lives in Oakland, California, where she teaches Poets in the Schools. [Here](#) is a blog post written by Kira Houston for the Next Chapter about the event.

Find Us Online:

Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [The Next Chapter](#).

If you have any news to share in the English Times, please write a couple of lines about it and send it to GA_English@clarku.edu or to Professor [Meredith Neuman](#), 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!
