



English Department News

No. 5, Fall 2020

Announcing the Dabney Adams Hart Endowment

The English Department is excited to announce that fundraising is under way through the College of Arts & Sciences Development and Special Events Office to establish the **Dabney Adams Hart Endowment**, started with seed funding by Hart’s family to honor the memory of the former GSU English professor. The hope is that the endowment will fund both the Dabney Adams Hart Legacy Scholarship and the Dabney Adams Hart Junior Faculty Research Fund. If you are interested in contributing to the **Dabney Adams Hart Endowment**, please contact Allison Bass, Associate Director of Development, at abass6@gsu.edu or fill out the [online donation form](#).

So far, the department has been able to use the initial funds to support Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Summer Research Grants (SOTL) in 2019 and 2020. These grants funded some exciting research that we would like to share to give you

an idea of the positive impact that donations to the Dabney Adams Hart Endowment would have on the department. Here are some highlights of the SOTL grants awarded thus far:

Principal Senior Lecturer Jody Brooks—Connecting GSU: Collaborative, Interactive Art. Together with the GSU Mind & Body Clinic Directors and the Spotlight Arts Director, Brooks worked with students on a series of cooperative, interactive pop-up art installations. The interactive exhibits included:

What Do You Value? From a group of 30 value cards, students (individuals, pairs, or groups) choose their Top 10 Core Values (the beliefs that drive their everyday behavior). Then, they divide their Top 10 into two piles—“What I Actually Value” and “What I Think

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I'm Supposed to Value." What's the difference? Why is there a gap between actual and alleged? What effect(s) does this have on our emotional and mental well-being?

How Are We Connected? A collaborative mural on which students represent themselves by coloring one quarter of a circle. The quarters are posted together to form circles in a larger quilt-like pattern.

What Do You Find Beautiful? Students write down (or draw a picture) of something they find beautiful that doesn't fit the current cultural definition of beauty. The images and words are used to create posters.

Lecturer Matthew Dischinger—Teaching Feeling: Affect in the Humanities Classroom. Dischinger's SoTL grant supported two projects: the development of an online, asynchronous version of ENGL 1102 (English Composition II) and his work as the editor of an essay cluster entitled "Teaching Feeling: Affect in the Humanities Classroom." Dischinger's primary goal this summer was to design a course that took advantage of the possibilities that digital learning provides while also helping students see how writing can respond to the difficult social and political conditions of 2020. The theme of the class he designed is "Democracy from Home." The readings and projects focused on what sorts of civic engagement can be carried out during an election season complicated by a pandemic. One project required students to write a letter to someone they know encouraging them to vote; Dischinger printed, addressed, and mailed the letters. In their reflections after the project, students mentioned the various responses they received from their letters. They were excited to see their writing go out into the world and help generate action.

Principal Senior Lecturer Laurah Norton—Writing the First Podcasting Textbook. Norton's SoTL grant allowed her to work on a proposal for a podcasting textbook tentatively titled "Podcasting: The Essential Guide to Crafting, Producing, and Marketing Narrative Audio." The planned text has four main sections: the introduction and landscape, which covers the

major genres, where the field is now, where it's going, and how podcasting has changed the shape of journalism, fiction, and even publishing; a section on craft, which discusses putting together both longform and short form podcasts, with an emphasis on creative non-fiction tenets—plot structure, character, point of view; a section on the crossover into journalism and its associated ethics, reporting, standards, and issues like fact checking and fair use; and a series of essays from experts in the field. The book will operate both as an academic text that will introduce novices to new ideas, real concerns, and even job opportunities they never knew existed and as a field guide for podcasters who want to learn how to craft quality stories that hold up, even as independent works, to the major players' productions.

Lecturer Stephanie Richardson—Social Justice and Activist Rhetorics. Richards's objectives for the SoTL grant were 1) To research opportunities for students to explore sites in close proximity to GSU for the purposes of engaging with original artifacts and experiences relevant to the intersections of rhetoric, civil rights, and social justice; 2) To partner with individuals and organizations associated with said sites to locate content reflective of activist rhetoric that can be contextualized for delivery in both live and online platforms; 3) To create a course and syllabus based on activist rhetoric developed as a result of the aforementioned research, designed to be delivered both live and online; 4) To contribute to current scholarship regarding civic engagement and activism as a pedagogical option for courses in Rhetoric & Composition and beyond; and 5) To contribute to scholarship regarding rhetorical activism in sonic and digital spaces.

COVID19 and the social unrest across the country in response to racial injustices ignited by the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020, added challenges to this project. In Atlanta, thousands of protestors took to the streets to exercise their right to peacefully assemble, though some protests escalated violently. Businesses closed,

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Teaching in 2020: Hybrid & Online Classes



Here's a glimpse of how two of the department's Regents' Professors, **John Burrison** (above) and **Randy Malamud** (below), are teaching this fall. Burrison has been teaching hybrid classes, which are mix of online sessions and socially distanced in-person meetings in the department's Troy Moore Library. He seeks to balance the two teaching modes to cover everything he would in a typical face-to-face semester and has been supplementing his lectures with "a lot of illustrative materials and a lot of links" to additional images and information connected to the lessons. He commented that teaching with restrictions during the pandemic has been a "difficult but worthwhile experience."

Malamud, who has a uniform of similar shirts for his video classes, said, "Teaching online is absolute-

ly not as bad as I was afraid it would be, and I am not as bad at it as I was sure I would be. I miss actual human beings, for sure, and human interaction. But under the circumstances, I think we've all done a pretty adequate job of doing what we're supposed to be doing. I know that this year has been hard, in so many ways, for lots of students. But I think that being able to sustain our reading/writing/thinking, relatively intact, helps them get through these times. I sure know that it helps me."

To wrap up the semester, some professors are sharing links to their final online classes so that students may present their work to a broader audience. For example, **Beth Gylys's** students are giving a poetry reading, and **Renée Schatteman's** are sharing their conference papers on African literature.



Congratulations to Humanities Research Fellows Audrey Goodman and Ashley Holmes

The department is celebrating two Humanities Research Fellows: Audrey Goodman (Spring 2020) and Ashley Holmes (Fall 2020). Humanities Research Fellowships are granted to professors who have also earned a semester's leave from teaching; the Humanities Research Center supports the fellows by providing a collegial atmosphere where they can focus on their work. Fellows typically lead a workshop where an interdisciplinary group of faculty and students pose questions and provide feedback on a work in progress; many of this year's workshops have been postponed.

Audrey Goodman is Professor of English and Associate Chair of our department. Her research explores how literary and visual forms express cultural identities, tell stories of displacement and belonging, disrupt colonial geographies, and articulate environmental knowledge in the US West. Goodman's new book, "A Planetary Lens: The Photo-

poetics of Western Women's Writing," which focuses on the interplay between text and image in works by Joan Myers, Meridel Rubenstein, Joan Didion, Sandra Cisneros, Leslie Marmon Silko, and Joy Harjo, is in production with University of Nebraska Press (to be released in fall 2021).

Ashley Holmes is Associate Professor of English and Director of GSU's Writing Across the Curriculum program. She studies how public pedagogy and community-based research encourage student writers to engage with local publics and civic issues. Her current project, "Communicating Across Difference," is a study of the possibilities for embodied rhetoric and experiential learning to enhance our abilities to communicate across our personal, political, and social differences. As an HRC Fellow, Holmes will be preparing applications for two external awards: the Mellon/ACLS Scholars & Society Fellowship and the NEH Public Scholars Grant.

Jami Johnson Wins First Place at GSURC 2020

Congratulations to English undergraduate Jami Johnson. Jami won first place for oral presentations in the fine arts and humanities at the fourteenth-annual Georgia State Undergraduate Research Conference (GSURC). This year's GSURC featured presentations by more than 180 GSU and Perimeter students who showcased their work through scientific posters, oral presentations, artistic and film displays, and musical performances. This year students recorded and uploaded their performances to a special website.

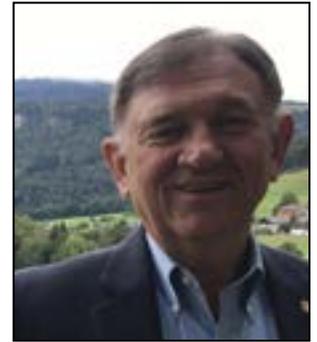
Jami presented "Impact Earth: The Tragedy of Earth in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*." Her faculty sponsor was **Stephen Dobranski**. Jami says, "Besides finishing my Honors Thesis, the next best highlight of the year was presenting my research at the GSURC in May. Although COVID-19 forced the conference to adapt to a virtual platform, I feel that it may have actually enhanced it! As a result of the asynchronous online format, I had the luxury of watching the presentations from all my fellow students. I was fascinated by the wide range of topics, themes, and work that went into constructing their research, findings, and arguments." Jami thanked her thesis advisor, Dr. Dobranski, who "was immensely helpful and encouraging during what was a rather unsettling and uncertain time."



Jami Johnson won first place in GSURC 2020's oral presentations.

Congratulations to all of our 2020 graduates!

The English Department wants to congratulate all of our 2020 graduates. The faculty and staff missed holding our regular ceremonies to recognize department grads and award winners and would like to take this opportunity to spotlight one 2020 graduate, **Tom Maples**. Tom writes, “I graduated GSU in 1976 with a business degree and went on to a long career with UPS. When I turned 62, I began the enrollment process at GSU for the second time with the thought of maybe a degree in English. My concentration is Creative Writing and my education has been a wonderful experience. My first degree enabled a business career and my second degree will enable another chapter during my retirement years. Good luck to my fellow graduates and always keep learning.”



Favorite class: English 4101: Study of a Single Author—William Faulkner. Dr. Pearl McHaney’s class was fun, interesting, and engaging.

Piece of writing you’re proud of? I wrote a short story about my grandfather based on some family story that I was never able to verify, so I fictionalized how I thought the event might have happened.

What have you been working on since finishing the degree? I took a history class this summer after graduation and will continue to take classes that interest me. I am researching and writing about the murder of my great aunt. The research reveals much about family dynamics and society in the South in the 1940s.

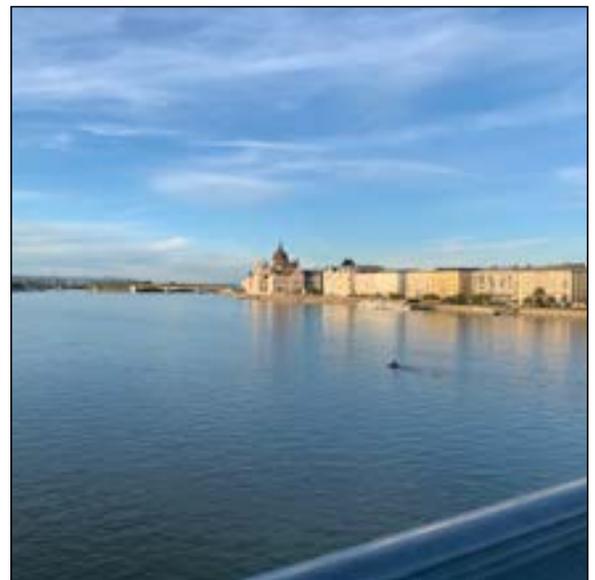
Any advice for alumni considering the GSU 62 program? DO IT!! My experience in the GSU 62 program was and is rewarding, educational, and enlightening. Keeping oneself engaged through learning and involved in student life at GSU allows you to stay relevant in our ever changing community. Education is still key to benefitting our society and understanding our fellow citizens. Again, my advice to my fellow alumni, do it, you will learn more this time than you did the first time!

Gina Caison’s Fellowship Year in Budapest

Associate Professor Gina Caison is spending this academic year in Budapest, Hungary, as a Junior Core Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study at Central European University. She plans to finish her second book, *Erosion: American Literature & the Anxiety of Disappearance*, for which she has also received a short-term fellowship from the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.



The Institute for Advanced Study allows scholars to spend focused time on their research, which is a tremendous gift. Caison says, “the pandemic has made this year a different kind of experience everywhere, but even the currently quiet streets of Budapest allow ample opportunity for solitary walks and contemplation of how the world responds to various crises.”

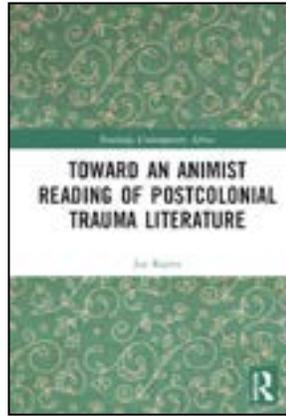


Above: Looking across the Danube River from the Széchenyi Chain Bridge to the Hungarian Parliament and Margaret Island.

Left: Caison on the rooftop terrace of Central European University’s Budapest campus.

English Faculty Publication Highlights

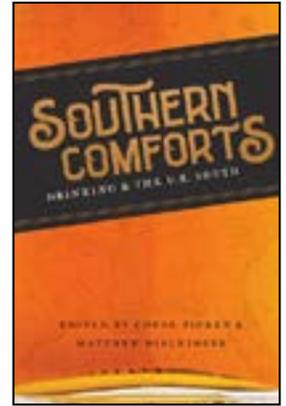
Jay Rajiva's new book, *Toward an Animist Reading of Postcolonial Trauma Literature* (Routledge Contemporary Africa Series 2021; released in July 2020), uses the conceptual framework of animism, the belief in the spiritual qualities of nonhuman matter, to analyze representations of trauma in postcolonial fiction from Nigeria and India. Examining novels by authors such as Chinua Achebe, Jhumpa Lahiri, Nnedi Okorafor, and Arundhati Roy, the book considers how animist beliefs shape the aesthetic representation of trauma in postcolonial literature, paying special attention to complex metaphor and narrative structure.



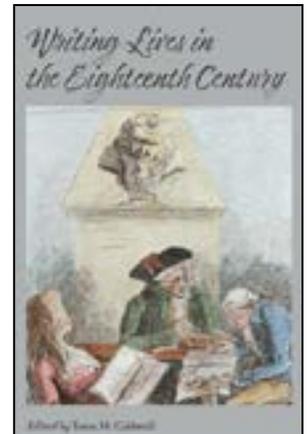
Beth Gylys's new poetry collection, *Body Braille* (Iris Press 2020), explores the failures and complications of existing in the world as a sentient being. Broken into five sections, four of the first five focus around a particular sense: touch, taste, vision/sight, and hearing. The book's final section—comprised of a crown of elegiac sonnets—follows a man after he loses his wife as he fights through the initial stages of grief. The collection is one undergirded by loss but also threaded through with a resilience that expresses itself as humor, as defiance, as longing, and as survival.



Matthew Dischinger co-edited *Southern Comforts: Drinking & the US South*, which explores how alcohol and drinking helped shape the literature and culture of the South. The collection proposes that discussions about drinking in southern culture often orbit around familiar figures and mythologies that obscure what alcohol consumption has meant over time. Complexities of race, class, and gender remain hidden amid familiar images, catchy slogans, and convenient stories. From Edgar Allan Poe to Richard Wright, Bessie Smith to Johnny Cash, Bourbon Street tourism to post-Katrina disaster capitalism, *Southern Comforts* uncovers the reciprocal relationship between mythologies of drinking and mythologies of region.



Tanya Caldwell edited and contributed to *Writing Lives in the Eighteenth Century* (Bucknell UP 2020). The collection of essays on memoir, biography, and autobiography during a formative period in the genre revolves around recognized male and female figures—returning to the Boswell and Burney circle—but presents arguments that dismantle traditional privileging of biographical modes. The contributors reconsider the processes of hero making in the beginning phases of a culture of celebrity.



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traffic in downtown Atlanta was compromised, and, in some cases, downtown was simply unsafe. Richardson commented, “as an African-American woman, the toll wasn’t simply one of mere inconvenience; on an emotional level, I grieved and lamented for my community, my loved ones, and especially my son. But I also felt that this moment highlighted how critical this project is, as many protestors seemed overcome with the need to do something, but were not clear as to what, or how, or

when. Now I am continuing to pursue this project with an even greater sense of purpose.”

If you would like more information about the **Dabney Adams Hart Endowment** or are interested in contributing, please email Allison Bass in Development at abass6@gsu.edu or fill out the [online donation form](#). You may also email English chair Lynée Gaillet at LGaillet@gsu.edu with questions about the endowment. Thank you for your support!

Contact us, follow us, support us!

The Department of English is located on floors 22, 23, and 24 of 25 Park Place (the former SunTrust Building).

Giving: Please visit english.gsu.edu/giving to learn about giving online or by mail to our foundation or about making a more specifically targeted gift. If you are interested in the **Dabney Adams Hart Endowment**, please contact department chair Lynée Gaillet at LGaillet@gsu.edu.

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Congratulations are in order!

Elizabeth West has been named the Interim Co-Director of Academics for the College of Arts & Sciences’s Center for Studies on Africa and Its Diaspora (CSAD). For information about the new center, please visit <https://csad.gsu.edu>. **LeeAnne Richardson** has stepped up to fill Dr. West’s former position of Executive Director of the South Atlantic Modern Language Association.



In Spring 2020, **Jay Rajiva** was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure.

Chris Kocela received the College of Arts & Sciences’s Outstanding Graduate Director Award.



Jay Rajiva, left; Elizabeth West, top right; Chris Kocela, bottom right.

