

ANNOTATIONS

FALL 2020



Q&A with Dept. Chair

**PROFESSOR
ANJA
WANNER**

HOW WAS THE FIRST YEAR AS CHAIR?

This was a year like no other. It started off with great energy. Six new faculty joined the department with expertise in areas like film studies, legal narratology, psycholinguistics, and literacy studies. We were allowed to hire and build a new cluster of excellence in the quickly developing field of Environmental Humanities, an area in which we were already strong but are now even better positioned to bring methods of humanistic inquiry to pressing societal problems. We also expanded our Writing Center staff, and with that the ability to reach students and faculty across campus as well as community members through our outreach programs. You can read about our fabulous new colleagues in this newsletter. Our faculty and staff won prestigious teaching and research awards, including the Chancellor's Inclusive

Excellence Award, and published books on topics ranging from paper-making in Renaissance England, Indian Theatre Theory, to a novel about a magic-practicing field hockey team.

However, the year also brought deeply felt losses. In the fall, Professor Teju Olaniyan, a most beloved colleague and mentor in the area of Black Global Literature, passed away at the age of 60. His capacious intellect and his moral authority are deeply missed, as is his deep baritone that could fill every room. Then came spring and with it the close-down not only of our lecture halls, but also of our offices, our meeting spaces, our libraries. Nobody could have been prepared for that. Nobody was prepared for travel bans and cancelled conferences and for working from home while taking care of children who could not go to school. And nobody could have been prepared for the passing of our new undergraduate advisor, Chris Logterman, this summer, just before her one-year anniversary in the department. What held us together was a strong commitment to serving our students and putting their needs first.

CONT.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO SWITCH TO ONLINE CLASSES SO SUDDENLY?

When our building closed down in March and we began to work remotely, we didn't know that we would not be back for a long time. Even under the best of circumstances, it is not easy to translate the level of rigor, engagement, and community that we expect in our classes into a different mode of instruction, and we had to do it in the midst of a fast-developing pandemic. We felt we were all in this together, but most of us had never taught a full course remotely. Faculty, staff, and graduate instructors worked together to create an online platform where instructors could ask questions and learn from each other. A special shoutout is due to our teaching assistants, who responded to both their professors' and their students' needs with empathy and flexibility, while also doing their own writing and course work. Five of them won campus-wide awards this year. We are so very lucky to have such committed instructors throughout the department.

We also had to take all our events and all of our advising and tutoring services online. More than 120 students graduated with an English Major in May and we celebrated them in an online ceremony, including a Zoom rendition of Varsity. Over the summer, many department members signed up for learning more about online pedagogy, and this fall, the vast majority of our classes are offered remotely, but this time they are designed as online classes

from the ground up. Our students have been incredibly patient and motivated – inviting us into their homes, carving out time for assignments, providing useful feedback. At the end of this semester, we will have taught over 10,000 students remotely in over 400 classes – no small accomplishment. Personally, I miss the energy that comes from being in the same room with students (and colleagues!) a lot, but I have also learned that taking some course components online can make a class more accessible.

WHAT OTHER INITIATIVES WILL THE DEPARTMENT ENGAGE IN THIS YEAR?

The pandemic has brought to the forefront the structural inequalities that people of color experience every day, including on our campus. The English Department is committing to taking concrete actions to work against racism and to interrogate our teaching and research practices. The pandemic has also made it harder for our graduates to find internships and jobs. This is where connecting with alumni can be truly helpful. This fall, we are hosting career events for both undergraduate and graduate students. We always look for alums who are willing to mentor a student. One doesn't have to be a senior executive to do that! Overall, we are learning how to do many things effectively online, but we can't wait to share our version of the Wisconsin Experience – empathy and humility, relentless curiosity, intellectual confidence, and purposeful action – with our students again without the use of a webcam.



IN MEMORIAM

This year we lost Chris Logterman, a long-time advisor at UW who recently joined our department in 2019.

Read the
College of
Letters &
Science obituary
[here](#)

REMEMBERING CHRIS LOGTERMAN

There are a lot of wonderful things to remember about our late undergraduate advisor Chris Logterman. Graduate students Keith Gabler and Katy Prottengeier remember talking to her about growing up on a dairy farm, where she told them that she fantasized about being Laura Ingalls Wilder to make her chores more enjoyable (you can view the clip on our FaceBook page). It's not surprising that these life experiences informed Chris's work with students in English and in the College of Letters & Science, where she was an advocate for first-generation students, as well as students from other under-represented communities.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN OUR UW-MADISON ENGLISH ALUMNI LINKEDIN GROUP!

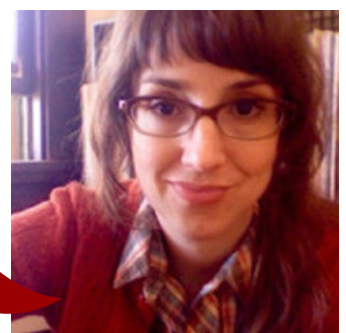
With so much uncertainty surrounding the economy, our undergrads need you more than ever. Your personal stories of professional attainment and insider industry knowledge are invaluable assets. We hope you will be willing share your experiences and connect with our English majors. The UW-Madison English Alumni LinkedIn group is an exciting new resource for current students and alumni to share information regarding career stories and information, and to provide a platform where graduates can readily network with each other.

- Julia Meuse, Career & Internship Coordinator



CALLING ALL ALUMNI

We hope you will take a few minutes to join by clicking [this link!](#)





FILL THE — HILL 2020

Save the date!
From now until
October 23rd
you can donate
to our
department
during the
online Fill the
Hill campaign!

WAYS TO SUPPORT ENGLISH

Gifts of any size make a difference for our faculty, staff and students – thank you for your support!

To make a donation to the Department of English, [click here](#). For more information, please contact Jill Way, Associate Director of Development, at (608) 284-0012 or Jill.Way@supportuw.org.

MAKING THE TRANSITION

HOW THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE OF ONLINE TEACHING

Fall semester at UW-Madison has already been quite a rollercoaster! However, our department laid the groundwork for successful online teaching back in March. We talked to Professor David Zimmerman, Associate Chair and Director of Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, about how professors and grad students came together to support English majors as the pandemic set in.

Keep reading to find out more!



WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THE DEPARTMENT FACED IN SUDDENLY SWITCHING TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION?

The department faced three closely related challenges. First, while English faculty, lecturers, and TA's routinely incorporate some online elements in their courses, only a handful of instructors had ever taught fully online courses. Second, we were given only a week to move every course online. And third, many classes, depending on their design or aims, had to undergo significant changes, changes that came with known costs – and unexpected benefits.

We responded to these challenges by quickly convening a team of faculty knowledgeable about the pedagogical or technical dimension of online instruction. The Online Pedagogy Working Group worked feverishly to build a website that provided guidance and resources. What made the website so effective was that everyone in the department was invited to contribute materials they thought would benefit others. These included sample online activities and assignments with which they'd had success, advice for recording lectures and creating podcasts, testimonials about new kinds of discussions and creative projects and exams afforded by the online format, and cautions about rookie mistakes.

The web site was a life saver for many instructors – not just for TAs new to teaching and senior faculty new to digital media but also everyone who initially felt at sea, unsure how to reshape classes that thrive on energetic discussions, charismatic lectures, face-to-face collaboration, and lively student presentations for the new online arena.

CONT.

From Heather Swan, Senior Lecturer:



This semester has been the most challenging semester I have ever had, as is true for most teachers, I imagine... My TA's have been so invaluable to me and to their students during this time. All of them have been incredibly flexible about moving the course online, responding to student needs with empathy and intelligence, and supporting me as the professor with feedback and a sense of solidarity. They have done all of this while also doing their own writing and coursework. I have so much admiration and gratitude for them. I wanted the department to know. We are very lucky to have them in our midst.

The exchange of teaching ideas among colleagues was not only of great practical help – it was also inspiring. It was inspiring to see the teaching creativity, experimental moxie, and pedagogical commitment of our instructors. It was also inspiring to be reminded how much our instructors care about students' welfare – not just inside the classroom but also, now more than ever, outside, as students are forced to adjust, suddenly, to new kinds of learning and new life stresses, constraints, and responsibilities.

For instructors and students, moving online was jarring. Instructors missed the joy and vibrancy of classroom interaction with excited students. Students missed seeing and listening to each other face to face. However, in most cases the initial anxiety, if not disappointment, dissipated, as instructors and students found fresh ways to engage the course material. Some students found asynchronous activities allowed them more time to reflect on a topic or question than a fast-paced classroom discussion allowed. Some found that online participation enabled them to hear (or read) and respond to even more classmates' voices than before. Some welcomed online projects that allowed them to try out digital tools they'd wanted to learn more about. Students in my upper-level class on Thomas Pynchon created innovative online exhibits (and corresponding curators' essays) for the culminating course assignment, a Pynchon Museum Project for which students created online art, music, graphic novels, photo essays, annotated fictional maps, and more.

From one of our wonderful Writing Center tutors:



Thanks to the Writing Center leadership team for putting together the online instruction plan and supporting all the tutors during this transition. I know it was a lot of work, and I think things are going pretty well - at least on my end as a tutor! Of all the ways life has changed for me, the Writing Center has provided the clearest communication and offered the most useful support.



Chancellor Blank reached out to tell us that Professor Mario Ortiz-Robles' online lectures are so well done that parents wrote her about him!

MEET THE WRITING CENTER'S NEW ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBERS

Even before the pandemic, the Writing Center has worked tirelessly to support UW students. This year, they have been able to hire five new full-time staff members! Now that the tutoring services they offer are all online, we wanted to find out what these new instructors were most excited about in their new positions. Their combined experience will be an asset to undergraduates, graduate students, and members of the Madison community!

In my new role at the Writing Center, I'm excited about all of the possibilities for connection that exist in our work with students and with professors, staff, and academic units across the university. The Writing Center can, I hope, serve as a place where writers can share their work and connect with each other and with Writing Center instructors and staff, and I hope to help facilitate these (currently virtual) spaces by making them accessible to students who may be struggling in various ways.

**JENNIFER
CONRAD**

PHD & MA IN
LITERARY STUDIES
UW-MADISON

MFA IN CREATIVE
WRITING/LITERATURE
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY



**LISA
MARVEL
JOHNSON**

PHD IN LITERARY
STUDIES
UW-MADISON

MA IN AFRO-
AMERICAN STUDIES
UW-MADISON

Because we're all-virtual this semester, so much of what we're doing is new and uncharted.

Although there are certainly drawbacks to having no in-person option for instruction, I've found that being forced to rethink our core practices has changed some of my perspectives about what good Writing Center teaching looks like. To me, It's energizing be trying out so many new things all at once.



I am most excited about working with graduate students to feel more self-efficacy with their writing and research and building graduate student community through this process. I'm also eager to work with instructors and faculty to better understand their roles as academic gatekeepers and how they can promote justice for students of all language backgrounds.

DOROTHY MAYNE

**PHD IN EDUCATION
POLICY, ORGANIZATION &
LEADERSHIP**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS,
URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

**MA IN CROSS-CULTURAL
& INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION**

BOWLING GREEN STATE
UNIVERSITY



For more than a decade, I have enjoyed teaching first-year writing and literature courses at institutions committed to serving marginalized and underrepresented students. In my spare time, I enjoy reading poetry and graphic novels and spending time with my daughter.

MARIA MUMMERT

**PHD IN COMPOSITION
& RHETORIC
UW-MADISON**

**MA IN AFRO-
AMERICAN STUDIES
UW-MADISON**



I'm most excited about the opportunity to continue as interim director of the Madison Writing Assistance program, which provides free one-to-one writing assistance for Madison-area residents (generously funded by the Evjue Foundation, the UW Anonymous Fund, and Altrusa International of Madison).

We successfully piloted fully remote services over the summer, and I'm eager to collaborate with Madison Public Library, Meadowood Neighborhood Center, Common Wealth Development, and other community organizations to connect writers with our services.

ANGELA ZITO

**PHD & MA IN
LITERARY STUDIES
UW-MADISON**



NEW FACULTY

We are extremely fortunate to have hired new faculty members at this chaotic time. Get to know them in the bios below!

Our department is continuing to make it clear that online education can be intellectually stimulating even without the in-person discussion we all love. Our new professors are using their specialties to teach exciting courses for our majors as well as students all across the university.



THERESA DELGADILLO

PROFESSOR

- Formerly at Ohio State
- Also holds appt. in [chican@/latin@ studies](#)

It's exciting to be joining such a talented and critically engaged faculty in the Department of English but particularly so when the moment calls us to bring into being a more diverse academy and I see my new colleagues embracing that call.



M. TY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

- PhD UC Berkeley, 2016
- Joins us from a postdoc fellowship at Clemson University and a fellowship at Berlin's Institute for Critical Inquiry

Combining insights from continental philosophy, natural history, modern literature, Ty offers sophisticated critique of racial blind spots in environmental thought.



INGRID DIRAN

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

- Formerly an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan

My research and teaching center on intersections among the environmental humanities, critical race studies, and critical theory (especially biopolitics and Marxism). This fall, I'll be teaching English/Environmental Studies 153: Literature and the Environment (Social Justice in the Anthropocene) and English 182: Intro to Literature for Honors (Doing Time: Race, Labor, and Incarceration in America).



SARAH ENSOR

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

- Sarah was also an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan!

I teach courses in the environmental humanities, queer theory, American literature, and various intersections thereof. This fall, I'll be teaching English/Environmental Studies 153: Literature and the Environment (Gender, Sexuality, and the Environment) and English 245: Seminar in the Major (Literary Architectures).



JESS WAGGONER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (GWS)

- We are fortunate to share Professor Waggoner with the Department of Gender and Women's Studies

I am thrilled to be working at a university with such a large disability studies presence and I'm excited to connect with colleagues and students in the department who are working in this scholarly area while also refining an ongoing, praxis-based commitment to accessibility.



NOREEN MCAULIFFE

LECTURER

- Formerly in our Literary Studies and Creative Writing programs from 2005-2010
- Recently taught writing courses at Rutgers University on storytelling for environmental scientists

I'm looking forward to returning to the department and teaching alongside colleagues who were important mentors for me in graduate school and throughout my early career.



AMANDA SHUBERT

LECTURER

- PhD in English from the University of Chicago, 2019
- Humanities postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Chicago, 2019-2020
- Joins us as a lecturer in both English and Communication Arts

I am most excited to work with students and develop new courses on 19th-century literature, film, and visual media

WORK-FROM-HOME TIPS

Suggestions from the English Department



Remote work has its challenges, for sure. I think it helps to approach these with generosity – with the idea that even though many things are new, we have what it takes to become fluent in the technologies that the moment requires and that others do as well. A large computer screen is helpful (why did I spend six months working on a tiny laptop?), as is having a reasonably comfortable chair. I recommend having a cat in one's environment but not allowing said cat to tip over a giant glass of water over onto one's desk during a virtual meeting.

JENNIFER CONRAD

ACADEMIC STAFF, WRITING CENTER

My lifeline for remote working is the Pomodoro Technique, or doing “virtual tomatoes” with colleagues via texting or video throughout the day. We set a 25-minute timer and stretch between pomodoros. I can’t emphasize stretching and resting between tasks enough!

JESS WAGGONER

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, GWS & ENGLISH

My remote research tip is to write every day, even if it just for 15 minutes.

AMANDA SHUBERT

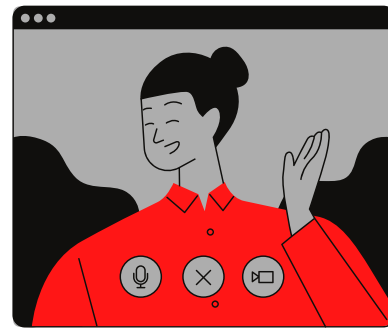
LECTURER, LITERARY STUDIES

Working from home, I needed to create some structure to my day that would help me maintain a semblance of difference between my workday and personal time. So, for the past few months, I've made a point of going for a walk around the neighborhood first thing in the morning and again when I've logged off for the day. Coming back through the door in the afternoon, it feels like I'm starting a different part of my day

ANGELA ZITO

ACADEMIC STAFF, WRITING CENTER

I'm not an expert in productivity, but I do have experience working from home as a freelance copy editor, so I guess one tip is to create a ritual for yourself to mark the transition from your home life to working life, such as putting coffee in a to-go cup or walking to your desk in the corner of the room. Some people say it's important to change from pajamas into work clothes, but I happen to think working in pajamas can be quite productive!



NOREEN MCAULIFFE
LECTURER, CREATIVE WRITING

Each morning, I make a to-do list and then I use a calendar to map out when I am going to accomplish each task from the list. By the end of each day, I (try!) to clear my inbox and complete every task (or reschedule tasks I didn't complete).

LISA MARVEL JOHNSON
ACADEMIC STAFF, WRITING CENTER

I've been using the Forest app regularly this semester when I work on my dissertation. I set it for 25-minute intervals, and the program blocks you from using other apps on your phone during that time. If you complete your timer, you grow a tree (or mushroom, or watermelon)! Using the app has given me a better sense of what I can write in a given amount of time. I've also learned that it's essential to break up longer writing periods (of 2-3 hours) into smaller, task-based intervals.

SARA GABLER THOMAS
GRADUATE STUDENT, LITERARY STUDIES

I've been working remotely for a couple of years pre-pandemic. I completed my last year of my PhD remotely, and what worked best for me was creating a routine and following it. This took some experimentation but what worked best for me was having my morning coffee, watching the news, and then a four-hour time block of working on my dissertation or manuscripts with all notifications off, four days a week. Then, I would do a non-screen activity (lunch, walk, workout, paint, etc.) before doing my assistantship work for the day. It took me a while to find a rhythm that worked for me, but that was a part of the process. Someone else's best-practices won't work for / aren't possible for everyone, but I think that the key for productive remote working is intentionally experimenting with different strategies, pursuing what works, and not judging yourself if something doesn't work for you. Also - scheduling days off!

DOROTHY MAYNE
ACADEMIC STAFF, WRITING CENTER