



# The Ductile Anchor

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF  
LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF  
TEXAS AT TYLER

FALL 2017

## English Major Skills for the Workforce

Michael Bryant

BA – 2006

Over the years I have managed band and orchestra shops, worked as a music educator, and restored musical instruments. I have been a digital marketer, a pay-per-click advertising manager, and now I am a small business owner. My business partner and I run Chow-Bryant, a Houston-based consulting agency for digital marketing and advertising.

You may be wondering how an English degree relates to digital marketing – probably more than you realize. I analyze dashboards, reports, and the information from my clients all day. I have to read between the lines and filter erroneous or errant data from useful information. It is my job to understand

and interpret a brand's entire narrative online, and then translate this into actionable information, campaigns, and ads. My English degree is paramount for these tasks. In fact, my business partner also has an English degree, as does our go-to website and app developer. A strong ability to research, analyze, and interpret goes a long way in digital marketing.

Here are the general attributes I feel make literature majors excellent candidates in "numbers" careers:

--Ability to translate complex ideas into simple concepts a non-expert can understand. Basically, you have experience examining an audience and tailoring a message to said audience. This means you can take yearly or quarterly reports and present them to a board or management team using language they're more likely to understand.

--Attention to detail, especially with written communications. Understanding the premise of an

exercise is tantamount to "getting it right" on a project. You know how to closely read a text and interpret its meaning. As a result, you are more likely to follow written instructions accurately and also contribute to high-level discussions via email.

--Strong communication skills. This skill goes beyond just translating complex ideas into readable reports. Your coursework also enhances your ability to communicate with co-workers. You have the ability to interpret a co-worker's words much like a text, and as a result are more likely to pick up nuances others might overlook. You're more likely to contribute towards solving interpersonal conflicts rather than causing them.

--Strong analytical skills. While a literature degree doesn't cover a lot of mathematical analysis, we still share many tools with the "maths" camp. We rely on formal logic and evidence to make our arguments. That same formal logic is the foundation of computer science and mathematics in general. As a bonus, due to your understanding of logical fallacies you're more likely to discover inefficiencies in a report or process. Catching these flaws (while still handling the basic analysis required by your job) can save an organization millions in lost opportunity-cost. Candidates with a background in STEM are more likely to follow an order of operations, which results in overlooking many of these flaws/fallacies.

--Project management background. We don't really use the term "project management" to describe our research projects, but that really should change. Taking on a research assignment, selecting your prompt, researching your sources, properly citing sources, etc.--this is project management. You know how to take on a large project, break it up into small pieces, and manage it from cradle-to-grave. You even have the ability to do this independently, without direct supervision or instruction. Organizations spend years training employees on project management.

Finally, to wrap this up, I think a background in literature is a strong asset for any human resources professional. One "Achilles heel" I see often in HR is an inability to understand people, what motivates

them, and how they are likely to interpret a written message. This flaw results in HR sending out poorly phrased memos that are often confusing and may even stir up conflict in the office that is predicated on a miscommunication. Such miscommunication often garners negative reactions and erodes trust between the staff and HR.

Be bold and creative with your job searches. I'm confident you'll get plenty of mileage out of your literature degree as long as you learn to articulate the skills you bring to a potential employer. We really need more people with your skill set in the business world!

## The Hard and Soft Skills of an English Major



Lori Cook

BA – 2014; MA – 2016

As a future graduate, you are probably not focused on the job market. However, English majors should grasp their unique professional advantages. Companies are looking for employees who have a healthy balance of hard and soft skills. Business owners benefit from an identical skill set. The hard and soft skills that English students gain during their education transfer to the real-world work place. I discovered this asset in my final semester as a graduate student at UT Tyler when I started my own business.

During that trying, yet thrilling, final semester of graduate school, I was busy completing my thesis and teaching two English classes. I was having a difficult time staying asleep at night due to my To-Do List wanting to chat at precisely 3:30 A.M. At this time, I was introduced to doTERRA Essential Oils by a friend who had joined the company as a Wellness Consultant. My friend sent me a sample of an essential oil to help me stay asleep, but being a responsible natural health advocate, I researched the product and company prior to use. It was here that my hard skills as an English major went to work for me. I thoroughly researched the company's history and product line, where the plants were grown, how the oils were produced, and their level of purity in

comparison to other competitive essential oils companies. I discovered several scientific peer-reviewed articles that had been recently published on the health effects of these oils. The research and critical skills I learned aided me in my decision to purchase and use the oils.

When I decided to build my own doTERRA business, the skills I developed went to work for me again. I began teaching wellness classes, writing class scripts, doing further research for clients and their needs, promoting my business through social media, as well as networking with others. As a leader of my own team, the soft skills I developed were crucial

when I mentored new members and trained them on how to run their own business. I can attribute my success in doTERRA to the critical thinking, writing, reading, researching, teaching, and speaking abilities gained during my time earning my BA and MA at The University of Texas at Tyler.

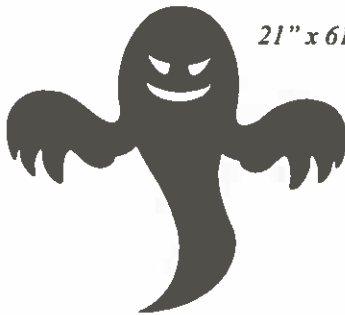
[BTW – If your To-Do list is waking you up at night, feel free to email me for a natural solution at [LoriCook@fusemail.com](mailto:LoriCook@fusemail.com).]



*Sadie's Postcard*

by David Frazier

21" x 61" Mixed media (canvas, burlap, rust smoke, coffee, charcoal, graphite, acrylic, toner)



Lit

Kate Keenan

MA – 2013

I spend an inordinate amount of time on Facebook, casually living up to the millennial stereotype. I find it not only entertaining, but also informative. Now, I also find it lucrative.

Many people scour the Internet seeking a job. I've used the regular sites: Monster, Craigslist, LinkedIn, and college job boards. There have been times I worked three contract jobs at once, all of which I found on job boards. Little did I know that a job could be something one could stumble upon, that serendipity was as effective as hours of research and prayer.



February 16 at 9:08pm

So I'm doing some research for a product naming project at work and I need the definitions of some terms I don't think I'm hip enough to understand ASAP. Specifically, what do "lit" and "turnt" mean?

Joshua David Keenan, Adam Heath and 17 others

18 Comments

A few months ago, I was working a half-time job as an educational diagnostician for a school district 45 minutes away from my home. My grandmother was living with us after a severe car accident. Although I was paid well enough at my part-

time job to supplement my husband's income, there was little in the way of spending money. One afternoon, after getting home, I scrolled through Facebook. A friend's post intrigued me. I could not resist the opportunity to shine



Do these terms have positive meanings besides partying hard?

Like · Reply · 3 · February 16 at 9:16pm



Lit can sometimes mean "woke." These terms are highly connotative because they are still liquid. Lit means buzzed (tipsy) sometimes. It can also mean "happening" or "got it going on." Turnt usually means drunk off your ass and making a fool of yourself, but can also mean acting wacky with friends. It also can refer to something slightly twisted, like a joke that ain't quite right.

Like · Reply · 3 · February 16 at 9:26pm · Edited



Kate Keenan Thank you for such a thorough answer.

Like · Reply · 2 · February 17 at 12:38am

a light on "lit" and its delicious connotation. Thus, I thoughtfully responded:

After responding, I forgot the exchange. Then, the next day, I received a surprising instant message from my friend.

I am a skeptic at heart, so my initial internal reaction was, "Yeah, right. Good try. When am I supposed to wire

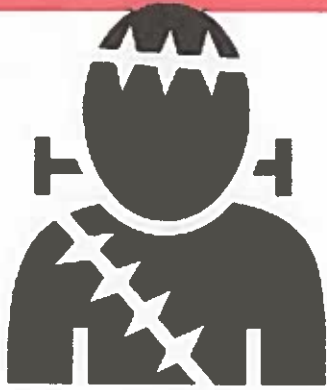
Hey, I do some part time work for a naming company called [redacted] who do a lot of high profile corporate naming projects. They employ a lot of people who they can consult for opinions and feedback. They were so impressed with your answer that they asked me to contact you and see if you had any interest in working for them. Usually they contact various people for specific projects based on their interests and expertise. I know you are probably very busy don't think they will ask more from you than you are willing to take on. It's a small company and the folks that run it are great people I have worked with for several years. Let me know if you're interested and I'll get more info.

you the \$500 for the start-up kit?" Instead, I gave him my email address and told him I was interested. A few hours later, I was signing a nondisclosure agreement and helping come up with a list of names for an extremely popular brand of chips. My grandmother was overjoyed to help me, as she was in fierce need of mental stimulation.

The next week, I received a \$400 check in the mail, which I deposited into my account without issue. I have since helped name and rename new and old products for household name brands on an average of twice per month. This side job has paid for the extra cost of my grandmother living here those few months, my kid's school clothes, a better summer vacation, extracurricular activities, and a family steak dinner once a month. We are not rich because of it, but life certainly is a little easier with that extra cushion. When in doubt about your choice of major, think back on this anecdote. This is not the only time my English major has benefited me. It benefits me every day in my profession, relationships, and personal understanding of the world. It should not have surprised me that again I reaped rewards from my field of study.

North American Altarpiece II by David Frazier Approx. 24"x24" Mixed media (coffee, graphite, ink, FHI, smoke, photo chemicals, gild sheets on paper)





## An Unexpected Course of Study

Francisco Ramirez

BA – 2017

With all the confidence in the world I can proclaim that when I was a senior in high school, I would never have believed that I would graduate from a university with a Major in Spanish and a Minor in English. The reason I am so positive is because the old me would have laughed and asked, “What are you going to do with that degree? How much money will you make?” I did not think that studying English would help me professionally. I now realize that I was wrong.

During my 4 years at UT Tyler, I used what I learned in my SPAN and ENGL classes to advance myself in the professional world. While a college student I worked as a store trainer, front end manager, and assistant manager at different businesses. I will

tell you in full confidence that the reason I got these jobs was my background in English.

When we study English, composition and literature, we are taught to organize our thoughts and ideas. We, as English majors and minors, tend to have an easier time explaining our ideas and goals. In all my interviews I had to write about myself and explain to my prospective employers why I wanted the job and why I was the best choice. I had to communicate my strengths and goals effectively on paper and in person. These communication skills have helped me get hired and promoted several times.

My English skills have been crucial to my success in the actual workplace. This part of my skill set I owe to Dr. Beebe and Dr. Odom. They taught me how to dissect and to understand what an author’s words. A big part of my duties has been to interview and hire people. When I read applications the skills that they taught me come in to play. I learn about people depending on how much effort they put into the written applications. I also have the skills to analyze what applicants downplay or ignore. I can interpret the significance of the topics applicants select or avoid as well as the actual words they use. Because I can analyze them, these written applications give me a sense of the applicant’s work ethic and abilities.

Now that I have graduated, I will be moving to the world of teaching. I have a job lined up as a Spanish and English teacher. My ENGL minor skills helped me succeed in the jobs that financed my college degree, and now I have the opportunity to pass along those skills to another generation. Enjoy your time as a student in the Department of Literature & Languages. The skills you are learning are invaluable in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce.

### *Unexpected Mutilation*

By David Frazier

32" x 40"

Mixed media (coffee, charcoal, graphite, smoke on paper)



## Corporate Success



Lena Lee  
BA – 2013

When I decided to major in English, I was constantly interrogated by friends and family. You all know the predictable question: “So . . . You’re going to teach, then?”

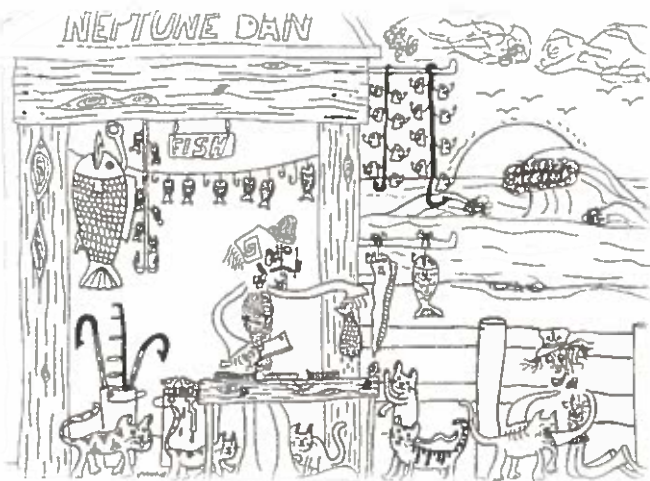
Why, no. No, I’m not.

I graduated in December of 2013 and landed a good job by the first week of January. My job was in a

corporate office, with excellent benefits, a solid starting salary, and a 401K match.

I don’t know many business majors who are snapped off the market as quickly as we English majors are. The longer I worked in corporate, the more the truth became clear to me. People no longer know how to write. They do not know how to think critically. They cannot communicate effectively. English majors can.

These are skills that cannot be taught in a work setting. English majors can succeed in any job because we know how to research, to read, and to think. When I started that job, I had no idea what I was doing. But I knew how to learn and that made all the difference.



*Neptune Dan's Precious Daughter Propilla* by Joshua Smith

One of my responsibilities at this job was to email back and forth with billion-dollar clients. I can’t tell you how many of my clients made overtures to me about openings in their companies. Many commented to my boss about how well I communicated and how efficient I was at taking care of any issue that arose.

My boss depended on me to proofread and edit any important communication he had to send. He promoted me to nurture relationships with the clients who required the most care and the most discerning touch.

Employers are getting wise to the deficiencies of education in this generation. They now know what attributes to look for in employees – critical thinking skills, writing skills, data analysis skills, and presentation skills. And English majors just happen to have those exact qualities. I am certain that any of my fellow English majors at UT Tyler could have been just as successful as I was at my job. Some more so.

So when your condescending cousin asks drily what you plan to do with your English major, please retort, “Whatever I want.”



## The Dash In Between

Nadia Hall

BA – 2007 [and M.Ed. in Educational Administration]

There is always a defining moment in life. An epiphany arrives, and you realize that you are exactly where you should be in a particular season in life despite what you had desired. After the epiphany, reflection follows and images of those that you

encountered along the beaten path who annotated various chapters in your personal novel to help you find deeper meaning appear. In my quest to leave an indelible mark on the lives of others as my predecessors left in mine, education became my platform.

English was my field of study because initially it was here that phenomenal women presented me with a key that unlocked the depths of my mind, ultimately giving me vision. It was here that I learned how to look beyond what I see to discover the truth of what the author of a text was attempting to convey. It was here that I also learned that every word that morphed into a sentence, every sentence that transformed into a paragraph, and every paragraph interwoven with punctuation had purpose. Here I discovered the importance of historical context and how it is used as a foundational component by the author and ultimately serves as a backdrop for textual themes.

I have utilized my position as teacher and now as a campus administrator to approach every child as I

## Side Effects of Majoring in English

Hannah Reimer

Current ENGL Student



I am a fickle person who overthinks everything. I've never been someone who inherently knows the precise reason they're put on earth. It has taken me five changes in major to get to where I am right now, at the start of my senior year. When I began my college career, I declared English as my major. Then I changed it to some kind of science in order to become a nurse anesthetist. Why? "Everyone knows" nurse anesthetists make money, and English majors become homeless alcoholics. From there I bounced

would a novel waiting to be read. Eagerly, I study the cover realizing that I am never to judge a book by one. It is with bated breath that I anticipate introducing myself to the pages within, not as a mere reader but as a Dash. Grammatically, a \dash\ is used to show a break in thought or the structure of a sentence. Webster also defines it as a "small amount of something added to something else." Its size is a staunch contradiction to its effect. A dash, when added correctly, will change a text's entire structure and meaning.

I now read to assist in the creation of bestsellers—students—by analyzing the text, revising, and then editing for the sole purpose of constructing a better ending. We are all stories waiting to be read and then told.

This column is dedicated to the amazing educators who have contributed to the pages of my novel. Although it is still being written, your contributions have had a profound influence.



*Prometheus* by Joshua Smith

between various options before relapsing and accepting my fate as an English major.

Nothing else fulfilled me. I was learning and doing what I was supposed to do, but I wasn't passionate about any of it. I wasn't growing. So, cardboard box or not, I've stuck with my decision this time.

English is special. It's not just reading and writing. It's not about memorizing the ideologies of Shakespeare and Palahniuk (God bless). No, English teaches you *how* to think. It forces you to make connections and begs the question why. You learn once you've got a really tight grasp on something, I mean you really know it inside and out... You're

completely wrong. Well, maybe not wrong, but definitely not right. There is an angle you've yet to examine things from, and everything is suddenly backwards again. The bad guy is the good guy, and the good guy is your mom. You learn that it's okay to be intimidated, to not have all the answers, because what is life without questions? Life *is* a question... Isn't it?

The study of English, literature and composition, invites you to perpetual growth, a limitless expansion of your own knowledge. English teaches you to think for yourself. You learn to look at your environment (setting), consider your peers and influences (characters and allusions), examine recurring problems you and the people you're

surrounded by have (theme), then ask yourself what it means.

By shedding light on everything – people, relationships, and situations – you illuminate yourself. You make more well-rounded decisions and notice things others don't because you approach every situation from the inside out. After all, can you truly know yourself without understanding how other people and situations have influenced you?

English is not just a major; it's a way of living. It's a way of thinking. It's how you approach everything in your life – Actively, thoughtfully, and from all angles.



## The Writer's Block

*The unofficial reading location guide with complimentary literature pairings.*

Hailey Siler

Current ENGL student

### - Tyler State Park -

Located north of Tyler, this reading location features a cool, spring-fed lake, thousands of trees, with historic structures scattered throughout. Over a dozen miles of trails provides solitude for the reader who needs a break.

Whitman | Emerson | Thoreau

### - Brady's Specialty Coffee -

The soothing sounds of German music from the 1800s will make you feel as if you've stepped right into a Canterbury Tale. Paired with gourmet coffee and the homey environment, Brady's is perfect for poetry or plays.

Chaucer | John Donne

### - Carnegie Public Library -

Located in the heart of downtown, Tyler's public library offers the perfect spot to catch up on your academic and recreational reading. The combination of books and children reading quietly makes a space a governess would love.

The Brontë Sisters | Henry James

### - Bergfeld Park Amphitheater -

There is no place better to read a play than Tyler's own Bergfeld Park. The renovated amphitheater is perfect for those who want to imagine a play being performed on the stage before them and those who prefer to act it out themselves.

Shakespeare | Henrik Ibsen



— Tyler Municipal Rose Garden —

The Rose Garden boasts over 35,000 rose bushes across 14 acres. The fields of flowers (also including camellias and day lilies) offer a perfect setting for those looking to enjoy nature while also reading about it.

Emily Dickinson | Wordsworth

PHOTO CREDIT: RAQUELLE LANGLINAIS



*Prospero summons Ariel* by Joshua Smith

English and the Recording Artist

Raquelle Langlinais  
Current ENGL student

What do you get when you combine 19 years of singing and performance, 5 years of consistent songwriting, 5 years of playing rhythm guitar, and gigs in different cities every weekend?... An exhausted 21-year-old musician with dwindling motivation. Needless to say, I started my sabbatical from music in August of 2015.

My sophomore year of college was my year of musical connection. I was given the opportunity to record with a local recording artist. Nineteen-year-old Raquelle loaded up her guitar and completed and unfinished lyrics and drove to a garage studio to work with this local musician. Boy, was I in for a life-altering experience. Demo recordings evolved into a completed 10-track record titled *Hold This* that made its way to iTunes, Spotify, and GooglePlay.

I made the decision to major in English rather than music after my sophomore year at TJC and this first recording experience. During my second semester at UT Tyler, I was taking two different American literature courses: American Renaissance literature with Dr. Beebe and American Twentieth-Century literature with Dr. Jessop. I found myself vulnerable to the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, and Walt Whitman. I opened myself to composing admiring sentiments in regards to the journeys of Jack Kerouac, Neal Cassady, and Allen Ginsberg in *On the Road*. Studying American writers during that semester was a much needed awakening for my songwriting.

Almost immediately after my creative reawakening, I was invited to start a new music project with a friend. This project involved writing lyrics and melodies for an Americana/Folk band. In just a few days in May of this year, we wrote and recorded demos for five new songs to take to Nashville. In August, we loaded up my little Honda with musical gear, sandwiches, and inspiring playlists and headed east. The entire trip was a whirlwind. Between recording with well-established musicians and engineers and music store shopping trips, my head was spinning. In a span of only 3 months, we had 5 new songs, a renewed attitude, and an inspiring band name: The Half-Guided Hearts.

At this point in time, we're working on booking time in different venues in the Dallas area to gain a greater fan base. Not only are we playing as many shows as we can get, we are constantly writing new songs, inspired on my part by my reading of the American literary tradition. With each new tune, we hope to strengthen our brand as songwriters. If circumstances permit, the world will hear The Half-Guided Hearts first album (title unknown) by the spring of 2018 with a possible preview single out before this year comes to an end. Look for it on iTunes, Spotify, and GooglePlay!

## Writing Mount Olympus: Advice to Young Scholars on Contacting Academics

Jason Walker

MA – 2016

They seem so daunting, don't they? The names and *vitae* of illustrious academics whose articles we read during classes and while conducting research—"Jane Smith is Professor Emeritus of 19<sup>th</sup>-Century French Literature and has published 32 books on the guillotine and rolling heads as symbols of the end to bourgeois cultural imperialism and the rise of pre-Marxist social strata in post-revolutionary poetry from the Burgundy Region"—not exactly fodder for Monday morning water cooler chatter. Naturally, the thought of reaching out to such an esteemed figure can be a little frightening; especially for young scholars who are still in the earliest stages of their studies. Overcoming that fear and sending the message often yields beneficial results, but there are a few important points to consider before clicking "Send."

Joshua "Jammer" Smith, a fellow alumnus of the UT Tyler Graduate English program, recalls his first experience writing an academic whose work he found particularly compelling: "I remember reading an article about "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" and just thinking that it was one of the most approachable academic works I'd read to date. . . I emailed [the author not expecting] feedback at all, professors are busy people, but just two weeks later I got a response thanking me for my kind words."

The most important thing to remember first is that these authors and academics whose work we read and admire are people, too. They are accustomed to feedback—yours will not be the first message they receive, and they will probably appreciate it. My first experience writing to such an individual was during graduate school. I contacted the author of an article and asked her to clarify a particular point. Not only did she answer—and quickly—but she was kind enough to

answer another question, as well. My understanding of the article was enhanced exponentially.

There are a few other key points to remember when writing professors or authors that will dramatically improve your chances of getting a helpful reply, or any reply at all:

1. Keep it short and simple. Brevity may be the “soul of wit,” but it is also the soul of not annoying busy people.
2. Be accurate. Remember, you are not only representing yourself, but you are representing your university, your professors, and your fellow students.
3. Be professional. The person to whom you are writing has earned your courtesy and respect—offer both freely.
4. Be responsive and grateful. When you receive a reply to your message, reply back promptly, thanking the sender for their time and consideration.

Last, but certainly not least, **BE BOLD!** One of the best lessons I learned in graduate school is that my thoughts, opinions, and questions are valuable and important. Yours are, too. Reach out without fear to people who have been down the road you’re on now and have navigated it successfully. I’m confident that, like me, and so many others before, you will find the experience rewarding.



## Donations

*Are you interested in making a donation to fund The Ductile Anchor? Would you like to donate to the Department of Literature and Languages or the College of Arts & Sciences? Contact the CAS Dean’s Office, Dean Martin Slann (903-566-7368), or the chair of the Department of Literature & Languages, Dr. Hui Wu (903-566-7289).*

## Untitled Art

By: Alia Papas





Untitled Art by Alia Pappas

## English Majors and Legal Careers

Arron Swink

BA – 2008

According to the English jurist Alfred Lord Denning's 1979 legal treatise, *The Discipline of Law*, "Words are the lawyer's tools of trade." Not only have I found this assertion to be true in the five-and-a-half-years I have worked as a general-practice attorney (and now as the Assistant County Attorney of Cherokee County, Texas), but I attribute my firm foundation in those tools to my study of literature and languages at The University of Texas at Tyler. I was privileged to attend UT Tyler from 2005 to 2008, receiving my Bachelor of Arts degree in that spring. After graduation, I enrolled at the Dedman School of Law at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, receiving my Juris Doctor degree in spring 2011 and sitting for and passing the Texas Bar Examination in July of the same year. From the LSAT to the Bar Exam, to my day-to-day practice, the impact of my UT

Tyler education has been evident and deeply appreciated.

Currently, my duties as Assistant County Attorney include representing the people of my home county in matters as varied as criminal misdemeanor prosecution, mental health law, family law (specifically involving protective orders and Child Protective Services) and general issues related to County governance. In each area of my practice I am faced with the requirements of analytical thinking, efficient and persuasive writing, and confident speaking – all skills sharpened at UT Tyler, whether in seminars, composition classes, or through oral presentation of academic papers.

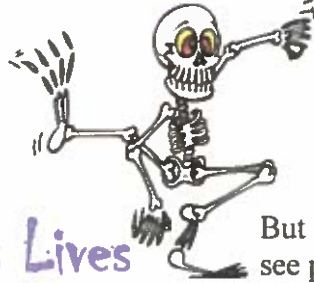
I can trace much of my introduction to, and enjoyment of, the "language of the law" itself to courses in classical literature and Latin. Now, when faced with legal or intellectual challenges in the office or the courtroom. I often find myself reflecting on a Latin maxim which first appeared in the annals of the common law of England to focus on my ultimate goal: *Fiat Justitia ruat caelum* ("Let justice be done, though the heavens fall.") It was my love of Latin, fostered at UT Tyler, which inspired me to have *Fiat Justitia* inscribed on the inside of my law school class ring as a reminder for the trying times.

Much of the work in my current position includes trying cases – especially misdemeanor criminal cases – in our County Court at Law. One of a trial lawyer's most effective tools is the development of a theme for his case; essentially, the best trial lawyers, and the ones I try to emulate, are great storytellers. When a judge or a jury becomes engrossed in the real-life stories of the cases before them, favorable verdicts tend to follow as a matter of logic. Spending three years of my academic career learning the world's great stories in the Literature and Languages Department at UT Tyler prepared me, and still motivates me, to make the stories of justice in which I play a role important and impactful for the people of Cherokee County, Texas. I am extremely proud to be a member of the UT Tyler Class of 2008 and to have studied in this Department. All of my experiences here have made a lasting positive impression on my own story.

## Call for Spring 2018 Columnists

What topics would you like to see covered in the next issue of *The Ductile Anchor*? We are looking for columnists for the SP18 issue. Alumni: what have been your experiences since graduating from UT Tyler? How have you been using

the skills from your major in English or Spanish in your careers? What surprising directions have you taken in your profession due to your Humanities-related skill set? Share your experiences and advice with our current students. If you would like to propose a column for the next issue of *The Ductile Anchor*, please contact the Faculty Editor (Dr. Ann Beebe, [abeebe@uttyler.edu](mailto:abeebe@uttyler.edu)).



## Storytelling Changes Lives

Megan Riaz

BA – 2009; MA – 2011

When I was in college, I pretty much accepted the fact that being an English major meant I wouldn't make a ton of money in life. My goal was to take as few science and math courses as possible, finish with decent grades, and move on to the next stage of my career. I had no idea my career path would eventually lead me to working at a nonprofit and helping the East Texas community, but here I am.

After spending seven years working at a corporate job, I accepted a job at a local nonprofit. It was a huge breath of fresh air to see a different perspective on the world; on helping others and making a difference. It has given me a new perspective on Tyler and our community.

But it's also hard. I have to ask for money. I have to see people who are hurting and need help. Thankfully, I get to help them, and I believe having a degree in English has given me the skills I need to leverage this position and help those in need.

I am able to share the stories from our clients with donors and the community. After all, who doesn't love a well-told story? I am able to connect with our clients when they are hurting because literature has expanded my knowledge of so many different situations, cultures, and circumstances in this world. I can help articulate what they are trying to explain to potential donors, when clients are held in check by emotions or a lack of verbal skills.

I love that I have a degree in English, and I love working for a non-profit.

Don't let your English degree pigeon-hole you into thinking that you won't make a difference, or your only job will be to teach. The world is rich with opportunities, and there are so many stories yet to tell.



## "A Noiseless Patient Spider"

By Walt Whitman

And you, O my Soul, where you stand,  
Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, – seeking the spheres, to connect them;  
Till the bridge you will need, be form'd – till the ductile anchor hold;  
Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, O my Soul. (Lines 6-10)

## Alumni Updates

The alumni updates appear in the fall issue.

The accomplishments / publications updates appear in the spring issue.

Alumni: please send me your career updates throughout the year.

We want to celebrate your accomplishments!

([abeebe@uttyler.edu](mailto:abeebe@uttyler.edu) or PM on Facebook)

### Tracey Dibbell Amaya

BA – 2006

Freshman Teacher, West Rusk High School

### Adina Barnett

BA – 2006

Director, Children of Prisoners, Prison Fellowship International, Cambodia

### Benjamin Barnett

MA – 2010

Ed.D. Candidate in Transformational Leadership, Concordia University

Principal, International High School, Cambodia



Untitled Art

By Alia Pappas

### Tina Bausinger

BA – 2011; MA – 2013

Ed.D. in Higher Education Leadership Candidate, Texas A&M-Commerce

ENGL 2 Pre-AP Teacher, Robert E. Lee HS

Founder, REL Backpack Program

Columnist, "Tina's Southern Table," *Van Banner*  
(<https://www.vanbanner.com/articles/columns>)

### Ben Beach

MA – 2015

English 2 & Pre-AP English 2 Instructor, Vista Ridge HS (Leander ISD)

Adjunct Instructor, Virginia College (Austin)

### Alex Brooks

BA – 2017

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Reading Teacher, Van Middle School

### Jessica Bryant

BA – 2011; MA – 2017

English II (Pre-AP and On-Level) Teacher, John Tyler High School

### Michael Bryant

BA – 2006

Co-Founder & Director of Search & Analytics, Chow-Bryant (Houston-based digital media & advertising agency)

### Chastadee Chain

BA—2011; MA – 2014

Principal Certification Candidate, Lamar University

Adjunct Instructor, English, Tyler Junior College

Dual-Credit Instructor, John Tyler HS

### Lori Cook

BA – 2014; MA – 2016

ENGL I & II Teacher, Cumberland Academy

Adjunct Instructor, UT Tyler, Department of Literature & Languages

Wellness Consultant, doTERRA Essential Oil

### Alice Grant Crocker

BA – 2007

M.Ed., Lamar University, 2010

Principal Prep Program, Lamar University, 2017

Senior English Teacher, Kilgore High School

### Carol DeGrasse

BA – 2015; MA – 2017

Ph.D. Candidate, English, Texas A&M – Commerce (starting SP18)

IELI Instructor, UT Tyler

Adjunct Instructor, UT Tyler, Department of Literature & Languages

### Sarah Draper

BA – 2016

CAS Academic Advisor, UT Tyler

### Michael Ryan Hale

BA – 2013; MA – 2015

Ph.D. Candidate, English, UT Arlington

General Editor, STET, UT Arlington Interdisciplinary Arts & Humanities Journal

### Mary Hoppe

BA – 2015

9<sup>th</sup> / 10<sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher, Chapel Hill High School

### Rebecca Johnston

MA – 2017

Adjunct Instructor, Saint Leo University & Santa Fe Community College

AP Literature Teacher, HSLDA Online Academy

### Kate Keenan

MA – 2013

Educational Diagnostician, Chapel Hill High School

### Stephanie Laszik

BA – 2013; MA – 2015

Full-time English instructor, Kilgore College

### Andrew Latham

MA – 2012

Instructor, English & Technical Writing, Midland College

### Emma Liles

BA – 2016

MA in Instruction & Curriculum, UT Tyler, 2017

9<sup>th</sup> Grade ENGL Teacher, Tatum ISD

### Katherine Means

BA – 2015

AP English Teacher, North Forney High School

### Kathy Milovich

MA – 2011

Adjunct Instructor, Department of Literature & Languages, UT Tyler

### Becky Proffer

BA – 2013

English I & Pre-AP Teacher, Bastrop High School

MA Candidate, Fine Arts in Creative Writing, Texas State University

### Marguerite Raymond

MA – 2017

Dual-Credit English Teacher, Bishop Lynch High School (Dallas)

### Megan Riaz

BA – 2009; MA – 2011

Development Director, East Texas Cornerstone Assistance Network

2017 Leadership Tyler Class

### James Chase Sanchez

BA – 2009; MA – 2011

Ph.D. in Rhet/Comp from TCU, 2017

Assistant Professor, Middlebury College (VT)

### Rachel Schulik

BA – 2017

6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies and 7<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA, UTT Innovation Academy

### Randi Shaw

MA – 2014

Sign Language Interpreter

ASL Teacher, Whitehouse High School

English Instructor, Tyler Junior College

MA Candidate in ASL, University of Northern Colorado

### Chelsea Smith

BA – 2012

US History Teacher, West Mesquite HS

### Jesse Stout

BA – 2015

MS Candidate, Human Resource Development

Payroll Assistant, Kilgore College

### Arron Swink

BA – 2008

J.D., Southern Methodist University, 2011

Assistant County Attorney, Cherokee County, TX

### Katrina Tie

BA – 2008

M.Ed., Stephen F. Austin, 2012

K-2 Counselor, IL Texas, Windmill Lakes Campus



## Jason Walker

MA – 2016

10<sup>th</sup> Grade ENGL / AP ENGL / Business ENGL,  
Edgewood HS

Staff Writer, *Houston Real Estate Producers*

English Content Creator, Lernsys

## Amanda Weaver

BA – 2012

J.D., Southern Methodist University, 2017

Law Clerk, Pennington Firm (Pending Bar Results)

## Steven Wolfe

MA – 2016

Adjunct Professor, Blue Ridge Community &  
Technical College (Martinsburg, WV)

## Introducing Dr. Tara Propper

Natalie Womble

Current ENGL major

One of our department's newest professors, Dr. Tara Propper, is a Long Island native adapting to the new environment of Tyler, Texas alongside her husband Dr. Matt Kelly. Dr. Propper and her husband had a few potential universities from which to choose, but they made it known that they came as a packaged deal. UT Tyler was their choice because they accommodated their demands and now they share an office. Dr. Propper loves the intimacy of UT Tyler and the ability to know her students as people and not another face in the crowd. She loves engaging with her students and having fun. Dr. Propper is teaching ENGL 1301 and a couple dual credit classes at the Innovation Academy this semester and ENGL 1301/1302 courses in spring 2018. She hopes to teach a professional editing course in the future. Dr. Propper is also an avid Cribbage player and is looking for new opponents. Dr. Propper received her BA in Political Science and her MFA in Poetry from Stony Brook University. She then obtained her Ph.D. in composition and rhetoric at the University of Pittsburg. She enjoys talking about not only creative writing but expository writing. After finishing her undergraduate degree, Dr. Propper had the opportunity to work in publishing at two photography magazines in New York for five years. She started as an editorial assistant and then moved up to the associate director role. Dr. Propper has bylined numerous publications while working in New York as well as published creatively. She is currently working on a future article about dialogue and a hopeful chapter for a future anthropology book. Dr. Propper is excited to be at UT Tyler and urges her students and future students to always remain intellectually curious.





He is bringing new and exciting topic ideas for classes, so make sure to keep him in mind when you sign up for next semester!

Outside of school, Dr. Kelly enjoys reading up on the current scientific fields, playing video games, and spending time outdoors with his wife. He notes that they are taking advantage of the scenic areas and enjoying the rural life that comes with living in Texas. For any who take the time to visit Dr. Kelly, it is clear that he cares a great deal about his students. He is happy to help any who come to him for questions, directions, or advice, and is working to be the best scholar and professor that he can be. His advice to students is to be flexible, recognize the importance of the community and resources found within our department, and push yourself to gain experience and help build your skillset. He already has great plans for the English department and looks forward to working with students and faculty to help develop and expand our growing department.

## Introducing Dr. Matt Kelly

Kaylee Willingham

Current ENGL major

The UT Tyler's Department of Literature & Languages is excited to welcome Dr. Matthew Kelly to our faculty lineup. Dr. Kelly was born and raised in San Francisco, California. During his senior year of high school he read Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, and soon realized that literature was more than just a hobby. He went on to complete his undergraduate studies in English and Rhetoric at the University of California at Berkeley as a first-generation college graduate. After working for two years at a non-profit organization, Dr. Kelly went on to earn his Masters in English at Penn State and his Ph.D. in English, with an emphasis in rhetoric, composition, and literary studies, at the University of Pittsburgh. Dr. Kelly is teaching several courses this semester, one of which is Content Design for New Media, that is exploring the development and impact of new media technologies.

## Credits for FALL 2017 Issue:

**Layout Editor:** Destiny Osteen

**Student Columnists:** Raquelle Langlinais, Hannah Reimer, Hailey Siler, Kaylee Willingham, Natalie Womble

**Alumni Columnists:** Michael Bryant, Luri Cook, Nadia Hall, Kate Keenan, Lena Lee, Francisco Ramirez, Megan Riaz, Arron Swink, Jason Walker

**Student / Alumni Artists:** Derek Frazier, Alia Pappas, Joshua Smith

**Faculty Editor:** Dr. Ann Beebe

