

# The Ductile Anchor

The Newsletter for the Department of Literature and Languages at the University of Texas at Tyler



## Using an English Degree in Neuropsychology By William Goette, 2014 BA in English and Psychology

In the interest of being honest, I did not know that I wanted to be an English major. Unlike others who may become English majors for grand and self-actualizing reasons, I stumbled into the field, choosing it as a minor before learning to appreciate the subject. As a double major in English and Psychology, I was accustomed to dancing around the question, “What are you going to do with that degree?” In actuality, I never considered my degree as the end goal of my undergraduate career; instead, I chose my degree because of the type of education that I wanted. Psychology classes gave me a foundation for my graduate studies, but my English degree gave me the skills that I needed to succeed in graduate school.

English proffers the chance to explore scholarship within the microcosm of a literary text and critical essay. Scientific publications differ from the essays for ENGL 1301, but the nature of both is still the same: make an observation, explain it, and demonstrate support for your explanation over others. Critical readings of texts presented an opportunity to explore that formula without the fetters of designing and completing an empirical study. In writing essays, I had to evaluate whether I had sufficiently demonstrated the support for my interpretation over those of others; in designing studies, I apply the same skills to ensure that the design will test my hypothesis while still accounting for competing ones. The critical reading skills that I learned as an English major help me develop research questions, and I notate scientific journals the same way I did the essays of Emerson. These are skills that my peers in the Psychology graduate program had to learn but were second nature to me.

While these benefits are largely intangible and of an intrinsic (and thus subjective) value, I can offer this final encouragement: being an English major got me my first publications. I was invited to make major revisions on a chapter and journal article because of my background in research and editing – the English major’s bread and butter. These invitations led to more involvement in other projects, important connections with researchers, and new research opportunities that were not previously available to me. Though it may make for a kitschy conclusion, despite now being a graduate student specializing in Neuropsychology, I find myself constantly falling back on the many lessons and skills that I learned as an English undergraduate.



### “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  
firmly – all the ductile anchor  
hold;

Till the gossamer thread you fling,  
catch somewhere, O my Soul.”  
(lines 6-10)

Above artwork by Haley  
Atchley

Credits: Layout Editor-Alia Pappas; Student Columnists-Alyssa Bledose, Katie Davidson, Bianca Gonzalez, Raven Johnston, Rebecca Johnston; Alumni Columnists-Laura Grace Dykes, Julia Endicott, William Goette, Stephanie Laszik, Kari McSweeney, Michelle Sullivan; Guest Columnist-Howard Patterson; Student Artists; Haley Atchley, Monica Hanes; Faculty Editor-Dr. Ann Beebe.

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presenter has not listened to themselves speak. One of the reasons I am such a supporter of degrees in the Humanities is their emphasis on written and verbal communication skills.

Professional athletes used to be among the worst at interviews. Many collegiate athletic programs work on interview skills with athletes because media interviews are part of a student-athlete’s responsibility, and the athletes represent that university’s brand every time they speak. Consider the average sound bite is less than 7.3 seconds. A twenty-one word sound bite in the national media is a prized commodity. Do not waste one second on “Uh, Okay.”

I attended a professional development seminar nearly 20 years ago; one of the sessions involved being videotaped while giving a short speech. When I saw myself, I was embarrassed and shocked. My hands were moving, and I was using filler words. From that moment on I vowed to become a better speaker through listening, and practice.

I have reviewed more than 1000 resumes during my career and hired well over one hundred people. The average amount of time I spend reviewing a resume is much less than you would expect. First, I gain an impression of their ability to catch my eye with their presentation. Second, I review their opening statements and then quickly look over education and experience. If I am interested, I read further. If not, pile B gets another candidate’s resume. When you are applying for a job, you have only seven to ten seconds to gain someone’s interest. Presentation and vocabulary are critical to getting your foot in the door.

Once you have landed an interview, you better be able to impress with verbal communication skills. Avoid sloppy vocabulary, slang expressions, run on sentences, or other forms of communication that cause the interviewer to cross you off the list mentally. You get one chance to make a first impression. Make the most of it. Eliminating the use of filler words will make you sound smarter, well prepared, knowledgeable and engaged with the audience. Video yourself answering potential interview questions whenever possible, learn from your mistakes, and practice. Polishing your communications skills will pay significant dividends down the line.

## Guest Column

### Communication Skills are Worth Cultivating

**Dr. Howard Patterson, UT Tyler Vice President for Student Affairs**

Whatever happened to people taking pride in their written and verbal communication skills? Often, when I listen to interviews of respected professionals, I am turned off by their use of filler words. There is nothing more off-putting than people who continually insert meaningless words or phrases such as um, uh, er, ah, like, okay, right, and you know? Filler words distract from the speaker’s message and tell me the



# Graduate Students and Professional Conferences

By Lori Cook, Carol DeGrasse, Rebecca Johnston, Ashlie Kontos, Melanie Whiting

A group of English graduate students attended the American Literature Association Symposium in San Antonio, Texas in February 2016. Upon their return, the students were asked their thoughts concerning the experience.

## Why should graduate students present work at conferences?

Graduate students should consider presenting papers at conferences for a variety of reasons. First, according to Lori Cook, students should present their work at a conference to participate in a dynamic conversation with other scholars in their field. We are working to build our credibility, so the exchange of ideas is vital. Second, Ashlie Kontos points out that graduate students need to build their curriculum vitae (CV) to obtain jobs. Finally, Melanie Whiting acknowledges the terrifying aspects of presenting a paper but also feels the experience is gratifying, too. Knowing that your work is accepted on a professional level is an incredible feeling.

## What is important about the application process?

The first steps in applying to present at a conference involve action. Choose to apply; we lose nothing by trying. Be sure to use terms that fit with the conference's theme or focus. Another suggestion is to keep your abstract concise and follow the application instructions exactly.

## What is important about acceptance?

Acceptance is confirmation that you are a scholar, and it means that the conference directors believe that your work has valuable insight that they would like you to share. As Carol DeGrasse notes, acceptance is a wonderful boost to your confidence as a student and a scholar.

## What is important about writing for public

## presentation?

When writing for public presentations, it is important to double and triple check for grammar mistakes and also to be prepared to give citations if the audience should ask for them. Recruit friends and family to be a practice audience for you, and time yourself to be sure you will fit into the allotted time slot.

## What is important about listening to other presentations?

According to Rebecca Johnston, by listening to other presentations you have the opportunity to learn about new areas of scholarship, and you might find other scholars whose research is connected to your own interests. This is a good way to network and grow as a scholar. Also, this is an opportunity to gain a challenging reading list of texts and new critical sources that pertain to your area of research. You can also learn from the various speakers about varying styles of writing and presentation.

## What is important about the contacts you can make?

Conferences are great networking resources. You could meet the chair of an English department who is looking for someone with your skill set and have the opportunity to make a great first impression. You may get to meet someone who is familiar with your area of research who is willing to share information with you. Lori Cook came away from this conference with five different professors to contact about her area of research!

# Conquering the World with an English Degree

Kari Cheatham McSweeney, 2011 BA in English & 2013 MA in English

After earning my BA and MA in English at UT Tyler, my goal was to find a job in the field of writing, editing, publishing, marketing, or possibly teaching. I was quite surprised when I was offered an accounting position at a property management firm. And you know what? I love my job. I have always been a bit peculiar in that I simultaneously love literature and mathematics, but English is unquestionably my chief love. In this job I get to use my accounting skills and my English major skills.

Three years later, I can truly see the importance of my English major skills. It happened over time, of course: someone needed a letter proofread, someone else wanted a fresh quip for a marketing campaign, the team needed to respond to a complaint eloquently and effectively, maintenance needed help properly wording invoices, and the list goes on!

I started at as a simple bookkeeper learning the ways of reporting, bookkeeping, balancing, etc., and today I am a Property Accountant, who (besides my normal tasks) handles HR, maintenance invoicing, proofreading and editing ads, correspondence, legal agreements between clients, management agreements for clarification, and again, the list goes on!

The worst thing imaginable when deciding who you want to be after completing your college degree is limiting yourself to a prescribed list of careers based on “in-the-box” thinking. I found a place that allows me to utilize each and every skill I possess. And, in fact, my English major skills are the ones that secured my promotion to Property Accountant.

I am currently considering what else the future may hold for me. Next year, I am moving my family to Oregon, and we are starting over. I am no longer worried about finding a new job because I have learned that a diverse set of skills (a.k.a. what an English degree will give you) happens to be what every employer desires! Studying English – rhetoric, composition, AND literature – can give you astounding insight into the real world. We learn how to read and analyze

texts, we learn how to debate ideas and make presentations, and we learn how to organize our ideas into polished emails, letters, and proposals. There are no limits to what we can accomplish as English majors, unless we personally set our own limits. Think outside the box; your future is counting on it!

## ‘Fake it ‘til You Make it’ and Other Bad Advice

Michelle Sullivan, 2010 BA in English & 2012 MA in English

UT Tyler’s MA degree program in English was absolutely the right one for me. After receiving my BA in English from the same institution, I realized that I needed a university with the kind of educators UT Tyler provides - highly intelligent and passionate professors who are not so distant as to be unable to call a student (me) out on his or her (my) crap. The stellar education I received went far beyond teaching literature, rhetoric, research methods, and analytical skills, though I am awesome at those now. I was taught to be a lifelong learner and a lover of learning - a characteristic that would allow me to transition from student to educator myself.

I was fortunate to get a job as an educator upon graduation. My prestigious University of Texas at Tyler degree (and winning personality) got me through the door, but it was the life-skills learned through my relationships with professors that helped me to survive. Do you ever see the memes online that portray teachers at the edge of death or on the verge of a psychotic break? These are non-fictional accounts. Many factors contribute to the insanity that is the first-year teaching experience, and most have nothing to do with the subject material itself. So though officially now a ‘master’ of my subject, I’ve come to realize that the learning experience does not end there.

From furious caffeine-fueled writing binges, I learned perseverance. I learned that the body’s functionality has limits and that there is a time to say, “Enough. I’ll try again after 2.5 minutes of sleep.” From professors’ patience and understanding with me as I attempted to juggle coursework, jobs, and family, I learned to be considerate of others in turn. Most



## 'Fake it 'til You Make it' and Other Bad Advice, Continued

importantly, I learned that there is no 'faking it to making it.' Truly making it requires asking for help from those with more wisdom and experience. Stepping hesitantly into my principal's office is reminiscent of the past need to step into the professor's office. The reception is about the same as well; the professor / principal / employer is usually glad to take questions and to have the opportunity to give feedback that will make the learner more effective at the job at hand. I hope never to stop learning, and I am thankful for the relationships at UT Tyler that sparked this passion.

## Fellowships and Grants

**Raven Johnston, 2013 BA in English & MA in English expected Fall 2016**

Fellowships and grants are worth pursuing as a college student. They're more or less free money to fund your research. English and Spanish majors and graduate students at UT Tyler can benefit from a range of fellowship and grant opportunities.

The Pivot Grant Search is a powerful search engine that helps to locate funding opportunities. Once you create an account, you can tailor your search in myriad ways — by the field of study, by the amount of the grant, by the type of funding, etc. It also allows you to track the deadlines for applying to those funding opportunities, and it can send updates when new grants are posted within your search parameters.

Library travel grants are another great source of funding. They allow you to travel to a library (usually one that's over a specific distance away) to conduct research. These grants usually relate to the special collections held in the library — for example, Southern Methodist University has the Clements Center-DeGolyer Library Research Travel Grant for funding research for someone interested in their

Southwestern literature, history and culture holdings, while the University of Chicago offers a travel grant for the use of their East Asian collection. Often the library will expect you to present your findings or write a short report at the end of the research period. Go to the library's website to search for grant opportunities.

Grants and fellowships are offered at most major conferences, many of which are aimed specifically at graduate students. Additionally, most of them offer travel grants for presenters who don't have other funding. Some conferences are very welcoming to younger scholars. For example, the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association (PCA/ACA) and its regional conferences have an abundance of fellowships and awards open to graduate students, in everything from pop culture pedagogy to creative writing.

There are also some funding opportunities available from within UT Tyler itself. In addition to things like the New Graduate Fellowship available for the first year of graduate studies, there are some travel grants available to graduate students from UT Tyler presenting at conferences. These are available whether or not a student is traveling with faculty, and include boarding expenses and fees associated with the conference registration. Contact the Graduate Director and the department chair for more information on opportunities for university funding for graduate student research.

Don't assume you are ineligible for research funds as a graduate student. Create an account on Pivot Grant Search, apply for library and conference grants, and check with your graduate program for funding possibilities.

## Achievements of Current and Former Department of Literature and Languages Students

### Publications:

#### **Tina Bausinger (BA & MA in English)**

"My Words," "A Concerned Friend," "On Settling," "The Border," and "Brewing Tea." *Five Poetry Magazine* 3.3 (2016).

#### **Terry Britt (BA in English)**

"Back and forth in time: Online news archives and presence as transportation." #ISOJ, Volume 5, Issue 1, Spring 2015.

#### **Laura Grace Dykes (BA in English)**

*Confessions of a Chronic Depressive: A Record of Struggle and Perseverance* (Amazon and paperback)

#### **William Goette (BA in English and Psychology)**

Schmitt, A., Livingston, R., Goette, W., Galusha-Glasscock, J. (In press). Relationship between the Mini-Mental State Examination and the Repeatable Battery for the Assessment of Neuropsychological Status in Patients Referred for a Dementia Evaluation. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*.

Goette, W., Byrne, J., and Lorenzetti, F. (2015). Learning and Memory. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Publishing (in press).

Goette, W., and Gallien, J. (2015). Social and Cultural Theories of Emotion. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Publishing (in press).

Goette, W., Gallien, J., and Murray, C. (2015). Death and Dying in Children, Adolescents, and Adults. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Publishing (in press).

Schmitt, A., Gallien, J., and Goette, W. (2015). Neuropsychological Disorders. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Publishing (in press).

Standridge, E., and Goette, W. (2015). Developing and Analyzing Arguments. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale Publishing (in press).

Standridge, E., and Goette, W. (2015). Writing in APA. In *College Researcher, Psychology Series*. Farmington Hills, MI, USA: Gale

#### **Rebecca Johnston (MA in English, expected Spring 2017)**

"The Death of Nick Adams" *E-rea* (Web Journal of Aix-Marseille University, Spring 2017)

"Rebecca Johnston of the University of Texas at Tyler on the Value of a Lewis-Smith-Reynolds Founders' Fellowship." *The Hemingway Newsletter* 68 (2016): 13. [Rebecca received a \$1,000 Research Grant from the Hemingway Society.]

#### **Kate Keenan (MA in English)**

"On E," *Noise City Zine* (July 2016)

"M69." *Noise City Zine* (June 2016)

#### **Stephanie Laszik (BA & MA in English)**

"Bowleg Bill." *American Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales: An Encyclopedia of American Folklore* (2016)

#### **James Chase Sanchez (BA & MA in English)**

Sanchez, James Chase and Tyler Branson. "The Role of Composition Programs in De-Normalizing Whiteness in the University: Programmatic Approaches to Racial Pedagogies." *Writing Program Administration* 39.2 (2016): 7-52.

Sanchez, James Chase. Rev. of *This Bright Light of Ours* by Maria Gitin. *Studies in American Culture* 38.1 (2015): 119-20.

#### **Joshua Smith (BA & MA in English)**

"Prometheus Bound." *Microfiction Monday Magazine* 42 (2016): n. pag.

#### **Jason Walker (MA in English, expected Fall 2016)**

"It's Not OK Any More." *The Dallas Voice* 17 June 2016.

"Now More Than Ever, How to Be Proud in East Texas." *Parachute by MapQuest* 17 June 2016.

"The Salt Palace in Grand Saline, TX." *Parachute by MapQuest* 5 May 2016.

"The Top 5 Best Burgers in East Texas." *Parachute by MapQuest* 1 August 2016.

"The Top 5 East Texas Slang Words that All City Fold Need to Know." *Parachute by MapQuest*

## Achievements, Continued

26 May 2016.

"The Top 5 Movies with East Texas Roots."

*Parachute by MapQuest* 17 June 2016.

"Three Top Tips for Surviving Family Road Trips."

*Parachute by MapQuest* 23 June 2016.

"What to Do for Memorial Day 2016 in Greater East Texas." *Parachute by MapQuest* 16 May 2016.

**Seth Wilson (MA in English, expected Fall 2016)**

Founder of *ArtsBlend.com*: an online arts and culture magazine devoted to finding love, joy, and fulfillment through the creative arts. It features news, reviews, and insights into popular culture past and present, as well as original poetry, art, and positive inspiring work of any kind. [Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com/ArtsBlend)

### Presentations:

**Terry Britt (BA in English)**

"Home computing's halcyon days: Discourse frames in computer magazines in the mid-1980s."

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference, Minneapolis (August 2016)

**Carol DeGrasse (BA in English, MA in English, expected Spring 2017)**



Artwork by Monica Hanes

"Revolution in Rhyme and Rap: A Comparative Analysis of Romantic Poetry and Urban Street

Lyrics"  
Northeast  
Modern  
Language  
Association  
Conference  
(NEMLA),  
Baltimore, MD  
(March 2017)

"Dysfunctional Utopia: Emily Dickinson & the 'Good Death.'" South Atlantic Modern Language Association

Conference (SAMPLA), Jacksonville, FL (November 2016)

"Emily Dickinson and the Death of the Corporeal: A Historical Analysis" Texas A&M Conference (2016)

**Brianna Doucet (MA in English, expected Spring 2017)**

"Abjection in the Home: The Redefined Locus of Power in *Beloved* and *Mama Day*." Queens College Graduate Conference, New York City (2016) and SCMLA (2016)

**William Goette (BA in English and Psychology)**

"Miscommunications and Misunderstandings: Psycho-jargon and Stigma." In-service presentation to therapy and administrative staff at NeuroRestorative. Tyler, TX, January 2016.

"Thinking about how I'm Thinking: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy." Invited guest lecture to

National Alliance on Mental Illness local support group meeting. Tyler, TX, March 2016.

"Redefining Race: Improving the Representation of Cultural and Linguistic Minorities in Neuropsychological Assessment." Paper presented at the 9th Annual East Texas Psi Chi Student Research Conference. Longview, TX, April 2016.

"Neurobiology of Schizophrenia and its Pharmacological Treatment." In-service presentation to

the therapy and administrative staff at NeuroRestorative in completion of state and CARF education requirements. Tyler, TX, May 2016.

"Schizophrenia, Psychosis, and Brain Injury." In-service presentation to nursing and support staff at NeuroRestorative in completion of state and CARF education requirements. Tyler, TX, May 2016.

**Raven Johnston (BA in English, MA in English, expected in Fall 2016)**

"The Post-Disaster Lure of the City in Yumeno Kyusaku's *Songs of Curiosity Hunting*." Paper South Central Modern Language Association conference, Dallas, TX (November 2016).

"The Gothic 'Apprehension' of Akinari Ueda's *Tales of Moonlight and Rain*." South Central Society for Eighteenth Century Studies conference,



## Alumni Updates

Our department graduates are listed by their first degree at the University of Texas at Tyler.

2004

**Jessica Otte** (BA in English): Ten years as English Teacher at Chapel Hill High School; Now Journalism Teacher (yearbook, newsletter, photography) in Chapel Hill High School's CTE Program

2006

**Tracey Dibbell Amaya** (BA in English): Founded new business, Sugar-Glazed Printing (opened 2016); American Literature Teacher at Kilgore High School

**Christy Rowley Kessler** (BA in English): Writing in Yokohama, Japan (2016-7)

**Kristi Taylor** (BA in English): MLS degree (University of North Texas, 2009); MA in Teaching (Texas Woman's University, 2012); School Librarian Certificate (Texas Woman's University, 2016); Library Media Specialist, Flower Mound Middle School (Texas)

2008

**Jamie Bitzenhofer** (BA in English): Professor of Government at TJC (starting 2016)

**Michael Cerliano** (BA in English; MA in English, 2016): English Instructor at Texas Woman's University (starting 2016)

2009

**Judy Carpenter** (BA in English): Ph. D. Candidate in the Supervision of Curriculum & Instruction Program, Texas A&M University – Commerce

**Angel Gamwell Chapman** (BA in English): Clinical Pharmacist at Baylor Scott & White and PGY1 Pharmacy Resident at Baylor Scott & White All Saints (Fort Worth)

**Samuel Jackson** (BA in English): Candidate in the Divinity Program at University of North Texas (starting 2016)

**Amanda Klinger** (BA in English): Associate Director of First Year Composition, Oklahoma University English Department

**Samantha Moore** (BA in English; MA in English, 2011): Awarded Doctoral Teaching Fellowship at



Artwork by Monica Hanes

## Achievements, Continued

Oklahoma City, OK (February 2016).  
 “The Ludicrous Lairs of Edogawa Ranpo.”  
 American Comparative Literature  
 Association conference, Seattle, WA (March  
 2015).

**Rebecca Johnston** (MA in English, expected  
 Spring 2017)

“Only the Names Remain.” Faulkner-Hemingway  
 Conference, Southeast Missouri State  
 (October 2016)

**Amanda Klinger** (BA in English)

“Agitation and Redemption: Urban Sensibility in  
 William Blake’s *Jerusalem*.” North American  
 Society for the Study of Romanticism  
 (NASSR), UC Berkeley (August 2016)



## Alumni Updates, Continued

TCU for 2016-7

2010

**Jack L. Adams** (BA in English; MA in English, 2015): Instructor of English Composition at SIAS International University in Henan Province, China (starting 2016)

**Jenny Brunson Gibbs** (BA in English): Candidate in Library Science Graduate program, Texas Woman's University (starting 2016)

**James Price** (BA in English; MA in English, 2016): Head of Literary Services, Mesa County Public Library District (Colorado)

**Michelle Sullivan** (BA in English; MA in English, 2012): Instructor of English and Developmental English (Kilgore College, starting 2016)

2011

**Tina Bausinger** (BA in English; MA in English, 2013): 10<sup>th</sup>-Grade English Teacher, Robert E. Lee High School (Tyler ISD, starting 2016)

**Derek Frazier** (MA in English): OSHA certified on forklift (Reminder: Derek is a curator at the Tyler Museum of Art)

**Jennifer Simmons** (BA in English): Pre-School Teacher at West Tokyo International Preschool (Japan, starting 2016)

2013

**Terry Britt** (BA in English): Ph.D. Candidate and Graduate Teaching Fellow, University of Missouri School of Journalism

**Levi Herrera** (BA in English): Started MA in Literature at Texas State University (San Marcos)

**Raven Johnston** (BA in English; MA in English, expected Fall 2016): Instructional Coach at Northeast Texas Community College (starting 2016)

**Kate Keenan** (MA in English): Diagnostician for Longview ISD (starting 2016)

**Lena Lee** (BA in English): Pre-AP English Teacher at Nimitz High School (Irving, TX, starting 2016)

**Rebekah Proffer** (BA in History / English Minor): pre-AP English Teacher at Bastrop High School (starting 2016)

2014

**Anthony Bertrand** (BA in English; MA in

English, 2016): Ph.D. Candidate, English Program (UT Arlington, starting 2016)

**Attalee Watson** (BA in English): Earned Texas Real Estate License (September 2016)

2015

**Ben Beach** (MA in English): Pre-AP English Teacher at Canyon Ridge Middle School (Leander ISD)

**Typhanie Tijerina-Hill** (BA in English): English Teacher at Willis Point Junior High School (starting 2016)

**Katherine Lane** (BA in English): English I Teacher at Terrell High School

**Sarah Maronen** (M.Ed. C&I, English): Workplace Learning & Academic Coordinator at Pinkston Preparatory Collegiate Academy (Dallas ISD, 2016-7); Principal Certification Program (expected Spring 2017)

**Jesse Stout** (BA in English): English Teacher at West Rusk High School

2016

**Emily Deibel** (BA in English): New Producer, KETK NBC

**Sarah Draper** (BA in English & Mass Communication): Academic Advisor at TJC

**Emma Liles** (BA in English): UT Tyler Teacher Residency Grant, 2016; English Teacher at UT Tyler Innovation Academy (starting 2016)



Artwork by Monica Hanes

## The Power of Writing

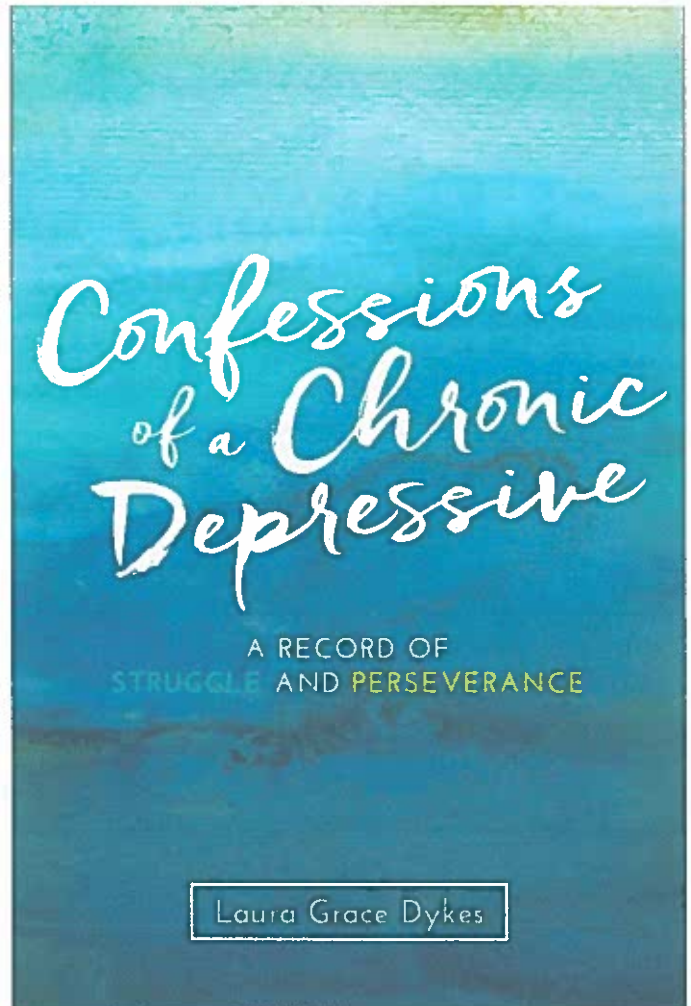
Laura Grace Dykes, 2005 BA in English

I knew I wanted to be an English major by the time I was 17. I switched universities as an undergrad, but I never switched majors. I even did some graduate work in English. I married an English professor, so even when I left school, I stayed connected to the academic world. I continue to discuss literature, culture, and theory regularly. More importantly though, critical analysis – a skill I was introduced to in high school and that was nurtured at UT Tyler and the University of Oklahoma – has become foundational in the way I approach the world. The texts I read and the way I learned to think and write in my English classes molded me into a better, more understanding person.

For my entire adult life, I have suffered from chronic major depression. In the last year, I started a blog and self-published a book about my struggles with mental illness (*Confessions of a Chronic Depressive: A Record of Struggle and Perseverance*). I have been fighting my illness for 16 years, and my purpose as a writer is to encourage other people to keep fighting for the health and happiness we each deserve. My writing is raw and transparent but always tinged with hope. I try to truly depict the struggles of a chronically depressed person by telling parts of my own story. I rely on honest self-reflection and critical evaluation of my life and circumstances to find my own value despite the lies of my ill brain and the stigma of mental illness generally.

It would be simple to tell you that I became a writer because studying English in college taught me how to write. Of course, this is partially true. I did a lot of writing in college and received a lot of instruction in crafting an argument. These skills set the foundation for me to be a writer, but critical thinking and analysis have made me a better writer. The skills I learned studying literary and theoretical texts have changed my approach to life and the world. Without my ability to look beyond superficial readings, I would not have been able to write about my struggle, but more importantly, I would not have been able to successfully fight my illness and discover my own

value. Whatever your struggle, keep fighting, and never underestimate the powers of critically thinking and putting your thoughts on paper.





## English Major to Run for Colorado State Representative

**Julia Endicott, 2013 BA in English**

Proudly, I graduated with a B.A. in English from the University of Texas at Tyler on December 13, 2013. I was a nontraditional student; I went back to school after both of my sons entered school. It wasn't easy, by any means, but I knew that my degree was essential to my family's success.

Prior to graduating, I had a job offer from the high-end bicycle component manufacturer, SRAM, in Colorado Springs, where I am now a technical communicator. My job utilizes not only my technical writing skills, but also editing, graphic design, photography, and videography skills.

My passion, however, lies with politics. I have been a member of the Democratic Party since 2001 and in March, after giving a speech, I was elected by my fellow delegates at the El Paso County Convention to run for Colorado Representative for House District 20.

My degree in English makes me uniquely qualified for this office in a very important way. Empathy. Studying various American works throughout history, I have learned what being an American means to different cultures and people. I have imagined my world through the eyes of immigrants, minorities, slaves, suffragettes, and what we now call the "1%."

I enjoy public speaking, and without a doubt I can attest to the skills I learned presenting in my various English classes.

Writing papers throughout the semester may seem pointless to some, but writing these papers developed my analytical thinking skills. I employ these analytical skills in various ways. Instead of reading Frederick Douglass's *A Narrative on the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845), I'm researching legislative bills and policy on issues like education, Veterans' Affairs, the economy, Civil Rights, and the environment.

Law and policy are not a far cry from the skills I learned in the English department. They are based on the fundamental ideas that I studied in my literature classes. Now, I research the needs of Coloradans, whereas before I researched the needs of figures in the past. I utilize the empathy I learned to feel for others to propose new policies that can benefit all people.

I am grateful to all of my professors at the University of Texas at Tyler. They pushed me because they believed I was capable of great things. I developed my confidence in the English department, which I now depend on to stand up for my values and what I believe is best for Coloradans.

You can learn more about the issues that are important to me and many Coloradans at [www.JuliaEndicottForColorado.com](http://www.JuliaEndicottForColorado.com)



## Hemingway in Slovenia and Italy

Rebecca Johnston, MA in English expected Spring 2017

The University of Texas at Tyler's English graduate program has offered me many challenges and experiences that have helped me prepare for what I hope will be a successful career. My most recent scholarly experience was a research trip I took in spring 2016 to Boston, Slovenia, and



Italy. Through a recommendation from one of my UT

Tyler professors, Dr. Ann Beebe, I was awarded one of the Hemingway Society's two Lewis-Reynolds-Smith Founders' Fellowships of 2016.

This fellowship enabled me to take this very fruitful research trip. In Boston I was able to spend time digging through the archives of the JFK library,

even getting to read *A Farewell to Arms* in Hemingway's own handwriting. From there, I

travelled to Slovenia to research the historical and geographical setting of *A Farewell to Arms*.

While I was there, I had the opportunity to meet with both Branko Drekonja and Alexander Potočnik, authors of *Hemingway's Trail of the Novel: A Farewell to Arms*.

Branko took my translator and I

on a tour of many of the towns mentioned in the



novel. I was also given the opportunity to speak to students at CIELS University in Gorizia, Italy about my research into Hemingway's use of setting in this novel. Without the preparation and support I have been given by my professors at UT Tyler, none of this would have been possible. I look

forward to more opportunities from UT Tyler's MA in English program.





## Travel Study to Costa Rica 2016

Bianca Gonzalez, BS  
in Health &  
Kinesiology expected  
Spring 2017

I was gathering last minute items to pack in my duffle bag before heading out the door. I was running late, of course. But, as the saying goes, “better late than never.” At the airport I met a group of students I had never seen before that morning. Once on board the flight I immediately fell asleep. It was when we landed in San Jose, Costa Rica that I realized this was going to be my home for the next four weeks.

I was put with a host family along with two other girls from the trip. Our host mother and her younger son, Danny, picked us up from the airport and took us into their home and made us feel welcome. Our first day we met the entire family: mom, dad, Danny, and the older brother, Tony, along with his fiancée, Nohe. Our host brother, Danny, took us out to show us the city of Heredia, our host city near the University of Costa Rica. It is a beautiful place full of rich colors and history.

Honestly, there are so many stories I have to share about my trip to Costa Rica. I did learn quite a bit of Spanish while abroad; my conversational abilities improved tremendously. I made incredible friendships over there, especially with my host family. We keep in contact through Facebook, and Tony has even invited me to his wedding next summer, which I really hope to attend.

We had so many incredible extracurricular experiences in Costa Rica. We visited museums and art

exhibits, but we also got to go zip-lining and hiking. We visited a hot springs resort and spent one weekend at the beach. I went snorkeling and parasailing for the first time, and it was incredible! Studying abroad is something I highly encourage students to do. Register for travel study course -- meet new people and explore your horizons. As college students we are meant to venture out and grow physically and mentally. The Costa Rica Travel Study class with Dr. Greg Utley is a wonderful chance to learn about yourself and who you are as a person. Go for it!

[NOTE: Dr. Utley ([gutley@uttyler.edu](mailto:gutley@uttyler.edu)) is planning his 2017 trip to Costa Rica. Contact him now for more information.]



## **Sigma Tau Delta: Community, Cash, and Curriculum Vita**

**Stephanie Laszik, 2013 BA in English & 2015 MA in English**

My experience with Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society (<http://www.english.org/sigmatd/>), was more than paying a membership fee and occasionally mentioning my membership in interviews.

Instead, when I first joined, I realized that STD (yes, it's an unfortunate abbreviation) afforded me the opportunity to control how, and to what extent, I wanted to let this society enhance my experience as an undergraduate, graduate student, and career.

During my junior year, I decided to submit an essay to the Annual Sigma Tau Delta International Convention in Savannah, GA. Naturally, the acceptance of my paper was a proud moment, but I had been to a few student conferences before. A few days before leaving for Savannah, I decided to explore the convention website and see what more STD had to offer me while attending. Before I knew it, I had entered an application to be what was called the "Southwestern Region Student Representative." I didn't have details, but I knew I wanted more: more experience, more opportunities, and more people in my professional network.

Before I knew it, I was elected, orientated, and enjoying lunch with other newly elected Student Representatives from all over the country. As we began to learn the responsibilities we were being given and the immensity of the geographic regions with which we were entrusted, I realized that I had a responsibility and opportunity to improve the professional and college experiences of English majors across Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and Arkansas.

The work began immediately but so did the play. Entrusted with representing five states, my first assignment was to fly out to Albuquerque, NM in September for the annual board meeting. Let me

clarify, the work was important and grueling. The experience of board meetings, formal hearings, and voting on the future of a distinguished honor society provided me incomparable real-life experience that has greatly enhanced my professional life. But, who doesn't love the opportunity to take an all-expense-paid trip to The Land of Enchantment with peers who have invested their lives in the study of writing and literature? As we approached the 2015 annual convention in New Mexico, the student representatives were responsible for the success and spirit of the event. In addition to seeing my friends and colleagues again, I won the Graduate Student Critical Essay award of \$150, received the anniversary plaque on behalf of UT Tyler, made life-long friends, and many other unmentionable life-changing events that I won't include here because they are better suited for another genre, poetry or creative non-fiction perhaps.

No matter your motivation: accolades to add to your resume, the need for a friend who understands your choice to be an English major, or a little extra cash for your excellent writing, Sigma Tau Delta is a place to explore ideas, market yourself, and enjoy your time as both a student and alumni.

I am more than happy to share further or answer any questions about my experiences as a Sigma Tau Delta member: [slaszik@uttyler.edu](mailto:slaszik@uttyler.edu). [Contact

Dr. Ann Beebe, Faculty Advisor, for an application to the UTT chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, Epsilon Omega.]

**Attention UT Tyler English Majors and Alumni  
Katie Davidson, President of the Epsilon Omega  
Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta**

In every newsletter issue, we try to feature a guest article by an East Texan who majored in English at another university and now works in business, law, the arts, etc. We want to hear about their experiences! You are needed to recruit those people to be guest columnists in future issues of *The Ductile Anchor*. The guest columnists will write a 350- 400 word columns about how they use English major skills in their professions. We want to highlight the many careers options for English majors. We ask current UT Tyler students and alumni to identify those former English majors in their communities and encourage them to share a little about themselves and their careers with the students of UT Tyler. For more information contact Dr. Ann Beebe, Faculty Editor. [abeebe@uttyler.edu](mailto:abeebe@uttyler.edu)





## Call for Spring 2017 Columns

What topics would you like to see covered in the next issue of *The Ductile Anchor*? We are looking for columnists for the SP17 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)).

## 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 Development Officer, Whitney King, for information about funding scholarships, special projects, faculty development, or building renovations. Whitney King, [wking@uttyler.edu](mailto:wking@uttyler.edu), 903-566-7384



Artwork by Monica Hanes

## New Faculty Profile: Dr. Anett Jessop

By Alyssa Bledsoe, BA in English expected in Fall 2016



Our department's newest professor, Dr. Anett Jessop, comes to us from California and is living in Texas for the first time. She has lived in many different regions prior to moving to here, and she's still trying to adjust to our unique brand of humidity. Dr. Jessop has a 28-year old son and is teaching three courses this semester, both of the creative writing sections and American Realism. For the spring semester she will teach 20<sup>th</sup>-Century American literature as well as the second course in the creative writing sequence. Along with her professorial duties, she is an active scholar. She has a publication coming out in December which focuses on Modernist writers working in the Mediterranean, and another publication which looks at the ways Modernist women rewrote the Classics coming out in 2017.

Dr. Jessop received a BA of Fine Arts from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, an MA degree in Creative Writing from the University of Minnesota, and moved to California to earn her PhD from the University of California at Davis in 2013. While completing her PhD, she worked as a Student Affairs Officer directing the MA and PhD programs at UC Davis. Her dissertation was over Modernist poetry with a particular interest in women's writing. She worked as a visiting professor in northern California at the University of Pacific as well as in southern California at the University of La Verne before coming to UT Tyler. She has taught classes in 20th/21st century American Literature, Content Engineering, British 19th Century literature, and even California literature. Dr. Jessop looks forward to learning more about Texas literature and East Texas, as well as getting to know the students and other faculty members at UT Tyler.



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# The Ductile Anchor

