The Chair’s Compass

Standing in the footsteps of the inimitable Dr. Richard Ramsey, I am humbled and excited following my first year of chairing this vibrant department. As a newly transplanted Hoosier, I am honored to offer these words in our newly-configured departmental newsletter, English and Linguistics @IPFW.

First, I thank my friend and colleague, Dr. Suzanne Rumsey, for taking on this project. The EngLing Thing has been reformed, Phoenix-like, through Suzanne’s imaginative talents. She has established a template and a format that will herald the work of this department for future readers.

Second, I thank my distinguished colleagues for welcoming me into this department. They have learned to tolerate my ironic humor and Scandinavian disposition, no small feat! This department is a warmly woven tapestry of individuals and experiences, with expertise and talent that offer IPFW and its students a cornucopia of courses and research opportunities that traverse literature, composition and rhetoric, creative and business writing, linguistics and folklore.

I will keep these words brief and allow the subsequent pages to speak volumes for our—and your—department. Please read about our students and our faculty; please share in this community. Your comments and your reflections are always welcome, and we look forward to your engagement in our efforts.

Warmest regards,
Hardin

2008 Scholarships and Awards

In April 2008 the English Department gave seven awards to students at the Annual Awards Banquet:

- Outstanding English Major: Heidi Moore;
- Sylvia E. Bowman Award: Troy Bigelow;
- Arline R. Standley Scholarship: Malissa Hostetler and Laura Gardener;
- Hollander Scholarship: Elizabeth Keller;
- Rainn Malis McPhail Scholarship: Troy Bigelow;
- Psi Iota Xi Scholarship: Louisa Danielson.

We congratulate these students for their outstanding work!

Check our website for details about each scholarship: http://ipfw.edu/engl/opportunities/contests.shtml.
Students in one of Damian's classes should expect to learn a whole lot of stuff that they didn't even know existed, and as a result... start thinking about things they never thought they'd think about (like dictionaries, and the origins of words).

The newest member of our full-time faculty is Dr. Damian Fleming, a medievalist, who will be teaching courses in medieval literature and history of the English language. Damian completed his PhD at the University of Toronto, the hub of medieval studies, and most recently was a visiting professor at John Carroll University in Ohio.

In true medievalist-researcher style, Damian said that his “particular corner of the realm” of medieval studies is “exploring what Anglo-Saxons knew about and thought of the Hebrew language.” He enjoys studying dead languages like Middle English, Old English, Latin, and Old Icelandic. “Reading these texts in their original languages allows one to see how strikingly modern they can be."

Damian noted “I can’t remember a time when I wasn’t interested in the middle ages (although the particular interests have changed quite a bit). When I was little, it was all about crossbows and catapults, swords and castles. I had quite a Lego collection.”

They can also expect a lot of humor.” In his classes, Damian noted that students will hear a lot about his daughter, March, and his wife, Tess.

IPFW is fortunate to have Damian for his research and teaching, and because he makes delicious crab cakes. Stop by his office (CM 133) (which is not a closet, mind you) to say hello. Welcome aboard, Damian!

Linguistics News

The Linguistics Minor is currently being updated and expanded. Talk to your advisor about adding a minor in linguistics to your degree. For information on courses and the field, contact any of the linguistics faculty: Ms. Irene Anders; Drs. Chad Thompson, Beth Simon, Hao Sun, Damien Fleming, and Hardin Aasand.
Susan Howard, a devotee of Harry Potter, has taken her appreciation “to another level” as she put it. This past summer 2008, Susan Howard attended a conference at Oxford and gave her second academic presentation about Harry Potter. Susan spoke about the post-colonial and multicultural themes she sees in the HP series, specifically in enslavement of house elves such as Winky. She said, “If you think about it, Winky’s speech sounds like it is straight out of Gone with the Wind.”

There is already a growing body of scholarship about the HP series. Many debate whether a series such as Harry Potter could be called “literature,” but to Susan, given the themes represented, the development of the writing style from adolescent to adult fiction over the course of the seven books, and evidence of multiculturalism, the books have clearly “changed the literary landscape for children’s writing.”

If you ask Susan Howard about her academic experiences, she’ll tell you she’s on the “forever plan” of education. She earned her BA in journalism at Syracuse University in 1983. After 11 years as a journalist, Susan returned to school. Susan received an MA in Creative Writing Fiction at Johns Hopkins University in 1995. Presently she is working on her doctorate in Creative Writing and Literature at the University of Houston. She came back to Fort Wayne several years ago to care for her mother, and she’s been teaching basic composition courses such as W131 and W233 since then.

2008-09 Visiting Writers Series Information

The IPFW Visiting Writers Series (VWS) has hosted 65 writers of national renown since its inception in 1992. Professor George Kalamaras assumed responsibility for the program in 1994 and has coordinated the series for the past 14 years, with a special emphasis on community outreach.

Visiting Writers give a public reading and often conduct a writing workshop. Events are open to the public and are free of charge. A variety of university and community groups sponsor the series, with special contributions by the Office of the VCAA and the Department of English and Linguistics (for a full listing of sponsors, please see our website).

During 2008-2009, the VWS will host three writers. The series is very close to finalizing sponsorship for a large community event with the Three Rivers Institute of Afrikan Arts and Culture (TRIAAC), to bring spokesperson, Malidoma Patrice Some, to Fort Wayne in late March or April. More information on this likely event and the visits of the remaining two authors of the 2008-2009 series will soon become available on the VWS website.

For more information, visit http://www.ipfw.edu/engl/news/visiting.shtml, or contact Dr. George Kalamaras, at kalamara@ipfw.edu.

Confluence Connection: Submissions

Confluence student literary magazine offers opportunities for creative expression in photography, poetry, fiction, essay, drama, memoir, creative non-fiction, and artwork.

We are now accepting submissions for the spring 2009 publication! All text-based submissions can be done online at www.ipfw.edu/confluence or in person. Graphic submissions must be taken to either the English Department in CM 145 or the Writing Center in KT G19.

For more information, see Andrew Johnson, this year’s editor, who is the Writing Center Graduate Assistant, or Dr. Stevens Amidon, the magazine’s faculty advisor.
Unique Spring ‘09 Course Offerings focus on Service Learning and Remnant Trust Exhibit

The English Department has several interesting course offerings in Spring 2009. Take a look:

In Dr. Beth Simon’s LING L103, Introduction to the Study of Language, students will benefit from the IPFW Remnant Trust Exhibit. Students will examine first-hand original texts of significant documents in the history of the United States as they discuss emergence of a "standard" in American English.

Dr. Rachel Hile’s sections of ENG L101, Western World Masterpieces I, will focus on the themes and texts in IPFW’s Remnant Trust exhibit. Original editions of most of the course texts will be available for students to view and handle as part of the exhibit, which brings rare books to the public. Additionally, students will attend some of the cultural and educational activities planned at IPFW spring 2009 semester—these events include public debates, lectures, and arts performances.

Dr. Mary Ann Cain’s W462/C82 Creativity and Community offers a service learning option to work with the Three Rivers Jenbe Ensemble, a West Afrikan drumming and dance group for area youth. Students who take the option have the opportunity to assist with a creative writing class, experience drumming and dance for themselves, and participate in the year-end public reading of creative work.

In Dr. Suzanne Rumsey’s W462/C682 Literacy and Family History, students will work in the Allen County Public Genealogy Library to research and write their own family histories. As they research their own family histories, students will also do service learning with the Lake James History Project (LJHP) in writing family and area histories of elderly residents at Lake James (near Angola, IN). LJHP members and students will collaboratively write portions of a book on Lake James history and people, which will be published.