

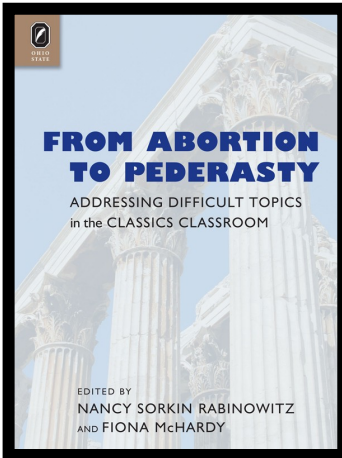
# Postings

The Annual Newsletter of the Idaho State University Department of English and Philosophy

Volume 10

2015-2016

## ISU Department of English and Philosophy Announces Inaugural Winner of Teaching Literature Book Award



This year, the Department of English and Philosophy announced the inaugural 2015 winner of its Teaching Literature Book Award, a juried prize presented biennially by the faculty in the Ph.D. Program in English and the Teaching of English at Idaho State University. This international prize honors a book that excels in blending current research with curricular planning and classroom methods and aims to encourage excellence in the teaching of literature by recognizing a book-length work on literature pedagogy at the post-secondary or graduate level.

Written by a team of distinguished scholars from around the globe, the winning book is the edited collection, *From Abortion to Pederasty: Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom*, published in 2014 by The Ohio State University Press. The collection is edited by Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz, professor of comparative literature, Hamilton College, New

York, and Fiona McHardy, principal lecturer in classical civilization, University of Roehampton, United Kingdom.

Jessica Winston, ISU professor of English and chair of the award committee, explained that the edited collection helps instructors in classical studies to address possibly disturbing subject matter. “Great works of literature explore the complexities of cultures past and present, raising important issues that speak directly to readers,” Winston said.

In its commendation, members of the award committee praised the book for presenting a range of strategies teachers might use when raising difficult subjects, such as death and dying or sexual violence: “Teachers sometimes avoid teaching topics because of their potentially unsettling nature, but these are precisely the areas where students need the most help in order to come to terms with disturbing subject matter in a rigorous yet supportive context.”

Curtis Whitaker, another ISU professor of English and an award committee member, said, “I drew from it while teaching a course in the literature of ancient Rome last spring. Essays on sexual subject matter—homosexuality and rape, in particular—were particularly helpful to me in teaching writers such as Plato and Ovid.”

The award committee lauded the book for its “clear, jargon-free prose,” and for the contributors’ expert combination of “up-to-date Classics research with pedagogical practice.” The authors demonstrate “exemplary command of subject matter alongside admirable openness about their own classroom experiences, describing successful strategies as well as lingering questions and uncertainties.”

Further, the committee praised the wide relevance and potential reach of the book, since “the essays present strategies that will help teachers of literature as well as other subjects rethink their approaches to a wide range of topics and texts.”

“We are pleased that such a timely and widely relevant book is the winner of our inaugural award,” Winston said. “In light of recent articles in *The Atlantic* and elsewhere dealing with trigger warnings and macroaggressions, instructors are increasingly in need of resources that will help them to address complex, and potentially upsetting, subject matter.” In this way, she said, *Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom* is a welcome book that college-level instructors in any area of literary studies and in a wide range of other specialties will find pertinent to their work with students at all levels.

*Continued on page 4, “Inaugural Winner”*

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## Letter from the Chair

Dr. Jennifer Eastman Attebery



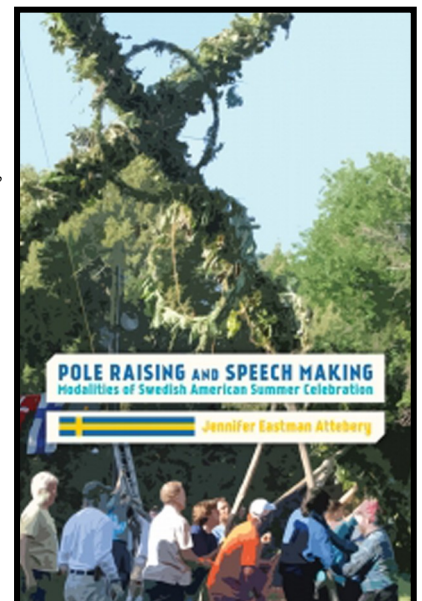
When alumni walk into Liberal Arts 262, our main department office, they experience a combination of old and new—just enough that is familiar to feel as though this is home base and just enough that is new to sense the impacts of change. The greatest impact is from the many new names on the mailboxes beside the wavy glass wall. Over the past four years, we've celebrated numerous retirements and hired eight new tenure-track faculty and five new lecturers. Every time I attend a Work-in-Progress seminar, at which faculty share manuscripts nearly ready for submission, or hear a faculty member speak about their research at the Humanities Café, or observe a graduate teaching intern who has been coached by a graduate faculty member, I'm seeing new expertise and new ideas revitalize our intellectual community.

In this process of change, we've worked to build a healthy balance of specializations. Balancing our especially strong corps of British literature professors, we have added to our representation of areas within American literature. While literature and composition/rhetoric are still the core of the English side of the department—very important for our graduate students—we have also added to our philosophy, creative writing, and professional writing faculty to nurture our undergraduate programs. The new specialties range from Victorian Gothic to 20<sup>th</sup> century British novel, from colonial to ethnic American, from philosophy of mind to multimodality.

As chair, I highly value the new perspectives now apparent in the department. But in the age of “mining” data I also have access to less exciting evidence of departmental vitality. The department's teaching in 2015 pulled into the institution about three times our departmental budget, and we also generated some modest amounts of grant income. In a year of falling enrollments at Idaho State, our graduate program has grown in number of students and credit hours and our numbers of undergraduate majors have remained steady. We also can celebrate that ISU's English and Philosophy department is well above the national average for tenure-track teaching of students. That is, unlike many schools where undergraduate teaching has been turned over to part-time adjuncts, our students are much more likely to encounter a tenure-track faculty member when they enter a freshman literature or philosophy class. Our undergraduates benefit alongside our graduate students from all the great new talent we've brought to Pocatello. Look elsewhere in this newsletter to meet the newest faculty, and next time you are on campus, come greet them in person.

## Dr. Jennifer Eastman Attebery Publishes Fourth Book

Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Department Chair and Director of the Folklore Program, published her book, *Pole-raising and Speech Making: Modalities of Swedish American Summer Celebration*. Research for the book was done with a Faculty Research Committee grant that helped her travel around the Rocky Mountain States during fall 2010—from Moscow and Helena to Provo—seeking information in historical society collections and university archives. Reading through letters, journals, newspapers, and ephemera from the 1880-1917 period allowed her to glean anything related to celebration during the spring-into-summer season. Her search also took her to the Midwest and to Sweden, where notes from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century ethnographers were available. A Fulbright award made it possible for her to be in Sweden in 2011, where she served as the Fulbright Distinguished Chair in American Studies at Uppsala University. While in Sweden, she also taught an American Studies course on Native American Literature and Folklore and their intersections. Her book, published by Utah State University Press for its Ritual, Festival, and Celebration series, focuses a great deal on Midsummer, which is a high point for Swedish Americans. It also is concerned with how immigrants accommodated their traditions to the important American holidays—Decoration (Memorial) Day and Independence Day. *Pole Raising and Speech Making* is proof that non-English immigrant culture must be included when discussing "American" culture.



## The 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Intermountain Philosophy Conference

William McCurdy and Russell Wahl, Professors of Philosophy

On November 6, 2015, the Department of English and Philosophy hosted the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Intermountain Philosophy Conference in the Pond Student Union Building. Since the inception of this conference, ISU philosophy professors have presented papers and ISU students have attended each of the nine previous meetings at the campuses of the five major universities in Utah (BYU, UU, UVU, USU, and WSU). This most recent gathering was the first time that the Intermountain Philosophy Conference has been held at ISU. In fact, although ISU has had guest philosophers deliver talks on occasion, ISU has never previously hosted a conference devoted solely to philosophy.

Sixteen presentations were delivered, including an opening keynote address by Dr. Charlie Huenemann, Professor of Philosophy at Utah State University. Speakers came from as far as Southern Utah University in Cedar City, Utah. The conference was organized under the direction of the head of the philosophy program at ISU, Dr. Russell Wahl. Three faculty members of the ISU philosophy program, Jim Skidmore, Nobel Ang, and William McCurdy made presentations. In addition, two former students with bachelor's degrees in philosophy from ISU, Lisa Fawcett and Spencer Case, who is completing his doctorate at the University of Colorado at Boulder, also graced the meeting with papers. The papers were in topics from several different areas of philosophy, with many in ethics, some working with Plato and Aristotle, and others in contemporary continental philosophy. It was a fine event to finally have the campus of ISU itself become a stopping post in the circuit of the annual Intermountain Philosophy Conference, which after all, was first called "The Utah/Idaho Philosophy Conference." After the conference a group of participants repaired to the Portneuf Valley Brewery for a continuation of the discussion.

## EGSA Hosts 11th Annual Intermountain Graduate Conference

Emily Ward, M.A. Student

When I began grad school, I didn't anticipate moments of white-knuckle fear. Yet, I still remember that moment, gripping the podium as I tried to calm down enough to speak at my first academic conference, the Intermountain Graduate Conference. Conferences are opportunities to learn from other scholars, network, and receive feedback that can help scholars improve their work. For grad students, the idea of presenting our work can be terrifying. One way to mitigate this terror is through practice, and the English Graduate Student Association works hard to make our conference safe and rewarding for all who attend. The EGSA sponsors the annual Intermountain Graduate Conference to allow graduate students the opportunity to share their ideas, learn from each other, and, often, to present at their first conference. I have attended the conference since 2011, and last year, I was given the opportunity to plan the 10<sup>th</sup> annual conference. This year, I have been asked to organize the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Intermountain Graduate Conference, being held March 4-5, 2016.



Last year, our theme was "Pushing Boundaries." Presenters came from all over the West, including ISU graduate students and students from Utah, Colorado, Nevada, and California. We had three guest speakers, including our own Dr. Amanda Zink; each did a phenomenal job teaching graduate students how to research, where our research can take us, and how to avoid the pitfalls of thinking we're "just" graduate students.

This year, our theme is "Intersections." Current scholarship often encourages intersections by blending disciplines, genres, and perspectives. In our own department, some students have studied stand-up comedy, comics, letters, and diaries, along with more traditional literature. Additionally, students use a wide swath of perspectives from history, rhetoric, sociology, psychology, popular culture, and politics. A broad theme encourages a variety of students with a range of scholarship to submit their work, making the conference stronger and more diverse.

The EGSA is pleased to have continued the conference for eleven years. As we look toward this year's conference, we've challenged ourselves to improve and expand, primarily by encouraging more scholars outside of Idaho to attend. The conference is the highlight of the EGSA year, and we eagerly anticipate this year's scholarship.



<https://www.facebook.com/isu.english.and.philosophy/?fref=ts>



## The Value of ISU's TESOL Certification Program

Richard Samuelson, Ph.D. Student

One of the draws for Idaho State University's English M.A. and Ph.D. programs is the potential for students to gain a Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certificate as they work toward their degree. Learning to teach ESL carries great benefits, including helping future teachers develop greater understanding of an often misunderstood segment of the student body. Given the growing presence of non-native speakers in U.S. universities, this program is increasingly relevant.



The TESOL certification program consists of 18 credits of graduate classes, including required courses in linguistics, as well as theories and principles of second language acquisition; further, students must also conduct a hands-on teaching practicum. The program is flexible—the required courses can be completed out of order if necessary, and even earned as a stand-alone course of study (separate from an M.A. or Ph.D.). Further, the program has application to teaching at various levels, including K-12, university, and abroad.

Emily Treasure, a Ph.D. student who taught English for two years in Japan after completing the TESOL certification, explains that the balanced, thorough, and flexible nature of the TESOL program set her “in good standing” with those she worked with in Japan. She says the certificate is the “gold standard,” and those who have it are more likely to be hired. Dr. Brent Wolter, the director of the TESOL program, agrees: “We’ve had people come out of our program and get tenure-track positions where [the TESOL certificate] was one of the things that really set them apart from other applicants who had their Ph.D. in English but maybe didn’t have any other qualifications.”

The program directly benefits students learning how to teach ESL classes and non-native speakers in general classes, but Dr. Wolter states that he’s noticed that the program’s benefits aren’t restricted to the teaching of non-native speakers. He and many of the graduates of the program have seen improvements in certificate holders’ teaching abilities generally, such as how they explain concepts, create clear assignments, and avoid unintentionally excluding students. Emily remarks, “I feel like it complements the rest of your...English classes really well because of the practical end of it.” Through her experience in the TESOL program and in Japan she “grew enormously as a teacher.”

As a Ph.D. student at ISU, I completed the practicum portion of the certificate, teaching a grammar class to prospective ISU students. I found it difficult sometimes to teach concepts I had thought were simple, but I also grew in my ability to explain those concepts and in my appreciation for those who are learning English as a second language.

## Dr. Brian Attebery Receives Mythopoeic Scholarship Award

Dr. Brian Attebery's book, *Stories About Stories: Fantasy and the Remaking of Myth*, received the 2015 Mythopoeic Scholarship Award in Myth and Fantasy Studies at the Mythcon 46 Conference in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This award is given to scholarly books on other specific authors in the Inklings tradition, or to more general works on the genres of myth and fantasy. Dr. Attebery, Professor of English and Editor of *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, explains the first time he attended Mythcon was as a guest scholar in 1988, and his scholar's address became a chapter in his book—and eventual 1993 Mythopoeic honoree—*Strategies of Fantasy*, published in 1992. Inspired by this conference's theme, “Legends for a New Land” and its line-up of guests, he explored older works of fantasy and was challenged by new ones. He explains, “I poked and prodded and spoke and wrote for about ten years, and eventually admitted to myself that I was writing another book about fantasy, this time directly confronting the intimidating question of the nature of myth and its relation to the fantastic imagination.” *Stories About Stories*, which looks at fantasy and the different ways of understanding myth and how new relationships with myth are worked out, offers a comprehensive history of the modern fantastic, as well as an argument about nature and its importance. Maria Tatar, John L. Loeb Professor of Germanic Languages and Literature at Harvard, says, “*Stories About Stories* enables us to understand the higher truths of narratives that walk a tightrope between sacred and profane, faith and skepticism, poetry and prose.”



“Inaugural Winner,” continued from page 1

The committee received nominations from publishers in the United States, Canada, and United Kingdom. The winner was chosen by a committee of national referees, including Whitaker; Tanya Agathocleous, associate professor of English, Hunter College, City University of New York; Jennifer Holberg, professor of English, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and founding coeditor of the journal *Pedagogy*; and Steven Lynn, professor of English and dean of the South Carolina Honors College, University of South Carolina.

The coeditor of the winning collection, Nancy Rabinowitz, will visit ISU September 7-8, 2016 to discuss the book and to meet with students. More details will be available in the fall. The Department is currently soliciting donations for the Teaching Literature Book Award Endowment, which will help to support the prize in perpetuity. For the full commendation of the winning book and to make a donation, please click on the “prizes and scholarships” link at [www.isu.edu/english/](http://www.isu.edu/english/).

## A Red-Letter Semester for Veteran Advocacy

Kelly Ricken, Ph.D. Student

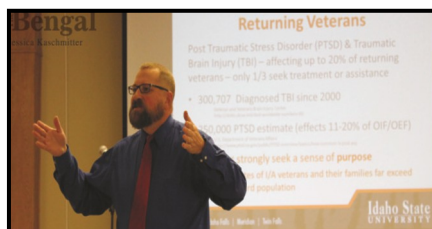
I became especially passionate about veteran advocacy three years ago when one of my 1101 students submitted a free-write about the struggles he faced as a newly -returned Iraq War veteran. His struggles with PTSD and feelings of academic inadequacy and not belonging made me realize that we instructors have been unwittingly complicit in this underaccommodation. It is a complicated issue, however, that requires an interdisciplinary effort to address.



In light of this, I initiated a campus-wide professional development opportunity—an interdisciplinary panel discussion called “Teaching ISU Student Veterans: Mobilizing the Academic Front.” Dr. Lydia Wilkes (English), Dr. Justin Stover (History), Todd Johnson (Veteran Student Services Center), and Casey Cornelius (USMC, Ret.) not only supported me in organizing the event, but also spoke on issues such as best practices, moral injury, VSSC resources, and PTSD. Several student veterans also opened themselves up for questions, sharing specific classroom experiences and offering suggestions for faculty improvement. The event was filmed on request of ISU First Lady Dr. Laura Vilas to be used as a faculty training tool in future years. It was also covered by *The Bengal* and KPVI News. I have received numerous requests to make this an annual event, so I look forward to improving it and moving closer toward the goal of enhanced classroom learning experiences for our student veterans.

While organizing the veterans event, I also taught a course called “The Literature of Soldiers,” the goal of which was to help students move beyond stereotypes in their understanding of soldiers and war. We studied soldiers in the works of Melville, West, Remarque, Hasford, and Swofford, and had guest speakers who were veterans—including my father, Mike Ricken (Ret.). The speakers helped bring the literature to life and showed more fully its relevance.

Fall of 2015 was a red-letter semester for veteran advocacy in our department. With the arrival of Dr. Lydia Wilkes, the support of Dr. Jennifer Attebery and Dr. Jessica Winston, and my ongoing efforts and collaboration with the Veteran Student Services Center, we are poised to make great improvements in how we teach student veterans and how we approach texts about soldiers and war.



Director of ISU Veteran Student Services Center, Todd Johnson, addresses attendees of the interdisciplinary panel discussion. *Photo courtesy of The Bengal, Idaho State University's Newspaper*

## Help support the Department of English and Philosophy

The department is truly grateful for the generosity of its donors and alumni, who make possible a wide variety of learning and research opportunities for our students, our faculty, and our community. Your gift can:

- ◆ Bring visiting speakers, writers, and artists to campus
- ◆ Develop our technological resources for pedagogy and research
- ◆ Fund *Black Rock & Sage*, our literary magazine
- ◆ Provide scholarship opportunities for outstanding students


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**Thank you for your support of the humanities at ISU!**

## Welcome, New Faculty

	Assistant Lecturer of Philosophy  Ph.D. University of Florida
Nobel Ang Ethical Theory, Meta-ethics, Moral Psychology	

	Assistant Lecturer of English  Ph.D. University of Tulsa
Jennifer Fuller British Literature	

	Assistant Professor of English  Ph.D. Iowa State University
Robert Watkins Composition, Rhetoric, Prof. Communication, Technical Writing	

	Assistant Lecturer of English  Ph.D. University of Kansas
Mike Begenchev TESOL	

	Assistant Professor of English  Ph.D. University of Florida
David Lawrimore Early American Literature, Secondary English Education	

	Assistant Professor of English  Ph.D. Indiana University
Lydia Wilkes Rhetoric and Composition	

## Faculty Publications and Accomplishments:

**Brian Attebery**, Professor of English and Editor of *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, also conducted a seminar on gender and science fiction and delivered two lectures on theoretical approaches to fantasy at LaTrobe University, in Melbourne, Australia and Federation University, in Ballarat, Australia.

**Jennifer Eastman Attebery**, Chair and Professor of English, published a blog post “What Happens to a Holiday When It Becomes Dislocated from Its Seasonal Anchor?” that appeared on the University Press of Colorado’s website.

**Elise Barker**, English Ph.D. 2014 and adjunct instructor, published a chapter titled “Alcott’s ‘Funny Match’ for Jo” in *Critical Insights: Little Women* (New Jersey: Salem Press, 2015).

**Jacob Berger**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, published “The Sensory Content of Perceptual Experience” in *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 96 (2016): 49-53.

**Tera Joy Cole**, Assistant Lecturer of English, published “Coyotes Don’t Litter” in the Winter 2015-16 issue of *The Writing Disorder*.

**Jenn Fuller**, Assistant Lecturer of English, had her book manuscript *Dark Paradise: Pacific Islands in the Nineteenth-Century British Imagination* accepted for publication by University of Edinburgh Press.

**Bethany Schultz Hurst**, Assistant Professor of English, published poems in *American Literary Review*, *New Orleans Review*, and *Smartish Pace*. She read her poem “Crisis on Infinite Earths: Issues 1-12” at the launch reading for *Best American Poetry 2015* (in which the poem is included) in NYC in September.

**Alan Johnson**, Professor of English, presented “What is ‘Urban Ecology’ in Modern India? Reading Devi and Adiga” at the Rocky Mountain MLA, October 8-10, Santa Fe, NM.

**Thomas Klein**, Professor of English, published “The Metaphorical Cloak of Exeter Riddle 83, ‘Ore/Gold/Metal’” in *ANQ: Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes, and Reviews* 28.1 (2015) and gave a paper on “Exeter Riddle 39, Anglo-Saxon Consolation, and the Quest for Certainty” at the International Congress on Medieval Studies.

**Mike Stubbs**, Associate Lecturer of English, published “Ultra-Run: Sixty-seven Miles, One Step at a Time” in *Idaho Magazine* (October 2015): 49-53.

**Susan Swetnam**, Professor Emerita, published “Raspberries and Reverence” in *Edible Idaho* (Summer 2015); “Planting in Autumn” in *Edible Idaho* (Autumn, 2015); “Poky Home” in *Journal of the West* (Autumn 2015); and “Look Wider Still” in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies* (Winter 2015).

**Matthew Van Winkle**, Assistant Professor of English, presented at New Knowledge Adventures on “Keats’s Last Words.”

**Russell Wahl**, Professor of Philosophy, published “Sense-Data and the Inference to Material Objects” in Wishton and Linsky, eds., *Acquaintance, Knowledge, and Logic* (Stanford: CSLI, 2015).

**Michael Westwood**, Assistant Lecturer of English, presented "Technology and Teaching Roles: Exploring the Challenges, Benefits, and Best Practices of Using Online Course Management Systems with International Student Populations" with **Diantha Smith**, Ph.D. Student, at the Intermountain-TESOL conference and was elected to serve as a member at large for the state of Idaho.

**Jessica Winston**, Professor of English, gave a paper on legal satire in the 1590s at the Sixteenth Century Society Conference in Vancouver, Canada, Oct. 23, 2015.

**Brent Wolter**, Professor of English, co-authored a book chapter “The Role of Lexical Knowledge in Second Language Reading” in *Reading in a Second Language: Cognitive and Psycholinguistic Issues* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2016), with Dr. Rena Helms-Park from University of Toronto at Scarborough co-authored the chapter.

**Amanda Zink**, Assistant Professor of English, presented at the 50th anniversary conference of the Western Literature Association, held in Reno, NV, October 14-17.

## Student Publications and Accomplishments:

**Amy Brumfield**, Ph.D. student, co-authored "The iPad Pilot Project: A Faculty Driven Effort to Use Mobile Technology in the Reinvention of the Liberal Arts," appearing in *Journal of Teaching and Learning with Technology* 4.1 (2015): 1-21, with Mark K. McBeth, Kandi Turley-Ames, Yolonda Youngs, and Laura Ahola-Young.

**Jacob Claflin**, Ph.D. student, published his entry on the film Makibefo in the *Literary Encyclopedia*.

**Jennifer Cox**, Ph.D. student, published "Symbiotic Werewolves and Cybernetic Anchoresses: Premodern Posthumans in Medieval Writing" in *Quidditas* 36: 84-105.

**Jeff Howard**, Ph.D. student, published "Students as Storytellers: Teaching Rhetorical Strategies through Folktales" in *Teaching English in the Two-Year College* (December 2015): 170-78, and "Barrie’s Inspiration and the Boys Who Didn’t Want to Grow Up" in *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Review* 28.1 (2015): 54-55.

**Diantha Smith**, Ph.D. student, was elected to be the graduate student representative on the Graduate Council for 2015-16.

**Jacob Thomas**, Ph.D. student, published "Right-Hand Men: Little John, Musashibo Benkei, and the Archetype of the Outlaw Second-in-Command" in the Proceedings of the "Image of the Rebel Conference 2015," sponsored by the Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery (SISSI).