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Contact: Jessica Winston, Professor and Chair, ISU Department of English and Philosophy, winsjess@isu.edu

ISU Announces Winner of 2021 Teaching Literature Book Award

POCATELLO – The Idaho State University Department of English and Philosophy has announced “Approaches to Teaching the Works of Octavia E. Butler” as the winner of the 2021 Teaching Literature Book Award.

The Teaching Literature Book Award is an international prize for the best book on teaching literature at the college level. The award is presented biennially by the graduate faculty in English at Idaho State University.

The winning books are judged by a committee of external reviewers. Jessica Winston, ISU professor of English and chair of the award committee, said that “the prize committee sought out books that offered timely and effective approaches to teaching literature at the college level today.”

The winning book examines the works of a significant writer of speculative fiction, Octavia L. Butler, she explained. “But the chapters apply to the teaching of other authors of speculative fiction, especially writers of color and women.”

In their commendation, members of the award committee praised the book for its presentation of “grounded essays that are short enough for teachers to read and digest as they prepare their own lesson plans.”



The award committee also appreciated that the volume also promotes teaching of more black speculative fiction, a genre that is “at the center, raising transformative and transdisciplinary possibilities for teachers and those involved in curricular design.”

The committee members explained that the volume is useful for “anyone looking to apply innovative thinking and reading practices in the humanities to the powerful worldbuilding of speculative fiction, particularly that being written by Black authors, especially women.”

The book is edited by Tarshia L. Stanley, Dean of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences, and Professor of English, at St. Catherine University (St. Paul, Minnesota). Professor Stanley commented that the award was “an incredible honor,” and that it was meaningful to have this work recognized.

The winning book was published in 2021 by the Modern Language Association as part of the Approaches to Teaching World Literature series.

This year’s committee included Darryl Dickson-Carr, Professor of English, Southern Methodist University; Miriamne Ara Krummel, Associate Professor of English, University of Dayton and recipient of the 2019 Teaching Literature Book Award; and Janine Utell, Professor of English, Widener University. Jessica Winston and Susan Goslee, Associate Professor of English at Idaho State, also served on the committee.

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