Tenure Granted to Dr. James Purdy

Dr. James Purdy began his first year as a tenured Associate Professor in August 2014. Purdy, who teaches writing and directs the University Writing Center, earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in 2006 and came to Duquesne from Bloomsburg University in 2008. In his six years at Duquesne Dr. Purdy has fundamentally transformed the Writing Center, which now serves over 2,000 students a year and provides valuable professional training for dozens of graduate and undergraduate students. Dr. Purdy’s popular classes focus on writing, particularly writing in digital and online environments.

Dr. Purdy is also a nationally known, award-winning researcher in the area of computers and composition. His two most recent books—The New Digital Scholar (2013) and The Next Digital Scholar (2014)—have been recognized by the Independent Publisher Book Awards and the USA Best Books Awards, respectively, and he won the 2011 Ellen Nold Award for the best article in computers and composition studies. Dr. Purdy just welcomed his second child into the world (a daughter, Julia, born on Nov. 20, 2014) and we look forward to many more years with him on our faculty.

Department Welcomes New Faculty

In August 2014, the Department welcomed two tenure-track and two non-tenure-track full-time faculty, as well as a one-year Visiting Assistant Professor.

Anna Gibson, Ph.D.

Anna Gibson received her Ph.D. in English from Duke University, where she was an ACLS/Mellon Dissertation Fellow. She works on nineteenth-century British literature and specializes in novels of the Victorian period. Her scholarship focuses on the relationship between the novel and the Victorian sciences, particularly psychology and physiology. Her current book project considers the formal innovations with which Victorian novels created a sensory concept of the person, and her article on Charles Dickens’s Our Mutual Friend is forthcoming in the scholarly journal Novel. In addition to her traditional research, Professor Gibson is interested in using digital scholarship to explore novel form. She is currently at work on the Digital Dickens Notes Project (http://dickensnotes.com), which aims to digitize and analyze Charles Dickens’s working notes for his novels alongside their serial parts. In fall 2014, Professor Gibson taught a graduate seminar on Subjectivity, Objectivity, and Victorian Literature as well as an undergraduate Introduction to Fiction course. In spring 2015, she is scheduled to teach an upper division undergraduate course in nineteenth-century British Literature as well as the second half of the British Literature Survey and our gateway to the English major course, Critical Issues in Literary Studies.
Sarah Breckenridge Wright, Ph.D.
Sarah Breckenridge Wright received a Ph.D. in English from The Pennsylvania State University in 2011. She comes to Duquesne after three years in a visiting position at Skidmore College in upstate New York. Her primary area of interest is late medieval literature, with secondary interests in early modern literature, history of the English language, cultural geography, and ecocriticism. She is currently working on a book project titled Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales in Motion: Human Mobility and the Liquid Landscape, which argues that the frame narrative and tales alike reformulate English national identity according to mobile categories. In addition to having published a number of journal articles and book chapters on medieval literature, she co-authored an interdisciplinary study on contemporary religious tourism. As this study suggests, she is dedicated to collaborative scholarship and teaching. In fall 2014, Professor Wright taught the History and Structure of the English Language course, and a course on Medieval Romance. In spring 2015, she is scheduled to teach a graduate course in Chaucer, the first half of the British Literature Survey, and a course entitled Waste Not, Want Not, which considers the material, spatial, and personal dimensions of waste.

Justin Kishbaugh, Ph.D.
Justin Kishbaugh is a full-time Writing Instructor in the English Department and the Legal Writing Specialist for the law school at Duquesne University. He earned an M.F.A from the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University, and his Ph.D. from Duquesne University. He published a chapbook of poetry, For the Blue Flash, in 2012, and currently serves as the Managing Editor of the Ezra Pound Society Newsletter, Make it New, and the Associate Editor of the Richard Aldington Society Newsletter. Articles of his have appeared in the collections, Imagism: Essays on Its Initiation, Impact, and Influence and Ghosts in the Background Moving: Aldington and Imagism. Another essay, on Ezra Pound and Laurence Binyon, is forthcoming in The Companion to Ezra Pound and Art. Justin’s scholarship tends to focus on the craft of writing, and he places a particular emphasis on the interaction between form and content in Modernist poetics. He is also quite a fan of the Rolling Stones, new shoes, and his cat, Weapon X.

Erin K. Johns Speese, Ph.D.
Dr. Erin K. Johns Speese joined the full-time faculty of the Duquesne English Department in the 2014-2015 year. She has previously taught at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and West Virginia University and while there, taught courses on transatlantic modernism, science and literature, popular culture, and composition. She received her Ph.D. from West Virginia University in 2013, and her specialty is in transatlantic twentieth-century literature and nineteenth-century British literature.

Johns Speese is currently working on two book projects. The first, The Modernist Sublime: Parenthood and the Intersubjective Sublime Subject in Faulkner, Forster, Lawrence, and Woolf, examines how these writers re-vision the traditional sublime as an intersubjective experience, dependent upon the recognition of social objectification and an ethics of reciprocal empathy between mothers and fathers. Her second project, The Chemistry of Literature, looks at the relationship between scientific and literary writing during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She has recently published an article on D.H. Lawrence, feminism, and the academy in the journal Rhizomes. In her free time, she enjoys binge-watching an embarrassing amount of low-brow television and reading feminist magazines and blogs.

Marianne Holohan, Ph.D. (Fall 2014 semester)
Dr. Marianne Holohan has been teaching in the English Department at Duquesne since 2004 as a graduate assistant, adjunct, and, in Fall 2014, as Visiting Assistant Professor. She received her Ph.D. from Duquesne in 2013, and her dissertation, entitled Scenes of Reading: Forgotten Antebellum Readers, Self-Representation, and the Transatlantic Reprint Industry, won Duquesne’s Distinguished Dissertation Award for the Humanities and Social Sciences in 2014.

As a nineteenth-century Americanist, Marianne is primarily interested in the history of reading—particularly in how minority groups and working-class whites represented their reading of literary texts in letters, diaries, autobiographies, and newspapers. Marianne’s dissertation, as well as her 2013 article, “British Illustrated Editions of Uncle Tom’s Cabin: Race, Working-Class Literacy, and Transatlantic Reprinting in the 1850s,” explore aspects of this topic. In the alarmingly small amount of time that remains after teaching freshman writing and parenting her one-year-old son, Finn, Marianne has been continuing her research on poetic manifestations of class consciousness in antebellum American working-class newspapers.

Rebecca Cepek, Ph.D. (Spring 2015 semester)
Dr. Rebecca Cepek joins the Duquesne English Department for the Spring 2015 semester. She successfully defended her dissertation, Stages of Belief: The Nature of Audience Response in Medieval and Early Modern Drama and received her Ph.D. in May 2014. In addition to teaching at Duquesne during her graduate studies, she has also taught a variety of courses at Bradford School, the Community College of Allegheny County, and Point Park University.

Dr. Cepek’s research focuses on the way the stories we believe shape our perception of reality and her classes generally concentrate on exploring the intersections of fact and fiction. She is currently working on revising and reshaping her dissertation for publication. Dr. Cepek is a native Pittsburgher, and she currently lives on the North Side with her husband and children.
Janine Bayer (Ph.D. 2010) was appointed as the new Chair of the English Department at La Roche College, effective August 2014.

Lori Campbell (Ph.D. 2002) published a new book: A Quest of Her Own: Essays on the Female Hero in Modern Fantasy (Lori Campbell, Ed. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 2014). She is also in the process of organizing a conference on Tolkien and Modern Fantasy in honor of the tenth anniversary of The Fantasy Studies Fellowship, the discussion group she started in 2005 for undergraduates at Pitt who are interested in the fantastic in literature and film. The conference will be held at the University of Pittsburgh on March 27, 2015. Students will present papers in the morning, and in the afternoon, the conference will feature two speakers: NYTimes bestselling author for Daughter of Smoke and Bone trilogy, Laini Taylor; and Mythopoeic Scholarship award winner and Prentice Professor of English at Wheaton College, Michael Drout. Submissions for presentations are open only to Pitt students, but the conference is free and open to all.

Anthony Cuda (B.A. 1998) recently co-edited The Complete Prose of T.S Eliot: The Critical Edition, Volume 2: The Perfect Critic, 1919-1926 with his colleague at Emory University, Ronald Schuchard, who is General Editor of the entire 8-volume set. The series is published through The Johns Hopkins University Press. Full page ads have appeared in the TLS, the New York Review of Books, Harpers, and other major venues. Anthony earned his Ph.D. in English from Emory University in 2004. He began teaching as an Assistant Professor at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro in 2007, and was granted tenure there in 2013.

Ellen Foster (Ph.D. 2005) is currently an Associate Professor of English at the University of the Virgin Islands, teaching at the St. Thomas campus. In recent months, she has also become an editor at H-Pennsylvania, part of H-Net, and a manuscript reviewer for the Bellevue Literary Review; she continues serving as Vice-President, Communications, for the Catharine Maria Sedgwick Society.

In addition, Ellen is two courses away from completing her certificate in Technical Writing and Communications from the University of California Santa Cruz Silicon Valley Extension.

Ruth Newberry (Ph.D. 2011) became a Senior Consulting Specialist for Blackboard Inc. in August 2014. She assists institutions with designing and implementing institutional and program student learning effectiveness, faculty development programs, and strategic adoption of technology for teaching and learning.

In April of 2014, Ruth delivered an invited workshop on “Make It Obvious! Connecting Students to Critical Learner Resources Through Emerging Technologies” at Sloan-C’s 7th Annual Emerging Technologies Symposium for Online Learning in Dallas, Texas and was a panel presenter at Educause Connect for “How do you prepare your faculty? What’s working, what’s not, and what to do?” in Baltimore, MD.

Amy Criniti Phillips (Ph.D. 2011) was hired in fall 2014 as a tenure-track Assistant Professor (British Literature Generalist) at Wheeling Jesuit University.

She also presented a paper, “The Challenges of Promoting Academic Integrity in the Age of (Mis)information,” at the West Virginia Association of College English Teachers (WVACET) Conference.

In the fall semester of 2012, Amy assumed the responsibility of recording all academic integrity violations at Wheeling Jesuit University and was tasked with creating and implementing a standard system of enforcing academic integrity at the university. As a former graduate student and teaching assistant at Duquesne, she contacted the Dean of the Liberal Arts College (Jim Swindal) and received his permission to adapt any of the documents and procedures of the academic integrity process in place at Duquesne. Using Duquesne’s system as a prototype, Amy collaborated with the Chief Academic Officer and the Academic Life Committee to design a three-part system that has been very successful since its implementation.

Claire Stetzer (B.A. 2014) accepted a position as Editorial Assistant for Sandy Creek, a children’s bargain imprint, at Sterling Publishing (Barnes & Noble’s Publishing division). Sandy Creek acquires the rights to children’s books that have been published around the world and then sells the books on the bargain fixture at Barnes & Noble. Claire is involved in all aspects of the process from proofreading and editing for Americanization, to tracking shipments and production timelines.

Sr. Rita Yeasted (Ph.D. 1981) has been appointed as the Dorothy Saladiak Distinguished Professor of English at La Roche College—the College’s first-ever Distinguished Professorship. Sr. Rita recently stepped down as the Chair of the English Department after 34 years.

John Zedolik (Ph.D. 2010) will have an article published in the summer 2015 issue of Studies in Philology, entitled “The Gardyn is Enclosed Al Aboute: The Inversion of Exclusivity in the Merchant’s Tale.” This article explores figurative and literal enclosures in that tale, one of the comedic works of the Canterbury Tales.
Confluence and Division: The Sixteenth Annual Modernist Studies Conference

MSA16 took place at the Omni William Penn in downtown Pittsburgh from November 6-9, and it was a huge success. The Modernist Studies Association is an interdisciplinary organization devoted to the study of the literature, culture, and the arts in the modernist period and the configurations of modernity that arise in the early twentieth century. We’ve been told that this conference was the best yet of all of the MSA conferences, which are held annually and sponsored by universities all over the country and in England.

Hosted by Duquesne University and co-sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh, MSA16 received generous support from Duquesne, including funding and stipends from Provosts Ralph Pearson and Tim Austin; McAnulty College Dean Jim Swindal; English Department Chairs Magali Michael and Greg Barnhisel; and the Center for Women’s and Gender Studies. The local host committee worked diligently for two years preparing for the conference and included Linda Kinnahan, Judy Suh and Greg Barnhisel, and from Pitt, Gayle Rogers. Amazing doctoral students Maureen Gallagher and Mary Parish served as Assistant Conference Organizers, and their excellent work impressed all.

The participation of students, alumni, and faculty showed the breadth and vitality of English Department community. Alumni Tim Bintrim and James Jaap organized and led several Willa Cather Walking Tours of downtown, bringing interesting local flavor to the conference through showing the significance of Cather’s Pittsburgh years to her writing. Several alumni presented papers, including James Jaap, Tim Bintrim, Ellen Smith, Elizabeth Savage, Emily Rutter, Kristianne Kalata Vaccaro, Rita Allison Kondrath, and Megan Jewell, and others supported through their attendance and help, including Justin Kishbaugh, Aaron Rovan, and Elizabeth Rich. Melissa Girard and Cameron Barnett, two of our stellar undergraduate majors from years past, each contributed to organizing and running events.

Thanks to all alumni who couldn’t be here but sent words of support for the big event! Current graduate students Marcie Panutsos Rovan and David Young presented papers, and Mike Smith conducted a workshop. Also, several faculty presented papers, including Judy Suh, Erin Speese, and Faith Barrett, and others served as panel chairs. Thanks to Magali Michael, Tom Kinnahan, Anna Gibson, Kathy Glass, Judy Suh, and Greg Barnhisel for generously helping out in this way.

MSA16 brought 820 scholars to the city for several days of workshops, panels, roundtables, talks, and readings, focused on modernist literature, art, and material culture. The energy of modernist studies was evident everywhere, from the fantastic book exhibit to the plenary talks and the hallway conversations. A panel on modernist film took place on Thursday evening at the University of Pittsburgh as the opening plenary, bringing three major scholars into conversation – David Trotter, Colin MacCabe, and Laura Marcus. The lively discussion was continued on page 6.

Alumni Poetry Reading

The Gumberg Library became a literary salon on October 3 when five Duquesne poets of different generations read their work to an audience of over forty poetry lovers. Current English major Samantha Leon joined Cameron Barnett (B.A. 2012), Elizabeth Savage (Ph.D. 1998), Robert Giannetti (M.A. 1966, Ph.D. 1979) and Samuel Hazo (M.A. 1955 and Professor Emeritus) in presenting their wildly different works.

Recent graduate Barnett showed how impressively his own work has developed in the last two years, and Savage read from her collection of poems inspired by an old grammar book. Hazo, a popular emeritus professor who has also served as Pennsylvania state poet laureate, transfixed his audience by reciting (rather than reading) his poems. Giannetti’s poems demonstrated the influence of the Renaissance poets he loves and Leon held her own among this powerful group of poets.

The English Department was proud to co-sponsor this event with the Gumberg Library and to remind the Duquesne family who had returned to campus for Homecoming Weekend that poetry is alive and well on the Bluff.
Faculty Updates


**Susan Howard** presented “Chronicling the Seminar State: Fictional and Nonfictional” at the East Central American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies in Newark, Delaware in November 2014. Dr. Howard also chaired a panel at the conference on Jane Austen Fan Fiction.

**Jim Purdy** was tenured and promoted to Associate Professor. His book *The New Digital Scholar: Exploring and Enriching the Research and Writing Practices of NextGen Students* (co-edited with Randall McClure) was awarded the Silver Medal in the Education: Commentary/Theory Category for the 2014 Independent Publisher Book Awards. His follow-up collection (again co-edited with Randall McClure), *The Next Digital Scholar: A Fresh Approach to the Common Core State Standards in Research and Writing*, was also published in 2014 and was a Finalist in the Educational/Academic Category at the 2014 USA Best Books Awards.


**Frederick Newberry** presented “‘She wore no waistcoat, and her shift was thin’: Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Elizabeth Inchbald, and the Sexuality of Fashion” at the East Central Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of Delaware in November 2014. She also chaired a roundtable session on “The Pleasures of Eighteenth-Century Archives” at the conference.

**Judy Suh** presented “Countering Orientalism and Bolstering Empire in Interwar British Travel Writing” at the Annual Conference of the Space Between Society, Institute of English Studies at the University of London in July 2014.

**Sarah Breckenridge Wright** presented the paper, “Building Bridges to Canterbury: Mobility in Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales” at the 19th International Congress of the New Chaucer Society in Reykjavik, Iceland in July 2014. Dr. Wright also published the article “The Soil’s Holy Bodies: The Art of Chorography in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*” in *Studies in Philology* 111.4, pgs. 652-79.

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**Dangerous Professor Speaks at Duquesne University**

Michael Bérubé, the Edwin Earle Sparks Professor of Literature at Penn State University, paid a visit to Duquesne in September to speak on the topic of “Disability as Motive.” Among his many professional interests are disability studies, and in his talk he touched upon the role played by disabled characters, and the motivating role of disability itself, in the Harry Potter series and Madeline L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time*.

An engaging and energetic scholar, Bérubé also led a small reading group in the morning and joined Dr. Barnhisel’s English 300 class to talk about professional opportunities in literary studies. Although Bérubé has been called one of the “100 Most Dangerous Academics in America,” tightened security and his affable demeanor ensured that no members of the Duquesne community were harmed during Bérubé’s day on campus.
Theater News

Alumnus Todd Kreidler: Broadway Playwright and Visiting Speaker

For the past few years, the First-Year Writing Program, directed by the English Department, has invited a visiting speaker to present to students during the spring semester. This gives students a rare opportunity to interact with one of the writers whose work they have been studying throughout the semester. On March 23, 2015, the First-Year Writing Program will welcome Broadway Playwright and English Department alumnus, Todd Kreidler.

A former Red Masquer who earned his BA from Duquesne in English and Philosophy, Todd collaborated for many years with the playwright August Wilson while in Pittsburgh. Among his many accomplishments, Todd’s most recent endeavors include Holler If Ya Hear Me—a musical about the life of Tupac Shakur that premiered on Broadway this past June—and a stage adaptation of Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner?, featuring Malcolm Jamal-Warner from The Cosby Show.

The event in March will feature the Red Masquers performing some of Todd’s work, as well as Todd’s presentation, and is open to the public. Visit the “News and Events” page at www.duq.edu/english for event information.

(Source: Linda Lombardi, Arena Stage Blog, November 27, 2013)
Erin Rentschler, a current doctoral student in English, has just been awarded the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award for 2015. This award is sponsored by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, and Erin will receive the award in person at their national meeting held in Washington D.C. in late January. The award is highly competitive, as she is one of only ten recipients of the 2015 award from a pool of approximately three hundred nominees.

“Erin’s been a special teacher and student since she first came to our program, and she richly deserves this honor,” said Department Chair Greg Barnhisel. “Any department would be honored to have one K. Patricia Cross Award winner. To have two, that puts us in rare company—only four or five departments have seen more than one student win. This is just more evidence of how remarkable our students are.”

(Michelle Gaffey, a Ph.D. student in the English Department, won the award in 2010.)

Erin was nominated for the award by her dissertation director, Dr. Magali Cornier Michael, who thought she was a perfect match for the award’s criteria. As the AAC&U website notes, the award “recognizes students who show exemplary promise as future leaders of higher education, who demonstrate a commitment to developing academic and civic responsibility in themselves and others; and whose work reflects a strong emphasis on teaching and learning.”

“What excites me about the K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Award is not that it gives me the opportunity to celebrate my proudest accomplishments, but rather that it values the future-oriented and powerful potential of more typical, day-to-day encounters like those that arise in teaching and collaborating with other teachers,” said Erin. “The award process has given me a chance to step back and reflect on how all the different pieces of my life in the world of higher education—as a graduate student, teacher, and faculty developer—fit together. Being honored as a recipient of this award validates the work I’ve done so far and motivates me to stick to the path I’ve set out for myself.”

The Duquesne University English Department congratulates her for her accomplishments.

Graduate Student Achievements

Coffee House Reading Series 2014-2015

The Coffee House Reading Series is a monthly reading of creative writing at the Barnes & Noble Café in the Power Center on Forbes Avenue. Organized and sponsored by Duquesne University’s English Department, the series aims to develop the creative writing and arts community on Duquesne’s campus by inviting established writers to present their work alongside the work of students and other emerging writers. You can view the current semester’s schedule of readings below. For more information, contact friedj@duq.edu.

ALL READINGS WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE BARNES & NOBLE CAFÉ, POWER CENTER, at 7:00 pm

October 7, 2014
Samantha Leon, poetry
Justin Kishbaugh, poetry

November 10, 2014
Lori Jakiela, memoir
Jane Bernstein, fiction

December 4, 2014
Michael S. Begnal, poetry
Karen Lillis, poetry

February 3, 2015
Scott Silsbe, poetry
Craig Bernier, fiction

March 16, 2015
Erin Elizabeth Smith, poetry
Jeffrey Condran, fiction

April 16, 2015
John Thomas Menesini, poetry
Aubrey Hirsch, fiction
Visiting Speaker, Todd Kreidler
Monday, March 23
Power Center Ballroom

Playwright and Duquesne University alumnus, Todd Kreidler, will be the visiting speaker for the First-Year Writing students in spring 2015. In addition to *Holler if Ya Hear Me*, a musical featuring the lyrics of Tupac Shakur, Todd has adapted and directed several other works. He recently directed August Wilson’s one-man show *How I Learned What I Learned*—a piece he originally directed and co-conceived with Wilson—at Off Broadway Signature Theatre. Todd is also writing a musical with Nikki Sixx, based on Sixx’s memoir and music, *The Heroin Diaries*.

This event will be open to the public.

4th Annual Lexicon Art Show
Tuesday, March 31
Power Center Ballroom

The Art Show will feature artists and performers from around the Duquesne Community and be open to the public. The show is on Tuesday, March 31 on the fifth floor of the Power Center. Anyone interested in participating should contact: lexicon staff at ArtsAtDuquesne@gmail.com. Admission is free, though donations toward future events are much appreciated!

English Graduate Student Organization Conference:
Access: Redefining Disability and Mobility Studies
March 20-21, 2015
Power Center Ballroom

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jonathan Hsy, George Washington University
For more information, contact accessMarch2015@gmail.com.