

Prose is architecture, not interior decoration.

— Ernest Hemingway (1899 – 1961)

THE CREATIVE WRITING PROGRAM

For students interested in literature and writing, the English Department offers a number of major and minor plans that provide academic stimulation and focused instructional skills application. One among these options is the Creative Writing Program. The program committee is made up of some of the English Department's highly regarded professors and includes Director Dennis Doherty, Distinguished Teaching Professor Jan Schmidt, 2006 Adjunct Teacher of the Year Laurence Carr, and, the 2004 recipient of the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, Pauline Uchmanowicz.

After students satisfactorily complete the first two Creative Writing Workshop classes, they may submit their writing portfolios to the program director for review in order to be permitted to declare a creative writing major and to continue to take the two Craft courses necessary to complete their degree. Students have the option of four craft concentrations: fiction, poetry, creative non-fiction, and dramatic writing. All four are intensive courses with the intention of helping to master the students' craft and to expose them to various forms of writing.

Students may also choose to declare a creative writing minor, which consists of two survey courses, two creative workshops courses, and two craft courses,

alongside their major of choice.

Doherty says that since the creative writing minor has been offered, there has been an increase in student interest in the program. "We're becoming bigger and better," he says, "and our program is highly popular."

Not only do creative writing students have the opportunity for extensive writing and peer reviewing the classroom, there are also several writing opportunities that encourage student submissions

and showcase the diverse creativity fostered within the department. These include *Cellar Door* and *The Fugitive*, both entirely student-maintained, and *Stonesthrow Review* and the *The Shawangunk Review* which annually celebrate student writing.

The Creative Writing Program and the English Department also organize several

events throughout the semester that benefit the student body and support the work of faculty, students, and alumni. Some upcoming events include a reading with former Professor Anthony Robinson from his latest novel, *The Floodplain*, at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art on March 13, and a reading with fantasy writer Professor Carol Goodman, pseudonym Juliet Dark, from her novel, *The Demon Lover*, on March 27 in the Honors Center. Both events are free and open to the public.



The Creative Writing Program Committee:
Dennis Doherty, Jan Schmidt (above), Larry Carr, and Pauline Uchmanowicz (below)

Faculty Profile: Erin Newcomb

Erin Newcomb joined the New Paltz faculty as an adjunct professor in the fall of 2008. Newcomb, who studied English at Lafayette College and earned her Masters and PhD in literacy education and women's studies from Penn State, shares an office on the seventh floor of Jacobson Faculty Tower with her husband and Composition Coordinator Matt Newcomb.

"I'm the messy one," she says, explaining why it's probably harder for her husband than it is for her. Other than that, though, she says it's nice to work so closely with her husband.

"We always have someone to read our papers, and someone to help if we're stuck with what to do with a teaching problem or reading a text," she says. "I don't really know what it would be like to be married to someone who didn't do something so similar to what I did."

At New Paltz, Newcomb has taught the early American Literature survey course, Composition, Women's Images and Realities, and Young Adult Literature.

"I like the survey of American literature a lot. I like that it includes the historical perspective and the literature," she says. Newcomb taught American Literature as an online course last summer and says it has since caused her to approach learning as a multimedia experience.

"It just made me really think about what you have to do if there's not a physical classroom. When you don't have body language or facial expressions, how do you make literature come alive?"



Outside of teaching, Dr. Newcomb says she loves to run and she takes her two-year-old daughter Lucy along in the jogging stroller.

"She loves it," Newcomb says. "We are in such a great area to introduce kids to being outside. I think it's so much more fun to take her for a hike somewhere and run around in the forest than to go to a playground."

Newcomb is attempting to run 50 marathons in 50 states, a goal that she says sometimes feels impossible. So far she has completed 18 marathons at 26.2 miles apiece, mostly throughout the northeast. Her goal has been temporarily put on hold, though, as she is expecting to give birth in June. "Pregnancy is slowing me down from marathons for a little while. Hopefully after this one I can get back into it," she says.

When she does return to running marathons, Newcomb is looking forward to traveling to states like Alaska, Hawaii, and California.

"There are just so many places that have great races," she says. "There's one in Napa. Napa could definitely win for post-race festivities."

Newcomb also enjoys fantasy novels and says her favorite author is J.R.R. Tolkien. She advises her students to continue to read for personal enjoyment aside from what is assigned in their classes.

"Read for pleasure because that's why most English majors become English majors," she says. "Keep that fire there. That you can hold on to forever."

Alumni and Friends of the English Department

Alumni and Friends of the English Department (AFED) was launched in 2009 and is a program that supports departmental initiatives that could not otherwise be afforded with state allocated money. Every dollar donated to AFED is used to benefit student activities such as the Graduate Symposium, Sigma Tau Delta honor society inductions, student travel, speakers and lecturers, field trips, and



more. Making a contribution to AFED is a great way for alumni to stay involved with their former department and

network with other graduates, but you do not need to have graduated to give a little bit back to the department we all love. Visit the AFED website at www.newpaltz.edu/English/friends to learn more about a membership. Any support would be greatly appreciated!

Anthony Robinson's *The Floodplain*

On Tuesday, March 13 at 5 p.m. at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, former New Paltz Professor and Creative Writing Director Anthony Robinson will be doing a reading from his most recent novel, *The Floodplain*. He says the inspiration for the book was somewhat geographical, living in a floodplain for most of his life.

Robinson says that the floodplain is symbolic of “both a very peaceful place when the weather is nice, and the sun is shining, and it’s a beautiful spring day or summer evening, a floodplain is that level fertile ground; people can walk on it, things grow on it, but when those rivers start to overflow, and when bad weather comes it becomes a raging torrent of water. Very dangerous and destructive.”

The story itself is based on Robinson’s first wife.

“She became a very beautiful woman, very talented,” he says. “She was a psychotherapist, but some incidents happened and she began to be emotionally upset. It had a tragic end. That was very moving and upsetting and certainly it

represented enough of a strong focus point for me to extrapolate, and move on, and create a fictional network all around the fact that she died.”

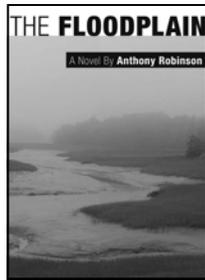
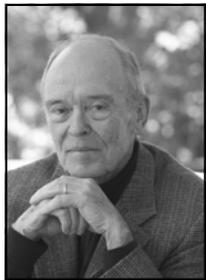
Robinson’s previous novel, *The American Golfer*, was just recently published in 2010 and Robinson says, having published two novels so quickly, he’s “feeling some good creative energy.” He is already working on another project entitled

Bluestone which tells the story of a boy growing up in the maverick art colony in Woodstock, NY.

“That’s where I grew up,” Robinson says. “My father went there as a young poet and had a little house there. It’s very famous for artists, writers, and

musicians. It’s in Woodstock, but apart from the village itself. Very rural.”

The novelist, who taught a variety of creative writing, composition, and survey literature courses during his time at New Paltz from 1964 through 2000, is really looking forward to the reading. “I miss teaching. I would like to go back,” he says. “I miss the classroom, really a lot.”



Pop-up Book Author Robert Sabuda

The Friends of the Sojourner Truth Library, an association of faculty, students, alumni, and community members, is hosting a free public lecture, reception, and book signing with pop-up book author Robert Sabuda. On April 4 at 4:30 p.m. in Lecture Center 104, Sabuda will be presenting a lecture entitled “Popping Up Through Space and Time” which will include a brief history of the art of pop-up books as well as an overview of his own creative work.

Robert Sabuda is a #1 *New York Times* best-selling children’s book creator, a two-time recipient of the *New York Times* Best Illustrated Book award, and has over five-million books in print. Some of his best-sellers include movable book versions of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and *The 12 Days of Christmas*.

Library Outreach Coordinator Morgan Gwenwald says The Friends decided to invite Sabuda back to the campus for a special lecture because he was so well received during his last visit. In 2005, the library hosted a lecture with Sabuda in conjunction with the library’s well-attended “Ideas in Motion: The History of Pop-Up and Movable Books” exhibit.

“The turn-out was huge,” Gwenwald says. The Friends of the Sojourner Truth Library try to organize lectures and events that benefit the campus, and, based on Sabuda’s previous visit, “people really like getting books signed.”

During the event, the campus bookstore will have for sale a collection of Sabuda’s books so attendees may browse, purchase, and have their books signed.



Briefly Noted

The Fugitive is accepting submissions of prose or poetry, traditional or experimental. E-mail to **fugitivefugitive@yahoo.com** by March 8 with your name and the title in the subject header. For more information check them out at **fugitiveweb.tumblr.com**.



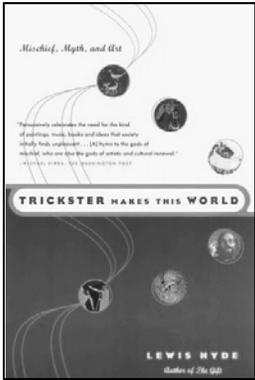
Come out for “An Evening of Fantasy.” Carol Goodman will read from *The Demon Lover*, written under the pseudonym Juliet Dark, on Tuesday, March 27 at 5:00 p.m. in the Honors Center.

The Department of English and the Career Resource Center have collaborated to organize the following events as part of the “Your English Degree @ Work” Series:

- A “Great Careers in Writing” discussion panel with three New Paltz alumni on Wednesday, March 14 from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. in JFT 1010.
- A “Teach English Abroad” information session and discussion panel on Wednesday, April 11 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in Lecture Center 102.

“What I’m Reading”: Jack Foster





This month’s “What I’m reading” column comes from Jack Foster, MA graduate, former Teaching Assistant, and current Alumni and Friends of the English Department member.

My substantial hunger for reading, like my appetite for food, is best satisfied by varying genres according to my current interests, whims, and what’s on the menu. In the past few weeks I’ve read Adrienne Mayor’s *The Poison King*, which convinced me that nothing has changed in the Middle East in the past 3,000 years except the names; C.O. Mann’s binary titles *1491* and *1493*, which has me re-evaluating my ideas of our North American new world narrative as well as expanding my thinking about globalization; Stephen Greenblatt’s *The Swerve*, which disappointed; Karen Russell’s collection of short stories and novel, *St. Lucy’s Home For Girls Raised By Wolves* and *Swamplandia* (respectively), which did not; Haruki Murakami’s *IQ84*, which fascinates while it discomforts; and, finally, the most engaging book I’ve read, *Trickster Makes This World, Mischief, Myth, and Art* by Lewis Hyde. Hyde proposes ways to analyze the actions of multi-cultural tricksters such as Hermes, Coyote, Loki, and Krishna the butter thief. This book is far more than mere myth analysis.

Footnotes

1. March 12: Mid-Point of Spring 2012 Semester
2. March 19-23: Spring Break
3. March 26: Classes resume.
4. March 30: Last day for course withdrawal

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