



THE ENGLISH CHANNEL



UConn Department of English

January 2016

Volume 2, Issue 2

FROM THE HEAD



Bob Hasenfratz
Department Head

In the following pages, you will discover the incredible range of accomplishments, activities, and contributions of the English Department since June 2015. This year has been particularly productive for the department, with a bumper crop of faculty publications, a number of students completing their PhDs, and a plenitude of awards, grants, and honors. Please see our website (<http://english.uconn.edu/>) or like our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/uconnenglish/>) to receive up-to-date notices about talks and events. We would love to hear from alumni about your experiences as English Majors. If you have current news or anecdotes to tell about your time as a student or have photographs of professors, colleagues, or alumni, please send them to me at hasenfratz@uconn.edu or Claire Reynolds at claire.reynolds@uconn.edu.

ALUM NEWS

Maggie Mitchell (PhD '04) published her debut novel, *Pretty Is*, in July through Henry Holt. It received [critical acclaim](#) in *The New York Times*. Mitchell read from the novel on August 5 at the Co-op Bookstore.

J. Aaron Sanders (PhD '08) is getting [good coverage](#) of his first novel, *Speakers of the Dead: A Walt Whitman Mystery*. He will be reading at the Co-op in Storrs Center April 21 at 6:00 pm.

GRAD LANDINGS

Gordon Fraser (PhD '15) secured a tenure-track position beginning Spring 2016 teaching American Literature at North Dakota State University.

Jon Kotchian (PhD '12) accepted a position as a full-time lecturer in the English department at Florida International University, where he will teach in the Writing and Rhetoric program.

Abbye Meyer (PhD '14) has taken a position as a Program Officer at the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities.

2015 PHDS EARNED

Emily Cormier, Jared Demick, Christina Henderson,
Gordon Fraser, Laila Khan, Kathryn Kornacki

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Editor: Claire Reynolds

Assistant Editor: Kaitlyn Sparta



NOTABLE EVENTS

Danielle Chapman, poet, essayist, and lecturer in English at Yale, presented her work at the UConn Co-op Bookstore on October 27. Chapman served as the Director of Literary Arts and Events for the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. She was also a consulting editor for The Poetry Foundation.

Creative writing professor **Bruce Cohen** read from his collection of poetry on September 30. Cohen, whose work has appeared in literary periodicals such as *The New Yorker*, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *The Southern Review*, has published four volumes of poetry. Previously, he directed, developed, and implemented nationally recognized academic enhancement programs at UConn, the University of Arizona, and the University of California at Berkeley.

Martha Collins, poet, translator, and editor, read from her book *Blue Front* on October 14. This book is her fifth collection of poems. Collins founded the Creative Writing Program at UMass-Boston and was Pauline Delaney Professor of Creative Writing at Oberlin College for ten years. She is currently editor-at-large for *FIELD* magazine and an editor for the Oberlin College Press.

Writing Women, Writing War
 British-Born novelist Nadifa Mohamed discusses the challenges of writing about women engaged in and affected by conflict. Mohamed was one of Granta's "Best of Young British Novelists" and her debut novel *Black Mamba Boy* won the 2010 Betty Trask Award, and was shortlisted for numerous awards, including the 2010 Guardian First Book Award, the 2010 Dylan Thomas Prize, and the 2010 John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. She was born in Marghera, Bangladesh and moved to the UK at the age of six.
 Oct 7th, Wednesday
 4pm
 Stern Lounge,
 Austin 217
 Sponsored by the Department of English and the Research Program on Humanitarianism at the Human Rights Institute.
 Contact: bhaskar.sharma@uconn.edu

Nadifa Mohamed gave a talk, "Writing Women, Writing War," on October 7. She discussed the challenges of writing about women engaged in and affected by conflict. Mohamed was one of Granta's "Best of Young British Novelists," and her debut novel *Black Mamba Boy* won the 2010 Betty Trask Award.

Award-winning poet **Jacqueline Osherow** read at the Co-op on November 11. Osherow is a Distinguished Professor of English at the University of Utah, where she directs the Creative Writing Program.

Mya Poe presented "Intended Consequences: What Students Can Tell Us About Writing Assessment" on October 19. Poe is a writer, editor, and assistant professor of English at Northeastern University. Her research focuses on writing assessment, diversity, and writing in the disciplines.

Laura van den Berg, Aetna Writer-in-Residence, read from her fiction on November 4. She is the author of two collections of stories and a novel. She received the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters, an O. Henry Award, and the Bard Fiction Prize. Currently, she is Writer-in-Residence at Bard College.

Medieval Live!

The **Medieval Studies Program** presented *Medieval Live! A Multimedia Middle Ages* on September 17. The event featured magical duels, onerous dowries, singing nuns, gibberish songs, and holy drunkards rendered from manuscripts for a digital projector. Students and faculty performed these pieces in the original languages of the medieval period.



EMINENT GUESTS

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
 IS PROUD TO PRESENT
"THE SCIENCE OF STORYTELLING"
 A LECTURE BY **FREDERICK LUIS ALDAMA**
 Arts and Humanities Distinguished Professor of English
 (Ohio State University)
 MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2015
 AUSTIN 217 (STERN LOUNGE)
 4:00-6:00 pm
 REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED
 Drawing from insights in the cognitive sciences, Professor Aldama will propose a dynamic model for understanding why it is we create and consume stories in all variety of oral, visual, and verbal formats from Mesopotamian folk tales to today's social and contemporary Latino & Hispanic movies and comic books. Considering film, short stories, art, and comics, Aldama proposes a science of storytelling that encompasses the subtle interplay between the creation of artistic texts and the meaning we give them.
 Co-Sponsored by
 El Instituto, Institute of Latino, Caribbean, and Latin American Studies

On November 2, **Frederick Luis Aldama**, Distinguished Professor of English at Ohio State University, presented "The Science of Storytelling." He provided a dynamic model for understanding why we create and consume stories in all variety of visual, verbal, and aural formats. Aldama proposed a science of storytelling encompassing the interplay between the creation of artistic texts and the meaning we give them.

Professor **Dyan Elliott**, the 2015 Charles Owen Visiting Professor, gave a talk, "Corrupter of Boys: The Medieval Church and Child Abuse," on September 9. She drew on new research for a monograph on medieval scandal. Elliott, Peter B. Ritzma Professor of the Humanities and Professor of History at Northwestern, is the author of four books on medieval gender, spirituality, and sexuality.

Guest speaker **Lisa Lowe** held a seminar based on her new book, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, on November 13. Lowe is Professor of English and American Studies at Tufts University. She is the author of *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* and the coeditor of *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*.

Assistant Professor of English **Nicole McClure** of Kutztown University spoke on November 12 at the Waterbury campus on Irish masculinity, fatherhood, and the cinematic representations of "the troubles" in Northern Ireland. Her talk featured illustrative film clips. McClure received both her MA and PhD in Comparative Literary & Cultural Studies from UConn and has been a guest speaker at the University on many occasions.

Internationally acclaimed award-winning poet, children's book author, and Professor Emerita **Marilyn Nelson** spoke on September 16 in the Stern Lounge about rhyme, scansion, and poetic form. Nelson is a former Connecticut Poet Laureate as well as the 2012 Frost Medal recipient. She has authored or translated fifteen books. Her works for children usually address African American history.

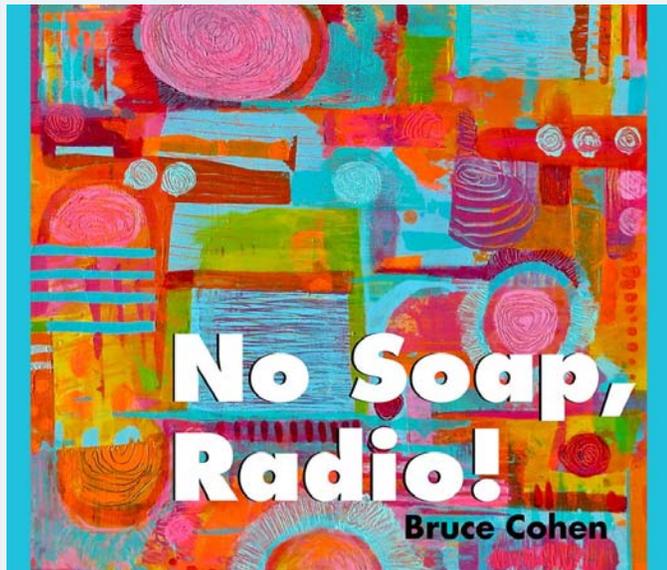


Carl Phillips, the 2016 Wallace Stevens Poet, will read from his work on March 22. Phillips is the author of a dozen books of poetry, two works of criticism, various essays, and a translation. His honors include a Lambda Literary Award, an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Pushcart Prize, the Academy of American Poets Prize, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the Library of Congress. Phillips served as Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets from 2006 to 2012. He is Professor of English, African Studies, and African American Studies at Washington University in St. Louis, where he also teaches in the Creative Writing Program.

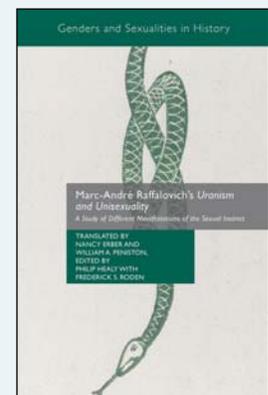
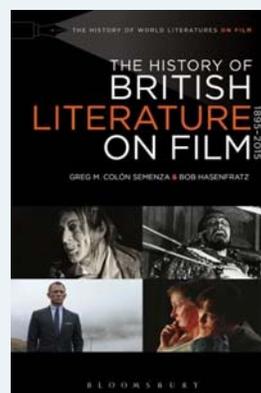


RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- Bedore, Pamela. "The Coy, the Graphic, and the Ugly: Violence in Dime Novels." *Violence in American Popular Culture*, Vol. 2.
- Burke, Mary. "The Marriage Plot and the Plot Against the Union: Irish Home Rule and Henry James's 'The Modern Warning.'" *Irish Studies Review*.
- Cohen, Bruce. *No Soap, Radio!*
- . "Non-Emergency Room" and "Human Mathematics." Poems. *Descant Magazine* 54 (Fall 2015).



- MacLeod, Glen, with Bart Eeckhout. "American Poetry in the 1910s and 1920s: Stevens, Moore, Williams, and Others." *A History of Modernist Poetry*.
- Marsden, Jean. "Richard Cumberland's *The Jew* and the Benevolence of the Audience: Performance and Religious Tolerance." *Eighteenth-Century Studies*.
- Piller, Erick. "The Extinction of the Rabbits." Poem. *Fugue*.
- Recchio, Tom. "Wordsworthian Pastoral and the Problem of Evil in *The Moorland Cottage*." *Evil and Its Variations in the Works of Elizabeth Gaskell: Sesquicentennial Essays*.
- Reeds, Eleanor. "Trio." Poem. *Long River Review*.
- Roden, Frederick S. "E. M. Forster's *Maurice*: A Roadmap to the First 'Gay' Novel in English." *Critical Insights: LGBTQ Literature*.
- . ed., with Philip Healy and Marc-Andre Raffalovich. *Uranism and Unisexuality: A Study of Different Manifestations of the Sexual Instinct*.
- Salah, Christiana. "Reimagining Revolution: Later Lives of the Narrative of Joseph Plumb Martin in Children's Literature." *Children's Literature*.
- Sánchez González, Lisa. "Teaching Boricua Literature." *Latino/a Literature in the Classroom: Twenty-first-century Approaches to Teaching*.
- Schlund-Vials, Cathy J., and Cynthia Wu. "Embodied Hybridity: Mixed Race, Adoptee, and Disabled Subjectivities." *Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature*.
- Semenza, Greg, and Robert Hasenfratz. *The History of British Literature on Film, 1895-2015*.
- Shelton, Matthew. "Rounding." Poem. *Abridged 0-47*.
- . "Wreckers." Poem. *Two Words For*.
- Shringarpure, Bhakti. "The Afterlives of Frantz Fanon and the Reconstruction of Postcolonial Studies." *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy*.
- . "Wartime Transgressions: Postcolonial Feminists Reimagine the Self and Nation." *The Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*.
- Smith, Victoria Ford. "Art Critics in the Cradle: Fin-de-Siècle Painting Books and the Move to Modernism." *Children's Literature*.
- Somerset, Fiona. "Masculinity and its Metonyms." *European Review of History*.
- Vials, Chris. "Red Feminists and Methodist Missionaries: Dorothy McConnell and the Other Afterlife of the Popular Front." *Lineages of the Literary Left: Essays in Honor of Alan M. Wald*.
- Winter, Sarah. "'Inverted Sympathy': Empathy and Mediation in Literary Transactions of Human Rights." *Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights*.
- Coundouriotis, Eleni. "In Flight: The Refugee Experience and Human Rights Narrative." *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Human Rights*.
- Davis, Susanne. "Destiny's Clothes." Short Story. In *An Uncion from the Holy One 4ink7 1* (Oct. 2015).
- Gallucci, Mary. "Mistaken Identities?: Alessandro de' Medici and the Question of 'Race.'" *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*.
- Harney-Mahajan, Tara. "Refashioning the Wedding Dress as the 'Future Anterior' in Edna O'Brien and Marina Carr." *Women's Studies*.
- Higonnet, Margaret. "Adaptations of *Alice in Wonderland*." *Cambridge Literary Review*.
- Hogan, Patrick. "Toward a Cognitive Poetics of History: Pinjar, the Ramayana, and Partition." *The Indian Partition in Literature and Films: History, Politics, and Aesthetics*.
- . "The Personal Ethics of Academic Freedom: Problems of Knowledge and Democratic Competence." *Journal of Academic Freedom*. <<http://www.aaup.org/reports-publications/journal-academic-freedom/volume-6>>.
- . "Metaphor in Cinematic Simulation, or Why Wim Wenders's Angels Live in a Colorless World." In *Embodied Metaphors in Film, Television, and Video Games: Cognitive Approaches*.
- Igarashi, Yohei. "Statistical Analysis at the Birth of Close Reading." *New Literary History*.
- Kaus, Alaina. "Liberalities of Feeling: Free Market Subjectivities in Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*.
- King'oo, Clare Costley. "William Hunnis and the Success of the Seven Sobs." *Renaissance Studies*.





AWARDS AND HONORS



Lynn Bloom was selected as a member of the national Fulbright US Student Screening Committee in Creative Writing for 2016-17 awards.

Kate Capshaw's *Civil Rights Childhood: Picturing Liberation in African American Photobooks* (2014) won the Honour Award from the International Research Society for Children's Literature. She was also named Master Class Tutor for "The Future of the Subject: Archives" from Newcastle University and Seven Stories: National Centre for Children's Books, UK, August 2015.

Ellen Carillo received a 2015 Council of Writing Program Administrators Research Grant of \$990.00 for her study "The Writing Center: A Promising Site for Studying Transfer?" She also received a Public Discourse Project (PDP) Initiative Award to plan a project titled "Fostering Tolerance, Empathy, and Open-mindedness in our Students: A Pedagogical Intervention." The goal of this project is to educate instructors on how to develop pedagogies that foster qualities such as open-mindedness and tolerance in their students.

Dwight Codr was elected to the Executive Board of the Daniel Defoe Society for a four-year term.

Martha J. Cutter received \$2,000 in funding from the Office of the Vice President for Research's Scholarship Facilitation Fund (SFF) for archival work on her project, *No Captive to the Stage: The Life and Performance Art of Henry Box Brown*.

Susanne Davis's short story collection *In Pursuit of Happiness* was runner up for the University of Kentucky Press Prose Series.

Gordon Fraser won the MLA William Riley Parker Prize for "Troubling the Cold War Logic of Annihilation: Apocalyptic Temporalities in Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger* and *Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*," which appeared in *PMLA* May 2015.

Sharon Harris was honored for contributions to the field with a panel devoted to her work by the Society of Early Americanists

at their annual conference in June. The commentaries from "An ample field would be opened': A Roundtable Honoring Sharon M. Harris" were then published on the SEA website: <http://www.societyofearlyamericanists.org/harris_roundtable.html>. She also received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for the Study of American Women Writers in Philadelphia on November 6.

Matthew Jones was awarded the Cardiff University USA Excellence Scholarship to receive an MA in Welsh & Celtic Studies over the 2015-16 school year.

Clare Costley King'oo was elected to the Executive Board of the Conference on Christianity and Literature (MLA affiliate organization) for a three-year term, 2016-2019.

Glen MacLeod won the John N. Serio Award for the best essay published in *The Wallace Stevens Journal* for "Stevens and the Cast Tradition."

Hannah Mockel-Rieke won the 2014-15 Scholarly Excellence Award from the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities Board of Regents for Higher Education. She was also the System Award Winner of the Board of Regents Scholarly Excellence Award for curriculum development and research in Peace and Conflict Studies at Norwalk Community College.

Grégory Pierrot was elected President of the Amiri Baraka Society for a two-year term, 2015-17.

Eleanor Reeds won the Aetna Graduate Critical Essay prize for "The Human Dimension of 'Telegraphic Orders': Agency and Communication in Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*"

Fred Roden received the Faculty Recognition Award at the Stamford campus on August 25.

Davyne Verstandig was made Poet Laureate of Washington in September and read from her poetry with other Connecticut laureates on October 27.

2015 AETNA WRITING PRIZES

First-Year Writing

Joshua Weist, "Corruptive Villainy: Finding the Root of Evil."

Ratcliffe Hicks

Julia Nattila, "Easy is the Descent into Hell": Seeing the Pain of Others in *Breaking Bad*.

Graduate Critical Essay Contest

Eleanor Reeds, "The Human Dimension of 'Telegraphic Orders': Agency and Communication in Ruiz de Burton's *Who Would Have Thought It?*"

2015 SOPHOMORE HONORS

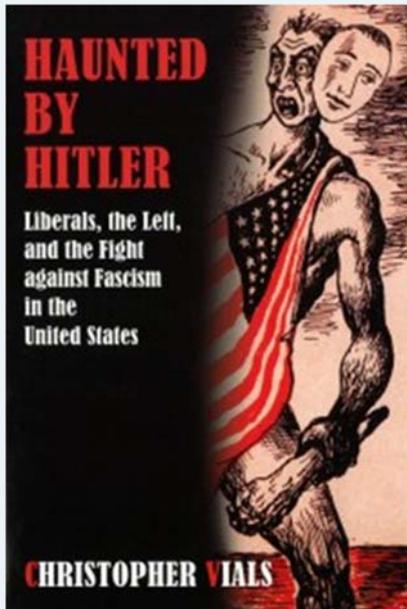
Jacqueline Bickley, Erika Mayer, Ainsley McMahan, Jeffrey Netting, Denisse Perez, Kaitlyn Sparta, and Sooriya Sundaram earned 2015 Sophomore Honors Certificates on October 20. These awards recognize their academic achievement, completion of Honors courses, and participation in Honors events during their freshman and sophomore years. Sooriya Sundaram presented the keynote talk at the ceremony.

IN MEMORIAM

Professor **John Seelye** (1931-2015), who taught English and American Literature for UConn, the University of California at Berkeley, University of North Carolina, Dartmouth College, and the University of Florida, died on April 20. Seelye served in the US Navy as a lieutenant during the Korean conflict. A writer, author, and scholar who wrote on a variety of subjects, he also enjoyed restoring historical homes and buildings, such as Veterans' Memorial Hall in Eastport, Maine—a museum dedicated to American Veterans.

Professor **Charles Angus McLaughlin** (1920-2015), who taught Shakespeare and 18th-century literature in our department from 1952 to 1989, served on the committee for disabled students, coached the UConn College Bowl team, received the Distinguished Teaching Award, and served as director of the Center of Innovative Education, died on June 11. McLaughlin was known as a Renaissance man with a wide range of interests and talents such as poetry, languages, acting, chess, music, tennis, stamp collecting, birding, and skiing. He served in the Army and was awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM NOT OVER



After World War II, many Americans thought the defeat of the Axis Powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan signaled the end of the threat of fascism, the political ideology based in extreme right-wing nationalism.

Yet fascist ideology existed in the United States in the early part of the 20th century, and in a new book Christopher Vials, director of American Studies and an associate professor of English, examines how fascism continues to

lurk in the fabric of the nation's culture and politics.

"There are functional equivalents of fascism in the United States after World War II, and these have had a demonstrable effect on American culture," says Vials, author of *Haunted by Hitler: Liberals, the Left, and the Fight against Fascism in the United States* (University of Massachusetts Press 2014). "I'm not saying they take the forms of Mussolini and Hitler. There is a distinctly American vein. The biggest aim of the book is to begin to have a conversation about the history of fascism within the United States."

Vials, whose previous book, *Realism for the Masses: Aesthetics, Popular Front Pluralism, and U. S. Culture, 1935-1947* (2009), examined American culture in the 1930s and 1940s, says that throughout American history there have been fringe movements that are important because they "terrorize people"; but he is most concerned about "functional equivalents of a mainstream fascist movement in the United States."

He notes how American politics has been affected by such activities in the past, from the 1930s radio broadcasts of Father Charles Coughlin—considered the founding father of right-wing radio—to George Wallace's American Independent Party in the 1960s, and beyond.

The Independent Party, the party of the Alabama governor known for his segregationist stand in his run for President in 1968, tried to capitalize on white backlash against minorities—a politics of resentment—which Vials says subsequently served as a strategy for Republican Party politics that was used by Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George H.W. Bush. It was this political approach that led the Black Panther Party to label the tactics used by the US government as fascist during demands from minority groups for social justice.

"What the Panthers were identifying at the time through the horrific backlash toward people of color movements in the late 1960s and the mainstreaming of Wallace was a kind of fascist politics," Vials says. "These politics were toxic not just for African Americans and people of color, but for white people as well."

He says that in the contemporary US, the Christian Right, particularly certain strands of it, are the closest functional equivalents of a mainstream fascist movement. But there are also some who apply the term to liberals.

"You have books like Jonah Goldberg's *Liberal Fascism* making a serious argument that liberals in the United States from John F. Kennedy to Hillary Clinton are fascists," Vials says. "It's become a relativizing term that embraces everything. In certain ways the left, with its own hyperbolizing, has been responsible for that state of affairs."

While Vials is more cautious in applying the term *fascist*, he says he does identify a movement like the Tea Party as dangerous. "Even though it's premature to call it fascist per se, they do have to explain someone like Richard Lott, who was running for Congress as a Tea Party representative and who dressed up like a Nazi, and others like him who are drawn to their movement," he says. "There's a reason for that; they recognize in the Tea Party a common set of core beliefs and a kind of exclusionary nationalism that they can latch themselves onto."

Vials explains that the two symbols of World War II fascism, Adolph Hitler and Benito Mussolini, built their political philosophy on the central role of militarism, after embracing military culture during their service in World War I and seeking to recreate society based on military life.

"Anti-fascists in the 1950s were concerned with the rise of the military industrial complex and about the Cold War," he says. "With the permanent standing army after the Korean War and with a permanent militarization of the culture, there really is a cause for concern. If you get a politics that is foundationally tied to militarism and yokes that militarism in particular ways, it's a bad sign."

"I'm not saying that any politicians who are ex-military are fascists, but if you have a war hero politician who is into military expansion abroad and who wants to refashion civilian life around the model of the military—and combines this with fanatical anti-communism and racism—all of these things combined should raise the alarm bells. But this is only one form an American fascism can take."

—Kenneth Best, *UConn Today*, 15 July 2015



Sen. Joseph McCarthy as a German soldier. During the McCarthy era in the late 1940s and early 1950s, thousands of Americans were accused of being communists or communist sympathizers. (Syndicated cartoon by Bill Mauldin, Feb. 25, 1954, Fig. 4 in *Haunted by Hitler*)



**JONATHAN HUFSTADER: RAISING THE STANDARDS AT
UConn SINCE 1993**



Professor Emeritus and adjunct faculty member **Jonathan Hufstader** graduated from Yale in 1960 and spent the next twenty-five years as a Benedictine monk, teaching French, religion, and philosophy at a secondary school for boys. A self-described “frustrated grad student,” he left the monastery in 1986, married the next year, and pursued graduate studies at Harvard with a focus on poetry, while teaching at a girls’ school near Boston. Helen Vendler taught him how to write about poetry, and the Nobel Prize-winning poet Seamus Heaney, who taught creative writing and poetry to undergrads, discussed his own work with him, giving Hufstader a better understanding of poetry. His UConn career began in 1993, and he continues to teach Heaney as well as Yeats, Keats, and others.

Hufstader speaks of the difference between honors and non-honors poetry classes. The honors sections of his poetry courses are capped at fifteen or twenty students, while the non-honors sections meet in large lecture halls. He finds that students tend to struggle more in such a large and impersonal environment. Meanwhile, the honors students thrive in their small classroom setting. They “enjoy poetry and *get* school. In the past they may have had teachers who had a positive influence on them. If you like something you’re going to be good at it. You have to have sympathetic vibrations with what you are doing.”

Hufstader’s association with the honors department extended beyond teaching honors poetry courses. He served on the board and the University Scholars Committee for several years. He described his involvement as a rewarding experience and the high point of his career at UConn. Hufstader enjoyed working with the other honors department members, noting that “they are all pleasant and easy to get along with, and they run the department extremely well.”

As for other faculty members and students, Hufstader says they are all excellent at what they do, past and present. UConn continues to attract high quality professors who are experts in many fields. While the caliber of these professors remains the same, the nature of past and present students differs. Hufstader remembers some truly great students in his early years, such as Paula Wilmot, who is now assistant director of the honors program. Today’s students write even better. Fewer of them are hung up on “obeying instructors and acting like a good kid” and therefore finding it difficult to write in interesting and original ways. Past students were dutiful, while present students are enthusiastic, and Hufstader says that the difference between the two really shows in their writing. While writing is a major part of being an English major, Hufstader advises today’s students to read. “You need to be a reader, you need to like it. It’s nerdy, but true.” It’s all about doing what you love.

On his retirement, Hufstader’s colleagues created in his honor the Hufstader Undergraduate Award, which is presented yearly to a graduating English major. Students are selected based on GPA, university involvement outside the classroom, and a recommendation from a professor. Speaking of the award, Professor Liz Hart describes Hufstader as the heart and soul of the English honors program, with a reputation for excellent teaching, humanity, patience, and compassion. For her, it seemed an obvious choice to honor Hufstader in this way.

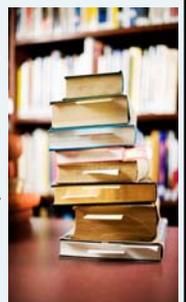
“He is fabulous,” says Hart. “He raised the standard for running the honors program and for being an honors student. We used our love for Jonathan Hufstader as an excuse to study truly distinguished students. It is a delight to honor him by acknowledging students who personify a sense of excellence.”

—Kaitlyn Sparta

SUPPORT ENGLISH

We are grateful for the generosity of our many donors—students and their parents, faculty, staff, and others—which allows us to fund scholarships and bring a rich array of learning opportunities to the community. You may donate to the English Department on the secure giving page for [CLAS](#); click “Other Gift Designation,” and type in English Department and the [specific fund](#), if any.

This year we are excited to introduce a newly endowed fund thanks to the generosity of two of our alums, Kathleen Walsh ('77 '79 '84) and Jim Carrington ('78). The Tribute to English Professors Fund for Graduate Education (31438) provides financial support, including fellowships and travel to conferences, seminars, and symposia, for English graduate students in honor or in memory of English professors.





WHY DO FEMALE COMEDIANS DISAPPEAR AFTER DARK?

With Trevor Noah debuting as host of *The Daily Show*, much of the conversation has centered on the 31-year-old South African's race and age.

Yet the recent late-night host shake-ups have one thing in common: from Seth Meyers to Stephen Colbert, they're still all men, all the time.

So where are the women on late-night television? The question is paraded out every few years as regularly as frosted lipstick or the peplum, as if no one has ever thought of it before. But women's humor is not a recent invention (look no further than Joan Rivers and Carol Burnett), even if—for some—it's a new discovery.

The circumstances remain the same: Women are not dominating late-night television for the same reason that they're not running most corporations or most countries. It's for the same reason that they're not controlling as much crucial real estate in the fields of sports, medicine, finance, and law as their male counterparts.

Women in power make a lot of people very nervous. And a lot of people—especially a lot of men—don't want to be made nervous every night before they go to sleep.

The last thing they want is an edgy, scintillating discussion, with the raucous laughter and powerful voice of a singularly funny, smart female host who, on a nightly basis, shapes one of the most significant conversations in contemporary culture.

Women in comedy remain a marginalized community. In 2010, a British television station polled people on the 100 best comedians of all time. In their results, 94 were men. As scholars who study gender and humor have pointed out, women's humor ruffles feathers, with "gender stereotypes" hindering "the development and recognition of women's humor."

At the same time, there's no question that a long line of women would make brilliant empresses of late-night programming; Tina Fey and Ellen DeGeneres would be effective, engaging, wildly entertaining, and hilarious hosts. And there are dozens of other women in the business who would have given Kimmel, Colbert, Meyers, and Noah a run for their money, even in heels.

I suspect that studio heads and the advertisers responsible for programming remain afraid that putting a woman behind the desk will lead to a decline in male viewership. (Meanwhile, they don't seem all too concerned about the female share.)

It's the 50-and-older crowd that reliably continues to tune into live programming for news and entertainment. For this reason, it's a desirable segment; they're the ones who are going to make or break late-night TV shows.

A woman alone behind the desk, with the microphone in front of her and a posse of the best writers in the country behind her, is in one of the most significant positions of influence in American popular culture. And however much kidding around is permitted on the set, she would actually be the person in control.

She would be the ringleader, the authority, the one running the show on both metaphorical and literal levels, and hers would be the last word.

A lot of men over 50 aren't familiar—or comfortable—with confronting that reality. Even though Christopher Hitchens's *Why Women Aren't Funny* is now a few years old, it remains emblematic of his generation's beliefs about a conventional, biological, and historical inability to create comedy and humor.

So what's being lost by not putting a woman at the helm of a late-night TV show?

Humorists are always at the head of their generation's class, given their ability to willfully and wickedly push, prod, and pinch their audiences into thought, emotion, and laughter. The women who create humor articulate what's ubiquitous but unspoken; they say, with wit and courage, what most of us are too cowardly or anxious to admit. In much the same way that we need comedians of different racial backgrounds, female comedians can tackle subjects that are taboo, or that white male comedians can't address with as much insight or depth.

While they're at it, the best of them help us find our own humor in the everyday; they help us remember to laugh at what we didn't find funny the first time around. By questioning, mocking, and demystifying the world, funny women illustrate that humor is our culture's third rail: electrified, powerful, and dangerous.

When women's voices are heard more effectively during the day in more places, I'm sure we'll be able to have them heard above a whisper after midnight. We'll have to make our own voices as viewers heard, and let those running the shows know we want women in those late-night-host spots.

I, for one, can't wait for the moment we'll get some enlightenment after dark.

—Gina Barreca, *UConn Today*, 2 October 2015
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Gina Barreca, professor of English, gives the address at the Convocation ceremony held at Gampel Pavilion.