



Moving Forward in the English Department

by Veronica Romanelli, Rashonda Montgomery, Darren Martinez, and Briauna Robinson

This semester, we asked the first year students on the Inkwell's staff to tell us what class they were looking forward to the most next year. The following are the responses they shared as they continue their journey as English majors here at Wilkes.

Veronica

The class I am most excited to take during the Fall 2019 semester is ENG 397. This class will be my first author class, and it focuses on Chaucer. I read some Chaucer last semester in ENG 233, and I really enjoyed it. My sister Gabriella was also an English major at Wilkes. She graduated in 2016, but I remember when she was in college, she always used to talk to me about her Chaucer class and why Chaucer was her favorite. When I asked her what I have to look forward to, she said, "Everything!" Her favorite part of the class was looking at digital facsimiles and figuring out what they said. When I asked her why she thinks it is a good idea to take the class, she added, "You read in Middle English, Dr. Hamill is the best professor, and Chaucer is great. We love Chaucer. I have so many tattoo ideas that came from that class." After learning about the class, I am even more excited to

take it than I was before!

Rashonda

I'm scheduled to take English 225 next semester, which is Comparative Grammar. Initially that didn't mean anything to me as I tend to get all of the English courses and their titles mixed up in my head. So, I was pretty much content with thinking it's just another English course. To me, it didn't really matter what it was, all that mattered was that it is a requirement for my certification in secondary education. As this semester is coming to an end, my curiosity grew. I decided to look up the comparative grammar course on the Wilkes online undergraduate course descriptions. There, the description for comparative grammar is "A comparative and critical study of prescriptive, descriptive and transformational-generative grammar." If that wouldn't have confused and scared you if you were in my shoes, then nothing truly will. What does any of that *even mean*?

Needless to say, after that I've been dreading next semester. However, Dr. Hamill was more than happy to try to relieve some of my worries by uncovering the

unknown for me. He briefly explained the course to me. He threw words at me like morphology and phonology, and I have to admit, I did not catch them. Are they even real? With the realization that I was still confused, Dr. Hamill got so excited he jumped out of his chair and began writing examples on the board. He spoke about the International Phonetic Alphabet so quickly that, at first, I had no idea he was still speaking English.

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Sigma Tau Delta Update

by Mackenzie Egan

This year, the Wilkes University Alpha Gamma Alpha chapter of Sigma Tau Delta has been very busy. In October chapter president, Mackenzie T. Egan, and social media coordinator, Brianna Schunk, submitted paper projects for review for the annual 2019 convention held in St. Louis, Missouri. Both projects were accepted and the pair traveled to St. Louis in March, along with Dr. Anthony, who was this year's chapter advisor, to present. At the convention the pair sat in on panels that included a candid conversation about publishing work, the question over trigger warnings in academic syllabis, and the keynote speakers, Nnedi Okorafor & Tess Taylor.

Brianna's 'creative nonfiction' piece, "Look at the Freaks" was showcased along with a panel of young writers coming to terms with their physical and mental disabilities in the academic setting. Her piece turned research into creativity and was a fantastic segway into

the remaining panelists. During the question and answer session afterwards, Brianna showed her vast knowledge of Disability theory and the questions around how are disabled people showcased in the media, both in creative media and news media, and how do we approach questioning/examining disability across the board.

Mackenzie's original creative work, "Sentiment," paired with four other panelists as they explored emotional and physical struggles dealing with loss. The short stories in the panel ranged from stories about the loss of one's self to a terminal disease to the battle between who's who in abusive situations. "Sentiment" also won third place in the original fiction category of the convention and will be out for publication this year.

Along with the convention, the Alpha Gamma Alpha chapter of Sigma Tau Delta has organized a book drive with Wilkes University's SHINE program. The book drive

will benefit students from pre-k through eighth grade in gaining access to books this summer. Donations will be accepted up until graduation, May 18th, in the DH lab of Kirby Hall or in the administrative office. New or gently used books are being accepted.

Lastly, this year's Sigma Tau Delta induction took place on Sunday, April 28th. Nine new members were inducted into the Alpha Gamma Alpha chapter this year, including *Inkwell* copy editor Jay Guziwicz and layout editor Erica Bicchetti. The induction ceremony welcomed these new members and challenged them to uphold the Sigma Tau Delta oath "sincerity, truth, design" and featured Keynote speaker Dr. Makkar. At the end of the ceremony some big departmental news was revealed: Dr. Makkar will be advising Sigma Tau Delta next year! For pictures of what the Alpha Gamma Alpha has been up to turn to page 14.

Moving Forward in the English Department

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But, he did get the basics of the ideas through to me. Ultimately, what I learned from his mini lesson is that there are some really complicated words to describe things I've already kinda picked up on about the English language. It doesn't follow the "rules" we learn in elementary school, and the sounds we learned in kindergarten don't tell the whole story.

Brianna

With the end of my first year of college approaching me rather quickly, I cannot help but think of the future I hold at Wilkes University. I cannot foretell how my college career will play out entirely, but I can certainly be excited for my next semester as it is very well planned out already. I

will be enthusiastically starting the climb of being a future high school English educator by taking ED180 and ED190 courses. I have always wanted to be a teacher since I was a small child, so to be able to represent this position in the slightest bit has me electrified.

I am also continuing along the line of my favorite type of courses... English of course! Upon

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taking my first survey in Spring 2019, I decided to take another survey for Fall 2019, ENG 233: Survey of English Literature. This is another course I am exhilarated to take, not just because it is another class with Dr. Hamill himself, but because I enjoy analyzing writing pieces and diving deeper into the lines shown to the reader. Finding the minute details and expanding them into a much grander idea is what I live for and exactly why I wish to become a teacher.

This next semester is the first one I am looking forward to since I have finally climbed out of the trenches of my general courses and am finally setting foot into what I came here for, education and expansive English.

Darren

I sat down with Dr. Anthony to get some insight on what I'll be in for in taking English 298, an advanced workshop in creative writing and poetry. Having most enjoyed creative writing with Bernie Kovacs this semester, I've really

been looking forward to continuing to engage writing creatively. The aspects of the course Dr. Anthony brought to my attention only served to increase my excitement.

I inquired a little bit about the books we'd be reading throughout the course. Dr. Anthony pointed out our anthology was edited by Okla Elliott, a late professor from Misericordia. Through him, we have the ability to work through native voices. Dr. Anthony related a tale about Elliott's poetic reach, in his capacity to bring together a large amount of writers for a local reading. I got a sense of the story that Elliott left for us, the sort of aura he encapsulated. If even a tiny bit shines through in reading the anthology, I think it will be a course worth my while.

The idea of loosely linked narratives was the prevailing idea of the course, and having that anecdote for Elliott was just a part of that. Another work we will use, *Red Mother* by Laurel Radzieski, crafts a narrative of a love story of a parasite to its host. I don't know

how one wouldn't want to read that. Through engaging with works like this, Dr. Anthony hopes for us to develop our own consistent voice throughout a portfolio. I find it inherent to poetry, and especially focused now, that our poems will essentially be letters to our readers. These letters are intended to be read like "here, this is me. Now, how about you?" The relatability and workman's quality a poem can have has always engaged me, and thinking more about my audience is definitely going to be a boon. On the business side of things, Dr. Anthony wants to look at the publishing side of poetry. It's really not something I expect to get a lot of money for. It's a little bit sad that it is more or less "for exposure," but I think I should still at least look into getting published to some extent. At the very least, honing my art for myself is worthwhile.

Inkwell Quarterly's Staff

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Hitting Wilkes University: NoViolet Bulwayo's Visit

by Rashonda Montgomery

The English Department and the Allan Hamilton Dickson Spring Writers Series made it possible for author NoViolet Bulwayo (a Zimbabwean author, and Stegner Fellow at Stanford University) to come to Wilkes for a reading and Q&A in the Kirby Hall Salon. NoViolet Bulwayo, is an acclaimed novelist, and short story writer. She is also the author of the novel *We Need New Names*, which was a finalist for the Man Booker Prize. Her novel was recognized with the LA Times Book Prize Art Seidenbaum Award for First Fiction, the Pen/Hemingway Award, and the Etisalat Prize for Literature.

I had the privilege of experiencing a workshop lead during my Intro to Creative Writing class. There, it was obvious to me that her presence could fill an empty room. Her voice flows in a way that made me want to hang on to every word and beg her to say more. In the classroom, it was obvious that talking about writing is something that she is not new to. She gave us a prompt, let us work on a short story using only dialogue, and made us read to her our stories. Even though she is the one with the expertise, she urged other students to give their opinions before she gave her own. In this workshop, she expressed the importance of dialogue in a story and explained to us how to make dialogue in writing more natural. For example, along with other points, she explained the importance of



NoViolet's reading captivated her audience in the Kirby Salon

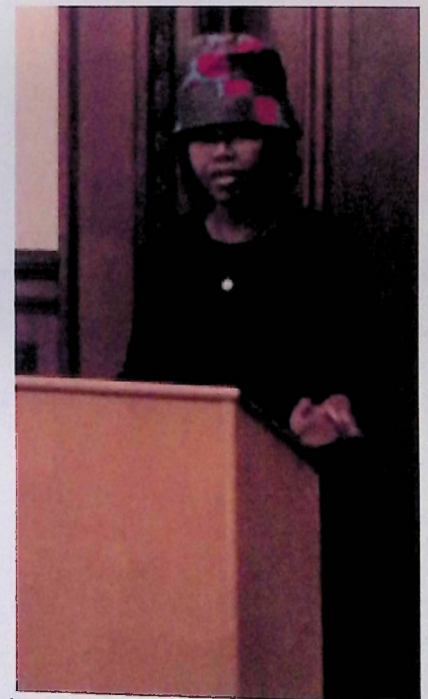
characters having distinct speech patterns.

Later, in her reading and Q&A, NoViolet Bulwayo began by expressing the importance of editing and drafting. She said "most of writing is rewriting" just before she dove into reading not from the published book that most of us had in our hands, but from her first draft of the first chapter. After reading that for us, she read from the first chapter in the final version of her book. There was a huge difference between the two. Bulwayo admitted she wrote five different drafts of *We Need New Names* before she wrote the one that was published.

Her novel, half set in a fictitious version of her home in Zimbabwe and half in America, does a great job of presenting the immigrant experience. A particular experience her novel touches on that she shared with us is the language barrier. A metaphor she used that sticks with me is "language is a country." Just like as an outsider to a country, you need a visa to

explore it. An understanding of the language of the people you are surrounded by is a crucial part of surviving as an "outsider". Without a visa to the language - the ability to understand, speak, and write the language - navigating becomes very difficult.

This is a struggle any non-english speaking immigrant will have when entering America.



NoViolet's book, *We Need New Names*, has seen many revisions - a fact she expanded upon during the Q&A. after her reading.

Farewell to *Inkwell's* Editor-in-Chief

by Erica Bicchetti

I have had the pleasure of working alongside Mackenzie on the *Inkwell Quarterly* for about two years now. I still remember when I first met Mackenzie... even though she doesn't. It was my senior year of high school, actually, when I came to Wilkes University for an interview. Long story short, I was accepted here at Wilkes! Directly after being accepted, I was told to wait for my tour guide who would take me around campus to show me all of the beautiful campus buildings. My tour guide arrived in her Wilkes attire and introduced herself as Mackenzie. I remember she asked me what my soon to be major was and I replied, English. Mackenzie told me her major was English as well, which ended up making the tour more successful because she was able to inform me which buildings I would be spending sleepless nights in. I thank her for that. Little did I know I would be seeing her again in English classes and clubs.

I remember when I became a member of the *Inkwell Quarterly* my sophomore year, Mackenzie was so welcoming and laid back which made me feel comfortable. Towards the end of that year, she personally reached out to me and asked if I was interested in fulfilling the layout editor position. I was thankful Mackenzie and Dr. Hamill chose me for this position. I remember feeling nervous that I just took on a huge responsibility as layout editor, which was something I knew nothing about at the time. Mackenzie and I met up in the Writing Center to work through the issue's layout

together. She guided me through the ins and outs of InDesign and Photoshop and allowed me to practice as she observed. Today, I can say that I am still the *Inkwell Quarterly's* layout editor, which is one achievement that I have made here at Wilkes, thanks to Mackenzie.

I have asked some of our *Inkwell* staff members to comment on Mackenzie's departure. They were kind enough to leave their thoughtful remarks such as the following:

"Thank you for all of your hard work and patience. Your dedication in everything you do is inspiring. Good luck in all your future endeavors!" - Emily Banks

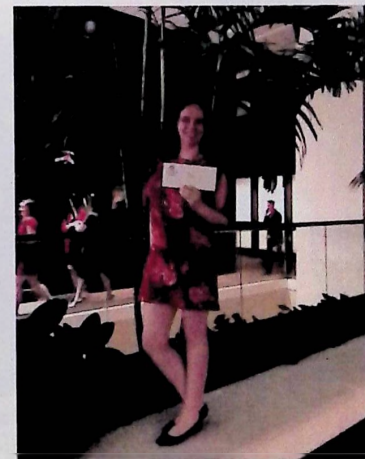
"Being rather new to Inkwell, I don't know Mackenzie as well as others. But in my short time, I was accommodated and led well. Seeing her passion for writing and her wanting us to be able to sell our own writing ability is pretty heartwarming. It's her kind of drive that I hope to have, and I'm not sure how we'll fill her wake." - Darren Martinez

"Mackenzie, I'm sad to see you leave, but extremely happy for you as well! Good luck in the future, it's been fun working with you. We'll miss you!" - Brian Vu

"Mackenzie's work as Editor-in-Chief of Inkwell Quarterly over the past two years has been exemplary. From coordinating themes of and contributing to the layout for every issue, to making key organizational and communication adjustments for staff roles and positions, to supporting the staff and

contributing writers as they develop their voices and take ownership of the newsletter, Mackenzie has had a profound impact on the shape of our Departmental Newsletter. She has been a true steward of IQ, and she will leave it better than she found it—and she will have put in place a model for her successors to do the same." - Dr. Hamill

Mackenzie is more than the Editor-in-Chief for the *Inkwell Quarterly*. At Wilkes, she studies English Writing and History. Mackenzie is also the President of Sigma Tau Delta, the Editor of the Manuscript, and is a member of Phi Alpha Theta. She has earned internships at DiscoverNEPA.com as a writer, Blysee.com as a lifestyle writer, and *Kine Hearts Magazine* as a communications intern. Recently, Mackenzie attended the 2019 Sigma Tau Delta Convention where she won an award for an original fiction piece titled "Sentiment." Speaking on behalf of the English Department if I may, we are all proud of you, Mackenzie. Congratulations, and good luck with the rest of your future!



Mackenzie Egan at the 2019 Sigma Tau Delta Convention

Much Ado About Something

by Isaiah McGahee

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage," but what Shakespeare did not say is that learning his lines was well, simply put, a living hell... for example: "If he hath a fancy to this foolery, which it appears he hath, then he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is." Say that three times fast, or better yet once for that matter.

From April 11th-14th, I had the opportunity to play Don Pedro, at King's College's production of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*. When presented with the opportunity to audition, I chose to audition for Don Pedro, mainly because the role had been reprised by my favorite actor, Denzel Washington, in the 1993 film adaptation. In addition, Pedro and I are quite similar: we both live life on the lighter side and are excellent wingmen, yet struggle in our own personal romantic endeavours (insert laughter if you so choose). In a cast full of squares and self-limiting characters, Pedro is without question a circle, and the ultimate catalyst in bringing the other main characters together, "into a mountain of affec-

tion, the one with the other."

Much Ado was only my second theatrical performance, the first being the musical, *Ragtime*, as Coalhouse Walker Jr. (also at King's). I can say in earnest, that learning my lines was a challenge so daunting, that for a moment I

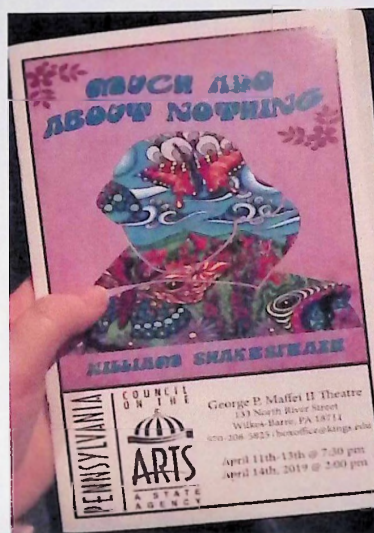


Image by Erica Bicchetti

regretted my decision to accept the role. The most difficult aspect of memorizing Shakespearean lines is not memorizing them per say, but memorizing them in a manner in

which you, as an actor, understand what is being said. Rehearsals didn't theoretically end, because finding your character requires a great deal of independent research and personal analysis. However, it was comforting, because every member of the cast experienced similar problems, and our unity in disunity ultimately became one of our greatest strengths; and as a cast, we came together to overcome this problem through a variety of exercises and Shakespearean workshops, which focused explicitly on line explanation and understanding. In the end, playing Don Pedro and experiencing Shakespeare from a completely personalized point of view, is an experience that I will never forget, and has truly become one of the most rewarding endeavours that I've ever undertaken. From a person who previously thought Shakespeare irrepressibly overrated, I can honestly say that Shakespeare has changed my life, and as Don Pedro said best, Shakespeare "has taught me to sing, and restored me to the owner."



Carmen Maria Machado pictured above
(Image from <https://carmenmariamachado.com/biography>)

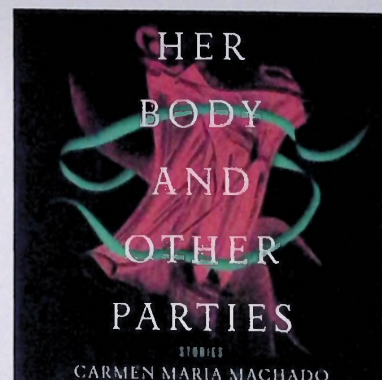


Image from <https://www.bookdepository.com/Her-Body-Other-Parties-Carmen-Maria-Machado/9781681686882>

Carmen Machado

by Mackenzie Egan

When I first met Carmen Machado it was not the most graceful moment of my life. I did not shake her hand - in fact, I don't even think I said hi to her. She had been sitting in the salon at Kirby Hall, working on a Macbook and looking every bit the awesome individual she turned out to be. Me, being...well myself, hadn't actually noticed her when I came tearing into the room. I was in a caffeineless frenzy (particularly at fault that day was my own poor planning) and was just in a rush to get my fix before the workshop started. So I ran in, dumped all of my things on the floor, and gave her the same vacant wave that most of the department has seen at least once, and disappeared. My blase attitude toward the woman in the comfy chair in the corner had less to do with her and more to do with me - I had no idea who she was; I just really liked her hair.

Coffee in hand, Sarah and I walked back in to Kirby to see Ms. Machado starting to set up. Embarrassed, I helped her arrange chairs in a circle and apologized for the over dramatic way I had flounced around about ten minutes prior. She'd just laughed - and ended up laughing at me harder when I spilled coffee on my legal pad. When the writing workshop began, Carmen walked us through an exercise with writing a positive, and a negative, paragraph inspired by an idyllic country road image she had on her laptop. She told us that when she taught creative writing classes she would run similar exercises.

Brianna, Sarah, and I all came up with something different from the exercise - something that was more visceral than anything I have ever written before - and Carmen willingly read each paragraph we had written and offered small critiques. Her attitude toward our writing was welcoming, and very encouraging. Actually, her attitude in general was very welcoming and encouraging, something that I think all of us that night really enjoyed.

After we were done workshoping Carmen took the time to answer some questions for us. Most of her answers came in the form of entertaining anecdotes about her life, her writing process, and her thoughts on cats. She gave us some amazing advice about graduate school, acting more like our equal in the process of trying to figure out whether writing was a feasible academic and career goal for the future. Carmen's encouraging words made it easier for the three of us to conceptualize ourselves as professional writers and I wish more of the students in the department had made it to the workshop.

Dinner was just as pleasant, with Carmen spending most of the meal talking to us students and Dr. Davis or just observing the way we interacted with each other. She seemed to find it entertaining how all of us at the meal could pick up conversations from other ends of the table and remain actively involved. With a small department, she noted, it was easier for all of us to remain in tune with each other. It was another nod in the direc-

tion of the amazing professors and classroom atmosphere that Wilkes' English department provides us.

Carmen read an excerpt from her short story collection, *Her Body and Other Parties*, which astounded us all. Between her beautiful, poetic prose, and her sassy demeanor, the reading was entrancing. While I'm not a huge fan of first person fiction, I found myself enjoying the narrator's tone as much as the content of the story she read for us. It was relatable, it was guttural, and it was written with the intention of exploring past events in a way that was both cathartic and entertaining. Carmen was as energetic in her reading as she had been in our workshop - laughing when she missed a word, making faces as she read particularly interesting scenes, and looking out at the crowd to gage our reactions when certain scenes required a laugh. Even during the book signing afterwards Carmen kept up her smiles, her jokes, and her attitude.

The whole experience was stellar - Carmen was down to Earth without being too humble, which made it easy to talk to her about her writing process, her path to her degrees, and her thoughts on existence. We each got something out of the visit, be it the three of us in the workshop, the handful that went to dinner, or the packed Salon that listened to her read. Carmen's visit, and her writing, will stay with the students, faculty, and staff here at Wilkes for a long time.

The Act Review

by Brian Vu

The Act is a show on Hulu based on the case of Dee Dee and Gypsy Rose Blanchard, where Dee Dee, the mother, was found dead in her home from stab wounds. In June of 2015, Gypsy, Dee Dee's daughter, and her boyfriend, Nicholas Godejohn, planned to murder Dee Dee after Gypsy figured out that her mother has been taking control of her life for her own benefit. Gypsy has what is known as Munchausen syndrome, which is a mental illness where the victim believes they are sick when in actuality, they are not. Dee used Gypsy's disability to live in a home that they didn't deserve and also to get money for herself. The show itself has been "dramatized or fictionalized" for entertainment, so it is hard to really understand the true facts of this case. In the show, the mother and daughter would shoplift without being seen, but the first time they attempted it, their neighbor Mel saw them from afar.

Throughout Gypsy's life, she has been in a wheelchair and her mother told her that she was deathly allergic to sugar. But, that didn't seem to be the case; Gypsy started eating sugar and surfing the web at night while her mom was passed out from Xanax. Seeing Gypsy grow older, it's no surprise that she would see through her mother's lies sooner or later. While watching the show, I thought the character of Dee Dee was such an odd and weird person, like she had some serious secrets to hide.

The hospitals that Dee Dee took Gypsy to did tests on Gypsy

and concluded that there was nothing wrong with her. Dee Dee had an excuse for everything, though, and she had a binder of fake medical files that she would use to cover up Gypsy's illness. For a mother, that is such a terrible thing to do. She would also give Gypsy medication that she didn't need which would just ruin her health in the long-run. In one of the episodes, an investigator came to interview Gypsy, but she couldn't even really respond clearly because Dee Dee had drugged her up right before the interview. Gypsy had a false childhood and was raised by a horrible human being. So how could she not be infuriated by her mother when she figured out that her life was a lie?

I never got to the end of the show but in the third episode, Dee Dee was found dead in her bed, her body covered in stab wounds. The show flashes forward to the event and then back to the main backstory. Gypsy met her boyfriend Nicholas on the internet, and he later persuaded Gypsy to kill her mother after her secrets were found. It's ironic that Dee Dee hid secrets from Gypsy and Gypsy did the same. They both put on an act, to everyone else, and they seemed like very nice and loving people. But underneath all that, both of them were kind of the same. Psychologically, Gypsy would not have been able to handle the secrets well, especially with the kind of childhood she had.

Overall, I think this show has a lot of meaty details. The ten-

sion is strong within every character, and there are quite a lot of WTF moments. It can be mind-blowing and the character development is interesting. How do you think you'd feel if you were raised with a mental illness, raised by your mother who hid the fact that there was really nothing wrong with you? Dee Dee brainwashes her daughter to use her for her own benefit, putting on an act so that other people aren't suspicious. It's inevitable that this will fail because the one person who sees it all is her own daughter. When she was younger she had no curiosity about her illness and why her mother does the specific things. It's a dependent factor for a child to not be curious about the way that their parents raise them. But when they reach a certain age, their brain is developed enough to figure out and connect some dots about their life and how they were raised. So it was ultimately inevitable that Gypsy would find out what her mother has been hiding this whole time.



Image from <https://www.hulu.com/series/the-act-8c910fe-859e-40a5-9966->

Senior Spotlights

by Erica Bicchetti

Mackenzie Egan

Q: What are you majoring/minoring in?

A: I am majoring in English and History with a minor in Women's and Gender Studies and a concentration in Anthropology.

Q: What are your future career aspirations?

A: I plan on, someday, working solely as a published author. For now I'm looking forward to working on press statements and other publicity for several companies, some freelance writing, and a ton of copy editing. One of the most amazing things I've learned about being an English major is that the degree really allows for a ton of flexibility - with these seven letters on my diploma and the skills I've acquired here at Wilkes I can do pretty much anything.

Q: What has been your greatest accomplishment during your Wilkes career?

A: My greatest achievement at Wilkes has been this right here. *The Inkwell Quarterly* has been a part of my life since I started at Wilkes four years ago, and even before when I first stepped foot on campus in October of 2014. Watching it grow, working with some truly gifted people, and getting to say, with pride, that I have been editor of this publication since January of 2016 has been some of the best moments of my career.

Q: What was your favorite novel from a class you've taken?

A: I loved, loved, loved Art Spiegelman's *Maus*.

Q: What was your least favorite novel?

A: I did not love *Ulysses* by James Joyce - well, I did not love spending a semester working on it. The novel itself is a work of genius but having to write over a dozen papers on it in the course of 15 or so weeks was actually awful.

Q: What advice do you have for underclassman?

A: Take that sixth class, get involved in on campus activities, and enjoy every moment you spend here. It all goes by so fast and before you know it you'll be looking back on your time at Wilkes and wondering where it all went. And make sure that you update your resume every couple of months - it's super annoying doing it all at once!

Haley Welker

Q: What are you majoring/minoring in?

A: My major is Middle Level Education with a focus in English and a certification in Special Education. I also have a minor in English.

Q: What are your future career aspirations?

A: I plan on getting either an English middle school or high school teaching job in the Lehigh Valley. Once I am hired, I plan on pursuing my master's degree.

Q: What has been your greatest accomplishment during your Wilkes career?

A: My greatest accomplishment is graduating with a strong GPA while also being a successful student athlete. I have received positive

accolades in both aspects of my life and I am proud that I could balance both while genuinely enjoying my time at Wilkes.

Q: What was your favorite novel from a class you've taken?

A: I loved reading *Jane Eyre* in Dr. Davis's British Literature survey class. The book inspired me to read more Victorian literature novels, like *Pride and Prejudice*, which I have grown to admire.

Q: What was your least favorite novel?

A: *Ulysses*. No explanation needed :)

Q: What advice do you have for underclassman?

A: My advice is to take advantage of the small class sizes at Wilkes and build relationships with your professors. They will be the most meaningful, important relationships that will ultimately contribute to your overall success as a student and shape you to be a better individual.

Matthew Judge

Q: What are you majoring/minoring in?

A: I am majoring in English and Secondary Education and I am minoring in History.

Q: What are your future career aspirations?

A: My future career aspirations are to become a Secondary English teacher and wrestling coach

Q: What has been your greatest accomplishment during your Wilkes career?

A: My greatest accomplishment

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during my Wilkes career was winning the Frank JJ Davies award from the English Department.

Q: What was your favorite novel from a class you've taken?

A: My favorite novel from a class I've taken is *Inherent Vice* by Thomas Pynchon.

Q: What was your least favorite novel?

A: My least favorite novel was *Wieland* by Charles Brockden Brown.

Q: What advice do you have for underclassman?

A: My advice for underclassmen is

to take full advantage of the English department faculty and their willingness to help students. The professors in the English department have helped me become twice the student I was when I got to Wilkes because of their willingness to work with me outside of class hours.

Sekiro Game Review

by Darren Martinez

Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice does a lot of things right. It is beautifully atmospheric, as is par for the course for From Software games. The combat is also highly tuned, creating an experience just as focused on grinding you into the dirt as it is pulling you up and giving you sights worth the journey. *Sekiro* is another success hot on the heels of *Bloodborne* and the *Dark Souls* franchise, marking another IP for From's acclaimed library.

Of these previous FromSoft titles, which does *Sekiro* play like? The PS4 exclusive gothic-Lovecraftian *Bloodborne* seemed to be the closest in terms of gameplay for most players while the turtling, defensive *Dark Souls* veterans found themselves up against a pretty hefty barrier. I was in the *Dark Souls* camp, finding the game's emphasis on parrying and whittling down both a posture and health bar rather difficult. It's a very gutsy system, entirely dependent on the player's aggressiveness while also meriting the watchful eye of enemy cues. The stringent emphasis on start-up animations and delibera-

tion of enemy weapon movements is not only beautiful to watch, but entirely necessitated by the second by second nature of fights.

The deadliness of the swordplay is almost fetishized, and you get a very good sense of how dangerous you and your enemies are. Deathblows are accompanied with gratuitous bloodspray, making the relishing of the death of a difficult foe that much more satisfying. The love that went into animating different fighting styles is astonishing, incorporating enemies ranging from monks, warrior women wielding spear-guns, sumo-wrestlers-turned-brigands, monkeys with swords, to horrors of Japanese folklore. They are delivered entirely seriously, and the game shines in 1 vs. 1 combat that emphasizes the care poured into every encounter.

While being grounded in samurai combat, you play as a shinobi. You're a ninja, and it's foolish not to use the tricks at your disposal. Stealth is a huge part of the game, especially if you struggle with confrontations with multiple foes. You also end up with a pros-

thetic arm, equipped with a grappling hook and accommodations for your shinobi tricks. A few of them are situational, like a small axe or spear, while your shurikens and firecrackers tend to carry a lot of weight. While only offered a singular katana as your main tool (which arguably promotes mastery of its systems and uses), spicing up fights with your tools is both advantageous and fun. My favorite would have to be the loaded umbrella, a large steel shield that fans out and eats a couple hits. It is really only useful against ranged foes, but further upgrades promote fire resistance and spirit-type enemy repellent. It's super handy.

Sekiro's combat, in its back-and-forths, becomes a rhythm game. Surprisingly, the game based around ninja stealth and samurai swordplay features rhythms. Many of the bosses derive their difficulty from the mix-ups in their attack patterns compared to the usual foes. Bosses can tout flurries of tiny attacks that bear down upon your own posture if not precise enough, a mix attack that requires a different

Story Continued on page 12

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Jim Whitaker's Visit

by Veronica Romanelli

Jim Whitaker got his start in filmmaking while he was studying economics at Georgetown University. After a certain point Whitaker knew economics was not his passion, but he did not know where to turn or what to do. That is when he saw an article in the paper that said his cousin was going to be filming a movie in Baltimore. Excited by the idea of working on a set, Whitaker sent a letter to his cousin asking if he could come see what filmmaking was all about. The movie was *Hairspray*, and it was the first film Whitaker ever worked on, providing food and water for the cast. After his experience on the set of *Hairspray*, Whitaker was sure he wanted to be a filmmaker for the rest of his life. Some of the most notable films Whitaker has produced include *A Wrinkle in Time*, *American Gangster*, *Cinderella Man*, *Friday Night Lights*, and *8 Mile*. Whitaker was previously President of Motion Pictures at Imagine Entertainment, and he is now President of Whitaker Entertainment.

When Jim Whitaker came to speak to Wilkes University students, he was introduced by Dr. Patrick Leahy, and it was revealed that the two were good friends in college. Dr. Leahy and Whitaker sat down together for a conversation about Whitaker's life and career. Whitaker first spoke about his childhood. He was the youngest child of five boys, which he says helped him with his career in which he had to learn to vie for the same resources as others without getting

into trouble. Much like his brotherhood, there was always someone to compete with throughout his career. Whitaker credits his father as one of his biggest inspirations to pursue his dream. His father always told him, "Do what you love," and it is this advice that gave Whitaker the courage to follow his heart and break out of his comfort zone.

Whitaker talked about his earliest film he ever made, titled *100 Moments in My Apartment*. He began this project after working on the set of *Hairspray* and getting his own camera. His film was very short, considering the limited film he had to record it with, but he was eager to see what he was capable of, so he worked with what he had to create his first film. Whitaker's first official film job was creating short films that were played at a museum. A project Whitaker seemed extremely passionate about during his conversation with Dr. Leahy was a Public Service Announcement he recorded after the death of his friend in a drunk driving accident. After reaching out to several organizations for funding for his PSA, Whitaker realized he would have to fund the PSA on his own. His friends helped him save money by walking through their neighborhood and selling raffle tickets. Eventually, he has enough money to produce the film. When he pitched his intense idea to several news stations, only one took his offer. Once one station started playing it, however, several others followed.

Throughout Whitaker's talk with Wilkes students, he shared

many heartfelt and emotional stories. It is difficult to relay the content that was shared during Whitaker's visit through writing because he has asked for much of it to be kept private. Before he left, he shared with the audience, "I'm in every movie." Whitaker explained that while his viewers might not visually see him in the movies he works on, he is there. He has never worked to tell a story that he did not have some connection to or that he did not think should be told. He credits *8 Mile* as being a movie that changed his career because people did not think it would be a success, but Whitaker was able to pull it off because he believed in it. Whitaker calls *Friday Night Lights* his favorite project, and he refers to it as "a story that needed to be told." At the end of their conversation, Dr. Leahy asked Whitaker what he would like the students in attendance to take away from his visit. Whitaker left students with the message to be true to themselves, respond honestly to their emotions, and to let their souls lead the way.



Image from Wilkes University

Sekiro Game Review

continued from page 10

dodge “beat” to be played, avoid-at-all-cost grapples, the list goes on. A dedicated, yet unskilled player (like myself) is granted the tools to memorize these patterns through the revival system. Tied up in a neat little bow with the story elements, player character Wolf is granted the ability to revive once a boss phase or encounter, giving another shot at winning before death merits actual consequence. A second death saps half your experience and half your sen, making it hard to get new skills and rendering you too broke to purchase anything from sparse shopkeepers. You might need to grind, which, although I haven’t made the effort to yet, makes it a little tedious to unlock every skill.

While considering the story and its characters, *Sekiro* is the first time character customization was not present in recent FromSoft history. No longer a blank receptacle for storytelling, the One-Armed Wolf, as *Sekiro* means in English, is a fully fleshed character in his own right. His naivety lags the story a bit in the early game, as he has the tendency to respond to NPCs by tossing up a question about the current maguffin within the story so a character can dispense story. As the Wolf grows stronger, so too do his conversational skills. He can give NPCs alcohol and indulge their backstories, and scripted story sequences see Wolf taking more of an active role in decision-making when faced with moral choices. You care about the people around you and your young lord, because they care about you in return. And as

odd as it may seem, the Buddhist presence and basis in Sengoku-period Japan within the game grounds everything in an air of realism.

Sekiro is an excellent game. But it’s backbreakingly difficult. Outcry on social media questioned how accessible the game was. As evidenced by YouTube lore channels, there seemed to be an audience for what the game offered in terms of story and world building that was turned off by the game’s intense difficulty. Although the exact accuracy of this is debatable, there were also claims of the mentally or physically challenged being unable to enjoy the game in its state. I am not one to withhold an experience from one looking for it, but I believe FromSoft sets out to tell a singular narrative with *Sekiro*. Diluting the experience by adding supplemental modes takes away from what I see as the singular vision presented by the narrative. When it comes to modders and community support, I am sure there are already ways to turn the world of *Sekiro* into a sandbox. It is not by some nefarious design that FromSoft sets out to exclude players from their worlds. The niche game that launched the “tough but fair” formula, *Demon Souls*, was exactly that: niche. Not to say it is entitlement that an easy mode be placed in a game, but I find it to be the developer’s stylistic choice to not recognize the game being beaten in a world with less enemies or reduced damage taken.

On the matters of difficulty, there is still some of the infamous FromSoft jank in *Sekiro*. Enemy AI,

while not like it used to, can still send enemies careening off cliffs. I will not lie, I actually had to kill a late game boss using an exploit that got him off the edge because I found it be a poorly designed encounter for the game’s style. In that way, I believe there exists the game’s “easy mode.” The capacity for a player to cheese encounters promotes variability in play, and can ease the tension of crushing difficulty. For instance, a miniboss that begins as a conversable NPC can be jumped on. This will trigger her to be recognized as an enemy but not yet aggro’d to you, giving a free deathblow and requiring only one more to vanquish it. You push up against the walls of the game, and sometimes they give. And honestly, that’s how it should be! That’s where the joy comes.

It’s a beautiful game. I’m about 60 hours in and still not done, with relatively little left to do. While not boasting the replayability of the *Souls* games or *Bloodborne*, *Sekiro* should absolutely be an experience on an action fan’s queue. It’s tough going from the start, but the game blossoms with its varied locales and a rewarding combat system. The utter fascination with the machinations of combat and the prospect of trading blows gives the fights a level of polish that makes it a labor of love. I’d say *Sekiro* is worth consideration for game of the year, even at this point. 9/10.

Faculty Updates

by Briauna Robinson

Dr. Helen Davis has been chosen for the very honorable and the highest award for teaching, the Carpenter Award! She has officially received this May 2nd.

Not only has she received this amazing award, but on March 29th, Dr. Davis presented an innovation session on "Creating and Expanding Effective Structures for LGBTQ+ Student Inclusion on Campus" at the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) Conference on Diversity, Equity, and Student Success in Pittsburgh, PA. Dr. Davis leads LGBTQ+ Awareness and Ally sessions at Wilkes University, King's College, and even Misericordia University.

Dr. Jap-Nanak Makkar also has some exciting things going on with her work. She will be presenting a paper called "Little Doubt: Conrad, Wiener, Cliff" at the Insti-

tute of Culture and Society (ICS). ICS is an institute convoked by the Marxist Literary Group, and it takes place at the University of Illinois Chicago from June 22 to 26. The highlight is that this paper she is presenting is only an excerpt from a longer essay, which has been under revision since August 2018, and will be submitted to a journal over the summer.

Since March 2019, Dr. Makkar has also had the honor of overseeing copyedits for her essay titled "A Trademark on Irony: Coetzee's Formalism, Digital Copyright, Literary Proprietorship" that will be published in the Summer 2019 issue of *Contemporary Literature*.

Dr. Thomas A. Hamill also has some updates as he will be presenting a paper titled "The Golfing Body Mnemonic: The Poetics of Swing Mechanics and Muscle Memory c. 1688" at the Tenth

Annual International Conference on Sport and Society in Toronto in June. The paper, based in archival work he conducted at the National Library of Scotland years ago, focuses on Thomas Kincaid, a medical student whose diary contains the first known written instructions on the golf swing. Kincaid enumerates in his diary what Dr. Hamill suggests is a working mechanics and poetics of the golf swing; especially insofar as his careful and recurring articulations of club arc, arm and torso rotation, leg control, and shaft angle eventually cohere in verses that frame the repeatable golf swing (and the laws of motion that govern it) in metered rhyme. Dr. Hamill's paper examines Kincaid's detailed criteria for effective golf and considers, in particular, the ways in which the diarist establishes a paradigm for effecting muscle memory through linguistic repetition and poetic form.

Fall 2019 Upper-Level Class Listings

ENG 225	Comparative Grammar	TR 3:00pm-4:15pm	Dr. Stanley
ENG 233	Survey English Literature I	MWF 2:00pm-2:50pm	Dr. Hamill
ENG 282	Survey American Literature II	TR 9:30am-10:45am	Dr. Kuhar
ENG 298	Workshop in Creative Writing - Poetry	MWF 10:00am-10:50am	Dr. Anthony
ENG 353	Studies in Postcolonial Literature	MWF 11:00am-11:50am	Dr. Makkar
ENG 393	Teaching of English	M 6:00pm-8:45pm	Prof. Lartz
ENG 397	Studies in Chaucer	MWF 1:00pm-1:50pm	Dr. Hamill

Sigma Tau Delta Induction

by Erica Bicchetti

On March 11th, 2019, I received an email for an invitation to join the English Honor Society. I did not realize how special that moment was. I thought it was spam mail! I wondered, *How on earth could I be invited to join the English Honor Society?* This seemed like something so far out of reach. I continued reading the email anyway, because *wouldn't it be cool to actually get inducted?* And then, I noticed something. I skimmed down to the signature. "Sincerely, Dr. Mischelle B. Anthony." That's when I knew it had to be legitimate. I reread the entire email this time, figuring out how I could've possibly accomplished this. Dr. Anthony writes, "To be eligible for membership in Sigma Tau Delta, students must be minoring or majoring in English and have completed three semesters of college coursework with at least two English courses beyond the University core requirements in English. Eligible students must have a minimum 3.0 average in their English courses and a minimum 3.0 average in their courses overall." *Wow, I thought. I did it!*

I remember one of the first things I did was forward the email to my mom. Her response was something along the lines of



14 Image of Dr. Makkar addressing the audience

"OMG I'm crying. We will pay the membership fee." I never asked her to pay for it, but I am grateful she offered. It was her way of saying "Nothing is getting in the way of your induction." I think she was more excited than I was, and I was stoked. Of course, moments later, my mom's whole facebook friend list knew I was being inducted into The International English Honor Society. Dr. Anthony had also informed inductees that the ceremony would be held on April 28th, 2019. That would give me plenty of time to find a dress for the occasion.

When April 28th came around, I was thrilled to become a part of Alpha Gamma Alpha's Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta. Families gathered in the Kirby Salon, and inductees sat in the front rows. The ceremony was brought to order by Dr. Anthony who introduced the keynote speaker Dr. Makkar. Dr. Makkar's address focused on what it means to be an English major, and her remarks were encouraging. Some other uplifting and inspiring speeches were given by the Social Media Coordinator, Brianna Schunk, and Historian, Maddison Black. Then, the President of Sigma Tau Delta, Mackenzie Egan



Image from <https://info.umkc.edu/unews/international-honor-society-comes-to-campus/>

initiated the nine new members. We received a rose, a book mark, a certificate, and a pin, along with an English Department t-shirt. Mackenzie had us repeat after her when saying the Sigma Tau Delta Pledge: "I shall endeavor to advance the study of chief literacy masterpieces, to encourage worthwhile reading, to promote the mastery of written expression, and to foster a spirit of fellowship among those who specialize in the study of the English language and of its literature, ever keeping in mind the motto of our society... Sincerity, Truth, Design." These words are certainly something to live by as an English major and future educator. I aspire to fulfill my duties as a member, and execute them onto my students someday.

Congratulations to the following students for being inducted into Sigma Tau Delta's Alpha Gamma Alpha Chapter this semester:

- Erica Bicchetti
- Hannah Bolacker
- Kaylynn Bruch
- Julia Guziewicz
- James Lapidus
- Rachel Nardozzi
- Katherine Osmani
- Veronica Romanelli
- Sarah Weynand



Image of Sigma Tau's newest members

Department Award Winners

Congratulations to the English Department Award Winners!

Matthew Judge—Frank J.J. Davies Award for outstanding achievement in English

Mackenzie Egan—Annette Evans Humanities Award for outstanding scholarship in the humanities and contribution to cultural affairs

Brianna Schunk—Patricia Boyle & Robert J. Heaman Scholarship for excellence in English studies, potential for advanced study, scholarship, and financial need

Maddison Black—Taft Achilles Rosenbery Naparsteck Scholarship for promising writing in prose fiction, journalism, or poetry

Inkwell Quarterly Staff Question

For our last staff question of the semester, the *Inkwell* staff was asked: "What book has made the top of your summer 'must read' list and why?"

"The Stranger Beside Me by Ann Rule because true crime has fascinated me lately. Also, the new movie on Ted Bundy inspired me to want to read a book written by someone who knew him well."

- Erica

The Sublime Object of Ideology, suggested by Dr. Kelly.

- Isaiah

I have a few big names on my list for summer that I very much need to get to; however, right now Daniel Torday's *Boomer1* has edged them all out for tops. I learned of his work somewhat randomly through close friends who know him from their neighborhood and through their kids' friend circles. His first book, the novella *The Sensualist*, is wonderful, and I'm really looking forward to reading what he's done since.

- Dr. Hamill

My book would be *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz and Janet Mills. The book talks about freedom, true happiness, and love. This summer I want to be as stress-free as possible so I can go into next semester with a more focused mind.

- Brian

Apidae by Lisa Borne Graves. The book is a dystopian future novel about the extinction of bees and the choice between selfishness and the fate of our entire race. I'm trying to support Indie authors, like myself and a bunch of my friends, and this book by Lisa has been on my GoodReads "want to read" list since it came out in November. Maybe with school out of the way I'll have a chance to work on the list!

- Mackenzie

The Top Ten Reasons that Hamill's Hunches devolve into "Top Ten Reasons" Lists

10. Prevailing theories have long suggested these lists are founded in the basic facts of absence. "He has not written his Hunches," they say, or, "He's got nothing" simply announces itself, silent, as matte white on the unfilled (and unfilled promise of) white space. But these theories are just, well, theories, and they seem to court only a straining, marginal grasp of *ex nihilo* logics. Lear's famous (and tragic) insistence that "Nothing will come of nothing," which telegraphs its own failure in his equally devastating follow up, "Speak again," has a purchase here, of course. And why not? He's Lear (and it's *Lear*) after all. And why wouldn't we (they?) be so demanding in our/their (our-we're) implicit insistence that we won't get fooled again? For even if we haven't read far enough back into the archive to know, we still suspect the nothingness of origins at work, right? But as the recent image of the black hole at the center of the M87 galaxy has tellingly demonstrated, reconstructing data to reveal "No light, but rather darkness visible" (as one *NY Times* journalist implied wonderfully with Miltonic awareness) there's beauty, hope, and even light, and even predictably so, amidst the vast maw of nothingness and awesome force. Not unlike that killer harmonic at the end of George's solo on "No-where Man". Or that screaming, trembling tone announcing Jimi's (arguably greatest) solo on "Machine Gun" (*Band of Gypsies* version, of course).

9. Contract negotiations at *IQ* have clearly broken down--or, at least, have gotten a bit tense. These tensions are cyclical and inevitable, of course, and they carry with them the accreted burdens of past time and "eras." Previous contractual agreements stipulated somewhat clearly the relatively vague expectations of Hamill's Hunches production rates. The renegotiated conditions of the latest contract, "complicated by Hamill's new role as Faculty Advisor," they say, now relatively vaguely enumerate the somewhat clear expectations of Hamill's Hunches production rates, accounting anew, obviously, for "proportionality of production" considerations (in four-page cast-off projection sequences). So it's not so much complicated as it is, simply, as many famous someones-or-others have put it, "a process."

8. The real "real" deadline is, as we know, always already never really real. Until, that is, it is.

7. Hamill is preoccupied with corpus analysis of *Digital Studio* and *DH Lab*--resisting, but also holding firmly to, his long-established contention that the originary (and coincidentally accurate) phrasing is *Digital Studio*. Of course, as language teaches us the "inaccurate" status of *DH Lab* for Kirby 202 does not preclude its accurate (and perhaps superior) function as a term or phrase. The lexicographers of ENG 324 are sorting it out as you read....

6. The real question that needs to be asked (if we can assume the

implied interrogative syntactics at work in Top Ten Lists) is, Where on Earth is the *Inkwell* game? Has anyone else noticed its disappearance? 5. Dr. Hamill has recently learned that, as one "consultant" has delicately put it, "Nothing says over 40 like two spaces after a period." In some senses, he's still recovering from this revelation. He gets it, of course, and he's on board. And he's sort of known this for a while. And he's also interested in and fascinated by the contexts and dynamics and applications of this principle (as you'll see in his future courses, where it will figure notably). That said, he's still recovering. And (mostly) still using two spaces after a period.

4. He's grading papers and engaging in the critical conversation at the heart of everything that matters in academic work; assignments and essays and such mean little without this ongoing dialogue, he knows. He expects that you know it too.

3. Can we re-think the word *devolve* in the title? Is that really the best verb? I mean, Top Ten Lists are fun and entertaining, no? And not necessarily in the fatalist Neil Postman sense, right? I mean we're not too far off from "to delight and instruct" are we?

2. Are we really not going to interrogate the absence of an *Inkwell* game any further? Really?

1. He did write them after all--in careful and vigilant and critical negotiations with "the structurally of the structure." Whew!