Annotiations
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Innovations
IN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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Letter from the Chair

What do a medievalist, a Shakespeare scholar, an expert in American literature, and a popular critic know about careers in the real world?

As it turns out, plenty.

I know this because in addition to my chair’s hat (much dented and bruised), I lead a partnership among faculty, students, and career advisors that is rewriting the DNA of workplace internships so that a humdrum summer of making copies and fetching coffee becomes a meaningful professional and educational experience. This partnership takes shape as an online course, “Internships in the Liberal Arts and Sciences,” taught by English professors who help guide students through the twists and turns of the internship experience. We provide students the opportunity to reflect critically on their work studying neurons at the Mayo Clinic, reading scripts in Hollywood, or working with death-row inmates, just to name a few of the hundreds of locations where our students have interned.

Because our course is online, we have no classroom. Instead students find their classrooms all over the world, whether working in publishing in New York City or in public policy on Capitol Hill. The geography of internships may vary, but the consistent feature is that the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively and think critically are the source code for success.

My favorite assignment is giving each student a book to read that speaks to their internship experience. (The best choice was when our resident medievalist assigned *Sex on Six Legs* to a student working with insects in a biology lab.) The assignment is not simply to read the book; students also engage their supervisor in a conversation about what they’ve read. There’s no better piece of technology than a book (after all, the Greek word *techne* encompasses more than computers or other widgets) for developing the creativity and conveying the intellectual curiosity that are the foundation for career achievement and satisfaction.

On, Wisconsin!

Russ Castronovo
Tom Paine Professor of English and
Dorothy Draheim Professor of American Studies
**Dean’s Message**

Sometimes friends, parents, and alumni ask me, “What can you do after graduation with a major in [fill in the blank]?”

My answer: “anything.”

Evidence comes from our philosophy majors and history majors working in Silicon Valley and on Wall Street; our mathematics and astronomy majors in marketing and law; our political science and psychology majors in consulting, nonprofits, and entrepreneurial start-ups.

A favorite expression of mine is: “A major is not a career.”

Our students develop a set of skills that serve them for a lifetime: critical thinking, the ability to make connections across disparate ideas, analytical reasoning, exemplary communication skills, and the ability to navigate differences across cultures and opinions. These skills are frequently mentioned by employers as the qualities most wanted in their employees.

To prepare our ambitious, hardworking students to think, work, and act in an increasingly complex world, my colleagues in L&S work tirelessly to design and administer cutting-edge coursework in every discipline. They develop new majors and certificates in response to high demand, manage programs that broaden students’ understanding of the world, leverage technology in ways that make students better learners, and build increasingly sophisticated skills that will serve students not only in their courses, but throughout their lives. Across L&S, every course, certificate, or degree reflects this forward-thinking approach.

I am proud of so many L&S faculty who bring energy and creativity to their teaching. From efforts to make larger classes feel smaller, to the connections made in First-Year Interest Groups, from our stimulating Honors program to our excellent Undergraduate Research Scholars program—our faculty are implementing high-impact learning practices in classes large and small.

A fundamental aspiration for a world-class university is to positively affect the lives of the students we teach. Together we are succeeding.

**On, Wisconsin!**

John Karl Scholz

Nellie June Gray Professor of Economics

Dean, UW–Madison College of Letters & Science

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**Department Retirements**

Three esteemed members of the English Department share favorite UW memories upon their retirement.

**PROF. SUSAN STANFORD FRIEDMAN**

(Hilldale Professor, Virginia Woolf Professor of English and Women’s Studies)

“In 1975, I began teaching English 250: Women and Literature, excited by the chance to teach so many forgotten women writers, like Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Virginia Woolf, Nella Larsen, Jean Rhys, Zora Neale Hurston, and Sylvia Plath. My students rebelled—‘so many of the stories and writers feature women’s madness, suicide, and despair. We can’t survive the semester!’ they complained. I learned from them to seek narratives of persistence, resilience, and agency, even in the face of patriarchal trials and tribulations. What the students demanded profoundly affected my future research and teaching. What I learned from my students made me a better teacher and scholar!”

**PROF. LYNN KELLER**

(Martha Meier Renk-Bascom Professor of Poetry)

“When I arrived at UW, junior faculty were rarely allowed to teach graduate students, and I taught here for six years before being given a graduate class. Perhaps partly in consequence of having to wait for this reward, teaching graduate students has always felt like a privilege. My favorite memory, then, does not involve a single event but a composite one: the experience I’ve enjoyed again and again of sitting at a table with a dozen or so English Department graduate students, puzzling over poems. The difficult poetry I love yields its richest meanings when reading is a communal act and insights offered by multiple voices build a collective understanding. Of course, it’s the wonderful UW students who have made that activity such a pleasure. How astonishing that I have been so fortunate as to be paid to sit in good company and talk about poetry!”

Continued on page 7
In the fall, we introduced our readers to the four new professors hired to the English department this school year. Professors Laila Amine, Ainehi Edoro, Yanie Fecu, and Kristina Huang joined the department after a year-long search that attracted close to 200 applicants. For readers less familiar with the hiring process for literary studies professors, this cluster hire was truly remarkable—it brought UW English into the national spotlight for its commitment to changing the culture of humanities in higher education.

Rather than hiring based on time period, the department wanted a cohort of professors who all taught and researched material under the theme of Global Black Literatures. As a result, English at UW has been invigorated by the addition of work on material stretching from the 18th to the 21st centuries and covering artists across the black Atlantic world. Hiring four professors in one department in a single year is also quite extraordinary. In part, UW English has its generous alumni, who have helped and are helping to raise $150,000 over five years to support these new faculty positions, to thank.

The new professors are already teaching a variety of classes to UW’s undergraduates. To give just a sampling, their course titles include: “The University and the Good Life,” “Female Futures,” “The Interracial Romance,” and “Empire of the Senses.” And with exciting new classes comes exciting but also challenging new material. Professors Edoro and Fecu note the importance of difficulty for students who are beginning to work with content they are less familiar with or entirely new to. Professor Edoro recognizes that she likes to assign challenging texts to her students. She recalls struggling with a text by Wole Soyinka back in her teens, and says, “I realized it was possible to read a text in English and not understand it.” But she valued this struggle and wants to guide her students through similar experiences with course readings. She says when a text becomes a beast you have to fight with to read, it comes to life in a weird way. She wants texts to come alive for her students, and she offers strategies and techniques for overcoming textual beasts. Professor Fecu reflects on potential difficulty for students through questions of comfort and discomfort. She does not want to make her students become more comfortable with certain kinds of material but rather help them become okay with discomfort. “Life is hard,” she says. “There are many difficult moments you will experience.” In her courses, she prioritizes resilience.
Professors Amine and Huang shed ever more light on their classroom communities. Professor Amine notes that her students would love for her to lecture and initially struggled to bring their own voices into class. On the one hand, their engagement during lectures signaled that they really wanted to learn the course material. But Professor Amine wanted to combat their hesitation to speak up—she wanted to hear what concerns they brought to and took from the assigned readings. In her classes, she gives students time to develop their ideas in writing so that they are better able to let their voices ring out in discussion. Professor Huang notes that class discussion is about intellectual vulnerability. She puts it: “Discomfort is being open to the responsibility of participating in the classroom.” She understands the classroom as a small world that she and the students are building, and she encourages vulnerability and the discomfort that accompanies it in order to grow that classroom-world.

But why Global Black Literatures in Wisconsin of all places, you might be asking. The new professors say that this is exactly where this kind of work needs to be happening. It is a problem to imagine a world where these literatures are primarily studied only in giant coastal cities or near the Caribbean archives. Additionally, the professors want to make sure Wisconsin students are not isolated from encounters with Global Black Literatures. And with Professors Amine, Edoro, Fecu, and Huang here, those students will be in good hands.

Distinguished Alumna 2019: Gillian Laub ’97
“Then I stumbled on a more complicated story.”

With this simple segue in her 2015 HBO documentary film, Southern Rites, Gillian Laub (BA ’97) shifts focus from her ongoing photographic chronicle of segregated proms in Montgomery County, GA, to the wrenching aftermath of the 2011 shooting of an unarmed black man by a white homeowner in the same community. In order to tell the story of the shooting, Laub complements her stock-in-trade photography with detailed interviews that are as illuminating as they are painful to watch. The film curates its interviews like a photo album by placing voices directly next to each other so that they can organically speak together about the racial politics in Montgomery County. As the New York Times review puts it, “In a calm, understated tone, Southern Rites digs deep to expose the roots that have made segregated proms and other affronts possible.”

Southern Rites had its genesis in a 2009 New York Times Magazine photo essay documenting the “white folks”/“black folks” proms of Montgomery County (yes—that’s 2009!). The film evolved from her return visits to photograph the southern Georgia county’s first integrated prom in 2011. Though best known for her Southern Rites work, Laub’s drive “to make an image that tells a story” has led to a career spanning nearly two decades of commissions, exhibitions, publication contributions, and books. Her work has earned numerous awards including virtually annual American Photography Awards since 2004.

Laub’s Southern Rites photography exhibition was displayed at UW’s Chazen Museum of Art from January 25 through May 12. Along with the exhibit, the Chazen held a screening of the HBO documentary followed by a discussion with Laub.

The trajectory of Laub’s career took a sharp turn after 9/11 when the native New Yorker began photographing families who were searching for missing loved ones in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks. She expanded the project to include those who had ultimately learned their loved ones had been lost. This work was followed by her extensive photo-documentation and diary-like collection of the testimonies of Palestinian and Israeli people caught in and victimized by the second intifada. This project led to her first book Testimony in 2007. The book version of Southern Rites followed in 2015. Citing Laub’s “empathetic portraits and eye for beauty amid the drama,” American Photo included Southern Rites among the Best Photobooks of the Year: 2015. It was included on similar lists by TIME, Smithsonian, Vogue, and LensCulture.

Laub received the 2019 Distinguished Alumni Award at the annual English Department awards ceremony in Madison on April 28. The annual award was established by the Board of Visitors to recognize alumni who have made exemplary use of their UW education.

Update from last newsletter: The 2018 Distinguished Alumni Award winner, Alicia Suskin Ostriker, was named State Poet 2018-2020 by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. Congratulations, Alicia!
Readers of the fall newsletter might remember the announcement that Composition and Rhetoric graduate student Neil Simpkins won the inaugural Leadership and Service Award organized by the department’s Diversity and Inclusion Student Committee (D+ISC). This semester, we have invited the D+ISC to share a little more about the group. Here is what they had to say:

At the beginning of the Spring 2018 semester, the department invited four students (three graduate and one undergraduate) to gather information about how UW English could become a more welcoming place. We were charged with addressing both pedagogical concerns and more social ones related to diversity and social justice. We chose the acronym D+ISC (for Diversity and Inclusion Student Committee) to bring the complex practices of “inclusion” to broader “diversity” initiatives the university has been sponsoring to address concerns about campus climate.

Last spring, D+ISC began this work with listening sessions for both undergraduate and graduate members of the department, which helped us to identify important needs articulated by students who attended. D+ISC composed a report to communicate to the faculty what we discovered during these conversations. During the past three semesters, we invited a larger team of English grad students to help design a series of pedagogical workshops. These 90-minute conversations have examined what happens in our classrooms: the challenges graduate TAs face when teaching materials about race, sexuality, and class, and how we can do this work better with greater compassion and insight.

One of the most encouraging revelations of this work has been discovering the depth of knowledge we collectively have within our graduate student community. This year, 16 graduate students have stepped forward to prepare one (sometimes two) of these workshops, sharing expertise, and exchanging strategies about how to respond to specific in-class situations we have faced. These events have also offered an unusual opportunity for grad students to collaborate with faculty from the English Department and the ESL Program: our gratitude to Kristina Huang, Leslie Bow, and Heidi Evans for bringing their energy and knowledge to these collaborations. We are also indebted to Associate Department Chair David Zimmerman for his steady support and advice throughout this period, as well as Department Chair Russ Castronovo for providing resources and administrative support and for inviting D+ISC to make its own decisions about the best way to put those resources to use.

Finally, during the current semester the campus has hosted more than a dozen job candidates who were being considered for several positions in ethnic studies, many who may also find a home in the English department. Members of D+ISC helped to organize grad student gatherings with these candidates, in part to provide feedback to search committees, but also to offer a welcoming conversation to candidates and to share some insights about the ways that the campus supports underrepresented students. In future semesters, D+ISC will continue soliciting feedback from department members about ongoing conversations that provide important support for students in our classes. We are especially grateful to all the grad students who have generously shared their pedagogical knowledge and concerns with the department— we hope others will join us for this work during the upcoming year.

2018–2019 D+ISC MEMBERS
Rachel Carroll
Julia Garrett
Erica Kanesaka Kalnay
Susan Maloney
Meredith Nnoka
Big Ten Emerging Scholars: Emily Loney and Katelin Krieg

Badger’s first thoughts of the Big Ten are likely to include athletic competition, whether they be of buzzer beaters at the Kohl Center, game-swinging pick-sixes at Camp Randall, or national championship celebrations on the ice in Hamden, CT. Obviously, athletic rivalry is part of what makes the Big Ten special. However, one recently implemented program showcases the exceptional scholarly community that also defines the conference.

This fall, Big Ten schools launched the Emerging Scholars Lecture Series, an annual program that sends advanced English graduate students to present on their dissertational work at other schools in the conference. Conceived during the inaugural annual meeting of Big Ten English Department Chairs in April 2018, the series was designed with the dual purpose of helping graduate students prepare for their professional careers and of fostering a sense of community between English scholars in the Big Ten.

The first Badger participant was Emily Loney, a PhD candidate specializing in Renaissance literature. In September, Loney traveled to State College, where the Penn State English Department had a full schedule planned for her, including a campus tour and dinner at the Department’s annual picnic. The visit was highlighted by Loney’s talk on the sonnets of Lady Mary Wroth and the spirited Q&A session that followed. “We talked about Renaissance sonnets, about the excitement of finding unusual manuscripts and unexpected collections of Renaissance poetry in the archives,” Loney said, “and even about how paying attention to Mary Wroth might give us new ways to teach Romeo and Juliet.”

In October, it was Wisconsin’s turn to play host, as we welcomed Dr. Katelin Krieg, a recently-minted PhD from the University of Minnesota, to campus. Those in attendance were lucky to hear Dr. Krieg present on work from her dissertation, which won Minnesota’s Best Arts and Humanities Dissertation Award for 2017-18. After the talk, the discussion moved from Helen C. White to Crandall’s on State Street where Dr. Krieg enjoyed dinner with graduate students and faculty.

Asked about her experience, Loney reflected on the sense of community she felt. “The Big Ten Emerging Scholars Lecture is valuable because it allows us to build networks across the English departments of various universities and find commonalities and communities,” Loney said. “It allows us to learn from our colleagues at different institutions, build relationships, and take what we learned back home.”

With the first year of the Emerging Scholars Lecture Series in the books, one thing is certain. When Big Ten English scholars get together, everybody wins.
Saying the “Unsayable”:
An Interview with Sonya Larson ‘05

Sonya Larson’s (BA ’05) short fiction and essays have appeared in Best American Short Stories 2017, American Short Fiction, American Literary Review, The Harvard Advocate, and more. Her story At the Bottom of New Lake was recently published as part of Amazon’s Warmer series, a collection of short sci-fi ebooks about climate change.

Larson currently works as Director of the Muse and the Marketplace literary conference, hosted by Grub-Street in Boston, as well as a manager of the Boston Writers of Color Group.

We caught up with her via email to discuss her time in Madison, At the Bottom of New Lake, and how literature can help us think through the issues facing us today.

Tell us about your experience in the UW–Madison English Department. What are your fondest memories from your time here? And how do you connect these experiences to your career as a writer?

As a kid I’d written little poems and stories, but at UW–Madison, I started to become a “real” writer. I took my writing more seriously, and started learning all the things I didn’t know that I didn’t know. In my first class, with Professor Ron Kuka, we studied books as works of art—rather than specimens to be analyzed. This, to me, felt instantly more exciting and true.

From then on, I was hooked. I took workshops with Srikanth Reddy, Rob Nixon, Ron Wallace, and Lorrie Moore—all of them exhilarating. I co-edited The Madison Review literary magazine, which meant running editorial meetings, giving feedback for our authors, designing T-shirts, and throwing launch parties. It felt so grown-up! By the time I graduated, I knew I wanted to pursue this art, difficulty be damned. Nothing thrilled me more.

Tell us about At the Bottom of New Lake. Where did the idea come from?

A friend challenged me to write a story about climate change, which sounded exciting until I actually tried to write it. All my ideas were trash. Predictable, didactic, and following the same basic arc: And then they realized they were doomed.

So I dumped all that, and started writing about murkier, “unsayable” things: the prevailing whiteness of the climate change movement, the resentments that younger and older generations can feel toward one another.

Eventually these ideas formed At the Bottom of New Lake. It’s about a working-class Chinese community left behind on Cape Cod, after a flood has devoured its seaside mansions. A white woman, whose heirloom home was destroyed, is desperately trying to educate the remaining community about climate change. But these Chinese families—particularly one teenage girl—are sort of happy about the flood. Their lives are better now. They have the beaches all to themselves, and they’re not faced with the daily indignities of inequality.

To write it, I had to get beyond the easy platitudes I’d first dreamed up, and into territory that’s more layered, complex, and emotionally uneasy. I didn’t want to write a simple Climate Change is Bad story. I wanted to explore moral questions that genuinely flummox me.
At the Bottom of New Lake is an entry in Amazon’s Warmer series, which is billed as “a collection of seven visions of a conceivable tomorrow by today’s most thought-provoking authors.” What issues does your story cover, and in what ways do you think fiction is uniquely suited for drawing attention to contemporary issues?

My story sheds light on the racial dynamics of climate change, as well as intergenerational fights around this issue—around many sociopolitical issues. Our culture isn’t great at addressing this stuff, but to move forward, it’s essential. People tend to carry strong beliefs, but our day-to-day behavior is far messier and contradictory. That reality can either help or hurt us as we try to achieve something together—something like combating climate change.

Fiction is uniquely suited for exploring contemporary issues because it removes us from the realm of op-eds, spreadsheets, and rational logic. Instead, fiction’s job is to move readers through the realm of emotional logic. Whether we realize it or not, emotional logic informs most of our day-to-day decisions. Sure—I can hate climate change. But maybe I also enjoy the smell of gasoline as I heat my car on a winter morning. Maybe I’d like to join that protest, but feel self-conscious about shouting slogans. These visceral experiences—to me—are where the rubber meets the road. Multiplied across millions, they sway the course of culture (or not).

You also work with GrubStreet, a creative writing center based out of Boston. What does GrubStreet do, and what is your role in the organization?

GrubStreet is a true home for writers in Boston. As I graduated from UW–Madison, Ellen Litman (who was there for a Wisconsin Institute Fellowship) said to me, “Sonya, go to Boston. The city cares about books, there are tons of writers, and there’s a tiny place there called GrubStreet, where you can continue your education.” That’s exactly what I did. Over 13 years later, it’s not so tiny anymore—we now host hundreds of workshops, parties, events, and intensive programs, and are about to move to a brand new 8,000-square-foot space. Writers: come!

Currently, I’m the Director of GrubStreet’s Muse and the Marketplace conference, which attracts 900+ writers, guest authors, literary agents, and editors each year. It was recently named “the #1 writing conference in North America” by The Writer magazine, which makes us proud. But the best part of my job may be organizing events for the Boston Writers of Color Group, now with over 700 members. Never before have I had a strong community of fellow writers of color. It’s life changing.

For more information on GrubStreet, Muse and the Marketplace, and the Boston Writers of Color Group, visit www.grubstreet.org.

WHAT’S YOUR STORY?

UW English wants to know what its alumni are up to. Send us an update!

We also welcome:
• Interest in mentoring our undergrads on the job market
• Recommendations for internships and job openings

Email: careers@english.wisc.edu
LAILA AMINE
*Postcolonial Paris: Fictions of Intimacy in the City of Light*
University of Wisconsin Press, 2018

“In the global imagination, Paris is the city's glamorous center, ignoring the Muslim residents in its outskirts except in moments of spectacular crisis such as terrorist attacks or riots. But colonial immigrants and their French offspring have been a significant presence in the Parisian landscape since the 1940s. Expanding the narrow script of what and who is Paris, Laila Amine explores the novels, films, and street art of Maghrebis, Franco-Arabs, and African Americans in the City of Light, including fiction by Charef, Chraïbi, Sebbar, Baldwin, Smith, and Wright, and such films as *La haine*, *Made in France*, *Chouchou*, and *A Son*.

Spanning the decades from the post–World War II era to the present day, Amine demonstrates that the postcolonial other is both peripheral to and intimately entangled with all the ideals so famously evoked by the French capital—romance, modernity, equality, and liberty. In their work, postcolonial writers and artists have juxtaposed these ideals with colonial tropes of intimacy (the interracial couple, the harem, the Arab queer) to expose their hidden violence. Amine highlights the intrusion of race in everyday life in a nation where, officially, it does not exist.”

ELIZABETH BEARDEN
*Monstrous Kinds: Body, Space, and Narrative in Renaissance Representations of Disability*
University of Michigan Press, 2019

“*Monstrous Kinds* is the first book to explore textual representations of disability in the global Renaissance. Elizabeth B. Bearden contends that monstrosity, as a precursor to modern concepts of disability, has much to teach about our tendency to inscribe disability with meaning. Understanding how early modern writers approached disability not only provides more accurate genealogies of disability, but also helps nuance current aesthetic and theoretical disability formulations.

The book analyzes the cultural valences of early modern disability across a broad national and chronological span, attending to the specific bodily, spatial, and aesthetic systems that contributed to early modern literary representations of disability. The cross section of texts (including conduct books and treatises, travel writing and wonder books) is comparative, putting canonical European authors such as Castiglione into dialogue with transatlantic and Anglo-Ottoman literary exchange. Bearden questions grand narratives that convey a progression of disability from supernatural marvel to medical specimen, suggesting that, instead, these categories coexist and intersect.”

MARK VARESCHI
*Everywhere and Nowhere: Anonymity and Mediation in Eighteenth-Century Britain*
University of Minnesota Press, 2018

“*Everywhere and Nowhere* considers the ubiquity of anonymity and mediation in the publication and circulation of eighteenth-century British literature—before the Romantic creation of the ‘author’—and what this means for literary criticism. Drawing on quantitative analysis and robust archival work, it reveals the long history of print anonymity so central to the risks and benefits of the digital culture.”
LYNN KELLER
Recomposing Ecopoetics: North American Poetry of the Self-Conscious Anthropocene
University of Virginia Press, 2018

“In the first book devoted exclusively to the ecopoetics of the twenty-first century, Lynn Keller examines poetry of what she terms the ‘self-conscious Anthropocene,’ a period in which there is widespread awareness of the scale and severity of human effects on the planet. Recomposing Ecopoetics analyzes work written since the year 2000 by thirteen North American poets—including Evelyn Reilly, Juliana Spahr, Ed Roberson, and Jena Osma—all of whom push the bounds of literary convention as they seek forms and language adequate to complex environmental problems. Drawing as often on linguistic experimentalism as on traditional literary resources, these poets respond to environments transformed by people and take ‘nature’ to be a far more inclusive and culturally imbricated category than conventional nature poetry does. This interdisciplinary study not only brings cutting-edge work in ecocriticism to bear on a diverse archive of contemporary environmental poetry; it also offers the environmental humanities new ways to understand the cultural and affective dimensions of the Anthropocene.”

JORDAN ZWECK
Epistolary Acts: Anglo-Saxon Letters and Early English Media
University of Toronto Press, 2018

“As challenging as it is to imagine how an educated cleric or wealthy lay person in the early Middle Ages would have understood a letter (especially one from God), it is even harder to understand why letters would have so captured the imagination of people who might never have produced, sent, or received letters themselves.

In Epistolary Acts, Jordan Zweck examines the presentation of letters in early medieval vernacular literature, including hagiography, prose romance, poetry, and sermons on letters from heaven, moving beyond traditional genre study to offer a radically new way of conceptualizing Anglo-Saxon epistolarity. Zweck argues that what makes early medieval English epistolarity unique is the performance of what she calls “epistolary acts,” the moments when authors represent or embed letters within vernacular texts. The book contributes to a growing interest in the intersections between medieval studies and media studies, blending traditional book history and manuscript studies with affect theory, media studies, and archive studies.”

Also, be on the lookout for Joshua Calhoun’s The Nature of the Page in Renaissance England: Ecology, Poetry, and Papermaking, which is due out in late spring from the University of Pennsylvania Press.
Innovating Teaching

**Naomi Salmon**, a graduate student in the English Department, won one of the university’s Innovation in Teaching Awards at a lovely ceremony in March 2019. Naomi will be completing her PhD this year.