



Northeastern University

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English Department Alumni e-Newsletter

Department of English

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October 01, 2009

# English Department Alumni e-Newsletter : Fall 2009

Northeastern University - Department of English

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# English Department *Alumni* e-Newsletter

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## A Letter From the Chair

Greetings, Alums! We've been enjoying a beautiful New England autumn here in the Boston area.

On a September Saturday, more than a dozen faculty, students, and alums participated as "Team NU English" in the Susan G. Komen Foundation 5K "Race for the Cure." We raised over \$1500 for breast cancer research and enjoyed the balmy (if somewhat fishy) air of South Street Seaport. We're hoping to make this an

annual gathering, so if you receive an email invitation next year and are in the Boston area, consider joining team NU English! All paces, from walkers to sprinters, are welcome.

With almost three hundred undergraduate majors, as well as over twenty talented Master's and doctoral students we admitted this year, the Fall semester has been busy as well as beautiful. Luckily, the faculty has received some reinforcements. We've been joined by Professor Chris W. Gallagher, who comes to Northeastern from the University of Nebraska, Lincoln. Professor Gallagher's field is Rhetoric and Composition, and he will be serving as our new Director of the Writing Program. Professor Gallagher is the author of three books, *Teaching Writing that Matters* (with Amy Lee), *Reclaiming Assessment*, and *Radical Departures*, as well as numerous articles.

Also joining us for this academic year is Visiting Assistant Professor Michael Booth, who works on Shakespeare and Early Modern literature. Professor Booth received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University and has been a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at Haverford College



Team NUEnglish

and a Visiting Assistant Professor at Oberlin College. He is also the recipient of a research fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library of Brown University.

Three new Lecturers—Dr. Laurie Edwards, Dr. Christen Enos, and Dr. Eileen Farrell—complete the roster of new fulltime faculty for this year.

Please read on for more news about the activities and accomplishments of our talented alums, students, and faculty. And please, as always—help us *make* the news! Stop by if you're in the area, and if you're not, Drop us a Line via the e-Newsletter page on our website at <http://www.english.neu.edu/newsletter/>. I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

~ Laura Green, Chair

## Second Husky Tapped by the White House: *David S. Ferriero*



David S. Ferriero, BA '72, MA'76

Northeastern University alumnus **David S. Ferriero**, BA '72, MA'76, has been nominated by President Barack Obama to the position of Archivist of the United States. Currently serving as the Andrew W. Mellon Director of the New York Public Li-

braries, Ferriero received his bachelor's and master's degrees in English Literature from Northeastern.

Upon the Senate's confirmation, Ferriero, a Beverly, Massachusetts native, will become the tenth archivist since President Franklin Roosevelt established the National Archives, the nation's largest record keeper, in 1934. As Archivist of the United States, Ferriero would oversee the maintenance and management of public records and be responsible for releasing government documents, including presidential papers.

He is the second Northeastern alumnus to be tapped for a position in the Obama administration. In May, Winslow Sargeant, '86, was nominated for the position of chief counsel for advocacy in the Small Business Administration.

Like many Northeastern students whose ultimate career interests are inspired by their co-op experiences, Ferriero took his first career step by accepting the seemingly unexciting co-op position as a junior library assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries in 1965.

Ferriero interrupted his Northeastern education to join the U.S. Navy and was deployed to Vietnam. He returned to Northeastern from the war a different student.

"I was much more focused at that point," Ferriero said in a 2005 interview with the Northeastern alumni magazine.

"When I came back and became a liberal arts major, that's when I took courses in the English department and really liked what I saw."

A love for the intellectual world of libraries was born. He landed a library position at MIT, and after 31 years there, Ferriero moved on to Duke University, where he served for several years as the Rita DiGiallorardo Holloway University Librarian and Vice Provost for Library Affairs. In 2004, he was tapped as chief executive of the New York Public Libraries Research Libraries, followed by his appointment as the Andrew W. Mellon Director three years later.

The New York Public Libraries (NYPL) is one of the largest public library systems in the United States and one of the largest research library systems in the world. Ferriero is responsible for collection strategy; conservation; digital experience; reference and research services; and education, programming, and exhibitions. The NYPL has 2,600 full-time employees and a budget of \$273 million.

As Archivist, Ferriero would be taking over an organization that, for fiscal year 2010, has a projected budget of \$454 million and 2,998 full-time employees.

In addition to a BA and an MA in English Literature from Northeastern, Ferriero holds an MS from the Simmons Graduate School of Library and Information Science.



The National Archives building in Washington, DC.

∞ "Second Husky Tapped by the White House," courtesy of Northeastern University's Office of Marketing and Communications, <http://www.northeastern.edu/marcom/>.



Send us your update: [http://www.english.neu.edu/alumni/drop\\_us\\_a\\_line/](http://www.english.neu.edu/alumni/drop_us_a_line/)

## A Versatile Degree for *Stephen Robie & Joshua Cristiano*

As we always emphasize, the English major is a versatile one that can lead to unexpected careers! A case in point is **Stephen Robie**, BA '06, who is enrolled in a joint Physician's Assistant/Master's in Public Health degree at George Washington University. This highly selective program, ranked fourth in its area in the nation, admits just twelve students per year from an applicant pool of over 200.

The program combines clinical practice with public health policy, both of which are important to Stephen. After receiving his BA, he trained as a paramedic, also at Northeastern. Stephen writes from DC:

"Working as a paramedic for two years, in North Carolina, allowed me to witness firsthand the disparities in the modern health care system. Health in society today is influenced not primarily by medicine, but by the social gradients in which the citizens of this country are confined. My primary focus is on community-oriented primary care systems, and I've been applying that philosophy to some aggressive patient advocacy and activist opportunities in DC. My goal is to serve as a clinician for traditionally underserved communities, either in an urban environment (similar to where I went to school) or a rural one (where I grew up.)"

Though he admits that he hasn't recently had much time to pursue his literary interests, Stephen has no doubt his major contributed to his concern with social justice. Stephen cites Stuart Peterfreund and much-loved and recently retired lecturer Joe DeRoche as particularly important influences, reflecting: "I'm reminded of discussions in Professor Peterfreund's class of William Blake and the poems in his *Songs of Innocence*, which sought to raise awareness of the plight of the neglected and elevate them beyond mere objects of pity. I also



Stephen Robie, BA '06

## Undergraduate Program Update: *Hot Topics*

The Department continues to develop the undergraduate curriculum. This year, we have added several new topics courses (in American literature of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries) to our catalog, as well as new courses in postcolonial literature. In Spring 2010, Professor Kimberly Brown will teach the first of these new courses, "Topics in 20th Century American Literature: Black Memory and Imagery." The course examines the role of the life story, or memoir, in the construction of African American identity after the Civil Rights Movement, focusing particularly on gendered constructions of memory as articulated through artistic, personal, and political influences. The course, part of an Advanced Learning Community, will be paired with a course on the Civil Rights Movement, taught by Professor Charissa Threat in the History department.



Faculty from the Department will meet in December to consider larger changes to the undergraduate curriculum, based on suggestions gathered from students over the past year. Students responded to surveys and attended a special forum in Spring 2009 on possible enhancements to the curriculum. Among the suggestions: more upper-level electives on special topics and more flexibility in choosing courses. Students were mostly pleased with how much they learn in courses as well as the quality of their professors.

~ Beth Britt, Head Advisor, Undergraduate Program

feel able to communicate my research and the needs of those I serve in writing, and much of that ability I owe to the faculty at Northeastern." We look forward to future updates on Stephen's achievements in this challenging and important field.

News from **Joshua Cristiano**, BA '06, emphasizes the role of serendipity in job-hunting: "On a lucky weekend trip to DC, I met my boss through a friend. Talk of our literary interests led to his suggesting that I send him several short stories and a few other writing samples. Close to thirty plays later, I'm still a Script Adapter for GraphicAudio." GraphicAudio is a Bethesda, MD company that produces MP3 downloads and audio CDs of fantasy, adventure, and science fiction stories. As Josh explains, "Each month, my director sends me a full-length novel, which I rewrite, cut, and edit to produce an audio

*Continued on Page 3.*

## Writing Program's Fall Update: *National Day on Writing Events*

The Writing Program organized a slate of events in recognition of the National Day on Writing, October 20th, 2009. Events included the following:

- a "writing rumpus room" in our Writing Center, at which participants engaged in fun writing activities such as magnetic poetry, 6-word memoirs, collaborative stories, comics-writing, etc.;
- a "community writing event," at which participants collaborated on the creation of a real-time multimedia text in which they reflected on the place of writing in their lives;
- an open mic reading, at which participants shared writing;
- a "writing with collaborative technologies" demonstration for faculty, at which participants learned about a range of "Web 2.0" writing technologies; and
- a Northeastern University Writing Program writing gallery on the National Gallery of Writing (see <http://galleryofwriting.org/galleries/275020>).

More information on our celebration of the National Day on Writing may be found at : <http://nuweb9.neu.edu/writingday>.

☞ *Chris Gallagher, Director of the Writing Program*

## Cooperative Education News **CO-OP** CENTENNIAL

This year marks the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Cooperative Education program at Northeastern. President Aoun has announced that 2009-2010 will be the year of Global Experience, and has committed the university to doubling the number of students who participate in international co-op. An important part of this initiative is the Presidential Global Scholarship, which will provide up to \$6,000 for 200 students a year to help defray the costs of going on co-op abroad.

Several English majors in the recent past have chosen to co-op abroad in Ghana, Nepal, Cambodia, and Turkey. With the help of the Global Scholarships, I look forward to seeing more of our students take advantage of these opportunities. As always, I welcome your ideas, job leads, and personal updates. I can be reached at 617-373-3423, [p.goodale@neu.edu](mailto:p.goodale@neu.edu), or via the Co-op website: [www.northeastern.edu/englishcoop/](http://www.northeastern.edu/englishcoop/).

☞ *Pam Goodale, Co-Op Advisor*

## A Versatile Degree

*Continued from Page 2*

play. I add sound effect cues for the sound engineers in post-production. Musically scored and read by professional actors, the final product is like a movie with your eyes closed."



Josh Cristiano, BA '06

Josh's favorite thing about the position is having creative control: "I'm allowed to do just about anything I want—short of killing off the main character!" Although Josh originally thought his creative ambitions would demand an MFA, he soon realized his on-the-job experience is a writing education in itself. His colleagues have "showed me which tools to use and which techniques worked best, while at the same time allowing my voice to come through. Perhaps the most important thing I've learned, however, is marketability. Everything I work on is for an audience, and it's important to know what that audience wants. In college, I was really into experimentalism, writing abstract short stories and poetry. I now realize, maybe it's not so bad if someone can accurately interpret something I write."

This newfound pragmatism hasn't prevented Josh from pursuing his own creative projects. He's currently editing his first novel and continues to write poetry. And he hasn't given up on the classroom, either. He reflects that, "Every bit of literature we studied at Northeastern helped shape my ability to tell and understand a story. It's hard to work on anything new without the framework of the past. Every writing workshop and writing group honed my skills, taught me how to paint with language, and instilled a certain confidence in my choices. Even now, I still participate in workshops. There's always something new to learn." Josh is currently applying to Master's in Education programs and hopes to find a high school teaching job that will allow him, in turn, to introduce students to classics such as Homer and *Beowulf* and pass on his own passion for creative expression.

A visual as well as a verbal artist, Josh also works part-time as an artist for Trader Joe's. Some of his writing and art can be found on his blog, <http://treebough.com>.

☞ *Laura Green, Chair*

## Graduate Program Update

We were pleased to welcome a large and accomplished incoming class of graduate students in September: nine new MA students and thirteen Ph.D. students joined us from locations around the country, including California, Hawaii, and Florida.

The graduate curriculum as well as the student body has expanded in new directions this year with a series of courses on special topics that highlight the many fields of expertise of our faculty. During the fall semester, Professor Kimberly Brown is teaching a course on twentieth-century American literature titled "The Body and the Visual" that focuses on issues such as photographic self-portraiture and literary fragmentation: students are studying work by visual artists and writers including Roland Barthes, John Edgar Wideman, and Cindy Sherman. Professor Patrick Mullen is teaching a course in literary studies titled, "Management Culture: The Novel, Cinema, and Capital" that focuses on the character of the business manager—from Don Cheadle in the film *Hotel Rwanda* to Lily Bart in *The House of Mirth*—as a key figure in modern and postmodern film and literature. Professor Kathleen Kelly is teaching a course in Medieval literature titled *World Literatures, 1100-1500* that considers Medieval European texts together with texts such as the *Sundiata* from Africa, the *Tale of Genji* from Japan, and the *Arabian Nights* from Persia. In my class on early Ameri-

can literature, *Gender and Empire*, students are reading gender theory together with captivity narratives, slave narratives, and novels from the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

Our spring semester graduate curriculum includes an array of courses on special topics including literature courses on "Victorian and Neo-Victorian Literature" and "American Modernism," a film course titled "Framing Faust: Film, Literature and Cultural Struggle," a course on Renaissance literature titled "Becoming Human," a course in African-American literature on "The Slave Narrative" and rhetoric and composition courses on "Politics, Aesthetics, and Writing Pedagogies" and "Rhetoric and Gender."

We are also working to help graduate students enter the ranks of the profession and have conducted a series of workshops this fall on professional matters, including preparing for the job market and presenting papers at academic conferences as well as preparing for comprehensive examinations. We look forward to the conference the graduate students have organized for the spring on "The Drawn Map," which will explore ideas of literature and geography: the conference is a great opportunity for graduate students to present their own work in the field to a wide audience of scholars from the department and the larger Boston area.

✎ Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Graduate Coordinator

## English Graduate Student Association (EGSA) News

The EGSA is off to a busy new start for this year, holding two of our most widely attended meetings and welcoming more students than ever before. The group has begun holding workshops for students in many stages of the program, and having fun outings to lectures and poetry readings throughout the Boston area. We encourage all interested alumni to visit our Facebook page (Search Northeastern EGSA) to see all the events that we have planned, and participate in our discussions about topics ranging from language exam tips, to where the best food on campus can be found.



The EGSA would like to send a special invitation to all alumni to come attend this year's graduate student conference. This year's conference, titled "The Drawn Map," will take place on

March 13-14 and will include a keynote lecture by Martin Bruckner of the University of Delaware, and a faculty lecture by Professor Elizabeth Dillon. This year's conference roundtable discussion will feature faculty members and students discussing the archive and related methodologies. EGSA is hoping for a large alumni presence at all events related to the conference, and as always, alumni are welcome to submit abstracts. So, mark you calendars, view the CFP on the EGSA website, and expect more event details from the EGSA in the coming months. ✎ Greg Cass, EGSA President

Northeastern University  
English Graduate Student Association  
Call for Papers

### The Drawn Map.

Keynote Speaker: Professor Martin Brückner,  
University of Delaware  
Faculty Speaker: Professor Elizabeth Maddock Dillon,  
Northeastern University  
and Professionalization Roundtable:  
"Mapping the Archive"

The English Graduate Student Association of Northeastern University invites papers for this year's conference which explore maps and mappings in literature, theory, film and art. We might think of the discourse of literature as a spatial practice, working through global paradigms, transnational encounters, and charting the topographies and contours of cultural, textual, and scholarly exchange.

The concept of "The Drawn Map" implies a sense of historical geography and the tensions of the mapped page, the body, the archive, as they are recorded, drawn, and revised. Maps are surfaces which inscribe codes of understanding, knowledge and the architecture of power. They are also flexible cartographies, subject to change, erasure, and new demarcations. Maps impel exploration, travel, conquest, cosmopolitanism, curiosity, diaspora, migration and imagination. They are also scientific in their plan, graph, and measure. And finally, we might think of maps as articulations—the practice of identifying, naming, classifying and recording.

200-word abstracts may be sent to [neuegsa@gmail.com](mailto:neuegsa@gmail.com) by December 20. Please include your name and university affiliation.

Topics might include, but are certainly not limited to:

Cosmopolitan Geographies	Maps and Methodology	Imagined or Embodied Geographies
The Map as Text	Mapping the Field	Mapping Gender and Identity
Maps, Memoirs, Memory	Aesthetic Geographies	Formal and Informal Geographies
Circulation of Culture	Mapping the Classroom	Geopolitics and Geoliteratures
Mapping of Empire	Travel Narratives	New Maps, New Borderlands
The Economy of Maps	Archival Spaces	Mapping Bodies, Mapping Space

## Alumni Updates

We were delighted to receive from a number of alumni/ae updates in response to the Spring 2009 *Alumni e-Newsletter*. More updates can be found at [www.english.neu.edu/alumni/](http://www.english.neu.edu/alumni/).

In Spring 2009, **Kara Andersen** (MA '00, PhD University of Pittsburgh) accepted an assistant professor position in the Film Department at Brooklyn College CUNY.

**Dan Branda** (BA '02) recently launched an Online Literary Journal, *Galley's Online*: <http://www.galleysonline.com>.

**Suzanne R. Harvey** (MA '68) has a forthcoming poetry book, entitled *Tiara for the Twentieth Century*. More information is available at: <http://www.danielpublishing.com/bro/harvey.html>.

**Brett Ingram** (MA '03) is enrolled in the University of Massachusetts-Amherst's PhD program in Communication, with a concentration in Public Culture, Performance Studies, and Rhetoric. He's working on his dissertation on the intersection of fascist aesthetics, rhetorical theory, and the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, and teaching classes in communication theory, film history, and writing at UMass-Amherst.

**Emily Lemiska** (BA '08) is working in the MGH Office of Public Affairs, as an Internal Communications Coordinator. Her primary responsibility is working on the hospital's newsletter, *MGH Hotline*. The weekly newsletter is written for employees, patients, and visitors. In addition to the newsletter, she also helps write the Annual Report and develop communications plans for a variety of areas in the hospital, creating posters, drafting announcements, etc. Her other duty is fielding media requests.



**Mary Beth Nevulis** (BA '08) has been accepted into the Master's program at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

**Lisa Perdigao** (PhD '04) has been promoted to Associate Professor at the Florida Institute of Technology.

**Jessica (Krenek) Witt** (MA '08) has been accepted into the doctoral program in Theater at the University of Maryland.

## Upcoming Department Events

[www.english.neu.edu/events/](http://www.english.neu.edu/events/)

*Thursday, November 19*

### In Memory & Legacy: The Interdisciplinarity of Civil Rights

The Humanities Center, Department of English, and Department of History are co-sponsoring a symposium to bring together an interdisciplinary panel of academic activists who focus on the challenges of research and pedagogy as they relate to the Civil Rights movement in the United States. Professors Kimberly Juanita Brown (English, NU), Peniel E. Joseph (History, Tufts University), and Charissa Threat (History, NU), who work within and beyond the parameters of the movement's ideology, will engage in a conversation about the different ways in which they enter the discourse of this historical, cultural, and political movement.

- 3:00 - 4:30 PM
- 102 West Village G

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.northeastern.edu/humanities>.

*Thursday, December 03*

### Barrs Lecture Series 2009-2010

Hillary Chute, Harvard University  
Society of Fellows

- 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM
- 315 Shillman Hall

For more information, please contact:

Graduate Programs Office at  
617-373-3692 or [m.daigle@neu.edu](mailto:m.daigle@neu.edu).

## *~ Acknowledgments ~*

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