

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome to the 2016-17 academic year. I hope you have had a restorative and productive summer. Classes begin August 29, and things are beginning to stir on the fifth floor. As we announced last month, my assistant Ben Simmons has gone on to grad school at CMU, and I'm very pleased that Jen Florian, whom most of you know from the Film Studies program or even before that from the main office, has taken the position of chair's assistant. She can schedule appointments with me if you call her at 624-6509 or email at jrf16@pitt.edu. Please send her timely announcements for our weekly e-news of any good news you wish to share, calls for papers, funding opportunities, and forthcoming events, and please follow e-news carefully to keep abreast of these. We are trying not to inundate you with one email announcement after another and will only send out individual announcements under special circumstances. Jen will also maintain a master calendar of department events; please consult with her as you schedule dates for lectures, readings, and gatherings. We can't avoid all conflicts even within the department, but we can try to minimize them. The calendar is already beginning to fill with exciting events. Of special note will be a visit from one of our most accomplished and famous alums, Michael Chabon, who will be here December 9 for a colloquium in the Humanities Center, a conversation with writing students and faculty, and a public interview at the Carnegie Music Hall.

Anna Murphy, our payroll administrator is on leave caring for a beautiful new baby, and in her absence you can email your concerns and questions to John Willard (jow69@pitt.edu) from the dean's office, who is handling our payroll. Kristin Hopkins (khopkins@pitt.edu), our Fiscal and Operations Manager, has settled in very well over the summer, and you can contact her with questions about office space, budget, and staff assistance. Chelsea Blake (chb135@pitt.edu) has gotten her mind around our complex schedule; she's the person to contact as soon as possible if you need to try to arrange a change of classroom. Jesse Daugherty continues to assist the grad program, Joe Kluchurosky the composition and literature programs, and Nancy Kirkwood the Writing Program, Pittsburgh Contemporary Writers Series, and now the Center for African American Poetry and Poetics, which has gotten off the ground this summer with new assistant director Lauren Russell, a Pitt MFA from several years back. If you need assistance from the main office staff as the semester begins, please try to make your requests two days in advance. In the rush, they can't guarantee completion of last-minute requests.

There will be changes in our program directors this year. Jeanne Marie Laskas is taking a year to plan the expansion of the Center for Creativity, and Peter Trachtenberg will be acting director of the writing program for the year. After sharing the literature directorship last year during Hannah Johnson's spring maternity leave, Gayle Rogers will again be splitting the directorship of the literature program with Hannah, with her in the fall, Gayle in the spring. With Randall Halle taking on the directorship of the interdisciplinary film studies program, Mark Lynn Anderson (fall) and Neepa Majumdar (spring) will be taking charge of the undergraduate film studies in the department. Jean Ferguson Carr continues to direct the composition program

and will be running CEAT this year as well, and Nancy Glazener continues in the graduate directorship.

Our first department meeting will be held on Thursday, September 8 in 501CL from 9:30-11:00. All faculty and graduate students are invited. Meetings will be on the second Thursday of the month except in March when Spring Break adjusts the schedule. Here are all the dates:

Thursday, September 8
Thursday, October 13
Thursday, November 10
Thursday, December 8
Thursday, January 12
Thursday, February 9
Thursday, March 2
Thursday, April 13

Meeting agenda for our first meeting will follow soon. At that meeting I'll be asking new faculty colleagues to stand and be recognized. Here are brief introductions to each of them:

Erin Anderson, Assistant Professor

Having directed the Professional and New Media Writing program at the University of Massachusetts Boston since earning her PhD at Pitt two years ago, Erin Anderson will serve as Assistant Professor in Writing with Specialty in Digital Storytelling starting this fall. Her dissertation, "The Material Poetics of Digital Voice: A Creative-Critical Inquiry," hinted at her intention as a researcher and instructor to develop cross-genre courses in digital writing that encourage students to work with audio, video, or interactive web-based writing and consider those mediums' potential across fiction, nonfiction, and poetics.

Zachary Horton, Assistant Professor

The second of two incoming junior assistant professors who will specialize in the digital realm, Zachary Horton will join the department as Assistant Professor in Literature with Specialty in Digital Literary Media beginning this fall. Horton arrives at Pitt one year after earning his PhD in English from the University of California-Santa Barbara. Fascinated by the concept of the human in relation to very large and very small scales, he is currently working on a book, *Mediating Scale: From the Cosmic Zoom to Trans-Scalar Ecology*, which explores the theory and practice of scalar mediation.

Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder, Assistant Professor

Fresh off a successful defense of her dissertation, *The Radical South: Grassroots Activism, Ethnicity, and Literary Form, 1960-1985*, which earned her a PhD in English from the University of Mississippi this past spring, Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder will begin as Assistant Professor in Literature with Specialty in American Ethnic, Minority, or Indigenous Literature starting this fall. Rodriguez Fielder, who also completed a year at the University of Copenhagen's Centre for Transnational American Studies as a guest researcher, will continue to explore issues related to 20th and 21st century U.S. literatures, multiethnic literature, social justice movement literature, and performance studies.

Lauren Russell, Research Assistant Professor

In early June, Lauren Russell, a 2014 Pitt MFA in Creative Writing, became Assistant Director of the newly minted Center for African American Poetry and Poetics (CAAPP). As a research assistant professor, Russell will lead one undergraduate poetry workshop and one community workshop during the coming academic year. As Assistant Director of the CAAPP, she will serve as the primary liaison between the co-directors and the advisory board, center fellows, invited guests, faculty affiliates, graduate students, community members, and other individuals and groups. To this point, Russell has produced three original chapbooks; in March 2017, she will see her first book, entitled *What's Hanging on the Hush*, published by Ahsahta Press.

Dan Kubis, Research Assistant Professor

Since moving from the Office of the Provost at the beginning of 2016, Dan Kubis has served in the newly created position of Assistant Director of the Humanities Center. Kubis, who supported countless events for the recently concluded Year of the Humanities, will now seek to capitalize on the positive momentum from symbiotic partnerships forged within the University during the past year. A 2013 Pitt PhD in English Literature who also holds a BA in Philosophy from the University, Kubis has contributed to many Pitt projects over the course of the past decade, including but not limited to the 225th Anniversary Website, the Cathedral Gallery touch-screen display, and most recently, the Year of the Humanities website and podcasts.

Doug Swanson, Research Assistant Professor

A veteran of investigative journalism who has enjoyed a decorated career at *The Dallas Morning News*, Doug Swanson joins the Department of English as a part-time Research Assistant Professor. Most recently, Doug served as the Professional-in-Residence at the University of Texas at Austin, his alma mater, where he taught investigative reporting combined with data mapping at UT's well-regarded School of Journalism. He is the author of six books, including the first non-fiction publication of his career, *Blood Aces: The Wild Ride of Benny Binion, the Texas Gangster Who Created Vegas Poker* (Viking, 2014).

Patrick McCabe, Visiting Associate Professor

An Irish writer whose books have twice been shortlisted for the Booker Prize, Patrick McCabe will join the Department of English in Spring 2017 as a Visiting Associate Professor. His books, *The Butcher Boy* (1992) and *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998), were both subsequently made into films.

Mary Gaitskill, Visiting Professor

A writer whose works often feature female characters grappling with inner conflicts related to sexuality, romance, love, sex work, and drug addiction, Mary Gaitskill will be a Visiting Professor for the Fall 2016 semester. The author of six books, including *Veronica*, which was nominated for the National Book Award, Gaitskill has taught at a variety of colleges across the United States, including Brown University, San Francisco State University, Hollins College, the University of California, Berkeley, and New York University.

Sarah Leavens, Lecturer

One of two new Lecturers in the Department of English in AY 16-17, Sarah Leavens brings with her several years of part-time teaching experience as well as one year of experience as a Visiting Lecturer. Sarah, who earned her MFA from Chatham University in 2012, has developed a successful course on professional uses of social media and taught courses in the Public and Professional Writing Program.

Angela Farkas, Lecturer

Having earned an MA in English from Pitt in 1991, Angela Farkas returned to receive her PhD in 2003 – also in English – for a dissertation entitled “Sensational Tales and Working-Girl Melodrama: Popular Story Paper Fiction and Readers in Late-19th Century America.” Farkas has intermittently taught courses in the Department of English since the early 1990s, most recently in the capacity of Visiting Lecturer.

April Flynn, Visiting Lecturer

April Flynn, who earned her MFA in Creative Writing from Pitt in April 2015, has served as a part-time faculty member in the Department of English since 2014, leading sections of Seminar in Composition and Written Professional Communication.

Katie Homar, Visiting Lecturer

A 2014 Pitt PhD whose dissertation was entitled “Prose Declaimers: British Romantic Essayists and Classical Rhetoric,” Katie Homar returns to the university having completed a postdoctoral fellowship at Mercyhurst University.

Cumi Ikeda, Visiting Lecturer

Cumi Ikeda earned her MFA in Nonfiction Writing this past April; she also holds an MA in English Literature from Western Washington University. In the past three years, she has led sections of Introduction to Journalism and Nonfiction as well as Seminar in Composition.

Megan Kappel, Visiting Lecturer

Having received her MFA in Screenwriting from Hollins University in 2012, Megan Kappel has since split her time between Pitt, Robert Morris University, and Point Park University; at Pitt, she has primarily taught courses on the Public and Professional Writing track.

Katherine Kidd, Visiting Lecturer

Having defended a dissertation entitled “Morality, Working Class Studies, and Queer Failure” this summer, Katherine Kidd will continue her stint in the department this fall as a new Visiting Lecturer. She has taught a multitude of courses over the past five years, including Working Class Literature and Short Story in Context: Science Fiction.

Tim Maddocks, Visiting Lecturer

A 2015 Pitt MFA in Creative Writing, Nonfiction, whose thesis was entitled “How to Give: Kindness Gone Awry and the Homeless People Who Happened to Me,” Tim Maddocks has taught courses such as Written Professional Communication, Freshman

Writing (Engineering Program), and Seminar in Composition. Maddocks has also served as Co-Editor in Chief of *Hot Metal Bridge* since September 2014.

Veronica Fitzpatrick, Visiting Instructor

A PhD candidate expected to defend her dissertation, “The Rehearsal For Terror: Sexual Trauma and Modern Horror,” this coming fall, Veronica Fitzpatrick has taught sections of Seminar in Composition: Film, Introduction to Film, Film Analysis, and The Horror Film at Pitt. Before pursuing her doctoral degree, Fitzpatrick earned an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Notre Dame in 2008.

Jessica FitzPatrick, Visiting Instructor

Having already received her M.A. in English from Pitt in 2013, Jessica FitzPatrick is scheduled to conclude work on and defend her dissertation, “Hacking the Future: The Space and Place of Earth in Postcolonial Science Fiction,” in the coming academic year. FitzPatrick has co-developed and piloted a course entitled “Secret Pittsburgh” as well as led sections of Women and Literature, Literature of the Contemporary, and Reading Poetry.

I’ll update you further at the September 8 meeting. I look forward to seeing you there and to working with you in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Don

Don Bialostosky
Professor and Chair