

# The English Broadside

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## Nature's Course: An Education Through Experience

### *Dr. Elizabeth Giddens Guides Students Through the Landscape of Learning*

*By Elizabeth Giddens*

Being an educated writer means fully and completely understanding the subject of your writing. There is no better way to write about nature than to personally go to where you are writing about and experience it.

That's the view of a student from the 2010 spring break field study trip to Cumberland Island National Park. A group of seven students, three friends, and two faculty members took the ferry from St. Mary's, Georgia, to the island for ranger-guided tours, beach walking, hiking, and a first-hand look at the longest undeveloped beach on the eastern coast and the beautiful barrier island attached to it.

Linked to WRIT 3170/AMST 3770: Environmental Writing and Literature taught by Dr. Beth Giddens, the trip is designed to extend class discussion and assigned writing projects beyond classroom walls, to get folks thinking about public land issues, connections between human and natural history, and ways that our daily routines and choices are relevant to regional, national, and international environmental concerns and problems.

As another student wrote in her review of the experience, "This trip was the epitome of the environmental writing course. From the history of how the island has been at the center of land use debate, to the way it is now pristine and undeveloped. It touches every reading and concept we have discussed in this class."

The three-day trip was supported by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and was offered again during spring break in March 2011. Although students pay for their expenses (about \$220), transportation is provided by the college.



**Above:** Fernando Moncayo takes a photo of the sawgrass habitat.  
*photo: Jennifer Dail*



**Left:** Classmates Megan Walters, Fernando Moncayo, and Chris Cooper on the Cumberland Queen Ferry.  
*photo Beth Giddens*





## Writing Collaboratively: Showcasing Students Success

By Dr. Rochelle L. Harris

“Tell us again what’s involved,” says Audrey. I am surprised at how much enthusiasm my students in the Spring 2010 World Lit course have for this possibility: writing a conference paper and proposal, together, as a final exam.

“Alright. Here’s the deal. In a week and a half, all of us would need to brainstorm a thesis statement, plan the paper, divide up the writing into specific assignments, then bring all of that together in a full draft to revise and finish. And I mean finish—edited well, correct MLA, and a high quality argument. We’d need to bring in several of the course texts and genuinely prove the argument we’re making.”

“And this is focused on world literature and pedagogy, right?” asks Anna, “We’d be writing a paper about our experiences in the class and the teaching of it?”

“That’s right.”

“What is pedagogy exactly?” asks Chris.

“In general, it’s anything to do with the teaching—and thus the learning—in the course. It can mean the different assignments I gave, the style of discussions we had, the way I designed the readings in the course schedule, and the kinds of learning you did,” I reply.

We did some good learning throughout this class; I know I made good pedagogical choices. In our study of epic poetry we started with Sherman Alexie’s recently published *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, [by Sherman Alexie] the contemporary tale of Junior leaving the Spokane reservation to go on a journey to the white high school in the next town; Alexie plays with the idea of the epic, leaving jokes scattered through his book (“It was *epic*, man”). We read this funny, ironic book alongside *Gilgamesh*, *Beowulf*, and *Son-Jara*. When students stumbled on the contrasts between wilderness and civilization in Enkidu or wrestled with Son-Jara’s nine-year curse, they could draw on Junior’s

story. Reading Chimimanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, a contemporary Nigerian novel about a young protagonist also caught between cultures and violences, allowed us to consider Sumerian poetry, Russian drama, and Sei Shonagon’s proto-essays. I paired Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* with the magical realism of Borges and Montaigne’s “Of Cannibalism.”

The interweaving of chronology and genre with the touchstones of contemporary texts works for these students. Yet, I know very well that one of the reasons it worked was because they found and created space for themselves in the course. Now, I invite them to participate in a conference panel. In front of me students weigh their work lives, home lives, the upcoming week of finals, and what would be better: a final exam or days spent negotiating a thousand small details while writing a conference paper.

“Do you realize how much work it will be? Really—you’ll have something to do *every day* for the next week and a half. During finals week.” Shakira, eyes bright, shakes her head at me a little.

“We’d be studying anyway,” says Robert. Other voices chime in.

I listen carefully, and this is what I hear: They know how much work this is, and they also know that in writing a conference paper they are able to not only answer the questions on an exam but also *ask* those questions: how have I understood this literature? have the ideas I’ve studied been integrated into my life? how do I see the world around me now?

Erica says, “Final exams are final exams. This is different.”

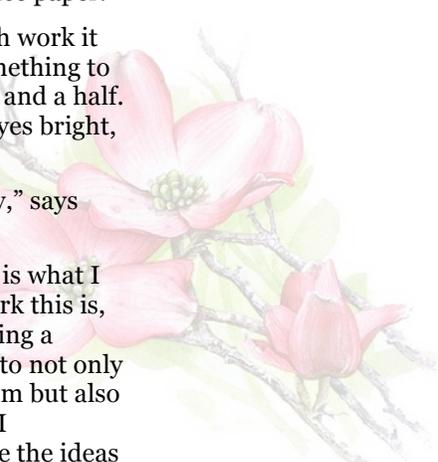
“I can put this on my resume, right?” asks Steve.

“Yep,” I say. Several students perk up.

“Really?” asks John, pushing his ball cap farther back on his head as if to see me without the shade of the brim. Andy raises his eyebrows. I nod.

“You’ll help, won’t you?” asks Reggie.

*Dr. Rochelle Harris’s Spring 2010 World Literature students designed a conference proposal, wrote a paper, and presented their work during April’s Conference on Composition and Communication meeting in Atlanta. The students demonstrated how the class worked together to write a collaborative final term paper.*



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“Oh sure, absolutely. But, we’ve already done a collaboration project.”

“We did well on it,” says Julianna.

“Yes,” I admit, now wondering why I’m trying to argue them out of it.

“Well,” says Jes, “that just proves it.” We all turn around and look at her where she sits in the back of the room, long dark hair falling over one shoulder. “You might even say that ‘collaboration’ is our ‘pedagogy.’” Everyone laughs. I’m surprised at how deeply I laugh, loving the idea of a student sending those academic words back out into the world, but in her own voice with her own meanings. “We’re learning collaboration and world literature in this class, and I say a conference paper final is the perfect fit to do that.”

People all around the room nod. Chatter breaks out between rows.

“Okay,” I say, “Here’s what I want you to do. Take out a piece of paper.” Students groan good-naturedly, rummaging in backpacks. “Write your vote on the paper. ‘Yes’ is for the conference paper final and ‘no’ is for a regular final. Then write a reason in a couple sentences. I’ll read these, and you’ll have my executive decision this afternoon on a Vista announcement.” Students start writing.

A group gathers around the table after turning in their votes; they want to

## Writing Collaboratively

know about conferences and proposals, résumés and grad school. One student says over and over, “This is *real* writing; I mean, people will *read* this.” They want to know what happens if we get accepted, how panels at conferences work, who our audience is, and how many people might show up. The verdict of my Vista announcement is clear.

Over the summer, after I submit our panel proposal, my students and I will learn that we’ve been invited to be featured speakers at the national Conference on College Composition and Communication in Atlanta in April 2011. The students will read their 10-page paper, and I will read a brief response paper. We will plan it for months, meeting at Starbucks on Chastain Road to collaboratively write a bio blurb for the conference program, electing Steven the Panel Chair, anticipating questions they might get from the audience, and practicing reading the paper.

For now, their buzzing conversations fade as they walk down the hall and I climb the stairs. I’m already thinking of who should be in what groups, of how much writing each student should do individually, of how much work needs to be done outside of class so that we can have a complete draft of the paper to read and revise during the two-hour final exam block. I am excited now. What will I hear? What do they think? What paper will they write? Let the exam begin.



*“One student says over and over, ‘This is real writing; I mean people will read this!’”*

## MAPW Grad Students “Press” On With Project

Students in Dr. Anne Richards’s 6550 Document Design and 7900 Social Media courses collaborated to launch the first graduate student press in the MAPW program. The press, entitled Paper and Pixel Publishers, held an Open House on May 3rd in the Student Center to showcase the first five books in the press’s catalogue. The titles released were designed by the 6550 students using their applied

graphic design skills, and Richards’s 7900 students provided additional support and generated publicity for the press.

Available in hard copy and web-based formats, the books offered by the press are in the public domain and can be accessed through Amazon.com. Dr. Richards said, “The MAPW students in 6550 and 7900 have gone above and beyond the call of duty to create this press from the bottom up, and I am very proud of their work, and of them.” <http://www.paperandpixelpublishers.wordpress.com>

## English Studies Festival, CLWC an International Success

The Contemporary Literature and Writing Conference (CLWC) was held March 27-30 in conjunction with the English Department's Spring Festival. Accomplished Israeli writer Etgar Keret (right), whose recent work is the acclaimed film *Jellyfish*, was this year's CLWC speaker. Other guest speakers at the Spring Festival included writers Scott Cairn, Wyn Cooper, and KSU's own Andy Plattner. Dr. Cindy Bowers brought the Spring Festival into being two years back and continues to oversee its many events each year.



(Above: Etgar Keret): The writer/director spoke at this year's English Studies Spring Festival.

Etgar Keret, winner of the 2007 Camera d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, spoke about his short stories and the "slightly surreal" film *Jellyfish*, which also landed him the 2008 Lincoln Center Best New Director award. "Jellyfish" is an unique reflection on the politics between Israel and Palestine woven into an artistically absurdist tale about the

relationship between three women. At the reception following his presentation, Einat Shaul, Director of Cultural Affairs for the Consulate General of Israel to the Southeast, was impressed by "the passion and curiosity of all the [KSU] students, who seemed genuinely intrigued by Etgar's writing process and engaged in a discussion that revolved entirely around the craft." Shaul praised KSU for encouraging students to think about global issues "through classes and by the screening of "Jellyfish." She said, "It is so important to... be open to literary works that are not

only 'international', but ultimately universal, and carry with them such great value, message, or technique." Shaul also expressed her appreciation for the work and enthusiasm of the English Department's Tony Grooms, Ralph Wilson, and Department Chair William Rice in organizing Keret's appearance at the festival.

The CLWC was established in 1989 to bring famous and respected writers and artists, like Keret, to the KSU campus.

## KSU English Faculty Featured at 2011 CCCC Convention

Kennesaw State University's English Department was featured at the national Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) that was held April 6-9 at Atlanta's Marriott Marquis. The CCCC is held every spring, and thousands of higher education faculty meet to share and explore issues that influence the scholarship and teaching within the field of composition studies.

KSU English Department faculty members presented and organized a number of the lectures and panels at the conference. Letizia Guglielmo, Rochelle Harris, and Mike Keleher served on the convention's organizing committee, and Dr. Beth Daniell gave a keynote address about issues in the college composition community's research process. Daniell also chaired and served on a number

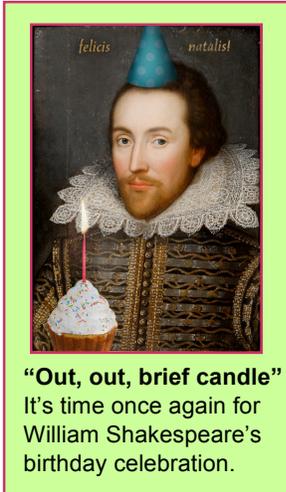
of panels. Dr. Rochelle Harris's collaborative writing project was a featured session at the conference, and she also chaired a featured speaker session at the conference.

Other members of KSU's English Department participated in presentations and panels at this year's CCCC. Additional conference contributors included Drs. Jonathan Arnett, Todd Harper, Laura McGrath, Mary Lou Odom, Anne Richards, and Ellen Taber as well as faculty members Mike Keleher, David Schmidt, and Linda Stewart. Graduate students Robert Rockett and Karen Roop also represented the MAPW's professional writing program with presentations at this year's conference.



## Bard's Birthday Brings Ballads and Balloons

Historians speculate that William Shakespeare may have been born sometime in late April 1564. An entry of his baptism is listed in the register of Holy Trinity parish church in Stratford-Upon-Avon dated April 26, 1564. However, the actual date of Shakespeare's birth is not really known. Traditionally, April 23, which is also St. George's Day, has been accepted as his birthday, and a house on Henley Street in Stratford that was owned by his father, John, is accepted as Shakespeare's birth place. However, the reality is that no one really knows when the great dramatist was born.



**“Out, out, brief candle”**  
It's time once again for William Shakespeare's birthday celebration.

**(Above Far Right) Dr. Keith Botelho:** Botelho orchestrates the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Shakespeare Birthday Party.

**(Right) Lecturer Melissa Keith** performs her sonnet with great panache.

**(Below) MAPW graduate students** and KSU faculty listen to the sonnets as they wait their turn to step up to the mic.



Despite the nebulous date of his actual birth, celebrations are held in many countries during April to commemorate his birthday, and KSU is no exception.

This year marks the Bard's 447th birthday, but it is just the fifth year that a party has been given in his honor at KSU. Dr. Keith Botelho began the annual campus celebration of Shakespeare's birthday in 2007, and each year the event showcases Shakespeare's sonnets—all 154 of them. The collection is read by students, faculty, staff, and professors, and the volunteer readers receive unique Shakespeare birthday t-shirts as a “party favor.” This year's readers included Dr. Richard Vengroff, Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and Dr. Dan Papp, President of Kennesaw State University.

Botelho's yearly birthday party is based on a celebration established by that of a professor he studied under when he was a student, and he asked his former professor if he could borrow the idea. Botelho received his professor's “blessing,” and he has now established his own tradition on KSU's campus.

The festivities are usually staged at the gazebo between the Social Sciences and English buildings, and since no birthday would be complete without cake and balloons, the gazebo party is decked out with both. Shakespeare would probably be pleased to be remembered with such revelry.



## Writing Center Can Claim "Teacher of the Year"

Pasty Hamby of Hiram High School won this year's Paulding County Teacher of the Year award. However, Hamby is also a valued team member of the KSU English Department's Writing Center. Hamby teaches English at Hiram High School, and regularly works in the writing center as a coach for student writers. She also often serves as a mentor to student teachers in the department's English Education program. "I was totally surprised and am greatly appreciative of the honor. Now I feel that I have to continuously prove that I deserve it!" Hamby said.



Superintendent Cliff Cole (left), Hamby, and HHS principal Jason Freeman (right), who nominated her for the honor.

photo: PCSD

## Fireworks Under the Gold Dome State Honors Stepakoff's Novel

The Georgia General Assembly honored Assistant Professor Jeffrey Stepakoff by passing a joint resolution to denote February 10, 2011 as *Fireworks Over Toccoa Day*. Stepakoff's novel of the same name was also released in paperback that day, and legislators received signed copies of the book during the honorary celebration at the Georgia Capitol.

**Further Congratulations:** The rights to Stepakoff's follow-up novel, *The Orchard*, have been acquired by *Reader's Digest*. Set in Ellijay, Georgia, *The Orchard* will be published in North America by St. Martin's Press/Macmillan in July of 2011. It will also be a part of the November edition of *Reader's Guide Select Editions*.



**Above:**  
Jeffrey Stepakoff  
(Feb. 2010)  
photo: Shawn Apostel

## English Department Kudos and Credits

### Martha Bowden

Dr. Bowden's essay "Parson Adams's Sermons: Benjamin Hoadly and Henry Fielding" is the sixth chapter in the *Swiftly Sterneard: Essays on Laurence Sterne and His Time in Honor of Melvyn New* (University of Delaware Press, 2011).

### Rob Chambers

The book *Parody: The Art That Plays With Art* was published in September 2010 by Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. Chambers also attended the ALSCW (Association of Literary Scholars, Critics, and Writers) annual convention in Princeton NJ, Nov. 4-7, 2010.

### Darren Crovitz

Darren Crovitz's new article, "Sudden Possibilities: Porpoises, Eggcorns, and Error," appears in the March issue of *English Journal*.

### Beth Daniell

On April 6, Dr. Beth Daniell gave the keynote address at the Qualitative Research Network at the Conference on Composition and Communication in Atlanta. She delivered an address on "The Questions That Need Answers." On April 7, Daniell also presented a paper titled "Stealing Prospero's Books: Agency, Rhetoric, and Literacy." This paper was part of a CCCC panel on "The Rhetoricity of Literacy." On April 8, Daniell chaired a CCCC session called "The Sports Page, the Country Music Stage, and the Spelman Messenger: Women Claiming Agency." Sarah Robbins, formerly of KSU and now on the faculty at Texas Christian, was also on the panel.

### Laura Dabundo

Dr. Laura Dabundo gave a paper called "Celebrating Murder: Christmastide Mystery and Detective Fiction" at the South-Central Conference on Christianity and Literature: Sin, Piety, and Celebration in Literature and the Arts," in New Orleans, on February 12, 2011.

### Jennifer Dail

Dr. Jennifer Dail's article "Creating Realms of Possibilities: Offering Mirrors and Windows" appears in the current issue of *The ALAN Review*, a peer-reviewed journal devoted to the study of literature for adolescents. Dr. Dail wrote this article in collaboration with Jordan Leonard, an English Education student.

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### Allison Cooper Davis

Dr. Allison Cooper Davis presented a paper titled "Waking a Meaning: Confession as an Interpretive Strategy in George MacDonald's Phantastes," at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association conference in Atlanta in November of 2010..

### Laura Davis

Dr. Laura Davis successfully defended her dissertation and receives her doctorate in May.

### Larrie Dudenhoeffer

Dr. Larrie Dudenhoeffer's essay "Masks of Infamy in Dark Knight" will appear in the upcoming number of the journal *Forum*. Also, his essay "The Allusion: Intelligent Machines, Jacques Derrida's Ethical Turn, and Oren Peli's Paranormal Activity" has been accepted for the upcoming collection *Terror and the (Post)Cinematic Sublime*.

### Khalil Elayan

Dr. Khalil Elayan published "A Revolution in Rhetoric" and "The Fall of the God-King and the Rise of the World Citizen" in *The Palestine Chronicle*. Both articles concern the ongoing revolutions in the Middle East.

### Jim Elledge

Dr. Jim Elledge's collection of prose poems about Henry Darger entitled *H* will be published by Lethe Press in June 2012. Lethe has also agreed to publish his *Tapping My Arm for a Vein: New and Selected Poems* in June 2013.

### Carol Harrell/English Education Faculty

As a result of the department's last NCATE review, two English Education programs

have been ranked as "nationally recognized programs": the B. S. in English Education and the M. A. T. in English Education.

### Linda Niemann

Indiana State University Press has published the 7th edition of Dr. Linda Niemann's *BOOMER*. First published in the 1990s, *BOOMER* has become an American classic. The new edition contains an introduction written by well-known Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko.

### Mary Lou Odom

Dr. Mary Lou Odom is a graduate of the inaugural Women's Executive Leadership Series (WELS) class.

### Andy Plattner

Dr. Andy Plattner's new collection of stories, *A Marriage of Convenience*, has just been published by BkMk Press, University of Missouri-Kansas City. .

### Tammy Powell

Dr. Tammy Powell's article "What Motivates Faculty to Adopt Distance Learning? Data Collected from a Faculty Development Workshop Called 'Build a Web Course'" appeared in a recent issue of *The International Journal on Advances in Life Sciences*.

### H. William Rice

Harold Bloom selected the second chapter of Rice's book *Ralph Ellison and the Politics of the Novel* (Lexington, 2003; rpt. 2007) as one of the essays in his new collection *Ralph Ellison: Bloom's Modern Critical Views*.

### Melanie Sumner

In September the Library of Congress will honor Peace Core

Writers. Sumner's first book, a collection of short stories entitled *Polite Society*, was written about her work as a member of the Peace Core. As a part of the ceremony, Sumner will present her book to the Library of Congress to be a part of its collections of books written about Peace Core experiences.

### CHSS Honors English Faculty

Many people in the English Department were recognized at the CHSS Awards Ceremony on April 13. Department Chair Dr. William Rice congratulated faculty and staff on their honors, "This is a very talented, hard-working department. That was evident today from the awards ceremony." Accolades went to the following faculty and staff:

- Dr. Bob Barrier and Dr. Dot Graham will be retiring this year. Dr. Barrier was recognized for more than 30 years of teaching at KSU and for his important work in building the Writing Center into a vital campus resource. Dr. Graham was also recognized for more than 30 years of teaching and her important work in creating and developing the University's ombuds program.
- Both Dr. Nina Morgan and Dr. Margaret Walters were recognized for winning CHSS Seed Grants.
- Dr. Anne Richards won the CHSS Scholarship Award.
- English Department faculty won all the CHSS Foundation Prizes for Scholarship. These winners were Dr. Keith Botelho, Mr. Jeff Stepakoff, and Ms. Melanie Sumner. Dr. Linda Niemann and Dr. Jim Elledge were nominees for Foundation Scholarship Prizes.
- Dr. Linda Niemann was a nominee for the CHSS Foundation Professor of the Year Award.
- Terri Brennen was a nominee for Staff Member of the Year.