



ENGLISH TIMES

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INTERVIEW WITH THE PRESIDENT

President John Bassett

Originally a history major, President Bassett graduated from Ohio Wesleyan University. Becoming interested in “reading seriously” some time after graduation, he eventually returned to Ohio Wesleyan for a graduate degree in English. He then went on to acquire a doctoral degree in Literature at the University of Rochester.

President Bassett’s interests are varied. To date, he has published books on authors such as William Faulkner, Mark Twain, and William Dean Howells (as well as others). When asked about future endeavors, he responded that he is currently at work on a book about Sherwood Anderson. Although he has written most extensively on novelists, President Bassett has a deep and abiding interest in poetry, an interest which he would like to pursue academically at a later date.

When asked about the importance of studying literature, President Bassett had some intriguing things to say. To some degree, President Bassett stated, the study of literature has of late drawn on certain social sciences, leading to a focus more on “how” literature means as opposed to “what” literature means. English as a discipline thus has become less cohesive but more wide-ranging.

President Bassett feels that we read and study literature for two basic reasons. First, for its aesthetic value, the pleasure it provides. At the same time, we can also learn from literature how a society develops and operates. He believes that without the engagement, there would be fewer people studying the subject. Indeed, he himself was first drawn to studying literature seriously because of its aesthetic value. In coming to literature for its aesthetic

value, however, a scholar can also learn more about how human societies function.

In a sense, President Bassett said, the designation “English major” has become less and less descriptive, since the term itself now can actually cover study in a wide variety of disciplines. English departments need to clarify what the goals of their major are and set up curricula and course sequences to assure reaching those goals. Still, it is unlikely major programs at different schools will be enough alike to assure a common meaning to the term “English major.”

President Bassett believes that colleges would be greatly impoverished if literature departments did not remain central players in universities. Yet, he also points out, while this is his opinion, the next few generations of students, responding to changes in technology such as the Internet, may not agree. As a strong believer in the “seamlessness” of all learning and knowledge, he thinks that the study of literature can teach us about human experience just as history may teach us about human experience. He believes a realization of this interconnectedness would be a desirable end.

Likewise, President Bassett is enthusiastic about the experience of talking about books and ideas as something that can take place on or off campus, “be it in the residence halls, or Wendy’s Clark Brunch, a local tavern” or anywhere else. He adds that it would be stimulating to have something like a Harvard Square style atmosphere supporting the campus to facilitate these types of experiences. The exchange of ideas is something exciting, something that could aid in the realization of this “seamlessness of all learning and all knowledge.”

Julie Bell and Kenny St. Onge



Please contact Terri in the department office (793-7142 or trutkiewicz@clarku.edu) if you have information for our January issue.

FAMILIAR FACES AT CLARK

Jenn Dooher, Career Services

English majors and grad students are fortunate to be able to count on the services of Jenn Dooher, the Director of CU Career Services (jdooh@clarku.edu; x7258; 122 Woodland Street, 2nd floor). Not only can Jenn understand English majors and grad students--she was an English major herself--she has a whole array of skills to help you obtain an internship or a job. She's energetic and imaginative as well.

Ms. Dooher is actively working with me to help English majors and grad students explore professional venues that could be critical to your future profession. Through her office, for example, English majors can apply to participate in internships for academic credit. To qualify, in the semester before you actually embark on an internship, you must have the approval of a professor who will sponsor you and a one-page proposal demonstrating how a particular internship is relevant to your major.

Typical internships in Worcester and the area include those that will involve you in journalism, radio, consulting, teaching, advertising, and editing. But you're not limited to these, and Ms. Dooher can help you find different kinds of internships as well.

In addition to internships, Career Services offers advice and guidance in finding a job, from setting up your resumé to calculating what expenses you're likely to encounter if you take a particular position over another (which will enable you to determine the "real value" of a salary). Ms. Dooher has also registered Clark with various services that enable you to look for positions. One of particular interest will guarantee two interviews in NYC with reputable firms before going.

This is an important opportunity for English majors and grad students. If you're interested, please contact Ms. Dooher for an appointment. Also, let me know how well you fare.

SunHee Kim Gertz, Chair of the Department

GRADUATE STUDENT BUSINESS

Graduate Reps. For Department Meetings

Liz Noyes
Andy Rimmington

Student Council Reps.

Kellie Dahlstrom
Mark Espy

Colloquium Refreshment Coordinator

Jack Haringa

Departmental Colloquia

8 DECEMBER, 1:30 p.m.
Anderson House, Seminar room I

DAN PAGE on representations of
black women on the Harlem stage

JEFF SCHAEFER, title TBA

ALUMNI NEWS

Professor Gertz has received overwhelmingly positive responses to her recent letter to English Department alumni. There will be a special section in our January issue spotlighting that response.



DEPARTMENT NEWS

Faculty Search

The English Department is conducting a search for a new full-time faculty member in 19th century British literature this semester. Undergraduate and graduate students are strongly encouraged to attend the finalists' presentations. Keep on the lookout for updates.

Senior Honors Students

The following students have been accepted into the senior honors program in English: [Julianne Baecker](#) and [Samantha Schoeller](#) with advisor John Conron; [Jessica Dalzell](#) with advisor Jay Elliott; [David Payne](#) with advisor SunHee Kim Gertz; [Scott Pezza](#) and [Dan TenEyck](#) with advisor Winston Napier; and [Stacie Swoboda](#) with advisor Virginia Vaughan.

May Term in Luxembourg

Students can once again study in the heart of Western Europe during Clark University's May Term (May 13 -June 9, 2001). In offering three undergraduate courses in Munsbach, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the *Leir Center in Luxembourg-Clark University* continues its commitment to providing an international perspective for its faculty and students. There will be an information session on Wednesday, November 29 from 5-6 p.m. in the Lurie Room, Higgins University Center. **Contact Uwe Gertz in the Study Abroad Office (793-7363) for more information.**

Worcester Art Museum's "Mosaics 2000" Conference November 17-19, 2000

Along with the Ancient Studies Seminar of the Centre Universitaire de Luxembourg (SEMANT), the Worcester Art Museum, and an international society for the study of ancient mosaics (AIEMA), the [Leir Center in Luxembourg-Clark University](#) (formerly known as CECIL) hosted the second part of a pair of international conferences, co-directed by SunHee Kim Gertz, on the subject of mosaics from the Roman Empire.

English Major, [Stacie Swoboda](#) received [LCL-CU's Leir Conference Award for Students](#) and was invited to attend the conference by SunHee Kim Gertz of the English Department.

The conference was held at the Worcester Art Museum in conjunction with the [Worcester Art Museum's Exhibition, Antioch: the Lost Ancient City, on display now to February 4, 2001.](#)

Following is an excerpt from the Worcester Art Museum's web site, www.worcesterart.org: "Join us in an exploration of one of the great cities of the Roman Empire in the most ambitious and significant undertaking in the Worcester Art Museum's 102-year history!

This landmark exhibition brings the ancient city of Antioch to life with extraordinary treasures created nearly 2,000 years ago and reunited for the first time since their discovery in the 1930s."

The museum's exhibit was featured in the Art/Architecture section of the November 19, 2000 issue of *The New York Times*.

Chair's Tea

Please join Professor Gertz **3:30-4:30** in her office on the **first Wednesday** and **third Thursday** of every month. Professor Gertz has hosted four very successful teas to date. Please mark your calendar for the next tea, which will be held **Wednesday, December 6.**

Did You Know...

The Writing Center has moved to the Corner House and the open area in the basement of Anderson House will soon become a lounge for English majors, minors and graduate students.

Junior and Senior Reps to the Chair

Junior Kenny St. Onge and Senior Julie Bell were selected by the English Department faculty to become Junior and Senior Representatives to the chair.



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Full-Time Faculty

Charles S. Blinderman, Ph.D.

Professor of English, Adjunct Professor of Biology. Professor Blinderman's major research areas are in Victorian literature, especially the influence of Darwinism.

John J. Conron, Ph.D.

Professor of English. Professor Conron researches and teaches comparative arts (painting, photography, architecture and landscape architecture, literature and film) and relations between art and culture.

James P. Elliott, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of English. Trained as textual editor in the field of American literature, Professor Elliott has been associated with the Edition of the Writings of James Fenimore Cooper for twenty years.

SunHee Kim Gertz, Ph.D.

Professor of English, Department Chair. Professor Gertz's research and publications are concerned with semiotics and western European literature in the late Middle Ages. She also researches links between Asian and European literatures.

Fern L. Johnson, Ph.D.

(Sabbatical - FY 2000-01)

Professor of English. Professor Johnson is a sociolinguist specializing in the study of gender, race, and culture in language and is also Director of the Communication and Culture program.

Winston Napier, Ph.D.

E. Franklin Frazier Chair, Assistant Professor of English. Professor Napier specializes in critical theory, 20th century African American literary culture and African American philosophy.

Heather Roberts, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of English. Professor Roberts specializes in the study of pre-1865 American literature, history and culture. Her research explores the role of fiction in cultural production.

Stanley Sultan, Ph.D.

Professor of English. Until recently, Professor Sultan's scholarly interest was largely in the poetry, fiction, and drama of modernist writers. In the past few years he has devoted more attention to critical theory, literary history, and theoretical issues in literary history.

Virginia Mason Vaughan, Ph.D.

Andrea B. and Peter D. Klein '64 Distinguished Professor, Mellon Fellow at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C., Professor of English. Professor Vaughan specializes in Renaissance literature, especially in Shakespeare, but as a cultural historian, she is also interested in appropriations of Shakespeare's texts from the seventeenth century to the present. She teaches courses in Shakespeare at the introductory and advanced level in addition to the seminar "Studies in the Renaissance."

Part-Time Faculty

Jim Adams

Expository Writing

Louis Bastien

Introduction to Literature & Composition

Barbara Blatner

Introduction to Literature & Composition

Jeanne Braham

Creative Writing: Fiction

Tim Connolly

News Writing

Carolyn Engdahl

Expository Writing

Anne Lea

Expository Writing

Diane Moul

Introduction to Literature & Composition

Jen Plante

Expository Writing

Denise Stephenson

Feature Writing I

Bill Tapply

Expository Writing

Lucilia Valerio

Introduction to Literature & Composition

Fiction by Women Writers

David Williams

Expository Writing

Office Hours

There are copies of faculty office hours outside seminar room II. Please help yourself.

Professor Virginia Vaughan

will be on a leave of absence during the spring semester to take an Andrew W. Mellon research fellowship at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington D.C. With her co-author, historian Alden T. Vaughan, she will research the nexus of prejudicial opinions that fostered English participation in the exploitation and enslavement of black Africans in early modern England and English America.

The Writing Center

Directed by **Anne Geller**, the Writing Center has moved to Corner House (corner of Woodland and Charlotte Streets). The Writing Center offers assistance with writing for any class in any discipline, at all stages of the writing process (trying to understand a writing assignment, brainstorming, composing, getting unstuck, writing, revising, seeking citation information, editing, proofreading).