

A Tool You Can Use

By Marlia Fontaine-Weisse

Welcome to all new and returning graduate students!

This year, there will be several positive changes within the department as we try to streamline communication between and among undergraduates, graduates, and faculty members. With that in mind comes the *Academic Pursuits* monthly newsletter, a venue to explore the realm of academia and discover ways to expand your portfolio.



Each issue will feature resources for publications—such as contacts at journals and collections for submissions of essays, book reviews, encyclopedia entries, and other forms of possible publication—and conferences. In our Spotlight section, select students will be interviewed to highlight their successes and offer ways for others to do the same. Our last recurring article will seek to unify all events sponsored by organizations related to the Department. By offering this resource, the goal of the Academic Pursuits Committee is to truly make this newsletter a tool you can use.

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Academic Pursuits Chair
Marlia Fontaine-Weisse

Academic Pursuits Committee
Kevin Kelsey

SAGES Officers

Sara Ehret, President
Sre14@zips.uakron.edu

Marlia Fontaine-Weisse, VP
Mef6@zips.uakron.edu

Heidi Theonen, Treasurer
Hlt2@zips.uakron.edu

Sara Keiper, Secretary
Sak32@zips.uakron.edu

September Deadlines

Reassessing Hawthorne's Gothic—Special Issue—*Nathaniel Hawthorne Review*: September 9th
<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/42185>

Although much work was done in the 1990s on Hawthorne's Gothic, it may be time to revisit his Gothic mode and offer new interpretations. Visit the above link to view sample topics, and the requirements for submission to this journal issue planned for a fall 2012 publication.

Undead in the West: Vampires, Zombies, Mummies, and Ghosts on the Cinematic Frontier: September 18th

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/42159>

The frontier has long been framed as a landscape of life and death, and this anthology seeks scholarly works that explore the realm where the two become one. Abstracts of 500 words are due by the above deadline and accepted essays will be due in February 2012 for 2012 publication.

Essay Collection on Neo-Historical Exoticism and Contemporary Fiction: September 21st

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/42109>

This edited collection intends to develop critical examination of the recent literary trend of the “neo-historical” novel and bring fresh perspectives to current debates on its cultural and theoretical underpinnings. Send a 300-500 word proposal for a 7,000 to 8,000 word chapter to the editor and include a short biographical note.

Northeast Modern Language Association: September 30th

<http://www.nemla.org/convention/2012/cfp.html>

The 43rd Annual Convention of the NeMLA will be held in Rochester, NY, March 15-18, 2012. Visit the website to determine which panel is right for you and submit an abstract between 250 and 500 words (depending on the session) to the panel organizer by the above date.

Filolog—Journal for Literary, Cultural and Language Studies: September 30th

<http://call-for-papers.sas.upenn.edu/node/42164>

This journal seeks papers dealing with contemporary literary, cultural, and language theories and/or their applications to particular works. Also welcome are papers dealing with meta-theories and their significance for the human and social sciences, as well as reviews of the most recent books in the field of cultural, language and literary theories and criticism.



“Wisdom is
not
knowledge,
but lies in
the use we
make of
knowledge.”

- N. Sri
Ram



Spotlight: Lindsey Render & Shane Fliger

By Marlia Fontaine-Weisse

This month's featured students are the soon-to-be-graduating Lindsey Render and Shane Fliger, MA in English Literature candidates. Their special sessions proposal, “Into the Digital: Video Games and English Studies,” was accepted by the Midwest Modern Language Association for its 53rd Annual Convention themed “Play...No, Seriously.” Here, they briefly share with us their inspiration and roles once accepted.

Q. How did you come up with the idea for your session proposal?

SAGES:

A student organization that focuses on helping graduate students of all tracks (Composition, Fine Arts, and Literature) in the English field develop professionally during their time at The University of Akron, by providing members with resources to help them publish, present, and prepare. SAGES also strives to promote unity among graduate students of the three tracks by creating events and providing resources that will benefit scholars regardless of their field.

Ask an officer
how to
**Become a
Member
and
JOIN TODAY!**

Shane -- Dr. Nunn gave us the general information for M/MLA, especially considering our interests in video games in literary studies. Lindsey and I sat down and started brainstorming, and we realized we wanted to co-chair a panel that would represent the breadth of potential in studying video games.

Q. Why is it important to look at video games as literary texts?

Lindsey -- As life-long gamers, it quickly became apparent to us that games have just as much (if not more) literary merit as many books that we've studied over the course of our academic careers. Games deal with cultural and social issues that authors have been broaching for years, but in such a way that avoids being heavy-handed or preachy like a lot of the "classics" we continue to study. Games are art. Art reflects life. They are just screaming for some attention in the academic world.

Q. What do you think made your session stand out among the potential hundreds that were submitted?

Shane -- We worked very hard to ensure that our session would function as a launching point for a broad spectrum of ideas. Instead of focusing on one specific type of criticism, school of thought, or genre of game, we wanted our session to represent the potential worth of video games studies as a whole to the field of English Studies.

Q. What are your responsibilities now that you are co-chairing this session?

Lindsey -- Once our call for papers was posted, we had to sift through the abstract submissions and decide how and where they would fit into our session. After that, we just had to send out the acceptance emails and complete the session forms for the M/MLA organizers detailing the presenters and their papers. We are also responsible with keeping in contact with our participants and keeping them updated on any necessary information. Administrative work aside, the session should be pretty entertaining once we get to St. Louis.

Q. What essay are you contributing to your session?

Shane -- I will be presenting my essay, "Boys and Girls in the Sandbox: Gender and the Male Gaze in Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto IV." In it, I discuss Grand Theft Auto IV through the lens of feminist film theory. Specifically, each of the love interests is discussed in terms of narrative and cultural impact. Interactive media in general, and GTA IV in particular, combines the male gaze with an editorial power that splinters the static male gaze into a more multi-faceted approach to female characters.

Lindsey -- I'm going to present my essay, "A New Literacy: The Positive Influence of Video Games on Community, Education, and Academia." I will discuss the overwhelming impact of video games on our society as a whole, from entertainment and social interaction, to education and academia.

Q. What are your future career goals, and do they include more video game analysis?

Lindsey -- As far as our future in the field, Shane and I have very similar goals. We both hope to teach and integrate games into our classrooms. We also intend to continue writing on the subject, and our copious and ever-growing experience with gaming continues to supply material. Shane is already publishing on the subject with the recent release of Halo and Philosophy: Intellect Evolved with his essay, "Sandbox Confrontations." We hope to continue contributing to the discussion by organizing and contributing to more volumes around the subject. Dragon Age and English Studies, anyone?

Q. What words of advice/encouragement can you offer students who look to submit session proposals in the future?

Shane and Lindsey -- Go for it! Work hard, utilize your resources, and take chances. The organizers are looking for something original, so don't feel like you have to do the same old critical approach to the same old text.

Events

Professional Development Workshop: Curriculum Vitae

Thursday, September 1st, in room 362 from 3:30p-5p

SAGES presents the first workshop of the academic year discussing the importance of the CV, how to draft one, and what mistakes to avoid. Bring questions, ideas, and resumés if you have them. Open to all graduate students.

The Big Big Mess Reading Series

Friday, September 2nd, at Annabelle's Bar & Lounge from 6p-9p

The Big Big Mess is a contemporary poetry, fiction, & nonfiction reading series based in Akron, Ohio, that aims to bring together national and local writers, with a focus on work that is new, awesome, and a bit of a mess. This event is featuring authors Matt Hart, Adam Fell, Matthew Guenette, and Nate Pritts and is sponsored by Forklift, Ink & H_NGM_N. For more information, check the BMM blog at <http://bigbigmess.tumblr.com/>, or find them on Facebook.

Have Something to Say?

We value student contributions and look forward to your well-written, appropriately-themed articles. To learn more about how to submit or how to become a committee member, email us at:

ua_academic_pursuits@yahoo.com

August Highlights



Visiting poet Jason Bredle at The Big Big Mess Reading Series



Dr. Nunn and Casey Shevlin in the Egg Race at the Department Picnic



Visiting poet Noah Falk at The Big Big Mess Reading Series



Chris Dillard and Dr. Bean in the Sack Race at the Department Picnic



Students competing in the Hula Hoop Challenge at the Department Picnic