

A collage of books and papers scattered in a field of tall grass and small white flowers. In the background, there are blue mountains under a light sky. The overall aesthetic is soft and artistic.

The English Aggie

April 2020

FALL 2020
CLASSES



ENGL 220: Graphic Novel

Dr. Harris

We'll analyze representative and innovative graphic novels in the 20th and 21st century—taking our examples from realism to the fantastic. We'll examine the genre's intersection with memoir, as well as examples of fantasy, horror, and science fiction. Some of the course will also focus on the craft of comic book storytelling—but not on how to draw—and the class will allow for student creative compositions, as well as the potential for collaborations between visual artists and writers.

ENGL 390: Studies in British Literature

Dr. Warren

In this course, we will examine constructions of heroes and villains in a variety of medieval literary works of different genres (epic, drama, romance, religious writing, comedy). We will explore how the categories of “hero” and villain” are shaped by generic expectations, by gender, and by other cultural forces. We will consider how heroes and villains make meaning in different medieval cultures, interrogating the social desires and anxieties that they manifest. Our study of literature will attend closely to historical, political, and cultural environments.

ENGL 393: Africana Literature & Culture

Dr. Tuhkanen

This course looks at the work of James Baldwin (1924-1987), an African American, gay writer and a keen observer of American and European life in the context of postcolonial modernity. Throughout his work from the late 1940s to the late 1980s, Baldwin developed his own form of ethics—of moving in a world while mindful of, and sensitive to, its perhaps irreconcilable differences. In this class, we will explore what such “Baldwinian ethics” consists of and how it may be relevant to our lives in the twenty-first century by situating his work in various contexts. Apart from Baldwin's work, the reading list also includes novels by Henry James, Richard Wright, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, as well as scholarly texts.



ENGL 415.500: John Donne Dr. Dickson

This seminar will explore one of the major writers of the early modern period and one of the greatest poets of any age, John Donne (1572-1631). We will begin by contextualizing his work within the Petrarchan tradition, which he transform 1) through his creative imitation/transformation of its tropes and attitudes and 2) through his adaptation of the elegies of Ovid; then we will work our way through his poetry and some of his prose. We will focus on his development as a poet—i.e., his apprenticeship in the Ovidian tradition and his emergence with a distinctive voice—the effect that manuscript “publication” has on his poetry, and the issues posed by his Catholic upbringing in Protestant England. We will also read from two biographies of Donne and essays from the critical tradition.

ENGL 415.501: Vladimir Nabokov Dr. Vasilakis

This course will focus on the work of Vladimir Nabokov. During the course we will follow Nabokov’s progression and development as a writer, examine his Russian (or European) and American periods, and see how his narratives constantly address questions of time, change, identity, and alienation. Students will be introduced to a major author and some of the most important characteristics of his work. They will be exposed to the translingual and transcultural texture of Nabokov’s work, the elusiveness of his writings, and gain some understanding of the author’s narrative strategies and techniques.



ENGL 489: Special Topics in Old English Dr. Mize

Beginning study of the Old English language through instruction in phonology, morphology, and syntax and the reading of various texts in verse and prose. The objective of the course is to bring students up to an intermediate level of reading ability in the English language as it existed prior to the Norman Conquest. The grade is based on student success in learning the language as evidenced mainly by translation exercises.

The Big Finish

BY BROOKE FOSSEY, '01

THE BIG FINISH is the story of an 88-year-old man named Duffy

Sinclair who is determined to button up his hard-lived life in peace at Centennial Assisted Living—but it's disrupted when his roommate's granddaughter climbs through their window with booze on her breath and a black eye. Before Duffy knows it, he's running a covert operation to get her clean and back on her feet, risking home, health and harmony. The upside to the chaos: he has a chance to rewrite his legacy. THE BIG FINISH is a funny, insightful and life-affirming debut that delivers an unflinching look at growing old, living large, and loving big, as told by an 88-year-old man who didn't see any of it coming.

Publication Date: 4/14/2020



Aggie Author Q&A

What was your inspiration for writing your novel?

This book was inspired by the many visits I paid to my grandfather at his assisted living home. The entire facility was full of such wonderful people who deserved their own book, but more than that, they deserved to be the heroes of the story for once.

How did your time at A&M influence you?

Texas A&M gave me some of my best memories, which show up throughout my writing in lots of different ways—through characters, scenes, relationships. Subtext aside, you'll see a direct shout out to the university in THE BIG FINISH because...of course! More than anything, I'm most grateful for the Aggie network. I played lacrosse at A&M, and my old teammate (who now owns Pixl Production) came to my rescue after all of my live book launch events were cancelled due to COVID-19. She produced an amazing online event for me, and the entire Aggie lacrosse team showed up to participate. Being an Aggie has also gifted me with my best friend in life and writing, Lauren Allbright.

Do you have any tips for writing OR any tips on the publishing process?

Write because you love it, submit your work because it deserves to be seen, always consider your trusted critiques, and don't be deterred by rejection. Also, remember that every writing job or assignment – no matter how basic – is a chance to get better at the craft.

5 favorite things about A&M OR favorite memory at A&M.

- Texas A&M Lacrosse – We won the Texas Women's Lacrosse League at least three of the four years I played.
- Commons Dining Hall – I had a meal plan all four years and left a dent in the buffet line.
- Sterling C. Evans Library – My home away from home, and my employer for a semester.
- Big 12 Championship Win in 1998 – What a wild ride!
- Aggie Bonfire Falling in 1999 – One of the saddest days on campus for all of us, but one of the best examples of the strength and love that can come from the Aggie spirit. We remember.

5 must-read craft books for Aggie Writers.

- *GMC: Goal, Motivation, and Conflict* - Debra Dixon
- *The Emotion Thesaurus: A Writer's Guide to Character Expression* - Angela Ackerman and Becca Puglisi
- *Self-editing for Fiction Writers* – Dave King
- *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* – Stephen King
- *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* – Anne Lamott

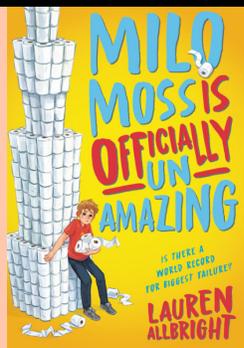
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MILO MOSS IS OFFICIALLY UNAMAZING

BY LAUREN ALLBRIGHT, '03 & '05

Twelve-year-old Milo Moss has been on a mission to achieve his family's lifelong goal: breaking a Guinness World Record. But when the record attempts don't exactly go as planned, Milo is forced to deal with his failure. Will Milo be able to leave behind his dream of breaking into Guinness? Or will he learn that sometimes there's more to life than winning?

Publication Date: 9/1/2020



Aggie Author Q&A

What was your inspiration for writing your novel?

My kids—both in my home and my students—are at an age where two major events occur: the trophies for participation stop and they realize their parents are supremely uncool. When I recognized the struggle for middle graders transitioning from external to

internal motivation, I wanted to explore it. Plus, I had some great “mom jokes” my kids didn't want me to say around their friends, so I had to put them in a novel.

How did your time at A&M influence you?

My time at A&M was one of the best times in my life—I'd be a professional student if life allowed. I earned both my Bachelor's and Master's at A&M. I also met my husband there. Highlights were: living in Davis Gary, eating Freebirds, going to English classes, and attending football games (and then realizing that if I skipped the football games, I had the town to myself). The influence continues as I meet Aggies in everyday life and feel an automatic comradery.

Do you have any tips for writing OR any tips on the publishing process?

Writers write. No matter what. And they keep doing it even if they are sure that what they are writing are the worst words ever strung together. The magic for every book happens in the drafting. That's where the story becomes whole.

Also, find people—writers and nonwriters—who will read your manuscript and be honest about what already works and what needs work. And, if at all possible, get yourself an amazing writer best friend to sludge through the struggle with you. (Looking at you, Brooke Fossey.)

5 favorite things about A&M OR favorite memory at A&M.

- Taking a middle grade literature class! I loved it so much. I'd stopped reading and writing for fun during the beginning of college because I was “too busy.” This class reminded me how much I loved to read and how I wanted to weave together stories of my own.
- Aggie Bonfire Falling in 1999 – I have to agree with Brooke about this one. Not my favorite memory, but this is one I will never forget. I was living in the dorms at the time, and I remember people banging on my door to see if I was in my room. This one still hurts.
- Training for my first marathon and first triathlon at the REC.
- Eating at Sbisa. I still say, “Pick it up,” out of habit when people drop things. (I'm assuming that is still a thing.)
- College Station!!! I love the town and am always looking for a reason to move back. My husband and I our bought our first house there when we were both in graduate school. My first child was born there. There is no better place!

5 must-read craft books for Aggie Writers.

- *The Story Solution* by Eric Edson
- *The Fire in Fiction* by Donald Maass
- *Save The Cat* by Blake Snyder
- *World of Wonder* by David Gerrold
- *The Chicago Manual of Style*—everybody should have a copy of this on his or her shelf!

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WINNERS OF THE 2019-2020



AWARDS & CONTESTS



GRADUATING SENIOR AWARD

Ryan Randle

ENGLISH RESEARCH ESSAY CONTEST

"Reclaiming Female Desire in Dracula"

Victoria Millen

STANLEY L. ARCHER MEMORIAL AWARD

"Monticelso as Representation of Institutional Deception"

Paige Stevenson

RHETORIC AND DISCOURSE STUDIES CONTEST

"Analysis of 'As We May Think'"

Bailey Grams

SCI-FI & FANTASY CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

1st Place: *"A Great Goliath"* by Amira Mazzawy

2nd Place: *"The Strongest Poison"* by Loren Mullen

3rd Place: *"I'm Still Here"* by Matthew Torres

Honorable Mentions: *"To Fan the Moonbeams From His Sleeping Eyes"* by Danielle Scott and *"Moon Shadows"* by Jessica Rapacz

GORDONE AWARDS

Poetry, Winner: Nicole Shair

"Rejected Memories and the People Who Keep Them"

Poetry, Runner-Up: Taylor Pike

"Tired of Dying"

Fiction, Winner: Amy Guzman

"Así es Como Soy"

Fiction, Runner-Up: John Heselton

"The Broken Bones Club"

Creative Nonfiction, Winner: Itzia Medrano

"On the Border of Self-Discovery"

Creative Nonfiction, Runner-Up: Anna Seguin

"You, Me and Bread"

UPREP

UNDERGRADUATE PROFESSIONAL & RESEARCH EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Q&A with Fall 2020 UPREP Student: Gianluca Percovich

Can you please describe your UPREP project?

Our UPREP project was process of assisting Distinguished Professor of English and John and Sara Lindsey Chair of Liberal Arts Margaret J.M. Ezell and Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts Kevin O'Sullivan in the creation of the "Making Meaning: Hands-on Basic Paleography and Book Production" workshop in conjunction with the Folger Shakespeare Library. It is a workshop intended to teach about the means of early physical book production and a broader seminar based discussion as to the future of the book itself.

What did you learn from it and what were the benefits?

We learned quite a bit about the history of the book itself and about Paleography (the study of handwriting), we practiced reading a variety of hands from the early modern period as well as physically printing a few pieces of previously written work as well. In a broader context we learned about performing research into the book itself from the early modern period as well as a foundation for understanding handwriting that may seem indiscernible to many (and on occasion still is to us). Learning how to do research on topics from this period was eye-opening and incredibly valuable.

What kind of skills did you learn OR what skills were you able to apply while you were involved with the project?

I believe I answered this a bit with the previous question, but to reiterate: learning to do more advanced research, learning to read hands previously unreadable to us, and learning how to structure a workshop of this nature by serving as sample students.

Did you learn something that related to your research or your professional plans/goals?

I personally learned a lot about structuring a learning experience for students, I recently was accepted into the Teach for America Corps of 2021 and as such this experience was eye-opening in terms of the amount of research and labor required in order to create something as complex as a workshop.

What did you most enjoy about the UPREP and why would you recommend it?

I loved being able to work with multiple accomplished individuals in their respective fields in order to work on something that there was a clear passion of. I especially enjoyed the fact that we operated on a pace that was acceptable to everyone and allowed us ample time and resources to learn more in-depth material than one would expect in a typical class. I would recommend UPREP to anyone who feels that a typical class may be too broad for their liking, specific research of this nature is incredibly satisfying.



Gianluca and his partner, Payton Johnson, in action.

Share your story with us!

Have any creative fiction or poetry that's collecting dust in your notebook, languishing in your hard drive, or waiting to be released from the confines of your mind?

Like "Texas A&M English Department" on Facebook and **follow** @TheEnglishAggie on Twitter and Instagram to stay informed about contests, magazines, and journals. Email your work to EnglishAggieStories@gmail.com and you could end up published in The English Aggie!

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Texas A&M Department of English

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