



The English Aggie

September 2019

Faculty

Heidi Craig



Where did you go to college? Why?

I went to Concordia University's Liberal Arts College in my hometown of Montreal, Canada. Its broad humanities curriculum -- combining literature, history, and philosophy across different periods and cultures -- appealed to me.

What is your field of expertise?

Shakespeare, renaissance drama, and the literature and culture of seventeenth-century England. My current research focuses on the production and reception of English drama between the years 1642 and 1660, when the performance of plays was outlawed. I'm also interested in rag-pickers, who collected the raw materials into which paper -- and eventually books -- was made. I find it fascinating that these low-status individuals were crucial to the process of textual and literary production.

What other academic subjects interest you?

The social sciences of psychology, religion and anthropology have always interested me, and I actually minored in Sociology in college. Anything that helps us understand the human condition!

How do you define good teaching?

I vividly recall when my teachers introduced me to many classic works of literature as an undergraduate; how I relished the wirthful complexity of Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton's daunting intellect, the social astuteness of Jane Austen, and Ralph Ellison's poignancy and power. As a teacher, I seek to convey my enduring excitement and enthusiasm for these great works to students who are reading them for the first time. What a profound privilege to teach these

What are some of your hobbies?

Yoga, running, and anything trivia-related.

What is your favorite book?

The immortal "Anna Karenina".

Are you a fan of original books or movie adaptations? Any exceptions?

Yes! I love all artistic forms. Even seemingly "bad" adaptations have their value, as they can open up one's ideas about the practice of artistic creation and the role of artistic influence. And, while we're on the topic of movie adaptations, while I wouldn't necessarily draw a direct line from Baz Luhrmann's "Romeo and Juliet" to my own profession, I will say that as a young person I found that film pretty powerful. Art can change lives.

Spotlight

Where did you go to college? Why?

I went to three colleges: University of Kent for my Bachelors; University of York for my MA and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, for my doctorate. I have also been to the University of Kansas as an undergraduate exchange student and a Fulbright Visiting Scholar.

What is your field of expertise?

My field of expertise is in English and American Literature, with special focus in African-American literature and Anglophone African Literature.

What other academic subjects interest you?

I am interested in slavery and the literary imagination; history and memory and cultural philosophy in literature.

How do you define good teaching?

Good teaching is when you leave the classroom curious and motivated to pursue your curiosity.

What are some of your hobbies?

I love traveling.

What is your favorite book?

"Beloved" and generally anything written by Toni Morrison.

Are you a fan of original books or movie adaptations? Any exceptions?

Original books, with the exception of perhaps "Romeo and Juliet" by Baz Luhrmann (only because he put such an original spin on a classic!)

Portia Owusu



A Summer Adventure in Japan

Written By: Rose Rodriguez, '20

It all started with samurais and ninjas. Yes, everyone at one point in their childhood became enamored with the samurai and ninja world. For me, I also fell in love with the music, the stories, the culture, and the beauty of cherry blossoms. In my teens, watching anime, Japanese animated movies and shows, became a frequent pastime. My love for the country only grew from this and so did my longing to fulfill the dream of visiting it one day. When I came to Texas A&M, I decided that I wanted a Bachelor of Arts so I could learn another language. Being Hispanic, I was leaning towards Spanish, of course, but my love and curiosity for Japan led me to learn that language instead. During my junior year, I took Japanese 101 and 102 and found myself falling in love all over again. It was then that I decided that I wanted to participate in the 10-week study abroad program for the summer of 2019. After many hours of working at my part-time job, and many hours of studying the language, with some other minor obstacles in the way, I was able to board my (very first) flight to Japan in May.



I can honestly say that this experience changed my life. I never thought I could grow so attached to people I only spent 10 weeks with. I never thought I'd be able to travel across the world and experience a culture so fully. I also never thought I'd get so excited over watching anime just because I understood a few words, phrases, or even sentences without the captions. Studying abroad is truly a wonderful journey that I believe many students should have the opportunity to take. It opens your eyes to the many differences between your own country and theirs. It's quite challenging at first because you experience culture shock. Especially when the language is a difficult level like Japanese. It's a bit unnerving because you go from being able to navigate yourself easily in the US to second guessing yourself because you're not quite sure what those Japanese characters mean. Over time, you become so used to seeing the language that, when you do see English in a random place that isn't a classroom, you get a bit confused (and also a bit relieved).



In my opinion, the food was the best part. By the second day, I was using chopsticks like a pro. A memory that amuses me is that some friends and I went to a "Denny's" on one of our explorations—I know, a "Denny's" out of all places—and, when we were served, we were given forks. I had held it for a good minute in my hand, staring at it in a sort of awe because it had been weeks since I last saw a fork. Transportation is another story. We are all so used to being able to drive everywhere or ride in a car to places.

Being in Japan proved a very different traveling experience. It took us about an hour and a half just to get to the university from the sharehouse by train and bus. I had never ridden a train before so that was quite the adventure in of itself because riding trains in Japan were both a nightmare and interesting experience. It would get so crowded, sometimes, that my small body would be nearly lifted off the ground.



Though the train navigation was a bit on the downside, I found Japan to be very beautiful. Nature is obviously treasured there because there are many large parks and even pieces of the cities where beautiful vegetation is allowed to grow quite freely. My favorite pastime, other than exploring, was taking photographs of such places. We were able to visit many famous sites in Japan like Shibuya Crossing, Fushimi Inari Shrine in Kyoto, an interactive art museum called teamLab Borderless, and the Edo Tokyo Museum.

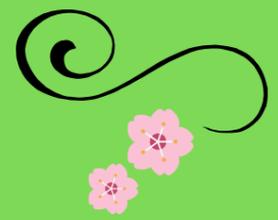
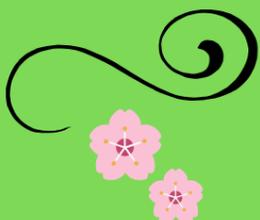


For the duration of the trip, we stayed within the Tokyo prefecture. However, between Summer I and Summer II, a group of friends and I boarded a night bus to Osaka and Kyoto where we spent 6 days for both vacation and exploration. Later in Summer II, for my birthday weekend I might add, we traveled to an area around Mt. Fuji. We were able to see one of the greatest symbols of Japan up close and even had fun in an amusement park called Fuji-Q Highland.

I found that Japan is very fond of convenient stores, cafes, and even restaurant styled bakeries. I grew to love them just as much. My experience with the university, Kyorin University, was great and I absolutely adored the professors. I also made a good handful of native speaker friends while attending. Honestly, I could go on and on about my experience in Japan. There was never a dull moment with my fellow Aggies from late night karaoke to shopping for gifts to cat cafes.



If I could give any advice about studying abroad, it is to start everything early. Start the application process early and look into many different places for scholarships. If you don't have your passport, start that process extra early because it does take quite a bit of time. If you're anything like me who struggles financially because you come from a low-income household or are on your own, don't give up hope. There are so many different ways to receive help to be able to fulfill this dream. I was blessed with financial aid, family, friends, and even the parents of those friends. Though the process of everything stressed me out a great deal, I'd do it all over again just so I could relive the experience and meet all of the people I had the honor of meeting. There is no doubt that I learned more in my 10 weeks abroad than I did in 2 semesters. If you have the chance to go abroad, I encourage you to take it even if it seems difficult. It'll be one of the best experiences in your life.



Real Talk: The Hardest Part About Being an English Major

Credit: DearEnglishMajor.com

Going through college is challenging, but when you're an English major, you tend to encounter a unique set of challenges. There are 4 major challenges that every English major faces. With the help of the audience from DearEnglishMajor, I will provide their perspectives and my own advice for combating those challenges.

1. The judgement of others

"Schools seem to worship anyone with a major involving science and math, so much so that it seems to be impossible to show off the talents of an English major. In my last year of study, I've discovered the HUGE amount of work that can be done if you have an English degree, which is phenomenal. Sometimes it can just be hard to portray how smart us 'book nerds' really are."

2. The struggle to find a career

"Listening to people make jokes about our major and not being able to find a suitable career. Sometimes blocking out the negativity of others can be difficult and the doubt can creep in, but just keep at it. Remember why you chose the major. The jobs are out there, I promise."

3. The courses and workload

"Not being accustomed to the amount of reading that is required of us. Yes we are English majors, and yes we love to read, but the amount of reading that we have to do for classes is extremely difficult. On any given day, I could have three different stories to read and analyze for classes, and each have different plotlines and characters to comprehend. I love reading, but sometimes it's too much."

4. The personal challenges

"For me, the hardest part about being an English major is turning in or sharing my writing with my professors and classmates. It makes me feel super vulnerable."

Advice

1. If it's your passion, go for it! No one can tell you what your passion is and no one can judge you for what it is. Whether it's cooking, solving math equations or writing poetry on a rainy day, **follow your fire.**

2. Being an English major is SO flexible! You develop excellent oral and written communication skills which is exactly what companies are looking for. You also develop your creativity and your mind is trained to read in an efficient manner. Just because you're an English major, doesn't mean you have to be a teacher. Other than being a writer, you can be a lawyer, a journalist, a translator, or work in the public relations department. **Don't let anyone limit you.**

3. Yes, I absolutely LOVE reading. But, sometimes, it can be quite overwhelming. This is a great chance to start **building those time management skills.** Learning how to manage your time will save you the headache.

4. Sharing my own writing does make me feel vulnerable. I'd like to think of it as stage fright. You get up on stage, butterflies in your stomach, heart in your throat, and knees weak. But, you just have to do it and, when you do, you're able to relax and perform more freely. That's how it can be with your writing. The more you share your work, **the more confident you'll be about expressing yourself.**



SUBMIT A SHORT STORY OR SPOOKY THEMED POEM TO
ENGLISHAGGIESTORIES@GMAIL.COM
FOR A CHANCE FEATURE IN THE ENGLISH AGGIE OCTOBER ISSUE!

Guidelines:

Short stories have a 1400 word limit (However, if it exceeds that amount, the rest of the story can be featured on social media if readers want more).

Poetry can be a max of 2 pages, depending on style.

Deadline is October 15th.



Science Fiction and Fantasy Studies

Create a Concentration

English majors may create a concentration in Science Fiction and Fantasy by taking a combination of the courses below to satisfy their Major Electives area on the degree plan (15 hours).

English minors may create a concentration in Science Fiction and Fantasy by taking a combination of the courses below that also meet the course-level requirements for the minor (18 hours).

ENGL 318: Utopian Literature in the English Tradition

Exploration of the theories and practices of historical and contemporary utopian literature through representative writers and texts.

ENGL/FILM 324: Science Fiction and Film

History and trajectory of science fiction film into the 21st century by filmmakers such as Kubrik, Jenkins, Cameron, Coogler and others.

ENGL 331: Fantasy Literature

An exploration of origins and development of fantasy literature, including representative writers, genres and texts.

ENGL 334: Science Fiction, Present and Past

Origins and development of the science fiction genre.

ENGL 343: Fairy Tales in the English Tradition

An exploration of the history, development, theory, and practice of fairy tales, including representative writers, sub-genres, and texts.

Or any of these classes when the topic is relevant

ENGL 235: Elements of Creative Writing

ENGL/FILM 351: Advanced Film

ENGL 360: Literature for Children

ENGL 361: Young Adult Literature

ENGL 394: Studies in Genre

ENGL 415: Studies in a Major Author

ENGL 481: Senior Seminar *Majors only.*

