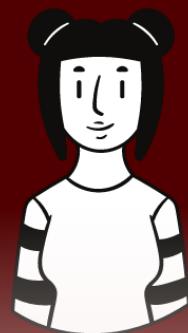


Oct. 2021

The English Aggie



Welcome, Faculty!

The Department of English Proudly Introduces Four New Faculty Members



Dr. Grace Heneks is a new lecturer for the English department. She received her PhD from Texas A&M (whoop!) in May 2021. In addition to her work, she also enjoys running and spending time with her husband and two dogs.

What is your focus area within English?

My focus within the field of English is contemporary African American and multiethnic American literature with an emphasis in humor and critical race studies.

What is your favorite class so far?

My favorite class to teach so far has been ENGL 362: US Latinx Literature.

What excites you most about getting to teach in person?

Seeing my students!

What's a fun fact about yourself?

I'm a twin. My twin brother, Andrew, is only 24 minutes older than me.

What are you reading right now?

In addition to the readings I've assigned for class, I'm currently reading three books: *Imbeciles: The Supreme Court, American Eugenics, and the Sterilization of Carrie Buck* by Adam Cohen ... *The Historian* by Elizabeth Kostova ... and *Razorblade Tears* by S.A. Cosby.

Dr. Christopher Manes is a new lecturer for the English department. He was originally born in Louisiana, but he has been living in Dallas for the last eighteen years. He writes and publishes documentary poetry.



What is your focus area within English?

My background is in studies in literature and history, mostly American Lit and poetry, but my dissertation and my research emphasis in college included African refugees or the transnational history of refugees and genocide holocaust studies.

What is your favorite class so far?

At Texas A&M, my focus is English composition and rhetoric which I must say is not necessarily a research area but that has been an area that I like teaching because I get to know more about the students and topics that truly in some cases I don't know much about.

What excites you most about getting to teach in person?

The difference is that when you are in person, you just get a little bit more body language so I can tell more when a student is really focused on that particular thing. When their cameras are off online you aren't really sure what they are doing. So are they focused on the task at hand?... I can far more easily see if it is just that they're thinking or do they not understand something.

What's a fun fact about yourself?

One fun fact students may not know--it may or may not be clear in a classroom setting--is that I really do like to laugh, like I'm not very serious. I make sure not to take myself too seriously, and so, of course, you do want to be careful with humor in the classroom so I don't know if students would know I'm funny, but I really do like to laugh.

What are you reading right now?

I'm reading a few things actually. I'm reading *The Traveling Queen*, which is written by one of our professors here, Michael Collins. [Another] book I'm reading is a book of poetry by Joy Harjo and it's a collection of Native American poems.

Dr. Jason Crider is an assistant professor in the English department. He recently finished his PhD at the University of Florida. Before that, he lived in South Carolina, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

What is your focus area within English?

Broadly speaking, I would say my focus is in digital rhetoric and technical writing. More specifically, my research consists of two major trajectories. First, I do a lot of work with mixed-reality media--digital media that moves beyond the desktop and integrates with the “real world,” attaches to our bodies, participates in space. Technologies like augmented reality, wearables, and location-based devices create new rhetorical paradigms that demand new bodily dispositions and offer new opportunities for participating in networked space ... My second research trajectory is focused on what I call prosthetic media, or digital media that integrates with or becomes the body. I use my experiences hacking two of my prosthetic devices as a cross section for exploring digital and health rhetorics, technical communication, digital activism, and disability studies ...



What is your favorite class so far?

We're only about a week in, but I'm already really loving my Modern Rhetorical Theory class. It's a class with so much urgency to it. We're in a moment saturated with messaging--advertisements, conspiracy theories, social media, news outlets, etc. Being rhetorically equipped doesn't mean being able to understand what all of these things mean, but rather being able to diagnose how they work. This class is an opportunity to explore some of the major theories for doing this kind of diagnostic work; it's the kind of stuff you can take with you when you leave the classroom and apply to nearly any aspect of your life.

What's a fun fact about yourself?

This one's hard. I like vintage bicycles and making hot sauce. I'm color blind. I collect vinyl records and lost keys. I don't know if any of these things are fun, but they are, in fact, facts.

What are you reading right now?

I'm reading a bunch of stuff right now. I just picked up *Metabolizing Capital* by Christian J. Pulver and *Writing Futures: Collaborative, Algorithmic, Autonomous* by Ann Hill Duin and Isabel Pedersen for a thing I'm writing on artificial intelligence.

Dr. Frances Thielman is a lecturer for the English department. She just graduated from Texas A&M (whoop!) with her PhD! She has a shiny new frame for her diploma.



What is your focus area within English?

My dissertation was about representations of trash in Victorian literature, and I got to learn a lot about the public health reforms and how they managed their municipal waste in 19th century Britain. I had a section about Wall-E at the very end to make a connection to the present day. I've also taught a lot of technical writing and worked at the department of Civil Engineering for a year developing the writing component for the introductory course of the new Environmental Engineering major.

What is your favorite class so far?

I really enjoy teaching the British Literature survey.

What excites you most about getting to teach in person?

I really missed the energy you get from seeing people's faces without a screen between you and watching the “a-ha” moment when a student understands something. I'm enjoying getting to experience that again.

What's a fun fact about yourself?

I'm a huge Doctor Who fan, and I spent lockdown watching every episode, from 1963 to the present.

What are you reading right now?

Mudlarking: Lost and Found on the River Thames by Lara Maiklem and *A Cultural History of the Tarot* by Helen Farley.

Read the full article on The English Aggie Blog: <https://englishaggie.blogspot.com/>

STEM & The Humanities

Miranda Chun, Class of '21, on How the Disciplines Intersect

There is often a clear divide between STEM and the humanities, despite the fact that one field can benefit and rely upon the other. Students like Miranda Chun are bridging the gap between STEM and the humanities to receive a truly well-rounded and interdisciplinary education. Miranda is a senior chemical engineering major, and she is also minoring in English.

Chun developed an early love of chemistry while in high school, so choosing to major in chemical engineering was easy. Even though she didn't exactly know what chemical engineering was, she had already identified her skill in chemistry, math, and even physics. She calls her major "a lucky guess," and once classes started she knew she had made the right decision in choosing her major. She chose her minor in English because she has enjoyed reading since childhood, and her final years of high school solidified a passion for English. "It took me until about 11th or 12th grade to find an appreciation for English," Chun said, "but once I did, I really fell in love." Even as she studied chemical engineering, it was important to her to prioritize getting to spend time in English classes and enjoy reading. A minor in English allowed her to do all of this. Chun admits that she receives "mildly shocked reactions when [she] tell[s] other engineers that [she] minor[s] in English. English is a subject that seems to inspire fear and horror in a good number of STEM students."

"It took me until about 11th or 12th grade to find an appreciation for English, but once I did, I really fell in love."

Chun has not let this deter her love of English, and she has met other students within STEM fields that share her dual interests. Some of her favorite English classes while working towards her minor have been Studies in British Literature with Dr. Ross and Technical and Professional Editing with Dr. DiCaglio. "Dr. Ross was an excellent professor and educator, and her enthusiasm for the class really helped to boost mine," Chun said. As she has learned, passionate and dedicated instructors have an



immense impact on students' engagement and outcome in a course. Chun completed Technical and Professional Editing online but believes that Dr. DiCaglio rose to the challenge of teaching online. She insists that she has never "been so challenged in an English class before [and] learned so much from his class about writing, editing, and communicating."

With her busy schedule, Chun reads for pleasure less frequently than she would like, but when she does, one of her favorite genres is science fiction. A favorite since high school is *Ender's Game* by Orson Scott Card, which helped her learn about empathy. Most recently, she has read *Educated* by Tara Westover. The book about a young Mormon woman struggling to get a college education made Chun "really appreciate education and the opportunities [she has] and gave [her] an insight into how hard it can be to balance between your logical mind and your instinct."

Chun believes that her time in English class has benefited her other coursework. An English education helps build upon existing communication skills and develop higher levels of critical thinking. She says that she has learned that "other people think differently ... and sometimes saying something in a way that I understand best may not be the best way to help someone else understand." Her English coursework has taught her new ways to communicate effectively and increase the productivity of her conversations; however, English experience doesn't only benefit students in the classroom. She

is currently getting co-op experience with Albemarle, a chemical manufacturing company, and she plans to remain in the chemical engineering field after graduation. She is particularly interested in the semiconductor industry at the moment, and the communication skills she has gained in English class will help her in her career. Chun is even considering going into intellectual property law after gaining experience in the industry, and she feels well-prepared by her English foundation at Texas A&M.

“I enjoy taking English classes because they give my mind a reason to work in a different way and relieve some of the pressure that builds up in me from ‘thinking like an engineer’ all the time.”

The thing that she is most grateful for in regards to her English classes is variety. She is constantly challenged by her chemical engineering coursework, so she appreciates the time that English class helps her dedicate to things she enjoys, like reading and writing. “I enjoy taking English classes because they give my mind a reason to work in a different way and relieve some of the pressure that builds up in me from ‘thinking like an engineer’ all the time,” Chun says.

Chun encourages her fellow students in STEM majors to embrace the humanities and enjoy their English classes by “not think[ing] of humanities classes as obligations.” She explained how she made the switch from viewing English classes as obligations to viewing them as opportunities. If STEM students replace the assumption that an English class is boring or not worth their time with a genuine effort to learn, they might allow themselves to see the value and importance of the humanities. Chun demonstrates the effectiveness of a positive attitude by stating that she has “ended up enjoying English classes and chemical engineering classes alike that [she] thought would be dreadful, just by coming in with a more optimistic outlook, or at least the resolve to try and get something good out of the class.”

Like Chun, I encourage STEM students to gain experience in the humanities. Whether that be through taking English classes at Texas A&M, participating in clubs and organizations on-campus or off-campus, or just reading in their free time, the humanities are a great way to increase creativity, communication, close-reading, writing, and other valuable skills. These skills can benefit you in many fields, such as law or even a chemical engineering co-op! You can learn to better communicate with supervisors and employees, write emails, reports, and other professional materials, read and analyze scientific articles, and just get more enjoyment out of life by gaining a new way of thinking. STEM students, think about bringing your scientific knowledge to the humanities!

How Do I Minor in English?

Step 1: Meet with an advisor from the English department.

- Schedule an appointment through Navigate online or through the mobile app
- Select change of minor when making your appointment

Note: You must have 90 or fewer hours to add a new minor.

Step 2: Select English classes to add to your degree plan.

How do I know which classes I should take?

To minor in English, you are required to take 18 hours of English courses:

- 9 hours can come from any English course
- 6 hours must come from a 300--400 level course
- 3 hours must be from a 400 level course

You can browse classes through the class search in Howdy, or you can view this English course catalog: <https://catalog.tamu.edu/undergraduate/course-descriptions/engl/>

Step 3: Apply your valuable knowledge to your field!

In which fields can I apply knowledge from my English classes?

- Law
- Business
- STEM
- Education
- And more!

Most fields require some level of reading, writing, and interacting with other people!

Return to Campus



Science Fiction and Fantasy Creative Writing Contest

Attention:

Submit your speculative fiction piece for a chance to perform your piece at a public reading and win cash prizes!

All pieces of speculative fiction are accepted.

You must be a currently enrolled Texas A&M undergraduate student to submit.

Submission word limit is 3000 words.

Submission Link:

<https://bit.ly/SciFiContest22>

Submission Deadline:

February 14, 2022

Presented and funded by



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This publication is brought to you by:
Texas A&M Department of English

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Department of
English

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