
THE INTERLOCUTOR

Newsletter of the Division of Humanities and Teacher Education (HUTE)
Seaver College, Pepperdine University
Spring 2020



This edition of *The Interlocutor* is dedicated to our HUTE graduating seniors. Having rallied through terrible disaster and tragedy that tested the Pepperdine community, the Class of 2020 has closed out their college career in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted learning and shifted instruction to online (as seen from the photo of Prof. Elizabeth Yomantas class above). We wish to celebrate all HUTE graduates for their achievements during this difficult time. We send them blessings and best wishes, and we look forward to seeing them at the postponed graduation ceremony in the future.

This issue is dedicated also to the memories of Prof. Connie Fulmer (below), who passed away in the middle of this semester on March 17. Prof. Fulmer began teaching at Seaver College in 1990 and specialized in Victorian literature and the works of the novelist George Eliot and Eliot's biographer Edith Simcox. She also served as HUTE chair (equivalent to divisional dean today) and associate dean at the Seaver Dean's Office. Her hard work and kindness to students and colleagues will be dearly missed.



"Blessed is the influence of one true,
loving human soul on another."

~George Eliot





Senior Reflection: Writing in Community

Shea McCollum, Creative Writing Major

It's no secret that writing is a solitary act. For generations, writers have garnered the reputation as loners, hermits, and recluses for the amount of time they spend alone with just their thoughts and the blank page. But while some degree of seclusion is, of course, necessary in order to write, I've found that having a community of people that will support you in your writing to be equally as important.

Growing up, I didn't know many other kids my age who were interested in creative writing, and besides a one semester poetry class, the school I went to wasn't really interested in teaching kids to write non-academically either. So most of the experience I had with writing as a kid happened on my own. I would read Shel Silverstein's collection and try to recreate some of his same whimsy in my poetry, or I'd watch an episode of TV and rewrite the ending the way that I'd wished it had happened. I never shared what I wrote with other people and always worked on my own. Back then, writing truly was a solitary act for me.

But things changed in high school when I got an idea for a story that was a bit more ambitious than anything I had written up until that point. It involved a lot of moving parts and abstract ideas that I had a difficult time sorting through on my own. Though I was really passionate about writing it, I kept getting stuck, unsure of how exactly I should express what I was trying to say or if anything I had written would make sense to other people.

As a last ditch attempt to salvage my work, I ended up bringing in a chapter of this story to school to see if some of my friends could read over it and give me their feedback. Some of them kindly agreed, and they were able to reflect back to me things in my writing I hadn't noticed and give me all sorts of ideas of how I could better articulate what I was trying to say. They also wanted me to bring in the next chapter of the story, so they find out what happened next. I made some of the alterations they had suggested, and the next week I brought in the second chapter. By then, word had spread throughout my freshman class about the impromptu workshops I was holding, and there were more people who wanted to serve as beta readers for my story.

Soon, the community of people built around this story grew, and people who had previously showed no interest in writing began bringing in their own stories to workshop. It was incredible to me as a writer to be able to hear how other people interpreted my words and start to develop the voice of my inner editor. But was even more astounding was seeing the way that these stories we'd written brought people together and made them feel excited to be a part of a collaborative, imaginative effort.

As a Creative Writing major at Pepperdine, I have been able to experience communities built around writing on a completely different level. The Creative Writing major is a pretty small, tight-knit community on Pepperdine's campus, and after a few semester of taking upper division classes, I knew and had taken classes with most everyone in my workshops. Having such a small community has really helped me to push myself in my writing and feel safe to share things rooted in personal experience without the fear

that my work will be judged or torn apart. There's a great deal of trust involved in sharing your work with other people, in general and especially in the early drafting stages when all of your writing feels precious to you, and I think that knowing the people you are sharing you're writing with helps build that sense of trust. The Creative Writing professors I've had at Pepperdine have done a great job encouraging students to share a balance of positive comments and constructive feedback that makes feel students feel encouraged about their work but which also gives them opportunity to grow as writers.

Fall semester, I took my last Creative Writing class, and I was disappointed to leave behind the workshop atmosphere that I had grown to love and which has helped me so immensely in my writing, so I ended up reaching out to several other students in the major and starting an ongoing voluntary workshops. People have the option of submitting their work to receive comments from their peers in exchange for feedback of their own. It's been really great to be able to carry the momentum and the bonds we'd built into the classroom into the work we're doing on our own.

As I prepare to graduate this spring, I just hope that the juniors and sophomores in the major will continue on this tradition and work to preserve the community between Creative Writing students both inside and outside of the classroom. Going forward in my writing life, I know I'm going to be intentional about building a community writers that I can share my work with because I've seen how much I can learn about my own writing by taking the time to consider someone else's perspective and treat writing as a collaborative effort, rather than just a solitary one.



Prof. Vickie Saxon and students in Creative Writing for the Professional Market, Fall 2019.
Left to right: Madeleine Carr, Alyssa Meza, Makenzie Daggett, Shea McCollum, Noah Racey, Nathan Heard, Dr. Saxon, Laura Duffield, Alexandra Pann, Emily Buchanan, and Cameryn Zorb.

Senior Reflection: To Faculty and Classmates

Sara Danielsen, Liberal Arts Major

Dear Humanities and Teacher Education Division,

Over my four years at Pepperdine, I always felt grateful for this small circle of extraordinary people and professors I met through this program. Even though I am not graduating with a credential, I have learned lessons for life through this program that I would like to share with you all.

First and foremost, my passion for people is what brought me to this program. My mom is a teacher and has been for most of my life and my dad is the social butterfly of every event. My parents raised me to be a people person. I came to Pepperdine as a young freshman, knowing I wanted to teach, so I joined the Teacher Education Program with an emphasis in Psychology. I got Dr. Carrie Wall as my academic advisor, Human Development professor, and an unofficial mentor.

Secondly, this is for you Dr. Wall. You have single-handedly made my Teacher Education experience worthwhile. I was very anxious, but also excited when joining the program and through your guidance and meetings, I felt like I found my path.

From my best to my worst student observation experiences, to my mental breakdowns about my future, you were there for me and supported me unconditionally, even down to my decision to pause my credential and take time to focus on myself.

Lastly, to my classmates.

Lauren Tuckek, you are going to be an incredible teacher. Ali Corsi, Kylie Snyder, Holly Reynolds: you guys made all the classes and CSET studying even more fun.

I always felt supported, heard and loved by my classmates in my HUTE classes and will forever be grateful for you all.

Even though my time as a Pepperdine senior got cut short, I am truly and eternally thankful for all the people and professors I met along the way. Once a wave, always a wave. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely,
Sara



Senior Reflection: Teachers and Authors

Anemone Hansen, English Major

On November 8, 2018, I woke up early to write, only to discover that a shooting in Thousand Oaks was front page news. I'm sure each person who was on campus that day remembers something different about it, but the moment that I will never forget happened at about ten that morning.

I was standing by the couch on the third floor of the CAC with a few of my classmates. A boy none of us recognized walked up and joined our group. He looked like he had just come face-to-face with death, so I asked if he needed a hug. He said no and kept standing there. I introduced myself and shook his hand. Then he said, "There's a girl in our class who's still missing." I told him I was sorry. There was nothing more to say. The previous week in Dr. James Thomas' Survey of American Lit class, we'd read "The Open Boat" by Stephen Crane and talked, in a mostly theoretical sense, about the last line: "they could then be interpreters." As I saw this stranger trying to process the fact that his classmate was most likely dead, that phrase came to mind. He had become an interpreter.

To me, one of the most invaluable parts of being an English major and taking Great Books at Pepperdine has been the awareness that none of us are alone in our humanity. Over the past three years, I've spent more time than I would have liked feeling sad, lonely, and confused by the harshness and apathy I was discovering in the world. I felt alone, but feelings are often inaccurate. In life we are all interpreters, but we don't have to interpret alone.

In Dr. Lorie Goodman's Advanced Composition class during Spring 2019, we interpreted our lives through our writing. We wrote about the streets we grew up on, our first friends, our childhood hideouts. We wrote about our wacky families, eating disorders, boyfriends, loneliness. We wrote and talked about the Borderline shooting and about friends who committed suicide. With our writing up on the projector to be critiqued by the class every day, we had to let go of pretending to be perfect. When we couldn't even hide our superficial mistakes—like grammar, punctuation, or repetitive sentence structure—we were freer to reveal the rest of the imperfections and fears that we spend most of our time trying to hide.

My favorite writer from Dr. Connie Fulmer's Brit Lit class was John Keats. While many of the other poets we read seemed stuffy to me, Keats' work just seemed beautiful. But what made him special was what he wanted written on his tombstone: Here lies one whose name was writ in water. I imagine him looking back on his short life and wondering how he ended up with such an instinct for writing, only to die before that artistry had a chance to mature. But instead of hiding from the suspicion that he was forgettable, he accepted it. Like Keats, our names are writ in water, and unlike him, most of us will not be remembered for centuries.





*Anemone and her section of Prof. Paul Contino's Great Books IV
at the beach for the last discussion of The Brothers Karamazov.*

I'm graduating from college later this month, and that's great, but it feels like a very arbitrary accomplishment. A piece of paper matters less to me than the lesson I began learning when I came to campus in August 2017: wherever I go, that's where I belong.

In Asian Great Books this semester, we've talked about water, how it flows to the lowest place and is still, and how it will fill a space of any shape without complaint or disdain. Zhuangzi writes that still water has the capacity to mirror those who look into it so that they can see themselves and be still as well. I'm thankful for Professor Paul Contino and others who have been still enough to show me more of myself. As I look forward to teaching English in the coming years, I hope that I can offer my students the calm, attentive stillness that I've seen and practiced in the best of my classes at Pepperdine.

Congratulations to Shea, Sara, Anemone, student editor Makenzie Daggett, and all other HUTE graduates! The faculty and staff are so proud of you. God bless you in your next endeavors!

Top: Prof. Carrie Wall and her family having a walk prior to California's temporary closure of public parks. At home, they have kept themselves busy with jigsaw puzzles, among other things. **Bottom:** Office Manager Genny Moore takes a selfie of her family at home. Prof. Shanna Early is about to give her housemate Grace a haircut.

Next page. Top: Prof. Julie Oni and her baby boy Isaiah at home and during a stroll. The face mask was sewn by her mother. **Middle:** Prof. Carrie Birmingham tries on her new face mask. Prof. Tuan Hoang and graduating senior Makenzie Daggett, Interlocutor editors, meet over Zoom. **Bottom:** Tech Liaison Terence Anderson hangs out with his children. Prof. Heather Thomson-Bunn and her children have a picnic in their front yard.







Top left: Prof. Stephanie Donnelly with her cat Lu.

Top right: Prof. Lisa Smith and her pup Gizmo.

Bottom left: Prof. Shanna Early and her dog River.

Bottom right: Administrative assistant Lee Jackson takes a break from her work at the dining table to hang out with her dog Silver and son Trevor.



Before Spring Break. *Left: Prof. Lorie Goodman's capstone class on Writing & Rhetoric. Right: Fifteen students were selected for participation in the Sundance Volunteer Program at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2020. Among them are four members of the Class of 2020 in Film Studies: Kathryn Reed Campbell, Kamryn Calhoun, Ben Chiang, and Brooke Zeall.*

After Spring Break: *A Zoom session of Prof. Jennifer Smith's HUM 111 class.*



Remote Presentations

Congratulations to these and other presenters of their senior theses and capstone projects!!



Film Studies
Class of 2020

Senior Thesis Project

Grayson Beeman
Anthony Bonetti
Kamryn Calhoun
Reed Campbell
Ben Chiang
Niklas Coles
Orion Keen
Fran Kirchmair
Gabrielle Norte
Angel Weaver
Brooke Zeall

Friday, April 24th at 4pm
Zoom Exhibition RSVP for access

"Quarantine," a short film
By Grayson Beeman

"The Specter's Game," a short film
By Anthony Bonetti

"Washed Up," a feature length screenplay
By Kamryn Calhoun

"Sweetie," a feature length screenplay
By Kathryn Reed Campbell

"An American Fiction," a feature length screenplay
By Benjamin Chiang

"A Walk in the Dark," a feature length screenplay
By Niklas Coles

"Keyhole," a feature length screenplay
By Orion Keen

"Fragolino," a feature length screenplay
By Fran Kirchmair

"If I Ever Get Out of Here," a short film
By Gabrielle Norte

"An Aster: New Take on Old Horror," a critical paper
By Angel Weaver

"Portraits of Complexity of the Human Experience," a critical paper
By Brooke Zeall

HISTORY SENIOR THESIS PRESENTATIONS

Join us on Zoom to celebrate
our graduating senior history majors!

Wednesday, April 15
1-2 PM

Zoom Meeting ID: 141038048
<https://pepperdine.zoom.us/j/141038048>

Callie Colvin, "The Berkeley Disability Rights Revolution"

Braeden Mitchell, "The Beatle that Rolled the Stone: How One Magazine Shaped an Entire Music Industry"

Erica Park, "Wong Chin Foo: Cultural Mediator and Advocate for Chinese Rights"

SENIOR THESIS PRESENTATIONS IN

English Literature

APRIL 20
5-7 PM PST
ZOOM

LAURA DUFFIELD
Society's Way of Dealing with Someone Different: Shame, Identity, and the Panopticon in Ken Kesey's One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

EMILIE SCHUTT
An Exploration of 'That One Thing' in Steinbeck's The Log From the Sea of Cortez and The Pearl

KASSIDY SHRECK
'A Pure Woman': Intersectionality Applied to Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles

CAROLINE SHARP
Born to Trauma: The Influence of Postcolonial Trauma on the Formation of Identity in Second-Generation Immigrants in Zadie Smith's White Teeth

CONNOR BALDRIDGE
Power of the Non-Binary Perspective in A Room of One's Own

RSVP
JACQUELINE.DILLION@PEPPERDINE.EDU

Change by Somer Levine

Visiting Instructor of Teacher Education & Director of Clinical Practice



In 2016 I was offered a job interview, and I was not happy about it. The local school was hiring a bilingual Reading Specialist. My husband was bewildered. How could I not celebrate an interview for what was seemingly the perfect job for me?

I explained that a job interview could mean imminent change. A change of job responsibilities. A change in colleagues and friends at work. A new boss. I was tired of change and had hit my change quota for the year. We had moved 50 miles from my previous teaching position to a suburb where we knew no one. I explained that change is big. Change is scary.

I did get the job. During my first semester I fell in love with all that changed. My students, school leader, colleagues and my new professional role brought me

immense joy. Then, six months into the new job more change struck: a new boss had been appointed replacing our passionate, warm, and inspiring school leader I admired. I did not have it in me to resist. This time I would face this change with a calm heart because it is easier that way. It is easier to surrender.

Change is inevitable. It is inescapable. It is guaranteed.

In 2019 I joined the faculty at Pepperdine University. Six months in and change has cashed in on her guarantee again. This time she has flexed her power on a scale so grand that we endure the resistance (or surrender) to change as a human race TOGETHER. Change honors no boundaries. We watch her reach -- from our shelter-in-place refuge, from hospital beds, from quarantine, from a Zoom breakout room, from our couch with our little ones in our laps -- across the globe gripping every inch of inhabited earth. Change is inescapable.

While change has become familiar to me, this time she is new. She has warped and we all feel the adjustments. She reinvented herself in a way I could have never guessed: a pandemic?

I will raise her by one and reinvent how *I* surrender. I have learned to find strength in what I have control over. I choose to surrender with Gratitude and sit in its warm lap, enveloping me, cradling me, and reassuring me. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for health, food, and safety. I am grateful for the helpers. I am thankful for a job I can mold and recreate from home knowing I am with a community of colleagues and students all going through this change together. Strength in numbers, strength in numbers. It is big. It is scary. Strength in numbers.'

My gratitude is more powerful than Change.