



THE GRADUATE STUDENTS IN ENGLISH NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2019

The Sapiient Pig

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UPCOMING DATES

TUES, MAY 2- LAST DAY OF CLASSES

SAT, MAY 4- GSE STUDENT-FAULTY PICNIC, LAKE FAYETTEVILLE NORTH PAVILION, 12:30-3:00 PM

MAY 10-11- COMMENCEMENT

MON, MAY 13- MAY INTERSESSION BEGINS

TUES, MAY 28- SUMMER SESSION (10-WEEK, FIRST 5-WEEK, AND 8-WEEK) BEGINS

MON, JULY 1- SUMMER SESSION (SECOND FIVE WEEK) BEGINS

MON, AUG. 5- AUGUST INTERSESSION BEGINS

MON, AUG. 26- FALL CLASSES BEGIN

DOORS OPENED AND CONVERSATIONS STARTED 2019 GSE CONFERENCE A RAINY DAY SUCCESS

After a semester of preparation, especially from GSE Vice President, Sharon Fox, the Graduate Students in English Organization hosted its annual conference on March 9, themed around the timely topic of "Opening Doors: Creating Opportunities for Difficult Conversations." The multi-disciplinary talk was well-attended by presenters despite the rainy weather and attendees were treated to conversations about topics ranging from the political and social weight of #Afroitaliano to Victor Frankenstein (and his bride) to Edo Japan.

In addition to being a great experience to list on a CV, this conference is a great way to share your research with your peers. Be on the look-out for next year's conference Call For Papers, helmed by the GSE's new VP, Jordan Savage.



More photos on page 5

Ask an Academic

ELÍAS DOMÍNGUEZ BARAJAS SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE BEFORE HIS NEXT ADVENTURE IN FLORIDA!

Q: Some graduate students have advocated writing groups to help them stay on track in the thesis or dissertation writing process. What are your accountability tips?

A: Writing groups are great, so long as the folks in them are mutually committed to keeping the established meeting schedule and writing deadlines. Setting the ground rules and expectations for participation in the group is important. Participants need to understand that joining a group not only entails making time to write but also making time to read the work of others. The latter is a very important responsibility that demonstrates true commitment to the group, and it's one of the tasks that the more ambitious members may neglect, despite the fact that acting as reviewers is something that will continue to carry into their professional lives should they pursue an academic career.

If one knows that working according to the schedules of others is not compatible with the pace one is personally accustomed to, then joining a writing group may not be the best choice. In the case of the more self-oriented, I recommend setting a fixed schedule for writing. Setting a realistic schedule, even one that devotes minimal but consistent time to writing and research (such as writing for 20 min. every morning or evening, or devoting 30 min. to researching or writing every other day), leads to the completion of many writing-related tasks.

Q: What is your preferred strategy for networking with academics?

A: Believe it or not, I like emailing colleagues I've not met. I think that graduate students should do this too. Waiting to actually meet people at conferences (the traditional approach) is too protracted and uncertain. Graduate students who appreciate someone's scholarly work should make it a point to make it known to the person whose work they admire. A brief email that provides a note of sincere appreciation for a theory, study, or argument made by the scholar selected is a very nice way to introduce oneself and expressing one's interest in that area of research. If a correspondence ensues, a working relationship may come out of it. If nothing else, the scholar contacted will at least recognize the sender's name down the line if the email message made a good impression.

Q: One of the most difficult and commonly-asked questions, especially at conferences and in job interviews is "Tell me about yourself." What is your strategy to answering this question? What answers do you appreciate hearing?

A: At this point in my career, that's an easy question to answer for me because I take it to mean "what do you do professionally?" It's easy to say "I'm an English professor who studies verbal art and its applications to the teaching of writing"; or to say, "I'm a paremiologist—that's the technical term for someone who studies proverbs" (the latter gets the proverbial ball rolling...yes, pun intended).

In the context of interviews, the question definitely should be interpreted as an invitation to talk about one's scholarship—specifically, what one is researching, what has been learned or is learning from that research, and where that research is likely to lead. In other words, in the context of the interview, that question allows one to articulate a research agenda.

In the context of conferences, when one is introduced to a colleague, the question may be interpreted in a more casual manner, but that does not mean that the opportunity to share one's professional interests should be wasted. When being introduced to someone at a conference, I appreciate a more personal reply at the start; one that tells me where the person is from (institutional affiliation or region), where they are in their academic trajectory, and what they're doing at the conference. From there, if time allows and there's mutual interest, a more detailed conversation may follow. Also, after a brief chat, it's customary to exchange business cards, so have those handy (or at least request one from the interlocutor so that there's a point of reference in future correspondence).



GREAT TURN-OUT FOR ANNUAL MFA FACULTY READING AT NIGHTBIRD BOOKS

This past March 13, MFA Liaison, Rome Font, helmed the annual MFA Faculty Reading featuring Toni Jensen, Davis McCombs, and Padma Viswanathan. It was standing room only at Nightbird Books as graduate students, friends, and family turned out to hear their many (many) poems, non-fiction, and fiction.



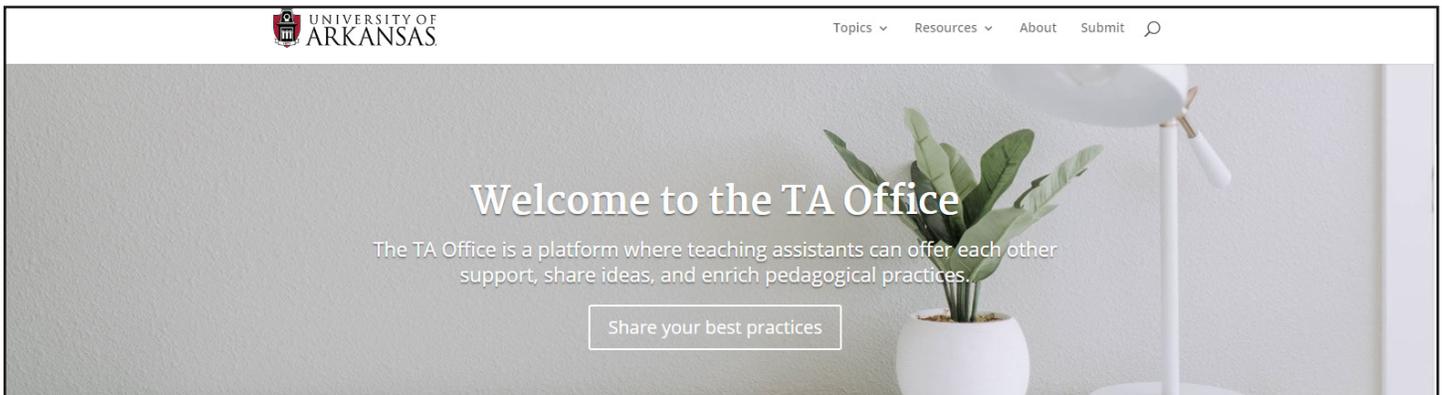
Above: Padma Viswanathan introduces her reading.
Left: Toni Jensen opens the night with an amazing reading.

UPCOMING EVENT: GSE PICNIC

The last GSE event of the year will be a picnic to make up for the cancelled Fall event. Join us at Lake Fayetteville's North Pavilion this Saturday, May 4, from 12:30-3:00pm. Friends, family, and dogs are welcome and the GSE will provide food and drinks for all. We are especially excited to send off this year's graduates! Need more reasons to attend? Say thanks to the 2018-2019 GSE officers! Greet your officers for 2019-2020!



GSE TO LAUNCH WEBSITE WITH TIPS FOR COMPOSITION TAs



All year, GSE Officers Dana Blair and Rome Font have been working on a special project meant to offer pedagogical assistance to TAs. The TA Office, which is currently in usability testing at this time, is an innovative website meant to open a dialogue between TAs. On the site, they can navigate advice from other TAs that pertains to their specific courses within the composition department or take suggestions on how to teach particular topics, like rhetoric. It even includes a section on classroom management!

Although the Department of Rhetoric and Composition has always made resources available to TAs, this website will be a unique home for support materials, since anyone can contribute using a simple form. As Media Development Director, Dana Blair plans to continue developing the website for a more total launch next year.

In the meantime, please consider visiting the site and submitting a tip of your own. As we all know, jumping into the classroom can be intimidating and the lore surrounding it can sometimes help to inspire and enliven classrooms. If something worked well for you, share it! It may be exactly the tip that someone else was waiting on to help them out of a tight spot or get them through a rough lesson.

Submission guidelines are easy to follow. Note that you should be professional and not use real student names (the submission manager suggests using pseudonyms).

You may access the site at <https://wordpressua.uark.edu/gse/>.

Your 2019-2020 GSE Officers

PLUS A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR ON WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER RUNNING FOR OFFICE NEXT YEAR

Next year's officers are as followed. Congratulations to all who were nominated and elected into their positions:

President: Kristen Figgins

Vice President: Jordan Savage

Secretary/Treasurer: Christopher Borntrager

CLCS Liaison: Zane Sarma

MA Liaison: Addison Cornwell

MFA Liaison: Gwen Mauroner

PhD Liaison: Gracie Bain

Student/Faculty Liaison: Rebecca Albright

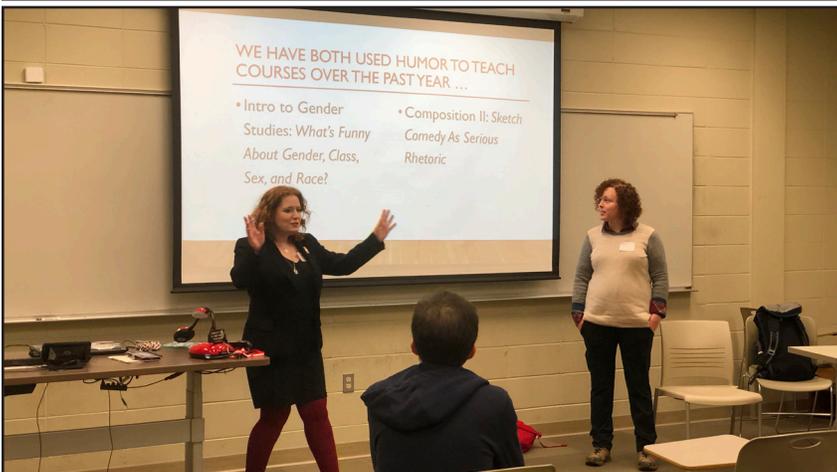
Media Development Director: Dana Blair

There's a section on a CV called "service." Even though this section can be inscrutable and time-consuming, I like the idea that part of the merit of being in academia is providing services to our community, to our school, and to our profession outside of our teaching and research responsibilities.

I was not elected into the position of Media Development Director. In the Fall, Tessa asked me to fill the vacant position, and I agreed against my better judgment, which was warning me about all of my many responsibilities.

I could not be happier that I accepted the position. I love what I have seen the GSE do and the sacrifice of time and energy that its officers make to serve our campus community. Next year, consider running for a position, not just to earn a line on your CV, but because the experiences of serving others are valuable, to you and your peers.

MORE PHOTOS FROM 2019 GSE CONFERENCE



Top Left: Lauren Provost (University of Louisiana-Monroe), Mason Patterson (UA-Fort Smith), and Mattison Fancher (UA-Fort Smith)

Middle Left: Anthony Sargenti (UA-Fayetteville), Noel Wheeler (UA-Fayetteville), Michael McLaughlin (UA-Fayetteville), and Sachin Shrestha (UL-Monroe)

Bottom Left: Sharon Fox and Rachel Thomas (UA-Fayetteville)

Top Right: Padma Viswanathan delivers keynote lecture

Bottom Right: Braden Taylor, Jomarea Beal, Kristina Kinney, and Jeff Whitson (UA-Monticello)