Gloria Naylor Archive Project Beginning at Lehigh

By Suzanne Edwards

The Gloria Naylor Archive Project has received a two-year, $100,000 Accelerator Grant from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research. This collaborative project will bring Gloria Naylor’s collected papers to Lehigh University for five years, where a team of faculty and graduate students will make them accessible to audiences inside and outside the academy. The material in the archive is a largely unexplored resource that will transform our understanding of this renowned 20th-century author’s novels, including her 1982 The Women of Brewster Place. Gloria Naylor’s collected papers include journal entries, private correspondence, and research notes, as well as drafts of her novels, a play, and a screenplay. Much of the material in the archive, including a partial draft of an unpublished novel, has not been considered in scholarship, and it paints a rich picture of the varied influences on Naylor’s fictional worlds. For instance, the documents shed new light on her transnational connections with artists and scholars, the film production company that she started in the 1990s, and her experiences as a graduate student at Yale University.

The project includes faculty, staff, and graduate students from across University: the English department (Suzanne Edwards, Mary Foltz, Heather Simoneau, Sam Sorensen, and Stephanie Watts), the History department (Natanya Duncan), Library and Technology Services (Lois Black and Jasmine Woodson), the Theatre department (Kashi Johnson and Melpomene Katakalos), the Lehigh University Art Gallery (William Crow and Mark Wonsidler), and the Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (Julia Masserjian). With the participation of Professor Randi Gill-Sadler from Lafayette College’s English department, the team looks forward to building collaborations with other Lehigh Valley institutions.

The guiding ethos for the project is to build an archive organized around Gloria Naylor’s aesthetic, political, and intellectual commitments. Naylor often reimagined her novels for the stage and screen, through a television mini-series on Women of Brewster Place, a theatrical production of Bailey’s Cafe, and an unproduced screenplay of Mama Day. As part of the Gloria Naylor Archive Project, Professor Johnson and Professor Katakalos of the Theatre Department will bring Naylor’s writing to life through dramatic performance. William Crow and Mark Wonsidler of LUAG will design an exhibition that showcases the visual and musical influences on Naylor’s writing—including some of her own sketches. Another theme in Naylor’s writing and published interviews is reimagining literary canon formation, as her novels allude to the works of Ann Petry, Ntozake Shange, Pat Barker, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and many others. By digitizing the material and making it available online, the project will make it easier for scholars, educators, students, and readers to trace Naylor’s personal correspondence with living writers, her responses to fans’ inquiries about these allusions, her research on these literary works, and her private writing about the challenges of getting her novels “into faculty lounges” at elite institutions. Most of all, Naylor was acutely concerned about accessibility; her own experience reading Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye while enrolled as an undergraduate at Brooklyn College helped her to envision herself as a writer. In spring of 2021, the Gloria Naylor Archive Project will hold a symposium to bring together nationally renowned scholars, educators, creative writers, actors, and designers to share the archive and develop further scholarly, digital, and public-facing arts projects.
Frankenstein Turns 200: A Bethlehem Celebration
By Beth Dolan

In October 2018, a graduate and undergraduate English class at Lehigh joined with the local and global community to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Mary Shelley’s novel Frankenstein. Professor Beth Dolan had the original idea for the global marathon reading when she served on the Keats-Shelley Association Board of Directors (K-SAA). The K-SAA chose Halloween as the date and provided digital resources for institutions to host events in their local communities, and to share moments from these events on global social media. In all, 600 institutions in 44 countries—from Bethlehem to Buenos Aires, South Africa to Serbia—participated in this Bloomsday-type event.

Dolan’s graduate course, “Frankenstein: Before and Beyond,” focused on the literature that influenced Mary Shelley, the texts she wrote later in her career, and the novels, films, and comic books that her enduring novel inspired. The course also included a significant public humanities element. The fourteen students in the class planned and hosted a film series, a book talk series, and the marathon reading. Students read Gregory Jay’s article “The Engaged Humanities: Principles and Practices of Public Scholarship and Teaching,” to assess our efforts in comparison to standards of responsible public engagement.

Throughout October, graduate students led lively conversations following three films, all free and open to the public: John Whale’s 1931 Frankenstein with Boris Karloff (co-sponsored by Steel Stacks and the Health, Medicine and Society Program), Young Frankenstein (co-sponsored by the LU Center for Community Engagement), and Kenneth Branagh’s Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (co-sponsored with the Bethlehem Area Public Library). The talk back on Whale’s film, led by Shelby Carr and Lauren Van Atta, featured a spirited conversation about the current issue of mass incarceration. Ava Berone and Katherine McCaffery invited audience members who attended Young Frankenstein to discuss the way the film’s humor plays in the #metoo era. The talk back on Branagh’s 1994 film, hosted by Sarah Anderle and Heather Flyte, featured comments on a shirtless Victor (Branagh), a creature recognizable as Robert de Niro, and the depiction of Elizabeth as the female creature.

Leading up to the public marathon reading, graduate students also led three book talks at the main branch of the public library—one for each volume of Shelley’s novel. The book talks drew a regular audience from the community, eager to discuss the classic novel. Ashlee Simon and Gill Andrews led a discussion of the first volume that branched into questions about science and ethics. Claire Silva worked with the Bethlehem Area School District to secure education credit for teachers who attended. In Silva’s and Trisha Nardone’s conversation about volume 2, teachers in attendance compared the creature’s isolation to experiences of alienation among their LGBT students. Nardone invited book talk participants to rewrite the ending of Shelley’s novel, eliciting several creative and interesting responses. Cherise Fung’s discussion of the final volume led to reflection on how people handle loss and our need for companionship. At the request of the BAPL, class members Elizabeth Erwin and Kelsey Stratman filmed the discussions for broadcast on the library’s Youtube channel.

On Halloween, the marathon reading, dubbed Frankenreads, kicked off at 9 am at BAPL. Dolan’s undergraduate class “The Afterlives of Frankenstein: Science, Bioethics, and Literature,” cross-listed with HMS, collaborated with the graduate class to co-host the public reading with the library. Members of the undergraduate class worked in teams to recruit readers from Lehigh and the local community; reading for 10 minutes each, participants included city council members, librarians, local journalists, voice actors, radio personalities, teachers, the BASD superintendent and assistant superintendent, Lehigh staff and faculty, and the members of the graduate class.

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The undergraduate class also recruited audience members, planned food and decorations for the event, and created a slide show for visual interest as folks read. Graduate students set up a fun photo booth with props, which encouraged tweeting to #Frankenreads. The public reading took about 10 hours total and inspired the public library to start a group for reading texts out loud in community, called “Let’s Read.”

The exciting events of October 2018 were, as the Bethlehem Area Public Library proclaimed, “a monster success.”

For more information, see the following stories that were published on the events

The K-SAA

The Philadelphia Inquirer:

The Morning Call:

The Southsider:

Lehigh News:
https://www1.lehigh.edu/news/frankenreads-breathe-new-life-into-frankenstein-this-halloween

BAPL:
https://www.bapl.org/frankenreads-was-a-monster-success/

ALUMNI PUBLICATIONS

Jennifer Kreatsoulas, PhD, co-author, body, mindful yoga, (Llewellyn Publications, 2018)

Be sure to keep up with the English Department’s Graduate Student Blog at https://lehighgrad.wordpress.com/

You can also follow us on Twitter @LehighEnglish

Visit the “Lehigh University English Department” on Facebook.
Alumni Q & A with David Fine

What is your current position?

I am an assistant professor of English at the University of Dayton. I completed my Ph.D. in May 2016 and started my current position in August 2016.

What does a typical day look like for you?

As a tenure-track faculty member, I am expected to make contributions in three main areas: research, teaching, and service. This semester, my MWFs are devoted to teaching, office hours, and committees. I try to devote TR to writing, but, obviously, grading, meetings, and course preparation fill these days as well. I work every weekend, usually on writing, for at least four hours each day.

I am expected to complete 4–6 articles or a monograph before going up for tenure. This academic year, I completed a chapter for an anthology on Iris Murdoch’s Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals. I drafted this piece in the summer, and I submitted the final, revised version on 31 December. Last week, I finished an article on Murdoch’s A Fairly Honourable Defeat for a special issue on her conception of love. I am now turning to a book review, which is due to the Iris Murdoch Society by the end of April.

My position is a 3/3 load, which means that, each semester, I teach (1) a course in the writing program, (2) a general education course, and (3) an upper-level course in my research area or an upper-level course for the English department. This semester, I moved things around a bit, because, in the fall, I participated in a “What is a University For?” faculty seminar. Long story short, I am teaching two general education courses—Literature for the Common Good and Gender & Fiction—and a graduate-undergraduate section of Twentieth-Century British Literature. In addition, I am directing an independent study on queer theory. I have 53 students this semester.

In terms of service, UD’s English department looks for evidence that I am making intentional decisions about where to contribute my energies in addition to remaining available to serve on necessary committees. For example, I currently serve on the English department’s Undergraduate Curriculum Review Committee, the Women and Gender Study’s Committee, and the Advisory Board for the University Professor for Faith and Culture. I advise two student groups as well: specifically, Sigma Tau Delta and Feminists United.

How did you find this position, and what made you a good fit for it?

I first saw an announcement for my position in The Chronicle of Higher Education. This advertisement listed all the positions that would be available at UD for Fall 2016. The posting for my job later appeared on the MLA’s Job Information List and had an application deadline of 15 November.

My search was unusually specific. The department was searching for someone with specialty in “Catholic Literary Modernity and Queer Theory,” and the chair advertised the position under that title. My dissertation focused on secularization and ethics in the twentieth-century British novel, and, fortunately, I published work that addressed sexuality and Catholicism before applying. I was a natural fit.

In addition to my research interests, I had worked at Lehigh as the assistant director of Global Citizenship for three years. The English department at UD was very interested in my work in global education and community-engaged learning, which speaks directly to the university’s mission. The administrators were even more interested in this aspect of my profile, and they made that interest explicit.

I attended a Jesuit university as an undergraduate. I pulled from this experience throughout the application process. It enabled me to articulate how I fit into the university’s larger picture. At a school like Dayton, connection to mission matters.
How did graduate school help you prepare for your own career?

I never felt pressured to hyper-specialize at Lehigh, and I am grateful for the breadth of knowledge that I have brought with me to UD. In my graduate coursework, I learned early to take the questions that interested me to other historical periods and fields. I have drawn on this experience in course design—I teach a variety of courses that extend beyond mid-twentieth-century writers—and in hiring committees.

I am fortunate for the teaching experience that I received at Lehigh. I designed and taught courses in first-year writing, literature (for non-majors), and global citizenship, and I have drawn upon this experience often. Since arriving at UD, I have designed nine new courses, ranging from an honors first-year writing course to a seminar in feminist theory. I usually have three preps. Lehigh has prepared me well to design and teach a variety of courses, especially for non-majors.

Lehigh’s department also made available service opportunities, and I am grateful for each and every role that I undertook. I learned—through work, for example, on the L&SJ conference committee and as a grad rep—not only how to balance service, teaching, and research (which is essential and also my job) but also, more significantly, how departments and universities work, which is rarely pure and never simple. I need to think strategically as I make decisions about my career pre-tenure, and Lehigh helped me to get a sense of how things play out at the level of the department, college, and university.

What do you know now that you wish you had learned in graduate school?

I loved teaching at Lehigh, and I learned—during my time there—how to teach Lehigh students effectively. UD students are similar in some ways and different in others. I would have benefitted by teaching experiences that challenged me to work with diverse populations, because the vast majority of U.S. college students are not—for better and worse—Lehigh students. I have friends who taught outside Lehigh during graduate school, and I see now its wisdom. Along those lines, I also wish I knew more about learning and program assessment. I worked quite a bit with curriculum at Lehigh, but, at UD, there is a much more developed culture of assessment than at Lehigh. I would have benefitted from some more experience in that area.

During my last three years at Lehigh, I worked full-time with the Global Citizenship Program. I am grateful for the advice that I received from my dissertation committee—Deep, Suzanne, and Beth—because I needed to learn how to professionalize quickly. I am also grateful for the support that I received from Dawn, who was DGS, and Jenna, who was placement director. I am appreciative of the opportunities that the department allowed me to pursue, and now the tables have turned: I am advising undergraduate English majors and graduate students as they make professional decisions. Back in 2015, I was very aware of the difficulties surrounding the academic job market, and Lehigh—and especially Jenna—pushed me to think broadly about career options. This thinking expanded my sense of what it means to work in the humanities. What I realize now, in 2019, is that this thinking has also made me a better advisor to my current and future students. It was necessary for me to consider multiple career trajectories.

I have also realized how much I took for granted. The English department and the Humanities Center brought speakers to campus—Sarah Beckwith, Amy Hollywood, Lauren Berlant—that energized our community and that continue to shape my thinking. UD does not bring speakers in the humanities to campus nearly as often, and I miss them. I was also fortunate to have a dissertation writing group—Katie Burton and Emily Shreve—whom I appreciated at the time but cherish even more now. In my experience, it is much more difficult to form these communities after graduate school: not only is there added pressure but there is also something special about learning together—in coursework, in the Humanities Center, at Wednesday’s at Drown—that make these groups really click. Katie’s clam pizza helped, too.
Finding H.D.
By Seth Moglen

Finding H.D. is an ambitious year-long public humanities project exploring the life and work of the most influential artist born and raised in the city of Bethlehem, Hilda Doolittle (1886-1961).

Publishing under the pen-name, H.D., Hilda Doolittle was as an influential figure of the modernist avant-garde. Over the course of a long writing life, she published a dozen volumes of poetry, including the pioneering imagist collection Sea Garden (1916) and the magisterial feminist long-poems Trilogy (1946) and Helen in Egypt (1961). She wrote three memoirs, The Gift (about her Bethlehem childhood), Tribute to Freud (about her psychoanalysis with Freud) and End To Torment (about her complex relationship to Ezra Pound), as well as a substantial body of experimental modernist fiction. The first woman awarded the medal of the American Academy of Arts & Letters, H.D. has exercised a powerful influence on major poets over the last three generations, including those associated with the New York, Black Mountain, and Language Poetry Schools. She is today widely celebrated as a feminist visionary, revelatory explorer of queer sexuality, and eloquent critic of militarism and war.

Hilda Doolittle was born in Bethlehem in 1886 and grew up on Church Street (on the site of today’s City Hall). Her family were among Bethlehem’s Moravian founders in the middle of the 18th century; they helped to found the Saucona Iron Company (later Bethlehem Steel); and her father was the first Professor of Mathematics and Astronomy at Lehigh University. H.D. is buried in the Nisky Hill cemetery. Although she left Bethlehem at the age of ten, she was preoccupied by the contradictory history of her birthplace, which she revisited throughout her writing life. Her work offers the most ambitious meditation to date on the meaning of Bethlehem for the broader history of the United States.

Finding H.D. is a year-long community exploration of the life and work of Hilda Doolittle – and its significance for our city. Finding H.D. seeks to engage people from every corner of our community in an effort to understand who we are by considering who H.D. was and what her work means to us today.

Finding H.D. is a collaboration of the Lehigh English Department and South Side Initiative with the Bethlehem Area Public Library, Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre, and Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center of Allentown.

Finding H.D. includes a series of events at Bethlehem Public Library (11 West Church Street); upcoming events include:

April 16, 2019, 6:30-8:00 pm. Panel Discussion: “H.D. and the Natural World”
Christine Roysdon (Lehigh Library); Louise Schafer (Horticulturalist, Edge of the Woods Native Plant Nursery); Gary DeLeo (Lehigh Physics Dept); Marilyn Hazleton, poet.

April 29, 2019, 6-8pm Lecture: “H.D. and Emily Dickinson: Bisexual Women Poets Who Made History” Liz Bradbury, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, 522 West Maple Street, Allentown.

June 2019. Film Screening: Borderline (starring Paul Robeson and H.D.) South Side Film Festival (date TBA; pending confirmation)


Sept. 2019. Forest Bathing with H.D. (led by Anisa George) Little Pond Retreat, 92 South Penn Dixie Road, Nazareth (TBA)


Oct 10, 11, 12, 13, 2019 World Premiere! A New Mixed-Media Play about H.D.
Written by Doug Roysdon (Mock Turtle Marionette Theatre)
Directed by Jennie Gilrain
Staged as part of Touchstone Theatre’s Festival UnBound.

Schedule subject to change. Please follow @paBAPL on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook for updates all year
GRADUATE STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

**Gillian Andrews** presented her paper, “The Hazards of Medicating Memory: Propranolol, Posthuman Ethics, and M. Night Shyamalan’s Split” at the annual meeting of the Society for Literature, Science and the Arts, Toronto, Canada, November 2018. She presented “Borders, Bodies, and Black Goo: Ebola Analogues in ‘It Comes At Night’” at the 8th International Health Humanities Meeting in Chicago, IL, March 2019.

**Kyle Brett** presented his paper “‘Strictly what it purports to be’: The Lowell Offering’s Challenge to Antebellum Print Economies” at the Northeast Modern Language Association (NEMLA) Conference in Washington, DC, March 2019.

**Caitlin Edwards** presented her paper, “Street yards where flower only lampposts”: Depicting and Resisting Environmental Classism in Olsen’s Yonnondio” at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers, Denver, CO, November 2018.

**Cherise Fung** presented her paper, “In the Name of Sovereignty: Rethinking the ‘Tiger Bitch’ and the Terrorist Bomber in Island of a Thousand Mirrors” at the British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference in Savannah, GA, February 2019.

**Rachel Heffner-Burns** presented her paper “The Sacred Feminine in H.D.’s The Flowering of the Rod” at the American Literature Association Symposium in Santa Fe, NM, November 2018. She also presented “Celebrating a ‘Sacred, Inner Thing’: The ‘Singing Strong Black Women’ of Langston Hughes’s Verse” at the Modern Language Association Conference in Chicago, IL, January 2019.


**Sarita Mizin** present her paper “Genre and Educating the Global New Woman: Pandita Ramabai’s Activist Ethnography” at the North American Victorian Studies Association in St. Petersburg, FL, October 2018. She presented “Rokeya Sakhatw Hassain’s Transgression Process as Women’s Internationalism” and “Worlds ‘By Women, For Women’: Rokeya Sakhatw Hassain’s Literary Activism” at the Modern Language Association Conference in Chicago, IL, January 2019. She was also conference committee chair for “Empowerment, Access, and Infrastructure: A Symposium in Advance of the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women” for the Lehigh University-United Nations Partnership and the Center for Gender Equity in Bethlehem, PA, February 2019.

**Trisha Nardone and Claire Silva** presented their paper “Communities as Agents of Social Change: Facilitating Town and Gown Collaboration with Communal Memoirs” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Pittsburgh, PA, March 2019.


**Dashiele Horn**’s article, “The Role of Empathy in Teaching and Tutoring LD Students,” is forthcoming in Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture 19/1, January 2019.

**Robert Fillman**’s poem "The Second Offer" was a finalist for the Ron Rash Award in Poetry and is forthcoming in Broad River Review. In the fall of 2018, he published the following poems: "Sing Cardinal" in The Aurorean; "Geese" in Canary A Journal of Environmental Crisis; "Rattails" and "The Worm" in Poetry East; and "I sit in the passenger seat" in Sugar House Review. He currently has poems forthcoming in the following publications: Allegro Poetry, Ninth Letter, and Pembroke Magazine.

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UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

- **April 15-20**: Graduate Student Appreciation Week
- **April 15-19**: Registration for Summer and Fall
- **April 12**: Last day for May doctoral candidates to deliver advisor approved dissertation drafts to CAS Graduate Associate Dean’s office
- **April 12**: Last day to drop a class with a “W”
- **May 1**: MA Thesis Presentations
- **May 3**: Last day for May doctoral and masters candidates to electronically upload dissertation or thesis and complete final paperwork
- **May 3**: Last day of classes
- **May 6**: Williams Prize Ceremony
- **May 7-15**: Final Exams Period
- **May 19**: Hooding Ceremony
- **May 20**: University Commencement
- **July 2**: Deadline to apply for September degree