On April 4th, Dr. Stephanie Powell Watts, Associate Professor of English, published her first novel, *No One Is Coming To Save Us*. A range of sources praised the book, from the *New York Times* to the *Washington Post*.

Powell Watts wrote the book over eight years. It began as an adaptation of a true story, in which someone died but his family continued to expect his return. But Powell Watts decided that she wanted the son to return — and so the novel was born.

Many reviewers have associated the novel with *The Great Gatsby*. Like Jay Gatsby returning for Daisy, JJ Ferguson returns to his North Carolina home with his heart set on an old love. Both stories focus on a longing to return to the past.

Powell Watts said, “Part of the genius of *Gatsby* is it meets you where you are” — depending on where the reader is in their life, the way they read the book changes. For instance, Powell Watts said that “after a critical loss, it impacts in a different way” than it may have in an earlier reading. *No One is Coming to Save Us* may have the same effect.

For Stephanie Powell Watts, one of the best parts of the writing process is traveling around the country and meeting readers. Because “people look for guidance and help… in literature,” she said, there are “people who feel like literature is a force in the world.” The book tours have opened her eyes to the reality that “there is a beating heart out there that is really waiting for what we do.”

The work of the writer is, in this way, the work of social justice. Powell Watts said that she thinks “one of the biggest and most important parts of what we do, what writers do, is to try to generate conversation and to try and become part of what is the conversation, and about things that are socially relevant and interesting.”

Powell Watts said she sees her work as a way of communicating with diverse people in an inclusive conversation. During book signings, people of different ages and backgrounds have approached her with personal stories, enabling them to identify with the novel and its characters.

She told the story of a woman in her 60s who approached her at a book signing.

“I had been talking about isolation and loneliness, which is one of the themes of the book,” Powell Watts said. “So many of my characters don’t have the kinds of support systems that they really want, and they don’t know how to get them… She told me that… for the first time in her life, she was truly alone, and she had to figure out how to negotiate that… Just to be able to have that moment with her, for her to feel like there was enough there for her to share that, this, with me — I think that is crucially important for people.”

The story becomes a place to realize connections that may have already begun in daily life. And for Powell Watts, who smiled throughout the telling of the story, this gives her work an added significance, especially for an author who said, “You so want to be a force for good.”
Dr. Lorenzo Servitje

As soon as the job call went out for the cross-listed HMS and English position at Lehigh, Lorenzo Servitje started receiving emails from colleagues encouraging him to apply. The position fit his interests perfectly. Servitje thought for a long time that he wanted to go to med school and worked for several years as both an EMT and a personal trainer before coming across research in the medical humanities. He always had a knack for English alongside his interest in medicine, and research in the medical humanities allowed him to continue his studies without sacrificing either. At the end of his Master’s program he completed an assignment that asked him to think about what the ideal job would look like for him. Servitje says that the description looked strikingly similar to the position he now holds.

Before applying for the job at Lehigh, Servitje hadn’t thought much about the social justice implications of his work. But, as he worked through the application, he began to see the implications of his research through that lens. Before he took the position, then, the department’s focus started to shape his work. He added an afterword to his dissertation focusing specifically on the connections between his ideas on the martial metaphor in medicine and contemporary issues in health. These reflections led him to revise his book proposal so that it more directly addressed these connections. The implications were already in the work; he just needed Lehigh to draw them out.

Social justice considerations will continue to influence Servitje’s scholarship, he says, and he’s especially excited about the interdisciplinary opportunities available at Lehigh. While his first priority is completing his book project, he hopes to partner with scholars in cognitive science, bioethics, and other related fields. He believes that his studies will benefit from cooperation with the people whose work already influences his own, but who have different areas of expertise.

Talking about his excitement for future courses, Servitje smiled, “The more I do this, I realize that teaching is really about learning.” Dr. Servitje is a lifelong learner — what better quality could there be for a professor? He is eager to teach a variety of different courses such as The Victorian Novel and Medicine, Literature of Contagion, and a course for graduate students on writing for publication. He is interested in finding ways to integrate undergraduates into research.

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

**Suzanne Edwards**, *The Afterlives of Rape in Medieval English Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016)

**Jenna Lay**, *Beyond the Cloister: Catholic Englishwomen and Early Modern Literary Culture* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)

**Dawn Keetley**, *Making a Murderer: Jesse Pomeroy, the Boy Murderer of 1870s Boston* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2017)

**James Peterson**, *Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners* (For Beginners, 2016)
Welcome new graduate students

Shelby Carr
Shelby pursued her undergrad at Penn State University, where she majored in English and minored in Women’s Studies.

Margaret Norsworthy
Margaret grew up in Atlanta, GA and finished B.A. degrees in political science and anthropology at Lehigh University in May 2017.

Cherise Fung
Cherise graduated with a BS in psychology and minors in political science and literature from Kutztown University.

Ethan Robles
Ethan graduated cum laude with a B.A. in English from DeSales University in 2014.

Sarah Goletz
Sarah earned a BA in English (with a minor in German) from Moravian College in 2005, followed by an MA in Children’s Literature from Eastern Michigan University in 2009.

Claire Silva
Claire Silva graduated magna cum laude from Penn State University in 2016 with a degree in English and a minor in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Jimmy Hamill
Jimmy received his B.A. in Writing from Saint Joseph’s University in 2012 and his M.A. in English Literature from Lehigh University in 2015.

Lauren Van Atta
Lauren earned her undergraduate degree at the University of Dayton, where she majored in English and minored in Psychology.

Trisha Nardone
Trisha Nardone graduated from Cedar Crest College in May 2017 with a B.A. in English.

Britney Watcher
Brit received her undergraduate degree in English literature from California State University East Bay in 2015.
Minh Hanh Trinh
Minh received her doctorate in English at Lehigh University in September 2016 and her Master's in English in 2007. Her dissertation, "‘My Mother is Calling Me’: Legacies of Sexual Violence in 20th-Century American Fiction by Women of Color," examines descendant responses in fiction to systemic violence against women of color and how the creative process enables women writers of an ethnic minority to express their anger as well as to envision forms of retribution and recognition. Her areas of specialization are African American and Asian American literature. She has taught English Literature & Composition I and II at Lehigh since 2007, has served as an instructor in the Global Citizenship program at Lehigh, including leading a cohort of Lehigh students to Malaysia in 2013, and she is currently Visiting Assistant Professor in the English department for 2017-2018. Minh and her parents are refugees from the Vietnam War. She came to America as an infant when her parents fled Saigon in 1975 and was later naturalized an American citizen. She lives in Willow Grove, PA, where she was raised. Minh has two brothers, one who lives in Hawaii, and another who currently lives in Japan. She values exercise and often runs outside, but, in particular, she loves to hike woods and mountains. She recently climbed Mt. Fuji, Japan in August 2017 and is planning next to hike the tallest peak in Hawaii, Mauna Kea.

New Visiting Assistant Professor

Congratulations to Sarah & Adam Heidebrink-Bruno
Sarah and Adam are happy to share the birth of their little comrade, Finley Adam Heidebrink-Bruno, who graciously waited until the end of the spring semester to make his appearance on May 13th, 2017. His favorite activities include eating, snuggling, and plotting to overthrow our hetero-patriarchal overlords, not necessarily in that order. You'll probably see him around Drown a lot, doing some combination of those activities.

Get ready for the next,

Literature & Social Justice Conference on
March 2 - 3, 2018

Abstracts due October 31, 2017 to lsjlehigh@gmail.com
For more information, please go to http://www.facebook.com/lsjlehigh
Contact Jo Grim or Sam Sorensen with questions.
Congratulations, Brenda!
Brenda Martinez ‘18G received the Percy Hughes Award for Scholarship, Humanity, and Social Change and the CAS Graduate Student Leadership and Service Award. The Percy Hughes Award “recognizes students who work towards implementing big, transformative ideas in local, national, and world communities with grace, tenacity, and devotion.” Brenda has many accomplishments including working in the Office of Multicultural Affairs, helping to found the Lehigh University Summer Scholars Institute, and co-founding Sisters in Conference. Brenda graduated with her Master’s degree in English and is continuing her education towards her Ph.D. at the University of Texas, Austin.

Digel-Jones Writing Award Recipients

Mareesa Miles ‘18G received the inaugural Digel-Jones Memorial Gift Award for Graduate Student Writing for her essay on Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, entitled “Sustaining the Pear Tree.” Mareesa is a second year Master’s degree candidate. Her research interests include transatlantic modernism, Anglophone literatures of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the public humanities.

James McAdams ‘17G received the first place inaugural Digel-Jones Memorial Gift Award for Graduate Student Writing for his essay on the political significance of David Foster Wallace’s essays and noveles, entitled “‘You Are Called to Account’: Dostoevsky, McCain and Civic Idealism in David Foster Wallace’s *The Pale King*.” James’ research interests include post-postmodernism, creative writing, the digital humanities, and the medical humanities. James received his Ph.D. in English at Lehigh University in May 2017.

Dana McClain ‘18G received the second place inaugural Digel-Jones Memorial Award for Graduate Student Writing for her essay on the political significance of three terms at the center of William Hill Brown’s *The Power of Sympathy*, entitled “Regulating Feeling in the First American Novel: Sympathy, Sensibility, Sensibility, and Sentiment.” Dana is a Ph.D. candidate who will graduate in May 2018. Her dissertation argues that early American writers used the genre of the novel to devise innovative republican functions for women that challenged the restrictive ideology of republican motherhood.
Summer Internship Profile: Jason Pollack

On the final day of his summer job, Jason Pollack’s colleagues in the North Hempstead Tax Office brought him a cake as a way of saying both thank you and goodbye. This is where he begins his story, because the cake affirmed his decision to take a local position over an internship at a large insurance firm in the city. He wanted to take the time to make individual connections, to “put a premium on the human connection,” a value that developed throughout his time in the English Department.

Working in the town office Jason says, “there was no such thing as a typical day! Whatever I did, it was with the town residents in mind. That’s sort of how the office operated- the people came first.” Some days he was assigned research regarding property documents and other days he was fully engaged in customer service. He also had the opportunity to work with residents outside the office, educating the public about pertinent tax and property rights.

Jason entered Lehigh as a student in the business school but turned to English because it was his passion; he believed that the major would help him to become “a complete and whole person.” Although he didn’t choose the major for vocational reasons, he found out firsthand how the lessons from his English classes benefited him in the world of business and government.

The same skills emphasized in the English department were the skills Jason needed in both the administrative and the customer services aspects of his summer job. English emphasizes communication which, Jason points out, is “the cog that makes the wheel of business work.” His writing preparation allowed him to formulate more succinct and clever emails crafted for each intended audience. The attention to both listening and discussion valued in English classrooms helped him to connect meaningfully with both clients and coworkers, while at the same time learning more about himself. He learned that personal relationships formed on the job matter as much, if not more, than the prestige of a position. At the same time, he realized how beneficial his coursework had been in making him a strong candidate and employee in a field not typically associated with the English major.

Kachel Prizes Winners

Jessica Hicks, “Half of who I am”
Gaby Morera, “A perfect match”
Katerina Traut, “Giving ‘Substance to Freedom and Democracy’: Black Woman Intellectual Vicki Garvin”
Austin Vitalli, Internship portfolio

Williams Prize Winners (continued)

Gorden Kender, “RE: How’ve You Been”
Garrett Linderman, “Music and Flaws in Elizabeth Browning’s ‘Sonnet 32’”
Ryan Loftus, “Autumn”
Gabriele Pate, “Stephan Dedalus as a Religious Artist”
Nicole Reisert, “Mixed Signals, Stuck on Repeat, The Description is in the Details”
Madeline Ruzak, “Welcome to the Circus”
Sarah Stankus, “Desert Heart”
Collier Sutter, “Alchemy of Illness”
PRESENTATIONS


Dashielle Horn presented “The Role of Empathy in Teaching and Tutoring Learning Disabled Students” at the SUNY Council on Writing Conference at Onondaga Community College, September 2018, and “Spinsterhood and Privilege Among Jane Austen’s Single Women” at the Single Lives Conference, at University College Dublin, October 2017

Dana McClain organized the panel, “Early National Women’s Education and the Public Sphere,” and presented her paper, “‘I shall continue your preceptress’: Mentorship in Susanna Rowson’s Charlotte Temple and Mentoria” at the Society of Early Americanists Biennial Conference, March 2017.

Evan Reibsome presented his paper, “From Parody to Participation: The Evolution of Stephen Crane’s Antiwar Poetics” at the American Literature Association on May 25-28, 2017.

GRADUATE STUDENT PUBLICATIONS


UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

Fall 2017

November 13-16   Registration Spring 2018
November 14     Last Day for January Ph.D. candidates to deliver approved dissertation drafts to Dean
November 14     Last day to drop a class with a “W”
November 22-24  Thanksgiving Break
December 8      Last day of classes
December 8      Last day to withdraw with WP/WF grades
December 8      Last day for January masters candidates to electronically upload thesis and deliver final paperwork to the Registrar’s Office
December 8      Last day for January doctoral candidates to complete all degree requirements
December 12     Final Exams Begin
December 20     Final Exams End
December 23     Grades Due