

Loosely Literati

Why Study English?

Dr. Mingay

Most of us have experienced that awkward encounter with the relative at the family gathering who asks, “What are you going to do with an English degree?” Sometimes it can seem that a degree in English is more abstract and less practical than a degree in business or computer science, or even music. However, as I have seen as both a student and a teacher of English, there are many places you can go and many things you can do with an English degree.

Journalism, Government/NGO communications, Literacy/Adult education, Archival work/research, Editing/proofreading, Publishing industry, Library

There are also ways in which an English degree can be first “course of study.” I have written many letters of reference and seen interesting paths for English students who went on to study law, or medicine, or library science, or education. Alan Wideman’s September 6, 2015, article in *The Globe and Mail*, “We ignore the liberal arts at our peril,” claims that a degree in the liberal arts, with its focus on the broad spectrum of human endeavour, has never been needed more. It is one of society’s best investments in helping to ensure that our self-reflections are broad.” Your degree in English is more valuable than you, or your relatives, may think.

The Literati

Dr. Willson Gordon

The Literati is a student society for all English majors and minors, professors and alumni here at King’s. Membership in the society is free and automatic for all English majors and minors. Literati events include a welcome lunch, end-of-term coffee houses, special guest speakers, among others. Membership also entitles you to a copy of the newly launched newsletter—*Loosely Literati*—that provides information about literary events at Kings and the wider community, offers alumni interviews, book reviews, and much more! Look for your copy on the third Tuesday of each month.

English Department Research News

Sarah Barnard

Over the summer, Dr. Willson Gordon and six student researchers, Brixton Sandhals, Jackie den Haan, Kate de Groot, Rynnelle Wiebe, Tyler Johansson, and Sara Barnard were hard at work on the Modernist Archive Publishing Project (MAPP). MAPP is an international collaborative project between several universities aiming to archive information surrounding publishing companies in the twentieth century. Thus far, there has been a specific focus surrounding the Hogarth Press: a publishing house founded towards the end of WWI by Leonard and Virginia Woolf. King’s researchers spent their time compiling information about several of the Press’ authors and their works, culminating in ten biographies, each with a complete bibliography of the respected subject’s work. Students also located many first editions of books published by the Hogarth Press in libraries and collections across the globe. For more information, please talk to Dr. Willson-Gordon, one of the student researchers, or visit www.modernistarchives.com

Current Reads

Kate de Groot

It can be hard to find the time for reading during the school year, but these students from a variety of majors make sure to always pick up and crack open the spine of a good book.

***The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* by Alan Bradley.**

Set in the 1940s, the eleven year old narrator provides humorous descriptions of serious situations, outsmarts the police, and solves the murder mystery.

Rynnelle Wiebe

3rd year English Student

***Tales From Firozsha Baag* by Rohinton Mistry**

My book is a chronicle on poverty in India during India’s struggles. It is told through a number of short stories that intertwine connecting the lives of tenants of an apartment complex in Bombay. I would recommend the book, as it is extremely visual and eye opening.

Connor de Groot

4th Year Commerce Student

Special Topics: The City in Literature

Tyler Johansson

Every year the English department offers new special topic classes. This year we are very excited to highlight Dr. Conner Byrnes class ENG399G, "The City in Literature!" The class will be offered in the winter semester of this year.

The course description is as follows:

ENG399G examines literary representations of urban space in order to investigate the enduring and yet evolving role the city has played in shaping human identities and communities. It will consider depictions of urban experience from a broad historical and generic range in order to trace the varied responses to the dynamic social, cultural, and political metropolitan landscape as it is manifest through the 18th, 19th, and 20th/early 21st centuries. Of central importance to the course will be an investigation of the diverse forms of morality, psychology, and spirituality that take shape in the city and are given voice within works of literature.

This is an exciting opportunity to examine literature in a new way while looking at a variety of genres and pieces of fiction.

Recommended Reading

Dr. Willson Gordon

If you are looking to read an uplifting, amusing, and touching book, I would recommend *Circus* by Claire Battershill. In this collection of short stories we find out about a range of intriguing characters: a shy internet dater, an Olympic luger, modern-day shepherds, a family of circus performers. This collection has won awards, but more importantly, it's about surprises, joy, and human connections. Also, we are hoping to have the author join us on campus in November, so you can read her book and then talk about it with her!

You can read a short interview with Claire here: <http://www.sarahselecky.com/2014/in-the-spotlight-claire-battershill/>

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Robert Frost

Nature's first green is gold
Her hardest hue to hold,
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.
Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day
Nothing gold can stay.

Literary Events

Rynnelle Wiebe

LitFest (October 15-25; various locations in Edmonton): This festival celebrates everything non-fiction. Attend events featuring authors, artists, and even chefs presenting non-fiction of various topics including gender, aboriginal art, and food. There's even a non-fiction story slam! Ticket prices vary for each event (some are free) with student prices available. A calendar of events and student ticket and pass prices can be found at <http://www.litfestalberta.com/>.

Words with Friends (aka Yegwords): This community of local writers meets every few weeks to share and enjoy creative writing. The next event is on October 11th so check out the website at www.yegwords.ca to find out when and where in order to attend or to participate!

On September 18 don't miss the Literati Kick off lunch from 12:00-1:00 pm in room N218. All English Majors and Minors are

Professor Profiles

Tyler Johansson and Dr. Willson Gordon

Every month we will showcase one of our phenomenal English professors beginning with the newly reappointed Dean of Arts **Dr. Arlette Zinck!**

We have asked each professor these three questions:

1. What is your favourite book?
2. What classes will you be teaching this year?
3. What is the current area of focus for your research?

Here are Dr. Zinck's responses:

1. The book I most enjoyed this summer was *My Life in Middlemarch* by Rebecca Mead. It is a delightful blend of personal reflection, research and scholarly musings about my favourite book. I have read and reread George Eliot's classic throughout my life and continue to find new things in it each time I pick it up.
2. I am back in the Dean's chair, so I will only be teaching one course per term. In the fall I am talking about the History of Literary Theory (English 404). In the winter I will be lecturing about the Bard. Can it get better than that? Me thinks not.
3. I am currently working on a project entitled "Battling Toward Peace: A Study of Faith and Hope in The Pilgrim's Progress, Parts One and Two." This project is the direct result of promptings from former Seventeenth Century Lit. Students who have lamented the dearth of commentary about the second part of Bunyan's classic text. We'll see if I can write something they will deem worth reading! Wish me luck.

Thank you to Dr. Zinck for her contributions. Next month look for Dr. Brett Roscoe's profile!