



CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

Caitlin Jackson '09

Literatures in English



Q: What made you decide to major in English?

A: Reading and writing have always been my two passions, and the English major at Connecticut

College allowed me to do what I love every day and with great satisfaction. My freshman year I took a seminar called “England and the End of an Empire,” where we focused on recent British fiction and how it figured into a sense of British identity. After taking this class I knew that I wanted to spend the next four years enrolled in English courses analyzing and debating about literature.

Q: What were your favorite classes?

A: A major in English is all-encompassing. One of my favorite English classes was “Shakespeare in Performance,” where we read plays and then attended performances at theaters ranging from the Yale Repertory Theatre to the Metropolitan Opera. I have also enjoyed taking creative writing classes, such as poetry and narrative nonfiction with Charles Hartman and Blanche Boyd, the College’s poet- and writer-in-residence. Learning about writing from published authors has been an amazing experience.

Q: What activities were you involved in?

A: I was on the English department Student advisory board, which is in charge of planning events for the majors and the department. I also worked for the English department, assisting with office work as well as researching for professors. It was my pleasure to be so involved with this department because it is truly unique.

Literatures in English

Overview

English is a popular subject at Connecticut College: it offers students the opportunity to experience the pleasures and responsibilities of the imagination, and the skills students gain through studying and writing about literature prepare them to participate in the growing global community — a community whose common language, more often than not, is English. Majors develop their own speaking and writing skills in the process of learning how to read a wide range of texts critically and imaginatively. They expand their understanding of the world they live in and its possibilities while becoming familiar with the literature that has mattered most to readers of English in different places and times. The range of works studied extends well beyond Britain and America — to the Caribbean and South Asia, for instance. This is one reason for the department’s name: literatures in English.

Concentrations

The department offers a concentration in creative writing. In addition to the courses required for the major, students in this concentration take classes in writing fiction or poetry under the supervision of our two writers-in-residence. The department has recently established a new concentration in race and ethnicity, which addresses English-language literature in the context of social and political developments over, approximately, the last three hundred years.

Interdisciplinary Study

Literatures in English makes a logical first or second major in combination with most other disciplines. Recent majors have linked their study of literatures in English with majors in government, religious studies, environmental studies, economics and dance. A double major is one way to combine more specialized pre-professional training with the critical and rhetorical skills and habits of mind that the literatures in English major cultivates. Whether you choose literatures in English as your only major or as one of your majors, you’ll find that English itself is highly esteemed as a background in professions such as business and law.

After Connecticut College

Some students continue their study of literature at the graduate level or put the skills they’ve acquired to good use in other post-graduate education, especially law school. Others go on to teach English in secondary schools, pursue careers in publishing, or work as writers, editors and journalists.

Faculty

Theresa Ammirati, *Dean of Studies; Assistant Professor of English*

B.A., Douglass College, Rutgers University; M.A., Lehigh University; Ph.D., University of Rhode Island
American studies; 20th-century American literature; rhetoric and composition

Courtney Baker, *Assistant Professor of English*

B.A., Harvard University; Ph.D., Duke University
Film and visual culture; critical theory; cultural studies; African-American literature

Blanche McCrary Boyd, *Roman and Tatiana Weller Professor of English; Writer-in-Residence*

B.A., Pomona College; M.A., Stanford University
Feminist fiction; creative writing (fiction and non-fiction)

Janet Gezari, *Lucy Marsh Haskell '19 Professor of English*

B.A., Cornell University; M.Phil., Ph.D., Yale University
The English novel since Defoe; Victorian culture, poetry and fiction; contemporary fiction

John S. Gordon, *Professor of English*

B.A., Hamilton College; M.A., Ph.D., Harvard University
Modern British literature; James Joyce and *Finnegans Wake*; modern poetry and literature

David Greven, *Associate Professor of English; Chair of the Literatures in English Department*

B.A., Hunter College; Ph.D., Brandeis University
Antebellum American literature; television; popular culture; film (Hitchcock; De Palma; the woman's film; melodrama; horror; film noir; 1970s film, sci-fi; contemporary Hollywood; queer film)

Charles O. Hartman, *Professor of English; Poet-in-Residence; Co-Director of the Creative Writing Program*

A.B., Harvard University; M.A., Ph.D., Washington University
Poetry writing; modern and contemporary poetry; prosody (metrics); music and poetry; computer arts

Simon Hay, *Associate Professor of English*

B.A., M.Phil., Massey University, New Zealand; Ph.D., Duke University
Postcolonial literature and theory; 20th-century British and British-colonial literature; critical theory

Philip E. Ray, *Associate Dean of Studies for Juniors and Seniors; Associate Professor of English; Adviser to Transfer Students*

B.A., Harvard College; M.A., Ph.D., Yale University
Science fiction; fantasy

Julie Rivkin, *Associate Dean of the Faculty; Professor of English*
B.A., Ph.D., Yale University
American literature; gender studies and contemporary literature; literary theory; Henry James

Steven Shoemaker, *Assistant Professor of English; Director of the Roth Writing Center*

B.S., University of Maryland; Ph.D., University of Virginia
20th-century American literature; writing and composition theory; intersections of literature, technology and science; literature and film; critical theory

Jeff Strabone, *Assistant Professor of English*

B.A., Dartmouth College; M.A. Northwestern University; M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., New York University
18th-century British literature; Romanticism; aesthetics and criticism; cultural agendas underlying the standardization of the English language

Lina Wilder, *Assistant Professor of English*

B.A., University of Rochester; B.M., Eastman School of Music; M.Phil., Ph.D., Yale University
Shakespeare; Renaissance literature; performance studies

What can you do with a major in literatures in English?

Michael Griesinger '01

Program and field coordinator for the International Rescue Committee in several countries, including Chad, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire and Burundi.

Took classes on Chaucer with Professor Bleeth and modern poetry with Professor Gordon. Studied abroad in Toulouse, France, and Mysore, India.

Geoff Babbitt '03

Doctoral candidate in creative writing at the University of Utah. Teaches courses in English, creative writing and academic writing.

Received an M.F.A. in poetry from the University of Utah in 2005. Has had poetry published in a number of literary journals, and serves as an editorial assistant for *Quarterly West* and *Western Humanities Review*.

Grace Elizabeth Kendall '07

Editorial assistant for Blue Sky Press, a children's publishing imprint for Scholastic Inc.

After graduation, attended the Columbia Publishing Course in New York City, a seven-week-long intensive professional program in the industry of publishing.

Selected Courses

Dissenting Voices in American Fiction; Alien Beings, Alien Worlds; Narratives of Black Travel; Wicked Thoughts; Bob Dylan; Writing the Short Story; Hollywood After the Sixties; American Women Writers; Poetry of the Post-Modern Era; Milton; Race and Documentary Film; The Novel and Globalization; Shakespeare in Performance; The Literature of Passing; George Eliot and Virginia Woolf; The Films of Alfred Hitchcock; The Ghost Story: Genre, Theory, Politics; Significant Others: India and England; Medieval Narrative: Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"

About Connecticut College

Connecticut College is a highly selective residential liberal arts college with 1,900 students from all over the country and the world. The academic program offers more than 47 majors in the arts, sciences, social sciences and humanities as well as innovative interdisciplinary programs. Students engage with dedicated faculty and each other to create a vibrant social, cultural and intellectual community in which learning is valued for its own sake — and individuals' diverse perspectives enrich the experience of all.