

# THE DUCTILE ANCHOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT TYLER DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE AND LANGUAGES

## ACADEMIC ASSIMILATION

James Chase Sanchez

When I began my academic career at the English Department at UT Tyler, I was underprepared. Like many

people who graduate from rural, lower-socioeconomic schools in East Texas, I was not aware of academic discourse--I thought all papers

were written in a certain voice, with the same audience I had with my high school teachers. But that all changed when I arrived at UT Tyler and became an English major.

I remember specifically learning two important writing lessons during my upper-division and Master's English courses at UT Tyler: 1) the value of rhetorical writing styles and 2) the joy of research. First, by taking courses that challenged

my "one size fits all" writing method, I learned more about rhetorical choices, writing styles, and audience awareness. My professors did not belittle me



because I was a step behind my peers who were more acquainted and acclimated with academic discourse;

rather, they supplied me the tools to achieve. By visiting the writing center, meeting these professors in one-on-one sessions, and practicing my craft, I learned how to assimilate (and sometimes resist) academic language, which has become integral to my success as doctoral candidate in Rhetoric and Composition at Texas Christian University.

Second, I found a true love of research that has guided me in

CREDITS FOR SP17  
ISSUE

### Student Columnists:

Becca Hale,  
Molly Howlett,  
Rebecca Johnston,  
Melanie Whiting,  
Eddie Woodard

### Alumni Columnists:

Kelsi Adams,  
L. Jack Adams,  
Terry Britt,  
Christy Rowley  
Kessler,  
Alia Pappas,  
James Chase Sanchez,  
Joshua Smith,  
Attalee Watson

### Guest Columnist:

Stephanie McNeel

### Student Artists:

Khadijah Evans,  
Phoebe Oberreit,  
Eddie Woodard

### Layout Editor:

Andrew Brown

### Faculty Editor:

Dr. Ann Beebe

my doctoral degree and which will propel me into my future role as an Assistant Professor of Writing at Middlebury College. I remember taking “Bibliographic Methods” during my Master’s coursework. In this course, we were challenged to find sources, compile bibliographic essays, and create new research, and through this deliberative process, I found a love for producing my own research. I was able to publish my first academic article, “Postulating a Stereotype: A

Rhetorical View of Chinese Immigration in *East of Eden*” in *Steinbeck Review* while at UT Tyler, and this early success was a building block for the research I have conducted in my doctoral program.

I was not the most polished student when I started my academic career at UT Tyler, nor was I the smartest by any means, but I was persistent. The professors in the English Department supplied me with the resources to succeed,

especially when I felt behind in comparison to some of my peers. I will always look back at my time at UT Tyler fondly because I know that is where the first steps toward my success in academia began. It started with professors who pushed me, challenged my language practices, and guided me throughout my B.A. and M.A.

And I owe all of my success to their mentorship and rigor.

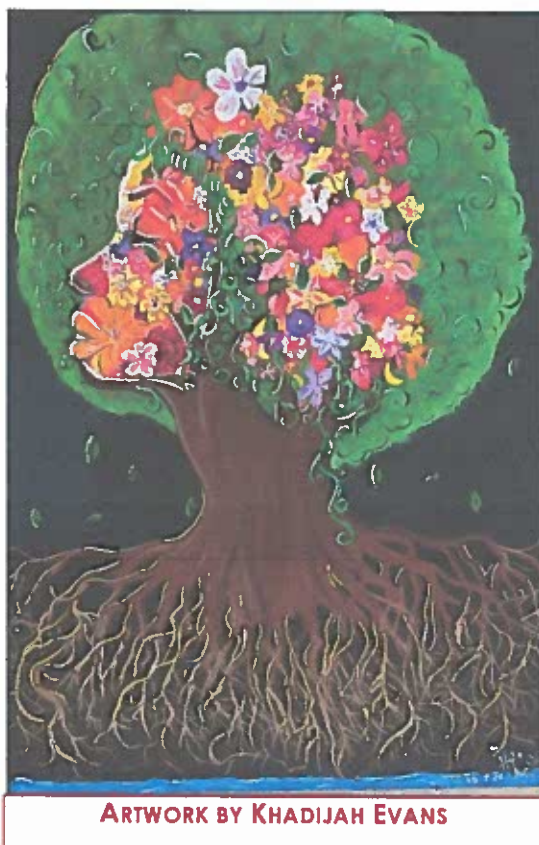
**2009 BA IN ENGLISH; 2011 MA IN ENGLISH**

## WHY I WAS AN ENGLISH MAJOR

Terry L. Britt

In the summer of 2011, I made what was a bold decision at the time. After 21 years and two previous failed attempts, I wanted to take one final shot at finishing a college degree.

I entered the University of Texas at Tyler as a full-time student that fall, while still working full time as a local newspaper reporter and having to commute nearly one hour each way to attend classes. Initially, all I wanted was to finally finish a



ARTWORK BY KHADIJAH EVANS

bachelor’s degree and go back into the media world for a better-paid position. But from the first moment

“A Noiseless Patient Spider”

Walt Whitman

And you, O my Soul, where you stand,

Surrounded, surrounded, in measureless oceans of space,

Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, -- seeking the spheres, to connect them;

Till the bridge you will need, be form’d -- till the ductile anchor hold;

Till the gossamer thread you fling, catch somewhere, O my Soul. (Lines 6-10)

I entered a classroom, everything began to change.

It started with the courage to try. But a once-unthinkable

transformation found fuel in the love of research work I discovered through my classes in English and communication. Professors in both departments took notice of me and opened my mind to the possibility of graduate programs.

Perhaps the biggest and best of personal transformations rely upon us looking for, and finding, the right place, time, and people to activate them. That was what I found with UT Tyler and its faculty, most notably the professors in the Department of Literature and Languages.

Through the classes I took in that last-chance effort to become a college graduate, I learned to look beneath the surface of literature, to deeply analyze what I was reading and develop and defend my own ideas about what each author wrote. Sure, the assignments and exams were challenging, and I didn't always turn in stellar work, but as time passed, my confidence in my research and writing skills quickly grew to levels I never imagined when I first enrolled.

Well before graduation day arrived for me, I knew I had become a different kind of writer,

and I knew my mid-life college journey would not come to an end with a Bachelor of Arts in English.

When the department first formed, I doubt anyone involved ever thought one of its graduates would go on to teach and do media psychology research at the world's oldest school of journalism.

There is one now.

**2013 English BA**

PhD student/Graduate Teaching Fellow  
University of Missouri

## An English Major in the Engineering Field

**Nicole Eddie Woodard**

I have worked for Crottie Technologies\* since 2013, shortly after it was founded in 2012. The company creates drawings for other engineering firms, including large corporations such as General Electric (GE). The biggest asset of this company is the owner's ability to create structures or designs fitting a type of machine to perform the function the client wants it to. Math equations and hands-on field work are expected, but what Mr. Crottie usually has the most trouble with is his spelling. No, that isn't an engineering term. Part of my job is to look over his emails to make sure he is using the right phrases, since auto-correct can only do so much. I have to make sure when he writes "Thank you for your patience" he isn't thanking them for being a patient.

I can also interpret a passive aggressive email from an impatient client who wants his projects done faster. When I take a call for a job, I am expected to understand the time frame each project should allow and add room for error. These are time management skills I perfected as an English major juggling countless reading assignments, projects, and papers.

As an English Major, I can analyze a prospective client's words and silences to know when it might be appropriate to ask for a higher fee. Our company is fairly small and each job takes an enormous amount of time; they need an English major to interpret not just what a client says, but what the customer actually means. Not only that, but when Mr. Crottie creates an efficient part or machine, he can apply for a patent. Looking over the language of patent applications and work contracts is essential. For example, there was a

client who had put in the fine print that all parts/machines would become property of the client, not Crottie Technology. I also go to the machine shops, when Mr. Crottie needs an extra hand. Being an English major means that I have the written and verbal communication skills crucial to the success of this engineering company as well as the practical skills to implement their plans.

**2017 BA in English**

\*Crottie Technology is located in Cypress, Texas. This organization primarily operates in the Business Activities at Non-commercial Site business / industry within the Business Services sector.



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PEER TUTORING IN WRITING

**Alia Pappas (2016 BA in English)**

**Becca Hale (2017 BA in English)**

In November 2016, four UT Tyler writing tutors and the Writing Center Director, Dr. Emily Standridge, embarked on a journey to Tacoma, Washington. They presented at the National Conference on Peer Tutoring in Writing, which connects Writing Center tutors and directors across the nation.

### Alia Pappas

Our group presented on Tutor Anxiety in the Writing Center and examined its sources. We gave a heuristic for how to utilize tutor anxiety, which was reinforced by breaking the audience into groups and discussing issues pertinent to their Writing Centers.

Tacoma and the Puget Sound campus provided a welcoming, intellectual atmosphere. The sessions that we attended gave us tactics to use in our Writing Center, such as new ways to interact with tutees who are nervous about writing and how to reach and aid a more diverse group of people.

The skills I learned from NCPTW are helping me as I pursue a career in copy editing and take editing classes through UC Berkeley. Other presentations and researching our own taught me how to better communicate corrections that I make to a piece of writing and to do so in a way that enables the writer to be comfortable and work constructively.

My advice to fellow English majors is to not fear public speaking or collaboration; they are valuable skills that truly do become easier with practice, and both boost your credibility and aid you as you enter the job market.

### Becca Hale

Besides the respite from the Texas weather and (superior, sorry to say) cuisine, the conference provided an opportunity to refine my networking skills by participating in workshops and a reception at the Glass Museum.

Believe it or not, introverted English majors, talking to people is a *good* thing--and it's not so difficult when they're your people.

Overshare Alert: I have crazy performance anxiety, like the vomiting kind. Needless to say, I was *concerned* about my portion of our workshop. However, the people I presented with and for were the most receptive, supportive bunch of nerds I have yet encountered.

What I'm trying to say is that your undergraduate years are ideal for these opportunities. If you're apprehensive about baring your academic soul in a room full of people, you have a department of peers who might be willing to join you. Consult your professors to find out which conferences are newbie-friendly and guilt some friends into coming with you. Take advantage of the resources at your disposal and visit places outside your bubble.

Also, know that presenting at a conference will actually *not* be completely foreign to you. The skills we cultivate every day as English majors: researching thoroughly, creating a well-constructed argument, and knowing how to explain a topic unfamiliar to your audience are things I leaned on during this experience. They will help you, too. Good luck, English majors!

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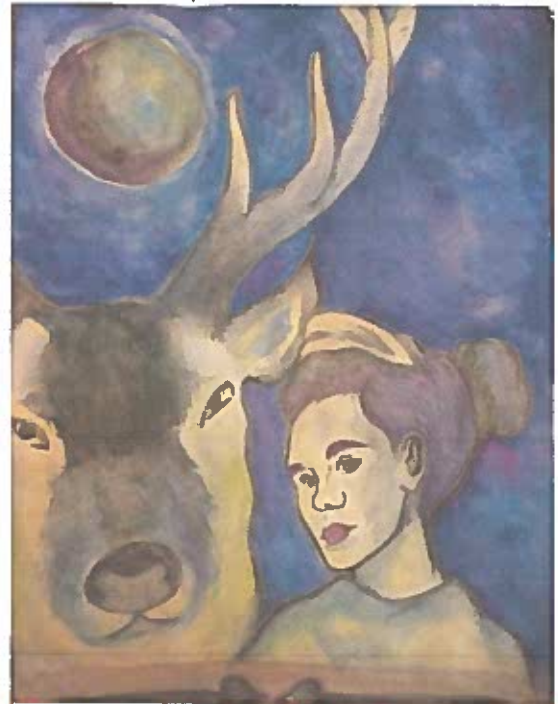
## AN AVERAGE DAY AT THE LIBRARY

Joshua Smith

BA and MA in English

I work at the Tyler Public Library. I'm not a librarian; I am an Information Access Associate. I also, for the record, don't spend all day shooing homeless people outside. While we do get a consistent crowd of homeless people at the library, most of them are nice people who just want to sit in the air conditioned lobby and look at their smart-phones (sounds familiar, doesn't it). For the record, I don't get to sit around and read all day. I wish I could (given how many books I've got checked out), but I spend most of the day on my feet.

I arrive at the library usually a half-hour early because I like to be punctual, and when I arrive there are books placed on hold that I need to take care of. This process involves emailing patrons, or calling them in the case of older people who aren't computer savvy. I haven't even finished the first book when my supervisor reminds me that later today is Yoga and that I need to make sure we have an updated list of patron waivers. This task involves digging through a cluttered series of computer files for three different word documents that are in different folders. Once I've actually found the first document a patron has come to the Info desk asking to fax something. I remind them of the cost and they start to fill out a form while I return to the computer and print out the first sheet. After I find the second sheet I have to send the fax when the phone calls the person calling needs to find the phone numbers of two furniture stores in Nashville Tennessee. You think I'm kidding; I'm not. I place her on hold and head over to send the fax, which doesn't send the first three times, and in that time two people have showed up to the desk. The fax sends; the patron thanks me. The first person in line needs a book about coin collecting. It takes a few minutes but I find a book which hasn't been stolen or lost and send him up to the second floor. The second patron is a woman who needs help with Overdrive, the e-book system the Tyler Public Library has access to. After helping her I remember the woman on hold and



ARTWORK BY PHOEBE OBERREIT

### DONATIONS

Are you interested in making a donation to fund The Ductile Anchor? Would you like to donate to the Department of Literature and Languages or the College of Arts & Sciences? Contact the CAS Development Officer, Whitney King, for information about funding scholarships, special projects, faculty development, or building renovations.

Whitney King,  
wking@uttyler.edu,  
903-566-7384

navigate through the internet until I find her the information she needs. Once that's done I decide to return to Holds when I get another phone call and someone needs to know where the closest Notary Public is in Tyler. This question requires more research, and after this call there's at least four or five more faxes in a row, and at least three people looking for books, but who don't know the titles. Literally five minutes before it starts, I remember that Yoga needs their money, forms, and audio cable.

This is an average day, and every day I realize more and more that my work as an English graduate student has given me the skills to juggle the various demands of my job. I understand that the job market can be difficult, but far more than the education is the training that I received mentally. Finding information, doing research for patrons, and eventually reporting your findings to others all requires training and my English degree helped me become a successful, not librarian, but information access associate... but maybe librarian later.

## WHY I AM AN ENGLISH MAJOR

Christy Rowley Kessler

Why become an English major? For me, it was because I found something that complemented who I am. After taking freshman level Grammar and Composition classes, I switched my major to English. I loved diving into each text, searching for meaning and understanding, and then taking time to formulate and share my thoughts and observations in a clear and effective way.

I already possessed a great love of reading, was naturally articulate, and enjoyed putting my thoughts into the written word. Pursuing an English degree allowed me to take some of my strengths and work to hone and perfect them. I think it is important to look at our natural gifts and talents to find glimpses of how we will find our greatest fulfillment.

Since graduation, I have worked at a few different places (two of which are higher education institutions). While I have not been hired for a job specifically because I was an English major, I have found that the skills I learned – research, clear communication and thought processes, looking for underlying meaning and intention, sharing my thoughts in an effective and inspiring way – are much needed and invaluable to any workplace.

My most recent employer at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, quite literally exclaimed in delight when she

realized I had been an English major. She saw the value of communication and what it would mean to her team and their collective impact. Since I would be interacting with the entire team, it was important to have someone in the role who valued clarity and communication.

Presently, I live in Yokohama, Japan, with my husband who is attending a Japanese



language school for one year. While here, I am focusing on my own personal writing and looking for opportunities to work with others who want to be authors. I particularly enjoy the editorial process. It was my privilege to volunteer as an editor for a book that was recently published, and I look forward to more opportunities to engage in my passion for literature.

**2006 BA in English**



## HOW I USE MY ENGLISH DEGREE IN REAL ESTATE

Attalee Watson

When I decided to major in English I knew that I had given myself several career paths to choose from. During my last semester in college, I thought about how I would transfer my English degree into a career that I would love just as much as I did English. I knew that I wanted to own my own business, work flexible hours, and interact with people on a regular basis which is why I choose Real Estate. In my first three months in Real Estate I closed six transactions. I can say with confidence my English degree continues to play an important role in my career. It has taught me how to communicate effectively, be persuasive, give presentations, meet deadlines and the fun part, be creative!

My first and most prized skill set I learned as an English major, and one that I use daily, is effective communication. As a Realtor, I do all my own administrative work, and this can be overwhelming at times. I use my proofreading skills to write clearly and concisely when revising contracts, submitting documentation, or corresponding through email.

The next and one of the most important jobs as a Realtor is understanding contracts. Real estate transactions can be complex. Every day I am writing contracts, going over inspections and negotiating on behalf of my clients. I thank my persuasive and argumentative techniques I used in many essays for teaching me how to clarify the facts while reaching a suitable agreement. You must have confidence in your writing and believe what you are saying to succeed. My English major has given me this confidence.

Another skill I developed in my English classes, just as important as the last, is giving a listing presentation. I used to dread giving class presentations and laugh when my professors told me that this was a skill set that I would use in the real world. I don't like to admit it but they were right. I give listing presentations several times a week to prospective clients and this requires a lot of preparation, research, and practice. If I know the material I can answer any question my client may have, and this is what helps grow my business.

Above anything else I must get things done in a timely manner. Meeting deadlines is something I have mastered, and this habit goes back to the many papers I have had to write. As important as it was for me to write the perfect paper, it was just as important to have it submitted on time. This is a must in Real Estate. If the offer isn't submitted on time, I could cost my client their potential dream house. I am grateful that my English professors held me accountable to deadlines.

Last, one of my favorite part about my English degree was always the ability to be creative. When you are creating something you love, you want others to see why it's worth loving. Competition in Real Estate is fierce, so it is necessary for me to come up with effective and creative marketing to differentiate me



from the competition. I write blogs, send out flyers, and create innovative marketing plans to drive people to my business.

Even though I have graduated I continue to educate myself by reading as well as going to classes and seminars (which I do at least twice a week). My English professors instilled in me the drive for life-long education. Many of these real estate classes implement what I learned with my English degree – critical thinking skills, writing skills, and verbal communication skills. My English major prepared me well for success in the business world.

## 2014 BA in English



## AN ENGLISH MAJOR IN CHINA

L. Jack Adams

I am writing from Xinzheng, Henan Province, China where I am teaching English Composition using an American curriculum at the SIAS International University, which is one of the few universities in China that is authorized to grant both American and Chinese degrees.

So, the question begs itself. How did I get here? From the beginning, my training at UTT was not only fundamental to my ability to pursue my former studies and practice of as a criminal defense lawyer, but the breath of courses offered to me through my B.A. and M.A. programs at UTT have made me a better teacher overall, as proven by years of former students that have become by students, peers, and fellows.

While at UTT, whether it was in Ancient Greek dramatic studies, Medieval History, or Renaissance English and Early American Literature, I have had the highest caliber of teachers and the highest level of university support.

For example, it was at UTT that I first learned the skills to engage top-level international journalists and librarians in order to conduct a fully-vetted academic transcription of Mohandas Gandhi's speech, "Giving a Spiritual Message to the World," which was delivered on October 17th, 1931 at Kingsley Hall (<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mohandasgandhi.htm>). And, it was in the Department of Literature and Languages that I first pursued both regional and national-level academic conferences, of

## CALL FOR FALL 2017 COLUMNISTS

What topics would you like to see covered in the next issue of The Ductile Anchor? We are looking for columnists for the F17 issue.

Alumni: what have been your experiences since graduating from UT Tyler? How have you been using the skills from your major in English or Spanish in your careers? What surprising directions have you taken in your profession due to your Humanities-related skill set? Share your experiences and advice with our current students. If you would like to propose a column for the next issue of The Ductile Anchor, please contact the Faculty Editor (Dr. Ann Beebe, [abeebe@uttyler.edu](mailto:abeebe@uttyler.edu)).



which I attended several with the full academic and departmental support of UTT each year that I was in attendance.

Needless to say a phenomenal foundation from a faculty that had the expertise to teach courses in everything from Greek Classics to Post-Mao Chinese Feminist Literature has shaped my experience and my future.

So, back to today, I am teaching academic English Composition in China. That may seem odd, but UTT has prepared me well to do so. In my M.A. program, I studied both classic and modern Rhetoric and Composition in depth, and I followed that training with multiple courses in Western educational pedagogies, Writing Center Theory, and I had several courses focused on writing-based practicums.

Combined, this set of skills has allowed me to test, reevaluate, revise, and put into practice the schemes needed to succeed as a teacher. And, ultimately, my education has prepared me to become what I most valued as a student, a true mentor.

**2010 BA in English; 2015 MA in English**



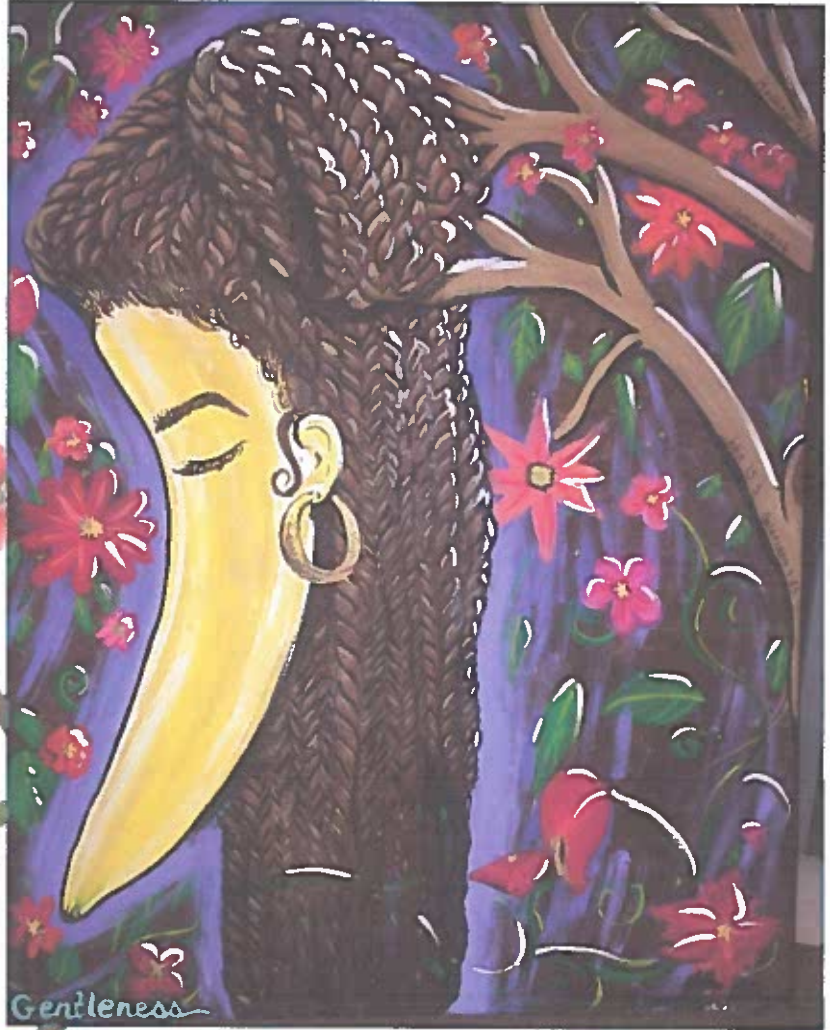
## THE ENGLISH MAJOR AND THE JOB SEARCH

Kelsi Adams

Job searching as an English major can be daunting, especially when so many people assume that all English majors just want to teach. I know many English majors who have pursued teaching, but I also know others who now excel in other areas. I have friends who have put their English-major skills to use as business administrators, book editors, small business owners, and even as world-traveling missionaries.

Resources provided by UT Tyler can help jump-start your job search. Career Services offers practical assistance, such as career advising and mock interviews, and they will even help you polish your resume. Also, be sure to sign up for a Patriot Jobs account. This website acts as a database for job searches and job fairs and can connect you to employers. Stay connected to the friends you have met at UT Tyler. Your peers will explore different careers in various locations, and they might be able to key you in on job opportunities. Also, because the English department is close-knit, your peers and professors will be well acquainted with your personal skills and could serve as helpful personal references.

Stay open to various possibilities, especially if you struggle to find a job immediately after



ARTWORK BY KHADIJAH EVANS

graduation. Some job postings might scare you with technical or business jargon, but often the skills we gained as English majors are assets to any employer. Others might worry about crafting a strong cover letter or nailing an interview, but as an English major you should not. Expand on the skills you have and apply them to the potential job at hand.

In the classroom, we did not just read literature and write essays; we honed our communication

skills while sharing our ideas and listening to others. We also mastered different types of writing, researched, made presentations, worked in groups, analyzed different texts, and practiced critical thinking. Explain these skills to potential employers. For example, if applying for a business position, explain how you could communicate clearly to customers via phone, in person, or through email. You could also create company ads, be a creative problem solver, and learn to

analyze sales data. Do not be afraid to think outside the box and show how adaptable English majors can be.

Job searching can be stressful, but stay positive. You can dominate more than just the classroom. There are so many possibilities out there, and with all the work you put in as an English major, you are qualified for more than you might think.

### BA and MA Graduate

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## AN ENGLISH MAJOR IN WASHINGTON, DC

Molly Howlett



oral form—something that is important in any field, but especially in a government agency like ED where my job is to serve the American people and keep them informed.

On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017, I embarked on an adventure of a lifetime! As a participant in the UT System's Bill Archer Fellowship Program, I am currently living, learning, and interning in the nation's capital—an exciting place of constant change.

In my short time here, the things I have been learning range from school lessons to life lessons. While learning about how the government works and how to advocate for issues that I care about, I have also been learning about people and gaining first-hand experience in working with individuals from all walks of life and on both sides of the political spectrum.

Additionally, being an English major in a political science world, I am coming into contact with many interesting and influential people that I never would have met otherwise. I am also learning that, even though I am different in many ways from others here in D.C., I belong.

In fact, this experience has shown me that I can succeed almost anywhere with the experiences and skills that I have gained in my Literature and Languages classes. For instance, I use my writing, editing, and research skills every day at my job with the U.S. Department of Education as I help edit publications and write blogs covering different events (ED).

These skills further translate to my ability to communicate effectively with others in written and

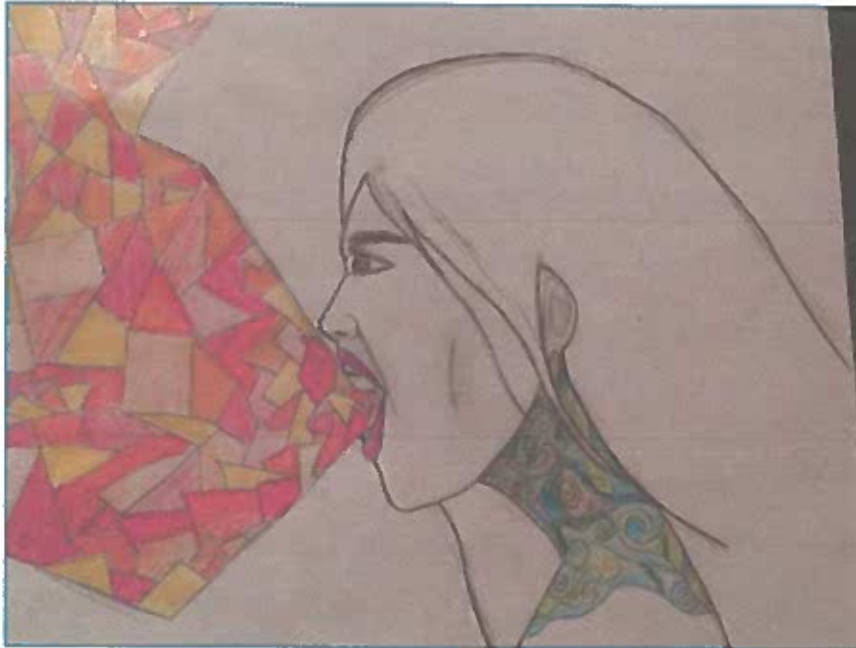


Also, in my classes where we discuss complex and controversial political issues, I thrive because I am not only able to quickly read and absorb information on the topics at hand, but can pick up on the nuances of a situation through analysis and deciphering of the language used to discuss them.

Ultimately, this experience has led to career opportunities simply by showing me that there will be jobs for me in almost any sector as long as I know how to market my skills effectively, and this new world of politics and public service is just another area in which I could be useful.

I strongly encourage any of my fellow English majors to apply for this incredible opportunity (or any other fellowship or internship)! D.C. needs more than just political minds; it needs those of us who have learned about people and history through our readings. It needs people who know how to be critical thinkers, close readers, and good communicators in order to create positive change for our country.

### BA Candidate in English



ARTWORK BY EDDIE WOODARD

## GUEST COLUMN:

Stephanie McNeel  
2005 BA in English  
(LeTourneau University)

Similar to a lot of 18 year olds, choosing my life's career seemed like such a huge decision, and I had no clue what it should entail. After many conversations with myself (don't judge me), I decided to pursue a degree which covered two of my favorite subjects in high school:

sports and English. Okay, so sports is not exactly a subject, but it was one of my loves.

I finally graduated from LeTourneau University in 2005 with a BA in English Language Arts and Reading and with a goal of teaching and coaching. Many people may ask

why I did not just shoot for a degree in Kinesiology. Great question. Two answers. First, I really loved everything about English - reading, writing, dissecting texts and sentences, researching, communicating, etc. Secondly, I felt I would be more valuable to my employer if I was able to teach a core subject in addition to coaching.

After graduating, I soon landed my first job at Chapel Hill in Tyler teaching high school English and coaching several sports. Talk about getting my feet wet! I think my entire body was underwater most of that year, but I loved every second of it! I quickly learned that although I was now a teacher, I would forever remain a student. Laurence J. Peter said it best, "A man doesn't know what he knows until he knows what he doesn't know." I continued to learn new things each day.

Fast forward a few years and I found myself back home in Gilmer, Texas teaching junior high English and coaching. After 7 incredible years at Harmony Jr. High, I made the decision to stay home with my two young children. However, the use of my English degree did not end once I stopped teaching. Indeed, it has remained vital as my husband and I began a new endeavor through opening our own CrossFit business.

Now, one might wonder how on earth an English degree would be used with a fitness program. I, too, did not realize how valuable that education would be until I understood what all was involved with starting one's own business. Remember the skills discussed earlier? Reading, writing, and researching have been

crucial when creating our business website, sending out monthly emails, and writing health and nutrition blogs.

Communicating has played a role when explaining to those of interest what we offer and how the program works, not to mention coaching on a daily basis the correct way to perform a lift or movement. Managing our social media site has provided a way for me to encourage our members through use of quotes (I love some good, motivational quotes) and communicate upcoming events. All the skills I gleaned from my English degree will no doubt continue to play a huge role in whatever journey life takes me on next. I will always be thankful for the education I have received and will never have regrets for the degree I chose to pursue!

Contact information: [www.crossfit154.net](http://www.crossfit154.net) Or <https://www.facebook.com/crossfit154/>



ARTWORK BY EDDIE WOODARD

## NETWORKING

Rebecca Johnston & Melanie Whiting  
English MA Candidates

Networking.

When I hear that word I think of some sort of computing term. I cannot reconcile myself to this being a necessary word in my world. However, as technological and foreign as it sounds, networking is necessary.

Networking is simply taking advantage of opportunities that are around you, and it is especially important for online students.

Networking can be getting to know your fellow students and building

professional relationships; however, reaching out to classmates that you have only met online can be intimidating. It has been my experience, though, that a little extra effort (in the form of chats

in forums and emails over assignments) can result in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Networking can also be attending conferences and taking the time to get to know your fellow presenters. This year I had the privilege of presenting at two conferences, and I have been able to trade information with several connections from these conferences. It can be intimidating to strike up a conversation with someone already established in the field, but my

experience has been that most people are willing and eager to talk with someone who is beginning the profession. These conversations can help you develop your idea and bring you confidence, too.

Whether you are at a conference or at home, it is important to look around for connections that can help you improve your professional life. I recently heard from a classmate (an online classmate) that she met a local English professor while picking up a

pizza order at Pizza Hut! While the two individuals had met previously years before, this brief conversation led to lunch at the university and a possible job once she graduates. My point is – be open and be intentional. Be open to new relationships. Be open to new experiences. Actively seek friends, even if they are virtual

(you can meet up at a conference). Think about where you want to work, and whether or not you know anyone currently working in that professional setting. Let your contacts know your professional goals. Be friendly and bold, and follow through with the connections you make. Professional connections can be furthered through emails or possibly even Facebook or other social media.

Through networking, we can all achieve our goals for 2017 and beyond.

