Welcome Message
A message from the Chair of the Department of English, Professor Alan Bewell.

Incredible Events
Professor Richard Greene at the Creative Writing Gala held at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library.
08
FEATURE

Tim Harrison
Does the Academic Bridging Program work? Ask Tim Harrison.

10
STUDENTS

Student Life
An update on Undergraduate and Graduate Student Life and IDIOM.

12
BOOKSHELF

Faculty Publications
Professor Richard Greene, launching his latest book, Dante's Poems, at Woodsworth College, Summer Abroad Program.

14
ENGLISH COMMUNITY

Faculty, Staff, and Students
Professor William Robins, winner of the Faculty of Arts & Science Outstanding Teaching Award.
WELCOME

Another year of incredible events and stories from the Department of English.

Chair of the Department of English
Alan Bewell

Welcome to this year’s edition of English Studies at the University of Toronto. We are happy to keep you informed about what has been happening in the Department of English.

This is the start of my second term as the Chair of the Department of English at the University of Toronto. It is a great honour and privilege to be playing a leadership role in a department with such an illustrious history and which is regarded as one of the top places in the world for the study of English. Having been on leave for the past year (writing a book on Romantic literature and natural history) what struck me when I returned was the sheer energy and excitement of people who frequent our building—our faculty, staff, and students. It is great to be back! I hope that the Newsletter captures some of that excitement.

New faculty whom we have hired over the past couple of years are a continuing source of some of that energy. Our first endowed chair in the Department, the Avie Bennett Chair in Canadian Literature, is being filled by Smaro Kamboureli. At St. George, we are benefiting from the presence of Denise Cruz (Asian North American Literature; Transnational and Global Feminisms); Joshua Gang (20th C. British and Anglophone Literature); Alex Hernandez (Restoration and 18th C. Literature); Scott Rayter (American Literature; Queer Theory); and Matthew Sergi (Early Modern Drama). Meanwhile, UTM has hired Liza Blake (Renaissance literature, science, and philosophy); Terry Robinson (18th and 19th C. Literature and Drama); and Daniel Wright (19th C. British Literature), while UTSC extended its range by hiring Kara Gaston (Medieval). Our faculty continues to win major awards, from Fellowships in the Royal Society of Canada—Ato Quayson and Paul Stevens—to the Northrop Frye Award for teaching and scholarship awarded to Elizabeth Harvey and the Faculty Teaching Award given to

Professor Alan Bewell taking in the amazing view from the 10th floor balcony at the Jackman Humanities Building.
William Robins. You will see more on some of the books that our faculty have recently published in the Newsletter.

You will notice that this Newsletter is different from its predecessors and if you have recently visited our website (www/english.utoronto.ca), which I urge you to do, you will also see many new and exciting changes. These reflect the vision of our new webmaster, Ashifa Rajwani, who is responsible for communications and alumni relations in the Department. Ashifa is working hard to build a stronger online English community, so please feel free to contact her if you have any thoughts or comments. In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the Newsletter.
EVENTS

From backpack to Briefcase, Writer-in-Residence seminar, Creative Writing Gala to the Spring Reading. Here is a highlight of some of the incredible events that took place in 2013-14.

Writer-in-Residence:
David Bezmozgis
Monday, January 27, 2014
The next Writer-in-Residence Reading will take place at the end of January, 2015
Location: Massey College

Award-winning writer and filmmaker David Bezmozgis was the Jack McClelland Writer-in-Residence for the Spring 2014 term at the Department of English. Bezmozgis’s first book, Natasha and Other Stories, was published in 2004 in the US and Canada and has since been translated into fifteen languages. Natasha was nominated for the Guardian First Book Award, the LA Times First Book Award, and the Governor General’s Award. It won the Toronto Book Award and the Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for a First Book. Bezmozgis’s first novel, The Free World, published in 2011 by HarperCollins, was a New York Times Notable Book for 2011 and a Globe and Mail Best Books Title for 2011. The Free World was a finalist for the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Governor General’s Award, and the Trillium Prize, and won the Amazon.ca First Novel Award. Critics have described Bezmozgis as a skilful storyteller, packing his brief tales with plot twists, quick revelations, and amusing characters.

David Bezmozgis was born in Riga, Latvia, and came to Canada when he was six. He has been a Guggenheim Fellow and a Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Fellow at the New York Public Library. Bezmozgis’ first feature film, Victoria Day, debuted at the Sundance Film Festival. In 2010, he was named one of The New Yorker’s most promising fiction writers under the age of forty. He currently lives in Toronto.

David conducted a creative writing seminar for members of the University community and met with students in an office provided by Massey College. At his reading, which took place at the end of January, David captivated the audience by reading from his upcoming novel The Betrayers.
Events English Fall 2014

The Adam Penn Gilders Scholarship in Creative Writing was established in 2008 with the intent to support and encourage the best and brightest students to study creative writing in Toronto. The scholarship allows poets, fiction writers and playwrights to focus their time, energies and talents on their writing, and enable them to take full advantage of U of T's unparalleled intellectual and creative resources.

Over the last 3 years, the Adam Penn Gilders awards ceremony has been held at the Thomas Rare Book Library. The gorgeous space, surrounded by thousands of volumes of some of the rarest books in the city is the perfect venue for this event.

The gala consisted of readings by MA Creative Writing students and poets. Canadian author Katherine Govier read from her upcoming novel, *Ghost Rush*. MA Creative Writing student Emily Fraser-Jeffries read from her upcoming novel titled *Between Bones* about her grandmother growing up in Toronto near a slaughter house in the 1950’s.

The program attracts an array of different people. Sandra Lloyd, another student, read from her poem collection titled *They Confessed Everything to Me in the Emergency Room*. Her poems focused on her time working as a registered nurse and helping patients.

The winner of this year’s Adam Gilder Prize was Nicole Grimaldi for her witty, funny and creative poem “Double-dipping”.

Spring Reunion: Spring Reading by Professor Robert McGill
Thursday, May 29, 2014
The next Spring Reunion will take place in May, 2015.
Location: Jackman Humanities Building, Room 100

This year the Spring Reunion invited alumni to attend a week of events across campus. These events gave alumni the opportunity to reconnect with other graduates. One event that has been held at the Department of English since 2008 is the Spring Reading. This year Professor Robert McGill participated in the Spring Reading. He read from his latest novel, *Once We Had a Country*. Following the reading, audience members had the opportunity to ask Prof. McGill questions about his novel, the inspiration behind his choice of characters and storyline.
TIMOTHY HARRISON: FASHION INDUSTRY WORKER TO TENURED PROFESSOR.

Interview by Ashifa Rajiwani

Tim Harrison is having an incredible year.

He recently accepted a job as a tenure-track assistant professor of English at the University of Chicago, a position he chose over three postdoctoral fellowships also offered.

The Milton Society of America honoured Tim with the Albert C. Labriola Award for the best article published by a graduate student.

This kind of success required big risk and heavy commitment. Tim transitioned from international fashion professional to mature student to award-winning academic by working full-time at restaurants in Toronto and making the most of support offered by the University of Toronto’s Academic Bridging Program.

The Academic Bridging Program is designed for people who have been away from formal education for some time and do not meet the university’s established requirements for direct entry admission.

We spoke to Tim Harrison about his remarkable academic achievements and why he didn’t think he could get into U of T.

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO DO WHAT YOU LOVE. I CAME TO U OF T IN HOPES OF ENRICHING MYSELF AND I DID.”

You came to the University in a pretty unconventional way. After completing high school, what did you do?

I did very poorly in high school, and spent a number of years working in international fashion and the service industry in Milan, Athens, Capetown, Shanghai, and Amsterdam. After meeting my Dutch wife in South Africa and subsequently having my immigration bid to the Netherlands fall through, we moved to Toronto from Amsterdam on two days notice carrying two suitcases.

After you settled in Toronto, you decided you wanted to pursue post-secondary education?

Yes, I really wanted to go back to school, but my academic background was far too poor to get into U of T. The only way I could enter the University was through the Academic Bridging Program at Woodsworth College (this program acts as a testing ground for people who do not have the appropriate credentials).

What were your initial thoughts of the Department of English?

U of T has a reputation for being big and impersonal, but I discovered a welcoming and friendly environment at the Department of English. When I asked for help, I received it; I also got a lot of encouragement. I found the department to be a nurturing environment. I am especially grateful to my wonderful supervisor, Elizabeth Harvey, and the other members of my supervisory committee, Lynne Magnusson, Paul Stevens, and Alex Gillespie.

What advice do you have for students entering university?

It is important to do what you love. I came to U of T in hopes of enriching myself and I did. I loved the courses I took and I worked hard. I had the opportunity to learn new things, encounter different works, and gain cognitive skills. These are experiences that can only help you, no matter what you go on to do.
Once again the ESU, IDIOM and the GEA put on a variety of workshops, seminars and pub nights this past year. Co-Presidents Halya Chumak and Daisy Qin give a synopsis about what the ESU was up to. Camille Viva, for IDiom, an English Undergraduate Academic Journal that was founded in 2006 and is the University of Toronto’s only journal of literary critical work, highlights important changes for IDIOM. Finally, Julia Cooper, President of the GEA, summarizes the 2013-14 year.

**English Student Union (ESU)**

The ESU has wrapped up a fantastic year for the 2013-2014 academic session. We really hit the ground running in September with a strong showing at the UTSC Clubs Fair during Frosh Week, handing out treats, U of T monogrammed writing utensils, and copies of IDIOM from previous years as we recruited first-years (and a few upper-years here and there too!) for the ESU mailing list and Mentorship Program.

During the fall semester we hosted “Circle Time,” a roundtable-style academic seminar-discussion hybrid. The honoured guest speakers were Professor Naomi Morgenstern, who gave a fantastic lecture on “Tales of Possession: Reading Toni Morrison’s Beloved with Occult Films of the 1970s and 80s,” and graduate student Prathna Lor, who provided excellent insight on “Transgender Palaces: Landscape Architecture and the Caribbean Imagery.” There was a great turn-out and student-guest lecturer engagement was high, and lots of positive feedback was provided by attendees in the aftermath.

In January, we came back strong by initiating weekly Mentorship Program meetings every Friday afternoon—snacks included. The meetings fostered a relaxed atmosphere in which upper-year mentors could share advice, offer guidance, and answer any questions posed by first- and second-year students.

March, on the other hand, saw the ESU host its “Spring Academic Seminar,” which showcased the talents and research interests of Professors new to the University of Toronto. These Professors included Professor Denise Cruz, who discussed “Monique Truong’s Literary South and the Regional Forms of Asian America,” Professor Joshua Gang, whose talk “Literature and Brains” introduced students to 20th century ideas regarding the intersection of literature and cognition, and Professor Matthew Sergi, who acted and spoke about “Advertising in Medieval Drama.” The turnout for this seminar also exceeded our expectations, and many students remained long after the talks had formally finished to ask our fantastic guest speakers questions about their respective fields of study as well as the implications of their presentations. This past March was also the month in which the ESU successfully ordered its first shipment of “U of T English”-branded hoodies. ESU executives hosted office hours early in the month to collect order forms and payment from students (and even some faculty members!) for this program-inspired merchandise.

On a final note, our annual executive elections marked another yearly, though welcome, change in our executive team. We are excited to introduce some new faces to the ESU, and congratulate Halya Chumak and Sushani Singh on their election as Co-Presidents for the 2014-2015 academic year! The executive also wishes our graduating member and two-time Co-President, Daisy Qin, the best of luck with her future endeavours. Moreover, we look forward to reconvening in September to present undergraduate students of English with more opportunities to meet us, engage with other English students, and get involved!
The 2013-2014 academic year was a period of exciting changes for IDIOM. The Editorial Board voted to open submissions to the Mississauga and Scarborough campuses and worked closely with the English Student’s Union to once again become an official ESU publication. The journal celebrated its eighth volume with a launch party co-hosted with the Hart House Literary and Library Committee. The event featured guest speaker Penny Caldwell, Editor-in-Chief at Cottage Life magazine, who gave students advice about careers in editing and publishing. The journal is funded entirely by student fundraising initiatives and sponsor donations. The 400 copies are printed by Coach House Press. The journal welcomes all English students who are interested in getting more involved with undergraduate scholarship to apply for the Editorial Board or to submit their English course work! Check out IDIOM’s website for more information: idiomjournal.wordpress.com

Graduate English Associate (GEA)

It has been a very busy year for the Graduate English Association, and the many workshops, community outreach initiatives, parties, and readings that we have hosted are thanks to the hard work of the 2013-14 Executive: our Vice President Claire Duncan, our Secretary Jeff Espie, and our Treasurer extraordinaire Elissa Gurman. We began the year by welcoming our new MA and PhD cohorts with a reception, library tours, and a Sibling Meet and Greet program to acclimatize students to the department. A highlight of this past fall was when the graduate students triumphed against the faculty in the annual softball game in late September, putting an end to the faculty’s seven-year winning streak. In addition to the Research Roundtable, bi-monthly coffee hours and pub nights, our first-ever pumpkin carving party, a field trip to the Harbord Street Pumpkin Festival, and a trip to the feminist haunted house Killjoy’s Kastle, the GEA also hosted a Christmas Party for students and faculty to rub elbows over egg nog in early December.

The New Year was no less full, as GEA member and incoming President, Margeaux Feldman, organized (with the help of many other wonderful graduate students) an evening at The Tranzac called “Academics Read Things They Wrote as Kids.” As the title suggests, it was a wonderfully awkward and cathartic event that had participants reading from their early attempts at fiction and diary entries. Elissa Gurman also organized two successful Out of The Cold community outreach programs this year, and I am very grateful to her for spearheading this initiative. We also hosted a number of workshops for graduate students on grant writing, preparing for the comprehensive exams, and transitioning to ABD. Claire Duncan also organized a successful Visitor’s Day for prospective students with the help of Marguerite Perry.

We also ran a series of successful Brown Bag Lunch talks once again this year and were lucky enough to host the following professors: Denise Cruz, Smaro, David Taylor, Paul Downes, Ira Wells, Mark Knight, and Liza Blake. I am very grateful to all of the presenters and attendees for being a part of this monthly exchange of ideas!

Thank-you to everyone for a lively year; it has been my pleasure to serve as President of the English Graduate Association.

01. From left to right: Elissa Gurman and Margeaux Feldman. Photography courtesy of GEA

02. From left to right: Nicholas Reynolds, Sarah Iaconis, Daisy Qin, Halyna Chumak, Camille Viva, Grace Gesualdo, Lauren Peat, and Nicholas Morra. Photography courtesy of IDIOM
BOOKSHELF

16th century printing in London, Canadian Indigeneity and a practical guide to composing poems. Here are this year’s faculty publications.

Written by
Ashifa Rajwani

This year, like every year, there was a wide range of publications from our faculty. I had the opportunity to attend book launches held for Professors Richard Greene, Robert McGill and Andrea Most. Having a book published is a tremendous accomplishment and should be celebrated as it was at these launches. It was a pleasure to attend these events, and I look forward to going to more in the near future. Going to a book launch is a great way to meet the author and ask them questions you may never have the chance to. This year, look out for book launches; you will be surprised how many of these take place across campus. To see what else is taking place at the department and across campus, I suggest you like us on Facebook (Department of English, University of Toronto) or follow us on Twitter (@UofTEnglish).

The following is a list of publications for 2013-14. This collection represents a fraction of what our faculty have accomplished. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to check out our faculty bookshelf page on our website: www.english.utoronto.ca/facultystaff/bookshelf.htm. The variety of books will amaze you. Keep a look out for more incredible publications to come in the future.
The Treacherous Imagination: Intimacy, Ethics and Autobiographical Fiction  
by Professor Robert McGill

Oxford Street, Accra: City Life and the Itineraries of Transnationalism  
by Professor Ato Quayson

The Teacherous Imagination: Intimacy, Ethics and Autobiographical Fiction  
by Professor Robert McGill

The Writing Moment: A Practical Guide to Creating Poems  
by Dr. Daniel Scott Tysdal

Theatrical Liberalism: Jews and Popular Entertainment in America  
by Professor Andrea Most

The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665  
co-edited by Professor Emeritus Germaine Warkentin

Reading Class through Shakespeare, Donne and Milton  
by Professor Christopher Warley

Once We Had a Country  
by Professor Robert McGill

Fighting Word: Polemics and Social Change in Literary Naturalism  
by Professor Ira Wells

From Little London to Little Bengal: Religion, Print & Modernity in Early British India 1793-1835  
by Professor Dan White

Professor Richard Greene, signing a copy of his latest book, *Dante's House* at his book launch held at Woodsworth College.
Welcome to our English community. Our community is made up of faculty, staff and students. This year was an exceptional year of scholarships, grants, fellowships and award winners. Some of our community winners have been featured in this section.

A. Professor Elizabeth Harvey: Winner of the Northrop Frye Award

Professor Elizabeth Harvey was honoured with the University of Toronto Alumni Association’s Northrop Frye Award for linking teaching and research. Prof. Harvey graciously accepted the award with the following speech:

Teaching for me has always been about co-creation, about the interaction and passionate connection that lies at the heart of learning. My three decades as a teacher has been marked by the inspirational nature of those collaborations. Let me record my gratitude to these co-creators: first, to my extraordinary and generous colleagues at U of T. Second, to my many remarkable students, undergraduate and graduate students, with whom it has been such a privilege to work. And finally, to my family, my best teachers of all. I close with Northrop Frye’s own words: “What the critic as a teacher of language tries to teach is not an elegant accomplishment, but the means of conscious life . . . The ultimate aim is an ethical and participating aim.” In this sense, the teaching of literature has never been more important than it is now to the creation of conscious and active members of society.

B. Brooke Xiang: Recipient of the University of Toronto Excellence Award

Brooke Xiang recently completed her Bachelor of Arts in English and Biological Anthropology. She considers receiving the University of Toronto Excellence Award a huge honour. From May until the end of September, Brooke will be working on a research project titled “Diasporic and Native Literatures in Canada: Performance as Politics / Politics as Performance” with Professor Smaro Kamboureli, Avie Bennett Chair in Canadian Literature. While the focus on Diasporic and Native literatures is significant to the study of Canadian literature, it also has personal significance for Brooke, whose sense of academic identity is intertwined with that of being a first-generation Canadian. Brooke is more than grateful for this opportunity and considers it to be a step towards her aspiring academic career in Canadian literature.

C. Tony Fong: Winner of the A.S.P. Woodhouse Prize

Tony Fong works on contemporary literature and film, focusing especially on life writing, ethics, and gender/sexuality studies. “Starving Art: Sacrifice, Ethics, and American Hunger Narratives,” Tony’s next book-length project, examines the centrality of hunger within the humanities by studying how literary and visual narratives diminish the body and its appetites. By approaching hunger as a sacrificial act, this project posits an ethics of self-deprivation.

Tony is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Study of the United States, Munk School of Global Affairs, for 2014-15.
Roderick (Rory) McKeown works on literature of the early modern period, particularly drama. His thesis, “Performative Language and Social Status in Shakespeare,” explores the complex operation of socially situated utterances in making powerful—yet unarticulated—claims to social status. In addition to revising his thesis for publication as a monograph, Rory has launched a new project, using early modern letters as historical context to examine the dynamics of extended families in the drama of the period.

Professor William Robins: Winner of the Faculty of Arts & Science Outstanding Teaching Award

William Robins's particular talent is the ability to make that wonderful range of what—at first sight—might seem remote and arcane knowledge readily accessible to his students. His students speak of his “eye-opening” lectures that broaden their understanding of the history of literature. As one student wrote, “Professor Robins’s lectures inspired me to ask my own questions. I often spent time after class thinking through the ideas presented and applying my own ideas to them.”

Prof. Robins was deeply honoured to receive the Outstanding Teaching Award and had this to say about it: “One of the most gratifying things about receiving the Arts and Science Outstanding Teaching Award is knowing that the nomination came from the Department of English, a department so chock-full of first-rate teachers. The students, of course, make the place, and connecting with the students is the crucial task of any instructor. It is invigorating to be surrounded by colleagues and staff who share my enthusiasm about making such connections happen again and again.”

Laura Clarke, winner of the RBC Bronwen Wallace Award

Laura’s first full length poetry collection will be coming out with ECW Press in 2015. This May, she was a participant in the 2014 writing studio at The Banff Centre.

Tony Fong: Winner of the Woodhouse Prize

Photography by Sofi Papamarko

D. Laura Clarke, winner of the RBC Bronwen Wallace Award. Photography by Katrina Alonso

E. Professor William Robins, winner of the Arts & Science Outstanding Teaching Award. Photography by Diana Tyszko

F. Roderick McKeown, winner of the Clifford Leech Prize. Photography by Claire Duncan

G. Morgan Vanek, winner of the Brian Corman Graduate Prize.

Photography by Ashifa Rajwani

Roderick (Rory) McKeown works on literature of the early modern period, particularly drama. His thesis, “Performative Language and Social Status in Shakespeare,” explores the complex operation of socially situated utterances in making powerful—yet unarticulated—claims to social status. In addition to revising his thesis for publication as a monograph, Rory has launched a new project, using early modern letters as historical context to examine the dynamics of extended families in the drama of the period.

Congratulations to Morgan Vanek, the first recipient of the Brian Corman Graduate Prize. Endowed in recognition of Dean Corman’s scholarly accomplishments and exemplary service to the University of Toronto, the Brian Corman Graduate Prize is awarded to graduate students in the English department who work on Restoration and/or 18th C. literature and who have made a significant contribution to the life of the University through student governance, community service, or volunteer work.

Morgan Vanek, winner of the Brian Corman Graduate Prize.

Photography by Ashifa Rajwani