The Red River Reading Series (RRRS) is an opportunity for students and professors to share their poetry, fiction, and personal essays with the MSU community. Each reading presents two student writers and one faculty member who also writes creatively. Student writers have ten minutes to share their work and faculty members have twenty minutes. All readings are held the first Friday of the month during the Fall and Spring semesters at 4:00 PM in the multipurpose room of Legacy Hall and are free and open to the public. By the way, there are always refreshments served during the midpoint of the reading.

Our first three readings in the Fall of 2016 included work from professors Dr. Nathan Jun, Dr. Donavan Irvin, and Dr. Robert Johnson, and our student readers included Erica Bourland, Chad Marqui, Lane Riggs, Kalli Root, Ali Ward, and Jonathan Henderson. Spring 2017 looks to be just as promising. RRRS will present the creative work of faculty members Dr. John Schulze, Ms. Krista Rascoe, and Mr. Joshua Ibarra. Student writers who will share their work include Faith Munoz, and Serah Welborn. Be sure to look for our poster that has the complete schedule, or you can check out our Facebook page.
ACCOLADES

At the **2016 Honors Recognition Banquet** on Apr. 22, Andrea Mendoza Lespron (English BA) won **Woman of the Year**. Congratulations to our department’s other nominees, Holly Frazier and Jonathan Henderson!

The winner of the 2016 **Vinson Award in Creative Writing** is Kalli Root, for her essay "You're Not As Cool As You Think You Are." Readers enjoyed the essay’s clarity and polish, the strength of its voice and the flow of its lines. Honorable mention goes to Caitlin McNeely, for her poem “Twenty Fifteen,” and to Alexis Mendez, for her poem “I Never Wrote a Sonnet.” The readers found both poems remarkable.

**Dr. Giddings** won the **Best Paper Award** at the Texas College English Association Conference in San Antonio in Mar. 2016 for his presentation entitled “Masculinities and Role Models in McMurtry’s *Horseman, Pass By.*”

**Dr. Giles** was invited to join the Editorial Board of the *Journal of the American Studies Association of Texas* in the fall of 2016. He was also invited to give a talk at MSU’s **National Society of Collegiate Scholars** induction ceremony Oct. 15, 2016, as well as to present “Going with the Grain: Taoism, Leadership, and the Interconnectivity of The Way” to MSU’s **Honors Leadership Seminar** on Oct. 20, 2016. Dr. Giles wrote two brief art historical articles which appear on the website of the **Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU** titled “David Bates” and “Chuck Close up Close,” and the first comprehensive history of the **Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra** titled “Symphonic Sounds on the South Plains: A History of the Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra.” The latter appears at www_wfso.org.

**Dr. Henschel** was selected as the MSU **Piper Award Nominee** for 2016. The Piper Professor Award recognizes professors for outstanding academic and scholarly achievement and for dedication to the teaching profession. Each college and university in Texas is allowed to submit one nomination.

**Dr. Irven** had his book proposal "To Speak, To Act, To Be" accepted in Nov. 2016 by **Duquesne University Press**. That same month, he was invited to guest edit a special issue of the journal *Review of Communication*, which will focus on philosophy and literature, particularly on how literature can communicate or disclose ontological insights.

**Dr. Jun** received the **Distinguished Faculty Award** from the MSU **Black Student Leadership Initiative** in Feb. 2016 for his “service to the African American and other minority communities on campus.”
ACCOLADES CONTINUED

Dr. Jun was also invited to serve as a Faculty Fellow of the Anarchist Studies Initiative at the State University of New York—Cortland.

Melissa Laussmann (English BA 2016) won the 2016 Outstanding English Student award for the Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences. She was also inducted into Who’s Who among Students in American Universities and Colleges and was elected a member of the Alpha Chi National College Honors Society. A great year for Melissa!

Austin Monson (Sociology BA) won Best Oral Presentation, Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences, for his EURECA project titled “Bridging the Gap: The Wichita Falls Symphony Orchestra and the Next Generation of Music Lovers” on Nov. 17th, 2016 at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum. His faculty mentors were Dr. Andrea Button (Sociology) and Dr. Giles.

Lisa D. Moore (English BA Fall 2016) won Best Oral Presentation, Prothro-Yeager College of Humanities & Social Sciences, for her EURECA project titled “Bridging the Gap: The Anglo-Saxon Connection between the English and German Languages” on Apr. 28, 2016 at the Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum. Lisa’s mentors were Dr. Yvonne Franke (German), Dr. Fields, and Dr. Galbraith (Emeritus).

Dr. Schulze was elected Vice President of the American Studies Association of Texas at their Oct. 2016 annual conference.

Melissa Laussmann and Dr. Betty Stewart

Austin Monson

Lisa Moore
ENGLISH MAJOR ASHLEY DAVIS PROMOTED TO PRINCIPAL OF CUNNINGHAM ELEMENTARY

Ashley Brianne Davis (formerly, Watts) was an outstanding English Major who graduated from MSU in 2009 and became principal of Cunningham Elementary School in August 2015.

While she was a student, Communities in Schools (CIS) offered an after-school program in Wichita Falls for helping “at risk” junior high students with their reading. CIS approached MSU Sigma Tau Delta for volunteers, and Ashley Watts, Jared Willden, and Adam Bell answered the call.

Ultimately, Adam Bell became a CIS program manager at Zundy Junior High and hired Ashley as a paid tutor. When Ashley graduated, she participated in an online program that certified her to teach, and she was hired to teach English fulltime at Kirby Junior High the fall of 2009.

While still teaching at Kirby, Ashley completed her Master of Education degree online and became assistant principal at Alamo Elementary School in fall 2013. When Alamo closed, Ashley became assistant principal at Scotland Park Elementary School. At the time, WFISD considered Scotland Park to be academically deficient, but by the end of the school year, Ashley and her principal, Laura Scott, had turned the school around in a way that caught everyone’s attention. People encouraged Ashley to apply for a principal’s position. She’ll never forget the phone call 8:30 PM at night, telling her she had the job as principal at Cunningham.

Mark Davis, Ashley’s husband, is presently principal of Booker T. Washington Elementary. She and Mark were high school sweethearts. Mark graduated from MSU with a business degree but the “great recession” of 2008 made finding a job in his field a challenge. He began substituting at Kirby and like Ashley earned his certification to teach online. Ashley and Mark finished the same online master’s program at the same time. Both Jared Willden and Adam Bell also went on to fulltime careers as teachers.

~ Dr. Peter Fields

English Education

As the experience of Ashley Davis indicates, English majors often become teachers—even if they are not planning on it. The best way to become certified to teach is while you are still an undergraduate. Talk to your English Advisor about this option and the required courses. In addition, just as Ashley did, you should keep in mind the importance of graduate school. The Education program offers graduate degrees applicable to teaching and administration, and the English program offers a graduate degree with great opportunities for professional training including the GA/TA assistantship. GA/TA students take Teaching College English and have the opportunity their second year to teach freshman English.
PUBLICATIONS


Dr. Jun. Rev. of Transnational Radicals: Italian Anarchists in Canada and the U.S. 1915-1940 by T. Tomchuck; and Immigrants Against the State: Yiddish and Italian Anarchism in America by T. Tomchuck. Altreitalie 52 (January-June 2016): 134-136

Dr. Lodge. The Death of Ivan Ilyich and Other Stories by Leo Tolstoy, ed. and trans., with a scholarly introduction and background materials. Nanaimo, Canada: Broadview Press, 2017.

Dr. Lodge. Trans. of recent poems by Štěpán Nosek (“The Pond, Moonlight, 1904,” and “in the sunlit garden...”). Poetry Ireland Review 119 (Fall 2016). Web.


Betty Carroll and Dr. Nivens presented “ELAR College Prep Course” at the Region IX Education Service Center in Wichita Falls on July 26, 2016. Dr. Nivens also presented “Grab Some Grammar and Go” as part of the AVATAR program on July 14, 2016.

Dr. Fields presented “Owen Barfield, William James, Consciousness, and the ‘old spiritual psychology’” at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association conference in Salt Lake City on Oct. 6, 2016.

Dr. Giddings presented “Masculinity in Pat Conroy’s My Losing Season” at the American Studies Association of Texas conference at Sam Houston State on Nov. 11, 2016.

Dr. Giles presented “Poets, Painters, and Paper: Intersecting Ideologies in Post-World War II American Avant-Garde Art” at the American Studies Association of Texas conference at Sam Houston State on Nov. 11, 2016.

Dr. Henschel presented “Incorporating Visuals into an Argument” at the W4Tx Summer Institute: Keep Calm & Write Region IX ESC, Wichita Falls, TX. July 14, 2016.

Dr. Johnson presented his short story “Casa de Cards” at the Southwest Popular Culture Association in Albuquerque in Feb. 2016. He also presented the story “Gifted” at the American Popular Culture Association / Popular Culture Association in Seattle in Mar. 2017.


Dr. Jun presented “Anarchism 101” and “Liberating Anarchist Studies from the Tyranny of (A)historicism” at the All Power to the Imagination conference at New College of Florida on Apr. 30, 2016.

Dr. Jun presented “Rationalism and Irrationalism in Classical Anarchist Thought” at the North American Society for Social Philosophy conference at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada on July 22, 2016.


Dr. Jun also presented “Rationalism and Irrationalism in Classical Anarchism” at the Northeastern Political Science Association conference in Boston on Nov. 10, 2016.
Dr. Lodge presented “Teaching Tang Dynasty Poetry: The Example of Du Fu” at the Association for Core Texts and Courses conference in Atlanta on Apr. 16, 2016.

Dr. Lodge read from her translation of Tolstoy’s “Strider” at MSU’s Celebration of Scholarship on Apr. 27, 2016.

Dr. Lodge also presented “Seduction, Sin, and Sickness: Vampires in Czech Decadence” as part of MSU’s Speakers and Issues Series on Nov. 14, 2016 at the Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU.

Dr. Nivens presented “Composing Politics in the Digital Age: Pairing First-Year Composition and American Government” at the National Learning Communities Conference in Atlanta, GA in Nov. 2016.

Dr. Nivens also presented on an MSU Teaching and Learning Resource Center panel about Learning Communities on Dec. 1, 2016 with Dr. Brandy Jolliff-Scott (Political Science).

Cody Parish presented "Resistance and the Colonial Zombie in M.T. Anderson’s Octavian Nothing" at the American Studies Association of Texas conference at Sam Houston State on Nov. 12, 2016.

Dr. Rankin, Dr. Jeff Hood (Math), and Kameron Shrum (Math/Computer Science BA) presented “Data Acquisition for, and Analysis of, Word Frequencies in the English Language” (Kameron Shrum, presenter) at the International Conference on Computational Science and Computational Intelligence in Las Vegas on Dec. 17, 2016. The paper will be published in the conference proceedings.


Dr. Schulze also presented "An Ontology of Disaster: A Short Story" at the American Studies Association of Texas conference at Sam Houston State on Nov. 11, 2016.

Alicia Ward (English MA candidate) presented “Poets, Painters, and Paper: Collaborative Intersections and the Curatorial Imagination” at the American Studies Association of Texas conference at Sam Houston State on Nov. 11, 2016.
**Poets, Painters, and Paper: Post-World War II American Avant-Garde Art**

Dr. Giles’ Post World War II Art & Poetry class last fall was one of the most unique and exceptional courses I’ve taken at Midwestern State University. The course went beyond the typical classroom setting by incorporating an accompanying art exhibition at the Wichita Falls Museum of Art at MSU which was co-curated by Dr. Giles, Danny Bills, and Alicia Ward (English BA 2016). The course challenged us not only on a scholarly level, but artistically as well. True to the Beat Generation spirit, we learned how to make a personal connection with the art and poetry as opposed to just analyzing its “meaning.” The course covered a multitude of poets and artists of the Post World War II avant-garde, including Gregory Corso, Frank O’Hara, Robert Motherwell and Jackson Pollock. Through class discussions facilitated by Dr. Giles and art historian Dr. Ann Marie Leimer, we were able to extensively study the way in which these artists transcended their world and drastically changed how art and poetry is perceived.

My classmates and I had the opportunity to choose one of the works in the exhibition and present our own interpretation of the piece, rather than the background of the work or the artist. Through assignments such as this, we were able to uncover the incredible relationship between the art, the poetry and ourselves. The course joined with the exhibition, Dr. Giles’ passion for the subject matter, and the power behind the Beat Generation, created one of the most impactful experiences a liberal arts university could offer.

~ Loganne Featherston (English BA)
Dr. Lodge and Dr. Schulze attended special professional development training in the humanities at the Association for Core Texts and Courses—Tradition and Innovation Summer Seminar last year. Here is Dr. Lodge on the exciting experience . . .

On behalf of MSU, I applied for and was awarded an institutional grant to develop our Core Text Great Books courses and new Core Text minor. Dr. Schulze and I attended the two-week seminar at the University of Chicago and Columbia University in June 2016. These two universities are famous for their highly respected Great Book programs, obligatory for all students beginning in the first year. We studied texts such as Homer's Odyssey, Plato's Symposium, Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Machiavelli's The Prince, Shakespeare's King Lear, and Woolf's To the Lighthouse. ACTC and most Great Books programs promote a text- and student-centered approach in a seminar setting. The course I am offering this spring, Great Books on Morality, is based in part on what I learned at the seminar last summer. This course, like World Literature I and II and many other courses, counts toward MSU's new interdisciplinary minor in Great Books.

Midwestern State is co-sponsoring ACTC's annual conference in Dallas from April 20th-23rd. Faculty members giving papers include me, Dr. Donovan Irven, and Krista Roscoe. Students delivering papers include Yolanda Torres, Maureen Trussell, Austin Monson, and Lane Riggs.

ACTC also sponsors an annual student conference. The 2017 conference will be held at Concordia University in Irvine, California. Two MSU students' proposals have been accepted: Brian Zug on The Decameron, and Serah Welborn on Ralph Waldo Emerson. The best papers will be published in ACTC's student journal Agora.
A SAMPLING OF RECENT NEW COURSE OFFERINGS

Great Books on Morality: This interdisciplinary text- and discussion-based course led by Dr. Lodge covers primary texts in literature, philosophy, and political science, including works by Aeschylus, Confucius, Aristotle, Plato, Augustine, Hobbes, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy.

Teaching Professional and Technical Writing: Taught by Dr. Henschel, 5213 is an examination of the theory, pedagogy, and practice of teaching technical and professional writing. This is the department's first offering for the new online English Graduate Certificate in Professional and Technical Communication.

Literature of Diverse Voices (Fantasy): In this, the first section of our new Diverse Voices class, Dr. Fields is teaching The Lord of the Rings, Prince Caspian, Miss Peregrine’s School for Peculiar Children, and Alice in Wonderland/Through the Looking Glass. Students will write a research paper on any topic relevant to fantasy literature, TV, or film.

The 1980s: Ryan Samuelson (Moffett Library) and Dr. Giles explore with students representative American literature and film from the 1980s, a decade fraught with Wall Street greed, Cold War fears, the social and political conservatism of the New Right, conspicuous consumption, and the outbreak of the AIDS and crack epidemics. It was also the decade that launched Cable TV, the Yuppies, MTV, Madonna, New Wave, the Walkman, the personal computer, and teen movies like The Breakfast Club and Pretty in Pink.

Philosophy of Sex, Love, and Friendship: Dr. Jun’s new course provides an introduction to the philosophy of sex, love, and friendship from both a theoretical and historical perspective. Particular topics discussed include the existence and nature of love, the complexities of human sexuality, and the ideal and practical realities of friendship.

Academic Research & Writing (The Martian): Dr. Fields’ 1143 class features Andy Weir’s novel The Martian. Dr. Sarah Cobb (Math) presents on three math-related topics inspired by key passages in the novel, and Dr. Jeff Hood (Math) appears in a number of classes to solicit data from students for statistical analysis of risk-taking in the novel.

The Gilded Age: Students in this interdisciplinary honors seminar taught by Dr. Martinez (Economics), Dr. Jun, and Dr. Giles explore the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of the Gilded Age in America from three different disciplinary vantages in order to help students develop a fuller understanding of this important era and to invite critical reflection on the lessons it offers for the present.

Rhetoric of Visuals and Infographics: This theoretical and practical inquiry into visual rhetoric and infographics is taught by Dr. Henschel. Students learn how images are used to communicate and persuade; how culture influences the creation, delivery, and interpretation of visual messages; and how this knowledge can be applied to the creation, arrangement, and delivery or display of visual information, data, and evidence.
On Sept. 17, 2016, members of MSU’s Arts & Literature Society enjoyed the Oklahoma City Museum of Art’s presentation of *Matisse in His Time: Masterworks of Modernism from the Center of Pompidou, Paris*, a mixed-media menagerie of works by Henri Matisse and his contemporaries. Guided by museum curators, the Society participated in a discussion of modern art as shaped by Cubism and Fauvism in each stage of Matisse’s life, comparing his sketches, paintings, and sculpture to those of Pierre-Auguste Renoir and Pablo Picasso. It was a unique experience made sweet by plantain chips and ice cream beside the OKC Riverwalk, coffee and cookies at an evening cafe, and a brief mid-September rain.
ENGLISH MASTER’S AT MSU

Across the US, reading, writing, and thinking have proven to be key skills sought in new-hires. What is more, the investigation of literature and of communication nourishes the mind in ways basic to the liberal—and, thus, *liberating*—arts. Consequently, MSU students considering graduate school should weigh the benefits offered by Midwestern’s MA program in English. Our curriculum focuses on the individual’s needs, offers three redesigned degree tracks, and is energized by professors available to assist students at every stage of their progress. Recent thesis projects have included a cyberpunk novel, a biographical fiction elaborating the history of a famous Fort Worth neighborhood, an analysis of film adaptations of the novels of Jane Austen, and a rigorous examination of later work from Vladimir Nabokov (a thesis now representing MSU in a national competition). Please drop by to speak with me about your future studies in English and how our program can help you reach your goals.

We are pleased to welcome the following new students to our graduate program: Jonathan Henderson, Carlena Kundert, Jenn Sidlauskus, Ginger Spiller, Ali Ward, Melissa Laussmann, Lisa Moore, and Kimberly Long. Welcome, all!

~ Dr. Robert Johnson