



# English Matters

Working for Student Success

Summer 2017

## A Word from the Chair

Last week, my summer students debated whether or not issues related to American affluence and consumerism might be illuminated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs. You remember the hierarchy: at the bottom are fundamental biological needs like food and shelter, and at the top is "self-actualization," an umbrella term for concepts like morality, creativity, spontaneity, problem solving, lack of prejudice, and acceptance of facts. In the rush of an "ah-ha" moment, one student proclaimed, "Self-actualization is why all of us are here, right?"

Yes, it is, partly! The acclaimed English writer Philip Pullman once said, "After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world." But for us, there's more: students, faculty and alumni of Samford's English Department share in a quest to show how words, literature, and film can make or break the world at large. We hope that you will be inspired by what's happening here at Samford, and join us in the quest! *Dr. M. Brad Busbee,*

English Department Chair



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## Entering Freshman Scholarships

We are pleased to announce the class of 2021 Nancy Terrell Scholarship recipients: Rachel Brockwell, from Birmingham, AL and Jordan Shoop, from Springville, AL. Both will begin their studies at Samford this fall.

The English Department is grateful for all the encouragement and donations that come from our alums and former faculty. It is truly a blessing to those who work and study here to have the support of those who have experienced, first hand, the power of a liberal arts degree and the growth that happens at a fine university like Samford.

# Alumni in Action

## C. Hassell Bullock ('61)



completed Volume 1 of his commentary on the Psalms (*Psalms 1-72*; Teach the Text series, Baker Academic). The volume was released in August 2015. In

2009, Bullock retired from forty years in the college classroom, thirty-six of them at Wheaton College (Wheaton, IL), where he was the Franklin S. Dyrness Professor of Biblical Studies. Bullock is married to Rhonda R. (Nichols) Bullock ('64).

## Samuel Smith ('08) began his



studies for a Ph.D. in Biomedical Sciences at UAB. Smith has been working as a researcher/

lab technician on HIV and TB in Dr. Olaf Kutsch's lab at UAB. In addition to an English major, Smith had a Biology minor at Samford. His English major has very much paid off for him as publishing articles plays a huge part of his most recent work.

## Josh Crute ('10) who lives and works in Los Angeles, released the



short film *Asteria*. Crute notes, "This one's a sci-fi, but more in the vein of Bradbury/*Solaris*/2001/*Fantasia*/*Little Prince*. Quite a few Samford alums worked on it." You can view the 10-minute film on Vimeo, along with other films created by Crute. To see *Asteria*: <https://vimeo.com/213701724>

## Sam Thielman ('04) was hired the first investigative reporter for



*Talking New Media's* new

Investigations Desk position. *TNM* is a news, information, and commentary website for the digital publishing industry. Thielman came from *The Guardian*, where he was an investigative reporter in NYC. More details at: <http://bit.ly/2rhITNM>

## Ryan Plemmons ('14) currently lives in Paris, where he is taking French classes at the Sorbonne while tutoring in English on the side. The



previous two years he worked in Rwanda with NGOs like 'Bridge2Rwanda'. He plans to take the GRE as a step toward a Masters

in Communications or Education & International Development. Plemmons plans long term to continue his NGO work

## Amanda Hill ('16) recently accepted a position as a production assistant for the *Cooking Light Diet*.



Her work includes social media, marketing, and production tasks such as customer service and data migration.

Her English

major, freelance-writing experience, and magazine internship were keys in preparation for this job.

## Jamie McDaniel ('01) was

honored by students with the Outstanding Faculty Award at Pittsburg State

University, where he is Associate Professor in English and Modern Languages.

"I love

seeing students succeed in ways they didn't think they could," says McDaniel. He earned his Ph.D. from Case Western University. (Photo credit: Pittsburg State University) See a short video of McDaniel here: <http://bit.ly/2qyZ7mw>



**CORRECTION** (Winter 2016) : Anne-Marie **Shipp** (not Shipley) graduated in 2012.

## Semester / Year-End Celebration Photo Gallery



English majors gathered to celebrate the end of a successful semester. Friends met and chatted about upcoming tests, while seniors marveled that their Samford career was swiftly coming to a close. Dr. Wright gave remarks.



### Special thanks to the following donors for their generous gifts:

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These faithful donors continue to support the department's mission to nurture articulate, insightful, and successful graduates. We appreciate their ongoing contributions to this cause. To make a donation, simply note "English Department Fund" on the memo area of the check.

# Stone Hendrickson Wins Phi Kappa Phi Fellowship



After graduating with a double major in English and Classics in May, Stone Hendrickson received a prestigious \$5,000 Phi Kappa Phi national honor society fellowship. Hendrickson was one of 51 across the nation to receive this scholarship.

Professor Sansom said, “Hendrickson excelled in every facet of campus life. He was studious and disciplined, a significant leader, and a good citizen and friend to many. We are proud of his accomplishments, and have great expectations and confidence in his future.”

Hendrickson is the fourth Samford alumnus in recent years to receive a Phi Kappa Phi fellowship.



Please join us in congratulating the editors of *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film*, the scholarly publication of the Department of English at Samford University. It is a forum for the best student scholarly writing in literature and cinema, and the best poetry, short-fiction, and screenplays. The journal also provides English majors experience in academic editing and publishing. *Wide Angle* is finishing its sixth year.

Dr. Geoff Wright founded the journal in the fall of 2011 and published its first issue in the spring of 2012. That first year was wild, as the students and Dr. Wright learned “how to do what we were doing while we were doing it.” Members of that inaugural editorial staff were: Anne Marie Pope, Alexandra Knight, Drew DeVine, Stephanie Ann Smith, and David Rodriguez. They were instrumental in forming a shared vision for the journal.

Dr. Wright noted, “This year’s editors have done an amazing job. Last semester’s issue (Winter 2016) was one of—if not the—largest fall issue we have ever published. And this semester they prepared a wide array of critical essays, reviews, poems, and short nonfiction stories. This group has consistently

impressed me with their maturity, professionalism, and teamwork. Week in and week out, they shouldered the load of reading and carefully evaluating submissions, writing constructive feedback for the authors, and editing and proofreading final documents—all on top of the workload for their classes. And they did it all with a blend of grace, determination, and a little insanity.”

We hope you will support Samford English scholars by searching for *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film* and reading this semester’s issue!

To read *Wide Angle* go to — <https://www.samford.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/wide-angle>

**Wide Angle** Staff pictured with mentor and Managing Editor Dr. Geoff Wright. L-R: Casey Cunningham, Mack Sexton, Kiani Yiu. (Not pictured: Lauren Morris and Cassidy Bell.)



## BACHE Readings Spring Semester

Spring semester brought two outstanding writers to Samford: E. Ralph Eubanks (pictured left) in March and



Teddy Wayne (below right) in April. Eubanks has published two book-length memoirs, *Ever is a Long Time: A Journey into Mississippi's Dark Past* (Basic Books 2003) and *The House at the End of the Road: The Story of Three Generations of an Interracial Family in the American South* (HarperCollins 2009), and numerous literary nonfiction essays in *American Scholar*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Washington Post*. In each of these publications he describes individual identity as emerging out of a complex matrix of geography, space, history, and race. Wayne's visit coincided with turbulent Alabama weather. (His talks on his second day were cancelled due to weather.) He gave an interview in which he highly praised some of our Samford English majors. Wayne said, "I went out to

dinner with three students at Samford on Tuesday night, and I was very impressed with all three of them. Not that I should be surprised by this, but they were all very bright, driven, kind, generous young people. Whether that's a product of being in Birmingham or just I happened to get three nice kids, I don't know, but it was the kind of thing that makes you feel good about the future of America's youth."



## Sigma Tau Delta Members Attend Convention in Louisville

Ryan Lally and Madeline Perkins (in photo at left), both Samford Sigma Tau Delta members, had papers



accepted to the 2017 National Conference. Perkins presented "Don't Luz It: Women and Culture in Hemingway's 'A Very Short Story,'" and Lally presented "Reconciling Life with Death and Humankind with the Universe: Major Jackson's Cosmic Unity in 'Life During Wartime' and 'Thinking of Lucretius'" in Louisville, Kentucky, at the conference. In addition to presenting, Ms. Perkins participated in the Sigma Tau Delta Southern Regional Caucus to elect new student representatives on the national board and in the process earned the Samford chapter \$300.

When asked about the convention, Lally and Perkins said that the highlight of the experience was meeting the diverse and interesting people who attended. They heard advice from award winning authors, and other students, who also presented papers, and they met people from all over the country. Lally said, "It was one of the best events I've attended this year!"

# Student Activities

## An Evening of Psalms and Sacred Verse

At least ninety people attended a student-led poetry reading, (a 20% increase in attendance from last year), on Monday, April 24, from 7:00-8:00 pm. The room was filled to capacity, and had standing room only. Participants ranged from English majors to students in other departments to our own Dr. David Chapman who read one of his own beautiful poems.



The Coordinator of the Creative Writing Concentration, Dr Steward explained that, "this event involved readings from the Psalms and from sacred verse, whether that verse is student-composed poetry about God or Christianity or our relation to the Divine, or the verse may be a famous sacred/spiritual poem like John Donne's Holy Sonnets." Junior Madeline Perkins, a creative writing concentration English major added, "This event is tons of fun. It's also valuable because it presents poetry in a way that is accessible rather than intimidating. The poems range from humorous to heartbreaking, but all are engaging evidences of the delights of poetry to a crowd who may not be used to it."



## Dr. Julie Steward Honored

On February 25, Dr. Steward (at right, pictured with her family at right) was awarded the Bulldog Professor of the game. She was nominated by senior Samford Women's basketball player and English major, Brittany Stevens (pictured left), who praised Steward's unapologetic and contagious passion for learning, her subject matter, and care for her students. The honor, which featured a Wilson basketball signed by the team, was bestowed during halftime at the Samford vs. Mercer home game.



## Student Activities con't from page 6

### Film Club Sees Largest Crowd Ever

Spring semester 2017, Samford University Film Club screened the films *Inside Out*, *Children of Men*, and those produced by students.

Dr. Stephen Chu, chair of the Department of Psychology headed a panel discussion that followed *Inside Out*. Students filled the Wright Center with the largest-ever viewing audience.



The Wright Center as students filled the theatre to watch and discuss the film, *Inside Out*.

In April, Film Club teamed with the Student

Government Association to show the award-winning sci-fi thriller, *Children of Men*. The event was well-attended and also featured a panel discussion afterwards.

The final event of the 2016-2017 school year was the annual filmmaking competition and screening event, *Snapshot*, where students submit films written, filmed and edited within 48 hours. The final screening featured films created during the year by film club members.

Film Club's purpose is to cultivate the appreciation and analysis of cinema across the University campus. We do this by screening both art-house and mainstream films, hosting discussions, and partnering with faculty from other areas of the University.

Club advisor, Dr. Geoff Wright had this to say, "Film Club finished its tenth year at Samford University! The 'fearsome foursome' —Jud Potter, Mack Sexton, Hudson Reynolds, and Caroline Hammond, seniors who have worked to support and develop Film Club during their years at Samford, —has been an absolute pleasure to serve with. They have grown our membership by leaps and bounds and expanded our footprint on campus. They are leaving Film Club better than they found it."

### Samford English Department Mission Statement

**The Samford English Department cultivates knowledge of literary and cinematic traditions and empowers students to pursue intellectual and vocational endeavors that engage diverse communities with creativity and compassion.**

## Department of English Special Recognition (con't next page)

Each year the English department honors the most outstanding senior with the Ladell Payne Exemplary English Major Award. This award is named after a distinguished English alumnus who served as a longtime president of Randolph-Macon College in Virginia before he retired, and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Samford. The award is given to the student whose classroom contributions and academic scholarship represent the scholarly model of Dr. Payne, who even as a college president published highly-regarded books of criticism.

This year's honoree was Caleb Punt, whose academic excellence and leadership are outstanding examples of the highest quality and character. (He also majored in Religion and was awarded that department's top award for the year.) Caleb was a University Fellow and a member of Samford's Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl team, which gave Samford national recognition by advancing to the quarterfinals of the national tournament for the second year in a row. In the final competition the team placed fifth in the nation; they are one of only three teams to earn a place in the quarter finals in successive years.

During his undergraduate years, Caleb published several articles in *Wide Angle*, and he served as that journal's Managing Editor during his junior year. His leadership carried over to the Religion Department, as well, where he served as Vice President for the Religion Honors Society Theta Alpha Kappa.

Dr. Brad Busbee noted, "Clearly, Caleb is an excellent team-player (as his contributions to the ethics bowl successes prove), high achiever, and active thinker. I had the pleasure of reading his senior thesis, titled *A Foucauldian reading of the Gospel of Mark*. I was struck not only by the crystal clear ideas and their eloquent and logical articulation, but also by the humanity of the paper. This is a young man who relishes his faith by thinking deeply about it."

Caleb was admitted to Candler School of Theology, Duke Divinity, Asbury, Perkins at SMU, Boston University, and Yale Divinity. He has chosen to study at Duke to pursue a Masters of Divinity.

The English Department is very proud of Caleb Punt, and we wish him continued success!



Dr. Busbee and Caleb Punt, Ladell Payne Exemplary Senior Award Winner

## Department of English Special Recognition (con't)

### Creative Writing Award Winner

The Vivian Lankford Campbell Award is given each year to an English major who exhibits skill and promise in the art of creative writing. This year's recipient is Ryan Lally, who exemplifies the best of what Samford's creative writing concentration offers: a foundation in the critical study of literature combined with a deep commitment to the art of creative composition.

In April, Ryan delivered a paper on the poetry of Major Jackson at the annual convention of Sigma Tau Delta (see page 5). Ryan's sharp ability to interpret poetry is evident whether he is explaining T.S. Eliot's concept of the "objective correlative" in a Shakespeare seminar or introducing published poets at BACHE readings.

Likewise, Ryan's own creative writing combines a sharp critical awareness with an emphasis of the power of language. He has published several poems in *Wide Angle*. In his poem "I Spoke of Travels," Lally urges the reader: We should reflect, even if truth is like an umbilical noose. The speakers in Lally's poems don't pretend to have all the answers, which is in itself a kind of wisdom. Treat yourself to a reading of Ryan Lally's poems in this edition of *Wide Angle*.



Ryan Lally (above left) with Dr. David Chapman at the Annual Awards Banquet.

### Exemplary Film Studies Award Winners

The Exemplary Film Studies award was designed to recognize high scholastic achievement in the Film Studies curriculum and substantive contributions to the program beyond the classroom. This year, our first co-recipients of the award were, Mack Sexton and Jud Potter.



L-R: Jud Potter, Dr. Geoff Wright, Mack Sexton

Sexton is a senior, a University Fellow, and the Public Relations specialist for Film Club. Sexton also served his second year in a row as Film Editor for *Wide Angle*. Also a senior, Potter is the current President of Film Club and served as VP last year. In their positions in Film Club and on *Wide Angle*, Mack and Jud have contributed significantly to the intellectual and aesthetic life of the Film Studies program and the Samford student community as a whole. Director of Film Studies concentration, Dr. Wright, said, "In Film Studies, we like to say, 'We do not watch movies. We read films.'" Jud and Mack embody this ethos. Teaching them these past several

years has been my pleasure. We usually say that a good teacher is someone who makes learning fun. Well, these two are exemplary students insofar as they made teaching a blast." Wright went on to note that Potter and Sexton consistently take leadership roles in their classes, modeling careful and creative film analysis. Recently, the two students took their expertise beyond the bounds of the Samford campus by starting their own podcast about film, which they lovingly titled "The Nerd's Guide to the Apocalypse." Join us in congratulating Jud and Mack.



## Faculty Matters

**David Chapman** returned to the English Department after 15 years as Dean. He presented a paper at the Nineteenth Century Studies Association annual meeting titled "Statuary Haul: The Removal of the J.L.M. Curry Statue." He also presented a paper on "The Corpus of London: Americans Studying Victorian Literature Abroad," for the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies conference in Philadelphia. His book review of *Carceral Fantasies: Cinema and Prison in Early Twentieth Century America* appeared in spring 2017 *Wide Angle*. Chapman also advises the John Howard Scholars, a group of outstanding students in Howard College who continue the work of the eighteenth century prison reformer.

**Rosemary Fisk** will return to the classroom full time in spring 2018 after sixteen years as associate dean of Howard College. She will be on sabbatical in fall 2017. This year two of her book chapters reached print: "The Minister's Black Veil and Islam in the Core Curriculum" in *Nathaniel Hawthorne in the College Classroom*, Diller and Coale, ed., AMS Press; and "Core Texts and Narratives: The Place of Narrative Assessment in the Intellectual Growth of First-Year Students" in *Qualitative Narrative Assessment: Core Text Programs in Review*, Vol. 1, Burk and DiMattio, ed, ACTC Publ. She helped organize the Teaching the Christian Intellectual Tradition conference on campus last fall on "Teaching the Reformations" and led Baptist Church of the Covenant in a series of four Lenten meditations using scripture and the poetry of Reynolds Price. She also gave the keynote lecture as part of the induction ceremony for Phi Kappa Phi on April 11th.

**Julie Steward** presented a paper titled "Teaching Shakespeare: Improvisational Techniques and Performance Theory" at the annual Association for Core Texts and Courses convention in Dallas, Texas. Her research on performance theory arose, in part, from participating in a seminar, "Transformative Thinking for Significant Learning: Critical Thinking and the Core Curriculum" at Samford. As Coordinator of Creative Writing, she organized the 2nd annual "Night of Psalms and Sacred Verse" poetry reading on April 24, 2017 to bring the campus community together to celebrate National Poetry Month. Her poem, "Saint Endlessly, Saint Unfurling" is forthcoming in a fall 2017 anthology published by Terrapin Books.

**Brad Busbee** was awarded the William E. and Wylodine F. Hull Research Fellowship for the 2016-17 academic year for his project "Living Wellsprings of Christian Humanist Collaborative Research." Busbee completed his fourth year as co-editor for the journal *Grundtvig-Studier* while also serving on the editorial board for *LATCH: Literary Artifact*

in *Theory, Culture, and History*, on the review board for *Medieval Perspectives*, and as a reviewer for *Romantik: Journal for the Study of Romanticisms*. He continued advisory work for *Grundtvigs-Værker* (online corpus of the work of N.F.S. Grundtvig) and, this spring, he began advisory work for *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (NCLC)*. In November, he published an article in Danish: the “Indledning til *Om Bjovulfs Drape eller det af Hr. Etatsraad Thorkelin 1815 udgivne angelsachsiske Digt*” [Introduction to ‘About *Beowulf* or State Counsellor Thorkelin’s Edition of the Anglo-Saxon Poem’]. And in December, Dr. Busbee published a translation of an 1815 essay about *Beowulf* titled “A few more words about *Beowulf*” and a book review of Megan Cavell’s *Weaving Words and Binding Bodies: The Poetics of Human Experience in Old English Literature* (University of Toronto Press). He presented a paper titled “‘A Little Homer for England and the North’: *Beowulf* and the Enlightenment of Danish Youth” at the “*Beowulf* for Young Readers Symposium,” hosted on September 22<sup>nd</sup> by Texas A&M University; he taught “The first English poem: what it teaches and how it works” on September 30<sup>th</sup> for Samford’s Family Weekend Parent Academy; and he moderated a panel titled “The Place-Time Conundrum—Orientating College Students to Medieval Culture in Text and Image” at the Fifty-fifth Annual Southeastern Medieval Association Conference, hosted on October 7<sup>th</sup> by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville. On November 2, he gave the “Making Sense of the Middle Ages” lecture for Samford’s general education program. And on December 5, he gave the “Faith and Reason” lecture for Theta Alpha Kappa, the Religion Honors Society. In February, Dr. Busbee travelled to Kolkata, India, to give a plenary lecture titled “Grundtvig’s Educational Use of Medieval ‘Nordisk’ Literature: An Experiment that Succeeded” at the International Conference on Lifelong Learning in Developing Countries: Issues and Perspectives” at the University of Kalyani.

**Keya Kraft** participated in the Tradition and Innovation Seminar, a two-week summer seminar on core text pedagogy hosted by the University of Chicago, Columbia University, and the Association for Core Texts and Courses, and funded by a grant from the Teagle Foundation. She also served as Director of the Birmingham Area Consortium of Higher Education.

**Steven Epley** *Susanna Rowson: Sentimental Prophet of Early American Literature*, in November 2016. Epley won the Faculty Research Award given by the Dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences. He also received a \$2,800 faculty development grant to prepare a standard edition of two nineteenth-century women-authored biblical paraphrases, *Susanna Rowson's Biblical Dialogues Between a Father and His Son*, and Sarah Hall's *Conversations on the Bible*. To aid in this project, Samford awarded him a Samford Arts & Sciences Program for Independent Research (ASPIRE) grant for \$1,000 to do joint research with senior English major Bailey Bridgeman.

**Jane Hiles** spent fall 2016 in London as professor in residence at the Daniel House, teaching ‘Court & Country’ while doing research at the British Library. She was on sabbatical in the spring writing on Milton and the Quakers.

**Geoff Wright** presented “The Anatomy of Shame: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of the Self in Brian Turner’s *My Life as a Foreign Country*” at the 2016 Rocky Mountain MLA convention in Salt Lake City. He is currently working on revising a longer version of this essay for review in an academic journal. In October, he was a panelist on The Moviegoer for the Walker Percy Symposium at the Altamont School, which celebrated the centennial of the author’s birth. In November, he served as a judge for the University of Alabama’s Holle Award for Excellence in Screenwriting. His essay on postmodern memory in Kevin Powers’ Iraq War novel *The Yellow Birds* is currently under review. This summer, he will finish working on a project on biographies about American servicewomen in combat in the Iraq War. Earlier this spring, he gave a lecture on this subject at the Progress Study Club here in Birmingham. As always, he served as faculty sponsor for the SU Film Club and as General Editor of *Wide Angle: A Journal of Literature and Film*.

**Tim Sutton** published a book review of *Father Colum Power, James Joyce’s Catholic Categories*. (Charleston, SC: Wiseblood Books, 2016. in the *James Joyce Literary Supplement* (University of Miami, Vol. 31.). And in Summer 2017 he presented “Leisure and the Humanities Classroom: Reclaiming the Liberal Arts,” at the New Directions in the Humanities Conference (London, UK).

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