



## English Matters

The semester is drawing to a close, but what a year it has been! On May 27, 2010, fifteen seniors will walk down that aisle in Madison Square Garden to receive their diplomas as John Jay English Majors, the first time in a generation. For this issue of *English Matters*, we're all about paying tribute and giving props to our seniors—and celebrating where our major program is headed.

Those smiling faces in our banner picture? From left to right that's Erica Hahn, Elaine Pinzon, Jodel Jeremie, Vonyke Akers, Judith Leconte, Ilona Zeltser and Julissa Acosta. They are the members of Prof. JoEllen Delucia's senior seminar in Enlightenment Literature and the Law, caught on a camera-phone right after they'd delivered a stunning series of presentations on their final research papers back on May 3. To a packed room of faculty, friends, and administrators—including President Jeremy Travis and Provost Jane Bowers—they held forth on range of fascinating and sophisticated projects that investigate the reach and limits of the law in eighteenth-century British culture.

These seven extraordinary students showed what amazing things John Jay English Majors are capable of, just like the dozens of students we honored at the Second Annual English Major Awards Luncheon on Friday May 21.

In all, it's an exhilarating and bittersweet time as we take stock of what we've all accomplished this year, and bid farewell to our fifteen English B.A.s

So read on! And enjoy!

## Chair's Message



**Prof. Marny Tabb**

**English Department Chair**

Just over 35 years ago our thriving English major along with its 100-plus students was summarily abolished by CUNY fiat in response to the exigencies of a different financial crisis. Eventually changes in city and state finances and in CUNY and John Jay administrations once again provided a fertile climate for the humanities at John Jay; in 2004 we began the four-year process to revive our English major. The great -- and only -- advantage of this long hiatus was that we were able to start from scratch, creating a major that is responsive to our students' interest in justice and law and to the vastly changed world of the 21st century. Our 125 student roster of thirty-five years ago was quickly surpassed; the English major count at age two is upwards of 350 -- including, for the first time, new freshmen as well as former forensic psychology and criminal justice students lured by the enticements of literature to change their major. Professor Pease tends to the curriculum and students of our revived major.

This May we celebrate our first English major graduates in 35 years, an intrepid 15 students who joined their faculty in successively inaugurating each of our new core courses, some in literature, some in literature and law. As professor of one of the two capstone courses for the major (the other taught by Professor Delucia), I can attest that our first class is thoughtful and engaged --and has been a joy to teach. To our graduating students: we offer you our congratulations as you embark on your life's adventure as John Jay English Majors Class of 2010!

## Department News

### *Summer Internship Program Begins!*

- This summer will see the start of the John Jay English Department Internship program. Prof. Richard Perez has been coordinating a range of competitive, unpaid internship experiences for our majors, which will allow students to work in different professional environments. This summer, we're placing a number of students in a range of artistic, literary, and technological projects. A first round of interviews was completed May 14. To find out more, contact Prof. Perez at [rperez@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:rperez@jjay.cuny.edu).

### *Law and Literature Conference a Success!*

- On April 16th 2010, John Jay College of Criminal Justice held its Second Biennial Literature and Law Conference at its campus in New York City, organized by Prof. Andrew Majeske. Prof. John Matteson, the 2008 Pulitzer Prize winner in biography, gave a keynote address on law and literature in the "Age of Emerson," while Julia Stone Peters, of Harvard and Columbia Universities, gave a talk entitled "Law and Literature in the Mediasphere." A Symposium volume of essays arising from work presented at the Conference will be published by the journal *Law and Literature* in June 2010.

### *Because it's never too early to look ahead...*

- The first meeting of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society, next year will be on Monday, September 13, at 3:30 p.m. in the English Conference Room

### *And last but not least, a fond and hearty farewell!*

- After 36 years of service in the classrooms of John Jay, Prof. Ed Davenport is retiring. In SEEK, he taught many students to write in freshman composition courses. In the English department, he developed a range of innovative literature courses while directing over 50 Independent Studies. The entire English Department community joins in expressing our sincere thanks and best wishes.

## English Major Awards

On Friday May 21, the English faculty had the distinct honor to host the second annual English Major Awards Luncheon in the English Conference Room. Over fifty students and faculty came out to salute the remarkable achievements of our majors—and to celebrate the first class of graduating seniors with a John Jay English B.A. in 35 years.

Prof. Caroline Reitz joined Prof. Allison Pease, the English Major Advisor, to preside over the ceremony, which recognized the superior academic achievement of eight exceptional students. Awards were handed out for the outstanding papers in 200-level, 300-level, 400-level and Creative writing courses, as well as to students who distinguished themselves in the classroom. The highest honor of the day, however, went to Rachel Ramirez, who was given the richly-deserved Outstanding Senior Award.

The ceremony also inducted 15 new students into Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honor society. Prof. Reitz, the faculty advisor, made special recognition of the chapter President, Katharina Rollins, for her exceptional service to the group, along with officers Tyler Garvey and Chad Infante. Graduating seniors who were inducted into the honor society were vested with a red ceremonial sash, which they'll be wearing with pride at commencement.

We were also honored to provide a festive forum for the annual Justice Studies Thesis Awards. Our own Prof. Bettina Carbonell, Program Coordinator for the Justice Studies Major, was joined by Andrea Woodner, of the Woodner Foundation, and Prof. Allison Kavey, Chair of the History Department, to recognize the exceptional theses of Manuel Patino, (first prize), Julian Balrup and Suleyka Canelo.

The high point of the afternoon, though, wasn't the free Qdoba burrito bar luncheon, as it turned out—though that wasn't too shabby. Rather, it was the slamming performances of four student authors, who gave us a preview of what to expect in the next issue of *The Quill*, John Jay's literary magazine, whose launch we were also celebrating. Editors Rachel Ramirez, Gustavo Louzen and Sifat Azad introduced Miriam San Lucas, Andy Sanchez, Jesse Lewis and Masoud House, who gave readings that were by turns stirring and poignant, and which offered a perfect bridge from the ceremonial formalities to the casual lunchtime chit-chat among students and faculty.

Here in the English Department, we couldn't be prouder of the hard work put in by all our major and minor students, but today we celebrated the achievements of these eight exceptional individuals:



**Outstanding Paper at the 200-Level**  
Jamie Bridgewater, "Still I Rise"

Pictured here with Prof. Caroline Reitz



**Outstanding Paper at the 300-Level**  
Stephen Bruno, "Barbary Dolls"

Awarded by English Major Advisor Prof. Allison Pease



**Outstanding Paper at the 400-Level**  
Erica Hahn, "The Detriment of Revenge: Everyone Suffers"

Awarded by Prof. Ed Davenport, in whose honor the award was inaugurated.



**Outstanding Work in a Creative Writing Course**  
Stacey-Ann McAllister, "First Night In"

Awarded by Prof. Adam Berlin, who offered high praise of the strong, confident voice that comes through in her writing.



**Classroom Leadership Awards**  
Jayelle Dorsainville  
Chad Infante

Awarded by Prof. Al Coppola. These students were recognized because their peers reported that they had learned the most from them in their classes together.



**English Pioneer Award**  
Jodel Jeremie

Awarded by Prof. Caroline Reitz to the student who has taken the most English courses in his undergraduate career at John Jay.



**Outstanding Senior Award**  
Rachel Ramirez

Awarded by Prof. Jean Mills and Prof. Paul Narkunas, who are directing Rachel's honors thesis on queer theory and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*.

**English Matters 2.6** is a more-or-less regular publication of the John Jay English Department for the instruction and delight of students in our major and minor programs. Questions? Comments? Complaints? Want to get involved? Contact the editor, Prof. Al Coppola, [acoppola@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:acoppola@jjay.cuny.edu).