English Matters 4.1

It's September again, and another school year stretches out in front of us. This time of year, it's only natural to notice the passing of time, especially when so many exciting changes are in store for us in the English Department community.

By next spring, our department will have relocated to the astonishing structure that is steadily rising behind the "T" building. Chances are, your next English class will be taught in a state-of the art classroom located at the very heart of the transformed John Jay campus. We'll be packing up our books and bidding farewell to the Annex right after the New Year.

But change, in and of itself, is neither good nor bad. New buildings rise, and old places are forgotten. While your professors once filled filing cabinets with photocopies and note cards, you've got laptops and smart phones and Kindles. Far less important than "where," or "how," is "what." Whether it's way out on 54th Street or right in the middle of the new Jaywalk, whether it's in a .pdf or between two glossy covers, what we do *matters*. Reading matters. Writing matters. Thinking matters. English matters.

Oh, yes it does.

This back-to-school issue of *English Matters* is full of timely news items and good advices to get you on track for a successful semester. Our new English Department Chair, Prof. Allison Pease, has a challenge for you—will you rise to meet it? To help you on your way, our new English Major Coordinator Prof. Caroline Reitz analyses the new and improved advising system we've put in place. And finally, you won't believe what one of your peers did on his summer vacation…

So read on, and enjoy!

Chair's Greeting

Prof. Allison Pease
English Department Chair

What are your professors teaching you?

Welcome to the fall 2011 semester. In my new role as Chair I write this note to let all majors know that I am still here to help, alongside Major Coordinator Professor Caroline Reitz, and I wish you each a rich and fulfilling semester. But how best can it be so? First, by ignoring the question I ask above. Our wonderful professors are your guides to learning, but only you can push yourself to re-read a passage of a text and question its meaning, or to write down and look up all of the words you don't yet know. Reading and thinking take time and concentration. And trust me, it matters. We are what we think.

Department News

- WASHINGTON, DC JOURNALISM INTERNSHIP: Nov. 1 is the deadline for students to apply for spring and summer reporting internships with the Scripps Howard Foundation Semester in Washington Program. Students studying print, online, broadcast and photo-journalism are eligible for the program. Interns earn a stipend of $2,520 for the 14-week spring term and $1,800 for the 10-week summer term. The program provides free housing in furnished apartments. Interns report for the web-based Scripps Howard Foundation Wire and may also report for campus or hometown news organizations. Interns work with an experienced Washington editor to choose, report and edit stories. Tours of Washington journalism and government institutions and guest speakers are part of the program. For more details, visit: http://www.shfwire.com.

- LSAT PREP FROM THE EXPERT: Professor Andrew Majeske, who used to write the LSAT, will be leading two LSAT strategy sessions in the coming month. On Monday, October 10th, he will present "Preparing to take the LSAT" in the English Department Conference Room. On Wednesday, October 26th, he will address strategies for tackling the Logical Reasoning Section of the LSAT in the Foreign Language Conference Room. All sessions will be held during the common hour (1:40-2:40) on the 7th floor of the Annex, 619 W. 54th Street.

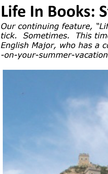
- STUDY ABROAD: the next Study Abroad Workshop will be held in room 4400N on Monday, October 3 @ 1:30pm-2:30pm. Students can plan on taking away lots of practical advice, including information on how to apply for CUNY study abroad scholarships.

- GET PUBLISHED: The student-run John Jay journal of creative writing, THE QUILL, is now in its third year. Students are urged to come and work as editors, as well as to submit their work for publication. Please contact Kamarjay.foster@jjay.cuny.edu.

- THE SENTINEL IS ONLINE: John Jay's student-run newspaper just launched its new website. While you can always pick up a hard copy of the paper on campus, now, all your JJ news is just a click away: www.johnjaysentinel.com.

Advice about Advising

This year, the department is introducing a new and improved advising system for our English Majors. Instead of having a single faculty member assigned to you as your advisor, there is now a committee of dedicated faculty members who will be working



Prof. Caroline Reitz
English Major Coordinator

In the past, many students found it hard to connect with their advisor due to scheduling conflicts. Now, there will always be someone in the department able to meet with you when it's convenient for your schedule.

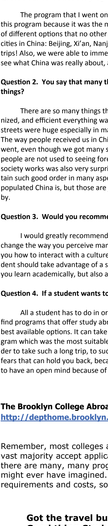
If you have any questions or concerns about the major, you are always welcome to drop by the department for advising. We have faculty available to assist you during most school hours Monday-Friday. We also have advising options on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings by appointment. Advising schedules can be found outside the English Department offices and Room 710. If you have any questions about the schedule or want to make an appointment, contact Professor Caroline Reitz at creitz@jjay.cuny.edu

Registration for winter and spring classes is around the corner. Stay tuned for an email reminding you to meet with an English department advisor so you can design the best schedule for the spring.

One last thought: Why not come to the Annex during the common hour, if you need a quiet place to study? Please consider the English Department on 54th Street your John Jay space to read and think, write your papers, meet with fellow students or drop in on your professors. We have tables along the inner corridor where you can sit, and a few desks with computers that, when not needed by our part-time faculty, you are welcome to use.

Life In Books: Study Abroad

Our continuing feature, "Life in Books," asks the hard questions about what makes us tick. Sometimes. This time around we're checking in with ***Ivan Garcia****, a John Jay English Major, who has a completely over-the-top answer to the old "what-did-you-do -on-your-summer-vacation" question…*



Ivan Garcia *has just returned from spending four weeks traveling and studying in China as part of Brooklyn College's Study Abroad in China Program. Taught in English by Brooklyn College faculty, the program involved three weeks of study in Nanjing enriched with tours of four other Chinese cities, including Beijing and Shanghai. We here at English Matters were eager to hear this rising senior's amazing story, so in a recent email interview, Professor Pease asked Ivan Garcia to discuss his Study Abroad experience last summer.*

Question 1: What was the program you went on, and why did you choose this program?

The program that I went on was the CUNY-Brooklyn College Study Abroad program in China. I chose this program because it was the most affordable program that I could find, and because it offered a variety of different options that no other program had. For example, we were able to travel to many different cities in China: Beijing, Xi'an, Nanjing, Suzhou/Hangzhou, & Shanghai and that's without including the side trips! Also, we were able to immerse ourselves into the local culture, mingle with the Chinese people, and see what China was really about, and best of all, it was cheap!

Question 2. You say that many things surprised you during your stay in China. What were some of those things?

There are so many things that surprised me during my stay in China. First of all, how clean, organized, and efficient everything was in the different cities we went to, when compared to New York City. The streets were huge especially in major cities like Beijing and Shanghai, and the skyscrapers were amazing! The way people received us in China was also very intriguing. They were very warm to us everywhere we went, even though we got many stares, but that was just because we were foreigners and many of the local people are not used to seeing foreigners, especially in the smaller cities. The way in which their collective society works was also very surprising and I saw how, in having a collective society, they were able to maintain such good order in many aspects of life: Family, Business, Education, Etc. particularly because of how populated China is, but those are just some of the things, out of many, that I was intrigued and surprised by.

Question 3. Would you recommend this experience to other students? Why?

I would greatly recommend this experience to all students in College! It is an experience that will change the way you perceive many things in life, especially when compared to America, and it will teach you how to interact with a culture different from one's own. I think to fully experience college every student should take advantage of a study abroad program and take that journey because it will not only help you learn academically, but also about life.

Question 4. If a student wants to do a trip like yours, what should they do?

All a student has to do in order to take a trip like mine is to find a place where they would like to go, find programs that offer study abroad trips to the certain location that you choose, and then research your best available options. It can take a while because I researched for a year and a half before I found the program which was the most suitable for me, and that offered the best package for an affordable price. In order to take such a long trip, to such a far away land, one also needs courage and needs to let go of any fears that can hold you back, because to truly experience all that the study abroad trip has to offer, one has to have an open mind because of all the differences that one encounters during the journey.

The Brooklyn College Abroad Program that Ivan participated can be reached here:
http://depthome.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc-china/

Remember, most colleges and universities sponsor a few abroad programs, and the vast majority accept applications from qualified students at any institution. In fact, there are many, many programs out there that can take you to more places than you might ever have imagined. Each one is unique, with its own goals, design, language requirements and costs, so it pays to do your homework if you hope to study abroad.

Got the travel bug? Worried about costs?
Good thing Study Abroad Scholarships are available through CUNY.

You may be eligible for a scholarship ranging from $1000 to $1650 to study abroad on a CUNY program this winter through STOCS (Study/Travel Opportunities for CUNY Students). More details here: http://www.cuny.edu/academics/programs/international/students/scholarships/stocs.html

Come to the next Study Abroad Workshop in room 4400N on
Monday, October 3 @ 1:30pm-2:30pm

English Matters 4.1 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 editors, Prof. Al Coppola, acoppola@jjay.cuny.edu and Olivera Jokic, djokic@jjay.cuny.edu. Check out past issues here: http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/departments/english/news.php