

THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

DEPARTMENT OF
English

B.A. DEGREE IN ENGLISH





Duvall's

JANE

HEAVY
THE AMERICAN JOURNAL
BY MATT DE LA PEÑA



The University of Mississippi is a notable and energizing place to study literature and creative writing. Oxford is a town for book lovers, with a cultural vibe that can be experienced through lively music, art, and culinary scenes. Home in the past to authors from William Faulkner to John Grisham, the impulse to write and read is in the air. In the Department of English, we see ourselves as heirs to the rich literary tradition that permeates the atmosphere on campus and in town and as educators for a transformative future.



English majors go everywhere. English is a relevant and adaptable undergraduate degree. In this new information age, analyzing and interpreting complex information for a specific audience is a crucial skill. Gaining interpersonal and intellectual proficiencies sought in the workforce empowers students to navigate changing and diverse futures.

English majors build careers in journalism, education, marketing, professional and creative writing, entertainment, business, information technology, editing and publishing, medicine, public relations, law, communications, politics, activism, and more.



“My experience as an English major is one of absolute acceptance and support. There’s never a bad idea or interpretation, and I’m learning a lot about myself just from the different ways my professors and peers read the texts in class. I constantly encounter new ideas and new authors, which enriches the experience even more.”

—MALERIE LOVEJOY (BA English and Linguistics '19)

English majors learn to research, read and think critically, and make clear written and multimedia arguments about complex and expressive texts. These are the most desired skills, according to employers. These skills are useful for almost any profession and are pivotal for meaningful participation in a thriving economy and society.

THREE REASONS WHY you should study English at the University of Mississippi

- 1.** Acclaimed literature and creative writing faculty
- 2.** Small upper-division seminars with talented and creative students
- 3.** Location in Oxford, a town for book lovers with a legacy of great writers



- **English majors do just about everything. Our grads include:** Law School Professors at UM and Elsewhere; a **Judge** for the US Court of Appeals; **Celebrity Business Managers**; the Director of College Sports **Marketing** for Nike; a **Business Developer** for the New Orleans Saints; **Doctors** of Dermatology, Optometry, and Orthopedic Surgery; a **Flight Surgeon** for the US Navy; **Several Chefs**; **Teachers**; the **Principal** of Jackson Prep; the **Chief of Staff** to Mississippi's Governor; a **State Trooper**; **Entrepreneurs** like the Owner of Oxford's Square Books; College and City **Librarians**; **Pilots**; **Pastors**; a **PR Officer** for the March of Dimes; **Song Writers** and **Journalists**; **VP of Design** for Land's End; **Publishers** and Bestselling **Novelists**; and the **Prime Minister** of Dominica.

THE ENGLISH MAJOR

The Department of English, with around 500 majors and minors, offers a wide range of literature courses from Beowulf and Shakespeare to African and Native American literatures, blues culture, environmental studies, film, prison studies, literary theory, and Southern writing. We also have beginning and advanced courses in the writing of poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, and screenwriting. Our junior and senior level classes are small (only 15 to 30 students), allowing for a close working relationship between students and professors. Talented research faculty teach literature classes, and widely published authors lead our creative writing classes.



**Seth Blackledge
(BA English '18)**

WHY STUDY ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI?

“The English program is one of the hallmarks of the university. My way of thinking about complex

subjects and dilemmas has fundamentally changed. Consider a degree in English if you want to challenge your perspective while studying interesting topics grounded in history and contemporary eras.”



The Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in English consists of 12 courses:

- Two literature surveys
- A foundational course in literary interpretation
- At least one course from each of the following categories:
 - Literatures of the Medieval Period*
 - Literatures of the Early Modern Period*
 - Literatures of the 18th and 19th Centuries*
 - Literatures of the 20th and 21st Centuries*
 - Counter-Canons and Critical Issues*
- A capstone course with a significant research and writing component
- English electives to explore other interests like film, gender and sexuality studies, environmental studies, linguistics, the South, literary theory, world literatures, and popular culture

Pursue an optional [creative writing emphasis](#) by taking four creative writing courses to develop your voice in writing poetry, screenplays, fiction, and creative nonfiction.

RECENT COURSES :

“Lines of Resistance: How to Read an American Poem”

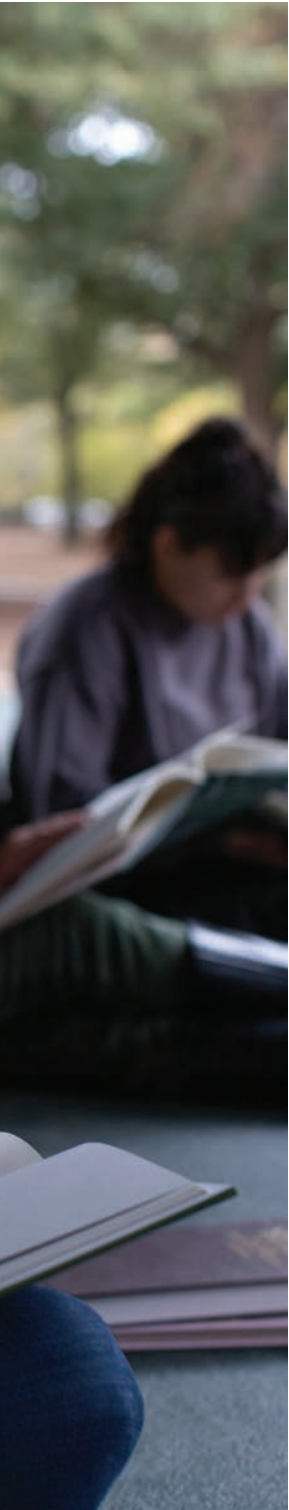
“Nature Writing”

“Gender on Film: Interpreting Jane Austen”

“Why are people still reading Shakespeare?”

“God and Science in Antebellum American Literature”

“African American Science Fiction”

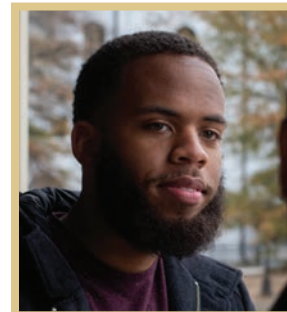


Students read from Shakespeare in Professor Erin Drew's introductory British literature class.



“Being an English major is exactly what you make of it. Whether that’s stoking your love of reading at the local independent bookstore Square Books, enhancing your writing skills by working with our campus Writing Center, or just bonding with like-minded English students, there are so many opportunities to explore your passions!”

— JOSHUA MANNERY (*BA English '21*)
Founding President of Cover-to-Cover,
a social and service organization
for undergraduate English students



Creative writing and academic essay contests carry scholarship awards:

- W. Alton Bryant Award
- Fayssoux Corneil Campbell Award
- Elmo Howell British Literature Award
- Virginia Morgan Scholarship
- Evans Harrington Creative Writing Scholarship
- The Ella Sommerville Award

Student Organizations:

- Cover-to-Cover
social and service organization for majors, minors, and all undergraduates who love reading and writing literature
- Rebel Writers
a peer creative writing group for undergraduates looking to publish
- Sigma Tau Delta
a national English honors society



Jacqueline Knirmschild (English '20) shares her poetry at our undergrad reading series, lowercase.

OUR ALUMNI



Julie Dhossche (English and Biochemistry '11)

Pediatric Dermatologist, Oregon Health and Science University.

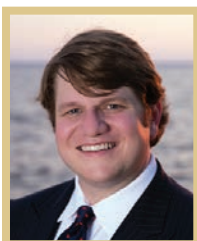
“The study of English is multifaceted—you’re learning literature, language, culture, art, philosophy and you’re honing your skills in speaking and writing. The ability to communicate is so valuable in life, and what better place to learn than in Oxford? The English department is stellar, and something about this place inspires development and creativity.”



Tametrice Eckols Strickland (English '95)

Vice Principal, Quitman County School District

“UM faculty are so advanced in preparing students that methods and resources introduced to me decades ago are still effective in the classroom today. English is global, and it opens the doors to unlimited opportunities and career paths.”



Taylor Sledge (English '07)

Owner and President of Sledge & Company Financial, LLC

“[I realized when I started working in finance after graduation] that the main thing I needed to do—alongside learning more about money—is to be considerate and

thoughtful of peoples’ problems, to really listen and take in what they need. Having a degree in English has been incredibly powerful to my career path because it taught me how to be a better communicator and learn more. That’s what a liberal arts education does in my opinion—it puts you on a track of learning how continuously to take in ideas and learn and grow.”



“University of Mississippi English Alumni at Work: A Panel Discussion”

was part of *Next Chapters: Career Networking with English Alumni*, a career advising and networking program designed specifically for our English majors and minors. Panelists included:

- **Campbell McCool** (Entrepreneur and Developer, Oxford)
- **Kent Jackson** (Senior Product Manager at Core Logic Inc., Oxford)
- **Nicole Tisdale** (Subcommittee Staff Director, Homeland Security Committee of House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.)
- **Kayleigh Webb** (Associate Publicist at HarperCollins, New York)
- **Kimbrelly Dandridge** (Associate Counsel at Gap Inc., San Francisco)
- **Lindsey Neyman** (Production Talent Manager at FuseFX, Los Angeles)



“I have been a high school teacher and a software developer, and am now an education coordinator for a software developer training program. Excellent communication skills were required for each of these disparate positions, and the skills I developed and the projects that I produced as an English major stood me in good stead for each opportunity.”

—Melissa Smith (BA English '06)

OUR ALUMNI

Other notable English majors

Greg Iles (BA English '83)

Best-selling novelist

Iles studied creative writing with University of Mississippi faculty, including Writer-in-Residence Willie Morris, a revered writer and editor who brought in friends William Styron, James Dickey, John Knowles, and many others to enrich his classes.

After years playing in the band Frankly Scarlet, Iles wrote his first novel, *Spandau Phoenix* (1993), about Nazi war criminal Rudolf Hess that became the first of thirteen New York Times Best Sellers. With his third novel, *Mortal Fear*, Iles began setting his novels in Mississippi, and in *The Quiet Game*, his fourth, he created Penn Cage and placed him in Iles' own hometown of Natchez on the Mississippi River. His novels have been made into films, translated into 20+ languages, and published in 35 countries.

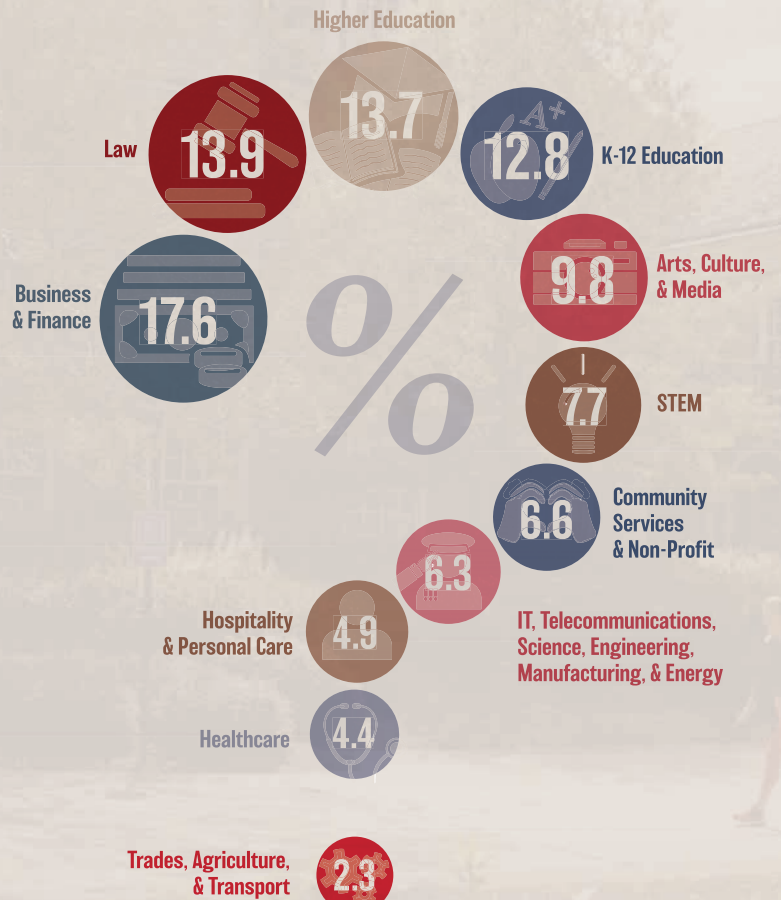
Glen Ballard (BA English '75)

Six-Time Grammy Award winner

One of popular music's most accomplished producers and songwriters, Ballard's records have sold 150+ million copies worldwide. His production company AUGURY develops original, music-driven content for television, film, and stage. During his diverse career, Ballard has worked with the biggest names in music, from Barbra Streisand and Aerosmith to Dave Matthews and Katy Perry.

He produced and cowrote Alanis Morissette's *Jagged Little Pill* (33 million sales worldwide, four Grammys, and named Best Album of the Decade by Billboard Magazine), wrote and arranged "Man in the Mirror" for Michael Jackson, and cowrote and produced the Grammy-winning and Oscar-nominated song "Believe" (Josh Groban) for the feature film *The Polar Express*.

Where are our Alumni Working





Author and screenwriter Chris Offutt's work includes True Blood, Treme, Weeds, and Country Dark.

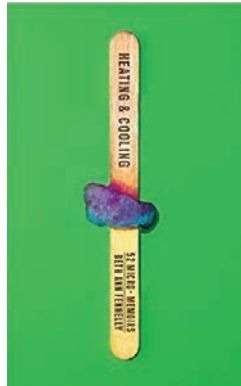
The forty plus faculty members in the Department of English are invested in their students' educations and futures. They are connected to communities across the university, Oxford, the state of Mississippi, and beyond. They are award-winning scholars and creative writers who have been recognized with prestigious fellowships and leadership roles in their professional associations.

"What I appreciated most about being an English major were the opportunities I had to meet and learn from well-known, award-winning authors. With my degree, the possibilities are endless."

—ALLIE JONES (BA English '19)



OUR FACULTY: CONNECTED



“Southerners in general and Mississippians in particular are known to have produced many of our nation’s greatest writers. It gives me great joy to work with students who will shape and create the writing of the future.”

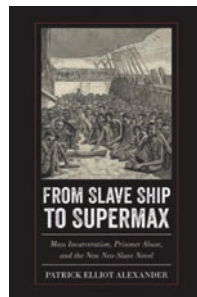
WHY STUDY ENGLISH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI?

“I can’t imagine a better place for a young writer to live than Oxford. It’s not just that we have rich history, with the ghost of Faulkner still roaming the streets. It’s that the present is so rich and diverse. Students can attend readings on campus, thanks to the John and Renée Grisham Visiting Writers Series, or attend readings at Square Books, or attend the student-run reading series, Broken English. They can take workshops on campus or share their work with the Rebel Writers Club. This is a place where literature is currency, where books matter, and the energy is palpable and welcoming.”

—BETH ANN FENNELLY
Professor of English and Mississippi Poet Laureate

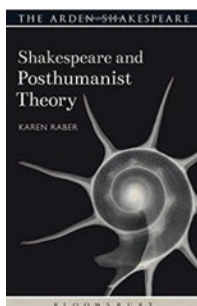


FACULTY AFFILIATIONS: African American Studies, Gender Studies, Southern Studies, Medieval Studies, Environmental Studies



Patrick Elliott Alexander's *From Slave Ship to Supermax*

Patrick Alexander received the Mississippi Humanities Council Humanities Educator Award in recognition of his work as cofounder and codirector of the Prison-to-College Pipeline Program at two state prisons.



Karen Raber's *Shakespeare and Posthumanist Theory*

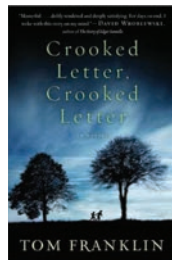
Karen Raber is executive director of the Shakespeare Association of America.

OUR FACULTY: AWARD-WINNING



Kiese Laymon, *Heavy: An American Memoir*

Winner of multiple prizes, including the Carnegie Medal for Nonfiction, LA Times Isherwood Prize for Autobiographical Prose, and Audible's Audiobook of the Year. Named a Best Book of the Year by the *The New York Times*, *Publishers Weekly*, *NPR*, *Southern Living*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and more.



Aimee Nezhukumatathil Winner of the Pushcart Prize

Tom Franklin, *Crooked Letter, Crooked Letter* Winner of the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for Best Mystery/Thriller

Adam Gussow, *Beyond the Crossroads: The Devil and the Blues Tradition* Recipient of the John G. Cawelti Award and the *Living Blues* Best Blues Book Award

Caroline Wigginton, *In the Neighborhood: Women's Publication in Early America* Winner of the *Early American Literature* Book Prize

Scott R. MacKenzie, *Be It Ever So Humble: Poverty, Fiction, and the Invention of the Middle-Class Home* Winner of the Walker Cowen Memorial Prize



THE UNIVERSITY of
MISSISSIPPI

**For additional information visit
www.english.olemiss.edu or contact**

CAROLINE WIGGINTON
Director of Undergraduate Studies
cwiggint@olemiss.edu

Department of English

Bondurant Hall
P.O. Box 1848, University of Mississippi, University, MS 38677
662.915.7439 | engl@olemiss.edu

 [Twitter @olemissenglish](https://twitter.com/olemissenglish)

 [Facebook umengl](https://www.facebook.com/umengl)

 [Instagram umenglishdepartment](https://www.instagram.com/umenglishdepartment)