



# THE FOLIO

THE UTEP DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



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## NOTABLE ALUMNA:

# Dr. Elizabeth N. Conquest

I met my late husband, Robert Conquest, when Jon Manchip White—at that time overseeing the English Department’s Creative Writing program—invited him to give a poetry reading at UTEP. Knowledgeable, educated, proficient in a wide range of fields, Bob was best known as a historian, though during his life he was also a soldier, diplomat, poet, literary critic, novelist, anthologist, editor, and advisor to heads of state. After his death, as literary executor I was tasked not only with sorting through his papers (the resulting inventory runs 121 pages), but also with editing a final Collected Poems, his memoir, and a Selected Letters. The work brought me full circle, back to an academic career abandoned when, Reader, I married him.

Most of that career had been at UTEP—first as an undergraduate earning a B.A. in Speech & Drama; then as a graduate student studying with that fine poet Robert Burlingame, and the legendary ‘Doc’ Sonnichsen. These are the two who—as Doc put it in his ‘Little Blue Flame’ commencement address—I’ll always remember with gratitude, who showed me what I wanted to do, and then showed me how to do it. M.A. in hand, I taught writing and literature courses at El Paso Community College before joining the UTEP English Department as a Lecturer. I spent the 1976-77 academic year at the University of Southern California, doing the coursework for a PhD in Rhetoric and Literature, then returned to teach English 3112 (the research paper) and 6111—a 6-unit interdepartmental communications course combining introductory English and Speech courses. The office in Hudspeth Hall that I shared with Martha Lou Broaddus had at that time an unobstructed view (now obscured by the Bookstore) out over the Rio Grande and into Juárez. Bob Esch, in an office across the hall, generously shared tried-and-true teaching methods with us. Walter Taylor, Department Chair, was remarkably understanding when I resigned and moved to London.

During the 12 years I served on the International Advisory Board of the Fabergé Arts Foundation, other than giving lectures in this country and abroad on the works of Carl Fabergé, I rarely put what I’d learned at UTEP and USC to any particular use—though I used to joke that a doctorate was necessary to keep up with conversations around our dinner table. But apparently, like riding a bike, such skills are never forgotten, and it’s been surprisingly easy to slip back into a scholarly life.

In the last weeks of his life, Bob was going through his eight earlier collections of verse correcting misprints and, in some cases, making minor alterations. And—as always—writing another poem. When his publisher asked me to edit The Collected



Dr. Elizabeth Conquest.

Poems of Robert Conquest (forthcoming from Waywiser Press in Spring 2020), I worked not only from the notes Bob had made in his previous collections, but also added some poems found among his manuscripts and notebooks that had been published only in journals, or not at all.

That same summer he’d been making final edits to his memoir *Two Muses*. Bob’s method of composition in prose works was to write ‘bits’, then assemble these into chapters. The first half of the book ran chronologically, but the remainder sat in folders. Deciding where those should be placed was a particularly tricky task when a figure appeared first in the early chapters, but in other sections as well. I was baffled until Tim Garton Ash suggested I read *Timebends*, Arthur Miller’s memoir. There, when a figure appears early in the narrative, Miller goes on to relate anecdotes about that person even if they occurred at a later date. This is how we tell our own stories, so it made sense. In lieu of the final chapter which Bob had not yet written, I chose one of his poems, “Sooner or Later”, as an envoi.

I’m now editing his Selected Letters. The titles of these often

LISTEN TO DR. CONQUEST DISCUSSING PHILIP LARKIN'S NOVEL *A GIRL IN WINTER* WITH ROBERT POGUE HARRISON AND TOBIAS WOLF ON STANFORD'S WEBSITE [HTTPS://WEB.STANFORD.EDU/GROUP/BOOKCLUB/CGI-BIN/WORDPRESS/?P=4573](https://web.stanford.edu/group/bookclub/cgi-bin/wordpress/?p=4573)

**WORKING THROUGH THESE PAPERS HAS BEEN THE CONTINUATION OF A CONVERSATION STARTED 43 YEARS AGO, LEAVING ME WITH A GREATER APPRECIATION OF MY HUSBAND'S LONG AND EVENTFUL LIFE.**



Letters collected by Dr. Conquest.

include “A Life in Letters”, and the best document the life, work, and times of a writer. What makes a letter worthy of inclusion in such a book? Patrick Kurp suggests certain criteria: the letter must transcend its immediate context and purpose, possess the readability of a first-rate poem or essay, and—*inadvertently or otherwise*—reveal something about the character of the person writing it. Bob kept copies of many of the letters he wrote, but not all. Some years ago he’d obtained from the Bodleian copies of those written to Philip Larkin, and from the Huntington Library those to Kingsley Amis. I hold copyright to all of Bob’s writings, which simplifies the permission process—e.g., when in Oxford, the Weston Library allowed me to photograph 37 letters he’d written to Bruce Montgomery.

How does one track down the rest? Possession of the incoming correspondence gave me a general sense of what should be included and is proving useful for footnotes. Those still living I approached directly; for those deceased, a quick Google search usually revealed where their papers had been placed. The catalogs of many special collections are accessible online, and most curators, proud of their holdings, are more than willing to help locate letters and—for a nominal fee—provide researchers with photocopies or scans.

When I began this work, Martin Amis—worried about the effects of the inevitable stabs of memory—urged me to hire a graduate student, but because of my own training and experience, and because my husband’s friends became mine as well, I thought I’d be more likely to recognize things of import that someone not well-versed in the period might overlook. And as Martin wrote in *Experience*, grief is like rain—you have to put your head down and walk right through it. Working through these papers has been the continuation of a conversation started 43 years ago, leaving me with a greater appreciation of my husband’s long and eventful life. To rephrase John Mansfield’s remark of Jane Austen: with love and loss, success and failure, life made him familiar. As it will for each of us.

SPECIAL THANKS: THE EDITORS OF THE FOLIO WOULD LIKE TO THANK DR. CONQUEST FOR HER REFLECTION.

LISTEN TO DR. CONQUEST DISCUSSING PHILIP LARKIN’S NOVEL A GIRL IN WINTER WITH ROBERT POGUE HARRISON AND TOBIAS WOLF ON STANFORD’S WEBSITE [HTTPS://WEB.STANFORD.EDU/GROUP/BOOKCLUB/CGI-BIN/WORDPRESS/?P=4573](https://web.stanford.edu/group/bookclub/cgi-bin/wordpress/?p=4573)

# El Paso Food Voices



# As

a literary scholar who specializes in food studies and folklore, Dr. Meredith Abarca has cultivated strong relationships with members of her community by learning how their lives are shaped by

their food practices. She first began collecting food stories from community members—whom she sees as “collaborators”—on a cassette recorder. As her work in food studies progressed, so did her technology: from cassettes, to digital recorders, to multiple cameras, and Dr. Abarca now films her community collaborators with a high-tech operation that includes lights, microphones, and mounted cameras.

But Dr. Abarca is quick to point out that she uses technology solely for the purpose of capturing and sharing the voices of the Paso del Norte community. Specifically, she seeks to “capture the voices of those we don’t hear.” In her research, Dr. Abarca has interviewed people in what she calls “public kitchens” throughout

El Paso and Ciudad Juárez—places ranging from Ardivino’s to tiny puestos, or food stands. In El Paso Food Voices—a digital archive that will be housed by UTEP’s Institute of Oral History—she endeavors to delineate stories from both public and private kitchens. In order to create a space for those voices, Dr. Abarca is gathering, recording, and archiving stories from collaborators in El Paso and Juárez, with the help of her student research assistants Solomon Contreras and Jonathan Hinojos.

As a food scholar, Dr. Abarca has unearthed the compelling stories behind cooking. She says, “This our history; this is our culture. We live here, but food connects us to a broader world. We love brisket, so let’s go back in history and talk about the Spaniards bringing cattle, because food not only connects us to our culture, but to the world beyond. As different as we are, let’s talk about our food—that’s what we share.” In her collaborators’ stories, she has discovered several themes within the act of cooking: “One motif that comes to mind is that we mold food with our hands. We not only use our hands to grow food, but to create communities.” Collaborators also consistently bring up the invest-

## “ONE MOTIF THAT COMES TO MIND IS THAT WE MOLD FOOD WITH OUR HANDS. WE NOT ONLY USE OUR HANDS TO GROW FOOD, BUT TO CREATE COMMUNITIES.”



ment of time that goes into cooking. Fire, water, and air are also common recurring themes. This shared imagery speaks to Dr. Abarca's central thesis, which is that food connects people and builds communities. A focal point of that connection is the language community members use. Dr. Abarca notes, "The kitchen has a jargon. There is an assumption that you would know some recipes, an assumption of what comes first in cooking. Every kitchen has a specialized language."

Dr. Abarca notes, "Celebrity chefs get a lot of attention—but there are a lot of people who have an impact on our culinary history and identity in our community." Thus, her goal with the El Paso Food Voices archive ventures "beyond capturing the landscape or history. It's acknowledging ordinary people and what contributions they've had in ways that history books don't always show." She emphasizes that these stories are "living history" that is "preserved through our memories, and comes to life when we tell these stories."

So far, Dr. Abarca has collected stories from 15 collaborators. She asserts, "Not all of the stories are finalized. No one story is more unique; it's different. I'm looking for commonalities—like the theme of the hands." Each story has required recording, editing, and uploading. In this process, she has become "a professor in folklore and literature that is moving into the 21st century." The stories will be shared in two formats. Audio and video recordings will be archived and shared, and the project's

webpage will also host information about public kitchens, private kitchens, recipes, and sources. Dr. Abarca and her team have worked tirelessly to collect photos and other historical documents to share as well.

Dr. Abarca envisions a wide audience for this project. While it is being created through an academic lens, she has endeavored to make the project accessible linguistically as well as electronically. In addition, this project has incredible meaning to the collaborators whose oral stories are featured. Because of that, the archive will become invaluable not only to them, but to their families and communities.

Because of the massive collaboration El Paso Food Voices requires, Dr. Abarca has many people to thank. She is most thankful for the help from her collaborators. She is also "very grateful to have been selected as a faculty fellow for the Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP, funded by the Mellon Foundation. This project has allowed me to work with student research assistants, Solomon Contreras and Jonathan Hinojos." The project will be housed by UTEP's Institute of Oral History (Digital Commons) and through a webpage she's curating and designing with the help of Steve Varela from Academic Technologies; she would like to thank Mr. Varela and his team for that assistance.

Audio files for El Paso Food Voices will be archived in UTEP's Institute of Oral History and videos along with historical and cultural information will be featured on the webpage, which will be up and running in late May 2019.

# The Humanities Collaborative



Professor Brian Kirby (left), Professor Margie Nelson Rodriguez (center), and Dr. Brian Yothers (right).

**T**he Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP continues to thrive as it moves toward the second year of a three-year grant program, which is funded through a generous \$2 million-dollar grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Principal Investigator Dr. Yothers states that the Humanities Collaborative “has been working over the past year to support a good amount of joint programming between UTEP and EPCC,” while Project Manager Vince Martinez notes that this partnership has “hit the ground running, and it’s been expanding quickly.”

The Collaborative is built on diverse programming from across the humanities. Reflecting on the first year of the Collaborative, Dr. Yothers notes that The Humanities Collaborative supports diverse programming from across the humanities, including an

EPCC event on Plato’s philosophy organized by EPCC Professor Crisol Escobedo; exhibits on local history at EPCC’s Northwest campus; a number of music history lectures and masterclasses organized by EPCC’s Dr. Yasmin Flores; and UTEP programming including monthly Mining Books events and the Annual Literature Lecture. As its slate of public programming grows, Dr. Yothers note that The Humanities Collaborative has “been looking at how to extend and improve programs,” such as the recent joint student conference, “Discovering the Humanities,” held at EPCC-Rio Grande, and a Professional-in-residence presentation by Patty Tiscareño, Executive Director of the Rio Grande Cancer Foundation, on the role the humanities can play in a career outside of academia.

Faculty-led projects form another important element of The Humanities Collaborative’s mission. UTEP English Professor Dr. Meredith Abarca’s El Paso Food Voices project (profiled in



this year's Folio) features research contributions from two EPCC students. Similarly, UTEP History Professor Dr. Jeff Shepherd is working with a UTEP student and an EPCC student on creating materials that will illuminate the relationship between El Paso and indigenous peoples. UTEP English Professor Dr. Tom Schmid's study-abroad class, "Walking with Wordsworth: Romantic Literature in the lake District, U.K." is now a joint UTEP-EPCC class, and he is working to introduce William Wordsworth's poetry to middle school classrooms. All three of these Faculty Fellows will deliver public presentations about their projects.

Further opportunities for UTEP and EPCC students to engage with the humanities abound, with student internships in place at UTEP's Centennial Museum and the Library's Special Collections Department. Meaningful cross-campus connections are being forged through student-faculty collaborations, such as EPCC History Professor Patrick Pyne's partnership with two UTEP doctoral students.

Project Manager Vince Martinez notes that The Humanities Collaborative has quickly ramped up its activities: "We already have several student fellows, and we're going through applications for undergraduates and graduate students." As this three-year grant program continues to expand its reach, Mr. Martinez is "trying to build awareness on both campuses and in the larger community as well." Dr. Yothers adds that, "as rapidly as it's grown, and as large as it's grown, it's going to grow even more rapidly over the next two years."

As they reflect on this progress, Dr. Yothers and Mr. Martinez would also like to thank Ana Diaz, Administrative Services Coordinator for the English Department; EPCC's co-Principal Investigators, Professors Margie Nelson Rodríguez and Brian Kirby; UTEP President Dr. Diana Natalicio and EPCC President Dr. William Serrata; and Daniel Carey-Whalen, Director of the Centennial Museum.

**Top:** Students and faculty presenting at the Humanities Conference at EPCC's Little Temple.

**Bottom:** Students exploring an exhibit on "The Haunted History of El Paso."



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HUMANITIES COLLABORATIVE AT EPCC-UTEP, VISIT ITS PROJECT BLOG ([WWW.HUMANITIESCOLLABORATIVE.UTEP.EDU/PROJECT-BLOG](http://WWW.HUMANITIESCOLLABORATIVE.UTEP.EDU/PROJECT-BLOG)) AND FACEBOOK PAGE [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EPCCUTEPHUMANITIESCOLLABORATIVE/](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EPCCUTEPHUMANITIESCOLLABORATIVE/).

# The Bilingual Professional Writing Certificate



Students and faculty enjoying the BPW Lab's open house.

**“ONE OF THE  
CERTIFICATE’S  
MAIN GOALS IS FOR  
STUDENTS TO BE ABLE  
TO HARVEST THEIR  
OWN BILINGUALISM.”**

This Spring, the Certificate Program’s Bilingual Professional Writing Laboratory opened its doors in Hudspeth 301. This computer lab offers a dedicated space for the Certificate’s students, and for any UTEP students working on bilingual writing projects. Funded by the Department of English and the Department of Languages and Linguistics, this bilingual professional writing work space features specialized computer equipment and the translation software Wordfast. It is open Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10:00 – 1:00 PM and is also available by appointment.

Furthermore, the BPWC’s core faculty, including Dr. Baca, Dr. Theresa Donovan, and Dr. Terry Quezada, are spreading the word about this unique bilingual writing certificate at national and international conferences, such as the Conference on College Composition and Communication, the Association of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, and the Latin American Association of Writing Studies (ALES), which was held in Santiago, Chile last October. This June, Drs. Isabel Baca, Terry Quezada, and Theresa Donovan will be presenting at the XVIII AELFE Congress at the University of Navarra in Pamplona, Spain. In July, Dr. Isabel Baca, Victoria Garcia, Juan Moisés (Moy) García Rentería, and Joy Urbina (UTEP Librarian) will be presenting at the 22nd Conference on Languages for Specific Purposes in Padua, Italy.

**T**he Bilingual Professional Writing Certificate (BPWC) is flourishing as it completes its first year since opening its doors in the fall of 2018 through the generous support of a \$100,000 Humanities Initiative grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). Program Director Dr. Isabel Baca and Associate Director Victoria Garcia are proud of the BPWC’s first three graduating students, who will complete the Certificate Program this Spring: Jennifer Young, Maria Fernanda Ramos, and Edgar Beltran. Dr. Baca points to these students’ work with the Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center, the Chamizal National Memorial, and UTEP’s Women’s and Gender Studies Program as examples of the BPWC’s practical emphasis on Spanish-English professional bilingual communication and community engagement.

Assistant Director Juan Moisés (Moy) García Rentería, also a doctoral student in Rhetoric and Writing Studies, notes that “one of the Certificate’s main goals is for students to be able to harvest their own bilingualism.” Mr. Rentería cites the BPWC’s multifaceted focus on translation, rhetoric, and professional writing as a means for inviting students to “build not only their writing, but also their identities as students.” The Certificate Program’s diverse course offerings include bilingual Technical and Workplace Writing classes that are also available to non-Certificate students who wish to explore their bilingualism while completing courses required for their degree plans. These widely useful bilingual courses (RWS 3355 and RWS 3359) will be offered online beginning in the fall. Graduate bilingual writing courses, and a possible graduate bilingual writing certificate, are also in the works.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BILINGUAL PROFESSIONAL WRITING CERTIFICATE, VISIT [HTTP://BILINGUALWRITING.UTEP.EDU/](http://bilingualwriting.utep.edu/), [FACEBOOK.COM/UTEPBPWC/](https://www.facebook.com/UTEPBPWC/), OR REACH OUT BY EMAIL AT [BILINGUALWRITING@UTEP.EDU](mailto:bilingualwriting@utep.edu). THE APPLICATION PROCESS INVOLVES ADMISSION TO UTEP, ALONG WITH THE SUBMISSION OF A LETTER OF INTEREST IN ENGLISH OR SPANISH, A COLLEGE TRANSCRIPT, AND A LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAM.



# Technical and Professional Writing Certificate

**T**

he proudest moment for any professor is when a student finds success based on their experiences in class. Dr. Terry Quezada, Director of the Graduate Technical and Professional Writing (TPW) Certificate, had one such experience this past semester. A student, Erika Villegas, emailed Dr. Quezada to share that she had recently written her very first memo for work. Erika completed the memo with confidence and received minimal

revisions. She asserts that her immediate success came from the “strong, outcome-focused Technical and Professional Writing certificate program.” She continues to find success from the program: “The readings, discussions, and assignments have strengthened my professional writing and ability to compose documents that are effective and ethical for their context. Coincidentally, my employer asked me to write a memo to deliver a sensitive message just two weeks into the course. The coursework has been immediately relevant and applicable in my professional career.” Dr. Quezada cites Erika’s story as one example of the professional and personal enrichment the TPW Certificate provides.

According to Dr. Quezada, “the program is designed for mid-level professionals from all fields who have found that, in their professions, they have to write in very different scenarios and contexts that they had not anticipated when they were studying for that profession.” Because of that targeted audience, the program is designed to help students become more productive in their chosen field. Because of

this broad but powerful approach, the program serves a variety of students, “such as engineers, individuals in the military who are looking to transition to civilian jobs, and educators who are looking to improve their writing skills as professionals as well as their teaching skills.” The program also serves master’s students who want to strengthen their writing skills. The program graduated 11 students in Fall 2018, the highest number since the program’s inception in 2011.

The certificate is able to serve diverse disciplines because it is, as Dr. Quezada describes it, “application focused. We ground some of that practice in theory because we cannot possibly

anticipate every single piece of writing that professionals are expected to do. We’re not just helping them achieve their immediate writing goals, but we certainly want them to analyze the writing situation and write effectively in any possible context.”

The program is very flexible and accessible for both professionals and graduate students. It requires four classes: RWS 5312 (Technical Writing), RWS 5313 (Grant Writing), RWS 5315 (Professional Writing and Rhetoric), and RWS 5317 (Edit-



**Erika Villegas,**  
UTEP employee and TPW student.

ing). Each course is seven weeks long and is offered in an online format through UTEP Connect. Dr. Quezada emphasizes that the program’s courses are taught by “experienced faculty who bring a wealth of information and practical experience to the courses. They understand what the students want from these courses, and can therefore design the courses to meet the students’ expectations.” Faculty members who teach in the program include Dr. Kate Mangelsdorf, Dr. Maggy Smith, Dr. Judith Fourzan, Dr. Isabel Baca, Dr. Laura Gonzales, and Dr. Theresa Donovan.

Students who are interested in completing the Technical and Professional Writing Certificate must have a bachelor’s degree and official transcripts, a minimum 2.5 GPA, and complete a statement of purpose and a graduate school application.

## THE PROUDEST MOMENT FOR ANY PROFESSOR IS WHEN A STUDENT FINDS SUCCESS BASED ON THEIR EXPERIENCES IN CLASS.

## CONFERENCE

# Challenges and Perspectives:

## THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS IN THE LEGAL SYSTEM



Dr. Gonzales (center), Ms. Rivera (right), and Paul LaPrade (left) discuss the conference.

THE CONFERENCE  
WILL TAKE PLACE AT  
THE JUAN DE CORDOVA  
PUBLIC LIBRARY IN  
OAXACA, MEXICO ON  
AUGUST 8-9, 2019.

**In** collaboration with CEPIADET (Centro Profesional Indígena de Asesoría, Defensa y Traducción) in Oaxaca, Mexico, Dr. Laura Gonzales and doctoral student Nora Rivera are organizing a symposium to, in Dr. Gonzales' words, "bring together Indigenous language interpreters who advocate for the language legal rights, representation, and sustainability of Indigenous communities across the globe." The conference, Challenges and Perspectives: The Professionalization of Indigenous Language Interpreters in The Legal System, will take place at the Juan De Cordova Public library in Oaxaca, Mexico on August 8-9, 2019.

Ms. Nora Rivera describes this unique, timely conference as "a colloquium for translators and interpreters of indigenous languages," whose "main purpose is to get together and share information on best practices and research" for application "in different industries, but, more specifically, in the legal field." She notes that this is "a big need, especially in the south of Mexico, where there's a large population of indigenous speakers." Dr. Laura Gonzales adds that the Challenges and Perspectives Conference seeks "to bring together indigenous language interpreters from Mexico, Central America, and South America, as well as researchers and students interested in indigenous languages."

Drawing on her experience as an interpreter and interpretation project manager, Dr. Laura Gonzales reflects that "there would be a lot of indigenous youth who needed assistance," whose distinct linguistic needs were too often met with the assumption that "since you come through South America, Central America, or Mexico, you speak Spanish." Thus, for Ms. Nora Rivera, the Challenges and Perspectives Conference represents an urgent opportunity to engage in dialogue about issues that are increas-

ingly relevant along the U.S.-Mexico border: "with the influx of immigrants here, there's a big need. We're hoping to be able to spread best practices." By inviting a diverse group of professional translators and interpreters into a shared conversation, Nora sees the potential for this conference to help bridge the "disconnect between translating and certain fields" through the exchange of "professional expertise."

Motivated by this important mission, Dr. Laura Gonzales and Ms. Nora Rivera are now contributing to the collaborative, community-driven process of planning and fundraising for this conference. This team-based approach, through CEPIADET, also involves a partnership with the El Paso Interpreters and Translators Association (EPITA), support from Arizona State University's Women of Color in Computing Research Collaborative, and contributions from UTEP graduate students through the English Department's Multilingual User-Experience Research Center.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES CONFERENCE, AND ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS, VISIT THE CONFERENCE'S GOFUNDME PAGE AT [WWW.GOFUNDME.COM/INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE-INTERPRETATION-CONFERENCE](http://WWW.GOFUNDME.COM/INDIGENOUS-LANGUAGE-INTERPRETATION-CONFERENCE).

## CONFERENCE

# The Rocky Mountain Modern Language Arts Conference



The Hotel Paso del Norte, previously known as the Camino Real.

**T**he Rocky Mountain Modern Language Arts (RMMLA) Conference has long been a popular conference for UTEP faculty and students. Dr. Ruben Espinosa has attended the RMMLA conference nearly every year since 2008, and he also served on the conference's Executive Board for three years (2011-2013), as well as on the Rocky Mountain Review Editorial Board (2012-2018). During his time on the Executive Board, Dr. Espinosa recalls discussions about the possibility of hosting the conference in El Paso. With the city's downtown revitalization initiative making it a more attractive choice, the 73rd Annual Convention of the RMMLA will be held in El Paso from October 10-12, 2019 in the newly renovated Hotel Paso del Norte.

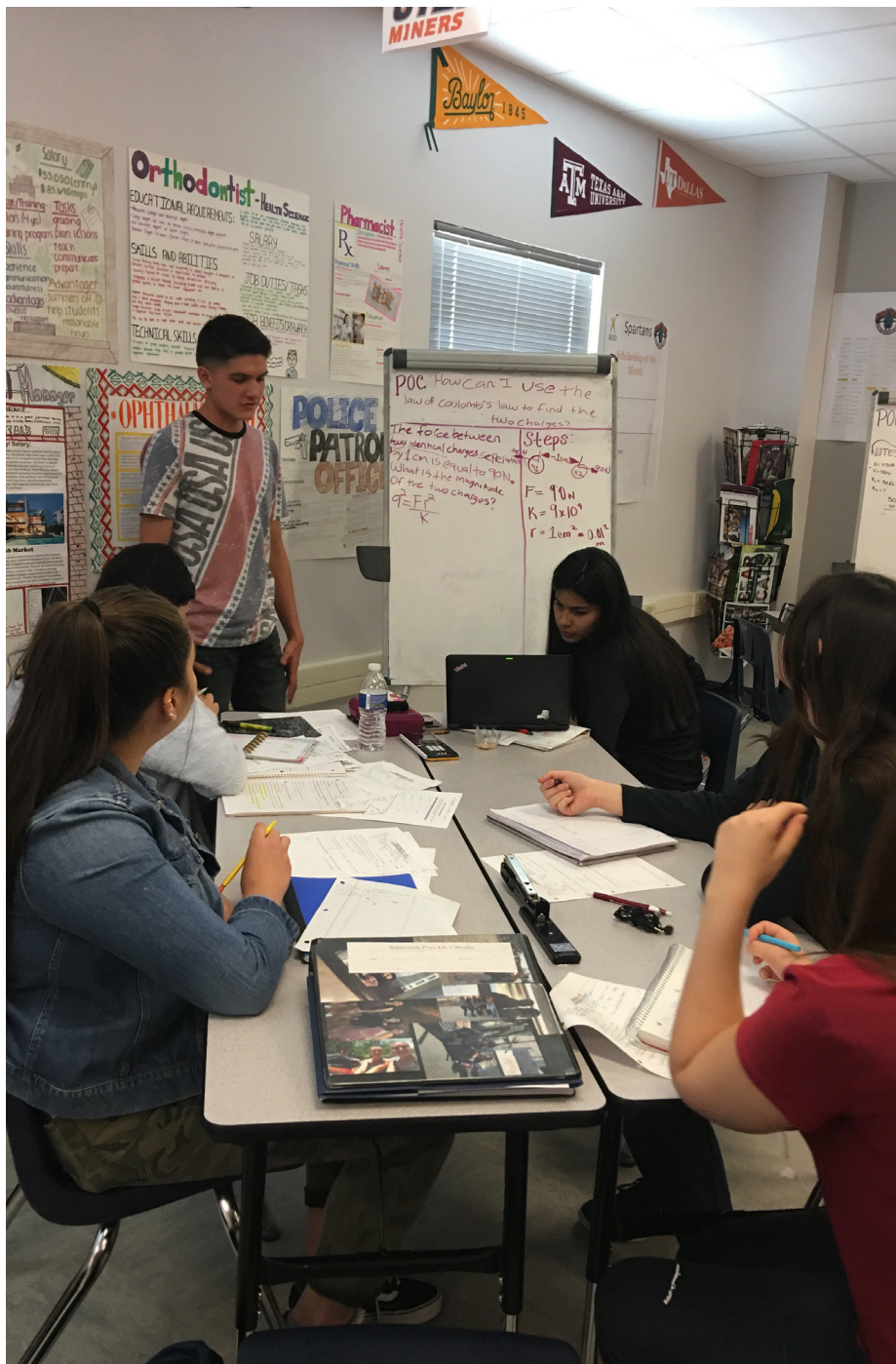
Dr. Espinosa first became involved in the Rocky Mountain MLA Conference as a graduate student. He describes his graduate experience at the conference as "validating," because "people in the audience were asking questions, and engaging with the work seriously." This sentiment is echoed by Dr. Joe Ortiz, who has attended the conference almost every year since 2012. Dr. Ortiz often pilots new work and ideas at RMMLA, due in large part to the congenial nature of the conference and the supportive audience. This gives him the opportunity to build up work in preparation for larger projects.

Both Dr. Espinosa and Dr. Ortiz describe the conferences as very welcoming to graduate students. When Dr. Espinosa was on the executive board, "35-40% of presenters were graduate students, which is fairly high." Dr. Ortiz says the audience is "receptive to graduate students," and student participation in the RMMLA conference "helps them immensely. There is nothing like having to give a conference paper, and hearing other conference papers as part of a panel, that teaches students that part of academic work." He emphasizes that conferences are key for developing students' confidence and professionalizing them for their future careers. Dr. Espinosa agrees, adding that the RMMLA Conference also provides opportunities for students to network with scholars in their field. He reflects on his own experience as a graduate student, when he met one of his "favorite scholars, an early champion of my work, Evelyn Gajowski. She was in the audience, and spoke to me after. It lived up to everything I'd ever heard about conferences."

Dr. Ortiz asserts that even if students are unable to present, they should consider attending the RMMLA Conference: "I would encourage grad students to even attend just one session. There's nothing like seeing some of these scholars present their papers, but also to see what kinds of questions are asked. They can learn so much from attending."

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN MODERN LANGUAGE ARTS CONFERENCE CAN BE FOUND AT [WWW.RMMLA.ORG/](http://WWW.RMMLA.ORG/)

# School Outreach and the First-Year Experience

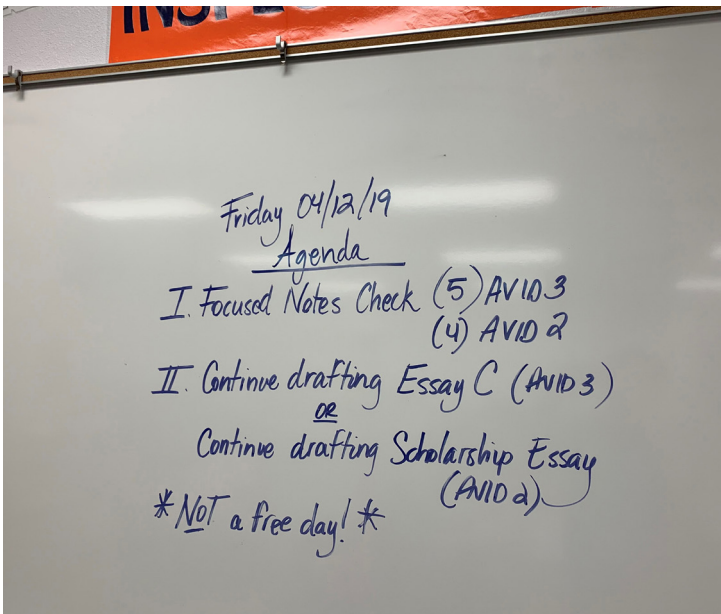


Students preparing for an AVID meeting, and a brainstorming session.

Last summer, Socorro Independent School District (SISD) reached out to the UTEP Edge student success initiative in search of a higher-education partner to help fortify their AVID program, which is “a global nonprofit organization dedicated to closing the achievement gap by preparing all students for college and other postsecondary opportunities.” Ms. Carmen Gonzalez, the Program Manager for Outreach and Student Access at UTEP, contacted Dr. Judith Fourzan (Rhetoric and Writing Studies and First-Year Composition), Ms. Aarin Walston (First-Year Composition and English & American Literature), and Dr. Anjanette Darrington (English Education), coordinating what would soon become a promising partnership between the UTEP English Department and SISD.

This partnership began with a summer workshop in 2018. Ms. Walston described it as both a collaborative and sobering experience. During the workshop, she connected with faculty members from English Language Arts, including a principal, a 12th grade teacher, and an 8th grade teacher. They discussed many educational concerns, including the fact that “their former students were approaching them about the difference in culture [between high school and college], especially regarding failure.” The array of perspectives allowed her to gauge the needs of incoming freshman, a demographic she serves well as a Literature and First-Year Composition Lecturer.

Dr. Fourzan attended a similar workshop for directors during the summer of 2018. Her conversations focused on “teaching students how to study and ask questions.” Currently, the primary goal of this partnership is to share information between UTEP faculty and K-12 instructors in SISD. Dr. Fourzan and Ms. Walston will be attending SISD workshops again this summer, where they plan to share their syllabi and course materials. Ms. Walston adds, “We’re also focus-



Flyer by FYC student Tevin Dieckhause-King.



# THE FYC FRONTIER FIESTA

**Each semester**, the UTEP First-Year Composition (FYC) program hosts the FYC Frontier Fiesta. This event is a celebration of the hard work accomplished by FYC students, most of whom are in their first year at UTEP. During the Fiesta, the program presents exemplary PSAs and short documentaries created by students in RWS 1301 and RWS 1302.

The FYC Frontier Fiesta will be held on May 14th at 6:00 PM in the Union Cinema. It was organized by Marco Rodriguez and Rebekah Grado, both FYC instructors. Learn more about the event by following FYC on Facebook, [fyc@utep](https://www.facebook.com/fyc@utep).

ing on building empathy for how our students are coming in.”

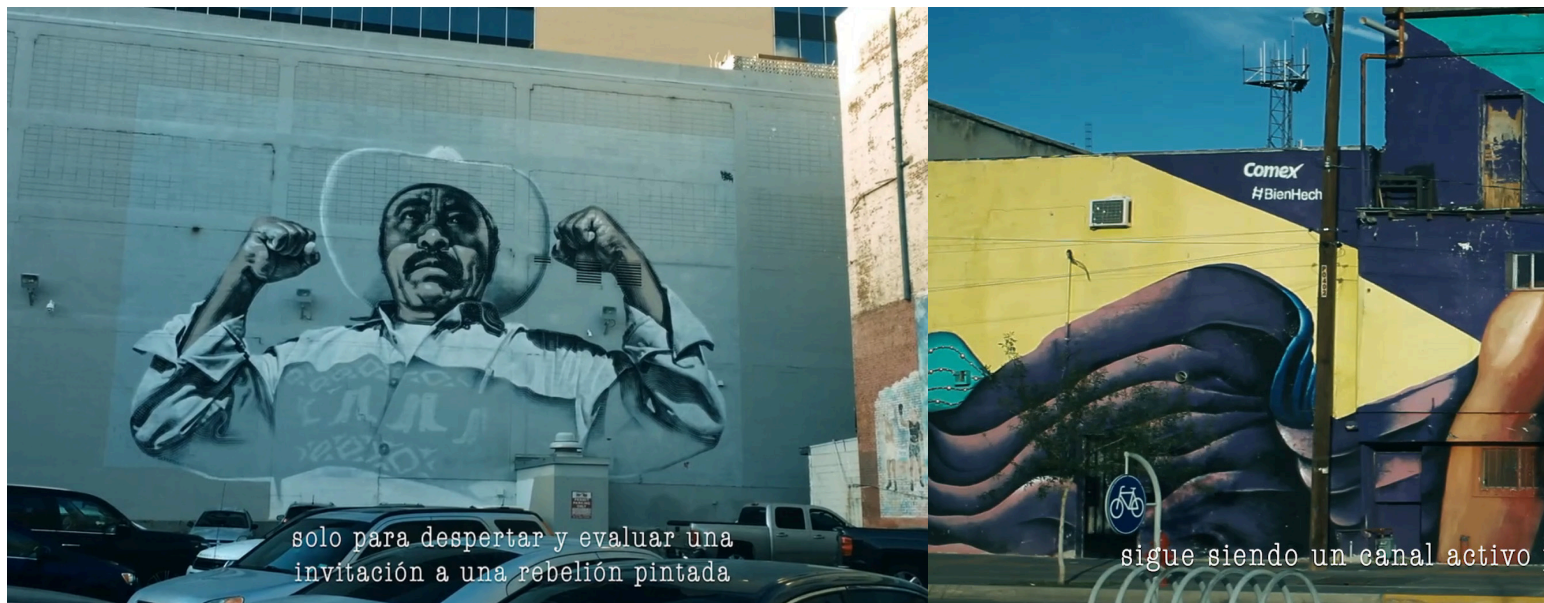
In the future, Ms. Walston would like to reach out to parents during parent-teacher conferences at SISD. She recognizes that, while students are in charge of their education at UTEP, parents provide an important foundation for their success. During these conferences, Ms. Walston and Dr. Fourzan would like to share information about how to navigate a syllabus, the time commitment represented by a college course, and what students are expected to do to prepare for their careers. Ms. Walston is also developing a teaching exchange program. Many SISD teachers have already sat in on English Department courses, but she has suggested encouraging more UTEP faculty to sit in on area high school classes. There are also plans to bring SISD high school students to UTEP, where they will be paired with and shadow UTEP students for a day.

When asked about the importance of this collaboration, Dr. Fourzan remarks, “it’s imperative that we reach out to the community—and perhaps drop down as far as middle school. It helps our students succeed wherever they go to college. Because they’re part of their community, they’re our students, whether they attend UTEP or not. It’s also promoting UTEP as a strong educational choice, which is very positive.”

Dr. Fourzan and Ms. Walston would like to thank Ms. Carmen Gonzalez, Dr. Anjanette Darrington, Ms. Rebekah Grado, Mr. Marco Rodriguez, and the many SISD administrators and faculty who have helped with this collaboration.

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHT

# Elizabeth and Jose Manuel



Two Screenshots from Jose Manuel and Elizabeth's Documentary, "Identity on the Border."

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he Rhetoric and Writing Studies Ph.D. Program is home to a diverse group of talented students, as exemplified by the unique professional and academic experiences that led Elizabeth Escobedo and Jose Manuel Flores to this program. From independently producing TV shows and magazines to experience as professors at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez (UACJ), Elizabeth and Jose Manuel have acquired wide-ranging expertise that is now

informing their doctoral studies in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.

Jose Manuel recounts that he and Elizabeth "started as independent producers working for a TV station, Canal 5, in Juárez. We moved very quickly, looking for opportunities to broaden our work." These efforts led to the opportunity to produce an international television show, *Luz Verde* (2005-2008), a showcase for musicians, poets, writers, and artists that aired in various cities throughout Mexico and the United States. This unique show incorporated diverse features such as its *mochila* (backpack) segment, which highlighted travel destinations, including Teotihuacan's Pyramid of the Sun. Producing *Luz Verde* was a formative experience that taught Elizabeth and Jose Manuel how to expand their knowledge by adapting to new challenges, a creative process that followed them as they developed extensive experience producing commercials, working in radio, and teaching a wide range of classes in Graphic Design and Digital Design at the Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez.

Most recently, this dynamic approach led Elizabeth and Jose Manuel to create a magazine, *La Radio 3.0*, exploring culture, music, art, film, and television. This innovative magazine, which they sold in 2016, synthesized pop culture with academic journal

features through its collaborations with professors and researchers. Building on this experience, Elizabeth and Jose Manuel are now planning a forthcoming bilingual, multimodal magazine, *D+Composition*, in collaboration with Dr. Isabel Baca and Dr. Lou Herman. This magazine will examine design, composition, writing, and technology within the context of the Ciudad Juárez-El Paso border community. Elizabeth envisions it as an opportunity "to create something together as a community, to express what we have to say about this community, about user experience, design, and various topics within Rhetoric and Writing Studies."

This inclusive mission of giving voice to their border community through diverse media is evident in "Identity on the Border" (<https://vimeo.com/304972877>), a video project that Elizabeth describes as "a call to action" inspired by a desire "to express an identity of the border that we sometimes



forget, but which is visible to us on the streets and in the public spaces where we interact with other people.” Jose Manuel notes that this video showcases the dialogue and solidarity that exists between artists in Ciudad Juárez and El Paso.

Elizabeth Escobedo and Jose Manuel Flores are now applying their unique talents and experiences to their doctoral studies in Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Jose Manuel is exploring the rhetorical dimensions of sound, while Elizabeth is focused on transmedia learning, UX design, and digital rhetorics. Meanwhile, their work on innovative projects like the forthcoming D+Composition magazine will ensure that Elizabeth and Jose Manuel continue to merge their academic work with their mission of creating unique, community-driven platforms for cultural and artistic expression.

# STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Much of the English Department’s success is owed to the generous grants and scholarships our students receive. Five of our students have received scholarships and grants for the 2018-2019 academic year:

▪ **G. Douglas Meyers Scholarship:**

Juan Soriano

▪ **Mimi Reisel Gladstein Scholarship:**

Christopher Thoreson

▪ **James Mortensen Scholarship:**

Jessica Reyes

▪ **C. L. Sonnichsen Scholarship:**

Ashley Prat

▪ **Gallagher Scholarship:**

Annabella Attaguile

# HSI-PATHWAYS FELLOWS

The Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI)-Pathways to the Professoriate program has selected its third cohort. Students in the program participate in a variety of activities and events to help prepare them for graduate work. During their time in the program, they are paired with a faculty mentor. The English Department is proud that two of its English & American Literature students have been accepted into the program.

**Anahi Ponce** (mentored by Dr. Marion Rohrleitner)

**Matilda Diebel** (mentored by Dr. Andrew Fleck)

# Mike Mullins

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Mike Mullins, assistant professor of practice and adviser, will retire at the end of the spring 2019 semester.

**T**he English Department recognizes Assistant Professor of Practice Mike Mullins for 21 years of invaluable contributions to the department, most of which he has spent as the department's undergraduate advisor in charge of scheduling. Mike's path to the English Department led through the military. Growing up in a military family with no hometown, Mike moved to El Paso in high school before serving in the Army for 13 years, after which he completed an MFA in a Creative Writing Program that was then a part of UTEP's English Department. Soon after graduation, Professor Mullins became a full-time Lecturer and took on advising and scheduling responsibilities. Reflecting on this expanding job description, Mike says "I did this to myself by making myself difficult to replace... I did everything I was asked and took no out of my vocabulary. When I get a hold of something, I do it to the best of my ability."

**"WHEN I GET  
A HOLD OF  
SOMETHING, I  
DO IT TO THE  
BEST OF MY  
ABILITY."**

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This detail- and service-oriented disposition has made the English Department a unique model for continuity in advising and scheduling. Professor Mullins reflects that "it's been a wild ride, and I've made lots of connections all over campus." Mike has become a resource for departments across campus due to his wide-ranging experience; he notes that it is common for departments to rotate advising responsibilities, while in the English Department "people know who the advisor is, and they know they can come see me any time." Mike credits former Department Chair Dr. Evelyn Posey for uniting advising and scheduling within a single dedicated position, which he believes "has worked really, really well." In this role, Mike sees himself as "a conduit for directors to put their schedules together," and views his main responsibility as facilitating students' progress through their degree programs.

Yet Professor Mullins' favorite experiences in the English Department have come in the classroom, where he has taught "a little over 3,000 students." Mike reflects that "the classroom is where I can escape. That's where I can shut everything out; then it's just me and the students. That's the best part of my week." He recalls the gratifying experience of encountering a student who recognized one of his favorite reading assignments—Langston Hughes' 1958 short



Mike Mullins



story “Thank You, Ma’am”—having read it in high school: “sure enough, her teacher had taken my class and loved that story.”

Mike Mullins is also grateful to have worked a short distance from his wife, Kaye Mullins, an Education Curator with UTEP’s Centennial Museum since 2002: “The most wonderful thing is to look out the window and be close enough that, if she came to the window, she could wave.” At the end of the Spring semester, Kaye and Mike will retire from their longstanding positions at UTEP on the same day, after which they’ll turn to their next challenge: three acres of land in Southwestern Colorado, a place they love and have looked forward to living, where they can enjoy the cold weather, the museums, and the train ride from Durango to Silverton. Mike anticipates they may even work more than they do now, but that “if we get snowed in, we get snowed in; there’s not anywhere we need to be.”

Mike reflects that he and Kaye “are institutional memory now,” and that “it’s tough to give it up, tough to leave the people here.” As he looks back on the people he has worked with, Mike notes that “there have been some amazing people here. I often wonder what it is that drew some of these people and made them stay; it’s not just the weather.” He is proud to have been an integral part of a productive department with a family atmosphere that gets the job done, producing a staggering number of teaching credits: “we are a people-oriented department; we take care of students.”

Over the last year, Professor Mullins has been preparing Dr. Levi Martin to become the undergraduate advisor in charge of scheduling. Mike states, “even though I tried to make myself irreplaceable, no one is, and Levi will do a great job.” As he looks forward to the challenge of continuing Mike’s tradition of excellence, Levi would like to “thank Mike for his time and service to the department through his years of advising and scheduling. The practices he has put into place will serve the department well as we move forward.”

## A SPECIAL THANK YOU



The English Department Team would like to thank Dr. Maggy Smith for her extraordinary leadership and mentorship as Department Chair from 2012-2019. Ms. Ana Diaz, Administrative Services Coordinator, reflects that Dr. Smith has been “a wonderful Chair throughout the years. She is always willing to help, with an open door and a friendly smile as she welcomes students, faculty, and staff. We thank Maggy and wish her the best as she joins her colleagues as a faculty member in Rhetoric and Writing Studies.”

# Publications

**Dr. Victor Del Hierro** and **Dr. Laura Gonzales** published “Comunidad de Cuentistas: Making Space for Indigenous and Latinx Storytellers” in *English Journal* along with J. Estrella Torrez, Santos Ramos, and Everado Cuevas.

**Dr. Lucia Dura** published the following blog entry: “Co-creating the syllabus: Inviting students to articulate course goals and processes,” on *The Little Orange Blog*, at UT System Academy of Distinguished Teachers. Her essay “Expanding the solution space: How asset-based inquiry can support advocacy in technical communication,” was published in *Citizenship and Advocacy in Technical Communication: Scholarly and Pedagogical Perspectives*, edited by Natalya Matveeva and Godwin Agboka (ATTW Book Series, Routledge, 2018, pp. 23-40). Dr. Dura had the following article published this fall: Sreeramoju, P., Dura, L., Fernandez-Rojas, M.E., Minhajuddin, A., Simacek, K., Fomby, T.B., Doebbeling, B.N. (2018). “Using a positive deviance approach to influence the culture of patient safety related to infection prevention.” *Open Forum Infectious Diseases*, 5(10), <https://doi.org/10.1093/ofid/ofy231>

**Dr. Ruben Espinosa's** chapter “Marian Mobility, Black Madonnas, and the Cleopatra Complex” was published in *Travel and Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World*, edited by Patricia Akhimie and Bernadette Andrea (University of Nebraska Press, 2018). He was also awarded a book contract by Routledge Press for his monograph, *Shakespeare on the Shades of Race*. It will be a part of the “Spotlight on Shakespeare” Series for the press (John Garrison and Kyle Pivetti, Series Editors).

**Dr. Mimi Gladstein's** book *The Women of Smelertown*, co-authored with Marcia Hatfield Daudistel, was published by TCU Press in the fall of 2018. Her essay “An Artist of Range and Breadth: Commemorating John Steinbeck,” was published in *Steinbeck Review* vol. 15, no. 2, 2018.

**Dr. Laura Gonzales's** book *Sites of translation: What multilinguals can teach us about digital writing and rhetoric*, was published by the University of Michigan Press in September 2018. The book was awarded the 2016 Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative Book Prize, and the open-access online version is available here at [fulcrum.org](http://fulcrum.org). The book is also available for purchase in print from University of Michigan Press.

**Dr. Joe Ortiz's** edition of John Taverner's *On the Origin and Progress of the Art of Music*, was published by Routledge in 2018.

**Dr. Jonna Perrillo** has published an invited column in a special collaborative issue between Chalkbeat and the Gotham History Blog on the significance of the Ocean Hill Brownsville strikes at their 50th anniversary. Her op-ed “Once Again Texas’s Board of Education Exposed How Poorly We Teach History” was published in the *Washington Post* on September 21, 2018.

**Dr. Keith Polette** published a textbook in English Education, *Words for Gifted Programs: 40 Vocabulary Building Activities for Grades 1-8*. (Pieces of Learning). He also published a wide range of poetry across genres:

“After Midnight.” *The Offbeat*.

“Kafka Calling,” “Echoes.”

*Otoliths: a Magazine of Many E-Things*

“Sparrow.” *The Esthetic Apostle*

“Bear.” *Peeking Cat Anthology*

“Daydream.” *Typishly: An Online Literary Journal*

“Koans.” *Sonic Boom*

#### **Haiga:**

“Leaf,” “Cat,” “Chirp,” “Diner,” “Snowgoose.” *Daily Haiga: An Edited Journal of Contemporary and Traditional Haiga*

#### **Haibun:**

“Under My Skin,” “Questions.” *The Haibun Journal*

“The Choice.” *Haibun Today: A Quarterly Journal*

“The Game.” *Contemporary Haibun Online: a Quarterly of Cotemporary English Language Haibun*.

#### **Haiku, Senryu, & Ku:**

“Seeing,” “Hobby Horse,” “Body,” “Ship,” “Slur,” “Butterfly,” “Fragments,” “River,” (One Line Haiku Section) *Under the Basho: A Journal of Haiku*

“Shadow.” *The Heron's Nest*

“Hummingbird,” “Cursive,” “Harvest,” “Cat.” *Akitsu Quarterly*

“River Mouth.” *Modern Haiku: An Independent Journal of Haiku and Haiku Studies*.

“Church Bells.” *Frogpond: Journal of the Haiku Society*

*of America*  
“Goldfinch.” *Bottle Rockets*  
“Pond Ripples.” *Four Hundred and Two Snails*  
“Hazel Eyes.” *Acorn: A Journal of Contemporary Haiku*  
“Cloudy Day,” “Summer Dusk.” *Presence*  
“River Trip,” “Summer’s Eve,” “Leaves Falling.”  
*Blithe Spirit: Journal of the British Haiku Society*  
“Woodpecker at Dawn,” “Winter Morning.”  
*Chrysanthemum*

**Dr. Teresa Quezada’s** chapter “Information Literacy and Writing Studies: The Beachfront Instructors and Students Navigate” was published in *Teaching Information Literacy and Writing Studies: Volume 2, Upper-Level and Graduate Courses* edited by Grace Veach.

**Dr. Marion Rohrleitner’s** essay, “Receive me kindly, stranger that I am’: W.G. Sebald’s Existential Exile,” was published in *European Writers in Exile*, edited by Robert C. Hauhart and Jeff Birkenstein. Lexington, 2018. Dr. Rohrleitner and her co-authors Drs. Marlene Daut and Gregory Pierrot signed a formal book contract with the University of Virginia Press for their co-authored *Anthology of Haitian Revolutionary Fictions*.

**Dr. Tom Schmid** published a blog post, “One Human Heart’: William Wordsworth, Poetry, and Place on the Border,” at *The Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP*. Dr. Stafford’s novel *Dancing on Horses* was published in April, 2018.

**Dr. P. J. Vierra’s** book review of *Higher Education in Texas: Its Beginnings to 1970* by Charles Matthews, appeared in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, vol. 122, no. 3, January 2019, pp. 342-343 His essay, “The Presidents of the University of Texas at El Paso, Part 1,” appeared in the Summer 2018 issue of *Password* (vol. 62, no. 2).

**Dr. Mónica González Ybarra’s** essay “Since when have people been illegal?’: Latinx youth reflections in Nèpantla” was published in *Latino Studies* (2018, pp. 1-21).

**Dr. Brian Yothers’s** essay “Melville after Secularism” was published in *The New Melville Studies*, edited by Cody Marrs (Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 53-65). He contributed the program note, “Whitman & Democracy” for the concert and symposium “I Sing the Body Electoral” at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC. He contributed the third blog posting, “Finding Futures for the Humanities Across the Nation,” to The Humanities Collaborative at EPCC-UTEP on October 25. His book chapter “Teaching Unlikely Poets: Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Frances E. W. Harper” was published in *Poetry and Pedagogy Across the Lifespan*, edited by Sandra Kleppe and Angela Sorby (Palgrave, 2018, pp. 302-25). His essay “Nineteenth-Century Religion” was published in *Walt Whitman in Context*, edited by Edward Whitley and Joanna Levin, by Cambridge University Press in 2018. His Broadview Edition of Herman Melville’s *The Piazza Tales* was published by Broadview Press in August, 2018. Dr. Yothers’s edited collection (with Harold K. Bush) *Above the American Renaissance: David S. Reynolds and the Spiritual Imagination in American Literary Studies* was published by the University of Massachusetts Press on May 25, 2018. His 2011 book *Melville’s Mirrors: Literary Criticism and America’s Most Elusive Author* was released in a new paperback edition with a new preface for the bicentennial year of Melville’s birth on April 15, 2019. Dr. Yothers also received a contract for his fifth single-author book, *Why Antislavery Poetry Matters Now*, from Camden House/Boydell & Brewer.

*The list of faculty and student publications come courtesy of the Monday Missives, which is curated by Dr. Brian Yothers.*



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We would love to hear from our alumni and friends. Feel free to drop by any upcoming events, or interact with us on social media. Please ensure that our faculty and students continue having opportunities to showcase their extraordinary teaching and scholarship. For information on how you can support the Department, visit our website or contact:

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