

# Postings

The Annual Newsletter of the Idaho State University Department of English and Philosophy

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## Handmaid's Tale Discussion Spans Disciplines, Empowers Students



A student-led panel discussion of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* was the result of a happy accident. In conversation, Dr. Amanda Zink discovered that both she and Dr. Kellee Kirkpatrick of Political Science were using the 1985 novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (currently the subject of a revival as a result of a television adaptation) in their fall courses: Zink in her Gender in Literature course and Kirkpatrick in Women in Politics.

The professors taught their classes independently, but brought their students together to discuss Atwood's novel, and together planned a student-led community event for the general public.

Combining the courses allowed the students from each class a fresh look at the novel and its impact.

"It was interesting for my class to evaluate the novel in a new perspective," Zink said. "Both classes read the same novel, but picked up on different themes. My students appreciated the historical contextualization offered by the political science class."

Together, the professors and their students developed the idea for a community event that would integrate in-class discussions, commentary from panelists and a screening of the first episode of *The Handmaid's Tale* on Hulu. The students broke down into committees, planned the event, gathered donations and advertised the event.

The November community event included an information table for attendees to learn more about the novel and the points of discussion the students had learned during the semester. Copies of *The Handmaid's Tale* were also available for purchase. The event drew students, university faculty and staff, members of the League of Women Voters and area high school teachers interested in including the novel in their own curriculum.



"Our students were so proud of and excited for the event," Zink said. "It really helped them take ownership of their educations."

On April 23, the event was recognized at the inaugural "Benny Awards" as Outstanding Event of the Year.



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## Letter from the Chair: Survivance and the Humanities

Dr. Jennifer Eastman Attebery



For the past many years, humanities scholars have had to adopt a survivance attitude and strategy, not just here at ISU but also nationwide. *Survivance* is Gerald Vizenor's term for an active and persistent presence in the face of hostility and repression--an insistence on both physical presence and on continuity of cultural practices and values. Vizenor developed the term in reference to American Indian presence and culture, and I use it here aware that I may be open to criticism for appropriation. Nevertheless, it feels right. We have had to do more than just survive; we've had to maintain a humorous and ironic presence and assume that what we do is important and enduring. Adhering to our disciplines and their significance has demanded the same assurance as the characters in Indigenous survivance narratives. Think of Thomas King's poignant yet gently humorous story "Borders," in which a Blackfoot woman refuses to declare herself either Canadian or American at the Alberta/Montana border and becomes temporarily stuck in the limbo of the duty free/customs area. I imagine a humanities scholar ironically eying the perhaps artificial boundaries in academics—between STEM and arts/humanities, for example, and refusing to acknowledge them as meaningful limits on our activities.

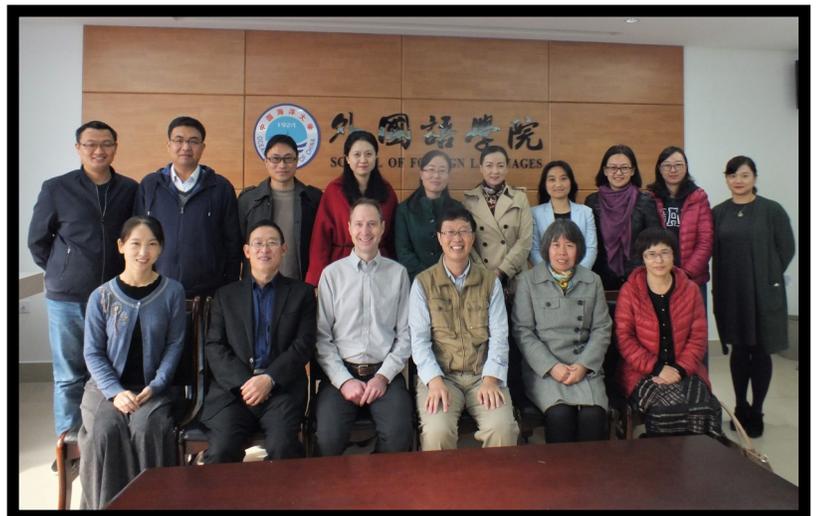
During my time as chair of the English and Philosophy department at ISU, I've attempted to embrace a survivance attitude and strategy—that is, more than merely surviving, but rather resistant to the debilitating narrative position of victimhood.

Survivance assumes that one's values and practices can endure even with resources denied or drained away. Indeed, I think this to be an accurate prognostication; if denied all resources whatsoever in their current form, the humanities are likely to be re-invented for the sheer need of humanities perspectives on our most critical social issues. King represents this optimistic side of survivance in his *The Back of the Turtle*, in which a First Nations reserve, severely damaged by a biological agent called GreenSweep, begins its return to a natural ecosystem through the combined efforts of those who remained and persevered alongside immigrants to the reserve.

I write at a turning point for Idaho State University. The university's next president, Kevin Satterlee, has just been selected, and we look forward to his presence on campus beginning June 18, 2018. Those who've not met Mr. Satterlee can view his remarks just after the State Board of Education's announcement, on the ISU webpage: <https://isu.edu/presidentialsearch/>. What he said, and the coherence and sincerity with which he said it, gives me several reasons to be cautiously hopeful about a future for the humanities at ISU.

## Dr. Brent Wolter Awarded Visiting Professorship at Ocean University

Dr. Brent Wolter, Professor of English, will serve during the next three years as a Visiting Professor at Ocean University in Qingdao, China. He will travel to Qingdao once or twice a year to supervise Ph.D. students, help faculty at the School of Foreign Languages improve their research output and international research profile, and deliver two lectures per visit to graduate students and faculty in his areas of specialization. The renewable appointment was awarded to Dr. Wolter following a May 2017 plenary lecture at the Second Annual Conference for Second Language Processing in Qingdao. Dr. Wolter "was really impressed by the students" following his visit to Ocean University. The university occupies three campuses in the coastal city, and maintains cooperative and exchange agreements with universities and research institutes in 37 countries. Dr. Wolter will be working from the university's Laoshan campus.



## Department Authors Collaborate on Interdisciplinary Book

Dr. Brian Attebery, Dr. Sonja Launspauch, Dr. Alan Johnson and Dr. Thomas Klein are among the twenty ISU contributors to the book *Narrative, Identity, and Academic Community in Higher Education*, a collaborative project of Idaho State's College of Arts and Letters. The book, published by Routledge in the spring of 2017, explores the diverse ways the idea of narrative can be understood and applied, and shows how the faculty authors have used narrative in their own research and projects.

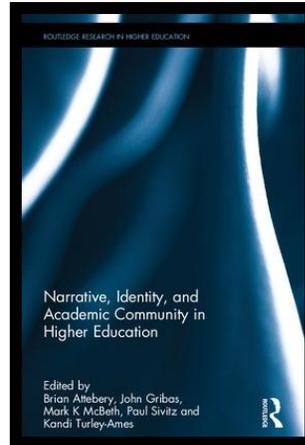
The inspiration for the book came from faculty connections set up through a narrative colloquium series, based on a growing awareness that narrative was an idea reflected in the work of faculty members from most of the College of Arts and Letters' departments. Through presentations by faculty and students and follow-up conversations, Arts and Letters personnel realized that this idea of narrative had potential to enhance unity among departments. That realization led to the idea of turning colloquium presentations and conversations into the seeds of an all-ISU, all-College of Arts and Letters book project.

In their chapters, professors from across the arts, humanities and social and behavioral sciences share results of their research as well as how their own personal stories relate to narrative.

Dr. Attebery served as a project editor, and contributed to the chapter "Narrative and the Performing Arts: A Symposium." Dr. Launspauch wrote the chapter "Stories and Objects: Narrative and the Construction of Connective Links in an American Quilting Guild"; Dr. Johnson contributed "Narrative Identities in India's Global Age"; and Dr. Klein wrote the chapter "Old and New Technologies of Asynchronous Communication: Virtual Narratives and 'Presence.'"

These authors also contributed to chapter summaries, symposia proceedings, or conversations with their colleagues across the disciplines.

"This collection of stories on how narrative plays a role in our research and disciplines shows how very different disciplines can come together to create common ground to better serve our students," said Kandi Turley-Ames, Arts and Letters Dean.



## Help support the Department of English and Philosophy

The department is truly grateful for the generosity of its donors and alumni, who make possible a wide variety of learning and research opportunities for our students, our faculty, and our community. Your gift can:

- ◆ Bring visiting speakers, writers, and artists to campus
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- ◆ Provide scholarship opportunities for outstanding students

To make a gift in any amount, please visit <https://my.isu.edu/give> and complete an Idaho State University Pledge Form. Be sure to indicate that your gift is for the Department of English and Philosophy.

## Philosophy Faculty, Students Attend Intermountain Philosophy Conference

On November 3, 2017, students and faculty from the Philosophy Program attended the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Intermountain Philosophy Conference at Brigham Young University. The conference is hosted by the Utah Philosophical Association.



For questions about gift donations, please contact:

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Thank you for your support of the humanities at ISU!

## Faculty Publications and Accomplishments:

**Brian Attebery**, Professor of English, presented in the panel “Alternative Histories: The Diverse Pasts of Speculative Fiction,” at the Radical Engagements Symposium, Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Attebery will also deliver the keynote address at the International Conference on Fantastic Literature, held in Brno, Czech Republic, in the fall of 2018.

**Jennifer Eastman Attebery**, Professor of English and Chair of the Department of English and Philosophy, attended the Borderlands Workshop, Sigtunastiftelsen, Sigtuna, Sweden, held August 24-25; a gathering of Swedish-American studies scholars from Sweden and the USA sponsored by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences in cooperation with Stockholm University and Uppsala University.

**Brian Attebery and Jennifer Eastman Attebery**, Professors of English, were honored as Distinguished Alumni at the College of Idaho Homecoming, Fall 2017.

**Elise Barker**, Adjunct Instructor in English, had her articles and photography featured in *Idaho Magazine*: “Chubbuck: On the Cusp of Change” in the June 2017 issue, and “Inkom: A Place of Stories and Storytellers” in the March 2018 issue. Both are part of *Idaho Magazine*'s “Spotlight City” series.

**Jacob Berger**, Assistant Professor of Philosophy, had his article “How Things Seem to Higher-Order Thought Theorists” published in *Dialogue* (2017). Dr. Berger also had his paper, “A Defense of Holistic Representationalism,” forthcoming in *Mind & Language*, published in “early view” format online.

**Tera Cole**, Associate Lecturer in English, was honored at the College of Arts and Letters 2017 holiday party for her many presentations in the college's Liberal Arts High project. In addition, her flash fiction piece, “Franny” will be published on April 21, 2018 in *Sky Island Journal*, an online literary publication.

**Jenn Fuller**, Assistant Lecturer in English, Idaho Falls, presented a lecture entitled “Big Brother is Everywhere: George Orwell’s *1984* and Contemporary Issues in Privacy and Cybersecurity” at Samford University's Daniel House, London Study Center, Fall 2017. Dr. Fuller also presented a paper entitled “Who Uses Those Excerpts Anyway? Teaching the Nineteenth-Century Novel in the Survey Course” at the *Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference* in Spring 2017.

**Hal Hellwig**, Associate Professor of English, presented “'Innocence at Home': Mark Twain's Italian Villa, Stormfield, and the Cultural Influence of Italy on Quarry Farm” at the Eighth International Conference on the State of Mark Twain Studies in Elmira, New York.

**Bethany Schultz Hurst**, Associate Professor of English, had new poetry published: “Poem in the Shape of John Wayne’s Stomach Cancer” published in *The Arkansas International*; “Seascape with Evacuating Animals,” in *Gulf Coast*; and “90% Contained” and “Eviction/Series Finale” in *Weber: The Contemporary West*. The latter issue also includes a conversation with Schultz Hurst, “Letting the Arrow Hit Its Mark.”

**Alan Johnson**, Professor of English, had his article “Going ‘Jungli’: Flora Annie Steel’s Wild Civility,” published in *Flora Annie Steel: A Critical Study of an Unconventional Memsahib*, ed. Susmita Roye (U of Alberta press, March 2017). Dr. Johnson also had his article “Cross-Cultural Humanities” published in *Rendezvous: Journal of Arts and Letters* 43: 1 & 2 (Spring 2017): 1-10; a special issue on the State of the Humanities.

**Margaret Johnson**, Professor of English, presented “Narrative Elusion in Emily Ruskovich’s *Idaho*” at the Western Literature Association Conference in Minneapolis.

**Thomas Klein**, Professor of English was honored with one of the ISU Outstanding Teacher awards for 2016-2017. Dr. Klein also gave three papers at three conferences in the summer of 2017: the International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University; the International Medieval Congress at Leeds University in the U.K.; and the Conference of the International Society for Anglo-Saxon Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

**David Lawrimore**, Assistant Professor of English, has had his article “Temperance, Abolition, and Genre Collision in Whitman’s Franklin Evans” published in *Studies in American Fiction* 44.2 (2017): 185-209.

**Matthew Levay**, Assistant Professor of English, has had the latest of his annual essays on modernist criticism published in the *Year’s Work in English Studies* (2017). Dr. Levay also had his essay “Preservation and Promotion: Ellery Queen, Magazine Publishing, and the Marketing of Detective Fiction” published in *The Centrality of Crime Fiction in American Literary Culture* (Routledge, 2017), edited by Alfred Bendixen and Olivia Carr Edenfield.

**Lisa Smith**, Instructor of English, Idaho Falls, has had her essay “Women Hold Up Half the Sky” published in the Fall 2017 edition of *The Switchgrass Review*.

**Mike Stubbs**, Associate Lecturer in English, has had his essay “The Bell and the Bear: A Centennial Trail Saga” published in *Idaho Magazine* (December 2017).

**Susan Swetnam**, Professor Emerita, has been appointed to the board of the Idaho Community Foundation.

## Faculty Publications and Accomplishments, continued

**Matthew VanWinkle**, Assistant Professor of English, had his essay "That Smileless Mouth of Him': Humor and the Malice of Delay in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" published in *The Journal of Dracula Studies*, no. 19 (2017), pp. 91-110.

**Russell Wahl**, Professor of Philosophy and Director of the Philosophy Program, had his article "Syllogism in the *Port-Royal Logic*" published in *The Aftermath of Syllogism*, a collection edited by Sgarbi and Cosci (Bloomsbury, 2018).

**Lydia Wilkes**, Assistant Professor of English, had her article "Framing a Veterans Syllabus Statement for Faculty" published in *Journal of Veterans Studies*. Dr. Wilkes also presented "How Can WPAs Support Student Veterans?" at the 2017 CCCC conference.

**Jessica Winston**, Professor of English and Chair of History, was honored with one of the ISU Outstanding Researcher awards for 2016-2017. Dr. Winston was also awarded the Joseph L. Andrews Legal Literature Award, 2017, from the American Association of Law Libraries for *Lawyers at Play: Literature, Law, Politics at the Early Modern Inns of Court, 1558-1581* (OUP 2016). The award recognizes works that contribute to and advance legal research or law librarianship.

## Student Publications and Accomplishments:

**Stephanie Bachman**, English Major, was honored as the October 2017 Career Path Intern of the Month.

**Amy Brumfield**, Ph.D. , English and the Teaching of English, presented on a panel entitled "Advocating for Student Engagement through VARK Learning Styles" at NTCE in November. She also presented "The Grammar-Phobic Guide to Assessing Student Grammar Errors" at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association conference, October 12-14 in Spokane.

**Jennifer K. Cox**, Ph.D. student, presented her paper, "Epic Englehart: Coyote Continues Captain America's Epic Quest," and also moderated a panel on "Sandmen and X-Men" at the International Conference for the Fantastic in the Arts (ICFA 38) in Orlando, FL, March 22-28, 2017.

**Anelise Farris**, Ph.D. Candidate, had her article, "Experimenting with the Occult: The Role of Liminality in Slumber Party Rituals," published in *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, vol 6 no 1 (2017). She also had her article "Fan-driven Identity Narratives: The Performative Culture of Star Wars Cosplayers" published in *New Directions in Folklore* Vol 15, No 1/2.

**Quinn Grover**, Ph.D. student, presented at a symposium titled "Doig Country: Imagining Montana and the West" put on by Montana State University and the Center for Western Lands and People in Bozeman on September 15.

**Kimberly Madsen**, Ph.D. Candidate, presented "Victorian Women Travel Writers and Authorial Self-fashioning." at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association conference, October 12-14 in Spokane.

**Corinna Barrett Percy**, Ph.D. Candidate, had her article "Reformers, Racism, and Patriarchy in Maria Amparo Ruiz de Burton's *The Squatter and the Don*" published in *The Explicator* 75.2 (2017): 112-117. She also presented "The Tradition of the Indian Warrior: Trauma, Violence, and Identity in *House Made of Dawn*" at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association conference, October 12-14 in Spokane.

**Diantha Smith**, Ph.D. Candidate, received an appointment as a full-time faculty member at BYU-Idaho, teaching composition and technical/professional writing, beginning fall 2017.

**Jacob Thomas**, Ph.D. Candidate, has accepted a tenure-track position in English at Snow College, a two-year college in Ephraim, UT. He also presented "The Rebirth of the Female Superhero: Kamala Khan's *Ms. Marvel*" at the "Image of Rebirth" conference in Greeley, Colorado at the University of Northern Colorado.

**Emily Treasure**, Ph.D. student, won the award for best presentation in Culture and Arts at the 2017 ISU Graduate Research Symposium with her paper "Inherited Ghosts of Racial Conflict in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Chief Seattle's Speech on the Land."

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