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Adam McKeown, an Assistant Professor of English at Tulane, recently taught American Literature for the Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program Prep School in Quantico, Virginia. "MCECEP Prep," as the program is called, was created in 1974 to help Marines selected to take part in a rigorous commissioning program get acclimated to college.

## Literature in Uniform

Adam McKeown

"It is some of the most challenging and rewarding teaching I have ever done," said McKeown, who is also a Lieutenant Colonel in the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve. "These Marines are up at dawn for physical training and sitting in class for eight solid hours, five days a week. They are under a lot of pressure, and they are spread very thin. They only have so much energy and patience, and so you have to be very clear in your own mind about why studying literature matters. And your reasons have to make sense to them."

McKeown has been teaching literature to Marines off and on since 1993, when as a Second Lieutenant on Okinawa he volunteered to teach English 101 at the base education center. He offered a Shakespeare class to troops on Camp Lemonier, Djibouti, while deployed in conjunction with Operation Enduring Freedom in 2005-2006. At Tulane he has developed service learning courses that allow English majors to tutor service members who are working on their college degrees.

"It is great to do something positive for the troops," McKeown said, "and as a literary critic I find that discussing literature with Marines keeps me honest. If I start talking in circles or hiding behind jargon they let me know it. So do my colleagues." McKeown was part of an English faculty led by Reginald Williams, also a reserve Lieutenant Colonel and a public school teacher in Shreveport.

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McKeown (far right) along with (from left to right) MCECEP Prep English Department Chair LtCol Reginald Williams, MCECEP Prep Director Col Rod Andrew, and fellow English teacher Captain Ted Lipka.



Marines preparing to go off to college as part of the Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program.

The Tulane University English Department Debate Education Society is thriving, but it requires a renewed commitment from Tulane to reach its long term goals..

## The Great Debaters Ryan McBride

Its founder and director, Ryan McBride, was honored this spring by Mayor Mitch Landrieu who awarded him a Certificate of Proclamation for his dedication to debate in New Orleans. This comes in addition to the recognition he received last year from then Mayor of New Orleans, C. Ray Nagin, who bestowed a day of honor on McBride. Kwame Anthony Appiah, the Laurence S. Rockefeller Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University, recently awarded the English Department Debate Education Society an American Philosophical Association grant. And the Middle School Public Debate Program is using the Debate Education Society as a model as they help universities sponsor debate programs in their own communities, including Harvard,



Stanford, and the University of Alaska.

The Debate Education Society is



an English Department service-learning project run by Tulane students, faculty, and numerous community partners. Its central goal is to be the catalyst for a debate renaissance in New Orleans, with a special focus on the most disadvantaged youth. Before the Society inaugurated three debate teams at local middle schools in the fall of 2009, middle school debate programs were virtually non-existent in New Orleans. Today, because of the Tulane Debate Education Society and our community partners, there are twelve active debate teams at local middle schools and our regular

tournaments continue to attract more schools.

The Society is grounded in an English Department service-learning course that aims to revive the principles of classical rhetoric described by

Aristotle, Plato,

Cicero, and Quintilian, and put them to work in post-Katrina New Orleans to promote civil discourse and

critical reasoning. Each student agrees, as part of the class, to spend forty hours coaching middle school debate in one of three local schools where over ninety-five percent of the students qualify for free or assisted lunches. These schools, in turn, now anchor

a new citywide debate league with an official charter from the Middle School Public Debate Program.

The program is very popular with Tulane students. A striking number of students have sought to continue their involvement with the Debate Education Society after their service-learning courses are over. This kind of commitment is virtually unheard of in service-learning projects and speaks to the deeply rewarding experience the program provides to both middle school debaters and Tulane students. Some Tulane students continue by working as interns with the Department of English (about a dozen interns each semester) or fellows with the Center for Public Service. Many others simply volunteer to keep coaching or to come back as judges or organizers. The huge increases in applications to Tulane University following Katrina are in part due to the desire of applicants to aid in the renewal of New Orleans. No program at Tulane offers students a better chance to develop meaningful relationships with community members while genuinely transforming the city than the Debate Education Society. ♦

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McKeown says he would like to do more teaching in theater and wishes there were a way to get more faculty and students involved. "I think a lot of people would like to be involved in the war for their own reasons, some of them very personal and complicated, and there are not many ways to do that unless you can put on a uniform. I am lucky that I can, and I don't take that for granted." ♦

### Second Line: a New Undergrad Journal

With the idea emerging out of the traditional capstone class required for Tulane senior English Majors, students in the 2010 Fall Capstone created *Second Line: An Undergraduate Journal of Literary Conversation* to give undergraduate students the opportunity to have their works of literary criticism published. Students in this class wrote twenty-five page papers, submitted them to scholarly journals and presented their ideas in a final conference open to the public. With the vast majority of undergraduate writing never seen by anyone other than a single professor, *Second Line* gives students recognition and a voice in the literary conversation. Publication in this journal encourages students to view themselves as vital members of the academic community.

After working for the entirety of the Spring 2011 semester, the *Second Line* Editorial Board is ready to launch its premier issue featuring the articles of students from the Fall 2010 capstone class. With the help of Mike Griffith and the Innovative Learning Center, *Second Line* was able to create an open-access, online journal to exhibit the undergraduate works. The website, [secondline.tulane.edu](http://secondline.tulane.edu), allows free access to the articles as well as additional information about the journal, giving students international exposure for their published works.

In an effort to expand undergraduate recognition, *Second Line* is now calling for submissions for their next issue. Tulane students with works of developed, original, and scholarly merit can submit their work through an online submission process. All information about the submission process can be found on the *Second Line* website. *Second Line* will also begin searching for new Editorial Board members for the 2011-2012 school year. ♦

### Sigma Tau Delta News

It has been another exciting year for Tulane's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society. The fall semester began with the news that one of our members, Paige Davis, received the Sigma Tau Delta Study Abroad Scholarship. Paige is using the \$3,000 this year as she studies in Paris, France. Also during the fall, we inducted a record twenty-four new members and held a social at the Rock-n-Bowl.

In the spring, we hosted a forum titled "What Do You Do with an English Major." Morgan Packard, Managing Editor of *New Orleans Magazine*, and Tom Lowenburg, owner of Octavia Books, spoke to members about the publishing industry, the future of independent bookstores, and how technology has impacted the way we approach reading. Also during the spring, we attended the 1718 Reading Series as a group.

Each year, Sigma Tau Delta hosts a national convention. Ten of our members traveled to Pittsburgh to present their original creative and critical works. A complete list of these students and their presentations has been included below. They were wonderful representatives for the department, demonstrating both the wide variety and high quality of work produced by our students. The board of Sigma Tau Delta, which consists of faculty from across the nation, was so impressed with us that its members have asked us to be the host chapter for next year's convention, which will take place here in New Orleans.

We would like to thank the Department of English, the Newcomb College Institute, and the Newcomb-Tulane Dean's Office for their generosity. The students would not have been able to attend this convention without your support.

Also, special thanks to the 2010-2011 officers: President Holly Phillips, Vice President Kelsey Rogut, Secretary Samantha Kirby, and Community Service Chair Zoe Clements. It has been a pleasure working with you all. ♦

## events

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Sherman Alexie  
Writer's Writer  
24 October 2011

nov

Pierce Butler  
Chair Lecture  
Brian Reed  
3 November 2011

Naomi Shihab Nye  
Poet Laureate Series  
17 November 2011

mar

Jonathon Franzen  
Great Writers Series  
5 March 2011

Josephine Gessner  
Ferguson Lecture

Congratulations to Dr. Molly Anne Rothenberg, who has been awarded the Weiss Presidential Fellowship for Undergraduate Teaching.

## faculty in action

To see the rest of our faculty's newest books, papers, articles, panels, awards, and achievements, [click here!](#)

### Our thanks to:

Adam McKeown - MCEP Article  
Ryan McBride - Debate Article  
Ashley Rhodes - Second Line Notice  
Megan Holt - Sigma Tau Delta News  
Arynne Sherouse - Design/Production  
Ashlie Sponenberg - Publications  
Coordinator  
Barbara Ryan - Distribution

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## Boyette Prize Winners

### Fall 2010

Hokan Holmquist

"Sophocles and the Supreme Court"

Jessica Hatch

"What Wasn't the Hipster?"

### Spring 2011

Nora Maria Fuller

"Monsters and Metaphors"

Andrew Jones

"Soul Force Through Food"

## Departmental Awards

Residency for Creative Writing Senior

Jean-Luc Delafontaine

Dale Edmonds Prize - Short Story

Nicholas Peruffo

The Quarante Club Prize for Best Short

Story by a Woman

Gabrielle Stanton

Senior Achievement Prize for Excellence in Creative Writing

Jessica Drake-Thomas

Class of 1903 Shakespeare Prize

Alexa Ruth

Donald Pizer Award - American Lit

Jordan McFaul

Henry Clay Stier Award in English

Dominique J. Monlezun

Virginia Gleaves Lazerus Award

Genevieve Schluter

The Award for Service to the

Literary Community

Ingram Wilkinson

Adams Teaching Award

Aleksandra Hajduczek

Megan Holt

Post-Doctoral Teaching Award

Ashlie Sponenberg

## Chair's News

Sponsored by the Creative Writing Fund, former U.S. Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize-winner Robert Hass came to read to us this January, and this excerpt from his "State of the Planet" reminds us of last spring's *Deep Water Horizon* disaster in the Gulf of Mexico:

It will seem to be poetry  
Forgetting its promise of sobriety to  
say the rosy shinings  
In the thick brown current are small  
dolphins rising  
To the surface where gout of the oil  
that burns inside  
The engine of the car I'm driving  
oozes from the banks.

The verse is about Ecuador, but here in Louisiana, actual dolphins are dying and people are suffering: we need all of our inspiring writers to keep us sensitized and active. In March, Professor Ian Baucom of Duke University gave the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual Josephine Gessner Ferguson lecture on Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* to highlight the importance of the humanities for the sciences to enrich our studies.

The activities of our department prove that we are putting our literary skills to work. A record ten members of our chapter of the international English Honor Society, Sigma Tau Delta, delivered papers at the national conference in Pittsburgh this spring. Students in Professor Rebecca Mark's senior capstone seminar started an online undergraduate journal, *Second Line: A Journal of Literary Conversations*; the first issue is linked to our website. You can read in this newsletter about Professor Adam McKeown's literary outreach efforts for those

actively serving in the military. Samantha Bruner, who recently graduated from our Master's program, left in April to teach English in Japan, braving the aftermath of the recent earthquake/tsunami/nuclear disaster.

Our Debate Education Society continues to expand, receiving honors, accolades, and grants. Over one hundred Tulane students have taken part. But we are in need of your support: please read the article, visit [rhetoric.tulane.edu](http://rhetoric.tulane.edu), and then donate whatever you can afford to offset the cost of materials for the coaching and tournaments. Just put DEBATE on the memo line of your check.

The department is changing. Postdoctoral fellows Dr. Judi Livingston and Dr. Joseph Letter both landed tenure-track positions this year. Judi will be teaching at Columbus State University, and Joe will teach at University of Tampa. We wish them every success. Dr. David Kaufmann and Dr. Roslyn Foy, old friends and wonderful teachers, are retiring after serving as postdoctoral fellows for five years. All four senior fellows have made extraordinary contributions to the program. We look forward to hearing their news.

We regret that we have to say goodbye to our exceptional Mellon postdoctoral fellow, Dr. Marguerite Nguyen, who will be taking up a tenure track post at Wesleyan University. Dr. Meghan Freeman, who has added so much to our department, has landed a position at Oregon State University. And more sad news: two of our favorite professors, Dwight Codr and Louise Hornby, are leaving to take positions elsewhere. Dwight will make the University of Connecticut his academic home, and Louise, with family in tow, will be the gain of UCLA.

Visiting assistant professor Dr. Roger Bellin will remain in the department for another

year. Two new visiting assistant professors, Dr. Peter Craft (Early Modern Studies) and one yet to be hired (British Modernist Literature) will arrive in the fall. We will also welcome this fall visiting scholar Li Ying, associate director of the English department at Beihang University, Beijing, China. Four new postdoctoral fellows will also join us next fall. In late-breaking good news, Alexander August Beller was born this May—congratulations to Tom and Elizabeth! And Emersyn Irene Tydlaska was born in April to Faye Tydlaska, who earned her doctorate with us.

Another academic year has passed, but we are already looking forward to next year: Sherman Alexie, Brian Reed, Naomi Nye, and Jonathan Franzen will be featured guests. Please stay tuned, stay in touch, and plan to attend our events.

Have a wonderful summer! ♦

Click here to see the latest awards and achievements of our post-doctoral fellows



Click here to see what our alumni are doing

## become a friend

Help us develop a network of alumni! You are the windows to possible futures for our majors.

Our goal is 100% participation by our alumni. Please join at the level that is right for you: \$20.00, \$50.00, \$100.00! The amount you give is far less important than your willingness to participate.

To become a friend, all you have to do is send your check to:

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New Orleans, LA 70118

Don't forget to send in something about yourself for our Alumni News! Email us now at [english@tulane.edu](mailto:english@tulane.edu).