

PEN & PIXELS

Notes from the English Department



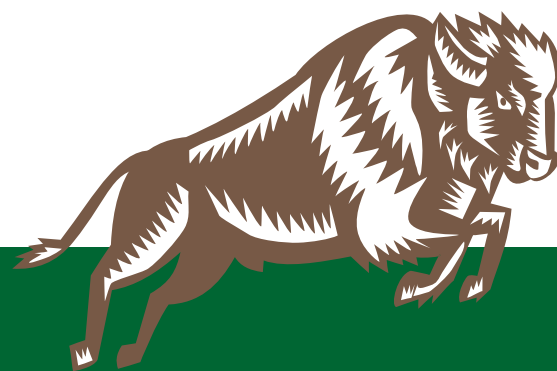
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- What we're watching!
- "In our defense...: MA & PhD virtual defenses
- Meet & greet new graduate students

GREETINGS: FROM THE EDITOR

Dear friends of NDSU English,

Welcome to the *special 'shelter in place'* issue of Pen & Pixels! We are pleased to bring you this issue on all things great happening at NDSU while the English department works from home. We hope you enjoy what you read and welcome any suggestions!



YOUR 'NEW' OFFICE SPACE

Pen & Pixels reached out to the department to ask about their newest office spaces!

"I'm currently working at the dining room table, with my son playing Fortnite in the room next door (very loudly). My daughter is on the deck outside in a makeshift bikini where she is doing her own 'science lesson' that involves ketchup and vinegar. I'm afraid to look."

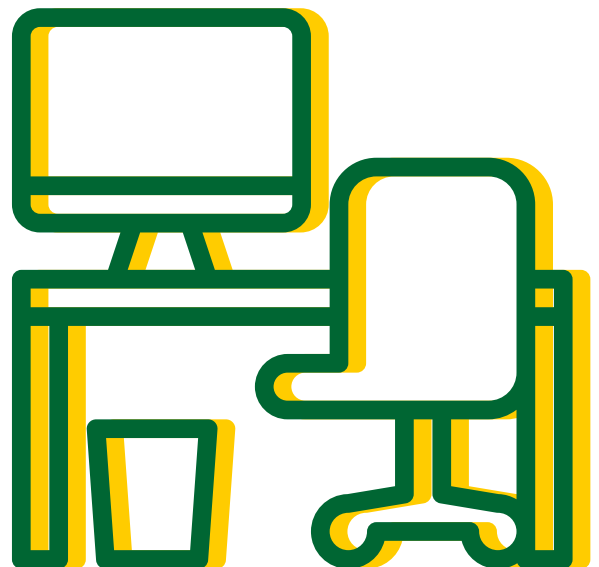
Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, Chair

"My space is the cleanest it has been all semester, and the loudest, as my dog is constantly snoring, since we now walk her twice a day as work-breaks, and my fiancé works through his presentation on fad diets for the Board of Dietitians. I have sprawled out much more than I ever could at the office, with books related to my two classes and my thesis spread on my coffee table, couch, end table, and dining room table."

Rachel Reko, Graduate Student

"I find I need to keep moving to different rooms, different table spaces, different levels of comfort, in order to stay focused. I evaluated a full set of student responses while my laptop was perched atop my dryer in my dank cement-block basement. But, I also reviewed a full class discussion board forum from my light-filled, bright sun porch while in the comfort of a leather cigar chair. When working from home, I need this wide range of options, featuring a wide range of comfort levels."

Emily Wicktor, Professor



In our defense...

Pen & Pixels offers congrats to those who successfully defended while sheltering in place!

At the end of their program, MA and PhD students alike prepare to defend their work to their committee and invited audience members.

This spring was no different, until March 12th, 2020 and the WHO's declaration of a pandemic. Instead of the traditional defense, in person, face-to-face, students prepared for a virtual defense, which came with its own struggles. However, those who successfully defended shared their experience with *Pen & Pixels* and were filled with hope and appreciation. Lindsay Campbell, MA, said, "While I (and probably many others!) never anticipated defending virtually, the experience went well and it was something I'll never forget! I'm thankful graduate students still had a worthwhile option to discuss our research!" MA student Deborah Haley echoed the sentiment saying that the virtual defense was "a weird experience, but my advisor was amazing and the department fully supported all defenders!"



Pictured: MA student Lindsay Campbell, English Professor Holly Hassel, Communications Professor Elizabeth Crawford, and English Professor Emily Wicktor, during Campbell's virtual defense.

In our defense... *Continued*

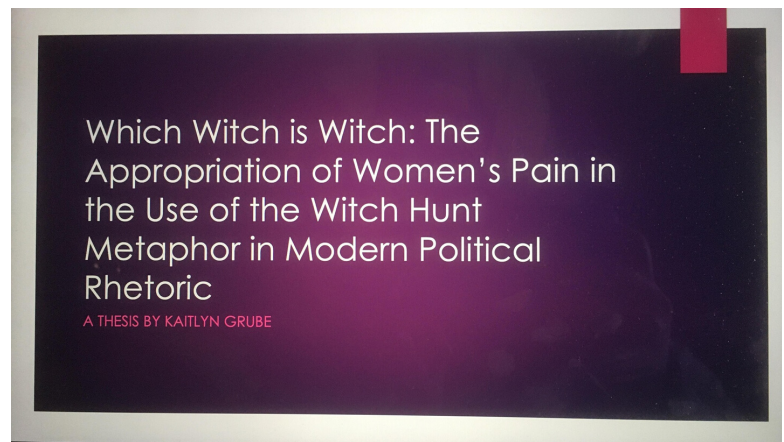
Despite some of the "weird" there seemed to be some benefit to the improvised structure, something that MA student Kaitlyn Grube commented on. "The online thesis defenses were really well attended,



Slide from Mike Bittner's thesis defense titled, "Off the Beaten Warpath: Native Representation and Themes in Chris Claremont's *X-Men*"

which was what I know most of us were worried about. We wanted the opportunity to present in front of our friends and colleagues in a meaningful way. The fact that many of our friends and colleagues showed up really meant a lot to me personally, and I feel confident in saying that it meant a lot to everyone else too."

Overall, the defenses went off without a hitch, and the department joined together to support the work of our defenders! Congratulations to everyone who successfully defended! *Pen & Pixels* wishes you the best of luck with your future endeavors.



Intro slide from Kaitlyn Grube's thesis defense.



What we're watching

Sheltering in place edition

STRANGER THINGS

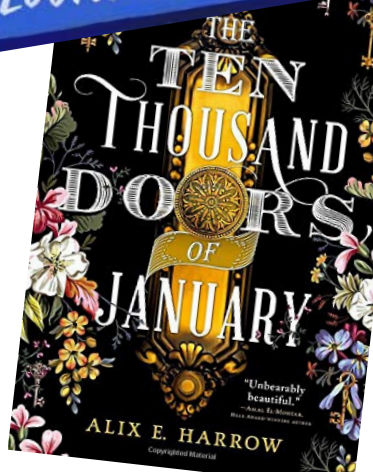
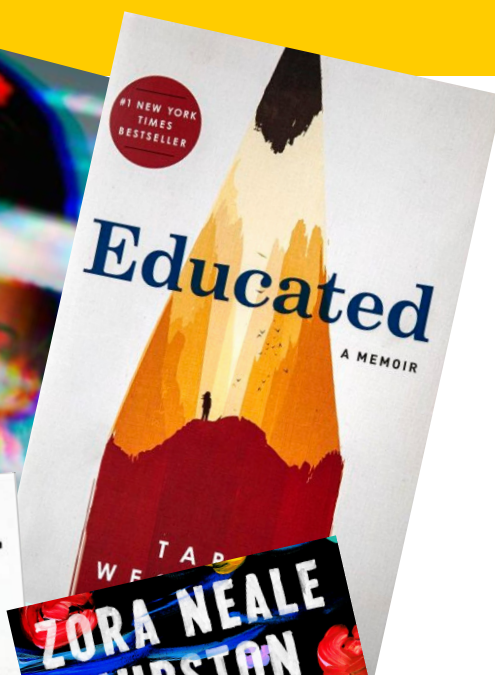
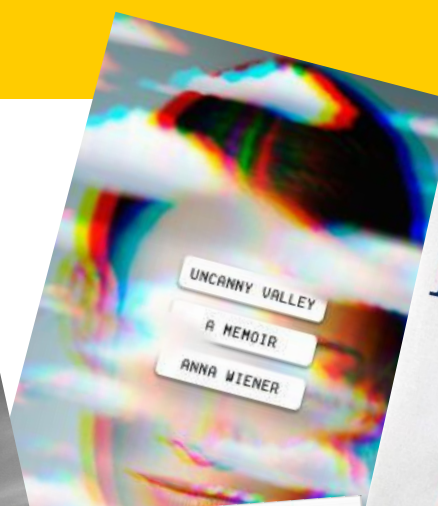
HGTV



CRIMINAL MINDS



What we're reading



Meet & Greet!

Welcome the newest graduate students to the department!



Meghan Stinar

Where are you from originally?

I'm from Fargo! I was part of the first class to graduate from Davies High School.

Tell us a little bit about your educational journey thus far (what has brought you to NDSU?)

I have a Spanish BA and Elementary Education BS from UND! I never anticipated being a middle school English teacher, but I love it so much. After getting my Middle Level Endorsement, I decided I wanted to continue my educational journey in English!

What is a fun fact about you?

I own a small business making jewelry called Meghan Stinar Crafts!

Where are you from originally?

I am originally from Bangladesh.

Tell us a little bit about your educational journey thus far (what has brought you to NDSU?)

I received my bachelor's and master's in English literature from the University of Rajshahi, Bangladesh. After graduation, I joined a private university in Bangladesh as a full-time lecturer in English.

What is a fun fact about you?

I am currently doing my second master's at Eastern Illinois University and writing my thesis!

Fahad Hossain



Meet & Greet!



Issac Sullivan

Where are you from originally?

That's interesting actually. I was born in North Dakota, but I relocated to Colorado. And then I took a sojourn to Arizona. It's been wild.

Tell us a little bit about your educational journey thus far (what has brought you to NDSU?)

My educational journey, thus far, has been highly eclectic. I primarily am interested in rhetoric and composition studies, but I also have interests in literary analysis in relation to queer narratives that involve trauma. For me, I would want to take my interest in rhetorical theory and apply it to a study of far-right discourses that are present in today's media, particularly Fox News. I chose NDSU as the next step for my education because I always felt welcome there, and I felt that I have work I still want to wrap up in Fargo.

Where are you from originally?

I am from Bedford, Michigan.

Tell us a little bit about your educational journey thus far (what has brought you to NDSU?)

I attended the University of Toledo where I earned my Bachelors degree in Anthropology and minor in English. After graduation in May of 2018, I served as an AmeriCorps VISTA for the College of Menominee Nation in Keshena, WI, where I helped individuals attending the Tribal college with their writing skills. I have decided to further my formal education in a masters in English to learn how to more effectively contribute to communities of low socioeconomic status and ESL students through teaching English.



Meg Perry


Krista Aldrich


Since graduating with her MA in 2018, Krista Aldrich has continued to find ways to be involved in academia. While lecturing for the department and working full time for the Fargo Public Library, she found time to apply for PhD programs, finding success this last April. Krista will be attending Louisiana State University in the fall as a PhD student, pursuing a degree in literature, where she hopes to continue to "bring light to female authors who have been overshadowed in the literary world."

Alumni *in* Action

Rowshan Chowdhury is currently doing her PhD in English with an American Studies concentration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her research concentrates on Asian American and Black Studies with a strong focus on displacement, racialized and gendered violence, and serialized literary works of marginalized writers in the long nineteenth century. When asked about the NDSU English department Rowshan said, "This department has given me the opportunity to explore the broader arena of academic research. Whatever I have achieved so far, it is all because of the caring faculty members of the NDSU English Department. This department welcomed me as a family member and made me see the best in me as an academic."


Rowshan Chowdhury

Emily Erickson

Emily Erickson is currently a copywriter and proofreader at Super Studio, a graphic design and production studio in downtown Fargo. Her experience in the English department gave her some great connections to future jobs and a really broad knowledge base to bring to her career after she got her undergraduate degree. When asked about the department Emily said, " My big takeaways: Prompt, clear communication, attention to detail, and healthy curiosity are key! (The feedback "Review your use of the semicolon" was also life-changing.) I miss the camaraderie with fellow students and, surprisingly, the intimidating reading lists on each syllabus!"

CREATIVE WRITING PROMPTS

This is an unprecedented time — and one you'll want to remember when you get older! Write a letter to your future self 10 years from now.

Here are some ideas of what to include:

- How is your life different from this time last month?
- What is the hardest thing about staying home?
- Has anything been a pleasant surprise in having to be at home more?
- What technology has helped you the most
- What is the best book you have read?
- What is the best movie / TV show you have watched?
- Have you done any hobbies, crafts or learned a new skill?
- Any unique family activities?
- Finally, have you learned anything new about yourself? Your family? Your community?

Be sure to save the letter somewhere safe to read later or consider scheduling it as an email to send to yourself!

For over 20 years the *New York Times* has published their popular "36 Hours" column where writers suggest plans for readers who are spending a weekend in places around the US. While travelling for fun may not be an option now, *The New York Times* continues to embrace the spirit of discovery, creativity, and curiosity.

During this pandemic, the paper is asking for readers to continue to suggest activities for their "36 Hours" column special edition "36 Hours in Wherever You Are."

"Write 50 words or so about one thing your fellow travel readers can do over a weekend wherever they are, and why you're suggesting it. Think within the spirit of travel, even if many of us are housebound. It might be:

- An album or a song playlist
- A book or movie that transports you
- A particular recipe you love
- A podcast episode worth sharing
- A drawing exercise
- A religious or spiritual ritual, or a service to take part in
- Taking a walk around your neighborhood
- Ways to "travel" without traveling
- A clever way to virtually connect with family and friends"

Pen & Pixels would like to offer a farewell to visiting professor Sharity Nelson. Thank you for your hard work. We wish you the best of luck!

THE BUZZ

PhD candidate **Anthony Albright** successfully defended his PhD dissertation titled, "Social Dialect Features of Military Speech: A sociolinguistic Study of Fargo-Area Veterans in April

Assistant professor **Anastassiya Andrianova** was promoted to Associate Professor this spring.

Associate professor **Alison Graham Bertolini** co-edited a new collection of essays with Casey Kayser, assistant professor of English at the University of Arkansas, titled "Understanding the Short Fiction of Carson McCullers," which was published by Mercer University Press in April.

Additionally, **Graham Bertolini** was awarded the Tapestry of Inclusion award by the Student Activities Office for her work on diversity at NDSU.

Graham Bertolini also won this year's College Research Award. This award represents the most strong and productive researcher in the college over the year, with Graham Bertolini producing five essays, one book, and three papers in just the last year.

Graduate Student **Mike Bittner** successfully defended his MA paper, "'Off the Beaten Warpath: Native Representation and Themes in Chris Claremont's X-Men'" in April.



Assistant professor **Sean Burt** was promoted to Associate Professor this spring.

Graduate student **Lindsay Campbell** successfully defended her masters paper, "Nongrievable Bodies: Sex Trafficking Subjects Embodied in Social Media Rhetoric" in April.

Lecturer **Ryan Christiansen** won the Bob Carroll Memorial Writing Award for his article "Pro Football's Renaissance Men: The Twilight Decade of the 1960s."

Graduate student **Ali Froslie** successfully defended her MA paper, "Blessed is She: Gender Critique Through Performativity and Portrayals of the Divine in Naomi Alderman's *The Power*" in April.

Assistant professor **Amy Gore** was named a Junior Fellow in Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography through the Rare Book School (RBS) at the University of Virginia.

Graduate student **Kaitlyn Grube** successfully defended her MA paper, "Which Witch is Witch: The Appropriation of Women's Pain in the Use of the Witch Hunt Metaphor in Modern Political Rhetoric" in April.

Graduate student **Deborah Haley** successfully defended her MA paper "The Dangers of Power: Government Control in the Worlds of *Condie's Matched* and *Lowry's The Giver*" in April.

Professor **Holly Hassel** received the Nell Ann Pickett service award from the NCTE for her work with two-year colleges.

Fahad Hossain, an international incoming graduate student from Bangladesh, was chosen for the Amy R. Taggart Doctoral Stipend in English at NDSU.

Lecturer **Jamee Larson** was promoted to Senior Lecturer this spring.

Assistant professor **Mary McCall** and Assistant professor of practice **Daniel Kenzie** were recipients of the 2020 CCCC Technical Scientific and Communication Award.

Professor **Bruce Maylath** was awarded by the Society for Communication, on the recommendation of the J. R. Gould Award Committee, the prestigious J. R. Gould Award for Excellence in Teaching for 2020.

PhD candidate **Ashleigh Petts** accepted an Assistant Professor of Technical Communication position at the University of Houston-Downtown in Houston, Texas.

Associate professor **Kelly Sassi**, along with co-authors Tanya Maloney, Nini Hayes, and Katie Crawford-Garrett, had their article titled, "Preparing and supporting teachers for equity and racial justice: Creating culturally relevant, collective, intergenerational, co-created spaces" published in the *Journal Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*.

Sassi was also promoted to full professor this spring.

Thank you for your support of the NDSU English Department.

Your contributions make a difference in our department and university every day. We are currently seeking financial support for student scholarships and for funding graduate student travel to conferences, where students will present their research. If you would like to contribute financially to the department, please do so through this link: <https://www.ndsualumni.com/contribute>

Please contact the department chair, **Rebecca Weaver-Hightower**, with any questions:

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What's Your Story?

We want to know where your research, writing, storytelling, etc., has taken you—In addition, we want to know where your initiative and ingenuity have taken your English degree. Send your stories to the current Pen & Pixels editor Hannah Stevens (Hannah.stevens.honeyman@gmail.com).