

Meet the May 2021 Graduates



Samantha Barney

As an English undergraduate student, I have spent a lot of time writing, reading, and critically approaching texts and the world. Each class has presented me different voices throughout time and how powerful those voices have been in creating our modern-day societies. Perhaps most significantly, my experience with the West Virginia Dialect Project (WVDP) has shown me how important our voices are. Through the WVDP, I have helped examine the sociolinguistic space from the individual to the community and how it influences the fabric of West Virginian and Appalachian communities. After graduation, I will be attending West Virginia University College of Law and exploring public interest law. I hope to emphasize West Virginian and Appalachian voices inside and outside of legal institutions.



Georgia Beatty

I'm a graduating senior from Weirton, WV and a German language enthusiast, writer, painter, poetry fanatic, and proud foster mom to many cats. I'm passionate about environmental literature and LGBTQ+ stories. English at WVU has taught me how to consider the world holistically; it's taught me how to think critically about literature and history, and how to be a better person, really. I've especially cherished my time in Creative Writing workshops; they've been invaluable in helping me grow and learn in my craft, and any time I get to talk about writing fiction is a good time. I value the connections I've made in those courses, as well. I'm taking a gap year to work and teach English (TESOL) before returning to Germany for graduate school.



Kiersten Bennett



Zoey Blair



Erica Bowles



Lakin Davis

After concluding my four years at WVU, I intend to take a year off to rest and travel the contiguous United States. In the future, I have dreams of pursuing a Master's in History or attending Law School. Out of every experience and relationship the English Department has offered, I will miss my professors the most. Dr. Lamb, Dr. Caronia, and more have shaped me into the confident academic individual that I am today. I wish the best of life and success to my fellow graduates as they take their knowledge through and beyond the hills of West Virginia.



Joshua Davy



Alexus Eudell



Cameron Ferguson

After a year off to relax and enjoy my youth (and stack up some moolah), I'll be enrolling at WVU Law School in the admissions class of 2022, unless I write a screenplay that blows up during my time off and I can just write movies for a living, in which case, West Virginia University will not receive another dollar from me. I have nothing but fond memories from my time as an English major. I learned so much and met so many genuine, give-you-the-shirt-off-their-back kind of people, be it professors or other students, and I'll always cherish those relationships. Signing off, a proud and grateful Mountaineer.



Sarah Ghabra



Amanda Griffith



Christopher Gross



Joshua Heagy



Madeline Hernandez



Makenzie Hudson

After graduating, I plan to continue my education at WVU. I will be attending the College of Education and Human Services, studying for a master's degree in elementary education. I also hope to earn a master's degree in literary education, one day using my degrees to become a reading specialist. Eventually, I would also like to earn a degree in library sciences to follow my childhood dream and become a librarian.

Professors such as Jill Woods, Kirk Hazen, Catherine Gouge, and the late Elizabeth Leo inspired and challenged me during my time at WVU. They each helped me become a better writer, both creatively and professionally. Throughout all the creative writing workshops, professional writing projects, and class discussions, I've learned to appreciate the English language and its role in my life.



Erin Huffman



Kristen Johnson

Kristen plans to attend West Virginia University for a Masters degree in the fall majoring in Integrated Marketing Communications with an area of emphasis in Public Relations Leadership. She very much enjoyed her time as an undergrad and has had many influential teachers along the way that awakened her passion for diversity and inclusion. She will be the Digital Media Director for PRSSA in addition to becoming a Diversity Ambassador for WVU during the next academic calendar year. She appreciated her position in the Mountaineer Maniacs as she continues to work on the Executive Board during Graduate School. Kristen is preparing for career in Crisis Communications post graduation while returning home to Maryland. Kristen would like to thank her parents and grandparents for supporting her during her time at West Virginia University.



Amelia Jones

Pursuing an English degree was one of the best decisions I have ever made. I am using what I learned in the classroom to refine my skills as an academic while having support from my peers and the institution. Literature has the capability to reveal who I am and how I fit into this world. The English department has become my home here at WVU. I have been able to pursue research, study abroad, and deepen my passion for literature. One of my favorite experiences was being able to study abroad in Rome and Florence, Italy with Dr. Caronia! After graduation, I plan to pursue my MA in English Education at Columbia University. I am so thankful for all of the guidance and support that I have received from the English department during my time here. Thank you all, for everything!



Malina Judd

During my time as an English major at WVU, I gained so many new and exciting experiences. Some of my favorite courses included creative writing and linguistics. I discovered a passion for writing poetry that won me quite a few awards. My favorite memory as an English major is when I left my comfort zone and presented my poetry in front of people for my final capstone project. As I leave my undergraduate career, I will remain at WVU for the next couple of years pursuing a master's degree in TESOL. I also just accepted a Graduate TA position in the Department of World Languages, Literatures and Linguistics. I am excited to see what the future holds!



Gabriella Lebo



Alex Long



Morgan Ludewig



Helena McAllister



Aerianna McClanahan

I come from the small, but beautiful town of Delbarton, WV. I am interested in researching diversity, social justice and grassroots activism particularly within an Appalachian setting. Outside of my academic interests, I enjoy spending time with my two dogs Dundie and Fern as well as watching '80s films (which are definitively the best, in my opinion).

I have loved English and Literature for as long as I could possibly remember. The thing that I love the most about it is that one text can have so many interpretations - the possibilities are limitless. With that in mind, taking courses that were so small and intimate and having a group of 20-25 people to bounce ideas off of in my classes here has been an incredible experience because with each new perspective I am introduced to by a classmate, my love for the subject not only grows tenfold, but I get to build bridges and connections to people from all walks of life in the process. It's unbelievably special.

I will be returning to WVU in the fall to pursue my Master's degree in English. As someone who hopes to become a college professor someday, I am thrilled to have the opportunity to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the English Department as I continue to pursue my academic and career goals.



Taylor Miller

I am from Fairmont, WV. Outside of my coursework, I volunteer with WVU's chapter of A Moment of Magic. I own an obnoxious number of plants, and in my spare time, I like to take care of said plants, read, hike, or spend time with my friends and family.

My favorite thing about the English program is the openness of both the degree and the professors and administrators who run the program. The English program allows students to experience all aspects of the English field, and encourages students to think outside of the stereotypical careers that an English degree is associated with. Through my courses, I have been able to improve my speaking, writing, and analytical skills, have read everything from the Classics to modern works, learned about the great creators that came before, and have been motivated to follow my heart. The professors and administrators in the program have never been anything but encouraging, believing in me and my potential even if I could not see the greater picture as they could.

After graduating with my undergraduate degrees, I will be returning to WVU in the fall to continue my education by pursuing a master's in Professional Writing and Editing. After completing my master's, I hope to work in the editing and publishing industry as a book editor.



Logan Moore



Emily Ogden

After graduating from West Virginia University, I will be attending the West Virginia University College of Law this Fall and plan to focus on restorative justice and criminal justice reform after law school. My two favorite English classes I had the opportunity to take were Justice and Literature, an Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program class taught by Dr. Kathleen Ryan, and Appalachian Literature of the Environment taught by Dr. Ann Pancake. I am so grateful for all the opportunities I had through the English program, from volunteering with the Appalachian Prison Book Project to finishing my education with a legal internship through my Capstone course. I cannot wait to apply everything I have learned here in the future, and I'm so proud to say that I am a graduate of the West Virginia University English program!



Madeline Paugh



Maria Pomales



Alexis Ream

As my Pap always told me, “your education can never be taken away from you.” In pursuit of my education, I found a home within the Department of English at WVU—a home that nurtured my academic interests and introduced me to my best friends. With immeasurable gratitude, I thank my family, friends, and professors of English, WGST, and Arabic Studies: all of you have made the past four years not only memorable, but possible. Following graduation, I will be working two jobs and earning a TEFL certification with a specialization in teaching English to Arabic speakers. In the future, I plan to attend graduate school to continue my writing and research on premodern feminine mystics.



Melissa Reynolds

I’m from Aurora, WV. I’m currently an active member of Morgantown Writers Group and an editor for The Metaworker Literary Magazine. When I’m not writing or studying, I rescue plants from the discount section at Kroger or I play Dungeons and Dragons.

I often stand in awe when reading someone’s words who have been gone for hundreds of years-- no time machine needed to know their thoughts. Stories allow me to explore many different aspects of life, whether it's a different time period, another place, or a new perspective.

I will be going to graduate school to get my masters in PWE this upcoming Fall. After that, I want to help other writers hone their craft while I continue my own work.



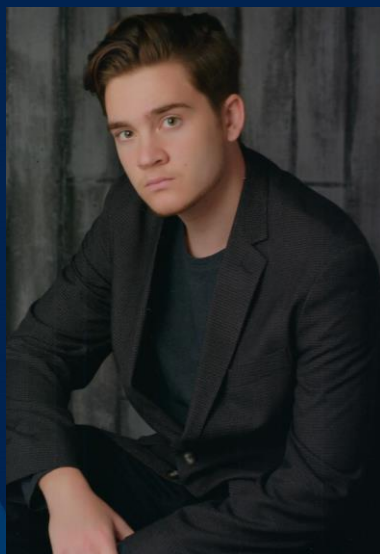
Sophia Rigglesman



Kelsy Robbins



Jaclyn Roberts



Stone Schaldenbrand

Stone Schaldenbrand is graduating with a B.A. in English with a concentration in Professional Writing and Editing. After graduation, Stone plans on doing part-time work with the West Virginia Humanities Council as a freelance writer. Also, Stone has been accepted into WVU's Professional Writing and Editing graduate program, where he will assume a position as a Graduate Teaching Assistant. Stone fell in love with every English course that he took as a WVU undergrad. However, Stone notes that beyond his capstone experience with Professor Jill Woods, English 338 with Professor Cari Carpenter, English 352 with Dr. Ann Pancake, English 301 with Dr. Erin Brock Carlson, and English 303 with Dr. Catherine Gouge were some of his most memorable, enjoyable, and thought-provoking courses.



Cassidy Southern



Kacie Steele



Tre Tarantini



Elizabeth Urish

I aspire to combine my English major and PWE emphasis with my Fashion Merchandising minor to write and edit in the Fashion industry. My favorite classes were any class that Ana Elfenbein taught. My favorite project was when I wrote an article for the fashion magazine, *La Mod*, for my fashion promotion class. I also was a part of the editorial team, and copyedited *La Mod*.



Madison Urse



Kaley Vestal

After graduation, Kaley will be pursuing a career in writing and editing. During her time at WVU, she has had the opportunity to work on research projects with Dr. Thomas Sura in rhetoric and Dr. Adam Komisaruk in literary theory. Some of her favorite classes have been Appalachian Fiction, Contemporary Literary Theory, and British Literature. One of Kaley's favorite memories has been presenting at WVELA Annual Conference in 2019 and being accepted to the 2020 CCCC Annual Convention.



Amanda Waterman



Erin Watson

I am currently working part-time for IGI global, an academic publishing company located in Hershey, Pennsylvania. I plan to transition to full-time after graduation. Some of my favorite English classes at WVU were Non-Western World Literature and British Literature



Marisa Watson

After graduation, I will be attending the WVU Integrated Marketing Communications graduate program! I have also accepted a full-time position at Agile5 in Fairmont, West Virginia as a technical writer. Later in life, I hope to move towards the book publishing industry and eventually open my own indie publishing company.

The WVU English program has not only taught me an extensive knowledge of literature and writing but has also allowed me to become a better person. The professors in the English department truly care for every one of their students and you can see their passion for their subject while they teach. It's truly been an unforgettable experience.



Alexandria Webb

I was born and raised in Kenova, West Virginia, where I learned to love reading and writing from an early age. I used to get in trouble in grade school for reading under my desk during lessons. I am passionate about creating content that lets the audience forget about everything else for a while and has the ability to occupy their mind long after they have read it. I hope to have my own published novel one day that can do this.

My favorite part of my English courses here at WVU has been the comprehensive aspect. The more I have learned about reading and writing, the more other subjects became easier to understand, making it a vital and versatile major. The English Department is full of nurturing and intelligent professors that make it easy to learn the material while also allowing you to be creative, and I hope to carry the skills they taught me as well as that creativity into my new position as a Proposal Writer for Fusion Technology in Bridgeport, WV.