

Meet the 2021-22 English Department Award and Scholarship Winners



Brooke Boyer

HOMETOWN: Indiana, Pennsylvania

MAJORS: English (Literature and Cultural Studies concentration) and Spanish

MINOR: Law and Legal Studies

Eleanor Tucker Donley Memorial Scholarship

Here at WVU, I am a member of the Law and Economics Club and the Women in Law Club, which have helped me fulfill my interests in law. I am specifically interested in international and immigration law and hope to pursue one of these areas in the future. In my spare time, I enjoy reading, running, and spending time with my family. I also enjoy studying Spanish culture and furthering my knowledge in the language.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English and being an English major is having the opportunity to explore a vast array of literature and analyzing those pieces to explore their deeper meanings. I also love the diverse course options here at WVU.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduating from WVU, I hope to attend law school and use my love of language to focus on either international or immigration law.



Valerie Browne

HOMETOWN: Martinsburg, West Virginia

MAJORS: English (Creative Writing concentration) and Russian Studies

MINOR: Political Science

Fulbright Scholarship

Honorable Mention of the Waitman Barbe Writing Award – Poetry Division

I enjoy being outdoors--hiking, ultimate frisbee, long runs on the C&O Canal towpath--reading, playing my guitar, and writing poetry. My academic interests lie in literature (especially Russian literature), language study, and Slavic & East European Studies. I'm passionate about cultural and literary exchange between the U.S. and former Soviet Republics.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love the way that English teaches you to critically evaluate the world and the relationships and structures therein while at the same time encouraging you to appreciate their beauty. The study of English is a wonderful melding of analysis and art.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation I will be studying Russian intensively in Kyrgyzstan as a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholar. In the fall I will be teaching English in Poland as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant. While there, I will also have the opportunity to work with displaced Ukrainians, which is extremely meaningful to me as my mom is from Ukraine.



Erica Cottrill

HOMETOWN: Quiet Dell, West Virginia

MAJORS: English (Creative Writing concentration) and Acting

First-place winner of the James Paul Brawner Expository Writing Contest – Undergraduate Division Waitman Barbe Creative Writing Award – Fiction Division

I live with my family and my sisters' cats in the summer but have no pet to call my own, despite wanting a bird for four years now. I crochet in class to keep my hands busy and nod when someone asks me if I'm knitting. I'm usually the shortest adult in the room.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English is being able to have discussions with my professors and fellow classmates about literature and language. It opens up so many new perspectives for me. I love how humbling it is to hear how someone else interprets a text and think, "Wow, I never would have thought of that."

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I would love to write fiction for a living, especially plays or screenplays, and to eventually go to graduate school for creative writing or performance. I want to expand people's view on Appalachia and its wonderful and complex inhabitants through my storytelling.



Alicyn Craig

HOMETOWN: Martinsburg, WV

MAJOR: Secondary Education/English

Blanche Haskins Lough Capicola Scholarship

I enjoy playing around with my cat, Artichoke, occasionally do makeup and if I truly have extra free time, attempt to read without having a cat meow in my face. One thing I do often is collect an asinine amount of squishmallows.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

With my major primarily being Secondary Education, I loved this past year going into the classroom and observing students to get insight on the future of my career. This year has shown me a lot about what to look forward to in the coming years.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After college I plan to work here in WV as an English teacher with hopes to be in a middle school.



Tucker Deitz

HOMETOWN: Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

MAJOR: English

MINOR: Addiction Studies

Jon Scott Nelson First-Year Writing Award

My interests include writing poetry, photography, and taking bike rides.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English is its ability to take the abstract and make it something concrete that everyone can understand and relate to English equalizes us in this way.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

My goal after college is to teach or pursue addiction studies further and go into social work.



James Freda

Rebecca Mason Perry Award

James is an aspiring horror writer from the Maine coast.



Daria Gavriushchenko

HOMETOWN: Ukraine, in Makeevka, which is near Donetsk

MAJOR: English

MINOR: TESOL

First-place winner of the James Paul Brawner Expository Writing Contest—102/103 Division

Since my childhood, I've been interested in learning languages and reading books. So far, I speak Russian, Ukrainian and English, but I also learned French and German. English as a second language has been my passion since kindergarten. The desire to become fluent in English brought me to West Virginia to study.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English courses is the ability to be creative and express my opinion through writing and an infinite number of chances to develop my writing skills.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation, I would like to teach adults who are also interested in learning English.



Cody Grey

HOMETOWN: Fort Irwin, California

MAJOR: Ph.D. English - My areas of interest include American postwar to contemporary queer and alternative sexuality literatures and long 19th-century British and Irish literatures with an emphasis on affect theory, gender, sexuality, and queer studies. I also have a soft spot for composition and rhetoric as they pertain to queerness, trauma-informed classrooms, and neurodivergent pedagogies.

Office of Graduate Education and Life Outstanding Merit Fellowship

I was born in Fort Irwin, California and grew up mostly in the Sacramento Valley, where I attended California State University, Sacramento studying English. I am passionate about reading, archiving, listening to scores and soundtracks, and indulging in seafood. I also enjoy a good cup of coffee, playing video games with my partners, and watching birds and the weather with my three cats.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

Opportunities to geek out with my students and colleagues, sharing unique insights, and sussing out close readings and meanings that shift our perspectives and understandings, whether that's about the text, the world, or even ourselves!

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

My future plans include regular volunteering with grassroots community archives and libraries, expanding my experiences with prison education and literacy, and expanding on my research topics and interests!



Destinee Harper

HOMETOWN: Harrisonburg, Virginia
MAJOR: MA in English

First-place winner of the James Paul Brawner Expository Writing Contest—Graduate Division

Destinee Harper is a poet, essayist, and fiction writer from Harrisonburg, Virginia. Currently, she works as a graduate instructor at West Virginia University as well as an assistant education coordinator for the Appalachian Prison Book Project. She is finishing the first year of her master's degree in English and is particularly interested in otherworldly fiction.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduating from West Virginia University, Destinee hopes to enroll in a PhD program or begin teaching at a community college. She believes in the restorative property of literature but now realizes, through the pandemic and hectic political climate, that living in a science fiction novel might not be as fun as she once thought.



David Hayhurst

HOMETOWN: Washington, West Virginia
MAJOR: English (Creative Writing concentration)

Appalachian Writing Award

I am passionate about creative writing and creating stories that can teach a reader.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English courses are all the selected pieces to read. While some can be boring, others will stick with me forever.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation, I hope to pursue my passion of writing and some day become an author.



Jordan Howes

HOMETOWN: Morgantown, West Virginia
MAJOR: English (Professional Writing and Editing concentration)

Blanche Haskins Lough Capicola Scholarship

I love to read, write, and help others which has fueled my passion for English education and social activism. I also write for The Daily Athenaeum here at WVU where I report for news.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English and English courses is how there is always an opportunity to expand your worldview in an English curriculum. The concepts we study are so versatile and constantly create opportunities to learn about yourself and the world around you while simultaneously challenging you to grow from said perspectives.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduating from WVU I intend to go to graduate school to study writing, rhetoric, and social change. I hope to eventually pursue a career in Secondary Education while staying involved with community activism organizations wherever I reside in the future.



Wenyu Kong

HOMETOWN: Dalian, China

MAJOR: Ph.D. in English

Department of English Distinguished Teaching Award

My study interests lie in British and Irish modernism, Gothic studies, and temporalities studies. Currently, I am in my dissertation stage and my thesis explores the history of British/Irish Gothic and the transformative usages of Gothic traditions in Irish modernist writings. I am interested in exploring the intersection of history, literature, and cultural memory. When I am not researching or studying, I also enjoy traveling and cooking. I am always excited to explore new places or try different recipes.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I believe that literature teaches us empathy. When we study a particular work, we are not simply studying for our academic purposes, and we also learn to listen to different voices and understand various styles of lives, and such mutual understanding is necessary for our society. I also feel grateful for knowing the wonderful people in our English Department; their passion for the subject helps me to discover more about English and see myself with more potential.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After I graduate from WVU, I hope I can continue to work as a researcher/lecturer in higher education institutions. I will be happy to continue to teach composition and literature to college students.



Mary Linscheid

HOMETOWN: Morgantown, West Virginia

MAJOR: English (Creative Writing concentration)

MINORS: Appalachian Studies and Appalachian Music

Blanche Haskins Lough Capicola Scholarship Virginia Butts Sturm Creative Writing Scholarship Waitman Barbe Creative Writing Contest—Poetry Division

Mary enjoys writing poetry, prose, and music that explores the connection Appalachians have to their homeland, traditions, and communities. As a musician, she has performed with several bands, including the WVU Bluegrass & Old-time Bands and The Honeysuckle Vines, and she will release her first solo EP, "A Place To Grow Old," in 2022. Her poetry has won several contests and, in 2022, a few of her poems were published in WVU's undergraduate literary journal, *Calliope*. In her free time, she can often be found playing fiddle in local old-time jams, exploring old graveyards, or wildcrafting herbs on her family farm.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love the people. I've had the most supportive instructors and mentors, and always have a good rapport with my classmates. I love that creative space that we enter into when we spend time exploring the formal elements of a text or attempt to answer a deep question through writing or in discussion.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

Although I'm aware there are grad programs in the fields I am interested in, such as English, Appalachian Studies, and music, I want to do some hands-on work and see the world after I finish my bachelor's degree. I plan to seek out culture-bearers of Appalachian traditions such as music, folk medicine, and storytelling and learn from them, using my education in English and Appalachian Studies to help me innovate, share, and carry on these traditions.



Aerianna McClanahan

HOMETOWN: Delbarton, West Virginia

MAJORS: MA in English Literature and Graduate Certificate in Women's and Gender Studies (WGST)

Rebecca Mason Perry Award

I am really passionate about interdisciplinary research because I consider myself somewhat of an intellectual omnivore - I always want to try a little bit of everything just to know what I like!

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English is that I can take literature from any time period, any region of the world, any genre and analyze it a million different ways depending on the theory or lens I use to interpret its content. That has always been the beauty and the appeal of English for me - each time you read a text, something new will reveal itself because your perception of literature grows as you grow.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

In Fall 2022, I will be applying for Ph.D programs. I am hoping to get accepted into a program where I can continue my studies in both English and WGST. I have never lived outside of West Virginia, so I will be excited to get a change of scenery (although WV will always be my home)!



Caitlin Mead

HOMETOWN: Wheeling, West Virginia
MAJORS: English and Psychology

Captain William Neely Award for Outstanding Sophomore

Elena Illa Graham Memorial Scholarship

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love having the opportunity to read and discuss literature with my professors and classmates. Most importantly, I feel at home in the English Department!

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I have many interests so I am keeping my options open! I hope to teach at some point, but I am also interested in higher education administration, research, writing, and so much more. I am looking forward to seeing where my degree and passions will lead me.



Scarlet Mebane

HOMETOWN: Morgantown, WV
MAJOR: English (Creative Writing concentration)
MINOR: Painting

Second-place winner of the James Paul Brawner Expository Writing Contest—Undergraduate Division

I enjoy drawing, painting, writing poems, and video games.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love looking at stories from a variety of different angles. Analyzing texts allows you to broaden your perspective, which is great for both the classroom and the real world.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

Undecided as of now! All I know for sure is that I want to keep writing and painting. Maybe I'll put those skills together and illustrate my own stories.



Jennalee Meck

HOMETOWN: Green Bank, West Virginia
MAJOR: Civil Engineering
MINOR: Professional Writing and Editing

Second-place winner of the Professional Writing and Editing Award

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

The way English allows me to have an outlet to express and advocate for things I am passionate about, while also prompting meaningful relationships with others, spurs my love for the discipline.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I hope to work within West Virginia to improve our infrastructure, ultimately enhancing the well-being of those who call this state home.



Sara Money

HOMETOWN: Capon Bridge, West Virginia

MAJOR: English/Secondary Education

Carter Bishop Memorial Scholarship

Some of my passions are hanging out with my dog and friends in my free time.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation, I am hoping to move back home and teach in Hardy County while working to get my Master's in a program for Special Education.



Tucker Nadeau

HOMETOWN: North Ferndale, Montana

MAJORS: English and Spanish

MINOR: Arabic Studies

Eberly College Outstanding Senior English Major

I came to WVU to join the wrestling team and because of all of the great outdoor opportunities. In my free time I enjoy whitewater kayaking and rafting, fishing, and cooking foods from around the world.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite part of English is getting the impetus to read such a wide variety of works that I would never have encountered on my own and the uniformly great teachers that I've had in all of my classes here at WVU.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

Next year I will be attending the University of Victoria in Canada to obtain an MA in English and eventually I plan on going into education.



Gabriella Pishotti

HOMETOWN: Warren, Ohio

David G. Allen Dissertation Fellowship Summer Humanities Internship WVU Foundation Distinguished Doctoral Scholarship

When I'm not reading and writing for school, I'm usually reading or writing for fun or baking something that is almost certain to have chocolate in it.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about literature is its ability to introduce people to different worlds and perspectives. With every book I pick up, I learn something new.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation, I hope to continue teaching English and pursuing my research interests.



Devin Price

HOMETOWN: Weirton, West Virginia

MAJORS: English and History

Blanche Haskins Lough Capicola Scholarship Waitman Barbe Creative Writing Award—Nonfiction Division

I am very passionate about service, both community and public service. Regarding community service, I believe that we all have an obligation to give back to our community, and I have been honored to do so through volunteering with local organizations, through my Church, and as a mentor in the Energy Express program. Furthermore, I also have answered the call to public service as a Senator in the WVU Student Government Association, where I have worked to provide scholarships for students (HOME Scholarship), cooperated with university administrators and local officials on pedestrian safety efforts, and have supported mental health entities on campus. In short, community and public service are my greatest passions.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about the English program here has been the ability to develop important skills in argumentation, communication, and writing in an interesting and engaging way. Every English professor that I have had has selected interesting texts and led thoughtful conversations about the content that we have read. I've been able to learn more about and analyze the works of some of my favorite writers, which, in turn, has allowed me to develop the aforementioned skill sets. Therefore, my favorite element of the English major and courses is being able to develop a variety of skills through an interesting and engaging medium: literature.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation I hope to attend law school and pursue a career in law and public service. I would like to combine my love for criminal law and constitutional law towards criminal justice reform efforts.



Qazi Arka Rahman

HOMETOWN: Bangladesh

MAJOR: Ph.D. in English

Blaydes Family Summer Fellowship John C. & Mildred W. Ludlum Doctoral Fellowship

Qazi Arka Rahman hails from Bangladesh and is interested in the nexus of postcolonial literature, south Asian studies, and digital humanities. He is curious about the role of fiction in shaping the concepts of nation and nationality in modern South Asia and seeks to understand the multidimensional identity politics operating in that region. Through his work as a Writing Studio Consultant, Arka has developed skills as a grant/proposal writer. He is an awardee of the Open Education Research (OER) Grant and two times recipient of the Summer Humanities Fellowship. Arka practices public speaking and has been an invited speaker for the Local to Global Film Series and Isaac Asimov Collection Symposium. A firm believer in the power of narratives to develop critical understanding of diversity and social justice, Arka also enjoys critical studies of science fiction, films, popular culture, and loves anything related to hard rock and cyberpunk! Learn more at <https://qazirahman.academia.edu/>.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

English courses open door to a world of inspiration and creativity. They allow you to engage with complex topics and help you to develop multiple perspectives through un-learning and re-learning. English courses also broaden your horizon and facilitate the development of an array of transferrable skills – a matter of utmost importance in these times of rapid changes.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I would like to pursue a career in academia as I enjoy research and like to teach. As a scholar, one of my goals is to bring in Bangladeshi literature in English and Bangla to broaden existing notions of South Asian identity while incorporating DH tools and methods. I would also like to work as a grant writer as I enjoy solving "grant-puzzles" to help people get the means to work on their desired projects.



Stone Schaldenbrand

HOMETOWN: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MAJOR: MA in Professional Writing and Editing

Rebecca Mason Perry Award

My interests mostly consist of pizza, pasta, and pilsner. I also enjoy watching cooking TikToks and finding new hiking trails.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

One of my favorite aspects about English and English courses is how far the discipline and skills reach. Studying English has immensely expanded my mind to the intricacy of communication, rhetorical awareness, and language in general. There are few spaces in life, if any, that I can avoid running into these intricate components. I feel grateful to have been able to study them some.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

For now, I would like to find a career in grants administration. Wherever my future takes me, I hope to utilize the valuable experience I've had with my hard-working and generous peers, professors, and colleagues.



Timothy Schumann

HOMETOWN: Arlington, Virginia

MAJOR: Agroecology

Jon Scott Nelson First-Year Writing Award

I'm interested in the arts of agriculture, animal husbandry, and forestry. My favorite writer is Wendell Berry whose book *The Unsettling of America* greatly influenced my perspective on farming and self-sufficiency in our modern world.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

Being able to write about subjects related to my major, Agroecology, allowed me to think and write about my passions in English class this year.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I hope to do work stewarding land and producing food once I graduate.



Kristi Snodgrass

HOMETOWN: Fairmont, West Virginia

MAJORS: English (Professional Writing and Editing concentration) and History

MINOR: Political Science

Professional Writing and Editing Award

Honorable Mention of the Waitman Barbe Creative Writing Award—Nonfiction Division

My interests include writing, video editing, and participating in track & field. I am especially passionate about reading and editing young adult fiction romance.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about English and English courses is the reading, in being able to escape reality and do anything from learning about first-wave feminism to taking a fantasy journey in another world.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

After graduation, I plan to intern at a publishing house that publishes young adult books and then work my way up to becoming a full-time book editor.



Newton Sweeney

HOMETOWN: Martinsburg, West Virginia

MAJORS: English (Creative Writing concentration) and Acting BFA

Honorable Mention of the Waitman Barbe Creative Writing Award—Fiction Division

I'm passionate about storytelling and the arts, and I believe that fiction has the power to change the world for the better.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love to be challenged through writing, and I thrive when surrounded by others who are as passionate about writing as I am.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I plan to continue studying English at the graduate level. From there, I hope to remain involved in the theatre while primarily earning a living through my writing in whatever capacity I am able to.



Megan Swiger

HOMETOWN: Morgantown, West Virginia

MAJOR: English/Secondary Education

Carter Bishop Scholarship

As an English Education major, I'd love to work here sometime after graduation. I truly enjoy reading and writing, as well as spending my free time in Barnes & Noble, being out in nature, and watching anime. Currently I'm getting my BA in English/Secondary Education but I am hoping to get my MFA in Creative Writing after I graduate.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite part about English and the courses here at WVU is being able to think deeply about stories and how they apply to our own lives.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I hope to become a published author and travel the world.



Yu Uchida

HOMETOWN: Tokyo, Japan

Summer Humanities Internship

Interests and passion:

Teaching, reading and playing music.

Field of interest:

19-20th century American Literature.



Lauren Volk

HOMETOWN: Cross Lanes, WV

MAJOR: English/Secondary Education

Blanche Haskins Lough Capicola Scholarship

I am from Cross Lanes, West Virginia originally, and now my family lives in Charleston. Some of my hobbies include reading, writing, singing, playing guitar, traveling, and cooking. I am involved with the Student Government Association as a senator, Cru, and the Presidential Student Ambassadors on campus, and I work for the West Virginia Dialect Project as a research assistant.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

I love reading and analyzing literature, and I also love creative writing and linguistics, so I get to exercise those interests all the time as an English major!

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

I plan to become an English teacher in a middle school or high school, and eventually get a masters in Educational Administration to become a principal!



Michael Vozniak

HOMETOWN: Fairmont, WV

MAJOR: Ph.D. in English (focusing his dissertation on place-based pedagogy in English Composition and Rhetoric)

Hayden Ward Dissertation Fellowship

A lifelong resident of West Virginia, Michael is passionate about the state and the surrounding Appalachian region. His interests include nature, travel, history, and folklore.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

Michael believes that English classes are important because they teach us to empathize with other people. His favorite thing about teaching Composition classes is that he can learn from students who come from many different backgrounds and disciplines. He also enjoys using the composition classes to teach his students about West Virginia.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

Michael plans to administrate and teach in college writing programs. He hopes that his students will continue to learn not just about writing in college, but also about exploring their relationships to places that shape their own identities.



Liam Wholihan

Russell MacDonald Graduate Creative Writing Contest—Poetry Division

This year, Liam's been really excited about Thucydides, Allosauruses, and bodies of water. Being from Maryland, his favorite estuary is the Chesapeake Bay, but he's partial to others.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

The courses may end but they're never over. You get to take the books home and live with them.

Future plans/what would you like to do after graduation?

Anything that involves working outside and having space to write. As he begins to compile his thesis this summer, he'll also be taking care of baseball fields and working on a full-length album of original music.



Kelli Wilhelm

HOMETOWN: Garrett County, Maryland

MAJOR: Ph.D. in English Literature and Cultural Studies

Eberly College Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant

My studies focus on silences and women's experiences in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British literature. Outside of these studies, I also enjoy watching classic films and walking on West Virginia trails.

I earned my Bachelor's degree in English and Psychology from Frostburg State University, my Master's in English from Salisbury University, and will earn my Ph.D. in English literature and cultural studies from WVU in spring 2022.

Favorite thing about English and English courses?

My favorite thing about teaching English courses is getting to work with and create community with students from across disciplines, and my favorite thing about taking English courses is learning new things about texts I love because I am able to talk about them with other readers.



Megan Williams

HOMETOWN: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

MAJOR: MFA in Creative Nonfiction

Russell MacDonald Graduate Creative Writing Contest—Nonfiction Division

Megan Williams is an MFA candidate in Creative Nonfiction writing. She hails from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In her writing, Megan explores sexual trauma, internet culture, and suffering. When not bumming people out via essay, Megan enjoys baking, Tweeting, and teaching her wonderful students.