

# INSIDE TUCKER HALL



## FROM THE CHAIR OF ENGLISH

As the holidays are upon us, campus is quietly emptying out. Students are going home to their families and friends, faculty are grading like maniacs, and hiring season is upon us. 2019 has been a time of change in the English Department, with multiple retirements, and a number of new arrivals. We celebrate the opportunity to welcome our six new faculty - Alicia Andzrejewski, Scott Challener, Will Clark, Emily Fine, Jennifer Lorden, and Chima Osakwe - and we look forward to an exciting future with them.

The fall was full of visitors, events and parties - as well as of reading, writing, talking and laughing. We hosted some amazing writers in the Patrick Hayes Writers' Festival. Pulitzer Prize finalist Hernan Diaz read from his novel *In the Distance*, described by Lawrence Downes in the *New York Times* as "a weird western about a lonely Swede traveling America's frontier in the 1800s." Diaz exhorted our students to think about reading, rather than researching, as they prepare to write the next great American novel - a liberating idea for us. Next up was our much beloved Emily Pease, who used to teach in the English Department, and whose first short story collection, *Let me Out Here*, just came out with Hub City Press, and immediately won the C. Michael Curtis Short Story Book Prize. Estella Conwill Majozo came to perform in her own play, *Musa and the Slave Ship Angel*, which reflects on the Middle Passage, and includes chants, ritual and song. The student performers were riveting, as was, of course, Conwill Majozo herself. The last Patrick Hayes event was Davy Rothbart, who read with his little son on his back, and told us about *Found Magazine*, which he started with his brother and which publishes bits and pieces that people find by chance: love letters, birthday cards, kids' homework, to-do lists, shopping lists, receipts and doodles, among others. Rothbart showed us the poetry in everyday things - the beauty of chance and serendipity.

We were also immensely proud when our very own Deborah Morse, Sara E. Nance Professor of English, was selected to give the Tack Lecture in October. The Tack Lecture brings the university and local communities together to hear a William & Mary professor speak on a subject of general interest - in the case of Professor Morse, Anna Sewall's 1877 novel *Black Beauty* and what it tells us about animal rights and Victorian ideologies of gender. Professor Morse - one of the department's most dynamic and sought-after teachers - proved just as mesmerizing in front of an audience of hundreds as she is in front of an audience of thirty. Next semester's Tack Lecturer, Hermine Pinson, is also from the English Department, so if you are in the area, please come and hear her speak. It is sure to be a wonderful evening.

We are bringing another slate of outstanding writers and speakers to campus next semester, including alum Laura Sims, author of the runaway success, *Looker*; former U.S. poet laureate Tracy K. Smith; and Susheila Nasta MBE, founder of *Wasafiri*, the U.K.'s leading magazine for international contemporary writing, which played a pioneering role in disseminating the work of writers from African, Caribbean, Asian and Black British backgrounds who often struggled to get adequate attention in the mainstream press. Come if you can! 2020 starts here!

Suzanne Raitt  
Chancellor Professor of English, Chair of English

# INTRODUCING

## Professor Alicia Andrzejewski

By Joel Calfee (English/Hispanic Studies, '20)

One of the two newest members of the English faculty is Alicia Andrzejewski (pronounced an-dre-yev-ski, but many of her students call her Dr. A). Professor Andrzejewski is a talented new professor who specializes in early modern literature and wrote her PhD dissertation on Shakespeare. However, her work approaches this period from an entirely new perspective. "My way of approaching Shakespeare is not based on making conjectures about his life," she tells me.

Her current book project, based on her dissertation, is titled *Queer Pregnancy in Shakespeare's Plays*. When asked to elaborate on this project, Dr. A says, "When it comes to scholars who are interested in LGBTQ+ lives in Shakespeare's work, they've done excellent work on finding homoerotic desire in the plays, but they tend to see pregnancy as representative of heteronormative structures." Professor Andrzejewski explains that "what I found is that because childbirth was largely a woman's business, and midwives would help women through their pregnancies, there was this space created through pregnancy and childbirth for women to become intimate with each other and be with each other and love each other and I feel that in many ways it's reflected in Shakespeare's work." When asked why she chose Shakespeare, she says, "If you want take down or you want to challenge heteronormative beliefs, or if you want to challenge this distinction where you cannot talk about pregnancy and queerness . . . go big. Do it with Shakespeare."

This mixture of early modern literature and queer and feminist theory is what makes Professor Andrzejewski's work so unique. Although we discuss the difficulties that are present when trying to understand these older characters through new vocabulary, she justifies these interpretations by saying



"just because someone names something doesn't mean that people didn't exist before the categorization who had similar experiences and feelings and ways in the world." While she may face challenges in her work, Dr. A just wants "to do something that might matter and make a difference in people's lives."

All of Professor Andrzejewski's areas of interest will be coming together for a senior seminar she will be teaching this spring, titled "Race, Science, & Reproduction." This course will trace literature from the early modern period to the present, and one of the objectives of the course is to ask: "How has race informed our understanding of reproduction and led to where we are now and the treatment of women of color, especially black women, in the medical

system?" Professor Andrzejewski says, "what we believe about reproduction has a lot to do with larger ideologies, so looking at it through this lens might inform or make visible some unexamined beliefs."

Dr. A is excited to be at William & Mary because she feels as if this university will be the perfect space to further her research, while also getting to explore these more uncommon themes in the classroom. "Public schools are very important to me," she tells me. "I didn't even know places like this existed where you were valued for your teaching and your research equally. I love teaching and I adore my students." The intimate environment of William & Mary will also be the perfect place for her to share the works she treasures. When asked what author she would choose if she could teach a course on anyone, she responds, "it definitely wouldn't be Shakespeare." She tells me she would either choose Octavia Butler or Haruki Murakami. "I would love to do a Murakami course. I haven't been here long enough to create the Murakami cult, but I had one at King's College. . . . He's magic."

Our faculty is already made better by the inclusion of Professor Andrzejewski and it will be exciting to see how she continues to challenge the status quo in her work and her teaching. As she says, "I think what good scholarship does is that it opens up a possibility that you weren't thinking about before." Professor Andrzejewski wants to push her students to challenge their own assumptions and to question their understanding of the world around us and the literature it has produced. "It's all messy but that's me." Her work is certainly not messy, but it is a valuable addition to the English Department and the William & Mary campus as a whole.

# A BIG WELCOME TO Professor Jennifer Lorden

By Ella Hadrovich (English, '21)

This past fall, we saw many new faces on campus, people eager to become a part of the Tribe at a school with such a rich history. While it is easy to think of these fresh new faces as students, the English department has also welcomed some wonderful new faculty members, including Professor Jennifer Lorden, a scholar of early medieval literature. Professor Lorden says that she was just as excited to join in on the festivities and “watch all the first years being welcomed to campus at convocation.” In an interview, she tells me, “Starting college can be a really alienating experience, and to see the upper years all turn up to tell new students that this is their home now makes a big difference.” And, as this is Professor Lorden’s first teaching position, we want to welcome her with just as much enthusiasm and love as we do all our new students because, if you find your way to William & Mary, you’ve found a new home.

Since she was just seventeen, Professor Lorden has known that she wanted to be an English professor and, just like every English major, a lot of that motivation came from wanting to have “an office with a lot of books in it.” She confesses that she hasn’t secured all the books just yet although she’s confident that her plan “seems to be working” thus far.

When asked why she picked medieval literature as her field of study, Professor Lorden responds that, “My interest was always in literature first, and my choice of historical subfield came later. But I chose medieval literature in part because it’s so crucial to understanding what ‘modern’ could even mean, and the narratives that modernity writes to define itself.” She focuses particularly closely on “feeling and religious devotion in the early medieval period,” the years before 1100, and is currently writing a book on the power of emotion. She’s arguing that,



contrary to the perception that “religious devotion in this early period is stoic and unfeeling,” emotion was actually crucial to the devotional poetry of the time. Further, her book will address the unexpected sophistication of feeling at the time and how it impacted medieval life. She believes that there is an overlap between all societies, even between ours and societies we perceive as very different from ourselves. Perhaps “they are not always different in the ways we assume they will be.” It’s important to continue to read and ask questions, even when we’ve been reading something for hundreds of years because there is so much that gets overlooked.

Next semester, Professor Lorden will be teaching “Old English” (ENGL 314) and “Old Norse Literature in Translation” (ENGL 381). Professor Lorden is “excited to teach

students how to read Old English and to work through the texts together in the original language.” She is also enthused about her Old Norse Literature class as she and her students will be looking at Old Norse texts as well as works from different medieval languages that concern themselves with similar, if not the same, stories and legends. She reflects, “We think of medieval people as homogeneous and repressed, but in reality, people travel, their books and their ideas travel, and they interact with other cultures. In ‘British Literature I’ this semester, we’re upending a lot of our ideas about what medieval people were like, and about what their literature was like—it’s much more irreverent and critical and at times crudely humorous than people expect. But a lot of clichés about the Middle Ages say more about ourselves than about medieval people.” And it’s true isn’t it? That we cannot help but view other societies through the lens of our own? If you are at all curious to how medieval life and modernity interact, you simply must take one—or both—of her classes next semester!

When asked about her favorite piece of literature, Professor Lorden wisely remarks that, “faves are never not problematic,” but that she especially loves “Deor,” an Old English poem, which is “about turns of fortune and putting one’s life in perspective.” Of course, she quickly clarifies that, like most things, “it’s also more complicated than that.” If you are hoping to run into Professor Lorden or just want to spend some time in her favorite spot on campus, make sure to check out Tucker Hall. If you see her around, make sure to say hello, ask her about the importance of feeling in medieval literature, and welcome her home.



# COURSE SPOTLIGHT

## *College Bucket List Item #1: Take A Class (or Five) with Professor Dawson*

*By Ella Hadrovic (English, '21)*

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### Toxicity! Unseen dangers! Threats to the land and women!

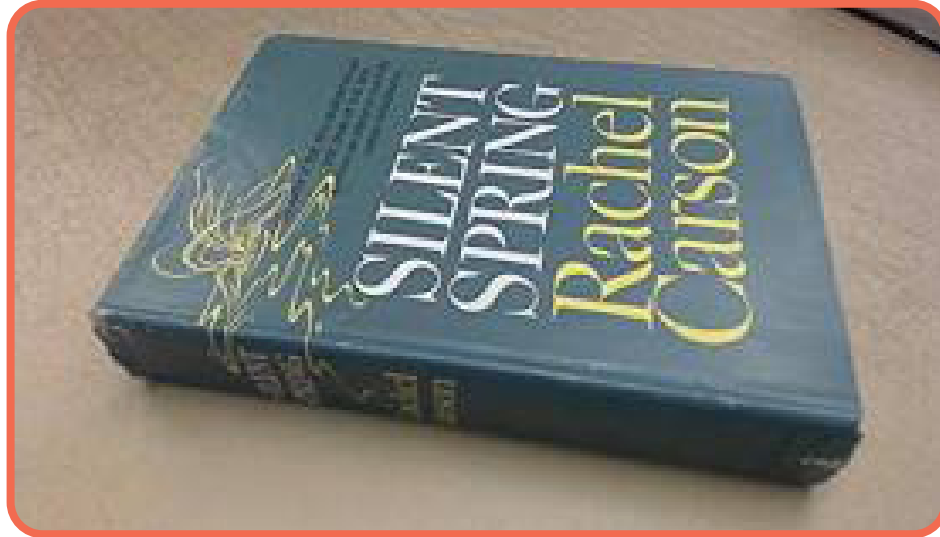


Who wouldn't want to take an interdisciplinary class that focuses on these three things? Professor Dawson's "Feminism and the Environment" class addresses these concepts and so much more. First taught in 2010, her class was slowly pieced together from fictional works she read concerning women living alone in post-apocalyptic landscapes as well as through her own experiences as a mother to small children. Suddenly, she found herself imagining what it would be like to survive in a ravaged world. More realistically, she wondered what to consider when determining what to

feed her own children. How should we look at the environmental health of our world today? What role have women historically played in the health and safety of food? How do we gain insight into the environment and what is going on regarding our food and water supply?

Professor Dawson's class uses a variety of materials and assignments to help students of different academic fields engage with these and other questions. In an interview, she explains that students can choose to create TED Talks or write essays to learn the correct balance

between writing and literary analysis, although she makes it clear that, at some point, students have to switch their methods up. With a laugh, she remarks that, quite predictably, English and GSWS majors typically choose essays at first, while Biology or Environmental Science majors lean towards the scientific projects, saving the more intimidating assignments that lie outside their comfort zones for later. And yet, many of the students who take "Feminism and the Environment" are double majors who appreciate the opportunity to see the intersection between the humanities and the sciences.



Professor Dawson likes to adapt the syllabus every time she teaches “Feminism and the Environment,” the most recent adjustment focusing specifically on writers who address environmental management, food as medicine, concerns about seed cultures, the lack of nutritional density in certain crops, and the decrease in the biodiversity of crops. Currently, the class reads Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) with the intention of viewing the role of a childless woman scientist in a society that could not separate her from her gender. They investigate the reception Carson’s book faced as a result of her perceived abnormality. Today it would seem ridiculous not to care for the environment simply because it is our home and the future depends upon it and, yet, Carson faced backlash because a woman without children was assumed not to care for the future of the planet. Who, after all, is she trying to save the world for? While wildly sexist and, frankly, quite ludicrous, this response framed Carson as an anomaly because she was pursuing a career path that focused on the future, even though she had no children. Dawson reflects upon the clarity of Carson’s work, how wonderfully articulate she is, and insists that the text is “just a marvel” in every way. She also looks at Jonathan Harr’s *A Civil Action* (1995), about a class action lawsuit centered on a city’s water supply. She encourages students to look at how an environmental lawsuit gets started. Who is legally responsible for the state of the water supply, who pays the costs, and what are the rules for an environmental

lawsuit? This case truly shows how a lawsuit that seems so obvious can face so many hurdles, and can result in so little money collected. Other notable works taught in the class include Todd Haynes’ film *Safe* (1995), which delves into environmental illness and the search for sources of toxicity, and Tony Morrison’s *A Mercy* (2008), which focuses on the interwoven roles of women and nature during the colonial era.

So what else is Professor Dawson teaching? And what is in the works for the future? Next semester, students can look forward to “The Literature of Age and Aging,” a COLL 200 ALV course, which will take a deeply interdisciplinary approach to the literature and sociology of aging. Here students will examine our contemporary understanding of the adolescent, a concept that simply did not exist until the 20th century. Can you imagine going straight from child to adult? How does the idea of a teenager or adolescent change the functions of everyday life and perception? Professor Dawson will also be teaching “20th Century American Women Writers,” a class that she confesses she would have loved to have taken in previous years had she been an undergrad picking courses. A course that she has a crush on is Professor Putzi’s “Transgender Studies” which is also being taught this spring, so, if you are looking for a GSWS course for the spring, be sure to add it to your schedule!

As for what is still in the works, Professor Dawson is currently playing around with

the idea of creating two new classes: one on the year 1925 and the other a deep dive into Henry James’ *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). The first class will focus on a selection of fourteen major novels that were published in 1925 and would serve to change the literary game, such as F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*. Dawson is excited to explore the “incredible richness in American and international publishing” at the time and to delve into both experimental and traditional novels that engage with more progressive subject matter. If you are one of those romantic individuals who likes to wax nostalgic about the 1920s or see the world through a small window of history, this is definitely the class for you! Her class on *The Wings of the Dove* will take a close look at James’ novel, thinking critically about how critics have responded to it and to the 1997 film adaptation. Specifically, the course will focus on commodification, eroticism, and trust in the context of the novel.

So you should consider taking a class with a professor who has dedicated her life to literature and is constantly thinking of creative new ways to look at the topic. I can personally vouch for her senior seminar on “Gender and Sexuality in 19th Century Literature”! And if all that won’t entice you, for Halloween she was planning on pairing a graduation robe with a witch hat and being a “Gradu-Witch.” Now who doesn’t love that?

# Aida Campos, Winner of the 2019 Concord Travelling Scholarship for Creative Writers

By Aida Campos (English, '20)



Thanks to the English Department's Concord Scholarship and a Charles Center fellowship, I spent an entire month last summer in El Salvador, working on my Honors thesis by driving through cities, hiking up mountains, and spending hours in archives. During my stay in El Salvador, I researched the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992)--both the sociopolitical history and my family history.

This experience was so fulfilling because it placed me inside a setting that demanded that I grow not only as a writer or researcher, but as a person. As a scholar, I've had to question and confront my political biases and acquire a more in-depth, critical lens with which to analyze US policies in Latin America. As a writer, I've had to search for a narrative voice that honors the experiences and histories of people affected by the war and does not appropriate their trauma. My project constructs different perspectives and personas, and staying true to those differences while still maintaining a cohesive narrative voice in the project has been difficult. Without my experiences in El Salvador, I wouldn't have gotten such bountiful material with which to construct these personas.

Finally, as a young Salvadoran-American attending a predominantly white institution, this experience has provided me with so much hope regarding the growing demand for Central American scholarship. This experience has exposed me to Salvadoran diasporic creatives and scholars; finally, as a senior in college, I am just now finding role models working in career fields that interest me for the first time.

Here's a brief look into the kind of writing  
that has emerged from my experience abroad:

*Dear wingless parrot in my tía's house,*

Become small in her fists. Do not tremble  
when she shears your forelimbs soon after your egg  
cracks. Disimagine flight, instead swallow  
down her curses, fearlessly play devout.  
Understand: this is how she nests her  
adoration, one last conjuring of  
faith that you too won't run away, breakout

along with children, neighbors, and brothers.  
You are all she gets to keep; your voice box  
of *kikikis* and *aaa caaas*  
a recording of her children's laughter.  
Let her feel baby hairs in your feathers,  
feed you like an empty gut full with chops  
of *lengua*, with stories of cadavers.

a e c

## Mark Your Calendars!

On March 26th, 2020, Hermine Pinson, Margaret Hamilton Professor of English & Africana Studies, will deliver a talk in the Tucker Faculty Lecture Series. Her talk is titled "To Make a Black Poet: Navigating a Blues Sensibility," and will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Commonwealth Auditorium.

# Visiting Teachers and Scholars in the English Department

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## Scott Challener

*What is your broader field of teaching and research?*

My research and teaching interests include U.S., Latinx, and transnational American literatures, Latin American literature, hemispheric American studies, comparative modernism, and poetry and poetics.

*What are you teaching here at W&M?*

I am teaching courses on Latinx and U.S. literatures and cultures in English and American Studies. Frequently these courses are also cross-listed with Latin American Studies. This semester, I'm teaching ENGL 363, the 1865-1914 American literature survey, which I've envisioned as a course on "American Literature's Hemispheric Address." We've read texts that engage in various ways with the U.S.'s longstanding, often contestatory, complex relationship with the Americas, from the Monroe Doctrine to the Harlem Renaissance. I'm also teaching an introductory, interdisciplinary course, AMST 290 / LAS 290 "Latinx Literatures and Cultures in the U.S. and Beyond," which uses debates about the recent "x" or equis to launch a deeper look at the diverse literatures and cultures of exilic, diasporic, and immigrant Latinx literatures of the twentieth century. I'm looking forward to teaching this course again next semester.

I'm also excited to teach a new special topics course this Spring, ENGL 371 "The New Border," which studies literature and theory from the past 30 years (ish!) written about, from, and around the US-Mexico border. And finally, I'll be teaching a section of ENGL 250 "Interpreting Literature,"

focused on the literature of the Americas.

*What is your research about?*

If I had to boil it down to one word, I'd say "address." On the broadest level, I think a lot about how literature addresses, or speaks to, different audiences and publics. I'm especially interested in asymmetries of address--how a poem or novel, for instance, might inhabit different pronouns, envision differentials between collectives and individuals, and stage the dramas that unfold between different "yous," "shes," "hes," and so forth. At the same time, I also try to attend to the historical mediation of these dynamics--how political economy, social position, public discourse, publication context, and reception history shape the lives and afterlives of texts as they circulate unevenly through different media, and in turn affect how "we" read texts and understand them.

*What is your favorite thing about W&M or Williamsburg?*

The students, of course! Every day I learn something from them. And I would quickly add, along the same lines: my colleagues and the staff. I'm very grateful to be part of this community.





## Will Clark

*What is your broader field of teaching and research?*

My interests include the nineteenth and twentieth century American novel; contemporary queer literature and queer theory; African American Studies; and literature and the law.

*What are you teaching here at W&M?*

In addition to ENGL 207, I'm teaching an upper-division course on contemporary queer literature and film, and an American Studies course on race, sexuality, and the law in the U.S. Next semester I'll be teaching courses on law and literature, and queer activism in the United States.

*What is your research about?*

My current book project, *Perverse Citizens: U.S. Fiction and the Conception of Queer Rights*, argues that a strain of U.S. fiction at the turn of the twentieth century depicts the emergent category of queerness by challenging the exclusion of queer subjects from the fullest extent of U.S. membership. During this time, queer figures became perverse citizens: members of the nation whose full belonging was threatened due to non-alignment with hegemonic norms. Linking fiction from Henry James' *The Bostonians* to Nella Larsen's *Quicksand*, my project contests that the literary

imaginary provides unique insights into the intensifying attachment between sexuality and citizenship around the turn of the century in ways that shape U.S. liberal rights discourses to this day.



## Emily Fine

*What is your broader field of teaching and research?*

Early modern English literature.

*What are you teaching here at W&M?*

Renaissance literature, Renaissance drama, Shakespeare, and English 250, "Interpreting Literature"

*What is your research about?*

My research focuses on early modern women's life writing, death, and inheritance. Lately I've been working on an article that looks at dying as a gendered art in seventeenth-century England. The article analyzes a volume of life writing by Grace Mildmay, written ca. 1617-1620, in which she describes the death of her father and mother and her own sickbed. Her father dies a bad death, by early modern standards, and Mildmay makes it clear that his death is linked to the way he cheated her out of his inheritance on his deathbed. Her mother also tried to cheat Mildmay out of her inheritance, but dies a pious death, and Mildmay follows her mother's example

on her own sickbed. My article explores this discrepancy, arguing that early modern cultural scripts for how to die set up men to die badly and made women into the true exemplars of the good death.



## Chima Osakwe

*What is your broader field of teaching and research?*

African and Postcolonial literatures

*What are you teaching here at W&M?*

Interpreting Literature (ENGL 250), Introduction to Literature of the African Diaspora (ENGL 417/AFST 306), and Modern African American Literature (ENGL 366/AFST 366).

*What is your research about?*

I am currently working on a journal article that addresses globalization in postcolonial writing with a close reference to Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Americanah* (2013). I will soon commence work on my second book, which will draw inspiration from postcolonial theory while investigating how selected African authors have reshaped historical sources in their literary works.

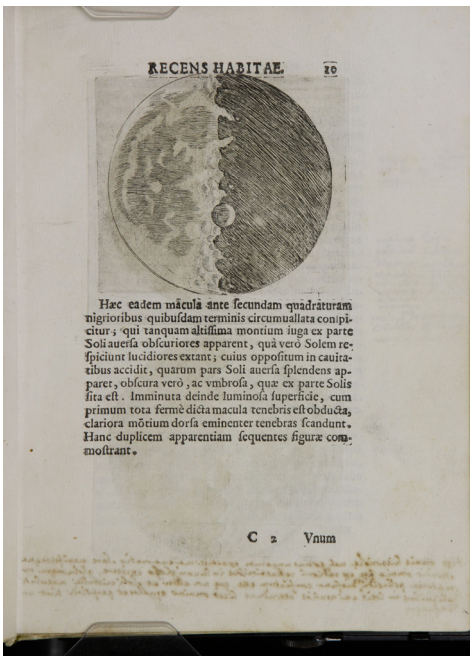


# In The Archives

## *The Men in the Moon: Early Modern Lunar Narratives and the Colonial Imagination*

By Erin Webster, Assistant Professor of English

For the last few years I've been working on a book-length study of seventeenth-century lunar narratives as they relate to European colonialism. Part scientific treatise and part utopian fiction, these works contain detailed speculative descriptions of the genealogical and theological status of their imagined lunar beings that resonate with contemporaneous descriptions of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, to which the anticipated discovery of life on the moon is routinely compared. As such, I feel they are critical texts in the history of English colonialism and can help us better to understand—and to question—the seventeenth-century English colonial imagination, as well as its legacy today.



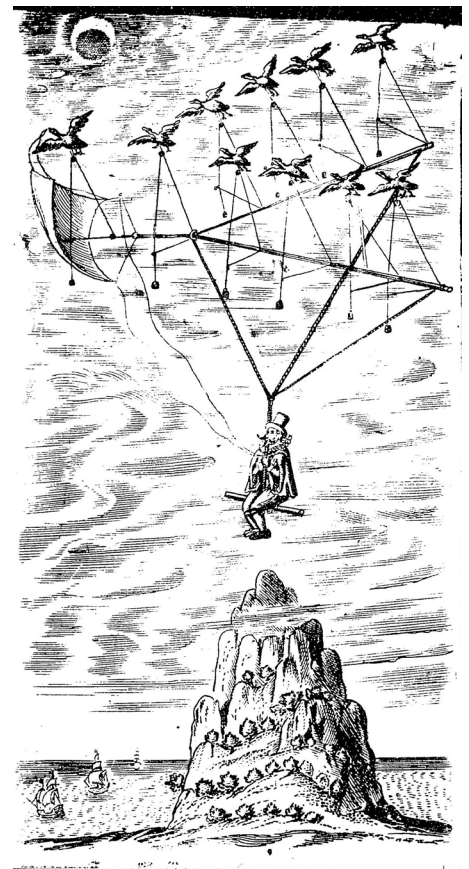
An illustration of the moon from Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610)

Early modern Europeans' views of the moon were significantly altered by the

publication of Galileo's *Sidereus Nuncius* (1610), the first book to show what the moon looked like when viewed through a telescope. Overturning the Aristotelian view that the moon was a smooth, perfect and unchanging sphere, Galileo instead made repeated claims for its "earth-like" nature—claims that inspired many of his readers to speculate as to its potential inhabitancy, even as he remained reticent on the subject. In the decades following the publication of *Sidereus Nuncius*, speculative accounts of life on the moon proliferated, including fictional works by Ben Jonson, John Donne, and Cyrano de Bergerac as well as scientific works by Johannes Kepler, John Wilkins, and Christiaan Huygens. The intention of these works varies enormously, with many writers using them to express skepticism or even criticism towards Europe's geographical colonization projects even as others used them to push the boundaries of scientific and geopolitical expansion to the next level, as it were, by extending it into the heavens. At the same time, they are strikingly consistent in identifying the moon as the next 'America,' with Galileo as its cosmological Columbus.

My work aims to work through the logic of this analogy, as well as its consequences. The possibility that the moon might be inhabited presented early modern Europeans with similar existential questions to those posed by the 'discovery' of the Americas, including the question of where these peoples had come from, and where they stood in relation to Christian Europeans in God's providential plan. Many—if not most—early modern Europeans believed that all humans were the direct descendants of Adam and that, as a consequence, they were born 'fallen,' and needed to be redeemed through Christ's sacrifice. The existence of extra-biblical peoples put pressure on this view. If the

peoples of the Americas had descended from Adam, how did they manage to cross the ocean thousands of years before Columbus, and why weren't there any records of them in biblical or classical texts? And if they *didn't* descend from Adam, then what did this mean in terms of their soteriological status? Were they unfallen beings, living in a paradise that had yet to experience sin? Or were they beings who were so far fallen that they lay outside of the scope of salvation?



Domingo Gonsales's goose-powered flight, from Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638)

## *In The Archives cont.*

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In the case of the beings imagined to inhabit the moon, these questions were made all the more complicated by the logistics of interplanetary travel, coupled with the still-present belief that, as one of the heavenly bodies, the moon was spiritually 'purer' than the lowly earth and ought thus to be home to a higher order of beings than humans. What interests me, however, is the way in which these conversations start to inform each other, so that at the same time that European authors are patterning their imaginary lunar civilizations on existing descriptions of the 'new world' of the Americas they are also revising their view of this same 'new world' in light of its imagined parallels with the moon. One of the strangest (and, in my view, most fascinating) examples of this kind of imaginative cross-pollination occurs in Francis Godwin's *The Man in the Moone* (1638), a sort of proto science fiction novel which details the fantastical voyages of a Spanish sailor, Domingo Gonsales, as he travels from Europe to the East Indies and then to the island of St. Helena,

before accidentally being transported to the moon via a geese-powered flying contraption of his own invention. Here, he finds a distinctly paradisaical society, devoid of such sins as lust, greed and murder. In a strange yet telling twist, however, he later discovers that this paradise is actually socially-engineered; in order to preserve it, the Lunars take some of their children, whom they determine at birth to be of questionable moral standing, and drop them into exile in the Americas, whose current inhabitants (Domingo informs us) he "can easily believe" to have descended from this Lunar race. In my view, this is a round-about way on Godwin's part of accounting for the existence of the indigenous peoples of the Americas while also bringing them into the Christian narrative of humankind's fall and redemption. Here, they are imagined *literally* to have fallen from Paradise and into human history, where they occupy a kind of parallel yet belated track to that of European Christendom.

The habit of using Columbus's landing as a model for interplanetary contact continues today. Cautioning us against efforts to contact extraterrestrial life-forms, Stephen Hawking posited in a 2010 documentary on the subject that, "If aliens visit us, the outcome would be much as when Columbus landed in America, which didn't turn out well for the Native Americans." Hawking is presumably criticizing the legacy of the European colonization of the Americas here; nevertheless, the structure of the analogy implicitly excludes Native Americans from the universal human "us" in this sentence, much as Godwin's narrative brings the Native Americans of his period into the fold of a Christianized humanity only to distance them—genealogically, theologically, and temporally—from Christian Europeans. By studying stories such as Godwin's, I hope to uncover the origins of these patterns of thought and to show how literary models of cultural interaction can shape real-world contact.

# TUCKER BOOK CLUB

*Our English Department faculty recommend  
some of their favorite books*

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## Arthur Knight, Associate Professor of English, American Studies, and Film & Media Studies

The best book I've read in recent months is *Asymmetry* (Simon & Schuster, 2018) by Lisa Halliday. It's hard to describe what I enjoyed and found most provocative about it without giving it away. It's stylistically adventurous and raises some provocative and timely questions in a brain-teasing (at least for my brain) way.

## Brian Castleberry, Senior Lecturer, English (soon to be Assistant Professor of English)

I can't stop recommending it *Florida*, by Lauren Groff. Groff is our best short story writer, and *Florida* shows her at the height of her powers, each story its own miracle of technique and human insight. The writing is breathtaking, but it's the capturing of our particular time through the lens of America's (arguably) strangest state that will make this book a classic.

## Deborah Morse, Professor of English

When I think of books that have stretched me entirely out of my Victorian Studies world, I'd have to say that Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* was a revelation. I read it for my book club--otherwise, I never would have read a harsh book of dystopian fiction. I live in the world of *Middlemarch* and other long novels that are not generally overt about grim violence (at least until Hardy), but *The Road* made me enter a new literary realm that I had to acknowledge had greatness, both in style and in subject matter. I was moved to tears.

## Jennifer Putzi, Associate Professor of English

I have been on a fantasy kick lately, so all of my favorites are other-worldly adventures featuring strong female characters. They include Samantha Shannon's *The Priory of the Orange Tree*, S. A. Chakraborty's *Daevabad Trilogy* (*The Kingdom of Copper* and *The City of Brass*, with a third book coming out in June), and Leigh Bardugo's amazing YA *Grishaverse*. I also have to recommend Becky Chambers' *The Long Way to a Small, Angry Planet*, an incredibly queer space odyssey where gender and sex are beautifully complicated.





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