

Jim Coby
Department of English
University of Alabama in Huntsville
Huntsville, AL

Educational History

Ph.D. in English, University of Louisiana at Lafayette (2016)

Concentration: Literature of the American South

Secondary Areas: Early American Literature, Comics and Graphic Novels, Early Modern British Literature

M.A. in English, University of North Alabama (2012)

Concentration: American Literature Since 1865

B.S. in Business Marketing, Western Kentucky University (2008)

Dissertation

“High Water Everywhere: Southern Literature, Eco-Disasters, and the Affective Turn”

Committee: Mary Ann Wilson (chair), Shelley Ingram, Joanna Davis-McElligatt

My dissertation examines how southern authors have utilized ecological disasters in their works as points at which to deconstruct monolithic mythologies about the American South. Employing theories of affect and emotion, I examine William Faulkner’s *The Wild Palms* [*If I Forget Thee, Jerusalem*], Barry Hannah’s *Nightwatchmen*, Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones*, and Tom Franklin and Beth Ann Fennelly’s *The Tilted World*. Each of these novels features a diluvian disaster, such as the Great Flood of 1927, Hurricane Camille, or Hurricane Katrina, as the central catalyst for their respective plots. My project argues that authors often use ecological catastrophes, not simply as plot devices, but as forums for demythologizing pervasive ideas about gender, race, and identity in the American South. Building on recent trends understand the American South through its national and global connections, and the turn to affect, a theoretical framework that explored the importance of feelings and refuses to exclusively privilege logic, my dissertation intervenes in current (mis)understandings of the U.S. South.

Research/Teaching Interests

Literature of the American South, Early American Literature, Contemporary American Literature, Comics and Graphic Narratives, Environmental Literature

Professional Experience

Lecturer of English

University of Alabama in Huntsville, August 2016 – Present

Huntsville, AL

Assistant Director of First Year Writing

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, May 2015 – May 2016

Lafayette, LA

Graduate Teaching Assistant

University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Aug. 2013 – May 2016

Lafayette, LA

English Tutor

University of Louisiana at Lafayette Writing Center, Oct. 2012 – May 2013

Lafayette, LA
English Tutor
University of Louisiana at Lafayette Office of Disability Services, Aug. 2012 – Aug. 2013
Lafayette, LA

Courses Taught

University of Alabama in Huntsville (Aug. 2016 – Present)

Honors 101 – Honors First Year Experience

Course Title: “Myths, Hoaxes, and Fake News”

This course, required of all freshman entering the University’s Honors Program, concerns information literacy and the University’s various academic resources. With a focus on experiential and collaborative learning, students examined issues related to “fake news,” culminating in a project wherein they designed their own hoaxes.

English 101 – Freshman Composition I

Using articles and essays on contemporary culture, students familiarized themselves with different modes of argumentation and composition. Among pertinent issues discussed were audience, organization, revision, and mechanics.

English 102 – Freshman Composition II

Course Title: “Monsters and Monstrosity in American Culture”

Within the framework of “monstrosity” and “otherness,” students conducted thorough research into contemporary social topics, later synthesizing the research to compose significant arguments. Topics included information literacy, database usage, incorporation of research and ideas, entering academic conversations, and polishing work for potential publication.

English 103 – Accelerated College Writing

Course Title: “The Best of Times/The Worst of Times”

Combining aspects of EH 101 and EH 102, this pilot course for advanced undergraduates focuses on semester long research projects centered around the common theme of Emily St. John Mandel’s novel *Station Eleven*. Additional readings include Kirkman’s *The Walking Dead* and Butler’s *Parable of the Sower*.

English 105 – Honors English Seminar

Course Title: “‘Stop me if you’ve heard this one before’: Imaginings and Re-Imaginings in American Literature and Culture” (Fall 2016)

With an eye fixed on crafting engaging and persuasive arguments, students examined several texts and subsequent adaptations and reinventions of those texts. Primary texts included Philip K. Dick’s *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* paired with Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*, Alison Bechdel’s graphic memoir *Fun Home* and its Broadway adaptation, and Ryan Adams’ song-for-song cover album of Taylor Swift’s *1989*.

English 105 – Honors English Seminar

Course Title: “It’s (Not) the End of the World: Artistic Responses to Catastrophe in American Literature and Culture” (Fall 2017)

Our class this semester will excavate five texts of trauma and art. Moving from a global epidemic in Mandel’s *Station Eleven* to a more localized (though by no means myopic) exploration of jobless- and hopelessness in Vance’s *Hillbilly Elegy*, we will attempt to understand how authors present and respond to cataclysmic and life altering events. Alongside this, we will be learning valuable composition skills and crafting persuasive arguments about the texts we’re reading.

University of Louisiana at Lafayette (Aug. 2013 – May 2016)

English 101 – Introduction to Academic Writing

In this introductory composition course, students become familiar with modes and methods of academic writing, through readings, drafting, and revising several essays. Students were assessed for their understanding of academic writing conventions, such as formatting, organization, and understanding of audience.

English 102 – Writing and Research About Culture

The second required component of the freshman-writing curriculum, this course introduces students to research methods and practices, such as database usage, understanding credible and non-credible sources, and the mechanics of citation. Themes for this course included gender issues, language and prejudice, and international views. One section was conducted during a summer session.

English 210 – Literary Genres

Course Title: “The Dirty South: Southern Literature Since 1970”

In this course, I taught students about contemporary southern authors and the contexts of these authors’ writing, such as the Civil Rights Movement, the rise of the Christian right, and various ecological concerns plaguing areas of the South. Primary texts included Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones*, Randall Kenan’s *A Visitation of Spirits*, Ernest J. Gaines’ *A Gathering of Old Men* and Dorothy Allison’s “River of Names”.

English 212 – Literature and Other Media

Course Title: “American Routes: Travel in the American Literary Imagination”

A sophomore level course combining studies of film and literature, this section introduced students travel narratives in the American imagination since the invention of the automobile. Primary texts included Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road*, Sherman Alexie’s *Reservation Blues*, Mary Miller’s *The Last Days of California*, and Dennis Hopper’s *Easy Rider*.

English 365 – Technical Writing (online)

A required course for many business majors, this online section of technical writing introduces various modes of professional and business communication.

Academic Publications

“Art, Inspiration, and Family: Interviews with Three of Ellen Glasgow’s Relatives.” Invited submission for the *Ellen Glasgow Journal of Southern Women Writers*. *Forthcoming*.

“‘The things they have to endure to stay together’: An Interview with Matthew Griffin.” *North Carolina Literary Review* 26.1 (2017): 174-187.

“Open Roads, Open Topics: The Virtues of Open-Ended Assignments in Contemporary American Travel Literature Courses.” *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice* 8.3 (2016): 1-13.

“Engaging Students and Fostering Multiple Literacies: A Brief Defense of Comics in the Classroom.” *Pennsylvania English* 38.1 (2016): 25-34.

“—it’s pretty easy to forget what it feels like to be a have-not’: Envisioning and Experiencing Trauma in Josh Neufeld’s *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*.” *South Central Review* 32.3 (2015): 110-123.

“Crisis-Dictated Gender Roles in James Fenimore Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*.” *The Explicator* 72.1 (2014): 32-33.

Reviews

Review of *Conversations with Ron Rash* edited by Mae Miller Claxton and Rain Newcomb. *South: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2017): *Forthcoming*.

Review of *Family of Earth: A Southern Mountain Childhood* by Wilma Dykeman. *Southern Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* (2017): *Forthcoming*

Review of *The Risen* by Ron Rash. *Journal of Appalachian Studies* 23.2 (2017): *Forthcoming*.

Review of *The Flood Year 1927* by Susan Scott Parrish. *Arkansas Review* 48.2 (2017): 149-150.

“A Little Mercy Left in the World After All’: A Review of *Hide* by Matthew Griffin and *The Trench Angel* by Michael Keenan Gutierrez.” *North Carolina Literary Review Online* 26.1 (2017): 112-114.

Review of *Barbarian Days: A Surfing Life* by William Finnegan. *Aethlon: Journal of Sports Literature* (2016): [Online Publication](#).

Review of *Catfish: A Savor the South Cookbook* by Paul and Angela Knipple. *The Arkansas Review* 47.1 (2016): 55-57.

“Present-Tense Drifters’: A Review of *All That I Have in This World* by Michael Parker.” *North Carolina Literary Review Online* 24.1 (2015): 91-92.

Review of *The New Mind of the South* by Tracy Thompson. *Paste Magazine* (16 Dec. 2014): [Online Publication](#).

Review of *Butterfly in the Typewriter: The Tragic Life of John Kennedy Toole and the Remarkable Story of A Confederacy of Dunces* by Cory McLaughlin. *Swamp Lily Review* 3.2 (2013): [Online Publication](#).

Manuscripts Under Review and In Preparation

“Rural Spaces, Undomesticated Landscapes, and (In)Disposable Bodies in Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones*.” 6,000 words. *Proposal accepted to forthcoming edited collection*.

“And we didn’t play no Skynyrd, neither’: Understanding the Drive-By Truckers’ ‘Southern Thing’.” 6,500 words. *Revise and Resubmit*.

“‘Nothing alive here but us and the plant’: Ecological Terror and the Disruption of Ontological Order in Scott Smith’s *The Ruins*.” 8,000 words. *Revise and Resubmit*.

“‘I ain’t going to the jailhouse if I can help it’: The Thriller Impulse in Ron Rash’s *One Foot in Eden*.” 7,500 words. *Under Review*.

Conference Presentations

“It’s (Not) the End of the World: Disaster, Hybridity, and the South in the Honors Freshman Seminar Classroom.” Paper proposal accepted to the Society for the Study of Southern Literature’s Bi-Annual Conference, “South 101” Panel (Austin, TX: March 2018)

“‘Make them know’: Reclaiming Undomesticated Landscapes and Disposable Bodies in Jesmyn Ward’s *Salvage the Bones*.” Paper presented at the Society for the Study of American Women Writers International Conference (Bordeaux, France: July, 2017)

“‘It is hard to fall in the love in the middle of a hurricane; however, that’s exactly what I did’: Trauma as Catalyst in Barry Hannah’s *Nightwatchmen*.” Paper presented at Auburn University-Montgomery’s “Southern Studies” 2017 Conference (Montgomery, AL: February, 2017)

“An Affective Turn in the South: Affect Theory and the New Southern Studies.” Paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association’s 2016 Regional Conference, “Society for the Study of Southern Literature” Panel; Panel Moderator (Salt Lake City, UT: October, 2016)

“Slouching Towards Richmond: On Discovering Ellen Glasgow’s Library.” Paper presented at the American Literature Association’s 2015 National Conference, “Ellen Glasgow Across the Canon” Panel (Boston, MA: May, 2015)

“—it’s pretty easy to forget what it feels like to be a have-not’: Envisioning and Experiencing Trauma in Josh Neufeld’s *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge*.” Paper presented at the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association’s 2015 National Conference, “Comics and Graphic Novels” Panel (New Orleans, LA: April, 2015)

“Using *The New Yorker* Cartoons in English Composition Classrooms.” Paper presented at the 2014 Louisiana Association of College Composition. Co-presented with Kevin Dwyer. (New Orleans, LA: February, 2014)

“‘So my band hit the road/ And we didn’t play no Skynyrd, neither’: Travel, Conflict, and ‘the Southern Thing’ in the Music of the Drive-By Truckers.” Paper presented at the South Atlantic Modern Language Association’s 2012 Conference, “‘I’ve Been Everywhere’: Country Lyrics of Displacement” Panel (Durham, NC: November, 2012)

“‘We don’t bow! We don’t know how!’: New Orleans’ Mardi Gras Indians and the Heritage of the African American Vernacular.” Paper presented at Northeastern University’s English Graduate Student Conference, “Memory Remains” (Boston, MA: March, 2012)

“‘You’re crazy, Ignatius!’: Understanding Ignatius J. Reilly in Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces*.” Paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association’s 2011 Conference, “American Humor” Panel (Scottsdale, AZ: October, 2011)

“The Devil in Denis Johnson: Drugs, the Gothic, and *Jesus’ Son*.” Paper presented at the University of North Alabama’s English Graduate Student Conference, “Going Gothic” (Florence, AL: October, 2010)

Professional Organizations

Society for the Study of Southern Literature
Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association
South Central Modern Language Association
American Culture Association
Sigma Tau Delta

Invited Talks/Lectures

Guest Lecture on “Sonny’s Blues,” “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” and “On the Death of Martin Luther King, Jr.” for Julie Naviaux’s EH 208 “Madness and Mayhem” Course (Spring 2017)

Guest Lecture on Josh Neufeld’s *A.D.: New Orleans After the Deluge* for Shelley Ingram’s ENG 330 “Louisiana Literature” Course (Fall 2014)

Guest Lecture on Tom Piazza’s *City of Refuge* for Mary Ann Wilson’s ENG 330 “Louisiana Literature” Course (Spring 2013)

Guest Lecture on Chuck Palahniuk’s *Lullaby* for Shelley Ingram’s ENG 440 “Folklore and Literature” Course (Fall 2012)

Professional Service

General

Invited Referee, *C21 Literature*, 2017

<http://c21.openlibhums.org/>

Moderator, Society for the Study of Southern Literature Panel at the RMMLA, 2016

University of Alabama in Huntsville

Volunteer, North Alabama High School English Outreach Committee, 2017

Member, Honors Introduction to College Planning Committee, 2017

Member, Common Text Author Visit Committee, 2017

Coordinator (with Colleen Weir), Brown Bag Professional Development Series, 2017-

www.uahbrownbagseries.weebly.com

Judge, UAH Creative Writing Award, “Short Story” Division, 2017

Member, Ad-Hoc English 105 Planning Committee, 2016-

Member, Lecturer Committee, 2016-

Member, CAHS New Faculty Pedagogy Group, 2016-

Member, Student Professional Development Committee, 2016-

Judge, Poetry Out Loud Regional Competition, “Original Poetry” Division, 2016

Coordinator, Graduate Student Proposal Writing Workshop, 2016

Participant, Alabama Symposium on Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Studies, 2016

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Member, First-Year Writing Course Assessment Committee, 2015-2016
Participant, The Humanities and Technology Camp (THAT Camp), 2016
Participant, Online Learning Consortium Innovate Conference, 2016
Judge, Ann Dobie Outstanding Freshman Essay Competition, 2015-2016
Member, Search Committee for English Instructor, 2015-2016
Member, First Year Writing Committee, 2015-2016
Moderator and Presenter, Workshop in Academic Publication, 2015
Member, “Digital Identities” Symposium Planning Committee, 2015
Participant, The Humanities and Technology Camp (THAT Camp), 2015
President, English Graduate Student Association, 2015-2016
Vice-President, English Graduate Student Association, 2014-2015
Assistant Fiction Editor, *Rougarou: An Online Literary Journal*, 2014-2015
Member, First-Year Writing Course Assessment Committee, 2012-2013

University of North Alabama

Member, “No Laughing Matter” Graduate Conference Planning Committee, 2013
Member, “The American Dream” Graduate Conference Planning Committee, 2011

Western Kentucky University

Director, Greentoppers Environmental Group’s Earth Day Festival, 2008
Director, Greentoppers Environmental Group’s Earth Day Festival, 2007

Internal Grants and Funding

UAH English Department Travel Grant, \$200, October 2016
UAH College of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences Travel Grant, \$300, October 2016
UAH Dean’s Research Grant, \$500, October 2016
UL Lafayette Graduate Student Organization Travel Grant, \$400, April 2015
UNA Conference Travel Grant, \$500, April 2012
UNA Conference Travel Grant, \$500, October 2011

Awards and Honors

Florence Sanders Jones Outstanding English Graduate Student Award for the 2014-2015 Academic Year, UL Lafayette

Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities Scholarship to Attend the 2015 Tennessee Williams Literary Festival in New Orleans, LA

First Graduate Student Alternate for the National Endowment for the Humanities’ 2014 Seminar “Reconsidering Flannery O’Connor,” Georgia College, Milledgeville, GA