

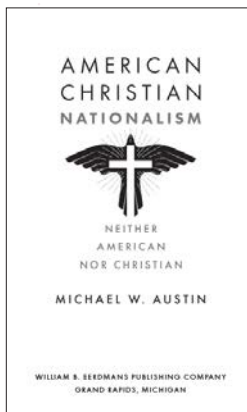
2024 | UNIVERSITY
**FACULTY AWARDS AND
RECOGNITION CEREMONY**
Celebrating Academic Excellence at
Eastern Kentucky University

Sabbatical Showcase

EKU

American Christian Nationalism: Neither American nor Christian

Mike Austin, *Foundation Professor
History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences*



SUMMARY

In the book I first explain what American Christian nationalism is. I then argue that it contradicts American ideals, including liberty, equality, justice, and service. It is also inconsistent with several central Christian values and virtues. It fails to adequately conform to the Christian ethic of loving your neighbor as yourself. It evinces pride and a lust for power, rather than humility, love, and service of others. I conclude by describing a way that Christians ought to engage politically in the public square in a pluralistic society, inspired by the idea of the beloved community from Martin Luther King, Jr.

HIGHLIGHTS

My keynote address at Oxford University during my sabbatical was a highlight, both for the experience and the feedback I was able to receive. Learning about the positive and negative aspects of the ways religion has functioned in society, including our own.

Finding a vision for political engagement that is appropriate in a pluralistic society for people of strong religious convictions.

IMPACT

The book is unique, as it is a concise statement and critique of Christian nationalism, and has already opened up speaking opportunities for me at other universities.

CONNECTION

We often discuss the role of religion in a democracy in both my ethics courses and some of my Honors courses, so this will enable me to introduce students to these ideas in an informed way as they navigate their own convictions and beliefs.

Translating the Poems of Henri Meschonnic

Gaby Bedetti, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

The project is to introduce a French writer to Anglophone audiences. A key figure in “new poetics,” Henri Meschonnic (1932–2009) is known worldwide for translations of the Old Testament and *Critique du rythme: Anthropologie historique du langage*. Bookending my translation of Meschonnic’s prose during a previous sabbatical, my recent leave enabled my co-translator, Don Boes, and me to publish our translations in thirty literary journals. With *The Butterfly Tree: Selected Poems of Henri Meschonnic*, we present five decades of Meschonnic’s poetry, his widow’s remembrance, and our introduction—in book form.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Spoken Pitch for *The Butterfly Tree* to Brigid Hughes, Editor, *A Public Space*
- Declamation of Three Meschonnic Poems at The American Literary Translators Conference
- Co-written introduction to *The Butterfly Tree: Selected Poems of Henri Meschonnic*
- Oral Co-Presentation of “From Rhythm to Community” at The Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900
- Bilingual manuscript of *The Butterfly Tree* comprised of one hundred poems, Régine Blais’s remembrance, and our introduction

IMPACT

As Henri Meschonnic’s poems have never been translated into English, our translations provide a significant addition to the canon of his work available to Anglophone readers, promote a unique voice, expand the cross-cultural pollination of American poetry, and enhance cultural diversity/inclusion. The project strengthens attention to language, critical thinking, and empathy—skills I model for my students as a writer, advisor to *Aurora: EKU’s Literary and Arts Journal*, and teacher of courses that integrate the arts.

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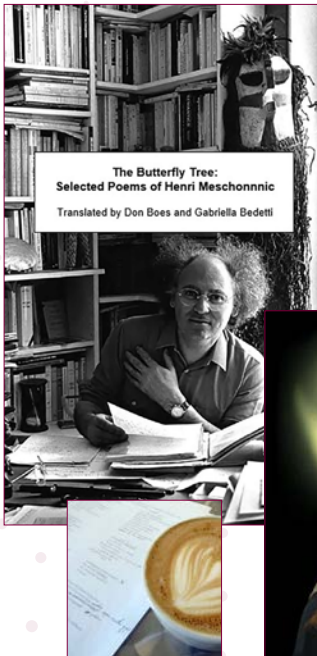


Translating the Poems of Henri Meschonnic

Gaby Bedetti, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

CONNECTION

The process of creation helps students synthesize and put into practice what they have learned, teaches academic socialization, and fosters interdisciplinary approaches beyond the institution. Breaking barriers gives all students—not just those who self-identify as creative—the freedom for creative problem solving, a more developed ability to empathize, and better communication skills.



National Environmental Health Associate President



D. Gary Brown, *Foundation Professor
Environmental & Occupational Public Health Science Industrial
Hygiene, and Sustainability – College of Health Sciences*

SUMMARY

The National Environmental Health Association has over 7,000 members. My duties included publishing 10 President's articles for the NEHA Journal, presenting at numerous State, Regional, National and International Conferences and working closely with multiple federal agencies including the CDC and the FDA. I was the face of NEHA throughout the United States and its territories.

HIGHLIGHTS

The CDC has provided NEHA a substantial increase in funding from previous years, \$1million dollars for the next 5 years for the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program. In May 2021, The FDA announced the award of the "Advancing Conformance with the Voluntary National Retail Food Regulatory Program Standards by State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Retail Food Regulatory Agencies" Cooperative Agreement to NEHA, the single largest federal food safety grant in environmental health history, at \$40 million.

IMPACT

Being the President of NEHA strengthened the reputation of the Environmental Health Science Department, College of Health Sciences and Eastern Kentucky University.

CONNECTION

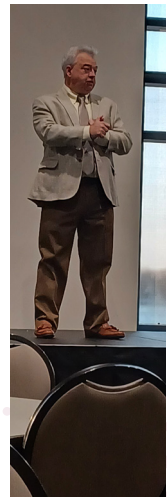
Being the President of NEHA strengthened the reputation of the Environmental Health Science Department, College of Health Sciences and Eastern Kentucky University.

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National Environmental Health Associate President

D. Gary Brown, *Foundation Professor
Environmental & Occupational Public Health Science Industrial
Hygiene, and Sustainability – College of Health Sciences*



Creation of a New Course: Digital Music

Thomas Couvillon, Professor, School of Music
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

Objective #1: To design and implement a new course–MUS 484: Digital Composition. This class was approved as a part of a recent curriculum revision and was taught for first time in Spring 2023.

Objective #2: To engage in a program of study designed to increase my proficiency with the software applications and compositional techniques currently used in the music industry.

Objective #3: To compose music for a documentary film created by the EKU School of Communication.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Located and mastered several freeware/low-cost software applications to allow students easy entry into creating digital music.
2. Completed two self-guided online courses that covered one of the major software platform that composers use to incorporate music and sound into video games.
3. Designed and taught a new course in Digital Music.
4. Worked in collaboration with an undergraduate composition major to write music for a documentary created by the EKU School of Communications.

IMPACT

The majority of commercial music is created using computers rather than live musicians. EKU students now have access to a course that provides the necessary technical skills needed to succeed in this field.

CONNECTION

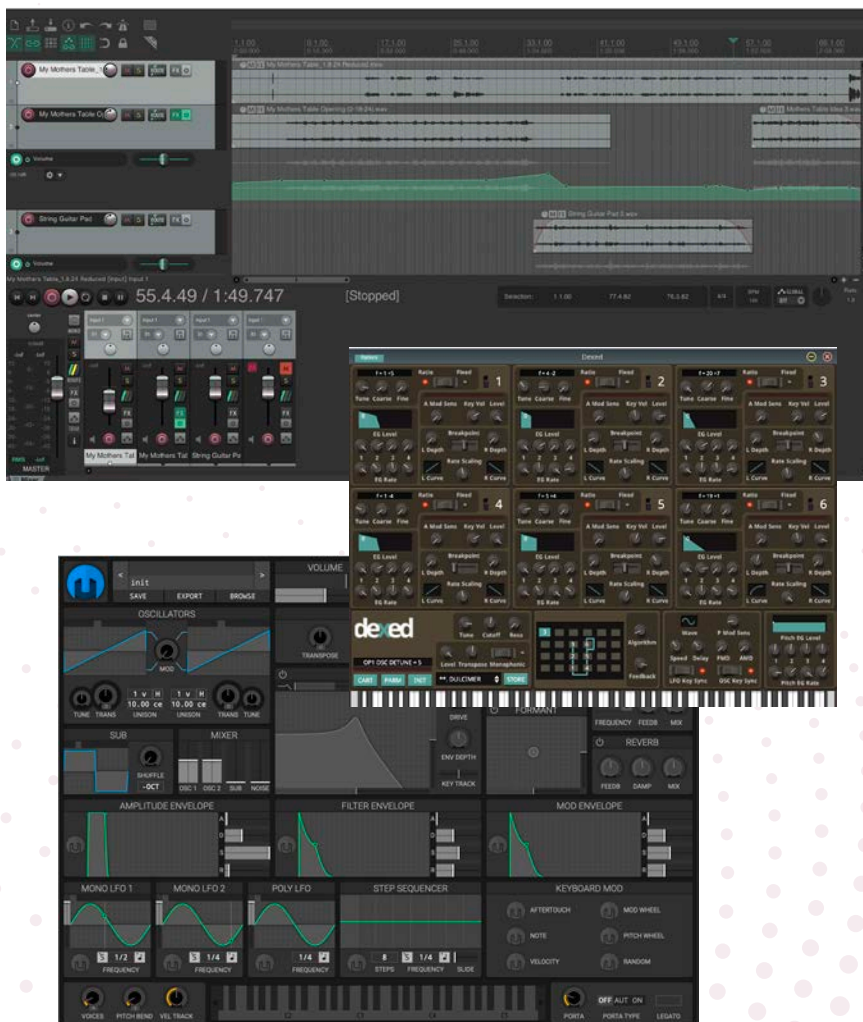
This sabbatical included professional development, course creation and creative activity in digital music with the goal of improving student instruction in commercial music composition.

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Creation of a New Course: Digital Music

Thomas Couvillon, Professor, School of Music
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



Ecological Studies of the Indiana Bat and Other Imperiled Mammals

Luke Dodd, Full Professor, Biological Sciences
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics



SUMMARY

During the Spring 2023 semester I continued my research efforts focused on the conservation of non-game mammals, with a primary focus on the ecological and conservation implications of artificial roosts for the endangered Indiana Bat.

HIGHLIGHTS

Mentees noted with asterisk:

Beckner, M.B.*, K.E. Powers, and L.E. Dodd. 2023. Attempted Predation of live-captured *Neotoma magister* (Allegheny Woodrat) by *Strix varia* (Barred Owl) and *Buteo jamaicensis* (Red-tailed Hawk) in Kentucky. *Northeastern Naturalist* 30: N48–N53.

Crawford, R.D.*, L.E. Dodd, and J.M. O'Keefe. Submitted 2023, In Revision. "Do artificial roost design and placement alter the torpor expression of Indiana bats?" *Conservation Physiology*.

Dodd, L.E. 2023. Surveillance of bark-mimic roosts for Indiana bats at Veterans Memorial Wildlife Management Area, L.E. Dodd (PI). Imperiled Bat Conservation Fund, \$8,817.

Howe, S.K*. 2023. "Assessment of natural roost availability and artificial roost preference by Indiana bats in Scott County, Kentucky." M.S. Thesis, Eastern Kentucky University.

Ryan, B.* 2023. "Variation in bat activity across upland-embedded wetlands in the Cumberland Ranger District of the Daniel Boone National Forest." Co-Advised with K. Watson (EKU PGAS). M.S. Thesis."

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Ecological Studies of the Indiana Bat and Other Imperiled Mammals

Luke Dodd, Full Professor, Biological Sciences
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

IMPACT

In total, the scholarship focus of my sabbatical yielded: a published peer-reviewed manuscript, another peer-reviewed manuscript in the submission/revision process, completion of 2 M.S. theses, securing of \$8,817 in continued research funds, an unsuccessful pursuit of \$316,856 in funding, and 5 research products presented by my lab across the region at professional conferences.

CONNECTION

I continued to prioritize showcasing the student-focused scholarship of my lab, yielding 3 talks and 2 posters presented during at annual meetings of the Midwest Bat Working Group, Kentucky Organization of Field Stations, and joint effort of the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network and Colloquium on the Conservation of Mammals in the Eastern United States. Notably, M.S. students exiting my lab landed employment in the wildlife and conservation arena this year (KY Transportation Cabinet, Indiana Dunes National Park, and New York State's Department of Environmental Conservation).

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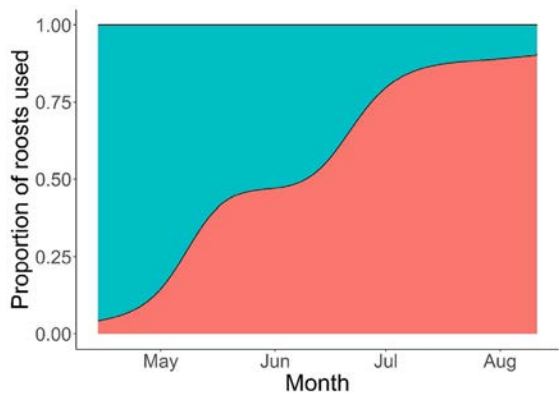


Ecological Studies of the Indiana Bat and Other Imperiled Mammals

Luke Dodd, Full Professor, Biological Sciences
STEM



Solar
■ Shade
■ Sun



The Coontie Island Collection: Documentation and Analysis

Jon C. Endonino, Associate Professor
Languages & Cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

A unique collection of prehistoric Native American artifacts was discovered washing out of a sand dune on Coontie Island south of St. Augustine, Florida in the March 1939. Among the artifacts were beads of polished stone and spear points and knives of large size and exceptional crafting, some nearly a foot in length. No archaeological analysis has ever been conducted until now. All of the objects are foreign to the coast of Florida and signal connections between different Native American cultures inhabiting the southeastern United States between 5600 and 5000 years ago, from the Savannah River Valley in Georgia and South Carolina to Mississippi, and the Suwannee River in north Florida. These connections foreshadow, possibly sparking, the mound-building Thornhill Lake culture in northeast Florida 5200–4700 years ago.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. This project is the first professional analysis of this singular collection of Native American Artifacts.
2. Data collected demonstrate cultural interactions over a wide geographic area spanning the Savannah River Valley to the Mississippi River Valley, and down to northern Florida.
3. Data collection include the use of photogrammetry, a technology that resulted in the production of 3D models that are available to the public and for other researchers.

IMPACT

The impact of this work is the connection of geographically disparate communities of hunter-gatherers across the southeastern United States that were possibly of a common cultural ancestry in the lower Tennessee River Valley. Ancestral connections between the Benton Culture of the Tennessee River valley and the Allendale Culture of the Savannah River Valley in Georgia and South Carolina have been demonstrated. Analysis of the Coontie Island collection produced compelling evidence that Thornhill

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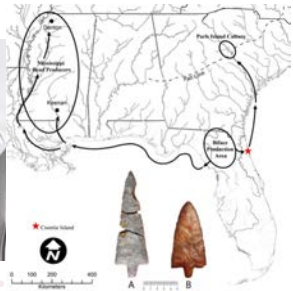
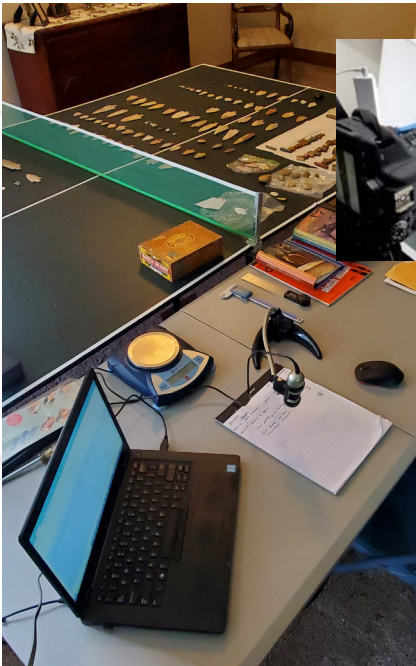
The Coontie Island Collection: Documentation and Analysis

Jon C. Endonino, Associate Professor
Languages & Cultural Studies, Anthropology, and Sociology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

Lake groups in northeast Florida also have shared ancestry with both Benton and Allendale cultures and that contact between these groups was maintained for more than a millennium.

CONNECTION

Through the work on the Coontie Island project done during my sabbatical I am now able to incorporate photogrammetry into my courses and have pursued the acquisition of equipment to be able to produce photogrammetric models of artifacts with the intent of teaching students this technique.



DNA Collection Tool

Jamie Fredericks, Associate Professor, Chemistry
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics



SUMMARY

Continued development of the DNA collection tool for forensic samples. Demonstrated that the tool can be used to collect blood and saliva from a variety of different apparel including cotton and jean. The tool allows for a variety of different downstream processes that would not to be possible with the traditional swab, providing analysts with flexibility in DNA analysis.

HIGHLIGHTS

Successfully demonstrated that the tool,

- In comparison to the swab, the tool can collect similar or more DNA from forensic samples
- Allowed multiple attempts of DNA analysis from the sample collected
- Non-provisional patent filled
- Successfully awarded >\$100K in outside grants

IMPACT

The tool provides analysts with the flexibility to choose the most appropriate protocols. This could save time and money and could be easily incorporated in DNA laboratories.

CONNECTION

This is a fantastic promotion tool for the program and EKU. Students have been heavily involved (past, present and future) in the project and is a great way to teach R&D to students.

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DNA Collection Tool

Jamie Fredericks, Associate Professor, Chemistry
College of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

So far, we have tested the device on two different materials, cotton, and jeans. Similar trends were observed.

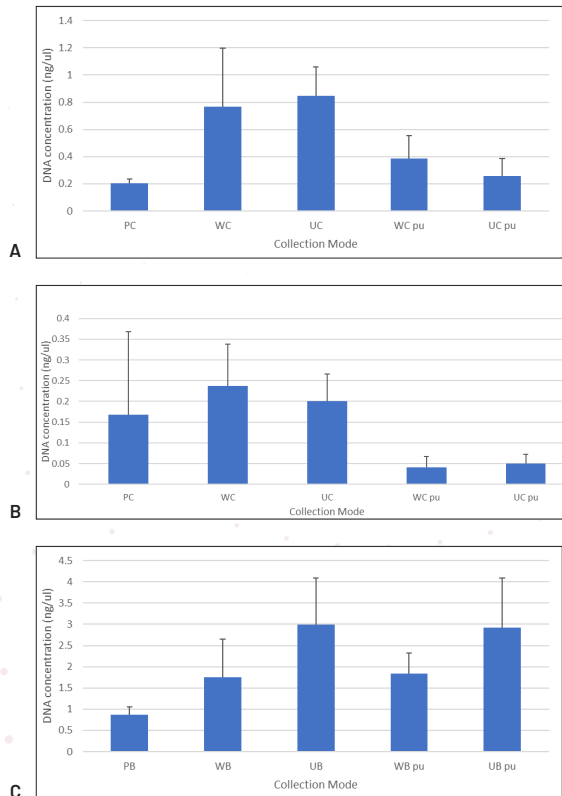


Figure 2: DNA collection data from cotton (A and C) and jean (B).

Compared to the swab (PC), Whatman FTA paper (WC) and Copan's Nucleic Card (UC) recovered more DNA from 10 ul blood (A and B) or saliva (C) deposited using traditional DNA extraction. WC pu and UC pu represent the concentration of DNA recovered from each paper (WC and UC) following Direct PCR analysis (i.e., Two 1.2mm discs were removed before traditional extraction). Full profiles were observed from each sample.

When using Direct PCR analysis protocols, 100% of profiles were observed from cotton and jean when using either GlobalFiler or PowerPlex Fusion STR profiling kits regardless if blood or saliva was deposited.

Bent Cedar Mountain (originally "Breaking Ground")

Julie Hensley, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

Completed and revised "*Bent Cedar Mountain*" (a novel-in-poems). Submitted individual poems from this project for publication. Conducted preliminary field research for "*Karst*" (a collection of poems). Continued to develop "*Copper State*" (a short story collection). Taught in a study abroad program in Harlaxton College in England.

HIGHLIGHTS

Attended three writing residencies on literary fellowships (Tyrone Guthrie Center, County Monaghan, Ireland; Jentel Arts, Banner, Wyoming; I-Park Arts, East Haddam, Connecticut) and, at the latter, began a creative collaboration with a musical composer. Crafted 38 new poems and two new short stories, completing "*Bent Cedar Mountain*." Visited and photographed several Karst landscapes (Keash Caves and the Burren in Ireland, the Peaks District in England). Taught creative writing at Harlaxton College (an exchange program catering to American students from private colleges and regional state universities).

IMPACT

The most direct impacts include scholarly studio talks and readings for the communities around each residency, and the publications resulting from time in the studio: so far, eight individual poems from "*Bent Cedar Mountain*" are forthcoming in "*Still*," *Ruminate*, *Rockbridge Review*," and "*Southern Review*." I am confident the entire novel-in-poems will eventually be published. It was a finalist in one of the first contests to which I submitted it, and several presses have requested the full manuscript. I am submitting a craft panel on the novel-in-stories for the 2025 Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Los Angeles, California. "*Bent Cedar Mountain*" promotes genre-blur and pushes the narrative limits of the poetry genre. The subject matter (domestic abuse) has the potential for powerful social impact, as well.

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Bent Cedar Mountain (originally "Breaking Ground")

Julie Hensley, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

CONNECTION

Completing this project primes me to support MFA students who are interested in pursuing genre-blur theses. I will likely develop a version of ENW 810/Contemporary Literature which focuses specifically on the novel-in-poems. Teaching at Harlaxton College enabled me to witness the logistics of how another institution runs an exchange program, providing ideas for how the Bluegrass Writers Studio can enhance our international residency.



Italian Literature, Translation and Cultural Studies

Erik Liddell, Associate Professor
Language and Cultural Studies, Anthropology and Sociology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

In the interconnected areas of Italian literary and cultural studies, I published the first English translation of Giuseppe Verdi and Salvatore Cammarano's opera libretto, "Alzira," itself based on the original French play by Voltaire, in the literary translation journal, *Metamorphoses*; studied Modern Italian Poetry and Short Stories through the Galileo Galilei Institute of Florence; took two Advanced Italian courses on a contemporary novel and on contemporary films through the Italian Cultural Institute of Los Angeles; and engaged in individual language instruction in conversational Italian with a focus on current events, social and political issues. In a separate vein, I also collaborated on a chapter about virtual conferences for a National Collegiate Honors Council monograph.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Erik Liddell. "Alzira." Translation from the original Italian, with Translator's Introduction, based on the original opera libretto, *Alzira*, by Salvatore Cammarano and Giuseppe Verdi (1845). "Metamorphoses: Journal of the Five College Faculty Seminar on Literary Translation," Fall/Winter 2022: 114-141.
- Jon Blandford, Kathy J. Cooke, Erik Liddell, Kathryn M. MacDonald and Tara M. Tuttle, "Cultivating Delight, Crossing Divides, and Solving Impossible Problems: Lessons Learned from a Year of Virtual Conferences," Honors Online, National Collegiate Honors Council monograph series (In press).
- Italian Cultural Institute of Los Angeles, "Advanced Italian Conversation: Focus on Contemporary Italian Films (*Isola delle rose*; *Mio fratello, mia sorella*; *Il filo invisibile*; *È stata la mano di Dio*)," 4-week course with Michele Scotto, July-August 2022.
- Galileo Galilei Institute of Florence, Modern Italian Literature Certificate Course on Poetry and Short Stories, 24-hour course with Serena Convito, September - October 2022.
- Italian Cultural Institute of Los Angeles, Advanced Italian Conversation:

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Italian Literature, Translation and Cultural Studies

Erik Liddell, Associate Professor
Language and Cultural Studies, Anthropology and Sociology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

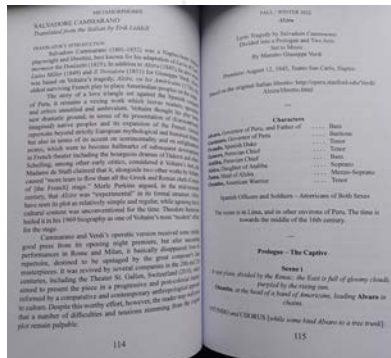
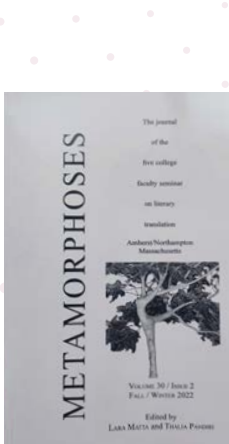
Focus on the Contemporary Novel (Matteo Bussola, *Il rosmarino non capisce l'inverno*), 4-week course with Michele Scotto, October–November 2022.

IMPACT

My continuing development in Italian supports my work as Director of the Kentucky Institute for International Study (KIIS) Italy Summer program, in which I also teach an Introduction to Italian Culture course.

CONNECTION

My continuing development in Italian also connects to my teaching in Honors seminars such as (currently) the Arts, Humanities, History and Diversity course, “Making and Remaking Italy,” and (previously) the Arts and Humanities course, “Opera from Page to Stage.”



The Genetics of Sexuality

Bob Mitchell, Professor, Psychology
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

I examined the available research on genetic explanations for sexual orientation, focusing on twin, linkage, and genome-wide analysis (GWA) studies. All of these studies fail to provide convincing evidence to explain sexual orientation. Typically, the claims of the studies contradict the evidence, and numerous conceptual problems pervade the research.

HIGHLIGHTS

Sexuality is more complicated than genetic studies allow. Diverse categorizations of the types of “sexual orientation” lead to incoherence in comparison across and even within studies. Different linkage and WA studies failed to find the same genes associated with homosexuality.

IMPACT

Sexual orientation is more complicated than scientists (and the general public) allow.

CONNECTION

I consolidated a lot of the more difficult literature for my students when I next teach my Theories of Sexual Desire course.

Critical Reading and Student Self-Selected Texts: Results of a Collaborative, Explicit Curricular Approach

Jill Parrott, *Professor, English*
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

This research asks whether a curriculum designed to integrate information literacy, critical reading, and writing improves students' ability to critically read sources and then use source content for their own purposes. We hypothesized that critical reading-infused library instruction, course instruction, and curriculum support via peer consultation (intervention group) would positively impact students' critical reading facility and ability to synthesize sources into meaningful writing as opposed to students who do not receive this instruction (control group). Our research indicates a strong correlation between students' navigating a critical reading curriculum for a research project with self-selected texts and positive research-based writing outcomes for these courses. Students in the intervention group were more likely to be able to integrate source material effectively into their self-selected research-based projects than students in the control group.

HIGHLIGHTS

My original main objective for this sabbatical was to complete and submit a manuscript for a research project titled "Deep Online Reading for Higher-Level Synthesis in Freshman Writing," but I did not end up with enough data for meaningful analysis and had to scrap that project.

I was disappointed by that, but it allowed more time for me to collaborate with librarian Trenia Napier to complete this project. We (1) collaborated with colleagues in math and statistics to analyze our data, (2) completed our manuscript draft by meeting together over Zoom to write, and (3) submitted the project.

After completing a few requested revisions, our article was accepted and published in 2023.

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Critical Reading and Student Self-Selected Texts: Results of a Collaborative, Explicit Curricular Approach

Jill Parrott, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

IMPACT

This collaboration with librarian Trenia Napier, which came out of the Quality Enhancement Plan focused on metacognitive critical reading, both reacts to local context and informs local improvement. We designed a curriculum for English 102 based on reading scholarship where we compared the works of 50 students from courses that had used the curriculum and 50 that had not, hypothesizing that students in intervention sections would apply concepts more adeptly. We coded multiple interactions with sources for each piece and found that almost all projections were correct: data trend toward students with intervention exhibiting more positive applications and integrating outside source material more successfully.

CONNECTION

Our statistically significant data for integration criteria means we know what works! Our instructors at ECU can confidently revise curriculum knowing it benefits students in general education writing courses as well as any course that requires research and writing. Curriculum such as that used in our intervention group are necessary to make professional-level academic texts accessible for students who most need support in this area (think: first-generation students, those from less privileged school systems or less advantaged backgrounds, or those for whom English is not their first language, among others).

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Critical Reading and Student Self-Selected Texts: Results of a Collaborative, Explicit Curricular Approach

Jill Parrott, *Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences*

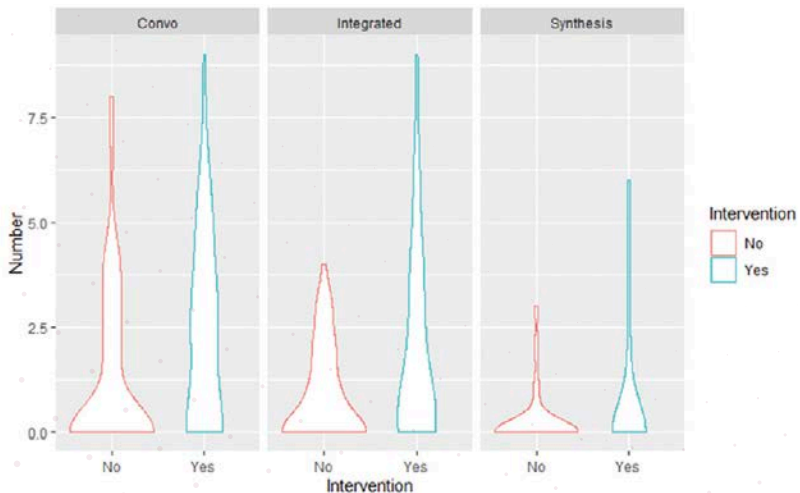


Figure 1. Students in the experimental group had more instances of integration.

Code	What it means
Z	Material sourced from the Abstract
Y	Material sourced from the first page
X	Material sourced from the second page
W	Material sourced from the third page or deeper
V	Non-paginated source: 1 or 2 paragraph
U	Non-paginated source: 3 paragraph or later
^	Media source (video, infographic, etc.–anything non-alphabetic)
R	Cannot find source material
S	Material not cited/No material cited
T	Material incorrectly cited (AWPUS)
\$	Material quoted
!	Material quoted incorrectly
#	Material paraphrased or summarized
%	Material plagiarized
?	Plagiarism possible
L	Material placed in conversation with other sources
M	Material synthesized with other sources in that paragraph or previous
N	Material is well integrated

Sisyphus and the Search for Meaning

Matthew Pianalto, Professor
History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

This project examines uses of the myth of Sisyphus in philosophical theories of meaning in life. Albert Camus famously urged us to imagine Sisyphus happy, but contemporary philosophers generally regard Sisyphus and his repetitive, futile rock-pushing as an example of meaningless and miserable activity. Both Camus and contemporary philosophers have downplayed other interpretations of the myth and other lessons we might learn from Sisyphus about life, death, and meaning. These include the relationship between the concepts of meaning, happiness, and virtue, the nature of work and play, and the value of friendship.

HIGHLIGHTS

Published works:

1. Two essays for 1000-Word Philosophy: "Meaning in Life: What Makes Our Lives Meaningful?" and "The Meaning of Life: What's the Point?"
2. "What's the Point if We're All Going to Die? Pessimism, Moderation, and the Reality of the Past," *Journal of Philosophy of Life* 14 (2024): 14-34

Works in progress:

1. Book manuscript: *Sisyphus and the Search for Meaning*
2. Article/Presentations: "Modeling Meaninglessness: The Uses and Abuses of Sisyphus"
3. Short Paper: "Socrates and Sisyphus in the Underworld: Is Philosophy Sisyphic?"

IMPACT

This project promotes a pluralistic approach to meaning in life and provides models for transforming our attitudes and goals to accommodate various challenges and obstacles to meaning.

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Sisyphus and the Search for Meaning

Matthew Pianto, Professor
History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

CONNECTION

This project has generated freely available resources on meaning in life that are accessible to general audiences and are already being used by myself and other teachers to guide discussions. It has also helped me reframe several topics and points of emphasis in my introductory ethics courses to encourage students to see ethics not merely as a set of rules but an ongoing process of thought and action in the pursuit of a good life.



"Meaning in Life:
What Makes Our Lives
Meaningful?" – 1000 Word
Philosophy



"The Meaning of Life: What's
the Point?" – 1000 Word
Philosophy



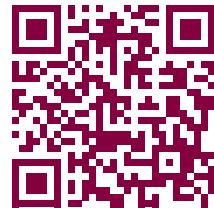
"What's the Point if We're
All Going to Die? Pessimism,
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14-34

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Sisyphus and the Search for Meaning

Matthew Pianto, Professor
History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



Matthew Pianto @
Academia.edu

"The Farm Wife's Friend" and "Roseate Fiction": Reading and Literacy in Edith Summers Kelley's "Weeds"

Charlotte Rich, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



SUMMARY

Edith Summers Kelley's novel *Weeds* (1923) tells the story of Judith Blackford, wife of a tenant tobacco farmer in Kentucky. The novel includes many references to literacy and reading, and it initially forecasts a narrative linking literacy to self-betterment and brighter futures. However, the novel works against such simple conclusions. The range of texts Kelley's characters encounter is limited, and these texts work to reconfirm expectations of their readers' gender, socioeconomic, and geographical status. As an underappreciated triumph of literary Naturalism, *Weeds* provides an important window into the reading habits of rural populations in early twentieth century America, while implying both the promise and the limits of literacy.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Researching rural education in 1910s Kentucky and its relationship to literacy rates and community attitudes toward education
2. Researching early twentieth century periodicals targeted to rural populations, especially those directed toward women such as *The Farmer's Wife*, to consider how they relate to the concept of an ideological notion of literacy: one in which literacy is context-dependent, power-laden, and functions to encourage in individuals a sense of their social place
3. Researching sentimental novels written for women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially those by Laura Jean Libbey and Mary Jane Holmes, which socialize their readers to expectations of marriage and domesticity
4. Exploring how, in light of her narrow exposure to the above texts, the only form of textual consumption that seems to offer the novel's protagonist understanding of her challenging existence is her reading of the natural world rather than books. At the same time as nature teaches Kelley's heroine hard lessons about its implacability, her reading of the natural world also serves throughout the novel to bring her solace.

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"The Farm Wife's Friend" and "Roseate Fiction": Reading and Literacy in Edith Summers Kelley's "Weeds"

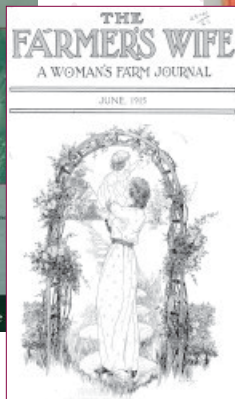
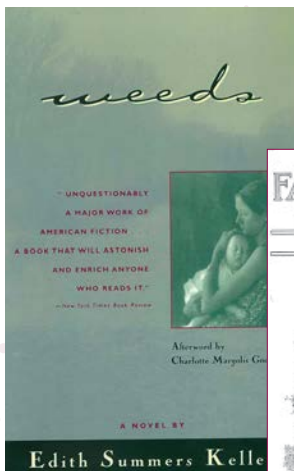
Charlotte Rich, Professor, English
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences

IMPACT

In publishing this essay, I hope to gain more attention for this under-recognized novel that legitimizes the voices and experiences of rural and socioeconomically marginalized Kentuckians in the early twentieth century.

CONNECTION

While I have taught this novel previously, conducting further research into its historical and educational contexts allows me to provide a more enriched classroom experience with the text. More generations of EKU students will discover this under-recognized author who published in the fields of Kentucky literature and working-class literature.

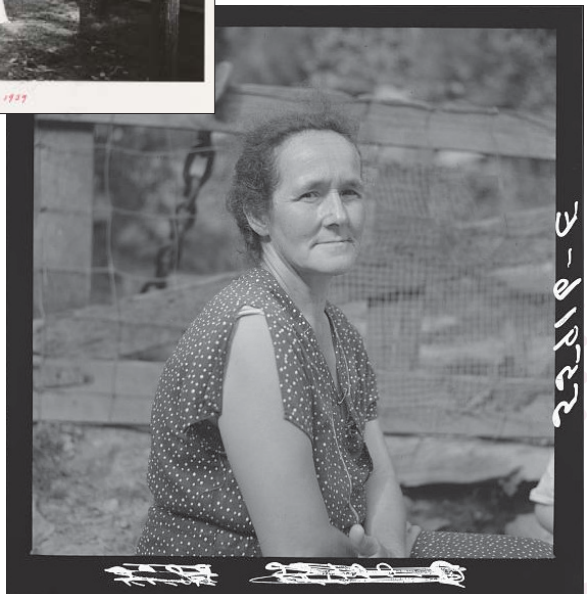




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"The Farm Wife's Friend" and "Roseate Fiction": Reading and Literacy in Edith Summers Kelley's "Weeds"

Charlotte Rich, *Professor, English*
College of Letters, Arts, and Social Sciences



Wicked General Education: Saving the World (and General Education) by Addressing Wicked Problems

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SUMMARY

The preponderance of wicked problems in the world requires that the university marshal all its resources and expertise to prepare students to face these challenges in their future careers and lives. I propose transforming an existing, sizable, and central component of the university into a program that combines disciplines from students' earliest courses to promote interprofessional pedagogy, a focus on wicked problems, challenge-based learning, and civic engagement. In this paper, I present the main issues that confront our society (and higher education institutions), the current understanding of these issues, and propose a way to reform one of the core aspects of higher education to prepare our students for the challenges of their era.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wicked problems will dominate the lives of current and future students.
- General education is the best place in the curriculum to prepare students for the wicked future.
- An integrated, transdisciplinary general education program that focuses on wicked problems, solutions mindsets, and collaboration with community stakeholders is required.

IMPACT

Impacts of adopting my proposed general education program include: increased student engagement, generations of citizens trained in facing wicked problems, improved faculty morale, better relations with state government, and increased fundraising.

CONNECTION

Adoption of my proposed general education program would affect my teaching of general education courses. Adoption of my proposed general education program would increase student engagement in general education courses, improve their identification with the university, and increase alumni giving to the university.

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