

# ENGLISH DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER

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Eugenio María de Hostos Community College, CUNY



# English Department

## Newsletter

Volume 4 | Issue 1

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## Chair's Message

### Well Wishes for a Successful Term



Welcome to the Fall 2020 semester. We all know that 2020 continues to challenge us in unexpected ways. In the midst of all of the difficulties we are facing today, it is important that we still recognize our colleagues' successes, accomplishments and joys. Thank you to Prof. Munoz and Prof. Porter for assembling this beautiful newsletter to give us the opportunity to celebrate one another. I wish us all the best for a happy and healthy fall.

## Issue Note

### Together, remotely



It seemed fitting that during this online semester, the English newsletter should address the unique needs of the current moment with featured programming information offered by the Writing Center, including term-long writing seminars and reading seminars.

We hear from the experience of two professors, Anne Genzale and Elizabeth Porter, respectively discussing incorporating SI tutors in the online classroom (page 5) and encouraging online student participation (below).

It also seemed fitting to celebrate the community that brings us all together, even remotely. This was the thinking that motivated the selection of a cover image, which was taken during the online professional development seminar for the Writing Center's fabulous cohort of SI tutors. The Quarantine Reading list includes a diversity of addictive page-turners submitted by the department community. The faculty profiles explore Sean Gerrity's project on marronage in the antebellum south, and Anne Rounds's new music-inspired poetry collection.

Finally, in honor of that community, we conclude with a poem of grace for the moment (page 6). We thank Professor Cynthia Jones for honoring our request for a poem selection. We also thank the issue contributors: Carl Grindley, Anne Genzale, Anne Rounds, Sean Gerrity, and Elizabeth Porter.

## Online Teaching Tip (New!)

### By Professor Elizabeth Porter

Q: What do you do to enhance participation in an online class?

A: I created a Google Docs version of the syllabus for students to collectively annotate in my ENG 110 class, which allowed me to answer their questions and assess whether they had read and reflected on the syllabus during the initial weeks of the semester.

**Professor Anne Rounds discusses her new book, *Little Double Elegy for All of You* (Ravenna Press, 2020)**



**Q: What was the inspiration for this book?**

A: Some folks know this story already—and it seems so small now—but in 2015, I had been intensely preparing for a piano performance, practicing many hours a day, and I wound up with a tendon overuse injury. As a result, I fell in a deep depression, blaming myself for what happened, believing I would never recover, would never play again,

shouldn't have ever tried to play at all, and other dark thoughts. Healing didn't happen the way I thought, but when I started to feel better about a year later, it was a radical reset of my relationship with the piano, and with playing, listening, and learning. That arc is what the poems in the collection reflect.

**Q: I noticed some literary references—how does your teaching and reading of literature inspire your poetry?**

A: I'm always aware of not wanting poems to sound like, "I had this thought and it was significant," or "I noticed this thing and it reminded me of this other thing." For me, using allusion is a way to tap into experience without being heavy-handed. I don't believe that poems should require explaining—just as when I teach literature, I don't view my role as "explaining" it— but I do think a poem should yield more upon being reread. Allusion and reference, and different modes of revealing them, are a way to achieve that kind of layering.

**Q: What is your favorite poem in the collection? Why?**

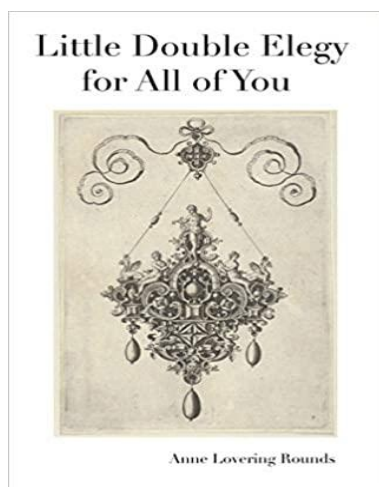
A: Oh gosh. Maybe the last one: "On the occasion of your anniversary"? I'm mildly obsessed with poetic closure, and to me, this was always the poem that was going to end the book: a little snapshot, an ending that's a reminder we're never really done.

**Q: Any advice for folks looking to publish poetry of their own?**

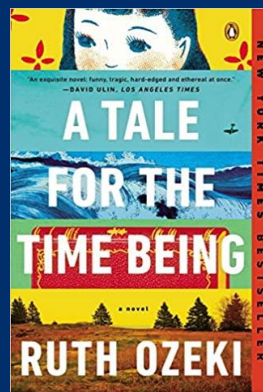
A: Try not to rush it. I think equally important to finding a publisher is finding a listener.

**Q: Where can folks buy a copy?**

A: Option A, you can ask me for one! I have a bunch and would be delighted to sign and mail one to you. Option B, support small independent presses and order it from [ravennapress.com](http://ravennapress.com). Option C, sigh, Amazon.

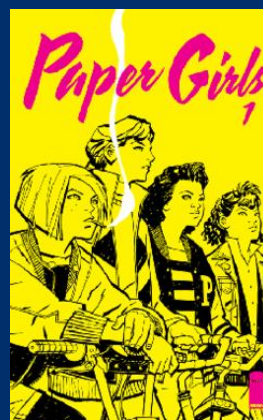
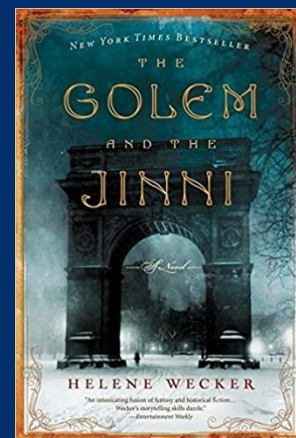


**English Department  
Quarantine Reading List**



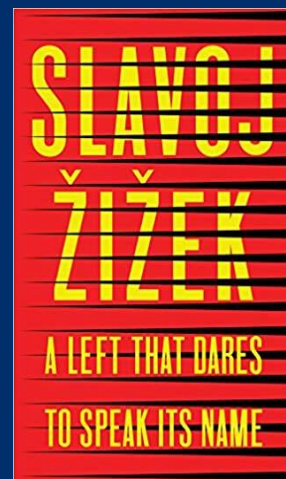
Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (2013)  
"a refreshingly weird novel that explores tenuous kinships among different times, places, and voices."  
– Prof. Bollinger

Helene Wecker, *The Golem and the Jinni* (2013)  
"Magical realism set in early 20<sup>th</sup> century NYC; a tale of the immigrant experience and love story between two magical creatures. I was enthralled."  
– Prof. Muñoz



Brian K. Vaughan & Cliff Chiang, *Paper Girls* (2015-2019)  
"Strong female leads. Time Travel. 80s nostalgia. References to 90s mall culture and present-day BLM."  
– Adelyn Castro, WC Web Manager

Slavoj Žižek, *A Left that Dares to Speak Its Name* (2020)  
"Žižek offers funny & intelligent correctives to the nonsense of our times... [and] a decided hope that humans can find their way back to a collective vision of history, thus allowing us to shape a just future out of the bleakness of the present."  
– Prof. Connolly



# Course Completion Data

## By Prof. Carl Grindley

### ALP continues to impress

The English Department's ALP approach to ENG 110 + 10 continues to show strong positive results. With the increase in enrollment from 30 students during the fall 2019 pilot to 108 for spring 2020, no one expected completion and pass rates to continue to out-perform traditional sections of ENG 110, but they did! Indeed, students in ENG 110+10 outperformed traditional ENG 110 students in two important metrics and equaled their performance in another.

In Table 1, you can see that ENG 110+10 students had 5% fewer incomplete grades (W-type grades), and 5% more complete grades (which include NCR, F, CR, D and above). What's more surprising is that ENG 110+10 students—who in the past would have been in developmental courses—earned B and A grades at the same rate as their more prepared classmates. Another success for our ALP!

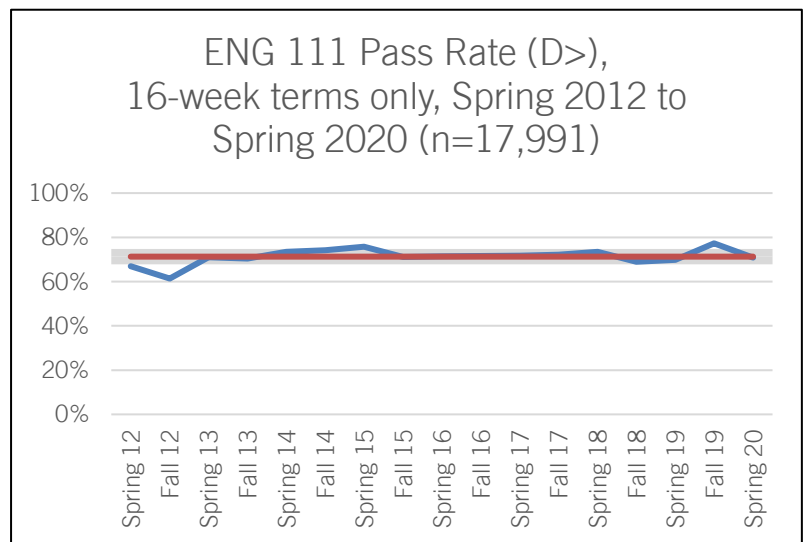
### The move online did not result in catastrophe

As per Table 2, the pass rates for ENG 100, 110 and 111 all held to within one standard deviation of their historical averages. The pass rate (defined as earning a D or higher) in ENG 110 for spring 2020 was 62%. This is down from fall 2019's 68%, but it is within one standard deviation from the 2012-present average of 65%. The same is true for ENG 100, which actually increased its pass rate by 2% to 67%. ENG 111 showed some weakness. The incomplete rate rose from 13% to 17% and grades of C or higher dropped from 73% to 62%. Nevertheless, the overall pass rate of 71%, although disappointing, was not only well within one standard deviation for the course, and was within a few tenths of a percent of the 8-year average of 71.2%.

### Table 1. 110/10/100 Courses Completion Rates

	Incomplete	Complete	D>	C>	B>	A>	Enrollment
SP '20 ENG 110+10	19%	81%	61%	52%	44%	23%	108
SP '20 ENG 110 (full set)	24%	76%	62%	55%	45%	23%	977
Fall '19 ENG 110+10	10%	90%	70%	63%	17%	10%	30
AY '15/'16 to Fall AY '19/'20	21%	79%	65%	62%	46%	18%	Lots

### Table 2. 111 Course Pass Rates



### Table 3. Fall 2020 Online Course Offerings

	ENG 10	ENG 100	ENG 110	ENG 111	Electives	Women & Gender Studies	Total
No. of Sections	10	9	58	34	8	3	128

### Table 4. Spring 2020 - Fall 2020 Data

Term	No. of English Sections	No. of Enrolled Students
Spring 2020	138	2,788
Fall 2020	123	2,582

The Writing Center Presents:

# READING MEET-UPS

## Fall Schedule

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>10/6</b> <i>The Declaration of Independence, The US Constitution</i>        | <b>11/3</b> <i>Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (Forethought and Chapter 1)</i> |
| <b>10/13</b> <i>The US Bill of Rights</i>                                      | <b>11/10</b> <i>Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (Cont. Chapters 1 and 2)</i>   |
| <b>10/20</b> <i>Douglass, "What to the Negro is the Fourth of July?"</i>       | <b>11/17</b> <i>Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (Cont. Chapter 2)</i>          |
| <b>10/27</b> <i>Douglass, "What to the Negro is the Fourth of July?" Cont.</i> |   |



**Tuesdays @ 4PM Via Zoom**  
(RSVP for link)

To RSVP email: [writingcenterhostos@gmail.com](mailto:writingcenterhostos@gmail.com)

The Writing Center Presents:

# WRITING SEMINARS

## Fall Schedule

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>10/5</b> "Take A Stand: Thesis Statements"             | <b>11/16</b> "In The Eye of The Storm: Gathering Your Thoughts" |
| <b>10/26</b> "A Story For The Season"                     | <b>11/23</b> "Google Like You Mean It"                          |
| <b>11/2</b> "Everything In Its Place: Paragraphing"       | <b>11/30</b> "Fire Side Chat: A discussion on testing anxiety"  |
| <b>11/9</b> "We've All Been Clowned: Understanding Irony" | <b>12/7</b> "Make Art, Not War" Poetry Workshop                 |



**Mondays @ 4PM Via Zoom**  
(RSVP for link)

To RSVP email: [writingcenterhostos@gmail.com](mailto:writingcenterhostos@gmail.com)

## Writing Center Offers Online Writing and Reading Enrichment Throughout Fall 2020

### Reading Meetups

The Hostos Writing Center is offering virtual reading meet-ups on Tuesday afternoons throughout the Fall 2020 term. The goal is to help students to develop their reading skills by reading together and discussing selections from core books curriculum developed and taught by faculty at Hostos. These works include Plato, Mary Wollstonecraft, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. Du Bois as well as the American Founding Documents. Facilitated by Victoria Munoz, Faculty Advisor to the Writing Center, Sarah Key, WC Poet-in-Practice, and Shaneka Crossman, WC SIP Administrator, meetings have afforded students a sense of belonging within a community of readers and an opportunity to think through questions of justice, virtue, and education. Meetings take place at 4 PM via Zoom on the following dates: September 22nd, and 29th; October 6th, 13th, 20th, and 27th; and November 3rd, 10th, and 17th.

### Writing Seminars

The Hostos Writing Center is offering virtual writing seminars on Monday afternoons throughout the Fall 2020 term. Each led by a pair or team from the Writing Center's highly talented cohort of tutors, these seminars cover diverse writerly topics, from thesis-crafting, research habits, paragraphing, and much more. The inaugural September event, "How to College" drew over 50 attendees over the two days that it was run via Zoom. The Writing Center is proud to provide a full term of events for community-building and robust discussion of writing topics with students even in a virtual setting.

Interested students are requested to RSVP to [writingcenterhostos@gmail.com](mailto:writingcenterhostos@gmail.com) and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @HostosWriting Students may register and sign up for tutoring at <http://hostos.mywconline.com>.

## A Poem for the Moment Selected by Professor Cynthia Jones

“Trayvon, Redux” [Rita Dove](#), 1952

It is difficult/ to get the news from poems / yet men  
die miserably every day / for lack / of what is found  
there. / Hear me out / for I too am concerned / and  
every man/ who wants to die at peace in his bed /  
besides.

—William Carlos Williams, “Asphodel, that Greeny  
Flower”

Move along, you don't belong here.  
This is what you're thinking. Thinking  
drives you nuts these days, all that  
talk about rights and law abidance when  
you can't even walk your own neighborhood  
in peace and quiet, get your black ass gone.  
You're thinking again. Then what?  
Matlock's on TV and here you are,  
vigilant, weary, exposed to the elements  
on a wet winter's evening in Florida  
when all's not right but no one sees it.  
Where are they – the law, the enforcers  
blind as a bunch of lazy bats can be,  
holsters dangling from coat hooks above their desks  
as they jaw the news between donuts?

Hey! It tastes good, shoving your voice  
down a throat thinking only of sweetness.  
Go on, choke on that. Did you say something?  
Are you thinking again? Stop!— and  
get your ass gone, your blackness,  
that casual little red riding hood  
I'm just on my way home attitude  
as if this street was his to walk on.  
Do you hear me talking to you? Boy.  
How dare he smile, jiggling his goodies  
in that tiny shiny bag, his black paw crinkling it,  
how dare he tinkle their laughter at you.

Here's a fine basket of riddles:  
If a mouth shoots off and no one's around  
to hear it, who can say which came first—  
push or shove, bang or whimper?  
Which is news fit to write home about?

## Recognizing Faculty Excellence Publications

Bernardini, Craig. "[Trees Go To Heaven](#)." Craft, 6 March 2020.  
Fabrizio, Andrea and Gregory Marks. “Core Texts and Core  
Questions: A Humanities Based Approach to  
Composition,” *Community College Humanities Review*, 4.2  
(2020): 40-57.

Muñoz, Victoria. “[C]arried away with The Myrroure of  
Knighthood’: Hispanophobia and the Rhetorical  
Feminization of Romance Literature,” in Arthur F. Marotti,  
ed. *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts, VI. Papers of the  
Renaissance English Text Society 2011-2016* (Tempe:  
Arizona Center for Medieval & Renaissance Studies/RETS,  
2019), 269-295.

Rounds, Anne Lovering. *Little Double Elegy For All of You*.  
Ravenna Press, 2020.

## Congratulations

To Prof. Andy Connolly, for receiving a 2020 CUNY Henry  
Wasser Award for Outstanding Assistant Professor.

To Prof. Sean Gerrity, for receiving a 2020 Mellon/ACLS  
Community College Faculty Fellowship.

To Prof. Krystyna Michael, for receiving a National Endowment  
for the Humanities Summer Institute Fellow. "City of Print:  
New York and the Periodical Press." July 2020; and a  
National Endowment for the Humanities Digital Humanities  
Advancement Grant. "Manifold in the Classroom." August  
2020.

To Prof. Victoria Muñoz, for receiving a Renaissance Society of  
America scholarship to Attend the Digital Humanities  
Summer Institute (DHSI) at the University of Victoria,  
Canada.

To Prof. Tram Nguyen, for her new position on the Hostos  
Community College Community Advisory Council.

To Prof. Juan Soto-Franco, for his summer appointments with the  
Hostos Office of Educational Technology, including his  
current post as part-time Instructional Designer.

## Presentations & Performances

Hutchins, Christine. “Border Crossings and Geopolitical Integrity  
in *As You Like It*,” pre-circulated paper for “Shakespeare  
in/on the Borderlands,” a remote asynchronous seminar  
co-directed by Victoria Muñoz and Elizabeth Acosta (El  
Paso CC), for the 2020 Shakespeare Association of  
America Virtual Conference.

Rice-González, Charles. Guest lecture. “Latinx/o/a Heritage  
Month: Gender, Race, and Latinidad.” City College Latin  
and Latin@ Studies. 24 September, 2020. Invited guest  
lecture. Online synchronous presentation.

Soto-Franco, Juan. “WhatsApp with TFD, TNYT, smartphones  
and Kahoot!?: A testimonial research based on the  
usefulness of these applications in reading and writing at a  
Hostos CC developmental course.” DR-TESOL Virtual 2020  
International Convention, Santo Domingo, Dominican  
Republic, 31 July 2020, Online synchronous presentation.

**Didn't get a chance to share your recent  
news? Submit it for the Spring issue!**

## Happening this Term

### Meetings

Wednesday, October 14<sup>th</sup>: Department Meeting (Zoom)

Course-level Meetings Schedule

All Meetings at 3:30 PM via Zoom

Developmental Courses:      ENG 111 Courses:

Thurs., Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>                      Mon., Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>

Tues., Dec. 1<sup>st</sup>                              Wed., Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>

ENG 110 Courses:                      Elective Courses:

Tues., Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>                              Tues., Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>

Thurs., Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>                              Mon., Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>

### News

The next issue of *Hostos Review / Revista Hostosiana* is dedicated to CONTEMPORARY QUEER WRITING IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH IN THE AMERICAS. It's guest editors are Drs. Claudia Salazar Jiménez and Larry La Fountain-Stoke and participants: Achy Obejas, Charles Rice-González, Clara Inés Giraldo Mejía, Gabby De Cicco, Gisela Kozak, Johan Mijail, Juan Pablo Sutherland, Laura Arnés, Mariana Docampo, Odette Alonso, Raquel Gutierrez, Raquel Salas Rivera, Rigoberto Gonzalez, SaSa Testa, Susana Chavez, Urayoán Noel, Vero Ferrari and Yolanda Arroyo Pizarro. The publication held a launch via Zoom on Friday, October 2 at 5 PM.

## Implementing Supplemental Instruction (SI) tutors in online courses

### with Professor Ann Genzale



Inspired by suggestions by Prof. Buchanan and Prof. Milsom to build a "clubhouse" discussion forum into asynchronous classes as a way of building community online, I created a "Writer's Cafe," which, like the clubhouse forum, allows students to chat with one another, share study tips, and ask questions or express concerns

about the class in an informal setting. By evoking the age-old practice of writers gathering in coffeehouses to socialize and exchange ideas, I wanted to motivate students to see themselves as part of a community of writers with shared experiences. This has been especially successful in my ENG 100 class, because it has also provided a space for my SI tutor [formerly called the SIP tutor] to post advice and encouragement to the entire class, as well as an easy way for my tutor to interact with students who have specific questions about their writing or a particular assignment. While I might chime in occasionally, I try to keep my posting to a minimum so that students can take ownership of the space and hopefully see it as a way of connecting with each other over the ups and downs of the writing process while taking class remotely.

## Professor Sean Gerrity Receives Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellowship



Professor Gerrity is a 2020 recipient of the Mellon Foundation / American Council of Learned Societies' prestigious Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellowship. As per the foundation's description, the award was created with the awareness that "[c]ommunity colleges are a vital component of the higher education ecosystem and of the academic humanities in particular. To this end, the Mellon/ACLS Community College Faculty Fellowship is intended to "support the research ambitions of humanities and social science faculty who teach at two-year institutions." These fellowships are made possible by the generous support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Professor Gerrity's award-winning project, "A Canada in the South: Maroons in American Literature," examines representations of maroons—enslaved people who fled bondage and took refuge in remote places like swamps, forests, and mountains—in a wide array of mostly African American literary texts from the 1830s through the early 1860s. It seeks to understand how marronage as both discursive and material practice invites reconsiderations of commonplace notions of freedom and unfreedom as they have been tied to a section-al US geography and narratives of freedom via the Underground Railroad. In short, the project argues that literary representations of maroons offer glimpses into alternative, unexpected, radical forms of freedom in the processes of being and becoming that do not depend upon recourse by, or intervention of, official state apparatuses.

**"...literary representations of maroons offer glimpses into alternative, unexpected, radical forms of freedom in the process of being and becoming that do not depend on recourse by, or intervention of, official state apparatuses."**