



Stetson's English Department Newsletter

Third Thursdays: An Interview with Luis Maldonado

The following is a synthesis of an interview conducted by Dr. Snook with Luis Maldonado (2001, English) for a Third Thursday gathering. Third Thursdays are opportunities for English majors to learn about the career paths, struggles and successes of fellow English majors.

Currently, Luis Maldonado works as Legal Counsel in U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services for the Department of Homeland Security and is a member of Stetson's Board of Trustees.

Maldonado changed majors multiple times, from political science, to history, and then to

English. Dr. Bailey mentored him concerning the law. Winning the Anne Morris essay contest and securing a SURE grant led him to becoming an English major. His first job was as an immigration attorney, a position that involved providing legal services for domestic violence immigration cases, as well as terrorism and espionage cases. His characterization of the opportunity was, "When a door opens you walk through it." When asked "What did you take from English that helped your career?" Maldonado's response was detailed:

"Writing wasn't easy. I gave birth to every paper. The contrastive analysis associated with writing papers relates to legal cases. Judges will reject documents if fonts, word counts, and number of pages are wrong. Proofing and revising for clarity helped. Citations formatting also carried over into law.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

Comas

Milton

The Gallic Wars

Caesar

Frankenstein

Shelley

Canterbury Tales

Chaucer

**Rime of the
Ancient Mariner**

Coleridge

Emma

Austin

**Classical
Rhetoric for the
Modern Student**

Corbett

This issue of The Scribe was written collaboratively with technical writing students from ENGL 206, Fall 2018. The pictures and haiku included are intended to embody wabi-sabi aesthetics and were written by students in class; see "Talk About Talk" for more on wabi-sabi.

Persuasive writing skills matter in law. You use expository writing as a manager, and narrative writing (the cold, hard facts) when presenting a case. Public speaking - arguing before a judge or presiding over a meeting - all important in law."

The courses that Maldonado appreciated most were Shakespeare and poetry classes; he valued poetry for its concision. Comparative analysis was his favorite academic practice. On a macro level, he appreciated the "attention to detail" that the major foregrounds.

On a micro level, he felt that professors being able to write "personalized" letters of recommendation advanced his career.

Maldonado graduated from Stetson University's College of Arts and Sciences in 2001, magna cum laude. He served on Stetson's



College of Arts and Sciences Advisory Board from 2012-2017, and he was elected to the Board of Trustees in 2017.

Please join fellow students and faculty for Third Thursdays this spring semester: 7:00 pm (Student Lounge on the second floor of Flagler Hall). You can contact Dr. Snook (lsnook@stetson.edu) for more information.



WHY BECOME AN ENGLISH MAJOR?

Majoring in English is finding a place among your peers, your idols, and your thoughts to call home. —Sarah Wasser

There is no career in which you will not have writing. Being able to analyze and articulate your own thoughts into words is the most valuable asset of communication and teamwork. It is surprising how poorly some people write and holding a firm grasp of the English language puts you at the skill level above the rest. —Xavier Mulligan

Language itself serves a grand purpose: Communication. As an English major, or minor, one gains a profound understanding for articulation that will aid her the rest of her life, regardless of workplace. —Allison Spaccio

Sigma Tau Delta at Stetson

Sigma Tau Delta is a national Collegiate English Honor Society. If you have immense dedication and a passion for literature, you too can join the 9,000 inducted members since 1924. Once inducted into this prestigious organization, members can publish academic and literary works in the society's annual undergraduate journal, *Sigma Tau Delta Review*.



Stetson University's English Department guides each individual Sigma Tau Delta member



through an educational journey, filled with the totality of enlightenment that the study of English provides.

After completing their undergraduate career, (seen below, left to right) Caroline Williams, Nicole Padgett, Victoria Aldea, and Chyina Powell, proudly wear Sigma Tau Delta's vibrant red graduation stole and medallion.

This student-run organization is facilitated by the faculty advisor, Dr. Grady Ballenger. Currently, we are interested in forming a book-club, and offering an informational session for academically qualified students majoring or minoring in English studies. If you become involved, you will have the opportunity to take charge of the organization and lead current and future students toward English-centered careers.

Alexander Anthony Mates,

2018 President



English Department Faculty

Grady Ballenger, Ph.D., University of North Carolina

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/grady-ballenger.php>

Nancy Barber, M.F.A., University of Florida

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/nancy-barber.php>

Michael Barnes, Ph.D., University of South Carolina

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/michael-barnes.php>

Shawnrece Campbell, Ph.D., Kent State University

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/shawnrece-campbell.php>

Teresa Carmody, Ph.D, University of Denver

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/teresa-carmody.php>

Joel Davis, Ph.D., University of Oregon

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/joel-davis.php>

Nicole Denner, Ph.D., Northwestern University

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/nicole-denner.php>

Leigh Ann Dunning, Ph.D., M.F.A., University of Memphis

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/leigh-ann-dunning.php>

Thomas Farrell, Ph.D., University of Michigan

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/thomas-farrell.php>

Chris Jimenez, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/chris-jimenez.php>

Megan O'Neill, Ph.D., University of New Mexico

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/megan-oneill.php>

Mary Pollock, Ph.D., University of Texas

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/mary-pollock.php>

Gail Radley, M.A., Stetson University

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/gail-radley.php>

Michele Randall, M.F.A., New England College

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/michele-randall.php>

Lori Snook, Ph.D., University of Arizona

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/lori-snook.php>

Terri Witek, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

<http://www.stetson.edu/other/faculty/profiles/therese-witek.php>



Talk About Talk

John M. Thompson

Wabi-sabi is one of the most dominating principles of art and culture in Japan and China. Wabi, meaning the bitter sweetness of being alone, brings one to accept simplicity over sophistication, and in return it is believed to bring peacefulness from rejecting the materialism with which so many people in our world are obsessed. Sabi, meaning solitude, brings forth a positive outlook of nobility with aging. A perfect example of Wabi-sabi principles may come from ancient pottery that has been perfectly repaired along all its cracks, or a withering and asymmetrical building that still holds itself up after many years of existence.

When Wabi-sabi is applied to writing, the western writer is given the task of challenging his own culture's values. In replacing materialism and perfection for simplicity and imperfection, the writer must strip down his writing to the essentials, focusing just as much on what is to be interpreted from the writing as to the literal meaning of the writing. In return, the writer gives greater attention to every word used and every sentence crafted to form ideas. Writing is a reflection of personal experiences and applying them to ideas. Wabi-sabi frees the writer from the restraints our culture puts on us, and it is why the writing style can help advance the writer beyond these restraints.

Wabi-Sabi and haikus, a form of Wabi-Sabi seen in poetry, are valuable concepts to writers as they can help you understand and refine your writing style and approach. This style is simplistic at first glance, but holds a deep reflective aspect. It teaches writers that fewer words can mean more. As seen in haikus, authors can express meaningful concepts and complex ideas in seventeen words. This ability can be helpful for writers who want to cut down on unnecessary words and get straight to the point. Wabi-Sabi shows that you don't need complex sentences to explore complex ideas.

References

Jupiter, Andrew. *Wabi-sabi: The Japanese Art of Impermanence*. Boston: Tuttle, 2003.

"Wabi and Sabi: The Aesthetics of Solitude." *Tao Chien (Tao Yuan-Ming), Poet of Reclusion - Articles - House of Hermits - Hermitary*, Hermitary & Meng-Hu, 2004.

How Can I Get Better at Writing?

Here are a few strategies:

- Have someone objectively review your work (like a tutor in Stetson's Writing Center).
- Write more about anything you find interesting or that you like.
- Leave it be. Get some food or something to drink. Relax, take a nap, and come back to it another day. This will allow you to be more objective about your writing.
- Model others – it sounds uncreative to imitate, but many famous authors learned their style by copying their favorite sources. Ben Franklin, one of our most idiosyncratic authors, comes to mind.
- Read your work out loud. This will help you hear sentence-level errors and give your writing more polish and fluidity.
- Use readability statistics to determine the audience level of your writing. Is your writing tailored to your target audience's level of understanding?
- Try some heuristic techniques and/or theories of writing, like the Iceberg theory.



Technical Writing Haiku (Fall 2018)

Technical writing students tried their hands at haiku. Haiku is a short Japanese poetic form that is characterized by three qualities: a juxtaposition of two images, a seasonal element that signifies the time of year, and 17 syllables in three lines (5, 7, 5).



Sparkles fill the night.
They fly a summer's path
when the light dies out

Pesky airborne bugs
scrambling over windshields,
overjoyed with love.

The sun is up now;
nature is alive again.
Summer has come back.

Umbrellas in sand.
Sand stings feet, while sun stings skin;
The breeze gives reprieve.

Cold water on me;
my hands numb, feet frozen.
Time to go to sleep.

The sky is now empty.
The calls of birds, his gone silent.
The cold winds bring snow.

Cool, fresh evergreen,
family is together;
the candle burns out.

Finger mullet run,
schooling in green surf,
they play, till sea hawks dive down.

Withered autumn leaves
fall from incredible heights,
meeting the cold dirt.

Crisp autumn downfall,
a summer leaf wisped away,
it was cold that day.

With all of the joy
raking the autumn leaves,
sadly it will end.

Pups in a tide pool,
predatory instinct confined;
a fisher casts his line.

Hatter Network

Affiliated with *Touchstone*, Uncouth Hour is a weekly open-mic event in which Stetson University's community of artists are afforded the opportunity to share their work with others in an environment conducive to literature and the arts. Uncouth Hour is held on Thursdays at 9:30 p.m. in Allen Hall. Its sessions are open, welcoming, non-binding. Snacks and cultural credit are also provided.

The Reporter is Florida's oldest collegiate publication. Our job is to keep the Stetson University and the DeLand communities updated on news and events and to give students and faculty alike a voice. You can contact *The Reporter* at reporter@stetson.edu.

Touchstone is Stetson University's annual literary magazine; it functions as a vehicle for student expression, publishing original pieces of fine art, literature, music, digital media and performance art regardless of the author's major, class, standing or academic experience. *Touchstone* prints the best of student submissions, decided by committee; special recognition may be awarded to students whose work in their genre is deemed exceptional by the editing team.

Stetson's MFA of Americas is hosting a winter break public readings/performance series, including Samuel Delany, author of *Babel-17*.

SATURDAY / JANUARY 5, 2019 / 8-9 PM

Samuel R. Delany is an acclaimed novelist and critic who taught English and creative writing at Temple University. After winning four Nebula Awards and two Hugo Awards, he was inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2013, Delany was named the 31st Damon Knight Memorial Foundation Grand Master by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America.

Additional authors in the series include: Terri Witek, Cyriaco Lopes, Patty Yumi Cottrell, Sergio Vega, Teresa Carmody, Veronica Gonzalez Peña, Urayoán Noel, LaTasha N. Nevada Diggs, Jena Osman, Poupeh Missaghi, Pola Olaxariac.

