



DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood, BA., MA., PhD, (UWI) – Head of Department

WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT

The 2018/19 academic year was a challenging one for the department: we maintained a busy schedule of events, introduced a new Major and Minor, moved to consolidate relationships with external partners and entered a period of review and reflection on how best to transform the curriculum in order to meet the challenges of teaching and learning in the Humanities in the 21st Century. The department is now home to three BA programmes: Literatures in English, Liberal Studies and the BA Film Studies, which was offered for the first time this academic year. We also introduced this year a Minor in Creative Writing. These changes indicate a need to reflect, assess and then rebrand the department in ways that would make it more attractive to the 21st century student, as well as more accurately reflect the work we do. As part of this process the Department intends to enact a name-change and we also embarked on a curriculum review of the Liberal Studies programme, in Semester 2. As we prepare for a Quality Assurance Review in March 2020, we have also begun the process of reviewing the BA Literatures in English. Amidst all this, the Department maintained a hectic calendar of activities aimed at students, the University community and the wider public. We recognize the need to maintain a vibrant public profile in order to bring attention to our programmes, as well as the contribution of the department, and more broadly the University, to the social and cultural life and development of the society in which we reside.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Ms Carolyn Allen, Ms Amba Chevannes, Mr Carlton Lowrie and Mrs Tanya Shirley Johnstone were appointed as Adjunct Staff during the academic year. Dr Anthea Morrison retired in September 2018 after 32 years of service to the UWI and was retained on a part-time basis.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The BA Film Studies was introduced in September 2018; nineteen students accepted offers for this multidisciplinary programme, which is coordinated by Dr Connor Ryan. The programme is designed to develop students' advanced visual literacy and equip them to compete in an increasingly visual world. Two new courses were introduced in the academic year: Introduction to Creative Writing (LITS1009) and Creative Non-Fiction and Digital Media (LITS3604). These new courses allowed the Department to fulfil the long-held goal of introducing the Minor in Creative Writing. The Graphic Novel (LITS2120) was approved and was scheduled to be offered for the first time in the 2019–20 academic year.

POSTGRADUATE STUDENT MATTERS

Mr. Tohru Nakamura was selected for the 2018/2019 Departmental Award along with Ms Whitney Eaton who, however was reassigned as Research Assistant to the HoD in Semester 2, following the resignation of Ms Francina Cousins, who received a UWI Scholarship.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT MATTERS

At the **Annual Faculty Awards Ceremony** on November 8 the Department presented awards to the following students: Kodi-Anne Brown, Stacy-Lee Fowler, Yashika Graham, Nysie Bennett, Kheilleigh-Ann Gray, Kimberlyn Johnson, Georgio Russell, Justine-Marie Williams and Kyle Williams. The Department provided social and academic support to undergraduates with its **Annual First Year Social** for Majors and Minors on September 20 in the Library Multifunctional Room. Each first-year student in the department was assigned an Academic Advisor from among the teaching staff. For continuing students, the Department held a **Mentorship & Career Session** on Thursday, November 29. Ms Kimberly Bell, LIE graduate, and now Programme Manager, Heart Trust/NTA and Ms Clement Henry, Administrative Assistant, Placement and Careers Services, were the presenters.

SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES & OUTREACH

The Department made a strong showing at the **37th Annual West Indian Literature Conference**, “Global Caribbean Studies: ‘Scapes’”, at the University of Miami, Coral Gables, October 4–6, 2018. Dr Isis Semaj-Hall and Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood presented papers. Dr Moseley-Wood also participated in the planning meeting to discuss the 2019 conference to be held in Guyana. Dr Michael Bucknor chaired the panel, “Staging the Self and the Body” and attended both the Business Meeting of the conference and the *Journal of West Indian Literature* Board Meeting, as Senior Editor.

The eminent Caribbean academic, Professor Rhonda Cobham-Sander delivered the **12th Edward Baugh Distinguished Lecture** on November 26, 2018 at the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts. Dr Cobham-Sander is the Emily C. Jordan Folger Professor of English and Black Studies and Chair of the English Department at Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts. She spoke on the topic, “Rero(o/u)ting the Rhizome: Representing Relationships in Caribbean Literature”

The Department hosted the **International Auto/ Biography Association (IABA) Americas Chapter 4th Biennial Conference** June 13–15, 2019 in the FHE, organised and co-convened by **Ms Lisa Brown** and **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood**. More than 40 scholars attended and presented papers in the field of autobiography and life-writing, exploring how lives are represented in various modes whether digital, graphic or scribal.

Events

During the 2018–19 academic year the Department organised many events that functioned as outreach efforts to the wider community as well as provided welcome support to teaching and learning. On September 18 at the Library Multifunctional Room we screened the documentary, *Back to Natural* and hosted a presentation by the Director, Dr Gillian Scott-Ward. The event was chaired and organised by **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood**. A reading featuring recipients of Code’s Burt Literary Awards for Young Adult Literature, dubbed “4 Writers 1 Night”, was co-hosted by the Department, the School of Education, Blouse & Skirt Books, Code, and the Jamaica Library Service on October 24, 2018 in the Library Multifunctional Room. The readers were A-dZiko Simba Gegele, Colleen Smith-Dennis, Viviana Prado-Nunez, and Kevin Jared Hosein. The **Jamaican Poets School and College Tour 2018** was hosted by the Department on November 5 at the Library Multifunctional Room and featured poets Tomlin Ellis, Howard Hendricks, Cherry Natural, Judith Falloon-Reid, Malachi Smith, Dr Sue, Ras Takura, Antonia Valarie and Wise Wurds. The Department collaborated with CARIMAC, the Jamaican Film and Television Producers Association (JAFTA) and the Nigerian High Commission to screen the film, *Dazzling Mirage* by Nigerian filmmaker, Mr. Tunde Kelani, on December 1 in the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre. The screening was followed by a panel discussion, led by **Dr Connor Ryan**, with Nigerian filmmakers and members of the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board delegation of Nollywood stakeholders. SALISES invited the Department and the Department of Sociology, Psychology and Social Work to collaborate on the hosting of a seminar with Dr Huwa Mahdi entitled “Fanon Revisited: Race, Gender and Coloniality” on December 12 in the SALISES Conference Room. The Department was pleased to host a reading and conversation with DLIE graduate and award-winning poet, Dr Ishion Hutchinson, author of *Far District* (Peepal Tree Press, 2010) and *House of Lords and Commons* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016) on December 13.

Dr Isis Semaj-Hall led the conversation with Dr Hutchinson and coordinated the Q&A which followed. From poets to movie stars – on January 22, DLIE in collaboration with CARIMAC and Best Ever Film Production Company, hosted the Caribbean Movie Forum at the Library Multifunctional Room. Stars of the Bahamian film, *Cargo* (2017): Jimmy Jean-Louis and Sky Nicole Grey, along with Director, Kareem Mortimer and Producer, Alexander Younis, participated in a discussion panel and Q&A. The event preceded the premiere of the film at Carib 5.

The Faculty's signature event for The UWI Research Days, *Poetry Clash*, was successfully staged on February 7, 2019. Yashika Graham, Kimone Edwards and Raquel Simpson won 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize respectively. Ms Graham also won the competition in 2018. The department was invited by CARIMAC to collaborate in the hosting of the Peter Abrahams Centenary Symposium: "Celebrating Peter Abrahams 100: Milestones in Literatures, Media and Political Writing" on March 5 in the Library Multifunctional Room. **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood** chaired the panel "Peter Abrahams: Literary and Political Heritage". **Dr Isis Semaj-Hall** organised and chaired the annual *Reggae Talks* on February 14 which featured a panel discussion with Protoje, Lila Ike, Claire Osman, Yannick Reid and the InDiggNation Collective. The discussion concluded with a lively Q & A segment. The Department honored recently retired colleague, Dr Anthea Morrison, on May 2 at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre (N1). Dr Morrison's 32 years of service to the UWI was celebrated in the form of tributes from colleagues, students, administrative staff and others. The Department partnered with the Gloria Lyn Memorial Fund (GLMF) and Two Seasons Guest House to present The Two Seasons Talking Trees Literary Fiesta on May 25 in Treasure Beach. The theme was, *Literature: Yesterday, today and tomorrow*. The programme featured a number of the Department's students.

Workshops

The Department hosted a successful Creative Writing Workshop in Poetry, presented by Professor Shara McCallum, Liberal Arts Professor of English at Penn State University, on February 28 at the Library Multifunctional Room. Certificates of Participation were issued at the end of the Workshop.

Book Launches

The Department hosted the launch of *Hard Gal Fi Dead: Musings, Poems, Notes to Self* by LIE graduate, Ms Tameka Coley, who goes by the pseudonym, Tami Tsansai. It was held on February 4 at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre. The launch speaker was **Dr Michael Bucknor**. The Department also gave support to the February 28 launch of *Through the Valley*, a memoir written by one of its First Class Honours graduates, Mrs Michelle Ashwood-Stewart. **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood** brought greeting from

the department at the launch and the department assisted in promoting the event. Richard “Dingo” Dingwall’s collection of poems, *A Window To Let The Light Out*, was launched on, March 10, 2019 at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre. The launch speaker was Ms Yashika Graham, a Literatures in English major.

March Is Literatures in English Month

On March 3, the Department staged “Love Affair with Literature 8” at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre. The event featured poetry and prose readings by Dr Shara McCallum, Professor of English at Penn State University and author of five books of poetry; Mr Richard “Dingo” Dingwall, an accomplished performance poet; Professor Erna Brodber, a recent recipient of the Windham–Campbell Literature Prize and the author of five novels; the well-known comedian and author, Mr Owen “Blakka” Ellis; and author, Ms A-dZiko Simba Gegele.

March is Movie Month at Mona

The Department hosted two screenings as part of its annual “March Is Movie Month at Mona” series. On March 8, 2019 the department showed *Four Days in May: Kingston 2010*, followed by a conversation with the filmmaker, Deborah A. Thomas, Professor of Anthropology at University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Anthony Harriott, Director for the Institute of Criminal Justice and Security and Tivoli Gardens community members. The session was chaired and organised by **Dr Connor Ryan**. On March 15th, Mr. Khalik Allah presented his film, *Black Mother*, followed by a lively Q&A session on the provocative film. The event was co-sponsored by Sharine Taylor of *Bashy Magazine* with support from the Dean’s Office, and was organised and chaired by **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood**.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS AND OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS

Members of the department participated in the UWT’s outreach programme to high schools: **Dr Anthea Morrison** visited St. Andrew High School on September 18, while **Dr Connor Ryan** visited Hillel Academy on October 23. **Dr Michael Bucknor** presented a CAPE Literatures in English Workshop for 6th Form students at Western Jamaica Campus on January 24, 2019. **Ms Lisa R. Brown** visited CAPE Literatures in English students at Excelsior High School on March 13, 2019. The Department held its annual **CAPE Lecture/Discussion Series** on April 5 and April 12 at the Old Library. Three Hundred and Seventy Two (372) students and 61 teachers from 32 schools were in attendance. Schools were represented across the three (3) counties. The presenters were **Dr Michael Bucknor**, organizer of the series, **Dr Jennifer Brittan**, **Ms Lisa Brown**, **Dr Norval Edwards**, **Dr Isis Semaj-Hall**, **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood**

and **Dr Connor Ryan**. Mr Clement Lambert, Ms Carolyn Allen, Ms Caprece McCleary and Ms Celia Webster were guest presenters.

STAFF/POSTGRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES

Ms Keilah Mills successfully presented her MPhil Upgrade seminar on Friday, November 16 in the Faculty Conference Room. Her paper was titled, “Unearthing Exilic Identities: The Politics and Poetics of Place in Select Caribbean and African-American Fiction”. Dr Leah Rosenberg, Associate Professor and University Term Professor, University of Florida, Gainesville presented a paper titled “The Easiest Place in the World to Sell: Tourism and the Making of National Culture in the Caribbean” on January 25 in N3. **Mr. Tohru Nakamura**, PhD candidate, presented a paper titled “Being with the Dead: Nihilism, Resistance, Body Politics and Being in Wilson Harris’s *The Four Banks of the River of Space*” on May 10 in N3.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS & LINKS WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES

Dr Isis Semaj-Hall chaired the Kingston Creative Meetup panel discussion titled “Jamaican Literature – the role of writers in modern Jamaica” on April 26 at the Kingston waterfront. **Dr Semaj-Hall** also chaired a panel discussion titled “Goodas fi Dem: Sexuality and Gender Identity in the Dancehall” in the Institute of Jamaica Groundation seminar series on February 3 at the Institute of Jamaica. **Dr Michael Bucknor** gave a keynote address at the Australian Association for Caribbean Studies Conference, *Caribbean Meridians*, at Western Sydney University, in Australia on February 7. The lecture was entitled, “Diasporic Intimacies: Caribbean Meridians and Literary Histories.” Dr Michael Bucknor presented a seminar by Skype on “Weeds and Waste in Caribbean Poetry” as part of the University of Leicester Global Studies programme International Summer School for graduate students, held in Leicester in June 2019. The summer school was a result of an institutional partnership between UWI and University of Leicester, an initiative that is being led at UWI by Dr Bucknor and Dr Sonjah Stanley Niaah. UWI Mona is expected to host the second Graduate Seminar in 2020 with students attending from the University of Leicester and other UWI campuses joining us here. An agreement between the Department and the **University of Salzburg** in Austria facilitating an Exchange Programme for both staff and students with funding from the Erasmus Institute, was finalised in Semester 1. Dr Michael Bucknor is the local coordinator of the project which is expected to begin in the coming academic year. **Dr Isis Semaj-Hall** collaborated with Professor Merle Collins of the Department of English Language and Literature at the **University of Maryland**, to link classrooms in order to jointly teach a course in Semester 2, 2019. The course taught at Mona was “Literature and Ideas in the Caribbean” while “Caribbean Literature: Literature and Ideas in the Caribbean” was

offered at Maryland. Classes at the two sites were linked once per week using teleconference technology, facilitating exchanges between lecturers and students across the two locations.

STAFF MATTERS

Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood assumed duties as Head of Department w.e.f. August 1, 2018.

Ms Lisa Brown was named an official nominee for the 2018 UWI Guardian Life Premium Teaching Award. In the letter sent to inform her of the award, it was stated that the judges were impressed with her teaching accomplishments and had recommended that Ms Brown be recognized as an exceptionally outstanding nominee.

Congratulations

The Department congratulated **Professor Emeritus Mervyn Morris** on being awarded the Musgrave Gold medal at the Annual Musgrave Medals Ceremony on October 10 at the Institute of Jamaica. The Department also congratulated **Professor Carolyn Cooper** on receiving the Emerita status w.e.f. February 2019. The Department extended heartiest congratulations to two of its graduates, Professors Kwame Dawes and Ishion Hutchinson, on each receiving the 2019 Windham-Campbell Prize (Poetry), valued at US\$165,000 and offered through Yale University.

CONFERENCE PAPERS PRESENTED

Dr Isis Semaj-Hall presented a paper titled “Manscapes: Grooming New Jamaican Iconography” at the 37th West Indian Literature Conference, University of Miami, Oct 4-6. **Dr Semaj-Hall** also presented a paper titled “Jane Irie Is Her Avatar: Uploading Brontë and Rhys in the Digital Age of Jamaica” at the Caribbean Digital Conference in Trinidad, December 4–6, 2019. **Dr Rachel Moseley-Wood** presented a paper titled “A University of the People?: Visual Education in the British West Indies” at the 37th West Indian Literature Conference, University of Miami, Oct 4–6. At the invitation of the Department of English at SUNY Geneseo, **Dr Connor Ryan** delivered a talk entitled “Dreams, Jobs, and Dream Jobs: Work in Nigerian Literature and Film”.

PUBLICATIONS

Dr Michael A. Bucknor

- “That Body Always Just a Skin Away”: Brotherly Love and the Intimacies of Men in David Chariandy’s *Brother*; *s/x salon* 30, February 2019.

- “Horizons of Desire in Caribbean Queer Speculative Fiction: Marlon James’s *John Crow’s Devil*”, in *Madness in Anglophone Caribbean Literature: On the Edge*. Eds. Bénédicte Ledent, Evelyn O’Callaghan and Daria Tunca. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- “Authorial Self-fashioning, Political Denials and Artistic Distinctiveness: The Queer Poetics of Marlon James,” (co-authored with Kezia Page). Special Issue on Marlon James of the *Journal of West Indian Literature* Volume 26 Number 2, November 2018. I–xiii. Dr Bucknor and Dr Page were guest co-editors of this issue of *JWIL*.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Dr Jennifer Brittan

- Served as a reviewer for the journal *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* – *LACES*.

Dr Michael A. Bucknor

- Judge of two of the newly inaugurated Poet Laureate Prizes: The Edward Baugh Poetry Prize and the Louise Bennett Poetry Prize. Judging took place on January 8 and 11, 2019.
- Chief Adjudicator in Round 1 of the “Talk di Poem” Finals organized by the School of Education, on April 9, 2019 at the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts.
- Senior Editor, *Journal of West Indian Literature* (Regional Refereed Publication) (2004–present)
- Editorial Board Member, *Caribbean Quarterly* (Regional Refereed Publication) (2010–present)
- Member, Board of Readers, *Issues in Critical Investigation*, Vanderbilt University, USA. (2010–present)
- Senior Editorial Advisor, *Lucayos*, College of the Bahamas. (Regional Refereed Publication) (2011–present)
- Actor Boy Judge
- Member of the Poet Laureate Committee, National Library of Jamaica
- Member of the Musgrave Medals Selection Sub-Committee – Literature

Dr Norval Edwards

- Review Editor, Northern Caribbean University’s peer-reviewed journal, *International Review of Humanities*
- Member, Advisory Board, *Issues in Critical Investigation*, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee.

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS

Undergraduate:

LIE Majors (29)

Liberal Studies Majors (29)

Film Studies (19)

Postgraduate:

PhD (3)

MPhil (7)

MA (5)