Welcome to the English Major!

This handbook is intended to help you navigate the Belmont University Department of English, providing information about who we are, what major and minor courses of study we offer, and what resources and opportunities are available to you as an English major at Belmont (and how to take advantage of them). That said, this is an unofficial document produced by the Department for informational purposes only—for official university policies and other information, see the Belmont University Undergraduate Catalog.

Reading and writing are acts of love and of survival, pursued for the sheer pleasure of creativity and imagination and for the human need to communicate. As an English major, you will be called to explore the written word: the means by which we know our past, understand our present, and envision our future. Your courses on all levels will foster the skills of critical, historical, and empathetic reading, focusing on texts from British, American, and World traditions. You’ll engage in and reflect on all facets of the English language and the writing process, discovering how language and writing shape identity and inform culture. Whether creating texts of your own or reading texts composed by others, you’ll be challenged and encouraged to examine your life and to appreciate the variety of human experience.
English is also one of the most flexible and practical degrees you can pursue in college. By taking advantage of the extra-curricular activities, internships, and connections you can make through the English Department, you can acquire the skills and experiences you need to join our recent alumni in the fields of publishing, marketing, media, education, grant writing and other work for non-profits; you may also join our alumni pursuing professional education in law, business, medicine, and graduate study in English. You will find that the Belmont University English Department can help you define, refine, and ultimately achieve the goals you develop as an English major.
Faculty

Sarah Blomeley (Ph.D., Miami University) is an Associate Professor of English. Her teaching and research interests include composition, rhetorical history, women’s rhetoric, literacy studies, and rhetorics of popular culture.

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Wyeth Burgess (Ph.D., Emory University) is Instructor of English. She teaches writing and literature courses, particularly First-Year and Third-Year Writing, interdisciplinary courses linked with biology and religion, and World Literature. Dr. Burgess’s interests which inform her classes include levels of community both visible and invisible, actual and mythic, from the classroom to literature, faith, regional identity and fandom. She is also passionate about outdoor education for young people and works as a summer camp counselor on the Cumberland Plateau.

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Cynthia Cox (Ph.D., The Ohio State University) is an Associate Professor of English. She teaches courses in Composition and in Folklore at the introductory, intermediate, advanced, and graduate levels. In the field of folklore, Dr. Cox is also interested in fairy tales, urban legends, and ethnography. Her recent work in the field of writing now focuses on creative nonfiction, on blogging, and on the analysis of popular culture. She teaches courses on children's literature and on business writing, and she can tell you anything you want to know about Bruce Springsteen. Dr. Cox also coordinates internships for the English Department and is the faculty sponsor for Sigma Tau Delta.

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David E. Curtis (Ph.D., University of Tennessee-Knoxville) is Professor of English and Associate Dean for Faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences. Since coming to Belmont, Dr. Curtis has taught numerous undergraduate and graduate courses in Early American Literature, African American Literature, Twentieth Century U. S. Drama, Critical Theory, and Composition, including many online classes. As a professor, Dr. Curtis is interested in the ways new technologies intersect with scholarship, critical theory, and pedagogical practice.
Victoria Doner (M.A., University of Iowa) is an Instructor of English. She teaches First-Year Writing and Third-Year Writing. Her background includes writing for a variety of business and international retail publications. The winner of the 2012-2013 Bruins’ Choice SAAC Faculty Inspiration Award, Ms. Doner encourages her students to “wing walk”—to take risks with their writing—and to find their place in the world through the magic, the power, the beauty, and the fun of words.

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Susan Finch (Ph.D., Florida State University) is an Assistant Professor of English. She specializes in Creative Writing with an emphasis in fiction. She writes both fiction and nonfiction, and her work has appeared in Carve, The Louisville Review, PANK Magazine, The Portland Review, among others. Her research interests include the novel, the short story, creative nonfiction, and children’s literature.

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Charmion Gustke (Ph.D., George Washington University) is an Instructor of English whose courses focus on the interdisciplinary practices of writing, reading, and community action. Her scholarly interests include the intersection of postcolonial theory and American literature, Empire Studies (particularly South African Literature), and the work, both fiction and nonfiction, of Willa Cather, on which Dr. Gustke has published articles. She is the acting secretary for the Dismas Board of Directors and sponsors the Belmont Community Garden in her continued support of local sustainable food practices.

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Amy Hodges Hamilton (Ph.D., Florida State University) is an Associate Professor of English at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. Amy's research and teaching interests center on personal writing, feminist theory, and healing and the arts. She has served on panels as a specialist in writing and healing, including presentations at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and a Healing and the Arts panel at Florida State University's Seven Days of Opening Nights. She co-authored her first essay on the subject of loss and trauma with her mentor Wendy Bishop in Trauma and the Teaching of Writing (NYU Press, 2005). She also served as the
founding director of Vanderbilt University's Writing Studio in 2005-2006 and continues to support writing programs both inside and outside the academy.

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Linda E. Holt (Ph.D., University of Louisville) is an Associate Professor of English and Chair of the Department of English. Dr. Holt has taught at Belmont since 1990, and her academic interests include rhetoric and composition studies, service-learning, student-centered pedagogies, and writing as cultural practice. While she most often teaches composition classes, she has also taught American Literature, creative writing, and The Art of the Essay, and she recently accompanied students to Ireland for a travel writing class.

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Caresse John (Ph.D., Northern Illinois University) is an Associate Professor of English who teaches American Literature, Composition, and Gender Studies. She is also interested in Modernist poetry and contemporary British women writers, particularly A.S. Byatt.
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**Jason Lovvorn** (Ph.D., Vanderbilt) is an Assistant Professor of English. His writing classes at Belmont often address issues of literacy, culture, technology, and nature. In addition, many of his classes involve a commitment to service learning in the Nashville community. His academic interests include composition and rhetoric studies, New Literacies, spatial theory, and new media, and he has published scholarly work on topics such as literacy history, online gaming, digital storytelling, and service-learning narratives.

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**Marcia A. McDonald** (Ph.D., Vanderbilt) is a Professor of English, specializing in Shakespeare and early modern drama. She has published on Shakespeare, on the humanities curriculum, and on English studies, and has been a lecturer at universities in France and China. Her teaching areas include Shakespeare, First Year Seminar, Classical Literature, composition, and interdisciplinary humanities. Research areas include Shakespeare and cultural studies, higher education, and eastern – western interactions in
Asia. She has traveled to China, France, England, and Israel, Turkey, and Greece with Belmont students and looks forward to future study abroad programs.

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Gary L. McDowell (Ph.D., Western Michigan University) is an Assistant Professor of English. He specializes in Creative Writing and contemporary American poetics. His research interests include the prose poem, the poetry of Charles Wright, and creative writing pedagogy. His secondary teaching interests include freshmen composition, memoir, and the lyric essay. He is the author of four volumes of poetry: Weeping at a Stranger’s Funeral (Dream Horse Press, 2014); American Amen (Dream Horse Press, 2010), winner of the 2009 Orphic Prize for poetry; They Speak of Fruit (Cooper Dillon, 2009); and The Blueprint (Pudding House, 2005). He's also the co-editor of the best-selling anthology, The Rose Metal Press Field Guide to Prose Poetry: Contemporary Poets in Discussion and Practice (Rose Metal Press, 2010).

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Maggie Monteverde (Ph.D., The Ohio State University) is a Professor of English. A recent winner of the Presidential Faculty Achievement Award, Dr. Monteverde teaches Medieval Literature and History of the English Language, among many other general education courses, including, on occasion, ones on Travel Writing and Science Fiction.

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Douglas Murray (Ph.D, University of North Carolina) is a Professor of English. He gravitates toward British rather than American literature and feels most at home with works of the 17th-early 20th centuries. His favorite novelist is Jane Austen, whose works he has helped edit for the Oxford University Press. Favorite poets include Pope, Blake, Milton, and Hopkins. His missions include teaching readers to feel poetry in their bones and to expand their reading beyond works penned in the last 15 minutes. He teaches Understanding Literary Language, Surveys of British Literature on the undergraduate and graduate level; and advanced courses on the 18th century and the British novel. He is also a musician and was semi-finalist and finalist in the American Guild of Organists National Competition in Improvisation in 2012. His specialties include improvisation in the French style.
and all music associated with the Church of England. In the summer of 2013 Dr. Murray taught a course in Downton Abbey through CCSA and was featured speaker at the Jane Austen Summer Program (UNC-CH), at Literary London (University of London), and at the International Gothic Association.

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Joel Overall (Ph.D., Texas Christian University) is an Assistant Professor of English. His teaching and research interests include rhetorical theory, composition, multimodal rhetoric, new media, Kenneth Burke studies, and the rhetoric of music.

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John H. E. Paine (Ph.D., Comparative Literature, Emory University) is Professor of Literature. His areas of interest and research are European, American, and Asian fiction, and literary theory and criticism. He has taught German and Humanities at Emory University, French at Georgia Tech, English and American Studies at the Universität Regensburg, and American Literature and Culture as a Fulbright Fellow in Angers, France. He has
also studied contemporary trends in literary criticism and Philosophy, the literature of the South, Homer and the Oral Epic, and Chinese and Japanese Culture and Literature during numerous faculty development seminars and workshops.

At Belmont, Dr. Paine has recently taught French civilization, grammar, and translation, as well as undergraduate and graduate courses in World Literature, World Novel, ExileHomeMemory in World Literature, World Story, and Japanese Literature and Culture. He is North American Editor of *Journal of the Short Story in English* and Editor of *Japan Studies Association Journal* and the *Belmont Humanities Symposium Journal*. He currently directs or co-directs study-abroad trips to Angers and Paris, and to Geneva, where he teaches the Maymester Junior Cornerstone course “Geneva under the Gaze of Mont Blanc.”

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**Robbie Clifton Pinter** (Ed.D. English, Vanderbilt University) is a Professor of English. She has taught at Belmont since 1984, and her academic interests include Rhetoric and composition, with a specialty in life writing and reflective learning that includes courses such as The Journal as Genre, Writing and Autobiography, Spirituality and Writing, Writing
and Place, and Memoir. She also enjoys teaching writing that is embedded in community and social change, such as Writing and Social Change, Environmental Writing, and Writing as Art and Agency. She incorporates service learning and other experiential pedagogies into her classes to give students experience with writing as social change as well as reflective learning. She publishes about life writing in the *JAEPL*, and she enjoys writing outside of academia in various media. In 2004, she published *For This Child I Prayed*, a memoir that tells the story of open adoption. Dr. Pinter has co-led Study Abroad trips to Turkey since 2010 in which she teaches various classes on Turkish literature and Writing related to Turkish authors and travel.

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**Annette Sisson** (Ph.D., Indiana University) is a Professor of English and Director of the Graduate Program. She specializes in Victorian Literature, but has taught many other courses, including 20th-Century Poetry, The Novel, Theory of Autobiography, Literary Theory, Literature and the Stage, Women's Literature, First-Year Seminar, Third-Year Writing, Understanding Literary Language, Senior Seminar in English Studies, and British Literature survey courses. She also teaches
Nature writers such as Mary Oliver, Wendell Berry, Barbara Kingsolver, Annie Dillard, etc. and enjoys teaching Study Abroad courses and using other experiential learning pedagogies (including but not limited to Service Learning) in her classes. For eight years she was the Director of General Education at Belmont and has also been heavily involved in the Faculty Senate.

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Andrea Stover (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst) is a Professor of English and Director of Writing. Her extensive work in autobiography, memoir, and diary studies draws upon interests and concerns in both literature and composition. She has taught courses in composition such as: Storying: the American Experience: A Study in Writing and Genre, Life Writing and the Construction of the Self, Creative Non-fiction, and The Art of the Essay. On the graduate level she has taught Women's Writing, Writing the Unspeakable in Gothic Literature, and Practical Literary Criticism.

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Sue Trout (M.A., University of South Carolina) is an Assistant Professor of English. She teaches American Literature, especially Southern Literature, Critical Reading and Writing, Junior Seminar, and composition. She is the faculty sponsor of the English Club.

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Bonnie Smith Whitehouse (Ph.D., University of Wisconsin) is an Associate Professor of English. As a teacher and scholar of writing and literature, she engages her students with questions about how reading and writing influence memory, narrative, identity, economy, politics, and the natural world. As a citizen, she has a special interest in educational access and equity, an interest which has led her to integrate service-learning into several of her classes. She has written about ways so-called common readers report reading popular novels have "changed" their lives in the context of mass literacy movements.

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Jayme Yeo (Ph.D, Rice University) is an Assistant Professor of English. She researches Renaissance devotional poetry, nationalism, and civil unrest, and also works in gender studies and early travel narratives. Her research has inspired service-learning courses that pair poetry with activism, and she has also taught courses in Shakespeare, film, and modern British literature. Her writing courses often ask students to analyze culture through literary metaphors, including one that investigates monsters as figures of cultural anxiety and desire. Her work has appeared in Intersections: Yearbook for Early Modern Studies and Literature and Theology.

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Description of the Program

General Education and Honors

English majors will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree. Most students will complete the Bell Core General Education program, with required hours in Written Communication, Oral Communication, Fine Arts, Religion, Foreign Language, Science, Social Science, Mathematics, Wellness, and Humanities. One of your three Humanities courses must be ENG 1050, Understanding Literary Language.

If you are in the Honors Program, your B.A. requirements are different, but you are still required to complete ENG 1050 and the foreign language requirement.

The English major is a 34-36 hour major consisting of core and elective courses.

The Common Core

All English majors must take:
ENG 1050 (preferably in your first semester)
ENG 2000 Critical Reading and Writing
ENW 2430 (Creative Writing) OR ENW 2510 (Art of Essay)
ENG 3000 Junior Seminar
ENG 3960 Internship
ENG 4900 Senior Seminar
Six hours of literature surveys
The Emphases

In addition to those courses, by no later than your junior year, you’ll choose an emphasis either in literature or in writing. While the literature emphasis includes more literary history and theory, and the writing emphasis includes more writing theory and practice, you’re encouraged as an English major to take courses within each emphasis. Below is a comparison of the two tracks—for details, see the catalog.

**Literature Emphasis**

- ENL 3800 Special Topics in World Literature
- One from: ENL 3540, 3620, 4350, 4360, 4370
- One 3000-level ENW course
- Nine additional hours of electives at the 3000-4000 level (3 of which can be ENW)

**Writing Emphasis**

- ENW 3020, Theories of Writing
- One from the following: ENL 3540, 3620, 4350, 4360, 4370
- One ENL elective NOT from 3540, 3620, 4350, 4360, 4370
- 9 hours of ENW electives
Choosing a Minor

One reason to take a wide variety of required general education courses and electives outside the English Department is to help choose a minor that will complement your English major. You must declare a minor by your senior year. If you are an English major with a Writing emphasis, you may minor in Literature and vice versa, but other popular minors include Education, Foreign Language, Philosophy, Sociology, Design Communications, and International Business; for a complete listing check the *Belmont Undergraduate Catalog*.

Advising

When you become an English major, you’ll choose or be assigned an advisor, with whom you’ll meet at least twice a year to discuss your academic program of study. Your advisor is someone who can help you make sure you are meeting all the requirements for graduation and having the best academic experience possible at Belmont, and your advisor can help guide you to courses, programs, and other experiences that can enhance your preparation for life after Belmont. While your advisor will help you create a schedule, assist you in long-range planning, and help you keep track of your academic progress, *the ultimate responsibility for your academic*
program rests with you. Become familiar with Degreeworks and check it often to make sure all listings are accurate. If you find mistakes (and they do happen) be sure to consult with your advisor. Make sure you’re doing your own preparation by reading around in the Belmont University Catalog, talking to other majors and professors, reviewing the next semester’s course offerings (descriptions are published before advising begins), reading the *BU English* blog and reading the blast emails sent out by the Department announcing new courses and internship and employment opportunities.

**Internships**

An internship experience is required for all English majors. Internships help you discover what kinds of work you might like to do (and what kinds you definitely do not want to do!) while providing you with experience you can put on your resumé. These experiences can range from on-campus opportunities to working for local businesses and non-profits; competitive summer internships in New York (among many others) and internships abroad are also possibilities.

ENG 3000, the Junior Seminar in English, is designed to make you aware of many potential internship opportunities. Read the blast emails sent to you from the Department along with the *BU*
English blog to learn about others. You may also arrange your own internship.

In order to receive credit for your internship you must consult with the Internship Coordinator, Dr. Cynthia Cox, *before* your internship begins.
Study Abroad

The English Department strongly encourages you to consider some kind of study-abroad experience during your time at Belmont. Belmont offers faculty-led study tours in England, Ireland, Australia, South Africa, Japan, and Hong Kong, and many other destinations. Our students have also done semesters, mini-terms, and internships in Europe, Asia, and Australia. Please see Dr. Maggie Monteverde or Dr. John H. E. Paine for more information.

Fulbright

Student Fulbright grants are available to newly graduated B. A. recipients in a wide variety of countries around the world. A rigorous application process is conducted during the first half of fall semester for graduating seniors. See your English major advisor or Dr. John H. E. Paine, Fulbright Campus Adviser, for details.

Belmont Writing Fellows

We hope you will become interested in the Belmont Writing Fellows Program, which is open to the entire campus but of special interest to those who care about reading and writing. The Writing Fellows Program is founded on the philosophy that writers benefit by sharing their work-in-progress
and revising based on constructive feedback. Think of Writing Fellows as trained ambassadors from the Writing Center to students and faculty members across campus. Every fall, ten Writing Fellows will be assigned to First Year Seminar courses in which they will work closely with professors and student writers. For more information, please contact Dr. Sarah Bowles.

Departmental Awards

Each spring, the English Department recognizes the excellent work of our majors through various awards (described below). Our students also compete for campus-wide awards and participate in the Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Carl J. Chaney Award

The student receiving this award must have a grade-point average of at least 3.5; must show concrete evidence of broad interests in varied fields of study; must exhibit in his everyday life appreciation for integrity, refinement, enthusiasm, and a superior quality of life; and must show every promise that in his future life he will continue to be a credit to himself, to his school, to his profession, and to his community. This student receives a $100 award.
Virginia M. Chaney Award

The student receiving this award must have a declared major in English and a grade-point average of at least 3.5; must show concrete evidence of broad interests in varied fields of study; must exhibit in her everyday life appreciation for integrity, refinement, enthusiasm, and a superior quality of life; and must show every promise that in her future life she will continue to be a credit to herself, to her school, to her profession, and to her community. This student receives a $100 award. (May be awarded to a language major if there is no eligible or deserving English major).

Ruby Treadway Creative Writing Award

This award was established on the occasion of Mrs. Treadway’s retirement after twenty-nine years of full-time teaching in the Literature, Language, and Communication Arts Departments. Because of her distinguished service to this institution and her contribution to religious journalism, it is our privilege to give this award to an outstanding student in creative writing. This student receives a $50 award.
James and Sara King Writing Award

Each year department members will nominate students who have submitted outstanding papers in response to a class assignment. A departmental subcommittee will select three to be submitted to the university wide Alfred Crabb Awards Committee for consideration for one of its prizes. Each of these will receive a $50 award.

The Corinne Dale Award for Achievement in Writing About Gender

This award, established in honor of Professor Emerita Dr. Corinne Dale, who for many years taught among other things courses on Women’s Literature, is awarded annually for an excellent piece of writing produced for an English class on a topic relevant to Women’s Studies or Gender Studies. The winner is awarded $50.00.

University Awards

The Marie Williams Murray and Walter Bassett Murray, Jr., Freshman Writing Awards

To honor their parents, Beth Murray Walker of the Belmont University Literature and Language Department faculty and Mary Lee McNiel Murray have established the Marie Williams Murray and
Walter Bassett Murray, Jr., Freshman Writing Awards. The two awards are open to all English 1010 students. The papers are chosen by a writing faculty committee on the basis of excellence of idea, content, and technical precision. Both awards may be given, or one, or none, at the discretion of the committee. Winners receive a $100.00 award.

Alfred Leland Crabb Award

The Alfred Leland Crabb Award is given each year to any two students of Belmont University whose writing ranks first and second in response to an assignment in any field in an established subject in the established curriculum of the university. First place award recipient receives $200.00; second place award recipient receives $150.00.

Directed Study

Directed independent study is available in very rare cases only and must have prior approval of the Chair of the English Department, Dr. Linda E. Holt.
Documentation

Unless otherwise instructed, documentation in all courses in the English Department follows current Modern Language Association (MLA) format.

Campus Resources

The Writing Center

The Belmont University Writing Center, located in the WAC Learning Center, is a place for all writers (not simply for writers who are having trouble). We have found that some of our best and brightest majors use the center regularly to get ideas for an essay or to talk through a draft with one of our many highly-trained tutors. We encourage you to use the Writing Center throughout your Belmont career!

The Writing Center offers free 30-minute sessions for anyone seeking advice or help with writing. We are happy to assist writers at any stage of the writing process—from generating ideas, to pre-writing, to polishing their manuscripts. Writers who visit us regularly learn more about:

- organizing a complex argument
- getting started with a research project
- reviewing published literature
• acknowledging debts to other sources
• choosing and using an appropriate documentation system
• making appropriate stylistic choices
• learning to proofread their own work
• and much more. . .

A few caveats: We are not an editing service; we will work with you to teach you how to proofread and edit your own work. And we will not do your reading, writing, or thinking for you. We suggest you come to the Writing Center well before your paper is due. (We joke that though we often witness miracles in the Writing Center, we do not perform them!)

To schedule a 30-minute session, please stop by or call 460-6241. Please bring a copy of your assignment with you to your tutorial session!

The Writing Center web site (http://www.belmont.edu/english/writing/) lists the current hours of operation and provides resources for students and teachers, including links to other useful web sites.

The Lila D. Bunch Library

The Lila D. Bunch Library offers you a number of print and internet resources (see especially the
subject guide for English), interlibrary loan, and reference and resource help (again, both in person and online), as well as computers and lots of lovely quiet space in which to read and write.

Groups, Events, and Publications

The English Club

If you enjoy hanging out with other book lovers, discussing novels, going to literature-based films, meeting professional writers, or even playing Apples to Apples, you’ll enjoy the English Club. Along with being a social community, the English Club also undertakes service projects relating to reading and writing, most notably annual participation in Family Literacy Day. Watch email blasts and the BU English blog for meeting times and events. Contact English Club sponsor Professor Sue Trout.

Sigma Tau Delta

Many members of the English Club are also members of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society. The English Department holds an induction ceremony every year. For details contact Sigma Tau Delta sponsor Dr. Cynthia Cox.
Speakers

Sigma Tau Delta and the English Club co-sponsor many guest speakers and events on campus, ranging from professional writers to scholars speaking on a wide variety of topics from Shakespeare to Stephanie Meyers. Other convocation events are also sponsored by these groups. Check the campus calendar, blast emails and the *BU English* blog for times and locations of these events.

Humanities Symposium

Each fall, the premier event in the School of Humanities (comprised of English, Philosophy, and Foreign Language Departments) is the Humanities Symposium, a wonderful opportunity for you to hear, question, and participate with speakers in intellectual exchange.

*Belmont Literary Journal*

The purpose of the *Belmont Literary Journal* is to promote and display original, creative works produced by Belmont's undergraduate and graduate students. It is edited and produced by Belmont students (including many English majors), and is rolled out each spring during the *BLJ Celebration*. If you are interested in participating in editing the *BLJ* or in submitting some of your fiction, poetry,
creative nonfiction, song lyrics, or artwork, contact BLJ sponsor, Dr. Gary McDowell.

**BU English**

*BU English* ([http://belmontenglish.wordpress.com/](http://belmontenglish.wordpress.com/)) is the blog of the English Department, bringing you daily updates on upcoming events, achievements of majors and alumni, and general literary goings-on. It is also an opportunity for you to get your work published. If you are interested in submitting items for *BU English*, contact Dr. Linda E. Holt.

**Beyond Belmont**

**Starting Early**

By the time you finish Junior Seminar (ENG 3000), you should have a better idea about what kind(s) of opportunities you’d like to pursue in your life after Belmont. As you think about what’s available post-graduation, see what our alumni have done by reading the *BU English* blog ([http://belmontenglish.wordpress.com/](http://belmontenglish.wordpress.com/)), talking to your professors and your classmates, and following up with the seminar speakers (if they have provided contact information).

If you think you might be interested in pursuing graduate study in English, talk to your professors
and more specifically to Dr. Annette Sisson, who directs our M.A. program in English. She has a lot of current information on graduate study in general, and she can fill you in on the various resources that will allow you to create a timeline for your application process.

Applying for Graduation

Alas, someday your undergraduate experience as an English major at Belmont must come to an end. You need to apply for graduation the semester before you intend to graduate. The registrar’s office will run a course audit which you can review with your advisor in order to make sure you have all the required course work (including experiential learning and global studies requirements) and convocation credit you need to graduate.

Getting References

If you have had faculty write letters of reference for you as you applied for positions on campus like being an R.A. or Towering Traditions leader, you know that you need to ask for these letters in advance of when they are due. It’s even more important to be aware of deadlines when asking a professor to comment on your entire academic career and potential for successful employment or admission to graduate or professional school. Your professors in the English Department are very
willing to write good letters supporting your applications; we’re proud of our majors, and want you to do well in your life after Belmont. Do not be shy in asking for references—it’s a big part of what we do. But nearly all good writing takes time, so make sure you ask well before your deadline!

Choose professors who know your work the best and with whom you’ve had the best working relationships. Ask for the references well in advance and then follow up politely a couple of weeks before the deadline if your professors have not indicated that they have submitted your letters. If you’re applying to multiple institutions, be sure to have forms filled out as completely as possible, and make sure you indicate on each the deadline you’re asking your professors to meet.

If you’re simply listing professors as references on a resumé, be sure to get their permission first, and let them know the places to which you’re applying and from which they might expect a call.

Stay in Touch

After investing several years in you (and you in us), we love to hear how our alumni are doing, and if you stay in the Nashville area, you will be considered a resource for the department (i.e., you may end up talking to Junior Seminar students
about what you do)! You must also consider yourself invited to our symposia and other events on campus, or just to come by and catch up with your professors. If you’ve moved on, at least stay in touch electronically. We post alumni updates fairly often on the *BU English* blog, to which you can become a subscriber. And if that multi-million selling book or blockbuster screenplay does eventually materialize, we would have no problem with you making a donation for programs or scholarships to help those along who came after you.

To close with a quote from another great book lover, Garrison Keillor: “Stay well, do good work, and keep in touch.”

**Belmont English is online!** Join us at:


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