

Department of
English and Foreign Languages

Newsletter

— Academic Year 2025-2026 —



*language
literature
culture
communication
perspective
connection
expression*



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MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of English and Foreign Languages



About the Department

The Department of English and Foreign Languages offers a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English. The Department's purpose is multifaceted due to its different programs. The Department's general education courses are designed to develop critical thinking and writing skills and also to acquaint students with the aesthetic and cultural values inherent in literature. The English program teaches the traditional canon of global literature and languages, creative writing, and African American Studies as (1) a body of knowledge to be mastered, (2) a means of reinforcing literature's aesthetic and cultural values, and (3) a means of refining thinking, writing, and researching skills. The program has expanded its literacy offerings beyond the conservative, traditional spectrum to include multicultural literature. As one team with one goal to win, the English and Foreign Languages faculty is an enthusiastic and dedicated group of people. They are always student-oriented and available for advice. Most of the full-time faculty are published writers of literary criticism, creative work, or monographs. The department aims to (1) provide all students with general education courses, (2) prepare students for graduate study in English and related fields, (3) develop critical thinking and analytical skills in literature and creative writing, and (4) develop competence in foreign languages.



The Writing Center

The Writing Center is an important avenue in the university, supporting students at various stages of their academic journey. It assists with brainstorming ideas and developing scholarly, creative, and critical writing, including research articles, assignments, resumes, presentations, and other forms of academic work. The Center also organizes workshops to build essential writing skills, including MLA and APA styles. In addition, it offers one-to-one consultations where students can discuss their concerns and gradually improve their writing. The Center plays a key role in guiding students applying for fellowships by helping them refine and strengthen their essays. Students preparing for higher education often visit to learn how to frame research questions and write effective synopses. Each month, the Writing Center engages with many students, providing consistent support and helping them become more confident and effective writers. The following services are offered at the Writing Center.

- Feedback on writing projects, including essays, research papers, application letters, resumes, business letters, and creative writing assignments
- Personalized help with the composing process, from generating topics to students proofreading and editing their own work
- Step-by-step roadmaps for revisions
- Assistance with style, diction, and usage
- Guidance with referencing, citations, and documentation



A Message from the Department Chair

Welcome to the latest edition of our department newsletter, a "smartboard" for sharing key updates and celebrating the achievements of our students, alumni, and faculty. Many thanks to the innovative editorship of Drs. Allison Wiltshire and Vikas Kadam.

Dr. John Zheng
Professor of English and Chair

Department News

New Space for the Department in the Academic Skills Parlor

The Department is set to return to its original space in the newly renovated Academic Skills Parlor. The president, Dr. Jerryl Briggs, officially declared the building open during the ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 17, 2026, in the presence of Dr. Kathie Stromile Golden, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. John Zheng, Professor of English and Department Chair; and Dr. Roy Hudson, a retired English Professor. This building, with the inclusion of cutting-edge technology and futuristic designs for classrooms and offices, is set to benefit overall student progress and faculty professional development.



Academic Skills Parlor



Dr. Vivek Singh
Writing Center
Specialist

Department hires a new Writing Center Specialist

The department hired a new Writing Center Specialist, Dr. Vivek Singh, in September 2025. He first came to MVSU as a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA) during the academic Year 2023-2024. Dr. Singh holds a terminal degree in English, specializing in Cultural Studies. While sharing his experience working at the Writing Center, Dr. Singh says, *“Working in the Writing Center as a specialist has been an enriching experience. It allows me to interact with students across the university. Through conversations on research papers, assignments, resumes, and other forms of academic writing, I not only support their writing but also gain insights into their expectations, which help me refine and strengthen the assistance we offer.”*

Department hosts two Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs)

The department hosted two Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs) during the academic year: Ms. Shubhrika Pansari, an FLTA of Hindi from India, who taught Hindi 101 and 102 as the primary instructor, and Mr. Abuther Alothman, an FLTA of Arabic from Iraq, who taught Arabic 101 as the primary instructor. Apart from teaching, both the FLTAs were actively engaged in various outreach and cultural exchange activities, including Henna Tattoo Workshops, International Calligraphy workshop, Country Presentations, Spoken Word Poetry Recitation, Café Cultural, Fashion Show, and Holi, the Festival of Colors. Ms. Pansari describes her experience: *“During my time at MVSU, I developed a deeper understanding of teaching a foreign language to undergraduates. The Fulbright FLTA Program gave me firsthand exposure to Mississippi’s vibrant and unique culture—not only in formal settings but also through everyday interactions, campus life, and community engagement. The friendships I formed and the professional relationships I built during this time will be truly lasting.”* Mr. Abuther Alothman expressed similar views about the program: *“My experience at Mississippi Valley State University has been truly rewarding. It has helped me grow both professionally and personally.”*



Ms. Shubhrika Pansari
(Hindi FLTA)

Department Updates and Events

Department Celebrates World Poetry Day



The Department of English and Foreign Languages celebrated World Poetry Day on April 8, 2026, from 10:00 to 11:00 a.m., in collaboration with the Office of International Programs as part of International Week 2026. The event featured approximately 16 international and American students and faculty members who recited poetry by renowned, award-winning poets from eight countries. Many international participants performed poems in their native languages, adding a vibrant multicultural dimension to the celebration. Notable presentations included Valincia Richard, an English major, who recited Maya Angelou's 'Still I Rise'; Diana Carolina Lopez-Espitia, a business major, who presented 'Si supiera' by Nobel Prize-winning Colombian writer Gabriel García Márquez; and Dr. Vivek Singh, Writing Center Specialist, who recited 'Kabir Ke Dohe' by the celebrated Hindi poet Kabir Das. Prof. Cristina Rascon Castro, the Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish and her four American students from her Spanish as a Foreign Language class presented poems from award winning Spanish poets. The event witnessed an audience of nearly 70 students and faculty members from various departments across the university.

Writing Workshops Hosted by the Writing Center

The Writing Center organized two successful workshops during the academic year in collaboration with the J.H. White Library. In Fall 2025, a two-day writing workshop was held on December 4 and 5 in the Computer Lab at the J.H. White Library. Designed to support students across disciplines, the workshop provided assistance with various forms of academic writing. Participants brought their final papers for review, sought help in developing and organizing ideas, and received guidance on citation styles, including MLA and APA. Additional support was offered for essays, papers, assignments, and other academic tasks. Approximately 40 students from various departments and majors participated in the workshop. In Spring 2026, the Writing Center conducted a one-day workshop on March 3 at the J.H. White Library. This session focused specifically on MLA and APA referencing styles, equipping students with essential skills for academic writing and research. This time, around 50 students from across the majors participated and sought help with documenting sources in their academic writing. Both workshops reflect the Writing Center's continued commitment to enhancing students' writing proficiency and academic success.



Department Updates and Events



Department Faculty Members and Fulbright FLTAs Participate in Spoken Words

Three department faculty, and two Fulbright FLTAs, participated in Spoken Words and Jazz, an event organized by the university as part of Founders Week on April 14, 2026. The event featured poetry recitations, jazz musical numbers, and singing performances. Department faculty members Dr. Vikas Kadam, Prof. Cristina Rascón Castro, and Dr. Vivek Singh, Fulbright FLTAs, Ms. Shubhrika Pansari (Hindi), and Mr. Abuther Alothman, (Arabic) recited and performed poetry from their countries and cultures, some of them were in foreign languages. The event provided yet another opportunity for the department faculty to connect with the on-campus community. Each participant received a small cash prize as a token of appreciation.

This was a competitive event, and three winners were selected based on the audience's response to each performance.



Department's Representation at the Mississippi Philological Association Conference 2026, in Hattiesburg, MS.



The Department has been an active participant and contributor to the Mississippi Philosophical Association's (MPA) annual conference, which celebrates Mississippi's rich literary and cultural heritage. This year, the conference was held at William Carey University in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, on March 20 and 21, 2026. This year, seven faculty members' research papers and creative works were selected for presentation at this conference. These faculty members from the department participated in this conference: Dr. Allison Wiltshire, who presented her critical work "Paradoxical Parodies: Stereotypes and Subversion in the Works of Richard Wright and Jesmyn Ward." Dr. Vikas Kadam presented his analytical research that focused on the exploration of nature imagery in the haikus of the well-known Mississippi writer and poet Richard Wright through the lens of the Conceptual Metaphors theory. Prof. Cristina Rascón Castro, Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish presented a paper "The exiled writing in *Dónde estás con tus ojos celestes* (Where are you with your celestial eyes), by Daniel Moyano." Ms. Shubhrika Pansari (FLTA Hindi), presented a pedagogical paper based on her a foreign language teaching, "*Bridging Borders through Hindi: Cultural Integration in a Multicultural FLTA Classroom*." Dr. Vivek Singh presented a literary critique titled "Southern Legacy to Modern Realism: Richard Ford and the Reimagining of Mississippi Literature." The department sponsored all the conference expenses including travel, registration, food and hotel stays.

Classroom Stories

Classroom Story—Dr. Shanell Bailey

Unique Approaches to Teaching Rhetorical Analysis

In Dr. Shanell Bailey's composition classroom, students don't just write their rhetorical analyses; they create class presentations out of them. Dr. Bailey has students begin discussions of the rhetorical analysis essay by sharing a presentation. This presentation assignment requires students to find examples of the major rhetorical strategies: ethos, pathos, and logos. Dr. Bailey allows students to choose from magazines, newspaper articles, or visual art, rather than using internet sources. Students also view advertisements and identify the rhetorical strategies used in each example. Regarding her decision to implement this presentation assignment, Dr. Bailey says she chose this exercise because it encourages students to think about real-world examples and ensures they can accurately identify strategies in authentic contexts. The importance Dr. Bailey places on this assignment is evident in the dual written and oral components of the grade students receive for this activity. Dr. Bailey says that her implementation of this assignment "allows the students to be more hands-on and actively engage in applying what they are learning." She goes on to say, "My students are better able to understand the concepts, and they usually perform much better when writing the rhetorical analysis."

Classroom Story—Dr. Allison Wiltshire

Teaching MS Delta Writing in the World Literature Classroom

In 2025, Dr. Allison Wiltshire was awarded a Metacognition/Innovative Course Redesign Faculty Development Grant. With this grant, Dr. Wiltshire developed a special EN 201 (World Literature) course centered on literature out of and about the Mississippi Delta. In this course, Dr. Wiltshire and her students studied works from such authors as Ida Mae Holland, Exodus Oktavia Brownlow, Claude Wilkinson, and our very own Jianqing Zheng. Emphasizing the metacognitive focus of the course, students, from the very start of the class, were encouraged to collaborate to explore how they learned best and to create their own learning and study goals. They achieved this metacognition through a number of writing assignments and in-class activities and discussions that fostered the formation of a community of learners who, in Dr. Wiltshire's observation, grew together in their critical thinking and interpretive skills. The results of that community building were astounding, with every single student passing the course and well over half of the students earning an A, reflecting the level of active engagement and dedication students demonstrated all semester. Many students were so interested in the content of the course that they expressed interest in the creation of future classes focused on Delta literature and culture. Dr. Wiltshire and her Delta Literature class were even featured in a Faculty Spotlight article for the *Delta Devils' Gazette*. Above all else, Dr. Wiltshire's goal for the course was to give students a deeper knowledge of the literature of the Mississippi Delta as a way to better understand their own cultural or environmental and artistic heritage and how Delta writing is viewed on a national and global stage. Based on the success of this course, Dr. Wiltshire firmly believes the class can serve as a launchpad for other Mississippi Delta literary and cultural class offerings within the Department of English & Foreign Languages and, perhaps, even a Delta Studies minor concentration for English majors.

Classroom Story from PEPP

Bringing Hope Behind Bars: Insights from Professors Evans and Purnell on PEPP

Prof. LaTonzia Evans and Prof. Deborah Purnell



Prof. LaTonzia Evans and Prof. Deborah Purnell shared their liberating experience of teaching English courses to incarcerated individuals through the Prison Education Partnership Program (PEPP) at Mississippi Valley State University. This program provides incarcerated individuals with access to higher education and enables them to pursue college education within the constraints of prison facilities. As Prof. Evans explains, the program is unique because it offers *“the opportunity to get a four-year university degree... which is what makes it unique.”* Operating in both women’s and men’s facilities, the program mirrors traditional college instruction while adapting to the constraints of the prison environment.

Academically, the program maintains the same rigor as on-campus courses. Professors use identical materials and standards, with only minor adjustments for access limitations. Prof. Evans notes, *“I use the exact same materials that I use here... the biggest difference is that I must provide research sources due to limited library access.”* Similarly, Prof. Purnell emphasizes a reflective and holistic approach, incorporating journaling to deepen engagement: *“It wasn’t just about world literature... it was about... how does that make you feel about what’s going on with you now?”* This blend of academic rigor and personal reflection defines the classroom experience.

The learning environment is structured yet comparable to a traditional classroom. Students meet in designated education buildings under strict security, including escorts and constant supervision. However, within the classroom, the atmosphere is highly interactive and intellectually driven. Discussions are often candid and extend beyond course material. Prof. Evans describes how students openly engage with complex topics about their lives in the prison and their lives outside it: *“About three weeks ago, we were talking about what it means to be a citizen. And so we were talking about, in terms of the government, we’re paying taxes and all of that. And so some of them ask certain questions about, you know, will I be truly a citizen again?”* This openness fosters meaningful dialogue, allowing students to connect literature with real-world issues and personal experiences.

Both Prof. Purnell and Prof. Evans expressed fascination with the level of students’ engagement, noting that incarcerated students often outperform traditional college students in participation and motivation. Prof. Evans describes the contrast as *“night and day,”* explaining that her incarcerated students *“are engaged, they ask wonderful questions... They always come prepared. They connect things. And that’s what I really enjoy about them.”* Prof. Purnell reinforces this, stating that they are comparable to highly motivated students: *“They were on the same level as those brighter ones in my regular classes... They read before class. Yep. They come in with questions, which is why you must be an educator who is on point two, because they’re asking you questions. I can’t look it up. I have to know the answer.”* This engagement is driven by a strong desire for self-improvement and a recognition of education as a rare opportunity.

The program’s impact on students is both academic and deeply personal. Many participants experience a renewed sense of purpose and achievement. Prof. Purnell highlights this with a powerful example: a 78-year-old student proudly declared, *“I pass all my classes... I didn’t think I could do this... and look at me, I’m in college.”* For incarcerated individuals, education becomes more than a credential—it represents dignity, growth, and the possibility of transformation, even within confinement.

Equally significant is the program’s impact on instructors. Both professors describe the experience as transformative and reaffirming. Prof. Evans reflects that teaching in the program *“gives me hope... it reminds me of why I decided I wanted to be a teacher.”* Prof. Purnell similarly calls the class *“one of the most rewarding... experiences,”* noting that her students became *“the highlight of my semester.”* These perspectives reveal how the program not only benefits students but also reshapes educators’ understanding of learning, motivation, and human potential.

Based on conversations with Prof. Purnell and Prof. Evans, the incarcerated classroom within the PEPP program demonstrates the transformative power of education even in the most restrictive environments. By maintaining high academic standards while fostering personal growth, the program challenges assumptions about incarcerated individuals and highlights education as a critical pathway to empowerment, rehabilitation, and hope.



Faculty Spotlight



Dr. Shanell Bailey Earns Doctorate and is Honored with Humanities Teacher of the Year Award



The Department proudly congratulates Dr. Shanell Bailey on achieving two significant milestones this year. Dr. Bailey earned her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University. Her dissertation, titled “College Preparedness: Exploring Faculty Perceptions of First-Year College Students’ Literacy Skills Transitioning from High School,” reflects her deep commitment to student learning and academic success.

In addition, Dr. Bailey was named the 2025–2026 Mississippi Humanities Teacher of the Year, a prestigious recognition of her excellence in teaching, student engagement, and innovative instructional practices. As part of this honor, she delivered a lecture, “Bridging the Literacy Gap with Effective Teaching Strategies for Today’s College Students,” on February 12, 2026, at Cliff E. Williams Auditorium. In her talk, she shared practical, research-based strategies to address literacy challenges across disciplines. Accepting the award, Dr. Bailey remarked, “I am honored to receive this recognition. Each year, I strive to improve my teaching, and it is rewarding when former students acknowledge the value of high expectations. This recognition affirms that dedication and hard work do not go unnoticed.” The Department commends Dr. Bailey for her outstanding achievements and continued dedication to academic excellence.

Prof. Deborah Purnell Leads Workshops, Publishes Scholarship, and Presents at State Conference

The Department proudly recognizes Prof. Deborah Purnell for her continued contributions to teaching, research, and student support. A dedicated member of the MVSU faculty since January 2015 and a proud alumna of the university, Prof. Purnell has consistently played a vital role in strengthening both academic programs and student learning initiatives. This year, Prof. Purnell achieved several notable milestones. She published a scholarly chapter in the edited volume *From Higher Learning to Charlottesville: College Campuses and American Democracy* (Palgrave Macmillan). Her chapter, “How Invisibility, Isolation, and Intersectionality Work to Further Class and Racial Antagonism for African American Women,” examines the lived experiences of African American women in higher education, highlighting how systemic inequalities and intersecting identities shape academic and social outcomes.

In her role as Director of the MVSU Writing Center, Prof. Purnell also organized two writing workshops for students from diverse academic disciplines, reinforcing the university’s commitment to writing excellence across the curriculum. Further extending her academic engagement, she presented a paper titled “Using the Wiz to Engage Students and Encourage Writing” at the 2026 Mississippi Writing Center Association Conference held on April 18, 2026. In April 2026, Prof. Purnell was appointed Vice President of the Mississippi Writing Center Association. The Department congratulates Prof. Purnell on these achievements and appreciates her continued dedication to student success and scholarly excellence.





Student Spotlight



Shyla McCall Earns Prestigious International Honors and Literary Recognition

The Department proudly celebrates Shyla McCall, an outstanding English scholar, for her remarkable academic and creative achievements. Ms. Shyla McCall has been selected to participate in the Future Tech for Good Leaders Summer School in Paris and *Beauvais* from July, 12 to 25, 2026, organized by *Ponts* Business School, the Embassy of France in the U.S, and the *Albertine* Foundation. This program brings together emerging global leaders. The Department wishes Shyla *bonne chance* on this exciting international journey.

Shyla has also been awarded the prestigious Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, a highly competitive U.S. Department of State program that supports American undergraduate students with financial need to pursue study and internship opportunities abroad. The program is funded by the U.S. Government and administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE).



In addition to her academic accomplishments, Shyla has demonstrated exceptional creative talent, published ten poems in various literary journals including *Quachita Life*, *Autumn Moon*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Cold Moon Journal*, *Daily Haiku*, *Haiku Dialogue*, and *tsuri-doro*. The Department congratulates Shyla McCall on these outstanding achievements and wishes her continued success in her academic and professional pursuits.

Omarion Anderson's Journey in Creative Writing and Publication



Omarion Anderson is a junior English major concentrating in creative writing. The Greenwood, MS native transferred from Mississippi Delta Community College and has been at Valley since the Spring 2025 semester. Since that time, Omarion has dazzled fellow students and professors with his scholarship and creative accomplishments, having written several poems, haiku, short stories, and even a few scripts. Impressively, he has written several poems, haiku, short stories, and few scripts. He has published six haiku in the journals, *Daily Haiku*, *Fireflies' Light*, *Haiku Dialogue*, and *Haiku Page*. The subjects and themes of Omarion's writing include the MS Delta, music, romance, family, and friendship, among other topics. When asked about his creative influences, Omarion says, "I have managed to find inspiration from nearly anywhere and everywhere, including my own personal life, observing other people, and seeing various things online."

Omarion credits his English classes, such as Delta Literature, Fiction Writing I, and Black Writers, with teaching him about different writers and how to think critically and improve his own writing. Omarion writes that his most inspirational professors have been Drs. Wiltshire and Zheng because they have introduced him to new writers, their particular styles, and how to apply the works of others to his own future writing. Outside of his creative writing pursuits, Omarion is active on campus as a staff writer for the *Delta Devils' Gazette* and a contributing member of *Pathfinders*, which helps students find their career and post-undergraduate paths. Upon graduation, Omarion hopes to become a television writer, and with his undeniable talent, the Department of English & Foreign Languages has every faith in his success as he pursues this dream and all of his future creative aspirations.



Alumni Spotlight

Seprela Ellis

MVSU English Education graduate Seprela Ellis, who also served as an intern for the English & Foreign Languages Department, currently serves as Principal of a charter school in Illinois. In this role, Ellis leads instructional programming, staff development, and school improvement initiatives focused on strengthening academic outcomes and building sustainable systems and culture. Under Ellis' leadership, the school has deepened its experiential learning implementation, strengthened instructional coherence across grade levels, and expanded structured coaching cycles to support teacher growth. Speaking of her most important priorities in this position, Ellis says, "I am committed to transformational leadership, educational equity, and creating learning environments where scholars and educators alike are challenged, supported, and inspired to grow." MVSU English and Foreign Languages takes pride in Ellis' accomplishments and sends her best wishes for her continued success.



Exodus Oktavia Brownlow



The Department of English and Foreign Languages congratulates Exodus Oktavia Brownlow, a 2014 graduate with a BA in English, on her excellence in writing as a Valley Scholar. Ms. Brownlow has very exciting news to share! Her short story collection—*When It Gets Cold in The South: Stories*—is to be published by Screen Door Press (University of Kentucky Press). It explores the cross-generational lives of women and girls, men and boys, humans and non-humans, who are bonded by their shared histories, romances, tragedies, and the otherness of the Black American South. Brownlow is thankful to her alma mater, saying, "The foundational teaching and persistence towards pushing me to strive for more has been such a tremendous part of my success. Without your guidance, I know that I would not be where I am today. My gratitude knows no end." Our department could not be prouder of Brownlow's accomplishments!

Ross Dexter

Ross Dexter, a 2014 graduate and another department alumnus, is doing exceptionally well in life and career. After teaching English (ELA) for 8 years at Water Valley High School, he moved into the Assistant Principal and ELA academic coach position in 2024. He says, "The opportunity allows me to continue to teach English IV, serve as a dual credit facilitator, and serve as an Assistant Principal." He was named Water Valley Teacher of the Year in 2017 and 2023. During the 2022-2023 school year, Mr. Dexter's English II scores ranked 6th in the state of Mississippi. He mentions, "Because of the bond and the expectation of excellence from myself and the students, the principal approached me with these positions in order to build on this achievement." His contributions helped the school move from a previous six-year academic accountability score of D, and for the past four years, the school has achieved a "B" with the high school only a few points from achieving an "A" score. The Department wishes Mr. Dexter the best for many more achievements.



Faculty Research Updates

Dr. John Zheng

Book Chapter:

In February 2026, published a book chapter, "Tanka, A Transplant in American Poetry," in *Japanese Forms in American Poetry: Beyond Haiku*, edited by Ce Rosenow (Bloomsbury Publishing).

Books:

In 2025, co-published a book of poetry and photographs, *Soulful Dancer* with William Ferries (Blue Horse Press).

In July 2025, published a book of poetry, *Visual Chords* (Broken Tribe Press).



Prof. Deborah Purnell

Book Chapter:

Published a scholarly chapter, "How Invisibility, Isolation, and Intersectionality Work to Further Class and Racial Antagonism for African American Women," in the edited volume *From Higher Learning to Charlottesville: College Campuses and American Democracy* (Palgrave Macmillan).



Conference Presentation:

Presented a paper titled "Using The Wiz to Engage Students and Encourage Writing" at the 2026 Mississippi Writing Center Association Conference, held on April 18, 2026.

Prof. LaTonzia Evans

Leadership Role:

Elected as the new President of the Faculty Senate of Mississippi Valley State University.

Course Credits:

Completed 10 CEU credits as of March 30th, 2026, at Miles College for the Dr. Glenda Glover Leadership Institute for Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, South Eastern Region.



Dr. Shanell Bailey

Degree Earned:

Graduated from Arkansas State University with a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. Her dissertation was titled, "College Preparedness: Exploring Faculty Perceptions of First-Year College Students' Literacy Skills Transitioning from High School."



Award:

Received the Mississippi Humanities Teacher Award in March 2026, a prestigious recognition of her excellence in teaching, student engagement, and innovative instructional practices.

Dr. Mamie Osborne

Conference Presentation:

In September 6, 2025, co-presented a paper with Dr. Roy Hudson, "Reflections and Social Commentary on the Struggle for Change: Student Unrest at Historically Black Colleges, 1960s – 1970s" at "1970 At Fifty-five: A symposium about the end of Massive Resistance," organized by the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, University of Mississippi.



Dr. Allison Wiltshire

Conference Presentations:

Presented a critical paper, "Paradoxical Parodies: Stereotypes and Subversion in the Works of Richard Wright and Jesmyn Ward," at the MPA 2026 Conference, organized by William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS.

Presented a paper entitled, "Racial Stereotypes and Empowerment in Zora Neale Hurston's 'Sweat,'" at the annual Zora Neale Hurston Conference hosted by Bethune-Cookman University.



Journal Articles:

Recently published a journal article, two book reviews, and a review of an anti-slavery library collection at Cornell University.

Dr. Vikas Kadam

Conference Presentation:

Presented a literary analytical paper, "Exploring Nature Imagery in Richard Wright's Haikus as Conceptual Metaphors" at the MPA 2026 Conference, organized by William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS.



Invited Conference Plenary Session:

Delivered an invited plenary session, "English as a Lingua Franca: Issues and Challenges" at the International Conference on 'Language, Literature and Culture in Transition', held on January 12 -14, 2026, organized by the Department of English, Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce, Pune, India.

Prof. Cristina Rascón Castro

Books:

In August 2025, published a compiled book, *Relámpagos, Contemporary Mexican Haiku Anthology* in Mexico (Hidalgo Autonomous University Press).

Creative Publications:

Published a set of poems in an anthology, *Nowhere Else - Haiku North America Anthology 2025*, USA.

In October 2025, published 17 translated haiku by John Zheng in *Letralia* in Venezuela.

Journal Editorship:

Joined the editorial board of two journals in November 2025: 1) *Juxtapositions* (The Haiku Foundation, USA) and 2) *Palabra que dormía* (Spanish literary Journal)/Norsk Tidsskriftforening (Norwegian Journals' Association).



Faculty Research Updates

Dr. Vivek Singh

Book :

In December 2025, published a co-authored book (Hindi), *Uttar Manavvaad (Posthumanism)* (Vani Prakashan).

Book Reviews :

In April 2026, published a book review of *The Tao According to Calvin Coolidge: Poems* by Charles Rammelkamp (North of Oxford).

In May 2026, published a co-authored book review of *Trust Issues: Stories* by K. P. Davis (North of Oxford).

Conference Presentation:

Presented a literary critique, "Southern Legacy to Modern Realism: Richard Ford and the Reimagining of Mississippi Literature" at the MPA 2026 Conference, organized by William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS.

Student Publication Updates

Shyla McCall

Poetry :

Published ten poems in various literary journals including *Quachita Life*, *Autumn Moon*, *Asahi Shimbun*, *Cold Moon Journal*, *Daily Haiku*, *Haiku Dialogue*, and *tsuri-doro*.

Valincia Richard

Poetry :

Published eight haiku in journals including *Asahi Shimbun* in Japan, *Autumn Moon Journal*, *Daily Haiku*, and *Haiku Page*.

Omarion Anderson

Poetry:

Published six haiku in journals including *Daily Haiku*, *Fireflies' Light*, *Haiku Dialogue*, and *Haiku Page*.

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