Becoming an English major was one of the easiest decisions I’ve made in my life. It was either learn more about Shakespeare and how to write poetry, or meander about undergrad for four years with absolutely no passion.

I especially enjoy being a creative writing major. It allows me the freedom to express my inner-most thoughts in a constructive manner without having to fly off the deep end.

When I first came to the department here at Illinois College, I was scared out of my mind and on academic probation so my success was mandatory. I didn’t know how I was going to make it but Dr. Hahn and Dr. Koepp reassured me that they were in my corner and would do their part to help me succeed.

My first advisor was none other than Dr. Koepp. His love for Victorian Literature and English as an art form taught me how to appreciate the beauty of language.

Medieval Literature courses with Dr. Kerbaugh taught me patience and the various ways one simple line of a passage could and should tell you about character development and the author’s writing style. Most importantly, Kerbaugh’s classes taught me that attention to detail.

As I continued to fulfill my requirements as a major, I found myself in various literature courses with almost everyone in the department. The classes that really opened and developed my creative skills were obviously the writing courses with Drs. Cochran, Kerbaugh and N. Capo.

When I would struggle with other courses and in my personal life I was able to take the skills I learned from my creative writing and play writing classes and channel them into a finished product. As exciting as that was for me as a budding writer, it was only a very small part of my maturation through the department.

Since I’ve been a major I have been a department aide, helped with the English Department Matrix and now I’m the editor of the department newsletter. Over the years and with all the obstacles placed in front of me, there was never a time that I didn’t have the support of the entire department behind me.

Every professor in this department is interested in both the academic and personal success of their students. They are understanding, caring and professional. Without their support, both in and out of the classroom, I’m not sure how I would have made it. I am both thankful and eternally grateful for the opportunities this department has afforded me and the education they have imparted to me.

I will always look back on my time here at Illinois College as an English Creative Writing and Literature major with the fondest of memories, even those days I didn’t want to go to class. I hope all of you will do the same.

A simple word of advice to the underclassmen. Get to know your department. They are here for you and want to see you succeed. Find your niche and keep at it. There is a wealth of knowledge, so much that has been left untapped, in each of these remarkable individuals we call professor.

~Alisia McCowan
**Senior Seminar Gets Lively**

This year marks the first time for the English senior seminar to pair with another department. Our majors have joined with seniors in the Department of Religion and Philosophy to study biblical allusions in literature under the direction of Drs. Hahn and Porter.

At the end of October, class members did a great job presenting their project proposals to an audience that included professors from both departments.

Discussion was lively and topics were wide-ranging. Perhaps the greatest surprise of the week happened in a discussion of biblical allusions in music with Dr. Udel's revelation of her familiarity with Alice Cooper's nighttime syndicated radio show. Dr. Udel, we knew you were a music fan, but we had no idea!

**STD Poetry Slam Part II**

The members of Sigma Tau Delta held their second poetry slam of the semester Thursday, Oct. 28, 8:30 p.m. in the ICE-Box theater.

This time the emcee for the evening was previous first place slam winner Johnai Humphries. Although the audience was smaller than at the first slam, they were still a lively bunch, to say the least. Poems were read in a variety of fashions from light-hearted humor to outright disgust and anger at various topics. It proved to be a most informative insight to the inner-workings of the minds of the eclectic group of poets who participated in the slam.

Although everyone came out to have fun and enjoy in the beauty that is spoken word art, some attended the slam in hopes of taking home winnings.

Previous sacrificial poet Alisia McCowan tied for second place with IC alum Mark Zuiderveld. Junior Mariah Davidson took home first place, complete with a gift certificate from a local restaurant, for her off the cuff humorous poetic approach to everyday life.

More slams coming in Spring 2011 semester. Grab a pen, write a poem and enter the slam or just attend and be a judge or audience member.

Poet Laureate Robert Pinksy during his visit here at the College for his poetry reading and question and answer session in the ICE Box Theater.

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**FYI—**

**Seeking Editor . . .**

Are you interested in gaining some editorial experience? English professor Betsy Hall seeks student applications for co-editor of Origins, a compilation of writing by students in the IC Connections first-year seminar courses.

Applicants should have good writing skills and an interest in editing. This is a paid position. Contact bhall@ic.edu to apply or to inquire further about this opportunity.
Poet Laureate Robert Pin-
sky graced the campus of Illinois College Wednes-
day, Nov. 3 with a poetry reading and question and answer session in the ICE Box Theater. He followed this with a visit to Dr. Koepp's English 250 class Thursday, Nov. 4 at 11 a.m. with another Q&A session.

The Illinois College community was grateful to host him. I asked our own Anna Booher for her reflections on his visit. This is what Anna had to say.

I remember that Mr. Pinsky recommended favoritepoem.org for entertainment but also for academic purposes. His inspiration comes from historical and cultural parts of religion. He also loves music before writing and he likes VJ Iron. He said that writer's block lasts forever, and that to break it we should write about things that scare us. He said one thing that I found so inspiring, "You don't have to be who you are defined as."

From November 10-14 Dr. Beth Capo attended the Modernist Studies Association annual conference in Victoria, British Columbia. In addition to presenting a paper entitled “Sex and the ‘Modern Girl’ in American and Japanese Modernist Narrative,” she participated in the “Globalizing Modernist Studies: Research and Teaching Strategies” seminar and attended many interesting panels. In November she also served as a reader for an article on Rebecca West's 1918 novel, The Return of the Soldier, for the journal College Literature.


Dr. Cynthia Cochran was awarded the Dr. Malcolm F. and Mrs. Mary Flo Stewart Student Research grant, with Sarah McCandless '11 to study the effects of working as a consultant in the Campus Writing Center. They will present their work with Emily Welch Boles '03 in November in a session called “Launching Careers from Writing Center Harbors,” and in a poster session at the International Writing Centers Association Conference in Baltimore. Dr. Cochran was also named as an editor of the Open-Access Textbook Project, Writing@CSU. This project makes textbooks available on the group’s website or on other Web sites for use by writing students and teachers.

Professor Nick Capo traveled to Mobile, Alabama, in early November and presented a paper at the National Symposium on Student Retention. At a postconference dinner, he had the good fortune to win the free-registration prize for next year’s Symposium in Charleston, South Carolina, so he presumably will be in South Carolina next November.

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**GRADUATE SCHOOL REFLECTIONS**

I really didn't know what to expect from graduate school at Western when I entered into it last August. Certainly it's an entirely different ballgame in comparison to undergraduate work.

Nick Capo told me once that graduate degrees are all research degrees, but I'm not sure I understood then exactly what he was getting at. The program at WIU is structured so that students taking full time hours take 9 credit hours a semester—three classes. I'm just finishing up my courses on Discourse Analysis in the classroom, Appropriations of Shakespeare, and Literary Theory, and Mr. Capo was right, they are ALL researched based.

We meet once a week for about three hours to discuss last week's readings and any projects we may be considering, and then the rest is all up to us. I have to say, my weekly reading capabilities have certainly been pushed to the max. But, as challenging as it's been, I feel like my horizons have broadened so much. I've been introduced to great theorists like Derrida, Lacan, Barthes, and many more while still keeping my feet grounded in the real world by studying Shakespeare's presence in popular culture. It's a whirlwind experience, but one that I am truly grateful that I dove into.

Most of my time outside of class is spent in the campus writing center where I work as a consultant. As a part of my apprenticeship, I work under Dr. Neil Baird and mold his methods of tutoring with those I learned at IC. Additionally, I just volunteered for a Thesis writing group; I'll be working with three other people and a professor, helping the older grad students with their theses while working out any idea I may have for mine. Surprisingly, I was chosen as Secretary for the English Graduate Organization (EGO)

The vast amounts of material that get covered have helped me learn what I like, what I don't like, and what I want to know more about. It's certainly made a non-fiction reader out of me. In all, it's been a great experience, and even though I want to pull my hair out sometimes, I couldn't be happier with where I am.

Miss you all!
Happy Holidays!
Emily Schoon

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**ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS**

A) Major, with a literature concentration
B) Minor, with a literature concentration
C) Major with writing concentration in Expository writing
D) Major with writing concentration in Creative writing
E) Minor with writing concentration

Just in case some of you first year students and undeclared upper classmen were wondering, here's what the Illinois College English Department has to offer you:

For more information about the English Department, its course offerings or events, please contact Dr. Lisa Udel, Department Chair at (217) 245-3284 or via e-mail at ludel@ic.edu.

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**NEXT EDITION!**

The English department newsletter will be getting a new editor for the Spring 2011 semester.

The new editor will be Senior Kristine Plocher. Information for up and coming newsletter editions, can be e-mailed to Kristine at plocher.kristine@mail.ic.edu. Newsletter submissions may also be sent to Dr. Udel at ludel@ic.edu.

Look for a feature on the department's newest Writer-in-Residence, Katherine Vaz, in the next newsletter edition. Welcome, Professor Vaz!