

Alumni Spotlight: Cynthia Arrieu-King

B.A. English and French (1996)



Please share a little bit about a favorite class or project you developed in English about which you are particularly proud.

I often think about Dale Billingley's Science and Literature course where we talked about Watson and Crick, and thought about ideas being passed down. I also loved Ulysses reading boot camp with Professor Henke and thinking about Postmodernism with Professor Tom Byers. Professors Skinner and Naslund were so encouraging to everyone, very inspiring as teachers.

Share your best memory of being an English student.

Getting to make friends in the Honors Building who attended different classes with me and whom I still am friends with today.

What is the most important thing learned while you were an English student?

We sentimentalize those we oppress.

Describe your career path. How did your English education prepare you for what you are doing today?

I went on to get an MFA in poetry at the University of Pittsburgh in 1999, and then after a stint in allied health I got my PhD in 20th century American literature at the University of Cincinnati in 2008. I was hired the same year as an assistant professor of creative writing at Stockton University.

What is one of your favorite professional accomplishments and/or most fascinating aspects of your job?

I have read my work at the Dodge Poetry Festival and have talked with students of all ages about poetry. But my most favorite thing is seeing my students read more and more poetry and come into their own as poets.

What advice would you give current students or recent graduates interested in pursuing a career in your professional field?

Read as much as you can. Write as much as you can. Don't take the meritocracy too seriously because in the end, it's meaningless.

What advice would you give students pursuing an English degree?

Go talk to your professors and also make an effort to make and hang out with friends. Also the Bingham Poetry Room in Ekstrom Library is an incredible resource! Not many schools have such a collection of poetry.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your time with UofL's English program?

It's a treat to come back and see people in my hometown at the 20th century Literature and Culture Conference. I hope students get to enjoy what it has to offer.