

13 February 2018

Dear Members of the Search Committee:

I am writing to apply for the full-time English Instructor position. I successfully defended my dissertation in January 2018, and will graduate with my PhD in English from the University of Arizona in May 2018. Although my dissertation focuses on American literature, I have a strong teaching record in first-year composition and transatlantic literature survey courses. Accessibility is a cornerstone of my teaching philosophy, and the access to higher education that community colleges provide aligns with my teaching goals.

I have eleven years of experience teaching at the college level, including literature courses, first-year composition, and introductory German language courses. I have experience teaching fully-online (using the D2L CMS) as well as teaching in intensive summer and winter short-sessions; I've taught classes as small as four students, seminars of 20-40, an online course with 80 students, and assisted in large (100+) lecture classes. I've taught six sections of our department's required upper-division literature survey course, British & American Literature 1660-1865, and TAed for two additional sections; I've also previously taught courses on major American authors as well as an introduction to close reading. I recently participated in a program assessment of student outcomes and competencies in our 300-level required courses for English majors and minors; I'm excited to continue this work developing, implementing, and assessing curriculum. My first-year composition courses are organized around social justice—reading and writing the diversity of human experience—and encourage students to use their research and writing to make a difference outside the classroom. Curricula and materials I developed for first-year writing courses have been published in multiple editions of our methods textbook and shared as recommended instructor resources since 2012; I've also been invited to speak to new instructors in the Writing Program to share my innovative rhetoric and research assignment sequence. My students feel invested in my composition courses because I teach real-world genres of writing: business memos, project proposals, professional letters, even blog posts; I recognize that composition isn't limited to the written page, and encourage students to explore multimedia production and digital document design. I ensure that assigned readings are culturally relevant and universally accessible—which includes keeping textbook costs low and offering multiple formats of texts (including ebooks and audiobooks) to accommodate different reading styles and adapt to different physical abilities.

In recent years I've brought more technologies from the online classroom into my face-to-face teaching, including asynchronous online discussions as well as the use of interactive digital visualizations and collaborative cloud documents, making coursework accessible for students of diverse abilities, income levels, learning styles, and backgrounds. Working at a large public university, I'm experienced engaging with a student body diverse in cultures, privileges, first languages, and readiness levels; I encourage my students to collaborate in teams that constructively use this diversity to dovetail their strengths with others' challenges, and to build each other up. My course evaluations reflect how I treat every student with respect, and make time to get to know them personally, even in large classes. My student-centered classroom is founded on individual respect and universal accessibility, supporting a more free—and fun—learning environment. By demonstrating the joy of academic inquiry and making assignments not just pedagogically sound but also *fun*, my students come to realize that academic inquiry isn't drudgery, but a delight worth pursuing. When students realize that “fun” can be scholarly, they begin to pursue learning from a place of curiosity and joy, which not only makes them better scholars, it makes them more likely to pursue their passion for learning beyond my classroom. I believe education is a process, not a product; how I teach is just as important as what I teach. The most powerful thing I do as a teacher is encouraging students to trust their own wisdom, value their unique perspectives, and speak their minds. My role as an instructor is to step up to empower students—with agency, knowledge, skills—and then to step back to let them find their own way to becoming fellow scholars. In both my teaching and research I am energized by the delight of academic inquiry.

My dissertation, “The Ability to Not-Find: Failure, Memory, and Hope in the American Novel,” examines how failure is constitutive of form in Charles Brockden Brown’s *Wieland*, Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick*, William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying*, and Thomas Pynchon’s *Inherent Vice*. This concept of constitutive failure comes from revisiting Georg Lukács’ foundational text *The Theory of the Novel* and re-translating select passages to recover compound nouns Lukács coined that have been until now lost in translation. While Lukács deploys these terms across his *Theory*, this single sentence in the original German of *Die Theorie des Romans* is key both to his argument about the interrelationship between time and form in the novel and to his terminology: “Nur im Roman, dessen Stoff das Suchen-müssen und das Nicht-finden-Können des Wesens ausmacht, ist die Zeit mit der Form mitgesetzt.” The Bostock translation, which English-speaking scholars have been using since the 1960s, is mostly correct here, aside for the tricky middle with the hyphenated constructions, which bear far more complex connotations than the simple translation of “seeking and failing to find the essence.” Considering the fluidity of meaning for each term, I translate this sentence as “Only in the Novel, whose very substance unveils the imperative-to-see and ability-to-not-find of being, is time posited together with form.” While “Nicht-findern-Können” can also plausibly be read as “the inability to find,” my positive, paradoxical rendering as “the ability to not-find” is more useful for an analysis of novelistic form and temporality. My analysis observes the contaminations and mutations on the level of language within each novel—transformations that serve as traces of the formal effects of time, in particular the temporal forces of memory and hope, which Lukács describes as key “creative forces” essential to novel form. American novels, in particular, have a strange relationship to memory and hope as a result of the nation’s relationship to past and future: a future formerly defined by a now-gone frontier, and a genocidal history that is forcibly forgotten. The residues of the corrosive past and the uncertainty of a coherent national future haunt the content and form of these novels. By exploring diverse methodologies, combining digital humanities methods of computer-assisted reading with the traditional rigor of close reading, my dissertation navigates vital new approaches to literary critique emerging from the “ability to not-find.”

My dissertation work has inspired a few related research projects. I’ll be presenting work at numerous conferences this spring: *SWPACA*, *ALA*, and *Novel Theory*. I’m currently working on an article tracing volcanic depictions of racial violence in Melville’s *Battle-Pieces*, and just beginning exploratory research into memoirs of unmarried female homesteaders of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. I also hope to continue an ongoing collaborative project on roadside “museums” of the American West, which interrogates westerners’ self-depictions of material history. In addition to these American Studies projects, my research also draws upon my background in German Studies and my strengths in comparative literature. My conference presentations on popular culture topics have complemented my teaching, helping students recognize the contemporary resonances and relevancy of literary history as well as the joy of critical analysis.

I love the exchange of ideas across disciplines I’ve experienced at academic conferences and at the Dartmouth Futures of American Studies Institute, which I’ve attended three times. Striving for this kind of interdisciplinary synthesis, I’ve collaborated with colleagues in the Center for English as a Second Language to pair my composition classes with international students for exchange days, and I’ve set up a partnership with a local high school English class to be the “rhetorical audience” for my current composition students’ public writing assignment. As someone who was only able to attend college thanks to a full-ride scholarship and part-time employment in the Federal Work Study program, I understand how vital the community college mission to provide affordable and accessible higher education truly is. I would love to teach in a community college setting, and I would be delighted to interview for this position.

Sincerely,



Carie Schneider

