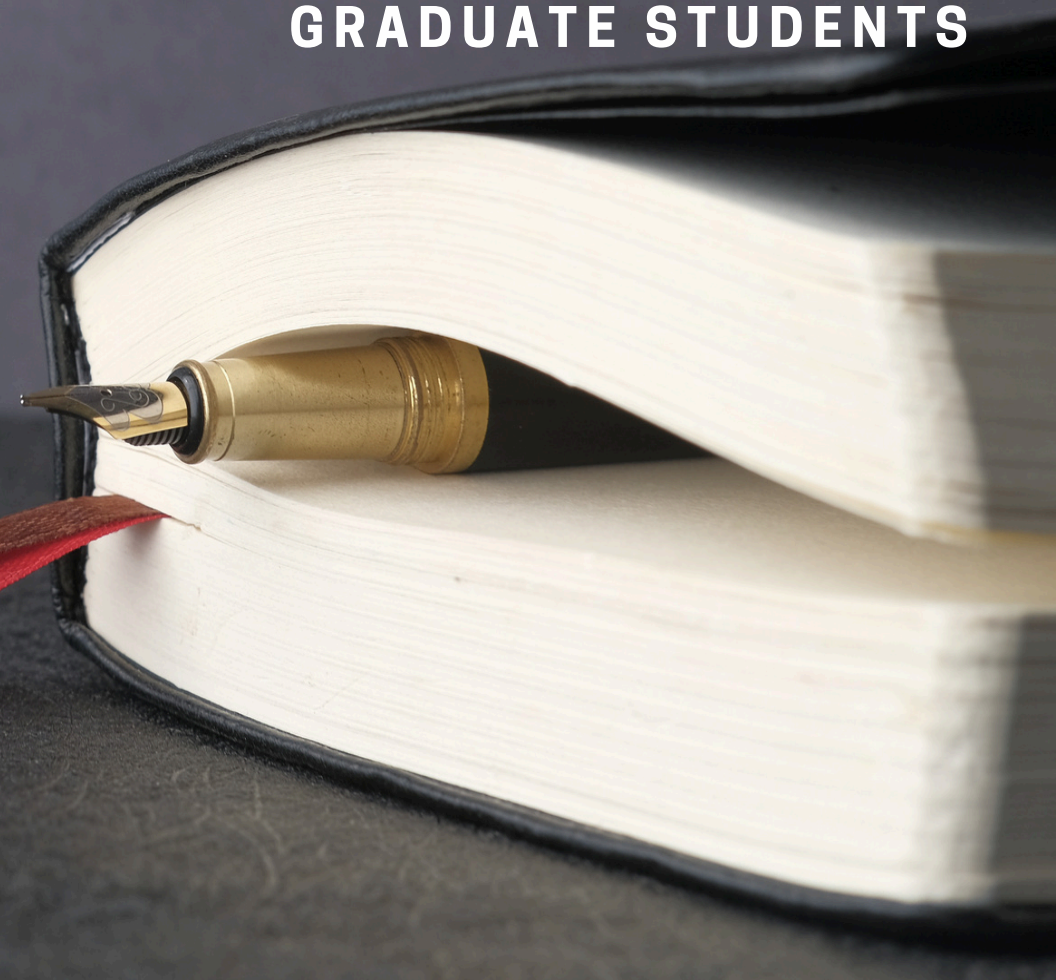




UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH DAKOTA

# DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

2024-2025  
GRADUATE STUDENTS



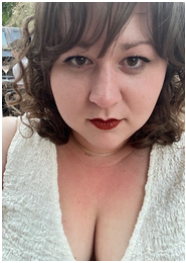


**BEKAH BAHN**  
**(MA-CREATIVE, 2023)**

is a second-year English-Creative Writing master's student from Volga, South Dakota. She received her undergraduate degree in English at USD with a minor in Music and two certifications in Professional Writing and Digital Marketing. She graduated with a Summa Cum Laude distinction.

**NICOLE BIEVER**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2022)**

**JORDAN BIGGERSTAFF**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2021)**



is a third-year PhD student. She earned her bachelor's degree in English from Augustana University in 2018 and graduated with her MA from USD in the spring of 2021. Her areas of interest include contemporary literature, feminist criticism, and revisionist literature. When Jo is not teaching or working on her coursework, she can be found drinking lots of tea and hanging out with Ophelia, her guinea pig.

**JEREMY CHRISTENSEN**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2023)**

grew up in the Black Hills of South Dakota, earning his bachelor's in speech communication and history at Black Hills State University and his master's in communication studies at The University of South Dakota. Since then, he has completed his coursework for the Ph.D. in English at USD.

For the past twenty years Jeremy has served as an instructor of communication and English at both two year and four-



year colleges in states ranging from Wyoming to North Carolina and currently works as a communication instructor at a college in Steubenville,

Ohio. In addition to teaching, he has coached competitive academic debate, built half-a-dozen programs, and coached his teams to multiple national and state championships. His primary areas of interest are popular culture and critical theory with a focus on late-twentieth century literature and the theories of Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. Jeremy has three children and lives with Ashley, his wife, in Weirton, West Virginia.

**KENZI COVEY**  
**(MA-ACCELERATED, 2024)**



**ELIAS JOEL DONSTAD**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2022)**

is a third-year PhD student and 2022-2023 Wolfe scholar. He is also the recipient of the Standing Proud scholarship from Sioux Falls Pride for the 2023-2024 school year. He graduated from USD with his M.A. in English May 2022. His poetry has been published in *Lyrical Iowa* 2019 and 2020, *Bourgeon Magazine*, and *Silent Spark Press's Remarkable Poetry*.

Elias hopes to pursue a poetic project focused on the bodily experience of gender-affirming surgery and community relationships.

**ADEFEMI FAGITE**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2024)**

holds an MFA in Creative Writing from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio where he received the Jordan Goodman Prize for Poetry. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of South Dakota. In 2024 he was nominated for the Best Poets award by Miami University. Adefemi's works explore the themes of displacement, post-colonial identity



and legacy, grief, and immigration. His works have appeared in *Brittle Paper*, *Parousia Magazine*, *The African Writers Review*, *Apex Publishing*, *Ebonylife Media*, *Oriki Podcast*, and elsewhere.



**ALEC FAIMAN**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2023)**

is a second-year Ph.D. student on the creative track. He received his M.A. in English from USD, during which time he was interested in modernist literature. Since then, he's switched to an emphasis in creative writing, where he usually finds himself working in the horror genre, but his long preoccupation with literary fiction pops in now and again.

**ERIN FRINK**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2017)**

**MARY GERAETS**  
**(MA-CREATIVE, 2018)**



**JUSTIN GRAY**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2018)**

completed his B.F.A. at Brooklyn College. He completed his M.A. in creative writing at the University of South Dakota and is now completing his Ph.D. and his creative dissertation, a short story cycle titled *Celebration Palms*, under the direction of Dr. duncan b. barlow at USD. Justin recently presented a paper "Labor, Race, and Oakland: What Sorry to Bother You

Teaches Us About Power of Multicultural Labor Collectivity" at the 2023 Modern Language Association conference in San Francisco. The impressive range of genres in which Justin has published demonstrates both his skills and his interests. His recent publications include a short story "The Outlaws" in *Coming of Age in Florida* (Florida Roots Press 2022) and "The Pact" a one-act play published in *Patchwork Literary Magazine* (Winter 2022). Justin was also recently named as one of two recipients of the inaugural Wayne Weber Graduate Student Scholarly Activity Award from USD.

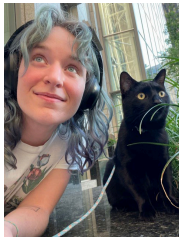
**TALITHA GREAVER**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2023)**



is a PhD student specializing in Creative Writing. Originally from Yankton SD, she earned her MFA in Creative Writing at Minnesota State University, Mankato, and her undergraduate degrees at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. She aims to write hopeful stories, is interested in Fabulism, and dabbles in embroidery in her free time. Her favorite book is *Cosmicomics* by Italo Calvino. She cares for a mischievous cat named Cellar Door.

**AVERY GUESS**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2015)**

**DANIELLE HARMS**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2022)**



**AMELIA HARRINGTON**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2020)**

is a poet from Appalachia living in downtown Omaha, Nebraska where they work as a pilot car driver traveling all over the country, and as a writing consultant on the campuses of Omaha's Metropolitan Community College. Their dissertation in progress is a book of poems called *If You Want to Hear Your Own Blood Rush* orbiting suicide, their mom, and the ecstasy of being.

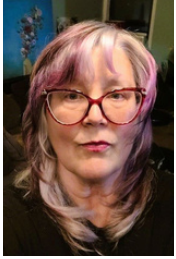
## **ANDRE HAWKINS (MA-CREATIVE, 2022)**

earned his B.A. in English at USD during which he earned scholarships and awards for research, poetry, and writing ability. His B.A. initiated interests in absurdist literature, Shakespearean poetics, and fiction deriving from diasporic identities. He is an aspiring copywriter dabbling in poetry, short fiction, and attempting to learn Italian for his wife with whom he lives in Vermillion, SD.



## **DARLA HITCHCOCK (PHD-CREATIVE, 2022)**

is a certified late bloomer working on a new career at an age when most people think of retirement. She earned her BA in Creative Writing at San Francisco State, her MFA in Writing & Publishing at Vermont College of Fine Arts, a Certificate in Manuscript Preparation at Long Island University in Brooklyn, NY. She is an enrolled member of the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and her work has appeared in *Frontmatter*, *Mono*, and *The Jester*.



## **RIAH HOPKINS (PHD-CREATIVE, 2022)**

is entering her third year in the PhD program as the new circulations manager of the *South Dakota Review*. In Summer '23,

Riah organized the publication of the first issue of *Broken Antler Magazine*, an all-woman run online horror literary journal, with her cohorts in the USD English department and fellow alumna from her

MFA in Writing and Publishing at Vermont College of Fine Arts. Riah is also the art curator of *Canned*, a literary magazine for the off kilter.

Riah's writing interests include American music, obsession, monsters with feelings, loneliness, and dentistry. Her writing has been published by *Hunger Mountain*, *Literary Taxidermy*, *Deep South Magazine*, and *The Gamer*.



## **ELIASU YUSUF IBRAHIM (MA-CRITICAL, 2024)**



is a first-year Master of Art in English - Literature student at the University of South Dakota. He is a Graduate Teaching Assistant at the English Department where he instructs two lower division sections in composition and literature. He graduated with a First-Class Honors Bachelors of Art Degree in English Education from the University of Education, Winneba in the year 2023. He was born and raised in Salaga,

Ghana, West Africa. He likes traveling and interested adapting to new diverse cultures and perspectives.



**ADDISON JENSEN**  
**(MA-CRITICAL, ACCELERATED, 2023)**

is a second-year MA student who graduated with her English Bachelor of Arts in the spring of 2024. Her research interests include translations and adaptations, mythology, and American folklore, the topic of her undergraduate honors thesis. As a graduate student, she hopes to expand her research into screenplays, sci-fi, linguistic anthropology,



horror, and Herman Melville, among other fascinations. She is an ambassador for the College of Fine Arts, involved with the VLP, and a member of Sigma Tau Delta.

**UROOSA KAHN**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2024)**



is pursuing her doctorate with a focus on Postcolonial Literature, South Asian narratives, and the literature of Conflicted and Disputed regions. Her research interests encompass identity politics, nationalism, subaltern identities, Orientalism, and the intersections of surveillance and biopolitics within these territories.

**ELISABETH KLUIN**  
**(MA-ACCELERATED, 2023)**

graduated in the fall of 2023 from the University of South Dakota with her B.A. in History and English. Her research interests include critical theory, Marxist theory, feminist theory, historical criticism, and women and gender studies. Her work has been featured at the Phi Alpha Theta Clayton Miles Lehmann Student History Conference where she won an honorable mention for best undergraduate paper. She has presented at IdeaFest and was selected as the recipient of the Dean Joseph H. Cash Excellence in Writing Award. She eagerly looks forward to presenting her writing and serving on the War and Society panel for the Northern Great Plains History Conference in the Fall of 2024. She is active on campus in numerous clubs and organizations and helps eager writers at the USD Writing Center. Elisabeth's words are often featured in The Volante. She was selected as a member of the President's Senior Leadership Institute where she strengthened her skills as a learner and leader. Furthermore, her work as a digital archivist for the Civil War Reconstruction Governor's of Mississippi has offered her the opportunity to delve further into her interests as a historian. Additionally, Elisabeth serves as a Music Instructor for Brandon Valley's Marching Lynx. She will graduate from the Accelerated Master's program in the Spring of 2025 and intends to pursue a PhD in History.



**DERRIC LUDENS**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2016)**

**COURT LUDWICK (SHE/ THEY)  
(PHD-CREATIVE, 2022)**

is the author of *These Strange Bodies* (ELJ Editions, 2024) and the founding editor-in-chief of *Broken Antler Magazine*. Her writing has been nominated for Best of the Net and the Pushcart Prize, and can be found in *EPOCH*, *Denver Quarterly*, *Variant Literature*, *Stonecoast Review*, *Oxford Magazine*, *Full House Literary*, *West Trade Review*, and elsewhere. Court's art



has shown at the Louise Hopkins Underwood Center for the Arts, and she has visual work in *Zaum Magazine*, *Bleating Thing Magazine*, and *body fluids*. She is the recipient of a 2024 Sioux Falls Arts Council Artist Grant, and she has taught workshops on hybrid writing and experimental form, most recently for *The Dakota Writing Project* and *Vermillion Literacy Project*. Court has an MA from Texas Tech University and is a current PhD student at the University of South Dakota. She is currently at work on her second book, a creative-critical project about bones, memory, and mommy issues.

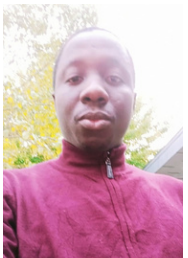
**SAMUEL MINLAH  
(MA-CRITICAL, 2024)**



Nationality: Ghanaian  
Previous University: University of Education, Winneba (BA English)  
Interest: The Intersection of Postcoloniality and Ecocriticism  
Hobbies: Drawing/ Painting, Hiking, Dabbling in Poetry

**BOSSMAN ODURO  
(MA-CRITICAL, 2024)**

**EZEKIEL OLUFAYO  
(PHD-CRITICAL, 2024)**



is a first year PhD student in Literary Studies: Critical. He holds degrees in English Studies (B. A.) at Adekunle Ajasin University and Literature-in-English (M. A.) at the University of Ilorin. He has taught literary appreciation and criticism in both secondary and post-secondary levels in Nigeria. Ezekiel specializes in intersecting postcolonial literature with the urban space and evaluating the poetics of African Hip Hop Music as well as the poetry of football commentary. He published the article: "Cannibalistic and Pornographic Images of Lagos City in Toni Kan's *The Carnivorous City*" in 2022.

**KATIE PIPER**  
**(MA-CREATIVE WRITING, 2023)**

is a second-year graduate student studying English with a specialization in Creative Writing. She believes English is a way to teach critical thinking and perspective. After getting her teaching credentials from the University of Idaho she taught these foundations in her classrooms.



**KATHERINE PRICE**  
**(PHD-CRITICAL, 2024)**

holds a Master of Music from the University of Oregon. A soprano, she specializes in art song, a subgenre of Western vocal literature in which composers craft musical settings of pre-existing poems. In the Ph.D., she will study primarily post-1800 poetry and its relationship to the body of English-language art song as well as that in other languages. She can be found performing periodically in local venues, and is featured on two albums (2022, and forthcoming 2024), available on Mark Records. Katherine is currently serving her third term on the Vermillion city council and works as Assistant Dean of Arts & Sciences at USD.



**CAITLYN ROSS**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2024)**

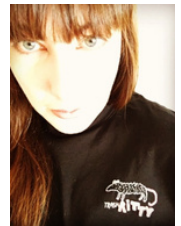
**KARLI TOKALA ROUSE**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2020)**

comes from the Ihanktonwan Dakota Oyate, was born in the Sandhills of western Nebraska and raised in Las Vegas. She earned her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2020 and is going into her final year as a PhD candidate at USD. In addition to teaching composition and literature courses, she has also served as a GAA with Native Student Services and was awarded a second year as the Pre-Doctoral Fellow with the Institute of American Indian Studies while she works to complete her dissertation.



**AMELIA SAINT (SHE/HER)**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2021)**

is a fourth-year creative track PhD student whose current literary hyperfixations include comics and any kind of writing that explores gender and neurodiversity. She is an instructor at Briar Cliff University in Sioux City, Iowa, where she lives with her partner, children, and various animal friends.





## **HUSSEIN SANOOH** **(PHD-CRITICAL, 2021)**

is originally from Baghdad, Iraq. He received his B.A. in English from BHSU and his M.A. in English literature from SDSU. As a poststructuralist, his interest is in subject formation. Influenced by Michel Foucault, he wants to investigate and examine how British Victorian discourses and ideologies form and shape Victorian subjects and literature. He goes by Sanooh.



## **TAYA SAZAMA** **(PHD-CRITICAL, 2018)**

holds a B.A. in English and Secondary Education from the University of Sioux Falls and a M.A. in English from the University of St. Thomas. Before beginning her doctoral work, she taught four years of high school English in South Dakota and is now entering her fifth year as a Ph.D. candidate on the critical track at the University of South Dakota. Her academic interests focus largely on 18th- and 19th-century British Literature with an emphasis on marriage, courtship, education, and reader reception, though she also enjoys popular culture studies, the Romance genre, and television and film adaptations. In May of 2020, Taya received the Emily Haddad Graduate Student Teaching Award from the University of South Dakota. Her review of Karen Bourrier's Victorian Bestseller: *The Life of Dinah Craik* appeared in the 2021 spring issue of *Victorian Periodicals Review*. Recently, she co-organized a panel at NEMLA entitled "The Popularity of Feminist Storytelling" where she also presented her joint research project "Feminist Storytelling and the Legacy of Jane Austen."

## **BENTLEY SNOW** **(PHD-CREATIVE, 2021)**

is a fourth-year PhD student in creative writing. He began braiding essays instinctively in an attempt to navigate some existential angst, and he kept braiding them because doing so led him to agree with GK Chesterton: to paraphrase, "poetry promotes sanity." To Bentley, in other words, the poetry of braided essays isn't just beautiful, it's epistemologically satisfying. He plans to write a collection of personal essays on stuff like this for his dissertation.



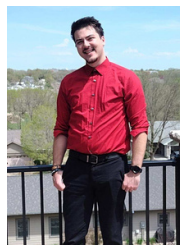
## **STEPHEN SNYDER** **(PHD-CRITICAL, 2021)**

is a third-year Ph.D. student at University of South Dakota and a fulltime Lecturer of English at South Dakota State University. He graduated in 2014 with an M.A. from South Dakota State University after defending his thesis "From Novel of Ideas to Pop Phenomenon: The Transmission of Atlas Shrugged into Popular Culture", a text that focused on Rand's widespread influence in both popular culture and rightwing populism. Areas of interest include 19th and 20th century American

Literature with a strong focus on interdisciplinary approach to literature. Additional scholarly interests include the American Renaissance, philosophy and literature, popular culture and media studies, African American literature, and American political history. His most recent research (and the eventual focus of his dissertation) focuses on the political novel (especially within dystopia fiction) and its influence on anti-government, anti-authority politics in America. Stephen has presented original scholarship at regional, national, and international conferences, and his awards includes the 2011 recipient for outstanding teaching assistant and the 2022 university-wide award for online teaching. He has taught courses in Composition, Literature, Technical Writing, and Diversity and Global Citizenship.

**MIKE SPEEGLE**  
**(PHD-CREATIVE, 2021)**

holds an MFA in Creative Writing and Popular Fiction and is a PhD candidate on the creative track. His area of research centers around the queer experience in agricultural communities with a focus on Northern California in the post-Bracero years. Mike was selected as USD's 2021/2022 Wolfe Scholar and received the Knutson Award for playwriting in 2022. He currently serves as circulations manager for South Dakota Review and in an arcane capacity at USD's Center for Teaching and Learning.



**ETHAN STONE**  
**(MA-CRITICAL, 2023)**

is a second-year M.A. Student, having completed his undergraduate studies in the spring of 2023 at the University of South Dakota and earning a B.A. in English (Creative Writing) and a B.S. in Biology (Conservation and Biodiversity). He is currently studying the aesthetics of feminism and women writers in early Gothic literature. He is originally from Broken Arrow, OK, but has since moved many, many times. He is expanding his musical tastes but finds his home in acoustic guitar. In his fleeting free time, he enjoys painting, playing video games, and writing stories for D&D characters he'll never use.

**ANNA VAN HOLLAND**  
**(MA-CRITICAL, 2023)**

is a second year MA student. She grew up in Vermillion and completed her BA in English from USD in 2023. Her research interests include literary criticism, aesthetics, and feminism. When she isn't studying or teaching, she enjoys hiking, traveling, or hanging out with her cat, Holly.



# 2025 EMILY HADAD GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD

THE EMILY HADAD GRADUATE TEACHING AWARD RECOGNIZES OVERALL EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND A DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT TO STUDENT LEARNING. APPLICATIONS WILL BE REVIEWED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTY AND WILL BE EVALUATED ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA: PERFORMANCE WITHIN AND BEYOND THE CLASSROOM (MEASURED BY COVER LETTER, AND IDEA SCORES / COMMENTS); ARTICULATION OF PEDAGOGICAL METHODS AND AIMS; COURSE ORGANIZATION AND ASSIGNMENT DESIGN; EVIDENCE OF COMMITMENT TO STUDENTS' INTELLECTUAL GROWTH AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS. ALL GRADUATE INSTRUCTORS ARE INVITED TO APPLY.

**DEADLINE: MARCH 15TH, 2025**

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# 2025 WAYNE WEBER GRADUATE STUDENT SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY AWARD

*Recognizing graduate students' scholarly activity, in all the realms of graduate student work.*

EACH YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH HONORS A GRADUATE STUDENT WHOSE ENGAGEMENT IN THE TRIPARTITE GOALS OF THE DEPARTMENT RISES TO AN EXCEPTIONAL LEVEL. CONSIDERATIONS ARE BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED ON THE ANNUAL REVIEW FORM (DUE IN EARLY SPRING) AS WELL AS THE STUDENT'S SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES INCLUDING PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS, ENGAGEMENT WITH PEDAGOGICAL QUESTIONS, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE DEPARTMENT ACTIVITIES.

**CURRENT ENGLISH GRADUATE STUDENTS ARE AUTOMATICALLY CONSIDERED FOR THIS AWARD THROUGH THEIR TIMELY SUBMISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT TO THE APPROPRIATE DROP BOX ON THE GRADUATE PROGRAM D2L PAGE.**

**DEADLINE: JANUARY 17TH, 2025**

*This award is named for Mr. Wayne Weber, who generously provided a substantial gift to support English graduate education. Mr. Weber was a 1951 graduate of the college of A&S with a major in English. Mr. Weber spent his life career as a teacher in California, teaching in Madeira, Klamath and Crescent Elk, where he taught for 27 years before retiring in 1958. He also taught English and writing classes at College of the Redwoods- Del Norte for eight years, as well as serving on the college's advisory board for several years. The Department of English is deeply grateful for Mr. Weber's support of graduate education.*

# DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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