New English Department Faculty

Afsane Rezaei

Afsane Rezaei joins the Department as an Assistant Professor. Afsane holds a PhD from the Department of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University, and an MA from the Western Kentucky University Folk Studies program. Her interdisciplinary research in Comparative Studies brings together the study of gender and folklore, anthropology of the Middle East, and vernacular religion, with an emphasis on women’s social spaces of vernacular religiosity. Her MA thesis, which focused on new forms of political joke-telling in Persian-speaking social media, was published as an article in *New Directions in Folklore* (2017). Her future projects include an investigation of the use of digital media for the emergence and transmission of political folk expressions (e.g. joke, memes, and rumors), particularly in non-democratic contexts.

Lianna Manibog

Lianna Manibog, who joins the Department as a Lecturer, received her Master’s in English from Brigham Young University in 2018. Lianna most recently taught composition, rhetoric, research, and literature at Snow College, where she also served as the Equity Initiative Coordinator and the Faculty Development Coordinator. In combining these two coordinator roles, Lianna has dedicated herself to providing support to traditionally marginalized students by engaging faculty in equity-focused professional development. In her interview, Lianna described how she integrates metacognition, discovery-based learning, collaboration, and community into the teaching of composition, specifically to acknowledge the strengths and needs of students most marginalized in academia.

Jeremy Ricketts

Jeremy Ricketts joins the Department as a Lecturer. Jeremy received his Ph.D. in American Studies from the University of New Mexico in 2011. He has taught first-year composition, expository writing, argument and analysis, and film and literature for the past nine years at several institutions. He comes to us from Bethel University in Tennessee, where he taught a six-six course load while continuing to emphasize student conferences, revision-based feedback, and classroom community. In his interview, Jeremy highlighted how rhetoric and composition can be a force for doing good in the world. To put this idea into practice, he designed an identity-based writing sequence where students ask a series of questions that move them from personal research to community research, and he includes diverse readings in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and age to emphasize how all students and authors have a voice and important messages to share with their audiences.

Cree Taylor

Cree Taylor joins the Department as a Lecturer. Cree received her Master’s in English from Utah State University in May 2020. Cree’s thesis research focuses on incorporating and analyzing readings by authors of color as a way to frame discussions of race and equity in the classroom, concepts that she has applied in her English 1010 & 2010 classes here at USU. Cree served admirably as our Graduate Assistant Director of Composition, where she mentored new graduate instructors, provided pedagogical feedback, and designed curriculum focused on the connections between composition, language, and power. In her interview, Cree described her pedagogical framework as an engaged pedagogy, where students and teachers work together to establish a community, empower student voices, and value diverse experiences.

Ashley Wells

Ashley Wells, who joins the Department as a Lecturer, received her Master of Fine Arts degree from California State University, Fresno, in 2012. She has taught first-year composition, rhetoric, research, gender & cultural studies, and literature for the past seven years at a variety of institutions. Ashley comes to us from Iowa State University, where in addition to teaching, she collaborated with the writing center, coordinated
professional development for the composition program, and worked extensively on first-generation equity initiatives. In her interview, Ashley described how she uses multimodal texts and assignments, such as comics and podcasts, to build community, engage students in authentic writing contexts, and allow for dialogue on power and privilege in the classroom.

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