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## WAC REPORT Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) 2023 Summer Institute

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# WAC REPORT

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## Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) 2023 Summer Institute

*Jonathan Shirland, John Mulrooney (WAC Coordinators),  
and Sean McPherson (Outgoing Coordinator)*

**F**rom August 21 to August 24, 18 BSU professors representing 13 departments gathered on campus for the 2023 Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) Summer Institute. The institute is the flagship event for WAC and a much-valued professional development opportunity for faculty. Diverse writing projects are developed during the institute through small working groups facilitated by the WAC coordinators; participants have time every day to write a significant section of their project, which is then shared within the working group for peer review. The opportunity to receive feedback and perspectives from fellow academics who are often from outside one's own discipline is invariably of great benefit as the projects develop towards publication; just as valuable is the sense of community, accountability, and collegiality the week generates among faculty from across our colleges. This report therefore publicizes the range of scholarly endeavors pursued by BSU faculty to a wider audience.

WAC as a pedagogical movement began in the late 1970s with roots both in the United States and the United Kingdom and is widely considered one of the longest standing curricula reform movements in higher education. Its aim is to help foster writing pedagogies across the entire university curriculum as well as to provide opportunities for faculty development and support for writing. The WAC Program at BSU was initiated in 2007 by Michelle Cox and has grown through the stewardship

of subsequent coordinators from various departments. Two guiding WAC principles are that writing remains a vital tool for thinking and learning and that writing is a form of social behavior that creates academic communities. The 2023 Summer Institute generated compelling verification of both of these beliefs. We thank everyone who participated and look forward to working with more faculty from across the BSU community in the coming academic year.

## 2023 WAC Summer Institute Projects:

**Halina Adams  
(English)**

*Olivia and Sarah: Resurrecting Black Women's Anger*

The anonymously penned novel, *The Woman of Colour* (1808), tells the story of Olivia Fairfield, the daughter of a plantation owner and enslaved woman, who travels to England to marry her cousin in order to secure her inheritance. My project examines Olivia's anger at the racism and pro-slavery attitudes she encounters in Britain through the joint contexts of the objectification of women like the Khokhoi captive Sarah Baartman and white female abolitionists' use of anger in their poetry and objects associated with the material culture of anti-slavery movements.

**Jessica Birthisel  
(Communication Studies)**

*"What in 'The Matrix' hell?" The possibilities and problematics of contemporary animated films that take young audiences 'into' the internet*

This qualitative textual analysis explores four recent animated films in which characters travel into the internet, exploring how these digital spaces are portrayed (including the anthropomorphization of digital concepts such as computer viruses and algorithms). The project asks: how do fictionalized media texts communicate digital concepts to an audience of children, and what are the implications of these representations for children's digital media literacy and attitudes toward internet culture more broadly?

**Christine Brandon  
(Geological Sciences)**

*Nesting site selection by Northern Diamondback Terrapins*

For this project, I am preparing a paper to submit to a conservation biology journal at the end of December.

The paper describes the results of my research into the environmental factors that Northern Diamondback Terrapins (*Malaclemys terrapin terrapin*) use to select favorable locations to lay their eggs.

**Adam Brieske-Ulenski  
(Elementary and Early  
Childhood Education)**

*The Clinical Literacy Coaching Framework*  
I am working on an eight-chapter book about a framework I developed for literacy coaching in K-12 public schools. During the WAC writing institute, I was able to focus on writing chapter two of my book proposal and get feedback about how to make it more interactive. As a result, the chapter better reflects a higher level of engagement among my potential readers than before.

**Todd Harris  
(Management)**

*Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Major League Baseball: A Contemporary Analysis of a Historical Organizational Change*  
On April 15th, 1947, Brooklyn Dodgers' first-baseman Jackie Robinson became the first Black Major League Baseball player in the modern era. My project examines the case of Jackie Robinson and the integration of the Brooklyn Dodgers' baseball team as an example of successful organizational change. This analysis looks to better understand why this organizational change occurred and how barriers to the change were overcome.

**James Hayes-Bohanan  
(Geography)**

*Amazon Deforestation in Lula's Encore*  
This project examines the environmental geography of deforestation in the Brazilian portion of the Amazon rain forest in the context of dramatic political currents at the regional, national, and global scales. During the institute, I completed my presentation for an upcoming geography conference and made significant progress on a draft for publication in a geographic journal.

**Inkyoung Kim  
(Political Science)**

*Book Review on Global Environmental Politics: The Transformative Role of Emerging Economies (2022) by Johannes Urpelainen.*

This book review introduces an important book that expands the horizon of global environmental politics shedding light on the growing roles of emerging economies. It highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the author's theoretical and empirical analysis on the relationship between international political economy and global environmental politics.

to reveal a Western bias in intervention selectivity. At the WAC summer institute, I made substantial edits to my introduction chapter and my main case study chapter on the Kosovo Crisis, thanks to the superb feedback of my colleagues.

**Hannarae Lee  
(Criminal Justice)**

*State-Sponsored Financial Theft between 2015 and 2020: Their Ramification and Impact on Cryptocurrency.*

This study stems from my previous work evaluating ransomware, bitcoin prices, and terrorism cases. This time, I focused on state-sponsored ransomware



Faculty gathering for a review session at the WAC Summer Institute. Photo: John Mulrooney.

**Sidita Kushi  
(Political Science)**

*From Kosovo to Darfur: Why Military Humanitarianism Favors the West*  
My book offers the first regionally-sensitive analysis of humanitarian military intervention patterns since the end of the Cold War, using both statistical analysis and qualitative narratives

attacks and their ramifications and impact on cryptocurrency.

**Boriana Marintcheva  
(Biological Sciences)**

*Lessons from HIV*  
The summer WAC institute provided the gift of time and collegial feedback that allowed me to write an article for *Bridgewater Review*. My project tracks

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the advances in understanding HIV biology that allowed our society to establish a clear path to HIV eradication even though we do not have a HIV cure or vaccine.

**Vignon Oussa  
(Mathematics)**

My project involves writing an article that showcases the application of a powerful tool in mathematics known as frame theory. This tool solves concrete

in better understanding the role plants have in fish biology, lake health, and ultimately increased fishing success.

**James Pearson  
(Philosophy)**

*A Series of Envatted Brains*

The skeptic describes an outlandish possibility – that an evil demon is systematically deceiving us about what the world is really like, or that we are brains trapped in a vat being manipulated by

culture in which they live, and yet they have learned to creatively subvert these gender binary expectations to be able to flourish and thrive.

**Shelagh Smith  
(English)**

Set in a New England lighthouse, *MEREN* is a supernatural coming-of-age novel exploring a young woman's sexuality amidst the mystery of her mother's death. As she explores the circumstances of her mother's passing, Meren comes to realize the death of her mother is actually tied to the centuries-old folklore of mermaids, selkies, and sirens.

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problems in representing and preserving data collected on physical objects. The paper explores a solution to the following problem: Given data on a surface (such as the intensity of light on the surface of a telescope's lens, data related to conductivity at every point inside a crystal, or even the temperature at various locations on the surface of a hot stove) that is modeled as a function over a manifold, how can this data be encoded in a manner that is robust against erasure?

**Donald Padgett  
(Biological Sciences)**

*An Angler's Guide to Lake Vegetation*

I am writing a book-length field guide to assist recreational fishers in identifying the plants they may encounter in ponds and lakes. The book will serve as a resource to better identify the plants and also use the plants to their benefit

an advanced scientist – and challenges the philosopher to explain how we can know their scenario is false. At the institute, I distinguished and articulated a range of envatted brain cases to demonstrate that, while some are philosophically intractable, others may be answered by appealing to semantic externalism – the view that the content of our thoughts and utterances is fixed, in part, by what causes us to think and say what we do.

**Joseph Schwab  
(Psychology)**

*Flourishing in a binary world: The creation of transgender alternative narratives*

This psychological research study investigates how American transgender emerging adults have experienced gender throughout their lives. The results from their life-story interviews indicate they have experienced marginalization from the gender binary



*Jonathan Shirland is Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Art History.*



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