

April 2021

The English Aggie



congrats

GRADS

Meet a few of our soon-to-be graduates from the Department of English! Congratulations to all of the English graduates, and good luck on all of your future endeavors.



“TAMU’s English program has taught me important communication, critical thinking, and problem solving skills that I already use on a daily basis.”

Caylie Evans ‘21

During her time with the Department of English, Caylie worked with Dr. Sara DiCaglio on a bibliography of literature inspired by COVID-19. She also enjoyed Dr. Marcela Fuentes’ creative writing class in which she formed friendships that eventually led to a new student organization, the Writers’ Ring. After graduation, Caylie will attend City, University of London’s English M.A. program and eventually wants to become a professor.

“I plan to use my English degree after graduation to share the joy of reading to others, especially with children and young adults. If there was one thing I learned while pursuing my English degree, it would be that although some may not love to read, they can identify with people’s stories, and no story is not worth sharing.”

Marilou Garcia ‘21

Marilou’s favorite part about being an English major at Texas A&M was being able to interact with other English majors who also love reading and writing. After graduation, she plans to attend Emerson College, pursuing a MFA in popular fiction and publishing degree. She hopes to become an editor or literary agent and wants to publish her own books sometime in the future.



Taylor Pike '21

Taylor worked as a writer for 12thMan.com, and as the writer and editor of the student-athlete newsletter for student-athlete engagement. She received a 2020 Gordone Award for poetry as an undergraduate. Taylor plans to pursue a Master's of English at the University of Arkansas to pursue a book editing career with a publishing firm, but she is also considering earning a PhD in English and becoming a professor.



Leah Renae Blume '21

As an undergraduate English major, Leah enjoyed her creative writing classes the most. She now plans to become an author after she graduates.



“Around the start of 2020, I decided to take a creative writing class. It gave me enough confidence to express my creativity and share stories I plan to publish someday after I graduate.”

Jordan Kobty '21

As an undergrad, Jordan interned at Whitaker Chalk Swindle and Schwartz PLLC, preparing for a future career in law. Jordan's favorite experience was the ENGL 491 research project. After graduation, Jordan is planning to attend law school.

Lauren Parrish '21

Lauren's plans after graduation are to attend Texas A&M's College of Education and earn a Master's in Curriculum and Instruction to teach high school English.



The Cushing Memorial Library & Archives houses one of the largest science fiction and fantasy special collections in the world.

Something For Everyone

Through its notably large Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection, Cushing Memorial Library & Archives strives to curate stories, memories, and histories by all, for all.

You're struck first by the sword. Then, the dagger. Then, the brief synopsis of a relevant *Game of Thrones* passage. As most students will recognize, this is the entrance to the Cushing Memorial Library & Archives. Much fewer will know that the *Game of Thrones* paraphernalia represents only a tiny piece of Cushing's exceptionally comprehensive science fiction and fantasy special

collection. There's so much more to be discovered—and yes, you can touch, hold, and turn the pages of all of it.

The Cushing Memorial Library & Archives frequently partners with the Department of English to raise awareness of science fiction and fantasy through author events, writing contests, and symposiums. Through its science fiction and fantasy special collection, Cushing

0468

documents the science fiction and fantasy narrative through time. The special collection is one of the largest of its kind in the world. Most students know the collection for its extensive accumulation of *Game of Thrones* items, gifted to Cushing by George R.R. Martin.

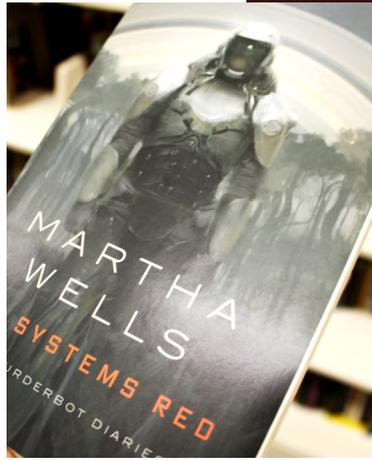
When the collection was first created about 40 years ago, science fiction, a frequently underestimated and misunderstood genre, did not have an obvious place within Texas A&M or the Department of English. Now, numerous English faculty members specialize in science fiction or fantasy, and students are able to concentrate in science fiction within the English major. Jeremy Brett, Associate Professor and Curator of Cushing's Science Fiction and Fantasy Research Collection, wants to bring awareness to the genre as an important field of study as well as a source of entertainment and escape.

"The collection is a huge well of intellectual resources for students to draw on for their work, and of course, it's a source of entertainment. The more we make people aware of it, the more they will come in and just sit with the materials and read them all day, which you are allowed to do. We want to give that opportunity to students," Brett said.

As part of Cushing's efforts to raise awareness of its collection and science fiction and fantasy scholarship, Brett wants to make Cushing as approachable as possible and combat the misconception that access to the special collection is restricted.

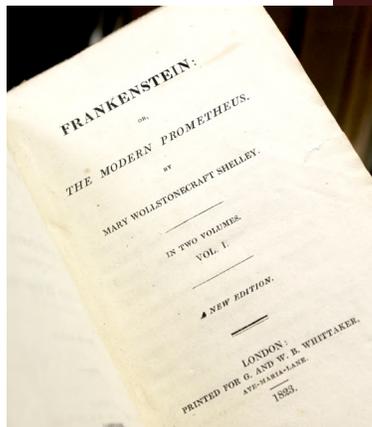
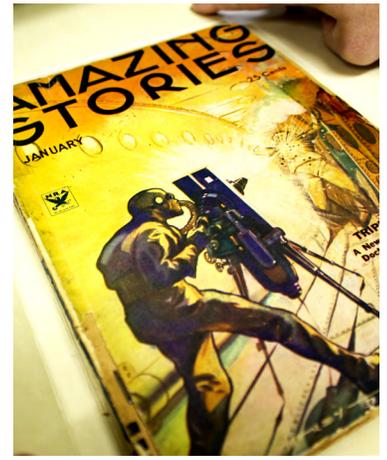
"Our goal is to give the collection more of a welcoming environment," Brett said. "Academic libraries, and especially special collections, have this closed off atmosphere, like they're restricted and nobody's allowed in them. This is stuff we want people to use. We want people to sit and have conversations with these materials and to realize there's value in them."

To access the materials, students can request an item from the collection through the LibCat system for published materials or the Archon system (archon.library.tamu.edu) for archival materials,



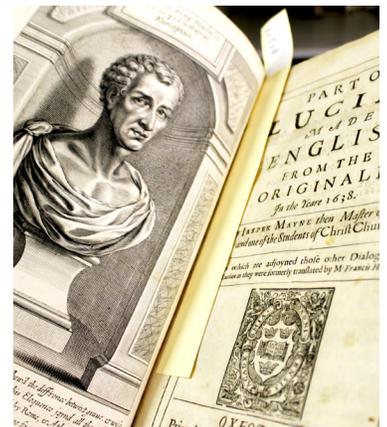
A book by Martha Wells, a resident of the Bryan/College Station area and an Aggie.

Sci-fi fans would buy "pulp" magazines made from wood pulp to read short science fiction stories.



A second edition of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, one of the first science fiction novels.

Collection of works of Lucian of Samosata (2nd century CE), translated into English by Jasper Mayne and published in 1664; one of the oldest pieces in the collection.



visit Cushing on main campus, and sit with the materials for as long as they like. Most of the books, magazines, and related items—including those that date back as far as the 1600s—can be handled by students. Brett stressed that within the stacks, there's something for everyone.

"There are things in the special collections that are going to interest everybody. There's gonna be something for everyone out there," Brett said. "Every story in the science fiction and fantasy collection meant something to somebody at the time that it came out, not just the author. Somebody read that book, and somebody found joy in it. It's important to me—it's important to all of us—that there's a story here for everybody."

There are more than 50,000 items in the science fiction and fantasy collection at Cushing library.





Editor's Note: The Aggie Network (It's Real)

While interviewing for The English Aggie articles, I got to experience the power of the Aggie Network. It's a lesson that I wish I had learned sooner, and I won't soon forget.

While working as the Communications Intern for the Department of English, I knew I would learn more about social media management, writing, and communications, but I didn't know that I would also learn about the writing culture at Amazon, or about the rhetoric of space, or even how to publish a book (both works of fiction and critical books). Interviewing for the articles that I would eventually publish in the monthly newsletter, I had the opportunity to access an amazing Aggie network and learn from many Aggies that came before me. I was impressed by the great work former students had accomplished, and the promising career paths they now found themselves pursuing. Because I tapped into this network, I feel more prepared for life after graduation and the opportunities available to those that studied English at Texas A&M.

Even though the Communications Internship introduced me to this network and pushed me to establish those connections, I wish I had started reaching out sooner. I tried to convey the lessons I learned from each interview in the articles

that I wrote for the newsletter, but there's no replacement for the real thing. I have so much knowledge that I wish I had known as a junior seeking an internship, or even as a freshman starting in college.

I highly encourage everyone, regardless of your major, classification, or career prospects, to reach out to the Aggie network. Have a job interview? Ask an Aggie in a similar job for their advice. Want to know the best way to make the most of your time at A&M? Ask a former student from your major. I can virtually guarantee that they will not only be willing to talk to you, but they will also be excited to share any information and advice they have with you.

Networking can be hard, and unappealing at times. In my experience, connecting with your Aggie network is completely different than the awkward luncheons or overwhelming networking dinners that usually come to mind when you think of "networking." It's usually just a conversation with someone who genuinely wants to help, and you never know what you might learn or gain from that experience.



CONGRATS

ENGLISH RESEARCH ESSAY CONTEST

DR. STANLEY L. ARCHER MEMORIAL AWARD

RHETORIC AND DISCOURSE STUDIES ESSAY CONTEST

ENGLISH FACULTY GRADUATING SENIOR AWARD

CHARLES GORDONE AWARDS FOR CREATIVE WRITING

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY CREATIVE WRITING CONTEST

ENGLISH AWARD RECIPIENTS

AWARDS CEREMONY

Wednesday, April 21

4:00 - 5:00 PM

Learn more at <https://liberalarts.tamu.edu/english/>



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Department of
English

Share Your Story!

Tag us in your post
@theenglishaggie

Use our hashtag
#theenglishaggie

Want to share your work?
Email EnglishAggieStories@gmail.com

Follow us!



englishaggie.blogspot.com



facebook.com/TheEnglishAggie



[@theenglishaggie](https://www.instagram.com/theenglishaggie)



[@theenglishaggie](https://twitter.com/theenglishaggie)



EnglishAggieStories@gmail.com



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Department of
English

This publication is brought to you by:
Texas A&M Department of English

Editor: Sarah Roberts '21

