Writing Instruction and Essay Awards Announced
April 29, 2015

The English Department, SAGES, and the Writing Program are pleased to recognize this year’s winners of teaching awards and student writing prizes.

The Jessica Melton Perry Award for Distinguished Teaching in Disciplinary & Professional Writing* recognizes outstanding instruction in writing in professional fields and/or disciplines other than English.

This year’s winner is Ricardo Apostol, Assistant Professor of Classics. Dr. Apostol's research and teaching interests blend theoretical approaches to the literature of Augustan Rome with contemporary re-imaginings of the ancient world in literature, philosophy, and film. In an undergraduate Classics major, coursework is largely comprised of advanced language courses – sites that might be prone to drills and exercises and little extended research and writing. Not so for Dr. Apostol's courses, where he assigns a research paper to complement his instruction in Latin and Greek. "The twist," he writes, "is that the students write the paper through the course of the semester, in close consultation with me, over multiple drafts, with constant feedback that they cannot ignore."

Dr. Apostol’s students will attest to the truth of this statement – they praise his consistent and valuable feedback. More significantly, they frame their work with Dr. Apostol as collaborative. One student nominator writes: “My writing improves tenfold anytime I have the privilege to work with him.” Another suggests that “his criticisms are always constructive and given in a collegial spirit.” Dr. Apostol is described by departmental colleagues as "a first-rate mentor" who guides his students as they tackle advanced topics and enables them to contribute their knowledge while also “discovering their own voices.” His students – both undergraduate and graduate – have gone on to present their work at academic conferences, often at the suggestion of Dr. Apostol. His students describe with gratitude the guidance and encouragement that helped them develop as scholars and writers.

* The Jessica Melton Perry Award was established in 2009 by Edward S. Sadar, M.D. (ADL ’64, SOM ’68), & Melinda Melton Sadar (FSM ’66) in honor of Melinda’s mother, who worked in the Center for Documentation and Communication Research at Western Reserve University from the late 1950s into the late 1960s.
The SAGES Excellence in Writing Instruction Award recognizes outstanding commitment to and success in teaching academic writing to Case Western Reserve University undergraduates in SAGES.

This year, the winner is **Amy Absher**, SAGES Fellow and Lecturer in the department of History. Dr. Absher’s students use strong language when they describe her teaching: “LOVE her forever!” and “She’s just a perfect teacher!” They also use two adjectives repeatedly: *passionate* and *patient*. These two qualities are evident in the ways she designs her courses and the writing projects students complete. Final papers are written over the course of five (or more) drafts; students sit with Dr. Absher and discuss the papers in terms of writers’ choices and decisions. Whether it is in a classroom or in individual conferences, one colleague describes Dr. Absher as having “the verve and vivacity [to make] the process of inquiry and learning a real treat for students.”

Her students agree – and they consider themselves her students for life. One writes: “I still contact her for help…I credit her…for being such an integral part of my four years at CWRU.” Another former student writes: “she wanted to make sure that each student received quality attention and guidance...she was the best SAGES teacher I had because of her academic insight and altruistic concern for students.”

The WRC Excellence in Consulting Award recognizes outstanding writing instruction for students of the University and exemplary service to the Writing Resource Center during the academic year.

This year, the winner is **Wells Addington**, Lecturer in the department of English. Wells’ philosophy of consulting in the WRC is based on providing students with lasting writing instruction. He writes that in the WRC, his “pedagogical concerns transcend any single document” and the conversations that he has with students focus on skills that are not only directly applicable to the immediate text, but also to future writing projects.

Wells’ students clearly appreciate his focus on them as individual writers and student comments emphasize the ways in which he respects their concerns and the integrity of their efforts. As one student who nominated Wells for this award wrote:

“I always make a point of trying to see [Wells} when I visit the WRC[....] He always offers very productive feedback about the content and organization of the paper, rather than getting hung up on altering my personal writing style. He realizes that we are all unique writers, and our styles will not be exactly the same, but that we all have valuable things to say. I am so grateful for his
guidance. Additionally, Wells is just a super awesome person in general and he makes his consulting sessions fun!

The SAGES First and University Seminar Essay Prizes recognize the best writing that students produce in their First and University Seminars. These essays are chosen from those nominated by SAGES seminar leaders each semester.

The University Seminar Awards are judged in September – and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing in December of each year. The winners for Academic Year 2013-2014 are:

**Emma Bardwell** for her essay “#Jan25: Social Media as a Tool for Revolution” written for USNA 286X (“The Future of News”) led by William Doll and Arielle Zibrak.

**Spencer Burton** for his essay “Invisible Wounds of the Lioness: Mental Trauma of Modern War for Female Combatants” written for USSY 290G (“Women & Warfare: Reality & Representation”) led by Ravenel Richardson and Wells Addington.

**Katy Hennen** for her essay “Hiroshima Revisited” written for USNA 262, “How I learned to Love the Bomb” led by Amy Absher.

The First Seminar Awards are judged in January and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing in April each year. The winners for Academic Year 2014-2015 are:

**Gwen Hildebrandt** for her essay “Politically Handcrafted” written for FSSO 161 (“The Craft of Cloth”) led by Erika Olbricht.

**Christine Scherer** for her essay “Asymptomatic Quarantine in America” written for FSSO 166 (“Does History Matter”) led by Peter Bennett and Joseph Cheatle.


You can read all of these outstanding essays in the booklets available on the Writing Program website: [http://www.case.edu/writing](http://www.case.edu/writing).