

June 30 2026

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Family of UCR's Department of English:

As the academic year concludes, I'm thrilled to announce the 2025-2026 honors and awards recipients in the Department of English. The full slate of award and honors recipients are provided in the pages that follow, including undergraduates graduating with honors, and graduate students who have been recognized for scholarly publications. This year, I have also included news about undergraduate honors recipients, doctoral degree recipients, and professional placement for doctoral graduates. Congratulations to all of you recent graduates, at all levels of the program, now heading out into the world. We're especially proud that our doctoral graduates' scholarly brilliance and academic and pedagogical accomplishment are recognized globally this year, from Southern California to Urbana-Champaign Illinois to Cambridge UK.

As the list makes clear, our awards and honors recipients this year do represent quality and impact across the board: from the undergraduate and graduate recipients of our long-running essay or teaching assistant awards; to the undergraduate and graduate recipients of our donor-funded awards recognizing excellence in scholarly writing, academic excellence, and outstanding community service; to the faculty recipients of our newest award, the Award for Faculty Excellence in Service to Undergraduate Education, awarded for the second time this academic year - this year, to two outstanding English Department faculty members.

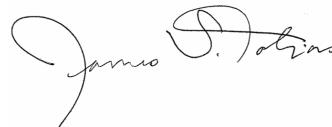
To the award committees who reviewed essays and applications and did the hard work of making selections, thank you for your work recognizing and highlighting English Department achievement this year. To all those who make funding for these awards possible, thank you: we are deeply grateful.

And to all of the department-supporting staff members who not only make these particular awards possible but generally keep our department moving forward, our very deepest appreciation: Monica, Gene, Leann, Ruben, Elaine, Karla, Tanya, Christy: thank you for the knowledge, care, detail, responsiveness, and insight that you consistently bring to your work.

To this year's award winners: warm congratulations on the very fine results of your intellectual labor. We so need the bold ideas of new generations of scholars, and the work you present here bodes well for the better future we work towards.

Read on for the good news!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James S. Tobias".

James Tobias, Ph.D.
Professor, Chair
Department of English
jtobias@ucr.edu

Department of English Awards and Recognitions 2025-2026

Faculty Award Recipients

Award for Faculty Excellence in Service to Undergraduate Education (Department of English):

Dr. Traise Yamamoto and Dr. Emma Stapely

For the second year of this new English Department award recognizing faculty contributions to English undergraduate education, we honor *two* Department faculty members, Dr. Traise Yamamoto and Dr. Emma Stapely. The award provides research funds in the amount of \$1000; this honor is awarded on the basis of nominations from English Department undergraduates.

Student comments included:

"Professor Yamamoto made me fall in love with English again and is very patient and thoughtful when answering questions."

and:

"I am nominating Professor Stapely for this award because she is an incredible educator who truly teaches us how to think. I have grown so much as a critical thinker in her class. She's also very personable and makes lectures genuinely enjoyable. Her openness and thoughtful teaching make it easy to stay engaged, and you can tell she truly cares about her students."

Congratulations, Dr. Stapely and Dr. Yamamoto!

2025-2026 Outstanding Disability Ally Award (UCR SDRC)

Dr. Jennifer Doyle

Dr. Jennifer Doyle has been recognized with the 2025-2026 Outstanding Disability Ally Award by the campus Student Disability Resource Center. The Student Disability Resource Center writes: "Nine years ago, the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) began the tradition of recognizing outstanding staff, faculty, and departments who have gone 'the extra mile' in support of students with disabilities on the UCR campus. This year, Dr. Doyle has been selected to be awarded

the 2025-2026 *Outstanding Disability Ally* faculty award, for your exemplary support. Congratulations! Please know that nominations came directly from UCR students. You are recognized and appreciated for the assistance and consistent advocacy you provided for students with disabilities to ensure they receive accommodations, services and are treated equitably, with dignity and respect. We know we can always count on you!"

English Undergraduate Scholar Awards

Our undergraduate awards recognize both high quality scholarly essays across topics and disciplines, as well as all-around performance in US literary and cultural studies recognized in the Emory Elliott Memorial Undergraduate Award. Congratulations to this year's recipients!

Undergraduate Essay Award (Department of English)

Winning Essay:

Isabella Day, “*Tender is the Flesh: Necropolitics and Cannibalism*”

Honorable Mention:

Troy Davidson, "The War on Masculinity: Analyzing the Demasculinization of Men in Asian American Literature"

Emory Elliott Memorial Undergraduate Award 2025-2026 (Department of English)

Miranda Regalado

“Fugitive Evanescence: The Implications of Intangible Freedom in The Narrative of Henry ‘Box’ Brown”

This award recognizes distinguished work in the study of US Literature and Culture. The award committee looks at the overall record of achievement and GPA in US literature and culture courses and considers specific recommendations from faculty. Miranda's paper originated in Dr. Emma Stapely's ENGL 131 Early American Literature (Winter 2026). From this year's awards committee: This essay persuasively argues that the Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown, Written by Himself is a text that employs unconventional and innovative artistic and narrative devices in order to bring new meaning to the concepts of “fugitive” and “fugitivity.” Of particular note is the essay author's discussion of Brown's self-objectification in a scene where he hides himself in a large box. This reification becomes an enabling and empowering process for Brown rather than a state of

immobility or containment because, as the essay author argues, Brown's entering and subsequent exiting of the box symbolizes freedom and rebirth on multiple levels. The essay also offers detailed and nuanced close readings of Brown's narrative along with thought-provoking artwork by the essay author."

English Honors Recipients 2025-2026

We recognize with great pride the 2025-2026 graduates of English receiving their Bachelor of Arts degrees with honors:

with Honors

Lisbeth Lozoya-Lemus
Gisselle Romero
Cleidy Campos
Allison Vu
Isabella Day
Luis Díaz
Jasmine Grimaldo
Dennis Aguilar Rivera
Yoselin Perez
Jess Sanchez
Mya Barr
Pablo Salas JR
Savanah Kawaii
Alexander Magdaleno
Batoul Odeh
Angelica Rodriguez
Jenny Qiao
Nashalin Resendiz
Thomas Lozano
Ivan Marrufo
Samantha Pacini-Carlin
Nathaniel Rose
Frances Bacalso
Giselle Padilla

with High Honors

Nicole Bell
Brynn Izay
Toan Pham
Daniella Lau
Anthony Alfaro
Isai Pina
Lizbeth Aispuro-Pena
Lauren Kizer

with Highest Honors

Hannah LeBrun
Samantha Caraballo
Jacqueline Choi

Graduate Scholars Award and Honors Recipients

Our graduate student awards include recognition within and beyond the Graduate Program in English. We are especially grateful to the donors whose support makes the Lindon Barrett, Emory Elliott, and Graduate Community Service awards possible. To all of this year's awards and honors recipients: your work makes clear that intellectual excellence, passion for innovation and discovery, and commitment to engaged scholarship continues to model excellence in the Graduate Program in English. Congratulations!

Lindon Barrett Black Studies Prize 2025-2026 (Department of English)

Emily Elvoid, Department of English, for "A Matter of Time: Disruption of Modernity, Genre, and Archive in Passing Novels"

The award committee writes: "The winning essay makes a significant intervention into modernist literary studies, arguing for the significance of passing narratives to the constitution of the field. Through a comprehensive literary review and nuanced readings of primary texts, the essay admirably centers the formation of blackness in Western thought to reflect and reinvigorate the purpose of modernism's signature form, the novel."

Emory Elliott Graduate Essay Award 2025-2026 (Department of English)

K Persinger, for "'Them People Ain't Human': Border Cannibals, Blackness, & Tehomophobia in *Firefly* and *Serenity*"

From the award committee: "This essay offers a salient critique of the frontier imaginary in the popular science fiction TV series *Firefly* and its sequel movie *Serenity*. The author connects the trope of the frontier in the series and movie with discourses and practices of settler colonialism that reproduce a Manichean divide between civilization and savagery. Particularly remarkable is the essay author's invocation of Catherine Keller's concept of "tehomophobia" (a fear of disorder and chaos) in their critique. This fear and loathing of encroaching chaos is unpacked through cogent analyses of several key crew members of the spaceship *Serenity* as well as the racialized representations of the Reavers, a group of space-faring cannibals who are serve as the show's primary antagonist."

Graduate Essay Awards 2025-2026 (Department of English)

Michelle Jones, first place, for "Hailed as Disability"

This year's selection committee is pleased to award "Hailed as Disabled: Discursive Identity Formation and Constraints on Lived Experience" the 2026 Graduate Essay Prize. A genuine pleasure to read and even more rewarding to think alongside, "Hailed as Disabled" distinguished itself through its rare combination of theoretical sophistication, methodological rigor, and emotional force. The essay deftly synthesizes disability studies, post-structuralism, and semiotics into a compelling intervention on both disability identity formation and the politics of visibility. Particularly striking was the paper's finely tuned balance between auto-theoretical reflection and evidence-based scholarly analysis, transforming lived experience into an analytic framework through which broader institutional, linguistic, and ideological structures become legible anew. The essay's concluding intervention, "Quotidian Radical Visibility," was likewise recognized as a generative contribution to contemporary disability scholarship, one that thoughtfully extends ongoing conversations surrounding embodiment, public space, and the semiotics of disability. Altogether, "Hailed as Disabled" stood out as an ambitious, deeply compelling, and exceptionally accomplished piece of graduate scholarship. Congratulations to Michelle!

Sarah Thompson, second place, for "Genre as Governance"

Josie Holland, third place, for "Interrupting Aesthetics"

Graduate Community Service Awards 2025-2026 (Department of English)

Michael Pfirrmann-Pugh

Michael is serving as the GSEA Vice President, and his service has been focused primarily on enhancing the English department's internal community and resources. He has revamped the English Canvas page to improve accessibility and updated it with materials for graduate success and conducted workshops for University Writing Program (UWP) materials for first-time applicants and created a shared Teaching and Pedagogy Google Drive folder for peer collaboration. He is also the main planner for graduate student town halls, community game nights, and the Dis/Junctions Graduate Conference.

Emily Mulvihill

Emily's service centers on advocacy for first-generation and low-income students, rooted in her own experience with TRIO programs (including Upward Bound and McNair). She mentors first-generation students through the graduate application process and facilitates writing workshops and academic training sessions to assist students transitioning into college and graduate-level studies.

Jenna Wilson

Jenna's service focuses on Indigenous and Palestinian solidarity through artistic and center-based work. She has collaborated with the California Center for Native Nations (CCNN) to launch a symposium and website connecting colonial struggles in California and Palestine, has led the creation of three large-scale mosaics in the INTS building to honor martyred Palestinian artists, journalists, and educators, has launched the CCNN quarterly newsletter and significantly updated their website, and has joined Long Beach Queers for Palestine to organize a vigil series and open mic fundraisers, advocating for divestment from weapon manufacturers and honoring victims of conflict.

Dissertation Fellowships (UCR Graduate Division, 2025-2026)

Dissertation Completion Fellowship Awards 2025-2026:

Amanda Mocsi, Ph.D.

Loren Barbour, Ph.D.

Allie Wood, Ph.D.

Dissertation Year Fellowship Award 2026-2027:

Liza Wemakor ABD

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award 2025-2026 (Department of English)

Emily Elvoid ABD

Hillary Chute Award for Best Graduate Student Paper (Comics Studies Society)

Sayeong Kim, for "Cultural Crossings in Comics: The Legacy of Kim Sanho, the First Korean Comic Artist in the U.S. Comics Industry"

Graduate Scholarship Publication Awards (Department of English)

Sayeong Kim, for: "A Submerged Future, a Remembering City: Spatio-Temporalities and Heterotopia in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140*," in *Studies in Modern Fiction* 33.1 (2026); and: "Trans-Corporality and Trans-Corporeal Knowledge in the Toxic Discourse Film *Dark Waters*," in *Literature and Environment* 24.3 (2025)

Jenna Wilson, for: "Poetic Proliferations: The Insurgent Aesthetic Experimentation of Camonghne Felix" in *liquid blackness* 9:2 October 2025; and: a review of Anne Stewart's *Angry Planet: Decolonial Fiction and the American Third World* in *Utopian Studies* 37:1 April 2026.

Amy Duong, for: a review of two Routledge anthologies edited by Paloma Fresno-Calleja and Hsu-Ming Teo: *Conflict and Colonialism in 21st Century Romantic Historical Fiction: Repairing the Past, Repurposing History* (2024) and *Travel and Colonialism in 21st Century Romantic Historical Fiction: Exotic Journeys, Reparative Histories* (2025), in *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* Vol. 15 2026.

2025-2026 Recipients of Doctoral Degrees in English

Warm congratulations to our Spring 2026 doctoral degree recipients:

Loren Barbour, Ph.D.

Kin Fai Hao, Ph.D.

Carolina Hernández-Bachman, Ph.D.

Amanda Mocsi, Ph.D.

Emily Mulvihill, Ph.D.

Alexandra Wood, Ph.D.

June 2026 Placement News for English Doctoral Graduates

We're thrilled to report the following professional placement news for English doctoral degree recipients (as of June 2026). Congratulations!

Carolina Hernandez-Bachman, Assistant Professor of English, Saddleback College, Mission Viejo

Amanda Mocsi, Visiting Assistant Professor of English, Bates College, Lewiston Maine

David Siglos: Assistant Professor, Asian American Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Allie Wood: Assistant Professor of English, College of Du Page, Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Sang-Keun Yoo: Lecturer in English, Cambridge University, UK