

# The University Writer

## At Home Abroad

### The U goes global in Songdo

There are all sorts of incredible opportunities for students at the U, but one recent addition is the chance to experience the university's curriculum and faculty on the other side of the world.

"The city is literally being built around us," says Jay Jordan, Associate Professor of English, and one of several to traverse oceans to take University of Utah academics global. "We're brand new here – this is the U's first real international branch campus."

In late 2014, the U became a founding institution of the Incheon Global Campus in Songdo, South Korea, a city lauded for having recently been built from the ground up with needs of both sustainability and technological advancement in mind. Along with pioneer exchange students from Salt Lake City, Jordan and other faculty members are experiencing first-hand not only the linguistic and cultural differences of a new country, but a cross-section of extremely diverse students and learning styles from all across the globe.

"I'm most excited about the way students are negotiating the cultural complexities of being part of an 'American' university in South Korea," says Jordan. His writing students are pursuing studies in Social Work, Communication and Psychology at Songdo,

but many will complete their degrees in the U.S. "We're hopeful and optimistic that the level of engagement and cooperation will continue even as the faculty and student complement grow."

Those who undertake the year abroad at the U's Asia Campus will find a number of academic opportunities specifically designed to enhance students' ability to draw connections between their coursework and the international atmosphere. "Next semester's global citizenship course focuses on street art, architecture and design as related to globalization," explains Jordan, whose course fulfills a Fine Arts exploration

requirement. "It makes sense for us to tap into the street art scene internationally."

In anticipation of greater enrollment for the Spring 2015 semester, Jordan and others have begun laying the groundwork in introducing scholarships and research programs focused on the experience in Songdo, as well as ensuring a fluid and fully formed academic experience for the incoming student body well into the future. For more information, visit <http://asiacampus.utah.edu/>.

- Elizabeth Bachman



Professor Jay Jordan meets with his students in one of the brand new classrooms on the Incheon Global Campus in Songdo, South Korea.

The University of Utah is pleased to announce its *new*

## DEPARTMENT OF WRITING & RHETORIC STUDIES

Professional Writing | Science Writing | Medical Writing | Writing for Law | Gender & Rhetoric | Writing for Social Justice | Digital Writing & Editing



DEPARTMENT OF WRITING & RHETORIC STUDIES  
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## Profiles in Excellence

U of U Undergraduate,  
Barbara Ochoa

University level research is an important part of the work done at an R1 institution, usually performed by graduate students and faculty. But Barbara Ochoa is an uncommon undergrad who just couldn't wait. She's helping to research the rate of attrition in freshman writing at the University of Utah.

Barbara is an exceptional senior, double majoring in Communications and Writing and Rhetoric Studies. "She wrote the best paper for an undergrad student that I have ever read," said Dr. Jennifer Andrus, professor for the Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies (DWRS) at the University of Utah. "I knew Barbara would be perfect for the research team due to her attention to detail and strong writing skills.

The Writing 1010 class is pre-requisite for all classes in the DWRS major, yet several students were dropping out of the class midway through the semester. Though very busy with school and other obligations, Barbara wanted to participate in the

research to find out why.

"I'm very interested in underrepresented communities and would like to see if there is any connection between the attrition rate in those communities and other social or economic factors." One of her goals in research is to create intervention methods for students who come from various racial and socio-economic groups and help stem the attrition rate.

Barbara has been helping with a survey that tries to identify the obstacles students face in staying in the 1010 class. She visited several classes and found that the students seemed disinterested and disengaged. "I began to wonder if the students really wanted to be there or if they were just checking off that box." She says her original idea that students were dropping out because of a lack of financial support or access to technology has already been proven wrong. But she says the factors behind the rate of attrition in 1010 are, as yet, undetermined.

"Is it because the University is a commuter school and construc-

tion around the campus is making access difficult, or is it because students have to work to help support their families? Or does the reason involve the attitudes toward writing in underrepresented communities--we just don't know yet." Another survey before the end of the calendar year may help to answer some of those questions.

Barbara anticipates finishing the surveys before March. She says her research team still has yet to do the focus groups and the personal interviews. With graduation next spring, she's hoping to complete as much as possible before moving on to graduate school.

- Tammy Nakamura



Barbara Ochoa, an undergraduate double-major, helps perform important research on freshman writing.

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## WRTG 5905 Sex & Robots: Technologies of Gender & Embodied Technology

What is the boundary between our natural bodies and technology?  
In what ways does technology supplement or replace human bodies?  
Why do we anthropomorphize technology at the same time that we find it terrifying?  
In what ways do we laminate our socio-cultural values of bodies onto technology?

**WE ARE FASCINATED WITH TECHNOLOGY THAT MIMICS HUMAN BODIES AND HUMAN INTERACTION**

In this course we will learn about what technology teaches us about gender, sex, how we use our bodies, and how we interact with the non-human that is all around us. We will read and analyze literature, film, theory, media, and lived experience in order to find and analyze sites in which gender, sex, and technology intersect, overlap and collide, working with a range of theoretical and analytical models. Assignments will ask students identify, research, and analyze textual, visual, and material aspects of gendered technology, technological bodies, or some other intersection between gender and technology in which bodies and technology come together.

**Spring 2015** Mon & Wed 11:50am – 1:10pm

Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies | 255 S Central Campus Drive Room 3700 | Salt Lake City, Utah 84112  
(801) 581-7090 | <http://www.humanities.utah.edu/writing/>

## Writing in the Age of Robots

New courses offered by the Writing Dept.  
this spring cater to students' varied interests

This coming spring, the Writing Department is offering a number of new courses to broaden students writing perspectives. Assistant professor Jennifer Andrus will be heading the intriguingly titled course, Sex & Robots. The course will focus on what "unnatural bodies" may teach us about how we think about our "natural" bodies.

"The sexing of technology, whether it is the voice on our GPS, a robotic arm in a factory, a Roomba vacuum or a humanoid robot, tells us something about our culture and how we make sense of the technology that replaces—or helps—humans," says Andrus. Students will explore novels such as Frankenstein and watch a number of films like Blade Runner and Iron Man, all while engaging in discussions about the intersections where sex, gender, and robots meet.

In Medical & Health Sciences (WRTG 4905), taught by instructor Susan Sample, students of all backgrounds with an interest in patient-provider relationships are invited to expand their

knowledge of health science discourses. In Sample's class, students will be analyzing discourses encountered in various medical professions and will ask questions like: How do we define health and illness—and how is it different from disease? A Program Associate in the Division of Medical Ethics and Humanities, Sample brings to the class her experience and understanding of the health science culture, helping students deepen their appreciation for medical fields of study.

If medicine is not your thing, join Assistant Professor David Hawkins for WRTG 4200 – Writing Popular Nonfiction. Focused largely on works from the past 10-15 years, this class will examine memoir, essays, and biographies from renowned authors like David Sedaris (*The Santaland Diaries*), Mary Roach, and Cheryl Strayed (*Wild*). Students will learn how non-fiction explores places the rest of the world can't go. The course also includes a workshop, guiding students through their own work and polishing it for publication.

These new courses will add variety to students writing schedule here at the University of Utah. Secure your seat for a new and fun semester. To find out more about spring classes visit <http://humanities.utah.edu/writing/index.php>.

- Sara Drury

## Giving Back to Their Community with Writing

Students learn the value of writing in several CEL writing classes

Community Engaged Learning (CEL) at the University of Utah includes coursework that brings the community and students together. The goal of these courses is to bring community partners onto the campus to see what students are learning, and take students into the community to put their learning to work for important causes.

In the Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies, CEL classes are designed to give students exposure to important writing skills, while offering community partners valuable services and support. In Natalie Stillman-Webb's Document Design class (WRTG 4830), students learn to assess the performance of websites, analyze design and layout, and make recommendations for improvements. One of the major projects in the class includes an analysis of a nonprofit's website. She says, "I check the websites after we have given the partner our reviews, and every partner thus far has taken the critiques and implemented them on their websites."

The benefit for the students is that they can give back to the community. But beyond that they get

to see how to use the skills they learn on campus in real workplace environments. This is much better practice for students and it gives them real-world exposure that helps them when they enter the job market.

Other Writing course that include a CEL component include:

**Intro to Writing 1010** – This prerequisite class focuses on the students understanding of the diverse purposes and disciplines of writing. Through the help of community partners, Writing 1010 will be able to produce basic documents proving that their writing skills can be used in the current workplace.

**Professional Writing 3015** – This class prepares students for writing in the workplace, including lessons on resume writing, memo writing, and proposals. This class culminates in a project where students learn about grant writing and prepare grant documents for a community partner—and

important workplace writing skill in a variety of professions.

**Digital Publishing 5830** – Students will analyze and critique documents to better the communicative functions. Students will critique documents and team together to get different ideas and have a better understanding of communication. By editing real life documents students will be able to see and recognize common mistakes and hopefully avoid doing this themselves in the future.

To learn more about CEL courses in the Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies, please visit <http://humanities.utah.edu/writing> or contact Writing Advisor, Lisa Shaw, Writing's academic advisor at [l.shaw@utah.edu](mailto:l.shaw@utah.edu).

- Brittany Limberakis

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You are invited to  
our annual

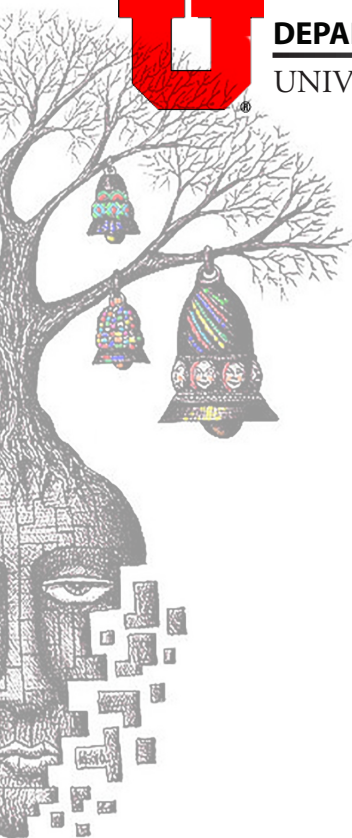
# Chocolate Party

with guest speaker:  
**Kirsten J. Allen**  
"The Wild World of Publishing"  
Editorial Director and Co-Publisher  
Torrey House Press

3:00pm – 5:00pm  
Wednesday, February 25  
LNCO 2110

Please RSVP by February 20 to [l.shaw@utah.edu](mailto:l.shaw@utah.edu)

Department of Writing and Rhetoric Studies | 255 S Central Campus Drive Room 3700 | Salt Lake City, Utah 84112  
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## Doubling Up On a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education Students Double Majoring in Writing & Rhetoric Studies Share Their Experience

In only its second year, the Writing and Rhetoric Studies major has outstripped the anticipated number of students it planned to enroll so early in its existence. With the program's expansion to 58 student majors and 20 minors, Writing is amassing a diverse group of learners from a variety of disciplines, all looking to round-out their educational experience.

From Philosophy to Biology, Film and Media Arts to Medical Laboratory Science, seven current Writing majors gave us the inside track to the benefits and challenges of double majoring in the field.

Despite their diverse academic backgrounds, each student said the flexibility, low credit hour requirements, diverse and focused classes, and the applicability of writing to a variety of careers played a role in their decision to double-major in Writing and Rhetoric Studies.

"It fits well into the communication major," David Munk, a senior in Strategic Communications said. But he added "the flexibility the major offers students--to choose a wide variety of classes with a minimal amount of required credit hours--was most likely the biggest factor."

The students noticed their Writing and Rhetoric Studies skills are strengthening their performance in their other studies, helping them to become "more persuasive writers." The students said the classes

in writing have "helped [them] compose arguments," "prepare for graduate school," and even helped them become "more analytical."

The students aren't the only ones aware of the valuable skills taught in the Writing and Rhetoric Studies program. Professors are also aware of the importance of writing skills in their students' futures.

"It is absolutely important to teach writing skills to students in all disciplines," said Dr. Shad Roundy, professor in the Mechanical Engineering Department. "It dramatically advances their own careers, but it also enables the organizations [they work for] to make better decisions."

The double-majoring students are also experiencing the challenges of added credit hours, and integrating diverse coursework into their academic development but they're positive the decision to major in Writing and Rhetoric is beneficial.

"[It's] difficult to take [extra writing classes] with a full science course load, but the benefits to my future, whether that be when I write, communicate with others, or even just in my level of thinking, make it all worth it," said Lori Long, a Biology and Writing and Rhetoric major.

To learn more about the short-major or minor in Writing and Rhetoric Studies--or to get information about the diverse menu of writing classes available visit <http://hum.utah.edu/writing/> or email the Writing and Rhetoric Studies academic advisor, Lisa Shaw at [l.shaw@utah.edu](mailto:l.shaw@utah.edu).

- Stephanie Hunter

