The Power of the Word - ENFL Newsletter

“We die. That may be the meaning of life. But we do language. That may be the measure of our lives.”—Toni Morrison

Faculty Highlights


Seraphine Omovi Kasongo, French Student

I am Seraphine Omoyi Kasongo, a junior biology major at Norfolk State University. Kinshasa, a city in the Democratic Republic of Congo, is where I was born. My family and I moved to the United States in January 2015 and now reside in the beautiful city of Hampton, Virginia. Since childhood, I always had an affinity for science and medical interests. I have never been hesitant about what I wanted to do or become in the future. My dream job is to have a career as a family doctor. Currently, I am enrolled as a full-time student and I work part-time at the Riverside Regional Medical Center. I intend to take and pass the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) so that I may apply to medical school.

French is my second language. Dr. Bonaventure Balla’s class is exactly what I needed to learn French, to build my vocabulary, and to communicate via speaking and writing in French. If you want to learn or improve your French speaking and writing skills, I encourage you to register for Dr. Bonaventure Balla’s French courses.

One of my long term goals is to open libraries in my hometown. I come from a place where access to certain things, such as books, is very limited. I would like for my people to experience what its like to have free access to books and other viable information.
Student Poetry

I love my black

by Abdul-Aziz Seck

I love my black so much so I hope it makes you uncomfortable
I love my black so much I suppose you’d feel vulnerable
So when you around me u feel the energy sourced from realms above
For i am only a vehicle of progress and the spirits riding shotgun
That thing you can’t put your finger on
Is the driving force of this lexicon
Authenticity comes from within and I see a lot of labels printed on

So why do I see my black so mistreated it was clear
Certain complexes demand flexing to hide fear
So what have we here? Napoleon or maybe that of the gods
One picks up a gun and badge while others equip privilege to build walls

My child pay attention to how his story lies
All they do is gloss their narratives over true stories textbooks always been the disguise
Oh you thought I’d be fooled you just don’t understand

Connect with us!

@NSUEnglishandForeignLanguageDept

@norfolkstateenglish

Meet Dr. Tenenbaum

David Tenenbaum is a professor and novelist/screenwriter from Virginia Beach, VA. After having taught literature for 15 years, he found himself eager to try his hand on the production side of the craft. He’s written four books and ten scripts, which include three film projects that have reached the finals of screenwriting competitions and two novels that were recently shortlisted at the Eyelands Book Awards. His movie, After School, a cautionary coming-of-age thriller, is currently in development with producer Jeff Bassetti. Tenenbaum’s script M.A.D. (Mutually Assured Destruction), a political satire, is currently in production with BDP Entertainment.
More Student Poetry

“I love my black” continued

You only feel big on someone else's shoulders so i wouldn't expect you to overstand this...
Jus how do we spell irony?
Being in the loop and still somehow misinformed
From bliss to scorn i see the thorns below painted roses
Candy coated poison, false dreams sold by marketing schemes to disguise words spoken
Jus how do you manage, where are the standards
This all built off of the backs of the oppressed so yeah have some respect in your manners
My black history is not plantations and thug music
You praised Columbus but ignore when my mans musa do it
They praise puppets and the master but ignore the strings take em away and left with nothing to control the scene
Put us in museums in shackles but cover themselves in jewels
Kings queens all light you think there no other hues
Things don’t’ look the same if you parked next to a phantom
Good on the outside but under the cover its tragic no comparison passing

This Edition’s Featured Student Poets

Mikyah Henderson

Abdul-Aziz Seck

The students read their work at an afternoon poetry reading at the Chrysler Museum on March 1, 2020.

The reading was organized to give student poets from NSU and ODU a chance to write and perform new work in conjunction with an exhibit of photographs by African American photographer Keris Salmon called The Architecture of Slavery.

Diamond Broughton

Kimberlyruth Printess
To: blk/rhetoric

by Diamond Broughton

Black/

In the heat of the sun
I find the home
you’ll never be able
to trace me back to.
Shores.
Chains/ wood/ and waves.
Buy/ sign/ and tear apart.
Is my ancestor’s chopping block really
art? If that’s the case should I start/
to collect the bars from jail cells
bottle up cops’ luck and weed smells
from traffic stops turned fatal.
Should I frame
every fallen angel
that got acquitted?
Exhibits
Of firehoses, nooses, and nightingales.
I’ll collect sound bites
of all the white girl whistles
that never happened.
I’ll go through the trouble
to even track down
the one from my great uncle.
Should I — marvel at the records kept
inept/ and freckled with flashbacks of
attacks with no atonement
How much film
would I need
to capture
the infinite moment
an “I don’t see color” coward
was scared of the color

Black/
in the wet of the water.
Call me Yemaya’s daughter.
Only God knows how many slaves
she taught to swim/ and baptized
blue.

Christina Pinkston, Ph.D. is, for
a second year, the originator of
a round-table session for the
(50th in 2019 and now 51st)
Annual Convention of the
Northeast Modern Language
Association (NeMLA). Her
round-table session is titled
“Exploration of ‘isms’ in
Literature: Purpose, Politics,
Pragmatics, and Profundity.”
Not only will Dr. Pinkston
serve as
Chair of the round-table session, but also she will speak as
a panelist on the topic “Examination of Purpose, Politics,
Pragmatics, and Profundity of Colorism and Symbolism in
the ‘Title-ism’ of Select Literary Works.” Dr. Pinkston
has approved seven university scholars to make
presentations as panelists, which should generate a vibrant
and thought-provoking discussion from all involved.

Dr. Gary Wilkens will present
his original poetry at the 2020
PCA/ACA National
Conference in Philadelphia on
April 18. His presentation is
titled “Southern Gothic Blues
Poetry: The Dupree Cycle.”
Fun Fact: this will be his 5th
consecutive year presenting at
this conference.
“blk/rhetoric” continued

No scent/ no odor.
Search no further.
I’m the surviving hope of the antebellum’s slaughter.
My origins don’t lie in the belly of a slave ship or the crack of a slave whip.
It exists/ in harmonious shades of Black/
in the chill of the moonlight.
Every color surviving the same plight.
We lit ain’t got no light.
I’ll bring you the flyest iambic pentameter of Black English vernacular.
Can’t go one day without touching something a Black man made or a Black woman saved.
Black babies beautiful in every shade.
Ain’t a museum big enough to curate everything Black folks gave.
I don’t need another reminder that I carry the strength of the slave. I am here to remind you that my bloodline is brave.
My trauma is not for the white gaze or anyway to celebrate the genius we take for granted everyday.
Black.

So We Walk by Mikyah Henderson

So We Walk

in the spirits of the shriveled cries and suffering times of ancestors chained by the oppressors bearing the scars from our aggressors
So We Walk

in the shadows of the kings and queens who fought for dreams that we may see is beyond our means but the very first step is to fully understand is believe
So We Walk

Through the thorn encrusted paths of pain
Having insults replacing our god-given names
Mourning the legends who were slain
Masking their glories with old massa given shame
So We Walk

in strut filled strides because now is Our time to let our Shea butter baby Melanin Magic shine
With our Nefertiti’s tresses hold our crowns up high
So We Walk

Hoping maybe they realize we too come from royalty
Knowing for a fact and never maybe
That we refuse to carry the label of talentless imprisoned coonskinned tar babies
So We Walk

For those taken from our reality
By the means of injustice and brutality
So We Walk

With hearts filled with both joy and misery
So We Walk

Bearing the souls of those that tell us to keep fighting for Our Vic
So We Walk

With our minds curious and fully open to rewriting their and creating our History
So We Walk
Other News and Events

Sigma Tau Delta Xi Nu Chapter Induction Ceremony for new inductee Covetta Griffin on March 5, 2020.

Spring Game Night with our English majors!

Dr. Jennifer Malia signing copies of Too Sticky! Sensory Issues with Autism at the American Library Association Midwinter Conference.

Professors De Leon-Menjivar and Ponack join in on the fun!

Publication Information: Cristina De Leon-Menjivar, Chief Editor of the ENFL (Recruitment) Newsletter
Dr. Christina Pinkston, Co-Editor and Chair, ENFL Recruitment Team
Dr. Desire Baloubi, Chairperson, ENFL Department