READING THE WORLD
We read great books of every sort, from *Beowulf* to *Beloved*, and we apply our analytical skills to every kind of content, from memos to memes. Anchored in the belief that reading and writing well prepares us to understand and improve the world around us, our English department combines intellectual rigor with a flexibility that allows you to pursue your curiosity through broad exposure to literature and writing.

CREATIVE WRITING
Our program in creative writing is one of the most robust in the country, thanks to a rich variety of course offerings, award-winning faculty, a thriving slate of student-run publications, and our partnerships with the Rose O’Neill Literary House and the Sophie Kerr Fund. Studying creative writing at Washington College will allow you to develop a strong and imaginative literary voice in concert with finely attuned reading skills.

JOURNALISM, EDITING & PUBLISHING
The Journalism, Editing & Publishing minor prepares students to write and research within the targeted professional contexts. Drawing on faculty expertise in reporting, editing, and publication management, our courses range from Introduction to Journalism and the Art of Rhetoric to advanced workshops on feature writing and journal production.

THE SOPHIE KERR LEGACY
The Sophie Kerr Fund was established in 1965 in accordance with the will of its namesake novelist and Eastern Shore native. Her gift of a half-million dollars was to be dedicated solely to the art and craft of writing, and to the community of the writing life. Each year the proceeds from the fund support influential programming, the four-year Sophie Kerr Scholarships, and the Sophie Kerr Prize, the largest undergraduate prize in the nation. That prize is valued these days at well over $60,000, and every year goes to the graduating senior who shows “the greatest potential for future literary endeavor.” Could that senior eventually be you?

ROSE O’NEILL LITERARY HOUSE
At Washington College, your home in the literary arts will be a literal house: the Rose O’Neill Literary House, established in 1970 and one of WC’s three Centers for Excellence. At the “Lit House,” you’ll experience the extracurricular writing life in one of the most beautiful settings on campus. Have you ever dreamed of talking with one of your favorite authors over a cup of mint tea? Here, you can make it happen. Recent guests include Terrance Hayes, Natalie Diaz, Rebecca Makkai, and Amy Hempel. You can also help run *Cherry Tree*, our national literary journal, or staff the incredible Young Writers’ Conference over the summer.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Studying English at Washington College means that you will bring your studies to life in conversation with celebrated writers and scholars at the Literary House, in trips to New York City, Philadelphia, Washington DC, and abroad, and through internships in communications, editing, journalism, publishing and many other fields where expert readers and writers are always needed.

FAST FACTS
- 7:1 student to faculty ratio
- 20 talks and workshops at the Lit House in 2019-2020
- 50+ paid internships on and off campus
- $63,912 Sophie Kerr Prize in 2019

Recent Courses:
- Global Middle Ages
- Jane Austen and Fan Culture
- Flash Fiction
- Postcolonial Literature
- Book History and American Print Culture

Recent Senior Thesis Research:
- Weaponry in *Beowulf*
- Queer Theory and the Image of the Insect
- Christian Rhetoric in Slave Narratives
- Shakespeare in South Korea
ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

Sean Rapelyea '08
Deputy Chief of Staff,
Office of the Governor, Illinois

“My time at Washington College was an incredible experience from my very first day on campus. My most challenging courses in the English Department pushed me to spend a great deal of time exploring scholarly criticism in order to develop and defend sustained arguments, a skill that comes into play every day working with legislators in the Statehouse. As a student, an athlete, and Elm editor, WC prepared me for the challenges I’ve seen in every evolution of my professional career.”

Brooke Schultz '18
Reporter, Delaware State News

“When I think of Washington College, I think of the people. I was incredibly lucky to have an English faculty that invested in my success as a student and as an alumna. The department matched the passion I put into it, sending me to conferences for journalism and literary publishing and affording me numerous scholarship opportunities for academic and creative work. I am grateful for the faculty I worked with all four years, and for their continued support even now, beyond my time in Chestertown.”

CURRENT STUDENTS

Annalie Buscarino ’21

“I’m typically a cautious decision-maker, but I knew as soon as I stepped on campus that this is where I wanted to spend the next four years. The vibrant community, nurturing professors, welcoming athletics department, and dynamic English program all attracted me to Chestertown. I double major in English and Sociology and triple minor in Creative Writing, Psychology, and Justice, Law, and Society. I am the goalkeeper for the women’s soccer team, participate in Writers’ Union and Animal Impact, and have been inducted into three honor societies. I’ve studied in Italy and interned in Zanzibar, Tanzania. I’m hoping to attend law school beyond graduation.”

Iskandar Haggarty ’21

“As a transfer student, WC’s location was important, but the print shop in the Rose O’Neill Literary House is what really sold me. I knew I would find a strong creative community here, and that was a real plus for me in choosing schools. I’m a History major with Medieval Studies and Creative Writing minors. I’m involved in intramural soccer and ultimate frisbee, and I can often be found in the band room. I hope to open my own bookstore and teach internationally.”

Tamia Williams ’21

“I first heard of WC during my junior year of high school and was skeptical at first because I always thought that I wanted to be at a large college. I found that I enjoyed the friendly atmosphere, open campus, and that everything is in walking distance. Our small-but-mighty style enables me to see friends every day on campus and to thrive academically with supportive faculty. Partaking in professional editing and publishing as a Screener and Copy Editor of Cherry Tree, and attending major conferences like AWP, have also prepared me for life post-graduation.”

Winner of the 2002 Sophie Kerr Prize
Sarah Blackman
Novelist and Director of Creative Writing at the Fine Arts Center in Greenville, SC

“WC helped me learn that my abiding interest in literature and writing was, at its most fundamental, an abiding curiosity about the world. I came in the College convinced that in order to be an artist I had to fiercely defend the exclusivity of my interest—because art is hard and requires dedication and the sacrifice of comfort or certainty; because there is always going to be someone who says, “well, yeah, but what are you going to do when you’re forty?” I left WC a long way down the path toward understanding that in order to be an artist I had to give up any notion of exclusivity; I had to fling myself wholeheartedly into knowledge—acquiring, curating, seeking out—and I that meant I had to fling myself wholeheartedly into the potential for failure.

Really being a writer, WC taught me, meant never ever being comfortable in what I know and never ever being satisfied in what I can do. I learned these things through the generosity of my teachers, the model of their ambition, and the faith the school demonstrated in my own ambition. This faith culminated in the Sophie Kerr prize, but was an integral part of all four years of my college experience as WC let me experiment, trusted me to design my path forward and challenged me at every turn to think harder, to seek out more, to recognize what I didn’t know, to confront myself and my preconceptions. It is the model I have built my life on. I am very proud to call WC one of my first homes.”