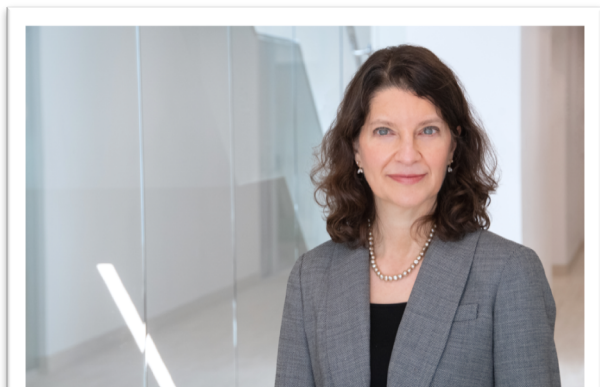


## Writing Faculty & Student Awards Announced

May 1, 2020

The annual Writing Program Awards honor excellence in the teaching of writing. Our award ceremony, like all of our spring semester celebrations, has unfortunately been canceled, but our honorees are worthy of acknowledgment nonetheless. This year, each faculty recipient has shared in their own words an aspect of their philosophy or practice for fostering their students' development as writers.

**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.



Sharona Hoffman, J.D., LL.M., S.J.D., Edgar A. Hahn Professor of Jurisprudence in the School of Law

This year's recipient, **Sharona Hoffman, Edgar A. Hahn Professor of Jurisprudence in the CWRU School of Law**, is lauded for providing extraordinary mentorship to law students in the area of legal scholarly writing, fostering students in their course work and supporting their efforts to publish.

When asked to describe her approach to writing instruction, Hoffman wrote, "I love teaching my year-long paper seminar at the law school. It is very gratifying to help students progress from struggling to find a

topic to having a paper that is often of publishable quality at the end of the year. I think the best advice I give students is to pick a topic about which they are passionate. Papers are always strongest when they are personally meaningful and when you are emotionally invested in your work.

Throughout the process, I emphasize the importance of editing and re-editing your work, focusing on wording and language, organizing your thoughts, honing your arguments, supporting your arguments, and convincing the reader that you offer a good approach to solving a problem. One of the most helpful exercises we do is a 30-minute presentation by each writer before the final draft is due. It includes a PowerPoint presentation and 10 minutes of Q & A. Students always benefit greatly from explaining their arguments and recommendations to their classmates and creating a slide deck. It helps them organize and clarify their own thoughts, and they get great input from their colleagues' questions and comments!

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\* The Jessica Melton Perry Award was established in 2009 by Edward S. Sadar, M.D. (ADL '64, SOM '68), & Melinda 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.

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**The SAGES Excellence in Writing Instruction Award** recognizes outstanding commitment to and success in teaching academic writing to CWRU undergraduates in SAGES.

This year's **winner** is **Gabrielle Parkin, Lecturer in English, SAGES Teaching Fellow, and the Assistant Director of the Writing Resource Center**. Nominated by students and colleagues, Dr. Parkin is described as being a supportive mentor and writing teacher. One student wrote, "I have seen her take pride in writing and SAGES in particular. Parkin has met with students outside the classroom and office hours. Everyone knows who Dr. Parkin is in the writing center. When students have a hard time comprehending a topic or formats, Parkin is always there to help."



Dr. Gabrielle Parkin, SAGES Teaching Fellow, and her 2018 Medieval Robots students modeling her theory of "intellectual play" at the Celebration of Student Writing & Research

In response to receiving this recognition, Parkin reflected, "The more I've taught, the more I've come to see the composition process as an opportunity for play. Intellectual play in the writing process isn't just about coming up with ambitious claims or fun turns of phrase; it is also mucking about with the things we built."

Students often want to write a paper, turn it in, and move on to the next assignment. But when we play with that paper afterwards—through revision of both the arguments and the language—and when we invite others to join us in that process, we turn writing and argumentation into a communal process. The essay becomes a space where we can play with each other's ideas and work towards not only a better essay, but also a deeper understanding of how the topic can affect an audience outside of the classroom."



Dr. Cara Byrne, SAGES Teaching Fellow

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**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, two consultants stood out both in their quantity of nominations as well as in the high quality of the consulting work their nominators described: **Cara Byrne**, Lecturer in English and SAGES Teaching Fellow, and **Andrea Milne**, Lecturer in History and SAGES Teaching Fellow.

Byrne wrote this about her theory of writing consultation:

"Through my work at the WRC, I've learned that writing is a communal act and learning about oneself as a writer is a never-ending task. Writing can also be a vulnerable and overwhelming act, so honoring where the writer is in their writing process—which involves listening to them as well as

offering guidance—can make for some powerful interactions. If I can help someone feel like they leave our 30- or 60-minute session with both an improved paper and with a better understanding of themselves as a writer, it's been a successful session. Consulting students, staff, and faculty at the WRC over the last 11 years has been a privilege and one of my favorite aspects of working at CWRU. “

While Byrne emphasizes the communal nature of consulting, Milne describes her writing consultation work as personal:

“I believe every person who crosses the threshold of Bellflower does so motivated by a desire to be understood. My job, then, is as much about personal engagement with my clients as it is about teaching the mechanics of academic English. My sessions are full of tangential conversations, questions, and—usually—laughter.

What the client may perceive as small talk is actually part of the process: it's building the connection and honest rapport necessary to engage with their writing in a holistic way. The more I know about who my client is, how they're feeling, how they think, and what they hope to achieve in their time at CWRU, the more likely I am to make a lasting impact on their writing.”



Dr. Andrea Milne, SAGES Teaching Fellow

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**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 First Seminar Awards** are judged in January and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing & Research in April each year. The winners for 2019 are

**Delphine Clatanoff**, for an essay titled, “**Charlotte Smith's Suffocating Romanticism**”

Written for FSSY185Q: Death Mourning and Immortality (Seminar Leader: John Wiehl)

**Patrick Pariseau**, for an essay titled, “**The Solar Cycle**”

Written for FSNA 165: Silicon and its Applications (Seminar Leader: Jim Stephens)

**Farha Watley**, for an essay titled, “**Black Solidarity: Combatting Colorism in the Black Community**”

Written for FSCC 110: Foundations of College Writing (Seminar Leader: Martha Schaffer)

**The University Seminar Awards** are judged in September and recognized at the Celebration of Student Writing & Research in December of each year. The winners for Academic Year 2018-2019 are

**Shmuel Berman**, for an essay titled, **“Religious Coffee Drinkers: Historical Reactions to Coffee by Organized Religions and Their Implications”**

Written for USSO 288T: Coffee and Civilization (Seminar Leader: Annie Pecastaings)

**Rebecca Kizner**, for an essay titled, **“The Function of a Name”**

Written for USSY 293T: Spaces of the Dead (Seminar Leader: Thomas Mira y Lopez)

**Marika Meijer**, for an essay titled, **“Paris by Artificial Light: How Lighting Systems Ultimately Influenced Parisian Sensibilities”**

Written for USSY 287X: Paris in the Arts (Seminar Leader: Annie Pecastaings)

All of these outstanding essays and information about the Essay Prizes and are available online at [Writing@CWRU](mailto:Writing@CWRU).