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## January 20, 2012: Chaucer among the Danes

Department of English

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Friday, January 20, 2012

### [Chaucer among the Danes](#)



Richard Utz has accepted an invitation by the Department of Identity and Culture at Roskilde University, Denmark, to serve as external reader for Professor Ebbe Klitgaard's postdoctoral thesis, "Chaucer in Denmark: A Study of the Translation and Reception History 1782-2012." Later this year, Utz will travel to Denmark to participate in the public defense for this dissertation. This formal process corresponds to the German \*Habilitation\* and is usually a prerequisite for full professorship in the Danish academic system.

Posted by [Richard Utz](#) at 7:48 PM [No comments:](#) 

### [English prof's "hat-trick" ...three books at once!](#)

Dr. Allen Webb, professor of English at WMU, just scored a book publishing "hat trick"—three books at once! All three books focus on contemporary topics in the teaching of English.

The first is "Teaching Literature in Virtual Worlds: Immersive Learning in English Studies." This cutting-edge book is the result of the Presidential Innovation Grant that Dr. Webb received in 2006 that funded a team of scholars and graduate students in English developing on-line virtual worlds for literature study. The edited collection includes chapters by 13 Department of English faculty and graduate students.

The second book is "Teaching Literature of Today's Middle East." This book provides much-needed resources, ideas and strategies for secondary and college teachers who seek to address current issues from the Middle East in their classes, including the Arab Spring, women in the Middle East, the Iraq and Afghan Wars, Palestine-Israel conflict, teaching about Islam, and Muslim Americans. The book includes contributions from WMU faculty Blain Auer (Religion) and Vivan Steemers (Foreign Languages).

The third book is "Teaching to Exceed the English Language Arts Common Core Standards: A Literacy Practices Approach for 6-12 Classrooms." Dr. Webb is a co-author (along with Richard Beach and Amanda Thein) of this book setting forth meaningful and exciting ways for teachers across the country to address the new curriculum standards (adopted by 44 states).

All are professional books that will be sold not only in the United States but also in Great Britain,

Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

After his B.A. in English at Swarthmore College (Honors Program), Allen studied for a secondary teacher certificate and taught high school English for six years. He earned an MAT in English and Education at Lewis and Clark College, and an M.A. and a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon. His doctoral studies focused on postcolonial literature in English, Spanish, and French and American minority literatures.

He has published 25 articles, presented at 100 conferences, including several keynote addresses, maintains 10 websites, and has won five grants totaling \$1.5 million. He serves on the Executive Committee of the National Conference on English Education, and is one of the authors of the State of Michigan 9-12 Language Arts Content Standards.

He designed the “Classroom of the Future” English Education Labs and his virtual world for teaching literature won the A+ Award by WebEnglish Teacher. Webb won the Faculty Achievement Award for Teaching from the WMU College of Arts and Sciences in 2004.

A retired mountaineer, he made the first American ascent of the highest peak in the Hindu Kush (Tirich Mir, 25,253') in 1982.

Webb’s scholarship and teaching focus on English education, postcolonial and minority literature, and internet learning. Webb is the principal investigator on the WMU Literary Worlds project, and past president of the Michigan Conference on English Education (MCEE).

LINKS:

[Dr. Webb’s profile](#)

[Teaching with Technology](#)

[“Virtual Worlds” in LiteraryWorlds.org](#)

Posted by bethlynn at [2:02 PM](#) [No comments:](#) 

[\*\*Congratulations Dr. Witschi !\*\*](#)

Professor Commissioned to Write for National Exhibit  
by Helena Witzke

Dr. Nicolas Witschi, WMU professor of English, has been commissioned by the Bank of America’s Art in Our Communities program to write the official companion essay for an exhibition showcasing art, artifacts and images of the American West.

The Bank of America created the Art in Our Communities program in order to increase community stability through the support of museums and nonprofit galleries. It lends communities the use of

special exhibitions in its expansive corporate collection at no cost. The exhibition, titled “Searching the Horizon: The Real American West 1830-1920,” will focus on both the common mythologies and the realities of the American West.

Ranging from works of art and photographs of people, places, and artifacts, the exhibition underscores the many different perceptions of the American West. Spanning a period of just under a century, the works available display a vast and teeming array of peoples, cultures, and a nation’s worth of ambition.

“It strikes a wonderful balance between showing the West of people’s imaginations and the West as it was lived historically,” Witschi says. “My hope is that it affects viewers positively by prompting them to rethink their ideas about the history of the American West.”

Western American history has always been convoluted, and at times brutal, as the companion essay discusses. However, it also holds an overpowering place in the popular imagination of what “America” is, and this reputation, Witschi believes, does not always follow.

“We use it [the American West] as a symbol of all quintessentially American ideas and ideals, but beyond the symbolic value lies a complex arrangement of cultures, only some of which may rightly be called ‘American,’” he says.

“Searching the Horizon” will allow communities across the nation the chance to explore and continue the discussion of the impact of this symbolism. The exhibition is currently on view at the New Britain Museum of American Art, in New Britain, Conn., until April, and will travel to different locations across the country over the next few years.

Posted by bethlynn at [1:59 PM](#) [No comments:](#) 

### [Call for Papers](#)

Oxford/Cambridge International Chronicles Symposium  
5-7 July 2012, University of Oxford  
Call for Papers

The Oxford/Cambridge International Chronicles Symposium (OCICS) is a biennial conference devoted to the interdisciplinary study of historical and related texts in the medieval and Early Modern periods. The theme for the 2012 conference is 'Bonds, Links, and Ties in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles'.

Keynote addresses will be given by Prof Pauline Stafford (Liverpool), Prof Elizabeth van Houts (Cambridge), and Dr James Howard-Johnston (Oxford). The conference will take place at Oxford’s Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies.

Abstracts of no more than 300 words for papers of 20 minutes must be submitted to the organizers via e-mail (at [ocics@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ocics@history.ox.ac.uk)) by 31 January 2012.

Topics may include, but are not limited to genealogies (real or imagined), family bonds, textual links, breaks and discontinuities, links between past, present, and future, ties of religion and faith, law, order, and disruption, oaths, promises, and betrayals, local, regional, and national identities.

A limited number of graduate student bursaries will be available.  
[www.ocics.co.uk](http://www.ocics.co.uk)

Posted by bethlynn at [8:04 AM](#)