

Sabbatical Cover Page Template

Sabbatical Details

Title of proposal	Narrative and the Anthropocene
Period of requested leave	Fall 2019
Primary location of sabbatical (state or country outside the U.S.)	Idaho
Date of previous sabbatical leaves at the UI (if applicable)	N/A

Contact Information

7 years of service

Name	Erin James	
V#	0044258	v00424258
College	CLASS	
Department	English	
Phone	775.527.7019	
E-Mail address	ejames@uidaho.edu	

Tenure Information

Date started in tenure-track position	August 2012
Date tenured	July 2016
If untenured; date of anticipated tenure	

Checklist of Required Documents

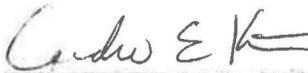
Cover Page
 Abstract
 Description of Proposed Sabbatical

CV in UI Format
 Letter from Unit Chair or Dean
 Appendix (if applicable)

Signatures


 Signature of Applicant March 5, 2018
 Date


 Signature of Unit Administrator 3/3/18
 Date


 Signature of Dean 3/5/18
 Date

Sabbatical Leave Proposal
Erin James, Department of English

Date of Leave: Fall 2019

Title of Projects: *Narrative and the Anthropocene* (Manuscript)

Applicant information:

Erin James
Associate Professor
Department of English
ejames@uidaho.edu
775.527.7019

Abstract

I propose to take sabbatical leave in Fall 2019 to complete a draft of my in-progress book manuscript, *Narrative and the Anthropocene*. This scholarly monograph examines what role stories and storytelling have to play in our understanding of the Anthropocene, the geologic epoch defined and marked by the irrevocable activity of humans on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. Using insights from both narrative theory and the environmental humanities, and building on scholarship that positions narrative as part of the problem of and solution to today's environmental crisis, this project considers what narrative structures are best suited to representing the new, human-created epoch in which we find ourselves, and how this epoch challenges the very definition of narrative.

Description of Proposed Plan for Sabbatical Project Overview and Significance

Narrative and the Anthropocene examines what role stories have to play in our understanding of the Anthropocene, the geologic epoch defined and marked by the irrevocable activity of humans on the Earth's geology and ecosystems. When scholars speak of narrative and the Anthropocene they tend to do so in one of two ways. The first is the conversation that dominates work in the environmental humanities that positions narrative as part of the problem of and solution to environmental crisis. Scholars such as Val Plumwood and Deborah Bird Rose suggest that a key factor in today's environmental challenges is the content of the stories that we tell each other about the environment; they thus call for the disruption of dominant narratives and the popularization of new narratives that are better suited to the realities of our changing world. Change the content of the stories, these scholars suggest, and change the damaging attitudes and behaviors that have brought us to this point. A separate group of scholars link narrative and the Anthropocene in a second, less optimistic way. Cultural theorists and literary critics steeped in deconstructivist philosophy suggest that narrative is a rhetorical mode deeply unsuited to our current epoch. Scholars such as Timothy Morton and Claire Colebrook argue that narrative is tied intimately to human perspectives and, as such, cannot adequately represent the broader timescales and wider conception of nonhuman lives that our current moment of environmental crisis demands. As such, they favor different art forms for representing today's environment.

My project offers a third conversation—one that wonders what contribution the Anthropocene stands to make to narrative studies, and vice versa. *Narrative and the Anthropocene* takes a formal approach to the issue to consider what narrative *structures* are best suited to representing the new, human-created epoch in which we find ourselves, and how this epoch challenges the very definition of narrative. It poses the following questions: how do the new conceptions of time and space associated with the Anthropocene diversify categories of narrative chronology and spatialization? How does the awareness of collective agency and the intertwining of humans and nonhumans associated with the Anthropocene shed new light on types of narration and narrators? By what structures can narratives grasp the scale and complexity of the Anthropocene? Furthermore my project also asks, how might narrative help us think differently about the Anthropocene? And how might it help us recognize the Anthropocene in narratives that do not feature the epoch explicitly in their content (including many published before the emergence of the term) and thus study a continuity that does not fit neatly into stipulations of the Anthropocene as a rupture with historical precedent? Finally, my project makes a case *for* narrative in the Anthropocene—for narrative as *the* dominant rhetorical mode of this epoch—by tracing the structural similarities between the two. It thus argues that, contrary to what some suggest, we stand to understand better the current state of the world and our relationship to it by engaging with narrative.

While I only have space here for brief chapter summaries, the following offers an overview of the project. My primary aim in the introduction, "Towards an Anthropocene Narrative Theory," is to correct two shortcomings: the almost total absence of considerations of the environment in narrative studies—let alone more specific discussions of the Anthropocene and climate change—and a lack of engagement with narrative theory within the environmental humanities, despite a keen interest in the role that narrative and storytelling might and should play in today's environmentalism. I do this by sketching out an "Anthropocene narrative theory," or a theory of narrative sensitive to matters commonly associated with the epoch. The introduction thus explores the ways in which the Anthropocene offers up new conceptualizations of time, space, the human species, and nonhuman agency, and speculates what narrative structures may best represent or illustrate these ideas. Chapter one, "Novel as Anthropocene," solidifies connections between narrative and the Anthropocene by

considering the history and characteristics of one type of narrative: the novel. This chapter charts the similar set of conditions that give rise to the novel and our current epoch in the seventeenth century and positions the novel as a mode inherently suited to illustrating the key assumptions and attitudes that define the Anthropocene. It thus resists recent scholarship by philosophers such as Morton and Colebrook and writers such as Amitav Ghosh that suggests that the novel is incapable of representing the Anthropocene and climate change.

In chapter two, “Time,” I consider perceptions and organizations of time unique to the Anthropocene. Of primary concern here are extreme temporalities—both those associated with the long durations of what Rob Nixon calls “slow violence” and the rapidity that scholars of digital media associate with the “Great Acceleration” of the twentieth- and twenty-first-centuries. I argue that both temporalities disturb current narratological models. The timeline of slow violence challenges the basic separation of description and plot that is fundamental to narrative theory, as it envisages plots that are so slow as to be almost static. Likewise, the great accelerations of modernity challenge current understandings of the way that readers read. Building on the work of literature and new medias scholars such as Nicholas Carr and N. Katherine Hayles, I explore how changes to cognition prompted by exposure to digital narratives stands to change the very mechanics of reading in the Anthropocene. In chapter three I turn my attention to “Space.” Inspired by the protean nature of environments rendered unfamiliar and unrecognizable by rising temperatures and sea levels, I argue that current models of narrative spatialization are ill-suited for analyzing representations of Anthropocene environments because they assume that space is stable. To ease this problem, I propose a new category of “fuzzy” spatialization that foregrounds spatializing information that is strategically inexact and thus difficult to map. I analyze examples of fuzzy spatialization in the “weird” fiction of Jeff VanderMeer and the non-fiction narratives that environmental philosophers such as Glenn Albrecht use to illustrate the concept of solastalgia, or a form of homesickness unique to the Anthropocene where your home is so altered by rising temperatures that you no longer feel at “home,” despite not having moved.

Chapters four and five both explore new types of agency that scholars affiliate with the Anthropocene. In “Narration,” I grapple with the implications for narrative of historian Dipesh Chakrabarty’s 2009 essay “The Climate of History: Four Thesis.” Chakrabarty argues that historians need to develop a new conceptualization of humans as collective agents, acting together and on a grand, planetary scale. I use this concept to further conversations about omniscience by Jonathan Culler and Meir Strenberg, accounting for the difficulty in representing such collective action in narratives. I then turn to potential narrative representations of species agency—especially in “we” and “you” narratives such as Chang-Rae Lee’s *On Such a Full Sea* and Kim Stanley Robinson’s *New York 2140*, respectively—to imagine the ways in which narratives might represent such collective activity. In “Narratives,” I dig into the claims of new materialists such as Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann that suggest that all nonhuman material possesses “narrative agency” and is thus capable of producing its own stories. I disagree with this claim, given the inherently anthropocentric nature of narrative as a rhetorical mode. Yet I take inspiration from it to explore how the Anthropocene challenges the very definition of narrative itself, especially in terms of what it is and where we find it. I pay particular attention to environmental representations of sequences of events such as those found in geological strata, ice cores, and tree rings to posit an alternative conceptualization of “material” narratives. In the book’s afterword, “Narrative and Climate Change,” I explore how climate scientists do (or do not) use narratives in articulations of their work. I pay special attention here to studies in communicating science and models of best practice for storytelling in science, such as that proposed by marine biologist and filmmaker Randy Olson.

Feasibility and Methods

Given my track record of using funded time for research and writing, as well as my past publishing successes and work I have already produced for the manuscript, I am confident in the feasibility of completing the full manuscript of *Narrative and the Anthropocene* during my sabbatical. I have made significant progress on the project already: a version of the introduction is forthcoming in a collection of original essays that I co-edited, *Environment and Narrative: New Directions in Econarratology* (under review with Ohio State UP), and I have already presented conference papers on the “Space” and “Narration” chapters. I have also secured the help of a graduate-student assistant through the CLASS Summer Research Grant program to research the “Novel as Anthropocene” chapter during summer 2018.

While at the Modern Language Association conference in New York City in January of this year, I was approached by the acquisitions editor of the new “AnthropoScene” series at Penn State University Press. We met to discuss my new book project and she enthusiastically requested a proposal and sample chapter as soon as I could produce them. My goal is to submit the proposal and introduction of *Narrative and the Anthropocene* to the press at the end of the Spring 2018 semester and complete a draft of the “Narration” chapter and research for the “Novel as Anthropocene” chapter this summer. During the 2018-9 academic year, I will complete a draft of the “Space” chapter and conduct research for the “Narrative” and “Narrative and Climate Change” chapters. I will enter my sabbatical semester with all of the pieces of the project in place via this preparatory work, allowing me time that semester to draft the remaining chapters of the project, finalize the manuscript, and submit the whole package to the press for review in January 2020.

Value of Sabbatical to UI

I am fortunate to be part of a prolific, award-winning faculty of environmental humanities scholars, in a department and college that values, and draws students because of, work in this subject. Since arriving at UI in 2012, I have helped to design and introduce new environmental humanities curriculum, including ENGL 322: Environmental Literatures and Cultures. As Director of the MA-English program, a position I have held since 2014, I have helped to “green” this degree, both by teaching environmental humanities courses and recruiting students with specialized interests in this area. I have also played a vital role in plans to expand environmental humanities work on campus beyond the English department—conversations that include colleagues in the sociology, philosophy, and history departments and the College of Natural Resources that propose various plans for cross-disciplinary research and curriculum. The work that I complete during my sabbatical will impact all of these projects, thus benefiting English undergraduate and graduate students and students across campus more broadly.

In terms of English students, completing this manuscript will allow me to develop new courses at both the undergraduate and the graduate level. This semester, I am teaching a section of ENGL 322 focused on “cli fi,” or climate change fiction. This is a unique class on campus: it is an upper-level English course that places emphasis on critical close reading and persuasive writing but draws students from departments and colleges across the university, including biology, business, history, math, natural resources, and sociology. The work that I complete during my sabbatical will add essential new dimensions to this class, including lessons on how climate scientists use (or do not use) narrative in their efforts to communicate their findings to the public. The work will also lead to new pedagogical opportunities in English courses, such as “climate change writing” or “storytelling and science.” Completing the *Narrative and the Anthropocene* manuscript will allow me to offer new graduate-level courses on the topic for MA and MFA students in the English department that explore the role of creative writing and storytelling in a response to today’s environmental crisis. It

will also prepare me to teach graduate-level courses that indulge a long-term, historical view of the novel and the ways in which it both has reflected key characteristics of the Anthropocene and adapted to respond to today's environmental crisis.

Importantly, the work that I complete during my sabbatical will help me solidify connections with colleagues beyond the English department. As part of my research for the book, I have been in conversation with specialists in cultural geography and science communication in the College of Natural Resources. They have been an invaluable resource for my thinking about the role that narrative does and can play in today's climate science, and we have begun to explore various collaborative projects that would yoke together our two areas of expertise, including a grant-funded study of water quality that explores culture-specific conceptions of time and space via indigenous stories and storytelling. I am eager to pursue these opportunities during my sabbatical, as they will add an exciting empirical dimension to my work. I predict that they also will be integral to the cross-disciplinary environmental humanities curriculum that I mention above.

Finally, this sabbatical will allow me to solidify my reputation as an internationally-recognized scholar of environment and narrative. Doing so will not only promote UI among environmental humanities and narrative scholars, but also increase the profile of the English department and MA-English program, thereby making it easier to attract and recruit stellar students. This directly contributes to the university's mission of research excellence.

Qualifications

Narrative and the Anthropocene extends research that I began in my first book, *The Storyworld Accord: Econarratology and Postcolonial Narratives* (U of Nebraska P, 2015). This book brought together the environmental humanities and narrative theory for the first time and garnered positive responses from readers in both audiences; it won the International Society for the Study of Narrative's (ISSN) 2016 "Perkins Prize for Best Book in Narrative Theory" and was a finalist for the Association of the Study of Literature and Environment's (ASLE) "Best Ecocriticism Book" award in 2017. Since its publication, I have worked hard to develop its arguments and methodologies. That work is now coming to fruition, with two edited collections of essays on environment and narrative in the final stages of review with Ohio State UP and the journal *English Studies*, respectively.

Initial work in the *Narrative and the Anthropocene* project has also garnered positive feedback. I debuted the book's introduction at the 2016 ISSN conference and since then have received several national and international invitations to share my new work. Upon invitation, I participated in a symposium on water justice at the University of Cincinnati in August 2017, where I debuted work for the book's chapter on "Space." At the end of March 2018, I will travel to the University of Ghent to lecture on the new book project and run a series of workshops for MA and PhD students involved with the "Narrating the Mesh" project (a 1.1 million-euro project funded by the European Research Council). Excitingly, the Executive Council of the ISSN has invited me to be a keynote speaker in the prestigious "Contemporary Narrative Theory" series at their conference at the University of Navarra, Spain, in June 2019, where I will speak about the novel and the Anthropocene. Finally, as I discuss above, I am already in talks with a pre-eminent university press about publishing the manuscript. Given the profile of my first book, new work that is about to be published, and positive initial reactions to the *Narrative and the Anthropocene* project, I am confident that I will complete the manuscript during my sabbatical and ultimately secure its publication.

CURRICULUM VITAE

University of Idaho

NAME: Erin (Somerville) James

DATE: February 28, 2018

RANK OR TITLE: Associate Professor

DEPARTMENT: English

OFFICE LOCATION AND CAMPUS ZIP:

Brink Hall 208 / 83844-1102

OFFICE PHONE: (775) 527-7019

FAX: (208) 885-5944

EMAIL: ejames@uidaho.edu

WEB: <http://www.uidaho.edu/class/english/erin-james>

DATE OF FIRST EMPLOYMENT AT UI: July 2012

DATE OF TENURE: July 2016

EDUCATION BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL:

Degrees:

Ph.D., Comparative Literature, University of Warwick, 2008; Diss: "Soul and Soil: Nature, Culture, and the Postcolonial Pastoral"

MA, Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures in English, University of Warwick, 2003

BAH, English, Acadia University, 2002

EXPERIENCE:

Teaching, Extension and Research Appointments:

Associate Professor, University of Idaho, 2016 – present

Assistant Professor, University of Idaho, 2012 – 2016

Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Reno, 2008 – 2012

Instructor, University of Sheffield, 2008

Instructor, University of Warwick, 2006 – 2008

TEACHING ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Areas of Specialization: Global Anglophone literatures and cultures, especially African, Caribbean, and Black British; postcolonial theory; ecocriticism; narrative and narrative theory

Courses Taught:

Associate Professor, University of Idaho

ENGL 175: Introduction to Literary Genres, Spring 2016 (online), Spring 2017 (online)

ENGL 258 – Literature of Western Civilization, Part II, Spring 2012, Spring 2013

ENGL 310 – Introduction to Literary Theory, Spring 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2015, Spring 2018

ENGL 322: Environmental Literatures and Cultures, Spring 2018

ENGL 485 – Global Anglophone Literatures, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2015, Fall 2017

ENGL 490 – Senior Seminar, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Fall 2017
ENGL 501 – Nixon Institute Seminar, Summer 2014, Summer 2016
ENGL 504 – Topics in Anglophone Literature, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2014
ENGL 511 – Studies in Literary Criticism, Fall 2016
IS 485 – Martin Scholars Senior Seminar, Fall 2014

Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Reno

Core Humanities 202 – The Modern World, Fall 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011
Eng 298 – Writing About Literature, Fall 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011
Eng 425 – Topics in Anglophone Literature, Fall 2008
Eng 480 – Comparative Literature, Spring 2008
Eng 486A – Postcolonial Literature, Spring 2010 and 2011
Eng 724 – Topics in Literature, Spring 2010 and 2012
Eng 786 – Topics in Anglophone Literature, Fall 2010

Instructor, University of Sheffield

ACE 3045 – Reflections on Critical Theory, 2008

Instructor, University of Warwick

En 122 – Modes of Reading, 2006
En 123 – Literature in the Modern World, 2007 and 2008
Cs 133 – Professional Skills, 2007 and 2008
Px 376 – Communicating Science, 2007 and 2008

Students Advised:

Undergraduate Students:

Advised 11 students 2013-2017

Graduate Students:

Currently advising to completion of degree as major professor:

Joseph Perreault
Gabrielle Roglin

Advised to completion of degree as major professor:

Jordan Clapper, 2017
Cody Brown, 2017)
Sandra Mullen, 2016
Jennifer Steere, 2016
Megan Tribbley, 2015
Dustin Purvis, 2015
Vanessa Schmolke, 2015
Adam Benson, 2014
Katie Cooper, 2014
Megan Dodd, 2013

Served on graduate thesis committee:

Tara Howe, MFA, 2017 - 2018
Joseph Perrault, MFA, 2015 - 2016
Brett Miller, MSc, 2013 - 2015
Chrystal Graham, MA-Eng, 2013

Courses Developed (since arriving at the University of Idaho):

ENGL 258 – Literature of Western Civilization
Empire State of Mind, Spring 2013

ENGL 310 – Literary Theory, Spring 2013

ENGL 322 – Environmental Literatures and Cultures
Climate Change Fiction, Spring 2018

ENGL 485 – Global Anglophone Literatures
Nigerian Literature, Fall 2017
African Literature: From *Graceland* to *Graceland*, Fall 2013
Caribbean Literature: Roots, Rhythms, and Languages, Fall 2012

ENGL 490 – Senior Seminar
How to Tell a Story: Narratives and Narrative Theory, Spring 2016

ENGL 501 – Nixon Institute Seminar
“Is English We Speaking”: Language as Cultural Experience in African and Caribbean Literature, Summer 2014
Language and Environment, Summer 2016

ENGL 504 – Topics in Anglophone Literature
Narrative Theory/Environments, Fall 2014
Caribbean Literature and the Environment, Fall 2013
The End of Postcolonial Theory?, Fall 2012

ENGL 511 – Studies in Literary Criticism
Narrative Theory, Fall 2016

IS 485 – Martin Scholars Senior Seminar
Environments Across Communities, Fall 2014

Non-credit Classes, Workshops, Seminars, Invited Lectures, etc.:

Invited Lecture: “Narrative and the Anthropocene,” University of Ghent, March 27, 2018

Invited Lecture: “African and Caribbean Literature,” AFST 101, University of Idaho, March 7, 2018

Invited Lecture: “Chimp Lit, Reader Empathy, and the Ethics of Narration.” Cal State Channel Islands (via Skype). October 26, 2015.

Guest Lecture: “Narrative Empathy,” ENGL 490, University of Idaho, Fall 2013, Spring 2018

Invited Lecture: “J.M. Coetzee’s *Disgrace*: Truth and Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Reno, 2012

Invited Lecture: “Paul Simon’s *Graceland* and Postcolonial South Africa,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Reno, 2011

Invited Lecture: “Sam Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners*,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Reno, 2011

Invited Lecture: “Caribbean Literature: Colonization and Calypso,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Reno, 2010

Invited Lecture: “What is African Literature?,” Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Reno, 2009

SCHOLARSHIP ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Publications:

Peer Reviewed and Refereed:

The Storyworld Accord: Econarratology and Postcolonial Narratives. University of Nebraska Press, 2015.

“What the Plant Says: Plant Narrators and the Ecosocial Imaginary.” *The Language of Plants: Science, Philosophy, Literature, and Cinema*. Patricia Vieira, Monica Gagliano, and John Ryan, eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

“Immersed in the Storyworld: Rotten English and Orality in Ken Saro-Wiwa’s *Sozaboy*.” *Journal of Narrative Theory*. 45.3 (Fall 2015).

“Teaching the Postcolonial Ecocritical Dialogue.” *Teaching Ecocriticism and Green Cultural Studies*. Greg Garrard, ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 60 – 71.

“Bioregionalism, Postcolonial Literatures and Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road*.” *The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, Place*. Karla Armbruster, Cheryl Glotfelty, and Tom Lynch, eds. University of Georgia Press, 2012. 261 – 77.

“Doomed Kyoto: Language, Environment and National Interests,” *Journal for Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies*. 14.2 (Spring 2007): 83 – 100.

Other:

Book Reviews:

Affective Ecologies: Empathy, Emotion, and Environmental Narrative. Alexa Weik von Mossner. *ISLE* (forthcoming)

EnvironMentality: Ecocriticism and the Event of Postcolonial Fiction. Roman Bartosch. *Environmental Values*. 24.6 (2015): 825-827.

The Power of Narrative in Environmental Networks. Raul Lejano, Mrill Ingram, and Helen Ingram. *ISLE* 21.2 (Spring 2014): 493-5.

Myths of Wilderness in Contemporary Narratives: Environmental Postcolonialism in Australia and Canada. Kylie Crane. *ISLE*. 20.4 (2013): 902-4.

Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George B. Handley, eds. *Comparative Literature Studies*. 50.1 (2013): 172 – 5.

Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics and World Narratives. Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt, eds. *ISLE*. 18.4 (2011): 891 – 3.

Postcolonial Ecocriticism. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin. *Green Letters* 13 (2010). 112 – 3.

Romantic Ecologies and Colonial Cultures in the British-Atlantic World, 1770-1850. Kevin Hutchings. *ISLE* 17.4 (2010): 824 – 6.

Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson and George B. Handley, eds. *ISLE* 13.2 (2006): 295 – 6.

Book Chapters:

““A Part of it All: the Necessity of Gaia in Sam Selvon’s Pastoral Writing.” David Dabydeen and Letizia Gramaglia, eds. *Coral Identities: New Essays in Indo-Caribbean Literature*. Leeds: Peepal Tree Press, 2010.

Encyclopedia Entries:

The Oxford Companion to Black British History. David Dabydeen, John Gilmore, and Cecily Jones, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Includes the following entries written by Erin Somerville: Sam Selvon, C.L.R. James, Robert Wedderburn, Sir John Hawkins, Edward Jenkins, Thomas Day, Soubis, *Robinson Crusoe*, Notting Hill Carnival, Colonial and Indian Exhibition, Great Exhibition, Royal Africa Company, Slave Ship Zong, Race and London Transport, and Banking, Insurance and Colonial Trade.

Edited Collections:

Green Letters 9 (2008). Co-edited with John Miller. Includes introduction by editors.

Painted Love: The Literature of Interracial Love and Sex. Co-edited by David Dabydeen and Benjamin Zephaniah, with Michael Niblett, Jonathan Morley, and Erin Somerville. Coventry: Derek Walcott Press, May 2008. Includes introductions by editors.

“*What is the Earthly Paradise?*”: *Ecocritical Responses to the Caribbean*. Co-edited with Chris Campbell. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2007. Includes chapters “The Sinking Ship’: Environmentality and the Caribbean” (Erin Somerville and Chris Campbell), “The Problem with Culture: Sam Selvon and the Postcolonial Pastoral” (Erin Somerville) and “Eco, Feminism: Indo-Caribbean Women and Nature” (Erin Somerville and Letizia Gramaglia).

Work in Progress:

Essays:

“Nonhuman Characters and the Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis.” Submitted and under review for special issue of *Poetics Today* on “Cognitive Literary Studies.”

Edited Collections:

Environment and Narrative: New Directions in Econarratology. Co-edited with Eric Morel. Currently under review with the editors of the “Theory and Interpretation of Narrative” series at Ohio State University Press.

“Ecocriticism and Narrative Theory,” special issue of *English Studies* containing six original essays and introduction co-written with Eric Morel. Co-edited with Eric Morel. Currently under peer-review.

Narrative and the Anthropocene. Book manuscript.

Professional Meeting Papers (selected):

Contemporary Narrative Theory Keynote Speaker. The International Society for the Study of Narrative, University of Navarra, Spain, June 6-8, 2019. Forthcoming.

“Fuzzy Spatialization in the Anthropocene.” The International Society for the Study of Narrative, McGill University, Montreal, QC, 2018. Forthcoming.

“How Do ‘We’ Narrate the Anthropocene?” Modern Language Association. New York, NY, 2018.

“Water Narratives in the Anthropocene.” Water and Human Settlements: UC Celebrates Water Week, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH, 2017.

“Notes from Underground: Categorizing Subterranean Narrative Space.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. Wayne State University, Detroit, MI, 2017.

“Notes from Underground: Exploring Anthropocenic Narratology.” The International Society for the Study of Narrative, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 2017.

“Narrative in the Anthropocene.” The World in 2050: Creating/Imagining Just Climate Futures. University of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, 2016.

“Narrative in the Anthropocene.” The International Society for the Study of Narrative, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2016.

“The Anthropocene in Narrative, the Narrative in the Anthropocene.” The Future of the Environmental Humanities: Art, Thought, and Action in the Anthropocene, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. 2015.

“Chimp Lit, Reader Empathy, and the Ethics of Narration.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment. University of Idaho, Moscow, ID, 2015.

“Green Reading: Narrative Theory, Material Ecocriticism, and Plant Narrators.” International Society for the Study of Narrative, MIT, Cambridge, MA, 2014.

“Empathy, Environmentalism, and Narrative Storyworlds.” The Future of the Environmental Humanities, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 2013.

“Ecocriticism and Narrative Storyworlds.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KA, 2013.

“The Current Boundaries of Ecocritical Thought.” Border/Lands: An Interdisciplinary Ecocriticism Conference, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID, 2013.

“Travelling the Famished Road: The Storyworld and Postcolonial Narratives.” International Society for the Study of Narrative, Las Vegas, NV, 2012.

“Postcolonial Ecocriticism and the Storyworld.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, 2011.

“What is Real Here?: Bioregionalism, Magic Realism and the Global Environmental Crisis.” Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, University of Victoria, Victoria, BC, 2009.

“Reading the Environment in Ken Saro-Wiwa's Rotten English.” Beyond Environmentalism: Culture, Justice, and Global Ecologies, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA, 2009.

“We *Do* Work in Africa: Ecocriticism and Ken Saro-Wiwa’s Rhetoric of Protection.” Junior Faculty Research Colloquium, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, NV, 2009.

Grants and Contracts Awarded:

CLASS Summer Research Grant, University of Idaho, 2018, \$2494
 Seed Grant, University of Idaho, 2014, \$12,000
 Summer Faculty Research Stipend, University of Idaho, 2012, \$5000
 Junior Faculty Summer Research/Artistry Small Grant Program, University of Nevada, Reno, 2010, 2011
 Junior Faculty Research Grant, University of Nevada, Reno, 2009

Honors and Awards (selected):

Teaching Excellence Award, University of Idaho, 2016/7
 Alumni Award for Excellence, University of Idaho, 2016
 Perkins Prize for Best Book of 2015, International Society for the Study of Narrative, 2016
 Best English Graduate Seminar Award, University of Nevada, Reno, 2012
 Lakshmi Persaud Fellowship, University of Warwick, 2005, 2006
 Kathy Dent Fellowship, University of Warwick, 2006
 Canadian Centennial Scholarship Fund, Canadian Women’s Club, 2006
 HRC Doctoral Fellowship, University of Warwick, 2005

SERVICE:

Major Service Assignments:

University of Idaho, Department of English:
 Director, MA-English, 2014 – present
 Executive Committee, 2014 – present
 Search Committee, Pre-1900 American Literature, 2016 – 2017
 Search Committee, Nineteenth-Century British Literature, 2014 – 2015
 Search Committee, Director of Creative Writing, 2014
 Promotion and Tenure Committee, 2013 – 2014
 Curriculum Committee, 2012 – present
 Chair, Ecocriticism Reading Group, 2012 – present

University of Idaho, College of Liberal Arts, Letters, and Social Sciences:

Affiliated Faculty, Africana Studies Minor, 2016 – present

Promotion and Tenure Committee, 2013 – 2014

Search Committee Member, Director of James A. and Louise McClure Center for Public Policy Research, 2012 – 2013

University of Idaho

Sabbatical and Leave Evaluation Committee 2015 – present (Chair 2017-8)

Ubuntu, 2014 – 2017 (Chair 2015-6)

Rhodes Scholarship Committee, 2013

Floor Marshal, University Commencement, 2013 – 2014

University of Nevada, Reno, Department of English:

Graduate Committee, 2011 – 2012

Late Nineteenth- and/or Early Twentieth-Century American Literature Search Committee, 2011 – 2012

Literature Committee, 2010 – 2011

Literature and Environment Committee, 2008 – 2012

Transatlantic Postdoctoral Fellow Search Committee, 2011

Twentieth-Century British/Postcolonial Literature Search Committee, 2009 – 2010

University of Nevada, Reno, College of Liberal Arts:

Diversity Task Force, 2010 – 2012

Ethnic Studies Committee, 2009 – 2012

Gender, Race, and Identity Program Faculty Associate, 2008 – 2012

University of Warwick:

Student Representative, Centre for Caribbean Studies, 2005 – 2008

Professional and Scholarly Organizations

Perkins Prize for Best Book in Narrative Theory Judge, International Society for the Study of Narrative, 2018

Manuscript Reviewer, MIT Press, Bloomsbury Academic, Routledge

Futures of the Conference Committee, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2017 – present

Travel Awards Committee, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2017 – present

Mentoring Program Co-coordinator, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2014 – present

Conference Site Host, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2013 – present

Assistant Editor, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 2013 – 2016

Postgraduate Coordinator, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment: UK, 2006 – 2008

Editorial Board, *Green Letters*, 2008

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS:

Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, 2008 – present

International Society for the Study of Narrative, 2012 – present

Modern Languages Association, 2016 – present

Department of English

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3 March 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

As chair of the English Department, I am pleased to write in support of Associate Professor Erin James's application for sabbatical leave during Fall Semester 2019. Erin joined the department in 2012 as an assistant professor and was promoted to associate professor in 2016. She has been an exemplary colleague at the University of Idaho, playing a vital role in supporting undergraduate and graduate students, managing our MA-English degree program, serving on (and chairing) numerous department, college, and university committees, and producing award-winning scholarship. She has not yet been granted sabbatical leave since becoming a faculty member, first at the University of Nevada, Reno (2008-12) and during her six years at Idaho.

Since joining the Idaho faculty, Erin has become one of the most prominent scholars of narrative theory in the world. Her book *The Storyworld Accord: Econarratology and Postcolonial Narratives* (University of Nebraska Press) received the Perkins Prize for best book of 2015 from the International Society for the Study of Narrative, was a finalist for the ASLE Book Award from the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, and has become a foundational work for many scholars seeking to explore the relationship between story and our understanding of the natural world. Erin has also published important articles and given high-profile invited lectures on various aspects of "econarratology," and she is currently completing an edited book on environment and narrative (under review with Ohio State University Press) and a guest-edited special issue of the journal *English Studies*. She proposes to use her sabbatical to complete a second monograph, *Narrative in the Anthropocene*, which would extend her first book by studying the complex and important relationship between the language of storytelling and, as she elegantly puts it in this sabbatical application, "the geologic epic defined and marked by the irrevocable activity of humans on the Earth's geology and ecosystems." Her application outlines this new project in impressive detail. I have no doubt that this sabbatical will enable Erin to complete what promises to be a major contribution to both narrative studies and the environmental humanities.

In addition to being a distinguished scholar, Erin is a stellar teacher. She has taught a wide range of courses since coming to Idaho, including undergraduate surveys of literary genres, the literature of Western civilization, and literary theory and also advanced seminars in postcolonial literature and climate change fiction. Her talents as a teacher were recognized with Idaho's Alumni Award for Excellence in 2016 and with the university's Teaching Excellence Award in 2016-17. As mentioned above, she has also played an essential administrative role in directing the English Department's MA program since 2014. Although we will miss her teaching while she is on sabbatical, our other tenure-track faculty members in American, British, and

comparative literature will cover the classes (introductory surveys and advanced undergraduate and graduate seminars) that Erin normally teaches.

Erin has proven herself to be a prominent scholar in her field on national and international levels, a wonderful teacher and mentor for students, and an essential university citizen (chairing the Ecocriticism Reading Group for the past six year and also chairing Ubuntu and the university's Sabbatical Leave Evaluation Committee in 2017-18, among other important service activities).

I not only support this sabbatical application, but I am truly excited about the book that will result from Erin's research.

Sincerely,



Scott Slovic
Professor and Chair
Department of English

Email: slovic@uidaho.edu

March 5, 2018

Sabbatical Leave Committee
University of Idaho

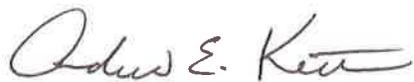
Dear colleagues:

I am writing to support Associate Professor Erin James's sabbatical proposal. She is applying for sabbatical leave for the Fall 2019 semester. Professor James will use her sabbatical to complete a draft of her new book, *Narrative in the Anthropocene*.

Since joining the English Department in 2012, Professor James has earned an international reputation for narrative theory. She is the author of two major monographs on narrative. Her book, *The Storyworld Accord*, won a Perkins Prize from the International Society for the Study of Narrative. Her new book delves further into her analysis of storytelling and human's impact upon the Earth's geology and ecosystems. Given her scholarly track record and her prominent position within the discipline, I would expect that this book would make a significant impact on the field.

I endorse Associate Professor James's sabbatical proposal. Her sabbatical will be productive and will make major contributions.

Sincerely,



Andrew E. Kersten
Dean, College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences