

Usability Test Final Report

SVSU English Department

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Introduction

Background

The purpose of this project was to complete a usability test for the English department at Saginaw Valley State University.

Research objectives and goals

The objectives of the usability test are to ascertain that users are able to quickly and easily find information related to Saginaw Valley State University's English Department.

The usability test will also attempt to discover what type of information is interesting and relevant for students. The goals that are to be accomplished include:

- Determining if the layout of the site is easy for users to navigate
- Determining if the content is easy to understand
- Determining if the key components of the site are easy for the users to find
- Determining if the style of the site is aesthetically pleasing for users
- Determining if the information currently on the site is relevant and useful

Methodology

User profile overview

The test participants will be selected from English 212 courses at Saginaw Valley State University. The test participants will be selected from courses taught by various instructors.

Testing procedures, environment, and timing

The testing will take place in an isolated environment, free from noise and distraction.

The test will be given on a laptop provided by the moderator. The test participant will be presented with the site to be tested in a modern web browser. The moderator will give the test participant a set of tasks to complete. As the test participant works through the tasks, the moderator will be recording the success of the task. The moderator will also be encouraging the participant to think out loud while recording any useful feedback provided by the test participant. The process will be recorded using Camtasia.

There is no limit to time per task. If the user is stuck, the moderator will use techniques such as prompting, echoing, and conversational disequilibrium to get the user focused on the task, which usually helps the participant figure out the issue. The testing process should not take more than 30 minutes per participant.

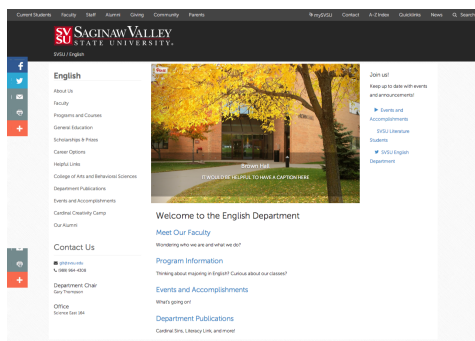
Metrics

The site will be evaluated based upon the users ability to complete the tasks. Completion will be indicated by true or false. Time will also be a factor in evaluating the usability of the site. The ability to quickly find specific information will also be observed.

Tasks and scenarios

The tasks that users will complete are listed below. The users will be asked to think out loud during the process in order to collect initial reactions and feedback. The user will also be asked to provide their perception regarding the difficulty of task performed.

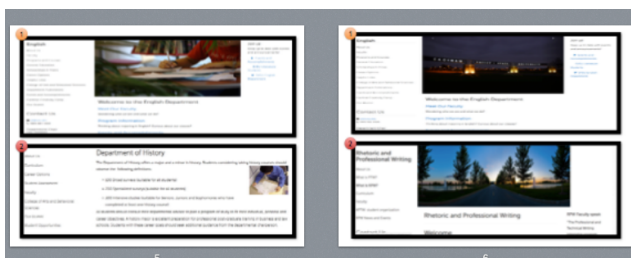
- Give initial impression of the website and state expectations
- Locate the list of required courses for the Creative Writing Major
- Locate information about the English department faculty members
- Locate information about past graduates of the English department
- Locate information about upcoming events on campus related to the English department
- Locate the English department Twitter account
- Compare the website with other university department websites
- Give initial impression about the imagery on the website
- Sort navigational elements in order of importance



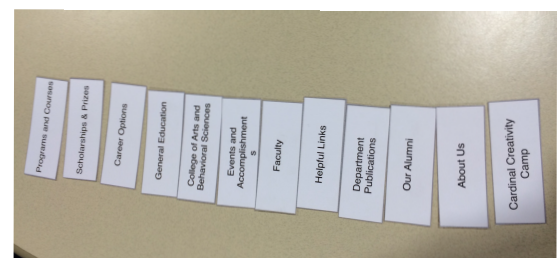
Task one



Task Six



Task Seven



Task Five

Executive Summary

This report details the observations of the usability testing performed on Saginaw Valley State University's English department website, in the month of November 2014. The main purposes of the test were to determine if the site was easy to use, if critical information was easy to find, and if the site contained relevant information for students exploring interest in English.

Overall the test participants were pleased with the ease of use with the site, specifically the useful left hand navigation. The test participants were also pleased with the imagery on the site. The major concern found by the test participants was the inability to locate specific course requirements in the current academic year course catalog. Another common concern is the lack of information on the faculty and alumni pages.

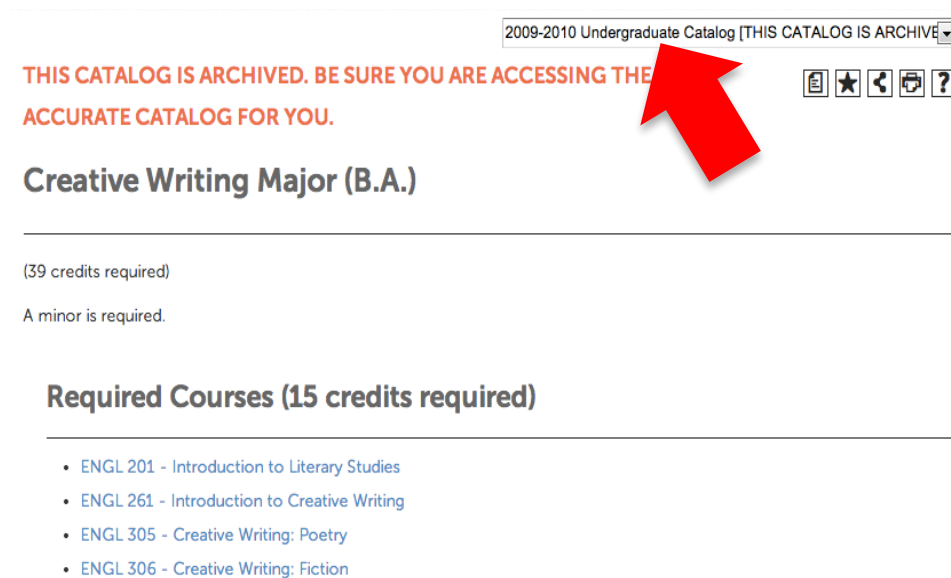
Overall findings and observations

Overall style and content:

The test participants agreed that the English department's website is very professional looking. One participant added that it is standard, looking much like all of the other departments on campus. This consistency across the departments provides users with ease of use and the ability to quickly locate information. The site content also met the expectations of the test participants by offering information related to the department's programs and their relative courses. Test participants were drawn to use the left hand navigational links, which proved to be working and helpful for finding information quickly.

Programs and Courses:

When asked to locate the program course requirements, students were able to quickly determine the needed to click on the “Programs and Courses” link. Once they landed on the catalog site, however, they were presented with an outdated catalog, which was a confusing experience for the participants. One participant stated, “This does not look right”. Not only were the test participants unsure of how to locate the current catalog, they had difficulty navigating back to the English department’s website.



2009-2010 Undergraduate Catalog [THIS CATALOG IS ARCHIVED]

THIS CATALOG IS ARCHIVED. BE SURE YOU ARE ACCESSING THE ACCURATE CATALOG FOR YOU.

Creative Writing Major (B.A.)

(39 credits required)

A minor is required.

Required Courses (15 credits required)

- ENGL 201 - Introduction to Literary Studies
- ENGL 261 - Introduction to Creative Writing
- ENGL 305 - Creative Writing: Poetry
- ENGL 306 - Creative Writing: Fiction

Faculty Information:

The participants appreciated that the list of faculty were in alphabetical order, but due to the length of this page they wished there was a way to easily search the page for the faculty member of whom they were trying to locate. The participants also indicated a desire to see what courses the faculty members were teaching and each professor’s email address.

Alumni Information:

The test participants were able to quickly and easily navigate to the alumni page using the navigational links on the left side of the site. Once the participants landed on the site, they questioned why the page was blank, but were able to determine they needed to click on the alumni's name in the sub-navigational link section to get to a specific graduate. They considered this information interesting, but wished there were more graduate profiles and associated photos.


Events:

The participants were not able to find information about the selected upcoming speaker in the "Voices in the Valley Series" as the events on this page are out of date. One participant wished that the information were in a calendar instead of in a list. In its current format, the test participants stated it was very effective to have the date bolded and the nearest event at the top.

Thursday, December 5, 2013 (7:00 pm, Roberta Allen Reading Room): Cardinal Sins'
Publication Party

Monday, December 2, 2013 (11:30 am, SE 124): Brown Bag Series, Professor Nicola
Imbrascio, "Fairy Tales"

Monday, April 22, 2013 (7:00 pm, Roberta Allen Reading Room): Cardinal Sins'
Publication Party



Social media:

The test participants had a bit of trouble locating the departments Twitter account. They often clicked on the left-hand floating share icons or looked on the “About Us” page.

One participant thought it may be located near the “Contact Us” section. The students expected that the Twitter page would be of use for relaying any type of departmental updates, events, and relevant information, however they noticed the Twitter page is not updated frequently.

Imagery:

The test participants did like the current images on the English department website; one participant added that the images are inviting and welcome the user into the pages.

Many participants stated to be “visual people” that prefer images instead of reading text.

Many of the participants specified that it would be useful to have captions on the photos because they were not able to determine what was happening in several of the photos.

Conclusions and recommendations

- All of the participants had a lot of difficulty one they were directed over the catalog.

We recommend updating the program links both in the left side navigational links and on the “Programs and Courses” page to direct students to the most current catalog for the academic year. Also, being that the links direct users to a third party system, we recommend that the catalog page be opened in a new tab. This will allow the users to easily navigate back to the English department website if needed.

- Many of the participants enjoyed the images, but would have like to see captions on the photos. We recommend that the images on the site be refreshed occasionally and have captions on them. It would also be beneficial to add more photos that capture the passion and excitement the faculty members have regarding the English programs offered at Saginaw Valley State University. For the “visual people” these images will have the potential to capture their attention as opposed to a large body of text.



- Students desire the ability to find out basic information about the instructors such as what courses they teach and their email addresses. Therefore, we recommend providing the email address in the table of information presented, as many students did not realize they could click on each professor to get more information, including the email address.

Department Chair

Name	Title	Building	Office	Phone
Gary L Thompson	Professor of English glt@svsu.edu	Science West	313	989-964-4308

- The test participants expressed interest in the alumni of the English department and expected more than just one student to be highlighted. We recommend that some copy be added to the “Our Alumni” landing page to invite users to explore the successes of past graduates. Also, it would be beneficial to current students, potential students, and parents to add more alumni profiles and include photos on the alumni profile pages.
- Students did express an interest in current events happening in the department we recommend that the “Events and Accomplishments” page be updated frequently to reflect the current events in the English department. It is also suggested that a calendar format is explored and implemented to display the department’s events. The Battle of the Valleys page includes a calendar to display events. Additionally, it is recommended that the department’s Twitter and Facebook accounts be updated *frequently* with details related to speaking events as well as other departmental activities and accomplishments.

Calendar of Events

[◀ Prev](#) [Next ▶](#)

[PRINT](#) | [SUBSCRIBE](#) | [ICAL](#) | [RSS](#)
View:

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2014

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
B.O.V. T-shirt Sales	11/14/2014 10 a.m.	Other space, Market Place at Doan Display Table, Zahnow Library Entrance
B.O.V. Saginaw Spirit Hockey Game@ Thedow	11/14/2014 6 p.m.	Off Campus

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2014

EVENT	DATE	LOCATION
Football Vs. Grand Valley	11/15/2014 1 p.m.	Wickes Memorial Football Stadium

[◀ Prev](#) [Next ▶](#)
Events calendar powered by 25Live

November 2014

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	1	2	3	4	5	6

Search

To help with the ease of finding the department's social media accounts, we recommend placing in more often throughout the site. It could even be placed in the left-hand navigation bar, the location in which the students know to go to quickly navigate through the site

Events and Accomplishments

Cardinal Creativity Camp

Our Alumni

🐦 [SVSU English Department](#)

Contact Us

✉ glt@svsu.edu

☎ (989) 964-4308



Appendix

Screener and profile spreadsheet

[Get this from Sherrin]

Moderator's guide

First I will tell you a little bit about myself. I am a graduate student in the Communications and Digital Media program. I am currently taking a course in Usability Testing and we have asked you to help us with one of our projects. I have a few questions to ask you before we get started, please answer to the best of your ability:

- What is your class standing?
- How often do you use the Internet?
- How often do you visit SVSU academic department websites? Which?
- Are there any specific majors you are contemplating?
- Where do you go to find information about specific academic programs or departments? If it is the SVSU department websites, what type of information do you expect to find?
- How often do you visit the social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) of academic departments on campus? Which?
- Are you familiar with the majors and minors that the English department offers? If so, which?

I would like to gather some input from you about a particular website, and we will be using your input to help my team make some recommendations.

A few things to cover quickly:

- I will be recording the audio and video during this session, but this will not be shared with anyone other than our group and will be archived.
- You are not being evaluated; you cannot fail. You are the one doing the evaluating of the site and your honest feedback is appreciated.
- I will be taking notes regarding your evaluation of the site throughout the session.
- Since this is for our class, there may be others in the space with us observing, but please ignore them and try to give the test your full attention.

This is very simple. I am going to ask you to browse to a website on the computer in front of you. I am going to ask you to complete a few different tasks and comment as you go. In fact, I would ask that you think out loud as you go through the tasks. Explain what you are looking for, what you expect when you click some place, and if the behavior of the site matched your expectations. Don't hesitate to explore as you go along. Please feel free to stop and ask questions of me at any time.

Ready to begin?

Task One

Navigate to the English Department's website.

- What catches your attention first on this page?
- How do you feel about this element?
- What is your first impression of the overall layout and content?
- What do you expect to find within this site?
- What majors and minors do the English department offer?

Task Two

- Please locate the list of necessary courses for the Creative Writing Major for the 2014 – 2015 academic year.

Task Three

- Where would you go to find information about instructors in the English department?
- What type of information would you expect to be on this page?
- Is there enough information here for what you expect?
- How do you feel about the layout of this page?

Task Four

Please locate information about some past graduates of the English department.

- Is this information interesting to you?

Task Five

Please locate details about the upcoming speaker for the Voices in the Valley Series.

- Is this information helpful?
- How do you feel about the presentation of this information?

Task Six

Please locate the departments Twitter account.

- What type of information would you expect to be on this page?
- Do you find that this Twitter account is useful to you?

Task Seven

- Comparison between other department website pages.

Task Eight

After seeing the imagery,

- How do you feel about the imagery on the English department site?
- Do you feel that the images are relevant or useful? If not, what type of images would you prefer to see here?

Task Nine

- Given this set of cards with the navigational elements on each, place them in order of usefulness.

Thanks for your time!

Screen Captures

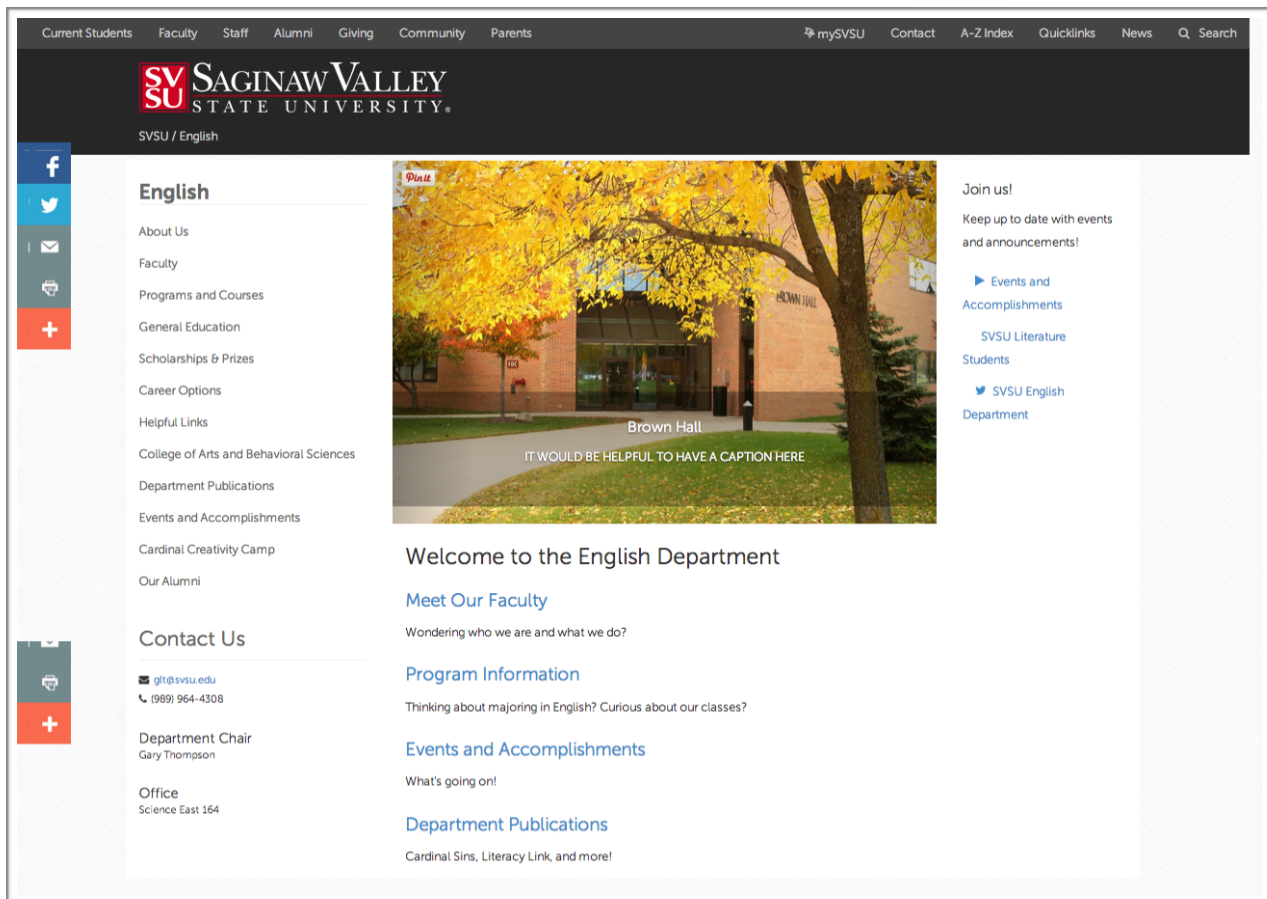


Figure 1 - Home

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Programs and Courses

English


- About Us
- Faculty
- Programs and Courses
 - Literature
 - Creative Writing
 - TESOL Certification
 - English - Teacher Certification
 - First-Year Writing Program
- General Education
- Scholarships & Prizes
- Career Options
- Helpful Links
- College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences
- Department Publications
- Events and Accomplishments
- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

Contact Us

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☎ (989) 964-4308

Department Chair
Gary Thompson

Office
Science East 164



Programs and Courses

Majors

- [Creative Writing Major \(B.A.\)](#)
- [Literature Major \(B.A.\)](#)
- [English Major for Teacher Certification \(B.A.\)](#)

If you're wondering what you can do with an English degree, check out our [careers page](#).

Minors

- [Creative Writing Minor](#)
- [English as a Second Language: Minor Endorsement](#)
- [English Education Minor for Teacher Certification](#)
- [Literature Minor](#)
- [Professional and Technical Writing Minor](#)

Certificate

- [Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages: Certificate](#)

Affiliated Program

- [Rhetoric & Professional Writing](#)

Majors

- [Professional and Technical Writing Major \(B.A.\)](#)

Minors

- [Professional and Technical Writing Minor](#)

Figure 4 - Programs and Courses

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / General Education

English

- About Us
- Faculty
- Programs and Courses
- General Education
- Scholarships & Prizes
- Career Options
- Helpful Links
- College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences
- Department Publications
- Events and Accomplishments
- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

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 Gary Thompson

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General Education Courses

All SVSU students are required to complete the General Education Program. It comprises 35 credit hours in 10 categories, each with a learning objective, a required number of credit hours, and an approved group of courses from which to choose. See the [Course Catalog](#) for a complete list of courses. English courses are found in Categories 1 and 10.

The General Education offerings count toward the fulfillment of electives for the English major. Please consult the specific, selected course descriptions for more in-depth explanations of the courses as individual professors adapt their classes to the guidelines in each general description.

General Education Courses

Category 1

- ENGL 202 Literary Genre (3)
- ENGL 203 Historical Approaches to Literature (3)
- ENGL 204 Thematic Approaches to Literature (3)
- ENGL 205 Studies in World Literature (3)

Category 10

- ENGL 212 Topics in Critical Writing (3)

Figure 5 - General Education

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Scholarships & Prizes

English

- About Us
- Faculty
- Programs and Courses
- General Education
- Scholarships & Prizes
- Career Options
- Helpful Links
- College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences
- Department Publications
- Events and Accomplishments
- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

Contact Us

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Scholarships and Prizes

Seitz Creative Writing Scholarship

The English Department is proud to coordinate the annual Seitz Creative Writing Scholarship. The scholarship was created by Jim and Melissa Seitz to acknowledge excellence in the writing of poetry and/or fiction. A graduate of SVSU, Melissa Seitz is a retired member of the English Department much respected by her students and colleagues. The scholarship recipient typically receives \$1,000, with the award split between the upcoming fall and winter semesters.

[Scholarship \(129kB\)](#) [2014 Seitz \(127kB\)](#)

Robert S. P. Yien First Year Writing Awards

The Robert S.P. Yien First Year Writing Awards showcase outstanding work by first year composition students in ENGL 080 and 111. Papers are judged by a committee comprised of the First Year Writing Coordinator and selected English Department faculty.

Figure 6 - Scholarships and Prizes

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Helpful Links

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 - Why Writing Matters
- College of Arts and Behavioral Sciences
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- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

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Links

Publications

- [Cardinal Sins](#) is SVSU's art and literary magazine. It is published twice each academic year and includes the work of students and faculty. The publication is edited and produced by students.
- [Literacy Link](#) addresses the use of reading and writing in the classroom and is edited and produced by Ms. Lynne Graft and Ms. Helen Raica-Klotz, both of the English Department. It is a forum for teachers across the University to share ideas, resources, and practices.
- [Valley Vanguard](#) is SVSU's student newspaper. It is published bi-weekly and is available on-line.

Resources

SVSU Resources

- [SVSU Writing Program](#)
- [SVSU Writing Center](#)
- [Career Opportunities in English Studies](#)
- [English 111](#)
- [Zahnnow Library](#)
- [Course Catalog and Schedule](#)

Style Guides

- [APA and MLA: Style by Academic Field](#)

Grammar Help

- [Internet Grammar of English](#)
- [Edufind](#)
- [Grammar Slammer](#)
- [Grammar Lady](#)

Humanities Resources

- [The English Server](#)
- [Voice of the Shuttle Homepage](#)

Recommended Links

- [NEA-Higher Education: Assessment Article](#)

General Education Assessment Materials

- [Category 1 Prompt \(5kB\)](#)
- [Category 10 Prompt \(4kB\)](#)
- [Category 1 Assessment Tool \(19kB\)](#)
- [Category 10 Assessment Tool \(29kB\)](#)
- [Assessment Procedure \(3kB\)](#)

Figure 7 - Helpful Links

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Department Publications

English

- About Us
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- Scholarships & Prizes
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- Department Publications
- Events and Accomplishments
- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

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- ☎ (989) 964-4308
- Department Chair
Gary Thompson
- Office
Science East 164

Department Publications

[Cardinal Sins: SVSU's Art and Literature Magazine](#)
Brandy Abraham, Editor-in-Chief

[Literacy Link: Campus Publication](#)
Emily Beard and Jason Kahler, Co-Editors

Figure 8 - Department Publications

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

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 - Faculty Accomplishments
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- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni

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Events and Accomplishments


Events and Deadlines

Find out important events deadlines in our department.



Faculty Accomplishments

Learn about our faculty's recent projects.



Student Accomplishments

Our students keep busy--see their publications, job placements, grad school announcements, and other points of pride




Figure 9 - Events and Accomplishments

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SVSU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Events and Accomplishments / Events and Deadlines

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Events and Deadlines

Thursday, December 5, 2013 (7:00 pm, Roberta Allen Reading Room): Cardinal Sins' Publication Party

Monday, December 2, 2013 (11:30 am, SE 124): Brown Bag Series, Professor Nicola Imbrascio, "Fairy Tales"

Monday, April 22, 2013 (7:00 pm, Roberta Allen Reading Room): Cardinal Sins' Publication Party

Monday, April 22, 2013 (11:30 am, P 247): English Department Colloquium Series, Professor Ara Ross presents, "Nebula, the poem-show: where the matter of poetry and puppetry coalesce (featuring a live puppetry performance)"

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 (7:00-8:50 pm, W 115): Michael Somers, the author of *Starved*, is from Midland. Mike has agreed to visit our campus to make a presentation, answer student questions, and sign books.

Monday, April 15 (in Chicago): Rosalie Riegler, a former member of the SVSU English department will be presenting "Crossing the Line & Doing Time for Peace."

Monday, March 25, 2013: Cardinal Sins Flash Fiction contest: Cardinal Sins is seeking submissions for our new Flash Fiction Contest! This contest is open to ANYONE - not just SVSU students/alumni. The winning submission will win \$150 and publication in the Winter/13 issue of Cardinal Sins. Runners-up will also be chosen for publication. The theme for the contest is "Trespassing." You can choose to interpret this however you wish - however loosely or creatively you would like to. Check out our website at cardinalsinsjournal.com All submission go through our submission manager: cardinalsins.submittable.com/submit If you have any questions, feel free to email cardinalsins@svsu.edu

Tuesday, March 5, 2013: Seitz Creative Writing Scholarship: The application deadline for the 2013-2014 scholarship is **March 5, 2013**. Application materials should be submitted to Christopher Giroux, SVSU, 7400 Bay Road, 355 Brown Hall, University Center, MI 48710. Students with questions should feel free to contact him at 989-964-4914 or cgiroux@svsu.edu. [Scholarship](#)

Thursday, February 21, 2013: The Robert S. P. Yien First Year Writing Awards ceremony (Award Program)

Figure 10 - Events Listing

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SV SAGINAW VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Our Alumni

English

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- Events and Accomplishments
- Cardinal Creativity Camp
- Our Alumni
 - Jamie Wendorf

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Department Chair
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Figure 11 - Our Alumni (blank)

Current Students Faculty Staff Alumni Giving Community Parents mySVSU Contact A-Z Index Quicklinks News Search

SV SU SAGINAW VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY

SVSU / English / Our Alumni / Jamie Wendorf

English

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 - Jamie Wendorf

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Jamie Wendorf

Jamie Jager earned her B.A. in 2011, double majoring in English and Spanish. While at SVSU, Jamie founded Living Through Literacy, a volunteer organization that gathers and shares the life stories of hospice patients. She was also a member of the Honors Program and the Roberts Fellows (2009-10). Jamie worked for four years as a tutor at the SVSU Writing Center and was awarded the 2010 Tutor Leadership Award by the East Central Writing Centers Association. She was active in several academic organizations, serving as a co-founder and vice president of Sigma Tau Delta (International English Honors Society), and secretary for Alpha Chi (National College Honor Society). Following graduation, Jamie worked at the Bay Area Community Foundation before joining New Hope Valley Assisted Living and Memory Care in Saginaw where she serves as the deputy director. Jamie is pursuing her Master of Science in Administration degree. She is a member of the Bay Area Young Professionals Network and enjoys photography, reading, volunteering, and restoring her 1872 home in Bay City with her husband Jon, 2011, B.S.

Figure 3 - Alumnus Profile