

## Dr. Shane Wood B.A. English, Literature, 2011

By Melissa J. Rush & Madelyn Chambers

### Assistant Professor of English, University of Southern Mississippi

*“When I reflect on my experiences at WKU, I always go back to the English classroom environment. For me, that was my greatest learning experience because it shaped and altered how I perceived education.”*



Shane Wood graduated from Western Kentucky University with a bachelor’s degree in Literature in 2011. He also earned a master’s degree in English Composition from California State University-Fresno in 2014 and completed his PhD in English Rhetoric and Composition at the University of Kansas in 2018. Wood is currently an Assistant Professor of English at University of Southern Mississippi, where he specializes in technical writing.

Wood valued the creative mentorship and insight he gained from his WKU English professors. In particular, Dr. Wes Berry’s classes resonated with Wood. “I owe a lot to Wes Berry. As an undergraduate, I took a couple of classes from him. I would always go visit him in office hours and mainly talk about life (sometimes course materials). He would always listen to me, and he would always provide terrific direction.” Wood also considers Dr. Lloyd Davies, Dr. Ted Hovet, and Dr. Tom Hunley to be great influences on his writing and academic career.

While at WKU, Wood wrote for both the *Talisman* and the *College Heights Herald*. He also served as an ambassador for the Dean’s Council of Students for Potter College and participated in the English Club and American Sign Language Club. Wood made his first professional conference debut at WKU when he presented at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Undergraduate Conference on Literature, Language, and Culture.

The collaboration and communal feeling of literature discussions made Wood switch his major from Business to Literature. Wood modeled that same collaborative design when he began teaching while pursuing his master’s degree. He created and taught a course called *The Meaning of Life and Death* at the University of Kansas, and he taught

two basic composition courses as an adjunct at Haskell Indian Nations University. Wood has also acted as the Editorial Assistant for the academic journal [Composition Forum](#) and presented at the [2018 Conference on College Composition and Communication](#) with Dr. Angela Jones, for which he designed a hospitality website. “I also created an ‘escape room’ at the conference. The escape room was themed as the ‘writing classroom’ and challenged participants, mostly teachers, to think about accessibility, privilege, power, identity, and labor in their writing classroom.”

In August 2018, Wood began teaching at University of Southern Mississippi, and he looks forward to continuing to grow with his students. “I feel extremely fortunate to have received a tenure-track position at a wonderful university. My whole life has been education and academia, so I’m going to continue laboring, reading, writing, and teaching. As a teacher, I’m content, but not too content. I always want to think critically and challenge myself pedagogically. The same can be said for my research agenda. I always want to work hard toward bigger goals and successes.”

Wood encourages current English majors to engage with their professors and their fellow English students. “WKU has an incredibly special English department. Take advantage of office hours. Get to know your professors. Be known by your professors. Collaborate with your peers. Share the wisdom and knowledge you have. You can contribute to the success of the classroom, and you can help create a sustainable, effective learning environment. I believe that all student voices are needed for the classroom to thrive.”

