

Samuel Stinson, M.A. English, Literature, 2012

By Melissa J. Rush

Ph.D. Candidate and Assistant Director of Composition, Ohio University

“Be open. Try new classes and innovative approaches to learning. Discover what indicators you have for future paths and reflect on them. Branch out by inquiring of your roots.”



When it came to choose which university to attend, it was a simple choice for Samuel Stinson. “Ultimately, I chose to attend WKU because the school had already been a significant factor in my life and development. Having lived in Bowling Green, many of my friends already attended WKU. While in high school, I would often join my college-age friends as they studied in the Helm-Cravens Library.”

Stinson completed his undergraduate work in 2003 at Western Kentucky University with a BS in computer science and a double major in English with a concentration in writing. Stinson was also the recipient of the Mary Lucille Scott Scholarship from the English department. However, it was a love of literature that led him to obtain his MA in Literature in 2012. Stinson was involved in the Honors program and completed his thesis as a short story collection under the direction of Professor Walker Rutledge.

Stinson is now continuing his education at [Ohio University](#) as a PhD candidate in rhetoric and composition. He also serves as the assistant director of composition and acts as a mentor for teaching assistants by organizing training sessions, organizing their orientations, and observing TA instruction in the classroom. In addition to his work with the teaching assistants, Stinson maintains program documents and teaching materials for composition classes.

Stinson uses his degree on a daily basis, and he is thankful for the foundation laid by his years at WKU. Professor Rutledge was instrumental in Stinson’s ability to recognize how critical writing comes through an appreciation from being repeatedly exposed to

great literature. He also realizes how much of his instilled sense of curiosity comes from all of his time spent with professors in the English department.

Stinson shared one of his most impactful events while at WKU. “My greatest learning experience at WKU during my undergraduate years was in taking a literature class on Hemingway and Faulkner. This class gave me the opportunity along with my peers to travel to Hemingway’s home in Oak Park, Illinois and to Faulkner’s home in Oxford, Mississippi. As happens in many experiences of this kind, the students who traveled together during the trip formed a social bond that transcended the class. I am still friends with some of the other students I met in that class. “

It was his graduation from WKU with his undergraduate degree that led him to the ultimate realization of his desire to teach at the university level. “The day I graduated with my undergraduate degree at WKU, I felt an immediate sense of relief, but I was still not certain what career path I would choose. After years of working toward a degree, there are often indicators for future paths that may be discovered. I began to reflect on these indicators, and eventually realized that teaching, working with students, was what I wanted to do.”

