



The Collage

College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Kutztown University

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**Dr. Colleen Clemens | English
Faculty Highlight**

Dr. Colleen Clemens, professor of non-western literature and director of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS) program at Kutztown University, always knew she would teach. "I'm just constantly teaching something; I think it's in my nature." After teaching 12th grade English, she decided to get her Ph.D., moving from the public school system to teach on a collegiate level. "I don't think I could be the teacher I want to be teaching high school," she says, as she aims to challenge traditional English classes by teaching more books written by women and people of color. "I can be the teacher I want to be at Kutztown."

great professors that taught us wonderful books that just opened the world."

Dr. Clemens credits expanding her reading as her introduction to women's and gender studies. "I didn't minor in women's studies, my honors thesis had nothing to do with gender—it wasn't a big part of my life," she says. "But once I started teaching, it was." For her and others she saw enter teaching around the same time, it was important to introduce more books written by women and people of color, changing the ways that students were thinking about the world around them. Dr. Clemens believes the Women's,

silence is complicity, and students should speak out when something is unjust. "The number one thing I want our students to know is that they are not alone," she voices. "They have faculty, staff, and other students that support them, and if they need to seek out that support, they should."

She always knew English would be her area of focus as well. "I don't just love reading, I love what books can do for people, the power that writing allows," she says. "I think teaching English is empowering."

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Non-western, or post-colonial, literature became Dr. Clemens's focus after finding herself frustrated that she was reading books mostly written by white, cisgendered men. "I like reading things that are beyond the canon," she explains. "It was my natural inclination to push back." She found different books through her second major in French as an undergraduate, but she really explored world literature through her graduate studies. "I never heard the terms post-colonial or non-western until grad school," she notes. "Once there was language for it, I decided this is what I can do. I had

Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGS) program at KU, which she has directed since 2016, can benefit everyone. "Thinking about yourself and the world around you will make you a better employee, parent, partner, etc.," she explains. "I think it's good for everyone to think about these things—I know it has made me a better parent."

Dr. Clemens sees the director position as the last piece of the puzzle in her career. "I'm really proud of this program. I think it's good for our students and faculty," she notes. She hopes to show through WGS that

Her favorite part of teaching is helping students, mentoring them as her professors did for her. "I feel like mentoring students is where we get to be the most influential," Dr. Clemens says. She recently

received the Undergraduate Research and Creativity Mentorship Award, something she believes honors her time spent with students. "It's a very emotionally and time consuming process to mentor students, so it's nice the University acknowledges that."

Dr. Clemens advises students to seek out mentors, to make connections and ask questions, as this can make the difference in a college career. "If professors compliment you or see something in you, we mean it," she says. "You may not see it yet, but we see it, and that matters."

Congratulations, December Graduates!

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's office is proud to congratulate the fall 2023 graduates. After having met many challenges, you have made it to the end with success. We hope you are proud of your accomplishments here at KU and we cannot wait to see what the future holds for all of you.

Congratulations class of fall 2023!





Todd Messner | Geology Student Highlight

Todd Messner, freshman Geology major at Kutztown University, wanted to be a paleontologist as a child, but after receiving his sister's rock collection, he fell in love with geology. His interest started with the color and eye-appeal of the different rocks and minerals and has since grown to their finer attributes. Now at KU, Todd has amassed a collection of regular and rare minerals over the past ten years, and has found a new interest in photographing his collection under microscopes.

While still in high school, Todd had the opportunity to work with Dr. Kurt Frieauf, professor of Economic Geology and

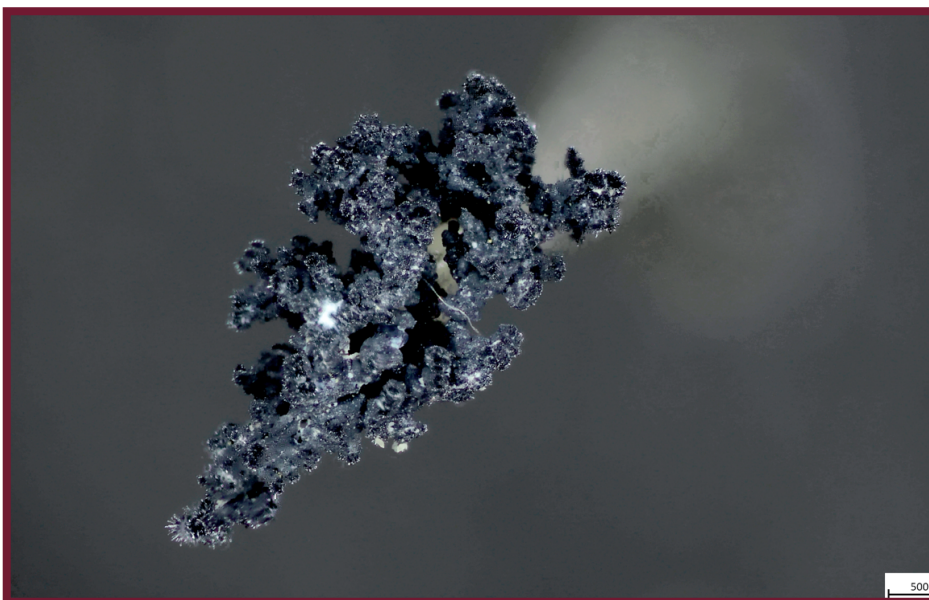
Geochemistry at KU, on the Scanning Electron Microscope during a visit to KU. "That experience allowed me to understand that Dr. Frieauf is an amazing professor, and there are so many other great professors at KU that will allow me to work with different things," Todd notes. Todd's decision to come to KU was based on his unique experiences with microscopes and other equipment. "I'm allowed to do so many things that most students at other colleges are not allowed to do, especially working with the Scanning Electron Microscope," he explains. "That is a very unique thing to be able to use, especially at a freshman level."

He looks to using microscopes as a way to evaluate structures within rare, micro samples of his collection.

"I try to collect as many rare minerals as possible, and it's very difficult to find large crystals of those rare minerals," he explains. "Looking at the micro-samples under the optical microscope will allow me to examine them at a larger aspect range." By looking at the structures of the minerals, he can recognize the differences between them and other minerals, allowing him to identify the rare and distinguishable characteristics. "I find them to be interesting because of the different properties that

they can exhibit, like fluorescence and phosphorescence," Todd comments. "But I also still love their eye-appealing nature."

His favorite micro mineral specimen in his collection is silver, as it has a crystal structure visible under the optical microscope. "Especially with metallic minerals, it's very difficult to get crystals to form," Todd explains. "This specimen is just a beautiful representation of how they can crystallize." To take photos of the minerals under the microscope, Todd uses Z stacking technology. This technique layers photos taken in different positions to omit any blurry or unclear sections to have a better result, allowing for better analysis of the minerals. Todd hopes to use these photos to help teach others about the different crystal systems with the minerals themselves, rather than having to use models.



Todd's silver specimen photographed under the optical microscope.

After his undergraduate degree, Todd wants to attend graduate school to advance his knowledge and research in the field, planning to go into economic geology once in his professional career. The economic side of geology looks at how minerals can contain different valuable elements needed for different uses, such as metals used for technology—though he would prefer to enter the exploration portion of the field. "With exploration, I would be sent out with a group to obtain samples and analyze them to determine whether there is enough ore for any economic value," Todd explains. For now, he advises other students to stick to what they have in mind for their futures, as he has been told by others that he should change his mind. "Don't let others determine your future for you," he says. "If you have an interest and you truly want to stick with it for the rest of your life, don't let someone tell you otherwise."

