

## **Dr. Dawn Winters M.A. English Language & Literature, 2009**

*By Melissa J. Rush & Madelyn Chambers*

### **English Instructor, Western Kentucky University**

*"A long time ago, I learned that women from all over the world possess strength and wisdom that is often times negated, objectified, or reduced. Your stories should empower you and others to navigate this world with confidence, wisdom, and grace."*



Dr. Dawn Winters earned her bachelor's degree in English and Allied Language Arts from Western Kentucky University in 2007. She returned to WKU for her master's degree in English Language and Literature, graduating in 2009, and her Doctor of Education degree, graduating in 2015. Winters is currently an English Instructor at WKU, teaching *Introduction to College Writing*, *Introduction to Literature*, *Writing in the Disciplines*, and *Language and Communication*.

Winters chose to attend WKU when her family moved to Bowling Green for her mother's job with General Motors. She wanted to teach after receiving her bachelor's degree, but she found that a graduate degree would give her more career opportunities. "I absolutely did not set out to pursue a graduate degree," said Winters. "Like many people during the recession, I chose graduate school, and I have never had so much fun in my life!" As a first-generation college student, she values the mentorship and academic support given by Dr. Sandra Hughes and Dr. Kelly Reames. Her peers at WKU also supported her throughout her grad school experience. "We ruthlessly questioned, lovingly encouraged, and supported each other, which made us collectively and individually better," said Winters.

Winters began her professional career at WKU teaching English in Cherry Hall. From the connections made through the English as a Second Language program, Winters joined WKU's [English as a Second Language International \(ESLi\)](#) program as an instructor in 2009. Winters was the Senior Director of Academics for ESLi from 2016 to the program's end in 2019. Beginning in Fall 2019, she will become an English Instructor in WKU's Department of English.

Although Winters has been an English instructor throughout her academic career, her interests in teaching extend beyond the English classroom. “I’m almost finished with an MA in Criminology, and I may have an opportunity to teach a Crim class in Spring 2020,” said Winters. “This is a passion of mine—studying crime, the intersection of crime and gender, and looking at the narrative of a crime—and I would look forward to doing more work in that field. Finding a way to marry my love of story with my love of crime would be a dream.” Whether in English or Criminology, Winters is excited to begin teaching more regularly. “Often my students teach me just as much if not more than I teach them, and international students are a wealth of knowledge, perspective, and difference,” said Winters.

When she isn’t teaching or studying for her MA, Winters enjoys spending time with her wife and their two dogs, three cats, and seven chickens. She is also part of two book clubs, and she has started a true crime club, the BGKY Murderinos.

Winters knows the skills of an English major are incredibly valuable in the workplace. “Being an English major means that you’ve got a set of versatile skills that not too many people understand. Work to present those skills in ways that are meaningful to you but also earn you a living. This may mean partnering what you know with something you’re interested in.” Winters hopes to merge her passions for English and Criminology in the future, creating a fulfilling and engaging life-long career.

