



Dr. Gillian Knoll

By Dillon Miller

Dr. Gillian Knoll brings an enthusiasm to the classroom that comes across as genuine, caring love for the students she teaches and the content she researches.

This semester, she is teaching “Shakespeare” and “Survey of British Literature I.” Next semester, Dr. Knoll is teaching two new classes entitled “Early Modern Literature,” which examines plays not written by Shakespeare in the Early Modern Era, and

“Shakespeare and _____” which aims to give graduate students an opportunity to bring their own “and” to the class in order to make their own syllabus.

Her love affair with Shakespeare began with performing in high school productions. Due to what she calls “bad acting,” she often received smaller parts in Shakespeare plays which led to her watch the play from more of a backstage perspective. This would be the catalyst that led Dr. Knoll to pursue an academic career in Shakespeare studies. “I knew I wanted to be an English professor as soon as I got to college,” she explains, “and on the first day of my first Shakespeare class in my freshman year, I knew this was what I wanted to do.”

Dr. Knoll is in the process of writing a new book entitled “Conceiving Desire.” Set to publish in 2020, the book is about Shakespeare and one of his contemporaries named John Lily. She hopes to examine how these two playwrights take the inner, private experience of desire and project it on the stage. Dr. Knoll is also proud of her first publication, an essay about John Lily published in *Shakespeare Quarterly*. She considers it to be a professional and personal milestone in her lifetime.

Dr. Knoll is currently in her fourth year of being the faculty sponsor for the WKU English Club. She loves the energy and commitment of the students involved in the

club. She is particularly “excited to see students socializing around English, around books, and loving to go buy secondhand books and sell them. There’s a lot of warmth, goodwill, and community there.”

Outside of the classroom, Dr. Knoll is currently in the wake of having her first child, a seven-month-old baby boy named Nathan. “He has turned everything upside down in the best possible way,” she says, “I am madly in love with him.” She considers it an accomplishment to be able to give herself to another person so completely and still be able to come to work.



When not researching eroticism in Shakespeare, overseeing clubs, and changing diapers, Dr. Knoll enjoys practicing yoga, which she started in graduate school. She says it helps her to “slow down” and take care of herself. She also takes piano lessons here at WKU and enjoys the immersive and humbling experience of learning a new skill as an adult.

Dr. Wes Berry sums Dr. Knoll up: “Dr. Knoll walks the world with the glow of a benevolent saint, spreading positive vibes with her enthusiasms and good humor.... I hope we see her levitating through the halls of Cherry for years to come.”