

TRI-DISTRICT ARTS



***Tri-DAC Creative Writing
Staff and Guest Artists Bios***



Michael Gore - Creative Writing Coordinator

Michael Gore is a teacher of English and Creative Writing at Gilbert High School, where he also started and runs the creative writing club, GHS Writers. He is passionate about both teaching and writing, and pursues a career as a writer outside of his teaching. He has a Bachelor of Arts in English, a minor in music, a Master of Teaching secondary English, and, nearly, a Master of Arts in literature from the University of South Carolina. Some of his field experience includes publication in the 2019 edition of South Carolina's Emerging Writers, publication in *The Lettered Olive*: an

Undergraduate Literary Journal, a presenter at the INK! Undergraduate Literary Conference, screenwriting/production assistant credit on a motion picture, and music assistance credit on a motion picture. He has experience working with students of all ages between middle school and college undergraduate. In his free time, Mr. Gore loves practicing sketching, cooking, playing the saxophone, video games, and going on adventures with his girlfriend and her two cats and two dogs. Mr. Gore loves to encourage students to express themselves through writing and see writing as a lifelong gift to enjoy and nurture.



David Arroyo (MFA) – Poetry Instructor

David Arroyo is an instructor with USC's Department of First-Year Writing. He's published over thirty poems and is working on his first full-length collection. He holds an MA in English from Florida State University and a MFA in Creative Writing from Stonecoast. His Dungeons & Dragons alignment is Neutral Good.

Maddie Clevestine (MFA)

Maddie is a second year MFA student specializing in poetry. Growing up in the South, Maddie's work focuses on their unique southern experience, changing family dynamics, and the natural world.



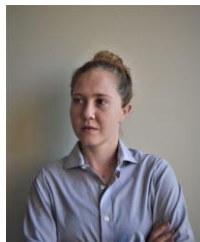
Carl Hiaasen

Carl Hiaasen was born and raised in Florida, where he still lives. He is the author of many bestselling novels for adults, including *Squeeze Me* and *Bad Monkey*, which is currently being made into a series for Apple TV+. His books for younger readers include the Newbery Honor winner *Hoot*, as well as *Flush*, *Scat*, *Chomp*, *Skink—No Surrender*, and *Squirm*. You can read more about Hiaasen's work at carlhiaasen.com, and follow him on social media on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter at @Carl_Hiaasen.



Claire Jimenez (PhD)

Claire Jiménez is the author of the short story collection *Staten Island Stories* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2019) and *What Happened to Ruthy Ramirez* (Grand Central, 2023). She received her M.F.A. from Vanderbilt University and her PhD from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. In 2020 she co founded the digital archive *The Puerto Rican Literature Project* with a group of other Puerto Rican writers and scholars and the *US Latino Digital Humanities Center* at the University of Houston. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor of English and African American Studies at the University of South Carolina.



Sam Liming (MFA)

Sam Liming's poems have been published in *Palette Poetry*, *Leavings*, and *The Spotlong Review*. She has an MFA from the University of South Carolina, where she served as editor for *Cola Literary Review* and helped run the *Shark's Parlor Reading Series*.



Ed Madden (PhD)

Ed Madden is a professor of English at the University of South Carolina and author of five books of poetry. From 2015 through 2022, he served as the poet laureate for the City of Columbia, SC. He is recipient of an Academy of American Poets Laureate Fellowship and artist residencies at the Hambidge Center in Georgia and the Instituto Sacatar in Brazil.

Ray McManus (PhD)



Ray McManus is the author of four books of poetry: *Punch.*, *Red Dirt Jesus*, *Left Behind* and *Driving through the Country before You Are Born*. His latest book, *The Last Saturday in America* is forthcoming from Hub City Press in 2024. His poems have been published in numerous journals such as *Crazyhorse*, *Prairie Schooner*, *POETRY*, and the *Birmingham Poetry Review*. Ray is the Chair of the Division of Arts & Letters and the Chair of the Division of Humanities & Social Sciences, as well as a Professor of English at the University of South Carolina Sumter. Since 2018, Ray has been the Writer in Residence at the Columbia Museum of Art where among many things he hosts the award-winning podcast *Binder*. In 2023, Ray received the Governor's Award for the Arts – the highest honor South Carolina gives in the arts.



Nicola Waldron (MFA)

Nicola Waldron is an award-winning writer of poetry and lyric prose, and a long-time teacher of literature, writing, and more recently yoga and meditation. Her work has been featured in many venues, most recently *The New York Times*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and several anthologies. Her essay “My Thick Waist” was chosen as a Best American Essays notable in 2015 and her poetry chapbook, *Girl at the Watershed*, was chosen by Kwame Dawes as a South Carolina Poetry Initiative competition winner and published in 2013.

She is the recipient of the U.K.’s Bridport Prize for poetry and the Broad River Prize for prose. A graduate of Cambridge University, the Bennington Writing Seminars, and Asheville Yoga Center’s Advanced Yoga Studies program, she teaches writing at the University of South Carolina and ‘yoga and word’ out in the community.



Melanie Walker (MFA) Fiction Instructor

Melanie is a writer and teacher based in Columbia, South Carolina. She teaches English at Cardinal Newman and the University of South Carolina, and has been published in *Necessary Fiction*, *New Feathers Anthology*, and others.