

Bethany Pastorial, B.A. English, Literature, 2006

By Olivia Alsup

Founder & Photographer,

Bethany P Photography

“There are a lot of people who struggle to connect with their audience and find that common ground, and I think that we, as English majors, are positioned uniquely to provide that service to people that don’t have that grasp of the English language.”



The aspect that really drew Bethany Pastorial to WKU was the beauty of the campus and, oddly enough, the success rate of Biochemistry majors accepted into Veterinary schools.

When Pastorial began her college career, she had already tested out of all of the English classes she would have to take in college except for one. Before taking English at WKU, she was planning on entering Veterinary school after graduating with a B.S. in Biochemistry. “It was kind of like a lightbulb went off,” said Pastorial of her English 3 class. “English had always come easy to me and I did really enjoy editing and writing, so I made the switch from Biochemistry to English Literature.”

Pastorial graduated with a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Writing from WKU in 2006. She then worked in Maryland as a technical writer for the United States Department of Defense. There, she wrote technical manuals for military equipment and oversaw teams of other technical writers.

While working for the Department of Defense, Pastorial launched her equine photography business on a part-time scale in 2017, while also working in freelance copywriting for equestrian marketing companies. In 2020, she has been able to transition to doing photography full-time for [Bethany P Photography](#), and she plans to fully launch the copywriting section of her business in the next year where she will offer writing and editing services for other small businesses.

For Pastorial, this company is a good way to combine the things she loves most about her work. Her skills in photography and English give her the opportunity to help others

in building their own businesses. “Most people who start a business aren’t interested in doing the nitty, gritty work of self marketing. They just want to do the thing that they’re good at; they don’t want to spend that time in front of a computer writing about what they’re good at. Being able to manipulate the English language is not intuitive to someone who is not really in love with words.”

Along with her company, Pastorial uses her skills in photography to benefit non-profit projects that focus on horse adoption and rehabilitation. She is the official photographer for [After the Races](#), a Maryland based organization that rehabilitates and rehomes retired Thoroughbred racehorses. She is also an industry partner with the ASPCA run organization, [The Right Horse Initiative](#), that works to promote equine adoption and welfare programs across the US.

Pastorial is also a co-founder and photographer for the [Equestrians of Color Project \(EOCP\)](#). The EOCP aims to photograph and interview equestrians of color in order to share their stories through a group blog. “We’re super excited to be able to bring to light more of these stories and amplify these voices. It’s a much-needed space so that we can see more persons of color in equestrian-based media.”

Pastorial still uses the soft skills she developed as an English major to run her copywriting and photography businesses. Time management, close reading skills, and audience analysis all help keep her business organized and connected to her audience on a personal level, so she is able to provide the services needed for each photography session.

Her advice to undergraduate students looking to achieve success with an English degree is to find something that truly interests you and comes naturally to you. She says, “With all of the different types of writing and literature that are available as an English major, you’re free to learn about what piece makes you personally tick. Take advantage of the variety and don’t be afraid to apply your skills to the untraditional.”

