

Jesse Knifley, B.A. English, Literature, 2009

By Max Chambers

Coordinator of Technology and Communications, The Center for Gifted Studies

“Even though the worlds of technology and writing are not even the same on paper, the skills are exactly the same.”



Jesse Knifley graduated from WKU in 2009 with his bachelor’s degree in Literature, minoring in Creative Writing. He is currently the Coordinator of Technology and Communications at [The Center for Gifted Studies](#), housed in WKU’s Florence Schneider Hall.

Knifley came to WKU because his sister attended WKU one year before he did. “This is a really beautiful place, and my sister had a good experience here, and that was the deciding factor.” He began as an undeclared student in science, but his English 100 & 200 courses made him fall in love with English.

Knifley gained valuable information in all of his classes, but his study abroad trip to Cambridge, England with Professor Pat Taylor had a huge influence on his love of literature. “It’s the idea that literature is dynamic and never-changing. The things that people were thinking about and writing about are still directly applicable to daily life. It’s the human condition.” His film classes with Dr. Ted Hovet also helped him explore non-canonical literature, film, and history. Dr. Dale Rigby, Debra Hays, and Terry Elliott also mentored and encouraged Knifley throughout his time at WKU.

Knifley originally planned to get his master’s degree in English from WKU when he finished his bachelor’s degree. After beginning a job at the [Warren County Public Library](#), he discovered his true passion was to “stay in the library world” instead. Knifley worked as a Library Assistant and Digital Services Librarian for nearly six years. When the position as Coordinator of Technology and Communications opened in 2017, Knifley found that his social media and online marketing experience directly transferred to his new position.

At The Center for Gifted Studies, Knifley coordinates marketing and communications, which mostly involves sending emails and managing the Center's website. Knifley values the skills he gained in the English department that directly apply to his job. "It has served me well to be able to write a lot better than other people. I'll have email communications with people, and advertising worth thousands of dollars is on the line. A lot of times you're asking people, 'Hey, you should donate us some money.' Without that training of being an English major, I don't know if I could do that as well as I do."

In his free time, Knifley enjoys hiking and reading nonfiction and travel guides. He also loves photography, and he posts many of his photos on his personal website, jesseknifley.com.

Knifley encourages current English students to value their English education. "Try to get the most out of whatever class you're taking. Don't think, 'Okay, I've got to read X number of texts or write X number of papers,' instead of thinking, 'How can I refine my reading process in a way that I'm getting the most out of these texts and I'm getting the most out of class discussion.'"

Knifley also encourages students to work on building job skills and experiences while they are still at WKU. "If there's an academic conference coming up, get on the planning committee. If there's a club you can be involved in, get on that. If there's a student group that needs someone to do their social media, get in there and do that. All those things add up over time and build your skill set."

