

Steve Benton

I was born in Fort Worth and grew up in several towns and cities in Texas, Oklahoma and Arkansas (including, most memorably, a two-year stint playing high school football at Odessa Permian of *Friday Night Lights* fame). After getting a degree in English from TCU, I spent five years teaching English as a Second Language in Madrid, Spain and then took the Trans-Siberian railroad to China, where I spent four more years teaching ESL and American Literature and Culture at Xiamen University. From China I went to the University of Chicago, where I got a master's degree in the humanities, and then across town to the Language, Literacy and Rhetoric program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where I got my Ph. D. in the spring of 2008.

My dissertation, a study of depictions of educators in popular fiction and film, accurately reflects my scholarly interest in popular culture, pedagogy and rhetoric, issues that I have also explored in several recent conference presentations and publications.

The arms and legs draped around my smiling head in the photo on the faculty page belong to Emilio (born 2005), the oldest of the three children my wife and I have brought into the world (OK--she did most of the bringing). Not pictured: the arms, legs, and other body parts of his younger siblings, the twins: Nina and Pablo (born 2008).