Grand Valley State University
English Department

Capstone Conference
April 17, 2015
Kirkhof Center
We, the English faculty at GVSU, are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, and we uphold the following values and principles:

Values

♦ We value the rigorous and comprehensive study of language, literacy and literature.
♦ We value the cultivation of critical reading and reflection.
♦ We value the production of excellent writing in a variety of forms.
♦ We value the ways the study of language and literature transforms our understanding of local, national, and international communities.
♦ We value teaching that will lead our students to participate in society as informed, responsible citizens.

Principles

♦ We will teach students to speak, read, and write effectively.
♦ We will teach a variety of literary, analytical, pedagogical, and theoretical skills.
♦ We will provide students in all three emphasis areas with a coherent curricular framework and relevant, well-structured choices.
♦ We will foster knowledge and love of literature and of language.

Mission Statement

The English Department strengthens the liberal education of students by developing a deepened understanding of language and literacy, the value of critical reading and effective writing, and the richness of literature, past and present.
The ENG 495 Capstone provides several important opportunities for English majors not offered elsewhere in the curriculum: the opportunity to reflect individually on the intellectual impact of majoring in English (intellectual autobiography); the opportunity to engage in the development and writing of an extended paper (senior thesis); and the opportunity to participate in the public presentation of the thesis work (departmental student conference).

This Capstone course underscores the Department’s principles and values: the cultivation of critical reading and reflection; the production of excellent writing in a variety of forms; the ability to speak, read, and write effectively; and the cultivation of literary, analytical, pedagogical, and theoretical skills.

This culminating event for the English Capstone Course requires that students publicly present a project that they have been responsible for shaping from its inception to its final form. The presentation will concretize the expertise that students have accrued in the research process and allow them to speak as authorities about their topic. No matter what career our students enter, public speaking is an essential skill, as is the act of distilling complex knowledge into a compact yet comprehensible package. Thus this final assignment of the Capstone course is the one that perhaps most clearly transitions students out of the major and into the next phase of their lives. We see this aspect of the course as a way to help students recognize each others’ accomplishments—and to help them be proud of their own as they move forward into their various futures.
9:00-9:50 am – Session One

10:00-10:50 am – Session Two

11:00-11:50 am – Session Three

12:00-12:50 pm – Session Four

1:00-1:50 pm – Session Five

2:00-2:50 pm – Session Six

3:00-3:50 pm – Session Seven

4:00 pm

Please join us in 2250 Kirkhof for our annual English Department Awards Ceremony. We thank you for attending our Capstone Conference today.

There are numerous lunch options available on-campus and off-campus. Please see page 31 for details.
Presenters:

Cassandra McCullen - The Home Reading Climate: Home-Caregiver Influence on Reading Development in Early Childhood

While the government has created programs like No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top to combat the growing illiteracy in America, they are ignoring the influence of home-caregivers on children’s reading development. Critics believe instilling the passion for reading is the job of teachers and school professionals, ignoring the importance of the first several years in a child's life. The benefits of reading, such as increased vocabulary and gains in background knowledge, become more difficult to achieve unless children are exposed to and have a positive attitude toward reading before they enter Kindergarten. This thesis discusses the components of a strong home reading climate, such as accessibility to literature and encouragement from adults, as well as the academic impacts of high-interest reading from a young age.

Lauren Mokan - Literacy, Involvement, and Everything In Between

It is no secret that literacy is important when it comes to children's development, but what most do not realize is how much parental involvement impacts their success. This thesis will explore many variables that factor into the development of children's literacy. My research is designed to direct parents' attention towards how important their involvement is in aiding the success of their children's future. Through gathered and well-organized research, I have learned how important reading is outside of the classroom, and how there are many involvement strategies available to meet each individual's needs. Some of these strategies include: reading aloud to children, literacy bags, library visits, exploring different genres, and many more. Parents should implement involvement in literacy to benefit their children's reading, and to strengthen their overall success in school. It is never too early to start reading with your children, and parental involvement makes all the difference.

Kara Snoeyink - The Advantages of Early Childhood Reading

My thesis focuses on the benefits of reading to children at an early age. It is a proven fact that early exposure to books through reading to children is crucial to their overall knowledge and involvement in society. These children will have broader vocabulary, stronger family connections, and greater comprehension skills. Children, from different economic statuses have different exposures to early reading; these experiences are essential to their ability to contribute to society. Lower income families may not have opportunities or finances to provide their children with the advantages of early reading. Programs are available to expose children to literature at any age. My perspective on early childhood reading is based upon my experiences of being extensively read to as a child and being home-schooled for several years. In this presentation I will argue in favor of the many advantages of early childhood reading.
Facilitators: Dr. Bill Osborn  
Dr. Ashley Shannon

Presenters:

**Kamarie Evink - Reimagining Fairy Tales in the Elementary Classroom**

The concern regarding what children hear and see is growing, especially within schools. An increasing amount of books and literature are challenged and banned because of their content; fairy tales are among the top of questionable literature. This paper will not only show the advantages of including fairy tales in curriculum, but how these tales should be presented. I will examine how to present multiple versions to students, thus enhancing their knowledge and critical thinking skills. I will be arguing that children are capable of handling multiple versions of fairy tales, including Walt Disney and Brothers Grimm. By using the tales of “Little Red Riding Hood” and “Cinderella” as examples, I will demonstrate how multiple versions are not only beneficial, but necessary.

**Rachael Gregory - Cinderella around the World: How Fairy Tales Reflect Culture**

Fairy tales have been ingrained in cultures around the world for generations. For my senior thesis, I will be looking at the fairy tale of “Cinderella” in multiple cultures. Through research and study I want to discover what the different versions of “Cinderella” from around the world tell children from those cultures and others about that society and what is important in that culture. I want to do this by taking a closer look at the themes and symbolism in each version and how those affect children who read them. I want to look at whether these themes and symbols set negative or positive values and expectations on children through the fairy tale of “Cinderella” and what we as educators can do to encourage the positive impacts and challenge the negative impacts.

**Joanna Koerner - Good, Old-Fashioned Villains: Stepmothers Compared and Contrasted in Fairy Tales across Cultures**

James Moriarty famously states in BBC’s *Sherlock*, “Every fairy tale needs a good old-fashioned villain.” In Western fairy tales, the villain is often a stepmother. Fairy tales in other cultures, too, are full of the wicked stepmother motif. There are both similarities and differences between the German “Aschenputtel,” the Russian tale “The Stepdaughter and the Stepmother’s Daughter,” and a fairy tale from the Philippines, “Abadeja.” I will begin by looking at why stepmothers are so prevalent in fairy tales across diverse cultural traditions. I will then examine various themes in each of these fairy tales to perceive how stepmothers are viewed in each one. Finally, I will examine what these images of stepmothers might signify in our individual cultures. By examining these tales of evil stepmothers, we can see how a society might question authority.
Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson  
Dr. Robert Rozema

Presenters:

**Cady Lewis - LGBTQ Identity in Young Adult Literature**
In my senior thesis, I focus on the representation of LGBTQ teens in Young Adult literature. By analyzing three works of YA fiction from varying recent decades, namely *Annie on My Mind* by Nancy Garden, *Boy Meets Boy* by David Levithan, and *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, I argue that the inclusion and representation of LGBTQ characters in these books, and YA literature as a whole, is ultimately positive, but that the power and positivity of future works will be much greater if sexuality is treated not as a problem or a defining characteristic, but as one facet of a person’s larger identity. Drawing upon the work of scholars such as Terry Castle and Caroline E. Jones, I will discuss what it is in these three novels that exemplify positive representation and what can be built upon for future works.

**Angelina Mount - Protecting the Dream, Neglecting Reality: The Evolving Content of Young Adult Literature**
Young Adult literature has been a catalyst for controversy, censorship, and debate since its recognition as a genre. However, the conversation surrounding it has recently shifted from focusing on the taboos of the genre to claiming that contemporary YA literature is darker than its predecessors. In my paper I explore the evolving content of YA Literature through a comparative analysis of six Young Adult novels – one from each decade since the rise in popularity of YA literature. The works discussed throughout my essay are: *The Chocolate War*, by Robert Cormier; *Go Ask Alice*, by Anonymous; *Speak*, by Laurie Halse Anderson; *Forever*, by Judy Blume; *Shine*, by Lauren Myracle; and *Scar*, by Cheryl Rainfield. As a high school educator, the objective of my research is to discover the purpose behind the changes in the content of the Young Adult literature, and to discuss the benefits of genre fluidity in YA literature.

**Hailie Roblyer - Critical Approaches to Young Adult Literature in Secondary Education**
For my senior thesis, I argue that critical approaches to literature should be taught during high school, rather than being postponed until college or higher education, and that teachers should use young adult literature in order to introduce critical theories rather than the canonical works to which they are typically applied. Critical approaches to literature are incredibly important for developing literacy skills and awareness of social issues, and young adult literature provides an excellent avenue for educators to promote a passion for reading among high school students while also holding enough literary value to support critical analysis. In this paper, I will demonstrate critical readings of the young adult novel *Divergent* by Veronica Roth using Feminist, Marxist, and Psychoanalytic theories in order to show the great potential that young adult literature has to simultaneously relate to adolescents while offering teachers the opportunity to introduce several important critical approaches.
Facilitators: Dr. Dawn Evans
Professor Jill Warren

Presenters:

Sara Baumeler - Controversial Metaphors: Approaches to Sherman Alexie’s *Diary of a Part-Time Indian in the Classroom*

According to Sherman Alexie, “You should approach each book--you should approach life--with the real possibility that you might get a metaphorical boner at any point” (97). Perhaps it is sentiments like this that make *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* a controversial text for readers of all ages. Parents, caregivers, educators and many others have expressed their feelings that this text is unsuitable for young adult readers. Their reasons include violence, sexual references, bullying, language, and other issues. Yet young adult readers appreciate Alexie’s text anyway, disregarding its negative aspects. This paper will explore the text as well as delve into responses given by Alexie to his enthusiastic and critical readers. Additionally, this paper will also explain how teachers use this text within a classroom environment and why some educators refuse to use Alexie’s *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* as a teaching tool.

Chelsea Boomgaard - Censorship In the Classrooms

The amount of censorship that takes place in classrooms is increasing as the years go on. Many teachers are against censorship whereas parents, supervisors and other adults are for censorship. This paper will discuss the positives and the negatives that are attached to censorship. Different views of people’s lives that are involved in the classroom as well as outside of the classroom will also be addressed. Not only will the paper explore all of these concepts but it will also discuss how one can deal with censorship and the effects it can have on a child. This paper will also bring up the reasons why a book will possibly be challenged or even banned.

Alonna Liabenow - Literature Circles as Classroom Problem Solvers

In recent years, it has become increasingly apparent that teaching a diverse group of learners is the norm. There are many differences in culture, language, ability, and personality within a single classroom. As teachers seek new ways to differentiate their curriculum and create a stronger sense of community in the classroom, I offer up one solution that has been tried and proven effective: literature circles. When teachers put in the necessary effort to create a meaningful and authentic learning experience, literature circles can be beneficial in that they foster community, build communication, encourage collaboration, contribute to a safe learning environment, and supplement students’ sense of autonomy and responsibility. This project focuses on the potential that literature circles have to be effective in classrooms, how to draw out that potential, and what pitfalls to avoid when implementing them.
Facilitators: Dr. Amy Masko
Dr. Janet Navarro

Presenters:

Rachel Burr - Are We All The Same? A Look at How Multicultural Literature Affects Us All

The presence of minority students is growing within the classroom, as is the use of multicultural literature. Most teachers include multicultural literature for the purpose of engaging minority students, and while multicultural literature is an opportunity for those students who find themselves apart from the mainstream climate of the classroom to feel connected, it has a value that can be present to every student. My argument states that multicultural literature is a mirror into the lives of the minority students within the classroom and it is also a window for students of the majority culture. White students can learn equivalent lessons from multicultural literature as they can from mainstream literature. This paper argues that multicultural literature can provide a surplus of values, morals, lessons, and understanding into another culture that is valuable to every student in the classroom.

Alyssa Mohr - Integrating Multicultural Literature in Elementary Classrooms

Multicultural literature is being used more in classrooms to allow students to make text-to-self connections. Using multicultural literature is a good way to expand student’s knowledge and introduce them to different cultures. Although multicultural literature is becoming more prevalent in classrooms, many teachers are still unsure of how to use it effectively and some even argue that there are no long-term benefits with teaching it. With proper background knowledge and execution of the lesson, it is possible for multicultural literature to be successfully taught in the classroom. This paper emphasizes the importance of using multicultural literature in the classroom and how it is beneficial to students.

Erica Raymond - Quality and Quantity Working Together: The Importance and Necessity of Quality Classroom Literature

Knowledge is power, and literature can be one of the primary ways to acquire it. Modern university courses that focus on teaching future educators best practices for student success often address the same topic. These courses often focus on how reading as much as possible can help students succeed academically. This paper adds to the conversation by arguing that not only is quantity important, but that diversity has a large impact on student success as well. Looking at the research about different themes that are represented within children’s literature such as race, class, gender, and LGBTQ issues, this paper will observe the cognitive effects these themes have on developing youth. From there, this paper will look at the positive outcomes of having diverse literature that effectively represents these themes. Ultimately, this representation will increase the chance for higher student success in a modern and changing world.
Facilitators: Dr. Dawn Evans
Dr. Robert Rozema

Presenters:

**Jessica Bullion - Video Gaming Influences on Language Arts**

Children learn in a variety of ways, including different mediums of technology that education has brought into the classroom. Educators, parents, and researchers have often debated the use of video games as an alternative for children to learn both inside and outside the classroom. Some believe that video games hinder children’s learning yet recent research suggests that implementing video games spikes learners who lack the challenge and motivation in their own classroom. Research also shows that video games are simply a learning tool, just not as widely accepted nor understood quite yet. This paper will argue the benefits that video games have brought to students and their interest in learning in the classroom.

**Morgan Clay - Thinking about Thinking: Teaching Metacognitive Strategies in the Secondary Classroom**

Metacognition can be defined as the awareness and understanding of one’s own thought process. Metacognitive learners are highly motivated and independent learners that strive for self-direction and autonomy. They take the initiative to analyze their own learning needs, set goals, seek out resources, implement strategies, and reflect on their outcome. There is a lack of metacognitive development in schools which has a direct impact on student’s ability to learn. Teaching metacognitive strategies may help student’s understanding of their own education. Metacognitive strategies encourage students to take ownership of their own learning. I have dedicated my thesis to exploring the use of these strategies in the secondary classroom and what positive effects it could have on student’s learning while in school and on into adulthood.

**Kimberly Davis - The Power of Choice: Using Multi-Genre Projects to Differentiate Instruction in Secondary English Classrooms**

Implementing an effective teaching method in a secondary English classroom containing students with various learning abilities is a constant struggle for teachers trying to meet required state standards. The introduction of multi-genre projects and papers, however, can provide students with a choice in what they learn and how they present it while still teaching them valuable and required researching and writing skills. Through the use of multi-genre projects and papers, teachers can differentiate their instruction for students on any academic level and provide the individual help students need. Multi-genre projects and papers also increase students’ motivation and quality of work, proving that they are more effective than the traditional research paper while still providing detrimental skills.
Facilitators: Dr. Michael Webster  
Dr. Brain White

Presenters:

**Whitney Purvis - The Representation of Muslims in U.S. Newspapers: A Critical Discourse Analysis**

In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, anti-Muslim attitudes have grown in the U.S. and other western countries. In U.S. news, Muslims are commonly linked to extremism, terrorism, and anti-Western values. U.S. news discourse creates an attitude of “us versus them,” dichotomizing the relationship between the West and Muslim communities. This study will use critical discourse analysis to evaluate the portrayal of Muslims between 2010 and 2015 in the widely read U.S. newspapers *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. The analysis will focus on how Muslims are represented grammatically at the sentence level, as well as discourse analysis. Sociologists found that news can have a framing effect on the views of readers; so, if found in this study, negative depictions of Muslims in the news could potentially not only reflect, but also perpetuate anti-Muslim prejudice in the U.S.

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**Tyler Van Werden - Critical Literacy and the Value of Negating Minority Misrepresentation in Academic Texts**

The possession of critical literacy skills is intertwined with the progress of a student’s development of self and the world beyond. Skills surpassing mere functional literacy are required for meaningful social, cultural, and human development. These skills ensure a holistic transformation of literacy, a process embedded within environmental contexts – mainly the practices of institutions and the textbooks provided for students and teachers. Therefore, one can assume the importance for readers to analyze and engage in academic literature from multiple angles by using critical literacy skills. My thesis argues that critical literacy exists as a counter to the improper representation of minorities, leading to a positive and well-rounded perception of minority groups. Negating this social injustice is vital for the sake of majority and minority students, and also the public. This paper examines the causes and implications of student exposure to existing minority perspectives, biases, and misrepresentations within our nation’s textbooks.

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**Kaylee Wolff - William Butler Yeats and Nationalism: Is He a Legitimate Postcolonial Writer?**

There is a debate within the community of literary scholars as to the ability to apply post colonial criticism to William Butler Yeats’ works. This paper address why he should be viewed as a postcolonial author because of the way in which he defines Irish identity. This paper explores the way that Yeats promotes Irish literature and nationalism. Yeats tries to promote a cultural revival in Ireland to establish an Irish identity separate from the English colonizers through promoting Irish classical literature and traditions. The paper addresses not only the way that scholars view Yeats’ writing, but also the way that his contemporaries view his writing. Do the contemporaries agree or disagree with Yeats’ definition of what it means to be Irish? Though there are multiple arguments to discredit Yeats as a true postcolonial writer, those who support Yeats as a post-colonialist provide a stronger argument.
Alesia Alexander - Perspectives of Race, Religion, and Gender in the 16th Century Through Shakespeare

Racial, religious, and gender views are often mirrored in the arts of the time; however, individual perspectives are hard to decipher through history books. The diversity of Shakespeare’s primary characters in *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *King Lear* reflects commonly held attitudes towards race, Judaism, and women in the 16th century. Using references from the play and scholarship published about racism, anti-Semitism and sexism, I examine stereotypes that Shakespeare used in the three plays listed above. Through this literary interrogation of research and Shakespeare’s writing, Shakespeare’s personal attitudes about those social groups are revealed. The results of this research show that Shakespeare covertly uses stereotyped main characters to highlight the injustices, prejudice, or racism against these stigmatized social groups.

Kristen Hollingsworth - The Importance of Modern Myth in Social Conflict: Adaptations of Greek Myth to Address Feminist Issues?

Margaret Atwood’s *The Penelopiad* is a modern adaptation of Homer’s epic poem, *The Odyssey*. This adaptation aims to address the underlying motivation in Telemachus’ and Odysseus’ hanging of the maids who, contradictory to the original text, have been ascribed to being loyal servants of Penelope in the male master’s absence. Myth itself provides a fundamental basis for society’s humanity, however, Modern Age has begun to disassociate itself from these Greek Myths due to the periodic divisions which they originate. Through analyses of the evolving relationship between the maids and their masters from the original text to the modern adaptation, we derive different connotative meanings. Through persisting forms and the application of semiotics and feminist theory to the content of these texts, we are better able to critically determine if society is attempting to resolve modern feminist issues through myth and what the ultimate influences may be.

Brooke Tiemann - A Sea of Oppression: Patriarchal Society in *The Awakening*

*The Awakening*, written by Kate Chopin in 1899, has given key insights into Southern Creole culture, and how it affected the lives of women. A common consensus among literary critics is that Edna Pontellier was a woman who was able to free herself from that culture on her own terms. I will argue that Edna, as well as other women in the novel, ultimately were forced to submit themselves to the patriarchal society in which they lived and were denied their cultural independence. By focusing on multiple characters from the novel, I will be able to illuminate ways in which both men and women were forced to submit to societal norms or rebel and find themselves labeled as outcasts.
Presenters:

**Sara Bobeldyk - Wordless Picture Books: Their Role in the Classroom**

The growing demand and popularity for wordless picture books in the current juvenile literature market opens up a unique opportunity for teachers to use this style of book within their classroom. Removing the need for students to decode the written language, these books are able to create an even playing field between students of all reading levels, language proficiency and cultural background in expanding their vocabulary, promoting positive reading attitudes and gauging their comprehension skills. Additionally this genre offers the ability to help actively engage all parents in their student’s education, regardless of their literacy skills or the language spoken within the home. This paper will help to promote the successful use of these books within the multicultural classroom. Additionally, it will discuss the most beneficial strategies and methods to maximize the benefits of this genre.

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**Lindsay LaPointe - Head Start Programs: An Early Edge, but Only for Some**

Head Start programs are preschools that start young children on the right path to education. Originally designed to aid children of low-income families, Head Start programs are widely agreed upon to be beneficial. This paper first looks at why these programs have such long-term positive effects and the psychological developmental stages that these programs support. It also explores why these programs are not used by everyone even as they are proven to be so effective. Currently Head Start programs are often so expensive that low-income families are unable to partake in them. If these programs are providing educational and social benefits for children, there need to be more opportunities for children of low-income families to have a place in them.

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**Jeanna Watson - Improving Literacy Within Urban Secondary Education**

My thesis discusses the importance of skillfully teaching literacy within urban school districts, specifically within secondary education. It argues what needs to change in order for literacy to improve within low-income school districts. I will be discussing possible problems of why literacy has been low in urban areas, some of the key solutions to improve literacy, and the significance of every student having equal academic opportunities despite financial or personal challenges. Also, I plan to share about how imperative literacy is for students to thrive academically as well as in their career fields. Teaching literacy effectively to inner-city students can drastically change lives.
Facilitators: Dr. Patricia Bloem  
Dr. Laura VanderBroek

Presenters:

**Barbara Jandernoa - Language Prejudice in Education: Changing the idea of "Standard English" To Create Equal Opportunity for Students with Varying Dialects**

The idea of “Standard English” as a primary language is in many ways a myth, as history shows consistently that language varies and changes constantly, despite opposition from Prescriptivists. Furthermore, the way that “Standard English” is typically taught in schools reinforces language prejudice and negative stereotypes of those who don’t speak the “Standard.” In this paper, I discuss how the dialect known as “Standard English” is indeed important to learn, and use in certain situations. But I go on to explain that if we assign a new name to this particular form such as Academic, Formal or Professional English, and change the way that it is taught in our schools, then we would greatly reduce language prejudice, as well as maintain the importance of this form. Therefore, students who don’t speak the standard will not feel forced to compromise their identity, but they will still have the opportunity for achievement by knowing and/or learning the so-called “Standard.”

**Justine Patmos - Traditional or Trendy? The Many Approaches to Second Language Acquisition**

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has evolved into many different forms in the American school system. Traditionally the two options for students have been Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES) and Foreign Language Experience (FLEX). In recent years, many schools have added full/partial immersion programs that emphasize long-term fluency. In this paper, I will clearly identify the differences between the program models and analyze field data while briefly discussing the theories of SLA. Finding that there are gaps in research regarding social implications and the lacking middle/high schools language programs, I discuss the lingering questions that the general public and school officials still have.

**Brian Scott - Liberation through Language: The Role of Multi-Dialectalism in Education**

Students who begin school speaking a variety of English other than the Standard variety (e.g. African American English) are at a disadvantage when compared to students who begin school speaking Standard American English (SAE). Thus, if one wishes to be part of the mainstream in America then one must speak SAE fluently. However, if one wishes to also maintain their identity in the home culture then one must not lose touch with their home language variety either. Therefore, one who is multi-dialectal, speaking more than one variety of a language, must learn to code-switch between the varieties thereby gaining the ability to make conscious, contextual language choices between the available varieties. One gains this new consciousness (metalinguistic/metacognitive awareness) through the use of contrastive analysis. Both contrastive analysis and code-switching are skills that students can learn through a scaffolded process and immediately begin to apply in their lives.
Jessica Amstutz - Gender Roles in Ranma 1/2: Japanese Popular Culture and the Rise of Feminism

One of the more popular anime/manga in the 1980s was Ranma ½, which is a comedic story that involves a main character who switches gender when doused with cold water. This text is one that challenges gender and marriage roles at a time in Japan where feminism was on the rise. Rumiko Takahashi, the author, uses the character’s fluid gender to highlight the difficulties that men and women have in the face of Japanese gender stereotypes. In this paper I will examine these issues and argue that Takahashi uses comedy as a medium to propagate feminist ideals concerning the flexibility of gender roles in a society that would otherwise censor her message.

Danielle Ballantyne - Gender Roles and Early Feminism in Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein

For my senior thesis, I focused on the novel Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. I argue that there is a strong feminist thread throughout the course of the novel that stems from Mary Shelley’s familiarity with her mother’s texts and philosophies, as well as a changing cultural climate, and that these inclinations are demonstrated both by characters themselves, and by Mary Shelley’s treatment of them. My presentation at the conference will focus on the ways in which Mary Shelley interweaves Mary Wollstonecraft’s teachings into the narrative, specifically discussing the strategy she employs of using characters’ strengths and failings as a commentary on the perils of enforced gender roles.

Karen Lomeo - Hysterical Women in Literature

In my thesis I will use twentieth century fiction literature to argue that women try to shed light on their mistreatment but our patriarchal society silences them through the use of a hysterical diagnosis. Women authors, specifically Jean Rhys and Toni Morrison, use writing as a medium to voice their oppression. I will address specific texts Wide Sargasso Sea and Beloved to show the stigma women get when they show emotion, and men immediately writing them off as hysterical, mentally unstable and mad. Though women are often subject to past violence by men, they are expected to repress these memories. Men, eager to maintain their hierarchy, take advantage of women who bravely show their vulnerable side.
Facilitators: Dr. Dawn Evans  
Dr. Janet Navarro

Presenters:

Corey Sobish - Helping Children Cope: How Using Literature Can Assist in the Grieving Process

Helping a child cope with grief and loss of a loved one is a rare phenomenon. Although it does not occur often, it is important to be able to handle the situation in a caring and effective way. Literature is a key factor in helping young children to understand and cope with tragedy. Both informational and fictional books are available to children to guide them through their feelings, thoughts, and fears through the grieving process. Getting the child’s teachers, family, and counselors involved is important for coping as well. Literature that uses appropriate language and informs is the most beneficial for both the child and his/her support system. In this paper, I will discuss why this type of literature is most effective in helping children cope.

Shannon Van Pelt - The Importance of Text-to-Self Connection in the Classroom

Bibliotherapy is an expressive form of therapy that relates student’s personal experiences to the content of literature such as fiction, non-fiction, and poetry, which produces positive results. This thesis explores how to use different types of literature in the classroom to assist students with coping with or solving problems that could affect their school performance in and out of the classroom. Educators should implement developmental bibliotherapy into their classroom in order to help their students learn problem-solving strategies for when they have to experience challenging problems such as bullying, fears, self-esteem issues, and absent or uninvolved parents. Introducing bibliotherapy to students will allow them to be more emotionally resilient and it will be beneficial in developing their social, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Lauren White - Integrating Mental Health and English Language Arts Curricula in General Education Classrooms: Using Natural Disaster Historical Fiction to Develop Positive Coping Skills

Inspired by the increase in natural disaster awareness, many authors have decided to publish disaster focused historical fiction books for children. These texts depict the harsh realities of traumatic events to young readers through the experiences of fictional characters. Often, these trauma centered books face parental censorship challenges at the elementary grade level. Consequently, many educators feel apprehensive to incorporate these texts as priority reading in their general education curriculum. This paper aims to defend the use of natural disaster historical fiction in the elementary English Language Arts curriculum. In doing so, teachers could provide students with psycho-education that aligns with the National Health Education Standards which would serve as early intervention for disaster trauma. Specifically, this thesis uses Hurricane Katrina as a model to rationalize classroom integration of natural disaster texts, and develops a plan for educators to teach coping skills through the use of related children’s historical fiction.
Facilitators: Dr. Robert Franciosi
Dr. David Ihrman

Presenters:

**Carson Ratliff - And the Rest is Left Unsaid: Finding Hemingway in *The Garden of Eden***

While it has received much criticism for departing from the realm of Hemingway’s traditional themes and intentions, the published version of *The Garden of Eden* is as much a traditional Hemingway novel as his classics *A Farewell to Arms* and *The Sun Also Rises*. The editor of the posthumous publication, Tom Jenks, has received criticism for omitting much of the novel’s original manuscript that other scholars believe added to the quality of the work and the integrity of Hemingway’s intentions. An analysis of *The Garden of Eden* alongside Hemingway’s first two novels, however, demonstrates its thematic consistency with the work published during Hemingway’s lifetime and Jenks’ commitment to keeping with the author’s style of limited prose. Editorial decisions made by Jenks intentionally keep mountains of detail underneath the surface, effectually presenting readers with an ambiguous yet subtly foreboding ending, true to Hemingway’s nature.

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**Lauren Rosenau - Harry Potter Series: Collision of Christianity and the Use of Witchcraft**

For my senior thesis, I focused on the morals that are placed in the Harry Potter series, written by J.K. Rowling. I argue that the Harry Potter series includes many aspects of religion, specifically Christianity. Also, I argue that the strong morals that are placed in the characters outweigh the magic and use of witchcraft for Christian readers. Throughout the series there are many biblical parallels and allusions that the author uses to impact the grand themes of the novel series. My presentation will focus on how readers, specifically Christian readers, should focus on the religious aspects of the texts instead of just the use of witchcraft.

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**Kevin Skiver - Good Vs. Bad: The Blurring of the Line Throughout Literary History**

Protagonists are often confused with proverbial “good guys” in many stories. However, it is exceptionally simple to create characters that are significantly more three dimensional than the designation of good or bad. Through some clever manipulation of perspective, authors can make characters that commit reprehensible actions appear to be sympathetic, in addition to making characters with pure motives seem villainous. This tactic has been used quite often throughout the history of literature, creating the idea of the “anti-hero.” By creating the ability to do this, perception is the most important part of a story. An author can distort a reader’s perception and make them think that they’re reading/watching a completely different story than they actually are. Perception determines how the characters, setting and other elements of the story are viewed by the reader, making it an extremely powerful tool if the author has the ability to wield it effectively. It’s the first thing that a reader sees in a story through the wording the author uses, and as such it is extremely important for the author to create a world that the reader will be intrigued to in order to keep them reading on.
Facilitators: Dr. Sherry Johnson
Dr. Amy Masko

Presenters:

**Jenna Hoezee - Voices Lost From Africa to America: Using Slave Narratives to Rediscover the Truths of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade**

The United States colonization is built upon a history in which all is not transparent in the K-12 curriculum. Our country was formed in a historically opaque period, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Currently the K-12 English curriculum overlooks the voices from which history was written, the slaves themselves. Often times what is taught in regards to the conditions of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade is taught with historical inaccuracies. With a strong K-12 English curriculum, in conjunction with the utilization of slave narratives, this paper argues that with this approach literature becomes the avenue into history. In continuation, through the enhancement of teacher background knowledge of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, American students will generate empathy as they read the intimate words of slaves who’ve traveled through the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. As a result, the authentic history in which the United States was founded upon will be examined in its entirety.

**Jazmin McMullen - Talking Their Language**

Ever since 1996, when the Oakland Unified School District passed the law that acknowledged Ebonics as the primary language of the African-American students in their schools, there has been a huge debate about the said dialect. As a result of this controversy, many linguists and educators have done lots of research on this topic and, therefore, brought much attention to African-American children and how they are taught in school. This paper looks at how incorporating Ebonics into the classrooms helps African-American children who speak Ebonics to succeed in school, in learning Standard American English, and gain confidence in themselves as students. We will also examine what proper training looks like for teachers who will have African-American students who speak Ebonics, and how the idea of incorporating the dialect into the classrooms will help all students, not just the speakers of Ebonics.

**Allison Rosbury - “You is Smart, You is Kind, You is Important”: Recognizing AAVE’s Use and Value in Literature**

What drives the use of written vernacular in literature? In conjunction with literary analysis, a linguistic approach is another way to answer this question. One particular vernacular that has been used in literature is African American Vernacular English (AAVE). The convergence of linguistics and literary analysis can highlight AAVE’s cultural and historical significance, the rhythm and richness it contributes to a text, and support the fact that language is always changing.
Facilitators: Dr. David Álvarez  
Dr. Amy Masko  

Presenters:  

**Amina Mohamed - Transforming Curriculum to Aid Identity Formation within Marginalized Students**  
Marginalized students go through various phases in their lives that either enrich or hinder their identity formation. The content of curriculum taught in the classroom environment plays a huge role in the development of identity within underrepresented students. This paper will explore three different inclusive strategies that can be incorporated into the curriculum to help students from marginalized backgrounds create counter stories that can aid them in reshaping their identities. It will also show how these inclusive strategies can help students create positive self images which, in turn, will empower them to define their own identities.

**Cathleen Nichols - Using Literary Theory to Contextualize Concepts of Social Justice**  
Today’s students are exposed to news and world events on many platforms and can find it increasingly difficult to assign meaning to what they are seeing and hearing. Literary theories condition us to interpret how we derive meaning from what we read. In this paper I will discuss the use of critical literacy methods, teaching literary theory to middle school students and how it can aid in their awareness of social justice, and to have a platform to raise their concerns with the daily and current events. By developing a personalized means of understanding the written word, students can apply moral, ethical, and philosophical principles to their interpretations of what they see and hear in everyday life, which prepares them for high school class discussions and creating their individual voice for their future.

**Katelyn Valliere - What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up? Defining Gender in Children’s Literature**  
What influences children’s understanding of gender roles? Children generate their schema of society and their identity in many ways. One way is through texts they are exposed to via story and illustrations. Children’s literature often addresses traditional gender stereotypes found within popular culture; these influence their perception of gender roles. However, some children’s literature challenges conventional stereotypes associated with gender. By analyzing research and performing research of my own I aim to find ways to evaluate children’s literature that provide children with versatile resources which allow them to develop their own gender schema.
Facilitators: Dr. Christen Pearson  
Dr. Shinian Wu

Presenters:

Courtney Boetsma - Flipping the Focus: Using High Stakes Testing to Influence Reading Instruction  
My senior thesis argues that teachers do not correctly use the results from their students’ high stakes tests to influence their instruction of reading comprehension. Research from many experts shows that teachers don’t use the information that they receive from high stakes testing to inform their reading comprehension instruction. Teachers far too often focus on high stakes testing in the form of how to best prepare students for success. I will discuss how, instead of shaping instruction to prepare students for high stakes testing, teachers ought to use high stakes testing to shape instruction.

Nicole Haynes - The Failures in Standardized Testing in Our Education System  
My senior thesis will examine the failures of standardized testing in the education system. As our diversity continues to grow in our communities, our norms in society are also changing. However, our testing systems are not changing. Tests such as the MEAP, ACT, etc. which are weighed heavily on what is considered the norm in society are still being used today. This creates holes that allow students who do not fit the standard criteria to slip through the cracks and compromise the reliability of standardized tests to measure academic success.

Terri Ohrling - Online Education: Exploring the Benefits and Drawbacks in Today's World  
As technology continues to advance, online education has become a more attractive option for busy students. People are looking for the most convenient ways to attend college while still living their everyday lives and having a career. Online schooling gives students another route of access to college classes that is more flexible than traditional classes that meet in a physical location. However, many studies seem to indicate that a student’s learning suffers from it because of the lack of teacher-learner interaction and the inability to be self-taught and disciplined enough to learn the materials of the class. This paper will explore the benefits and drawbacks of online college education in today’s world.
Facilitators: Dr. Ashley Shannon  
Dr. Michael Webster

Presenters:

**Kelley Burcroff - Women of Authority in Harry Potter**
While many people pay attention to the male characters in J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* series, the women deserve just as much focus. Rowling uses characters like Minerva McGonagall, Hermione Granger, Dolores Umbridge, and Bellatrix Lestrange to exemplify women in roles of authority or high influence. With the portrayal of these characters, she is making a statement about women in authority or high influence: that they use their power for good or that they use their power for bad. By making these comparisons of the characters in *Harry Potter* to modern day society, Rowling shows that by using power, influence, or authority for good one can help the world become a better place. The purpose of these comparisons is to give readers something to strive for and a lesson to be learned about letting power go to their head.

**Sarah Donaldson - La Malinche: a Semiotic Examination of the Figure Malinche in Laura Esquivel's *Malinche: A Novel***
In 1519, an indigenous woman known by many names is given to conquistador Hernán Cortés, where her knowledge of Maya and Náhuatl earns her the title of Doña Marina, and the role of translator as the Spanish moved through Mexico. The limited historical evidence of her existence comes from conquistador accounts and local reflections and this evidence focuses on her role instead of her personality. However, instead of disappearing into the margins, her lack of primary descriptions and absence of first-person accounts have only amplified the legacy of a woman divided by polar caricature in Mexican culture and literature. This paper analyzes Laura Esquivel’s novel *La Malinche* while making connections to other versions of the Malinche myth in twentieth-century Chicana literature. After analyzing other works within the genre, I argue that this contemporary example clearly highlights the continuing influence of machismo and the shifting attitudes Chicana feminism have shaped within Mexican literature.

**Alison Tazelaar - Bad Husbands: Medea and Mellie Fight the Patriarchy**
Men behaving badly is nothing new. In fact, the problem of male entitlement is not only pervasive in our culture, as we can see in the adulterous relationship on the current television show *Scandal*, but also thousands of years ago as can be seen in Euripides’ *Medea*. In this play, the title character’s husband, Jason, breaks his marriage vows in much the same way Fitz abandons Mellie in *Scandal*. In this paper, I will examine how scholars have approached this issue in *Medea* and apply it to *Scandal* to see the similarities—and more importantly the differences—between the two. This comparison will help us to understand why the issue is so pervasive and why we enjoy seeing it represented in our popular entertainment.
Heather Burrone - Young Adult Dystopian Literature: Showcasing the Impacts of Eradicating Individual Freedoms

When reading George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Lois Lowry’s *The Giver*, and Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*, one can find an encompassing peek at the human condition within a dystopian society. Fear arises when authorities have too much power or control. The sovereignty of the citizens in the society of each novel is harsh and unlike anything one would likely observe. Each government aims to control their citizens by enforcing conformity and suppressing individual thought. Lacking these freedoms, the books’ cultures are deprived of creative and critical thought, innovation and eventually advancement. The world benefits from this lack of conformity and thus has the ability to advance. Dystopian literature allows the reader to discover a deeper understanding of human nature. Readers are encouraged to use these texts to contemplate how the human condition is affected by oppressive societal rule and thus use the literature as an agent of change for society.

Nicole Groves - It's Worse Than It Seems: The History of Dystopian Literature and Its Psychological Implications

In recent years, dystopian literature has grown to be a popular genre for readers of many ages. However, it was not until recently that dystopian literature really existed as a genre and not a subcategory of young adult fiction literature. In this analysis, I will explore the history of the genre and the ways it has developed into several contemporary sub-genres. From this base, I will then investigate the psychological implications of the genre's major themes in conjunction with popular culture and contemporary social anxieties. It is because of these themes and influences that dystopian literature has become such a large part of our entertainment and popular culture in recent years. By examining dystopian literature in this manner, we can develop a more nuanced understanding of both the genre's popularity and our culture's fascination with the themes resonating throughout the genre.

Alison Taylor - Representations of Technology in Dystopian Fiction

In my thesis, I wish to explore the ways in which technology is represented in dystopian literature. I will be exploring various dystopian novels, including *1984* by George Orwell, *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury, and *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley. The usage of technology is very prevalent in these novels and is usually portrayed in a negative light. Modern technology has no doubt shaped the lives of writers everywhere, which is why it will also be interesting to compare modern dystopian novels to their famous predecessors, in order to see what themes or elements have not withstood the test of time.
Presenters:

**Emily Kennedy - The Power of Choice: The Effect of Choice on Reading Comprehension and Motivation**

Reading comprehension is a skill that students use in many different aspects, but the importance of this skill is not fully grasped by students. Providing choice in a classroom reading program has tremendous effects on student motivation and still allows for instruction in reading comprehension that is so vital to many aspects of their lives. My thesis emphasizes how implementing a choice reading program in classrooms will have a positive effect on students’ reading comprehension and fluency levels. The research I have done shows the positive relationship between choice reading programs and students’ interest in reading, and the ways that choice contributes to the improvement of reading techniques. This research is valuable to teachers and educators who are in need of a reading program that motivates students to read more often while honing essential reading skills.

**Kendra Savara - Accelerated Reader: Effects of a Computerized Reading Program on Student Reading Achievement**

An increasing number of schools are implementing the Accelerated Reader program in hopes of increasing student reading comprehension and ability. Through the use of computerized tests, Accelerated Reader claims to boost students’ interest in reading while also increasing their reading proficiency. The Accelerated Reader program has become somewhat controversial in the education world as educators examine its effectiveness in the classroom. This paper examines the positives and negatives of the Accelerated Reader program, as well as its effects on students’ reading. Furthermore, this paper demonstrates that the use of the program by itself is not enough to be beneficial to students, and offers solutions to introduce this program into the classroom with accompanying resources and teaching strategies.

**Nicolette Schweitzer - Teaching Teachers: How to Teach Reading to Gifted Students**

After reading many articles and the research of many prominent educational psychologists, reading specialists, and college professors – such as Renzulli, Reis, Levande, Trezise, and Wood – I have discovered that although there are plenty of well-researched avenues for teaching reading to gifted readers, pre-service teachers lack knowledge of these avenues. My thesis argues that the best way to teach reading to gifted readers is to teach their teachers and expose them to the many different tactics, strategies, theories, and methods that have been proposed and researched by the experts in the field. For this specific presentation, I will highlight the importance of curriculum compacting and the creation of education teams composed of librarians, reading specialists, and other teachers to find more challenging reading materials to replace the material that their gifted readers have already mastered.
Session 6B-Room 2215

Facilitators: Dr. Amy Masko
Dr. Christen Pearson

Presenters:

Karla Malave - Is the Montessori System Effective for K-5 English Language Learners?
In my thesis the reader will briefly be informed of five different teaching philosophies and the methods within those philosophies. However, I focus in on one particular philosophy overall, which is the Montessori System. This thesis talks about the different methods, skills, and goals that the Montessori System practices, including the roles that both the teachers and students play within the system. The purpose of my thesis is to research the effectiveness of the Montessori System for K-5 English Language Learners (ELL). My conclusion is derived from the information gathered through my research on what ELL students need and benefit from in a learning environment, and my research on the Montessori system. The conclusion is made by considering the information gathered from articles about ELL students and articles about the Montessori System.

Troy Panehal - The Science of Second Language Acquisition and How it is Applied in Bilingual Immersion Schools
For my thesis, I want to prove why bilingual immersion schools are the best approach to second language acquisition (SLA) for English language learners (ELL). Specifically, I draw on practices of bilingual immersion schools across the nation and how their activities engage aspects of SLA that have been researched in recent years. The two aspects that I mainly focus on are sociocultural theories outlined by Vygotsky and cognitive theories developed by SLA researchers. In my presentation, I will focus on Vygotskian theories and how his studies are specifically engaged in the effective activities performed by bilingual educational schools.
Chanise Love - Pondering the Sands of Time: Which Came First, Death, or the Dream of Death?

The Sandman series by Neil Gaiman takes a unique perspective on the old folk tale of the Dream King. Morpheus (who also goes by "Dream") controls the realm of dreams and is responsible for the manifestation of dreams in all living beings. Yet even though Dream does portray some resemblance to the Roman god of dreams, he differs in the fact that he dislikes the responsibility he holds and would rather end his existence than continue his role. This paper will examine Morpheus/Dream's character in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series in relation to the psychological elements of man, and the way in which the former offers a better outlook on the latter. At the same time, Dream's relationship with his sister Death will also be explored. Through the exploration of Gaiman's take on the intricate bone betwixt Death & Dream, and by comparing it to other renditions of this particular companionship, this paper will showcase the ways in which the ideologies of death and dreaming can vary based upon one’s particular history and/or culture.

Rachel Reimink - The Evolution of the Horror Genre

For my senior thesis, I am tracing the evolution of the horror genre through fluctuating societal concerns and the influence of the individual authors, analyzing which fears present in the writings are original and which are persistent. My thesis will analyze short stories from Edgar Allan Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, and Stephen King. I argue that while the content in the writing of each author differs based on societal issues and individual stimuli, there are baseline fears that have plagued society continuously and have consistently been present in the horror genre. My presentation will focus on the argument that despite the changing fears based on societal influences and the effects of individual author’s fears, the horror genre has a recurring theme of using the universal fear of the unknown to generate feelings of terror in the reader.

Christian Wagner - The Nameless City: H. P. Lovecraft and Modern Myth-Making

Howard Phillips (H.P.) Lovecraft was an American author, essayist, and poet, best known for his work in the genre of supernatural horror. During his lifetime, Lovecraft’s writing was largely unrecognized and limited to so-called “pulp magazines.” Although his written works are relatively few, their impact on contemporary literature and popular culture are profound. In the decades following his death, numerous authors have written stories featuring Lovecraft’s fictional characters and settings, known as the “Cthulhu Mythos,” which spans literature, film, music, and games. Given the widespread nature of Lovecraft’s literary influence, the “Cthulhu Mythos” has many characteristics of a myth cycle. This research paper asserts that it does not simply parallel existing myth cycles, but is one of many new, emerging myth cycles. Furthermore, it examines how subsequent entries to the “Cthulhu Mythos” differ from Lovecraft’s original work, as well as the implications this has to the formation of modern myth.
Facilitators: Dr. David Ihrman
               Dr. Bill Osborn

Presenters:

Alaina Moreau - “I See it Feelingly”: The Literary and Physical Symbols in Mark Danielewski’s *House of Leaves*

Mark Danielewski’s *House of Leaves* utilizes unusual tone and formatting in order to challenge how readers perceive conventional novels. In order to analyze the fictive film, *The Navidson Record*, the narrator employs academic language. Utilizing this scholarly voice, the narrator excessively dissects the symbolic meanings seen within the film, from echoes to the fictional Minotaur. These literary symbols contrast with the readers’ personal interpretation of the symbols that the book visually displays. While the author’s scholarly dissection of symbolic meanings serve to distract from the story itself, *House of Leaves*’ unique visual attributes symbolically enhance the meaning of the story. By utilizing the ideas perpetuated by postmodernist and poststructuralist texts, this presentation looks into the meanings associated with these contrasting symbolic associations. These distinct approaches to symbolic interpretation work to enhance Danielewski’s commentary on the lack of reliability within text, and the more meaningful reliability of personal experience.

Amy Spitz - "Lizzie Bennet is Now Following You on Twitter": Revitalizing Classic Literature through Transmedia Storytelling

My thesis argues that transmedia storytelling techniques—including web series and social media accounts—are forging new and diverse techniques for adapting and modernizing timeless stories of classic literature. I examine updated versions of canonized literature told via web series and character interaction on social media, compared to the most recent adaptation trend (1990s teen films), to see how transmedia allows for inclusion of more of the source material, deeper audience engagement with the story, and re-imagining of characters. My presentation will give a brief overview of transmedia storytelling techniques by applying them to my primary example, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*—a web series modernization of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Travis Stoos - Video Games and Their Impact Upon the Literary World

According to theorist Espen J. Aarseth, the idea of ergodic literature is literature which requires nontrivial effort to traverse a text, or medium. Unlike most conventional texts, which require at most the turning of a page or the clicking of a button, ergodic literature requires more active participation from the reader or user. In this sense, many contemporary video games are excellent examples of complex, ergodic literary texts. This evolution creates a realm where the reader is constantly intertwined in the material they are analyzing. This paper will examine the literary text of video games by using the popular game *Skyrim* as a touchstone text to conceptualize ergodic texts from a literary-theoretical perspective. By using theories related to non-linear texts, linear texts, reader investment, and chaos theory, the significance of using video games as a template for theoretical application and their importance to the literary genre will be made clear.
Facilitators: Dr. Corinna McLeod  
Dr. Christen Pearson

Presenters:

Rhiannon Brown - Benefits of Multicultural Literature in the Classroom: Raising Awareness
As classrooms and schools are becoming more diverse, multicultural literature has become a new focus among schoolteachers everywhere. Teachers offer students many tools to gain broader understandings about the world around them, the use of multicultural literature being a prime resource. The problems presented are finding high-quality and useful multicultural texts, but also creating awareness among teachers about the importance of multicultural literature. By examining studies about what is being done to incorporate multicultural literature, this paper will explore what works at current usage, as well as improvements that could be made so that teachers gain awareness and students reap greater benefits, such as connecting to literature on a deeper level. When children are not able to find their lives reflected in books, they are less interested in the reading process.

Stephanie Nalepa - Teacher-Student Relationships: The Overlooked Foundation of Culturally Responsive Teaching
In an attempt to improve the academic achievement levels of minority students, many teachers have adopted culturally responsive teaching practices. While many scholars and educators appear to understand and execute the obvious characteristics of culturally responsive teaching, they fail to demonstrate an understanding of its deeply rooted foundation: a quality relationship between teachers and their minority students. This paper identifies the ways in which a comfortable and trusting relationship can begin. It also highlights and examines studies conducted upon teachers who have successfully sustained meaningful relationships with their students. To emphasize the importance of relationships as a fundamental aspect of culturally responsive teaching, this paper discusses how these relationships positively impact minority and marginalized students, which will further benefit the minority students in the long run.

Christin Weirick - Multicultural Children's Literature: Quality vs. Quantity
Elementary school students can learn so much through a book about themselves, the people around them and other people’s cultures. For my senior thesis I will focus on multicultural literature in the classroom. I will present the criteria that should be considered when picking out multicultural literature for elementary school students. I will do a review of three different books, one for kindergarteners through second graders, another for third graders through fifth graders, and lastly a book for sixth through eighth graders, and how these books follow the criteria stated before and may be quality additions to classrooms everywhere.
Session Seven - 3:00-3:50 pm

Session 7B-Room 2215

Facilitators: Dr. Lindsay Ellis
             Dr. Avis Hewitt

Presenters:

Sabrina Hatfield - What Did I just Read?: An Examination of the Effects of Interactive Read-Aloud Strategies on Student Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition in the Elementary-Level Classroom

Finding the most effective way to promote optimal student reading comprehension and vocabulary development is perhaps the most crucial challenge educators face. With endless research highlighting the importance of providing individualized and differentiated instruction for each student to meet their individual needs, teachers have begun moving away from whole-class instructional strategies, such as the read-aloud. With much emphasis placed on the importance of high scoring on high-stakes standardized testing, administrators have forbidden the use of these read-alouds, believing it to be a waste of teaching time. Through the examination and analysis of previous observational and case studies, I have found concrete evidence of the significant benefits on student comprehension development and vocabulary acquisition through the use of interactive read-aloud strategies. It is the objective of this paper to show that educators of all levels should come to know the benefits and usefulness of interactive read-alouds within an elementary classroom.

Emily Klein - Emergent Literacy Development in Today’s Classrooms

Emergent literacy is one of the most important developmental aspects of childhood because it serves as the foundation for all further learning. However, there is much debate regarding how exactly to support, encourage, and enhance the development of emergent literacy skills necessary to create successful readers and writers that will excel both in and beyond the classroom. Phonological awareness, alphabet awareness, read-alouds, shared book reading, and support for emergent reading and writing have all been cited as important strategies that aid in the development of these skills. This paper will determine which strategies and interventions are the most beneficial for young children and how to implement these in the classroom for maximum emergent literacy development.

Allison Knopf - Leveled Libraries: The Intent, the Reality, and the Future

Teachers are always looking for better ways to scaffold student reading development. Many leveling programs have been created to aid teachers in the process of matching student to book. Sadly, their original purpose has been lost in many classrooms. Teachers have leveled entire libraries and then require students to read books within assigned levels. Research indicates that using leveling systems in this restrictive way is not conducive to overall reading development. This project will discuss multiple leveling systems, how they are often misused and how to use them productively. It will suggest that leveling systems should be a small portion of reading curriculum used to guide teachers rather than students. Students should be equipped with the tools to choose books of appropriate difficulty and subject matter independently rather than being required to choose within a certain range. This choice encourages deeper connections to reading and helps encourage lifelong readers.
Andrea Fabbro - Borders as "Anti-Nature": Reclaiming Home in A Tempest

Postcolonial studies have merged with ecocriticism in order to analyze how different cultures relate with the physical world. Through these lenses I will examine Aimé Césaire's A Tempest, which explores the political issues instigated by colonialism. I look at how different conceptions of the island, which is the play's setting, exemplify different ways of thinking about nature. Prospero, the colonizer, embodies estrangement from nature. This stance contributes to an ideology that supports uneven social and spatial dominion to justify the conquest of people and land. To undermine this worldview, A Tempest untangles the opposition between “culture” and “nature.” I analyze the relationship between identity and nonhuman nature to show how a conceptual retooling of “nature” combats imperialist ideology. Identity is fluid, despite the physical and conceptual borders imposed upon it. Rethinking the logic of borders can foster healthier relationships with one another and earth.

Caleb Munn - “Bad Girls Do It Well”: An Examination of Gender and Sexual Performance in Shakespeare’s Late Comedies

Rather than simply being the theoretical brainchild of 1990s academic discourse, questions regarding the relation between gender performance and social privilege exist in one form or another in contexts classical and contemporary, fictional and non-fictional. Drawing on the work of theorists like Eve Sedgwick and Judith Butler, this paper will analyze gender performance, performativity, and discourses on the queer body present in Shakespeare’s plays. By examining how these discourses and discursive acts operate within the texts of The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, and All’s Well That Ends Well, I will be able to argue that gender performativity exists at the epicenter of society and our socialized bodies. I will argue that performances of gender impact every aspect of the personal, interpersonal, sexual, social, political, and socioeconomic spheres, and that gender performance may be strategically utilized to self-determine our social standing in both fictional and non-fictional worlds.
Literature, an oasis of expression and articulation, has the capacity to heal sufferers of mental illness. Writers with mental illness have produced literature for the therapeutic benefit of themselves and others for centuries. Many have misconstrued this fact as evidence of a causal relationship between mental illness and literary genius. The lives and works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Franz Kafka, Sylvia Plath and William Styron do well to illustrate that the relationship is actually a complementary one, meaning that each can and often will encourage the other. These authors treated themselves by facing their respective illnesses on the page, whether directly or metaphorically. The readers of their works, mentally ill or not, have benefited from the courage of these authors because, through literature, these authors succeeded not only in treating themselves but in treating the ignorance which has shadowed mental illness for as long as it has been observed.

Jillian McLoughlin - Ellis Bell or Emily Brontë? Reading *Wuthering Heights* through the Lens of Gender.

Emily Brontë originally published her novel *Wuthering Heights* under the male pen name of Ellis Bell. This choice was made by Emily and her sisters to avoid the condescension or derision with which reviewers then often treated women writers. These novels written by the Brontë sisters made a great impact on the literature during the mid nineteenth century, while exceeding the limits put on what was printable. This paper will explore how reading *Wuthering Heights* with or without the knowledge of gender, influences the reactions and opinions of the readers.

Brittany Picklesimer - Artistic Indirection: Circumventing Censorship in the Film Adaptations of Four Plays by Tennessee Williams

This paper will explore how the Motion Picture Production Code ("The Hays Code") limited and affected the film adaptations of four plays by Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *27 Wagons Full of Cotton* (made into a film as *Baby Doll*), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *Suddenly, Last Summer*. Despite the taboo issues present in the plays, the filmmakers were able to successfully create faithful adaptations that did not drastically detract from the themes of the original plays. The large critical and commercial success of these films showed a desire among film audiences for more mature and sophisticated films that tackled these controversial topics, ultimately leading to the demise of the Motion Picture Production Code.
Dining Options

**Commons:**
Lower Level: Includes Bleecker Street, Freshen's Smoothies and Crepes, Jump Asian Cuisine and Papa John's Pizza.


**The Connection:**
Featuring sustainably focused menu. Guests can enjoy meals at Green Plate, Croutons custom made salads and 42nd St. Deli sandwiches. Also enjoy locally roasted coffee from Rowsters. This location accepts credit and debit cards.

Also at P.O.D. is the Wired coffee bar featuring a full line of brewed coffees, specialty drinks, Javalanches and Smoothies.

*Papa John’s Pizza* - Get your favorite pizza. Dine-in, carryout or have it delivered. Call ahead at 331-PAPA or online at papajohns.com.

**Kirkhof Center:**
Lower Level: A variety of crisp grab and go salads, Bene Pizza and Pasta, Zoca, Grille Works, Croutons, Subway and made to order sushi.

Main Level: Try one of our many specialty drinks galore with Java City and the Freshens Smoothie Company. The Convenience Store is also a great place to pick up a snack or a meal to go. Stop by our section of organic and natural snacks for a healthy treat.

**Kleiner Commons:**
Choose from The Market (comfort food & international flavors, pizza, grill items, made-to-order salads, sandwiches & wraps, sushi and soup), Qdoba and Java City.

There are also many options off campus, including Burger King, McDonalds, Subway, Mancinos, Grand Coney, Murphy’s Family Restaurant, Jimmy Johns, Biggby, Main Street Pub, Aroy Thai, Tim Horton’s Café, and China One.
Dr. Andrew M.C. Brown Memorial English Scholarship

**Eligibility Requirements:**

- Should be accepted or currently enrolled at GVSU
- Must be a senior with a declared major in English with Language and Literature emphasis
- Student must be enrolled for at least 12 credit hours with a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher
- Preference will be given to students intending to pursue an advanced English degree. Financial need may be considered.

**Application Requirements:**

- In 100-200 words (1-2 paragraphs), explain why you are applying for this scholarship, why you should receive the award, and how it will assist you in achieving your academic goals.
- Submit two sample papers written while at GVSU that demonstrate your scholastic achievement and potential in the field of English.

2015-2016 Academic Year Winners

Stephanie Brzezinski

Kristen Hollingsworth
English Faculty Scholarship for New English Majors

How many? Two $750 scholarships are awarded each year

Who’s Eligible? 1st & 2nd year students (≤60 credit hours) who are 1st generation college students with a GPA of 2.5 or higher
*must declare English major by time of application*

2015-2016 Academic Year Winners
Brianna Routt
The Robert L. Chamberlain Scholarship

A Tuition Scholarship for Junior English Majors
Demonstrating Excellence in Writing

Eligibility Requirements:

♦ Students must be English majors
♦ Students must have Junior status
♦ Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA
♦ Students must be full time
♦ Financial need may be taken into consideration

2015-2016 Academic Year Winners

Connor Huizenga
Kimberly Sterzick
The Gilbert R. and Patricia K. Davis Endowed Merit Scholarship

Merit scholarship for Full-or-Part-Time Junior and Senior English Majors

Eligibility Requirements:

Students must be declared English majors
Students must have 55+ credits.
Students must have completed 30 hours at GVSU.
Students must have a 3.0 GPA.
Students may be full or part time. Part time students are especially encouraged to apply.
Financial need is not a criterion
Students who receive the award as a Junior are eligible to receive the award as a Senior if they maintain their eligibility.

2015-2016 Academic Year Winners
Kathleen Gallagher
Carson Ratliff
GVSU’s English Department
~in conjunction with the departments of Classics and Writing~
is pleased to announce its annual…

Oldenburg Writing Contest

Named in honor of former department member E. William Oldenburg, the contest offers GVSU students **first-place prizes of $50 and second- and third-place prizes of $25** in each of the following categories.

**Categories:**

- **Personal, analytical, or persuasive essay written by a freshman.**
  First Place: Andrew Newton
  Second Place: Kayleigh Vanderwerff
  Third Place: Rachel Huck

- **Personal essay written by a sophomore, junior, or senior.**
  First Place: Amina Mohamed
  Second Place: Alexandra Calderon
  Third Place: Elise Riffle

- **Analytical or persuasive essay written by a sophomore, junior, or senior.**
  First Place: Carson Ratliff
  Second Place: Elizabeth Visser
  Third Place: Meghan Forest

- **Poetry written by any GVSU undergraduate student.**
  First Place: Michelle Kuznicki
  Second Place: Shelby Grzywacz
  Third Place: Nathan Holtrey
  Honorable Mention: Carson DeYoung
  Honorable Mention: Alison Sall

- **Fiction written by any GVSU undergraduate student. One short story per entrant.**
  First Place: Andrew Beardslee
  Second Place: Paige Agnew
  Third Place Tie: Lewis Stone
  Third Place Tie: Jacqueline Vega

- **Drama written by any GVSU undergraduate student. One short play per entrant.**
  First Place: Stephanie Oesch
  Second Place: Paige Agnew
  Third Place: Cody Robison
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