

# ENG 495

## *Capstone Conference*

**20 April 2018**

**Kirkhof Center**

**Grand Valley State University**

**Allendale, Michigan**

## Why a Capstone Conference?

The English 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).

Our Capstone course underscores the department's principles and values: to cultivate critical reading and reflection; to produce excellent writing in a variety of forms; to speak, read, and write effectively; and to achieve literary, analytical, pedagogical, and theoretical skills.

This conference is the culminating event for the English Capstone course. It requires that students publically present a project for which they have been responsible from its inception to its final form. The presentation makes concrete the expertise that students have accrued in the research process and allows them to speak as authorities on 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 for 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 element 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.

## Schedule

Session One: 9-9:50 a.m.

*Panels A & B*

Session Two: 10-10:50 a.m.

*Panels C & D*

Session Three: 11-11:50 a.m.

*Panels E & F*

Session Four: 12-12:50 p.m.

*Panels G, H & I*

Session Five: 1-1:50 p.m.

*Panels J, K & L*

Session Six: 2-2:50 p.m.

*Panels M, N & O*

Session Seven: 3-3:50 p.m.

*Panels P, Q & R*

## Notes

Students will present in the order in which they appear in this program; a question-and-answer session will follow once all students on the panel have presented their papers.

Should you have questions, issues or concerns during today's program, please contact faculty in KC 2264.

**Panel A**  
**KC 2259****Avenues of Communication**

Facilitators: Dr. Lindsay Ellis &  
Dr. Karen Pezzetti

**Lacey J. Lehman**  
**‘Bilingualism and the**  
**Importance of Dual**  
**Language Immersion**  
**Programs in Early**  
**Education’**

The United States and its school systems are becoming more diverse because immigration rates are higher than they have ever been before. Thus, more students are entering school with limited or no exposure to English as a first or second language. Fortunately, dual language immersion programs have been designed to assist English Language Learners (ELLs) and bilingual students in becoming familiarized with a new language so they can succeed academically in our school systems. However, some schools simply do not have the financial or community support to implement these programs. This paper sets forth the importance of bilingualism through the use of dual language immersion programs. Readers will gain insight on what else we, as teachers, can do to make sure our ELLs and bilingual students are given the opportunities to reach their full potential in and out of the classroom.

**Larissa Hershberger**  
**‘The Benefits of**  
**Adapting Bilingual**  
**Immersion Programs**  
**in Our Schools’**

We live in a country where the main language taught in our schools is English. However, outside of the academic setting, 20% of Americans speak a language other than English at home. This number is constantly increasing as more immigrants and refugees move to the United States. Both parents and educators realize being proficient in a second language is a tool that will help students in their future success. This thesis will explore the positive aspects of bilingual immersion programs as well as how such programs lead students on a path towards academic success.

**Curtis Neff**  
**‘Navigating Codes:**  
**Code-Meshing as a**  
**Solution to Faulty**  
**Code-Switching’**

The central mission of education is to provide for every student. Code-switching has been an exciting buzzword flying around as the solution to the social problems embedded into the language arts classroom; however, for as well-intentioned as it may be, there are yet significant threats to students with the implementation of code-switching as pedagogy. This paper presents code-meshing, as described by

Vershawn Ashanti Young, as a full implementation of what code-switching fails to accomplish: genuine acceptance of all students, and their multiple, valid language proficiencies.

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**Panel B**  
**KC 2266**

**Challenging the Curriculum**

Facilitators: Dr. Kurt Bullock &  
Dr. Dawn Evans

**Allison Srmek**  
**‘The Freedom to a**  
**Dutch and Irish**  
**Education’**

Freedom of education, or the right for one to be educated in accordance with their own beliefs, ensures that all students are able to attend their school of choice—something that is not utilized in many countries. The Netherlands and Ireland both allow their students to go to any school that they choose, including religious schools, as public and private schools are funded equally. Unlike these countries, the United States government does not fund faith-based schools, leading to many students being denied the right to attend if the family cannot provide the money on their own. In this paper I intend to explain both the benefits and the downfalls of having this freedom of choice in place.

**Blake Marvin**  
**‘A Progressive Take**  
**on the Stagnant**  
**Secondary English**  
**Curriculum’**

The literature that is being taught at the secondary level has been consistent for the better part of a century. These canonical pieces of literature have a strong influence on the English curriculum through the claims that these novels teach the core American values. These novels treasure the theme of the “American Dream.” Unfortunately, in this day and age that dream seems less likely than it has in the past. English instructors are finding it difficult to obtain the focus and motivation of students to read these classic novels for there is too much disconnect. I propose a need for more contemporary literature that students can more readily connect with to be taught in schools. Contemporary literature teaches the values that are important in today’s society. With society rapidly changing, there must be a change in which pieces of literature are appropriate for our students to read.

**Alicia Cole**  
**'Two Sides of**  
**Literature: Teaching**  
**Young Adult and**  
**Classic Literature**  
**Together'**

Reading the classics has been a part of high school English classrooms for much of modern memory; however, there are many issues with this method of learning alone. One solution to these issues is to only teach contemporary young adult novels, although this is not without its own disadvantages. In this paper I argue that a beneficial way to teach literature is to take a “best of both worlds” approach and teach classic literature and contemporary literature together. This approach views both texts as equals with something unique and valuable to be taught in a secondary classroom. When taught together, the different texts can build on themes presented in each, clarify difficult language, and introduce readers to difficult topics.

**10 a.m.**

**SESSION TWO**

**Panel C**  
**KC 2259**

**Censorship & Sexuality**

Facilitators: Dr. Kathleen Blumreich &  
Dr. Ashley Shannon

**Lindsay Seekell**  
**'Censorship**  
**in K-12 Schools:**  
**Is It Protecting or**  
**Providing a Disservice**  
**to Our Students?'**

To censor, or not to censor, that is the question. Censorship, in regards to literature, is an issue that prohibits the use of books that portray “inappropriate” content in the classroom. These books are challenged or banned, and therefore, removed from the shelves. This is an ongoing issue in K-12 schools due to the various views people hold concerning the safety of children and young adults, and what is considered “appropriate” and what is not. This presentation will discuss the effects that this issue has on schools, teachers, children, young adults, and families.

**Amanda Hoskins**  
**'Censoring Books:**  
**Where Have All the**  
**Sexual Orientation**  
**Books Gone?'**

From all the books that are challenged and censored each year in elementary schools, the majority of them are banned because of the characters' sexual orientation. In looking at why such a high volume of books with LGBTQ themes are banned or censored, the goal was to see the reasoning behind these bans and how the volume can be lowered so that these types of books can remain on the shelf. Discussion includes how removing these books affects LGBTQ students' mental health. It is important to have

characters like themselves in books, and to introduce other students to these topics. The legal cases that have come from banning these books are occurring with greater frequency in recent years. To lessen the issues that arise from keeping these books from children, some schools and libraries are turning away from censorship to give students choice and to create a more inclusive environment.

**Jake Abbott**  
**‘It’s Okay to  
Be Gay: Fighting  
Heteronormativity with  
LGBT Literature in  
Elementary Programs’**

The literature used in elementary classrooms is one of the most important aspects of the curriculum. Students grow up learning the diversity of other people through the texts provided in school, but there is lack of acknowledgment of the LGBT community. Even when there is mention of LGBT characters, they quite often fit into a heteronormative structure. This emphasizes to children that this heteronormative mindset is how the world ultimately works, which can lead to the disrespect of this particular community. An analysis of past and current literature through a queer lens was done to show how the incorporation of LGBT literature can positively affect the overall classroom climate with the inclusion of this community. Teachers’ resistance and ways to work around them are discussed through interviews of pre-service teachers, teachers and teacher educators. With the incorporation of this literature, the overall classroom environment can be safe and welcoming.

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**Panel D**  
**KC 2266**

**Teaching with Technology**

Facilitators: Dr. Dan Brown &  
Dr. Dawn Evans

**Colbie Wakeley**  
**‘Technology  
Benefiting the  
Teacher and Learner’**

As teachers, how do we engage with students so dependent on technology? Should we discourage the use of technology in the classroom? Is technology helping or hindering the students’ ability to learn in the classroom? As a future teacher who seems to be caught between two generations, my research focuses on technology and how it is widening the generation gap that creates learning obstacles between the teacher and the learner, but also considers how to balance technology in the classroom in a way that will pique the interest of students and allow them to learn in a more individualized way, yet appreciate

their learning through play and interaction. Technology can be beneficial to both the teacher and the learner in ways many have never considered.

**Katelyn Kastner**  
**‘Preparing ELLs with  
Technology’**

Technology was brought into the world for practical purposes. How many of us use phones, computers, tablets, and other technological devices? I know I use technology on a daily basis, especially when I am in the classroom. When I take notes in class, I use my laptop. When I have to call my mom or text a friend, I use my iPhone. I use my laptop to write all of my college papers, and children are growing up learning to do all of their work on computers. More and more technology is going to be coming our way as educators, and it is our job to help prepare the English Language Learners in their education of how to incorporate technology. It is important to keep old traditions while introducing new traditions. Educators have to keep in mind what is best for the education of their students that are learning this language.

**Lauren Mistry**  
**‘iTeach:  
The Future of  
Technology in the  
Classroom’**

This thesis explores the impact that technology is having upon the communication and socialization habits of today’s youth. It discusses the societal dangers technology creates for young adults as they become more reliant upon iPhones, computers, and tablets. It examines the connection between distracted lives and distracted learning. Specifically, it takes a candid look at the negative impact technology is having upon the ability of children to learn and master the skills needed to read, write, express themselves and think abstractly. It explores the consequences of addiction, distraction, reduced attention spans and the potential for the development of mental disorders resulting from excessive technology usage. It examines technology’s benefit to data collection, research, and collaborative learning. It concludes with an overview of how technology can be effectively integrated into classrooms and teaching settings, supported by feedback from a teacher and principal, each with over 25 years of classroom experience.



**Panel E**  
**KC 2259****Changing Pedagogies, Changing Lives**

Facilitators: Dr. Amy Masko &  
Dr. Brian White

**Mary Dieterly**  
**‘Unschooling:  
The Benefits of  
Project-Based,  
Child-Led Learning’**

Schools are fighting the clock to meet education standards. With the introduction of Standardized Testing and Common Core Standards being adopted by the majority of United States schools, many schools are moving towards a subject specific, standardized curriculum to meet the requirements. Teachers follow the script provided in the curriculum, and all the required standards are met throughout the year. Even with these adjustments to the typical school day, test scores have not improved as much as predicted. An unschooling mentality vs. a standard curriculum is the answer to improving tests scores. In a project-based, child-led setting, students would be allowed to work on projects that are of interest to them, and each project would cover the required standards in multiple subjects over its duration. Students would retain more information, increase test scores, and have a deeper appreciation for and enjoyment of their education.

**Ashley Jones**  
**‘Teaching  
Intersectionality in  
the Classroom’**

Intersectionality studies the intertwining perspectives a single person holds based on their race, gender, sexuality, class, religion, and more. Each perspective influences the others in order to create values and beliefs about the world and other people. Social issues are typically avoided in high school classrooms, but recent research has shown that discussing intersectionality improves students’ ability to empathize with other perspectives that differ from their own. This will improve the social awareness of citizens who will later be capable of creating and changing the rules and laws throughout the United States that are blatantly and subtly discriminatory against people who do not identify as a traditional white male in Western culture.

**Krystal Hornecker**  
**‘#ArmMeWith:  
Critical Literacy  
Strategies to Change  
Communities’**

In a day and age rife with school violence, I seek a way to curb the violence. I strongly believe that by teaching students critical literacy skills within the classroom context, in conjunction with conversations about socially-charged topics, teachers can build stronger communities. The acts of building a stronger community within the classroom, of opening up lines of communication, and of building a foundation of discovery based on curiosity, challenge, support, and reflection will in turn help to build a stronger community outside of the school. I explore ways that building communities in this manner will help to lower instances of bullying and, in turn, school violence. The theory is new and the application is newer still, but wouldn't it be amazing if we could point back to open lines of communication in the classroom as our cure for such an awful problem?

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**Panel F**  
**KC 2266**

**The Teaching of Writing**

Facilitators: Dr. Colleen Brice &  
Dr. Dan Brown

**Erin Gogolin**  
**‘The Link Between  
Teacher Preparation  
Programs and  
Adolescent  
Motivation to Write’**

Many scholars assert that teacher preparation programs do not fully prepare future secondary English teachers to teach composition effectively. This lack of preparation correlates to a declining adolescent motivation to write well and with enjoyment. Adolescent writers commonly have very little motivation to write, and they struggle with it. Consequently, teachers are criticized for their performance. An evaluation of the course content and course outcomes of Michigan universities demonstrates that in some instances, outside of student teaching, as little as one course of all required coursework is fully dedicated to composition teaching methods. This paper describes the educational context of teacher preparation in Michigan and provides some recommendations for what may be necessary to improve motivation in adolescent writers with respect to teacher preparation programs.

**Kristi Kolb**  
**‘The Mixed**  
**Correlation between**  
**Writing and Anxiety:**  
**Reducing Rising**  
**Levels of Anxiety in**  
**Students Today?’**

This paper will examine the correlation between writing and rising anxiety levels in students, based on the internal and external factors of anxiety. According to researchers, the type of writing task and the way it is introduced dramatically affects the level of anxiety felt by the student. Teachers can manipulate their instruction and writing activities based on the needs of their students and not only reduce the level of writing anxiety, but anxiety in general.

**Jenna Hiltunen**  
**‘Assessing the**  
**Progress of**  
**School-Age ESL**  
**Learners in the**  
**English Writing**  
**Classroom’**

Educators use various methods and tools to observe the progress of students who are learners of English as a Second Language (ESL). Assessment practices are necessary in analyzing student progress; however, there are some forms that are not beneficial to judging overall student progress. While the purpose of classroom assessment is to evaluate student learning and growth, the assessment done in the classroom is “not always in favor of forming students’ learning” (Ketabi & Ketabi, 2014). As such, there are tactics and methods which may prove to be more beneficial to student assessment, e.g., using analytic versus holistic grading rubrics. In this presentation, I will illustrate effective methods of assessing the writing of ESL students, and how these methods are interconnected with the writing instruction these students receive.

**12 p.m.**

**SESSION FOUR**

**Panel G**  
**KC 2259**

**Representing Diversity**

Facilitators: Dr. Karen Pezzetti &  
Dr. Brian White

**Emilee Dubois**  
**‘The Dangerous**  
**Representation of**  
**Characters with**  
**Disabilities in**  
**Children’s Literature’**

Scholars and educators commonly agree that a main purpose of children’s literature is to provide children with “mirrors” of their own identity and “windows” into the lives of people different from themselves. While efforts have been made to promote inclusiveness of underrepresented minorities in children’s literature, there remains a lack of characters who have cognitive disabilities. Furthermore, the characters with disabilities that do appear in children’s books are often portrayed in a

biased way or inaccurately. An inauthentic character does not provide a “mirror” for children who do have disabilities, nor does it provide an accurate “window” into the life of a child with disabilities, and is therefore harmful to children and society. Authors, illustrators, publishers, educators, and parents are responsible for the representation and discussion of literary characters with disabilities amongst children.

**Tess Hart**  
**‘The Impact of**  
**Multicultural**  
**Literature:**  
**Decreasing**  
**Discrimination**  
**through Global**  
**Reading’**

In schools throughout the world today, there is an unprecedented amount of racism and discrimination based on race and nationality because of a lack of exposure to foreign communities and cultures in the United States. When children are not exposed to ways of life that are foreign to them, they tend to fear them, and that fear only leads to further discrimination and inequality. We must examine how racism is integrated into our society and address it. Schools are the places where students learn how to interact with and treat one another. We must teach students about unfamiliar places, and foreign-cultures literature can help us to do this. Books give students the opportunity to explore, engage with, and investigate other cultures from where they stand. International and multicultural literature broadens perspectives, builds empathy, and promotes global-mindedness in a way that I believe will decrease discriminatory thoughts and actions in children and lead to a more inclusive nation and world.

**Heather Brinks**  
**‘Using Multicultural**  
**Literature to Combat**  
**the Opportunity Gap’**

The reading opportunity gap that is affecting schools across the country is an issue that educators need to take seriously and come up with a solution to end. When students of color and different cultures read books that have non-relatable characters, there is no connection happening between the student and the books which can lead to disinterest in reading altogether. Students need books that have characters, situations, and settings that are familiar to them to properly engage with a text. Multicultural literature is the instrument to do just that. When multicultural literature is properly used in a classroom, students from diverse cultures can connect with books, leading to students who are engaged and excited to read. This paper looks at the benefits of using multicultural literature in the classroom, and it also examines one author in particular and how his books can help combat the growing opportunity gap.

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**Panel H**  
**KC 2263**

**Language-Learning Policies & Practices**

Facilitators: Dr. Colleen Brice &  
Dr. Shinian Wu

**Julie Vander Loo**  
**‘Strategies for**  
**Teaching Immersion**  
**Education’**

Immersion education is becoming a popular means of teaching in the elementary classroom. Parents are seeing the importance of their children becoming bilingual at a young age. The ability to speak two languages is one of the major benefits of Immersion Education, but there are more. Not only are there multiple benefits for the student, but also there are multiple methods used to divide the time between the L1 and the L2. Regardless of the method, certain teaching strategies should be used in the classroom. These strategies include group work, building on funds of knowledge, using the L1, and reading of literature. The approach to the use of the strategy may change depending on the method, but all of the strategies should be used. This thesis will explore the merit of using these strategies across all of the different methods for Immersion classrooms.

**Maddie Danaher**  
**‘The Consequences**  
**that Language**  
**Restrictive Policies**  
**Have on Our ELL**  
**Youth’**

Language-restrictive laws in Arizona schools have drastic effects on the English language learners. The people of Arizona passed the language restrictive policies in the early 2000s. Both of these policies center around English language acquisition, and how to teach English to English language learners. The policies focus on the restriction of the student’s first language in the classroom in return for English only instruction. In this literature review I am going to address both of these policies and how they affect language acquisition in students. There will be a review of the methodologies in how to best instruct English as well as how English instruction influences identity formation in students.

**Ariel Davids**  
**‘Multimodal**  
**Approaches in the**  
**Classroom’**

Multimodal texts are observed through a series of peer-reviewed research articles throughout this paper. The advantages and disadvantages of the multimodal approach in classrooms are examined through the content on the approach itself, and the elements of technology, assessment and overall beneficiaries of the multimodal approach including, but not limited to motivation in the classroom and different learning environments. It is concluded that incorporating

multimodal texts in developing classrooms is beneficial for students.

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**Panel I**  
**KC 2266**

**Beyond the Dark Side**

Facilitators: Dr. Ben Lockerd &  
Dr. Brian Deyo

**Abby Mulcahy**  
**‘Opening the**  
**Curiosity Door: The**  
**Moral Imagination in**  
***Stranger Things*’**

Many popular, current television shows feature morally ambiguous characters or plot lines that focus on shallow desires. The television show *Stranger Things* strays from modern shows by following the concept of the moral imagination combined with virtues. Throughout my thesis I will be exploring how the empathetic connections between each of the characters in the show and also between the viewers and the characters develop and strengthen the viewers’ own moral imagination. First, I will research the basis of the moral imagination from the perspective of several major authors, including Russell Kirk and Edmund Burke. Then I will compare the premise of the moral imagination to the characters and situations in *Stranger Things*.

**Samantha Huebler**  
**‘Breaking the Wheel:**  
**The Rise of the**  
**Underdog and Shifts**  
**of Power in *Game of***  
***Thrones*’**

My interest in the journey of an underdog and the complexity of power relationships within societies was ignited after my many weeks of watching the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. The author of the series from which the show is derived incorporates many different types of underdogs in his fantasy-based war novels. In my presentation, I plan to describe what the relationships were like between the “Top Dog” and the “Underdog” within the Medieval Period setting. I will explain the features of an underdog which qualify him or her to rise to the top by subverting the power of the otherwise oppressive hierarchical social institution. My focus will be on the transformation of Daenerys Targaryen, an orphaned princess in *Game of Thrones* who overcomes many obstacles and eventually establishes herself as an immediate threat to the “Iron Throne.” I will address the different reasons why we repeatedly see underdogs in literature and why readers feel the absolute need for an underdog victory story.

**Dan Sommerville**  
**'The Power of the**  
**Dark Side:**  
**Examining the**  
**Evolution of the**  
**Hero's Journey within**  
**the *Star Wars* Saga'**

George Lucas, the creator of the *Star Wars* Franchise, has often credited Joseph Campbell's Famous book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* as the catalyst of inspiration for his ground-breaking franchise. Campbell's "monomyth" structures common patterns and themes that comprise the Hero's Journey—patterns that remain consistent despite the differences of context. Since the inception of *Star Wars*, the franchise has used Campbell's model extensively in three separate stories. The original trilogy remained true to form to Campbell's monomyth, following the journey of Luke Skywalker, while the other films explore challenging facets of the Hero's Journey. The Prequel Saga surrounding Anakin Skywalker twists the common patterns of the monomyth instead producing a villain's journey. The newest iteration now expands upon this idea with the story of Kylo Ren, whose journey personifies a contemporary literary idea: the Anti-Hero. This work will examine *Star Wars*' deconstruction and evolution of Campbell's monomyth.

**1 p.m.**

**SESSION FIVE**

**Panel J**  
**KC 2259**

**Literary Answers for Today's Issues**

Facilitators: Prof. Gayle Johnson &  
Dr. Ashley Shannon

**Rex Curtis**  
**'Mary Shelley's**  
***Frankenstein* as a**  
**Warning for Artificial**  
**Intelligence'**

Artificial Intelligence is quickly becoming a part of everyday life. Cell phones have personal assistants which seem to get smarter with each model, automated cars wait on the horizon, and automation helps perform factory and other manual labor jobs at a faster and more efficient rate than any human being. These benefits, while they do make life a little easier, bring with them a set of dangers. There are many in the field of AI who have already expressed their concerns about the unintended consequences of pursuing the subject too far. This growing concern has illuminated a problematic question which needs answering: What do we look to for guidance as we journey into an unknown technological future? I aim to show that literature in general, and specifically, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, can operate as a legitimate guide for reality.

**Matthew Artis, Jr.**  
**‘The Need to  
Protect the Peace:  
The Misuse of  
Surveillance  
and “Justice” in  
*Psycho-Pass*’**

The anime *Psycho-Pass*, in true Orwellian fashion, focuses on the idea of the government having 24/7 access to surveillance of the citizens of 22<sup>nd</sup> century Tokyo. It can determine their very lives for them: where they work, what schools they can attend, and even use their emotions to deem them criminal. But what if this futuristic nightmare could become a reality? Maybe this dystopian horror is actually a commentary on a nation that has changed itself to constantly look at its citizens since any of them could become a terrorist. Such is the case as *Psycho-Pass* seems to be the dystopian version of post- September 11, 2001, America and its USA PATRIOT Act.

**Ellorie Kenyon**  
**‘Beyond “Thoughts  
and Prayers”:  
Religion, Action and  
Survival in Dystopian  
Fiction’**

Dystopian fiction is a popular genre in the world today, known for its fast-paced action, the impossible odds which characters must overcome to survive, and the ways in which the genre can be used to explore real-world problems and anxieties. What may often go unnoticed, however, is that many of these novels also reference religion and faith as key factors in character arcs and social structures. In this project I will explore four key ways that religion is used in dystopian fiction, and examine how this is reminiscent of the society in which we live today. Exploring how characters in dystopian worlds use and view religion in times of crisis will allow us to better understand how American society uses religion in times of tragedy, and whether this is helpful or detrimental to the progress and safety of our world.

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**Panel K**  
**KC 2263**

**Literacy Concerns**

Facilitators: Dr. Rob Rozema &  
Dr. Shinian Wu

**Sarah Hendrickson**  
**‘Approaches to  
Shrinking the  
Opportunity Gap  
in Literacy  
Development’**

Poverty is a worldwide epidemic that will not be solved quickly or soon. This poverty epidemic has an impact on all aspects of society, especially in education. "Children from lower income families do not fare as well academically as do children from more advantaged families" (Oxford and Lee 597). So what should educators and other people surrounding the academic life of each student do to support students who come from impoverished home situations? This paper will begin by explaining the



necessity of looking at multiple approaches to closing achievement gaps between students. Three approaches will be discussed, including Family Choices, Curriculum Choices, and Pedagogical Choices. The purpose is to organize and provide a resource for parents, teachers, administrators, and other community workers to use when a student seems to be academically slipping due to the reality of poverty.

**Lizzy Ketchum**  
**‘Meeting the Needs  
of Autism Spectrum  
Disorder Students’**

This paper focuses on the topic of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and how they are constantly facing academic challenges as well as societal challenges in and out of the classroom. As educators, it is our job to do everything and anything to help better accommodate these students with ASD in our classrooms. Such accommodations will provide a much more enriching experience and enjoyable time within the classroom for students. Specifically, this paper focuses on strategies that aid students in reading and writing while incorporating technology. With the help of these strategies students with ASD will be more likely to succeed in life and achieve greatness.

**Alexandra Job**  
**‘Literacy and  
Manipulatives/  
Puppets:  
What Is the  
Correlation?’**

In many classrooms educators integrate puppets and other manipulative materials into their literacy pedagogy. Research has shown these are valuable resources because they allow for motivation and imagination during the learning process. Puppets and manipulatives have been shown to increase comfort, imagination, memorization and excitement for learning, but further research can help us assess its use for older learners, students that have disabilities, and English language learners. This paper will explore the experiences teachers and learners have using these types of sensory material and how students have or have not benefited from them as they acquire literacy.

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**Panel L**  
**KC 2266**

**Poetry Hour—Dickinson, Plath & Lorde**

Facilitators: Dr. Brian Deyo &  
Dr. Jo Miller

**Ashley Troxell**  
**‘Poetry Analysis of**  
**Emily Dickinson’**

There are many scholars who have critically analyzed Emily Dickinson’s poetry. Some critics argue that her poems are uninfluenced by her life and others argue that analysis should be focused on the author’s work instead of speculating on their intention. This thesis will challenge both ideas by supporting how Emily Dickinson’s poetry was influenced by the relationships in her life and that the intention of her poems were written for specific people.

**Anne Marie Smit**  
**‘Identity, Anger**  
**and Protest: An**  
**Examination of the**  
**Poetry of Sylvia Plath**  
**and Audre Lorde**  
**within the Scope of**  
**Feminist Politics’**

Sylvia Plath and Audre Lorde were two poets who emerged during second-wave feminism. Many scholars discuss the two poets individually, but far fewer place the two in conversation. The reasons for this are intuitive; on the surface, Plath and Lorde have little in common—Plath was white and heterosexual while Lorde was black and lesbian, among other things. Despite those glaring differences, Plath and Lorde used their poetry to question a system that they felt restricted them from realizing their authentic identity. Both women used poetry for protest, but ultimately, what they objected to was different, which suggests second-wave feminism’s lack of representation and possible racist ties. Understanding poetry as a means of self-definition, I will analyze poems of both women that employ their anger in protest of systems that confined them.

**Panel M**  
**KC 2259****The Teaching of Literature & Literacy**

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &  
Prof. Gayle Johnson

**Audrey Batka**  
**‘Death in Children’s**  
**Literature: We Teach**  
**Our Children about**  
**Death and How to**  
**Cope with Their**  
**Experiences’**

Death in children’s literature has been written about all throughout history. The fashion in which death is portrayed within the literature has continued to evolve with the members of society that it is intended for. My thesis discusses the ways that death is represented in children’s literature, starting with the 1700s, to the present. The benefits of how death is written about is explained through the concept of bibliotherapy. This paper will also discuss the possibilities of improving the influences and the means of educating children by literature involving death. Some views believe that a topic such as death should not be taught and exposed to young children. However, the positive effects of introducing and explaining death to children through literature are far greater than not.

**Jill Boersma**  
**‘Fantasy:**  
**A Miracle Drug?’**

Since early childhood, we’ve read fairy tales and children’s books filled with fantasy worlds and people. My thesis considers how fantasy reading, movies, video games, and other related media leads to the development of our minds, emotions, and dealing with everyday life. It also considers the idea that fairy tales and fantasy have positive effects on abused children. Fantasy has the healing power to allow abused children to feel safe and hope that things can and will get better.

**Makala Langeland**  
**‘Digital Literacy in**  
**the English Language**  
**Arts Classroom’**

There seem to be many who would argue that technology has no place in the classroom, that it’s distracting, without purpose, or even a negative influence. Yet, there is a striking difference in the learning outcomes between students who are taught to use technology in the English Language Arts classroom for reading and writing, and those with teachers that strive to stick to the traditional ways of learning. Our world is and has been technologically advancing, specifically in ways that can be beneficial for students’ literacy skills. This paper will illuminate

the important benefits of teaching English Language Arts through technology.

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**Panel N**  
**KC 2263**

**Graphic Voices**

Facilitators: Dr. Kurt Bullock &  
Dr. Rob Rozema

**Tim Stillson**  
**‘Calvin and Hobbes**  
**as a Contemporary**  
**American Voice:**  
**Comics Are No**  
**Laughing Matter’**

Comic strips and comic books have often been labeled “lowbrow” literature that uses humor to entertain readers that are not mentally mature, irrespective of their age. But comics have historically functioned as vibrant reflections of American culture; comics have functioned as an American voice in the ever-changing times. Bill Watterson’s *Calvin and Hobbes* gives numerous examples within issue-relevant contexts to compel readers to consider the implications of modern scientific and technological developments and advancements. This paper will argue that Watterson deftly uses such examples to draw attention to the effects of character hubris in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Day Prometheus* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and the unknown long-term effects of modern-day or future human cloning or genetically altering natural human beings.

**Tyler Eskovitz**  
**‘Bridging the Gap:**  
**Comic Utility**  
**for Classics and the**  
**Modern Reader’**

My thesis is on using Marvel and D.C. comic books to help secondary-education students learn the core value and components of classic literature. With the growing gap between students of today and the publication of classic works, such as Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (published in 1818) or J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Hobbit* (1937), students are rapidly becoming disinterested in the books often deemed indispensable to the English curriculum. However, being both familiar to students through popular culture and bearing the same archetypal tropes and elements as their older counterparts, comic books can sufficiently and effectively aid student learning and reanimate student interest in the classics.

**Cynthia Fisher**  
**‘Graphic Classics’**

William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is a classic literary work that has been adapted into the format of graphic novels. These reshaping of Shakespeare’s work not only retains the original text,

but there are also copies available in plain text that utilize more modern language and a quick text version that summarizes the lines. In this paper I will examine the different text formats and discuss how these individual readings enable multiple levels of readers to read and analyze the play while comprehending the plot. I will address the artistic styling of the graphic novel, as well as the format of the text and how it diverges in the separate versions to appeal to a more diverse group of readers.

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**Panel 0**   **Literary Evolutions**  
**KC 2266**   Facilitators: Dr. Rob Franciosi &  
Dr. Michael Webster

**Roxanne Henley**  
**‘The Decline in**  
**Picture Book Word**  
**Count’**

In the twenty-first century, the word count of children’s picture books has decreased from an average of one thousand words to five hundred words or fewer. Many theories regarding why have been generated. The theories range from low attention spans and time constraints to financial concerns and academic success. Yet a clear, solid, fact-based answer from publishers, writers, illustrators, and educators cannot be found. Considering the high level of lexicon and depth of concepts in picture books, one has to wonder if such a wide-sweeping practice of decreasing word counts, without a scientific foundation, might be detrimental to children. The question of why five hundred words or fewer is one that needs to be answered.

**Bonnie Barnum**  
**‘Evolution**  
**of Fairy Tales:**  
**From Oral to Disney’**

Fairy tales have evolved from oral performance to written form to animated productions. In the 1930s Disney started to play a role in the transmission of fairy tales. Disney itself has evolved over time, too. *Beauty and the Beast* is as prime example of this. There was a gap of almost 20 years between Disney's animated and live action version of this story, yet the two movies are very different. This paper will examine these differences within a social context.

**Megan Bowers**  
**‘Anne Frank as**  
**a Literary Critic’**

Anne Frank’s *The Diary of a Young Girl* reveals the importance of the many different uses of literature as it relates to the residents of the Annexe in hiding during WWII. These utilizations of text can be broken down into four categories: entertainment, a

news source, education, and finally as a point of disagreement where characters gauge each other's levels of intelligence and or maturity through literary preferences. A large component of this disagreement centers around the languages of the texts mentioned, which reveals much about the general opinions and feelings towards the languages that they are written in. Namely, German is seen as a vulgar language to stay away from when possible, while others spoken or being studied in the Annexe, such as English and French, are great sources of knowledge to draw from. This paper will analyze what the diary's text criticism

**3 p.m.**

## **SESSION SEVEN**

**Panel P**  
**KC 2259**

### **Moving to the Beat**

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &  
Dr. Christy Pearson

**Emmie Carr**  
**'Fighting the Power**  
**from Within the**  
**Power: Using Hip Hop**  
**Based Education as a**  
**Mode of Critical**  
**Pedagogy'**

There have been many "flavors of the month" when it comes to pedagogy, but Paulo Freire's model of critical pedagogy is here to stay. Out of this model, many subsequent pedagogies have formed. This essay examines the culturally relevant and sustainable practice of Hip Hop Based Education (HHBE), which has resulted in many positive educational outcomes, but is often relegated to the margins in academia. Hip Hop is often attributed as a form of critical education and is seen as inseparable from political and civic engagement. In this way, Hip Hop can be viewed as a fitting approach of critical pedagogy, demonstrating its ability to "read the world." Within the realm of Hip Hop are legitimate forms of critical and cultural pedagogy worthy of study and practice. This thesis will stress the importance of employing a culturally relevant pedagogy such as HHBE to progress society, as well as to enhance the academic and social achievements of our students.

**Kayci Marr**  
**'Rapper's Delight,**  
**Female Fright'**

The hip-hop culture developed out of the Bronx as a way for youth to express their frustrations with the sociopolitical and racial discrimination. Less than half a century later, the lyrical themes have changed from social justice to misogyny. In addition, in 2017,

rap/hip-hop surpassed rock as the most listened to genre. Because of hip-hop's increasing popularity and clinical studies and neurological evidence on the socialization of music, this paper explores the potentially negative effects of hip-hop on its listeners.

**Anna Gall**  
**'The Promising Link  
Between Reading  
Instruction and  
Movement in the  
Classroom'**

For years, educators and policy makers have argued about the best methods for teaching reading, but there have been few actual changes. While the focus of reading instruction evolves, classroom implementation continues to look the same: Students sit in one place and read for long periods of time. With every new standard and benchmark, teachers and students are asked to step up their game, as education becomes increasingly test-centered and learning becomes a chore. It seems as though policy makers are attempting to remedy the nation's literacy problem, but our students are still struggling and missing out on the education they deserve. So, what is the best way to teach reading? This thesis will propose movement in the classroom as a method of teaching reading that has promising outcomes for reading achievement and, more importantly, can show students that reading can be exciting.

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**Panel Q**  
**KC 2263**

**Emotive Reading**

Facilitators: Dr. Regis Fox &  
Dr. Laura VanderBroek

**Ashley Clein**  
**"I Is the Hardest  
Word to Define":  
An Exploration  
of John Green's  
Portrayal of Illness  
within *Turtles All the  
Way Down*'**

My thesis will discuss John Green's approach to illness, specifically his depiction of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in his newest novel, *Turtles All the Way Down* (TatWD). Unlike many authors, John Green creates characters who are not overcome by the hardships they face but rather push through their issues, whether it be their own illness (mental or physical), the death of a loved one, or other traumas, in order to make the best of their situation. In TatWD, the main character, Aza, struggles with OCD, much like Green himself. This gives Green insight that other authors couldn't have, based on personal connection. By examining his newest, most personal work in the context of his previous approaches to illness and trauma, we can gain insight into his writing process and commentary

on our society's ideas of illness and coping mechanisms in relation to trauma.

**Autumn Stein**  
**'Human-Animal Relationships: The Positive Effects Animals Have on Our Emotional Well Being'**

Psychological and medical studies have shown that human-animal relationships can improve the mental and emotional well-being of humans. In *Marley and Me*, by John Grogan, human-animal relationships improve the mental well-being of the Grogan family by using humor as a stress relief, strengthening family dynamics, and giving meaning to their life. This paper will put the experiences from Grogan's book into conversation with scientific research, and analyze the way in which literature can enable science to reach a wide audience. Human-animal relationships have a positive impact on people's mental health, but are not recognized enough within literature, and are not represented enough in real life. Literature can spread awareness in the real world, resulting in more individuals seeking animals for emotional support, thus improving their mental and emotional well-being.

**Caitlynn Webb**  
**'Using Good Books to Replace The Good Book'**

In a world that revolves around scientific progress and learning, a distaste for religion is becoming more and more popular. These atheistic views have the potential to leave a lot of existential questions unanswered: What is the meaning of life? What happens after death? And so many more. I will be exploring ways in which literature can be used to replace the all-knowing, all-healing, security blanket that is religion. There is a good book out there for any and all occasions; those without religion do not have to go without peace of mind, comfort, and guidance.

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**Panel R**  
**KC 2266**

**Literary Passages**

Facilitators: Dr. Ben Lockerd &  
Dr. Michael Webster

**Samantha Lang**  
**'Imp of the ODD: The Gallows Humor of Edgar Allan Poe'**

The combination of often violent horror themes and comedic elements is inherently taboo, but has existed in film since the 1920s, and in literature since ancient Greece. The phenomenon, also known as "gallows humor," has been criticized for as long as it has been popular. In my thesis, I will use the works



of Edgar Allan Poe to explore how Poe uses comedic elements to enhance his tales of the macabre. This will be accomplished by examining the nature of gallows or dark humor, the psychology of humor and its use in stressful or distressing situations, and the ways in which Poe's character's use humor within his tales.

**Skye Grit**  
**'Reinventing**  
**the Vampire:**  
**A Comparison of**  
**Bram Stoker's**  
***Dracula* and Jewelle**  
**Gomez's *The Gilda***  
***Stories*'**

Horror narratives and monster stories reflect the anxieties of the society that creates them, as is evident in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Stoker's work reflects anxieties about gender, sexuality, race, and power through the villainy of the vampire. This villainy is transformed, however, in Jewelle Gomez's *The Gilda Stories* to invert the existing power structures in society and create a positive discourse about race, gender, sexuality, and privilege. By comparing the two, I intend to analyze how the vampire can be used to both reinforce social anxieties and reflect social desires or need for change. In the modernized redefinition of the vampire, Jewelle Gomez is able to reconfigure that which was previously conceived as horrific or abject to become familiar and sympathetic.

**Daniel Taccolini**  
**'Timshel as Man's**  
**Ladder to the Stars:**  
**Revisiting**  
**John Steinbeck's**  
***East of Eden*'**

Published in 1952, John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* stands out in a number of ways from those novels which he wrote previously, and is mostly known for. The novel moves in a much more philosophical direction than his others, following a consistent theme inspired by the biblical story of Cain and Abel from the fourth chapter of the book of Genesis. Through this theme, the book addresses the problem of evil, the magnificent concept of human free will, and, fundamentally, the effects of the choices that are made. Since the initial response of critics to the book in the 1950s, there has been very little said about the novel. In this thesis, I intend to shed light on the fact that, because of its powerful exploration of the human soul, this book is important and ought to be more widely recognized.

**4 p.m.**

## **AWARDS**

**Annual Awards  
Ceremony  
KC 0058**

Please join us in honoring our students during the English Department's Annual Awards Ceremony, held in the Thornapple Room of the Kirkhof Center.

**Honoring Student  
Writing in the  
Persuasive and  
Personal Essay,  
Poetry, Fiction,  
& Drama  
Held in Conjunction  
with the departments  
of Classics and  
Writing**

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

- Personal, analytical, or persuasive essay written by a freshman;
- Personal essay written by a sophomore, junior, or senior;
- Analytical or persuasive essay written by a sophomore, junior, or senior;
- Poetry written by any GVSU undergraduate student (a portfolio of three to five poems would be an appropriate entry, and a single poem would not be considered);
- Fiction written by any GVSU undergraduate student (one short story per entrant);
- Drama written by any GVSU undergraduate student (one short play per entrant);
- Essay, poetry, fiction, or drama written by a GVSU graduate student.

**Entry Requirements:**

- Entries must have been written while enrolled at GVSU;
- Entries should be typed, double-spaced (photocopies are acceptable), and submitted with a detachable cover sheet indicating:
  - title of work;
  - category entered (please specify graduate or undergraduate);
  - contestant's name and student ID;
  - address, phone number, and e-mail for March and April of the academic year;
- Place contestant's name on the cover sheet only, not on the manuscript.

All winners who have not been or currently are a student employee at GVSU must complete an I-9 Form, which may be obtained and turned in to Student Employment (105 STU). Entries are accepted online through the English department website. Manuscripts will not be returned.

**The Robert C.  
Chamberlain  
Scholarship**

**A Tuition Scholarship  
for Junior English  
Majors  
Demonstrating  
Excellence in Writing**

The Chamberlain Scholarship will be awarded at the English Department's Awards Ceremony held in April.

**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;
- Students must demonstrate financial need by filing the FAFSA;

**Application Requirements**

Each student must submit:

- A short letter explaining why the student qualifies for this scholarship;
- Two pieces of writing, at least one from a class at Grand Valley State University;

Applications must be submitted online at:

[www.gvsu.edu/scholarships](http://www.gvsu.edu/scholarships)

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2019.

**The Gilbert R. and  
Patricia K. Davis  
Endowed Merit  
Scholarship**

**A Merit Scholarship  
for Full- or Part-Time  
Junior and Senior  
English Majors**

The Davis Scholarship will be awarded at the the English Department Awards Ceremony held in April.

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Students must be a Junior or Senior declared English major;
- Students must have completed 30 credit hours at GVSU;
- Students must have at least 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 Juniors are eligible to receive the award as Seniors if they maintain their eligibility.

### **Applications Requirements**

Applications must be submitted online at:

[www.gvsu.edu/scholarships](http://www.gvsu.edu/scholarships)

Applications deadline is TBA, Winter 2019.

### **The English Faculty Scholarship for New Majors A Scholarship Made Possible through the Generosity of GVSU English Department faculty members**

The English Faculty Scholarship for New Majors is awarded to two English majors annually at the English Department Awards Ceremony held in April.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applicants must be a declared English major at the time of application
- Applicants must be a currently-enrolled student with fewer than 60 credit hours completed (1st or 2nd year student) during the semester of application
- Cumulative 2.5 grade point average or better
- First-generation college student

#### **Supplemental Questions**

1. Are you the first person in your immediate family to pursue a college degree (neither parent/guardian(s) has a four-year degree)?
2. 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.
3. Why are you interested in this scholarship?

Please include an academic writing sample, minimum three full pages in length, submitted for a class during your freshman or sophomore year.

#### **Applications Requirements:**

Applications must be submitted online at:

[www.gvsu.edu/scholarships](http://www.gvsu.edu/scholarships)

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2019.

**Dr. Andrew M.C.  
Brown Memorial  
English Scholarship  
A Scholarship  
Created to Assist  
Language &  
Literature Emphasis  
English Majors**

The Brown Scholarship will be awarded at the the English Department Awards Ceremony held in April.

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Candidates should be accepted or currently enrolled at GVSU;
- Must be a senior with a declared major in English with Language & Literature emphasis;
- 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, as evidenced by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

**Application Requirements**

Each student must:

- Provide a short statement of why you qualify for this scholarship;
- Submit two pieces of writing, at least one from a GVSU English class.

Renewal Criteria: This scholarship is non-renewable. Award sum is \$2,000.

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2019.



Abbott, Jake — 7	Huebler, Samantha — 14
Artis, Matthew Jr.— 16	Job, Alexandra — 17
Barnum, Bonnie — 21	Jones, Ashley — 9
Batka, Audrey — 19	Kastner, Katelyn — 8
Boersma, Jill — 19	Kenyon, Ellorie — 16
Bowers, Megan — 21	Ketchum, Lizzy — 17
Brinks, Heather — 12	Kolb, Kristi — 11
Carr, Emmie — 22	Lang, Samantha — 24
Clein, Ashley — 23	Langeland, Makala — 19
Cole, Alicia — 6	Lehman, Lacey — 4
Curtis, Rex — 15	Marr, Kayci — 22
Danaher, Maddie — 13	Marvin, Blake — 5
Dauids, Ariel — 13	Mistry, Lauren — 8
Dieterly, Mary — 9	Mulcahy, Abby — 14
Dubois, Emilee —11	Neff, Curtis — 4
Eskovitz, Tyler — 20	Seekell, Lindsay — 6
Fisher, Cynthia — 20	Smit, Anne Marie — 18
Gall, Anna — 23	Sommerville, Dan — 15
Gogolin, Erin — 10	Srmek, Allison — 5
Grit, Skye — 25	Stein, Autumn — 24
Hart, Tess — 12	Stillson, Tim — 20
Hendrickson, Sarah — 16	Taccolini, Daniel — 25
Henley, Roxanne — 21	Troxell, Ashley — 18
Hershberger, Larissa — 4	Vander Loo, Julie — 13
Hiltunen, Jenna — 11	Wakeley, Colbie — 7
Hornecker, Krystal — 10	Webb, Caitlynn — 24
Hoskins, Amanda — 6	