

English Department Capstone Conference

9 December 2016
Kirkhof Center
Grand Valley State University
Allendale, Michigan



ENG 495 *Capstone Conference*

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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 A, B & C

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

Panels A, B & C

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

Panels A, B & C

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

Panels A, B & C

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

Panels A, B & C

Reception: 3-3:50 p.m.

Notes

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

Please join us at 3 p.m. in 2263 Kirkhof for an informal reception honoring all of today's presenters.

Panel A
KC 2259**Multicultural Literature:**
Integration & Inclusion

Facilitators: Dr. Pat Bloem &
Dr. Ashley Shannon

Mary Kate Davis
‘The Importance of
Multicultural Literature
in the Early Grades’

With the demographic of students in elementary schools increasing by the day, there is a demand for instruction from teachers about how to address this diversity. Elementary teachers are feeling the pressure to incorporate lessons on diversity and culture, while also having to teach to standards like those in the Common Core. Although the standards offer opportunities for students to achieve the same learning goals, there is no emphasis on teaching diverse literary works to students. Unless teachers are instructed on how to incorporate multicultural literature early on in a student’s education, topics like diversity may not be addressed through literature until the later grades. This paper argues that multicultural literature is an excellent—and, perhaps, the best—strategy for educators to use to begin teaching students about diversity and culture within the elementary grades.

Emily Mikesell
‘Teaching Multicultural
Literature in the Early
Grades’

This presentation highlights the significances of using multicultural literature in the classroom. Classrooms are a diverse place and must be treated as such. Using multicultural literature is a gateway for all students to feel included and represented in a classroom. The benefits of multicultural literature are countless; while it gives students an opportunity to see the world around them, they can also make connections within. Representing and including all cultures takes time and effort from the teacher with careful lesson planning. Books should be explicitly chosen and classrooms should be culturally inclusive to ensure that all students are being taught effectively. Teachers using explicit teaching can help all students be prepared to participate in the diverse world that we live in.

Erin Smith
**'The Effects of
Multicultural
Literature: A Deeper
Look into Inclusion**

As our society becomes more diverse, so too do our schools. It is apparent that reading is a fundamental aspect of every educational subject. As students engage and develop strong reading habits, their overall academic success increases. But what if this is not an option for all students? Literature inside the classroom oftentimes does not coincide with the diversity of each individual, which creates a disconnect between the student and their learning within the classroom. Through this presentation I will prove that the inclusion of multicultural literature is an important aspect with obvious benefits, not only to the students, but also to our societies.

Panel B
KC 2270

**Dramatic & Folkloric Narrative
in the Classroom**

Facilitators: Dr. Sufen Lai &
Dr. Brian White

Samantha Kiss
**'The Use of Fairy Tales
within the Classroom'**

My presentation will begin with a brief history of fairy tales and how many tales were modified for children. Then, I will present my findings on the common characteristics that many fairy tales embody and why children are drawn to these certain characteristics. The majority of my presentation will be about why certain fairy tales should be used within the classroom to teach topics such as international literature, morality within character development, critical literacy, and how to fight aliteracy.

Elizabeth Skalski
**'Combating Aliteracy
through Drama'**

The number of students struggling with aliteracy is an ever-growing problem in elementary schools nationwide. Students showing aversion to reading often fall behind in literacy skills as they continue their education. Using drama in the classroom to improve literacy skills yields positive results. There are more studies and discussion focusing on combating aliteracy in students; however, there is a lack of research focusing on using drama to reduce aliteracy. This paper will look at the research on combating aliteracy, how drama has been used in the classroom to improve literacy, and how it may be used to address the issue of aliteracy at the elementary level.

Sharla Bazen
**'Improving Reading
Comprehension Using
Drama Techniques'**

There is a gap within the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) that excludes two essential elements for improving learning as a whole, but more specifically, for improving reading comprehension. These two elements are pleasure and wisdom, which are both crucial to creating comprehensive learners. One method of bridging this gap is through the implementation of drama strategies within the classroom. Drama provides opportunities to actively involve each student in making reading come alive. For this to happen, Wilhelm insists that *You gotta BE the book* (Wilhelm, 2008). Ways in which students can 'BE' the book include acting, predicting, rationalizing, commenting, implying, suggesting, recommending and reflecting, and seeing the book through visualization, imagination, and collaboration. In this presentation, I reveal the research that supports the implementation of drama in the classroom and the ways in which the CCSS fall short. I argue that drama is a strategy too important to be neglected, especially when focusing on improving reading comprehension.

10 a.m.

SESSION TWO

Panel A
KC 2259

Undercurrents in Young Adult Literature

Facilitators: Dr. Kurt Bullock &
Dr. Jo Miller

Kimberly Sterzick
**'Christian Theology in
Harry Potter Illustrated
through Dobby's
Discipleship**

Since the release of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, this book, and its subsequent series, has been under enormous scrutiny for its premise in the magical world and its lack of Christian themes in the narrative. Many scholars researching the debate find that Harry Potter's parallels to occultism and its ambiguity regarding a rigid moral code drive some Christians to believe that the series is anti- or non-Christian. For them, the series must not be safe for young Christian minds to read if there are no Christian morals within the story. However, some scholars respond to this outcry against *Harry Potter* and postulate that the series does indeed illustrate many theological ideals, like self-sacrifice and redemption. This paper will expand on the argument that the *Harry Potter* series exhibits a sound theological foundation in Christianity by exploring the ways Dobby, the house elf, embodies traits of discipleship.

Jessica Piell
**'Agency Games: The
Question of Autonomy
in *The Hunger Games*'**

There is a heavy debate over whether or not Katniss Everdeen from Suzanne Collins's *The Hunger Games* stands in the literary gap for young women everywhere: female role model, or not? Literary and Feminist critics agree that the question is over agency. Does Katniss have agency? Is she an autonomous being who exercises her own individuality and makes her own decisions, or is she just another heroine swept along with the agendas and choices made by others? Approaching this argument with a new perspective, this presentation will look at how Katniss's agency is stripped away, but ultimately how she finds and retains it again, placing her among the most realistic and human female role models in young adult literature.

Panel B
KC 2263

Representing Personal & Political Truths

Facilitators: Dr. Kathleen Blumreich &
Dr. Corinna McLeod

Alexandra Hawk
**'*Dulce et decorum est
pro patria mori?*:
Responses through
Literature to an
Unpopular War**

War and literature are two things that were a heavy influence on culture worldwide. World War I and the war in Vietnam were two wars that had a huge effect on the world—they made us ask the question of what happens when no one truly wins a war. Some of the most significant pieces of literature were written after the war—most notably Siegfried Sassoon's poetry in response to World War I, and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried* in response to the Vietnam War. I will analyze these pieces of literature in the context of their time, and look at the surprising connections between not only these two pieces, but what they show about the importance of the people's voices being heard after the war—what is the importance of literature during wartime, and what effects does it have on the world's view on war, especially those where there is no true 'winner?'

Erik Wochholz
**'Camus's Metaphysical
Rebellion as Portrayed
by *The Stranger*'**

Albert Camus's *The Stranger* has captured the imagination of a wide variety of scholars since its original publication. These scholars have often used psychoanalytical theory as a means of interpreting the novella's protagonist Meursault. However, strict adherence to psychoanalytical theory has been detrimental in interpreting the philosophical absurdism that forms the foundation of *The Stranger*. An absurdist reading of *The Stranger* is necessary

because it serves to elicit what Camus refers to as his 'metaphysical rebellion.' This paper will therefore demonstrate how *The Stranger* attempts to portray Meursault's journey to metaphysical rebellion as a deterrent against philosophical suicide.

Quincy Hutcherson
'2016: The New 1984'

This thesis project explores how people in power, such as large corporations, government officials, and Politicians, manipulate language in order to maintain control and power of today's society. What is problematic about this manipulation of language is the fact that it is embedded in advertisements, social media websites, and buzz words, making it very difficult for people to recognize when they are being persuaded to do things. Throughout this project, I touch on how language is manipulative, why that manipulation is so successful, and how we can avoid it. In order to effectively portray to readers how important it is to be aware of modern-day propaganda and the manipulation of language in today's society, I will use the events in George Orwell's novel *1984* and parallel them to the events that are taking place in 2016.

Panel C
KC 2270

Challenging the Classroom Reading Curriculum

Facilitators: Dr. Pat Bloem &
Dr. Karen Pezzetti

Brittani Christensen
'Standardized Testing and Reading Motivation: The Concerns and Threats to Students'

The negative effects of standardized testing have been researched extensively, making the support of standardized testing extremely controversial. The level of performance expected of students is causing anxiety, stress, and a fixed mindset, just to name a few problems. These harmful effects that standardized testing have on students' achievement and well-being is causing a severe decline in student motivation toward reading and learning. The intrinsic and extrinsic motivators of reading are at odds with the harmful effects of standardized testing. If reading is always associated with testing and the stresses that are associated with it, then students will simply not read, thus causing a decline in students becoming lifelong readers. Do we, as educators, want our students to be

stressed and think of reading as a high-stakes test? This is becoming the reality for students and this concern is impacting their future of reading.

Kelsey Pardue
'Banning Children's
Books: Protecting
Them or Taking Away
Their Intellectual
Freedom?'

Books have been challenged and banned as early as the 1600s and continue to be a widely discussed topic during the 21st century, with most concerns coming from parents. The concerns regarding these books range from frank language, content that is too mature, or anything that may be seen as 'inappropriate' for a child to read. Another argument, primarily by Fanetti and Kauer, stands in contrast, saying that if challenged books are approached in the right way, they can widen and flourish the knowledge of the reader. A lot of speculation has been put on the infamous book *And Tango Makes Three* by Peter Parnell and Justin Richardson due to the controversial content. This book is one among many that is challenged and banned in school districts, but there is a way to teach this safely to small children without it being inconsistent with parents' wishes. This presentation will analyze and appreciate both sides of the argument while finding acceptable spots for challenged and banned pieces of literature in the classroom.

Erica Ruffner
'Queering the High
School English
Classroom without
Being Fired'

'Radical': relating to or affecting the fundamental nature of something; far-reaching or thorough. By this definition, successful English curricula should be radical. English educators are challenged to teach their students to think critically about the world and themselves. But how can this be achieved thoroughly when there are systems in place that have been historically immune to critical thought? Systems like heteronormativity subliminally affect the degree to which students can critically analyze themselves and their society by dictating what is 'normal.'

Deconstruction of such limiting norms can be facilitated with Queer Theory; however, theorists who support the use of Queer Theory in high school have failed to address the stigmatization of the word 'queer' and thus have failed to address the restrictions that educators face in implementing such curriculum. This presentation will explore the ways in which Queer Theory can realistically and reasonably be incorporated into high school English classrooms.

Panel A
KC 2259**Rap in the Mainstream**

Facilitators: Dr. Regis Fox &
Dr. Rob Rozema

Amanda Hiemstra
‘Detroit: The
Soundtrack of Hope’

Detroit exemplified the American standard of a booming capitalistic society starting with the automobile industry, enabling a vast number of people to attain the American Dream. African Americans, especially, migrated to the North to escape racial discrimination in hopes of better economic opportunity. Plagued by racial tensions and violent uprisings, African Americans were still treated as second class citizens. With help from Motown, which became a symbol of pride and hope for the newly defined Detroit sound, African Americans were not just integrating into but leading society. Detroit became the cultural root in which African Americans were able to express their voice in preserving black history and culture. This paper will focus on Detroit’s influence by examining one of its most famous artists, Eminem, and analyze his musical texts within the context of Detroit’s rich history.

Cody Anderson
‘The Metamorphosis of
Double Consciousness
in *To Pimp a Butterfly*’

W.E.B. Du Bois observed the fractured mentality of African Americans in his 1903 literary work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. Through the constantly shifting and transforming social backdrop of America, one could imagine this to be an artifact of the past; however, it is still observable today and serves as a vital point of discussion. This paper will examine the century-old concept of double consciousness within the modern-day socio-political climate in the Grammy-nominated *To Pimp a Butterfly* by American rapper Kendrick Lamar, as well as the vital importance of modern minority writers in literary discourse.

Alexander Ehlert
‘More than Mere
Theater: Theater and
Race, Focusing on
Lin-Manuel Miranda’s
***Hamilton*’**

This thesis explores the identity of race as it relates to modern theater. This relationship is illustrated in an analysis of the plays *Parade*, *Venice*, and *Hamilton* and their relationship with the identity of race in the English language. The context for this inspection will be a comparison of these young plays to more established plays, specifically Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and *Othello*. Beyond simply studying the

relationship between these plays, this presentation focuses on how the less established plays were produced by the cultural identity of race at the time, as well as how they influenced their cultural identity.

Panel B
KC 2263 **Philosophical Applications of
the Written Word**

Facilitators: Dr. David Ihrman &
Dr. Michael Webster

Theresa Benedetto
**‘James Baldwin and
Education’**

Chosen pieces of James Baldwin’s literature will be displayed and open to critical analysis. Baldwin’s authoritative work carries thematic elements and an ethical backbone that connect to effective educational practices. This project explores these themes of identity, growth, and civil discourse within his literature. Furthermore, it will be argued if and how James Baldwin’s principles are being practiced in education at a school in New York City named for the American author. The James Baldwin School’s teaching practices, curriculum, and mission statement will be examined to determine if the dynamic of the school parallels the philosophy of education created by Baldwin.

Blake Haskins
**‘Thoreauvian Philoso-
phies in Business:
Comparing the Experi-
ments of Henry David
Thoreau and Yvon
Chouinard’**

In 1973 Yvon Chouinard founded his outdoor clothing company, Patagonia, whose mission statement reads, “Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, use business to inspire and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.” Since founding Patagonia, Chouinard has routinely labeled his company as an experiment that seeks to provide an alternative for doing ‘business as usual.’ Using philosophies similar to that of American Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, Patagonia has become an incredibly successful and global business while generating a large following and maintaining a strong and positive relationship with environmentally-conscious consumers. This presentation seeks to compare Chouinard’s business experiment, Patagonia, to Thoreau’s lifestyle experiment, *Walden*, and to examine how Thoreau’s individualism and unique perspective on the relationship between man and the natural world has helped to shape one of today’s most successful and environmentally responsible businesses.

Arielle Coesens
**'New Orientalism:
Western Intervention
in Afghanistan, A
Thousand Splendid
Suns, and Dangerous
Dichotomies'**

In the post-9/11 United States of America, numerous texts have been mass marketed and produced that advocate for and justify US military intervention in Afghanistan. This paper largely examines Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as one of these texts. The novel is analyzed textually and metatextually, exposing the underlying Western messages that can be found within the covers and outside of them. Afghanistan's recent history has fragmented the country, leaving a power vacuum where New Orientalism finds justification in reaffirming Western stereotypes of the Orient and advocating for Western intervention. This 'school of interpretation' wrongly declares that the Orient is not only a backwards place but is also inherently violent and in need of saving from greater Western powers.

Panel C
KC 2270

How We Say It, How We Spell It

Facilitators: Dr. Colleen Brice &
Dr. Jo Miller

Corinne Newsom
**'Is There a Michigan
Dialect?'**

My thesis will be exploring the concept of dialect, and whether or not there is something that may be considered a 'Michigan' dialect. Specifically, I will be analyzing the enregistered, Yooper dialect, and how that dialect might be considered 'Michigan,' as well as analyzing NCCS/NCVS (Northern Cities Chain Shift or Northern Cities Vowel Shift) and its relations to the speech patterns of southern Michigan.

Allison Meyers
**'There's More than One
Way to Spell a Word:
The Benefits of
Invented Spelling in
the Elementary
Classroom**

Spelling is difficult for children. We can see that clearly in young students' writing. It is a hard process to grasp and perform correctly, especially when insufficient instruction is given. Invented spelling is a teaching strategy that can be very beneficial to students as they begin to write on their own. This technique helps students with their phonemic awareness and decoding abilities, and contributes to their future reading success. While many students and educators believe conventional spelling instruction is the correct way to teach spelling, this type of instruction does not have the same benefits that invented spelling provides students. This paper will examine the controversy of invented spelling in pedagogical theory and argue that invented spelling is the more effective strategy to use in the classroom.

Chelsea Tanner
'Eliminating Inventive Spelling'

Since the 1970s, there has been an increase of inventive spelling. Inventive spelling is when a student is trying to spell an unknown word and sounds it out letter by letter or sound by sound. For example, the word 'ocean' is commonly misspelled as 'oshin.' Spelling isn't something that is taught in classrooms anymore. Students are given a spelling list to learn, and by the end of the week they are tested on the words given to them. The phonetic strategy (letter-to-sound) is what is being used to teach students how to spell, and this is the main cause of inventive spelling. English is a very complex language with many different ways to spell the same sounds. In this presentation, I will argue against the use of phonetics with the use of other strategies that are more effective for spelling and the spelling of unknown words. These strategies will help eliminate inventive spelling, helping students become better spellers.

12 p.m.

SESSION FOUR

Panel A
KC 2259

Classroom Reading & Writing Practices

Facilitators: Dr. Ashley Shannon &
Dr. Brian White

Heather Ferris
'Read-Alouds in an Elementary Classroom'

My thesis project is on the importance of conducting read-alouds with young children both at home and in an elementary classroom. Research shows that test scores in reading comprehension have significantly decreased in the past few years for elementary students. Reading and writing are two of the most important skills a child needs to know, not only in school, but in everyday life. This is why a technique, such as read-alouds, is crucial to use with children at a young age. Read-alouds are extremely important to use with young children because they improve vocabulary development, improve reading instruction, enhance reading comprehension, and improve overall literacy development. In this paper I discuss how read-alouds work well to provide a good foundation of these skills for children. The paper also includes possible teaching methods that teachers can use to have a successful read-aloud conducted within their classroom.

Taylor Cieslak
**‘Reading Helps the
World Go Round:
The Importance
of Including
Environmental
Literature in an
Elementary Classroom’**

Environmental concerns such as climate change are growing greater every year, but many elementary school teachers are not prepared to teach about such issues for a variety of reasons. Scholars discuss ways in which elementary teachers can use environmental children’s literature as a tool to promote environmental sustainability in the classroom, wherever the topic fits into the curriculum. However, using environmental children’s literature is not always straightforward. Teachers need to follow many guidelines in choosing environmental literature and strategies. Learning these guidelines and strategies will better prepare elementary classroom teachers for teaching about environmental issues. I will also argue why teaching environmental sustainability is a crucial subject, and how literature can ease the difficulties of addressing such a controversial and complex topic.

Autumn Scott
**‘Creatively Teaching
Literature and Writing
within the Common
Core Standards’**

With all of the Common Core State Standards, teachers have a lack of room to teach creatively (unless, you consider the creativity it takes to create a unit plan that covers all that is required by the CCSS). However, whether it is appreciated or not, the Common Core has been adopted in at least forty-two states, and it has no plans on going anywhere. The CCSS is part of the education system now. That is why it is important for teachers to learn how to teach literature and writing creatively within the Common Core State Standards.

Panel B
KC 2263

Refugee Education

Facilitators: Dr. Colleen Brice &
Dr. Laura Vanderbroek

Alyssa Black
**‘A Crisis Amongst Us:
Hopes of Rectifying
Refugees’ Interrupted
Education’**

My thesis strives to educate readers about refugees and how their interrupted education has a lasting effect on their growth and success. So many individuals have been left without stability, and it has caused a deficiency within their education and literacy. Despite the importance placed on literacy and education, today, millions of displaced refugees are being denied appropriate education and as a result, are becoming less literate in highly literate societies. Literacy is built on more than just education, however. An individual’s L1 or primary language literacy, culture, and social awareness influence second language acquisition. The

acquisition of a language takes time and support to learn, something that many of these refugees are deprived of. With credible facts and personal statements, I will reveal the importance of these factors and how together they can affect the success of refugee students who are left to fend desperately for themselves in such highly literate societies.

Hillary Moore
**'ESL Refugees: Finding
a Place in American
Classrooms'**

Thousands of refugees are admitted into the United States yearly. When refugee children are placed in schools, there are many struggles for both students and teachers. Language and cultural barriers often cause a rift between students and teachers. Unfortunately, many teachers in the United States are not prepared to accept refugees into their classrooms. However, there are ways for them to try to transition students into a mainstream classroom. In order for teachers to incorporate refugee students into their classrooms, they must be aware of the hardships refugees have faced, and also teach them in ways that are effective for ESL students. Through proper education, both teachers and families can learn to cope with the struggles they are faced with in the United States, so the students are able to be incorporated into English speaking classrooms.

Trang Huynh
**'New and Emerging
Category of Learners:
Adult Refugee LESLLA
Learners'**

This senior thesis project focuses on adult refugees who are currently learning English as a second language, and who are either preliterate or low literate. Given the current conflicts in not only the Syrian Arab Republic, but also in other countries, the task of providing education for these displaced individuals has become an crucial issue in the United States. The increase in demand for providing the appropriate education for adult refugees has created a new category of learners. This category is termed Low Educated Second Language and Literacy Acquisition, or LESLLA. The challenge presented here is understanding this new category of learners despite lack of a substantial amount of research in this area. The objective is to consider the struggles in becoming literate at a mature age, and to find a fitting approach to teaching these adult refugees who come from different parts of the world with different backgrounds and experiences.

Panel C
KC 2270

Socio-Cultural Literature

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &
Dr. Corinna McLeod

Kerry DeGraaf
'Meritocracy and 1984'

Historically George Orwell's novel *1984* has been looked upon as a dystopian novel with its strongest relevance being related to the cold war era and the political structures of American democracy versus the socialist structures of countries such as Russia during that time period. This has led to a dismissal by some as to the current relevance in the study of *1984* outside of historical perspective. This paper will seek to argue that George Orwell's novel *1984* maintains its relevancy in today's modern society and political structure as commentary on what is in truth less of an American democracy than it is a fallacy of American meritocracy. The commentary of the novel on the ideological social structures, educational institutions, and political systems when looked at in relation to the fallacy of our modern American meritocracy makes Orwell's *1984* not only relevant but crucial for further examination and analysis.

Debra Kue
**'Literature and Asian-
American Identity'**

As a culturally diverse individual who has faced intersectional variance amongst the white dominant population of America, the exploration and formation of Hmong identity has been an issue to fully comprehend. During adolescence, one of the most influential mechanisms that aids identity formation is literature. However, the threat in literature towards culturally diverse peoples are the lack of representation, as well as the overexposure to a certain type of representation. When considering Allison Layfield's theory of the limited narrative of Asian Americans being conditioned by America's expectations, Hmong identity, as well as many other Asian cultural groups, are at risk of losing personal identity at the expense of appeasing towards what their audience wishes to hear rather than what the cultural groups wants to express. By analyzing various Asian American literature, this paper will explore whether or not Layfield's theory holds true and how literature affects the formation of Hmong identity.

Panel A
KC 2259**Situating ELLs in the Classroom**

Facilitators: Dr. Dawn Evans &
Dr. Christy Pearson

Lauren Carney
‘The Benefits of
Cultural Relevance to
English Language
Learners’

The number of English Language Learners (ELLs) is increasing in the United States’ school systems. The National Center for Education Statistics states that ‘the percentage of public school students in the United States who were ELLs was higher in the school year 2013-14 (9.3 percent, or an estimated 4.5 million students) than in 2003-04’ (8.8 percent, or an estimated 4.2 million students (English Language Learners in Public Schools, 2016). Their reading comprehension and academic proficiency takes longer to develop as compared to their monolingual peers. Due to the increase of ELLs, teachers need to be prepared to assist these students, especially in reading comprehension. Through the use of culturally relevant texts in classrooms for ELLs and culturally relevant pedagogy by teachers, ELLs will increase their reading comprehension and engagement by making connections that help them rely on the knowledge they’ve learned previously in classes and through their own lives.

Alaina Pung
‘Content and
Language Integrated
Learning: Language
Scaffolding Techniques
for Content Area
Teachers’

Content and language integrated learning (CLIL) is a fast growing type of bilingual education that incorporates the learning of a target language through content area instruction. The European Union’s new language goal for all citizens to learn two or more European languages popularized CLIL, which is demonstrated by its use in over thirty countries (Baker, 2011 p. 246). Critics question CLIL because of its lack of standard parameters and professional development. The majority of CLIL content teachers have little language teaching training. One of the main components of CLIL is that instructors are expected to teach the target language through their content but, without formal training, teachers are left without the tools and knowledge necessary to teach language. This paper will discuss the need for CLIL educators to be trained in their content area as well as in language scaffolding techniques through the use of an integrated biology lesson plan.

Laryssa Montambo
**‘The Tool that
Promotes Academic
Literacy among English
Language Learners:
Technology’**

As the number of people immigrating to the United States continues to rise, so does the number of students being placed in an elementary classroom with little to no knowledge of the English Language. English language learners need a curriculum that is centered around innovative, creative and motivational teaching ideals. The use of technology such as computers, e-Books and various programs allow students to be engaged in language learning while improving and building on their academic literacy. As technology continues to be a constant source of information, it is our future and promotes academic literacy when it is used with guided instruction in a classroom.

Panel B
KC 2263

Innovative Classroom Pedagogy

Facilitators: Dr. Sherry Johnson &
Dr. Brian White

Olivia Liphardt
‘Cinematic Classroom’

The purpose of this paper is to explore the use of feature films as a tool in language learning. The need for multilingual ability in the global world is becoming increasingly imperative. In a digitally driven society, people rely on technology for much of their daily activity. It seems only natural at this point that technology use gains a larger and deeper purpose in the classroom, specifically the language classroom. With the help of varying forms of captioning, language acquisition is possible through the viewing of films in foreign languages. Films are audiovisual technology sources that support both visual and auditory learners with authentic language input. Films are not created for language instruction and therefore immerse language learners in authentic conversations, accents and slang. Students are subject to engaging material and able to move away from drilling practices and memorization.

Susan Roskelley
**‘Fun Matters: The
Importance of Creative
Writing in Secondary
Education’**

Creative writing is not a subject that is heavily emphasized in the current English language arts curriculum. To some educators and scholars, creative writing is viewed as more of a pastime—something that is done for fun and personal enjoyment, not for strengthening one’s writing and exploring topics in a different way. Additionally, these scholars argue that creative writing is difficult to assess and is not a teachable craft. Although these arguments have some

validity, I ultimately argue in my thesis that teachers need to approach the integration of creative writing in the classroom with a different mindset, and that incorporating creative writing alongside traditional writing composition can be beneficial to students.

Madeleine Peltier
**‘Culturally Relevant
Pedagogy: Spoken
Word Poetry and the
Common Core
Standards’**

The radical opportunity gap in America’s urban schools can no longer be ignored. Diverse learners are pouring into city schools at an unprecedented pace, and schools are struggling to provide these students with the empowering education they are promised. Historically oppressed, poor students of color are often blamed for poor academic performance in such schools; this dangerous and naive assumption has been rightfully flipped on its head. Today, we are analyzing how the goals and methods of instruction may be the root of the problem. Using a Critical Race Theory lens, Gloria Ladson-Billings has presented a progressive form of education that sent the pedagogical research world spinning: culturally relevant pedagogy. In the context of the recent implementation of the Common Core State Standards, I will argue that culturally relevant pedagogy is essential to the progression of social equality, and that spoken word poetry embodies these pedagogical tenets within an English classroom.

Panel C
KC 2270

Literary Play and Practice

Facilitators: Dr. Kurt Bullock &
Dr. David Ihrman

Sage Hughston
**‘The Powers of Women
and the Powers of
Darkness: Bram
Stoker’s *Dracula*’**

Written in the era of the audacious New Woman, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* offers a perspective on the roles of women that has been studied and scrutinized with mixed results. It can be hard to say whether the “male-minded” Mina Harker or the soft, pure Lucy Westenra are meant to be endorsing or condemning the profeminist movement of the 1890s. Keeping this in mind, I will analyze the agency of the human women in the novel, especially as they are put through tremendous physical and mental transformations. I will be particularly concerned with how their agency functions within the novel, and how interactions with the male characters, including Dracula himself, limit or expand the ability of Lucy and Mina to act and to influence change in the narrative.

Kristi Coutourier
**‘When Is a Lighthouse
Simply a Lighthouse?’**

The use of symbols abounds in Virginia Woolf’s novel *To the Lighthouse*. Whether it is the prominent lighthouse itself, the painting by Lily Briscoe, or the more obscure flowers scattered about the yard, the symbols hold a variety of different explanations or meanings. Scholars have debated how we interpret these symbols extensively; for many of these symbols, like the lighthouse itself, no critical consensus has been reached. In this essay I will examine the symbolism Woolf uses within the story not to figure out which interpretation is “correct” but to question if the use of symbolism lends itself to a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the author’s intent, or if it instead muddles the flow the storyline and detracts from the reading of *To the Lighthouse*.

Samantha Resner
**‘The Art of Destruction:
A Look at the
Experimental Writing
of William S.
Burroughs**

While those who have studied William S. Burroughs vary widely in their perspective and opinions, there has always been one consistent agreed upon theme: Burroughs’ writing style shifts drastically from his earlier work, his memoir *Junky*, to his later novels, *Naked Lunch* and *The Nova Trilogy*, which is also known as his ‘cut-up trilogy.’ This thesis will discuss various influences in Burroughs’ life that led to his more experimental writing. It is my contention that the time right before Burroughs moved to Paris as well as the years he spent there was a deeply influential period in his life. It was around this time that he began to experiment with cut-ups and other methods which he used to deconstruct his own writing. With these experiments, Burroughs was able to use artistic media to showcase his own fractured mind.

2 p.m.

SESSION SIX

Panel A
KC 2259

Teaching Fiction

Facilitators: Dr. David Ihrman &
Dr. Karen Pezzetti

Corrie Bennardi
**‘Children’s Fantasy
Literature: Combining
Reality and Fiction in
the Classroom’**

Children’s fantasy literature encourages students to actively use their imaginations while increasing their academic and social skills. The important impact fantasy literature can have on students and their development is frequently overlooked and disregarded. Some critics argue that the fantasy genre is for entertainment purposes only and does not contain any relevant infor-

mation or ideas. Although children's fantasy books are fictional in nature, readers are able to experience a personal connection to the story and gain a deeper understanding of another culture. A quality example of fantasy literature is J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series because it incorporates real-life issues in a fictional fantasy world. Reading fantasy can have a positive influence on children and should be encouraged more frequently in elementary education classrooms.

Stephanie Plotkin
**'The Need for Young
Adult Literature in the
Classroom Today'**

Students, especially in secondary education, have lost the enthusiasm for reading that they had when they were younger. The novels high school English teachers currently use for whole-class instruction are the same classic, canonical works they used more than a decade ago, but contemporary teenagers cannot relate to the current material. In this presentation, I will show the importance of utilizing current young adult choices along with classic literature to help bring back student enthusiasm and comprehension. Young adult literature, or YAL, offers readers diverse characters, compelling stories, and high quality writing. Student engagement with a work of literature insures introspective writing, lively discussions, and perhaps most importantly—the students will keep reading, long after the required selection has been finished.

Alannah McBryde
**'Implementing Graphic
Novels in the
Secondary Classroom'**

Throughout history, scholars have criticized the graphic novel for its 'simplicity,' 'meaningless content,' or its 'influence on juvenile delinquency.' They see no positive that can come from this medium. If they do, it is merely as a scaffolding tool that has no true power on its own. This paper presents these critics' views, and ultimately casts them aside by juxtaposing the graphic novel's usefulness in the classroom as an educational medium with both native speakers and ELLs. This paper highlights the position that there is no evidence that graphic novels negatively affect adolescents as the critics say they do; furthermore, this paper emphasizes the constant struggles that graphic novels have had to deal with and their successes, thus proving their positive and effective learning with students in education and for all readers.

Panel B
KC 2263

Socio-Cultural Issues in Literature

Facilitators: Dr. David Alvarez &
Dr. Michael Webster

Zechariah Ramey
**‘Critiquing Capitalism:
Suffering and
Solidarity in *The
Grapes of Wrath*’**

The book is more powerful than the pulpit. Simply preaching about the ills of capitalism routinely falls upon deaf ears because many of us can not relate to the human suffering it often causes. Additionally, as educated individuals, the institutions and ideologies of our lives benefit many of us while simultaneously hiding the costs. *The Grapes of Wrath* exposes the reader to the darker sides of profit which are usually kept hidden from the consumer. I will use Marxist Literary Criticism to diagnose the state of capitalism present in *The Grapes of Wrath*. In what ways are human potential squandered and how do characters respond to oppression? Is Steinbeck’s most famous work a call to revolution?

Abby Keyser
**‘The Role of Money,
Religion and Race in
*The Merchant of
Venice*’**

The Merchant of Venice is one of William Shakespeare’s plays in which the relationships between the characters is quite astounding. Unlike most plays, in *The Merchant of Venice* the characters and their interactions is what propels and deepens the plot itself. They go so far as to even delve into the themes of money, religion, and race. Although these are heavy topics to discuss, Shakespeare intricately intertwines these three themes through several characters’ storylines such as Antonio’s, Shylock’s, and Jessica’s. He sheds light through these characters by introducing issues revolving around the differences between Christians and Jews, conversion, sacrifice, and more. These powerful topics are exemplified throughout the play and help explain the hostility and hatred that lies between many of the characters.

Spencer Miller
**‘Ecocriticism: The
Unity of Theory and
Activism’**

Ecocriticism is a relatively new field of study in which the relationship between humans and the natural world is analyzed within literature. The field has been largely concerned with raising environmental awareness and promoting activism; however, there have been recent pushes towards developing a stronger theoretical basis. This has begun to create a divide in ecocriticism between activism and theory. While many ecocritics choose one or the other, this paper explains that activism and theory must not be separated. Specifically,

this paper highlights the way in which ecocriticism uses deconstruction to break down language that is potentially harmful to our view of the natural world. In addition, this paper will evaluate the use of literature in changing language and therefore the prevalent mindset of society.

Panel C
KC 2270

Innovative Pedagogy for ELLs

Facilitators: Dr. Christy Pearson &
Dr. Shinian Wu

Katelyn Atkinson
‘Like Nailing Jello to a
Tree: Various
Pedagogical
Approaches to
Teaching Figurative
Language to English
Language Learners’

In recent years, there has been a heavy influx of English language learners (ELLs) entering the United States school system. According to the current United States educational policy, ELLs coming to this country are under a lot of pressure to learn English very quickly. English is a rich and varied language; ELL students often find understanding the basic syntax and vocabulary of the language difficult and the more complex figurative formulations very challenging. This paper will explore different pedagogical approaches to teaching ELLs figurative language in the quickest and most efficient way possible. Language learning is more than just learning grammar and vocabulary; learning figurative competency also supports the cultural education of ELLs.

Lindsey Wabeke
‘Co-Teaching: An
Appropriate and
Effective Model for
Educating English
Language Learners’

Most teachers prepare between four and five years of undergraduate work for their careers. This preparation includes little training in linguistics and teaching English Language learners (ELLs) in the classroom. In all the literature which was compiled for this presentation, authors and researchers agreed that mainstream teachers, teachers who teach in the English-only classroom, needed to be more prepared to work with ELL students since the ELL population is growing and since inclusion in the mainstream classroom is extremely important for the success of the ELL student (Gunderson, 2013; Pettit, 2011; Dove & Honigsfeld, 2010). This presentation explores some of the misconceptions which teachers have about educating ELL students in the mainstream classroom and which learning models would best suit them. This presentation also explores the co-teaching model which, as the research of Maria Dove and Andrea Honigsfeld shows, is highly effective.

Victoria Vedder
‘The Montessori
Method and Its Effect
on ESL Learners’

ESL learners require a curriculum that focuses on their own specific set of needs. These unique types of learners deserve the time and attention that a fully equitable education demands. In order to reach the goal of an equitable education, ESL learners’ previous struggles, stereotypes, and achievement gaps must end. The Montessori classroom, and its rare design, gives ample opportunities for all ESL learners to succeed. Teachers have been searching for the best methods on how to teach their ESL learners for years. The Montessori method is an untapped solution to the often negative experiences ESL learners can have in the classroom. The Montessori method of teaching and its radical curriculum creates the perfect environment for ESL learners.

3 p.m.

RECEPTION

Reception
KC 2263

Please join us for an informal reception to honor our ENG 495 Capstone students and their achievements this semester.

**Held in Conjunction
with the departments
of Classics and Writing**

**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 2017;
- 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 accepted anytime at the English Department Office in 210 Lake Huron Hall;
- Entries may also be submitted 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

Application deadline is March 1, 2017.

**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 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.

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

Applications Requirements

Applications must be submitted online at:

www.gvsu.edu/scholarships

Applications deadline is March 1, 2017.

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

Application deadline is March 1, 2017.

Cody Anderson—10	Olivia Liphardt—18
Sharla Bazen—6	Allison Meyers—12
Theresa Benedetto—11	Emily Mikesell—4
Alyssa Black—14	Laryssa Montambo—18
Lauren Carney—17	Hillary Moore—15
Brittani Christensen—8	Corinne Newsom—12
Taylor Cieslak—14	Kelsey Pardue—9
Arielle Coesens—12	Madeleine Peltier—19
Mary Davis—4	Jessica Piell—7
Alexander Ehlert—10	Alaina Pung—17
Heather Ferris—13	Susan Roskelley—18
Blake Haskins—11	Erica Ruffner—9
Alexandra Hawk—7	Autumn Scott—14
Amanda Hiemstra—10	Elizabeth Skalski—5
Sage Hughston—19	Erin Smith—5
Quincy Hutcherson—8	Kimberly Sterzick—6
Trang Huynh—15	Chelsea Tanner—13
Samantha Kiss—5	Erik Wochholz—7