

*Ah, world, what lessons you prepare for us,
Even in the leafless winter,
Even in the ashy city.*

—Mary Oliver

English Department Capstone Conference



ENG 495 *Capstone Conference*

9 December 2022

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 publicly 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: 10-10:50 a.m.

Panels A, B & C

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

Panels D, E & F

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

Panels G & H

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

Panels I & J

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**Young Adult Literature: Dystopia,
Fantasy, and Horror**

Facilitators: Dr. Kathleen Blumreich &
Dr. Lindsay Ellis

Haley Turner
**‘The Aim of the Game:
How *The Hunger Games*
Teaches Young
Readers about Real
World Issues and
Themselves’**

The Hunger Games, written by Suzanne Collins, follows the journey of sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen as she is faced with the harsh realities of the dystopian nation of Panem. From becoming the sole provider of her family at age 11, to surviving a fight to the death (twice), to facing emotional torture and blackmail, to being asked to spearhead a rebellion at age 17, Katniss has gone through more than most kids could even fathom. However, the injustice she faces throughout the books can be translated into real world problems. Throughout this series, Collins explores themes of poverty, wealth disparity, death, war, revolution, mental illness, PTSD, power relations, gender roles, and the many different forms of love. This paper will explore the impact that *The Hunger Games* has had on a generation of readers and how critical analysis of dystopian literature can ignite a passion within young people for social justice.

Andrew Hylan
**‘It’s Not All Fantasy:
The Accurate Portrayal
of Mental Illness in
the Stormlight
Archive Series’**

In recent years, literature in the fantasy genre has taken on some of the more challenging themes related to mental health. The fantasy novelist Brandon Sanderson accurately depicts individuals with mental illnesses. Within the Stormlight Archive series, Sanderson immerses the reader into the war-torn world of Roshar where magic has begun returning to humans. The protagonists grapple with mental illnesses ranging from depression to post-traumatic stress disorder, and dissociative identity disorder. Through the medium of magic as a metaphor for self-discovery, the protagonists learn and must ultimately choose whether to be truthful to themselves about how their mental illnesses make them think, behave, and act. While magic can heal most physical wounds, it does not alter the magic user’s mental state of mind. Ultimately, Sanderson’s books *The Way of Kings*, *Words of Radiance*, *Oathbringer*, and *Rhythm of War* destigmatize mental illness by showing how characters can learn to cope with internal struggles while facing external battles.

Taylor Smith
**'When Love Bites:
Teen Vampire Fiction
and Its Impact on
Young Women'**

Between the 1990s and early 2000s, teen readers in America were introduced to two vampire romance series that would become widely popular: *The Vampire Diaries* (1991) and *Twilight* (2005). The series have met a wide range of reactions, from obsession to ridicule. While these books do contain depictions of sexuality within their romances, there are much darker sexual themes and undertones in the way that vampirism functions within the narratives. This presentation will discuss the origins of this genre as the byproduct of the classic vampire novel and the gothic romance, theories as to why young girls might find it so compelling, and what this might tell us about the sexual realities of women today, paying explicit attention to the trope of the love triangle and how it may embody the protagonists choice between humanity and immortality.

Panel B
KC 2266

Better Practices, Better Teaching

Facilitators: Roy Black &
Dr. Corinna McLeod

Claire Nixon
**“T” is for Trauma:
The Benefits of Using
Trauma-Informed
Children’s Literature
in the Classroom'**

In 1995, the CDC and Kaiser conducted a study on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) in which the startling discovery was made that more than two thirds of children have reported at least one traumatic event by the age of 16. With a focus on the acknowledgement of childhood trauma, a new wave of teaching has emerged of trauma-informed teaching, with the purpose of providing students with a safe area for them to thrive in as well as promoting self-regulation and coping skills in young children. A way to do that is through trauma-informed literacy: an approach to literacy with a focus on promoting literature that helps students cope with past (and present) traumatic events while promoting self-regulation. This presentation argues that the use of trauma-informed literacy in the early elementary classroom will set up students for success as they cope with trauma and gain self-regulation skills that will decrease the likelihood of students turning to unhealthy habits to cope.

Hailey Hinken
‘How the Accelerated Reading Program Does More Harm Than Good, and What Educators Can Do Better’

The Accelerated Reading (AR) program is a computer software program that assesses and rewards students' reading level based on their comprehension of a given text. Countless school districts make a common mistake by choosing the Accelerated Reading program for their students to practice reading and for teachers to assess students' work. The AR program creates unhealthy reading habits, as students are trained to look for the answers on the assessments, rather than reading for enjoyment. This presentation shows how the AR program harms students' reading comprehension and willingness to read, and proposes better teaching practices for educators that benefit students, and get students excited about reading.

Elarie Ghysels
‘An Acceptable Accommodation: The Benefits of Incorporating Audiobooks in the Classroom’

Audiobooks have been around for decades, and research shows that they have been growing in popularity. Audiobooks are one of the most amazing assets that educators can use in literacy classrooms. This tool should be considered a viable option as an accommodation for different populations of learners so long as it is used in the context of Reading While Listening (RWL). Many students find themselves struggling with reading for various reasons that can cause them to fall behind their peers when it comes to reading fluency and comprehension, making learning difficult later on. This thesis is advocating for students to be given the option to utilize audiobooks to help improve their reading skills. This presentation will introduce information about how people comprehend reading print versus audiobooks, the pros and cons of audiobooks for different readers, and how audiobooks can be implemented into the classroom so that students can use them to accommodate certain setbacks they might face as readers.

Panel C
KC 2270

This is America

Facilitators: Dr. Fred Antczak &
Dr. Sherry Johnson

Faith Davis
‘Representation of Black Authors in Literature’

Black representation matters. Across media, there is a false depiction of the African American style of living, if mentioned at all. Due to the push for white authors into mainstream literature, authors of color have not been allowed to have their stories heard. This lack of representation in literature has failed students time

and time again. Representation has power. Being able to see yourself or your culture in literature allows for empathy and understanding to grow. Whether it be classic literature or a romance novel, Black authors should be permitted to make an impact. This is however not the case; white authors occupy spaces meant for Black authors. This is seen when White authors write literature about Black culture and experiences without having been a part of either. This leads to harmful stereotypes and caricatures being reinforced from an outside perspective. Black authors deserve to write Black Literature. In my thesis, I will explore the lack of representation of authors of color.

TeAnna Hernandez
**‘Chicano & Native
American Literature:
Shared U.S.
Experiences of
Minorities’**

American literature includes works by people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, not just those written by white Americans. In comparison to the writing of white authors, diverse American literature is not as widely read. Through the perspective of both ethnic groups, this thesis explores the similarities between Chicano and Native American literature. I will be closely examining American literature from perspectives that are frequently ignored. Five Chicano and Native American novels—*The Circuit*, *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*, *Pocho and Lakota Women*, *Black Elk Speaks*, and *There, There*—are examined in this thesis. In this analysis, I'll primarily concentrate on common experiences like assimilation, racism, lack of education, issues of cultural loss, pressure on identification, and poverty. In an effort to foster understanding between Native Americans and Chicanos, this thesis will go into detail on how these factors influence the literature that each group produces. Additionally, I will be addressing how each of these novels depicts the struggles that Native Americans and Chicanos face as minorities in the United States.

Megan Wright
**‘Benjamin Franklin:
The Hero, The
Capitalist, and the
Middle-Aged Woman’**

Silence Dogood, a columnist for the *New England Courant*, was a middle-aged widow writing about her experiences and opinions regarding our new nation. Readers fell in love with this woman and her witty commentary, but the one holding the quill was actually a sixteen-year-old boy. A young Benjamin Franklin wrote eight letters from her perspective and the nation fell in love with his character. Dogood is just one of many ways Franklin depicts himself, however none as nuanced as the depiction found in his *Autobiography*.

The way in which Franklin chooses to portray himself yields two contrasting interpretations: Franklin as an American folk-hero and as a spokesman for capitalism. The two interpretations of Franklin appear in literary reactions to his *Autobiography* ultimately resulting in the emergence of the American character. Analyzing Franklin's role in the emergence of this archetype leads to understanding America's complicated national identity. In this presentation, I will explain the two.

11 a.m.

SESSION TWO

Panel D
KC 2259

Feminist Icons, Odysseys, and Genres

Facilitators: Dr. Robert Rozema &
Dr. Ashley Shannon

Taryn Harwell
**'Wonder Woman:
A Symbol of Progress'**

In this thesis, the readers will be examining a fictional woman from a foreign land wrapped in an American flag coming to defend and protect the values of a world her own people turned their backs on. She saw a glimpse of something worth saving. Most people know this heroic woman by the name Wonder Woman. Be prepared to dive into the ever-evolving world of comic books. My focus will be following Woman Woman comics from her creation in the 1940s to present day. We will be looking at what societal movements in history have helped aid in her cultural development over the past 81 years. Specifically, examining the societal movements of the different waves of feminism and how they are reflected in her cultural development as a fictional character. Understanding Wonder Woman's evolution throughout history helps us understand how one fictional character has become one of the most well-known feminist icons.

Emily Lyday
**'Giving Penelope Her
Voice Back: Analyzing
Atwood and Haynes'
Rewritings of the
Odyssey'**

The *Odyssey*, written in the 7th-century BC by Homer can be seen by many as a classical piece of literature. It is a monomyth, more commonly known as The Hero's Journey, that follows Odysseus in his journey of trying to get home to his wife, Penelope, after the Trojan War. Homer portrays Penelope as the epitome of a wife: loyal and patient, but is this realistically how she might have been after waiting 10 years for his return? In the cultural perspective of 7th-century Greece, yes. However, through the rewritings of Penelope by

Margaret Atwood and Natalie Haynes, we get the 21st-century perspective and comparison of how Penelope might have felt and thought from her own point of view of Odysseus' journey.

Amanda Rampenthal
**'Hidden Corpses,
Experimentation, and
More in Feminist
Horror Today'**

Horror literature can reveal a great deal about a society at a point in time. So, what does today's feminist horror or horror focused on women say about women right now or society right now? And why is it important for both men and women to read these books? In this essay, I will examine both recently released horror books and research concerning our love of horror and the benefits.

Panel E
KC 2266

LGBTQ Themed Books and Censorship

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &
Dr. Corinna McLeod

Vanesa Gaete Muñoz
**'Out and Proud:
Queer Literature
in the Classroom'**

The LGBTQI+ community and topics related to it have been subject to persecution in many places, and classrooms are no exception. Book bannings often focus on LGBTQI+ books and topics. Nevertheless, students, both LGBTQI+ and straight, can only benefit from reading queer books. This paper argues that teaching LGBTQI+ topics can have a positive effect on the LGBTQI+ students' lives, by decreasing some consequences that bullying has on them (skipping school or dropping out) and improving LGBTQI+ inclusion helps students' self-esteem. In order to achieve an LGBTQI+-positive classroom, it is important for teachers to be open about their sexuality, to provide support to LGBTQI+ students, and to incorporate queer literature into their classrooms. Therefore, this paper intends to argue that incorporating queer literature has more pros than cons, hence teachers should be encouraged to do it.

Kenadee Berg
**'Fighting Modern
Censorship: How
Educators Combat
Book Censorship'**

Censorship can be tracked down as a part of history from the Middle Ages to the 21st-century and can affect many outlets like literature, cinema, and news. In the recent past, the individuals responsible for modern censorship were typically parents or concerned community members. In the American school system, the main contributors to censorship are parents and the school board. Two key locations where censorship

occurs in the literature that children are allowed to read both in the library and the classroom. In the recent past, parents and school board officials often try to restrict the material that students can read because it is indecent for minors, discusses materials like racism, LGBTQ+, or is sexually suggestive. But censorship has radically changed over the past five years, and this is due to the involvement of parents and school boards against the literature students read. By understanding the reasons behind parental and board participation in this new form of censorship, teachers will be better equipped to fight against the injustice of censorship in schools. It is essential for all students to be knowledgeable about their right to read, and in correlation, the student's right to be taught valuable material.

Alyx Beachum
**'Banned Books:
Denying Students
Access to Literature
They Need and
Deserve'**

In this presentation, I will be addressing how banning books in schools is doing more harm than good. These books are not banned for the way they are written, rather they are banned for what the writing says. Many of these books have won awards such as the Caldecott and Newbery award; yet they remain on the banned book list in many states. Within these books we see topics such as disabilities, racism, creativity, sexual assault, gun violence, and drug abuse. These are heavy topics that schools should be helping their students through. A way to do that is using literature. Students need to have literature they can relate to even when those things are hard to understand. We should not be banning books because they have controversial topics. It is our job as teachers to provide students with books and literature that represent the hardships that many students are facing. Not every student has a picture-perfect life; that needs to be reflected in the literature schools offer them. Books that are banned or frowned upon by schools have the potential to help students find the escape and understanding that they desperately need.

Jenna Sobaski
‘Sexual Violence in
Post-Colonial
Literature: How Time
Has Changed How
We React’

As sexual violence is rampant in our culture, it is no surprise that depictions of it appear in our literature as well. As a colonial country, colonialism gains its power through the perpetuation of gender inequality. As we have witnessed the era of post-colonialism, we see a push for gender equality and a call to end sexual violence. However, the era of post-colonialism is quite long, and there has been a drastic change in ideology from when it started to the present day. In my capstone paper, I will dissect depictions of sexual violence in post-colonial literature, as well as discuss the meanings and interpretations, and how they have changed from the early times of post-colonialism to now. I aim to show proper examples of depictions of sexual violence as well as ones that miss the mark. Our society moves so fast, the changing ideology has to keep up with literature.

Eliana Briske
‘The Kids Aren’t
Alright: Addressing
Rape Culture
in High School
Literature’

Rape and sexual assault are issues that the public is becoming increasingly aware of. As the understanding of rape moves away from individual acts of violence, and instead to a systemic, culturally ingrained attitude, the world searches for solutions. Students are exposed to messages about consent and assault every day. Keeping discussion of rape culture out of the education system is therefore not only ineffective, but actively harmful for students and their safety. Giving students beneficial messages about sexual assault and giving them a safe space within which to contemplate these realities, is vital to prevent the replication and perpetuation of rape culture, for victims, future victims, and even potential rapists. The main goal of this paper is to argue that the literature classroom is the best place to address sexual assault and rape culture, as well as explore options for how to have those conversations.

Alyssa Torres
‘Choosing Your Future:
College Major as
Predictor of Long-Term
Values and Views’

Scholars within various academic fields (including but not limited to: sociology, psychology, and marketing) have worked with the concept of human values in order to better understand the function that values have in guiding human behaviors, attitudes, opinions, and personality traits. Specific values and value profiles have been shown to have correlations with various

psychological and sociological implications, e.g., one's well-being, satisfaction with life, or quality of interpersonal relationships. Furthermore, other research has been published that investigates the value profiles and priorities of the students and graduates of differing academic disciplines. In this presentation, I will explain the nature of values, correlations found between college majors and different value profiles, and varying psychological and sociological implications that are predicted to result from value profiles. I theorize that, rather than reflecting one's academic interests, an individual's choice of college major might be better perceived as a predictor for long-term value prioritization and as a result life satisfaction.

12 p.m.

SESSION THREE

Panel G
KC 2259

Reading and Writing in Crisis

Facilitators: Roy Black &
Dr. Sherry Johnson

Jamie Benson
'Changing Reading
Habits of Secondary
Students'

Once students move into middle school, there is a significant decline in reading for pleasure. This paper's overall topic is to understand why after 5th grade, many students stop reading for pleasure. Based on the research, there is a more significant number of young girls who read for fun compared to young boys, and the lack of male YA authors and representation leads to a disinterest in reading as young men perceive it as a more feminine hobby. On top of that stereotype, many schools do not stress the importance of teaching fiction to their students. Many schools go from actively reading books as a community to assigning different texts that students need help digesting. Changing the narrative of reading in school from a chore to a passion and leisurely activity is the main goal for all English teachers. Using graphic novels, audiobooks, and interactive reading methods, students will gain the excitement of reading back after losing it in their younger years.

Ashley Austreng
**‘Education’s Literary
Crisis: Why Students
Are Losing the Love of
Reading and How
to Repair It’**

Without argument, there has been an increase in what could be considered an adolescent literary crisis; by the time students are entering high school, many of them feel discouraged about reading and often, they lose the joy of it altogether. Research suggests that over a third of people never pick up a book again after high school, with the percentage rising higher after college. How do we, as educators, bring back the magic of reading, a skill that will also be presented outside of school? My thesis will be examining why reading rates have decreased so dramatically within a span of a few years when academic texts are presented, as well as how teachers can prevent this from happening. If this has already begun, I address ways to combat it and how schools are unintentionally (but systematically) killing reading for pleasure, which is the opposite of their goal. My thesis will delve into these topics and not just analyze and address the issue of reader disengagement, but also provide solutions and real-world scenarios to fix it.

Luke DePlaunty
**‘From Envelope to
Email: Positive
Effects of the
Internet on English
Communication’**

Since its creation, the internet has been one of the most significant enablers of language change in our modern world. Besides the printing press, very few inventions have dramatically changed English in such a short period. Not only has the internet allowed us to communicate faster and, in more ways, but it has also allowed us to alter our language in the ways we use our vocabulary. It has also led English users to modify how we structure our sentences and the words or symbols we use, and has also led to specific grammatical changes. This paper seeks to prove and discuss, using the analysis of scholarly sources, the many new features of English. These include compounding, clipping/shortening of words, the use of Emoticons (emojis), and the non-typical use of numbers or spelling within our everyday vernacular that are direct products of the internet and CMC (computer-mediated discourse). Consequently, this thesis seeks to address how the internet has only added to our language in terms of expressivity and has positively impacted our language, as opposed to the commonly accepted idea that the internet has degraded language as a whole.

Taylor Zuerner-Gumro
‘Literary
Representation of
Autism: Analysis of *The*
***Curious Incident* and**
***Ido in Autismland*’**

Mark Haddon’s *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* detective fiction novel follows Christopher, who is known to have Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). While this novel was a best-seller and continuously used in education, it was not received well by a portion of the autistic community leading Haddon to deny Christopher’s ASD diagnosis. This novel is the literary representation of autism and is best understood through the examination of another important autistic text: *Ido In Autismland: Climbing Out of Autism’s Silent Prison* by Ido Kedar. This biography follows Kedar from the ages of 12 to 14. Kedar recounts his journey to find his preferred non-verbal communication method, and with the help of a spectacular woman, Kedar learned to communicate. Kedar begs the world to open its eyes and realize how their judgments and stereotypes occur before interactions with those with ASD have ended. His personal experience of therapists shoving him into a box of generalizations, smothering his voice and uniqueness for years, left a bad taste of how society generally views individuals with ASD as cookie-cutters. Using both Lisa Zunshine’s application of Theory of Mind (ToM) to fiction and Simon Baron-Cohen’s application of ToM to autism, this presentation will compare these texts. This discussion will contribute to the literary representation of ASD, how it affects social discourse and feelings towards those with ASD, and how it can improve education and the inclusion of person-centered thinking.

Catalina Navarro
Moreira
‘Female Autistic
Representations in
Media: Where
Are They?’

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been around since the 1930’s, but it started as a male diagnosis as it was studied only in men. Compared to their male counterparts, autistic females have a lower prevalence of ASD diagnoses or receive them considerably later in life. Unfortunately, some women never even receive a diagnosis. Before being diagnosed, women on the spectrum often reported feeling confused and overpowered by the outside world. Since most people expect girls to be quiet and collected as children, it is not anticipated that they could be autistic. This severely affected the quality of life for most of them.

Consequently, autistic women have also been underrepresented in the popular media. Throughout the years, the pop culture industry has propagated or developed a number of stereotypes, based on the male phenotype of autism, leaving females and autistic women on the outside again.

Mikayla Kirtland
‘Mind Reading’

Does reading improve mental health? Many students and educators struggle with mental health issues, even if they are not aware of it. Often, this includes anxiety, stress, and depression. Many educators are not aware of how to approach mental health issues or struggle to find time during the school day to focus on them. Mental health is something that is worth carving out time in the school day for, even if there are only a few minutes to spare. Research suggests many coping mechanisms, but one of the most applicable coping mechanisms during the school day includes reading. Reading is a great resource for all students to not only develop knowledge and perspectives, but it is also a great way to individually improve stress, anxiety, and depression symptoms because it is a therapeutic technique. Incorporating time into the classroom to read can help students and educators academically, socially, and emotionally.

1 p.m.

SESSION FOUR

Panel I
KC 2259

English as a Second & Foreign Language
Facilitators: Dr. Adeline Borti &
Dr. Dan Brown

Daniel Ocampo
‘A Better Future for
Our ESL Students’

Over the years we've seen the growth of Latino English as a second language students arriving in our high schools here in the United States. When combining the growing number of Latino ESL students along with the overwhelming importance of learning the English language, it would be fair to conclude that learning English is paramount to all Latino ESL students. Thanks to technology, we have seen advancements in the amount of learning websites that are available for our ESL students. With teachers being required to be ESL certified, help from Spanish speaking paraprofessionals, and other support staff, many believe that our students are on the right path to learning English. Unfortunately, that's not the case. In

fact, most Latino ESL students are set up to fail as soon as they step foot in our high schools. In this presentation, we're going to dive inside the minds of our Latino ESL students and find out why I believe they're set up to fail, as well as talk about why I believe many of them don't find it important to learn the English Language. Outside of school factors like living situations, the need to work, the age they arrive in this country, families, and deportation will all be discussed.

Camila Valeria Alvarez
'Motivation in At-Risk Schools: Can We Fight the Odds?'

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) can be challenging because different factors can positively or negatively affect this process. Motivation is one of the keys to learning, but what happens when the socioeconomic context decreases motivation? Standardized tests from different countries demonstrate a large difference between high and low socioeconomic groups. Even if students are getting access to English, the amount of time to develop skills is not the same. This presentation aims to demonstrate how socioeconomic status can affect the motivation to learn EFL and consequently the academic performance of students from at-risk schools. These socioeconomic differences play an important role in the opportunities (specifically, in the EFL subject) available for high and low-socioeconomic-class students, the causes and consequences of low motivation, as well as suggestions regarding the decisions in the classroom that we can make as teachers to engage students in this process and make it a positive experience.

Panel J
KC 2266

Trauma and Its Consequences

Facilitators: Dr. Pengtong Qu &
Dr. Robert Rozema

Bailey Barrett
'The Importance of Trauma-Informed Teaching'

Trauma-Informed Teaching is on the rise within school systems because educators are coming to the realization that trauma seeps into the classroom environment daily. A study conducted by the CDC showed out of 144,000 adults, 61% faced a traumatic experience between the ages 0 and 17 (CDC: Adverse Childhood Experiences). In my presentation, I will introduce trauma and its effects on the brain and learning. When a student is facing or processing trauma, the brains' functioning and processing are altered, making it hard for children to learn or process new information.

Additionally, I will present what educators can do to support students who may be experiencing trauma, such as the classroom setup, Trauma-Informed literature, and possible early intervention strategies. Through Trauma-Informed Teaching, students will benefit from increased social skills, decision-making strategies, and overall health. Educators will benefit by having teaching practices to equip students for success and resilience, which results in a supportive classroom environment suited for learning.

Charlotte Jewett
**‘The Impacts of Death
on the Childhood
Experience’**

Death, loss, and grief can be incredibly difficult curveballs of life, and any involved individual can be affected differently. Entangled children can be significantly impacted or even completely scared during the process. The bulk of people can be negatively affected, but a minuscule group can grow to become better individuals during the process. This research essay will explore the many effects of traumatic deaths on children by looking at the multiple everlasting negative and positive influences these life events can endure. Children’s emotions will also be examined under a microscope to see their developmental patterns and how they can affect the ways they go through their grief journey. Two children’s books will be focused on in this paper. These works of fiction highlight the various traumas and psychological, emotional, and physical effects on a child’s psyche and life. They are *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* by Kate DiCamillo and *The War That Saved My Life* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley.

Hannah Dennes
**‘Illuminating Death
in Education’**

When you first read the word *death* your heart might suddenly drop. It is a difficult topic, but why? Death affects everyone and is seen as the great equalizer in many different cultures, yet most people shiver when they hear the word. Death, dying, and grief are all crucial concepts that should be taught more often in schools across the United States. Conversing and learning about death and dying can also ease future grief. When topics are not discussed, students cannot prepare for the future of the inevitable. Through readings and novels like *Looking for Alaska* and *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green, teachers can begin the conversation surrounding death sooner rather than later. Throughout this presentation, several questions will be examined such as: Why should we teach about death, how should we teach about death, how soon is

too soon, as well as how can Green's books help us understand conceptualizing and teaching about death, dying, and grief? Ultimately, research suggests that teaching concepts related to death, specifically through means of reading, can be more beneficial to students than omitting the conversation and avoiding the word.

**Honoring Student
Writing in the
Persuasive and
Personal Essay,
Poetry, Fiction,
& Drama
Held in Conjunction
with the Departments
of Classics &
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 (104A 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

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2023.

**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

Applications deadline is TBA, Winter 2023.

**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

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2023.

**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 varies.

Application deadline is TBA, Winter 2023.

**Robert Franciosi
American Literature
Scholarship
A Scholarship
Created to Assist
English Majors who
Express Interest in
American Literature**

The Robert Franciosi American Literature Scholarship is awarded annually at the English Department Awards Ceremony held in April.

Eligibility

- Applicants must be accepted for or currently enrolled at Grand Valley State University;
- Applicants must be an undergraduate junior or senior enrolled full-time or part-time with a major in English with Language & Literature or Secondary Education emphasis;
- Applicants must be a resident of Michigan;
- Applicants must have completed 30 credit hours at GVSU with a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA;
- Applicants must be meeting satisfactory academic progress (<https://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/satisfactory-academic-progress-sap-17.htm>).

Supplemental Questions

- Please describe in 1,000 words or less your experience studying American Literature and why you feel it has been valuable.

Preference will be given to students who demonstrate an interest in American Literature.

Financial need may be considered and will be demonstrated by the completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Applications Requirements:

Applications must be submitted online at:
www.gvsu.edu/scholarships
Application deadline is March 3, 2023.

Austreng, Ashley — 13	Jewett, Charlotte — 17
Barrett, Bailey — 16	Kirtland, Mikayla — 15
Beachum, Alyx — 10	Lyday, Emily — 8
Benson, Jamie — 12	Navarro Moreira, Catalina — 14
Berg, Kenadee — 9	Nixon, Claire — 5
Briske, Eliana — 11	Ocampo, Daniel — 15
Davis, Faith — 6	Rampenthal, Amanda — 9
Dennes, Hannah — 17	Smith, Taylor — 5
DePlaunty, Luke — 13	Sobaski, Jenna — 11
Gaete Muñoz, Vanesa — 9	Torres, Alyssa — 11
Ghysels, Elarie — 6	Turner, Haley — 4
Harwell, Taryn — 8	Valeria Alvarez, Camila — 16
Hernandez, TeAnna — 7	Wright, Megan — 7
Hinken, Hailey — 6	Zuerner-Gumro, Taylor — 14
Hylen, Andrew — 4	