

*No sound, no proclamation, no delight  
Of haunting prophecy came, no hurricane swirled.  
But at the morn the earth was strange, a blur, white.*  
—Nan Shepherd, “Snow”

# English Department Capstone Conference



# ENG 495

## *Capstone Conference*

**8 December 2023**

**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.

*Panel A*

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

*Panels B, C & D*

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

*Panels E, F & G*

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

*Panels H & I*

## 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 2266****Teaching on the Margin**

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &  
Dr. Brian White

**Diana DeYoung**  
**‘LGBT Students in the**  
**Classroom: Providing a**  
**Culturally-Relevant**  
**Pedagogy of Care’**

Students of all types deserve an education that is equitable, safe, and caring. LGBT students face higher risks of bullying, suicide, and are less likely to do well in school due to such effects. However, two pedagogical approaches, the pedagogy of care and culturally relevant pedagogy, can support LGBT students and reduce these events. Through this paper, I will explore more in depth why LGBT students specifically need these pedagogies and how to enact them in an English classroom. Providing LGBT literature and a place to write and work through how students feel are ways that the English classroom can support LGBT students, as I will highlight through these pedagogies.

**Jacquelin Veldink**  
**‘Moving Beyond the**  
**“Piñata Curriculum”**  
**with Multicultural**  
**Literature’**

Each week, stories arise in the news of altercations, issues, and disagreements surrounding racial, ethnic, and cultural differences. Though technology has been erasing the boundaries of our world, people continue to struggle to connect across cultural lines and understand diverse perspectives. The shallowness of the commonly used “Piñata Curriculum,” labeled by Diane M. Hoffman, continues to shy away from hot-button sociopolitical themes within multicultural literature. The avoidance of difficult questions offers a disservice to students, threatening to perpetuate cultural division. This thesis argues that sociopolitical topics should be explored, tactfully, through multicultural literature to engage students with deep consideration of sensitive, yet societally relevant issues. It outlines how aesthetic reading of authentically represented, sincere multicultural literature, blended with classroom discourse can yield personal reflection and transformation among a range of ethnically diverse students.

**Claire Budzol**  
**‘Closing the Achievement**  
**Gap for Black Students’**

The classroom needs to be a place where students can feel comfortable and not be judged. Black students receive disproportionate treatment when compared to White students. So often Black students are



overlooked and mistreated. However, there are factors that are limiting students to succeed. The achievement gap started early on in America's history and has traveled its way into the classroom. This thesis will go through the reasoning of why funding, quality mentor support services, and culturally relevant curriculum is crucial for students' academic success, as well as showing how equality overrules quality. With the help of references from *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, I will argue the importance of closing the achievement gap in the classroom.

## 11 a.m. SESSION TWO

### Panel B KC 2259

### Analyzing Neverland & Happily Ever After

Facilitators: Dr. Rachel Anderson &  
Dr. Sherry Johnson

#### **Michaela Christie** **“And Thus It Will Go** **On”: Peter Pan’s** **Continued Influence** **on Children’s Theater** **& Literature’**

J. M. Barrie introduced Peter Pan to the world in his fictionalized autobiography *The Little White Bird* (1902), but his appearance on stage captured audiences in *Peter Pan* or *The Boy Who Would Not Grow Up* (1904). Barrie's story of the boy who wouldn't grow up has received praise and criticism for its unique approach to childhood. The influence of Peter Pan can also be seen through various film, stage, and literary adaptations. In this paper, I will analyze select reinterpretations of Barrie's original story. These adaptations reexamine the themes of gender and the relationship between adult and child first presented by Barrie, as well as contemporary perspectives of these themes. These ideas are thrown into relief in the dramatic methods pioneered by Barrie which have translated into modern adaptations and throughout children's literature and theater.

#### **Audrey Schatz** **“They Have Always** **Been Strong”: Female** **Portrayal in Peter Pan’**

For as long as Peter Pan has existed, there have been countless adaptations of his story and research about his character. However, Peter is nothing without the women who support him. Despite the significance of Wendy and Tinker Bell, the research is limited to their relationship with men. In this regard, they have not always been considered strong characters. This idea cannot be further from the truth. Wendy and Tinker Bell have always been strong. They are more than their

relationships. Their strength can be traced across time, starting with the original text, through the animated Disney film, into the early 2000s with the live-action adaptation, and coming full circle with a Disney reboot released in April 2023. In my thesis, I analyze and examine these adaptations of J. M. Barrie's classic work with a specific focus on the strength that Wendy and Tinker Bell have always possessed.

**Haley Schultz**  
**'Behind the Castle Walls: Mental Health, Societal Stigmas, and Disney Princess Magic'**

For as long as time, fairy tales have been a prevalent part of literature and entertainment for young audiences across cultures. Fairy tales use imaginary characters, exciting adventures, and happy endings to appeal to younger generations. While the development of a princess and what embodies the role of a princess came to life through the genre of fairy tales, it has unconsciously created a negative connotation on young readers today. Through the historical analysis of what makes a princess, popular creators such as Walt Disney started to emphasize the development of princesses as main characters and role models within stories and films. Because of his growing success, we now have discovered the "Disney Princess Phenomenon" as a method to look at the societal standards the princesses demonstrate to young girls specifically. However, the negative impact of these standards may create mental health issues for readers over time.

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**Panel C**  
**KC 2266**

**Instructing Reading & Writing**

Facilitators: Dr. Brian White &  
Dr. Shinian Wu

**Andreas Fields**  
**'Re-writing Instruction Using Mentor Texts'**

Writing can be an elusive skill for students, which leads many to declare outright that they are "bad writers." Students' writing skills can be enhanced through stronger reading strategies, like using mentor texts. Educators and researchers have worked with mentor texts in English classrooms and have seen their impact on student writing. Mentor texts are carefully studied texts teachers use with students to introduce and familiarize them with certain writing strategies. When taught effectively, students gain concrete understanding of writing strategies deployed by authors and feel comfortable using them in their own writing. This essay details the best strategies for

selecting and teaching mentor texts and how this instruction energizes students, builds their confidence, and makes them better writers.

**Addison Bauer**  
**‘The Necessity for  
Narrative in Education’**

There are four major modes of writing taught at all education levels: persuasive, narrative, expository, and descriptive. In 1975, James Britton conducted research to find the frequency at which each mode of writing was taught in the classroom, a study that would later be replicated by Arthur Applebee in 1980. Both researchers found that narrative writing was nearly nonexistent in high school classrooms. Since then, teachers have continued to diminish the necessity for narrative writing in the classroom, finding value in other forms of writing, particularly argumentative and persuasive, that they believe better prepare students for life beyond high school. But narrative writing has been found to have numerous academic, professional, and health benefits for students who participate in creating this work. Because of the many benefits narrative writing provides for students, this thesis will argue for the promotion of narrative writing in education.

**Autumn Fritz**  
**‘#AliterateNoMore:  
How TikTok is Leading  
a Reading Revival’**

Aliteracy is taking our world by storm. From classrooms to workplaces, the act of reading is being avoided at all costs. And if it can no longer be tolerated in professional settings, all hope for recreational reading remaining a cherished pastime is lost. By purposefully choosing to negate reading from one's routine, the educational, career, mental, and social benefits that come along with it are lost. Educators and scholars alarmed by these repercussions have searched for explanations as to why aliterate behavior has become so prominent. While factors such as lack of choice and low social acceptability have been named principal, many have begun to point fingers at technology as addictions to screens take away from other pastimes. However, the social media app TikTok has the potential to flip the script and use what some have named a factor in reading's demise as a method to revive the reading world.

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**Panel D**  
**KC 2270**

**Growing Up in Fiction, Prose & Poetry**

Facilitators: Dr. David Álvarez &  
Roy Black



**Drew Pearson**  
**‘You’re On Your Own, Kid:  
The Bildungsroman  
and Representation  
from Alcott to Swift’**

The coming of age journey is as popular a genre as it is a meaningful experience to those who read and write about it. The Bildungsroman genre continues to expand as more unique and diverse voices contribute their stories. It’s a powerful source of representation that the songwriters of today recognize, implementing the genre into their lyricism. Among the modern lyricists developing the Bildungsroman through songwriting is the country/pop singer Taylor Swift. Her songs are a beloved source of representation for young girls, and many queer youths as well. Like Louisa May Alcott’s groundbreaking novel *Little Women*, Swift’s lyricism incorporates complex and diverse representations of girlhood through the lens of the coming of age experience.

**Cecelia Olson**  
**‘When You Can’t  
Protect Your Own:  
The White Trash  
Identity as an  
Ethnic Scapegoat’**

In American political discourse it is not uncommon for poverty, an economic issue, to be conflated with race. White Americans are often surrounded with the notion of being the privileged race in this country, and middle and upper class white Americans undoubtedly benefit from white privilege, but if millions of people within this privileged race also suffer from poverty on such a grand scale, America’s perception of the relationship between poverty and race should be called into question. The best place to examine this question is within memoirs such as JD Vance’s *Hillbilly Elegy* and Cassie Chambers’ *Hill Women*, both often described as “white trash narratives.” Through the analysis of these memoirs this paper will focus on how slurs like “white trash” and “hillbilly” have socio-historically evolved into an ethnic identity and in some circumstances acts as an ethnic scapegoat for crushing generational poverty.

**Ian McGuckin**  
**“‘Something Was  
Always Burning”:  
Redefining Violence in  
Ocean Vuong’s *Night  
Sky with Exit Wounds*’**

Ocean Vuong has emerged as a prominent and powerful voice within American, Vietnamese-American, and refugee literature within the past decade. Vuong’s first poetry collection, *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*, addresses their familial trauma from the Vietnamese-American War, negotiating identity within the margins of stanzas and beyond the margins of nationality, gender, and language. In reading for this liminality of identity in Vuong’s poetry, we find a space where traumatic events are (re)remembered and redefined, challenging and queering dominant constructions of temporality, memory, and history in the process. This paper will embrace a decolonial

queer perspective and draw on the field of critical refugee studies to argue that Vuong's poetry queers the lines between creation and destruction, violence and intimacy in order to invest traumatic pasts with a creative force that allows Vietnamese-Americans, queer individuals, and refugees to be redefined and remembered with beauty.

**12 p.m.**

## **SESSION THREE**

### **Panel E KC 2259**

### **Promoting Classroom Awareness**

Facilitators: Dr. Dan Brown &  
Dr. Sarah Williams

**Jessica Lytle**  
**'Cultivating Inclusivity  
and Empathy:  
Teaching *The Circuit*  
through Culturally  
Responsive Pedagogy'**

This thesis explores various pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Francisco Jiménez's *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, an autobiographical young adult novel, through a culturally responsive framework. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) relies heavily on students' diverse experiences and focuses on using such experiences to nurture cultural competency and academic achievement. Today, educators are faced with the challenge of catering to a diverse population of students who have unique strengths and needs and must be prepared to work with students in a way that responds appropriately in a cultural context. With a rapidly increasing English Language Learner (ELL) population in mainstream classrooms, many teachers do not feel adequately prepared to adapt their lessons properly to aid such students who may need additional support. This paper further analyzes specific pedagogical methods to supplement instruction with a focused scope on Spanish L1 students' strengths and challenges.

**Katelyn Toner**  
**'Empowering  
Elementary Minds:  
Promoting Social and  
Emotional Learning in  
Young Students'**

In the past five years, mental health awareness has escalated tremendously. As of 2021, an estimated 22.8% of adults and 16.5% of children had experienced mental illness in their life. Likewise, an increase in disruptive, oppositional, and inattentive behavior within the classroom has left many teachers feeling like they are drowning, with little to no support from their district. Seventy percent of general classroom teachers have reported a significant increase

in misbehavior following the COVID-19 pandemic. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), although a relatively new concept, has helped raise mental health awareness schoolwide and promotes constructive behavioral management techniques within the classroom. This teaching approach emphasizes the importance of fostering healthy and positive relationships with peers, teachers, and family members, while also fostering self-awareness, particularly concerning emotions or feelings. This paper demonstrates what an effective Social and Emotional lesson entails and delves into four children's books that promote Social and Emotional ideologies.

**Jennifer Rountree**  
**'Nostalgia and**  
**Nationalism: Modern**  
**American Book**  
**Banning and K-12**  
**Pedagogy'**

During the 2022-23 US school year, 1,557 works were removed from schools and libraries due to book banning campaigns throughout the United States. This 33% increase over the previous school year should be a cause for alarm for English teachers and free speech advocates who consider the written word to be hallowed ground protected by the first amendment of the United States (PEN America). At the national level, schools have been working to increase the use of inclusive texts to expand representation of American citizens and to enrich the story of our country in almost all areas of education. Opponents to multicultural literacy, parent groups and special interest groups alike, have weaponized American nationalism and nostalgia to remove works from schools and libraries that are believed to be a threat to the concept of American childhood to the national identity of America itself.

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

**Dissecting Dystopian Dilemmas**

Facilitators: Dr. Corinna McLeod &  
Dr. Rob Rozema

**Isabelle England**  
**'Reframing Reader's**  
**Lives through YA**  
**Dystopian Literature'**

In 2020, as death quite literally stared many in the face, instead of trying to get away from the depressing topics flooding the news, the public immersed themselves in dystopian media with the same central themes. This connection might lead some to think about why people turned to dystopian literature at a time when the real world felt more dystopian than

ever. For this presentation I will be using primarily *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins to demonstrate the common features of the dystopian literature genre and why these features make it such a popular genre with young adults. I will then explore and discuss how these common dystopian features help young adult readers to reframe their self-identity, their own thoughts on morality and how they confront death and mortality within their lives.

**Makayla Pranger**  
**‘False Thinking as a  
Dangerous Lifepath:  
Peering into *The  
Handmaid’s Tale*’**

Gilead, the fictional world in Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*, is a harsh and extreme depiction of a totalitarian society. The ideology that imprisons the futuristic America may seem far-fetched in its ability to exert control over a large population. Many think that the people of Gilead must have been unknowingly coerced, manipulated, and brainwashed. What patterns of thinking allowed them to be manipulated, their freedom revoked? False consciousness will be explored to demonstrate the state of thinking that many people find themselves in, their lack of awareness driven forth by the powerful’s ideology, cementing beliefs in the rest of society so that they may limit the masses’ methods of reasoning. The microcosm of Gilead emulates the environment that America could become: one where power structures create an illusion to feed their agenda of control if careful, critical thinking is not exercised and false consciousness is not broken.

**Haley Turner**  
**‘Fire is Catching: The  
Rise of Dystopian  
Literature and What It  
Means for our Future’**

Dystopian young adult literature has seen an unprecedented rise in popularity since the start of the twenty-first century. Due to rapidly advancing technology, growing political unrest, and the looming issue of climate change, the prospect of a dystopian society has become more and more reflective of what our future may hold. These stories that outline grim imagined futures have drawn in young readers with their protagonists’ courage and refusal to sit idly by as the world burns. The characters’ continual fight for justice within dystopian literature has inspired many young readers to take action to prevent these stories from becoming our reality. In this presentation I will focus on *The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins and discuss how reading stories such as these shape young readers’ way of thinking about the world and encourage them to advocate for change.

**Mason DeBruler**  
**‘Reflecting on Your**  
**(Un)Reality: Revealing**  
**Detached Realities**  
**through Narrative**  
**Introspection’**

This thesis investigates how introspection, specifically as reflection on the past, is used by the narrators of *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro and *Age of Iron* by J. M. Coetzee to uncover and/or justify their personal worldviews. Mr. Stevens and Mrs. Curren—the narrators of *The Remains of the Day* and *Age of Iron* respectively—having existed in times of great violence and nearing the end of their lives, reflect on how they’ve confronted and contended with their personal beliefs, relationships, and outward society throughout their lives. Examined through analysis of psychological theories, historical context, and writing style, this literary study finds that the two narrators, both having lived in very similar circumstances, use introspection to recognize that they have employed false perceptions—Mr. Stevens through repression and Mrs. Curren through ignorance—to detach themselves from their actual reality and avoid facing unpleasant truths.

**Libby Bowen**  
**“‘Book Boyfriends” Do**  
**It Better: The Popular**  
**Romance Novel and**  
**Women’s Sexual**  
**Empowerment’**

The popular romance novel receives abundant criticism for its frequent inclusion of erotic content. For scholarly critics, it is the nature of sexual scenarios often described in romance which some find potentially harmful for the genre’s women readers; for the American public, however, it is the mere presence of explicit sexual material which provokes backlash. I will explore why U.S. society deems erotic literature so unacceptable—particularly within a genre predominantly consumed by women—and address various concerns and arguments presented in scholarly critiques of the genre. Ultimately, I contend the popular romance novel works as a vehicle for women’s empowerment and encourages their sexual liberation, as the romance genre reverses traditional sexual scripts to favor the female experience, cultivating a fictional environment in which women’s physical and emotional desires are paramount.

**Isabella Gielniak**  
**“Does This Book Make  
Me Look Fat?”:  
The Evolution of  
Insufferable Fat  
Characters in Young  
Adult Literature’**

As young adult literature (YAL) has evolved over the last few decades, themes are becoming nuanced and inclusive to accommodate diversifying generations. Characters in YAL have subsequently become more authentic. However, research over the last couple decades indicates that among the increasing representation among identities, fat young women in YAL remain mostly two-dimensional. This thesis argues that although significant strides have been made in YAL as it follows the body neutrality movement, there is still room for improvement. This thesis analyzes novels that contain fat young women throughout the evolution of YAL to determine how much improvement is needed for equitable and accurate representation of larger bodies for young adult audiences.

**1 p.m.**

**SESSION FOUR**

**Panel H**  
**KC 2266**

**Seeing & Transforming Spaces**

Facilitators: Roy Black &  
Dr. Corinna McLeod

**Mickenzie Atkins**  
**‘The Double-Edged  
Sword of Gendered  
Gazes: Negative  
Influence and  
Empowerment  
Potential’**

Since the first explorations of gender studies, the concept of a nuanced gendered gaze has emerged at the forefront of many feminist theories. This thesis will critically examine the male and female gazes, considering the potential capacity of both gendered gazes to reinforce power dynamics and harmful stereotypes. It is considered that adverse effects of traditional gender norms emerge thusly in media, societal expectations, and interpersonal dynamics. However, the research also uncovers the use of the female gaze as a powerful tool and counter-narrative in the correct context of fostering a more egalitarian lens. Informed by examples from art and media, the study underscores the dual nature of the gendered gaze—capable of reinforcing harmful norms yet also serving as a catalyst for societal transformation.

**Emma Kotwick**  
**‘Triumph of the Will:  
The Power of  
Persuasion’**

*Triumph of the Will*, a propagandist film directed by Leni Riefenstahl in 1935, wielded a powerful influence over the German public by strategically employing cinematic techniques to construct a distorted narrative of unity and power during the Nazi era. The film



showcased the 1934 Nazi Party Congress in Nuremberg, skillfully intertwining political messaging with compelling visuals. Through glorifying Adolf Hitler and meticulously portraying a harmonious and disciplined society, Riefenstahl created a potent emotional connection, tapping into the nationalistic sentiments of the German population. The film's artful manipulation of imagery and sound conveyed political ideals and worked subconsciously, fostering a sense of collective identity and unquestioning loyalty among the viewers. *Triumph of the Will* exemplifies how propaganda, when seamlessly integrated with aesthetic appeal, can mold public perception and contribute to the success of authoritarian ideologies.

**Madeline Kelly**  
**'Adapting a Ghost:**  
**Archie Kennedy as**  
**Intermedial Palimpsest**  
**in *Hornblower*'**

C. S. Forester's (1899–1966) *Horatio Hornblower* series is an eleven-part literary epic published in the mid-twentieth century cataloging the Napoleonic-era naval exploits of the titular English sailor. This book series garnered a limited television film adaptation during the late nineties, covering the first three volumes. Though conventional wisdom holds that film adaptations of literature are innately of lesser intrinsic value than their original counterparts, this paper contends that the film's revision and inclusion of Hornblower's shipmate, Archie Kennedy—analyzed through lenses of adaptation theory, narrative theory, and queer theory—creates a fascinating dialogue between the media's two forms and gives new meaning to the function of this character within the larger plot of the television adaptation.

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**Panel I**  
**KC 2270**

**Considering Our Social Consciousness**

Facilitators: Dr. Lindsay Ellis &  
Dr. Sarah Williams

**Jenna Bovid**  
**'Forty-Nine Years of an**  
**Ambiguous Utopia:**  
**The Continued**  
**Relevance of *The***  
***Dispossessed*'**

Ursula K. Le Guin's 1974 novel *The Dispossessed* is a work of science fiction centering around the physicist protagonist Shevek, a man who transfers from his anarchist moon colony to the planet his society cut itself off from. Although the two worlds are framed as ideological opposites, separated by law and nationalistic pride, Shevek's journey shows that boundaries are ultimately an illusion. The novel was well received upon publication for its socially-conscious

storytelling and hard-hitting political commentary. Its ideas about the dangers of capitalism, the idealism of anarchism, and what ultimately makes a society a dystopia were informed by the contemporary social events and political revolutions of the twentieth century. I will argue that *The Dispossessed* and its prequel story, “The Day Before The Revolution,” are still necessary today. Their themes not only remain relevant, but can be read and interpreted in new ways that reflect the current political and social climate.

**Edmund Butler-Loring**  
**‘Biting Back: Using  
Insect Horror to Fight  
Species Decline and  
Climate Change’**

From the “Big Bug” horror films of the 1950s to modern insect-driven body horror media such as the David Cronenberg 1986 film, *The Fly*, instances of insect-based horror are reflective of the collective fears of members of society. Today, one of the largest threats to humans, the environment, and insects is climate change. Climate change and further destruction of habitats could become detrimental to insect populations in the near future. The outcome of climate change is dependent on our actions today, and insect-horror fiction will be instrumental in assisting society to address the negative impacts of climate change. These stories that make our skin crawl can promote a greater appreciation for insect species regardless of their societal popularity. However, if the effects of climate change become irreversible, insect-horror fiction will guide us through our unfamiliar reality toward acceptance and understanding of our newfound dystopian world.

**Emma Young**  
**‘An Investigation  
Regarding the  
Impending Extinction  
of Migratory Bird  
Species in *Migrations*,  
by Charlotte  
McConaghy’**

This paper focuses on the looming extinctions of migratory bird species. It looks at the issue through the lens of literature, specifically the portrayal of mass extinctions in the novel *Migrations*, by Charlotte McConaghy. This paper delves into factors contributing to extinction, migration facts, patterns, and symbolism, the human relationship with the environment, and the spirit of the bird in literature. The argument is structured around the idea that main character Franny’s view of the natural world reminds the reader to reconnect with nature. It’s about finding empathy and coping with loss to move towards a better future than the setting of *Migrations*, which shows the disastrous consequences of anthropocentrism and pollutive or extractive practices.

**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 \$100, second-place prizes of \$75, and third-place prizes of \$50 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, 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 entry itself.
- Entries are submitted via the English Department website.

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.

**The Robert C.  
Chamberlain  
Scholarship**

**A Tuition Scholarship  
for Junior English  
Majors**

**Demonstrating  
Excellence in Writing**

**Eligibility Requirements**

- Students must be English majors;
- Students must have Junior status;
- Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA;
- Students must be full time;
- 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.

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

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

**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**

Each student must submit:

- An essay of up to 1000 words explaining why the applicant chose to major in English.

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

**Eligibility Requirements**

- 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.

**Application Requirements**

Each student must provide responses to the following question/statement:

- Are you the first person in your immediate family to pursue a college degree (neither parent/guardian(s) has a four-year degree)?
- 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.

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

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

**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.

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

**Eligibility Requirements**

- 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>).
- 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).

**Application Requirements**

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



Atkins, Mickenzie — 13  
Bauer, Addison — 7  
Bovid, Jenna — 14  
Bowen, Libby — 12  
Budzol, Claire — 4  
Butler-Loring, Edmund — 15  
Christie, Michaela — 5  
DeBruler, Mason — 12  
DeYoung, Diana — 4  
England, Isabelle — 10  
Fields, Andreas — 6  
Fritz, Autumn — 7  
Gielniak, Isabella — 13  
Kelly, Madeline — 14  
Kotwick, Emma — 13  
Lytle, Jessica — 9  
McGuckin, Ian — 8  
Olson, Cecelia — 8  
Pearson, Drew — 8  
Pranger, Makayla — 11  
Rountree, Jennifer — 10  
Schatz, Audrey — 5  
Schultz, Haley — 6  
Toner, Katelyn — 9  
Turner, Haley — 11  
Veldink, Jacquelin — 4  
Young, Emma — 15