

2017 Belmont Undergraduate Research Symposium

English II

Moderator: Sue Trout

April 20, 2017

7:00-8:00 p.m. -- JAAC 2140

Flipping the Literature Classroom: Alternative “Ways of Knowing” Literature

Ashley Sanders, Ryland Close, Rachel Petty, Lindsay Hunnicutt

Faculty Advisor: Professor Sue Trout

One of the essential goals of teaching an upper level literature course is to get students to do close reading and interpretation of text. Traditionally this is accomplished by having students survey secondary scholarship on a novel and then craft an extended critical argument in the form of the literary critical essay. This panel will offer alternative ways of writing about literature that not only encourage close reading and critical writing, but also introduce students to research methods that consider text from inception through reception. Students engage in the cultural poetics of a novel by researching how a text comes to be, how it was received at the time of publication, how literary critics interpret the same text through time, and how the cultural, historical, and literary references within text create multiple levels of interpretation. This panel was formed out of the Belmont’s Fall 2016 American Postmodern Novels course, and members of the panel will present research and evaluations formed throughout the semester on specific texts. Ashley Sanders will analyze the inception and creation of Nabokov’s *Lolita* with an origin study. Ryland Close will evaluate the original reviews and canonization of Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse-Five* through reception study. Rachel Petty will unveil the multiple layers of meaning of Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49* through annotations, and Lindsay Hunnicutt will reveal how to enter the critical conversation about interpreting Morrison’s *Beloved* through annotated bibliography.

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Why Beginnings Matter

Ashley Sanders

Faculty Advisor: Sue Trout

An origin study explores the genesis of a literary work– from the author’s initial idea through composition, revision, and publication. This assignment requires extensive primary research in

biographies, autobiographies, authors' letters, and interviews. Studies on the novel itself – book length studies, scholarly articles on the origin of the novel, and annotated versions of the novel are also quite useful in piecing together a novel's beginnings.

A consideration of the genesis of Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* provides not only insight into Nabokov's process of writing, it also reveals a richer understanding of the text, authorial intent, and cultural context for one of the nation's most controversial texts.

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Time Traveling: A Reception Study of Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five*

Ryland Close

Faculty Advisor: Sue Trout

A critical reception study explores how a novel was received by literary and popular critics at the time of its publication. This assignment requires extensive primary research of book reviews written in journals and magazines at the time of a novel's original publication. An examination of the critical reception of a novel allows students to not only understand how a novel was evaluated upon its appearance, but also gives students insight into its future acceptance or rejection into an established literary canon. In addition, initial reception establishes the extent to which original book reviews guide future critical discussion of a novel.

An examination of the critical reception of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* provides valuable insight into the cultural environment of the late nineteen sixties as well as the lens through which critics of the time were reading literature. Such insight into Vonnegut's novel yields an interesting understanding of World War II war fiction, the development of science fiction as a genre, and the progression of postmodern theory.

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Making Your Way Through the Labyrinth

Rachel Petty

Faculty Advisor: Sue Trout

Annotations help readers identify references and allusions that authors employ within their texts. Identifying these references can help readers understand the author's influences, intentions, and multiple layers of meaning within a text. Each annotation contains an identification of the reference or allusion, followed by a scholarly interpretation of that reference within the context of the work. Annotations on a novel require a survey of secondary

historical, cultural, and literary criticism and the ability to convey how this research illuminates the sometimes hidden meaning of text.

A set of annotations focused on the main character of Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* reveals the uncertain nature of Oedipa's journey, helps readers grasp the abstract scientific concepts throughout the novel, and illustrates how, in a perfectly postmodern way, Pynchon both works within and playfully subverts traditional literary and mythical traditions.

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Entering the Conversation Through Annotated Bibliography

Lindsay Hunnicutt

Faculty Advisor: Sue Trout

An Annotated Bibliography summarizes and evaluates secondary sources on a literary work. As an alternate way of writing about literature, the writer's job is twofold: to locate and identify the primary and definitive scholarship on a text through databases and scholarly journals, and then to specifically summarize substantive critical articles about a particular work by the author. The research gives the student a deeper understanding of how critics have interpreted a novel over time. More importantly, this research allows a student to survey and subsequently enter the critical conversation surrounding a novel, and to better understand how the critical conversation reflects contemporary literary theory as it progresses over time.

An annotated bibliography of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* reveals how this extraordinary novel was received, how it utilizes and expands the tropes of African American literature and culture, and how it reflects and reveals postmodern experimentation.