

Towson University

How Popular Culture Can Help Bridge the Achievement Gap

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Division of Liberal Arts
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Global Humanities Program

by

Aubrey Zinn

Towson, Maryland

May 2018

**TOWSON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

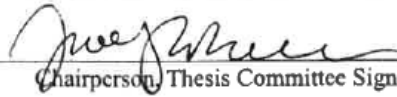
This is to certify that the Thesis is prepared by:

Aubrey Zinn

Entitled:

How Popular Culture Can Help Bridge the Achievement Gap

Has been approved by the thesis committee as satisfactory completing the thesis requirements for
the degree: **Master of Arts** (i.e., Doctor of Science)



Chairperson, Thesis Committee Signature

Dr. Jennifer Ballenger

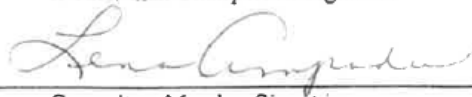
Type Name

5/3/18
Date

Thesis Advisor,
If other than Chairperson Signature

Type Name

Date



Committee Member Signature

Dr. Lena Ampadu

Type Name

5/3/18
Date

Committee Member Signature

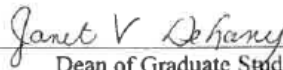
Type Name

Date

Committee Member Signature

Type Name

Date



Dean of Graduate Studies

Dr. Janet V. Delany

Type Name

5-8-18
Date

Contents

Thesis Approval Form	page ii
Table of Contents	page iii
Chapter 1: Why Popular Culture Belongs in College Curricula	page 1
A) The Problem: The College Preparation Gap Is the Achievement Gap in Disguise	
B) The Solution: Popular Culture Can Help Bridge the Gap	
Chapter 2: Literature Review	page 20
A) Theory	
B) Best Practices	
Chapter 3: Course Template	page 38
A) Short Fiction	
B) Drama	
C) Poetry	
D) Results and Next Steps	
Appendix A: Syllabus	page 58
Appendix B: Course Documents	page 72
Bibliography	page 86
Curriculum Vitae	page 97

Chapter 1

Why Popular Culture Belongs in College Curricula

The American education system has innumerable problems: safety, standards, class size, infrastructure, teacher retention, and student retention are just a few. Floating betwixt and between these problems is the multi-faceted obstacle called the achievement gap. First recognized in 1966, the achievement gap generally refers to the educational disparity between white and/or privileged student populations and minority and/or underserved student populations. This disparity can be evident in education resources, student performance, or both. This disparity can occur in K-12 education, higher education, or both.

Unfortunately, data tells us that in the last half century the U.S. has not made much progress in eliminating the achievement gap. According to the Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis, although the gaps have narrowed since the 1970s, “the gaps are still very large, ranging from 0.5 to 0.9 standard deviations.”¹ These gaps are further complicated because they are linked to several causes: socioeconomic disparity, early childhood education quality, public school quality, segregation, and public policies.² Perhaps the best course of action moving forward, then, is to forge a bridge over it.

¹ Stanford CEPA, “Racial and Ethnic Achievement Gaps,” *Educational Opportunity Monitoring Project*, Stanford University, <http://cepa.stanford.edu/educational-opportunity-monitoring-project/achievement-gaps/race/>. Accessed April 25, 2018.

² Ibid.

Across the board, research suggests that honing students' critical thinking skills will improve their performance. However, many students—even those who have been accepted into college—lack the proficiencies and, frankly, the interest to access the sophisticated texts that are traditionally used to foster critical thinking: *Beloved*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *Moby Dick*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, to name a few.³ A first step, then, has to be finding a middle ground: content that is challenging enough to advance critical thinking but not out of students' reach. Popular culture,⁴ the themes in which overwhelmingly overlap with traditional college-level texts, can be that middle ground. To this end, college curricula should embrace the popular culture that nontraditional learners are comfortable with and already enjoy to create a bridge between students' knowledge and advanced texts.

A) The Problem: The College Preparation Gap Is the Achievement Gap in Disguise

Students are fond of asking, “Why do I have to learn this?” And when they do, it is nice to give an answer that is not glib—one that imbues more than, “Because your grade depends on it.” However, answering, “Because it will help you get a job” might be met with eye rolls, too, when the subject is English,

³ Hopkins Public Schools, “Recommended Reading for College-Bound Students,” accessed March 26, 2018.

https://www.hopkinsschools.org/sites/default/files/public/downloads/college_reading_list.pdf . This list combines books from three sources: The College Board’s “101 Great Books Recommended for College-Bound Readers,” the National Council of Teachers of English “Recommended Reading for the College-Bound,” and Common Core.

⁴ I am using the term *popular culture* to refer to texts that pair most closely with complex literary texts in the genres of fiction, drama, and poetry: novels—including graphic novels—short fiction, television shows, movies, and music, but *not* to commercials, advertisements, or visual art.

foreign language, history, linguistics, classical studies, or philosophy, as many students see these majors—even these courses—as incidental to employment. The *real* answer—“Because it will help you think and learn”—is an abstract and undervalued concept in today’s conveyor-belt culture. Just this spring, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported that in reaction to a “\$4.5-million deficit and declining enrollment,” the University of Wisconsin wants to “shift” funding “from programs with lower enrollment, primarily in the traditional humanities and social sciences” to sixteen new programs in “‘high-demand career paths’ such as computer information systems, finance, and chemical engineering.”⁵ In February the University of Central Missouri announced its “proposal to eliminate the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences.”⁶

Critics rightfully worry that this is a slippery slope, as the complex texts students grapple with in humanities courses help them develop their critical thinking skills. Critical thinking refers to “interpreting and drawing conclusions” particularly in “complex texts.”⁷ Research reveals that undervaluing critical thinking in K-12 education has already set up a destructive chain of events: Many students who get into college cannot perform well enough to complete their degree programs. Data show that high school graduation rates have risen

⁵ Fernanda Zamudio-Suarez, “U. of Wisconsin at Stevens Point Proposes Cutting 13 Programs, Mostly in Liberal Arts,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2018, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/U-of-Wisconsin-at-Stevens/242745>.

⁶ Eric Kelderman, “Can Closing a Humanities College Save a University?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 13, 2018, accessed April 20, 2018, <https://chronicle.com/article/Can-Closing-a-Humanities/243113>.

⁷ Frey, Carol. “A Crash Course in College Preparedness,” *US News*, August 2016, 2010, accessed March 3, 2018. <https://www.usnews.com/education/articles/2010/08/16/a-crash-course-in-college-preparedness>.

“significantly” since 2005, and college enrollment is also “far higher;”⁸ however, the National Assessment of Educational Progress reports that only 37% of high school graduates are actually “prepared for college-level coursework.”⁹ ACT¹⁰ reports similar results.¹¹ The Fordham Institute dubs this phenomenon “the college preparation gap,”¹² and much of the research does focus on college success rates; however, it is important to note that the preparation gap also applies to students who enter the work force after high school. Says National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Governing Board Chair Terry Mazany, “A strong foundation in math and reading is essential to a student being prepared for college academics and for most careers, so this trend of stagnating scores is worrisome.”¹³

Because high school graduation and college acceptance rates have increased, it appears that we have struck a blow against the achievement gap, but skill deficits still lurk like a ticking time bomb, set to destroy student success in higher education or places of employment. One reason this gap exists is that

⁸ National Assessment Governing Board, “The Nation’s Report Card: 12th-Grade Scores Lower in Math, Steady in Reading Since 2013; 37 Percent of Students Are Academically Prepared for College,” *PR Newswire*, April 27, 2016. Accessed March 5, 2018. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-nations-report-card-12th-grade-scores-lower-in-math-steady-in-reading-since-2013-37-percent-of-students-are-academically-prepared-for-college-300258203.html> .

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ ACT is a non-profit organization focused on college and career readiness. They created the ACT college admissions test in 1959.

¹¹ ACT, “Underserved Learners Lag Behind Peers in College & Career Readiness According to 2017 ACT Score Results,” *ACT*, September 7, 2017. Accessed March 3, 2018. <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/newsroom/underserved-learners-behind-peers-in-college-career-readiness.html>

¹² Michael J. Petrilli and Chester E. Finn, Jr, “College preparedness over the years, according to NAEP,” *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*, April 8, 2015, Accessed March 3, 2018. <https://edexcellence.net/articles/college-preparedness-over-the-years-according-to-naep> .

¹³ National Assessment Governing Board, “The Nation’s Report Card.”

school culture has become powered by business rhetoric that has overtaken parents', students', and even schools' philosophies of education. Reformer Alfie Kohn characterizes the trend as "living in an age when education is described as an 'investment.'"¹⁴ Former Phi Beta Kappa Secretary John Churchill describes the impetus as the urgent desire to "make college 'pay off.'"¹⁵ A *New York Times* article claims that since the 2008 recession, many parents and students see college as not much more than "a tool for job preparation."¹⁶ This economic rationale began as far back as 1916, when Ellwood Cubberly, in a book called *Public School Administration*, argued that K-12 schools should be like factories "'in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life.'"¹⁷ This vision took hold. In 1997 Linda Darling-Hammond described how K-12 schools "literally resemble factories:"

the short segmented tasks stressing speed and neatness that predominate in most schools, the emphasis on rules from the important to the trivial, and the obsession with bells, schedules, and time clocks are all dug deep into the ethos of late-nineteenth-century America, when students were being prepared to work in factories on predetermined tasks that would not require them to figure out what to do.¹⁸

¹⁴ Alfie Kohn, "Students Don't 'Work'—They Learn," *Education Week*, September 3, 1997, Accessed December 2, 2015. <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/students-dont-work-learn/>.

¹⁵ "From the Secretary," *The Key Reporter*, Fall 2012, 2.

¹⁶ Tamar Lewin, "As Interest Fades in Humanities, Colleges Worry," *New York Times*, 30 October 2013, accessed December 5, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/education/as-interest-fades-in-the-humanities-colleges-worry.html?_r=0.

¹⁷ quoted in Alfie Kohn, "The 500-Pound Gorilla," *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 2002, accessed November 28, 2015. <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/500-pound-gorilla/>.

¹⁸ quoted in Kohn, "The 500-Pound Gorilla."

However, this assembly-line mentality does not jibe with the reality of higher education, where students in all majors are consistently asked to “make sense of, evaluate and write about complex information texts.”¹⁹

Moreover, the business model supports an incredibly narrow view of education. Education experts like Linda McNeil note, “‘Measurable outcomes may be the least significant results of learning’”²⁰ even though such outcomes are the focus of the business model. Kohn contrasts business jargon equating school to a student’s *job* with the actual *learning* that benefits them,²¹ the qualities of which he describes quite poetically as “a love of learning for its own sake, a penchant for asking challenging questions, a commitment to democratic participation in decision making.”²² These same qualities are echoed in Phi Beta Kappa’s National Arts and Sciences Initiative. In its action plan, the Initiative equates arts and sciences education with “well-rounded education” that helps learners “think critically” and be “better prepared to participate in our democracy and effect positive change” largely due to the fact that such breadth education fosters a “strong base of human understanding.”²³

If this broader vision of education still falls flat for students and their parents, then we can highlight feedback from businesses and colleges, the

¹⁹ SREB Community College Commission, “Community Colleges in the South: Strengthening Readiness and Pathways,” Southern Regional Education Board, February 2015: p. 11. file:///E:/commcollegecom_2015%20SREB.pdf.

²⁰ quoted in Kohn, “Students Don’t ‘Work’—They Learn.” Also quoted in this article, Hermine H. Marshall claims that academic achievement awards and “inducements” like honor roll “devalue” the “original act of learning.”

²¹ Kohn, “Students Don’t ‘Work’—They Learn.”

²² Kohn, “The 500-Pound Gorilla.”

²³ Phi Beta Kappa Society, “Make the Case: Six Reasons the Arts and Sciences are Key,” *National Arts and Sciences Initiative*, Phi Beta Kappa, Accessed December 2, 2015, toolkit.pbk.org/#

stakeholders who benefit from qualified high school graduates. Sixty-two percent of employers and 78% of college instructors polled in a 2015 Achieve, Inc. survey reported that U.S. high school graduates lack the skills necessary to do well at work or in college, respectively.²⁴ Of the employers in this group, 61% indicated that they request or require high school graduate employees to get additional education or training to make up for gaps in their ability to read, to write, or do mathematics. College instructors at both two- and four-year institutions report an increase in the number of students who do poorly or even fail due to their lack of skills.²⁵ The same Achieve study reveals that 47% of recent high school graduates themselves report at least some gaps in their preparation for college.

Specifically, critical thinking is a skill both employers and college instructors report students need to improve; employers rank it as the second most needed (the first was work/study habits), and instructors rank it first.²⁶ The rub is that even students who take “the right college prep classes” seem to lack these critical thinking skills.²⁷ The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education notes that many high school exit exams are really only testing “proficiency at the 8th- to 10th-grade levels.”²⁸ Ultimately, even students who took

²⁴ “Rising to the Challenge: College Instructors’ Views on High School Graduates’ Preparedness for College,” *Achieve*, July 22, 2015, accessed March 3, 2018.

<https://www.achieve.org/publications/rising-challenge-survey-ii-powerpoint>.

²⁵ Ibid. Compared to 2004 poll.

²⁶ Ibid. Other skills listed are writing, work and study habits, written communication, mathematics, comprehension of complicated materials, problem solving, science, verbal communication, conducting research, computer and technology skills, and working as part of a team.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and The Southern Regional Education Board, *Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy*, San Jose, CA: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010.

college-preparatory courses and “have done everything they were told to do to prepare for college find, after they arrive, that their new institution has deemed them unprepared.”²⁹ Bauerlein and Stotsky note that students are used to reading “more contemporary, shorter works” which are “less difficult”³⁰ even though more complex works, those rich in “literary devices” and “intricate language,” are what actually prepare students for college success, according to ACT.³¹

Certainly vertical alignment between high school and college programs is called for. It is helpful to have feedback from college instructors and employers about what skills high school graduates lack; however, it is overly simplistic to think that fixing this skill deficit is the job of K-12 teachers alone. In fact, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) notes that, because of their proximity, “Public schools need the direct support of community colleges to meet the immense readiness challenge. Community colleges need to lead in making more students ready for postsecondary education, especially in supporting systematic high school efforts to raise achievement in literacy and math skills.” One of the first steps the SREB recommends is that colleges, “Send specific, concrete messages about the literacy and math readiness skills needed” and “provide concrete, actual examples of first-year community college course work

Accessed November 30, 2015.

http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/index.shtml.Section II.

²⁹ Ibid., Section I.

³⁰ Mark Bauerlein and Sandra Stotsky. *How Common Core’s ELA Standards Place College Readiness at Risk*. White Paper no. 89. Boston: Pioneer Institute, 2013, p. 5. Accessed November 30, 2015.

<https://www.heartland.org/sites/default/files/commoncoreelastandards.pdf>.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 6-7. ACT is a non-profit organization focused on college and career readiness. They created the ACT college admissions test in 1959.

to high schools.”³² SREB President David Spence acknowledges that “higher education [needs to] speak with one voice on standards,” which is a reform goal that is set for 2020.³³

In the meantime, however, there remains a large population of academically at-risk college students who are already enrolled in colleges and universities across the nation. The Fordham Institute reports that “America’s college matriculation rate is up but its college completion rate is not: We’ve succeeded at motivating more young people to enroll, but we haven’t prepared them to succeed at it.”³⁴ Not only are more students matriculating after high school,³⁵ more nontraditional students are able to attend part time via relatively new flexible part-time programs and online courses.³⁶ According to Saunders, Brake, Griffiths, and Thornton, “Within the context of adult and continuing education, the emphasis is placed on widening the participation of underachieving learners.”³⁷ However, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education estimates that two-year and state colleges require 50 – 75% of their students to take remedial courses in reading, writing, and/or math.³⁸ Second, according to Bauerlein and Stotsky, many first-year remedial college students

³² SREB Community College Commission, p. 13.

³³ Frey

³⁴ Petrilli and Finn

³⁵ National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, section I.

³⁶ Danny Saunders, Mark Brake, Martin Griffiths, and Rosi Thornton. “Access, astronomy and science fiction: A case study in curriculum design.” *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (March 2004): 27. Accessed November 29, 2015. *MLA International Bibliography*. DOI: 10.1177/1469787404040458.27.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

³⁸ National Center for Policy and Higher Education and The Southern Regional Education Board, Section I.

drop out.³⁹ The organization Complete College America specifies that, of students who make it through remedial courses, only one-third to one-fourth go on to complete regular college-level English and math courses; of those who begin college in remedial classes, only one in ten actually graduates.⁴⁰

In this context, our educational system still has a definable *Other*: those whose limited academic skills subordinate them within the academic culture. While on the surface, matriculation data seems to suggest that our country has bridged the achievement gap, once students are enrolled in colleges (or are employed), it becomes clear that this gap still exists. Technically these students are not denied *access* to higher education; however, college remediation rates are high for this group. Worse, remediation does not seem to help much, as this group's dropout rates are also high.

Studies of the achievement gap began in 1966 with the Coleman Report on the Equality of Educational Opportunity, which was requested by the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In 2017, ACT reports that 46% of those who took the ACT were “underserved students,” i.e., those “who would be the first generation in their family to attend college, come from low-income families and/or self-identify their race/ethnicity as minority.”⁴¹ Alarming, only 9% to 26% of those students are deemed college -ready based on their ACT scores. This is disturbing. However, clearly more is at play than just students' races and socio-economic statuses,

³⁹ p. 4.

⁴⁰ Complete College America, “Remediation: Higher Education’s Bridge to Nowhere,” CCA, April 2012: 3, accessed December 5, 2015, https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/CCA%20Remediation%20ES%20FINAL.pdf.

⁴¹ ACT, “Underserved Learners Lag”

because overall, only 39% of the ACT's 2017 test-takers met three or four of the ACT's four College Readiness Benchmarks.⁴² The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGP) reports the same findings.⁴³

Educators and policy makers must consider the role that diminishing humanities programs play in the college preparation gap. In K-12 education, this means “plac[ing] greater emphasis on the skills students need to read complex texts across a range of disciplines.”⁴⁴ The SREB notes that “many K-12 systems” have made a step in the right direction by “adopt[ing] new literacy standards such as the Common Core State Standards . . . that are based on the deep and effective reading of complex information texts . . . and the ability to engage in expository writing that parallels the higher text complexity.”⁴⁵ However, the responsibility cannot end with K-12 educators. Consider what history professor Katherine Pickering Antonova writes:

Jobs are changing faster than people can train for them, and what college does best is teach people how to think and process information. Especially vital are a group of disciplines we should call the information sciences, a.k.a. the humanities, social sciences, library science, computer science and digital humanities . . . Identifying high-quality information (and knowing what makes it high-quality) and communicating complicated or abstract ideas from multiple perspectives are at least as important to our

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Petrilli and Finn

⁴⁴ SREB Community College Commission, p. 12.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

digital future as the STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) have been to the industrial age.⁴⁶

Since 1970, conferred humanities degrees have decreased by half.⁴⁷

Currently, the most popular degree programs are in STEM fields, and those are also the fields that receive the most federal funding.⁴⁸ Stanford professor Dan Edelstein quips, “‘It’s not cool to be a nerd . . . unless you’re a STEM nerd.’”⁴⁹ But humanities courses benefit all learners. According to Root-Bernstein et al.’s study, 510 Nobel Prize winners (from 1901 – 2005) have liberal arts avocations.⁵⁰ This connection is not coincidental; they write, “Current science curricula may need to be broadened . . . Purely academic skills are not sufficient to train a person for creative scientific work. . . . To train the best scientists may therefore require what is often called a ‘liberal arts education.’”⁵¹ STEM fields are important, to be sure, but Albert Einstein reported that being a *musician* helped him develop the Theory of Relativity, and Nobel Prize winning physicist William Phillips said, “The classes that emphasized language and writing skills were just

⁴⁶ “America needs the humanities more than ever. So why have we abandoned them?” *Washington Post*, September 18, 2017, accessed March 4, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/09/18/america-has-forgotten-the-value-of-the-humanities-at-the-moment-it-needs-them-most/?utm_term=.93159cd3f84b.

⁴⁷ Lewin. In 1970, 14% of all bachelor’s degrees were in humanities; in 2013, 7% were humanities degrees.

⁴⁸ Ibid. STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and math. These trends are noted by John Tresch, historian of science at the University of Pennsylvania.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Robert Root-Bernstein, et. al. “Arts Foster Scientific Success: Avocations of Nobel, National Academy, Royal Society, and Sigma Xi Members.” *Journal of Psychology of Science and Technology* 1, no. 2 (2008): 54. Accessed December 2, 2015. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/1035/arts-foster-scientific-success.pdf>.

⁵¹ Ibid., 60.

as important for the development of my scientific career as were science and math.”⁵² Even more essentially, Nobel Prize winning chemist Roald Hoffmann notices that the “language of science is inherently poetic,” and physicist Robert R. Wilson said, ““Human qualities are an important part of physics and give physics a quality of humanness.”⁵³ Wilson’s point about complement is important. Martin Heidegger cautioned against subordinating the human and focusing only on the scientific: “The approaching tide of technological revolution in the atomic age could so captivate, bewitch, dazzle, and beguile man that calculative thinking may someday come to be accepted and practiced *as the only* way of thinking.”⁵⁴

To be fair, most humanities advocates do not deny the importance of other fields. Churchill says, “Specialization is essential--that's where knowledge comes from.” However, to that he adds, “But specialization alone is insufficient. We have to be able to say how what we discover matters to anyone else. . . . Specialists should also be generalists, deep in something but broad and integrative in skills and interests. We believe in seeking wholeness and connection.”⁵⁵ It seems that lauded scientists agree. Now we need policy makers to catch up so that our students can catch up as well.

⁵² Ibid., 59.

⁵³ Ibid., 59 – 60.

⁵⁴ “Memorial Address,” *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, (New York: Harper, 1966): 56.

⁵⁵ Alex Silverman, “The Face of Phi Beta Kappa, John Churchill,” Phi Beta Kappa News, *The Key Reporter*, January 8, 2015, accessed November 30, 2015.
<https://keyreporter.org/PBKNews/PbkNews/Details/1280.html>.

B) The Solution: Popular Culture Can Help Bridge the Gap

One may argue that colleges and universities offer remedial courses, so they are already doing their part to bridge the achievement gap. Hypothetically, this may be true. However, the data shows that college retention rates for remedial students are low, so the system is clearly not working as well as it could. Although colleges and universities have to follow state and federal guidelines, they have greater curricular freedom than K-12 systems. This freedom is a gold mine because it allows college curricula to meet students where they are comfortable: within the realm of popular culture, which here refers to novels—including graphic novels—short fiction, television shows, movies, and music, but not to commercials, advertisements, or visual art.⁵⁶ Robin Redmon Wright notes that popular culture is “often much more accessible to our students than is academic discourse.”⁵⁷ Some institutions—George Mason University, Columbia College Chicago, University of Texas , San Antonio, and University of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, to name a few—already take advantage of the way popular culture can play a crucial role in reviving students’ skills;⁵⁸ in general, “people are ineluctably drawn to [popular culture’s] various forms—whether in music, cinema, TV, [or] radio.”⁵⁹ In fact, “the average adult watches four to five hours of TV per day,” and “the average American youth spends . . . 1,023 hours

⁵⁶ I am limiting the term *popular culture* in this way so that the popular works will pair easily with the traditional literature genres of fiction, drama, and poetry.

⁵⁷ “The Avengers, Public Pedagogy, and the Development of...” in *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media*, p. 70

⁵⁸ The institutions listed are those where researchers referenced in this paper—Hanley, Foote, Redmon Wright, Thompson, and Tisdell, respectively—teach.

⁵⁹ Talmadge C. Guy, “Learning Who We (and They) Are: Popular Culture as Pedagogy,” p. 16

watching TV every year.”⁶⁰ Why shouldn’t educators use students’ pastimes to their advantage? Literacy education expert Julie Hamston notes that “the pleasure that comes from engagement with a familiar, or comfortable, text” such as those from popular culture can allow readers to think about new ideas.⁶¹ In the classroom setting, those new ideas would involve linking popular culture to more complex texts. As Tisdell explains, “Using popular culture can serve as a bridge by drawing on everyday experiences of the pleasures and influences of media and connecting those experiences to theory.”⁶² Specifically, Stuckey and Kring examine how popular movies like *Brokeback Mountain*, *The Hours*, and *Crash* can “help students learn how to analyze the ways in which gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation [social relations] are portrayed.”⁶³ Such popular works can later be linked thematically or structurally to more traditional texts: In a literature classroom, these are often referred to as canonized or anthologized texts. Theoretically, students’ honed analytical skills will transfer. In addition to Stuckey and Kring, other researchers, such as Heuer and Wright, have come to this same general conclusion.

Popular culture can be misunderstood and underappreciated. Pop culture is sometimes associated with multicultural education, a movement rooted in the 1960s and that gained momentum in the 1970s. However, a multicultural angle too narrowly defines popular culture, which is strictly a product of time period.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 17

⁶¹ “Pleasurable Texts: Popular Culture in the Classroom.” *Screen Education*, no. 37, 2005: 108-113. *Education Research Complete*.

⁶² Elizabeth J. Tisdell, “Popular Culture and Critical Media Literacy in Adult Education: Theory and Practice,” in *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media*, p. 12.

⁶³ “Critical Media Literacy and Popular Film” in *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media*, p. 25.

Multiculturalism seeks to validate diverse voices, whereas popular culture simply acknowledges and examines those arts that exist during a specific time period.

Multiculturalism and popular culture may be correlated, but they are not the same.⁶⁴ This distinction is noteworthy because currency is particularly important to underserved students who sometimes come to college—particularly community colleges—“distrustful, not understanding the relevance of classwork to their out-of-school lives.”⁶⁵ Popular texts can acclimate these learners because they widen literacy to include “social practice[s] intimately interwoven with the learners’ culture, community, and history.”⁶⁶

Many who write on the topic of popular culture highlight that the themes it espouses link to themes espoused in canonized literature.⁶⁷ For example, Hanley discusses how hip hop music can help introduce themes about capitalist wealth, poverty, the American Dream, crime, urban warfare, misogyny, violence, and drugs.⁶⁸ In his treatise *The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories*, Christopher Booker declares, “There is in fact no kind of story, however serious or however trivial, which does not ultimately spring from the same source, which is not shaped by the same archetypal rules and spun from the same universal

⁶⁴ The confusion over how to define *popular culture* may stem from its academic evolution over time. Storey accounts for six ways to define popular culture, ranging from the negative “‘inferior culture’” designation to “‘commercial culture’” designed to “‘manipulate.’” The definition later evolves to more positive designations such as culture that simply “‘originates with the people,’” to culture that can create “‘positive change’” through conflict between “‘dominant and resistant forces,’” to finally the things that create pleasurable experiences in everyday life. (Wright and Sandlin 119 – 121)

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 59

⁶⁶ Taylor qtd in Heuer, p. 57.

⁶⁷ Tisdell and Thompson, Guy, Stuckey and Kring, Fink and Foote, in *Popular Culture in Entertainment Media*

⁶⁸ “Old School Crossings: Hip Hop in Teacher Education and Beyond,” in *Popular Culture in Entertainment Media*

language.”⁶⁹ Booker notes that it behooves us to examine “every type of story imaginable,” including popular works such as *Star Wars*, *E. T.*, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, and the Sherlock Holmes novels.⁷⁰

Booker’s point is particularly important as we investigate eliminating the gap between high-achieving students and those who are academically at risk. To this end, the discussion of popular culture literature should not center around studying it *apart from* or *instead of* canonized texts. Culturally enduring works are important in part because they reveal aspects of our humanity. Seneca explains that the importance of such canonized texts lies not in their minute details but rather in their enduring themes. He writes,

We have no leisure to hear lectures on the question whether [Ulysses] was sea-tost between Italy and Sicily, or outside our known world; . . . Show me rather, by the example of Ulysses, how I am to love my country, my wife, my father, and how, even after suffering shipwreck, I am to sail toward these ends, honourable as they are.⁷¹

These themes “cannot conduct the soul all the way to virtue, but . . . set it going in that direction” and “contribute greatly toward the equipment of life.”⁷² Culturally enduring, complex works are important because they reveal aspects of our humanity, and exposure to such works illuminates the connections contemporary

⁶⁹ (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014):7.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁷¹ Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, translated by Richard Mott Gummere, (Digireads.com Classics, 2013): 209.

⁷² Ibid., 211.

society has with its past. As Bartholome puts it, “Popular culture facilitates the transmission of ideas from ‘long ago and far away’ into recognizable social and behavioral venues.”⁷³ For historical, literary, sociological, or psychological reasons, it may be relevant to study *Beowulf*; however, the ancient poem may “bore and baffle”⁷⁴ even the most motivated students. However, pairing it with Steven Spielberg’s modern classic *Jaws*⁷⁵ could orient students to plot and theme and put them in a more comfortable position from which to discuss *Beowulf*’s broader implications.

Echoing Seneca, Thomas A. Fain, Jr. asserts that popular culture texts help students “grasp concepts [and] make sense of what they learn,”⁷⁶ which is, of course, part of critical thinking. Literary works are potential safe spaces for readers to examine issues such as love and violence, which exist outside of time and culture. In this fast-paced, media-driven culture, who wouldn’t want their children thinking toward self-examination and societal critique? In the late 1990s, researchers began using the term *critical media literacy* to describe this kind of critiquing. Developmental psychologist Erik Erikson noted that adolescents are focused on defining who they are and are often influenced by others’ opinions of them.⁷⁷ Technology like smartphones and social media allow influences—some

⁷³ Lynn G. Bartholome, “The Value of Teaching Popular Culture in the Community College: A Stew of Abstract, Concrete, Serious, and Not-So-Serious Notions.” *In Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum: Essays for Educators*, edited by Ray B. Browne (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005), p. 151.

⁷⁴ Booker, p. 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “American Popular Culture: Should We Integrate It Into American Education?” *Education* 124, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 590. Accessed November, 29, 2015. ERIC database.

⁷⁷ Saul McLeod, “Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion,” *Erik Erikson*, updated 2013, accessed December 7, 2015, <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>.

positive, some negative—to invade children and adolescents’ lives like never before. Henfield, Washington, and Owens acknowledge that popular culture can have manipulative powers; they note, “It could easily be argued that popular culture is the major influence of millennial youth,” a phenomenon that is “unmatched with any other time period in history.”⁷⁸ Specifically, Booker notes that storytelling is “far and away one of the most important features of our everyday existence,”⁷⁹ although he also points out that storytelling’s hold on us is not a new phenomenon.

In this vein, it is important to recognize that popular culture’s pedagogical power is undercut if educators instead use it to illustrate how much *better* canonized texts are. Some texts endure; some do not. However, per Booker’s study, similar themes and plot patterns unite all texts. Undercutting popular versions of these patterns would alienate the very students educators are trying to win over. Ideally, courses that balance popular culture with traditional texts would celebrate both as valuable and educational. A noteworthy concern, however, is that the amount of class time assigned to popular culture texts will limit time allotted for traditional texts; in a literature survey class, the number of traditional texts may need to be cut by as much as half. There is no easy answer to this scheduling problem. Institutions will have to balance all desired outcomes as they implement theory into best practices.

⁷⁸ Malik S. Henfield, Ahmed R. Washington, and Delila Owens, “To Be or Not to Be Gifted: The Choice for a New Generation,” *Gifted Child Today* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 19. Accessed November 29, 2015. *Eric* database.

<http://journals.profnrock.com/IJP/c.abs/gifted-child-today/volume33/issue2/article987>.

⁷⁹ Booker, p. 2

Chapter 2

Literature Review

A) Theory

Regardless of which kind of higher-education institution—two-year or four-year—a student chooses, introductory-level courses are essentially similar: They present and explore “modes of inquiry, historical contexts, and standards of judgement—all of which can be introduced very efficiently when applied to cultural artifacts with which the beginning [college] student is already acquainted.”⁸⁰ Within this framework, however, it is crucial that college educators accept that adult learners have specific needs; developmental education pioneer Hunter Reed Boylan asserts that college courses must be “guided by the principles of adult learning and development.”⁸¹ Specifically, leading adult learning scholar Stephen D. Brookfield explains that an “enormous amount of significant adult learning . . . takes place outside formal educational settings.”⁸² If college educators infuse this type of prior knowledge into courses, Brookfield suggests “Such prior learning and experiences also comprise valuable curricular resources.”⁸³ To that end, most people spend over seven hours a day “consuming

⁸⁰ Bartholome, p.151.

⁸¹ Patti Levine-Brown and S. Wes Anthony, “The Current State of Developmental Education: An Interview with Hunter R. Boylan,” *Journal of Developmental Education*, vol. 41, no. 1, Fall 2017, p. 18.

⁸² Stephen D. Brookfield, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986, p. 1.

⁸³ Brookfield, p. 2

media,”⁸⁴ and according to the Media Education Foundation, an average adult spends four to five hours of that time watching television.⁸⁵ Heuer finds that the popular culture media students absorb and enjoy can work with learners’ schemas by using “already in-place fluencies as a bridge to new understandings.”⁸⁶ Specifically, popular culture can help students succeed in college for three reasons: setting, affect, and content.

In general, adult learners require “links between [their] experiences and the topic under discussion.”⁸⁷ Arguably, K-12 students crave and benefit from these connections as well. For adult learners, however, beyond these general preferences, “At the very least there must be explicit connections made between unfamiliar concepts or bodies of knowledge and the current preoccupations or past experiences.”⁸⁸ This is of particular concern for adult learners because, for the large part, they are voluntary participants. Brookfield notes that “such participation can easily be withdrawn if learners feel that the activity does not meet their needs, does not make particular sense, or is conducted at a level that is incomprehensible to them.”⁸⁹ Johnson agrees: “Make the learning environment too easy, or too hard, and students get bored or frustrated and lose interest. But if the environment tracks along in sync with the students’ growing abilities, they’ll

⁸⁴ Jeff Dunn, “TV is still media’s biggest platform — but the internet is quickly gaining ground,” Business Insider, June 9, 2017. <http://www.businessinsider.com/tv-vs-internet-media-consumption-average-chart-2017-6>

⁸⁵ Guy, p. 17

⁸⁶ Heuer, p. 57.

⁸⁷ Brookfield, p. 9

⁸⁸ Brookfield p. 12

⁸⁹ p. 12

stay focused and engaged.”⁹⁰ To garner and maintain enrollment, it behooves colleges to adopt curricular practices that speak to their audiences.

Moreover, today’s adult learners are less likely to accept or thrive under “traditional” pedagogical practices; Brookfield explains,

It is naïve to assume that simply because adults are under the direction of a teacher that learning is being facilitated. . . . A mass lecture to an audience of adults in which there is no opportunity for discussion, no time for questions, no chance for collaborative exploration of differing viewpoints, and no attempt to make some links between the learners’ experiences and the topic under discussion is poor practice.⁹¹

A best practice is to “involve learners in mutual planning of methods and curricular directions.”⁹² One way to accomplish this is for the teacher to select half of the course’s texts and have students supply the other half, which could be from popular culture. For example, if an instructor chooses Mary Shelley’s novel *Frankenstein*, the instructor and students can forge a link to popular culture using themes of humanity or bioethics. Students might connect those themes to the 2001 movie *AI Artificial Intelligence*⁹³ or the 2017-2018 Netflix series *Santa Clarita Diet*. These popular culture texts then become part of the syllabus as well.

Such pairings can enhance the affective domain. According to Bloom’s Taxonomy, students who are comfortable in their learning environment learn better; most education researchers since Bloom agree that this affective domain

⁹⁰ Steven Johnson, *Everything Good is Bad for You*, (New York: Riverhead, 2005) p. 177

⁹¹ Brookfield, p. 9

⁹² Ibid., p. 102

⁹³ Bartholome, p. 152

“is essential to learning.”⁹⁴ Regarding students’ willingness and ability to receive and respond to phenomena, “When a professor includes popular culture in the curriculum, it authenticates the culture that students already value.”⁹⁵ Such authentication can go a long way in encouraging and retaining students who may worry that they do not “belong” in the college setting because it evokes emotions of pleasure and gratification, two primary affective functions. College educators who report using popular culture texts observe that class participation is high: “Classroom energy levels rise substantially;”⁹⁶ “Unlike other Humanities courses I’ve taught, this course [on *The Simpsons*] elicits so much participation that I cannot keep up with the raised hands . . . and I receive homework assignments in a more timely manner and with a generally higher level of thought and analysis.”⁹⁷ Ray B. Browne predicts that students “would flock to [popular culture] classes.”⁹⁸ If true, then the curriculum itself would do the work of recruiting students into the very classes that can help them hone their critical thinking skills. Ultimately, pairing popular culture texts with traditional texts may move students up the Taxonomy’s ladder toward valuing a more diverse range of texts.

⁹⁴ Karin Kirk, “What is the Affective Domain anyway?” Science Education Resource Center, <https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/intro.html>, accessed May 2, 2018.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Guy, p. 19.

⁹⁷ Maxwell A. Fink and Deborah C. Foote, “Using *The Simpsons* to Teach Humanities with Gen X and Gen Y Adult Students,” In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007, p. 51.

⁹⁸ Ray B. Browne, “Folklore to Populore,” In *Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum: Essays for Educators*, edited by Ray B. Browne. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005. P. 27. Bartholome indicates that Browne is known as “the father of popular culture” (150).

One way that popular culture texts can inspire critical thinking is through “critical reflection,”⁹⁹ a concept often referred to as critical media literacy.

Brookfield explains,

Through educational encounters, learners come to appreciate that values, beliefs, behaviors, and ideologies are culturally transmitted and that they are provisional and relative. This awareness that the supposed givens of work conduct, relationships, and political allegiances are, in fact, culturally constructed means that adults will come to question many aspects of their professional, personal, and political lives.¹⁰⁰

Tisdell sums up these concepts by saying that, because popular culture is the backdrop of our students’ lives, by using it in the curriculum we are “teaching students to ‘read the world.’”¹⁰¹ For example, Armstrong suggests using the FOX television show *The Simpsons* (1989-present) to analyze “the complex and contradictory [political] ideologies” in the U.S.¹⁰² Additionally, popular romantic works—or romantic components of works—can be used to analyze “traditional gender roles and notions of romantic love grounded in a system of patriarchy.”¹⁰³ For example, the HBO original series *VEEP* (2012 - present) certainly challenges viewers to examine notions of gender, romance, and power as well as how the three interact. The ABC television show *Black-ish* (2014-present) analyzes racial stereotyping. Such themes certainly exist in canonized works: George Orwell’s

⁹⁹ Brookfield, p. 10

¹⁰⁰ pp. 10-11

¹⁰¹ Tisdell, p. 6.

¹⁰² Wright and Sandlin, p.124.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 129

Animal Farm dissects political ideology; Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* investigate gender roles; Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* explores racial stereotypes. The popular texts complement the traditional ones because they are familiar and less intimidating to students. The goal is to enhance traditional texts' value by showing students how they are still relevant historically and culturally.

Popular culture should not necessarily be written off as less complex than its traditional counterparts, however. In his study, Steven Johnson found that popular culture "has, on average, grown more complex and intellectually challenging over the past thirty years."¹⁰⁴ Johnson acknowledges that, of course, not all popular texts are created equal: "Television may be more passive than video games, but there are degrees of passivity. Some narratives force you to do work to make sense of them, while others just let you settle into the couch and zone out."¹⁰⁵ However, fantasy sports teams, games like *Dungeons & Dragons* and *Diplomacy*, video games like *Sim City*, *Grand Theft Auto*, and *Everquest*, and television shows like *Twin Peaks*, *ER*, *The West Wing*, *The Sopranos*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Lost*, and *24* are all examples of how intellectually challenging popular culture has become.¹⁰⁶ The difficulty level is measured by how many plot lines and characters viewers must keep track of and how much inference the viewer must supply. Games, for example, are often so difficult that players consult guidebooks; in fact, Johnson reports that a guidebook for the game *Grand*

¹⁰⁴ Johnson, p. xiii.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 63

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.8, 30-37, 68-72

Theft Auto “sold more than 1.6 million copies.”¹⁰⁷ In such games, not only do players have to accomplish a goal, they also have to glean the rules as they play; Johnson points out that this facet makes some video games more complex than traditional games like Chess and Monopoly and even sports like baseball.¹⁰⁸ Many popular television shows also require viewers to do a lot of “cognitive work;”¹⁰⁹ Johnson notes that in 2005, the show *The Sopranos* was “the most ambitious show on TV to date” as it required viewers to keep track of “a dozen distinct threats over the course of an episode, with more than twenty recurring characters.”¹¹⁰ He lauds television and video games as more complex than movies because films are typically limited to two or three hours, whereas television dramas stretch over several seasons, and video games, on average, take forty hours to complete.¹¹¹ Giroux, on the other hand, argues that films are the most complex popular culture teaching tools, as they “allow their ideologies to play out pedagogically in a way that a three-minute pop song or a twenty-two minute sitcom cannot.”¹¹² In the broader sense, however, both Johnson’s and Giroux’s perspectives celebrate the pedagogical value of popular culture, and allowing students to select a course’s popular culture components can alleviate the need to elevate one form—television, film, or games—over the others.

¹⁰⁷ p. 29

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, pp. 42-43

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 63

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 69

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 131

¹¹² Henry A. Giroux, “Breaking into the Movies: Pedagogy and the Politics of Film,” *JAC*, vol. 21, no. 3, Summer 2001: p. 589. Accessed February 2, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20866426>.

Inserting such challenging popular culture texts into college curricula targets the same skills needed to access traditional curricular works: “attention, patience, retention, the parsing of narrative threads.”¹¹³ Popular culture can be used across curricula as well. Story gaming—whether it is face-to-face or virtual—involves systems analysis, probability theory, and pattern recognition.¹¹⁴ For example, the game *Sim City* can teach players about how “high tax rates in industrial areas can stifle development.”¹¹⁵ This kind of learning is sometimes referred to as “stealth learning,”¹¹⁶ or what John Dewey would call “collateral learning.”¹¹⁷ Overall, regardless of what students are thinking about, “it’s the way [they’re] thinking that matters.”¹¹⁸ As Johnson points out, “We teach algebra to children knowing full well that the day they leave the classroom, ninety-nine percent of those kids will never again directly employ their algebraic skills. Learning algebra isn’t about acquiring a specific tool; it’s about building up a mental muscle that will come in handy elsewhere.”¹¹⁹ Likewise, as college coursework intensifies in 300-level courses and beyond, or as learners encounter challenging situations in their workplaces, the cognitive muscles they developed in their introductory-level courses should support increasingly heavy academic lifting.

¹¹³ Johnson, p. 64

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 8-9

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 32

¹¹⁶ David Von Drehl, “The Case Against Summer Vacation,” *Time*, vol. 176, no. 5, August 2, 2010, p. 41.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, p. 40

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

B) Best Practices

There is a fair amount of qualitative research that supports this paradigm. Giroux explains that he uses popular culture films in his college classes because they are “cultural text[s]” than can “bridge the gap between the academic discourse of the classroom and those social issues and public concerns that animate the larger society.”¹²⁰ In a broad sense, Giroux notes that he “[approaches] film as a serious object of social, political, and cultural analysis” wherein he asks students to examine which of the film’s interpretations society deems as most legitimate and how these interpretations relate to power.¹²¹ Under this pedagogical umbrella, he has observed that popular culture films “revitalize” his students’ “sense of agency” within the culture and also serves as “an important source of [their] knowledge.”¹²² For example, he describes how films such as *Fight Club* link to his students’ identities and can thus help them analyze the film’s themes, such as American masculinity.¹²³

Like Giroux, Wright investigates the way popular culture can create pedagogically relevant connections with learners. However, she focuses on the way television can help its viewers “form their identities.”¹²⁴ She bases her findings on interviews with women who found inspiration in the fictional *Avengers* character Dr. Catherine Gale, who “in 1962, before the advent of

¹²⁰ Giroux, p. 595

¹²¹ Others also address the way popular culture portrays and/or confronts power: Fink and Foote, Guy, Hanley, and Wright.

¹²² Giroux, p. 589

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Wright, “*The Avengers*, Public Pedagogy, and the Development of British Women’s Consciousness,” In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007: p69. San Francisco: Jossey – Bass, 2007.

second-wave feminism in Britain, ... regularly challenged the status quo.”¹²⁵

Wright describes how the women in her study seemed to think of Gale as their inspiration to become judo-fighters, scientists, and entrepreneurs, to name a few.¹²⁶ Extrapolating from this, Wright explains that because students are so intimately connected with the television shows they adore, incorporating these specific shows into the syllabus “elicits powerful and engaged prose, as well as the development of critical thinking.”¹²⁷ Specifically, Wright notes that these practices help “[prepare] students for the critical thinking required for college-level work.”¹²⁸

Waggoner also uses television shows as texts in her composition courses, explaining that “when [she] assigned students texts and essays to read most seemed uninterested, and that showed in their writing assignments. However, when [she] used television . . . the students’ writing demonstrated increased interest through better responses.” She suggests that students improved because television’s “rhetorical imagery appealed more to [them] than constant reading.”¹²⁹ Based on her experiences, Waggoner points out two practical advantages to using television shows: one, students can view the show in a uniform amount of time, so teachers using this type of text in class do not have to account for varied reading rates; two, students enjoy the texts and, thus, are more

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 64

¹²⁶ Ibid., pp. 66-68

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 70

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Erin Waggoner, “Using Joss Whedon in the Composition Classroom,” *Compendium2*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011: p.35. Accessed February 24, 2018. www.technodocbox.com/amp/69978021.

engaged in class.¹³⁰ She describes how using texts such as Joss Whedon's three-part web series *Dr. Horrible* were particularly useful for honing students' prediction and argument skills.¹³¹ She also explains how she uses Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* episode "Hush" to have students analyze communication styles and difficulties.¹³² She admits that, at first, students are often confused because most of the episode has no dialogue; however, ultimately they "[manage] to identify how facial expressions, body language, music, actions, and even scenery [help] to define the plot in terms of visual rhetoric."¹³³

Heuer's research further emphasizes how using visual popular culture texts can foster literacy, particularly for under-performing students, as "the highly visual aspects of most media correspond to many learning styles."¹³⁴ Her work focuses on urban alternative high school students and their teachers; however, her team's approach uses adult-learning principles with both groups. She observed that forms of visual media "mesmerized" learners, who later "reacted strongly in animated discussions."¹³⁵ She also notes that participants retained the messages of the visual texts. Heuer also examined using game show formats in the classroom. Her findings support that doing so can help learners "gain confidence" and also suggest that "the competition aspect [of game shows] may have appealed to these learners as well as the built-in pacing and opportunities for

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 36

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 37

¹³² Ibid., p. 38

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Heuer, p. 61.

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 59

small victories.”¹³⁶ Heuer surmises that popular culture visual media, “even those specifically for educational purposes, connect to everyday media and literacy practices, and for that reason they are likely to have appeal.”¹³⁷

Fink and Foote’s work focuses on using a thematic approach with the animated television show *The Simpsons*. They note that the show’s social and political themes align with “a great number of the main themes or underlying intended messages within many significant works of literature”¹³⁸ and, based on their combined classroom experiences, conclude that both “high and low culture” can be used in tandem as both are “of special value as tools for learning.”¹³⁹ Regarding the affective domain, Fink and Foote found that students who were familiar with *The Simpsons* before the semester began were less intimidated by the course and, as a result, were “more likely to participate, ask and answer questions, and engage with the class material” than were students who were unfamiliar with the show.¹⁴⁰

Likewise, Bartholome explains how infusing popular culture into the community college curriculum “provides an opportunity to learn a radically unfamiliar skill (i.e., critical analysis) through deeply familiar material.”¹⁴¹ She describes the challenges community college instructors have, as they teach “the most widely diverse population in higher education;”¹⁴² specifically, “On any

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 59

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 51

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 53

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 50

¹⁴¹ Bartholome, p. 151

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 152

given day, the community college professor enters a classroom populated with students of all ages, backgrounds, and levels of educational preparedness. How do we get everyone on the same page?”¹⁴³ As an answer, she details several lesson examples in which popular culture successfully connected “something quite abstract to something concrete in [the student’s life].”¹⁴⁴ One anecdote involves a student who was able to understand Descartes’s *Meditations* because it was paired with the movie *The Matrix*, a film that also examines the pitfalls of knowledge.¹⁴⁵ Regarding the bigger picture, Bartholome concludes that “students can perceive how the classics continue to influence even contemporary genres, such as the talk show.”¹⁴⁶

Beyond the visual, Hanley examines how popular culture music, particularly rap and hip hop, can be pedagogically useful. She explains, “I draw on hip hop as a way to model using dialogic instruction, the arts, and popular culture to develop literacy skills.”¹⁴⁷ Like Wright, she insists that, for effective implementation, teachers must use the specific popular culture texts that students enjoy.¹⁴⁸ To that end, she argues that educators need to become familiar with rap and hip hop music in order to overcome the “biases” that many teachers have about these genres.¹⁴⁹ Haney explains that rap and hip hop do often “[represent] the black experience with drugs, violence, and misogyny,”¹⁵⁰ but that those

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 150

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 151

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 151

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 152

¹⁴⁷ Hanley, p36.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 38

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 40

themes are often reflections of cultural “rage, alienation, resistance, and desires.”¹⁵¹ Because “almost any question asked about rap or hip hop can lead to a heated debate,” these lyrical texts can foster critical thinking and critical media literacy.¹⁵²

Guy reports using popular culture texts because they are ubiquitous—“most Americans are exposed to the products of culture industries much more than to traditional educational content”¹⁵³—and a reflection of society’s mores; as such, these texts “teach us about race, class, gender, and other forms of socially significant difference.”¹⁵⁴ For example, when using the 2004 movie *Crash*, he notes that students are “frequently . . . disgust[ed]” by certain scenes but also enlightened: After viewing one scene, students “often acknowledge, some for the first time, the way in which African Americans may have justifiable fear of and disdain for police power.”¹⁵⁵ He extends students’ reactions by next asking them to “[determine] the different interpretations that can be made by different identity groups in different contexts” about the same scene.¹⁵⁶ Finally, he asks students to consider what societal norms might need to be challenged based on their new understandings.¹⁵⁷ Guy’s approach uses popular culture to create a safe space in which students can comfortably learn about and discuss challenging issues because they are discussing characters rather than real people. As Stuckey and

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 37

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 40

¹⁵³ Guy, pp. 16-17

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 16

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 20

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 21

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 22

Kring put it, “In the classroom, opening up a dialogue about movie characters . . . is a way for students to feel comfortable talking about controversial issues.”¹⁵⁸ Moreover, these projective experiences are meaningful because students do come to care about fictional characters. The characters are “fictional, yet they become real in our own individual and collective experience of them, a blurring of the real and unreal,” and can “take on national significance, and even become part of public debate on social issues.”¹⁵⁹ Hopefully, by pairing popular texts with more traditional ones, students will see that such “safe spaces” are available in both, thus solidifying cultural ties throughout time.

Few quantitative studies exist to back up qualitative trends; however, in 2007, Tisdell and Thompson conducted a mixed-method study to explore the ways popular media can (1) help adult learners “construct knowledge,” and (2) be used effectively in college classrooms.¹⁶⁰ They administered a thirty-two question survey to 215 masters and doctoral students at nine different universities. Of those 215 participants, 142 were teachers. The study also gathered qualitative data based on interviews with fifteen of the survey respondents.

The study’s quantitative data reveals that more than half of the study participants discuss “characters or themes of television shows or movies” at

¹⁵⁸ Heather Stuckey and Kelly Kring, “Critical Media Literacy and Popular Film: Experiences of Teaching and Learning in a Graduate Class,” In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007: p. 30. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

¹⁵⁹ Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, “‘Seeing from a different angle’: The role of pop culture in teaching for diversity and critical media literacy in adult education,” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 26, no. 6, 2007: pp. 653-654.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370701711349>.

¹⁶⁰ Tisdell and Thompson, p.668. Their study focused specifically on teaching themes about identity and diversity.

school or work (65% occasionally; 91.3% “if it was relevant to the conversation”), which suggests that such popular culture can create common ground and initiate discussion—what Giroux calls “a form of ‘public pedagogy.’”¹⁶¹

The study’s qualitative findings suggest that popular culture—television and movies, specifically, in this study—can, within a safe space, illuminate new “choices” or “options” about an issue. For example, one interviewee describes how the movie *Iris* helped her explore what her relationship might be like in the future and consequently make a decision: “I got a vision of what I could have in my own life.”¹⁶² Additionally, the study supports that popular culture can reveal issues’ complexities. The HBO show *Six Feet Under* gave one participant “a better understanding” of how complex the life of an LGBTQ person could be because the storytelling ““helps you get in the mind of the ‘other’” and ““think about things from a different angle.””¹⁶³ Furthermore, the study concludes that popular culture can fuel discussion. These discussions are easily facilitated because the text is a “common pleasure” and can be used as a way of “finding a common connection with others.”¹⁶⁴ Study participants also demonstrated how these initial discussions can fluidly evolve into deeper analyses. For example, the television show *Desperate Housewives* can be satirically provocative in that it addresses “gendered ‘compulsory roles’ that white middle class women are often

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 658.

¹⁶² Ibid., pp. 661-662

¹⁶³ Tisdell and Thompson, pp. 660-664

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 665

taught to fulfill (such as ‘find a man, get married, and live happily ever after’)” but the show also “turns those compulsory roles on their head.”¹⁶⁵

Despite this data, Tisdell and Thompson’s study also suggests that few adult educators, at least in 2007, are using popular culture “intentionally;” that is, as more than just a hook. Their quantitative data indicates that 80% of educators use popular culture texts “at least occasionally,”¹⁶⁶ but actually showing TV or movies in class “is generally rare.”¹⁶⁷ Their results do not examine how many educators require or encourage viewings outside of class meetings. Their results also suggest that less than half (41%) of educators surveyed use popular culture media “frequently or very frequently,”¹⁶⁸ and the authors conclude that more educators should institute it as a best practice. Specifically, they note that discussion and analysis of popular culture texts can fuel “greater understanding”¹⁶⁹ and even allow “new meanings [to] emerge.”¹⁷⁰ Such texts also facilitate new learning, as they “expose people to a variety of ideas and issues that they might not seek out directly.”¹⁷¹

Tisdell and Thompson’s study opens several avenues for further quantitative research. In particular, their line of inquiry could be extended to undergraduate students. Abundant qualitative data and trends suggest that various academic fields accept popular culture’s curricular value. For example, a recent

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 666

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 671

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 660

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 660

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 668

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 670

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

list of McFarland Books publications sent to college educators includes titles such as *Superheroines and the Epic Journey*; *Jessica Jones: Scarred Superhero*, *Essays on Gender, Trauma, and Addiction in the Netflix Series*; *The Artemis Archetype in Popular Culture*; and *Women of Blaxploitation*. These titles suggest connections to courses in literature, psychology, sociology, gender studies, and African-American studies. Given popular culture's increasing presence in college classrooms, it behooves us to further examine its measured effects on learning.

Chapter 3

Course Template

How well does popular culture actually impact student achievement, and what kind of data best indicates popular culture's curricular effectiveness? To begin to answer these pedagogical questions, I gathered baseline data by creating and implementing a template for an introductory-level college literature course which paired popular culture with traditional literature texts. I wanted to explore three essential questions: Will students' critical thinking skills improve, will students complete the course, and will students pass the course with a C grade or higher?

I teach at a Maryland community college. Our institution's mission is to "[provide] accessible, innovative, learner-centered educational opportunities. As an open-access institution, the College promotes graduation, transfer, individual goal attainment, and career and workforce development. The College fosters lifelong learning, global awareness, and social and cultural enrichment."¹⁷² The words "accessible, innovative, learner-centered," "lifelong learning," and "social and cultural enrichment" certainly link to the theoretical benefits of using popular culture in curricula. However, although the College offers five Associate's Degree programs, twenty-two certificate programs,¹⁷³ and courses in fifty-eight

¹⁷² Harford Community College, "Mission, Vision, Values," *About HCC*, Accessed March 21, 2018. <http://www.harford.edu/about/mission.aspx>

¹⁷³ Harford Community College, "Programs of Study," *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*, accessed March 21, 2018, http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/programs_of_study.asp

subject areas,¹⁷⁴ none of the course offerings are specifically targeted toward popular culture. Still, incorporating popular culture seems possible and promising, as there are fifteen course descriptions—across disciplines including English, history, art, health, psychology, sociology, drama, and business—that suggest a potential connection to popular culture. For example, per the course description for English 102: Literature and Composition (a course I teach), students learn “critical analysis of literary genres, emphasizing poetry, short fiction and drama. Students explore literary works from various cultures through discussions and critical writing activities.”¹⁷⁵ In this description, the critical thinking component is clear, and the course’s focus on literary genres makes popular culture pairings practical.

This approach is also pragmatic because it appears the College needs to explore additional remediation and retention strategies, as its graduation and transfer rates barely rise above 50%. The four-year average number of degrees and certificates awarded is 1,072.¹⁷⁶ Based on three years of attendance from 2013-2016, 53% of certificate- or degree-seeking students enrolled either graduated or transferred.¹⁷⁷ White / Caucasian students had the highest

¹⁷⁴ Harford Community College, “Course Descriptions,” *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*, accessed March 21, 2018, http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/course_descriptions.asp

¹⁷⁵ Harford Community College, “Course Descriptions: English,” *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*, accessed March 9, 2018, http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/course_descriptions.asp#P_ENG. I have been teaching at this institution as an adjunct instructor since 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness, “Facts & Figures,” *Harford Community College*, accessed March 9, 2018. <https://www.harford.edu/about/facts-and-figures.aspx>

¹⁷⁷ Valerie Swain, “Disclosure of Institutional (General Student Body) Graduation/Completion and Transfer-out Rates,” Harford Community College, Accessed March 21, 2018, https://www.harford.edu/~media/PDF/Student-Services/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/Student_Right_to_Know_web.ashx. This is the most recent data available.

graduation rate (36%), followed by Asian (33%), Hispanic (32%) , and Black / African American (12%). Asian students had the highest transfer rate (50%), followed by White / Caucasian (27%), Black / African American (25%), and Hispanic (23%).¹⁷⁸

In fall 2017, there were 6,128 students enrolled at the college, 1,300 of which were enrolled for the first time. The average student's age was 23.5; the median age was 20. "Minority" or "other" students comprised 29.5% of the student population. Of all enrolled students, 5,068 were degree- or certificate-seeking students. Based on data from 2015 – 2017, the approximate ratio of students enrolled in non-credit to credit courses was 1 : 1.5. In other words, roughly 33% of students are taking non-credit ("transitional" or "remedial") courses, which admittedly is lower than national data.¹⁷⁹ Still, one third of enrolled students need skill support.

To begin gathering data, I integrated popular culture into one section of English 102: English Literature and Composition during the Fall 2017 semester. I collected observational data, administered anonymous student surveys, examined optional, anonymous comments on students' course evaluations, analyzed students' grades on a research essay, and monitored attendance data. I also gathered college-wide baseline data on students' English 102 final grades and course withdrawals. Overall, the baseline data is promising but suggests that further study is warranted.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Previously, I noted that 50-75% of two-year and state-college students take remedial courses, according to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education.

A) Short Fiction

At my institution, English 102 covers poetry, short fiction, and drama. I set up my English 102 course to cover short fiction first so that my first lessons cover the different kinds of plots and themes readers encounter across time and culture. I used Christopher Booker's treatise *The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories* to structure this first third of the course. Doing so also allowed me to efficiently pair seven traditional short fiction texts, such as William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," with popular texts, such as Alfred Hitchcock's 1960 movie *Psycho*.¹⁸⁰ By the end of the short fiction unit, students were much more adept at finding meaningful pairings on their own. Booker designates the seven plots as Overcoming the Monster, Rags to Riches, The Quest, Voyage and Return, Comedy, Tragedy, and Rebirth.

Lesson 1: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly¹⁸¹

In this first lesson, I wanted to make students feel comfortable with the subject matter, find out what works students enjoy and despise, and lay groundwork for popular culture pairings. I invited students to think about all of the books, short stories, movies, TV shows, and plays they had read or seen. Then, they listed at least one that they considered *good* (that is, they enjoyed it and would read it / watch it again), one that was *bad* (that is, they got through it

¹⁸⁰ John A. McDermott, "'Do You Love Me, Norman?' : Faulkner's 'A Rose for Emily' and Metalious's Peyton Place as Sources for Robert Bloch's *Psycho*," *Popular Culture*, vol. 40, no. 3, June 2007, pp. 454-467. *Wiley Online Library*. The Hitchcock movie is based on the novel *Psycho* by Robert Bloch.

¹⁸¹ This is, of course, a pop culture reference to the 1966 Clint Eastwood movie *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, although many students do not recognize the allusion.

but would not recommend it nor read it / watch it again), and one that was *ugly* (that is, they wished they could get those hours back; no one should be subjected to such horror). For each selection, they needed to briefly explain why they rated the works the way that they did. The discussion began in an online discussion forum¹⁸² because at the beginning of the semester, many students are not comfortable contributing to face-to-face class discussion. Each student had an initial post deadline, and then students logged in again to reply to at least two other students' posts. I collated their responses¹⁸³ and distributed the chart in class for lesson two.

Lesson Two: Booker's Seven Basic Plots

My objectives in lesson two remained the same: to actuate the affective domain, to find out what works students enjoy and despise, and to lay groundwork for popular culture pairings. I used the Learning Management System (LMS) to randomly place students into semester-long writing groups. Now that students had interacted online, I put them into these small groups to get to know one another and to continue discussion face-to-face.¹⁸⁴ During the small-group discussion, they examined the Good, Bad, Ugly compilation and extended that by listing topics addressed in those works. For example, several of the works, such as *The Immortal life of Henrietta Lacks* and *To Kill a Mockingbird*, deal with power and racism.

¹⁸² At my institution, we use the Blackboard LMS.

¹⁸³ See Appendix for the Good, Bad, Ugly chart with their responses.

¹⁸⁴ See Appendix for the discussion guide.

During the second half of the class, we discussed their findings as a large group. I listed the topics—which I refer to as theme seeds—on the board. Once we had a generous list, in this case it covered the entire white board, I explained how theme and plot connect and introduce Booker’s seven plots. To test his theory, in their groups students attempted to place each Good, Bad, Ugly work into one of Booker’s plot categories. They were able to do so successfully, so we concluded that his theory has merit. Several groups also noted that some works could fit into more than one plot category. For example, the movie *The Dark Knight*, which is part of the Batman saga, fits into Overcoming the Monster as well as The Quest; one student also pointed out that, if we examine the entire Batman storyline, it can even fit into Tragedy or perhaps Rebirth. The analytical skills students demonstrated during this discussion was a promising indication that their popular culture knowledge was inspiring critical thinking. Moreover, I now had a working list of texts the students enjoyed. Most, but not all, of the texts that were on the good list were works of popular culture.

Lesson Three: Tragedy¹⁸⁵

“A Rose for Emily” is one of the first stories we read. I introduced Booker’s definition of tragedy: The protagonist character slowly spirals down into darkness before he or she is finally defeated. He also delineates five stages of the

¹⁸⁵ Booker begins with Overcoming the Monster, noting that it is the “most important” (19) because these are stories that have made “a leap across the whole of recorded human history” and thus “must have some profound symbolic significance in the inner life of mankind” (22). I begin with tragedy and comedy, as they are two larger categories into which other plots can often fit. Booker acknowledges that “this division holds good over a much greater range of stories” (22).

plot: anticipation, dream, frustration, nightmare, and destruction.¹⁸⁶ Before reading, the students' first assignment was to view or read something of their choosing that fit this definition. During our next meeting, I listed their selections on the board¹⁸⁷ and we discussed why these texts are tragic. Here our roles were flipped, as I am hardly familiar with all of their popular culture selections.

After this class meeting, students read Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," which the popular online site *Shmoop*¹⁸⁸ designates as a tragedy. I also instructed them to prepare a one-page analysis defending whether or not the story fits Booker's definition of tragedy or if it better aligns with another of the seven plots. Their defense needed to include analysis of the plot as well as one other literary element (their choice): character, style, theme, etc. During the subsequent discussion, a few students began to question the common idea that tragedy is distinguished by a "sad" ending. Many students agreed that the ending can be ambiguous because it depends on the audience's opinion of the protagonist. If the audience likes the protagonist, then the tragic ending can be interpreted as sad, but if the audience does not have sympathy for the protagonist, then that character's spiral might be better interpreted as karmic. In this case, the class was split: half sympathized with Emily as a victim, and half did not. Regardless, most students

¹⁸⁶ Booker, p. 156

¹⁸⁷ Students identified the following as tragedies: *Obsessed*, *All Things Fall Apart*, *Titanic*, *Ozark*, *Shameless* (end of season 6), *Narcos* (seasons 1 & 2), *The Titanic*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Batman: The Animated Series*, *Gladiator*, *The Fault in our Stars*, *The Virgin Suicides*, *Rogue One*, *Of Mice and Men*, and *Criminal Minds*: "A Shade of Gray" episode.

¹⁸⁸Shmoop Editorial Team, "A Rose for Emily Booker's Seven Basic Plots Analysis," *Shmoop University, Inc.* Last modified November 11, 2008. Accessed April 15, 2018. <https://www.shmoop.com/a-rose-for-emily/tragedy-plot.html>. *Shmoop* includes a Booker analysis for many of its texts. English teachers constantly battle students' use of sites like this one; over the years, I have tried to embrace such sites as part of my instruction and, thus, hopefully quell students' plagiarism of them.

agreed that the plot fits the tragic structure, although they acknowledged that it could fit into other categories as well, such as Quest. Their paragraphs and discussion indicated that this assignment inspired critical analysis.

Alternatively, Bartholome suggests pairing the tragedy *Antigone* with *The Jerry Springer Show*—a “modern version of tragedy” in which the audience serves as the chorus when they “[chant] and [remind] the audience of the cultural values the [show] is trying to inspire.”¹⁸⁹ Moreover, as an alternative or extension, the critical essay ““Do You Love Me, Norman?” : Faulkner's ‘A Rose for Emily’ and Metalious's *Peyton Place* as Sources for Robert Bloch's *Psycho*”¹⁹⁰ could be used to pair “A Rose for Emily” with the Hitchcock movie *Psycho*. Doing so could be an effective way to introduce literary criticism, and this pairing could also facilitate discussion of sympathetic characters and tragic endings being “sad.” In my English 102 course, I introduced snippets of literary criticism to facilitate class discussion in the short fiction unit, but my main objectives were getting students to apply literary terms and to become comfortable conducting literary analysis. I introduced critical research in the drama unit.

To end this section on tragedy, we discussed the essential question:

Tragedies were/are written across time and culture;¹⁹¹ why is this such an important (and ubiquitous) plot type? My goal here was to have students examine

¹⁸⁹ Bartholome, p. 151

¹⁹⁰ John A. McDermott

¹⁹¹ I provided students with a list of, and some brief background on, several famous tragedies across time and culture: Greek myth *Icarus*, *Antigone* (Sophocles, Greece, approx. 441 BCE), *Oedipus The King* (Sophocles, Greece, approx. 430 BCE), *Julius Caesar* (Shakespeare, England, 1599), *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, England, approx. 1600), *Macbeth* (Shakespeare, England, 1606), *Faust* (legend as far back as 1587, but famously written about by Goethe, Germany, 1808—part I), *Anna Karenina* (Tolstoy, Russia, 1873-1877), *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson, England, 1886), *Of Mice and Men* (Steinbeck, USA, 1937), *Lolita* (Nabokov, Russia/France/USA, 1955).

traditional and popular works as symbiotic forms. When the issue of quality came up, I explained that some works are more groundbreaking than others, some words endure and some do not, but that does not alter the plot patterns. Moreover, as Bartholome points out, many traditional, lauded works such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* were, at their inception, considered pop culture.¹⁹²

Lessons Four through Eight: Five More Booker Plots

I followed the same general pattern for five other plot types: Comedy (Margaret Atwood's "Happy Endings"), Overcoming the Monster (Edgar Allan Poe's "Cask of Amontillado"), Voyage and Return (Jimmy Cross excerpt from Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*), Rebirth (Kate Chopin's "The Storm"), and Quest (Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path"). For variety, I sometimes made the students' popular culture pairing search less formal, or I moved it from beginning to end of the lesson. For each selection, however, we analyzed plot structure, practiced identifying and supporting theme statements, and evaluated why the type of plot structure is ubiquitous.

Lesson Nine: Rags to Riches

The rags to riches tale is perhaps one of the most familiar because many fairy tales fit its formula: *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Aladdin*. *Harry Potter* is a contemporary example. The last short work we examined was Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings." Before they read it, we listed popular fairy tale titles on the board, and then listed common fairy tale elements. I instructed students to isolate fairy tale elements they saw in

¹⁹² Bartholome, p. 152

Marquez's story and come prepared to write a short in-class essay analyzing this aspect of the story. The actual prompt, which was not given until the day of the in-class writing, read: What fairy tale qualities does Marquez infuse in his story "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"? Why do you think he infuses these elements? My objective was to evaluate whether or not students' familiarity with fairy tales would help them uncover a theme in this challenging and strange story.

Most students proficiently isolated the fairy tale elements but struggled to connect those devices to a larger purpose. However, one student wrote that perhaps Marquez was writing a sequel to the *Icarus* myth. He posited that the story follows Booker's Rebirth plot. As such, the old man, who remains nameless, was mistakenly identified as an angel but is really the reanimated Icarus. The trials he faces are his "[imprisonment] in the state of living death"¹⁹³ and his eventually healing and ability to fly away represent his redemption. The story's theme, then, communicates that we are all capable of redemption. It was incredibly fulfilling to see this student begin with popular fairy tale conventions, link them to traditional mythology, and then use those allusions as a bridge to create meaning out of a strange, modern text. Although his response was not the norm, it suggested that popular culture pairings can facilitate critical analysis.

¹⁹³ Booker, p. 204

B. Drama

Lesson 1: Evolving Off of the Page

I positioned the drama unit second in the semester because I distinguished it as fiction that evolves off of the page. I introduced this concept by showing the final scene from Sophia Coppola's 2003 film *Lost in Translation*. The scene depicts an intimate moment between Bill Murray's and Scarlett Johansson's characters while on a busy Tokyo street. The dialogue is whispered, so the audience cannot distinguish it, yet the scene still conveys a tremendous amount of information. This viewing opened a discussion of other techniques that drama uses that are not available in novels and short stories. Waggoner describes a similar lesson using the episode "Hush" from Joss Whedon's television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. In the episode, the characters lose their voices and must find other ways to communicate. Waggoner explains that the lesson exemplifies what she refers to as "visual rhetoric," as it "[pushes] students to realize that not all logic, ethics, and emotions are shown through dialogue."¹⁹⁴

Lesson Two: Wise Old Man / Woman Archetype

The objectives for the drama unit were for students to be able to (1) interpret and analyze how a character contributes to a play overall and (2) effectively integrate evidence from primary and secondary sources. Specifically, I assigned an analysis of Troy in August Wilson's play *Fences*.¹⁹⁵ To facilitate this analysis, I explained the wise old man / woman archetype and instructed students to select a work of contemporary literature, film, or television that

¹⁹⁴ Waggoner, p. 38

¹⁹⁵ See Appendix for the assignment sheet.

contains such a figure. They read or viewed the work and took notes on that figure and his/her importance to the whole. Students submitted examples such as Morrie from Mitch Albom's book *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Alfred from *Batman*, Jack and William from the television show *This Is Us*, and Mary Poppins. They discussed their observations first in small groups, looking for similar traits and purposes. The groups then reported their conclusions to the class. We generated a list of characters and traits on the board.

As a contrast, I introduced the term tragic hero and reminded them of the tenets of a tragedy by referring back to "A Rose for Emily." We made another list of popular examples of tragic heroes; students offered examples such as Batman, Severus Snape from *Harry Potter*, and Elsa from *Frozen*. As they finished reading the play *Fences*, I told them to consider if Troy could fit neatly into either category: wise old man or tragic hero?

Lessons Three: *Fences*

We spent two class meetings discussing the play. The students were charged with crafting five critical discussion questions while they read.¹⁹⁶ On day one, these questions guided our discussion, which was somewhat informal. When possible, we looked for connections between questions, but whenever discussion lagged, I asked someone else to read one of his/her questions so the discussion could shift in another direction. A few examples of questions were: Is Troy sympathetic? Was Troy right in the way he treated Cory? What did the ending mean? Why was the setting important? Not all questions dealt with Troy

¹⁹⁶ These kinds of questions were modeled during the short fiction unit, and students were reminded of this and given examples.

specifically; however, we discussed how understanding all aspects of the play would help analyze Troy's relationship to the whole.

At the end of day one, I assigned a piece of literary criticism¹⁹⁷ for students to read for the next class meeting. I used this essay to structure day two's discussion, particularly because it provided historical background as well as a theory about the play's ending—two topics that came up on day one.

Toward the end of day two, students worked in small groups to write theme statements for the play. Most of the statements related to the topics racism, father-son relationships, and women's roles. Each group shared their statement and briefly indicated the evidence that supported that theme.

Lesson Five: Literary Criticism

The *Fences* essay is the first assignment for which I required students to use literary criticism, although they had been informally introduced to critical scholarship in the short fiction unit. To familiarize students with the variety of critical approaches available, we completed a jigsaw activity¹⁹⁸: Each small group was given one critical camp to investigate; they had to list three tenets of that camp in order to teach the rest of the class about it. Groups investigated new criticism, new historicism, reader response, psychoanalytic criticism, queer theory, and feminist criticism. To conclude, as a large group we discussed which kind of critic Wardi seemed to be, and we also drew some conclusions about

¹⁹⁷ Anissa Janine Wardi, "From 1727 Bedford Street to 1839 Wylie Avenue: Home in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 1, Winter 2013: pp. 44-61. *Project Muse*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/utq.2013.0002>.

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix for jigsaw activity.

which types of criticism might be most helpful for their *Fences* essays. Finally, we reviewed how to search databases and cite research.

Lesson Six: Writing the Essay

The students' next step was to isolate their topics, begin research, and submit their working theses to the LMS for feedback. Once topics and theses were approved, students continued to research and constructed planning outlines, which they brought to class for writing group feedback. Eventually, students attended a one-on-one draft conference with me. One student argued that Rose was the play's most important character; her proof centered around establishing Rose and Troy as foils, where Rose fit the wise old woman archetype. Several students wrote about Troy as a tragic hero who was simply using tough love with his son. One student took this idea further and wrote that Troy used tough love because he needed to teach Cory hard truths about race relations.

Students submitted their essays after spending roughly four weeks on the unit. Essays were required to be five to seven pages and include at least three secondary sources, two of which needed to be literary criticism.

After the essays were submitted, students were given an optional, anonymous survey¹⁹⁹ to gauge (1) how much they enjoyed the popular culture wise old man/ woman discussions and (2) how much that lesson helped them understand the play and Troy's character.

¹⁹⁹ See Appendix for the survey.

C) Poetry

The poetry unit was more traditional, in that each student selected one anthologized poem from a list I generated. They explicated the poem, led a ten-to-fifteen-minute discussion about that poem, then wrote a follow-up essay analyzing a trend in that poet's works. Poets included Robert Frost, Theodore Roethke, Margaret Atwood, Audre Lorde, Sylvia Plath, Carl Sandburg, Walt Whitman, Gwendolyn Brooks, Lewis Carroll, Martin Espada, and Matsuo Basho. The course's anthology²⁰⁰ organized the works by device—persona, word choice and order, figurative language, sound, and form—so I used this same format. As described below, this structure was not terribly effective. Research indicates that infusing popular culture works best with a thematic approach, and my experience supports altering this unit by grouping poems by theme.

As it was, this third of the course became a *de facto* control group. It not only differed structurally, it was also the section of the course that included the least popular culture. I only encouraged one student, who could not find a poem that interested her on the list, to select a popular song instead. She chose the 2017 song “Bad and Boujee” by the hip hop trio Migos²⁰¹ and led her discussion during the sound device section. This song has clear references to power relationships, materialism, and the American dream: The opening lyrics announce,

You know Young Rich Niggas

You know so we ain't really never had no old money

²⁰⁰ Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, *Compact Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*, ninth edition, Cengage Learning, 2016.

²⁰¹ Migos, “Bad and Boujee,” *Genius*, <https://genius.com/Migos-bad-and-boujee-lyrics>, accessed April 17, 2018. See Appendix for lyrics.

We got a whole lotta new money though
 (If Young Metro don't trust you I'm gon' shoot ya)
 Raindrops, drop tops (drop top)
 Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox (cookie)
 Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot (Thot)
 Cookin' up dope in the crockpot, (pot)
 We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga (hey).

However, the student herself did not isolate these themes. Instead, she focused more on interpreting the jargon, literal translation, and discussing the artists' unique sound effects. To pick up her thread, I played an excerpt of Jeremy Irons reading T. S. Eliot's "What the Thunder Said" from *The Wasteland*²⁰² to illustrate that traditional poems sometimes employ similar sound devices. Without a thematic tie, however, students struggled to extend their thinking and analyze how such sounds help convey meaning. The discussion was, in a word, flat, and I viewed this popular culture addition as a missed opportunity.

However, I included a follow-up question on the final exam: How / why can popular music (of any genre) be considered poetry? Prove your answer by referring to at least one contemporary song and at least one poem from our syllabus. One student answered by pairing Theodore Roethke's "My Papa's Waltz" with Kacey Musgraves's song "Merry Go 'Round."²⁰³ She connected both works' use of music—the waltz, nursery rhymes, and merry-go-round organ

²⁰²Jeremy Irons, *The Wasteland* "What the Thunder Said," 30 March 2012, BBC Radio 4, *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYROFY_Kh8M. Accessed April 17, 2018.

²⁰³ Kacey Musgraves, "Merry Go 'Round," *AZ Lyrics*, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/kaceymusgraves/merrygoround.html>, accessed April 17, 2018.

music—to their use of irony, explaining that the titles evoke pleasant associations, but the stanzas actually reveal failed expectations brought on by addiction. Her answer combined links through both theme and literary devices. She also touched on the way poetry and music use literary devices to help the audience read between the lines even more than other genres do, a skill I referred to as “poetic leaping” in a class activity.

D) Results and Next Steps

This one semester’s cursory data is encouraging and suggests that popular culture positively impacts student achievement. Observational data confirms what other researchers have reported: class participation in lessons that included popular culture was high. For example, every student brought in at least one example of a wise old man or woman, and class discussion during that lesson lasted almost the entire meeting time. By contrast, class participation during the poetry unit was low even though students informally reported that they, in general, preferred poetry over other genres. Also, I had hypothesized that class participation would be high during the poetry discussions because students would want to encourage the student discussion leaders and because this unit occurred later in the semester, when students were more experienced with literary analysis. However, the opposite was true.

Student feedback via the anonymous survey²⁰⁴ revealed that most students found the popular culture wise old man / woman lesson enjoyable and helpful. Of

²⁰⁴ See Appendix for the survey.

the eighteen students regularly attending, fifteen returned the survey. Fourteen respondents (93%) answered “yes” to the question, “Did you enjoy discussing versions of wise old men / women from popular TV, movies, books?” Ten students expanded on their answers using words like “fun,” “enjoyable,” “thought-provoking,” and/or “interesting.” Twelve students (80%) circled “yes” to the question, “Did looking at versions of wise old men / women from popular TV, movies, books help you understand Troy and/or the play *Fences*?” In their written feedback to that question, six students specifically mentioned that it was helpful to compare Troy with other wise old men and women. Although this baseline data is revealing, when I advance it in future semesters, the binary yes/no nature of the survey should be revised into a rating scale for more accurate data.

Grade-based data suggests that popular culture pairings do improve students’ critical thinking. Fifteen students submitted the *Fences* essay: 20% received A’s, 40% received Bs, 13% received Cs, 13% received Ds, and 13% received Fs. This data is somewhat skewed because critical thinking was not the only skill assessed in the essay; however, 60% of students earned an A or B, indicating that the majority of students performed above-average on all skills. By contrast, of the sixteen students who submitted poetry essays, 18% received A’s, 31% received Bs, 0% received Cs, 31% received Ds, and 18% received Fs. That is, on the assessment for the unit in which I did not include popular culture pairings, only 49% of students performed above average. Even though this quantitative data seems to support popular culture’s curricular effectiveness, it also discredits the theory that students’ honed critical thinking skills will transfer

to other areas, as the later unit's grades were lower. It seems more likely that students' critical thinking improved in relation to their interest in the topic. It may also be true that, in general, students need more than one fifteen-week course to hone these skills.

Of the seventeen students who completed my English 102 course in Fall 2017, 29% earned A's, 47% earned Bs, 11% earned Cs, 5% earned Ds, and 24% earned Fs. College-wide, English 102 grade disbursement was skewed more favorably with 36% of those 171 students earning A's, 27% earning Bs, 16% earning Cs, 5% earning Cs, and 8% earning Fs.²⁰⁵ However, overall, 76% of my students received an A or B, whereas college-wide, only 63% of all English 102 students earned an A or B. Again, this data is encouraging but also inconclusive.

To validate my baseline results, a larger sample of students must be included in a future study, and a control group should be implemented, ideally in a separate class that studies the same traditional texts without the popular culture component. Another question my baseline study raises is whether or not grade-based data is the most accurate measure of popular culture's success in bridging the achievement gap. Retention rates, transfer rates, and graduation rates may be better indicators. In my particular class, twenty-two students were enrolled. By midterm, eighteen were regularly attending, and seventeen took the final exam. Given the many variables affecting community college students in particular—full- and part-time jobs, families, commuting²⁰⁶—this seems to be a reasonable

²⁰⁵ Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Effectiveness, *Course Grade Distribution Fall 05 – 17*, Harford Community College, March 13, 2018. Accessed April 18, 2018.

²⁰⁶ Bartholome, p. 149. "Common characteristics of the typical community college learner: 80 percent to 90 percent are employed; 50 percent hold down full-time jobs. Over 70 percent of

retention rate, although my course's 22% withdrawal rate is higher than the college-wide 8% withdrawal rate for English 102. Moving forward, a longitudinal study in which students deemed underprepared are divided into two groups—one of which is instructed using popular culture—and tracked through their community college careers may be most appropriate.

Continued quantitative investigation into popular culture's pedagogical power should not be overlooked. Many scholars have done important examinations of popular culture in high school curricula, but complementary work needs to advance in the realm of adult education. As Henfield, Washington, and Owens report, "Disparate participation, referred to as the participation gap, in rigorous coursework and programs is slowly becoming recognized as a contributor to the overall gap in achievement between Black students and their peers (Ford, Grantham, & Whiting, 2008)."²⁰⁷ If nothing else, the research done to date collectively supports that popular culture can improve student engagement, which seems like a good start. As implementation moves forward, institutions will also have to investigate ways to balance course time between popular culture and traditional works that are lauded as our country's cultural backbone.

students attend part-time; the students are almost exclusively commuters. . . . Students are often married, [and] have family responsibilities."

²⁰⁷ p. 18.

Appendix A

Harford Community College
English Composition and Literature (Eng 102)
Course Syllabus

Instructor: Aubrey Zinn **Office Hours:** MWF 10 – 11 a.m. or by appointment

Blackboard: Our course is web enhanced, so documents are available on Blackboard. Also, you will have the option to submit some assignments via Blackboard, and there will be a few times when you will have to post to a discussion board.

Course Format: Our discussions and our writing will center around four basic questions: How? Why? Who cares? How do we know this is true?

Required Text:

Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell. *Compact Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*. 9th ed. Cengage Learning, 2016.

Course Description:

This three-credit course focuses on the critical analysis of literary genres, emphasizing poetry, short fiction, and drama. Students explore literary works from various cultures through discussions and critical writing activities. *Prerequisite: minimum of C grade in Eng 101.*

Student Learning Objectives and Academic Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Write critical compositions on literary works (Academic Outcomes: communication, critical thinking, information literacy).
2. Interpret literary texts by supporting assertions with specific references to the work and other relevant primary and secondary sources (Academic Outcomes: communication, critical thinking, information literacy).
3. Define and analyze the elements of the short story, poetry, and drama (Academic Outcomes: communication, critical thinking).
4. Increase knowledge of literature (Academic Outcomes: culture and society).

NOTE: See the current HCC catalog for a complete description of the Academic Outcomes.

Course Requirements:

1. Write three out-of-class critical essays, including one extended research essay.
2. Complete four in-class writing assignments, including the final exam.
3. Check email and Blackboard regularly for course information and announcements.
4. Complete readings and journals.
5. Attend all classes and scheduled conferences. If you do not attend your scheduled conference with the required materials, you cannot receive higher than a 65% D on the essay. See p. 3 of this syllabus for more information on conferences.
6. Complete assignments for classes and scheduled conferences.
7. Participate in class discussions and activities.
8. Prepare all out-of-class essays using appropriate word-processing programs and MLA form.
9. Receive instructor approval of essay topics, resources, and writing plans prior to starting a draft of the essays.

Assessment Methods and Grading:

Writing skills in English 102 will be evaluated on a traditional A to F scale. Each writing assignment will be graded on how well it meets the course objectives listed on this syllabus as well as the stated specifications of the particular writing assignment. Grading rubrics and/or checklists will be given when each essay is assigned, but in general, essay grades are based on thorough analysis and support, clear organization, and effective use of language and stylistic devices.

Assignment	Points Available	% of final grade		Points Earned
Portfolio	150	12%		
Participation / Class Discussions*	100	8%		
In-class writings (3)	150	12%		
Critical Analysis: Short Story	160 = 100 (essay) 60 (thesis, outline, source highlighting)	12%		
Research Essay and related preliminary assignments (Drama)	340	26%		
In-Class Research Presentation / Discussion Leadership (Poetry)	100	8%		
Critical Analysis: Poet	100	8%		
Final Exam (includes an in-class writing)	200	15%		
TOTAL	1,300	100%		

*Participation in class discussions is a somewhat nebulous area to grade, yet it is a vital part of this course. Essentially, 100 points—about 8%—will be deducted for students who do not participate in class discussions. The instructor must first alert the student of the problem and give him/her ample time to improve.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: In the interest of fairness, ALL assignments must be turned in at the appointed time—typically at the ***beginning*** of class.

DO NOT email assignments unless specific permission has been given. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL NOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR EMAILED WORK OR WORK LEFT IN HER MAILBOX.

- ✓ All assignments must be in MLA format.
- ✓ Please use a paperclip rather than a staple.
- ✓ Each essay must be written on the assigned topic, and your specific topic and thesis must have prior approval (typically via Blackboard).
- ✓ All essays must have a works cited page. Any essay not meeting these requirements will fail.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: An assignment turned in half an hour late is still late and will be penalized as if it were a day late; in other words, arriving at the end of class in order to turn in an essay will mean the assignment is late, as you had an extra hour that your classmates did not have.

Late assignments will be dropped one letter grade per day until the next scheduled class meeting and will not be accepted after the next scheduled class meeting.

CONFERENCES: We will have a one-on-one conference for two of the three out-of-class essays you write. If you do not attend your conference, you cannot receive higher than a 65% D on that essay.

You will bring ***two things*** to conference.

- ✓ A TYPED draft in MLA form —minimum 2 pages of text for the short story essay draft and minimum 3 pages of text for the research essay draft. If you do not bring the draft, you cannot receive higher than a 65% (“D”) on that essay.
 - The draft must have the source workshop highlighting and labeling completed. This is part of your grade (20 points).
- ✓ A TYPED draft of your Works Cited page.

**Although I do not allocate specific conference time for the poet essay, you are encouraged to schedule an appointment with me to go over a draft of your essay.

REVISION POLICY: Revision is a vital part of the writing process, and ample time is allotted for feedback and revision in each essay cycle. Once an essay is submitted for grading, it cannot be revised for an improved grade.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS: Students should retain all graded assignments for up to 60 days after the end of the semester in case there is a grade dispute.

GRADE SUMMARIES: Grades are available under the “My Grades” link on our Blackboard page. These grades will be updated by midterm and before finals; however, I do not promise to update at other times. You are responsible for keeping track of your own grade. You can figure your grade by dividing your total points by the total possible points. Use the assignment chart on page 2.

Course Policies:

HCC students are bound by the academic policies and sanctions—including academic dishonesty and student conduct—outlined in the most current HCC Catalog. It is the student's responsibility to review these policies prior to the start of the semester.

ATTENDANCE: Students are expected to attend all classes and conferences during the scheduled times and to participate in all learning activities. The instructor will keep attendance records for reporting and evaluating purposes.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: Students are expected to act as responsible and mature adults whose behavior does not interfere with instruction, does not distract other students, and is not rude. Therefore, students must turn off cell phones and other electronic equipment before class begins. Do not text or listen to headphones during class. Students should not arrive late or leave early; note the attendance policy elsewhere in this syllabus. Students should not have side conversations or sleep during class. If a student wishes to record a class, he/she must seek instructor approval.

This is a course in which varying opinions are welcomed and encouraged. Mature students respectfully express their opinions and listen to the opinions of others. We will read and discuss literature that is challenging, thought-provoking, and controversial. Some of the works will address topics that may make you uncomfortable and may challenge your beliefs. Please be open-minded and willing to appreciate and learn from diverse voices and experiences.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE: Email is a fast and effective way for us to communicate; however, please be professional. Always include a subject heading and begin each email with a greeting ("Hi," "Good afternoon," "Dear Mrs. Zinn," etc.). Use complete sentences. Do not issue commands (such as "Look this over and tell me what to fix"); rather, make a request and use please and thank you. In other words, be polite; you do not want to offend the person who gives you grades. When sending an attachment, always include a brief message explaining what is attached. Remember that email is meant to be a tool; it should not create more work for me. These same practices should be implemented in your impending professional life, so practice them now.

STUDENT CONDUCT: Students will be familiar with and adhere to the "Code for Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct" which can be found on OwlNet under the My Academic Life Tab or in the HCC online catalog. The Code outlines prohibited conduct, the disciplinary process, and possible sanctions. Students found responsible for violating the Code will have a disciplinary record that will remain in the Office of the Associate Vice President for Student Development for three years.

TITLE IX EDUCATION POLICY & SEXUAL MISCONDUCT: Harford Community College (HCC) is committed to providing a working and learning environment free from sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, intimate partner violence/abuse, sexual exploitation and sexual intimidation. Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination prohibited by state and federal laws, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as amended (“Title IX”) and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, and also may constitute criminal activity. HCC will not tolerate sexual misconduct. The College has implemented measures to ensure that all allegations of sexual misconduct are investigated and resolved in a timely, discreet, fair, and impartial manner. All incidents of sexual misconduct should be reported to the Title IX Coordinator, Dr. Jacqueline Jackson, by calling 443-412-2233. The complete Sexual Harassment and Misconduct Procedure can be found on OwlNet – My Academic Life Tab (for students) and Work Life Tab (for employees).

FEDERAL CREDIT HOUR DEFINITION:

For a 15 week semester, each credit hour represents one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of outside class-work per week. For terms that are less than 15 weeks, students should also spend a minimum of two hours outside of class for every hour in class. Academic activities include, but are not limited to reading, writing, studying, research, and completing worksheets. In addition, at least an equivalent amount of out of class work is required for laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, etc.

At Harford Community College, for all credit courses, students are expected to spend a minimum of 37.5 combined hours of direct instructional time and related coursework time per credit hour. This course is a 3 credit course. This course achieves the minimum of 112.5 hours of combined instructional time by requiring 37.5 hours of direct instructional time and 75 hours of student work outside of direct instructional time.

Resources:

LEARNING CENTER: Students are encouraged to use this free, walk-in service. The Learning Center is located in the Library room 115.

<http://www.harford.edu/learningcenter>

443-412-2427 or 443-412-2429

learningcenter@harford.edu

What They Offer:

- Free learning assistance in most courses for HCC students registered for the current semester
- Over 45 part-time peer and professional learning assistants who bring experience in a variety of courses
- The learning assistants help students with specific course content while promoting good study habits and learning strategies
- No appointment needed for walk-in assistance in the Learning Center

What students need to bring :

- Student ID card
- Textbook, class material, assignment specifications
- Specific questions to review
- Assignment sheet and/or transitional English record sheet (if applicable)

ASK A LIBRARIAN: <http://www.harford.edu/academics/library/help/ask-a-librarian.aspx?FP=OWL>

You can text, call, email, or make a one-on-one research appointment with a research librarian. This is an amazing service!

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES:

HCC is committed to serving students who have documented physical, learning, psychological, or other disabilities. Students who have a disability are responsible for contacting Disability Support Services at 443-412-2402 to discuss their needs and establish eligibility for services and reasonable accommodations. Because accommodations can take time to implement, if you have not already contacted DSS you should do so immediately. All information shared with Disability Support is kept in accordance with relevant state and federal laws.

STUDENT SERVICES: A list of hours and locations for Student Services is available in OwlNet, on My Academic Life tab, under Quick Links.

Course Outline and Assignments

*The instructor reserves the right to modify and/or change the course syllabus with reasonable notification to students.

DATE	TOPIC(S)	<u>DUE</u> THIS MEETING	SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES
Week 1			
Monday, Aug. 28	Course introduction The Literary Canon Why bother reading any of this? Using Blackboard	Post to Blackboard Discussion Board by 8 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 29 : The Good, The Bad, & The Ugly. NOTE: <i>Assigned posts count toward your 100-point participation grade.</i> Upcoming: By 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1 respond to at least 2 other classmates' posts.	
Wednesday, Aug. 30	Theme Seeds: Unearthing Meaning in Literature →Christopher Booker's 7 Basic Plots →Why the literary terms matter Writing Journals	Upcoming: Post to Blackboard Discussion Board by Friday, Feb. 1 at 8 p.m.: 1) What do you hope to get out of this course? Consult the handout "Top 10 Reasons To Study Humanities" 2) Also, remember to respond to at least 2 other classmates' Good, Bad, Ugly posts. Define Literary Terms ASAP...	Glossary of Literary Terms (G1-G10) See syllabus p. 16 for online resources
Friday, Sept. 1	Discussion: "Story of an Hour" From Theme Seed to Theme Statement	Chapter 1 pp. 4-7 ("Conventional Themes" & "The Literary Canon") Chapter 1 pp. 9 – 16 (Interpreting Literature," "Evaluating Literature," & "Function of Literary Criticism") "Story of an Hour" pp. 204-206) →Bring at least 1 theme seed with quoted lines from the story to support it. →What, to you, is the most important literary	

		element in this story? Why? **3 Posts due by 8 pm tonight (see “upcoming” above)	
Week 2			
Monday, Sept. 4	LABOR DAY: College Closed		
Wednesday, Sept. 6	Explain Portfolios Tragedy: Discuss “A Rose for Emily” by W. Faulkner	Read “A Rose for Emily” (p. 224-) and watch a TV show or movie that fits Booker’s definition of <i>tragedy</i>	
Friday, Sept. 8	Wrap up discussion of “Rose for Emily” and the tragedies you watched	“Emily” Portfolio entry	
Week 3			
Monday, Sept. 11	Comedy: “Happy Endings” by M. Atwood	Read “Happy Endings” (p. 545-) and complete Portfolio entry	
Wednesday, Sept. 13	Overcoming the Monster: “Cask of Amontillado” by E. A. Poe	Read “Cask of Amontillado” (p. 328-) complete Portfolio entry	
Friday, Sept. 15	Voyage and Return: “The Things They Carried” by T. O’Brien	Read “The Things They Carried” (p. 392-) and complete Portfolio entry	
Week 4			
Monday, Sept. 18	Rebirth: “The Storm” by K. Chopin	Read “The Storm” (p. 273-) and complete Portfolio entry	
Wednesday, Sept. 20	Quest: “A Worn Path” by E. Welty	Read “A Worn Path” (p. 463-) and complete Portfolio entry	
Friday, Sept. 22	In-Class Writing: 50 points Rags to Riches: “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by G. G. Marquez	Read “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (p. 585-)	
Week 5			
Monday, Sept. 25	Essay #1: Short Story Theme Analysis Parts of a literary Essay Model Essay *conference sign up	Text Ch. 5 Optional Short Story Extra Credit Due (via Bb by 11:59 pm)	
Wednesday, Sept. 27	Outline Workshop Essay style choices: intros, titles, organization, conclusions	Bring your topic, thesis, and outline (20 points)	

Friday, Sept. 29	SS Essay Conferences— No Class	Bring a typed draft of your essay (2 pages minimum). See syllabus part 1 p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Week 6			
Monday, Oct. 2	SS Essay Conferences— No Class	Bring a typed draft of your essay (2 pages minimum). See syllabus part 1 p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Wednesday, Oct. 4	SS Essay Conferences— No Class	Bring a typed draft of your essay (2 pages minimum). See syllabus part 1 p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Friday, Oct. 6	Introduction to Drama	Short Story Essay Due	
Week 7			
Monday, Oct. 9	Discuss “Beauty”	“Beauty” pp. 1069- Ch. 40 pp. 1511-1515 →Bring at least 1 theme seed <i>with quoted lines to support it.</i> →What, to you, is the most important literary element in this play? Why?	Plot: Ch. 37 Character: Ch. 38 Staging: Ch. 39
Wednesday, Oct. 11	Intro to Research Essay Assignment Using literary criticism MLA Quiz (mandatory, but you will earn extra credit points)	Begin reading “Fences” (p. 1549-) <i>due for discussion by Monday, Oct. 16</i>	
Friday, Oct. 13	Literary Criticism	BRING BOOK TO CLASS	
Week 8			
Monday, Oct. 16	Discuss “Fences”: Theme Seeds and Text Support	Bring a list of at least 5 critical questions (20 points)	
Wednesday, Oct. 18	Discuss “Fences”: Historical background; literary criticism; scholarly sources	Posted article :TBA	

Friday, Oct. 20	Developing essay topics Model essay	Essay topic and thesis due for approval via Bb by 11:59 p.m. (20 pts)	
Week 9			
Monday, Oct. 23	In-Class Writing: “Fences” from a critical stance (50 points)		
Wednesday, Oct. 25	Online Meeting: Outline and Source Conferences—NO CLASS	Due no later than 11:30 am: Post your outline with sources (outline template available on Bb) 30 points Due no later than 12:15 pm: Respond to your groups’ posts (refer to comment guide sheet) **I will respond as well, but I am responding to all class members, so I might not be finished by 12:15.	
Friday, Oct. 27	“Fences” Essay Conferences—NO CLASS	Bring a highlighted, typed draft of your essay—3 pages minimum. See syllabus p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Week 10			
Monday, Oct. 30	“Fences” Essay Conferences—NO CLASS	Bring a highlighted, typed draft of your essay—3 pages minimum. See syllabus p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Wednesday, Nov. 1	“Fences” Essay Conferences—NO CLASS	Bring a highlighted, typed draft of your essay—3 pages minimum. See syllabus p. 3 for conference requirements.	
Friday, Nov. 3	Introduction to Poetry and Poetry Explication	“Fences” Research Essay Due Define Poetry Terms ASAP	
Week 11			
Monday, Nov. 6	College’s WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE Explain Poetry Discussion Leadership	Read through the poems on the syllabus and post your top 3 preferences for discussion leadership (due via Bb by 11:59 p.m.)	

	(connected to Essay #3: Poet Analysis) **Begin planning practice discussion (Langston Hughes)		
Wednesday, Nov. 8	Poem Explication and Literary Criticism: Practice Leading Discussion (small groups)		
Friday, Nov. 10	Discussion (special focus on persona and tone)	READ ALL: E. Dickinson, "I'm Nobody!" (p. 675) R. Frost, "Fire and Ice" (p. 686) W. Szyborska, "Hilter's First Photograph" (p. 709) T. Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz" (p. 885) M. Espada, "The Community College Revises Its Curriculum" (p. 987) A. Hudgins, "Elegy for My Father" (p. 890) Portfolio entry DUE (**Remember: You will read all poems, but in your entry, you only explicate one of the poems.)	
Week 12			
Monday, Nov. 13	Special focus on persona and tone, cont'd		
Wednesday, Nov. 15	Discussion (special focus on word choice and word order)	READ ALL: M. Atwood, "The City Planners" (p. 722) G. Brooks, "We Real Cool" (p. 730) E. E. Cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty how town" (p. 734) Portfolio Entry DUE	Ch. 25
Friday, Nov. 17	Discussion (special focus on imagery and figurative language)	READ ALL: W. C. Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (p. 742)	Ch. 26 & 27

		R. Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" (p. 749) A. Lorde, "Rooming houses are old women" (p. 761) S. Plath, "Daddy" (p. 772) M. Atwood, "you fit into me" (p. 780) A. Ginsberg, "A Supermarket in California" (p. 787) C. Sandburg, "Fog" (p. 895) Portfolio Entry DUE	
Week 13			
Monday, Nov. 20	Discussion (special focus on imagery and figurative language, cont'd)		
Wednesday, Nov. 22	NO CLASS—College Closed Happy Thanksgiving!		
Friday, Nov. 24	NO CLASS—College Closed Happy Thanksgiving!		
Week 14			
Monday, Nov. 27	Discussion (special focus on sound)	READ ALL: W. Whitman, "Had I the Choice" (p. 791) G. Brooks, "Sadie and Maud" (p. 792) R. Herrick, "Delight in Disorder" (p. 809) L. Carroll, "Jabberwocky" (p. 810) T. Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz" (p. 885) Portfolio Entry DUE	Ch. 28
Wednesday, Nov. 29	Discussion (special focus on sound, cont'd)		
Friday, Dec. 1	Discussion (special focus on form) **Exam information handout	READ ALL: Sonnet Form: G. Brooks, "First Fight, Then Fiddle" (p. 823) Epigrams (complete together): M. Espada "Why I Went to College" (p. 833); C. A. Duffy "Mrs. Darwin" (p. 832)	Ch. 29

		Haiku (complete together): M. Basho, "Four Haiku" (p. 835); J. Kerouac "American Haiku" (pp. 836-837) Open Form: C. Sandburg, "Chicago" (p. 838) Portfolio Entry DUE	
Week 15			
Monday, Dec. 4	In-Class Writing: Sonnet Structure (50 points)		
Wednesday, Dec. 6	Discussion (special focus on form, cont'd) Discuss Final Exam	Optional Poetry Extra Credit due (in class or via Bb)	
Friday, Dec. 8 11:20 am – 1:20 pm	FINAL EXAM: In-Class Writing Assignment (literary terms, short answer, and essay)	**Final grades will be available via Owlnet on Dec. 18.	

Appendix B

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly
m = movie

1) Discuss: What criteria did you use to judge the works? On which works do you agree? Disagree?

2) List topics addressed in the works (Example: greed, freedom, coming of age, etc.).

GOOD	Topics	BAD	Topics	UGLY	Topics
<i>Living on the Black</i> <i>The Immortal</i> <i>Life of Henrietta</i> <i>Lacks</i> <i>Narcos</i> (tv) <i>Anabelle 2</i> (m) <i>Milk and Honey</i> <i>And Then There Were None</i> <i>The Lovely Bones</i> <i>Love and Basketball</i> (m) <i>Goal: The Dream Begins</i> (m) <i>Girls' Trip</i> (m) <i>The Dark Knight</i> (m) <i>Catch 22</i> <i>An Abundance of Katherines</i> <i>Aquamarine</i> (m) <i>Great Gatsby</i> (m) <i>CSI</i> (tv) <i>Kicking and Screaming</i> (m) <i>Step Brothers</i> (m)		<i>Deadpool</i> (m) <i>HP and Prisoner of Azkaban</i> <i>Baby Driver</i> (m) <i>Krampus</i> (m) <i>The Odyssey</i> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> <i>Lizzie McGuire</i> (tv) <i>Phil to the Future</i> (tv) <i>The Belko Experiment</i> (m) <i>Anabelle</i> (m) <i>The Kite Runner</i> <i>Wolf of Wall Street</i> (m) <i>Big Fat Greek Wedding 2</i> (m) <i>"The Raven"</i> <i>Austin Powers</i> (m) <i>Jupiter Ascending</i> (m)		<i>Of Mice and Men</i> <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> <i>Lucy</i> (m) <i>Twilight</i> series <i>Supersize Me</i> (m) <i>Minions</i> (m) <i>Dirty Dancing</i> (m) anything by Shakespeare... <i>The Tempest</i> <i>Spit on Your Grave</i> (m) <i>Avatar: Last AirBender</i> (m) <i>The Scarlett Letter</i> <i>Beowulf</i> <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (m) <i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>Fast and Furious 8</i> (m)	

Christopher Booker's Seven Basic Plots

Christopher Booker is a scholar who wrote that every story falls into one of seven basic plot structures: Overcoming the Monster, Rags to Riches, the Quest, Voyage and Return, Comedy, Tragedy, and Rebirth.

1) Overcoming the Monster Hero learns of a great evil threatening the land and sets out to destroy it.
2) Rags to Riches Surrounded by dark forces who suppress and ridicule him, the Hero slowly blossoms into a mature figure who ultimately gets riches, a kingdom, and the perfect mate.
3) The Quest Hero learns of something that he desperately wants to find, and sets out to find it, often with companions.
4) Voyage and Return Hero heads off into a magic land with crazy rules, ultimately triumphs over the madness and returns home far more mature than when he set out.
5) Comedy Hero and Heroine are destined to get together, but a dark force is preventing them from doing so; the story conspires to make the dark force repent, and suddenly the Hero and Heroine are free to get together. This is part of a cascade of effects that shows everyone for who they really are, and allows two or more other relationships to correctly form.
6) Tragedy The protagonist character slowly spirals down into darkness before he or she is finally defeated.
7) Rebirth As with the <i>Tragedy</i> plot, but our protagonist manages to realize his or her error before it's too late, and does a complete turnaround to avoid inevitable defeat.

No. _____

A. Zinn

Eng102

Fall 2017

SURVEY

“Fences” and Wise Old Man Lesson

I am collecting data on whether or not studying popular culture helps students analyze literature. I would appreciate your honest, anonymous feedback. If you choose to participate, I will add extra credit to your grade. To keep your feedback anonymous, I will have another instructor transfer the points (all or nothing based on filling out this form) from this randomly-assigned number to the gradebook. I will not know who provided what information.

1) Did you enjoy discussing versions of wise old men / women from popular TV, movies, and books?

YES NO

Why?

2) Did looking at versions of wise old men / women from popular TV, movies, books help you understand Troy in “Fences”? YES NO

If so, how? Please be as specific as possible.

3) Complete: If we had NOT looked at versions of wise old men/women from popular TV, movies, books, I would have understood the play “Fences” (MORE / THE SAME / LESS).

Short Story In-Class Writing: 50 points

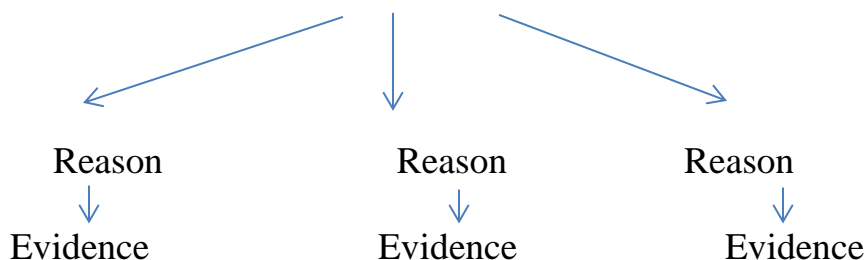
The rags to riches tale is perhaps one of the most familiar because many fairy tales fit its formula: *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Aladdin*. *Harry Potter* is a contemporary example.

What fairy tale qualities does Marquez infuse in his story “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (pp. 585-590)? Why do you think he infuses these elements?

CRITERIA	NOT EVIDENT	BASIC	SATISFACTORY	OUTSTANDING
Thesis: The thesis answers the question and is clearly defined and adhered to in the essay. An excellent thesis will contain a plan of proof.	0	6	8	10
Introduction: The introduction sets the context for your argument, and includes the thesis and a plan of proof.	0	3	4	5
Organization: The body is organized by unified reasons that support the thesis. The organization of the information progresses logically and follows the plan of proof outlined in the introduction. The body includes transitions to connect ideas back to the thesis.	0	6	8	10
Support: You support your analysis/reasons with specific, cited references to the works. You briefly summarize key events as necessary. You include specific examples, and you quote important dialog / descriptions as necessary. You comment on and draw conclusions about the evidence you present from the story.	0	9	12	15
Conclusion: You comment on or extend the information presented in the essay. The conclusion is NOT simply a restatement of the thesis; rather, you draw a <i>conclusion</i> about the topic.	0	3	4	5
Style: You maintain the 3 rd -person point of view (do not use “I”). You use present tense verbs when talking about literature UNLESS you are discussing historical events, biographical data, or events that took place before the time of the work’s main action.	0	3	4	5
TOTAL	/ 50			

****Consider using an issue tree to organize your ideas.**

Thesis:_(answer to your WHY question)_____



Research Assignment: "Fences" by August Wilson

Schmoop argues that "Fences" is a tragedy and that Troy is a tragic hero (link: <https://www.shmoop.com/fences-august-wilson/troy-maxson.html>).

Write in response to this argument by analyzing Troy in some way. You are not limited to only discussing Troy; you are encouraged to partner his characterization with other literary elements in "Fences." Theme does not have to be the main focus of the essay, as it was for your short story essay; however, you will have to address theme in some way in your essay, perhaps in the conclusion to explain why the elements you dissect matter to the play overall.

- ✓ Read the play "Fences" between now and class on ---.
- ✓ Begin by listing a minimum of 5 **critical questions** AND watching a contemporary TV show, movie, or reading a contemporary piece of literature that contains a "wise old man" archetype—take notes on this archetype (**due in class on ---**).
- ✓ Use one or more of these questions to zero in on a specific topic that interests you. (**Topic, working thesis, and planning outline due by ---**)
- ✓ Begin researching your topic to help you focus / narrow it.
- ✓ Use the play and your outside sources to create your **full outline** (**due ---**).

Rough Draft due (typed, minimum 3 pages): **Due ---**; remember that you cannot receive higher than a 65% on the essay if you do not attend conference with a draft.

Final Draft due at the **beginning of class** on ---.

Other Requirements:

- Length: 5-7 pages (excluding Works Cited page), typed in MLA format with size 12 Times New Roman font
- Sources: **You must have at least 3 supplemental (secondary) sources (sources other than the text); two sources MUST be critical articles.**
A note of caution: I highly doubt you will be able to write a thorough analysis of your topic without several critical articles, so if you desire a grade higher than a C, I encourage you to do a lot of source work and find 2+ works of literary criticism relating to your topic. Of course, there are always exceptions, and I allow for that; thus, the requirements are written cautiously.
 - Support your analysis of the play with text support in the form of quotes, paraphrases, and/or summaries of the play itself.
 - Support your analysis of the play with quotes, paraphrases, and/or summaries from at least two critical articles and one other supplemental source. A critical article must be written by a credible scholar within the literary field; in other words, you must find the articles in a journal, not from Joe Schmo on the Internet. I strongly suggest you consult the HCC Library's online databases, such as **JSTOR, Literary Reference Center** and the **Literature Resource Center**. You can consult the library's Literary Database Tutorial via the library homepage. There is also a link to this tutorial in the class slides for ---.
- The requirements dictate that your Works Cited page will have a minimum of 4 entries: the play, two critical articles, and a third supplemental source of your choice. You may exceed 4 sources.
- This is a research essay. If you have no supplementary (secondary) sources, you cannot pass this essay.
- Only typed essays will be graded.

GRADING

Preliminary Grades		
You have submitted at least 5 critical questions: discussion-oriented questions that hit on topics of critical or interpretive debate in the play.	20	
You have submitted your topic and thesis for approval via Bb.	20	
You have submitted a detailed outline—with sources—at the <i>online conference</i> .	30	
You attended your <i>essay conference</i> with a 3-page (or more) draft and a draft of your works cited page.	Y / N	
The draft is highlighted per the source workshop guidelines (see handout).	20	
Essay Grade		
Thesis: The thesis contains the work's title and author and is written as a persuasive thesis rather than an informative thesis.	10	
Introduction: Includes background information that gives the reader a context to understand the topic and thesis; is written in a style that complements the rest of the essay; contains a clear and worthwhile thesis statement that is adhered to in the essay; offers a plan of proof to direct the reader; works with the title to engage the reader in the essay and complement the topic.	25	
Body: Development The writing follows the plan of proof from the introduction; supports the thesis with accurate and relevant text evidence (primary source); supports the thesis with at least two relevant, credible critical essays and at least one additional relevant, credible supplemental source (secondary sources); integrates quotes, paraphrases, summaries smoothly; includes writer's interpretations / conclusions about the evidence and explanations for how the evidence proves the thesis; leaves no unanswered questions—the topic is fully developed.	80 (roughly 1/3 of the actual essay's grade)	
Body: Organization and Coherence The writing is organized in a conscious manner that complements the topic and thesis and is organized using transitions that link ideas and sections to each other and to the thesis.	20	
Conclusion: Extends the information presented rather than simply restating what has already been proven; is written in a style that complements the rest of the essay.	25	
Theme: You have explained how your topic reinforces the play's overall meaning. To this end, you have explicated the play's overall meaning.	40	
Citations: Information is correctly cited using MLA internal documentation and a correctly formatted Works Cited page.	30	
Form and Grammar/Mechanics: The essay is typed in MLA form (font, pagination, heading, title, spacing). It has been carefully edited and proofread for grammar, mechanics, and spelling. You maintain the 3 rd person point of view. You write about literature using the present tense.	20	
TOTAL	340	

Literary Criticism Jigsaw Activity

TYPE	3 MAIN TENETS	GROUP CONCLUSIONS: What are benefits and dangers of each type? Is there a type that seems best? Why?
1) MODEL: Queer Theory pp.1678 - 1680	1) Sexual identity—and ALL identity—is not fixed; it can be transcended to access / explore different points of view. 2) Zeroes in on sexual relationships and roles in a text as a clue to underlying meaning(s) within the text. 3) We miss meaning if we are fixated on “heteronormativity”(1714)—the premise that heterosexuality is the moral standard—because then we simply assume any derivations from heterosexuality or traditional gender roles are meant to be perverse or problematic.	
2) Formalism / New Criticism pp. 1661 - 1662		
3) Reader Response pp. 1663 - 1665		

TYPE	3 MAIN TENETS	GROUP CONCLUSIONS: What are benefits and dangers of each type? Is there a type that seems best? Why?
4) Feminist Criticism pp. 1665 - 1666		
5) Psychoanalytic Criticism pp. 1669 - 1671		
6) New Historicism pp. 1676 - 1678		

Bad and Boujee

By Migos

You know Young Rich Niggas
 You know so we ain't really never had no old money
 We got a whole lotta new money though
 (If Young Metro don't trust you I'm gon' shoot ya)
 Raindrops, drop tops (drop top)
 Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox (cookie)
 Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot (Thot)
 Cookin' up dope in the crockpot, (pot)
 We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga (hey)
 I don't trust nobody, grip the trigger (nobody)
 Call up the gang, they come and get you (gang)
 Cry me a river, give you a tissue (hey)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (blaow)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (savage)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (grrah)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (dope)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (hey)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (glah)
 Offset, woah, woah, woah, woah, woah
 Rackings on rackings, got backends on backends
 I'm ridin' around in a coupe (coupe)
 I take your bitch right from you (you)
 Bitch I'm a dog, woof (grrr)
 Beat the ho walls loose (hey)
 Hop in the frog, woah (skrt)
 I tell that bitch to come for me (come for me)
 I swear these niggas under me (hey)
 They hate and the devil keep jumpin' me (jumpin' me)
 Bankrolls on me keep me company (cash)
 We did the most, yeah
 Pull up in Ghosts, yeah (woo)
 My diamonds a choker (glah)
 Holdin' the fire with no holster (blaow)
 Rick The Ruler, diamonds cooler (cooler)
 This a Rollie not a Mueller (hey)
 Dabbin' on 'em like the usual (dab)
 Magic with the brick, do voodoo (magic)
 Court side with a bad bitch (bitch)
 Then I send the bitch through Uber (go)
 I'm young and rich and plus I'm boujee (hey)
 I'm not stupid so I keep the Uzi (rrrah)
 Rackings on rackings, got backends on backends
 So my money makin' my back ache
 You niggas got a low Act' rate (Act')
 We from the Nawf, yeah dat way (Nawf)
 Fat cookie blunt in the ash tray (cookie)

Two bitches, just national smash day (smash)
 Hop in the Lamb', have a drag race (skrt)
 I let them birds take a bath bae (brrrrr)
 Raindrops, drop tops (drop top)
 Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox (cookie)
 Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot (thot)
 Cookin' up dope in the crockpot, (pot)
 We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga (hey)
 I don't trust nobody, grip the trigger (nobody)
 Call up the gang, they come and get you (gang)
 Cry me a river, give you a tissue (hey)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (blaow)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (savage)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (grrah)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (dope)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (hey)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (glah)
 Pour a four, I'm droppin' muddy
 Outer space, KiD CuDi (drank)
 Introduce me your bitch ass wifey and we know she sluttin'
 Broke a brick down, nutty buddy, now that nigga duckin'
 Don't move too fast I might shoot you (huh?)
 Draco bad and boujee (Draco)
 I'm always hangin' with shooters (brrah)
 Might be posted somewhere secluded (private)
 Still be playin' with pots and pans, call me Quavo Ratatouille
 Run with that sack, call me Boobie (run with it)
 When I'm on stage show me boobies (ay)
 Ice on my neck, I'm the coolest (ice)
 Hop out the suicide with the Uzi (pew-pew-pew)
 I pull up, I pull up, I pull up
 I hop out with all of the drugs in the cooler (skrt)
 I'm cookin', I'm cookin', I'm whippin', I'm whippin' into a rock up, let it lock up (lock up)
 I gave her 10 racks, I told her go shoppin' and spend it all at the pop up (ten)
 These bitches they fuck and suck dick and they bustin' for Instagram, get your clout up
 Uh, yeah, dat way, float on the track like a Segway (go)
 Yeah, dat way, I used to trap by the subway (trappin')
 Yeah, dat way, young nigga trap with the AK (rrrah)
 Yeah, dat way, big dyke ho get it on, Macy Gray (hey)
 Raindrops, drop tops (drop top)
 Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox (cookie)
 Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot (thot)
 Cookin' up dope in the crockpot, (pot)
 We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga (hey)
 I don't trust nobody, grip the trigger (nobody)
 Call up the gang, they come and get you (gang)
 Cry me a river, give you a tissue (hey)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (blaow)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (savage)

We got 30's and 100 rounds too (grrah)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (dope)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (hey)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (glah)
 Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, my bitch she bad to the bone, ay
 Wait, these niggas watchin', I swear to God they be my clones
 Yeah, hey, huh, switchin' my hoes like my flows (what?)
 Switchin' my flows like my clothes (like what?)
 Keep on shootin' that gun, don't reload
 Oh, oh, now she won't fuck with my crew
 'Cause the money come all out the roof
 Drive the 'Rari, that bitch got no roof (skrt)
 Wait, what kind of 'Rari? 458 (damn)
 All of these niggas, they hate (they hate)
 Try to hide, shoot through the gate
 Look, go to the strip club, make it rain (rain)
 So much money they use rakes
 Count 100, 000 in your face (in your face)
 Yeah, they put 300 right in the safe
 Met her today, oh
 She talk to me like she knew me, yah
 Go to sleep in a jacuzzi, yah
 Yeah, wakin' up right to a two piece, yah
 Countin' that paper like loose leaf, yah
 Gettin' that chicken with blue cheese, yah
 Yeah, boy you so fake like my collar
 You snakin', I swear to God that be that Gucci, ay
 And you know we winnin' (winnin')
 Yeah, we is not losin'
 Try to play your song, it ain't move me (what?)
 Saw your girl once now she choose me, yeah
 Raindrops, drop tops (drop top)
 Smokin' on cookie in the hotbox (cookie)
 Fuckin' on your bitch she a thot, thot, thot (thot)
 Cookin' up dope in the crockpot, (pot)
 We came from nothin' to somethin' nigga (hey)
 I don't trust nobody, grip the trigger (nobody)
 Call up the gang, they come and get you (gang)
 Cry me a river, give you a tissue (hey)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (blaow)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (savage)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (grrah)
 My bitch is bad and boujee (bad)
 Cookin' up dope with a Uzi (dope)
 My niggas is savage, ruthless (hey)
 We got 30's and 100 rounds too (glah)

Songwriters: Leland Tyler Wayne / Kiari Kendrell Cephus / Robert Mandell / Quavious Keyate Marshall /
 Symere Woods

Bad and Boujee lyrics © Universal Music Publishing Group, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc, Cypmp, Reservoir
 Media Management Inc

"Merry Go 'Round"

By Kacey Musgraves

If you ain't got two kids by 21,
You're probably gonna die alone.
Least that's what tradition told you.
And it don't matter if you don't believe,
Come Sunday morning, you best be there in the front row like you're supposed to.

Same hurt in every heart.
Same trailer, different park.

Mama's hooked on Mary Kay.
Brother's hooked on Mary Jane.
Daddy's hooked on Mary two doors down.
Mary, Mary quite contrary.
We get bored, so, we get married
Just like dust, we settle in this town.
On this broken merry go 'round and 'round and 'round we go
Where it stops nobody knows and it ain't slowin' down.
This merry go 'round.

We think the first time's good enough.
So, we hold on to high school love.
Sayin' we won't end up like our parents.
Tiny little boxes in a row.
Ain't what you want, it's what you know.
Just happy in the shoes you're wearin'.
Same checks we're always cashin' to buy a little more distraction.

'Cause mama's hooked on Mary Kay.
Brother's hooked on Mary Jane.
Daddy's hooked on Mary two doors down.
Mary, Mary, quite contrary.
We get bored, so, we get married.
Just like dust, we settle in this town.
On this broken merry go 'round and 'round and 'round we go
Where it stops nobody knows and it ain't slowin' down.
This merry go 'round.

Mary, Mary, quite contrary.
We're so bored until we're buried.
Just like dust, we settle in this town.
On this broken merry go 'round.
Merry go 'round.

Jack and Jill went up the hill.
Jack burned out on booze and pills.

And Mary had a little lamb.
Mary just don't give a damn no more.

Writer(s): Kacey Musgraves, Shane Mcanally, Joshua Osborne

Bibliography

- Achieve, Inc. "Rising to the Challenge: Views on High School Graduates' Preparedness for College and Careers." *Achieve*, July 22, 2015. Accessed March 3, 2018. <https://www.achieve.org/publications/rising-challenge-survey-ii-powerpoint>.
- ACT. "Underserved Learners Lag Behind Peers in College & Career Readiness According to 2017 ACT Score Results." *ACT*, September 7, 2017. Accessed March 3, 2018. <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/newsroom/underserved-learners-behind-peers-in-college-career-readiness.html>
- Antonova, Katherine Pickering. "America needs the humanities more than ever. So why have we abandoned them?" *Washington Post*, September 18, 2017. Accessed March 4, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/made-by-history/wp/2017/09/18/america-has-forgotten-the-value-of-the-humanities-at-the-moment-it-needs-them-most/?utm_term=.93159cd3f84b
- Bartholome, Lynn G. "The Value of Teaching Popular Culture in the Community College: A Stew of Abstract, Concrete, Serious, and Not-So-Serious Notions." In *Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum: Essays for Educators*, edited by Ray B. Browne. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005. Pp. 148-154

Bauerlein, Mark and Sandra Stotsky. *How Common Core's ELA Standards Place College Readiness at Risk*. White Paper no. 89. Boston: Pioneer Institute, 2013. Accessed November 30, 2015.

<https://www.heartland.org/sites/default/files/commoncoreelastandards.pdf>

Booker, Christopher. *The Seven Basic Plots: Why we tell stories*. New York; Bloomsbury, 2014.

Brookfield, Stephen D. *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning: A Comprehensive Analysis of Principles and Effective Practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986.

Browne, Ray B. "Folklore to Populore." In *Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum: Essays for Educators*, edited by Ray B. Browne. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005. pp. 24-27

Browne, Ray B., editor. *Popular Culture Studies Across the Curriculum: Essays for Educators*. North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc, 2005.

Churchill, John. "From the Secretary." *The Key Reporter*, Fall 2012.

Collopy, Trisha. "Deep Reading: Making a Case for the Pleasures of Difficult Reading at the College Level." *Council Chronicle*, vol. 27, no. 3, March 2018: pp. 10-12.

Complete College America. "Remediation: Higher Education's Bridge to Nowhere." CCA, April 2012. Accessed December 5, 2015.

https://www.insidehighered.com/sites/default/server_files/files/CCA%20Remediation%20ES%20FINAL.pdf

- Descartes, Rene. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. 3rd edition. Translated by Donald A. Cress. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1993.
- Dunn, Jeff. "TV is still media's biggest platform — but the internet is quickly gaining ground." *Business Insider*, June 9, 2017.
<http://www.businessinsider.com/tv-vs-internet-media-consumption-average-chart-2017-6>. Accessed April 13, 2018.
- Fain, Thomas A., Jr. "American Popular Culture: Should We Integrate It Into American Education?" *Education* 124, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 590 – 594.
 Accessed November 29, 2015. ERIC database.
- Fink, Maxwell A. and Deborah C. Foote. "Using *The Simpsons* to Teach Humanities with Gen X and Gen Y Adult Students." In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.
- Frey, Carol. "A Crash Course in College Preparedness: Start sharpening your analytical skills early and don't shy from a challenging read." *US News*, August 16, 2010. Accessed March 3, 2018.
<https://www.usnews.com/education/articles/2010/08/16/a-crash-course-in-college-preparedness> .
- Giroux, Henry A. "Breaking into the Movies: Pedagogy and the Politics of Film." *JAC*, vol. 21, no. 3 (summer 2001): pp. 583-598. Accessed February 6, 2018. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20866426>.

- Guy, Taladge G. "Learning Who We (and They) Are: Popular Culture as Pedagogy." In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.
- Hamston, Julie. "Pleasurable Texts: Popular Culture in the Classroom." *Screen Education*, no. 37, 2005: 108-113. *Education Research Complete*.
- Hanley, Mary Stone. "Old School Crossings: Hip Hop in Teacher Education and Beyond." In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007: pp. 35-44. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.
- Harford Community College. "Academic Policies and Information." *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*. Accessed March 21, 2018.
http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/academic_info_and_policies.asp
- Harford Community College. "Course Descriptions." *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*. Accessed March 21, 2018.
http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/course_descriptions.asp
- Harford Community College. "Course Descriptions: English." *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*. Accessed March 9, 2018,
http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/course_descriptions.asp#P_ENG.
- Harford Community College. "Mission, Vision, Values." *About HCC*. Accessed March 21, 2018. <http://www.harford.edu/about/mission.aspx>

Harford Community College. “Programs of Study.” *2017-2018 Course Catalogue*. Accessed March 21, 2001,

http://ww2.harford.edu/Catalog/programs_of_study.asp

Heidegger, Martin. “Memorial Address.” *Discourse on Thinking*. Translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper, 1966.

Henfield, Malik S., Ahmed R. Washington, and Delila Owens. “To Be or Not to Be Gifted: The Choice for a New Generation.” *Gifted Child Today* 33, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 17 – 25. Accessed November 29, 2015. *Eric* database. <http://journals.prufrock.com/IJP/c.abs/gifted-child-today/volume33/issue2/article987>.

Heuer, Barbara P. “Using Popular Media to Build Literacy.” *In Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.

Hopkins Public Schools. “Recommended Reading for College-Bound Students.” Accessed March 26, 2018. https://www.hopkinsschools.org/sites/default/files/public/downloads/college_reading_list.pdf

Irons, Jeremy. *The Wasteland* “What the Thunder Said.” 30 March 2012, BBC Radio 4. *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sYROFY_Kh8M. Accessed April 17, 2018.

- Johnson, Steven. *Everything Bad Is Good For You: How Today's Popular Culture is Actually Making Us Smarter*. New York: Riverhead, 2005.
- Kelderman, Eric. "Can Closing a Humanities College Save a University?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 13, 2018. Accessed April 20, 2018.
<https://chronicle.com/article/Can-Closing-a-Humanities/243113>.
- Kirk, Karin. "What is the Affective Domain anyway?" *Science Education Resource Center*.
<https://serc.carleton.edu/NAGTWorkshops/affective/intro.html>. Accessed May 2, 2018.
- Kirszner, Laurie G. and Stephen R. Mandell, editors. *Compact Literature: Reading, Reacting, Writing*, ninth edition. Cengage Learning, 2016.
- Kohn, Alfie. "Students Don't 'Work'—They Learn." *Education Week*, September 3, 1997. Accessed December 2, 2015.
<http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/students-dont-work-learn/>.
- , "The 500-Pound Gorilla." *Phi Delta Kappan*, October 2002. Accessed November 28, 2015, <http://www.alfiekohn.org/article/500-pound-gorilla/>.
- Levine-Brown, Patti and S. Wes Anthony. "The Current State of Developmental Education: An Interview with Hunter R. Boylan." *Journal of Developmental Education*, vol. 41, no. 1, Fall 2017, pp. 18-22.
- Lewin, Tamar. "As Interest Fades in Humanities, Colleges Worry." *New York Times*, 30 October 2013. Accessed December 5, 2015.
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/education/as-interest-fades-in-the-humanities-colleges-worry.html?_r=0.

McDermott, John A., “ ‘Do You Love Me, Norman?’ : Faulkner's ‘A Rose for Emily’ and Metalious's *Peyton Place* as Sources for Robert Bloch's *Psycho*,” *Popular Culture*, vol. 40, no. 3, June 2007, pp. 454-467. *Wiley Online Library*.

McLeod, Saul. “Ego Identity vs. Role Confusion.” *Erik Erikson*, updated 2013. Accessed December 7, 2015. <http://www.simplypsychology.org/Erik-Erikson.html>.

Migos. “Bad and Boujee.” *Genius*, <https://genius.com/Migos-bad-and-boujee-lyrics>, accessed April 17, 2018.

Musgraves, Kacey. “Merry Go ‘Round,” *AZ Lyrics*, <https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/kaceymusgraves/merrygoround.html>, accessed April 17, 2018.

National Assessment Governing Board. “The Nation's Report Card: 12th-Grade Scores Lower in Math, Steady in Reading Since 2013; 37 Percent of Students Are Academically Prepared for College.” *PR Newswire*, April 27, 2016. Accessed March 5, 2018. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-nations-report-card-12th-grade-scores-lower-in-math-steady-in-reading-since-2013-37-percent-of-students-are-academically-prepared-for-college-300258203.html> .

National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education and The Southern Regional Education Board. *Beyond the Rhetoric: Improving College Readiness Through Coherent State Policy*. San Jose, CA: The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2010.

Accessed November 30, 2015.

http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/index.shtml.

Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness, *Course Grade*

Distribution Fall 05 – 17, Harford Community College, March 13, 2018.

Accessed April 18, 2018.

Office of Institutional Research, Planning & Effectiveness. “Facts & Figures.”

Harford Community College. Accessed March 9, 2018.

<https://www.harford.edu/about/facts-and-figures.aspx>

Petrilli, Michael J. and Chester E. Finn, Jr. “College preparedness over the years,

according to NAEP.” *Thomas B. Fordham Institute*, April 8, 2015.

Accessed March 3, 2018. [https://edexcellence.net/articles/college-](https://edexcellence.net/articles/college-preparedness-over-the-years-according-to-naep)

[preparedness-over-the-years-according-to-naep](https://edexcellence.net/articles/college-preparedness-over-the-years-according-to-naep) .

Phi Beta Kappa Society. “Make the Case: Six Reasons Arts and Sciences are the

Key.” *National Arts and Sciences Initiative*. Phi Beta Kappa. Accessed

December 2, 2015. toolkit.pbk.org/#.

Root-Bernstein, Robert, et. al. “Arts Foster Scientific Success: Avocations of

Nobel, National Academy, Royal Society, and Sigma Xi Members.”

Journal of Psychology of Science and Technology 1, no. 2 (2008): 51 – 63.

Accessed December 2, 2015.

[https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/1035/arts-foster-](https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/1035/arts-foster-scientific-success.pdf)
[scientific-success.pdf](https://www.psychologytoday.com/files/attachments/1035/arts-foster-scientific-success.pdf).

Seneca. *Letters from a Stoic*. Translated by Richard Mott Gummere.

Digireads.com Classics, 2013.

Saunders, Danny, Mark Brake, Martin Griffiths, and Rosi Thornton. "Access, astronomy and science fiction: A case study in curriculum design." *Active Learning in Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (March 2004): 27 – 42. Accessed November 29, 2015. *MLA International Bibliography*. DOI: 10.1177/1469787404040458.

Shmoop Editorial Team. "A Rose for Emily Booker's Seven Basic Plots Analysis." *Shmoop University, Inc.* Last modified November 11, 2008. Accessed April 15, 2018.
<https://www.shmoop.com/a-rose-for-emily/tragedy-plot.html>.

Silverman, Alex. "The Face of Phi Beta Kappa, John Churchill." Phi Beta Kappa News. *The Key Reporter*. January 8, 2015. Accessed November 30, 2015.
<http://keyreporter.org/PbkNews/PbkNews/Details/1280.html>.

SREB Community College Commission. "Community Colleges in the South: Strengthening Readiness and Pathways." Southern Regional Education Board, February 2015, file:///E:/commcollegecom_2015%20SREB.pdf.

Stanford CEPA. "Racial and Ethnic Achievement Gaps." *Educational Opportunity Monitoring Project*, Stanford University,
<http://cepa.stanford.edu/educational-opportunity-monitoring-project/achievement-gaps/race/>. Accessed April 25, 2018.

Stuckey, Heather and Kelly Kring. "Critical Media Literacy and Popular Film: Experiences of Teaching and Learning in a Graduate Class." In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*, edited by Elizabeth

J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.

Swain, Valerie. “Disclosure of Institutional (General Student Body) Graduation/Completion and Transfer-out Rates.” *Harford Community College*. Accessed March 21, 2018, https://www.harford.edu/~media/PDF/Student-Services/Student-Rights-and-Responsibilities/Student_Right_to_Know_web.ashx

Tisdell, Elizabeth J. “Popular Culture and Critical Media Literacy in Adult Education: Theory and Practice.” In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*. edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007. San Francisco: Jossey –Bass, 2007.

Tisdell, Elizabeth J. and Patricia M. Thompson, editors. *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Fall 2007.

Tisdell, Elizabeth J. and Patricia M. Thompson. “‘Seeing from a different angle’: The role of pop culture in teaching for diversity and critical media literacy in adult education.” *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 26, no. 6, 2007: pp. 651-673. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02601370701711349>.

Von Drehl, David. “The Case Against Summer Vacation.” *Time*, vol. 176, no. 5, August 2, 2010: pp. 36-42.

Waggoner, Erin. “Using Joss Whedon in the Composition Classroom.” *Compendium2*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011: pp. 35-42. Accessed February 24, 2018. www.technodocbox.com/amp/69978021.

Wardi, Anissa Janine. "From 1727 Bedford Street to 1839 Wylie Avenue: Home in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle." *University of Toronto Quarterly*, vol. 82, no. 1, Winter 2013: pp. 44-61. *Project Muse*, <https://doi.org/10.1353/utq.2013.0002>.

Wright, Robin Redmon. "*The Avengers*, Public Pedagogy, and the Development of British Women's Consciousness." In *Popular Culture and Entertainment Media in Adult Education*. edited by Elizabeth J. Tisdell and Patricia M. Thompson, no. 115, Fall 2007: pp. 63-72. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007.

Wright, Robin Redmon and Jennifer A. Sandlin. "Cult TV, Hip Hop, Shape-Shifters, and Vampire Slayers: A Review of the Literature at the Intersection of Adult Education and Popular Culture." *Adult Education Quarterly* 59, no. 2 (February 2009): 118 – 141. Accessed November 29, 2015. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0741713608327368>.

Zamudio-Suarez, Fernanda. "U. of Wisconsin at Stevens Point Proposes Cutting 13 Programs, Mostly in Liberal Arts," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2018. Accessed April 20, 2018. <https://www.chronicle.com/article/U-of-Wisconsin-at-Stevens/242745>.

Curriculum Vitae

Aubrey Zinn

Global Humanities
Master of Arts, 2018

Education

Master of Arts in Global Humanities, Towson University, Towson, MD

May 2018

Certificate for Online Adjunct Teaching (COAT), MarylandOnline.org

April 2011

12 Credits toward Masters in Secondary Education, Towson University, 2008 - 2010

GPA: 4.0/4.0

15 Credits toward Masters of English, concentration in Composition and Rhetoric

Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD, 1999 - 2000

GPA: 3.9/4.0

Mentoring for Teachers course, Wicomico County Board of Education

August-October 2001

Bachelor of Arts in English with a concentration in Education, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

May 1996

Minors: Spanish Studies and History

Undergraduate Honors:

Phi Beta Kappa, Alpha of Delaware Chapter

Magna Cum Laude

Secondary education: Perry Hall High School, Perry Hall, MD, June 3, 1991

Teaching Experience

Adjunct Instructor, English Composition (Eng101) and English Composition and Literature (Eng102)

Harford Community College

Fall 2007- present

English and Journalism Teacher: Bel Air High School, Harford County Public Schools, Bel Air, MD

August 2002 to June 2005

English Teacher: Wicomico High School, Wicomico County Public Schools, Salisbury, MD

August 1997 to June 2002

Writing Fellowship, University of Delaware Honors Program

September 1993-May 1995

Professional Presentations and Experience

Presenter, College English Association Middle Atlantic Group Spring Conference, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, DC

March 2018

“Using Popular Culture to Bridge the Achievement Gap”

Curriculum Development

- Harford County Public Schools, Bel Air, MD

June 2005, June 2003

- Wicomico County Public Schools, Salisbury, MD

March 2002, June 1998

Co-Presenter, High School Assessments Inservice, Wicomico High School, Salisbury, MD

May 15, 2001

Presented information about ninth-grade High School Assessment format and evaluation to English-department peers.

Eastern Shore Writing Project (*affiliate of National Writing Project*)

Completed July 2000

Presenter: July 2001, March 2001, July 2000

“Connecting the High-School English Curriculum to Real-World Audiences”

