



# Honors Newsletter

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Department of English*



*2018 Honors Graduates with Dr. Kirk Melnikoff and Dr. Matthew Rowney*



# STUDENT Theses

## Senior Projects Spring 2018

**Joseph Anderson**, "Discovering the Uncanny in the Horror Works of Stephen King"

**Julie Benavides**, "Latina Identity: A Creative Exploration"

**Kelly Brabec**, "Unmasking the Masochist: The Conception and Impact of Yukio Mishima's *Confessions of a Mask*"

**Desiree Brown**, "Acronyms, Illness, Doctors, and Sweat"

**Katharine V. Clarke**, "Beyond Self-Defense: A Socio-Linguistic Stance on Identity Construction and Selective Association/Dissociation"

**Jordan Costanza**, "Of Ravens and Romanticism: Edgar Allan Poe's Enduring Legacy in American Education and the Juvenile Appropriations of His Poetry and Prose"

**Hannah Edwards**, "The Multiple Personas of Alice B. Sheldon: Performing Gender and Authorship"

**Mason Gibbs**, "A Fence around Cane: Jean Toomer's *Cane* and the Making of Authorship"

**Melissa Glass**, "*Toy Story*: A Story of the Growth of the Millennial Generation"

**Jenna Hainlen**, "'Now Receive My Word': An Analysis of the Role of Rhetoric and Authorship in the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints"

**Meredith Harris**, "Once Upon a Time: A Linguistic Study of Female and Male Protagonists and Question Forms in *Cinderella* (1950) and *Frozen* (2013)"

**Kassidy Imerman**, "Making Movements: Analyzing Toni Morrison's Editorial Career from a Bibliographic Perspective"

**Haley Lawson**, "*Pride and Prejudice* and Possibilities: Hugh Thomson's Balancing Act in Victorian Society"

**Brandi McLean**, "The Nature of Walking and Writing: Following in the Footsteps of Poe and Thoreau"

**Tina Ramsey**, "One title, Two Mommies, and Three Stories: Publishers' Impact on the Content of *Heather Has Two Mommies*"

**Jacquelyn Schaeffe**, "The Limited Perspective in the Journey to Self-Acceptance in *Annie on My Mind*"

**Rori Wynn**, "Hurricane Katrina, Race, and the Book Trade"

## Congratulations to Shelby LeClair

Winner of a Children's Literature Association  
2018 Carol Gay Award

Miss LeClair's essay, "Serious Matters: How Humor Functions in Young Adult Literature about the Holocaust" was chosen by a three-member committee as the honors essay for this year's award. The essay was praised for approaching a difficult topic with "profound sensitivity."



## Catching up with Victoria White

### 2017 Alumni

#### How do you think the Honors Program prepared you for graduate school?

The English Honors Program was absolutely my gateway into graduate school. Through the structure of the seminar class and the freedom to choose an inquiry path with my thesis, I was really able to understand my own learning goals and ambitions outside the confines of a traditional classroom.

#### Where are you currently studying?

Now I am pursuing my master's degree in Literature at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

#### Plans after graduation?

Since I am only in my first year, I have not really thought about what I am going to do after graduation. I would love to teach somewhere, but the question is at a high school or a university? But then again, I would never say no to a PhD program.



# First Year Out

Featuring Rachel West  
by Haley Lawson

*In this interview, we wanted to feature one of our former English Honors students and their personal experience one-year post-graduation from UNCC. For this segment, we chose Rachel West. Rachel has been working and successfully using her English degree in the job market. We delve into her job search, the details of her day-to-day, how she uses skills she learned in the Honors program, her experiences in the Honors program, advice for future Honors students, and other fun questions about the real life of a previous English major.*

**Where are you working or what industry are you currently working in?**

Nonprofit sector - an international relief organization

**What does your job entail?**

I originally started as support for correspondence and social media. Now as an administrative assistant in marketing, I assist marketing leadership and support teams with their initiatives to spread awareness through social media, email, videos, branding, etc. I love what I do because there is something new every day, and I get to work on a variety of writing projects. There is never a dull moment!

**How did you find the job listing? (linkedin, NinerNews, HireANiner, etc)? Any advice for those of us who will start job searching soon?**

Be sure to use all of your resources, and do some digging to find the gold. (Niner pun absolutely intended.) When I started the job search, I mainly relied on career search engines. This wasn't the best idea. Make a list of organizations or companies you're interested in working for, and visit their website to look for job openings. It's always better to go directly to the source. I spent months searching for a relevant job, but it wasn't until I went to the organization's website that I found the perfect job for me. Also, don't be afraid to apply for positions, even if you don't feel qualified. I dreamed of working at my current organization for many years. I didn't think I'd get to work here until several years down the road, when I would be equipped with more experience. I'm glad I was wrong! You really never know what could happen, so hit "Apply" and go for it.

**What does Honors mean to you?**

Honors students have a natural curiosity about the world around them. Learning isn't just a chore at school; it's a way of life. Honors means going above and beyond to contribute to society, whether by knowledge or physical needs. Both are essential, and the Humanities can help achieve goals in both.

**How did it help prepare you for "the real world?"**

English Honors helped me analyze the world in a more critical and detailed way. Through research for my thesis, I had the opportunity to learn about digital communication and how we create a representation of ourselves through language and themes on social media. This was essential for my next steps in correspondence and marketing, but no matter what field you work in, being able to communicate well and critically analyze situations and initiatives is a huge plus.

**What were your favorite Honors experiences or your favorite class?**

My favorite Honors class was Dr. Melnikoff's seminar on Shakespeare, King James and Queen Elizabeth. Studying English allows you to connect themes across time and space, and all of Shakespeare's themes are still relevant centuries later. Discussions were a great time of bonding with classmates because there was so much to learn from everyone's different perspectives.

**Who/what inspired you to join the Honors program?**

Our amazing faculty inspired me to join. The passion that professors have for their areas of expertise made me excited to dig deeper into my concentration (Language & Digital Technology) through my thesis. If you haven't gotten to know your professors, be sure to do so! They are treasure troves of knowledge and wisdom.

**Can you talk about writing the thesis, advice for future Honors students?**

The thesis process stretched me more than I'd ever been stretched, but trust me when I say that it's worth it. In the work force, there are only so many times in life when you get to pick a project to spend months developing, then present or publish it. It's a great experience that I'm grateful for. While you're developing your thesis, be sure to allow yourself enough room for your topic. If you make it too broad, you can easily get away from your core purpose and argument. But give yourself enough space to let your original thoughts and hypothesis be challenged. Allow yourself to be surprised by your findings, and adjust accordingly. Above all else, don't lose the wonder of learning. Have fun with it!

**Do you incorporate anything you learned in the Honors program in your daily life?**

Absolutely! Attention to detail is a must-have every day, and the Honors program greatly developed this skill. While analyzing texts, you quickly learn that bookmarked quotes and passages will likely return later in the story, no matter how minute the details seem. The same goes for life - there is a lot of information that you will need later, so details are crucial. I write everything down in a notebook now because it helps me process and remember information for future use - it's come in handy many times already!





WHAT MEDIA  
INFLUENCED YOU  
OVER THE PAST YEAR?



**THE HATE U GIVE**

"This novel gave me insight into the experiences of an African American teenager experiencing racism as we see it in America today."  
-Tina Ramsey

**STRANGER THINGS**

"I highly recommend Stranger Things!"  
-Jacquelyn Schaeffe

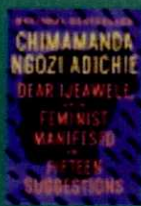


**NARRATIVE MUSE**

"This website releases frequent lists and reviews of books and movies that are women-led and women-created."  
-Kelly Brabec

**DEAR IJEWELE**

"I love this book."  
-Jenna Hainlen



**LAST WEEK TONIGHT**

LAST WEEK TONIGHT  
-JOHN OLIVER

"This show colors my interests in education, be it the way I view discussion topics, essay prompts, research assignments, etc."  
-Jordan Costanza

**DEAR HANK AND JOHN**

"This podcast is equal parts engaging and soothing."  
-Kassidy Imerman



**intelligence<sup>2</sup>**  
THE WORLD OF DEBATE

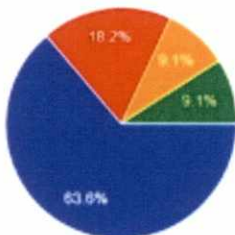
**INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES**

"A wonderful debate podcast with a revolving debaters and interesting topics."  
-Mason Gibbs

# POST-GRAD PLANS

The 2018 Honors Program grads share their plans for the future.

Where are our grads going?



- ▲ Graduate School
- Working
- Gap Year
- ★ Other

"I am considering entering into the legal field with the Charlotte office of an international law firm."  
-Hayley Lawson



"I'll be working at Freedom School Partners this summer, then working in Charlotte and applying to grad programs in the fall."  
-Kelly Brabec



"I'm going to work full-time as a Social Media and Marketing Assistant for E.P. Gates Construction and Realty."  
-Melissa Glass



Here are a few of the students who will be continuing their education in UNCC's graduate program:



Desiree Brown



Jordan Costanza



Mason Gibbs



Jacquelyn Schaeffe

**THE JOE ROGAN PODCAST**



"I find the variety of guests to provide fascinating perspectives: scientists, historians, nutritionists, entrepreneurs, authors, doctors, celebrities, etc."  
-Hayley Lawson



**GET OUT**

"This movie not only shed light on the racial tensions of our country, but it managed to do it in a way that was exciting, informative, and record-breaking."  
-Jordan Costanza



## Notable Theses

### *Honors at Work*

#### **Beyond Self-Defense: A Socio-Linguistic Stance on Identity Construction and Selective Association/Dissociation**

by Katharine V. Clarke

This paper engages with online citizen discourse to discuss the negotiation of the Latino identity. Since its conception by the Nixon administration for use in the U.S. census, the Latino identity has been a highly political one. The recent U.S. presidential election of 2016 has again brought the Latino identity to the forefront in media coverage. This paper focuses on several of President Trump's specific comments regarding Mexicans - and Latinos as a group - that resulted in public backlash in the form of overt sociopolitical campaigns and online discussions concerning the tension surrounding the Latino identity. One such Latino campaign, entitled "Turn Ignorance Around," was remediated in 2015 and reposted to Tumblr. From this Tumblr thread, comments wherein participants self-identified as Latino, were chosen to comprise the corpus and a thematic analysis was undertaken to categorize, and thus better analyze, these comments. Using Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) five principles of identity and interaction as the base for the framework, this paper attempts to reveal how selective association/disassociation are realized in bottom-up Latino identity negotiation. Results indicate that the increasing use of social media lends authority to ordinary discourse and proliferates a sense of community and positive association within the Latino community.



## Catching up with *Tayler Green*

2017 Alumni

#### **Where are you currently studying?**

I am a first year graduate student at Clemson University, in the M.A. of Writing, Rhetoric and Media.

#### **What's your MA focus?**

I entered the program wanting to focus only on technical writing, but I've become more invested in visual rhetoric, digital production, and content strategy. I have a few more months to narrow down on a focus, and I plan to pursue a client project next year.

#### **How do you like life in your new city?**

Life is okay! Clemson is small-town America, obsessed with sports, and not particularly diverse. You'll still find me in Charlotte most weekends.

#### **How do you think the Honors Program prepared you for graduate school?**

Working with an advisor, conducting research, and writing a thesis was an invaluable experience heading into graduate school. Dr. Toscano's honors video game course was great for pushing us into cultural studies, rhetoric, and multimodal arguments (if you think graduate school is traditional papers, you're in for a learning curve—i.e., teaching yourself all the Adobe programs). Writing and presenting the honors thesis was an invaluable research opportunity. I'm definitely challenged at Clemson, but I did not struggle to adjust; I was ready for graduate-level work, and I have the Honors English Program to thank for that.

#### **What kind of connection do you hope to maintain with the Honors Program?**

I hope to be a resource to any other students going through the Honors program or applying to graduate school (if you're interested in Clemson, I'm happy to talk and meet with you!). I'd also like to keep in touch with the other graduates of the honors program, and hear about all of the wonderful things they're accomplishing.

## Notable Theses

### *Honors at Work*

#### **Making Movements: Analyzing Toni Morrison's Editorial Career from a Bibliographic Perspective**

by Kassidy Imerman

The purpose of this thesis is to examine Toni Morrison's editorial career at Random House from a bibliographic perspective in order to ascertain the manner in which she constructed authorship around writers during the publishing process, as well as how her efforts to publish black writers bolstered the Black Arts Movement. The project establishes the importance of approaching social movements from a bibliographic perspective and posits that the Black Arts Movement is an especially valuable case study because Black Arts Movement leaders used artistic and literary texts as a mode of communication. Morrison's Random House correspondences reveal that she made a calculated effort to build up authorship around black writers. Her collaboration with Eugene B. Redmond and Loretta Dumas's novel posthumously leads to the conclusion that authorship is a carefully constructed abstraction. However, it is a construct that is invaluable in authenticating marginalized voices, as Morrison did in publishing Black Arts Movement writers. These findings establish the publishing house as an engine of social movements, and editors such as Morrison as vital collaborators who make communication within the movement possible.



# English Honors Courses

2017-2018

## ENGL 4750-090: Honors Seminar: Language, Society and Ideology

Professor Miller

This course introduces students to powerful ideologies regarding language, with a particular emphasis on English in the U.S. Students will read classic as well as contemporary research articles that address topics such as language varieties in the U.S. (Hip Hop language, adolescent speech, Southern English, Asian American English etc.), the role of Standard or Educated English varieties beyond the classroom, and the real-world effects of people's attitudes toward standard and stigmatized language varieties.

## ENGL 4751-090: Honors Thesis Seminar

Professor Melnikoff

This class will introduce students to the fast-growing field in cultural history known as "the History of the Book." It will also guide Honors students through the process of producing an Honors thesis on a Book-History topic of their choice. Over the course of the semester, we will talk about about the various material forms, textual apparatuses, and technologies associated with manuscripts, printed books, and digital publications. We will also pay close attention to different reading practices and to the differing religious, political, social, and cultural contexts of book production, especially in England between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Whenever possible, we will spend time in Atkins Library's rare book collection, looking at paper, at typefaces, at bindings, and at illustrations.

## ENGL 4203/5203—H01: Writing Fiction (Honors Seminar): Experimenting with Forms

Professor Bryn Chancellor

Writers will study and practice techniques and forms ranging from traditional to explosive. This class pushes writers to discover the great range of possibilities within fiction writing and recognize the value in stretching beyond comfort zones. Students will read and discuss representative published pieces and then create several of their own. The course will include mid-draft exchanges, one formal workshop, as well as responses to essays, stories and chapters. A final portfolio will be produced with revisions and an apologia. The course strongly emphasizes literary writing over commercial writing, insisting writers strive for real tension from real, complex characters.

## ENGL 4750: Gender, Nature, and Science

Professor Jennifer Munroe

The seventeenth century in England bore witness to a "scientific revolution" that changed the way people thought about the natural world. This course will explore how this "revolution" developed, with a focus on how changing attitudes about the natural world were gendered and how science itself became a gendered endeavor. "Nature," long gendered feminine, underwent a revaluing, as did the alignment of women with it. In this course, we will consider how men and women both sought ways to understand, use, and codify the things of Nature and align shifting notions of masculinity and femininity.

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### *In Memorium.*

#### Professor Anita Moss (1943-2018)



Members of the English Department lost a beloved colleague on April 11, 2018. Dr. Anita Moss joined the UNC Charlotte Department of English in 1972 as a Lecturer. She completed her Ph.D. in English at Indiana University in 1978. Returning to UNC Charlotte, she was appointed to Assistant Professor in 1979 and promoted to Associate Professor in 1983. In 1988 she received the NCNB Teaching Award (now the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence), and a year later she was promoted to Full Professor. Over her 4+ decades at UNC Charlotte, she taught courses in American Literature, British Literature, and especially Children's Literature. Indeed, she was a pioneer in the now-vibrant area of Literary Studies, publishing the foundational *The Family of Stories: An Anthology of Children's Literature* in 1986. Professor Moss will be remembered by faculty and students alike for her intelligence, candor, honesty, compassion, generosity, and sharp wit.



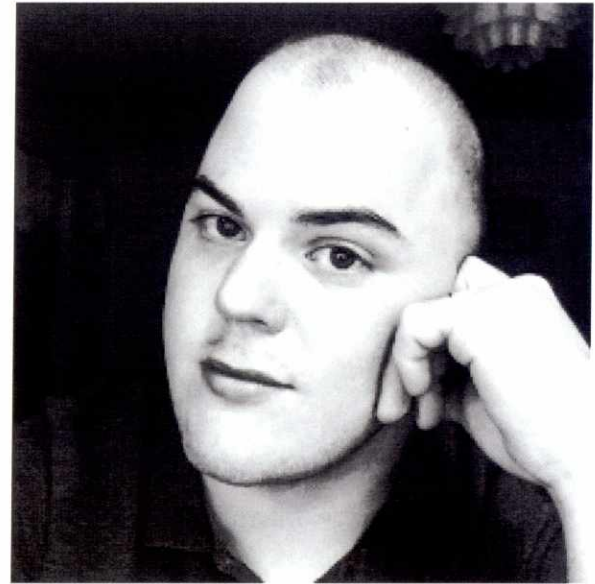
# Alumni Spotlight

## Featuring *Thomas Simonson*

By Mason Gibbs

**First of all, after leaving UNCC, what are you doing in your graduate studies at Wake Forest?**

I've spent my first year at Wake Forest focusing on classes that allowed me to fill gaps in my reading. My time at UNC involved a heavy focus on American and World literatures, so at Wake I've tried to balance that with seminars on Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, as well as two on Victorian and 20th century British literature. I'm hoping this will prepare me in applying to Ph.D programs next year. I've also spent a significant amount of time on campus for my Graduate Assistantship, gaining pedagogical experience by working in the university's Writing Center. Lastly, I've spent this Spring presenting at conferences and continuing research projects I began as an undergraduate.



**Would you attribute your interest in pursuing a PhD to your experiences being an Honors student at UNCC?**

I attribute much of my success as an undergraduate to the English department offering an Honors program. I wanted to go to graduate school, and I felt that working on a true research project as required by the honors program would both give me experience—in the type of work a graduate program would require—as well as enable me to glimpse (beforehand) whether such a career was truly what I desired. It was. The Honors program was one of the most distinguished learning experiences I had at UNCC.

**How has the UNCC Honors program prepared you to tackle, not only the M.A. program at Wake Forest, but a potential Doctorate degree at another university? In other words, how has the English Honors program either established or sharpened your abilities for your post-undergraduate career?**

In the Honors Program, the thesis-writing process was transformative. As a component of the English department's Honors Program, it gives students first-hand experience in the type of work they will be engaging in should they pursue graduate study. The thesis I composed was used for many of my graduate school applications' writing samples, and the level of feedback and engagement I received enabled me to refine the project enough for it to eventually be published in an undergraduate journal. Lastly, referring to that experience in my personal statement enriched my application, even as it indicated I was prepared for the next level of scholarly work. I would encourage any UNC Charlotte English major who wants to continue beyond a Bachelor's degree to complete the Honors Program.

**How did you manage your time while in the Honors program at UNCC? Are there any tips you can give prospective or current Honor students?**

The only advice I can give is to work out a balance that is proportionate with your priorities. If going to graduate school or continuing to work in a specialized field is your top priority, then there is some other aspect of your time, energy, and attention that will have to give. An education is an investment, and balancing according to your goals doesn't mean we spend as much time not working as working: it means spending as much time working *as we need to*, and as much time not working *as we need to*, rather than as much as we *want* to. To current or prospective Honors students, then, I'd recommend a healthy work-fun ratio that doesn't compromise their goals.

**My final question: Is there anyone that you would like to thank for their assistance in the Honors program at UNCC?**

I had a magnificent mentor in Professor Juan Meneses, who developed a superb reading list of primary, secondary, and theoretical sources for my thesis. The honors seminar with Dr. Melnikoff was one of the most distinguished learning experiences I had at UNCC; we were encouraged to be industrious in our scholarship and entrusted to handle texts more complicated than we had been assigned at any time before. I worked with many professors at UNCC on several independent and class-based projects that prepared me for graduate school, but I'm indebted to him specifically for leading the program in its year of formation. I'd like to stop by and catch up with many of my UNCC Professors at some point. I also had a wonderful experience with Dr. Malin Pereira completing the Charlotte Research Scholars program in 2016: she gave me the freedom and the feedback I needed to treat the program as a "trial run" of sorts in writing an article-length paper, which I did under her guidance that summer, before I entered the Honors Program. Lastly, after completing the Honors Program, Dr. Lara Vetter, who was one of my first professors at UNC, invited me to take her graduate seminar in my last semester, which provided a fresh challenge and energized my preparations for graduate school.

**Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions, Thomas. Is there anything else you want to say before we wrap up?**

The Honors program, like any degree program, is a timed commitment—an opportunity that will expire eventually. If it means investing time and energy to make it a success, I think it's worth it. 100%



# Getting Off Campus

An afternoon spent at The Flying Saucer playing checkers and drinking \$3 pints.



If you go to "The Saucer" expecting an astral theme, little green men or kitschy space decor, you might be surprised upon entering to find an entire restaurant decorated with saucer plates. It's true, every inch of wall and ceiling space transforms this strip-mall corner lot into a wall of flying, or perhaps hanging, saucers.

On a quiet and sunny afternoon, heard floating around the patio are snippets of collegiate conversations. A group of international students complain about campus policy, an instructor sits in a shady corner grading papers, a table of ladies laugh and take selfies, a few students sit alone with headphones working on laptops. It almost feels like an extension of campus. An extension with lots (and lots) of beer on tap and spicy mustard that will bring tears to your eyes.

The food is decent, if a bit overpriced. If you expected a space theme and were surprised to find dinner plates, you might also be surprised by the occasional nod to German cuisine--pretzels, brats and sauerkraut. All in all, the expansive and inexpensive beer offerings, board games, decent food and sun-dappled seating make The Flying Saucer a spot worth exploring.

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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

*Dr. Kirk Melnikoff*

The 2017-2018 academic year has been a busy one for the English Honors Program. In August, Professor Matt Rowney took over as Assistant Director, replacing Professor Janaka Lewis who was named the new Director of the UNC Charlotte Women's and Gender Studies Program. Dr. Lewis did a huge amount for English Honors, and she will be greatly missed. In both the fall and the spring, Dr. Rowney and I admitted over a dozen new Honors students, making English Honors one of the largest honors programs in the university. In December, six English majors graduated with honors; and this spring, seventeen more will be graduating. Like those in 2016-17, this academic year's graduates produced theses in number of different English-Studies areas--in Creative Writing, Linguistics, Technical Communication, Rhetoric, Children's Literature, and Literary Studies. The English Honors program sponsored two significant events this past year as well. In October, Dr. Gabriel Ford (Converse College) gave a hands-on printing-press demonstration; and in April, Dr. Miranda Burgess (University of British Columbia) kicked off the 3rd Biannual English Honors Colloquium with the key-note talk "Blank Confusion: Wordsworth's Paper Figures." And finally, this May, I am very happy to be launching this Newsletter. Here, current English Honors students and English Honors alumni will be given highlights of the program's recent activities, and they will also be able to catch up on the lives and achievements of their amazing peers. Thanks to Kelly Brabec, Mason Gibbs, Haley Lawson and especially Misha Lazzara for making this happen!