

# The Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program Proudly Announces the 2021 Undergraduate Writing Colloquium Winners

## HUMANITIES

### **Catherine Ramsey, “Dancing to a Tune that was Felt, not Heard: How Dance has been a Tool to Reaffirm and Celebrate Familial Structure throughout African and African-American History”**

**Written for The New Black Family (AAAS 209), Professor Larry Hudson**

- ➔ This essay begins with a clear, powerful, and stylish introduction, and just gets better from there. Thorough research, a complex argument that proceeds logically through a series of well-executed transitions, and a keen sense of historical connection, all combine to make this essay successful. The core connection between dance and Black familial structures - whether in sixteenth-century West Africa or in America over the course of several centuries - is established clearly in the introduction, motivating the central claim that the arts have worked to counter the historical portrayal of the Black family as "dysfunctional in nature." Whether it is discussing the separation of families under slavery, the relative status of dance during the Harlem Renaissance, or the creative process behind *Revelations*, this paper consistently weaves together information from multiple sources while advancing shrewd, convincing, and original arguments. – Writing Consultant Judges

#### Honorable Mention

Rebecca McCall, “Honor, Shame, and Misogyny in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*”

Written for Medieval Otherworlds (ENGL 206), Professor Thomas Hahn

- ➔ This essay argues convincingly for the importance of honor and shame cultures in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight," sustaining a skilled close reading of the poem itself while entering into productive dialogue with a number of literary critics. From the analysis of the private and public aspects of honor, guilt, and shame at King Arthur's Court to Gawain's entirely human fear of death when preparing to face the Green Knight, the essay manages to show how the poem is both a product of a very different time and a source of enduring interest for readers today. The final section exposing Gawain's misogyny is especially effective, building on the framework of guilt and shame cultures while also moving the argument in an important new direction. – Writing Consultant Judges

## MULTIMODAL PROJECT

### **Katherine Serna, “Compañeros (Neighbors)”**

- ➔ “Compañeros (Neighbors)” invites the viewer to Laredo, TX. The film includes several elements--footage of Laredo, dancing, interviews with the filmmaker's grandparents, music, and a spoken poem. Through an excellent use of pacing and purposeful editing, the filmmaker combines these elements to convey a clear message: a dual warning against the dangers of the wall and celebration of a community well-worth protecting. “Compañeros” manages to be both powerful and poetic, leaving the viewer with a strong sense that they are one of the neighbors. – Writing Consultant Judges

#### Honorable Mention

Thomas Oddo, “Residential Segregation in Monroe County: Problems, People and the Plan”

Created for Innovation in Public Service (PSCI 233W), Professor Stuart Jordan

- ➔ “Residential Segregation in Monroe County: Problems, People and the Plan” provides teachers with an insightful lesson on how redlining and discriminatory housing practices continue to shape the Rochester area. Its interactive tools and well-constructed comparisons help students authentically explore contexts they might otherwise take for granted. Engaging prompts provide challenging questions and useful guidance for understanding how ingrained these contexts are. The plan's clear instructions make it easy to implement and its ending action plan extends it beyond the classroom in a useful way – Writing Consultant Judges

## NATURAL & APPLIED SCIENCES

### **Michaela Alarie, “Review: Deep Brain Stimulation as Treatment for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Suggested Targets”**

**Written for Neuroscience of Neuroprosthetics (BME 415), Professor Sarah McConnell**

- ➔ The paper titled "Review: Deep Brain Stimulation as Treatment for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Suggested Targets" does just as it promises. The author offers a clearly written review on an active area of research, not only effectively summarizing the work of others, but also delivering a detailed evaluation of DBS as a treatment. Furthermore, the author takes the real individuals who could benefit from this treatment into account as they describe the motivation and future directions of the field. In the next few years, we may be reading studies about DBS for OCD that follow the author's predictions! – Writing Consultant Judges

#### Honorable Mention

Thomas Oddo, "Discussion of NMD factors UPF2 and UPF3 bridge UPF1 to the exon junction complex and stimulate its RNA helicase activity"

Written for Perspectives of Biology (BIOL 112), Professor David Goldfarb

- ➔ The author was able to navigate the complex network of biology terminology in order to explain an equally complex interaction of factors that make up the NMD pathway, but what really shines in this paper is the author's summary. In the summary, we are treated to some excellent "science communication." The author steps away from the technical detail to communicate in terms anyone could understand. We as readers are able to appreciate why we care about the NMD pathway, what it does, and the future directions of research. – Writing Consultant Judges

## **SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **Syed Ghani, "Free and Fair Elections Amendment: Enfranchising Felons and Enacting Citizen-Led, Non-Partisan Redistricting"**

Written for Supreme Court in United States History (PSCI 212), Professor Joel Seligman

- ➔ The writer's care for the topic of voter enfranchisement shines through in the careful, thorough research and detailed historical context that illuminates the pressing nature of this contemporary issue and the importance of its consequences. The paper speaks to a broad audience and draws attention to the intersectionality of voting rights, invigorating readers' understanding of the relationship of free and fair elections to social, racial, and economic justice. Overall, this paper argues convincingly for the historical precedent and present-day necessity of a Constitutional Amendment that would move the United States closer to and ultimately protect the practice of genuine democracy. – Writing Consultant Judges

#### Honorable Mention

Anh-Tho Nguyen, "*Không có gì bang com va cá. Không có gì bang má va con*": Shaping Việt Kiều Motherhood in America"

Written for American Kinship(s) (ANTH 217), Professor Kathryn Mariner

- ➔ This paper is well-written, well-researched, and well-argued. It takes an innovative and interdisciplinary approach to the study of the Vietnamese Diaspora, making use of history, poetry, and proverbs to approach a deeper understanding of Việt Kiều motherhood in America. The author hardly wastes a word, and builds a convincing argument for the continuing impact of Vietnamese history (and specifically the history of the Vietnam War) on the modern identities and practices of mothers of Vietnamese descent living in America. – Writing Consultant Judges

## **WRTG**

### **Sophia Krackov, "Queer Austen"**

Written for Austen Through the Ages (WRTG 105), Instructor Michael Ormsbee

- ➔ This paper makes a complex and convincing argument about the senses in which we might think of a "queer Austen." In doing so, it makes a contribution to the conversation that is both significant and highly interesting. It takes risks, many of which pay off, and engages with its sources deeply and thoughtfully. – Writing Consultant Judges

#### Honorable Mention

Zoë Bross, "Moving Past Biblical Ideologies in American Culture Towards a Sustainable Future"

Written for What is Human Nature? (WRTG 105), Instructor Adam Stauffer

- ➔ This essay is ambitious in scope and skilled in execution. Its discussion of the ideological and cultural roots of America's rampant consumerism and disregard for the environment is shrewd and convincing. At the same time, it offers a persuasive reading of Genesis and its lasting cultural influence in America, while acknowledging the important differences within versions of Christianity, and especially the difference that literal and figurative interpretations of the Bible might make in terms of the relationship between religious belief and environmental concerns. The essay is especially strong when it turns to non-Western cultures, describing some ways of thinking about - and caring for - the environment that contrast with the literal interpretation of Genesis. Well written, well researched, and a pleasure to read! – Writing Consultant Judges