

EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL

ENGLISH STUDIES CONFERENCE



**VIRTUAL
CONFERENCE
SESSIONS: TUES.,
4/8, 6-8PM
ONLINE**

**MAIN CONFERENCE
WEDNESDAY, 4/9,
9:30AM-5:00PM**

REGISTRATION & FREE BREAKFAST: 9:30-10:00AM

FREE LUNCH & KEYNOTE SPEAKER: 12:00-2:00pm

Prize Raffles/Give-Aways Throughout the Day!

PANEL SESSIONS & READINGS: 10:00-5:00PM

FULL PROGRAM AVAILABLE AT CONFERENCE WEBSITE VIA QR CODE:



THIRD FLOOR COLEMAN HALL & ADDITIONAL SPACES

2025 English Studies Conference Program

English Studies Online Conference, Tuesday, April 8th, 6-9pm
Virtual Panels (available via Zoom links in each session)



SESSION ONE (Concurrent Evening Sessions)

6:00pm-6:50pm, Virtual Panels, Zoom

Panel 1A – Online

Moderator: Dr. Melissa Ames

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://eiu.zoom.us/j/84492017064?pwd=cSiSCbfo5GYPx2PCjJF9paPrudbSSx.1>

Student Engagement, Media Literacy, & Social Justice Pedagogy: Exemplars in Best Practices & Instructional Design

Presentations:

Hannah Graver, “Empowering Diverse Voices with Civic & Media Literacy”

This presentation shares the final result of an applied pedagogy project which features ten thorough media literacy and social justice focused lesson plans designed for a Dual Credit English 101 class. Each lesson focuses on activities that either empower students to create and hone their unique writing style and voice as writer in at least two modes of communication and also understand how rhetors use words and voice to persuade audiences. Lessons tap into contemporary events and popular culture. For example, students conduct a rhetorical analysis of the Drake/Kendrick Lamar rap battle listening to and reading the lyrics of Lamar’s “Euphoria” along with a student/class-selected Drake song from the beef to analyze. Another set of lessons touch a recent media event wherein Bad Bunny and *SNL* cast members Fred Armisen, Marcello Hernández, Andrew Dismukes performed several skits on *SNL* completely in Spanish. No code-switching, no Spanglish, just performed in Spanish. This skit is used to start discussion in the classroom on dialogue, dialects, languages, code switching and voice by comparing it to this skit with Pedro Pascal and Marcello Hernandez switching between Spanish and English. Other lessons that focus on developing audience awareness and voice while mastering media analysis and digital literacy involve analyzing political advertisements, understanding deep fakes, writing open social change letters, and creating podcasts.

Leigha Philips, “Rhetorical Analysis, Media Literacy & Social Justice Pedagogy”

In a society defined by and preoccupied with media, researchers, teachers, parents, and discerning students alike have recognized the profound affect media has on society, politics, history, and justice. Ghada Sfeir from the University of Saskatchewan notes that “critical pedagogy of popular culture in the curriculum holds other tremendous benefits to students such as expanding thinking about others, finding alternative narratives in students’ own lives, enhancing cultural synchronization, building culturally responsive awareness... and scaffolding social intelligence” (1). This presentation shares the results of a revised applied pedagogy project that aimed to challenge outdated beliefs that academic knowledge is superior to popular culture (Sfeir 22) and to engage students in critical pedagogy that challenges oppression, accepted perspectives of race and identity, societal expectations, social constructs, and the like. This project revised a Rhetorical Analysis Unit (which relied heavily on American historical documents) and paired pop culture texts (analyzed through diverse media) with older but relevant “great” speeches for rhetorical analysis and to generate discourse on varying topics as they pertain to social justice. The goal was to *politicize* the boring, existing 11th grade unit to become something worth reading and writing about. Apart from writing an assortment of traditional and artistic rhetorical analyses, the aim was to construct a final project that integrated fundamentals of collective action—something integral and overlooked that has been absent from many secondary lessons.

Dustin Uher, “George Takei’s *They Called Us Enemy*: A Culturally Responsive Teaching Unit”

This presentation shares a unit on George Takei’s *They Called Us Enemy* that directly and truthfully addresses America’s history, racism, and, most importantly, the steep discount privilege affords some in life while simultaneously raising the metaphorical market price for others. Designing a social-justice oriented unit around this graphic memoir is a timely and educationally accessible avenue to achieve develop student skills in critical media and popular culture consumption. The unit frontloads historical context using various forms of media and outlines expectations for engaging with this topic. Then, throughout the core reading, provides instruction in reading comics and how the genre conventions help Takei 1) reveal his trauma and resilience, 2) further his message of hope in democracy (as Takei used his platform and privilege to achieve goals as a social activist himself), and 3) organize in-depth discussions for students to discuss racism and forms of privilege seen in this text and relate it to their lives today.



Panel 1B – Online
Moderator: Dr. Colleen Abel

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://eiu.zoom.us/j/84762361630?pwd=VozCk3ab9COMiGURHkeRmZbsEHarsQ.1>

Graduate Creative Writing Showcase

Graduate students will share pieces of their creative writing from workshop courses and independent projects, followed by a Q&A.

Presenters:

Nikola Stojkovic
Anita Gilliland
Lexy Fulton
Erica Heldenbrand

SESSION TWO (Undergraduate/Graduate Session)

7:00pm-7:50pm, Virtual Panel, Zoom

Panel 2A – Online
Moderator: Dr. Marjorie Worthington

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://eiu.zoom.us/j/87414847002>

English Studies Research Projects

Presentations:

Olivia Corona, “Making the Canon More Effective: Pairing Anchor and Supplementary Texts”

This essay examines English Language Arts pedagogy surrounding the use of canonical and non-canonical texts cohesively in the classroom. The main focus is around the benefits of using supplementary texts to support anchor texts from the canon. The supplementary texts specified in this essay include multicultural literature, young adult literature, and nonfiction. Utilizing supplementary texts alongside anchor texts has the ability to not only increase student engagement but also help students grow as learners by further developing their literacy skills, including reading, writing, and critical thinking.



Michael Redman, "Queer Visions Across Eras"

This essay looks at the cultural connections between the neo-conservative revolution in England and the U.S. during the 1980s and the current cultural tensions regarding Trumpism and the conservative movement in the present-day U.S. I aim to examine the rise in political discourse in artistic responses from several fields (literature, film, music) to the rise of Thatcherism and its impact on progressive and queer lives. I then intend to show how this fraught political tension during the 1980s helps us understand the current conservative assault on liberal and queer lives and values in post-Trump America.

Brittany Frizzo, "Sexual Assault and Systemic Injustice: Exploring *Unbelievable*'s Representation of the Criminal Justice System in Sexual Assault Cases"

Unbelievable is a Netflix mini-series that explores the experience of Marie Adler, a young woman who is initially accused of fabricating a rape story until the truth is eventually exposed through a different investigation. This series aims to raise public awareness and understanding around sexual assault trauma and the flaws within our legal system for such crimes by highlighting the female victim's experience. This presentation shares a project that studied how this series portrays the way the criminal justice system handles sexual assault cases and presents a call for social justice. The focus of the study is on Marie Adler's experiences and the issues that she encounters as she faces the aftermath of her assault. Investigating the representation of the criminal justice system within the series exposes the failures in the initial investigation and highlights the impact this has on survivors. The focus of this project centers on the representation of sexual assault and the systemic failures encountered through the mini-series. Analyzing the media choices showcases the strengths and weaknesses of this method for such a sensitive subject.

Film Screening (and Q&A Session with Writer/Producer)

8:00pm-9:00pm, Virtual Viewing Session, Zoom

Moderator: Dr. Melissa Ames



Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://eiu.zoom.us/j/89005885994?pwd=ZmxgzbbhRQvT4NcojXaE2om6GaFaCbX.1>

The Politics of Memory in Aaron Sorkin's *Trial of the Chicago Seven* Written/Produced by Newton Holt

This film analysis/documentary analyzes Aaron Sorkin's long-gestating 2020 film *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, which focuses on the conspiracy trial waged by the American government against eight leaders of various anti-war protest groups: the National Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (also known as the Mobe), the Youth International Party (also known as the Yippies), the Students for a Democratic Society,

and the Black Panther Party. Like many of Sorkin's other political works, *Trial* is constructed with heightened language and a particular brand of liberal optimism wherein even the government's lead prosecutor does not believe in the legitimacy of the titular case. According to Sorkin himself in an interview with *GQ*, the film is designed to be a "painting" of historical events rather than a "photograph." Of course, creative liberties are always taken when condensing something as large and complex as a five-month trial into a two-hour film. Still, the nature of Sorkin's particular creative liberties are revealing and point towards a larger trend toward historical revisionism. Several of the real event's hard edges are sanded off in favor of a story significantly less radical than the key players involved. This film analysis/documentary seeks to answer these foundational questions: How do Sorkin's creative liberties dilute or change the historical record of the Chicago 7 trial? How do artists use history as allegory for current events? What is the long-term effect of creating ambiguous art submerged in a political backdrop? Join us for this film viewing and a Q&A session with the writer/producer following.

English Studies Main Conference Events, Wednesday, April 9th, Coleman Hall - Third Floor Classrooms & Auditorium

Registration/Breakfast

9:30am-10:00am, Third Floor Coleman Hall

Check-in to the conference & pick-up your program in the third-floor hallway and join us for an opening conference light continental breakfast spread before our day of celebrating English Studies at EIU begins.

SESSION THREE (Morning Opening Session)

10:00-10:50am, Coleman Hall Auditorium, CH 1255

Panel 3A – 1255 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Colleen Abel

Creative Writing Showcase

Undergraduate and graduate creative writers working in poetry and fiction will read from a selection of their work.

Readers:

Sydney Quick
Ian Rickett

Jenna Tobias
Ethan Miller

Dani Harris
Kierstyn Budz



SESSION FOUR (Concurrent Panels)

11:00-11:50am, Coleman Hall Third Floor



Panel 4A – 3130 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Melissa Caldwell

The Varieties of English: Honors Projects in English

Come listen to the exciting work of departmental honors students writing fiction, creative nonfiction, and a literary & cultural studies essay.

Presentations:

Presley Wiseman, "Family: The Victims of the Criminal Justice System,"
Essay/Creative Nonfiction

Michael Redman, "Queer Resistance Across Ages," Literary Criticism

Sydney Quick, "The Other Violet & Other Stories," Fiction

Dani Harris, *Fragile: A Novel about Chronic Illness, Murder, Queer Love, and the Mysteriousness of the Appalachian Mountains*

Panel 4B – 3140 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Randall Beebe

Fractured Voices, Hidden Truths: Unreliable Narration in YA Fiction

Join the students of English 3604B for this series of succinct, mini-presentations as they ask the following question: What do you do when the narrator isn't telling you everything—or maybe can't? This panel looks at how three young adult novels ask readers to dig deeper and question what the very narrative they're reading is saying. In *I Am the Cheese*, the main character's bike trip is revealed to be a delusional hallucination shaped by trauma, unfolding while he's in a psychiatric facility. In *Speak*, Melinda's selective mutism forces readers to track her emotional world through silence, symbols, and what she leaves unsaid. In *The Adoration of Jenna Fox*, memory loss and medical secrets blur the line between authentic identity and simulation. Each story shows how narrators can be unreliable in different ways—not to deceive but to reflect fractured subjectivity.

Presentations:

Panel I: "I Should Have Known!": Navigating Unreliable Narration in I Am the Cheese

Presenters: Sam Erwin, Elijah Kubicek, and Tamara Mayer
Panel II: Speaking Through Silence: Voice and Trauma in Speak

Presenters: Jacob Adcock, Ophelia Klein, and Izzy Ledesma

Panel III: AI in The Adoration of Jenna Fox: Artificial Identity or Artificial Intelligence?

Presenters: Lexi Durham, Riley Jansen, and Peyton Shelton

SESSION FIVE (Concurrent Panels)

12:00-12:50am, Coleman Hall Third Floor



Panel 5A – 3130 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Terri Fredrick

Media, Race, & “Realness”: A Look at Black American Experiences &/in Culture Texts

Presentations:

Gabrielle Hill, “The Cable into Intersubjectivity”

February 9, 2025 better known as a record breaking Super Bowl halftime performance. Kendrick Lamar demonstrates how performance can be both creative expression and debate of meaning within recent sociopolitical issues. Moreover, elements of Kendrick Lamar’s performance both visual and hidden exemplifies intersubjectivity.

Jade Maxwell, “Who's Really Real?: The Concept of Realness from The Black Mind”

This is a personal and rhetorically analytic essay on the concept of "Realness" from the Black American perspective. I plan to analyze various media created by Black artists (rappers, artists, writers, etc.) that have defined realness and what makes a person be considered as real. Furthermore, I will embed my own perspective of realness within my life, culture, and self-perception and reflect on how my life experiences have shaped my own perception of realness.

Panel 5B – 3140 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Lydia Craig

Changing How We Read & Write: Pedagogical Best Practices from Composition & Rhetoric to Genre Studies

Presenters:

Halie Selsor, “Graphic Novels in the Secondary ELA Classroom”

This presentation explores the value of graphic novels as rigorous literature and powerful educational resources. The presentation examines the benefits and challenges of teaching graphic novels in the English Language Arts classroom, providing strategies and resources that guide educators in effectively integrating graphic texts into their classrooms. In doing so, educators can facilitate student

engagement, encourage critical thinking, and promote increased literacy skills within diverse student populations.

Danielle Fitch, “To Hell with Words, See Something!” Peter Elbow on Prioritizing Process Over Perfection”

This ode to Elbowian values explores the nuances of Elbow’s career that left a lasting impact on the University and the way we understand and teach English composition. Though written before his recent passing, this essay has been turned into a tribute to the fiery, passion that confronted "The Man," embraced writer's individual voices, and courageously rejuvenated the field of writing.

Lunch Break & Transition to Keynote

12:50-1:05pm, Coleman Hall Third Floor



Grab your complimentary lunch and make your way to the keynote presentation in the Coleman Hall auditorium where you are welcome to eat during the presentation. Don’t delay getting downstairs for the start of the keynote presentation though as we’ll be doing our first prize giveaways of the day and you must be present to win!

Keynote Speaker (& Prize Midday Prize Give Away), Coleman Auditorium

1:05-1:10pm, Midday Prize Give Away, CH 1255

1:10-2:00pm, Keynote Presentation, CH 1255



“Oh, Bi the Way”: Bisexual Rhetorics in Queer Webcomics – Dr. Rachael Ryerson

While scholarship on queer rhetorics in queer comix remains sparse, deep rhetorical analyses of bisexual comics are even more rare. To address this gap, and to answer Pamela VanHaitsma’s call for more attention to bisexual rhetorics and the building of more bisexual archives, I curated and investigated several queer webcomics that feature bisexual lives and experiences. Thus, this keynote explores how bisexuality is represented, defined and/or troubled in bisexual webcomics like *Oglaf*, *Power Ballad*, and *Questionable Content*. Too, I consider what those representations mean rhetorically and ideologically,

and how bisexual webcomics become a powerful site of queer community building. I synthesize representations of bisexuality from this webcomics archive— representations that are multimodal, digital, and narrative—to capture, in part, what bisexual rhetorics in webcomics mean for being, doing, and living queer(ly).

SESSION SIX (Concurrent Panels)

2:05-2:55pm, Coleman Hall Third Floor

Panel 6A – 3130 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Julie Campbell

Shakespeare and Renaissance Relationships

Presentations:



Madalynn Bloom, "Silent Wife, Happy Life: The Silencing Power of Marriage in Shakespeare"

There is nothing that quiets a woman quite like her inevitable marriage to a man. In many of William Shakespeare's (1564-1616) plays, there is at least one female character who appears to defy the perfect-and-obedient-woman stereotype. In *Othello* (ca. 1604), it is the bitter, husband-hater, Emilia. In *Much Ado About Nothing* (ca. 1600), it is the outspoken, marriage-hater, Beatrice. In the first couple acts of their respective plays, these women come off as pillars of feminism—breaking molds and delivering powerful speeches bashing men and traditional notions of husbandry; however, as the curtain falls, so do the women, right back into the molds that have been carved for them. Emilia literally falls dead, unable to escape the wrath of her husband. Beatrice falls into a marriage, a pact she once disdained, and loses that outspokenness she was known by. Marriage acts as the ultimate silencer of women in Shakespeare's plays, stripping even the most powerful women of that which sets them apart, squashing them back into the role of a quiet, subservient wife.

Sean Bailey, "Perils of Reputation: Critique of the Honor System in *Much Ado about Nothing*"

Although criticism of gender roles and patriarchal social issues is mainly attributed to the feminist movements of the twentieth century, artists and writers have been deconstructing these institutions for much longer. A prime example of this, *Much Ado About Nothing*, written by William Shakespeare between 1598 and 1599, criticized the gendered institutions of his time long before Suffragettes marched the streets of England and the United States. *Much Ado About Nothing* consistently frames the honor system as inane, often through comedy and dramatic irony, as well as detrimental to those who live under it. It was clear to Shakespearean audiences

just as it is to contemporary ones that *Much Ado About Nothing* is a criticism of the gendered honor system of the premodern and early modern world.

Veronica Cornejo, "Women in Shakespeare"

As a general rule, albeit unwritten, society has always expected a lot from women. In the premodern era, men ruled the world. Women were meant for bearing children and seeing them raised appropriately provided women survived childbirth and children survived infancy. It was often believed that if one woman died bearing children, she could easily be replaced by another to continue the family line. As time has progressed, though, women have been afforded more complexities. While still expected to remain the perfect picture of feminine chastity, godliness, silence, and obedience, they began to be seen as either all good—perfection—or all bad—evil and tempestuous. As early as the 1400's, however, women began writing in answer to those claims of perfection vs. evil, and because women's voices were still so undervalued, male authors joined in, supporting a feminist movement with their own writing as well. Arguably, the most famous playwright the world has known, William Shakespeare, used his platform to show his support of women and their strengths and value in a time period where women needed all the help they could get to be seen and heard

Panel 6B – 3140 Coleman Hall
Moderator: Dr. Jeannie Ludlow



Showcasing Literary Analysis: Character "Types" and Social Commentary

Presentations:

Mataya Petrea, "The Dangers of Societal Neglect: How Arthur Fleck Became a Villain"

Villains are not often given time in the spotlight, but the 2019 film, *Joker*, explores the idea that a villain's story is much more powerful than that of a hero. This presentation discusses the evil that one can become due to societal neglect through DC's very own, the Joker.

Killeen Reidy, "Neuroqueer-coding: Analyzing Magically Different Protagonists"

A breakdown of the process of developing Reidy's analytical framework, neuroqueer-coding, with examples of it in practice by analyzing magically different YA protagonists.

SESSION SEVEN (Concurrent Panels)

3:05-3:55pm, Coleman Hall Third Floor



Panel 7A – 3130 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Tim Taylor

Press-Release Presentations about Recent Articles in Rhetoric & Composition

In these concise, press-release-like presentations, each participant will provide a summary of a research article from within the past five years in Rhetoric and Composition, and the conclusion of each presentation should answer this question: “How should this article affect how I teach writing at the college level or elsewhere?” After every person has presented about their research article, there will be a brief discussion about connections among the articles & ideas for implementation in writing courses.

Presentations:

Kiersten Holland, on “EPortfolio Composition: Fostering a Pedagogy of Well-Being” by Bre Garrett

Danielle Fitch, on “Critical Posthumanist Literacy: Building Theory for Reading, Writing, and Living Ethically with Everyday Artificial Intelligence” by Sarah K. Burriss and Kevin Leander

Daniel Bobie, on “Politeness Profiles in the First-Year Composition Classroom” by Pennie L. Gray

Tim Taylor, on “Strategic Interventions: Grade-Based Nudging in Online and Hybrid Courses” by Rochelle Rodrigo, Beth Eyres, and Sara Walton

Panel 7B – 3140 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Suzie Park

English Studies Capstone Panel: The Business of Caring

Join us as we bring together the world of English studies and the larger “business of caring.” From multiple perspectives, ranging from Mr. Beast to foster and elderly care, from women's healthcare to the housing crisis, our panel considers the relevance of critical reading skills to some of the most pressing public dilemmas centered on failures of caring. Our English capstone class has asked how people successfully demonstrate or fail to demonstrate care, how difficult it is to navigate the ethical requirement to care for fellow human beings, and how practices of “care” are inscribed in everything from public policy (assisted care living, guardianship, housing policies) to social media representations (“like

and subscribe,” influencer culture, self-care), from private notions of passionate concern (“I really care about this”) to personal struggles with limited care (“I should care more, but I don’t”).

Presentations:

Athena Ballard: "Everybody Has a Price!": Mr. Beast and the Business of Caring"

Katie Gillespie: "Caring and Women's Healthcare"

Amy Haas: "Career Caring"

Angel Walker: "The Forgotten Aspects of Humanity"

Presley Wiseman: "Cycles of Neglect: The Foster System Leaving Children Behind"

Final Prize Giveaways, Grand Prize Giveaway & Transition to Final Sessions

3:55-4:05pm, Coleman Hall 3rd Floor Main Concourse (near Eng. Office/Writing Center)

After Session Five Panels get out gather in the main third floor Coleman Hall concourse for our final prize giveaways of the day which includes our grand prize of the Kindle Air. Anyone participating in the final prize giveaway of the day should intend to attend one of the two final professionalization panels following the celebratory giveaway. (It’s on the honor system, so be good department citizens!)

SESSION EIGHT (Closing Professionalization Panels)

4:05-4:55pm, Coleman Hall Third Floor

Panel 8A – 3130 Coleman Hall

Moderator: Dr. Melissa Ames

Let’s Talk Teaching (and Beyond): The English Educator Panel

Local educators gather to discuss the directions their education degrees have taken them. This panel includes novice and expert teachers, educators working in diverse districts across the state as teachers and administrators. Topics of discussion include student teaching, substitute teaching, the job market, mentoring young educators, and various challenges facing those in the field (e.g. the politicization of education, teacher shortages, the mental health epidemic, and more).

Panelists:

Makenna Boyd

Tessa (Philpot) Gleason

Zayne McCorkle

Tiffany Mumm



Panel 8B – 3140 Coleman Hall
Moderator: Dr. Terri Fredrick

English Major Internship Roundtable Discussion

Interns from this semester and last will present briefly about their internship experiences and then answer questions from the moderator and audience.

Panelists:

Killeen Reidy
Talianna Rubin
Jenna Tobias
Sydney Quick

Notes:



ENGLISH STUDIES CONFERENCE



THANK YOU FOR CELEBRATING
ENGLISH STUDIES WITH US TODAY!