Rutgers University

English Department Honors Thesis Symposium

April 30, 2021  A Zoom Gathering

Sponsored by the English Department
Thank you all for gathering today to celebrate the students who have completed their Honors theses in the English Department. An Honors Thesis is a major achievement; it is a capstone, an original piece of scholarship representing the highest level of work available to English majors at Rutgers. Undertaken under the direct supervision of a faculty advisor and reader, it often serves as a stepping-stone towards applications to graduate and professional programs. An Honors Thesis allows students to consolidate the skills and knowledge they have developed over the course of their studies while working collaboratively on a project that extends their engagement with literature and culture—extends it in new, and oftentimes undirected, directions.

Even in "normal" times, it is an arduous and stressful affair to complete an Honors Thesis. This year's students are to be especially commended for completing their work despite the strains of an ongoing pandemic, the limits and loneliness of zoom learning, and the uncertainty of life at the moment. We are full of admiration for them, and so very pleased to be able to be with them here to celebrate their achievements, and we wish them so much luck for the future.

Profs Ann Coiro and Belinda McKeon, Directors, English Senior Honors
SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION: PROF. ANN COIRO

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR: PROF. BILLY GALPERIN

VIDEO SURVEY OF THESES (BREAKOUT ROOMS)

PRESENTATION OF PAUL ROBESON AWARDS AND JORDAN LEE FLYER AWARDS

CLOSING TOAST: PROF. BRADLEY EVANS
Hometown: Iselin, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: An epic fantasy deeply concerned with the nature of power. When Kazuki’s home village is razed to the ground by a demon born of flesh and fire, he swears revenge. He turns to Guardianship to earn the right to a Penumbra, a gift of immense power. Unbeknownst to all, a secret sleeps within the Mother Tree’s gift.

Music you listen to while writing: If I’m feeling inspired, up-tempo music that I can lose myself in. Otherwise, I tend to listen to music without lyrics or music in another language that can serve as background noise.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): I didn’t expect just how much I was able to write in a short amount of time. This was the first time I had decided to dedicate my time to a longer project and I am extremely happy with the results.

When writing your thesis, where you found your best information: Aside from technical facts that were a quick google search away, the best source of information came from my peers. Reading their pieces gave me so much inspiration and allowed me to look at my work in wildly different ways. Different ways of thinking through trauma, different ways of looking at a single object, different moods and emotions to advantage of. I owe a lot to them.

Why you wrote a thesis: I wrote a thesis solely for myself. I wanted to tell a story that aligned with all of my interests, taking inspiration from a variety of mediums. I’m still writing Sovereign for myself but somewhere along the way a few other people have tagged along and now I write for them also.
Hometown: Iselin, NJ

Your thesis is... a collection of poems that cover aspects of the Kashmiri conflict, some of which include past events, the present political climate, and the occupation overall. The collection also delves into what it means to be living in diaspora and the inevitability of losing a culture.

An author/novel/story/poem that you'd recommend to anybody: The poem 'Things I Didn't Know I Loved' by Nâzım Hikmet

What was unexpected about the process of writing your thesis? I didn’t realize how tender this would get. At the beginning of the year, I wanted to stay away from the personal as possible, though this was inevitable. I didn’t expect to learn more about how I felt throughout this, I always imagined myself as removed from the conflict, but with each poem I wrote, I felt more and more connected to Kashmir and its history.

Why you wrote a thesis: I noticed that I would write about the same three topics, one of which is the Kashmir conflict. I thought it would make the most sense to take time to see how much material I’d be able to generate under the requirements of the thesis and with the guidance of an advisor.

What comes next? I’ll be attending graduate school to pursue a Creative Writing MFA.
"It is important to acknowledge the existence of duopathic characters in melodrama..."

RENEE BENKOVICS

The Duopathic Character of Melodrama: From Sentimental Drama and Gendered Differences to its Maturation in The Bells

ADVISOR: PROF. MATTHEW BUCKLEY  SECOND READER: PROF. CAROLYN WILLIAMS

Hometown: North Brunswick

Your thesis in 60 words or less: Melodrama scholars have defined the characters of the genre as stereotyped and simplified. Heilman offers the term monopathic to describe their undivided natures. My thesis argues that although monopathic characters do exist in melodrama, duopathic characters are also evident. It is important to acknowledge the existence of duopathic characters in melodrama because internal conflict within these characters can be examined.

Why you wrote a thesis: After taking a couple of melodrama courses, I've found that the genre interests me greatly. Writing a thesis allowed me to explore the genre in greater depth through research and let me uncover conclusions to my own questions.

Music you listen to while writing: I have a playlist of Studio Ghibli instrumentals that makes the perfect backdrop for writing.

A much-loved literary quote: "I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart. I am, I am, I am." Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar

Non-literature classes at Rutgers you've enjoyed: I minored in Psychology and found my religious minds, personality psych, and infant development courses the most interesting.
The convert experiences a radical reorientation of the soul ...

Tell us about your thesis: My thesis analyzes Christian conversion through the epistemological development of characters in C.S Lewis’s The Magician’s Nephew and The Screwtape Letters, using Saint Augustine’s memoria as a framework. The convert experiences a radical reorientation of the soul inward and upwards towards God, the true object of its affections, and continues a constant state of conversion throughout life.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: The Confessions by Saint Augustine of Hippo.

Music you listen to while writing: Taizé music, Gregorian chants, and hymns

A much-loved literary quote: From A Good Man is Hard to Find by Flannery O’Connor: “‘She would of been a good woman,’ The Misfit said, ‘if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life.’”
The Sexed and the Unsexed Women: An Exploration of Sex and Power Through Shakespeare’s Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth

**Hometown:** North Brunswick

**Your thesis in 60 words or less:** My thesis explores Shakespeare’s Cleopatra and Lady Macbeth as different yet remarkably similar in how they navigate power. While both are infamously strong heroines, they are nonetheless dependent on their husbands for access to power—manipulating roles of witchcraft, motherhood, and wifely duty to secure this access. Ultimately, they destroy themselves and their men in obsessive pursuit of this power.

**Part-time job you’ve had:** ESL Intermediate English Teacher in Zahle, Lebanon.

**Something you learned as an English major at Rutgers:** Literature is unique in that it records the human history of emotions, irrationality, doubt, love, evil, brilliance, and everything in between. It will show you how you were never really the first one to experience anything and that someone, whether fictional or real, has been through what you’re going through.

**Why you wrote a thesis:** Are you really an English major if you aren’t always trying to challenge and torture yourself with writing? Even until the very end? I find it exciting to close every chapter in my life with a bit of madness—it’s good for the soul.

**Non-literature classes at Rutgers you’ve enjoyed:** Microeconomics, Mathematics of Money, Teaching Emerging Bilinguals, Language and Linguistics.
Hometown: Somerset, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: Like Breathing is the story of a young black girl struggling with her identity and sense of self while surrounded by people who make her question whether or not beauty is only skin deep. She turns inward to find a sense of security, however as her mental health declines she finds herself losing sense of what is real and what isn’t.

When writing your thesis, where you found your best information: A lot of the best information I found was while listening to the stories some of my family members told about their childhoods, and growing up black in America.

Why you wrote a thesis: I feel like this is the first story that I had a passion behind. It tells a narrative that I feel I not only can relate to, but is also an important one to tell.

A much-loved literary quote: “Talk nonsense, but talk your own nonsense, and I’ll kiss you for it. To go wrong in one’s own way is better than to go right in someone else’s”

-Fyodor Dostoyevsky
To Build an Ark: Christian Themes in Climate Change Literature

Hometown: Marlton, NJ.

Your thesis in 60 words or less: My thesis is a study of Christian themes in contemporary climate change fiction. By analyzing Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver and The Road by Cormac McCarthy, I argue that Christianity functions in contemporary literary fiction as a positive tool to inspire readers to care for the environment.

Why you wrote a thesis: I wrote a thesis because I was genuinely excited by the idea of creating my own project and dedicating a year to it. I also wanted to get a taste of what academia feels since, at the time, I was considering applying to grad school.

Non-literature classes at Rutgers you’ve enjoyed: Some of my favorite Rutgers classes have included "Dinosaurs," "The Hero’s Quest: Myth, Religion and Harry Potter," all of my creative writing classes and "Animal Fitting, Exhibition and Handling," where I spent five weeks working with Grattini, the unruliest goat at Rutgers Farm.

Your writing rituals: I always like to have a mug of Chai tea at my side when I’m writing. Usually, I write in the evenings and enjoy listening to music as I work. I find that, unfortunately, classical music tends to distract me even more than music with lyrics, so I usually stick to classic and alt. rock to keep my focus, haha.

A much-loved literary quote: “The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid.” Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey
"...writing is so much more fun when it is collaborative..."

ANNIE GONOR

Kerouac Cuts the Cat in Two: On Emotional Dissonance and Tracing the Relationship Between Traditional and Modern Zen Buddhism

Hometown: Fair Lawn, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: This piece is an investigation of the role Zen Buddhism had in shaping the American religious landscape from its introduction to the country in the 1950's until today. It traces this modern spiritual legacy through a comparative analysis of three primary Ancient Buddhist and modern Buddhist texts: Jack Keroauc’s Dharma Bums and The Scripture of Golden Eternity and Mujus’ Shaseki-shun.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: My Year of Rest and Relaxation by Ottessa Moshfegh.

Some of the artists who matter to you right now: Charlie Burg, Monica Risky.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): That writing is so much more fun when it is collaborative.

Part-time job you’ve had: Tennis coaching!

A much-loved literary quote: “Well, don’t let your mouth start nothing your ass can’t stand” – Toni Morrison, Sula.

A good name for a pet, taken from literature: Quarlous - from Knight of the Burning Pestle by Francis Beaumont.
Hometown: Chatsworth, NJ.

Your thesis in 60 words or less: A creative thesis through the medium of an anonymous Twitter account, that encompasses the pain, narcissism, horror, love, and redemption of an unnamed and ungendered narrator making sense, and coming to terms with, their parents' divorce.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): I wasn’t expecting many people to follow or even respond to my thesis/tweets so quickly. My intention was to have my Twitter account be interactive, but I am very appreciative of how many people added their own prose/stories/thoughts to my Tweets. It made me feel very grateful for embarking on this journey.

Non-literature classes at Rutgers you’ve enjoyed: Race Relations with Professor Steph-Pena Alves.

Your writing rituals: always cry.

A good name for a pet, taken from literature: Cerberus or Prometheus

What comes next? *screams*

Anything else: Thank you for the amazing years. I am unbelievably grateful, and I hope to continue to make everyone proud.
Hometown: St. John's, Antigua & Barbuda

Your thesis in 60 words or less: My thesis is an exploration of generational trauma that has been passed down from slavery and a retrospective look at some of the trauma that I have experienced. The poetry focuses on the Black experience in the US and the Black family dynamics that exist within the Caribbean whereas the prose focuses on the personal aspect of trauma and healing.

Music you listen to while writing: Hozier, George Ezra, Amber Run, The Civil Wars, The Sweeplings, Oh Wonder

Some of the artists who matter to you right now: These are a list of Antiguan artists/creators whose work and journey I find truly inspiring. More and more I am realizing how important it is to acknowledge the talent that is around you and giving credit to those who are outside of America because they are just as outstanding: Chavel (Instagram: Chadvakid); Shelleysa Morgan (Instagram: Shelleyshaa); Makeida Antonio (instagram: WadadliWriter); Jaycie (instaram: aurajae_ / artistrybyh.a.m_); Annetta (instagram: anehtah)

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): I didn’t expect how personal this journey would be. My topic started out very broad but generational trauma was an important topic for me and I wanted to explore it further. However, by the end of the thesis, I have a better understanding of myself, my family and my trauma. I feel more confident in myself and my path to healing and growth. I did not expect to leave this program with a new sense of self and I guess life is interesting like that.
...a narcissistic Adam and a victimized and sophisticated Eve.

Damned Be the Divine: Dismantling the Preconceptions of Adam and Eve

ADVISOR: PROF. ANN BAYNES COIRO
2ND READER: PROF. STACY KLEIN

Hometown: Union, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: “What is natural in a prenatural world? Surely not Adam and Eve’s relationship! Going against the current of the widely accepted opinions of Milton’s Paradise Lost, this thesis explores a narcissistic Adam and a victimized and sophisticated Eve.

What comes next? I am going for my Master’s in Education at the Rutgers University Graduate School of Education! I will be in the College Student Affairs program working towards becoming a Dean of Students.

Music you listen to while writing: RnB, mostly songs by Raveena.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): I learned that I can write 15 pages in two days, haha! I also did not expect to be able to read and decipher Paradise Lost in the way that I can now. It’s like learning Shakespeare but with a single text.

Something you learned as an English major at Rutgers: English majors are so funny and we stick together. I also learned that a lot of us love to write more than read.

Why you wrote a thesis: I wrote a thesis because I wanted to test my abilities as an English major and have something to attest to all my years of learning and hard work. I do not regret any moment of researching and writing, and I am so proud to have completed this challenging task. It has been such an honor writing a thesis and I feel prepared to take on what else life has to offer!
MEGAN MANTHA

Maybe I'm Not a Career Woman:

A collection of poems about Playboy bunnies, heartbreak, spreadsheets, finding a small part of yourself, and the contemporary art of nuclear waste warning messages.

Hometown: Stockton, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: Collected poems, ekphrases, and rants that cover a myriad of topics from playboy bunnies, old school lesbians, and beautiful works of art, to wawa parking lot fights, the bureaucracy of hell, and leaving behind things that best stay dead.

What comes next? Working for the Rutgers Alum run company Original Skateboards and engaging in community art spaces while I figure it all out.


Why you wrote a thesis: Out of spite for my 8th grade English teacher who said I’d never make it into Honors English.
Hometown: North Brunswick, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: Through a postcolonial and patriarchal capitalist perspective of Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye as well as American popular culture, I define colorism as a product of the traumas of colonialism and a subconscious measure of social capital that has been detrimental for dark skinned Black women/femmes. Using this advanced definition of colorism, this text addresses how under the veneer of multicultural inclusion and “Black is Beautiful” initiatives, Hollywood continues to make organized efforts to erase dark skinned Black women/femmes.

Some of the artists who matter to you right now: Charlie XCX, Mitski, Frank Ocean and Beach House

Why you wrote a thesis: I was inspired by a essay collection written by sociologist, Tressie McMillan Cottom called Thick: And Other Essays where she articulates colorism, racism and Eurocentrism in media/popular culture.

A much-loved literary quote: “First we only want to be seen, but once we’re seen, that’s not enough anymore. After that, we want to be remembered.” Station Eleven – Emily St. John Mandel.
NEHA PERI

Incoherency as Literary Resistance in Toni Morrison’s Beloved

Hometown: Mount Laurel, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: An exploration of Toni Morrison’s use of the incoherent as a mode of opacity to resist against Western conceptions of the transparent. I look at how Morrison reimagines the work of comprehension through a section of the novel I have termed the ‘incoherency chapters’ based on their structure and style.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): I’ve learned that things change quickly. A new idea can uproot your entire argument and turn it on its head. The idea you have going in will probably not resemble the final product, and that’s okay. Sometimes you have something you want to say, and the literature becomes your vehicle to speak about it, and sometimes a book can shape your argument in ways you never thought possible. Part of the experience, I think, is doing the research that makes you challenge even what you thought you knew, and I find that really exciting.

Something you learned as an English major at Rutgers: I’ve learned how expansive the field is. There’s so much to explore, and so many brilliant minds to work on it with. The Rutgers English Department has been such an inspiring place for me to generate new ideas and explore my literary passions. Being part of it for four years has solidified my goal to go into academia and continue with research.

Why you wrote a thesis: I wrote a thesis because I wanted the chance, for years, to research this part of Beloved and make some meaning out of it. I read it for the first time in 12th grade, and had not stopped thinking about it since. I also wanted to write a thesis to encapsulate my time at the Rutgers English Department in a single project.
The Complexity of Night: A Phantasmic Fusion of Physicality and Figurative Being

ADVISOR: PROF. ANN BAYNES COIRO  SECOND READER: PROF. RONALD LEVÃO

Hometown: Readington, New Jersey

Your thesis in 60 words or less: My thesis explores the complexity of Night in John Milton’s Paradise Lost. I examine Night as a figurative being and a physical time and explain how that changes the perception of her complicity in Satan’s revenge plot. My close reads combined with outside sources reveal Night’s fluid ability to belong to more than one category at any given time.

What you learned while writing your thesis (that you didn’t expect): One thing I learned that I didn’t expect to while writing a thesis was how much more capability I had inside myself to overcome adversity. When I first began my thesis, I was on a completely different track. I honestly didn’t have a clear idea in my head until I had already written the December chunk. It was daunting to me to keep going at points because I had no clear direction, but being able to produce something that I am so proud of helped me learn a lot about myself and my abilities to adapt and overcome.

The most essential information when writing my thesis came from my advisor, Professor Coiro. I took her Milton class in the spring semester of my junior year and I was amazed at how much she knew then. Once we started working together, I found her information and leads on sources I could use irreplaceable. She is so knowledgeable about John Milton and was able to direct me in whatever direction I needed to go. I definitely could not have done this without her.

My writing rituals all help me relax and really embrace the idea to me of what a writer is. I can write anywhere but my favorite place to write is in my bed. Being comfortable is essential to me. I grab a blanket, the fuzzier the better, and get set up on my lap desk. I settle in with a cup of coffee in my mug that says “Novel in Progress” and grab my laptop. I have a Surface Pro so I detach my screen and prop it up and use my Bluetooth typewriter keyboard. I usually always start with a free write and then move into something I have been working on or an idea that came to me in my free writing time. Something about those elements combined just help me channel my creative energy and produce something I like.

"I examine Night as a figurative being and a physical time..."
Hometown: Park Ridge, New Jersey

Your thesis in 60 words or less: An exploration into the consumer culture of 1980’s America and the all-encompassing nature of late-stage capitalism as expressed through the interaction between sound and narrative. By aurally addressing issues of identity and authenticity across disparate economic and racial backgrounds, I assert that meaning, whether positive or not, is achievable in an otherwise inauthentic postmodern world via "listening" outside of oneself.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: East of Eden by John Steinbeck, especially if you read the novel poolside.

Music you listen to while writing: “Brown Noise – 90 Minutes” by Sound Dreamer.

Non-literature classes at Rutgers you’ve enjoyed: “Politics & Culture” with Michael Rossi. There are more than a few nods in my thesis towards lessons I learned in that class.

Your writing rituals: Write for one hour, play “Castles in the Air” by Don McClean on the guitar once or twice, then back to work for another 45 minutes.
ALEXANDRA ROSSETTI

Raising the Roof: An Exploration of Physical Space in *Jane Eyre*

**Hometown:** Leonardo, NJ

**Your thesis in 60 words or less:** This thesis looks at the architectural elements and language used in Jane Eyre and how it relates to the plot structure and the impact it has on Jane.

**Music you listen to while writing:** Almost anything. Ranging from Green Day to Lo-Fi beats to bird noises.

**A much-loved literary quote:** "Though my soul may set in darkness, it will rise in perfect light. I have loved the stars too fondly to be fearful of the night." - Sarah Williams, “The Old Astronomer to His Pupil”

**Your writing rituals:** Starting with a pen and paper on a sheet of printer paper. If I’m really stuck, I write as if I’m having a conversation with myself. I’ll ask myself the question I’m trying to answer and then write “Well,...” and start to answer it.
Your thesis in 60 words or less: How did recent developments in science influence the writers of American Transcendentalism? In this thesis, I briefly examine the role that science played in the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson as an introduction, and I then take a deep dive by investigating how Walt Whitman weaves science into Leaves of Grass and how Henry David Thoreau employs science throughout Walden.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating by Elizabeth Tova Bailey.

What comes next? I’ll be pursuing a PhD in “Ecology and Evolutionary Biology and Neuroscience” at Princeton University. My dissertation will center on investigating the neurobiology of mosquitoes, with a focus on how it influences behavior. I’ll be working with the yellow fever mosquito, Aedes aegypti.

Music you listen to while writing: Before writing, I get motivated by listening to the song “Sometimes I Make Shit that Rocks” by Hot Dad. Then I try to write shit that rocks.

Some of the artists who matter to you right now: Christopher Marley (no relation to Bob) for his cool insect mosaics—sorry if by “artist” you meant “musician” and not artist sensu stricto.

When writing your thesis, where you found your best information: I found a lot of great scholarly books by taking advantage of Amazon’s algorithms. I put three books that were important in my Amazon shopping cart and just parked them there. Over the next few weeks, I would get emails “recommended for you.” Whenever there was a book relevant to my thesis in the recommendation email, I put it in my shopping cart, thereby further refining the search algorithm. After a couple of weeks, I had about fifteen amazing books in the shopping cart, including a few I don’t think I would have come across on my own.
Hometown: Kendall Park, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: A murder mystery and fantasy novel with a twist, If Dreams Could Kill combines futuristic versions of virtual reality with classic Dungeons and Dragons adventures to create an interactive story that could appeal to gamers and readers alike. Included is a fully functional D&D One Shot titled Vampires of Redvale which can be played alongside, before, or after reading the novel.

What comes next? Now that I’m done with the thesis, I’m finally motivated to finish writing the rest of the book! There’s something about having the specific deadline of this many pages by this time that stopped my brain from being able to think in depth about the rest of this novel beyond major plot details and vague theoretical concepts. Now that I’m done, though, I can’t wait to continue exploring this story and see where it takes me. I’ve already started the next few chapters!

Some of the artists who matter to you right now: Though 'artist' can be a loose term at times, Youtuber and Author Christine Riccio is what I would call an artist whom I look up to. Starting her career as a “Booktuber” and now having published one book with another set to debut in a month, she has taken her viewers through the whole journey with her, sharing her writing struggles and successes, her experiences with the publishing process, and generally providing motivation and support for those who would seek to pursue writing themselves.

When writing your thesis, where you found your best information: I found my best inspiration and brainstorming to come from books and media that dealt with themes and concepts that I was trying to focus on. For example, right after I began writing this thesis the book Ready Player Two came out, by Ernest Cline. Though I was a big fan of Ready Player One and it was a major source of inspiration for my work, it didn’t 100% reflect the virtual reality experience I was trying to embody, and Ready Player Two felt so perfectly timed and connected to my thesis that I felt it was somehow published just for me. It took virtual reality one extra step that I was trying to emulate, and confronted all of the social and personal conflicts I was trying to consider. Though I ended up being disappointed by Ready Player Two, it showed me what I did and didn’t like about their concept of virtual reality and helped me develop my own version. I also relied heavily on Dungeons and Dragons books such as the Players Handbook and Monster Manual for much of the content both in the book and the One Shot.
Your thesis in 60 words or less: By observing Claudia’s retrospective narration and her attention to Pecola and nature, I suggest that Claudia uses marigolds as an allegory for the precarious condition of Black girls in order to assert their right to protection and belonging—key elements of citizenship.

An author/novel/story/poem that you'd recommend to anybody: Joan Didion’s The Year of Magical Thinking

Part-time job you've had: I worked at my local Barnes and Noble as a bookseller.

Non-literature classes at Rutgers you've enjoyed: The Modern Girl; Gender, Race and Class in the Media; Feminist Theory: Historical Perspectives

Your writing rituals: First and foremost, my writing ritual begins with overthinking and procrastination. Then, I need to have an almond-milk or matcha latte at hand as fuel for the pre-write process. I also have to be at my desk (preferably enclosed in my room) for optimal writing with notes at hand. I don’t like to listen to music when I write because it feels like the lyrics are competing with my thoughts so I'm usually writing in silence. For shorter projects, I like to write papers all at once because it gives my writing a fluid voice that I feel suffers when I try to write for shorter periods of time with breaks (although this is probably most influenced by time constraint). For longer projects, like this thesis, I still write between 4-7 pages at a time, but time is much more spaced out, which helps me to slow down and take breaks as needed.
Your thesis explores the role of art in the portrayal of pandemics in two science fiction novels, Station Eleven by Emily St. John Mandel and Oryx and Crake by Margaret Atwood. The portrayals of art are used in both novels to preserve pre-pandemic society as well as critique it. Art is also used as a vehicle for creating a hopeful future.

What’s next? Attending Columbia’s summer publishing course and then starting my full-time job at OncLive as Assistant Editor.

Part-time job you’ve had: Editorial Assistant at Rutgers University Press.

A much-loved literary quote: “All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.” The Fellowship of the Ring.
"...a disagreement between what society expects and what society’s constraints permit."

African-American Motherhood: Sacrifice, Necessity, and Familial Reformation in Toni Morrison

Hometown: Edison, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: Toni Morrison's African-American mothers are asked to abide by white America’s standards, although their position as African-American women often makes this an impossibility for them. There is a disagreement between what society expects and what society’s constraints permit of African-American mothers. With Paradise, Sula, and Beloved, I will show how African American mothers persevere under these circumstances.

What comes next? I'm attending Columbia Law School in the fall!

A much-loved literary quote: "But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs." George Eliot

A good name for a pet, taken from literature: Tom Pawyer
Hometown: Haddon Township, New Jersey

Your thesis in 60 words or less: This collection is an exploration of what it means to be a woman growing up in the present environment, both in its physical and emotional space. It investigates how we form relationships with the natural world but also the people within it, especially those who create and display expectations from women which can be found paralleled in nature.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: The Magic Toyshop by Angela Carter. I would recommend to anybody because I can almost guarantee you’ve never read anything like it, and even if you hate it, there is something to admire about how wonderfully bizarre and disturbing but beautifully enchanting this feminist story is.

Something you learned as an English major at Rutgers: Being an English major here at Rutgers taught me that there is and will be an audience for what you do, and there are people in the world who will take your art seriously. The English department taught me, above all else, that my passion for writing matters and is worth pursuing.

A much-loved literary quote: “A purpose of human life, no matter who is controlling it, is to love whoever is around to be loved.”
— Kurt Vonnegut, The Sirens of Titan

A good name for a pet, taken from literature: Gatsby strikes me as a perfect name for a tuxedo cat.
"...feminist vegetarian theoretical lens, with particular consideration for Korean gender politics and Korean humanisms."

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio

Your thesis in 60 words or less: My thesis analyzes the novel The Vegetarian by Han Kang through a feminist vegetarian theoretical lens, with particular consideration for Korean gender politics and Korean humanisms in reflection of the novel's roots. I ultimately suggest that The Vegetarian presents vegetarianism as a form of liberation not only from specied violence, but critically, from gendered and sexual violence.

An author/novel/story/poem that you’d recommend to anybody: Running with Scissors by Austin Burroughs

A much-loved literary quote: “The true harvest of my life is intangible. A little stardust caught. A portion of the rainbow I have clutched” from A Gesture Life by Chang-Rae Lee

Anything else/Favorite bus seat: The window on the left-hand side of first row of upper level seats.

AMANDA WELLS

More than Meat; Liberation and Feminist Vegetarian Politics in The Vegetarian by Han Kang

ADVISOR: PROF. MUKTI MANGHARAM
SECOND READER: PROF. DANA LUCIANO
Hometown: Berkeley Heights, NJ

Your thesis in 60 words or less: A book-length poem, organized as a numbered list, exploring themes of loss, trauma, motherhood, and grief in response to the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989. The poem is divided in four sections and loosely follow the perspectives of speakers reflecting on the events of June 4th and the resonance of those events with the Chinese people as a whole.

An author/novel/story/poem that you'd recommend to anybody: alphabet by Inger Christensen

Music you listen to while writing: Silence - I wait until everyone is out or asleep.

Why you wrote a thesis: I felt like I had something I wanted to say, and this was the best way I could say it.

A much-loved literary quote: "The value of things is not the time they last, but the intensity with which they occur." - Fernando Pessoa
CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR GRADUATING WRITERS

*In these difficult times, your achievements inspire us.*

THANKS, ETC:

Thanks to our faculty for directing another wonderful group of honors theses, and a huge thank you also to our administrative heroes Aimee LaBrie and Leandra Cain.

Thank you to our students for working so hard, cheering us up, and looking out for each other. We are immensely proud of you. And thanks to science...we all know what for. Onward!