



ostylus
a journal of first-year writing

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From the Guest Editor

On January 28, 2015, UCF's Department of Writing and Rhetoric will celebrate a milestone by hosting the 5th Annual Knights Write Showcase in the Pegasus Ballroom of the Student Union. Here, select students present orally and visually the work they produced in their first-year writing classes.

It's important to note that every year, between 6,000 and 8,000 students enroll in first-year writing classes at UCF. While not every student has their work submitted, a large number end up with their essays in the pool from which these are chosen. For some of the projects in this issue, the students started with a great idea that they worked with for an entire semester; for others, their idea started out in more general terms and was cultivated along the way into something unique and special. In every case, the final materials submitted exemplify exceptional writing and research skills.

The essays presented in this issue are courtesy of the 5th Annual Knights Write Showcase panelists. The first of the panels I'll be discussing is titled: Fanfiction and Popular Culture. Here, four students offer their point of views on this interesting topic.

In Garrett Jones's essay, "Fanfiction Rules Writing Research," the author explores how the research and writing process of fanfiction helps students learn about how to perform research for professional or academic purposes. He finishes the essay with suggestions for incorporating fanfiction writing into the classroom and why doing so could be beneficial. This essay may give you ideas about how your own non-academic activities might actually help you with classwork.

Ashleigh Linse wrote "Fan-Producer Relations of Doctor Who—The Modern Doctor" in her ENC 1102 class. In it, she argues that fans can and do influence the producers of shows, Doctor Who specifically, in a positive direction. To make her point, Linse collected textual, statistical, and multimedia evidence. Additionally, her essay is a wonderful model of how students can artfully add their position on a subject into an existing conversation.

Ashley Joyce-Nyack also wrote on the topic of fan influence in her essay, "SuperWhoLock: The Face of the New Super-Fandom." This essay not only discusses the positive influences of the fan base of Doctor Who, but also for the shows Supernatural and Sherlock. Reading this essay alongside Linse's may offer some insight on just how persuasive and powerful a loyal fan base can be in the entertainment industry.

The fourth presenter on this panel, Brittani Couch, wrote the essay, “Interpreting Cinematic Elements: Psychological Explanations” in her ENC 1102 class. In it she explores the connection between the psychological theories of schema, identification, and fundamental attribution error to the construction of audience representation of cinematic elements. As you read, it may be fun to think about the connections you have with your favorite movies.

The second panel, Researching Writing in the University, is also made up of four students who offer interesting and unique perspectives on academic writing.

First, Nick Scala explores the difference between high school and college writing in his essay, “The Evolution of Writing.” Reflecting on the writing tasks he did in high school Scala focuses specifically on the usefulness of FCAT Writes toward preparing students for college-level writing. This essay is especially relatable because of the prevalence of standardized testing today.

The next essay, “Ending the Cycle of Frustration: How I Overcame the Hindrance of Writer’s Block,” by Amanda Wimmersberg, discusses a subject that nearly everyone has been affected by. Along with collecting data from other students, the author also conducted several self-experiments to discover if any would help her overcome writer’s block. This essay is especially useful to readers who know they struggle with the same issue.

The third panelist, Komysa Hassan, wrote, “Digital Literacy and The Making of Meaning: How Format Affects Interpretation through the University of Central Florida Libraries Search Interface.” The author looks at the rhetorical situation users of UCF Libraries’ OneSearch are in when they use the program and how that influences the way they conduct research and interpret the results of data collection. If you have ever used the OneSearch interface (or plan to in the future), it may be useful to keep Hassan’s findings in mind as you work.

Last for this panel, Cullen Fitzgerald, wrote the essay, “Engineering Majors and Writing: Is It the Instructor or the Student?” In it, the author looks for answers to the question: where writing is concerned, is there a gap between what Engineering professors are instructing students and what is expected in the profession? Fitzgerald conducts surveys and interviews to research the answer—which will be of interest to anyone who is part of the Engineering field.

The third student panel is one comprised of four authors whose work was published during the last year in *Stylus: A Journal of First-Year Writing*. Two of the authors, Steven Heller and James Plyler, were published in the Spring 2014 issue. You can access their essays here http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/5_1.php. The other two, Willa Maddox and Kyle Coltrain, were published in our Fall 2014 issue available here http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/5_2.php. All four of these essays are excellent examples of first-year writing at its best.

Like many students currently enrolled at UCF, you may be wondering how to approach your own writing projects, big or small. The essays in this issue are excellent models of analysis, data collection, and exceptional writing. It may help you to also read the writer’s statements to learn how the authors overcame, what to them at the time, were various roadblocks to successful writing. Some of the authors discuss how they came up with ideas and research questions, while others offer advice on data collection and entering academic conversations in a way that interested them. Join us at the Showcase in January to see how the authors adjust their material for a different audience and genre of presenting.

If you would like to watch videos of the 2014 panelists, you can visit the Knights Write Showcase website at: <http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/showcase.php>

All of us at the Showcase and with *Stylus* hope you find this issue beneficial to your own writing projects. Enjoy!

Adele Richardson,
Knights Write Showcase