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because people are different, and there are many different types of viruses that cause the common cold," Ismert said.

Junior Lauren Campbell has sneezed, coughed and had a runny nose and mild sore throat for over two weeks.

"I've felt weak, run down, and it makes me not want to work as much, but with all of my extracurricular activities, I still have to get things done," Campbell said. She noted that everyone around her, including her boyfriend, friends and coworkers, have also had the same symptoms lately.

So why is everyone catching a cold now? Ismert said more illnesses may be present during certain times of the year due to changes in the weather.

"When the weather turns cold, it drives people inside, and colds are easier to transmit to the people in close quarters when people are coughing, sneezing and blowing noses and then touching handles, desks and chairs," Ismert said.

Stress is another explanation of the increase in illnesses among students. Things like tests, papers and school combined with working can cause stress, lowering the immune system and making a student more susceptible to

To avoid catching a cold or other illnesses, Ismert suggests students constantly wash their hands, dispose of tissues properly, cover their mouths when coughing or cough into the fold of their arm, get adequate sleep, take a multivitamin, especially with an unhealthy diet, and limit excess stress when possible.

"I wish people would stop sneezing on me, wash their hands more, stop spreading germs and be more considerate," Campbell laughed.

Treatment options for the common cold depend on the symptoms. For a sore throat, Ismert recommends gargling with warm salt water and using a chloroseptic spray. Tylenol or Ibuprophen can relieve pain and fever, while nasal drips and Claritin can help with congestion. For a cough, try ATussin or a DM-type cough syrup.

"If a student is concerned about a health issue and needs reassurance about those symptoms, whether it turns out to be a virus or a more serious illness, then they should come see us," Ismert said.

The Student Health Center is located in Westside Hall and is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., no appointment necessary. On Thursdays, the SHC opens at 9 a.m. For more information, call 962-3280 or visit the SHC Web site at www.uncw.edu/stuaff/healthservices/shc.htm.

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# The UNCW Graduate English Association to hold first conference

KATY LUQUIRE STAFF WRITER

The UNCW Graduate English Association will be holding its first conference this weekend. In the association's groundbreaking conference, graduate students will get a chance to present their work based around "Title Effects: Writing through Watershed." Although the conference does not officially begin until Saturday, April 1, the event begins Friday, March 31 at Rebel Books featuring "creative writing and a mixer from conference attendees, friends, our keynote speaker, and our colleagues," said Melinda Hollis, the GEA co-chair, in an email interview.

Dr. Wagas A. Khwaja, the keynote speaker, a creative writer and postcolonial scholar from Agnes Scott University, will highlight the ending of the conference on Saturday. UNCW English professors Anthony Atkins, Sue Richardson, Michael Ruwe and Barbara Waxman will be introducing students at the conference as well.

Before Khwaja's presentation, graduate students will present their scholarship in the University Union with food and drink breaks in between each presentation. Each student will present for around 15 minutes, followed by a question and answer session.

Hollis encourages everyone to come out and "see what your students have been working on both in their scholarship and raising the bar for graduate english studies at our fine university."



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