

# Celebrating Student Achievement

The Herald would like to offer a sampling of the multitude of research being presented by undergraduates on CSA Day, April 12th. Presentations will be held in various locations on campus.

## Morning Conference Sessions

- Poster presentation- 7:30 AM -9 AM, Carlyle Campbell Library.
- Teaching and Learning: *Educating Children and the Public* - Ledford 101.
- Laboratory Science: *Research and A Closer Look* - SMB 162.
- Literature: *Classic to Contemporary* - Kresge Auditorium.
- Social Science: *Quality of Life, Diversity, and Immigration* - Ledford 111.
- Business and Related Topics: *Research, Renovation, and Cryptology* - Harris 110.
- Communication & Media presentations - SMB 118.
- Octavia! performing - Carswell Concert Hall.
- Afternoon Conference Sessions and Events**
- Clinical Practice and Human Emotions - Ledford 101.
- Scientific Field Research and Sustainability -SMB 162, 1:40 PM.
- Studies in the Humanities: *Gender, Feminism, and Film* - Kresge Auditorium, 1:30 PM.
- Art History and Picturing Time - SMB 118, 1:30 PM.
- International Programs: *Study and Research, Abroad conferences* - Harris 110, 1:40PM.
- Performances and Exposition - Carswell Concert Hall, 1:40 PM.

## Ann Cox

Oscar Wilde's Italy



Photo Credits: Ann Cox

### What led you to pursue this topic?

I chose this topic because Oscar Wilde is my favorite writer and I grew up reading and performing in his work. While he is often associated with London and British society, if one digs deeper, it is clear to see that he was greatly influenced by his time in Italy. When I was accepted to study abroad in Sansepolcro, I knew I wanted to follow in Oscar's footsteps to learn just how this beautiful place impacted his life and work.

### If you could do your research over again, would you choose the same topic?

I would do this project again in a heartbeat! I learned so much about Oscar and about Italy through this research. I got to stay connected with my roots as a theatre kid, but from the lens of an International Studies major.

### How did you conduct your research?

To conduct this research, I analyzed

Oscar's letters, his poetry, his writing, and biographies to track his time in Italy and visit to as many places he went as possible. I traced themes of romanticism, aestheticism, Catholicism, and varying perceptions of... homosexuality and compared these themes between Italy and London to find how Italian culture affected him in ways Victorian Britain did not.

### What did you conclude?

My conclusion was that Italy is a reflection of Oscar that provided him an outlet to be most in touch with who he was as a writer, a gay man, and an icon. He would not have been the same without his connection to Italian culture.

## Brooke Mayo

Zelda Fitzgerald's *Save Me the Waltz*: Through the Eyes of a Woman

### What was your thesis?

It is a discussion on Zelda Fitzgerald's conditions that she was under when she wrote her first and only novel. Long story short: She wrote it in only six weeks in an asylum, her husband was mad that she wrote about their lives (and therefore changed most of her book), and his influence resulted in the novel not receiving proper editing. The book had horrible reviews, and it's still considered a literary failure; however, my thesis digs deeper than that. I discuss the significance of Fitzgerald's novel in the sense that it's semi-autobiographical, and it's a fascinating approach to understanding the mind of a woman during The Roaring Twenties.

### What led you to pursue this topic?

A couple of summers ago, my father was stationed in Montgomery, Alabama, and I decided that it would be a good experience to spend my break down there. I went to Barnes and Noble a lot, and I found a book called "Z" that got my attention. Plus, it was on sale for \$4, so of course I got it. It was a modern novel based on the life of Zelda Fitzgerald. Being the English nerd that I am, I loved it, and I was obsessed with the idea that the American culture didn't truly know who she truly was. The F. Scott Fitzgerald museum is also in Montgomery, and I knew that my life would be changed forever as I stood and read her letters to her husband and father that were hanging on the walls. She had a story to tell, in spite of the patriarchal society that she lived in, and I wanted to be a part of it.

### If you could do your research over again, would you choose the same topic?

In a heartbeat! She has become a part of me, and I feel drawn to tell her story. She deserves this. I chose a tough subject since there isn't a lot of information on her in comparison to other writers, but it was and is worth it.

### How did you conduct your research?

English majors have to do a thesis, and we also have to take a research seminar class, which is probably the

most work I've ever had to do for a class while here at Meredith: that was my spring semester of my junior year. Now, the spring semester of my senior year, I'm finally putting all of the research together to share with others. I've had to look up original reviews of the novel, letters that Zelda wrote, biographies (of her husband), etc.

### What did you conclude?

We all have stories, and they all deserve to be told. It may appear that somebody has a perfect life, but it could actually be the farthest thing from it. Also, research isn't something that just happens overnight. I've been working on this for technically two years now if you add in my pre-research of going to the museum and whatnot. Even now as I'm writing and presenting, I'm finding more and more information that I could use.

### What advice can you offer about starting/writing your thesis?

Pick a topic that you love, and it won't really seem like work - it'll be more of a mission. I have made it my mission to prove a point about Zelda, and that has made this an extremely enjoyable experience. Yes, it's a lot of work, but it's worth it when it's all finished. Oh, and save your sources in print as well as on a thumb-drive. Y'all should have seen my face when my hard-drive crashed earlier this year. Luckily, I have an amazing advisor that saved some things for me and I also saved the majority of things in another place, so I didn't have to start from scratch

## Nicole Lawson

Acts of Love: Increasing Empathy for People with Mental Illness



Lawson with her anonymous dancers after a rehearsal. Staff photo by Sarah Kiser.

### What was your thesis?

I am studying a process that educator and activist, Paolo Freire, called "praxis." It is the process of reflecting on the world that we live in and then acting on that world in order to make it a more compassionate place to live. I have two research questions: 1) Can praxis increase empathy? 2) Does dance constitute a form of praxis?

### What led you to pursue this topic?

I have been involved in mental health activism since I was in middle school. I am also very dedicated to the idea that dance should serve the community. When I came to Meredith, I learned about a type of dance-making and research process that incorporated feminist and critical pedagogy as a means to create social change. I really

wanted to study this process in order to better understand how it affected participants.

### If you could do your research over again, would you choose the same topic?

Absolutely! I have had the privilege of working with an incredible group of women and have learned so much about the power of dance to create social change.

### How did you conduct your research?

I have been working with a cast of five women in a dance-making process based in praxis. We discuss topics about mental illness, discrimination and empathy and then engage in "embodied reflection" of these topics through movement improvisation and composition. I am also collecting journal entries and conducting interviews with the participants in order to learn more about how they are experiencing the process and how the process is impacting them. Our process together will culminate in the performance of a work that we have created together that will premiere at DanceWorks 2016 April 22-24, 2016.

### What did you conclude?

So I am actually still in the process of conducting my research. What I have learned so far, however, is that dance really can impact people's empathy for others. During my first round of interviews, one of my dancers said this about what she has learned about discrimination against people with mental illness: "This should be impacting how I vote." She went on to tell me how she would be researching candidates' policies on mental health in order to choose to whom she would give her vote. It is incredible to see how much these dancers' attitudes toward people living with mental illness have changed in such a short period of time.

### What advice can you offer about starting/writing your thesis?

Your advisor can make or break your thesis project, so choose wisely. I have been so lucky to have Carol Finley as my advisor. She keeps me focused and knows how to ask the right questions to get me thinking about project in new ways.

## Tess Coleman

Differences in Motivational Strategies in K-2 and 3-5 Classrooms.

### What led you to pursue this topic?

I first got interested in this topic when I took Dr. Schrock's Educational Psychology class where we read a study on motivational strategies in classrooms. I decided I wanted to take this research a little further and investigate the different age groups in elementary school and how teachers are motivating their students.

### How did you conduct your research?

(Continued on next page)