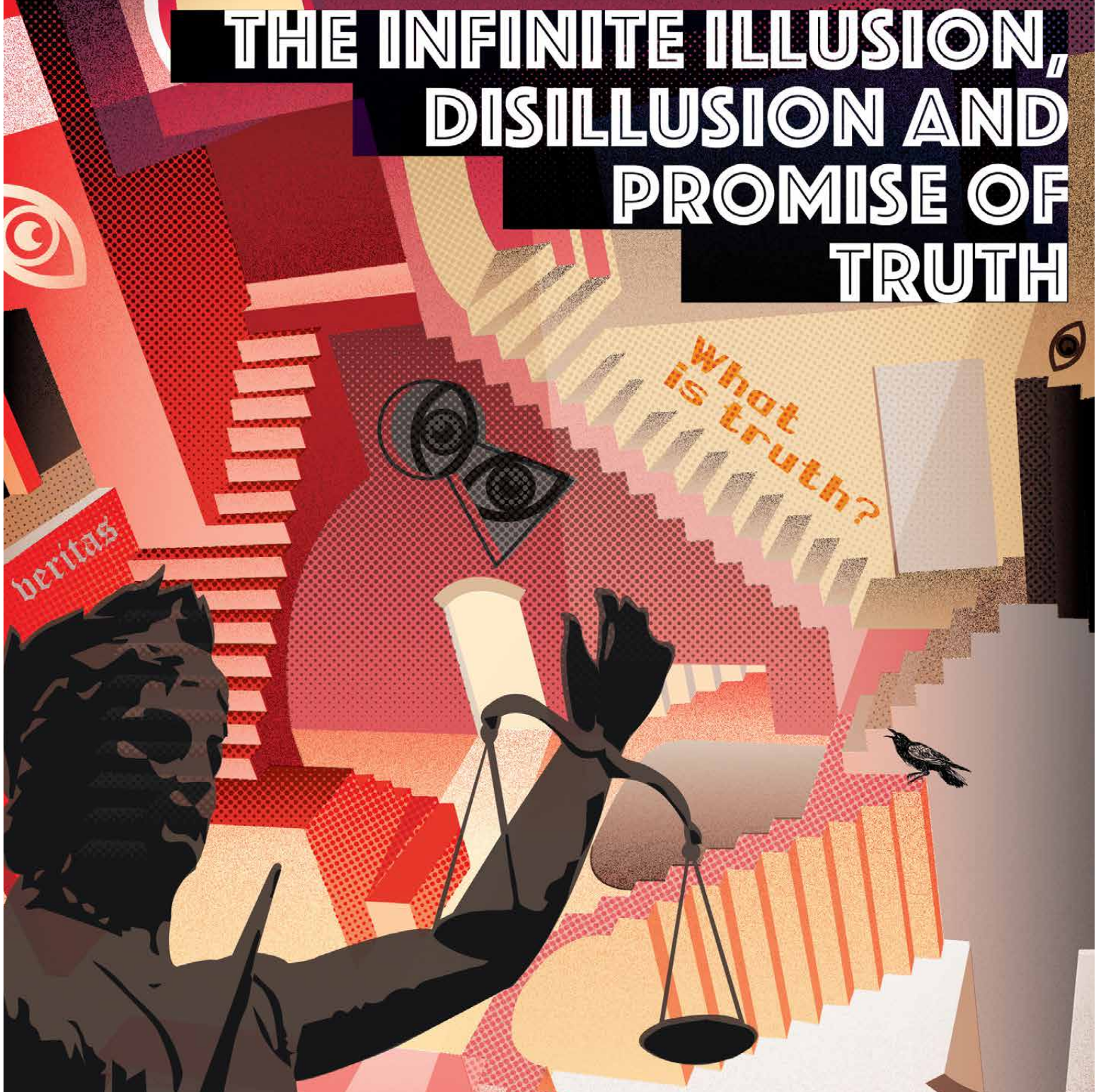


THE INFINITE ILLUSION, DISILLUSION AND PROMISE OF TRUTH



GCIC ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM 2017

Friday, April 21 ♦ 9 a.m.-4 p.m. ♦ LRC-131



College of the Mainland®

G.C.I.C.
GULF COAST INTERCOLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM

WELCOME to College of the Mainland's fifth Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Consortium Academic Symposium 2017!

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The theme, "**The Infinite Illusion, Disillusion, and Promise of Truth**," asks us to consider what we mean when we refer to the "truth." We asked students to consider the often-relative nature of our interpretations of truth and to measure a truth's validity for its subjective and/or objective value. We asked students to ponder the depth and nature of "truths" in all subjects including and not limited to the arts, maths, sciences, social sciences, humanities and technical fields. We wanted students to create original, inquiry-driven projects that help them evaluate the relationship we have with "truth" and its implications.

Though modern life is moving forward in ways we deem evolutionary, revolutionary and perhaps innovative, our need to understand, seek or create truth remains a constant even when our definition of truth may change. This year's theme is broad and lent itself to cross-disciplinary examination, which is the driving force of our academic symposium.

We invite you to closely study the presentation schedule and choose sessions that best suit your interests; when in sessions, we ask you to engage actively with student presenters during Q&A. The aim is for them to grow as scholars from this experience and for their work to enrich the day's conversation concerning the theme.

Our hope for this symposium is that it serves multiple goals including enhancing students' communication skills, facilitating networking across the disciplines and colleges, and helping students build self-confidence and ownership of their work.

Enjoy yourself, and thank you for supporting student scholarship.

Sincerely,

Dalel Serda, Professor of English
GCIC Academic Symposium Chair

9 – 9:20 a.m.	Brief Remarks on Theme: "The Infinite Illusion, Disillusion and Promise of Truth" Overview of Day's Events: Dalel Serda, Professor of English	LRC 131
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Session 1A: Truth and the State of the Union: Debaters' Roundtable College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Cody Smith	LRC 257
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Session 1B: Science as Truth "Truth' in the Scientific Method: Actualities of Theory and Praxis" Kaitlyn Montgomery, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Jeremy Bechelli "The Dangerous Interrelation between Pressure and Mental Illness in A Beautiful Mind" Ludmilla Laranjeiras, Lee College; Advisors: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby "Viruses: The Illusion and Overlooked Truth" Luis Lopez, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Jeremy Bechelli	LRC 258
9:30 – 10:30 a.m.	Session 1C: The Human Condition I "Babel in the eyes of Plato" Leah Sparkman, Lee College; Advisors: Professors Georgeann Ward and Professor Hamby "Humanity's Unifying Factor: Temptation, Will, and Their Expression Through Literature" Isis Rendon, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda Fabricated Masculinity in "Greasy Lake" Kaegan Knox, Lee College; Advisors: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby	LRC 255
10:40 – 11:40 a.m.	Session 2A: The (Social) Science of Illusion (or Delusion) "Should America Prohibit Marijuana?" Gerald Fisher, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Shinya Wakao "Degenerated Dreams" Christian Kimmey, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda "Social Constructionism and the Arbitration of Truth" Lauren Buchanan and Harry Hathaway, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Cody Smith	LRC 257

10:40 – 11:40 a.m.	<p>Session 2B: We've Got It All Wrong...</p> <p>"An Evolutionary Arms Race" Deana Otero, College of the Mainland; Advisors: Professors Jeremy Bechelli and Michelle Cortez</p> <p>"Dorothea Versus the Government" Kayla Emig, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Kristy Peet</p> <p>"Conquistador or Defender" Freyja Coe, Alvin Community College; Advisor: Professor Elizabeth McLane</p>	LRC 258
10:40 – 11:40 a.m.	<p>Session 2C: Feminist, Gender and Race Politics</p> <p>"The Little Mermaid: The Ugly Feminist 144 Years Later" Emily Martinez, Lee College; Advisor: Professor Georgeann Ward</p> <p>"Can't Be That Simple: Hulga and Gender Code Complexity in 'Good Country People'" Emily Blumentritt, Lee College; Advisors: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby</p> <p>"No More Excuses, Hollywood: The Importance of Honest Representation in Film and Television" Diana Lopez, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Stacey Burleson</p>	LRC 255
11:50 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<p>Complimentary Lunch & Speaker: Professor Kristy Peet, Photography</p> <p>"Photography, Truth and the Sublime"</p>	LRC 131
12:40 – 1:40 p.m.	<p>Session 3A: The Politics of Self-Delusion and Self-Perpetuation</p> <p>"The Ultimate Deception: Christopher Marlowe as William Shakespeare" Isis Rendon, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda</p> <p>"Perpetuating a Persona: The Mask of Masculinity in 'How to Date'" Chyna Lewis, Lee College; Advisors: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby</p> <p>"I and The City" Fatima Salahuddin, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Stacey Burleson</p>	LRC 257
12:40 – 1:40 p.m.	<p>Session 3B: Writing Our Truths - Creative Writers' Reading</p> <p>A selection of students from this semester's Creative Writing class will be featured at this reading. College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Stacey Burleson</p>	LRC 258
12:40 – 1:40 p.m.	<p>Session 3C: Deconstructing Oversimplification</p> <p>"Foreign Versus Native: How International Students Perceive American Education" Maizie Fernandes, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda</p> <p>"Business Planning" Neisha Pander, Alvin Community College; Advisor: Professor Elizabeth McLane</p> <p>"Writing Anxiety Debunked" Michelle Nguyen, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda</p>	LRC 255
1:50 – 2:50 p.m.	<p>Session 4A: The Promise Of</p> <p>"Distinguishing Imitation from Reality: The Boy Code in 'Rite of Passage'" Divya Singh, Lee College; Advisor: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby</p> <p>"Truth by Design" Kendal McLaughlin, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Christine Peet</p> <p>"Gender Stereotypes: How Do They Impact the Future Career Goals of American Youth?" Bree Butler, College of the Mainland; Advisor: Professor Dalel Serda</p>	LRC 257
1:50 – 2:50 p.m.	<p>Session 4B: The Human Condition II</p> <p>"An Examination of Illusory Perfection in Arts of Light and Nature" Nabeel Muhammedy, Lone Star University Park; Advisors: Professors Amy Hirsch and Frank Rodriguez</p> <p>"A Wolf in the Woods" John Staton, Lee College; Advisor: Professor Georgeann Ward</p> <p>"The Loss of Connection in 'Hands'" Garrett Broussard, Lee College; Advisor: Professors Georgeann Ward and Jerry Hamby</p>	LRC 258
3 – 3:45 p.m.	<p>Keynote Talk and Q & A:</p> <p>Dr. Louis Markos, English and humanities, scholar in residence, Houston Baptist University; "The Aesthetics of Incarnation: A Christian Response to Postmodernism"</p>	LRC 131
3:45 – 4 p.m.	<p>Awards and Wrap-Up</p>	LRC 131

STUDENT PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS:

In order of scheduled presentation; please see presentation schedule.

"Truth" in the Scientific Method: Actualities of Theory and Praxis

Kaitlyn Montgomery, College of the Mainland

The theoretical framework underlying the scientific method is a series of strict sequential steps. Hypothesis-driven research is commonly considered the scientific method; this process entails devising a hypothesis and then empirically validating that hypothesis. An alternative method of research exists and is known as discovery-driven research, which constitutes scientists discovering data, or data mining, and subsequently using inductive reasoning to find patterns or observation within the data. When we envision the scientific method, we assume it's to solve a problem, but it can simply be a means to discover unknown knowledge. Overall, the public envisions science as a linear process, and the truth is that the method is ever changing and malleable. We are educated in hypothesis-driven scientific method in school, but only understanding hypothesis driven scientific methods limit creativity and discovery. Innovation is critical in science, because science is becoming increasingly complex. There is not just one way to go about conducting research. My analysis of the scientific methods will utilize firsthand experience conducting authentic scientific research and analyze how I used a discovery-based scientific method approach to discover potential treatments using bacteriophages from the Galveston County environment.

The Dangerous Interrelation between Pressure and Mental Illness in A Beautiful Mind

Ludmilla Laranjeiras, Lee College

Stimulating learning is essential, mainly because knowledge means freedom, but the way it is encouraged is equally important. In this direction, the link between pressure and mental illness presented in the film A Beautiful Mind may be investigated through Plato's ideas from his text "The Allegory of the Cave." By discussing people's perception of the truth, Plato says that humankind normally lives inside the boundaries of their sensory knowledge as if they unconsciously live inside caves. Along the same lines, in A Beautiful Mind, the Nobel Laureate John Forbes Nash's life is depicted. As a schizophrenic scientist under extreme pressure to produce original ideas, Nash has his life depicted as if he lived inside one of these caves, making his own journey to self-discovery during his life in order to find his way towards to the light. His life story is a powerful case study on how negative pressure and competition can be to someone, psychologically and psychiatrically.

Viruses: The Illusion and Overlooked Truth

Luis Lopez, College of the Mainland

The Latin origin of virus means "slimy or liquid poison," which serves to further our association of the word "virus" with negative ideas such as infection, disease, contagion, suffering and death. These negative connotations are often true to the nature of a virus. However, they only scratch the surface to what a virus is and its critical role within its own environmental niche. Those who are unfamiliar or unaware about viruses can be blinded by a veil created by people's misunderstanding of virology, and the mainstream media that discuss only the threatening truth about viruses, leading to an increased sense of terror that makes for a good story. These perspectives on viruses create an illusion within the population that only disaster and chaos can come from viruses, while the positive aspects and roles of viruses are hidden or neglected. This partial story of the virus undermines the significance they play in the environment and the medical field. Within the environment, bacteriophages help to control the bacterial levels in the soil and water, which limit human exposure to potential pathogens and balance the

microbial ecology. In the medical field, bacteriophages may be used as a way to fight diseases caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria, such as the pathogens that causes tuberculosis and leprosy. Inspired by research and studies done with Virus Hunters of College of the Mainland on mycobacteria and mycobacteriophage, this presentation will explore the illusions and falsehoods surrounding viruses within our environment as well as shed light on many of the truths within the study of virology relating to their importance and implications around the world.

Babel in the Eyes of Plato

Leah Sparkman, Lee College

In the film "Babel" by Alejandro González Iñárritu, viewers meet a group of characters from four different countries around the world, whose location difference is also a symbol of the interconnectedness of mankind. Following these characters and the stories presented across the globe, viewers witness how different facets of their humanity connect them even though distance says otherwise. These facets include naivety, unawareness, fear, control, grief, sorrow, and existential despair and stem from the way the characters react to events in their lives. Plato explains in "The Allegory of the Cave" that life is like a cave that holds prisoners in shadows of false realities, and the only way out is through enlightenment, which is described as the "universal author of all things beautiful and right" or, to put simply, the truth. Babel is an applicable illustration through which viewers can see a reflection of themselves and explore the different chains that bind the characters. Chieko Wataya is a Japanese deaf-mute student who is stuck in her own existential cave started by the death of her mother. Following her through this journey, one can also see how Chieko's struggles apply to all of mankind through the eyes of Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave."

Humanity's Unifying Factor: Temptation, Will and Their Expression Through Literature

Isis Rendon, College of the Mainland

There is a unifying factor that is present for humanity; from the Bible to Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," this struggle has been acknowledged in literature throughout the ages. All men and women, from Christian to Buddhist to Hindu, face the unavoidable challenge of temptation. Concupiscence, according to Christian teaching, is the theory that every human being after the fall of Adam and Eve is now inclined to sin. Because of it, we are prone to give into temptation, which as a result, makes personal growth more difficult to achieve. According to research done by Wilhelm Hoffman et al., "Humans are tempted into getting immediate rewards instead of resisting temptation to achieve future goals." One reason is that we desire instant gratification; another lies in our ability or inability for self-control. St. Augustine, a Christian bishop and theologian, notes that "there are two minds in us of two kinds, one good, the other evil" as we are constantly fighting our own will to do what our conscience deems correct. This is not to say that a person can't live a life without giving into temptation, but because of concupiscence human beings are more prone to give into it. This research focuses on the human struggle when faced with temptation, the acknowledgment of it by different religions, and the expression of it by authors through their written works.

“Fabricated Masculinity in ‘Greasy Lake’”

Kaegan Knox, Lee College

Image is everything in our culture. The way we talk, how we dress, who we are around, and where we hang out all adds together to build up our image. Truth that is harmful to that image is hidden away to uphold this fabricated sense of self. Society has set expectations of what a “real man” acts like, and if a boy’s image does not meet that then he is not considered a true man. The need to live up to these expectations and create an image for themselves lead the characters of “Greasy Lake” by T. Coraghessan Boyle, a story about three young men riding around trying to find trouble and the consequences to when they do eventually find it, into making reckless decisions. Add in a youthful sense of immortality and the competition within a group of males all trying to prove themselves, and you have the making of a disastrous situation. William Pollack’s book “Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood” explains how society expects boys to act in certain ways restricting their true selves and leading them to act in potentially harmful ways, helping to spread light on the motivation that drives the characters of “Greasy Lake.” Driven by the need to prove their masculinity, the characters of “Greasy Lake” take on Pollack’s “mask of masculinity,” each of them trying to impress the others.

Should America Prohibit Marijuana?

Gerald Fisher, College of the Mainland

Over the last century, marijuana has been under scrutiny for a number of different reasons. The American population has been told one thing about cannabis while scientific research has shown another. Originally, it was outlawed due to Harry Anslinger’s 1930s claim that it promoted “insanity” and “violence” and was soon linked to a famous homicide case in Florida where a boy named Victor Licata murdered his family with an axe. In an effort to criminalize the drug and in an effort to link marijuana to the murder in Florida, Anslinger wrote the most prominent scientists of his time to ask if marijuana was actually a dangerous drug. Twenty-nine out of thirty write back saying it was not dangerous. Likewise, scientists in the 1940s once again researched cannabis and came to the same conclusion, that the drug was in fact not connected to violence or insanity at all. Provided that, a bipartisan commission in 1973 suggested that the president (Richard Nixon) decriminalize the drug, instead, Nixon started a war on drugs. Presently, prohibition still exists with past stigmas still in existence and new ones as well; skeptics believe it is a gateway drug, is addictive, will cause complications in the economy, and has a negative impact on health for consumers. On the other hand, not every American shares the same sentiment for prohibition of cannabis. In fact, states have legalized it for both medicinal and recreational purposes. Specifically, Colorado and its citizens have flourished from its full legalization. Therefore, it begs the question, if marijuana’s prohibition is based on an illusion, what would happen if we were told of its real truth?

Degenerated Dreams

Christian Kimmey, College of the Mainland

Learned individuals have had their counsel sought out since time immemorial and were once something of a scarce resource. In the United States of today, however, institutions of higher learning are all around us and no longer restrict admission based upon any real standard other than an individual’s ability to perform in an academic setting. Despite this, there are still disparities between demographics, both in attendance and in performance. Economic factors have quite the large role in this, but every year, there are more and more programs designed to overcome these barriers, from scholarships to government grants to affordable student loans. Yet, the disparities remain. What

good is the availability of education, and means with which to finance it, if it is not sought out and used? This paper attempts to delve into unresolved “truths” regarding why individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and financial backgrounds might be more or less predisposed to seek out both education and financial assistance. From familial support, to social structures, to cultural differences, there are a number of other contributing factors that need to be addressed if we are ever to really reach equity.

Social Constructionism and the Arbitration of Truth

Lauren Buchanan and Harry Hathaway, College of the Mainland

The purpose of this research is to examine the concept of truth through the lens of social epistemology, with a focus on the process by which truth is actualized within a society. This will be achieved via an analytical and interpretive thought process to demonstrate that truth is a product of the academic, cultural, economic, and socio-political structures that form the foundations of a group of people and the societies they compose. A variety of case studies will supplement this assertion, examining archetypal figures, groups, and societies throughout human history and investigating how the concept of social constructionism paved the way to the reality of truth they held. These studies range in time periods from ancient Mesopotamia and the Code of Hammurabi, to modern day Republicanism in the United States, and from topics as diverse as classism in patrician ancient Rome to the intellectual supremacy of gentlemen-philosophers in seventeenth-century England. The analysis gleaned from these studies will then be cross-applied to today’s society, where one can clearly observe a breakdown of this historical precedent. Due to the proliferation of information because of advanced technology, archetypal arbiters of truth no longer yield the same power over society as they used to. The overarching scope of this research is not only to establish truth as a social construct, but also to contextualize it in relation to those who adjudicate it as well as those who exist under its dominion.

An Evolutionary Arms Race

Deana Otero, College of the Mainland

As a coping mechanism, we prefer to believe that our world is organized and efficient. This tunnel vision has restricted us from realizing all the possibilities the earth has to offer. Things, living and non-living, are susceptible to change through the constant pro-cess that is mutation and ultimately, natural selection. The methods we have used, and possibly overused, have led to the harsh truth that bacteria are becoming resistant to antibiotics. Unlike antibiotics, at this point, bacteria do not readily develop resistance to bacteriophages. Bacteriophages are viruses that invade bacterial cells and, in the case of lytic phages, disrupt bacterial metabolism, causing the bacterium to burst. With the increasing incidence of antibiotic resistant bacteria and a deficit in the development of new classes of antibiotics to counteract them, there is a need to apply phages in a range of infections. Selection of phage is a natural process; thus the evolutionary arms race supports the idea that active phages will begin to adapt to any phage resistance and will be selected for through natural selection. As a society, we may all be under the illusion that bacterial resistance is a norm and may not offer any repercussions. In an entropic world where anything is possible, we settle for the idea of perfection and control. Thus in my presentation, I will be illustrating how College of the Mainland is allowing us to participate in finding phage that will contribute to the greater scientific community through genetic analysis of mycobacteriophages.

Dorothea Versus the Government

Kayla Emig, College of the Mainland

Dorothea Lange's intention as a photographer was to capture people as they are and to portray the emotions that they are feeling. In Lange's work as a documentary photographer, she wanted to earn the trust of the people. Traveling back home from a long day's work, she and another drove by a sign that said, "Pea Picker's Camp." She didn't want to stop because it would be more of the same photos they had already taken...and they didn't stop. However, she began to argue with herself. 20 minutes later, they did a U-turn, for she was following instinct, not reason. Once she entered the camp, she walked straight to the lean-to-shelter that sat on the edge of the camp. A woman told her that the rain had ruined the pea crop and that they had sold everything from tires to bedding just for food. After their conversation, she snapped a few photos of them and no other pea pickers' in the camp. In that moment, she realized that she recorded the essence of her monthlong assignment. The images were barely dry as she headed to the San Francisco News so they could print her story which ran March 10, 1936. The paper went nationwide. The response of these images were powerful and the people were appalled that the very people providing food were starving. The federal government shipped 20,000 pounds of food to the California fields. Dorothea felt relief and satisfaction in helping starving pea pickers. The picture that was printed was that of the Migrant Mother. Dorothea Lange used photography to show social truth and cause a change.

Conquistador or Defender

Freyja Coe, Alvin Community College

The well-known Spanish explorer Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca managed to survive ten years in the Americas by living with the native population. During that time he was a merchant, slave, and faith healer. He eventually traveled back to Spain after he met some of his countrymen. He wrote in explicit detail about the cultures he encountered in the Americas. He described the countrymen who were trying to enslave the Native Americans he was traveling with, ironically, as "Christian slavers." This paper will explore de Vaca's motivation in his writings and the biases that may have been present. De Vaca's narrative, *La Relacion*, has been interpreted in several different ways: as a ploy to the monarchs of Spain to convince them to make him governor of Florida, as a rationale for the failed expedition, and as a transformation of de Vaca's view of the native population.

De Vaca was unique because he did not dismiss the natives as simply savage. The differences in the way De Vaca described and interacted with the people is pronounced and significant. De Vaca's narrative can be seen from multiple perspectives. There are multiple arguments layered into *La Relacion* that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. De Vaca did not have a singular purpose, and his narrative did not have one single message to convey. Although there is no way of knowing with absolute certainty, it is likely that his narrative was a ploy to the king to send him to Florida, an explanation of the expedition's failure, and de Vaca's stance against slavery. Like all people, de Vaca was not one thing. He had flaws, and he had virtues.

The Little Mermaid: The Ugly Feminist 144 Years Later

Emily Martinez, Lee College

As the waves of feminism seemingly change social norms and standards for women, classic tales which feature women are re-examined and adapted to match the changing society. In accordance with Linda Hutcheon's "A Theory of Adaptation," an adaptation of the classic tale of "The Little Mermaid" is not "derivative" or "secondary" to its source text, but subject to time and geography. Hutcheon's piece serves

as a manual for understanding the factors that are attributed to the changes in language, theme, and character traits in adaptations. For example, in studying adaptations, readers understand that though the methods of keeping up the disillusionment of women's equality have changed between adaptations, the intent is the same: to keep women disempowered. Naomi Wolf's, "The Beauty Myth" may be applied as a theoretical lens to better understand gender constructs in Hans Christian Anderson's, "The Little Mermaid" (1845) and its adaptation into film 144 years later, Disney's "The Little Mermaid" (1989). Wolf helps readers interpret the ways society has superficially changed its view of women from the source text to film, as it is apparent in the character of the sea witch. In my presentation, I will explain the ways in which women are held back through characters who antagonize feminism, causing viewers to question how far society has advanced its view of women in the past 144 years.

Can't Be That Simple: Hulga and Gender Code Complexity in "Good Country People"

Emily Blumentritt, Lee College

In Flannery O'Connor's 1955 short story, "Good Country People," a divorced mother and her adult daughter tend to their farm out in the country. Even in their isolated farm life, gender code creates conflict for these family members, severely limiting their ability to form genuine connections with one another. Through the analytical angle of William Pollack's "Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood," in which gender code is carefully critiqued, the detrimental effects of gender codes upon the daughter Hulga are revealed. In my presentation, I will discuss my original literary analysis and research on the argument that O'Connor's story presents about the detrimental illusions of gender code and the complexity of gender issues in American life. As exemplified in "Good Country People," gendered myths and stereotypes become the "truth" of society, muddling the development of the authentic self and corrupting genuine human value and connections.

No More Excuses, Hollywood: The Importance of Honest Representation in Film and Television

Diana Lopez, College of the Mainland

The imbalance of representation of characters of color on both film and television has always existed. It is a complex issue to navigate and Hollywood has failed in addressing the problem many times. This is due to the problem being multifaceted. It has to do with actors, directors, writers, and studio executives. The lack of minorities in these positions is a crucial part of why honest portrayals of characters that reflect most filmgoers is also lacking. This disparity in representation matters because what we watch has an immense influence on how we view ourselves and others. If what we watch reinforces unfair and inaccurate views on people different than us, then that content can shape our attitudes towards them in a negative way. The same rule applies for inclusive content with positive depictions. Diverse content does not have to solely focus on a character's race or ethnicity. The goal of a genuine portrayal should be to present a character in such a way that shows affinity for the human experience. This type of representation is extremely necessary in our current climate, where some believe we should ignore our similarities and fear our differences. I will discuss the need and importance for characters and stories of minorities that are based in truth instead of false and stereotypical notions. In addition to invalidating the claims that the industry uses to detract from making progress, this project will incorporate data from the 2017 Hollywood Diversity Report, which is done annually by the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at UCLA.

The Ultimate Deception: Christopher Marlowe as William Shakespeare

Isis Rendon, College of the Mainland

William Shakespeare is one of the most famously known playwrights in history. Yet, what if history hasn't told the truth? There is a theory that poses this very question. Christopher Marlowe, a contemporary writer to Shakespeare, led an interesting and controversial life as Queen Elizabeth's spy during the turbulent times of 16th-century England. His playwrighting career was halted due to his untimely and mysterious death at the age of 29. There is not much information on Marlowe's early life, but soon after his death, Shakespeare emerged and followed with a vast line of works. Through a fictionalized letter written by the author to his wife and daughters, I explored the idea behind the theory of a scheme created by Marlowe to save his own life by reemerging under the new alias of William Shakespeare. I strived to relate how the influence of his time period, the events of his lifetime, and his own views on the human condition affected his life and the literature he wrote from his fictionalized time as Marlowe to his life as the imagined Shakespeare. This creative project impacted my outlook on how personal, social, political, and ideological contexts relate to the creative process.

Perpetuating a Persona: The Mask of Masculinity in "How to Date"

Chyna Lewis, Lee College

Constrained by the existence of societal norms, people begin to live behind a façade, building up a safety barrier between their authentic self and fictional persona. William Pollack's "Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood" accentuates how shame is perpetuated in a society tainted by the principles of the "boy code." This set of socially constructed principles has, over time, shaped what society perceives masculinity and masculine behavior to be. Therefore, in compliance to male gender code, males must conceal their true feelings and emotional vulnerability behind a "mask of masculinity" in an effort to evade ostracism. Comparatively, in the short story "How to Date a Brown girl, Black girl, White girl, or Halfe" by Junot Diaz, readers are given an insight into what it is like for a male who lives behind a mask of masculinity. Through a satirical "instruction manual" on dating, the reader follows Yuniór as he packages himself, concealing personal attributes that could potentially render him vulnerable to his racially diverse conquests. Coming off as self-absorbed, chauvinistic, and suave, Yuniór is truly just another individual who has fallen victim to the detriments of assimilation and the "mask of masculinity." Seeking anything that will fill the gaps formed by his own insecurities, Yuniór's adherence to the "boy code" results in shallow relationships and self-deprecation, exemplifying the hindrance that male gender codes and the "mask of masculinity" inflict upon the dynamics of relationships and identity. In this presentation, I will discuss how, in placing emphasis on the need to be "macho" and "masculine," the importance of being vulnerable in relation to the human condition has been reduced.

I and The City

Fatima Salahuddin, College of the Mainland

The main character in this fictitious piece is addressing fear in many shapes, forms, and sizes. Fear plays a huge role in the aspect of status, socialism, death, etc. It can dictate an individual or a people's fate. The character in this piece says, "I fear that we may never wake up long enough to break the cycle of this infectious disillusion of needing them to legitimize who we are. It is a cursed fate my people have and will continue to suffer from." This means the character's people have accepted whatever fate The Elite have already set in stone for them. It also means that the oppressed will do anything to become a part of their oppressors because in the illusion that has been inflicted on them, it has taught them over time that being a part of The Elite is what

makes them human. The deeper a people fall into that illusion the more they forget who they once were. "Many of us in ground zero take part in it religiously, we make preparations for it, we sharpen and create effective weapons for it, and all of this is done for those who want to feel belonged." What the character is implying is the entirety of a people becomes easier to control because of their desperation to feel deserving, in order to leave from that unwanted place, to no longer be labeled as an unwanted individual. The truth of recognizing the so-called savior of a civilization as the monster in this piece is an extreme hardship the character is faced with. The character has to walk away from everything he has known and stood for because of the unjust actions committed by the hands of those who feel superior to others. This has caused grave inflictions that appear to have an everlasting effect on the people who are victimized by it.

Foreign Versus Native: How International Students Perceive American Education

Maizie Fernandes, College of the Mainland

Research shows culture plays an integral role in the structuring and implementation of a country's education system. Even though they may or may not realize they are doing it, schools around the world inherently adhere to cultural and societal standards and norms. Educational institutions reflect the values and symbols of their culture through the way they organize their students' education. It is this intrinsic acceptance of societal and cultural standards that academia tends to overlook when debating the credibility of an international education standard. Even though the majority of schools around the world teach the same concepts, the way they prioritize that content varies. In a comparative case study of Thai and Canadian residency programs by Anne Wong, we see that even though the two countries had a similar curriculum, there were many differences in curricular emphasis, educational practices, and teacher beliefs and values. These differences influenced how each country implemented and interpreted the content they offered their students. Even in Thailand—a country known for maintaining its distinct culture despite adoption of Western education standards—it is difficult to separate culture from education. Research has yet to show how a shift away from native, subjective cultural values can affect the way students learn what is supposed to be objective content in foreign settings.

This study examines the way international students perceive American education compared to the education in their native country. Since it is close to impossible to separate cultural expectations from education, it is critical we understand the discrepancies students undergo when transferring to a different education system. What differences and similarities do students notice in the education they have access to in their native country compared to the education they have access to here? More importantly, how does having an educational background in another country affect the way students perceive American education? Ultimately, the goal of this research project is to understand what students experience when their adoptive American schooling culture and their home country's schooling culture prioritize differently.

Business Planning

Neisha Pander, Alvin Community College

People often think that starting and running a company is easy. The truth is that it takes planning, dedication, and perseverance. Over half of the businesses that start this year will fail. Goals and research are necessary for a firm to have a chance of growing. The effects of running a successful business go well beyond a single entrepreneur. A successful family business can impact the community and surrounding economies.

This project walks the audience through a business plan created for a small company, Stick's RV Repair and Service. The business is based in

in Willis, Texas, north of Houston. The presentation shows how to give the company a recognizable brand in the community. It emphasizes the company's potential impact on the community once changes are made. The necessity of communication in different forms is also emphasized.

Research, legal, and marketing strategies for the business are detailed. A look at a variety financial statements used to keep the company on a set trajectory is explored, as well as the method used to track the progress. The final product is the culmination of all documents into a specific plan for use in the daily operations and expansion of this small business.

Writing Anxiety Debunked

Michelle Nguyen, College of the Mainland

This paper seeks to debunk the so-called "truth" regarding writing anxiety while introducing its motivational capabilities. Anxiety has a bad reputation as being the notorious plaguing force that can heavily oppress individuals. It is omnipresent and influences various aspects of life, including one's academic career. According to Martinez, Kock, and Cass, writing anxiety is a prevalent negative force among college students and can often hinder their writing performance. Moreover, it manifests within students in different forms, varying from complete avoidance to excessive revision. The latter is the type of anxiety that plagued me throughout my high school years. However, through my development as a writer this past semester, I have come to the realization that my writing anxiety is not solely a negative force but that it can also be source of motivation. Moreover, composition is a multidimensional process, as described by Kellogg and Whiteford. Many students find themselves lost in this process and unable to maneuver through the mayhem. This inability to cope can lead to a cognitive overload, and consequently the inability to productively redirect writing anxiety. I argue that writing anxiety can be a constructive source of intrinsic motivation, so long as the individual has some grasp with how to cope with the chaos of composition. The main form of evidence I use to support my argument is subjective and stemming from deep self-reflection of my writing experiences.

Distinguishing Imitation from Reality: The Boy Code in "Rite of Passage"

Divya Singh, Lee College

On every occasion in which young boys gather together, there are opportunities for them to socialize with one another along masculine gender codes, and therefore, boys adopt behavior that is considered gender-appropriate by mainstream society from a young age. Additionally, gender is salient to adolescent boys' own identities and perceptions of others and they socialize each other's gendered behaviors and adhere to these structured roles out of fear of social ostracism. Correspondingly, in Dr. William Pollack's work entitled "Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood," he states that boys often live "behind a mask of masculine bravado that hides the genuine self to conform to our society's expectations" (5). This "mask of masculinity" leads to boys being conditioned into following injunctions that encourage them to internalize a "Boy Code" that promotes stoicism, aggression, and dominance and twists emotionally intact little boys into psychologically debilitated men. Similarly, in Sharon Olds' poem "Rite of Passage," a mother examines small boys at a birthday party already adhering to gender code and committed to their distorted masculine roles as aggressors. In this poem, the mother is evaluating the boys in comparison to how men perform in society, and the author is exemplifying the fact that boys integrate a need to be the greatest or strongest at a young age, and this imitation ultimately packages them into the men they will be in the future. Using Pollack's work as a theoretical base, in this presentation I will show how "Rite of Passage" exemplifies that rather than risk ostracism by their fellow peers, boys

begin adhering to "The Boy Code" from an early age through talk of violence and false senses of assuredness, leading them to adopt hyper-aggressive personas and distorting their understanding of true violence.

Truth by Design: How We Apply Truths to Objects Based on Their Relative Nature

Kendal McLaughlin, College of the Mainland

Take a moment to close your eyes. Imagine a tree. Now keeping the same texture of the bark on the tree, imagine the texture of a person's face. Blend the two in your mind. It should look roughly something like the image I have attached below. While their face is obfuscated, the concept of the image is something that can be enjoyed. This technique is called multiple exposure. Historically it was created by using a broken film camera and exposing the film strip to light multiple times. In digital photography, this is generally enabled in some setting menu on the camera or using Photoshop. One can use solid or textured backgrounds for a myriad of tones, thus changing the mood of the subject. In an article written by Sara Barnes on layersmagazine.com, images by Andres Gal-lardo Albajar and Andreas Lie stand out as conceptually the most interesting as they seem to capture the mood of the subject interacting with their backgrounds (Barnes, 2016). This is something I strive for in my own multiple exposure work, as the initial image and the secondary, and even occasionally tertiary images, should work together to create a cohesive whole. What then does truth mean when we can overlay several truths to create a new truth? Which is more important, the truth we create for ourselves, or an absolute? I posit that the truth is in the intent to create something new, rather than to amalgamate something else. In my talk we will explore these concepts in others' work along with my own work.

Gender Stereotypes: How Do They Impact the Future Career Goals of American Youth?

Bree Butler, College of the Mainland

In America today, there are strict stereotypes placed on men and women. In her documentaries *The Mask You Live In* and *Miss Representation*, Jennifer Siebel Newsom points out that men are portrayed as hyper-masculine and intelligent whereas women are portrayed as simplistic and body-obsessed. From a very young age, children are exposed to these stereotypes through television, music, and magazines. In Hollywood, women are highlighted physically, and men are highlighted intellectually. When this is all that they see, children begin to take these ideas as truth. In a study based in China by Jingjing Song, students were surveyed on their confidence and aptitude in math. The study showed female students having much lower confidence in their abilities than their male peers although their aptitude levels were comparable. In STEM-related careers, women are less represented than their male counterparts even though, according to *Status and Trends in the Education of Racial and Ethnic Groups 2016* by the National Center for Educational Statistics, women have a higher enrollment rate in post-secondary education. Is this because of the stereotypes Newsom pointed out? Does mainstream media play a part in these findings? We are fed the "truths" that men's minds are more important than women's, and women's bodies are more important than their mind. Are these perceived truths negatively impacting children and their future career goals?

An Examination of Illusory Perfection in Arts of Light and Nature

Nabeel Muhammedy, Lone Star University Park

This paper discusses how the beauty of nature deceives the human mind. It examines the theme of illusion as portrayed by the natural world and in the arts of the contemporary era. By assessing contemporary literature and art it embellishes that the worldly life is nothing but only

GUEST SPEAKERS AND ABSTRACTS

a temporary illusion. Two main research methods are employed, textual analysis and comparative analysis. Textual analysis has been used to explicate the literary works and comparative analysis of the poem and the artworks is used to reveal the theme of illusion. In addition, it depicts how the perfection of nature deceives humankind to chase perfection. The research is based on four primary sources: two poems and two artworks. The poems, "In Praise of Limestone" by William Hugh Auden and "I Am Going to Start Living like a Mystic" by Edward Hirsch, and in James Turrell's art, namely, "Light Inside" and "Twilight Epiphany," exquisitely delineate the theme of delusion. Auden uses the limestone as a symbol of nature. The poem offers sincerity towards nature but irony towards civilization. Hirsch sheds light on how humans draw unreal conclusions of their natural surrounding while exploring the natural world. Furthermore, the sculptures "Light Inside" and "Twilight Epiphany" illustrate how simply a change in color can alter human perception. Thereby, this paper asserts that humans should seek perfection on the inside i.e. perfection of one's character, instead of chasing perfection, as beauty lies on the inside; for instance, the lead of a pencil makes it useful and thus, beautiful, and the lead is inside it.

A Wolf in the Woods

John Staton, Lee College

"Once upon a time, there was a little village girl, the prettiest that had ever been seen." This is the first sentence of Charles Perrault's 1697 French parable "Little Red Riding Hood," a story that has captivated children and adults alike for hundreds of years. "Little Red Riding Hood" has been told and retold countless times, but has almost always been a tale of conflict between an innocent, yet naïve, young girl and the sinister wolf that preys upon her. One such version of the story is adapted onscreen in Disney Picture's 2014 film "Into the Woods." Both versions of the classic fairy tale seek to highlight the sexually violent nature of the two characters' conflict, yet with two distinct arguments that reflect the social climate of their generation over sexual violation and responsibility. However both versions of the tale, whether seemingly antiquated or modern, still fall into the trope of the infantilizing of women and dehumanization of men and its real world implications through the depictions of their characters. In this presentation, I will use images, political commentary, and academic texts to deconstruct the characters of "Little Red Riding Hood" and reveal their connection in promoting "rape culture" and the disillusionment of both gender's roles in personal sexual responsibility.

The Loss of Connection in "Hands"

Garrett Broussard, Lee College

Since about the 19th century, males have been subjected to an unspoken "truth" that has been woven into the fabric of their existence. This "truth," as described by William Pollack in "Real Boys: Rescuing Our Boys from the Myths of Boyhood," is referred to as the "boy code." A code that is relentlessly forced onto boys by a society that would have them suppress their emotions in the efforts of becoming a man. Examples of the "boy code" can be seen everywhere in the world that surrounds us, even as the oppressor in many works of literature, as seen in the short story "Hands" by Sherwood Anderson, the tale of a man who has succumbed to the power of the "boy code." Beginning as the lovable character Adolph Myers, the readers see the ill effect of the "boy code" through his transformation into Wing Biddlebaum. Through the eyes of Pollack, the short story "Hands" can be interpreted as a tragic example of the consequences of a society that forces a male to suppress his emotions.



Louis Markos

Keynote Speaker

Louis Markos is a professor of English and scholar in residence at Houston Baptist University, where he teaches courses on British romantic and Victorian poetry and prose, the classics, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien and film. Dr. Markos lectures on

Ancient Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages and Renaissance, and Romanticism for HBU's Honors College.

He has produced two lecture series with The Teaching Company/ Great Courses (From Plato to Postmodernism: Understanding the Essence of Literature and the Role of the Author; The Life and Writings of C.S. Lewis). He has given more than 300 public lectures in the U.S., Rome, Oxford and British Columbia, and he had his adaptations of "The Iphigenia in Tauris of Euripides," "The Helen of Euripides" and "The Electra of Sophocles" performed off-Broadway. He is committed to the concept of the professor as public educator and believes that knowledge must not be walled up in the academy but must be disseminated to all who have ears to hear. Visit his webpage at www.Loumarkos.com.

He is the author of 13 books, available at www.amazon.com/author/louismarkos including "From A to Z to Middle-Earth with J.R.R. Tolkien" (Lampion Press, 2016) and "The Dreaming Stone" (a children's novel; Lampion Press, 2015).

Abstract

"The Aesthetics of Incarnation: A Christian Response to Postmodernism"

The rise and triumph of postmodern thought over the last half-century has led to the death of language: not language as a practical tool for communication, but language as a vehicle for higher meanings, transcendent ideals and absolute truths. Although it should have been the role of the Church to resist this breakdown of language, our seminaries, schooled on Enlightenment thought, have too often played into the hands of the postmoderns. Protestants in particular, with their tendency toward iconoclasm and a narrow, mathematically-defined understanding of the inerrancy of scripture, have helped to hasten a mindset detrimental to the arts and that threatens the central mystery of the gospels: the Incarnation.

This talk will fashion an aesthetics of incarnation that will not only speak to the potential of the arts to bear meaning but that will champion the arts as a friend to the beleaguered truth-seeker living in a postmodern world. First, I shall discuss the threat to meaning posed both by modernism (structuralism) and postmodernism (deconstruction) and the failure of the Church to answer that threat. Second, I shall look to the history of the Church for traces of a lost aesthetics of incarnation in Augustine's focus on the allegorical meaning of scripture, in the Orthodox emphasis on icons as symbols of the incarnation, and in the medieval focus on liturgy and sacrament.

COM ADMINISTRATION



Kristy Peet
Lunch Speaker

Kristy Peet was born in Dallas and completed her undergraduate work at Austin College in Sherman, Texas, and her Master of Fine Arts in photography from the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia.

She is a large format analog photographer focusing primarily on staged images conceptually related to the internal personal state. Her work has been shown in solo and group exhibitions across the U.S. including a solo exhibition at the Dallas Contemporary. Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Savannah College of Art and Design.

Kristy also serves as vice president of BOX13 Artspace, an artist-run exhibition and studio space devoted to the creation and advancement of experimental contemporary art in Houston. She is currently professor of art at COM.

Abstract

"Photography, Truth and the Sublime"

Since its invention in 1826, people have looked to photographs to provide absolute truth. Photography's earliest use was primarily portraiture, but does one photograph really show what a person looks like? Consider the fraction of a second in which a photograph is taken compared with a person's lifetime or even the variety of expression a person can exhibit. Can a staged image be more true than one that isn't?

Photography has always had a tenuous relationship with the idea of truth. During this lunch presentation, Kristy Peet will discuss photography in relation to absolute versus emotional truth. She will also share work from her current series, "Gilt World," which explores landscape photography and the sublime.



Professor Dalel Serda
GCIC Academic Symposium Chair

Professor Dalel Serda works to offer students opportunities to engage in inquiry-driven undergraduate research that contributes to ongoing, cross-disciplinary conversations. She is a proponent of helping students gain habits of mind that foster self-regulation

both inside and outside the college classroom. She hopes providing students a platform like today's symposium will help them gain the authority and know-how necessary to pursue long-term learning and civic engagement.



Dr. Warren Nichols
COM President

President since February 2017, Dr. Warren Nichols has attended community events and met with legislators in Austin. He is working with the COM board of trustees, faculty and staff to develop processes and strategies to keep the college's focus on student success and providing a qualified workforce.

Previously Nichols served as the first vice chancellor of community colleges for the Tennessee Board of Regents for five years. He oversaw the transition from a system of 13 independent institutions to a statewide community college system. Tennessee's state-level strategy prompted initiatives including Finish Faster programs. Another initiative developed three Centers of Excellence in health care, information technology and advanced manufacturing.

Nichols started his career as a police officer in Arlington, Texas, and later transitioned to higher education.

Nichols is from Fort Worth and holds a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of Houston. He received his master's and bachelor's degrees from the University of Texas at Arlington and began his journey in higher education at Tarrant County Junior College.

He uses his experience as a first-generation college graduate and developer of workforce programs to shape the future of community colleges and their graduates.



Dr. James R. Templer

Dr. James R. Templer lives in League City, Texas, with his wife, Lisa. He was a college professor of art (23 years) and vice president of instruction (11 years). He retired from College of the Mainland in August 2010.

Templer was asked to return to COM as interim vice president of instruction in September 2016 and is currently serving in that role.

Templer holds a bachelor's and master's of fine arts in painting from East Texas State University. He earned his Ph.D. in the medical humanities, arts and visual studies, from The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston.



Dr. Vicki Stanfield

Dr. Vicki Stanfield has served in administrative positions in academic and student affairs to improve student success by working with faculty, instructional and student service leaders to create new programs and practices. At COM, Vicki serves as vice president for student services, providing leadership over admissions and records, recruitment, testing services, financial aid, advising and counseling, TRiO, Title V – HSI grant and student life. She also serves as co-chair of the Student Success Council. Vicki holds an Associate of Art from Lone Star College-North Harris, and a B.A.T. in English—Summa Cum Laude, Master of Education in counselor education and doctorate in educational leadership from Sam Houston State University.



Dr. Steven L. Sewell

Dr. Steven L. Sewell serves as dean of academic programs at COM, having formerly served as chair of the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department and as a professor of history. Steve previously served as director of instructional assessment and co-chair of COM’s Institutional Effectiveness Council. Steve earned his B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Oklahoma State University. He has published extensively on the history of labor in the Oklahoma coal mining industry. He recently published a chapter entitled, “The Spatial Diffusion of Beer from its Sumerian Origins to Today” in *The Geography of Beer* (2014). Steve taught previously at Oklahoma Panhandle State University, Medgar Evers College of the City University of New York and Texas Tech University.



Dr. Clen Burton

Clen Burton is the father of Clay and Shelby, boy and girl twins. He is married to the former Michelle Barkate and is a native of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

He currently serves as the COM vice president of fiscal affairs and as an adjunct accounting instructor. From 2004 to 2012, he served as the vice chancellor of finance

and administration for River Parishes Community College. Previously he worked in health care, public accounting and the construction industry.

He has a doctorate in human resource education, a master’s degree in accounting and a bachelor’s degree in speech communication from Louisiana State University. Later in life, he earned an associate degree in computer information systems from Bossier Parish Community College. He is a certified public accountant.

A member of the Dickinson Rotary Club, he has an unhealthy passion for LSU football and officiated high school football for seven seasons.



Dr. Carla Boone

Dr. Carla Boone is the COM dean for workforce and continuing education. Carla is a COM graduate and has worked in a number of positions at COM since 1986. Carla received a B.S. in health care administration from UTMB Galveston, an M.S. in instructional technology from UHCL and an Ed.D. in community college in administration from Texas Tech

University.



Dr. Kris Kimbark

Dr. Kris Kimbark has over 15 years in higher education administration as well as over 15 years as a health care administrator in brain injury rehabilitation. She has served COM in many capacities, including director of student support services, associate vice president of student services and most recently as dean of students. She has her doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis in higher education. She has been published in the Community College Research Center journal on the topic of student success in community college. Dr. Kimbark was also honored by PTK in 2015 with the Hallmark Award. She is passionate about helping students succeed in their educational endeavors, especially disadvantaged students.



Mary Ann Amelang

Mary Ann Amelang is CFRE, vice president for institutional advancement and executive director of COM Foundation. She has over 25 years of experience in resource development, the last 19 of which at community colleges. She returned to COM in September 2013 after seven years at Lee College in Baytown, Texas, as executive director of

institutional advancement. She previously served as executive director of resource development at COM from 1999 to 2006. She holds a Master of Arts in humanities from the University of Houston-Clear Lake and a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Houston. Mary Ann served four years on the board of the Council for Resource Development. Over the past 15 years, Mary Ann has presented resource development and grant writing workshops regionally and nationally.

THANK YOU

Members and officers of the College of the Mainland's Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society Sigma Delta Chapter served as student hosts for this event as did College of the Mainland students and alumni.

College of the Mainland's staff and faculty served as our judges and moderators. Thank you, Professor Stacey Burleson, Dr. Cody Smith, Professor Brian Anderson, Dr. Elaine Childs, Professor Rose Shirey, Erin McDaniel, Professor Douglas Alvarez, Dr. Shinya Wakao, Dr. Jeremy Bechelli, Dr. Michelle Cortez, Professor H. Russ Brown, Diana North, Professor Candice Ratley, Dr. Teri Walker, Professor Bridget Walton and Professor Luis Sabido.

Thank you to all professors who served as student presenter advisors.

Thank you to Dr. Louis Markos for serving as our keynote speaker and Professor Kristy Peet for serving as our lunch speaker.

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Lastly, thank you, Board of Trustees, for being valuable advocates for College of the Mainland. Events such as these would not be possible without your advocacy.

Sincerely,

Professor Dalel Serda

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