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Final Master's Portfolio

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A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of
Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English
with a specialization in English Teaching

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Senior Lecturer Kimberly Spallinger, First Reader
Professor Lee Nickoson, Second Reader

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Portfolio Narrative

When I first set out to earn my master's degree in English, I knew that I wanted to focus on how I could become a better educator. I have been a high school English teacher for five years now; after spending time teaching in two very different communities, one a very affluent suburb of Columbus, Ohio and the other a very rural community in Northeast Ohio, I started reconsidering the efficacy of many of the traditions in the high school English classroom and public education. I knew that in order to better my practice, I needed to become more educated on the best practices and pedagogies of teachers and professors more accomplished and experienced than myself and refine my own skills writing, research, analysis, and synthesis. Now that I am finally coming to the end of my time in this program, I am able to look back at my work and see that although I have not magically become the best teacher to walk planet Earth, I have honed my own skills in the English curriculum and learned many new research-based strategies that I can bring back to the classroom.

In choosing which pieces of mine to focus on for this portfolio, I wanted to accomplish a a few different things: illustrate my ability to analyze, synthesize, and revise my initial writing, include writing with different purposes and goals, and show what topics and content are most central to my identity as a teacher and a student. Through the four pieces that I have gathered, I hope to prove not only that I have grown as both a student and an educator, but also that through the work I have completed through this program, I am better prepared to help my students become independent, critical thinkers that will go on to have a positive impact on our society. That is my ultimate goal.

The first two pieces I chose to include in this portfolio were selected for similar reasons. First, both pieces focus on some of the social issues I feel passionately about. The first is a piece that I wrote analyzing the depiction of two different characters who embody the femme fatale archetype and how that depiction intersects with modern feminism. The second essay is one that explores how gentrification is similar to colonialism. Although I am lucky enough to have not faced much sociocultural adversity in my own life, I am very cognizant of this privilege that I have, and that has always motivated me to be as much of a champion for others who are not as privileged as possible. Both of these pieces of writing allowed me to explore the social topics that I feel passionately about while using other historical and literary connections to ground my thinking and build my analysis.

I also chose these two essays because they both illustrate the kinds of critical thinking that I want to see in my students. I strongly believe that critical thinking needs to be central to the English classroom. Analysis of literature has always been a focus of the English curriculum, but critical thinking needs to go beyond the analysis and synthesis of literature. Critical thinking needs to be employed when exploring and discussing news and pop culture, watching television and movies, and looking at advertisements, all of which happens on a daily basis outside of the classroom; essentially, critical thinking needs to be used constantly in every context. Students need to be prepared to consider the purpose, bias, argument, evidence, and truth behind everything they see beyond traditional literature.

In order to more successfully implement these focuses in my classroom, I need to strengthen my own knowledge and skills. Both of these essays required me to hone my own critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills. After watching multiple films and reading various

texts, I was inspired to make connections to my own life, something that I often ask of my own students after reading a novel or watching a film. By doing just that, I challenged myself to find more meaning and make more connections to the themes and universal truths in both of the courses' content; this made me a better critical thinker and will hopefully allow me to become a better teacher of these skills for my own students.

Another belief that is central to my teaching ideology and identity is the belief that there needs to be a focus on facilitating and modeling effective discourse. The way we communicate with others is changing with our ever-evolving technology, and thus, students need to learn new strategies to deeply engage with others. This is important for building critical thinking as well; by having students engage with others who have varying viewpoints and perspectives, they must challenge their own preconceived beliefs and ideas, synthesizing all of the information brought forward and wading through the complexities. To illustrate the importance of this idea in my teaching practice, I included a proposal for an afterschool workshop I created with another BGSU graduate student.

To create this piece, we worked collaboratively to discuss and exchange ideas, each of us focusing on our own distinct portion of the workshop. We reviewed each other's work and offered feedback to make sure our ideas were coming together to create one seamless piece. I received permission from the other student to include this piece in my portfolio; he also shared some of the revisions he has since made on his portion of the project with me. I included his revisions, as well as revising my own portions, so that I could share the best possible version of our vision since this is something we both feel so passionately about.

The last piece I included in my portfolio is a research piece about the need for students to be educated in social media use in order to be prepared for future careers. I chose to include this piece because it explores a topic that is pertinent to my career. With the increasing use and presence of social media in the workforce, I need to make sure that I am embedding different kinds of technology and social media into my lesson plans so that my students can have the skills they need in order to be successful in their future careers.

I also chose this piece because it shows the diversity of pieces that I created throughout my time in this program. Writing this was a challenge for me; although I have written plenty of research-based essays, I have never written one in this format before, and I have never explored the field of technical communications. Even though writing and revising was a challenge because of the new content and structure, I still felt inclined to include it because I believe that I took the challenge head on and was ultimately successful. I am always asking my own students to create essays and projects that I'm sure challenge them; it was a good experience for me to take a walk in their shoes. This will help to remind me of what struggles they may be facing and to better understand their perspective when we embark on a piece of writing.

Overall, I hope that this portfolio not only provides evidence of the diverse work I have completed through this master's program to improve my abilities as a reader, writer, and thinker, but I also hope that it provides some insight into my goals and values as an educator. This program has given me a better foundation on which I can continue to build and hone my own skills and facilitate that same growth in my students; because of this program, I am confident that I will become an even more effective educator for future generations.

Laura Risaliti

Dr. Piya Pal-Lapinski

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27 June 2018

<div align="center">The Femme Fatale as the Modern Feminist</div>

The archetype of the femme fatale is one that has been illustrated in various texts and artistic mediums through multiple centuries. Even today, it continues to prevail in many modern pieces of art and literature. Although the mere presence of the femme fatale has not changed, the way readers and audiences engage with and view the femme fatale has changed drastically over the course of history. While early femme fatales depicted a villainization of female independence and sexuality, paralleling the views and reaction of the public, modern femme fatales are greeted with a different lens: the modern femme fatale often becomes a feminist hero. With this change in audience perception of the femme fatale, the function of the character also changes. Instead of focusing on the dangers of a promiscuous woman, modern femme fatales provide social commentary by illustrating the discrimination and inequality women often face in today's society.

However, not all femme fatales are created equally. In Prosper Mérimée's novella *Carmen*, the protagonist Carmen does fulfill the role of the feminist's modern femme fatale: she is a strong-willed, independent, and sexually-free woman who acts according to her own wishes and desires. Yet, in William Oldroyd's 2016 film *Lady Macbeth*, our protagonist does not quite fill the same role. Although she is also very strong-willed, independent, and promiscuous, some major differences sets these two protagonists apart: accountability and exploitation of other

minorities. This lack of accountability and the exploitation of others takes Lady Macbeth from idyllic femme fatale to be praised to the femme fatale to be critiqued. Through Carmen and Lady Macbeth, one can see that in order to be heralded as a depiction of a modern feminist, the femme fatale archetype must not only illustrate agency and independence but also accountability for one's actions and a sense of equality for others who may be also be exploited.

One reason for this difference in Katherine and Carmen's roles as the femme fatale could be the historical context of the pieces themselves. While modern feminists may see Carmen as more of a heroine, her depiction as a rebellious, sensual, and dangerous woman highlights the desire of the French to "'assert its supremacy over lesser cultures'" during the mid 19th century (Hayes 18). As Melissa Heffner Hayes explains, "Carmen, as a representation of Southern Spain, consolidates the qualities attributed to the Other through colonial discourse: a sexual vibrancy combined with a moral purity that can be traced to her racial, class, and gendered markings" (Hayes 17-18). Carmen is seen not only as an outsider because of her unapologetic, outspoken nature, the very nature that would be celebrated by feminists today, but also because of her sociocultural background. Carmen's image "draws upon the resonance of Muslim culture in Andalusia, and the suspected 'Oriental' origins of the gypsies who settled in Southern Spain" (Hayes 18). Mérimée uses the plot of *Carmen* as a metaphor for colonialism: Carmen functions to provide "the threat of the unruly, the exotic, and the distinctly female Other" while "[t]he contested body of the gypsy dancer incorporates a moment of confrontation between Western institutions of power and the resistant Orientalist Other" (Hayes 18-20). Because of this, Carmen's power and agency are depicted as foreign, perilous qualities that have the ability to destabilize and threaten a society.

Katherine, on the other hand, is not a member of an exotic culture and therefore is not depicted as a cultural Other. Instead of relying on fear of the cultural Other like *Carmen* does, *Lady Macbeth* relies on the fear of society breaking away from the strict gender roles of the time. In Victorian England, "women were defined physically and intellectually as the 'weaker' sex, in all ways subordinate to male authority" (Marsh 1). Women were expected to fulfill their domestic duties in the home while remaining submissive to the men in their lives. Katherine combats this norm in *Lady Macbeth*, directly defying her husband and the gender norms and expectations of the time. In this way, Katherine also serves as the dangerous femme fatale that threatens society's establishments. However, she is not seen as a total outsider as Carmen is. Carmen is a member of the oppressed race, class, and gender, while Katherine is only a member of the oppressed gender. Carmen cannot oppress others below her because she is already at the lowest social standing. Katherine, while a member of the oppressed gender, is still a member of the white, upper class. With her standing, she is still able to use her power and agency to exploit those below her in race or class to ensure her own liberation from the same oppression they face.

As described by Hillary MacArthur from the University of South Carolina, the femme fatale "is a stereotype for dangerous female sexuality, exemplifying the female body as being a well-prepared arsenal ready to engage in a war with what is soon no longer the stronger sex. The Femme Fatale is the personification of how women can gain a certain level of equality within a male dominated society" (MacArthur 9). By this description, the femme fatale aligns with what modern feminists stand for: sexual liberation and equality among both men and women in all aspects of society. As MacArthur explains, "Feminists [want] to be able to have the same rights as men in respect to their behavior, and in terms of exploring their own sexuality" (MacArthur

3-4). This is the same goal that many of the femme fatales have; however, their means of achieving these goals may look a little different than the modern feminist.

Although modern feminists may not focus in on the idea of "[using] sex for pleasure and as a weapon or a tool to control men" like many femme fatales do, both the femme fatale and the modern feminist would celebrate the idea of a woman who "threatens the status quo and the hero because she controls her own sexuality" (MacArthur 9). These key qualities—agency, independence, sexual emancipation—tie both the femme fatale and the feminist together as one. Both would "buck at the idea that she should belong to or be possessed by anyone" (MacArthur 9). Although the archetype of the femme fatale is often "a stereotyped version of all that is or can be considered negative in women" (MacArthur 9), by examining these archetypal characters through the feminist lens, it is clear that these women represent more than just a villainous, promiscuous, and morally corrupt opposition to the male protagonist.

In Mérimée's *Carmen*, Carmen illustrates many of the characteristics of the stereotypical femme fatale. She is fiercely independent and openly sexual, using her sexuality to her advantage to assert power over men. Carmen is the epitome of the stereotypical femme fatale, "a predatory siren who lures men to their destruction, an objectification of manipulative, destructive, female sexuality" (Edwards 1). Carmen tells José that "[she] may wear wool, but [she is] not a sheep" (Mérimée 31). Carmen's outspoken nature is a fundamental trait of the femme fatale archetype. While José is ultimately drawn to these traits in Carmen, he also hates them. As Naomi Segal, a Professorial Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London explains, "[José] despises her for the very qualities—her independence, her skill with languages, her knowledge, and leadership—that he admires in her and knows are lacking in him" (Segal 108). Carmen's embodiment of these traits

makes José become painfully aware of his own shortcomings in his agency and independence. Instead of reflecting on himself, he villainizes Carmen for being everything he is not.

At the end of the novella, José is desperate for Carmen to be with him. Carmen, who has now become disinterested in José, tells him,"I no longer love you. But you still love me, and that's why you want to kill me. I could easily tell you another lie, but I'd sooner spare myself the trouble" (Mérimée 52). Here the audience can see Carmen's independence and accountability for her actions. At this point, José is threatening Carmen with her life; if she agrees to be with him, she will live, but if she does not, she will die. It would be easy for Carmen to lie to José to save her own life; if she did not want to be with him, she could simply wait for the next moment to formulate an escape. Yet, Carmen decides that she will not lie to José. She believes that it is fate that José will kill her.

At a first glance, it seems as though Carmen does not seem to be taking any agency in what will happen to her. She claims it is fate and therefore lets fate take over. She is not fighting what she believes the future already holds, which seems to counter the idea of controlling one's own destiny through one's own self-agency. However, Carmen still chooses to tell José that she does not love him anymore and that "Carmen will always be free. Calli she was born, calli she will die" (Mérimée 52). Through this choice to tell José that she does not love him, Carmen does assert her agency and accountability. She chooses how and when she will die by refusing to submit to José. She knows what the consequences of her actions will be and fully accepts those consequences before she makes her choice. Instead of lying to escape what consequences she believes are destined for her, she faces them head on and determines the circumstances

surrounding her death to ensure she remains liberated and uncontrolled by anyone even to her death.

After José kills Carmen, instead of acknowledging his part in her death, which is entirely his doing, he blames Carmen for his actions. Similar to many femme fatale tales, "the curse [is laid] upon the blameless woman condemned for a crime she has not committed, but which a man has perpetrated because he believes she will not love him" (Segal 105). Here, Mérimée provides a direct contrast between the two principal characters. José, who has physically committed murder, is unable to accept his role in Carmen's death. Instead, José blames Carmen (and the Calé who raised her) for her destruction. Carmen, on the other hand, is fully aware of what is going to happen and verbally acknowledges that she knows what will happen but still says what she wants to anyway. This final scene illustrates "Carmen's resistance, her refusal to let herself be loved, the explanation for—indeed justification of—her murder" (Segal 109-10). Through her resistance and her acceptance of her actions and of fate, Carmen proves to uphold the qualities of the femme fatale.

Carmen's character not only fits within the definition of the archetypal femme fatale, but she also fits within the boundaries of what modern feminists would celebrate as a heroic female character. Like most femme fatales, Carmen's "refusal to abide by the constructs of mainstream society creates an image of a strong, exciting, and unrepentant woman who defies the control of men and rejects the institution of the family" (MacArthur 9). This description of the femme fatale fits within the goals of the modern feminist. Modern feminism is associated with "gender inequality, male dominance, sexism, patriarchy, phallocracy, the oppression of women, the suppression of women, sex discrimination, sex oppression, heterosexualism, hierarchal

sex-gender system, systemic misogyny, the construction of women as an exploited class,

patriarchy as a global religion, [and] male supremacism" (Code n.pag.). Through Carmen's

actions, she rebels against many of these institutions: her choice to be sexually involved with

multiple men, even outside of her marriage, shows her rebellion against social boundaries

regarding sexuality; her choice to live as a gypsy shows her rebellion against social and familial

expectations for women; and her choice to refuse to obey any other shows her rebellion against

oppression.

While Carmen asserts her own personal power and agency throughout the story, even to

her death, she does not use her power and agency to exploit others who are already oppressed.

The only power she asserts over anyone is her sexuality, and this she uses against her own

oppressor; even in this, Carmen is not working to exploit anyone outright. It is José who falls in

love with Carmen and is entranced by her beauty and sexuality. Carmen cannot force that

reaction out of José, so his reaction to her is ultimately not through her exploitation of him. This

differs from some of the other stories of femme fatales who consciously choose to use their

newly achieved agency, power, and liberation to oppress and exploit others who are already

oppressed themselves.

In William Oldroyd's film *Lady Macbeth*, written by Alice Birch, Katherine, the femme

fatale of the story, acts "as a loathsome, self-centered operator who will kill anyone who stands

in her way" (Koehler 40). Katherine is married off to Alexander, who as a husband provides little

love and lots of abuse. Visually, Oldroyd depicts this prisoner-like existence through the

furniture in the house: "Floors, tables, and walls are hard, uncomfortable. [The male

protagonists'] homes aren't refuges, but containers, designed to contain emotion, women,

women's bodies, women's minds" (Koehler 41). At the beginning of the film, "she seems part of

the furniture, literally; there is a recurring image of her sitting alone on a sofa, centrally placed

within the frame, surrounded by her keepers' opulent possessions, as ornamental as a china doll"

(Kroenert 41). This hard visual depiction of Katherine's environment and her minimal agency in

it makes it clear to the audience that she is being oppressed both physically and emotionally.

Similar to Carmen and the archetype of the femme fatale, Katherine breaks out of this

prison-like existence and oppression by establishing her own sexual liberation, "not through

lifestyle or economic mobility or education or any of those high-minded notions that flatter

liberal moviegoers, but through flat-out fucking. The moment Katharine finds any man in earshot

ready to take her up on it—it happens to be good-looking Sebastian—she goes at it like a caged

animal let out of the pen" (Koehler 41). Katherine too becomes an outspoken woman; as she

continues in her affair with Sebastian, she becomes more and more brazen with her liberation, to

the point that when her husband returns and confronts her about her promiscuity, both verbally

and physically, she brings Sebastian into the room so she can show her husband exactly what she

has been up to in his absence.

However, as Katherine continues in her sexual liberation, she begins to slowly break

away from the feminist interpretation of the femme fatale. As Katherine faces resistance to her

increasing independence from various others (her father in law, her husband, her husband's child

through another woman), she begins to murder them. In doing this, "Katherine develops into a

morally complex and disturbing human being...with a basis for her wrath and vengeance

(Koehler 41). The audience can see Katherine's oppression lead to her actions; she uses

vengeance as a motivator to make steps to become the liberated woman that she is at the end of

the film. While it may be easy to see the motivating factors behind why Katherine murders her oppressors and anyone else who may threaten her personal liberation and to justify her actions, it is harder to justify how she handles the consequences of her actions while looking at her actions through a feminist lens.

When these crimes are discovered by the authorities, instead of accepting her fate and the consequences of her actions, much like Carmen does, Katherine instead shifts the blame on to others, scapegoating them for her own decisions. When Sebastian, who helped Katherine to commit some of the murders, confesses to their crimes, Katherine uses the opportunity to instead claim that Sebastian, along with her housemaid Anna, committed all of the murders. Katherine continues to use her newfound power and agency, as she did in committing the crimes, except this time she does not use them against the male protagonist oppressor like other femme fatales do. Instead, she exploits those in positions of power already below her. Sebastian, a mixed race farmhand, and Anna, a black housemaid who is "just a step above slavehood" (Koehler 41), do not have power over the lady of the house. Katherine is using her power and agency to further oppress others who were already oppressed, instead of only using her power and agency against her own oppressor. Katherine moves "from a place of near total oppression" at the beginning of the film to oppressor as "she has discovered in [Sebastian] a path to independence and individual satisfaction, and will go to increasingly brutal lengths in order to defend it" (Kroenert 42).

By having Katherine exploit these two and ultimately send them to their death for crimes they did not fully commit, Birch "complicates the movie's politics and power dynamics even further" (Koehler 41). It becomes unclear to the audience who is more oppressed at this point in the story: is it Katherine, who has been physically and verbally abused by her husband?

Sebastian, who does the bidding of his lover, confesses, and takes the fall for her? Or Anna, an innocent party to all of the misdoings in the house? Here, "Birch lays down a political setting of oppression and demands that attention is paid to the kind of response that oppression can trigger, asking the audience if this is too much, or too little" (Koehler 41). If Katherine is willing to oppress others who ultimately did not participate in any actions or activities that led to her own oppression, then she herself is now just as guilty as Alexander is for constraining her in the first place.

Yet, what further complicates Katherines decision to exploit Sebastian and Anna for her crimes is the fact the she finds out is pregnant. Some audience members may find this as justification for her exploitation of Sebastian and Anna: she is merely trying to protect her unborn child. However, it is unlikely that Katherine would have faced death while she was pregnant. Instead, it is likely that she would have been executed after the birth of her child. While this fact no longer puts her child's life immediately at risk, one could still claim that Katherine did not want to subject her child to a life without a mother.

As Hillary MacArthur points out, "a Femme Fatale will always lean towards her base emotions and let her wants and desires guide her" even though "society expects her to always embrace her cultured side and reject the primitive" (MacArthur 6). In this way, Katherine is still embodying the archetype of the femme fatale: her emotions and desires lead her to put blame on Anna and Sebastian in order to take it off of herself to either protect her unborn child, herself, or both. Although this reaction fits within the femme fatale archetype, it does not fit within the constraints of what would be heralded as a feminist femme fatale. Katherine's exploitation of

others ensures that inequality plays a part, something that goes against the goal and values of a modern feminist.

The film itself fits within the boundaries of a classic femme fatale tale in that it "[examines] the pursuit of actualisation by women in repressive societies, through sexuality and self-agency" (Kroenert 41). However, more than Katherine's own sexual and personal liberation, the film focuses in on the power dynamics between all races and classes of people, not just that of the femme fatale: "In Oldroyd's hands, Leskov's story becomes an examination of power - who has it, how it can be gained by those who lack it, how it is used once it is attained" (Kroenert 41). This story speaks to power dynamics of the entire house, which lets the reader examine not only Katherine's role in gaining her own power, but who else gains or loses power as a result of her own self-agency.

The difference between these two femme fatale protagonists, while slight, is important to note when viewing these stories through a feminist lens. Carmen is a woman who begins in the story already having her own self-agency and independence. As she continues throughout the story, she continues to assert these characteristics, even when José, the male protagonist, tries to hold her back and oppress her by asserting his own dominance. Although Carmen ultimately falls due to the actions of José, she remains, in her mind, true to herself because she refuses to fall under his terms. She rejects his dominance while continuing to assert her own. Her story, therefore, is not about her gaining her agency and liberation; her story is about the struggle to protect her already achieved sense of self and independence. While she uses her sexuality to manipulate José, she does so only to ensure that she is able to keep this agency and independence.

On the contrary, Katherine's story in *Lady Macbeth* is about her journey in gaining her own agency and independence. At the beginning of the film, Katherine does as her husband asks, undressing for him and remaining in the house according to his rules. As the story continues, she begins to forge her own path and break away from the overbearing dominance that Alexander asserts over her. She begins to challenge anyone who steps in her way of achieving her own freedom and "is not averse to scheming, manipulation, and even violence when circumstances call for it, in pursuit of her goals" (Kroenert 41). In this way, she is both similar and different from Carmen. While they both have a similar end goal in mind, since Carmen has already achieved her independence, she does not have to work as hard as Katherine does to reach her goals; she only has to remain independent, not find independence.

Yet, Katherine is willing to exploit anyone who gets in her way, and in this way, she is different from Carmen. Carmen does not exploit anyone, although the argument can be made that she manipulates her oppressors. Katherine does this as well, but then takes it a step further when she uses Anna and Sebastian to her own advantage. Both Anna and Sebastian, who are in positions of power lower than that of Katherine, both because of their social class and their race, are exploited by Katherine in order to protect herself and the life of her unborn child. Here, Katherine is unique in that she fully transitions in her role; she goes from that of the one who is oppressed to that of the oppressor.

The same is not true for Carmen: she never fully becomes the oppressor. In this way, Katherine demonstrates a different kind of femme fatale, one that would not be celebrated by modern feminists because through her own transition and liberation, she actually reverts back to power dynamics that still contradict those upheld by modern feminists today. Even though she

has rejected the oppression of others on herself and has found her own voice and agency through her personal and sexual liberation, her exploitation of Anna and Sebastian shows that she is not concerned with gaining equal rights or having the same social standards: she wants to have power over others. She wants to become the oppressor.

Through the two femme fatale protagonists, Carmen and Katherine, it is evident that not all femme fatale archetypal characters hold up the qualities that would be associated with modern feminism. Many femme fatales do embody many traits that one would associate with feminism today—sexual liberation, agency, breaking away from oppression, breaking social and gender norms, and independence—but femme fatales must also uphold the ideal of equality across different genders, races, and classes to be heralded as a feminist hero. While exploitation of these different classifications may grant the femme fatale her freedom, it also solidifies her as the new oppressor, one in which a future version of the femme fatale will have to rebel. To truly represent a femme fatale through a feminist lens, the femme fatale must value her own agency and independence along with others'. She must be an advocate not only for her own personal and sexual liberation, but one for others who are oppressed as well; in short, she must support intersectional feminism. If she can accomplish this, she has succeeded in becoming what today's feminists would celebrate as not just a femme fatale but also a hero.

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2 August 2018

<div align="center">The New Colonialism</div>

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to travel abroad to England, Ireland, and Wales

with some high school students. As we were on our tour of London, our tour guide pointed out

the Ministry of Defense. Jokingly, he shared that he liked to call it the Ministry of Offense

because in England's history, they spent much more time invading and ruling other countries

than protecting their own. Even though this was intended as a light-hearted comment, it stuck

with me for the rest of the trip and still sits at the forefront of my mind as I continue to think

about the role of colonialism in our world today.

Colonialism has undoubtedly shaped much of our world. It is responsible for the

oppression and the success of so many different countries and groups of people over the course

of many centuries. In fact, colonialism is still a prevalent issue for many in their daily lives. But,

for some countries, colonialism has taken on a different face. Some countries and communities

may not see soldiers invading or occupying their land and oppressing their people, but that does

not mean that colonialism does not exist in these places; it has merely evolved.

Today, colonialism also goes by another name: gentrification. Gentrification is the

renewing and rebuilding of an area, which sounds like a great thing at face value. However, what

typically accompanies this renewal is the displacement of poor communities in favor of more

affluent communities. In this way, gentrification is just as damaging as colonialism. Like

colonialism, gentrification favors those with money and power, and in the process, oppresses and pushes out those who are lacking. This causes poor and minority communities to enter a cycle of systemic oppression that is likely to continue on for generations unless there is advocacy and intervention by those in power.

Gentrification has become an increasingly popular topic of conversation in the greater Columbus area since the start of the new millenium. Columbus, a city that has been growing quickly over the past few decades, has seen many changes occurring throughout different communities. One of these changes is the gentrification of the Olde Towne East neighborhood. Olde Towne East was one of Columbus's first suburban neighborhoods, and wealthy businessmen, politicians, architects, and other affluent professionals all began building homes there (*Olde Towne East*). However, as time when on, the new money began to move further and further east, creating a new wealthy suburban neighborhood, Bexley. After World War II, the change became even more drastic as "white flight" set in and the affluent community that once occupied Olde Towne East moved to Bexley and other wealthier suburbs (*Olde Towne East*). After the development of more streets and a major highway right through the center of the neighborhood, the community was completely changed, and by the 1970s, Olde Towne East was a predominantly poor, black community (*Olde Towne East*).

Today, Olde Towne East is again undergoing a new change. Over the past few decades, it has seen an influx of another minority community: the gay community. Having these two minority communities in the same neighborhood could have been a great opportunity for the two to join forces and support and advocate for each other, lifting each other out of an oppressed state. Adolfo Gilly explains this idea in the introduction to Frantz Fanon's *A Dying Colonialism*.

In his discussion of the role of women in revolutions, he states that "women, like the proletariat, can only liberate themselves by liberating all other oppressed strata and sectors of the society, and by acting together with them" (Fanon 5). Yet, this is not what happened with the two communities in Olde Towne East. Instead of joining together, the two communities became pitted against one another. In Gilly's explanation, the women were members of both oppressed communities: that of the oppressed culture and of the oppressed sex. Therefore, it made sense for women to liberate all of the other oppressed sectors with them because they belonged to both groups. However, this is not true of the two communities in Olde Towne East. These two minority communities, while both oppressed, were two completely separate communities with no overlap or common ground.

Because of the separation between these two minority communities, it was easier for members of each community to view the other as competition or as a roadblock in their own community's path to success. Fanon describes this feeling, stating that "the colonized person...perceives life not as a flowering or a development of an essential productiveness, but as a permanent struggle against an omnipresent death. This ever-menacing death is experienced as endemic famine, unemployment, a high mortality rate, an inferiority complex and the absence of any hope for the future" (Fanon 12). While these communities may not have been fearing the same violent death or famine that can accompany conflicts created by colonialism, they were still motivated by the fight against another kind of death: the death of the culture of their minority community and the programs and resources that would ensure their livelihood within their neighborhood.

According to The Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Olde Towne East had a 73% population of black residents in 1980, and this stayed above 60% until 2000; by 2009, however, the percent of black residents in Olde Towne East dropped to 44%, while the percent of white residents rose from 25% in 1980 to 55% in 2009 (Kirwan 1). Moreover, the Kirwan Institute also discovered that in Franklin County, the infant mortality rate for black babies is two and a half times that of white babies (Kirwan 1). Not only was the black community being forced out of their homes in the Olde Towne East neighborhood, but they were also left devoid of the resources and institutions—ones that directly impact livelihood— that the white community was privileged to have. Yet, while the black community in Olde Towne East was facing eradication both geographically and physically, the white community took advantage of their plight, using their new found power to ensure the survival of their own.

One way the gay community worked to push out the black community was through housing code violations. Chief Baba Olugbala Shango Obadena, an artist in the Olde Towne East community, received a citation from a neighbor for having an Afrocentric sign hanging from his porch that had his name and address on it. When he went to court, the judge told him that the sign was not in compliance with the housing codes, although the Chief had no issue with the sign being up for years before. Chief Baba Olugbala Shango Obadena stated, "I think what's happening here is, is, is very much like Bosnia. Except we're more sophisticated but the end results are the same ethnic cleansing. There's a new sergeant of people who are moving into the community who want to gentrify it and they have different ways of doing that" (*Flag Wars*). By making clear rules about what is or is not acceptable in regards to one's house, members of the

gay community made one culture acceptable and others unacceptable. The Chief's Afrocentric sign, a sign that simply stated his name and address, was deemed as not in compliance because it did not fit the image that the gay community wanted or the culture that the community wanted to support.

By using the city code enforcement, new community members were able to "put pressure on the people who don't have the money to maybe maintain the homes the way European-American males have" (*Flag Wars*). Members of the gay community reported issues that did not fit the confines of traditional wealthy, suburban homes because they wanted their new community to look a certain way: a way aligned with that of wealthy, white European-Americans. These issues ranged from weeds growing out of gutters, stair rails falling off, cars sitting unused on the property, and, as in the Chief's case, a traditionally Afrocentric sign hanging above the door. This choice to report members of the Olde Towne East community for not conforming to housing norms defined by a specific group of people shows a new kind of discrimination. Instead of making it illegal for members of the black community to eat or shop in certain locations like in the Jim Crow era, the gay community enacted laws and zoning that made it necessary for community members to have money and to live lives that more closely resembled that of a white, middle to upper-middle class citizen. This puts the value on one community's way of life over that of another community, making the members of the oppressed community feel like they do not belong in their own neighborhood anymore. By instituting laws that require conformity and money, the gay community implicitly stated that the black community's way of life was unacceptable, undesirable, and less than that of the gay community.

As members of the gay community—a community that was comprised of mostly white, middle to upper middle class males—continued to move into Olde Towne East, they began to request that the neighborhood be designated as a historic district. As Linda Goode Bryant, one of the documentary filmmakers who explored the gentrification of Olde Towne East in her film *Flag Wars*, explains, "designating a neighborhood a historic district raises the costs that a homeowner faces in maintaining a home or making renovations to a home because the codes for historic preservation require materials that are almost always more expensive than those used in new construction" (Bryant 716). In this way, the new members of the Olde Towne East community could put more pressure on and force out citizens who were unable to pay for the kind of upkeep that was required. This created a new, higher minimum cost of living for the black community that was already established in Olde Towne East, one which many members were not able to meet.

Beyond the cost of meeting the zoning and historical district requirements, members of the gay community also helped to enact restrictions that limited community members' choice in painting their own homes, thus taking away their freedom and ability to make decisions about their home in their own neighborhood. Previous residents were used to painting their homes different shades of pink, purple, and blue; "the idea that they would [now] have to get permission before they painted their houses again was shocking and insulting to them" (Bryant 717). This new requirement took the agency away from citizens, making them feel like they did not have a say in their own home and community. As Fanon describes, "an underdeveloped people must prove, by its fighting power, its ability to set itself up as a nation" (Fanon 24). This is exactly what the gay community was trying to do: take control and take steps to make their new

community their own. In order for the gay community to set itself up as its own strong community, they believed they must show their own power and agency. Yet, this forced the existing black community that was already established to abide by the cultural and financial expectations of the gay community, putting them in a place of oppression and forcing them to adopt cultural norms outside of their own.

On top of changing the way community members could live and take care of their homes, the gay community and the city code enforcement officials used discrimination in how they upheld and enforced these new laws. Chief Baba Olugbala Shango Obadena was reported for having an Afrocentric sign, yet his white neighbor flew a German flag, which was not perceived as an issue. Both were displayed on the porch and showed support for a different culture or country, but only the Chief was in violation of the city code. This may be because of the resident's race or class or because of the race associated with the displayed piece. Either way, the fact that the Chief had to go to court and pay over $10,000 to resolve the case, while the neighbor with the German flag faced nothing, highlights the discrimination against the black community in Olde Towne East ("Flag Wars").

One white male resident also "had no trouble painting the trim on the exterior of his renovated home in a varied palate of bold, colorful hues [because] such trim was a feature of Victorian houses" when members of the black community were no longer allowed to paint their homes the bright pinks, purples, and blues that they had been before the community was designated as a historic district (Bryant 717). The inequality in the enforcement of the city codes illustrates the discrimination at play: when poor, black citizens countered the traditional

European suburban image, they were vilified and brought to court; yet, when wealthy, white members of the community challenged this image, nothing was done.

This change in community expectations and the discrimination of one group is similar to what happens in the film *Garam Hawa.* In this film, Salim Mirza is unwilling to leave his home in India after the partition when most of the Muslims begin to move to Pakistan. Even though Mirza is a man of good standing in his community before the partition, after the partition, this all changes. He is no longer trusted or respected by those same peers in the same way he was before, even though his actions have not changed. He cannot get a loan from the bank, and when he is forced out of his family home, he struggles to find a new home because he is forced to pay months rent in advance (*Garam Hawa*). The expectations and rules that apply to him as a Muslim do not seem to apply to the rest of his Indian peers. While those enacting and enforcing the rules in both Olde Towne East and in India may have justifications for these differences, like trying to uphold the historic integrity of the area or making sure those citizens are held financially accountable so that other community members and institutions are not taken advantage of, it is still an act of discrimination against one specific community. These actions help to oppress these minority communities, forcing them out of positions of power and agency in their own communities and taking away their dignity.

The search for human dignity is a motivating factor for those who are oppressed by colonialism. As Frantz Fanon writes, "the essence of revolution is not the struggle for bread; it is the struggle for human dignity. Certainly this includes bread. And at the base of any revolutionary situation are economic conditions…[however,] immediate economic conditions are secondary to the movement of the masses to liquidate all forms of oppression and govern

themselves by and for themselves" (Fanon 12). The gentrification of Olde Towne East is unique in that both communities, the gay community and the black community, are searching for this dignity. As two minority groups, both want the ability to "liquidate all forms of oppression and govern themselves by and for themselves." Yet, in the gay community's drive to create its own identity and agency within a neighborhood, it ends up oppressing those who were there before them.

This is not the first time groups who are moving to new areas seeking more power and agency have oppressed long-term residents of an established community, as shown in the documentary *5 Broken Cameras*. In this documentary film, Emad Burnat shows what happens when Israeli soldiers come to his town of Bil'in and occupy much of their farming land in order to build a wall to separate Bil'in from a future Jewish settlement. At first, the soldiers still allow Emad and his young sons access to their farming land. However, as tensions rise, the soldiers occupying the land begin to act more and more violently against the Palestinian citizens, seizing their land, burning the olive trees of the farmers, and even shooting and killing some of the villagers (*5 Broken Cameras*). The Israeli soldiers are acting in the favor of their own people, trying to secure land and better future. The same is true of the members of the gay community coming into the Olde Towne East neighborhood; they are also trying to secure land and a better future. But, in both of these groups efforts, they are ignoring the history of the locals they are taking advantage of.

One long-time resident of Olde Towne East, Linda Regina Mitchell, addresses this issue. Mitchell argues that it is the history of the people who have lived in a house that matters more than the history of the physical building or the land or what someone might want to gain from it:

"'You don't try to take somebody's history away from them because you want their house, because you saw something that you like, disregarding the fact that there has already been a family there'" (Austin 282-83). Even though Mitchell owns the home she lives in, that did not stop local authorities from trying to evict her based on her not meeting the zoning regulations. Instead of letting Mitchell continue to have agency over her own home, as she had for years before the gentrification of Olde Towne East began, citizens and law enforcement tried to take advantage of her inability to keep up with the zoning so that they could take ownership of her home and repair it for their own profit.

These people trying to take advantage of Mitchell and many others "seemed confident that there was nothing racist about thinking that the Victorian houses in Olde Towne East belonged in the hands of custodians who embraced Victorian values and aesthetics, rather than the poorer black incumbent owners who merely considered the buildings home" (Austin 282). The idea that someone else's home or belongings should not belong to them because they do not embrace a certain lifestyle or standard of living illustrates the perceived superiority of the incoming community. Even though there is an established community that already exists in this neighborhood, the new community members believed they had the right to determine who could and could not remain in their homes and what the homes could and could not look like. Just like with colonization, the new community took complete control and power from the existing population, occupied their community, and established new constraints for citizens and their homes. The existing populations' agency is completely stripped away along with their way of life, and they are then expected to abandon their own history and heritage for that of the occupying group.

One of the many reasons why the gay community, another traditionally oppressed group of people, oppressed the residing black community in Olde Towne East is because in order to guarantee its own success, the gay community had to take power into its own hands. Frantz Fanon explores this idea, stating, "Liberation does not come as a gift from anybody; it is seized by the masses with their own hands. And by seizing it they themselves are transformed; confidence in their own strength soars, and they turn their energy and their experience to the tasks of building, governing, and deciding their own lives for themselves" (Fanon 2). Even though the gay citizens that moved into Olde Towne East are acting hypocritically by oppressing others as they seek their own liberation, they may see their actions as justified because they are ensuring success for themselves and the future generations of the gay community. By seizing power and agency from the existing community, they have secured their own community's survival.

While gentrification has developed a negative connotation for all of the reasons explored in gentrification of the Olde Towne East neighborhood, not all gentrification has to oppress and push out the original residents. On the other side of the city of Columbus is another neighborhood called Franklinton. Franklinton is also undergoing gentrification, yet the way Franklinton is being gentrified is quite different from that of Olde Towne East. Franklinton has been a largely abandoned neighborhood for years. Jim Sweeney, the director of the Franklinton Development Association, explains this difference, stating, "we are looking at an opportunity to kind of do what people would call gentrification only without the negative component of it, which would be the displacement of the existing population, because the existing population is gone already. They went decades ago when the floods came through and pretty much wiped out

all of the housing" ("Gentrification 'Without the Negative' in Columbus, Ohio"). Without the displacement of people and established communities, artists and other community members have been able to restore and rejuvenate Franklinton with little negative sociocultural impact; they have not forced an existing community into assimilation or oppression because there is no existing community.

Although situations like the one in Franklinton may not be possible for every city looking to restore and rebuild its poorest neighborhoods, it is important to think about the lasting impacts gentrification can have on the existing communities in these areas. Just like colonialism, gentrification oppresses and pushes out the established poor and minority communities that already inhabit the area because it favors renewal and rejuvenation, something that typically accompanies money and power. Since these poor and minority communities often cannot adjust to the inflated cost of living or the new restrictions that have been established, they are forced to evacuate unless they can conform. Not only does this hurt their ability to be financially secure, but it also suppresses minority cultures and heritages.

This establishes a specific identity as better than another, and in most cases, especially in the United States, that is the identity of a wealthy, white citizen as better than that of a poor, minority citizen. As this cycle continues, poor, minority citizens are continually oppressed and pushed further and further down the social ladder as wealthy, white citizens continue to climb, taking power and agency from those below them and forcing their own cultural norms and expectations on to everyone else. In order to stop this cycle, those in power need to adopt strategies that promote advocacy and agency for these communities that are taken advantage of.

Without intervention from those with a powerful voice, it will be hard for those whose voices

have been squashed and taken away to find a way out of this systemic oppression.

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ENG 6200

3 May 2018

PROJECT TITLE

Deeply Divided: Working Toward Healthier Public Discourse in America

PROJECT AUDIENCE

The content in this workshop proposal has been developed for students at the high school level.
It can easily be adapted to the junior high school level by employing content appropriate for the
grade level.

TERMINOLOGY & ASSUMPTIONS WITHIN THIS PROPOSAL

- "National political discourse" appears frequently in this proposal, sometimes shortened to
  "political discourse" or simply "discourse." We are not referring to this subject in all its
  multifaceted totality. We are referring to a specific strand of national political discourse
  that is often undertaken in social media and website chat rooms, is employed by trade by
  so-called pundits and prognosticators, and surfaces randomly in society via impromptu
  in-person interactions amongst citizens.

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[1] This was a collaborative project created by myself and Brian Champlin. I received his permission to use this piece
in my portfolio. He also shared the revisions he made to the project since our initial submission; he focused most of
his writing and revisions on the introduction and phase 1, while I focused most of my writing and revision on phases
2 and 3.

• We assert that this strand of national political discourse is "diseased." By that we mean that, in its current incarnation, national political discourse is by and large failing to function as a public-sphere marketplace of ideas in which perspectives are shared, examined, and evaluated by citizens seeking to make informed decisions in a representative democracy. We believe that the "interchange" is at a qualitative all-time low, and that in the specific strand of national discourse that we are addressing (perhaps appropriately labeled "popular" national political discourse), people are not attempting to exchange ideas, but to reinforce for themselves ideas that they already hold. In this proposal, we make the assumption that our readers share this belief about the state of popular discourse.

• In this proposal, we point out that opinions are shaped by the moral frameworks that people carry with them. That is, rather than being generated through pure reason, opinions are products of individual moral belief systems. We do not argue that those systems themselves are diseased. Rather, we posit that the discourse that people are currently using to advocate for their opinions is diseased. Again, we do not make an academic argument in defense of this position; we simply assume that our readers share it.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

At the outset of this program, we ask students to assess the current state of public discourse in our country, illustrating to them just how badly divided we are and why that division is

untenable. We then teach students that morality, not pure reason, creates opinions. Recognizing these facts will create a multifaceted effect:

- Students will gain insight into their own opinions and moral makeup—that is, the moral belief system that they carry with them and that informs their opinions.

- Students will gain insight into the subjectivity of "truth."

- Students will understand that opinions that conflict with their own are founded in the same manner as their own—through moral belief systems rather than through "ignorance" or "lack of enlightenment." This understanding will introduce a new and more challenging type of empathy as students are asked to recognize the validity/reality of others' moral belief systems, and therefore opinions.

Students will then be asked to formulate arguments through the lens of others' moral belief systems. Obviously, understanding those belief systems is integral to the process; genuine listening and understanding therefore are prerequisites to a successful argument. As students employ this new style of rhetoric, they will begin to understand that effective rhetoric—and therefore healthy discourse—are indeed possible in today's deeply divided America.

In summary, this project will:

- Help students recognize the diseased nature of popular national political discourse;

- Inspire them to want to employ more effective political rhetoric;

- Increase awareness that one's worldview and "truth" are not identical;

- Encourage a new empathy (the hard kind of empathy – when exercising it actually challenges one's deeply held beliefs);

- Teach students specific techniques for more effective rhetoric;

- Show students a path towards healthier national discourse;

- Create space for them to begin practicing that discourse.

NEED FOR PROJECT

Often nowadays, we read or hear the assertion that our country has become profoundly divided, that people have hunkered down into their worldviews like never before, that everyone is talking and no one is listening. Often, too, it is assumed that engaging in discourse with "opponents" means engaging with intolerance and anger— even hatred and violence. The reasons for this are complex, but there is seemingly no end in sight. It appears to us that rhetors are increasingly directing their message to themselves, simply affirming their own positions as opposed to genuinely attempting to connect with others. This idea is only exacerbated by the news bubbles and echo chambers that have become more and more prevalent. The ability to cherry-pick news sources to fit the bias of one's choice deepens the problem—but compounding that are the social media algorithms and structures that generate and amplify echo chambers. If someone does not like an ideology or belief system, that person is able to completely avoid information from sources that would support those ideals. If individuals are exposed to contradictory facts and opinions, they are able to decry them as "fake news" and therefore avoid contemplating how those facts and/or opinions may problematize their own personal ideology. In a society that (in our view) is becoming increasingly focused on winning arguments and debates rather than

working towards a consensus, we want to create a program that combats this kind of divisive

rhetoric and diseased discourse. We want to contribute to the effort of helping save America

from itself— because it is quite possible that we have arrived at a point in which it needs saving.

GENERAL TIMELINE AND STRUCTURE

This program will be completed as a workshop that takes place after school hours—once per

week, for two hours each week. It will last approximately four months and be divided into three

phases. The first two phases will be instruction-based and shorter in length (approximately four

weeks each). The third phase will last eight weeks and involve writing and collaborative work.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following is a sampling of questions with which we will poll the high school students at

your school prior to beginning the workshop. The questions would serve as data to be shared

with workshop participants. Prior to that, though, the school-wide poll itself will create interest

in and awareness of the workshop—helping to increase enrollment.

- Do you feel that you understand the following terms: discourse, rhetoric, ethos, pathos,

  logos?

- Think for a moment of a social/political topic you care deeply about (gun control,

  abortion, the environment, kneeling during the national anthem, etc.). Now imagine

  someone in front of you who seems to be the perfect representation of the group you

  consider your opponents. That person is telling you why their belief is correct, and yours

is wrong. Which of the following BEST describes how you feel: (1) intellectually challenged, (2) frustrated, (3) disgusted, (4) no strong feeling.

- Think about how "divided" America is today. Which word BEST describes how that makes you feel: (1) normal/no feeling, (2) sad, (3) hopeless

- Think again of that person who believes the complete opposite of what you believe. Do you think they exist in a so-called "echo chamber" (consuming and hearing only one viewpoint)?

- Do you feel comfortable talking about politics most of the time, or are you fearful that the conversation will quickly devolve into anger and argument?

- Where do people your age engage in political conversations (what platforms, where in person, etc.)?

- Do you believe in facts? What are they?

- Has the internet helped create more conversations, better conversations, or what?

WORK SCHEDULE: SUMMARY

This workshop will be broken up into three different phases. The first two phases will consist of four one-hour lessons each; the third phase will consist of eight one-hour lessons. There will then be a one lesson conclusion. In general, Phase 1 creates the need/demand for the workshop; Phase 2 creates the intellectual framework; Phase 3 creates the action/implementation.

● Phase 1: Who's talking, and who's listening?

The Current State of National Discourse—And Why We Need To Do Better

● Phase 2: I'm right; you're wrong—and I'll never believe otherwise.

Understanding How Opinions Are Products of Moral Belief Systems

● Phase 3: Speak so that others will hear.

Using Moral Jujutsu to Make Effective Arguments

WORK SCHEDULE: DETAILED

PHASE 1: The Current State of National Discourse—And Why We Need To Do Better

Phase 1, Part 1—Terminology: Rhetoric and Discourse

At the start of Phase 1, students will learn the meanings of the terms "rhetoric" and "discourse," as well as the rhetorical devices "logos," "pathos," and "ethos." We will not simply introduce the terms and move on. We will use this small workshop environment as an opportunity to instill a strong, foundational understanding of the ideas behind the terms. Throughout the course, there will be a terminology poster visible to all, displaying concise definitions of each term. Students will be made aware of a game: throughout the course, if they notice that one or more of the three terms applies to content currently being discussed, they can volunteer that information and receive a point. Points are redeemed for prizes at the end of the workshop. The "terminology" section will include the following:

● Contemporary definitions and examples (from term papers to tweets);

● Basic history, antiquity to present;

● Worksheets: matching, identification;

● Open class discussion;

● Video resources.

Phase 1, Part 2—The History of American National Discourse, Pre-Internet

This portion of the workshop will involve collaboration with an American History/Cultural Studies teacher.

The class will be introduced to the idea of "national discourse," tracing discourse and its mediums from the Declaration of Independence to the Civil War, through the tumultuous 1960s and then the Cold War. Newspapers, radio, and television will be considered, as will socio-economic, racial, and gender factors. Students will gain an introductory and general understanding of the manner in which national history, current events, and technology—along with the preoccupations of groups in power (affluent white males)—has shaped the direction and contours of what is known as "national discourse." The section will conclude with consideration of televised negative "attack ads"—which (though negative attacks are as old as the country itself) have become the rule of political discourse rather than the exception.

This section will include lecture, open discussion, and video resources.

Phase 1, Part 3—Deeply Divided: The Current State of National Discourse

The class will then examine public discourse in the age of Internet. We will examine Internet-enabled media such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and blogs, as well as the "comments" section available on almost all online news/media posts for examples of political discourse. The class will also consider the sources of information that contemporary rhetors are consuming, including: television media, Internet sites, chat rooms, contemporary "pundits" and the personae they affect, and the rise of the "soundbite." Also considered will be: the manner in which "big data" curates the media that one sees on their screen, and the manner in which

individuals can control the variety of thought they are exposed to (creating or challenging so-called "echo chambers"). Activities/lessons will include:

- The class will perform close reading and viewing of rhetoric from various political media. Students will attempt to identify levels of bias, from objective to subjective. Obviously, an "objective" viewpoint is impossible, but a "scale" will be introduced nonetheless, with media that seeks to understand rather than to reinforce an already realized viewpoint situated on the "objective" side. Class discussion will focus on the nature of that attempt to understand, how much "objectivity" is actually possible, etc.

- The class will be introduced to Gottman's research on divorce, and how feelings of "disgust" and "contempt" are proven predictors of divorce, while "anger" does not necessarily predict anything. This information can be found at www.gottman.com. The class will then identify rhetoric that paints the opposition as disgusting and/or subhuman. For this, they will examine the rhetoric of nationally-televised pundits, writers with national exposure, politicians, and political ads. They will also search public discourse for sentiments of disgust, and contemplate the relationship between professional and public discourse.

- The class will perform close reading of reasonable (level-headed) argumentative rhetoric, identifying devices and contemplating why it fails to convince its supposed audience (those that disagree).

- The class will be asked to contemplate the source of feelings of contempt for their opponents. The class will discuss the line between contempt and respectful disagreement.

● The class will collaboratively create five action points they believe they can implement to make improvements to discourse in their lives after learning about public discourse and its current state. This will be put onto a poster and hung in the workshop space for students to see on a regular basis. They will also revisit and revise these action points throughout the second and third phases, ultimately arriving at a finalize version of these action points to take away when the workshop is complete.

● Video resources:

https://www.ted.com/talks/robb_willer_how_to_have_better_political_conversations

https://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_can_a_divided_america_heal

PHASE 2: Understanding How Opinions Are Morally-Based

Phase 2, Part 1 -- Understanding Our Own (and others') Morality

Phase 2 will start with students participating in an activity called "The Lifeboat." In this activity, students have to choose which people should be saved a space on a lifeboat in a sea disaster situation. There are 15 people and only 10 can fit on the lifeboat. Each person is given a short description like "A doctor. A general practitioner, he is addicted to drugs and very nervous. Age 60." Students will first create their own list of who should or should not be on the lifeboat. After completing the activity for themselves, they will get in small groups and try to come to consensus on who should and should not make it onto the lifeboat. After reaching consensus, we will discuss what this activity illuminated for students (what made each person decide on who to take, which characters were not negotiable in their eyes, etc.). This will let students begin to see how others morality may differ from their own, but that does not make them wrong.

- Example resource: http://www.takingtheescalator.com/zzzLifeboat.pdf

Phase 2, Part 2 -- "The Cave" in the Modern World

We will begin by having students read Plato's "The Allegory of the Cave." In reading this, students will see how the prisoners still in the cave could not accept the escaped prisoner's description of the world outside of the cave because it challenged their perceived "truth." Students will work in small groups to read and comprehend the text, and then we will come together as a group to discuss the significance of the story (and what the allegory is). We will brainstorm examples of where we see "the cave" today to help students begin to identify with the story (believing in Santa as a child, "the cave" in pop culture like *Toy Story*, etc.).

Phase 2, Part 3 -- Identifying and analyzing our own caves

After reading and discussing the meaning and significance of the allegory, during the next two weeks, students will begin examining their own "cave" and their beliefs. This will require students to identify an ideological belief of their own that they believe is "right." After identifying this belief, students will spend some time looking at how this belief has been formed. Students will create a visual representation of their echo chamber (their "cave") to show this--echo chambers can include parents/guardians, religious beliefs, news outlets they engage in, who (either individuals, organizations, or other sources) they follow on social media, friends, and anything else that they believe has helped them to form this opinion or belief.

After students are finished creating their caves, as a group, we will come together to establish some productive discourse norms before we move on. Knowing that they will soon be

discussing ideas and topics that they may strongly believe in but others may not, students need to decide on a guidelines that will keep their collaboration and conversations productive and uninflammatory. Some of these established rules or guidelines could be letting everyone speak before responding, asking questions to find out "why" instead of attacking or defending, actively listening, and so on. To make sure these norms are known and at the forefront of students minds', students will create a poster that will hang in the collaborative space with their agreed upon norms to hold them accountable to these actions. After establishing this framework, we will also revisit and revise the action points to make improvements to discourse in their lives that students created in phase 1. Students will be asked to revise based on the framework they created for productive discourse and their work and learnings thus far. Then, students will then get into small groups to share with one another their cave visuals and how some of their beliefs may have been formed or influenced, looking at similarities and differences they have with their peers. We will then discuss again how beliefs are formed and how, while others may have different beliefs, each person sees their own as "correct".

Students will then take their visual representation of their belief and turn it into a piece of writing. In this piece, they will begin to articulate their own perspective and belief and aim to explain WHY they believe what they do. We will reiterate that instead of trying to convince their audience to change their belief (which is not likely to happen since these beliefs are often so rooted in one's morals), it is more effective to explain why they believe what they do. With this focus, their audience can understand the morals and motivating factors behind their belief and hopefully at least gain a new understanding of a different perspective.

PHASE 3: Speak So That Others Will Hear

Phase 3, Part 1 -- Hearing (really hearing) the other side

In the first week of the final phase, students will partner with someone who has an opposing or differing belief than theirs (the one that they established in the second phase). They do not necessarily have to be exact opposites, but the two students should not completely agree on the belief. They will then have to sit down together to have a 15-20 minute discussion in which they seek clarity from the other perspective. Again, the goal of this conversation is not to persuade but to gain a better understanding of why the other person believes what he or she does. Partners should also work to explore "the gray" with each other: Where is there complexity regarding this belief? Where can they concede to the other side's points? Where can the two partners agree? Before students partner up, we will review the guidelines students established in phase 2 for productive discourse, spending time going over how to have these kinds of interactions and discussions so that they are effective and respectful. We will go over how to ask questions that seek clarity (ones that are not biased or leading) and how to avoid belittling the opposition, both explicitly or implicitly. We will also show our students the Oatmeal graphic about the backfire effect. We will use this to talk about how we may naturally want to react in anger or shut down when opinions, beliefs, and facts contradict our own. We will stress that we need to be aware of this natural reaction; we have to fight to remain open-minded and really listen to our partners to gain a new understanding and perspective on the topic.

- Online resource: http://theoatmeal.com/comics/ believe_clean

Phase 3, Part 2 -- A Walk in Their Shoes: Understanding the other side

In the following lesson, students will take what they learned from their conversation with their partner and use that information to write another piece about a belief, except this time, students will be required to embody their partner's belief and write as if they are their partner. Students should practice stepping inside their partner's shoes and thinking about how their partner views this belief. These pieces of writing should feel authentic to the partner's belief. Again, we will go over how to avoid being biased or belittling in students' writing, since the students who are writing these pieces do not agree with the position they are taking. By completing this activity, students will get experience in really examining the morality and reasoning that informs opinions against their own, which will hopefully help to build empathy, understanding, and insight for all students.

After writing from their partner's perspective, in the next lesson, students will again collaborate with their partner, this time to go through their writing to make sure they are authentically embodying their partner's views. Partners will be responsible for giving feedback as to how they can adapt and change their writing to reflect the views of "the other" without adding any condescending side remarks or other explicit or implicit ideas that would not represent their views in a realistic way. By working on this together, not only will students gain a better understanding of their partner's views and learn how to accurately represent those views, but students will be collaborating with someone else who has a different view. This collaboration in itself is beneficial because it requires students to have a discourse that is respectful and effective while still navigating topics that the participants may disagree on.

Phase 3, Part 3 -- Bringing it all together: Collaborating to use effective rhetoric

The next two lessons of phase three will require more collaboration between partners to create an end product. This product is a nuanced speech: both partners need to work together to take their topic (their belief) and what they have written about it so far and create a speech that they will present to their peers. This speech should employ effective rhetorical appeals while addressing their topic in a way that will engage as many peers as possible. This means that they will have to think about what they learned and what challenges they faced through the early stages of phase three when they had to listen to their partner's perspective and reasoning as to why he or she held that belief. What was effective? What was ineffective? What reasons or explanations did or did not resonate with both parties? Why? What appeals would be most or least effective for their diverse audience? Partners will use all of this information to create their speeches. Students will have a little bit of freedom in terms of exactly how they want to set up their speech: They can choose to each present a speech on their "side" of the belief (while still creating both speeches collaboratively) and performing the two speeches back to back, or students may choose to do one longer speech together in which they take a nuanced stance on the topic that is more of a middle ground between the two sides. Depending on how strongly the students feel about their belief, the topic, and the "gray" area that students were able to find, one style of speech may work better for certain groups.

Phase 3, Part 4 -- Listening and Reflecting: What did you hear?

The final three lessons will be the presentations of the speeches. All students will become audience members for their peers' speeches. After every pair has presented their speeches, students will write a final reflection about what they learned through this process. Things we will

want students to reflect on and address in these written reflections would be: What was the easiest part of this project? What was the hardest part? Why? What challenges, if any, did you face that were hard to overcome? What did you learn about your partner? What did you learn about "the other side"? Did your opinions or views change at all? Do you have a better understanding of "the other side"? How did you approach collaborating with your partner? How did you decide what rhetorical strategies would be most effective for your speech? What have you learned about yourself through this project? What do you want to take away from this project? What did you learn? How will you apply what you learned to your life outside of this workshop?...and any other things students find meaningful to address in relation to their work and growth through this workshop.

Phase 3, Part 5 -- Big Takeaways: Where do we go from here?

In the final lesson of the workshop, students will bring their reflections and we will have a round table discussion/Socratic seminar to facilitate a conversation about what we should all take away from the workshop and how we can improve discourse in the world today. Students' reflections will serve as notes for talking points, but the conversation will be fairly open and fluid to discuss what they want to in terms of takeaways. Before we finish the discussion, we will have students go back to their five action points they created in phase 1 (and revised in phase 2) one more time. After learning and engaging with the content over the course of the workshop, students will collaboratively make a final decision on what they believe they can implement now to make improvements to discourse in their lives.

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<p align="center">Social Media in Education and the Workforce</p>

INTRODUCTION

It is no surprise that with the increase of technology, our world is changing at a rapid rate. The way we communicate on a daily basis has evolved from only face to face interactions to emails, tweets, DMs, Facetime, Instagram and Snapchat stories, and beyond. While it is generally accepted that the younger the generation, the more adept and experienced that generation is with using these social media outlets for communication, this does not mean that individuals in said generation are adequately prepared to navigate the world of social media communication in a professional context. In order to prepare the next generation of young adults for the workforce, social media communication needs to be explicitly taught in higher education courses.

In this essay, I will explore the prevalence and current uses of social media platforms and what those uses look like in both professional and personal contexts. I will also examine the expectations both employees and employers have in regards to privacy and effective and responsible social media use. After examining the expectations of modern employers, I will explore how higher education can best prepare students for social media use in the workforce and what skills and experiences students need in order to succeed.

With the increasing use of social media both socially and professionally, it is imperative for us to examine in what ways we use social media, in what ways students need to be prepared in using social media for professional means, and how we can best prepare these students for their futures in a world that relies heavily on social media for daily communication. This will help colleges and universities to create and adapt programs to meet these changing needs of students and potential employers. Ultimately, this will ensure that the next generation of professionals will have the skills and knowledge base to make a positive impact on society, foster a sense of community through social media, and increase effective communication between different people and groups of people.

THE PREVALENCE AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media outlets are often viewed as platforms that are only used by individuals for selfish or narcissistic means (Sung). While these platforms can be used for these reasons, it has also become a cultural norm to use these platforms as a means of basic communication (McKinney). One of the most popular platforms, Facebook, is used on a daily basis by most users: "Facebook users report spending anywhere from 0 [minutes] to over 2 [hours] per day on the website, and, on average, users reported spending close to 30 [minutes] per day on Facebook" (Tazghini 10). The prominence of social media sites like Facebook in today's society has helped to change how we communicate and how we use these platforms. Not only can they be used by individuals to share memories, pictures, and events, but businesses and other professional groups can use these outlets to promote their product, gather research, and advertise as well.

According to a survey conducted by Ph.D. candidate Toni Ferro, "Our results show that the majority of knowledge workers surveyed use [publicly available online services such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Drive] for at least some part of their workweek, and this use has been true across all 4 years of our survey" (Ferro 6). The prevalence of social media is growing in professional contexts. Even in jobs that are not always immediately associated with technology and social media—jobs like teachers, designers, financial advisors, and more—use of these platforms is spreading.

Social media has transformed how people engage with others on both a personal and professional level. These platforms allow users to create and share information and resources quickly and efficiently. For example, Twitter, which is used by 23% of all internet users, can be used to facilitate an exchange of resources (McCorkle 33); one user explained how Twitter allowed him "to become an active contributor in this network of exchange…[he] would share and would retweet those links to people" (Pigg 81). The ability to so easily become an active contributor and/or facilitator in a collaborative network opens up doors of communication that were never available before. Dr. Stacey Pigg explains how social media communication allows users to "gain access to existing communities of practice, maintain a presence within them, and leverage community norms to circulate texts through them" (Pigg 81).

Pigg explains, "Social media are common places not only for creating ideas and texts but where identity and professional trajectory are continually invented—a place where [people] working outside of typical geographies could make a presence and then be found" (Pigg 84). These platforms not only allow for the sharing of information and resources, but they also allow users to establish a public identity, which can be helpful to individuals looking to attract potential

employers or sponsors and businesses trying to increase public exposure. The multifaceted use of social media is only increasing as use of these platforms increases. Pigg describes how "embodied practices are never static. The cultural contexts, writing technologies, and microlevel movements and routines of contemporary symbolic analysts are coemergent; they are evolving together, with slight shifts in each driving forward new adaptations in the others" (Pigg 84). While one may be adept in using a social media platform when it is first developed, as uses and collaborative platforms grow and change, so must the user's knowledge of the platform.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Employee Expectations

Personal knowledge and use of social media platforms can be very different than professional use. While these outlets can overlap in personal and professional use, this may not necessarily be ideal for all professionals. In her dissertation, Laura Anne Ewing describes how "[students may use] Twitter to connect with governmental agencies, specific businesses, and leaders in the ITC community through strategic tweeting. Such exercises would require students to rhetorically reflect on the selection of appropriate hashtags, and participate [in] current Twitter conversations" (Ewing 66). When using social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram for personal use, users may be less cautious in what they post; however, if they use these platforms for professional means, or there is overlap between their personal and professional accounts, users would need to be cognizant of exactly what image and content they are sharing with those who can access their account.

Patricia Sanchez Abril, explains that "findings suggest that Millennials are cognizant of their reputational vulnerability on digital media but are not willing to sacrifice Internet participation to segregate their multiple life performances" (Abril 66). If these users are aware of the vulnerability and the negative consequences they could face based on how they participate and what they engage in on social media, but they are unwilling to sacrifice involvement, it seems as though these potential employees are caught in a paradox.

Abril explains the paradox of the employee's wishes: "Employee respondents generally want privacy from unintended employer eyes, and yet they share a significant amount of personal information online, knowing it could become available to employers and others" (Abril 66). While many potential employees do not like the idea of employers being able to oversee or punish users for their personal social media content, that does not mean it does not happen. In a survey, employees were asked "about a wide range of topics related to social media, such as the extent of personal information they post online, the privacy-protective measures they employ on social media sites, their level of concern regarding their privacy online, and their attitudes and expectations regarding the use of social media in the workplace" (Abril 67). Even though employees gave their employers access to personal information by sharing and posting things online, "respondents expect that work life and private life should be generally segregated—and that actions in one domain should not affect the other" (Abril 67).

Recently, some Snapchat users have come under scrutiny for posting racially charged content; while these were on personal accounts, the users still faced consequences from schools and organizations they were affiliated with. One can only assume that the consequences would be even more severe for a user in a professional context. Ultimately, "because social media

privacy encompasses so many facets of the complex employment relationship, it is clear that there can be no one‑size‑fits‑all solution" (Abril 67). Therefore, employers and employees need to openly discuss their expectations for social media use and the consequences that could be implemented if those expectations are not met as part of the employee orientation so that both employer and employee are on the same page. Potential employees should also be taught how to effectively engage in social media practices while still upholding the integrity and values of their employers.

Employer Expectations

With this increase of social media use in professional and personal contexts, it is no surprise that employers expect potential employees to be able to navigate these platforms effectively and responsibly. Beyond being cognizant of the content that users post and the potential consequences related to posted content, employers also expect potential employees to be technologically skilled in utilizing social media outlets. According to David C. Leonard, an Assistant Dean at the Mercer University School of Engineering in Atlanta, "Even among college-age students (the traditional campus-bound learner), companies expect that their new hires will be savvy about team activities and have experience using computer-based collaborative tools" (Leonard 13). Potential employees are not only expected to be skilled and knowledgeable in their content field, but they are also expected to be able to engage in computer or social media-based practices and to collaborate using these outlets.

The number of employers looking for these skills is increasing quickly: "Job opportunities requiring social media marketing skills are on the rise (Kerpen, 2013), and those

skills were high in demand in 2013 on LinkedIn" (McCorkle 33). Social media and technical communication skills are becoming imperative for graduating students if they hope to find a job in a related field. Yet, "while many of the available jobs in technology and communications require social media skills, millennials are not adequately prepared with the professional use of social media to fill those jobs" (McCorkle 35). This discrepancy between the number of jobs available and the number of students who are prepared to take on these jobs is problematic. If students are not adequately prepared with the skill set necessary for a career, they may not be successful in finding a profession. With the increase in the demand of employers requiring these skills, it is imperative for colleges and universities to prepare students for this demand to teach the needed skills related to social media use.

TEACHING SOCIAL MEDIA

Current Curriculum Related to Social Media

It is apparent that companies and employers around the world are becoming increasingly interested in potential employees with social media and technical communication skills. While many schools are adapting to the changing modes of communication, others still have not changed their curriculum to address these new skills. Laura Anne Ewing explains that "Technical communication practitioners are using social media in the workplace and...there is an exigency for these tools in ITC. The unexpected finding is that social media are not showing up in syllabi at the level of engagement necessary to prepare students for this work" (Ewing 62). If these programs are not teaching social media-related skills, we cannot expect students to be prepared for these careers when they go out in the workforce, which could negatively impact their chances

of getting hired initially or excelling in their career after being hired. To combat this, professors

and other faculty need to address this need in their curriculum so that "the environment for

utilizing instructional learning theories and methods for effective electronic communication in

the Digital Age [parallel] the digital networked environment that our students currently or soon

will be working in" (Leonard 12).

Adapting Curriculum to Address to Social Media

Since social media is a relatively new platform, programs and curriculum that have

adapted to address the skills needed by employers are still evolving. Melody A. Bowdon claims,

"Technical communication scholars need to continue to study Twitter conversations and patterns

to learn what we can about what people are saying, how information is moving and changing,

and how these forums can be used to promote a safe and informed citizenry as well as the

objectives of corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies" (Bowdon 49). To

begin to identify these patterns, it can be as simple as having students critically examine their

own social media use. By "[encouraging] students to review their own social media practices as

individuals and perhaps those of their friends and classmates [they can begin] to consider the

ethos they portray through those posts" (Bowdon 49).

This initial engagement with social media through a more critical lens allows students to

practice using these platforms in professional ways in a very low-risk climate: "Twitter provides

a great first opportunity for marketing, advertising, journalism and communication students to

learn how to use social media for more public and professionally focused reasons (such as

personal branding), while building social media networking skills that could transfer to other

social platforms and uses" (McCorkle 41). Students can use platforms, such as Twitter, to develop their own professional voice and persona online. This gives students experience using these platforms outside of their own personal use.

Michael Alan Sacks explains the importance of bringing the study of social media and technical communication to the classroom: "Understanding how social network theory underlies social and professional networking allows students to maximize their networks while avoiding career-undermining mistakes" (Sacks 85). When students engage in these outlets in a classroom, they are doing so in a safe environment where mistakes lack the severity they do in real world contexts. By providing students with this experience during their educational career, they are able to begin developing skills employers will want to see in the future without fear of failure.

Dr. Elise Hurley argues that instructors can prepare students to engage in social media in ways that would be appropriate for professional contexts by having students critically examine best practices of rhetoric through social media: "Rather than focusing merely on integration and use, we advocate for rhetorically and critically thoughtful negotiations with social media, ones where our knowledge of rhetoric and communication as practices that are culturally negotiated might be a greater help to students' social media savvy than cautionary tales that invoke fear and assume a lack of agency on the part of users" (Hurley 66). Just hearing horror stories about how employees have lost jobs because of inappropriate social media use does not teach students how to avoid the same fate; students need to engage in social media practices and analyze best practices so that they can learn about effective social media use through their own personal experiences and interactions.

Dr. Bernadette Longo reaffirms Hurley's position that students need experience with using social media. To best accomplish this, instructors should be "establishing learning environments in which students learn from each other—as well as from people outside the classroom—[providing] opportunities for authentic learning that can prepare students for the workplaces practitioners now encounter. Using social media in classrooms, teachers can recreate professional settings in which technical communicators learn about users directly" (Longo 30-31). Not only can teachers recreate settings, situations, accounts, and identities for students to engage with and learn from through social media use, but they can also have students actively monitor and analyze their own personal use of social media. Professors can have students study what factors help to increase or decrease effective social media use through their own accounts; doing so will help students learn about best practices through experience. By providing students with ample opportunities to engage in social media practices both personally and with peers, students have a chance to develop and hone skills that will likely be expected by future employers and companies.

While some may believe that simply using social media in the classroom will prepare students for using it in the future, others argue that using and examining social media use in a traditional class structure may not always fully prepare students for using these skills in the context of future professional use. Dr. Ann M. Blakeslee corroborates this idea, stating, "Most research emphasizes the differences between classroom and workplace contexts, calling into question the ability of any classroom project to convey the rhetorical contexts and social actions of the workplace" (Blakeslee 178). If this is the case, it is understandable that some faculty members would be hesitant to incorporate social media skills into their curriculum if it ultimately

is not reflective of what students will experience in the real world. However, some professors are finding ways to make sure that students do learn these skills within a context that reflects what they may see in the workforce.

Other instructors have taken the study of social media and technical communication further by providing realistic contexts for students to engage in to develop their skills. In some institutions, "Instructors who incorporate these new skills are doing so typically through the use of supplemental sources outside of traditional textbooks...Creating projects that reflect these workplace requires some ingenuity (and may ultimately save employers from providing additional on-the-ground training)" (Ewin 63). By stepping outside of the realm of the traditional classroom, instructors are able to give students more real-life experiences using social media that will help them prepare for situations that they may encounter in their future careers.

Another approach professors are using to encourage students to learn about social media use in a professional context is collaborations with different workforces. According to Blakeslee, "Research suggests that [workforce collaborations] can be valuable experiences for our students, exposing them to the cultures and activities of the workplace and gradually introducing them to the genres that both arise from and support those cultures and activities. (Blakeslee 189). By utilizing these collaborations, students are able to experience the real world contexts they will be working in after they graduate. Not only do they get a better idea of exactly what skills they will need to know in able to complete tasks, but they are also able to learn about the climate and culture of the workforce while still having the advice, supervision, and instruction of a classroom: "These projects can also act as useful transitional experiences for our students: students can get a taste of writing practices while still having the guidance and support of their

instructor and classmates" (Blakeslee 190). This helps to prepare students even further for their future professional careers.

Social media use is a complex system for students to learn and navigate, and students should be taught to engage in the complexities that exist. Instructors should not only cover the skills necessary to best prepare students for their future careers, but they should also "encourage students to adopt a critical stance to disrupt dominant constructions of social media as either wholly illegitimate or entirely beneficial" (Hurley 66). In acknowledging the complexities that define social media and its uses, students will develop the most complete lens to determine and analyze effective and appropriate social media use in their futures.

Needed Skills Related to Social Media

With such a diverse set of uses of social media, there is an even more diverse set of skills and contexts for students to learn in order to be prepared for professional careers in related fields. Kirk St. Amant, Assistant Professor of Technical and Scientific Communication at James Madison University, shares a new context in which social media and technical communication skills are used in the workforce: "One of the most interesting and fastest growing online trends is the 'virtual office' in which individuals in different locations use electronic communication technologies to interact. In some cases, online communication technologies allow parties to meet in a virtual location in order to communicate with coworkers" (St. Amant 290).

In this context, employees would be expected to use technical communication as their only form of communication. This would require participants of this kind of collaboration to master multiple facets of digital communication, including "how people from different cultures present information visually and verbally in online interactions [and] how cultural rhetorical

differences could affect the perceptions in terms of the usefulness and the credibility of the ideas presented via online media" (St. Amant 291). Since these are not things that are inherent in many students, these are skills that would need to be specifically taught in a technical communications course.

Luckily, many of the diverse skills needed for technical communication can be used in overlapping contexts. For example, "many of the highly rated skills developed in using Twitter are important and transferrable to the use of other social media platforms and tools (such as content consumption, content curation and content creation)" (McCorkle 38). This means that although there may be some skills that need to be specifically addressed for the context, like those that would be needed for a virtual office, many jobs utilize skills that are intersectional, which would make it much easier for students to learn a base set of skills to prepare them for the workforce. This may include skills like using appropriate hashtags, creating engaging content for the intended audience, using content to reach out to new clientele, advertising and linking content to Instagram stories and posts, analyzing and reflecting on effective and ineffective strategies, and much more. Ultimately, whether or not students learn how to deal with every situation related to social media use is not necessarily important because "in real life situations it is not always possible to follow a strict methodology" (Löfstedt 312). What is important is that students have a skill set that gives them a fundamental base of knowledge to build on and the problem solving skills—skills like decision making, researching, collaborating, and looking outside of the box— to know how to progress when faced with a situation outside of their experience.

Applicable Courses for Social Media and Technical Communication

Since social media and technical communication are used in a variety of ways in a variety of contexts, it may come as no surprise that there are many different courses in which social media and technical communication can be taught. Even though social media and technical communication may seem specifically geared toward a technology-based class, as technology use spreads, social media and technical communication skills can be beneficial in general education courses by preparing students for a technological world. For example, "while it fits perfectly in a digital marketing or e-commerce course, the use of Twitter and the suggested tools can be used to support social media networking for any marketing, advertising, journalism or communications subject" (McCorkle 41). Because of its expansive nature, Twitter is used by many different people and can be embedded into many different careers. Not only can digital marketing or e-commerce related fields use it effectively, but so can other fields like journalism, advertising, education, and many more: "The great benefit of using social media in the marketing, advertising, journalism or communications classroom is that students can develop their strategies, implement them and improve from their experiences, while also developing valuable skills needed by potential employer" (McCorkle 36).

Social media can also be integrated into many business-based courses as well. Social media and technical communication skills often intersect skills needed by business students, and "the use of social media lends itself well to many of the impression management techniques that [are taught] in business communication courses, such as personal branding" (Sacks 80). In situations like these, students can build upon their skills related to appropriate and effective

social media use while still developing skills that are already traditionally taught in the school's curriculum.

CONCLUSION

As professional use of social media and technical communication continues to rise, students need to be prepared for their futures in the workforce, which means instructors and institutions need to adapt to the changing times to address the skills students will need in their future careers. As Leonard states, "The knowledge industry is changing. Unless we, within institutions of higher education, wish to become obsolete as knowledge-sharing and knowledge-dissemination vehicles, we must change too" (Leonard 17). There was once a time where the computer and all the platforms associated with it (email, internet) were new; employers wanted to hire employees that had skills in navigating these new technological platforms because that would mean greater success for the entire company. The same is true now of social media. Employers want their potential employees to be able to effectively and efficiently navigate these platforms for the benefit of the entire organization or company.

Those in positions of leadership at universities, colleges, and other learning institutions need to bring curriculum related to developing these skills in social media use to the forefront. The role of an educator is to prepare students and to give them the tools and skills necessary to be successful. It is important to remember that "[social media] is still an immature technology. Much research and development still remain to be done in areas such as safety, confidentiality, traceability and information verification" (Löfstedt 312). As our world continues to grow and change, the skills needed to be successful will change as well. We need to be willing to explicitly

address these new skills with students so that they can be as knowledgeable and prepared as

possible when they go to enter the workforce.

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