

## Creating an Abstract of Your Work

An **abstract** is a 150-200 word description of the main ideas, sources, and findings of your completed senior seminar research paper. It is a concise statement of the problem and how your research resolved it, and should include a clear statement of the paper's thesis or central argument. You can use it to submit a proposal for the Spring 2014 undergraduate research conference on our campus or elsewhere.

Here are some links for helps in writing an abstract:

From UMass Amherst – especially if you are interested in submitting your paper for the 2014 Undergraduate Research Conference (their guidelines permit up to 250 words). UMass posts its entire printed program online, which contains many examples of successful history paper abstracts. <https://www.honors.umass.edu/abstract-guidelines>

From Indiana University – yours will be more like the “indicative abstract” because it summarizes an essay you have already written. <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/abstracts.shtml>

From UNC Chapel Hill – scroll down to the section on abstracting your own writing. <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/abstracts/>

## Some Sample Humanities/Social Science Abstracts for WSU Celebration of Scholarship and Creativity

### History

#### THE GOLDEN THREAD

Tess Howard

*Faculty Adviser: Najib Saliba, Ph.D.*

This paper discusses a text fragment from the *Kitab al Hawi fi al tibb*, “The Comprehensive Book of Medicine,” written nine centuries ago. The author argues that it represents a bright and shining link between our present medical field and the past – preserving the case studies of a doctor who reliably documented the work he did the city hospitals and clinics. Such preserved documents leave us with the image of a doctor that is very familiar to us, writing about how he has treated a few patients suffering from a common human pain that even today is still no stranger to our advanced lives. Because of the efforts of al-Razi and other doctors in his time, western European nations emerged from the dark ages and reawakened their medical and scientific minds. If not for the doctors and scientists of the Arabic-speaking community in the Middle Ages, one would be hard-pressed to imagine our society as it is today with our modern hospitals, shining sterile instruments and bright lights. The page is a “golden thread” of history.

### English

#### THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS IN MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

Hannah Gunnell

*Faculty Adviser: MaryLynn Saul, Ph.D.*

One can neither fully understand nor appreciate works of medieval literature without also considering the philosophical and theological traditions on which they are grounded. An important facet of medieval theology which manifests itself frequently in the literature of the times is the query into the nature of sin, particularly the Seven Deadly Sins. This presentation focuses on the Seven Deadly Sins in the literature of the fourteenth century. It will display depictions of the various sins as they appeared in certain illuminated texts. The prominence of the Seven Deadly Sins within various works of literature will be highlighted. It

will also contain a brief historical survey of the fourteenth century and explore how the events during this time may have influenced how fascinated fourteenth century writers were with the Seven Deadly Sins.

### **Philosophy**

#### **WONDERFUL PHILOSOPHIES OF MARY SEACOLE**

Kristin Waters, Ph.D.

First-hand, personal reflections by nineteenth century Caribbean women are relatively rare. One exception is Mary Seacole's memoir, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Strange Lands* (1857), an illuminating recollection of her extraordinary life that reveals sophisticated observations about race, gender, class, and nation. This paper explores five different accounts of who Seacole is: her own, and those by Rhonda Frederick, Cheryl Fish, Jane Robinson, and a multi-faceted account from the English press (Frederick 2003, Robinson, 2004). I examine these in relation to a theoretical framework outlined in Charles Mills' essay, "But what are you really?" *Blackness visible: Essays on philosophy and race*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). Mills articulates a set of metaphysical positions which I examine in the context of studies of Seacole's identity: realism, materialist constructivism, and relativism. This essay demonstrates the importance of an objectivist metaphysics and argues that Seacole was one of the early writers to explicitly explore the power of objectivist constructivism against racial realism. Also, the reader learns more about Mary Seacole, the Jamaican hotelier and healer, and also about the ontologies of race.

### **Sociology**

#### **PROBLEMS WITH PRIVILEGING MARRIAGE IN PUBLIC POLICY\*\***

Brittany Davis

*Faculty Adviser: Fortunata Songora Makene, Ph.D.*

This paper examines a brief history of marriage, the status of marriage in America, and examines arguments towards traditional marriage. Specifically, that marriage serves a public purpose thus, government can legitimately privilege marriage. Conservative groups claims that other relationships such as cohabitation and homosexuality do not benefit children and society, and, therefore, should not be supported by government. I evaluate the claims that marriage between one man and woman is truly beneficial, including investigating the impact of keeping certain types of relationships (such as polygamy, same sex couples, and childless marriages) taboo. The Family Research Council and other groups believe heterosexual marriage is a cure-all for society's problems. However, an alternative assessment of correlations between marriage and healthier societies, involved citizens and decreased violence suggests that less stratification between social classes could provide similar benefits to society.

### **World Languages**

#### **NAFTA AND THE ZAPATISTAS**

Constanza Bartholomae

*Faculty Adviser: Guillermina Elissondo, Ph.D.*

This presentation focuses on the Zapatistas, an indigenous group from Chiapas, Mexico, that has been advocating for equal rights for almost two decades. Though the roots of the rebellion can be traced to the European invasion of the Americas when indigenous groups lost control of historic lands and were often forced into slavery, the Zapatista uprising in 1994 represented a new call for struggle and resistance. By the end of the twentieth century, indigenous communities in Chiapas lived in the most marginal and isolated condition; high levels of poverty and lack of health care and education plagued their communities. The NAFTA Treaty, signed by the United States, Canada and Mexico, furthered their marginalization, and the Zapatistas rebelled against the neoliberal model of the treaty. The presentation will also explain how social media were arguably the most important assets for the group and the internet their most effective weapon.