

Introduction:

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 21st Annual Fall 2012 English Department Senior Thesis Colloquium. The students presenting today have been working on their theses for a full year -- in ENG 480 and ENG 481, a two-semester thesis capstone course.

In the first semester students studied a branch of literary analysis known as cultural theory, or cultural studies. Each presentation you will hear today draws on cultural studies as its theoretical foundation, and if you are here at noon you will see a short video created by Kate Marshall for her midterm last Spring that provides a very nice overview of cultural theory. Which is great because it means I can keep this introduction short. (Feel free to read the introduction to the Spring 2012 Colloquium if you are reading this speech and would like more background.)

I will just say for now that cultural studies has been around for 30 years – changing the way literary scholars understand how to study texts as well as the way we understand the meaning of popular culture itself.

When they chose their topics for research, I asked each student to pick something that was extremely popular because they would learn while studying culture theory that for a text to be popular it almost always engages a set of conflicting cultural ideologies.

Over the course of two semesters the students here today learned how to dissect their favorite popular movies & television shows to discover the existence of -- and the tensions between -- these ideologies.

culture—to analyzing and critiquing it.

There will be a ten minute question and answer session at the end of each panel. Each paper will last approx 10-12 minutes. Feel free to enter or leave between presentations.

The first presentation is Kate Torres reading a selection of her thesis entitled "From Apocalyptic Realism to Utopian Idealism: Illuminating Studio Ghibli's Transnational Resonance."

Please silence your cell phones and open your minds.