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## Experiencing Fort Greene Park

Professor Jessica Rosenberg's section of Core Seminar explored Fort Greene Park on a beautiful autumn day earlier this semester. The experience, which was developed in collaboration with Professor Michael Pelias, featured reflection on the poetry of Walt Whitman and observation using all of the senses.

The following reflections were offered by some of the students who participated in the exploration.

Jean Richard Casimir began by noting, "Walt Whitman was in favor of public parks, because he thought that every big city—including Brooklyn—deserves a park to serve as a "lung" to provide for the free circulation of air."

Christine Amenta, commenting in the spirit of Whitman, noted, "When one is observing a nature setting, one cannot think or analyze it too much. Nature is what



**Students in COS 50 Section 17 spread out to explore and experience the open space in Fort Greene Park, just steps away from the Brooklyn Campus.**

it is. Observing it with an open mind and not predicting what is going to happen is the beauty of

nature. In nature, the future doesn't exist, only the present."

Matt Bullock elaborates, "Wisdom, according to Whitman, involves self-realization. The exploration of Fort Greene Park showed me that sometimes having all of the facts and answers is not enough. Taking the time to find out a little bit more about who you are and reviewing the lessons that life has taught you is the path to obtaining wisdom."

Jose Fuentes commented, "My perspective of Brooklyn changed instantly. As a native of a place where trees out-populate people, the fast and busy city life can become overwhelming. Fort Greene Park is a small sanctuary in a big borough."

## National Day on Writing

On October 20th, the Brooklyn Campus celebrated writing across the campus in honor of the National Day on Writing.

Events on campus included readings by students and faculty, discussions of careers in writing, a calligraphy demonstration, and

various opportunities to write. Students and faculty, including some from the Core Seminar Program, showcased various forms of writing in an innovative online gallery.

The National Day on Writing was sponsored by the National

Council of Teachers of English. On our campus, coordination of events was lead by Deborah Mutnick, William Burgos and Courtney Frederick.

Two of the articles on the next page of this newsletter highlight festivities of the day.

# All Aboard for the Citation Station!



Watch for this logo and stop by for help citing your sources!

By Betsy Crenshaw

The Library, Writing Center and Academic Reinforcement Center have joined together to help students struggling with citing sources and formatting bibliographies in a campaign branding all three locations as "Citation Stations."

This effort grew out of the Library's Citation Station event on the National Day on Writing and in short order became a collaborative effort.

Staff members at each location

are always ready, willing and able to answer questions regarding this ever-troubling aspect of academic writing. But all too often, students do not seek the help. Thus, we decided to highlight and augment our services in this area.

The Library has committed to staffing an additional service point during club hours each week (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:00am to 12:00pm) at least until the end of the semester.

The Writing Center and the Academic Reinforcement Center will also advertise this service more visibly in hopes of increasing student use of all three locations.

Attendants at the Citation Stations will not rewrite papers for students, but they will help them to cite or reference various kinds of sources in a variety of academic styles.

Students and faculty both are encouraged to stop by to learn how we can help!

*"In my Core Seminar class, we discuss the idea of the human and what makes one humane."*

## Online Gallery of Writing

By Alisa Davidova

Mid-semester I was given the opportunity to write a poem for the National Day on Writing in hopes of getting some extra-credit points towards my grade. At first, it seemed like an obligated chore, but then I found myself writing away.

I put all my thoughts and feelings of the moment onto a piece of paper. My writing

"Just Me" was not something I had to think about or over-analyze; it was something from the heart. It represents how my life was yesterday, how it is today, and how it will be tomorrow.

In my Core Seminar class, we discuss the idea of the human and what makes one humane. The fact that I know what I want, such as wanting to smile,

makes me human. My goal is self-actualization. Given my willpower, I will be able to accomplish this goal.

Editor's Note: To view the complete gallery, which contains pieces from many LIU students and faculty, visit <http://galleryofwriting.org/galleries/279337>.

## COS & the Halloween Parade

By Susan Baglieri

One of the highlights of the experience of my students in Core Seminar this semester was visiting the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade. This activity served as an interesting context for us to integrate our coursework from the semester.

Our theme within the Idea of the Human this semester was the adornment of the human body as it reflects our sense of what is "normal" and helps us to express identity for others to interpret. We read poetry by Langston Hughes, Pablo Neruda and others and considered John Berger's perceptions

and interpretations of landscape.

After viewing the parade, some students even chose poetry as a mode through which to engage Berger's style of observation and analysis, as well as to consider identity and the role of pretending on Halloween night.

A view of the Greenwich Village Halloween Parade.



# Masque of the Red Death



By Maksim Vak

Professor Gladys Schrynemakers and I staged a masquerade ball with our students this semester on Halloween. Students all brought masks that they had made, but were oddly afraid to don, as if doing so were a form of exposure or unmasking.

We discussed questions of human behavior in different social circumstances. Many students were surprised to recognize that in different social groups they perform different roles and don different masks, sometimes even mask themselves when they face themselves.

By degree our discussion of masking merged with a discussion of Edgar Allen Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death." We interpreted the story in view of the inevitable death that Prince Prospero tries to escape. The students were in-

trigued by death's mastery over any human contrivances to turn away from death and revealing humans' futile attempts to deceive death by the masquerade of life.

During the joint session we were able to expose the basic problems addressed in Poe's story. Our discussion invitation to think death without prejudice and fear. In subsequent discussion with students, I saw that this invitation to think was surprisingly productive, and despite the gravity of the discussed problem, cheerful.

**"Genuine reading involves a lot more than running one's eyes over words on a page or screen in hopes of absorbing information."**

## AAC&U Reading Rubric

By Alan Grose

Over the summer, I had the opportunity to participate with a team of educators from around the country in a project to develop a rubric for assessing the development of students' academic reading skills over the course of their undergraduate careers. The project was a part of the Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE)

initiative by the Association of American Colleges & Universities.

We all know that genuine reading involves a lot more than running one's eyes over words on a page or screen in the hopes of absorbing information. But articulating just how complex a skill reading is proved to be a challenging task. The rubric our team developed identifies several different compo-

nents that go into academic reading, as well as distinct levels of accomplishment with each.

The reading rubric is one of fifteen VALUE rubrics articulating expectations for the outcomes of student learning in core skills central to liberal education. More information about the project and the other rubrics can be found on the web at [www.aacu.org/value](http://www.aacu.org/value).

## Call for Student Submissions

The Core Seminar Newsletter invites submissions from students to report on their experiences in Core Seminar.

Did you have a unique experience or make a surprising discovery in the course of your inquiries in Core Seminar? If so, please share it with the rest of the Brooklyn Campus community!

Submissions might focus on your experience in any aspect of COS 50. This could include your field activities, joint sessions, research related to your seminar papers or even creative work you did in exploring the Idea of the Human or the sub-themes investigated by your class. How did that experience shape your education here on the Brooklyn Campus?

Your submission might be anywhere from 100 to 250 words. Including images related to your experiences is highly encouraged!

Please submit them either to your Instructor or directly to the Core Seminar office in the Pratt Building, Room 510.



**Try your hand at writing for The Idea of the Human!**

## COS 50 The Idea of the Human

1 University Plaza  
Pratt Building 514  
Brooklyn, NY 11201  
Phone: 718-780-4379  
Fax: 718-780-4059  
E-mail: alan.grose@brooklyn.liu.edu

**Core Seminar is a three-credit interdisciplinary course providing a common intellectual experience for undergraduate students of all disciplines. The Seminar explores what it means to be human through shared readings, discussion in the Seminar and in Joint Sessions with other sections, field explorations, and multiple forms of writing.**

**The Idea of the Human: Core Seminar News is edited by Alan Grose, Administrative Coordinator for the COS Program. We welcome submissions of ideas or notes on unique COS experiences from both faculty and students from the program.**

# COS Assessment Spotlight

The Core Seminar Program is embarking this year upon an ambitious new assessment of the portfolios of work assembled by students in COS 50. The program will use two rubrics to identify the direct evidence of student learning in two specific areas.

The first area is written communication. This is an important area, because COS 50 is the second of three writing intensive classes students take on the Brooklyn Campus. To evaluate the writing in student portfolios, we will use a rubric that is adapted from a rubric used in the English Department to evaluate writing in English 16.

The second area of student learning we will evaluate is “integrative learning.” This form of learning ranges from drawing simple, but new con-

nections between ideas and experiences to complex synthesizing and transferring of ideas in creative ways. COS 50 aims to cultivate integrative learning by drawing upon multiple sites and sources of student learning.



*Association  
of American  
Colleges and  
Universities*

**The AAC&U is a national organization that advocates for the goals and practices of liberal education.**

For this assessment, we have adopted a rubric developed by the AAC&U in its Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education project.

As an initial phase of this project, the program has revised the instructions students are given for assembling their portfolios and distributed these instructions at the beginning of the semester. In addition to assembling all of their written work for the course, students will also construct a table of contents and write a caption for each of the items in their portfolio. Students are invited to think creatively in presenting in their portfolios what they think shows the evidence of their learning.

We look forward to sharing the findings of our assessment with the Brooklyn Campus in the Fall of 2010.