

My wish to pursue a Master's Degree in English is driven by my passionate engagement with literary studies and a practical desire to teach at the community college level. The graduate program in English at CSU Sacramento will allow me to combine these two interests; I have corresponded with Davis Toise, who has informed me that I can work towards a Teaching Composition Certificate while pursuing a scholarly emphasis in literature. These compatible pursuits are my academic goal at your university.

I discovered my literary passions as an undergraduate in the English Department at UC Davis, where I have been a student for nearly two years. For my senior thesis in the Critical Honors Program, I am currently reading certain Southern modernist texts and exploring their relationship to an idealized vision of Southern white womanhood rooted in antebellum attitudes. My analysis is anchored in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, and I am also engaging with three of his short stories, as well as "Battle Royal" from Ralph Ellison.

This research follows on other projects I have completed which often revolve around literary constructions of gender and sexuality, primarily initiated from a psychosexual perspective. I am fascinated with exploring the negotiation of one's current cultural position within a literary and historical context centered in the past; I believe that gender and sexuality are fundamental concepts of identity that individuals use to socially locate themselves. I feel that these concepts provide a coherent starting point for an interrogation of individual identity as well as for culture at large. Broadly, I am motivated to discover how sexuality and gender inform literary criticism, and how these concepts operate within literary spheres.

It is through my position as a student at a community college and now at a large research institution, that I have discovered firsthand the need for quality writing instruction within all institutions of higher education. Written communication skills are necessary for collegiate success and rhetoric and writing skills are invaluable to professional advancement. While continuing my scholarly work towards a Masters degree, I also want to explore pedagogical theories about rhetoric and composition in order to further my teaching qualifications.

I have already had experience in this role at San Joaquin Delta College where I read and graded many student essays in both English and Physical Anthropology. My job was to grade papers for content, organization and clarity of communication, and I also made myself available to help students individually if they so desired. This is a role I very much enjoy, and I am intrigued with the possibility of continuing work as a teaching assistant at CSU Sacramento.

As a graduate student in English, I hope to progress in my own intellectual development through more rigorous studies and bring my passion for literature and rhetoric to undergraduates. My ultimate goal is a position as a Professor of English teaching rhetoric, writing and composition.