Three English Majors Graduate with Honors | English

05/04/2017

(L to R) Evelyn Funda, Abigail Bentley, Millie Tullis & Jennifer Sinor
(Not Pictured) Danielle Green

Millie Tullis, Danielle Green, and Abigail Bentley graduate with Honors on May 6, 2017. They received their honors medallions to wear with their academic regalia in a ceremony on Tuesday, May 2. In addition, Millie Tullis received an award for the Outstanding Capstone Project, the highest honor bestowed by the program. Students who receive honors in English have completed a rigorous set of courses, including independent study with faculty mentors, a written thesis, and a public presentation. The University Honors Program is directed by Dr. Kristine Miller, who is also Professor of English.

Millie Tullis, who was named University Undergraduate Researcher of the Year in 2016 and who delivered an IGNITE talk during Research Week in April 2017, wrote a lyric essay on Sylvia Path’s work and her own life in her thesis, “Her Body as Petals: Annotated Bibliography.” She said, “My essay explores Plath research and how, for me, it must cross into my own sexual trauma. The essay examines female identity and writing as well as how trauma affects our understanding of the past and our fractured identities.” Dr. Jennifer Sinor served as mentor. After graduation, Tullis is focusing on writing for a year. After that, she plans to attend an MFA program and a PhD program with the culminating goal of teaching creative writing at a university. “I’d like to mentor students the way I have been mentored at USU,” she said. “Doing Honors English has enhanced my undergraduate career more than I can say. I feel that my thesis is truly the culmination of all of my creative endeavors and Plath research. It has utilized all the skills my English degree has developed and refined them further.”

Danielle Green examined the critiques of escapist entertainment in post-World War II films in “Running in REM Cycles: Escapism in the French Postwar Films Le Silence de la Mer and La Vache et le Prisonnier.” She found that their directorial choices address the power and shortcomings of escapism. Dr. Brian McCuskey served as faculty mentor. Green will spend the summer working in Long Island and then move to Germany for a gap year as an English teacher before applying to programs in Cinema Studies. She said, “Honors provided me with opportunities to be creative with my undergraduate education. I was able to do projects in art despite being an English major, and I could stretch the possibilities of my projects over all the topics I wanted to study. It was great preparation for graduate school.”

Abigail Bentley focused on early American captivity narratives for her thesis, “The Revival of America’s First Genre: Exploring The Panther Narrative’s Feminist Principles in Post-Revolutionary War America.” Why did these narratives, particularly Mary Rowlandson’s story, become popular again during the American Revolution? She then connected this shift in literary interest to the proto-feminist ideas circulating during the war and before the Constitution was written. She drew on The Panther Narrative, an anonymous radical work, and Judith Sargent Murray’s “On Equality of the Sexes,” a famous proto-feminist essay that made an appeal for education equality. Faculty mentors for the thesis included Dr. Steven Shively, Dr. Keri Holt, and Dr. Evelyn Funda.