TEACHING DOCUMENTATION

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Courses Taught

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# Courses Taught

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<th>Course Name</th>
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*Team Teaching—not instructor of record.*
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Total number of students taught since Fall 2004: 1,931
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TOTAL: 298
Peer Evaluations of Teaching

Appendix B
13 October 2011

Dear Professor Thomas:

I had the pleasure of visiting Susan Andersen’s English 2630 class (Survey of American Culture) on October 12. The course, which introduces students to interdisciplinary methods of analyzing American culture, is now part of the department’s new core curriculum emphasizing the three areas of Literature, Writing, and Culture. Our English 2630 course is meant to be a thematic course focusing on American culture, and Susan has built her course on the theme of House, Home, and the American Identity. Emphasizing that the our representations of the home offer a rich site for cultural expressions of essential values and national concerns, Susan’s course, in particular, is an innovative, well-conceived course that considers American ideas of home through literature, history, popular culture, architecture, and art.

On the day I visited Susan’s class, she was focusing on the cultural transition from the 1940s, when, as a matter of patriotic duty, women were urged to leave the home in order to be “Rosie, the Riveter” to the 1950s when women were expected to return to the domestic sphere. This is an important moment in American cultural studies—one that raises issues of gender and social class, but Susan’s methods of presenting the topics were not to merely lecture about these significant cultural changes. Instead, she dramatized the transition by using documentary and television clips as well as popular songs and art of the period, in particular several Norman Rockwell paintings that are iconic portrayals of home and family. Using these items from material culture as her texts for the day, Susan did an admirable job of leading the students through a discussion of how they evidenced gender roles, attitudes about the nuclear family during the threat of the nuclear age, the dual pressures of consumerism (especially in regards to the house and home), and conformity (students discussed how “home” provided an vision of safety through conformity, and the class rightly questioned the sustainability of that ideal in a multi-cultural world). In keeping with the goals and objectives of the course itself, Susan did a good job of expanding students’ notions of how we “read” culture. Discussion of The Donna Reed Show was paired with historical statistics about the average income and housing costs to give a broad view of what our culture valued during the period. It was clear to me that Susan’s students understood these concepts, especially within the arc of what they had been previously studying; they had just finished the 1925 novel The Professor’s House by Cather, and they would be discussing 1950s architectural styles like the ranch-house and the post-war building boom in the suburbs during their next class.
Students very obviously like Susan. When she asked them to do a short free-writing assignment of analyzing the Rockwell paintings in preparation for discussion, the students uniformly got out their pens and set to work. I could tell they felt comfortable sharing relevant stories with the class, and that demonstrates an atmosphere of trust. In the class period I visited, she was approachable, funny, and encouraging, most notably without ever losing a level of rigor or control of the class. She maintains a professional persona without sacrificing her philosophical belief that a large part of teaching is mentoring students.

This was especially apparent as Susan often offered asides to the students during their discussion, telling them “This would make a great final research project.... We have archival materials in our library that could be used to research this, and I can help you find them, if you’re interested.” I spoke to Susan about these research projects after the class, and she told me about some of the exciting projects that former students had completed during earlier semesters (e.g., an analysis of the complexities of recipes from 1950 versus those from 2000 and an analysis of how women were portrayed in Better Homes and Gardens from the 1940s). These are exciting learning opportunities for students to analyze primary materials and examine them through a “cultural studies” lens, which is precisely what English 2630 is supposed to do.

In sum, the class period I visited was a good indication of Susan’s talent as a teacher. She has worked hard to create and interesting and innovative curriculum, and the students are obviously responding to the course.

Sincerely,

Evelyn I. Funda
Associate Professor of English
Director of Graduate Studies, English
Observation of Susan Andersen’s Teaching

One of the most rewarding aspects of being a senior member of an organization is to have the chance to watch the junior members develop and grow. I’m particularly grateful to have had that opportunity with Susan Andersen. I observed Susan teach English 2010-Intermediate Writing in 2002 and 2003. So when I visited her English 2630-Survey of American Culture class on 10/7/11, I was sure of a few things I would see and wondered about others.

I knew Susan’s students would love her. Everybody does. Her warmth, compassion, and empathy tame even the most savage student beast. So it was in 2002; so it is in 2011. Students take the class seriously in part because they’re so fond of Susan and want to please her. They had some fairly sophisticated discussions as Susan challenged them with Marcel Duchamp’s “Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2” and asked them how it related to Willa Cather’s The Professor’s House. They didn’t understand the connection at first, but they had enough faith in Susan to play along until they understood what she was trying to get them to see.

One of my questions was about the dark side of Susan’s warmth—an inability to say no, to quiet the rowdy, to end a discussion or turn it back to the point. In Susan’s early years, students would occasionally critique her for discussions that went on too long or seemed pointless. When I observed Susan’s classes, though I praised the atmosphere, I wasn’t always sure that Susan was helping students make all the important connections. And the way she presented herself didn’t help: her self-deprecation threatened at times to undermine the classroom authority that her students were glad to grant her.

Since those visits, Susan has become a lecturer and perhaps the English department’s most versatile teacher. (She has taught more different courses than I have at USU, and I consider myself the department’s utility infielder.) The lack of self-confidence that led to uncertainty in the classroom is gone. Susan moves through the material with firm control and perfect timing. Early in the class period, she shushed the table behind me by pointing at them and asking them to stop their chattering, then moved on so quickly it almost seemed as though she hadn’t said it. There are no more cross-conversations, no meandering discussions, no students taking advantage of a forgiving teacher.

The novice who once neglected to make important connections in her classes is now a master teacher who focuses on the interrelationships among the different materials she is teaching. She showed the Duchamp and a Vermeer that Cather was fond of and had students brainstorm and then discuss the relationship of the paintings to the novel. As students described their reaction to the Duchamp painting, she wrote on the board words that students brought up like “fragmented,” then went on to help students see the same kind of fragmentation in the text. Soon she had two columns of terms on
the board, terms that students used to describe the painting but that in fact described the art and literature of the post-World War I U.S.

Although I knew nothing about the class before my visit, I could see Susan building on a theme of dwellings and place, as she showed pictures of the Mesa Verde ruins that Cather visited and reminded students of Cather’s fascination with building a home that fit into nature without extravagance. Students wound up talking about the values that they saw in the book and how money was less important to Cather than art and nature.

Susan’s timing seemed perfect, and she was in control of the material at all times. She could still speak more loudly and forcefully at times, and students can always use more transitional connection between activities. But overall it was a thoroughly professional class that used a variety of pedagogical approaches to appeal to different student learning styles and assured that students saw the particular piece under study in the context of American history and culture of the same period. Without giving up any of the strengths she initially brought to teaching, Susan has lost a novice’s uncertainty. She now relies on her intelligence and cultural knowledge more than her warmth. The atmosphere is as friendly as ever, but now the intellectual content of the class is as strong as the personal bonds that Susan develops. It was a thoroughly impressive class.

Brock Dethier
10/10/11
November 7, 2011

To: Members of Susan Andersen’s Promotion Committee

From: Steven Shively

Re: Class observation

On October 24, 2011, I had the pleasure of observing Susan Andersen teach her ENGL 2630 Survey of American Culture class. The class was well-planned and well-executed; Susan’s good humor, her concern for her students, and her commitment to making the time meaningful meant that this was an enriching experience for her students and for me.

One important reason the class was so successful is that Susan has worked hard to put this course together. She identified a theme—homes and housing—and then put in much time crafting the course into a meaningful experience. She was cognizant of the important place this course holds in the new English Department curriculum, and she also made sure that it is truly a course in cultural studies rather than a literature course. The result of Susan’s work is a course that fully meets the department’s expectations while serving student needs and interests. I doubt many of our tenure-track faculty would have done as well.

The particular class session I observed was devoted to the important topic of aesthetics, in particular, beauty versus functionality in buildings. The variety of instructional input was fantastic: readings, a personal story from Susan, student anecdotes, photographs, a film clip, and lists on the white board. Such variety makes for a well-paced and stimulating class, and it also helps Susan reach students who have varied learning styles, an approach that is especially appropriate for an exploratory course. Significantly, Susan’s method is firmly grounded in an American Studies approach as she explores interdisciplinary aspects of the topic (in this case, sculpture, architecture, religion, furniture, etc.) as she opens her students to a wide range of nontraditional source material.

Susan’s teaching style, her teacher’s personality, adds a great deal to her class. Her delivery is animated and friendly as she laughs and gestures while moving around the space. The fact that she genuinely likes her students is obvious, and the students reciprocate her friendliness. Susan regularly offers reminders and asks questions to verify that students are following the lesson. She blends lecture (and various forms of giving information) well with discussion and student viewpoints. Some of this seems natural for Susan, simply her way of doing business in the classroom, but sometimes I believe it is carefully planned—her orchestrated use of small groups, for example.

Susan is an accomplished teacher and doesn’t need my advice, but I’ll offer a couple of thoughts she may wish to consider. It seemed to me that her confidence lapsed at times, especially at the
beginning of class when she introduced this theory-based lesson. Not surprisingly, she seemed uneasy about basing a class on theory, and she seemed leery about how the students would respond. In truth, her worries were unfounded—the lesson was interesting and rich, and students responded well. A more confident beginning might have helped students warm up more quickly to the lesson, and it might make students less anxious about theory. My other recommendation is simply that Susan get a watch or some method of easily telling time; on occasion she had to ask students what time it was.

This class was full of the things that make up a good class: a well-prepared teacher, stimulating and varied instructional materials, students actively participating in the learning process, and more. The students are fortunate to have Susan Andersen as their instructor, and the English Department is fortunate to have her among us.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Steven B. Shively
Associate Professor
(435) 797-0235
steve.shively@usu.edu
28 September 2011

Attn: Dr. Jeannie Thomas, English Department Head
Re: Susan Andersen, teaching observation

I have worked closely with Susan Andersen for a decade as colleagues in the department. She has always been a force of goodwill and generosity, most especially to the undergraduates she teaches and to the graduate students she has mentored as Assistant Director of the Writing Program and in the Writing Center.

Recently, I had the pleasure of observing Susan first-hand at work in her English 2630 (Survey of American Culture) class.

It’s clear that Susan is a teacher who comes carefully prepared to the classroom. Well before class started, she had thought-provoking questions written on the board for students to consider. It quickly became evident that she had drawn up a purposeful lesson plan, for which she had brought to class supplemental materials, including a book of Mary Cassat paintings and a photo of the Dr. Pierce’s Women’s Tonic barn outside Logan. Not only did the use of these images heighten student interest, they helped immensely to illustrate the historical context of gender roles as background to the short story she was teaching that day, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “Yellow Wallpaper,” published in 1892.

Susan is at ease in the classroom, partly, I think, because she sees the students as more than students. She talks with them as though they are kindred spirits who love the material as much as she does. She effortlessly knows her students by name and doesn’t lord over them her knowledge and understanding, but instead invites them to share in the excitement of it with her. When they asked for additional samples of a writing assignment they’re working on, she didn’t hesitate to commit to providing sample papers for them to review. Susan is as magnanimous as she is attentive, and her students seem to recognize and appreciate it.

Susan began her class briefly reviewing the discussion from the previous class and then slid seamlessly into the lecture for the day as though the material were one continuous tract. I imagine that this helps students recognize how history ebbs and flows from one cultural construct to the next, how the way they see the world today is not merely happenstance, but a series of notions that build upon one another, how threads from the past still manifest themselves today. In listening to Susan teach a story more than a century old, the story felt suddenly as present as the barn that still stands on the
highway. To end the class, Susan pointed to the next reading and writing assignments as a further continuation of what they had been discussing.

Susan’s class was evenly balanced between lecture and discussion. Using the questions from the board, she divided the class into small groups and assigned each group a question to discuss among themselves. While they worked in groups, Susan wandered the room and naturally eased herself into each of the groups, briefly nudging them forward in their discussion before moving on to another group. She then had each group share their responses to the questions with the whole class.

Susan let the students take ownership of the classroom and speak, and then probed with additional questions to encourage deeper thinking on the matter. Even when students couldn't always further their thinking, Susan validated their thoughts with warmth and encouragement, and would connect their ideas to the larger issues at play. She often added insights of her own to supplement the discussion. In all, it was a very effective strategy to encourage student confidence, to develop critical thinking skills, and to further the theme of the lecture.

Let me just add that I've studied “Yellow Wallpaper” and taught it several times in my own classes, but I left Susan’s class with a new appreciation for the story—for its historical context, for its relevance to gender roles even today, and for Gilman’s ability as a writer.

Susan is a consummate teacher and mentor. It’s clear she has the confidence of her students, and their adoration. It’s a privilege to see such a teacher at work.

Best Regards,

John Engler
Senior Lecturer of English
Star Coulbrooke  
USU Writing Center Director  
3200 Old Main Hill  
Logan UT 84332-3200  
(435) 797-3853 or (435) 770-8217

Re: Letter of Support for Susan B. Andersen

October 4, 2011

One of the most fortuitous events of my writing center career occurred in January of 2008, when I had been promoted to director and was looking for candidates to fill the recently-vacated position of assistant director. I ran into Susan Andersen, a long-admired colleague of mine, at the local grocery store. Susan was assistant director of the intermediate writing program at the time, so I thought she might have some good recommendations for the WC-position. When I asked her if she knew of any qualified individuals, she hesitated, and then said, with a big smile, “What about me?”

I was flabbergasted. Flattered. Delighted! “You mean it?” Yes, she did. She said she had been thinking of making a change and had always appreciated what we do in the Center. I couldn’t believe my luck. I had not considered Susan because she was obviously happy with her teaching load and good at her job as AD in the writing program. She was one of our best and busiest lecturers. I never imagined she would want to add the USU Writing Center to her already-packed schedule.

Susan was the favorite student of every professor in the course of her studies at USU. (When Professor Emeritus Willis Pitkin heard she was going to be the assistant director, he made a special trip to the Center to congratulate her—and me, for choosing her). With Susan’s track record as favorite-student and respected scholar, she was first-pick for a graduate instructorship in the Department of English. Since acquiring her Master’s degree, Susan has taught hundreds of students who have admired and appreciated her in a large variety of classes. She says yes to opportunities others might pass-up because of the extra work involved. She’s been a shining example of how to serve graciously and well, as committee-member, panelist, judge, advisor, officer, assistant, chair, facilitator, collaborator, and associate, with or without proper compensation.

It was obvious to me, from the beginning of Susan’s work in the USU Writing Center, that she was more than an assistant to the director. She is truly my associate, participating in the decisions and obligations of our busy Center; observing and mentoring dozens of tutors every semester; acting as advocate and liaison among students, staff, faculty, and administration; helping teach the graduate seminar and undergraduate practicum classes for new tutors; helping to conduct staff meetings, while taking extensive notes for our archive; e-mailing notes and memos to the staff; and overseeing the many projects and internships in which tutors participate every semester. Susan is my right hand. I am advocating for her to be promoted in compensation as well as title.
Susan’s volunteer-spirit and her notoriety as a favorite teacher of large classes, such as Connections, and small classes, capped for personalized writing-instruction, as well as Honors classes and theme-based literature classes, have made her invaluable to our tutor-hiring process. She knows most of the applicants we interview and can give me insight on how they will work out for us. She is gracious to all, whether they end up tutoring here or not. She provides honest, positive feedback on the tutoring sessions she observes, working from tutor-strengths and giving tutors the incentive to make their own goals for improvement. For these reasons and more, I can’t imagine how I could do without her.

I hope this letter of support helps Susan attain promotion to Senior Lecturer.

Sincerely,

Star Coulbrooke

Star Coulbrooke
January 29, 2006

Dear Brock:

I am writing to recommend Susan Andersen as Acting Director of English 2010 next year. As a graduate instructor and lecturer at Utah State University, I’ve worked with Susan for four years. During that time, Susan’s enthusiasm for her job and her dedication to her students have set her apart as a co-worker and teacher.

Susan is passionate about teaching and working in the English Department. She develops strong relationships with her students and co-workers—she learns her students’ names and still remembers that I was a cheerleader in high school and what I wrote my thesis about. Whenever I talk to Susan, I’m impressed to find out about classes she’s substituting for professors, articles she’s publishing, and meetings she’s organizing. As English 2010 Assistant Director, Susan made a point of inviting new and old composition instructors to go to her with questions and problems. And, at the beginning of the semester, I can count on Susan asking me, and every other English 2010 instructor, about my classes and then really listening to how I think they’re going. If you polled everyone on the fourth floor of Ray B. West, we’d all agree that Susan’s enthusiasm creates an easier place to work and makes us all want to be better teachers.

Susan also has a reputation among lecturers and graduate students for spending extra time helping students succeed in her classes. More than any other composition instructor I know, Susan works to develop classroom activities that encourage her students to share ideas and look at writing differently—I’ve seen her carrying art books and music to class to introduce new writing techniques or help students choose research topics. She also assigns group work and provides opportunities for students to workshop their writing in class. Because Susan’s office is right down the hall from mine, I often see her conferencing with students about assignments, sometimes after her office hours are over. Last semester I even heard her suggesting ways for overcoming writer’s block to a frustrated student. The time and effort Susan puts into preparing her classes and helping her students make her a teacher all of the lecturers and graduate students admire and want to emulate.

I highly recommend Susan as Acting Director of English 2010. I know she would approach the job with the same enthusiasm and dedication that characterizes all of her work in the English Department.

Sincerely,

Nikki Eyre
Mentoring Students

Appendix C
MENTORING STUDENTS

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SUMMARY STATEMENT

I was honored to serve as a faculty mentor for Trent Olsen, who was awarded HASS undergraduate researcher of the year and is now in a PhD program. Trent’s project, “Social Barriers to Intercultural Romance in Henry James’s Daisy Miller: A Study” was featured in “Posters on the Hill” and the magazine Research on Capitol Hill. Included here is Olsen’s poster.

Included here are letters from Graduate Instructors in the Writing Program, whom I have mentored, some since entry in the English major; and a letter from a reluctant Mathematics major who was enrolled in my English 2010 Honors course.
Social Barriers to Intercultural Romance in Henry James's *Daisy Miller: A Study*

The Gilded Age was a time of dramatic social change as well as unprecedented economic growth in American history. One important social outcome of the era was the interaction between the self-made "new money" of the United States and the aristocratic inherited "old money," centered primarily in Europe. This conflict among the upper class was particularly manifest in regard to courtship and marriage. My research examines Henry James's portrayal of romantic relationships across cultural boundaries in *Daisy Miller: A Study* (1878). I specifically analyze the relationship of the characters Mr. Winterbourne and Daisy Miller, and the social forces that prohibit its fruition, in context of the intersection of the traditionally political and economic concept of marriage and the ideal of romantic love in popular American culture. My study further explores James's depiction of this social discord in light of the union of two of his contemporaries: American Jennie Jerome and England's Lord Randolph Churchill. James's own life and scholarship provide additional insight to my analysis.
Social Barriers to Intercultural Romantic Relationships in
Henry James’s *Daisy Miller*

Trent Olsen, Undergraduate Researcher
Christine Cooper-Rompato, Faculty Mentor
Susan Andersen, Faculty Mentor

Department of English, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Abstract

The late nineteenth century was a time of dramatic social change and unprecedented economic growth in American history. One important social outcome of the era was the conflict between the self-made “new money” of the United States and the aristocratic, inherited “old money” of Europe. As the American merchant class attempted to enter the highest social circles of the Old World, the European aristocracy feared a shift in power and sought to bar them from their privileged society. This social battle among the upper classes was particularly intense in regard to courtship and marriage. My research examines Henry James’s portrayal of cross-cultural romantic relationships in *Daisy Miller* (1878). More specifically, I explore the relationship between the characters Frederick Winterbourne and Daisy Miller and the social forces that hinder their romance, preventing potential marriage. My study compares the much contested union of two of James’s contemporaries, American Jennie Jerome and England’s Lord Randolph Churchill, with the controversial relationship depicted in the novel. This comparison confirms James’s portrayal of the stark reality of the social forces working against cross-cultural romantic relationships. My examination of this historical case also provides insight into the intersection of the traditionally political and economic concept of marriage entrenched in England and the period’s newly emerging ideal of romantic love made popular in American culture.

Evidence of the intersection of the new and old forms of marriage are evident both in James’s novel and in the union of Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie Jerome. This high-profile marriage occurred just four years before the publication of *Daisy Miller* and would have undoubtedly been familiar to James, who personally knew some of Churchill’s family members. The marriage likely served as a model for Daisy and Winterbourne.

**Literary Characters: Daisy Miller and Frederick Winterbourne**

- Daisy: The daughter of a successful New York financier, represents the American “new money.” Winterbourne: a wealthy expatriate, has assimilated into the high social circles of the Old World.

- Winterbourne and Daisy: no proper introduction. After three days, he “could have believed he was going to elope with her” (483). Daisy “would have reciprocated his affection” but is prevented by powerful cultural forces working against their union (596).

- Winterbourne’s Aunt, Mrs. Costello, “a widow with a fortune and a person of much distinction,” act as a parental figure to her nephew (476) and refuses to meet Daisy or her family, saying, “They are very common. They are the sort of Americans that one does not like” (476). Effectively preventing any possible marriage (476).

- “Daisy’s mother is persevering and indifferent of her daughter’s behavior and choice of companions.” Winterbourne: “This is a very different type of matrimony from the high-born marriages of the European peerage society” (481). The European aristocrats condemn Mrs. Miller’s perseveriness, ostracizing Daisy and her family on moral grounds.

**Historical Figures: Jennie Jerome and Lord Randolph Churchill**

- Jennie Jerome: also the daughter of a New York investor received her education in Europe. Churchill: Son of the seventh Duke of Marlborough, represented the “old money” and entrenched nobility of Europe.

- Lord Randolph Churchill and Jennie Jerome: Unlike Daisy and Winterbourne, the two were formally introduced. Falling instantly in love, Jerome accepted Lord Rondolph’s marriage proposal three days later.

- The Churchills strongly opposed the marriage. The Duke stated, “An American connection is not one that we would like…you must allow that it is a slightly coming down in pride for us to contemplate” (Martin 66-7). Their conspicuous absence at the wedding signaled their ostracism of their new daughter-in-law, whom they would never fully accept.

- The Jennie ensured that the marriage would be a success. They were received with much social and economic benefits of companionship.

**Social Context**

The European gentile society, represented by eminent historian Francis Parkman, called for “an alliance of the educated and cultured…to beat back the menace of greedy and irresponsible crowds of barbary ready to overwhelm us” (p. 154). They saw American industrialists as the enemy and tried to maintain their superiority by strict control over courtship and marriage. Daisy Miller portrays the intersection of the new and old forms of marriage through Daisy and Winterbourne.

**Old Marriage**

- “Marrying Up” is most important
- Marriage is a personal decision
- Focus is on exchange of social and economic capital between two parties

**New Marriage**

- Marrying for love is most important
- Marriage is a personal decision
- Focus is on the personal benefits of companionship

**Cultural Distance and Conclusion**

- Cultural differences between Daisy and Winterbourne: vernacular, knowledge, and social behavior.
- Daisy’s constant emphasis of her family’s wealth and extravagant reflect an attempt to emulate and appease the upper classes.
- Daisy’s ironic imitation of the aristocracy: “I’m dying to be exalted myself. Well, we are exclusive—no, we don’t speak to anyone—a girl who is not a lady. I suppose it’s the same thing” (476).
- Winterbourne (meaning foreign) stands out in the novel’s distinctive Daisy and the aristocracy. He ultimately is left high and dry.
- Winterbourne: "It makes very little difference whether [Daisy is] not," Daisy’s reply: She does not care “whether she gets Roman love” (504).
- In a sense it is Winterbourne’s choice of the aristocratic society or that cuts her off from his social circle and drives her to her death.
- This literary-historical study of cross-cultural interaction in the eighteenth century provides important insight into our society today.

**Atitudes of National Superiority**

James portrays the ethnocentric attitudes of national superiority prevalent at the time as an important factor working against Winterbourne’s and relationship.

- Jennie Jerome: “In England then, the American woman was looked strange and abnormal creature” (Qtd. in Martin 53).
- James emphasizes ethnocentric attitudes—Randolph Miller and W. A. American lady is the best candy and American men are the best friends.
- Giovanni is described as a “third-class Italian” and ironically has been described as “foreigner” in his own country (492).
- James reinforces prejudice in his portrayal. Giovanni abandon his girlfriend causing her death, selfishly lamenting the fact that she would have married him.
- The crossed the English and American collodial language popularized by Mark Twain and attacked the natives with their improper speech patterns on a speaking tour in the United States.
September 30, 2011

Re: Letter of Support for Susan Andersen

I would like to share my experience with Susan Andersen during the past six years. After being away from college for nearly thirty years, I came to USU as a fifty-year-old re-entry student with only an associate’s degree in the summer of 2005 and began work toward a bachelor’s degree with two week-long folklore seminar courses. In the fall of that year, I registered for my first regular semester-long courses, and met Susan in the English Orientation (1110) course she taught. Susan reached out to me and to all the students in a positive and friendly manner. Her passion and excitement for English in general and for the USU department in particular was contagious. She made us feel welcome as she gave us an over-view of the three available emphases and invited several of the professors to present to the class. For me, these presentations were extremely helpful—they gave me a taste of some of the passionate professors and helped me chart my work. For example, I knew right away that I wanted to take courses from Phebe Jensen and Melody Graulich because they were excited, passionate, and interesting in the brief moments during orientation. Ever willing to answer questions and help us in any and every way, Susan and her course gave me a very favorable first impression of the entire department. She helped to ease my fears about coming back to school, which was no small feat because I felt terrified, wondering if I had any viable mental powers left after being away from the academic world for so long. From that first class, whenever I met Susan on campus, in the English building, or in the community, she remembered me by name and always asked how things were going, and if there was anything she could do to help me.

In the following fall (2006) I registered for English 2170, Survey of American Literature from 1865 to the Present, another course Susan taught. A fellow re-entry student, Sheryl Anderson and I enjoyed this course together, and we still comment now and then over Facebook about issues that we discussed and learned about in this class—among them the role of women in the late 1800s to early 1900s, a notion I am currently writing about in my master’s thesis, and a subject that I first became aware of in this course. Susan created an atmosphere in her class of safety and open discussion, where students could think out loud without fear of judgment or put-down. This kind of open acceptance allowed discussion to ignite and explode. Students knew that Susan and fellow classmates would take what was of worth and add to it, allowing lesser notions to fall away unnoticed. This kind of teaching opens the world up to students and creates passionate learners.
Along the way to my eventual graduation in 2009, two people encouraged me to continue on into the master’s program: Evelyn Funda and Susan Andersen, who opened my mind to the idea of continuing my education—something I had never even considered before, and who gave me ongoing support. Evelyn first brought the possibility to my attention, and Susan could speak first-hand of her experience in USU’s program and answer my questions and self-doubts, especially when it came to the required GRE or MAT exam. She helped me have the courage to apply to the program, to continue.

When Utah State’s American Studies Master’s Program accepted me and offered me a graduate instructorship, Susan became my official mentor. As I struggled to make the leap from student to teacher, she consistently helped me with samples of her syllabi, lesson plans, student-written examples of essays, and just by being there. Susan met with me on several occasions to answer questions and listen to my failures and successes; she initiated email correspondence and always responded quickly to my email questions and concerns. Whenever I saw her, she gave me an emotional boost. Susan helped me feel that I could be successful, that I wasn’t just a phony, only pretending to teach, (a notion that I think all GI instructors feel, at least for a little while) and she offered me acceptance as a colleague, not just a prior student. Because of Susan’s mentoring, I was able to become a strong teacher, with evaluations for quality of course in the 5.3-5.4 range (when the department was 5.2, the college was 5.1, and the university was 5.1.) My evaluations for effectiveness of instructor ran from 5.4 – 5.5 (when the department was 5.3, the college was 5.1-5.2, and the university was 5.1.)

Last year a position opened to work with Susan in the 2010 writing program for Voices. Excited for the opportunity to work with her more closely, I applied and was given the chance to learn even more from Susan. She continued to mentor me through the process of planning, coordinating, and building the structure and program that culminates in Voices. She showed me the process of producing and editing a publication, something I had never done before. She helped me understand the program and has been open and supportive to my ideas to tweak, and hopefully improve, the way Voices works. Largely because of her influence, I was awarded the English department’s Graduate Instructor of the Year award at the end of 2010.

Based on my experience over the course of several years and changes in our professional and day-to-day relationships, Susan is a great example of ongoing nurturing, mentoring, and support of students, and she is well-deserving of a promotion in her career path.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Bonnie Moore
Graduate Instructor
730 E 2160 N
Logan, UT 84341

435-787-0847
Kelli Towers  
January 30, 2006

To whom it may concern:

Over the last semester as I have worked with Susan Andersen, I have been impressed with both her personable manner and efficient direction as assistant director of English 2010. With the director's position opening up, I would like to recommend her for that role; not only is she capable of completing the responsibilities of the job, but she is also just the right personality.

First and foremost, it is clear to me that Susan values her students. I modeled my syllabus for English 2010 off of hers, and not just because it was readily available. I appreciated her humane approach to writing, and to teaching writing. To her it seemed that the desires of the people behind the writing were as important as good organizations and sentence structure. She genuinely set out to help her students discover and articulate ideas that were important to *them*. I could discern that through her statement of course objectives, and the setup and description of assignments, many of which challenged students to look inward and discover what they value and desire. I appreciated that aspect of her organization, and have tried to emulate it in my own teaching.

But Susan also values us, her English 2010 underlings. Being new to English 2010 this year, I was a little nervous about forming my own curriculum and teaching new material. However, Susan made herself so available for class visits and observations, and provided such nurturing feedback after them, that I felt completely encouraged and validated in my efforts. I always knew I was welcome in her office if I ever had questions, and she often made it a point to stop in to our offices when passing by just to see how we were doing, and to offer any help.

I honestly have no reservations in recommending Susan for the 2010 director's position. She seems to have just the qualities a director ought to have: a dedication to writing and its potential to elevate and empower students, and a dedication to supporting and serving the people she directs. I hope you will consider her as worthy a candidate as I do.

Sincerely,

Kelli Towers
October 4, 2011

Re: Susan Andersen as mentor

Susan Andersen has been part of my education at Utah State University from my first orientation course as an undergraduate English student. Her friendly demeanor drew me in as a student. At the time I only intended on teaching high school English, but she emphasized keeping my options open for my future career.

As a senior I came in contact with Susan again, this time through my position as a tutor in the Writing Center. Her encouragement from earlier was now applicable. I was looking toward graduate school at Utah State. She was one of the only supporters of my decision to attend Utah State for my Master’s in English and spent much time helping me think through the possibilities of the future. Her dedication to teaching and Writing Center research were part of the inspiration for my position as the Apprentice Director of the Writing Center.

Now, as a graduate student, I continue to work with Susan through that position. She is able to take my small ideas and turn them into realistic applications for the Writing Center. For example, she gave me the task of analyzing other Writing Centers’ student surveys. This task inspired the idea for the exit survey pilot we have currently. Not only does Susan give me the chance to grow as a researcher, she is kind enough to give me much of the spotlight. We look forward to presenting our findings together at a national conference, just another way she continues to foster my growth while contributing to Writing Center scholarship.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Amber Bowden
Morgan Summers had this to say to students about taking English 2010H:

"To all those who are even a little apprehensive about having to take English 2010—I'm talking to you. Why? I was one of you. I was so apprehensive, in fact, some thought it would be best for me to talk to someone in the counseling department about my anxieties over taking an English class. I am here to tell you this: I survived English 2010. In fact, English 2010 may have been one of the best classes I have taken here in terms of opportunities it has opened up for me.

"I am a Mathematics Education major—about as far from having anything to do with English as you can get. I didn't think I really needed an English class. As it is a University requirement, I reluctantly signed up for an Honors section of the class. The class ended up being a specially themed section—Latino contributions to US culture. For the final research paper, I wanted to tie this theme in with my major course of study. I ended up writing a paper entitled: "When are we ever going to need to use this?" A look at why mathematics is important—especially to the Latino population. Simultaneously, I was working on my departmental plan of study for my Honors Inquiry class. I met with my advisor, who suggested I meet with a specific professor in the Math department to talk about possible research opportunities. I made the appointment thinking, "I'm a math ed major, there probably isn't really any research I can do." In this meeting, we discussed my recent paper and the fact that there was a College of Science Minigrant available, but the application and proposal were due the following week. I took several of my ideas from my research paper, and wrote a proposal. I ended up receiving the grant and have begun the research process. I have also developed my outline for my Honors Senior Project—also sparked by that same research paper. This research opportunity is HUGE for me, and is opening up so many doors and windows to more opportunities. This is all happening because of that dang English 2010 class that I was so reluctant and apprehensive to take.

"As I am getting further along in my program, and working more on my research, I am realizing more and more that the lessons learned from English 2010 have completely become integrated into my life. I am not only working on the research end of things, but also applying lessons elsewhere such as taking lessons learned about rhetoric and how to compose an argument, and using them as I write answers to homework questions in math classes in which I am required to write my thoughts, and WHY I am taking certain steps, and performing calculations, and why that is a correct approach. English 2010 has, so far, contributed more to my overall education here at Utah State, than any other single class I have taken."
Email from Morgan Summers

October 1, 2011

I am currently in my first semester as a graduate student at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. I am expected to receive my M.A. Spring 2013. I am studying Organizational and Professional Communications Development. (It's in the Department of Communication Studies) I was able to receive a full assistantship. As such, I teach one lab section of COMM 210--Foundations of Public Speaking, and also serve as one of two graduate assistant coaches for our competitive Debate Team--which has won 8 out of the last 9 National NEDA titles (NEDA=National Educational Debate Association). In fact, I will be traveling to Columbus, OH next weekend to help coach our team at a tournament at Capital University.

In part because of your attitudes in class helping me to overcome my fear of academic writing, I am choosing to write a thesis instead of taking comprehensive exams for graduation. Though my plans may change, as of right now, I am considering the possibility of going on to obtain a Ph.D. in Instructional Communication--blending my mathematics education and communications backgrounds. I am absolutely loving my graduate work. I have writing assignments due almost weekly, and the thought of completing them no longer scares me like it once did. I am thriving in the world of academia. I was recently entrusted by my supervisor and professor, Dr. Katherine Denker, to write, compile, and submit a graduate student panel proposal to the Central States Communication Association convention, where we chose to submit it to the general Communication Education division, instead of the graduate caucus. This means my proposal will be up against those written by PhD's. She asked me over my second-year peers, since she knew I was "competent and capable."

Thanks so much again! Crazy how time flies! Wasn't I JUST a freshman in your class?!?!?

If I can be of any help, please let me know! I'd be happy to do whatever!

Morgan

--
Morgan Summers
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