

Capstone Proposal

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Advisor: Alexa Dunn

Throughout my SLA experience I have been exposed to a variety of ways to communicate information. The use of playwriting as a medium struck me as the most interesting and engaging way of presenting information. My capstone is a play that investigates how and why certain demographics are represented the way that they are. I have always had a keen interest in United States history, especially the Civil Right Era, and why society is taking longer to apply the governmental advancements made. This time period was a turning point in history and although its goals of racial equality and segregation were achieved at a government level; would took another twenty years before an individual of color was allowed to be on television

For my capstone, I chose to work with local director and dramaturge, David O'Connor. He and I have collaborated on a number of projects with Philadelphia Young Playwrights and have established a working relationship. He has he taken an interest in the topic of my play. David seemed like the perfect fit for my mentor because he has access to resources necessary to get the play staged at Philadelphia theater company and he has gone through the same process. We will communicate mostly via email and in person meetings. The meetings will occur at least once monthly and email conversations will occur weekly.

It is my goal for this project to allow me to fully immerse myself in the playwriting and producing process. I will be writing, directing, producing, and possibly even acting in the final product. Throughout the project I will be shadowing various theater staff (i.e producers, sound designers, costume designers, stage crew, etc.) and calling on them to assist in staging the final product. The final product will be one staged performance along with an documentary of the process. I also plan to print some book copies of the play and have them available at the final performance. All components of my project will presented on a website for viewing purposes. It is my hope that by completing this project I will have a clearer idea of what it means to be a professional playwright and director.

I believe that my goal for this project is appropriate because I am forcing myself to engage in all aspects of the theater and not just one, allowing me to better understand all of the efforts necessary to successfully stage a production. Through this experience of exploring theater roles I hope to find the one or two positions that I want to pursue as a possible career choice.

Each of the Science Leadership Academy Core Values will be reflected in this project as follows:

Inquiry: This project is my investigates why there is a gap between the time it takes society to accept certain government institutions.

Research: The play focuses on the integration of television and media over time. My research will to look into historical references to create a tangible world that accurately represents this transition over time. I will also be shadowing theater staff to gain an understanding of what skills are necessary to fill that specific role in theater.

Collaboration: Writing, directing, and producing a play will allow me to work alongside a range of individuals with a variety of skill sets. By shadowing theater staff around the city, I will be able to gain knowledge from them to translate that information to the students that I will be casting for production.

This will allow me to forge new and lasting relationships.

Presentation: The final product is going to be one fully staged event at a local theater company in Center City. I will also be creating a short documentary about the complete process of bringing a play into fruition. It is my goal to create a website to house all of the components of the project (play teaser, documentary, photo gallery, research, discussion of techniques, etc.). I would also like to print some books of the play and have them available for distribution.

Reflection: The overarching goal of this project is for me to gain a better understanding of what career path I would like to take in the theatrical world. I plan to use this process as the basis for decisions that I will make in college and beyond.

Intermediate Deadlines

Date	Activity	Accomplished
10/5/12	Complete Draft 1	Yes
10/8/12	Meet w/ David and discuss revisions	Yes
11/1/12	Complete Draft 2	Yes
11/14/12	Meet w/ David and discuss revisions	Yes
1/13/13	Complete Draft 3	Yes
2/1/13	Annotated Bibliography, Revised Proposal, and Timeline Complete	Yes
2/4/13	Casting Session 1 in 303	Yes
2/5/13	Draft 4 Sent to David	
2/7/13	Casting Session 2 in 303 and Meet w/ David and discuss revisions	Yes
TBD	Meet w/ David, discuss revisions,	Yes
2/11/13	Begin weekly rehearsals using the Rehearsal Plan (Mondays for 2 weeks)	Yes
2/12/13	Meeting with David	Yes

2/19/13	Begin Tuesday rehearsals in the drama studio	Yes
2/27/13	Continue work on set or sound design	Yes
3/16/13	Begin set building	Yes
3/20/13	Begin work on book cover	Yes
3/28/13	Revise play for printing	Yes
4/4/13	Tech Rehearsal	Yes
4/5/13	Performance Date	Yes
4/8/13	Begin work on Documentary	Yes
4/16/13	Begin work on Website	Yes
4/20/13 - 5/5/13	Continue work on website and documentary	Yes
5/6 - 21/13	Work on Process Paper	Yes
5/22/13	Add all elements to website	
5/30/13	Revise Process Paper	
6/3-7/13	Create presentation (Keynote or Prezi)	
6/10-14/13	Capstone Presentation Week	

Mentor Meeting Log:

Date	Notes
10/16/12	• Better incorporation of facts. Right now in certain sections of dialogue it doesn't sound like real talk. It sounds "text bookish" and too factual. • Needs more internal and external conflict • Hypnosis and other forms of time travel need to be better executed. • Establishment of world (metaphoric) • Maybe use an actual person to represent

	what America is going through rather than an abstract idea
11/14/12	● Highlight the doctor's character more (how her goes of on a tangent and rambles) ● Define arch of characters (classic dramatic structures) ● What is the secret that the character can't see, but the audience can? ● Research common mental disorders associated with working in a cubicle, in a call center, or remaining at the same position for an extended amount of time with no progress
2/10/12	● Where is the story going? Does this align with the original message about media? ● Dialogue is snappy and full of action ● Who is this baby? What role can it play in the possible relationship between Corey and Emily? ● Is Emily a representation of media? How does she distort Corey's story as he attempts to readjust to society? ● What do Emily's "nightmares" reflect? Irresponsibility of media? ● How will Corey and Emily's lives overlap? ● What and where is the climactic scene? ● What powers does Emily have over the reality that Corey is walking in? ● Think about different ways of characters revealing information. Information that is known does not need to be confirmed. ● For the documentary: consider the angle. Maybe there is someone investigating what you are doing. This person could ask the provocative questions. ● In rehearsal: Make the actors feel like they are apart of the creative process. Find ways of engaging them in writing, sound design, stage management and design.

Annotated Bibliography

1. Andrews, Bart, and Thomas Watson. *Loving Lucy: An Illustrated Tribute to Lucille Ball*. New York: St. Martin's, 1980. Print Another example of segregation in media during the time period is the popular television show, *I Love Lucy*.

The show aired in 1951 and quickly caught national attention and became a hit. In summation, the show was about a housewife living in New York City, who always managed to turn an ordinary household chore into an extravagant disaster. The majority of the *I Love Lucy* cast was white. The only non-white cast member was Desi Arnaz, who played Ricky Ricardo was identified as a white-Hispanic (Hingham). With its overwhelming amount of popularity and success it would be assumed that a majority of Americans were watching and connecting with the show. The predominantly white cast, and themes of freedoms and opportunity, reached only a white audience.

2. *You Can't Miss: AT&T Long Distance Calling*. Fortune 500, 1973. Web. 08 Dec 2011. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DY9t2WeMX1c>>.

This was valuable source because it described the tensions and separation between black and white Americans translated into the media and advertisements of the time period. The advertisement for AT&T Long Distance Calling was in color and had no music or sound effects other than the points in which Russell shoots the ball into the basket. Throughout the commercial Russell makes multiple basketball long distance analogies, in order to connect to his strong interracial fan base. He also never touches or acknowledges the telephone present on set. This in some ways can confound the audience because the advertisement is for a telephone service, and yet there was no interaction with the telephone. These analogies connected widened the audience range that encompassed both black and white Americans. The sports references were used as a common ground where the two shared similar feelings toward something.

3. *Bill Cosby for Jello pudding*. 1981. Web. 08 Dec 2011. <Bill Cosby Jello Pudding Commercial 1982 www.youtube.com/watch?v=6G_EDtd1yuM>. <Bill Cosby Jello Pudding Commercial 1982

In the advertisement a circle of white children indulge in Jello pudding while comedian, Bill Cosby speaks and aimlessly fiddles with the product. This advertisement is in color and set on a porch crowded with greenery. In the script Cosby speaks about the “tastiness” of the pudding and that it is “great for the whole family”, yet in the commercial he never even lifts the spoon to his mouth nor does any representation of *his* family enjoying the product exist. The audience does however, get to see white children eat and enjoy the pudding.

4. Campbell, Edward D.C. *Before Freedom Came: African-American Life in the Antebellum South: To Accompany an Exhibition Organized by the Museum of the Confederacy*. Richmond: The Museum of the Confederacy; Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991. [LC call number: E443.B44 1991 P&P Afr- Amer]

This American Library Association Notable Book consists of essays by noted historians, folklorists, and archaeologists. The book has a remarkable array of text, illustrations and pictures describing the way of black life before “freedom came”. It goes deeply into the life both on the plantation and in Southern cities.

5. Cashman, Sean Dennis. *African-Americans and the Quest for Civil Rights, 1900-1990*. New York: New York University Press, 1991. [LC call number: E185.61.C292 1991 P&P Afr-Amer]

This source is an annotated timeline of various events and milestones of the Civil Rights Movement. It uses both a conservative and liberal lens to analyze the movement and break down the different groups that participated in the movement. It also focuses on various individuals and contains interviews from both during and after the Civil Rights Movement.

6. *Chronology of the Civil Rights Era in the US and in Philadelphia 1954-1979*. 1. Philadelphia: 1983. 276. Print.

This source was a timeline of the Civil Rights era in the US with a focus on Philadelphia. It provided a focused case study of a particular place in the US and its reaction to what was happening. There were riots and high school events were spurred by various television broadcasts. Some local networks allowed African Americans to speak on television, but only for news purposes. This could be seen as a milestone in African American presence in media. However, the event did not have much national or local impact.

7. Dornfeld, Margaret. *The Turning Tide: From the Desegregation of the Armed Forces to the*

Montgomery Bus Boycott (1948-1956). New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1995. [LC call number: E185.615.D654 1995 P&P Afr-Amer]

This book captures the time era when black political and social activism grew and spread heavily. The book includes many events such as boycotts, the formation of organized groups and the 1963 March on Washington. The author discusses the Watts riots and the death of Malcolm X.

8. HAMPTON, HENRY. "TV VIEW; The Camera Lens as Two-Edged Sword." *New York Times* 15 01 1989, n. pag. Web. 5 Jan. 2012.

The source proposes different ideas and quotes about the television world and race. It noted television as a place of neutrality. Also television is driven by events not issues. Integration is believed as a Utopian dream. Integration is started at the corporate and pre-production levels, before it reaches the screen.

9. Harley, Sharon. *The Timetables of African-American History: A Chronology of the Most Important People and Events in African-American History*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. [LC call number: E185.H295 1995 P&P Afr-Amer]

This source was a timeline of African-American History era in the US with a focus on many important people and events. It provided a focused case study on particular events and its reaction to the people affected by it. There was also a large focus on the triumphs before, during, and after the Civil Rights Movement.

10. Horton, James Oliver and Lois E. Horton, eds. *A History of the African American People: The History, Traditions & Culture of African Americans*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997. [LC call number: E185.H56 1997 P&P Afr-Amer]

This source examined the history of African Americans with a social and communal focus. It goes deeply into the life both on and off the plantation and also in Southern cities. It also goes in detail on various individuals both during and after the Civil Rights Movement.

11. Johnson, Robert. *Bill Cosby: In Words and Pictures*. Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1986. Print.

The source focuses on Bill Cosby's commercial career and how it was affected by his race. African Americans had to endure an uphill plight against discrimination in the United States. African-Americans have succeeded removing de jure discrimination from their reality. However de facto discrimination still exists in American society.

12. "Louisiana 'Jim Crow' Law Valid ." *New York Times* 21 12 1892, n. pag. Web. 13 Jan. 2012.

<<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9E05EEDB1F31E033A25752C2A9649D94639ED7CF>>.

The source examined the Jim Crow Laws. Jim Crow laws forced African-Americans to remain at a status less than White Americans. The combination of discriminatory legislations, because of its longevity, has been branded into the minds of every American. The Supreme Court recognized that this particular Jim Crow law was unconstitutional and deprived African-Americans equal protection under the law.

13. Paul Craig, Roberts, and Lawrence, Stratton. *The New Color Line: How Quotas and Privilege Destroy Democracy*. Washington D.C: Regnery Pub, 1997. Print.

The source believes that it is legally necessary to discriminate against males of the white race in order to avoid civil rights lawsuits and achieve approving race and gender proportionally in the workforce, mortgage financing, etc. Also focuses on the 1964 Civil Rights Act and its misinterpretation. It is believed to be turning America into a caste society. It provides a different perspective on my project.

14. Randall, Vernellia R, ed. "Examples of Jim Crow Laws." *Race, Racism and the Law Speaking Truth to Power!!*. Daytona University, 1993. Web. 12 Dec 2011.
<<http://academic.udayton.edu/race/02rights/jcrow02.htm>>.

The source focused on the Jim Crow Laws. Jim Crow laws were challenged in courts and were eventually abolished. On both a state and federal level, government issued discrimination was removed. This does not, however, mean that Americans would adopt the same conclusive end to prejudice. The laws abolished, because of their longevity were branded into the minds of Americans. Meaning that, even though the laws no longer existed in government, the element of discrimination associated with them would still be present in American social life.

15. Therenstorm, Stepan and Abigail. *America in Black and White: One Nation, Indivisible*. 1. New York City: Thomas and Schuster, 1997. 133-203. Print.

In the source the author discusses the status of blacks has been transformed in recent decades, and how there is no going back. Problems remain, of course. But they will not be solved by traditional civil rights strategies, the authors argue. Affirmative action programs, for instance, do nothing to help the black underclass. Racial preferences cannot rescue the high school dropout who is too unskilled for the modern world of work. Racial progress ultimately depends on our common understanding that we are one nation, indivisible - that we sink or swim together, that black poverty impoverishes us all, and that black alienation eats at the nation's soul.

16. Thomas, Ford. "Effects of Stereotypical Portrayals of African Americans on Personal

Perception." *Social Psychology Quarterly*. 60. (1997): 267-78. Web. 13 Dec. 2011.

In the source the author discusses how television makes us stereotype people. The author connects it to our perception on African Americans and how it effects us all. If stereotypes continue how can society move on and quit discriminating was the question the author left for us to answer.

17. United States Federal Government. Supreme Court. *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954) (USSC). Washington D.C: , 1954. Web. <<http://www.nationalcenter.org/brown.html>>.

The source discussed the causes of the Brown v. Board of Education case. *Brown v. Board of Education* was a collection of cases brought to the United States Supreme Court to challenge the presence of "separate but equal" in the public school system. Prior to this ruling and for some time after public schools in the Southern States were segregated based on race.

Other Sources:

Stehlik, Milos , dir. "Creating racial reality through advertising and film." Dir. Herbert Allen Shirley Riley-Davis. *Images, Movies and Race*.. WBEZ 91.5: 19/12/2011. Web. 13 Jan 2012.

Vintage Tv Ads. 1951-83. Web. 09 Dec 2011. <www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSJew3Gedg>.

"Emancipation." *Washington Post and Herald* 18 05 1984, 1. Web. 13 Jan. 2012.

Ypsilanti, Mich. "Bill Russell Had Another First." *New York Times* 25 06 2000, n. pag. Web. 13 Jan. 2012. <<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/25/sports/l-bill-russell-had-another-first-974501.html?ref=williamfeltonrussell>>.

Dumond, Dwight Lowell. *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961. [LC call number: E441.D84 P&P Afr-Amer]

Ebony Pictorial History of Black America. 4 vols. Chicago: Johnson Pub., 1971- . [LC call number: E185.E23 P&P Afr-Amer]

The Burger Boy. General Foods, 1972. Web. 02 Dec 201. <http://www.retrojunk.com/details_commercial/24266/>.

Kool-Aid: Neighborhood Whistle. General Foods, 1967, Web. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKY2O4KFmMU>>.

Pluto, Terry. *Tall Tales: The Glory Years of the NBA in the Words of the Men Who Played, Coached, and Built Pro Basketball*. . New York: Simon & Schuster., 1992. Print