

Instructor Introductory Letter

Dear Selection Committee,

I would love to submit Luci Galvan's paper as an example of excellent undergraduate writing in media criticism (Communication Studies). Luci submitted this paper for my Communication Studies 169 (Television Criticism) course. The course meets our department's methods requirements, as it is a survey of the most common qualitative approaches to the study of television.

For this writing assignment, students were asked to select one (or more) of various methods and use that method in the critique of a television program of the student's choice. The goal was the creation of a sophisticated and significant discovery and argument about how the television program functions as a rhetorical event. Students were asked to examine their texts carefully and closely; I also asked them to really challenge themselves with their conclusions. Each paper, in order to be successful, needed to answer my "So what?" question. Luci's paper does just that.

In fact, Luci was somewhat plagued by this question. She would visit my office hours and propose different research questions, all of which seemed valid and interesting to me. She would leave, perhaps unsatisfied, only to return with *better* ideas, *new* directions, *more challenging* research questions...her research stamina seems to know no end, and her academic curiosity seems bottomless. Her final result is both clever and noteworthy, not only by undergraduate standards. Luci truly pushed herself to create an *original* contribution to the body of knowledge. I encouraged her to submit her work to your journal, and I intend to encourage her to submit this work to other competitions and conferences.

As her ideas and writing progressed through several drafts, I realized that she might have stumbled across what could become a graduate level study. Though our department will be lucky enough to have Luci as a first year MA student in the Spring Semester, her research agenda will likely take her in a different direction. The fact that she was able to create such a competent piece of work in an area that does not represent her life's passion is further testament to the scholar she is, and the scholar she will become. She makes me want to keep reading; how often can we say such a thing about undergraduate writing?

On a final note, as the result of a semester's worth of work, the final draft was meant to be between 20 – 25 pages; thus, the author had to edit her work considerably to make it appropriate for this journal competition. The ability to cut one's work while maintaining clarity of purpose and direction is not found in most of the undergraduates I've encountered, and stands as another reason I am proud of the work Luci has done.

Sincerely,

Michele S. Foss-Snowden, Ph.D.
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