



LEARNING ABROAD CONFERENCE

E I G H T H A N N U A L

Friday, November 15, 2019

MSU International Center

MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

* The image on the cover is a Gall-Peters projection. Named after James Gall and Arno Peters, the map accurately depicts land mass sizes relative to each other.

WELCOME

Welcome to MSU's eighth annual Learning Abroad Conference!

Our conference this year focuses on a central theme: **"Growing Through Challenge: Learning Abroad in a Time of Global Change."**

This year's presenters will discuss how their education abroad experiences address issues related to this topic. MSU has a long-standing tradition of global student mobility. This conference is designed to allow students to share what they learned abroad with the MSU community, family, and friends. The conference features both students who are studying abroad at MSU and MSU students who have returned from various programs outside of the U.S.

We sincerely thank the presenters for their willingness to share their experiences and expertise.

We are also grateful for all the conference organizers, coaches, and moderators who have made this event possible:

Lynn Aguado

Office for Education Abroad

Bryce Carlton

Office for International Students & Scholars

Marcie Cowley

College of Social Science

Leydi Egan

Office for International Students & Scholars

Kristin Janka

Honors College

Karen Kangas-Preston

College of Arts & Letters

Vicky Wai-ye Lee

Office for International Students & Scholars

Oumatie Marajh

College of Social Science

Sheila Marquardt

Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education

Elizabeth Matthews

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Joyce Meier

College of Arts & Letters

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Julie Sinclair

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Haris Sorovigas

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Office for Education Abroad

Brook Stokdyk

Office for International Students & Scholars

Antoinette Tessmer

The Eli Broad College of Business

Andrea Thomann

Office for Education Abroad

Gail Vander Stoep

College of Agriculture & Natural Resources

Elizabeth Wandschneider

Office for Education Abroad

Kris Windorski

Office for Education Abroad

Finally, a special thank you to:

Kyle Anderson Office for Education Abroad (Conference Publicity)

Opal Leeman Bartzis Executive Director, Office for Education Abroad (Welcome Speaker)

Cheryl Benner Office for Education Abroad (Conference Publicity)

James Lucas Assistant Dean, Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (Pre-conference Workshop)

Sherry Martinez-Bonilla Office for Education Abroad (Conference Logistical Support)

Krista McCallum Beatty Director, Office for International Students & Scholars (Welcome Speaker)

Peer Advisers Office for Education Abroad (Conference Logistical Support)

Spartans Abroad Global Ambassadors (Conference Logistical Support)

James Fealey STA Travel (Travel Voucher Donation)

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

LEARNING ABROAD CONFERENCE

- 12:00 - 12:30 pm** Registration (Lobby)
- 12:30 - 1:00 pm** Welcome by Opal Leeman Bartzis & Krista McCallum Beatty (room 303)
- 1:00 - 2:00 pm** Student presentations (rooms 303, 305, 307)
- 2:00 - 3:00 pm** Student presentations (rooms 303, 305, 307)
- 3:00 - 4:00 pm** Student presentations (rooms 303, 305, 307)
- 4:00 - 5:00 pm** Student presentations (rooms 303, 305, 307)
- 5:15 - 6:00 pm** Closing ceremony (room 115)



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 1 | 1:00 - 2:00PM | Room 303
MODERATOR: Krista McCallum Beatty

You Went Where?: An American in Modern-Day Russia

Russia
Ashley Peer (USA)

Ashley studied abroad in Volgograd, Russia during the summer 2018 semester, focusing heavily on improving her skills in the Russian language. However, along with bettering her Russian, Ashley gained a deep appreciation for Russian history and created deep bonds through the celebration of Russian culture. Her presentation focuses on setting aside differences, uplifting each other through our hardships and challenges people to explore outside their comfort zone.

Diversity and Inclusiveness: Looking at the World from a Different Perspective

USA
Haoran Liu (China)

Haoran Liu is an international student from China majoring in Supply Chain Management. He was born in a city with all only Chinese. When he came to MSU, he realized how diverse the campus was and he experienced a lot of culture shock. He will talk about how he overcame those culture differences and became a world-citizen, and how he learnt about inclusiveness and diversity in his college life.

The Culture of Language Learning

Argentina
Carla Simone (USA)

The presenter had an international internship in Buenos Aires, Argentina this past summer where she was a teaching assistant at a school teaching English. This experience helped her gain real-world experience in a classroom and reiterated the importance of language education and the differences between the cultures around language learning in Argentina and the US. Her presentation will be about her experience with English education in Argentina and language education in the US.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 2 | 1:00 - 2:00PM | Room 305
MODERATOR: Antoinette Tessmer

Expectations vs. Reality: The Impact of Immersion

Belgium

Sarah Maynard (USA)

Sarah journeyed to Namur, Belgium on the Global Finance Studies Program offered through MSU in the summer of 2019. As it was her first time traveling to Europe, she had expectations for her program which were quickly shattered upon arrival. Instead of allowing her disappointment to rule the program, Sarah turned the situation into a learning opportunity through a series of immersive experiences which ultimately changed her life. In this presentation, she will address her personal journey and the experiences that allowed her to assimilate with Belgian culture.

Illiterate Again: Comparing Childhood and Adulthood Illiteracy

France

Dhaval Gandhi (India & USA)

Dhaval recently discovered his passion for navigating across communication boundaries while studying abroad in Paris, France for six weeks during the Summer of 2019. His experience of being an adult who was functionally illiterate in France reminded him of his prior experiences with childhood illiteracy that he faced when he moved from India to the United States. Throughout his presentation, he will compare the emotions surrounding both events while also educating the audience on what it means to communicate.

Learning Culture, Challenges, and Healthcare Systems in Kenya

Kenya

Ashley Basso (USA)

The presenter traveled to Mombasa, Kenya for a Pre-Dental internship and gained a lot more knowledge than just teeth. She spent 5 weeks as an intern at Coast Provincial General Hospital mainly in the dental department. After the hospital she went to schools and conducted free personal hygiene and medical clinics in the community. She will analyze experiences, sharing what she learned, tips for people going on service-based study abroad or internships, and the importance to expose yourself to different cultures especially in healthcare professions.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 3 | 1:00 - 2:00PM | Room 307
MODERATOR: Oumatie Marajh

Deep Breaths: Coping With Mental Illness While Abroad

Spain

Carolyn Forrest (USA)

Carolyn studied abroad in Valencia, Spain during the summer of 2019. She focused on immersing herself in the culture and quickly became overwhelmed with the intensity and vivacity of life in another country. This augmented her battle with mental illness. In this presentation she will share what coping mechanisms she learned in order to take full advantage of her study abroad experience.

Seeing the World with an Aspiring Educator's Lens

South Africa

Clare Sutka (USA)

Clare has been fortunate enough to have studied abroad in 5 different countries all over the world! She is a special education major that has a passion to want to spread the greatness in having an international perspective in the classroom. Her presentation will discuss how her mentors have influenced her thinking, the goals that have developed because of her time abroad, and how she wants to form a culturally inclusive and international perspective in the classroom setting.

German Culture: Influences, Individualism, and Insights

Germany

Megan Medendorp (USA)

Megan studied abroad for two weeks in Germany over the summer through the first-year seminars abroad program at MSU. Before and while in Germany, she investigated cultural differences between German and American society and found it very compelling. She will present this information by providing facts regarding these differences and describe personal experiences with cultural interactions while on the program.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 4 | 2:00 - 3:00PM | Room 303
MODERATOR: Krista McCallum Beatty

Theatre and My Dis-ABILITY

United Kingdom (England)
Courtney Way (USA)

Courtney traveled to the United Kingdom in the summer of 2019 and to the United Arab Emirates in February 2019 with MSU's Department of Theatre. These experiences were meant to intensively study the practice and application of theatre and to create global connections. She will discuss accessibility in global theatre, how it has influenced her as a Hard of Hearing individual, the challenges she faced abroad, and how different practices in theatre can be applied to help others.

Appreciating Diversity: Integrating Beyond Our Differences

Malawi
Racheal Nassimbwa (Uganda)

The presenter participated in an MSU Study Abroad program and research internship in Malawi. The programs enriched her knowledge about health disparities between USA and Africa. She will share her experiences and challenges during her stay in Malawi, and how it helped her understand and appreciate diversity in learning. She will also address her personal journey as an international student studying in the USA and Malawi.

Empowering Women in 'God's Own Country'

India
Alison Shereda (USA)

Alison is a junior studying Comparative Cultures and Politics and spent two weeks studying International Development Policy in Kerala, India. Her studies in this program focused on the state's fishing communities and the problems that they are facing resulting from globalization and climate change. In her presentation, Alison will showcase the research she conducted while working with these communities, particular focusing on women's economic, political, and social empowerment.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 5 | 2:00 - 3:00PM | Room 305
MODERATOR: Antoinette Tessmer

Health Care in Japan: Letting Go of My American Pride

Japan
Neha Iska (USA)

The presenter traveled abroad to Japan this past summer; throughout her program learned to let go of her American pride and henceforth became receptive to new philosophies of life. She plans on discussing her newfound knowledge on the healthcare system in Japan and the gains she achieved by simply letting go and remaining open.

In a World of Polarization and Isolation: We Are Not Alone

Germany
Josh King (USA)

Josh studied abroad in Mayen, Germany during the summer semester of 2019. During his studies and travels, he was able to identify several issues that were also common in the United States. Through these observations, Josh was able to better appreciate the similarities in the fears and struggles that exist in numerous other countries outside of the United States. His experiences have inspired him to pursue a career abroad with the U.S. State Department.

Visiting the Frozen Continent on a Rapidly Warming Planet

Antarctica
Alexandra Kahn (USA)

Alexandra is an Environmental Studies & Sustainability major who spent winter break of her junior year on a study abroad to the Antarctic Peninsula. She will talk about how the tourism industry works in such a unique and remote location, and how ecotourism and firsthand experiences can be a crucial part of shifting people's attitudes in favor of sustainability.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 6 | 2:00 - 3:00PM | Room 307
MODERATOR: Oumatie Marajh

It's More Than Just Food: A Culture in Ruins

Greece

Heather Sayles (USA)

Heather participated in a First-Year Seminar Abroad to Greece the summer before starting her journey at MSU. There, she studied the Mediterranean Diet throughout time. She expected to just learn about the diet, but instead, she gained a new understanding of just how much the effects of globalization have eroded the rich culture of this captivating country. Her presentation focuses on how the Greek culture has changed in such a short amount of time, as well as what this means for Greece and for the rest of the world.

What Have I Gotten Myself Into?

Italy

Brandi Randall (USA)

Brandi was born in Michigan and hadn't left the state much since. After being accepted to study abroad in Italy and England for the Foundations of Neuroscience program, she faced one of her biggest fears and got on her first airplane. From there, it was five weeks of non-stop new experiences and new cultures. Her presentation aims to share her experiences of her worst fears and best times in hopes that other people who can identify with her will take away that it is better to be scared and go for it anyways than to tell yourself "maybe someday" forever.

Education in Israel: How Institutions Provide Insight to Social Relations

Israel

Callie Keller (USA)

The presenter studied abroad in Israel for six weeks with a Jewish studies program which taught cultural diversity and immigration in Israel. She plans to discuss how institutions may provide insight to how identities are created and affect social relations. By doing so she will highlight the importance of interview-based testimony and study abroad experiences.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 7 | 3:00 - 4:00PM | Room 303
MODERATOR: Sheila Marquardt

All the World's a Stage: How Theater Can Help Us Process Current Events

United Kingdom (England)
C. Rose Widmann (USA)

Theater is one of the most versatile arts because it connects us to ourselves and our surroundings. While studying in London, MSU students learned to process current events through physical and visual theater and its themes. The reality and emotion of theater can be used to fulfill many needs through the process of coping.

You Are Your Courage

USA
Apichaya Thaneerat (Thailand)

Many international students leave their beloved home country to study in a foreign land on their own. Apichaya, an MSU student from Thailand, has experienced both culture shock and reverse culture shock this past year while completing her senior year in an American high school. She would like to share her stories and strategies on how to overcome these challenges, change your perspective towards them, and teach you how to be courageous on your study abroad journey.

Embracing my Multicultural Identity at a Time of Immigration Tension

Japan
Maxine Osorio (USA)

Maxine Osorio studied abroad in Japan for four weeks under Michigan State University's college of education. Her intentions were to expand on the many ways students learn, accompanied with discovering how education systems are structured around the world. Maxine's multi-tiered identity allowed her to rediscover her own being while confronting the stereotypes that came with being a brown Mexican-American in Japan.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 8 | 3:00 - 4:00PM | Room 305
MODERATOR: Lynn Aguado

Climate Change and Resilience: Confronting Privilege and Preconceived Ideas

India
Lauren Driscoll (USA)

Lauren studied abroad in Kerala, India during the summer of 2019. She studied international development and the practices and policies that accompany it, focusing on the lived experiences of marginalized farmers and fisher folk that remain vulnerable to climate change. Lauren's presentation focuses on the challenge of navigating an unknown environment, and the shift of personal perceptions over time through exposure to unexpected resources in a space most stereotype as resource-poor.

Race and Equity: A Contemporary Perspective

United Kingdom (England)
Tom Douglas (USA)

The presenter traveled to London, England with Michigan State's Neuroscience program. This experience was designed to investigate the history and foundations of neuroscience during the 1600s. He will also address how this experience has affected him as a black male and how it brought his attention to the lack of recognition that African scientists received during the 1600s and scientists of color receive from then until present day.

Positioning Myself as an African American in Tanzania

Tanzania
Ja'La Wourman (USA)

Ja'La Wourman is a third year doctoral student in the Writing, Rhetoric, and Cultures program. During the summer 2019 semester she served as one of the graduate assistants in the Tanzania Partnership Program (TPP) As someone who travels regularly and studies culture, she was not expecting the many negotiations of identity and positionality that happened during the program. Her presentation will share these experiences and provide tools to audience members on how to embrace their diverse backgrounds when confronted with them abroad.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 9 | 3:00 - 4:00PM | Room 307
MODERATOR: Elizabeth Matthews

Red, White, and Blue: The Importance of International Perspectives and Creating Change

United Kingdom
Madeline Broderick (USA)

Madeline is a junior studying marketing and political science. She traveled to the United Kingdom this summer with a program through the MSU College of Social Science, learning about the national and international impacts of Brexit. She experienced multiple instances of activism and people standing up for what they believe in—ranging from political demonstrations to an LGBT rights march—that made her realize the impact a single person can have if they make their voice heard. She will share a message of hope and creating change in one's own life based on her experiences with ordinary citizens making an impact on what they care about.

A Small Piece of a Big Puzzle

Denmark
Dudley Mbekenga (Tanzania & USA)

Dudley studied abroad in Lyngby, Denmark at Denmark Technical University (DTU). His goal was to try something completely new and foreign, to fully immerse himself in a culture he knew little about. For six months he lived a Danish lifestyle; attending classes, learning Danish, eating Danish food, and navigating public transportation. He had to navigate his way through cultural differences, homesickness, language barriers, cuisine, and social norms. This time, he was the foreigner. Thrown into a place where nobody knew his name, Dudley had to push himself out of his comfort zone in order to discover more about himself and find himself in the world.

Expanding Horizons Through Study Abroad

Belize
DeNari Armstrong (USA)

DeNari studied abroad in San Ignacio, Belize twice for spring break and summer of 2019. She had the opportunity to experience life in Belize through service learning, interning, and cultural immersion. In this presentation, she plans on sharing her experiences in Belize, and how it positively impacted her while managing mental health challenges.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 10 | 4:00 - 5:00PM | Room 303
MODERATOR: Sheila Marquardt

Beyond Western Feminism: The Women of Morocco

Morocco

Delaney McDermott (USA)

The presenter traveled all across Morocco with the College of Arts and Letter's Arabic program. The program was intended to help immerse students into the Arabic language by exposing them to the culture of Morocco, in part by the bonds formed with Moroccan native university students as language learning partners. Delaney will discuss feminism in Moroccan culture, her observations, and her own experience with the language partners who made such an impact on her during the program.

Different but Still Me

United Kingdom (England)

Lu Hongwen (China)

陆泓文 NANCY is an international student who has been in America for three years. Recently she went to the Theatre in London program. She plans to talk about how culture influences her while she still remains true to herself.

Around the World and Back Again!

Mexico

Andrea Vega (Mexico & USA)

As Andrea begins to reflect on her undergraduate career at Michigan State University as a graduating senior, there is one aspect of being a Spartan that cannot go unnoticed: Education Abroad. When she committed herself to MSU and moved 6 states north of Southwest Florida, she was unaware of how much bigger her dreams were about to become. During her first year she participated in her first program *International Engagement in Mexico* and was humbled at the way her education and service could impact others at an international level. Coming back from the IEM program sparked something special that she kept ignited by enrolling in the same program year after year in this non-traditional location.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 11 | 4:00 - 5:00PM | Room 305
MODERATOR: Julie Sinclair

A History That Isn't Mine

Italy
Andre Reed (USA)

The presenter is an undergraduate student from Detroit, MI majoring in Creative Advertising. In the spring of 2019, he had the opportunity to leave the country for the first time and travel to various cities in Italy. While there, he immersed himself in the experience and culture while reflecting on his own country's history. In this presentation, he plans on sharing his first experience abroad through stories, daily poetry entries, and personal shot photographs, while discussing the importance of history and how learning it helps up develop a better sense of self.

Self-Discovery Through Cultural Experiences

USA
Maria Rifioti (Greece & Brazil)

Maria is a Greek- Brazilian undergraduate student who used her experiences of living in three different continents by the age of 17 years-old to develop her identity. She used those experiences to become an observant global citizen and constantly encourage more students, especially international ones, to step into positions of leadership within MSU.

Witnessing Brexit-Induced Anxiety

Ireland
Art Chandrasekaran (USA)

The presenter, Arthi Chandrasekaran, traveled to Dublin and Galway, Ireland. During her travels she immersed herself in Irish history as well as its industrial present. Through this exploration of past and present, she crystalized a clarity regarding where Ireland is going - especially in light of its Brexit oriented challenges. She will use personal stories to put Michigan in the Irish context before finally briefing the audience on where she sees business to be heading in the future.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Panel 12 | 4:00 - 5:00PM | Room 307

MODERATOR: Elizabeth Matthews

Mi Amor

Dominican Republic

Brittany Ladson (USA) & Mackenzie Deslover (USA)

During spring break of 2019, we traveled to the Dominican Republic to shadow in a diabetic wound clinic. We visited patients having their post-op surgical scars cleaned which involved heavy scrubbing of bare areas to prevent infections. Because analgesics are limited to the wealthy, patients were clearly in agony and were calling out in pain. In order to soothe the patients, the Dominican healthcare team used methods different than American physicians would. Being a new member of this healthcare team, it was a challenge to change our approach to showing sympathy to match the emotional needs of the patients.

Do No Harm

Peru

Brittany Ladson (USA)

This summer, the MSUCOM Peru Global Outreach Program embarked on the Amazon Rainforest to provide medical care to patients in underserved villages. There's been great discussion about the efficacy and sustainability of these short-term medical service trips (STMST) on the population being served. Some believe they create distrust in native doctors, fail to provide follow-up, and risk patient safety by inviting ill-prepared medical students. In contrast, others believe much good can come from STMSTs, including providing medical services to those far from clinics, advising patients on sustainable healthy lifestyle changes, and conducting research that can improve future patient outcomes.



STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY BY LAST NAME	TIME OF PRESENTATION	LOCATION
Armstrong, DeNari Junior Mathematics	Panel 9: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 307
Basso, Ashley Senior Biomedical and Molecular Nutrition	Panel 2: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 305
Broderick, Madeline Junior Marketing and Political Science	Panel 9: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 307
Chandrasekaran, Art Graduate/Professional MBA	Panel 11: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 305
Deslover, Mackenzie Sophomore Premedical	Panel 12: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 307
Douglas, Tom Junior Neuroscience	Panel 8: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 305
Driscoll, Lauren Junior Comparative Cultures and Politics	Panel 8: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 305
Forrest, Carolyn Junior Neuroscience, Spanish	Panel 3: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 307
Gandhi, Dhaval Junior Neuroscience and History, Philosophy, & Sociology of Science	Panel 2: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 305
Iska, Neha Sophomore Neuroscience and Sociology	Panel 5: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 305
Kahn, Alexandra Senior Environmental Studies & Sustainability	Panel 5: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 305
Keller, Callie Junior International Relations	Panel 6: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 307
King, Josh Senior Global History	Panel 5: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 305

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY BY LAST NAME	TIME OF PRESENTATION	LOCATION
Ladson, Brittany Graduate/Professional Osteopathic Medicine	Panel 12: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 307
Liu, Haoran Junior Supply Chain Management	Panel 1: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 303
Lu, Hongwen Senior Theater	Panel 10: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 303
Maynard, Sarah Junior Marketing	Panel 2: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 305
Mbekenga, Dudley Senior Civil Engineering	Panel 9: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 307
McDermott, Delaney Junior Comparative Cultures and Politics, Arabic	Panel 10: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 303
Medendorp, Megan Freshman Kinesiology	Panel 3: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 307
Nassimbwa, Racheal Junior Medical Laboratory Sciences	Panel 4: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 303
Osorio, Maxine Junior Special Education-minor in TESOL	Panel 7: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 303
Peer, Ashley Senior Microbiology, Genetics	Panel 1: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 303
Randall, Brandi Senior Neuroscience	Panel 6: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 307
Reed, Andre Senior Creative Advertising	Panel 11: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 305
Rifioti, Maria Junior International Relations, minor in Public Relations	Panel 11: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 305

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY BY LAST NAME	TIME OF PRESENTATION	LOCATION
Sayles, Heather Sophomore Neuroscience/ Lyman Briggs	Panel 6: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 307
Shereda, Alison Junior Comparative Cultures and Politics	Panel 4: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 303
Simone, Carla Junior Spanish	Panel 1: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 303
Sutka, Clare Graduate/Professional Special Education- Learning Disabilities	Panel 3: 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Room 307
Thaneerat, Apichaya Freshman Geography Information Science	Panel 7: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 303
Vega, Andrea Senior English	Panel 10: 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Room 303
Way, Courtney Senior HDFS and Theatre	Panel 4: 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Room 303
Widmann, C. Rose Senior Theater/English Ed	Panel 7: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 303
Wourman, Ja'La Graduate/Professional Writing & Rhetoric	Panel 8: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Room 305

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