

## 2022 Graduation Essay Awards

The British and American Cultural Studies Program makes awards each year to fourth-year students for the best graduation research essays. The awards recognize excellence in research and writing. All seminar supervisors may submit their selections for the year's best work. The research activities of the three English seminars supervised by Professors Armstrong, Boulanger and Piccolo are summarized below along with each professor's selection of the best research essay for 2022. On behalf of BACS, we would like to congratulate this year's winners and offer our thanks to seminar instructors who have worked with students to produce such excellent work. A larger selection of graduation essays in Japanese and in English can be found in the BACS 2022 Graduation Thesis Collection.

### *Professor Armstrong's Seminar*

This year, students in my fourth-year seminar chose topics in the fields of education, environment, film, LGBTQ rights, and multiculturalism. Both Sae Shibata and Hiroto Suzuki chose Canada's largest province, Ontario, as the focus of their research projects. Sae wrote about multicultural curricula in the

Ontario's K-12 education system while Hiroto Suzuki tackled the problem of pollution in Lake Ontario - the source of drinking water for millions of people on both sides of the border. In her essay, Sae shows that, "Ontario's . . . curriculum is based on multicultural education designed to teach students the diversity that is important for living in Canada." In his essay, Hiroto examines government policies for protection of water in the Great Lakes and the activities of non-governmental organizations as well as public awareness of issues such as plastic pollution from industrial and domestic sources. Like Hiroto, Yuma Sugiwaka chose environment for his research project, focusing on the plight of polar bears in Canada's Arctic. The disappearance of ice due to rising temperatures caused by climate change and competition for food with humans pose serious threats to the polar bears' existence. Yuma discusses some of the actions that the Canadian government, partner arctic nations, and international organizations have taken to conserve the polar bear population.

Sena Yamada's research took American director Nancy Meyers and her 2015 film *The Intern* as the focus for exploring changing ideas around women in the workforce, work-life balance, gender and age, and changing family structures in contemporary American society. In the film *Jules*, played by Anne Hathaway, struggles to adapt to her role as CEO of an online clothing start-up while the new intern, the 70 year-old retiree, Ben, played by Robert De Niro, offers sage advice to Jules and the young staff of the company. "Experience Never Gets Old' is the slogan of the movie," Sena writes, and "No matter what stage

of life and gender, it is important to have work-life balance to feel healthy and live a life with meaning." Kano Suzuki chose to explore the response to immigration and cultural diversity in the province of Quebec by examining the concept of interculturalism. Interculturalism differs from Canada's policy of multiculturalism in significant ways, she writes: "because of Quebec's past as a French-Canadian minority and because of its unique character as an official French language, Quebec rejects multiculturalism, and aims to integrate while preserving Quebec's traditions and French language." Emina Kishida wrote about Canada's progress toward enshrining LGBTQ rights and promoting a culture of acceptance and support for LGBTQ people. Discussing both the legal framework and the efforts of individuals and groups, Emina shows how Canada "has made a big difference because it protects LGBTQ rights and has an environment that socially accepts LGBTQ people."

Finally, Chiharu Terai wrote about the impact of soul music on African-American consciousness during the Civil Rights Era. Chiharu's essay shows depth and range, and provides thoughtful analysis. She writes a topic that she is passionate about. For these reasons, she deserves the award for Best Graduation Essay in English in my seminar. There were, of course, a number of strong essays this year, and all students showed their ability to research and write a scholarly essay in English. I am grateful to my students for their intellectual curiosity, their hard-work, and their cooperation throughout this long process.