The Lion’s Pride Committee

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Artist’s statement: I am a medical assisting student who found her talent in painting. Thank you to Jason Sobottka for helping along the way.

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Writing Through Time

Stephanie Conway

I’m a high school student. This painting was done in Jason Sobottka’s beginning painting class. Everyone should take an art class! If one doesn’t, they will be letting a creative opportunity pass by.
My American Dream
Diego Martinez

I grew up in Mexico in a lower middle class family. Being the youngest of thirteen siblings, I often had to fight for the things that I wanted for myself not to share. After seeing most of my brothers and sisters leave our hometown to achieve their American Dream at seventeen years old it was my “turn” to leave for “El Norte” and seek my American Dream only to realize ten years later that my dream was just that.

When I was growing up in a small town in Mexico, all I saw was my parents working so hard to sustain our family. My father was a truck driver, and at times I would not see him for weeks. My mother had to make sure that my siblings and I had something to eat at the end of the day. Most of the times she played the mother and father role. Since I can remember, my mother would always tell me to go to school and get a good education. But the fact that my parents were always busy gave me the opportunity to go to school but not to study—only to play with my friends and to get bad grades; and I really took advantage of that.

Since I was about 8 years old, my dream was to go to the U.S., work, and earn a lot of money to buy a truck. Some of the people that had returned to my hometown of Union de Tula Jalisco, Mexico after being in the U.S. for several years had
done that; they would cruise around the town with their cool looking trucks, having a lot of fun, drinking and partying most of the day, and it seemed like everyone in the town wanted to be their friends. And for some reason I wanted to be like them.

When I was 17 years old I was causing a lot of trouble. My mother was very disappointed because I did not want to continue my education and my father wanted me to find a job. That is when my dream started. On November 20, 2004, I started packing my stuff. I was finally on my way to El Norte (The North) where I had always wanted to be. My parents had already arranged my arrival with one of my sisters and her husband, who at the time were living in Redmond, Washington. They also wanted me to study and they enrolled me in a high school.

For the first time in my life I felt so confused and out of my comfort zone that, once again, I turned my back to a great opportunity of education. “I did not come to study, I came to work.” I kept repeating that to my sister and to everybody else who wanted to convince me to go to school. It seems like my sister’s husband got tired of my opposing attitude and he hired me to work for him installing carpets. Finally, my dream moved forward. With every paycheck I was getting closer to
that truck. Time went by—I learned how to install carpets and started to make good money, so I established my own business installing carpets. At that time, a lot of bad habits were already part of my life and everything seemed unreal. After several years of parties, alcohol, tobacco, wrong decisions, and bad friends, I lost my business and everything went downhill.

Then, in 2009, I found a job in a company named Servpro. This company is recognized for fire and water-cleanup and restoration. Everything was so different from what I had been used to do, but because I had always liked to work hard as my parents taught me, I learned how to do the job very efficiently. My boss was very happy and gave me a raise in the first two months. And there I was again—making good money and once again my dream was moving forward. I bought the truck that I had always dreamed of. A 2005 lifted Toyota Tacoma—it had been lifted six inches with a Pro-Comp suspension, the exhaust system was amazing, and the tires and rims were just incredible. My dream had finally come true. I was in El Norte, I was making good money, and I had a very cool-looking truck.

However, about a year and half later while working the morning shift, I forced myself to the limit while I was tearing the hardwood floor off the customer’s kitchen that had gotten
wet the night before. As I bent down to get one of my tools, I felt a discharge of electricity from my waist down and back up to my brain. A herniated disk in the lower part of my back was the cause of that feeling. Eventually, I got treatment, and after trying different ways to make the pain go away, I had to have surgery.

Four months later, I sold my truck because it was getting harder and harder to make the payments, and I was not even able to get into it. Then I realized that in order for me to find a job that does not require physical work I had to at least learn how to read and write English. Also, my bad habits needed to change. After trying several times, I finally quit smoking. Six months later, I quit drinking. As I was leaving these bad habits, many of my “friends” stopped frequenting me.

Because of my injury, I qualified for a program to get retrained—now I have this opportunity and my goals have changed. I am attending Lake Washington Institute of Technology and I am in the Medical Assisting Program. For the first time in my life I am giving myself the opportunity to learn. Now one of my goals is to graduate from this program and continue my education so my mind can keep working while my body recuperates. Hopefully, after completing this
program I will be able to find a job that does not require physical labor.

Now that I find myself in school after so many years, there are insecurities—fears that make me feel inferior to the other students. Trying to learn a second language has been very difficult especially because sometimes I have a very hard time focusing and comprehending. But somehow I have managed to pass my classes, and that shows me that with hard work and dedication I can accomplish my goals. Now I hope one day I will go back to Mexico, find kids that think the way I thought, and inspire them—not to buy a truck but to set educational goals in their lives.
Curtain Fall
Lisa Tanaka

I am currently in the Digital Gaming and Media program. I worked on this piece as a midterm assignment for Jason Sobottka in his human anatomy class.
Lessons of the Danse Macabre
Mia Perez

I am a student beginning the Funeral Services Program this year and this was a narrative essay for English 100 regarding personal goals.

Ever since I was a child my interests have been geared toward the taboo. All the things that people generally found grotesque and frightening were the topics I loved most for discussion and had an almost perverse passion for. I was never afraid of these things. Instead, I loved and embraced them. In fact, as a little kid, I used to rush out of school just so I could go home and watch my open-surgery television programs until my parents forced me to change the channel because they couldn’t handle it. And not much has changed. Now I rush out of my college classes to read my newest books regarding disease, medicine and, most of all, death. It was a pretty easy transition into this new adult-student lifestyle, but it did take me a long time to get here. I’m sure it’s difficult for anyone to come to understand that they undoubtedly, most certainly, need to be, are made to be in the “death industry”. Harder yet, was the realization that the profession I was about to become
involved with is part of an entire system I was willing to challenge, reform and revolutionize.

By the time I was in 5th grade I was already dedicated to contemplating the dead. I used to stroll about the playground, meditating on my “grief” which struck when one of my family members died, hypothetically, in my head. My friends always tried to get me to play, but I thought I played enough as it were. With some convincing, they learned to let me be. It was also during this time that my taste in literature and art began to form. My favorite author was Neil Gaiman, and I was an avid reader of a series called ‘Edgar and Ellen’ – shamelessly titled after the great poet Edgar Allen Poe – and any book chosen from The Series of Unfortunate Events was the best one to read before bed. But having a bookshelf made of cobweb dreams and irony wasn’t enough for me. I didn’t know it then, but I was growing into a student of the macabre right before my own eyes.

I moved on to an alternative interdisciplinary high school in Seattle called The Nova Project. It was most prominently known for the fact that the students were in charge of their own education. We were able to create independent contracts, teach classes, and choose our own criteria. It was there that I
began to study philosophy, natural science, mythology and the history of medicine. I was in a book club, joined many philosophy seminar classes and took an environmental science class every semester. I even taught two weeks of classes regarding the concept of love in world mythology. Although the myths we studied included a copious amount of death, my students listened attentively and reflected on why the positive feeling of love could be correlated with such a “negative” concept as mortality. It became obvious to me that I needed to encourage an intellectual environment where these questions could be taken seriously and discussed in a comfortable philosophical, even artistic, manner.

After high school I spent two years “trying to figure it out.” Unfortunately the Fates casted me a bad hand and I was stuck in a bout of mental illness for most of that time. But the three sisters must have felt a little guilty because what was to follow was a godsend.

My bed was placed in the loft of my room, big enough to fit only a twin mattress, four crates of books and some ash trays. I was unemployed and spent a lot of time in bed. I was very sick and quite tired of my situation. While lying there one day drinking coffee and browsing the internet – as I did most days
I came across a very special article concerning environmentalism within the funeral industry. I googled the author and found that he was the owner of a local funeral home that specializes in sustainable cremation. His name is Jeff Jorgenson and he is a member of something called The Order of the Good Death.

The Order of the Good Death is an organization of morticians, historians, librarians, curators, caretakers, artists, funeral directors, philosophers, writers, musicians, performers, and more, dedicated to helping humanity heal its paralyzing fear of death. Their website mission statement includes quotes from Edward Abbey and Susun Weed, both radical environmentalists. For hours I read from one article to the next, scouring their blog for more information. This is what had been missing from my life - philosophy and natural sciences as one, working together to dismantle topics that are unjustly taboo.

The Order was founded by a young woman named Caitlin Doughty who runs a video series online called ‘Ask A Mortician’ and published a book earlier this year which became a New York Time’s Best Seller. The first video I watched of hers was an informational welcoming to The Order
which claimed my heart when, amongst shelves of leather bound books and over a serenade that you would hear in a pet shelter commercial, she says: “Despite recent advances in medical science, an estimated 100% will die from death alone. These numbers are staggering, but there is hope.” She is hilarious, and smart and is revolutionizing a whole industry by supporting at-home death care, environmentalism, death rituals and a medieval philosophy known as ‘The Art of Dying.’ She fights relentlessly and honestly against the National Funeral Directors Association – which she views as a capitalist association whose only goal is to make money and influence people into thinking they can be immortalized through products and fancy processions. Plenty of funeral homes actually pay their directors on commission, so they have to prey on the grieving for a good buck. I felt like I had found a kindred spirit in Caitlin and knew immediately what to do.

Within a few days I submitted an application to the only school in Washington that offered a Funeral Services program, Lake Washington Institute of Technology. A week later I got an e-mail stating I had been accepted.

Having enrolled in the Funeral Services program, I have to realize that I function very differently from capitalist societies
that want to shove cadavers into cement boxes and put them underground. But the best way to fight is from within. I want to bring into my new college classrooms the discussions that I had brought to my students in the past. Deliberating your mortality and looking inside yourself for the courage to make end-of-life plans can heal wounds that you never knew existed and increase your gratitude of life! Everyone dies. It’s not fun to swallow for any of us, but I believe if the “business” of death (finances, remains and funeral planning, logistics, and wills, etc.) were to be dealt with during life, the concept of grieving and healing from such a loss will be more comprehensible to our psyches. Plus, there is now a myriad of ways to deal with our remains that people can research and choose for their own body before the time of death, therefore lessening denial and fear. Creating sensitive spaces and discussions that aid people in figuring out how they want to go, what goals need to be accomplished before the time comes, how to work through grief and look death in the eyes could create a kinder, more appreciative society. Humanity and society as a whole are perfectly capable of acknowledging what we’ve always known and there is no reason to be afraid of it. We have rights as human beings to make these decisions ourselves and if we can
confront these issues it can be an empowering experiences for us all.

Statistics say that 20 years from now the majority of morticians will be women between the ages of 20 and 30. Women who went from being tiny Goth girls to elegantly dressed academics ready to discuss what most of the world isn’t. This is a fight for the betterment of our future, not our demise and I am willing and ready to educate others and ease them into a new philosophy of death. This reformation could be an answer to many of the world’s problems and even if it’s not I am going to be present for the battle.

By 2017 I am going to be a certified mortician, hopefully writing my own educational and death-positive literature. If there truly is a movement happening right here, right now, I am not going to let it slip away in my lifetime.
3 Life Studies
Anika Smith

Anika Smith is a Digital Gaming and Media student and artist. 3 Life Studies was the midterm assignment from the Human Life Drawing course. The artist used pencil, and walnut and sumi ink.
Figure Study Midterm  
Jonathan Lampel  

A gesture study of three figures, 25 minutes each. LWIT’s human life drawing class has helped me nail down proportions and anatomy, which will be extremely valuable in the animation industry.
Revolving
Neelam Singh

This piece, “Revolving,” tries to capture different moods in a very symbolic way for masculine and feminine energies respectively. The work attempts at depicting the merging of these two energies to create balance.
I was assigned to write a process analysis essay, so I chose to write about only one of the fascinating systems in the body: the nervous system. I put my knowledge to the test by trying to explain how the nervous system causes reflexes.

You’re moving your hands on the fluffy carpet in your bedroom, and you suddenly pull your hand back at the exact moment that you feel a sharp pain on the tip of your finger. You glance at your hand but direct your attention to the carpet, searching for the cause of your pain. A shiny, silver line stands out and you make a mental note: put away all the sewing supplies.

With our sense of touch, our bodies can feel and recognize objects in our surroundings. When we suddenly feel something sharp, we might move before we can process what happened. Within our bodies, messages are sent among cells for us to accomplish every step involved in a reflex. It is complex—but not for our bodies, since they are capable of executing hundreds of complex processes at once. Let’s try to understand at a basic level what is happening inside our bodies when a reflex occurs.
The nervous system is the system in the human body that makes reflexes possible because it allows interaction to happen. This includes interaction simply within our bodies or between our bodies and our surroundings. Interaction within our bodies maintains homeostasis. You see, our bodies are neat and like our internal conditions to be a certain way. When things aren’t that way, the body takes actions to meet the desired conditions and keep us alive. Interaction between our bodies and our surroundings is also important because our bodies can work with various parts to protect us if they detect harm. When you felt the sharp needle, the nervous system detected harm and was working to protect you from further harm.

The nervous system is divided into two departments. The first, the Central Nervous System (CNS), includes the brain and the spinal cord. The second is the Peripheral Nervous System (PNS), and it contains all the nerves outside the CNS. The PNS is divided further into two groups: the somatic nervous system and the autonomic nervous system. What differentiate these two groups are how we use them and what effectors get stimulated in each. Effectors are any cells or tissues that respond to commands from the nervous system.
The somatic nervous system depends on our voluntary control and its effectors are skeletal muscles. For example, we use the somatic nervous system when we reach for a glass of lemonade. The autonomic nervous system performs involuntary and automatic actions. Its effectors are smooth muscles, cardiac muscle, and glands (Taylor 148). This system’s jobs include making sure that we digest the nutrients we consume.

The cells that allow cooperation between the brain and other parts of the body are neurons. Neurons are the specialized cells found in the nervous system. The classification of neurons depends on the direction in which they send impulses. Sensory neurons collect information from our senses. They are afferent, meaning they direct impulses to the CNS. Motor neurons, which are efferent, send messages from the CNS to other parts of the body. Finally, interneurons direct information from one neuron to another within the CNS. They link the sensory and motor neurons. When you experience a reflex, interneurons send messages to provide further assistance for the body. For example, interneurons can transmit impulses to other parts of the CNS to help you retain balance as you react abruptly (Taylor 150).
A neuron has an important job to do: relay information to, within, or from the CNS. Its structure helps it accomplish its goal. As shown in figure 1, each neuron has a *cell body*, *dendrites*, and an *axon*. The cell body contains the nucleus and other organelles. The dendrites are fibers that extend away from the cell and resemble a tree. They act as receptors because they receive a stimulus and conduct it to the cell body to interpret. A neuron’s axon is a single fiber that also extends from the cell body. It conducts impulses away from the neuron, either to another neuron, to a muscle, or to a gland. Some axons are covered by a fatty, insulating material of *myelin sheath* (Taylor 150). This myelin sheath is like a blanket that wraps around the axon. However, the myelin doesn’t cover it like one big blanket. Instead, the cells that make up the myelin (called “*Schwann cells*”) are like multiple small blankets that leave exposed spaces in between. On an axon, the exposed spaces are called *nodes* (also called “*nodes of ranvier*”). Impulses jump from node to node, making their transmission quicker and more precise.

So what happens inside your body when you experience a reflex after touching a sharp needle? The CNS and PNS work together to send and perform commands in the body. When we
feel something sharp, the sensory neurons of the PNS send information to the CNS. An impulse begins at the dendrites of these neurons. The impulse travels through the cell body, then through the myelinated axon, where it quickly jumps from node to node. The dendrites of another neuron receive the messages and this pattern continues. The information is directed to the CNS, where interneurons assist in analyzing and interpreting the information. The CNS says, “We are touching something that could be harmful. We cannot touch it anymore.” The CNS then sends messages back to the PNS using motor neurons. The impulse travels down the dendrites, cell body, and axon of each neuron until it reaches its target. In this case, the autonomic nervous system sends a message to the muscles in your hand because this system is determined to protect you. Involuntarily, you pull your hand away. The nervous system has accomplished its immediate mission, but it continues working because it has other very busy and important jobs.
Fig. 1. Diagram of a neuron, a cell of the nervous system.


Works Cited

Dream Farm House
Nidhi Bindlish

I am an artist and taking class from LWTech. I am exploring different mediums of painting like sketching, pastels, oil, and spray.
Bilbo’s Hobbit Hole of Hobbiton
Stephanie Conway

I’m a high school student at LWTech. This painting was done in Jason Sobottka’s painting class. Every person should take an art class of any kind. If they don’t, they are truly missing out.
To the Sound of Tamboura
Elena Kirkegaard

This essay, which was written for English 101, grew out of a response to Louise Erdrich’s essay “Beneath My House.” Like Erdrich, I had an objective to write about my experience of panic. My essay is quite fictional and not based on one particular experience. I had a period of time (a couple of years) when I had experiences of bliss and fear alternating each other and arising unexpectedly during my practice. Then it all stabilized - I became generally less anxious and fearful and, at the same time, more connected with the natural states of happiness and quietude. I don’t want to mislead anybody into thinking that meditation practice is associated with fear and panic!

Part 1. Inspiration.

When I was a teenager my grandmother gave me a book with an intriguing title: Pranayama, The Science of Yogic Breathing, by Yogi Ramacharakra. This was in 1987, near the beginning of “Perestroika” in Russia. The “Iron Curtain” separating Soviet Union from the Western World was lifted, and all kinds of books that were considered “enemy propaganda” before now flooded bookstores and newsstands of St-Petersburg. The book was so odd that it immediately caught my attention. It was first published in 1916 in the old Cyrillic alphabet that went out of use in the 1930’s. I had never seen a
book written in this old font before. I giggled with enjoyment trying to decipher the writing. But, the subject of the book was so fascinating that it was worth the effort. The author was describing the great benefits of yogic breathing and a connection between the breath and the mind. The second part of the book was teaching readers how to use the flow of the breath to meditate and to attain spiritual awakening, or "enlightenment."

To pique my interest even more, my grandmother told me that her mother, my great grandmother, was a yogi and a meditation practitioner. She was born before the Russian Revolution and had had in her possession a book on meditation and yoga. It was a large and beautiful book, as my grandmother remembered it. Its black leather cover was embossed with golden ornaments and the text was generously sprinkled with delicate illustrations and curly vignettes. When the Red Army commissars came to raid the house in 1917, grandmother hid the book under a floor board. She offered her possessions (money, jewelry, clothes) voluntarily, so the commissars would search no further. The book was saved, and she kept it close at hand her entire life.
The story inspired me greatly and took me on my own path of spiritual explorations. First, I began collecting and reading all the books on yoga and meditation I could find. Often, I didn’t understand their deeper meaning, but I enjoyed the process and the occasional Sanskrit words, like nirvana or kundalini. I knew, I wanted to perfect the practice of meditation, but when I tried to meditate, I felt restless and uncomfortable. My mind wondered and worried incessantly. By the age of twenty, my enthusiasm had run out and my attempts to meditate had come to a halt, until one day, many years later, my relationship with the meditation practice changed, and my enthusiasm was reignited once again.

Part 2. Experience.

I was in my 30’s, living in a new city, in a foreign country, striving to find myself in this new life. One day I typed “meditation, Seattle” into a search engine. The net generously offered me a number of choices. I picked one place and wrote down the address. I didn’t know what to expect, but I was ready for an adventure.

I arrived at the door of a meditation center some days later, in time for a session, or satsang. A well-dressed woman let me
in, greeting me with a smile. Some pleasant music was playing, a spacious hall was well lit, and the milky white walls seemed translucent. Arrangements of fresh flowers, large and small, were places here and there. Framed portraits of the Guru, the current leader of this tradition, were displayed on every wall. I walked slowly around, looking at each portrait. Some portraits were formal, offering a viewer a benevolent smile and a joyful variety of monastic garments of Indian swamis: scarlet red, coral, peach, and saffron yellow. Others were casual, capturing the moment of movement and emotion. But most striking feature in all the portraits was the piercing look of the Guru’s large black eyes, shaded by her long velvety eyelashes.

The bell rang softly, and an elderly woman announced that the meditation hall was now open. I took my shoes off and walked in. It was dark inside. Several rows of red chairs were arranged neatly. Before I could decide where I wanted to sit, the same woman came to me and directed me to the left. “The right side is for men, the left side is for women - for the purposes of harmonious chanting,” she explained.

When my eyes adjusted to the darkened room, and when I settled comfortably on the floor, I noticed the centerpiece of the
hall. The largest of them all, the framed portrait of the Guru, was placed on a white antique settee. More fresh flowers in tall vases were proudly guarding the Guru’s altar, standing symmetrically at both sides. The garland of red and white roses was strung together with folded green leaves, and was placed over the portrait. A poignant smell of sandalwood was layered with a delicate scent of roses. The scents, the shimmering darkness, and the sounds of the room were melting into each other, and I inhaled this fusion deeply, again and again.

After a few minutes, the music started. People began to chant the verse of a mantra - a special phrase offered to the seekers of the tradition to calm the mind. Soon, I found myself joining the chorus of voices. The melody was smooth and almost sleepy in the beginning, but after a while, it was rolling up and down, floating to the left, diving to the right, and twirling in circles. The words of the chant repeated themselves, yet the melody was telling a captivating story, taking the listener on a dramatic journey. As the chant unfolded, the melody became buoyant. My heart began to beat faster, as if it couldn’t contain all the joyful sounds within its boundaries. The chanting reached its intense and bouncing
culmination, when just before the end, it fell into a sleepy pace again. Finally, everything stopped in a vast pulsating silence. It was time for meditation. The lights went completely out: only candles at the altar were permitted to glimmer. I closed my eyes. A new kind of music begun to play, deep and resonant. It was the sound of *tamboura*, a traditional Indian instrument. The few notes repeated themselves in a rhythmical pattern, like a boat rocking on the waves. Deep relaxation overtook me. Part of my mind was still wide awake, making notes and offering opinions. Yet, it had no energy to form any proper sentences. They were only particles, flickers of thoughts. I felt that it was extremely pleasant to sit like this, and I wished I could stay here all night, alone in this room.

Then, I noticed that I couldn’t feel my body anymore. There were no sensations of warmth or cold, comfort or discomfort. I couldn’t feel gravity, breath, or the beating of my heart. It felt as if a life force had left my body, but not my mind. “I’m dying,” the flicker of a thought informed me in a cruel and dispassionate voice.

That flicker started a panic. The intense and mindless fear suddenly rolled up and down my back. I couldn’t understand what was wrong, and where the fear was coming from. I tried
to check my elusive vital signs with my attention: “Is my heart still beating? Am I still breathing? Why can’t I feel it? Am I dead or alive? Maybe there was no me at all - no one to die! I have never lived, breathed, or had a heartbeat!” Somehow, I knew that if I moved even slightly, everything would be back to normal, but I just kept sitting very still, as some part of me was curious about this “near death experience.” I felt like Alice falling into a rabbit hole. “What am I going to tell my mom if I die?” That last thought was just too ridiculous to be taken seriously. I imagined my postmortem, “Cause of death: meditation.” I began to laugh, and just like that, the panic was gone. Without it, I felt free to explore my experience.

There was something extremely pleasant in this weightless, motionless aliveness. I didn’t know if I was in the same room anymore. The space around me was emanating a gentle twilight. It felt perfect for my eyes. Except that my eyes were closed. The sound of *tamboura* also disappeared, but there was some sound that I could not identify. Maybe it was a sound of currents moving in the deep oceanic waters, or the sound of the clouds pushing each other with their masses and crystallizing into the myriads of tiny snowflakes. As from a great distance, I heard the soft chirping of a bell, and the voice inviting me “to
open my eyes and move gently.” I felt disappointed. I couldn’t believe that meditation period was so short, just a few minutes! When I opened my eyes, I realized that forty minutes of meditation session had passed; the program was over and it was time to go home.

When I stepped outside, my mind was very calm. I looked around: everything in nature, trees and shrubs, patches of grass and puddles of water were supremely beautiful, delicate and alive. All the man-made objects – cars, houses, lampposts – were adorable, as crafted by gnomes. Nothing was out of place, and everything was perfect. I was aware of space surrounding every object. It was permeated by light, life and mystery. Everything was sweet, precious and new.

Part 3. Meditation

Later, I learned that everything I felt – the fear, the panic, the stillness, the bliss – was quite common and natural. I also learned that all the spiritual experiences, no matter how fascinating, scary or beautiful, are only the passing experiences. Like any other experiences they come and go. They don’t reflect the depth of our emotional maturity or the sincerity of our values.
After my first visit to meditation center, my practice became regular. However, I have noticed that it was very dynamic. Even today I keep observing the multitude of experiences and emotions that arise during my practice without any reason or invitation. Some of these experiences are intense, and some are very subtle. I try to relate to them with patience. Some days I sit in meditation with unsettling and persisting discomfort, giving my timer a mean look from time to time and wishing for my practice to end quickly. And some days I feel perfectly still, calm and steady, enjoying the light flow of my breath and the mystery of my own presence. Yet, some other days, I feel unable to sit at all. Busyness, laziness or fatigue claims a temporary victory over my senses and leaves my efforts in ruins. On the days or weeks like these, I turn to a good book for inspiration and comfort.

I have also discovered that every experience that arises during my meditation practice has a purpose – to serve and to teach me an important lesson. It is a good friend who guides me on the journey of life and self-discovery.
Splendor in Chiya
Rose Amano

I am currently in the second year of the MMDP Graphic Arts program. This quarter I’m enrolled in printmaking class and the piece, Splendor in Chiya, is an additive monoprint. This style of printing is only one print so planning is well thought out. Starting off with a monoprint, the center flora, and introducing other layers of print impressions with textures of blending elements creates a reflective landscape—a movement of patterns, like a river.
Sea Garden
Rose Amano

This is my second year in the MMDP Graphic Arts program. In preparation for my first abstract painting in acrylics, I did a sketch study to check the balance of colors, elements and movement within the space allowed. This helps to train the eyes to envision paint strokes between the paint layers.
I'm in the welding program and this was for my English 101 class with Wes Mantooth. The assignment was a narrative essay and I chose to write about a near-death experience I had while diving.

Note: In this essay, all names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved (editor).

I awoke to the thrumming of the engines vibrating throughout the deck, the muted shouts of work crews moving equipment, and the dull roar of the a/c units working overtime again. I sluggishly crawled out of my bunk, donned a pair of flip flops and shuffled my way out of the cabin towards the deck hatch. Overwhelming light, heat, humidity, and sound assaulted me the second I made my way through the hatch and out onto the deck of the Heracles, a beast of a derrick barge at 420 feet long and 98 feet wide and with a 500 ton main crane located out in the Gulf of Mexico.

I quickened my pace as I made my way towards the locker entrance and re-entered the relative comfort of the air-conditioned interior of the ship. As I met up with my dive crew at our lockers, the usual bullshitting began, talking about the dives we had that day, our girls back home, football, and
whatever other nonsense wandered into our heads. After a quick shower and a fresh set of clothes we made our way to the upper decks and the commissary for our morning meal, but to call it breakfast always felt imprecise as it was the night shifts dinner and contained none of your usual “breakfast foods,” pork-chops with mashed potatoes and gravy, green bean casserole, salad, and far too much macaroni and cheese.

Once we had all finished, we proceeded to the communal recreation room, merely a large box with a TV, a few computers, and a spattering of crappy books and magazines. This mediocre refuge served as the conference room twice a day for our Job Safety Analysis meetings, but as usual I was only mildly present as the upper ups prattled on in a wasted attempt to inspire us about having pride in our work, working efficiently as a team, and presenting the best face possible for the company. Once we were finally free from the meeting, our group split up, with me making my way out to the deck and the little dive shack that served as home base for my crew, a cozy affair with a large couch, TV, and video games for when we didn’t have any active divers in the water or were waiting on something before a dive.
I was greeted by a tennis ball to the head immediately upon entering the door courtesy of my dive partner, Sean Birdsall, whom all of us just called Birdman. With a modicum of cursing I flung the ball back in his general direction and flopped down on the couch. A few minutes of the usual back and forth previewed half an hour of intense virtual violence wherein we proceeded to mutilate each other relentlessly.

When my dive manager emerged from his private cabin, a huge luxury on such a cramped ship, our entire demeanor changed on a dime. We became attentive, quiet, and thoughtful because our boss didn’t have the nickname “Screaming Rhino” for nothing. His name was Walt Edderman and he was a mountain of a man, thick with muscle from years of hard labor, skin leathereed and tough, and a temper as short as a freshly mown lawn. What proceeded was a Job Safety Analysis which I had prepared and subsequently delivered, but unlike the general meeting earlier mine was riddled with questions and discussions because as divers we were the one who could die with a simple slip or minor mistake.

It wasn’t until we were half way through our required meeting that our fresh rookie, Ben Acker, came crashing into the room moaning some excuse about no one waking him up.
This was an individual for whom my partner and I had almost no tolerance, sadly we were stuck with the task of evaluating and training the kid and we had yet to be impressed. The general attitude of our work was this: you show up on time, you work your ass off, you do everything as safely as possible, and you watch each other’s backs, all were attributes that Acker had failed to display in the two weeks we had known him.

Once Edderman had vented on Acker we quickly wrapped up our meeting and went to work getting our gear ready. Birdman and I were the first divers up and we set about our daily helmet maintenance before going over our operations plan. Today we were going to be inspecting an old oil rig that had begun tilting and required observation before deciding whether it was to be repaired or scrapped and replaced. We worked through our plan, Acker poking his nose in and giving a variety of useless and incorrect advice on how to do our jobs.

Finally we were ready to go, so we donned our wetsuits, harnesses, emergency oxygen bottles, weight belts, and stood at standby with our helmets. Today I was first dive with Birdman my rescue diver for the first six hours then we would swap. Edderman came storming out of his office (not that we
had ever seen him move in a way that we didn’t describe as angry) and hollered out final orders and gave us the green light to hook up our air hoses and don our helmets. This was when I found I had the misfortune to have Acker as my tender; he was going to be holding my air hose, my lifeline, in his hands the entire day. Not a concept I was fond of but orders being orders I just grumbled about it and got on with my work.

A two story jump was my entrance into the water that day, and immediately upon resurfacing I ran through my triple checks for my air supplies. After checking that all my seals were good and finding everything as it should be I began my descent. I plummeted down 60 feet in a matter of seconds to arrive at the first inspection location. As always I relished the rush of the dive, of doing something less than 1% of the world population can do. I came quickly out of my reverie and oriented myself to my work and began making my way over to the first of three pylons I had to inspect. Upon making contact I secured myself and radioed Edderman topside for my inspection equipment. That was the beginning of the slow process of magnetic particle inspection, moving inch by inch around the pylon, each of which had a 10 foot diameter.
Time passed as it always does and I fell into my routine: position my electromagnet, sprinkle iron filings, activate my magnet, look for the cracks the filings become drawn to, report to topside, and move on. This was my day for the next two and a half hours until the monotony was broken by a message from topside about a storm that was nearby and which would require us to cease dive operations if it continued to head for us. Thinking very little about the storm warning I went back to work knowing the mad scramble that the deck would be, riggers running to and fro securing all manner of equipment, divers making sure our bottles of oxygen were properly capped if not in use, putting up tarps for our hyperbaric chambers, and everyone keeping their eyes open for loose tools and trip hazards.

That was when my day changed in a terrifying way, I began to ascend. This development was extremely disquieting as it meant that something was wrong with my air hose that suspended me above the depths. I began to panic and immediately called out to topside asking what the fuck was going on, all the while feeling the pressure in my head build. Time slowed to a crawl all of a sudden and I had a surprising feeling of calm as what I heard from topside hit home. I wasn’t
supposed to be ascending, something was very wrong, and suddenly I knew that I was going to die. My first thought was that at least it would be quick: rising faster than my bubbles, the nitrogen and oxygen in my brain would expand drastically, killing me instantly with an arterial gas embolism.

My entire life didn’t flash before my eyes, and I didn’t have some spiritual moment of awakening. I merely thought about the people I loved and that I wish I could see them one more time. In a snap time returned to normal and I was rushing upwards, darkness encroaching my vision, and all I managed to say before the black consumed everything was “tell my family I love them.”

To awake was infinitely surprising to me, not to mention extremely disorienting; I came to staring at the white metal interior of a hyperbaric chamber; I heard the rushing sound of oxygen pumped in, felt the chill of the tank. As I gathered my senses and my awareness increased, I tried to rise from the floor and was gently pushed back down by a nurse’s hands and gently soothed and told to relax, assured I was alright, and that I was safe. I fell back into unconsciousness, but this time with vast depths of relief and joy at having somehow survived.
When I awoke for the second time, I was feeling monumentally improved, I had some strength back and I was actively aware of my surroundings. This time the nurse, whose name was Karen, helped me sit up, handed me a cup of hot soup and began to explain what had happened. As it turned out Acker had nearly killed me. When the storm warning that I had thought so little about went out across the deck, Acker had gone into a full blown panic and taken it upon himself to haul me up and to “safety” as fast as possible. When Edderman heard me on the radio panicking he had charged outside, deployed Birdman, and grabbed my line out of Acker’s hands and dropped me some 20 feet. What followed was a hurried emergency decompression/recompression which landed me in the hyperbaric chamber for a week, and I had just woken up on day three.

The aftermath of the incident went by in a blur, lots of MRI’s and being poked and prodded by various doctors and psychologists. In the end the incident prompted me to leave the diving industry and return home to Washington, where struggling with PTSD and nerve damage the desire for familiar and comforting territory was strong to say nothing of the support of family. The repercussions of the incident were
varied and from my viewpoint very fair: Birdman got a promotion and significant pay raise for his part in what happened, and Edderman received a commendation and my sincere thanks, but Acker in contrast was not only fired but he received a black mark in the industry preventing him from ever finding work as a diver in addition to being charged with criminal negligence.

Looking back at it now, years later, I find that I am actually grateful for the accident that nearly took my life. Going through that experience relieved me from my invincibility complex, and in overcoming the struggles that were the aftermath I grew exponentially as a person. I will never forget the panic, the terror, and the calm resignation that came with realizing what I believed an inevitable end. The joy of awakening, finding that I was alive, and discovering new appreciations for life and its beauty is something that I will forever cherish.
Rip Tide Rider
Robert Rowe

Painted in oils on a 36” x 24” canvas.
While growing up a few distinct sounds will be seared into my mind, it like a song melody that is forever embedded into your mind, for me it is the constant sound of woks over a jet-stream like fire stir-frying food, or the noodle man slamming dough against the wood bench while the dough is hand pulled into beautiful strands of noodles. You see, my parents owned a Chinese restaurant and being born into the restaurant life was a curse and a blessing for me. Growing up and being exposed to the food industry at a young age I was like any other kid, I much rather have had that burger from a fast food restaurant, or that microwaved boxed meal from the grocery store. It wasn’t until my late high school, early college years did I finally appreciate food and wanted to replicate dishes I ate at restaurants and at home.

So why culinary school? Working in the foodservice industry for the last 6 years, and finally in 2012 with the decision of changing my lifestyle and turning vegetarian, a huge question and lightbulb sparked in my head. Where the heck is my food coming from? I started cooking for myself a lot more (terribly I might add) while eating less processed foods and ultimately
finding out where my food was sourced; then the idea of attending culinary school made sense. Why not attend school where I can first hand touch all these whole products, learn proper kitchen and cooking techniques all while learning how to turn these whole products into a restaurant quality dish, that was pure excitement for me. LWIT has no doubt become the backbone to my culinary training, other than being classically French trained, I liked to think of it as a playground, a place where you can share ideas with everyone and play with your food. LWIT chef instructors have graciously been very accommodating with my vegetarian lifestyle and even encouraged it at school.

Food has become a way that I am able to express myself artistically, it’s a never ending cycle of how you can better yourself next time. The ingredients, flavors, and the way I plate my food is a way to represent who I am. The last couple years have been an amazing journey here at LWIT, as I have seen myself grow as a cook, and a culinarian. LWIT has given me the confidence and basic tools to get a job in the industry and most importantly, to do well at my job. To see how far I’ve come the last 2 years is absolutely amazing.
To showcase my last couple years here in the Culinary Arts program, I was very proud to present my final capstone project and challenge myself by making an all vegan menu and representing myself on the plate. Thinking outside the box was definitely something I enjoyed doing very much. It’s the most satisfying feeling watching your menu go from just a brainstorm to fully plated!
A Disguised Blessing
Jonathan Lopez

The prompt for this essay was to write about a significant event that happened to someone.

After graduating from high school, I never thought I would go to college. However, I will be receiving my associate’s in the Information Technology Application Development program in the fall of 2015, making me the first and only one in my family to receive a college degree, but certainly not the last one. Although I was hesitant to go back to school, I soon realized how much of an impact this decision has made in my daily life and in a way it gave me a whole new purpose. I have also gained programming knowledge that I was not aware I was missing. Most importantly, I have met people that have made a huge impact in my life in unexpected ways; some have even helped me grow as a person. Besides meeting people that I aspire to be like one day, I have also met friends that are ambitious as I am and have formed partnerships to succeed in the competitive gaming industry.

Although I have been learning how to program for about 6 years now, until 2 years ago I had never learned about
programming inside a classroom. Through persistency and motivation I utilized the free information available online to teach myself how to write code. Even though I had found phenomenal “teachers” and strong communities online, I was losing the motivation to learn about and practice coding. I was getting overwhelmed and impatient. I just wanted to create applications, but instead I had to spend most of my time studying and researching how to do various things. Eventually I began to understand how to create applications for a wide range of platforms. For example, I started to developed applications for the IPhone and Android marketplace, as well as websites and PC programs. I always felt like I could learn faster from having a teacher that I could ask for help or advice when I needed it. I knew I needed some sort of further education and was considering going to college. However, I was hesitant to go back school since I didn’t want to do anything else besides program. Also, I always felt like education should be free, especially in my field because information is always rapidly changing. Ultimately, though, I knew that my chances of getting a job without a degree would be very slim. Therefore I started looking into different programs offered in my field.
After extensively searching for the right educational path, I decided to give Lake Washington Institute of Technology a chance. Even though I planned to go to college mostly to be hirable and to make connections with people, I have also learned a lot about programming, more than I would have ever imagined. For instance, due to my program’s curriculum I had to learn many programming languages that I wouldn’t have learned otherwise. One programming language in particular that I learned is C++. I wouldn’t have learned this programming language on my own because I simply didn’t have a reason to and this language tends to be more challenging for programmers. However, thanks to my knowledgeable C++ teacher guiding me through this language, I have learned some of the fundamentals and logic behind commonly used functionalities used in most popular programming languages. Knowing how to program before going to school helped me significantly. Since I knew basic programming logic already I was able to quickly advance to more difficult topics.

Besides the obvious reason of going to college for the education, I also wanted to meet people that knew about art to help me with various projects I was currently working on.
Therefore, in the first quarter at Lake Washington Tech I took a class called Interactive Media Design, which is part of art program. Little did I know, this class would have a big impact on my life. At first, I was thrown off by the teacher’s teaching style. For example, the first day of class we all sat around a table and talked about games. However, as time went on the teacher’s unique perspective on different subjects and knowledge of the gaming industry made me really respect him and want to learn from him. I wanted to impress him so he would acknowledge me. One day, the teacher assigned us to bring and show anything in class so I had a chance to show my skills. I put in a lot of effort to create an interactive mouse application to show the class (the application interacted with the user according with the position of the mouse), which really impressed him. This set in motion a chain of events that would alter my life.

After creating many challenging but successful applications for the school, my teacher gave me the opportunity to be part of the PAX club. This club is made up of artists and a few programmers that create games that might get to go to the PAX gaming convention, which is held for 3 days out of the year. In this club, I was able to find a lot of people who were
interested in creating art for games, which was what I was looking for. Although most of them were new or lacking the motivation, I found a group of people that were motivated, had the talent, and, most importantly, were innovative like I am. Through collaboration and dedication we were able to create a truly innovative gaming system. I have become obsessed with developing this gaming system not just for the potential financial rewards but also for self-entertainment. This project has motivated me to become a better programmer and giving me an exciting goal for the future.

Even though I was going to college to improve my resume and programming knowledge I ended up gaining much more than I would have ever expected. I was lucky enough to meet a great mentor that helped me grow and friends that still help me create interactive games. Going to college and being a part of the PAX club has given me the chance to push myself to create an interactive gaming system that I have been religiously working on. Unexpectedly, my decision to go to college led to this invention which gave me the desire and motivation to become a better programmer.

Video of the game can be seen here:

http://www.quackattackgames.com/about.html
Lily Flower
Nayela Ahmed

I'm never without a sketchbook, so I am constantly drawing, and sometimes the drawings can develop into a more in depth ideas that blossom into detailed images. My work tends to focus on nature, animals, people, and the environment around me. This particular subject is a lily flower on the pond, and its reflection. This delicate artwork was created using Adobe Illustrator. My influences are everything I feel, see and hear, but I've always loved nature, particularly flowers.
Comparison in Deaths caused by Ebola and AIDS in 2014
Eduard Ordukhanov

I am an ITAD student here at Lake Washington Institute of Technology. The work that I am submitting was done in my technical writing class, and it uses the power of visuals to demonstrate the difference between deaths caused by Ebola, and AIDS in the year 2014.

Ebola took the spotlight in the news when an outbreak occurred in Liberia. Because of the significant news coverage relating Ebola many people around the world thought they were in great danger, and believed that Ebola would be the
next big pandemic. Fortunately if you live in the United States there is a higher chance of you dying as a result of a lightning strike than contracting Ebola. Above is a graph that compares deaths as a result of Ebola, and AIDS in countries which are mostly in Africa. Right away it is easy to tell that deaths caused by AIDS are significantly higher. In fact the deaths caused by AIDS in Nigeria were so significant that the bar graph fails to fit the actual number. In reality the deaths caused by AIDS in Nigeria should be a little over twice the size of the bar shown in the graph. Meanwhile the deaths caused by Ebola in Nigeria are so miniscule that it is hard to even tell if any exist. The most deaths in 2014 as a result of AIDS happened in Nigeria which is 209,600, and the most deaths that occurred as a result of Ebola happened in Liberia which is 4,716. This goes to show that Ebola was overhyped by the media, and there is really no reason to fear Ebola when there are much worse viruses, and diseases out there that the media fails to cover.
Women in the Military
Sidney Teske

I am in the High School Academy at LWIT. I enjoy going through high school and college at the same time. College is so much cooler the high school. I enjoy writing essays and taking English classes. This essay I wrote was not based on radical feminism. I just think that women should be treated more equal, even in the military. And yes, I am a guy.

Over the history of mankind, many people have argued about whether women should be allowed to serve the military or not. Women were first admitted to join the military in 1901, after women aided the military by nursing in the American-Spanish war because the armed forces could not find enough male nurses to serve the troops. And for over a century, women
served the military by cleaning, sewing and cooking for the troops. Moreover, the military officials declared women should only be permitted to serve in the military when there was a serious shortage of men. Finally, with the women rights movement in 1976, women were finally permitted to join the military academies and services. Women join the Air Force because the physical conditions required by this branch of the military are conditions that women are capable of performing as well, if not better, than men. Regulations and requirements necessary to become an Air Force pilot can apply to both men and women. In some cases physical hindrances in flight, such as gravity, actually favor women. Because women are usually shorter and have a slightly different body structure they have a different G force system regulating their bodily functions. Therefore, their tolerance for in flight conditions is superior to that of men. G force refers to the force of gravity on the body and women’s body structure related to this G force is more conducive to in flight conditions. Additionally, the eye-hand coordination and intellectual capacities such as the ability to read and perform instrumentation associated with flight are talents available to both genders. Another reason why women join the Air Force over other divisions of military is because of
the more civilized approach to the job. In branches like the Army, troops have to stay aware of what is going on around them. These troops may be sleeping on the ground, even in countries that they are invading. In general, women like to have a safer, stable and more secure job. By working at the Air Force, many women have the ability to have a life outside their job. For example, many women are raising a family while working for the Air Force. Even though there are women in other sections of military, the majority of them are proud of working for the Air Force.

References


The Beast Mode Effect
Justin Tremain

Our objective for the assignment was to create a visual chart that is clear to follow and easy to understand while still having a great visual impact.

Since joining the Seahawks in 2010, which he played a limited role in 12 out of 16 games, Marshawn “Beast Mode” Lynch has had his best stats of his career. Lynch has steadily increased his production on the field in both rushing and receiving. The Seahawks have a win/loss record of 50 wins and 30 losses since Beast Mode arrived in the Emerald City, compared to the prior five years where they posted a win/loss record of 41 wins and 39 losses. This chart that shows that despite his age of 28, which is relatively high for a running back, he is consistently producing and the Seahawks are winning more games.
Animal Creatures
Eric Liggins

A one page comic of a couple of animals dealing with the unknown. The real unknowns would be why are these animals talking and what kind of steroid is this bee using?
Head Kicks in Taekwondo: An Unregulated Danger?
Amanda Gardiner

_I am an underage student at LWTech, who submitted this as my research essay for English 102. The topic of head contact is very personal to me, as I am a 3rd degree Black Belt in Taekwondo, and am an internationally ranked competitor in the sport. Despite the danger I put myself through, I relish in it every moment, and hope that one day I can enjoy it in complete safety._

Taekwondo, a Korean martial art, is popular for its disciplined training, flashy kicks, and diversity of activities that appeal to a wide group of people. The practice of Taekwondo consists of forms - which are sets of choreographed moves, weapons, which are used in self-defense, and finally sparring, where athletes don protective gear and fight each other. More difficult kicks earn more points, with the person who has the most points at the end winning the match. Ever since Taekwondo was introduced to the Summer Olympic Games in 1992, sparring has become more and more popular and increasingly violent as elite and professional competitors clash head to head in an attempt to fight in the Olympics. In the dangerous world of elite Taekwondo sparring, recent years
have seen head contact becoming more forceful and violent, being used by younger and younger age groups, and causing serious injuries in athletes.

As Taekwondo is a relatively new sport in the competitive world, in the Olympics for only the past 23 years, the rules of world class Taekwondo have evolved with the sport. It was after several years of strict no head contact that the rules were changed to allow adults full head contact. From that point the rules evolved further to permit black belt juniors (ages 15-17) to kick to the head with full force; soon after junior color belts were allowed the same privilege. Now within the past several years, 12-13 year old belts of all colors can make contact to the head, up to the point of knocking their opponent down. With these rules have come increased difficulty to score points on the chest with the introduction of electronic chest gear, and increased point values for kicking to the head. All of these rules make kicking to the head more and more appealing to the athletes, who are ignoring the severe risk of closed head injuries in an attempt to win.

Part of the rise of popularity in head kicks is the increasing difficulty to score on the chest. This is a result of the invention of electronic chest gear by a group of seven engineers who
started the technology company Truescore Inc. in 2000. Their technology was used in its first Olympic games at the London Olympics in 2012 (Jean, S. 2012). Before electronic scoring, four judges would sit at each corner of the mat with controls and whenever a judge would see a kick they felt was a point they would press a button on their controls. If three out of four judges pressed the button, a point would go to that opponent. It was a very inaccurate system, with points lost if the judges didn’t hit the button quick enough, couldn’t see the kick due to bad positioning, or even had a bias for or against one of the competitors. While the judging system is still in place for other types of kicks - to score extra points for a turning kick to the torso, and for both regular and turning kicks to the head - the electronic system takes out the subjective element for the most common type of kick, which are regular kicks to the torso.

The electronic scoring functions through two pieces of equipment, the hogu (or chest guard) and the foot gear. Embedded in the foot gear are magnets, whose magnetic field is picked up by sensors within the hogu's that anticipate contact (Jean, S. 2012). When the magnets and sensors make contact as a kick is executed, information about the kick that includes the impact and force are sent to a wireless
transmitter put in the back of the chest guard (ibid.). The transmitter sends the info over to the main operating system which then analyzes the registered kick and scores it if above a certain psi (pounds per square inch) limit (ibid.). Because of this minimum impact level that kicks must surpass to score, there is a much higher level of difficulty to score points to the torso. This difficulty, added on to the fact that regular kicks to the torso only score one point per kick, means that more and more athletes are switching over to head kicks, which have a much higher point per kick ratio.

In the year 2003, the World Taekwondo Federation made historic changes to their Olympic style Sparring by allowing children and adolescents from ages 12 and up to start kicking and scoring to the head (WTF, 2014, p. 2). This meant that children were encouraged by their coaches and parents to start aggressively attacking the head, something that before the rule amendment in 2003 would have been grounds for disqualification from a competition. While the cadet age group (ages 12-14) is instructed to only use ‘light’ head contact, meaning they can tap the head but will be penalized for hard kicks or knock downs, the junior age division (ages 15-17) are allowed full head contact including knock downs and possible
With the juniors fighting for positions on the junior national team, world ranking, and spots on the future Olympic teams, the junior division has taken advantage of full head contact and aims to disable their opponent whenever possible, a violent outcome that would have been frowned upon before.

In the addendum of 2003 that allowed young age groups to start kicking to the head, the World Taekwondo Federation also increased the point values for successful head contact (WTF, 2014). A successful regular kick to the torso of your opponent scores one point, and a turning kick (which is defined if at any point during the execution of the kick you expose your back to your opponent) to the torso is worth two points. It used to be the same rules for head contact, one point for regular kicks to the head and two for turning kicks to the head, but this changed dramatically. Now regular kick to the head of your opponent will score three points, and a turning kick to the head will score four points (WTF, 2014, Article 12). This score difference means that an athlete can win a match while simultaneously executing fewer kicks, so they exert themselves less while winning matches if they use more difficult and violent kicks, a risk they are willing to take.
The danger of increased head contact also came with the 2003 rule that the area considered ‘head’ increased (WTF, 2014). Previously, the head was considered the top and sides of the head which were safely covered by head gear. In the rule change, the ‘head’ was considered any place on the body from the collarbones up, including neck, face, and back of the head (ibid). This not only makes scoring to the head easier for athletes, but increases their chances of injury by allowing full contact to vulnerable areas above the neck.

The possibility of injury that is brought about by these new head contact rules has people concerned and worried for the wellbeing of their children. An article from ABC News (n.d.) cites the Illinois Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr., who himself is a black belt in Taekwondo, on the dangers that the new rules present, “It’s one thing to score a point, it’s another thing where the goal is to disable a young person from participating in the sport, and quite possibly disable them from participating in any other activity for the rest of their life” (ABC News, para. 4). They go on to explain how these new rules increase the chances of concussions, which can be dangerous to the developing brains of children (ibid.). The American Academy of Pediatrics explains how these rules for increased head contact
in children go against good sportsmanship, saying, “If the idea is to prepare our children for combat, this places winning above children’s safety” (as cited in ABC News, para. 11).

With the increased number of head kicks that athletes deal and receive during a match, due to the rule changes made in 2003, the number of closed head injuries among sparring competitors has increased dramatically. A study by Fife, O’Sullivan, and Pieter (2013) on the biomechanics of head injury in Taekwondo sparring shows that while Taekwondo has a low amount of head contact compared to other full contact sports, with an average of only 1.22 head blows per minute, “the resultant effect of one blow may amount to a severe head injury” (Fife, p. 6). They continue on to talk about how the high rate of concussions among athletes in Taekwondo has been caused by, “sequelae of chronic traumatic encephalopathy” (Fife, 2013, p. 6). This means that even though an individual strike to the head may not be life threatening, repeated trauma to the head will lead to concussions and other severe closed head injuries.

The danger of the repeated head kicks can be seen in a nine-year-long study of the injuries reported during elite Taekwondo sparring competitions. Kazemi, Mohsen,
Chudolinski, Artur, Turgeon, Matt, Aaron, Simon, Ho, Eric, & Coombe, Lianne (2009) collected information from injury reports that were filed and treated by the medical staff at the competition (Kazemi et al. p. 1). Out of all the injuries that were reported throughout the study, the most common area for injuries to be sustained was the head, with an injury rate of 19% (Kazemi et al. 2009. Table 2). The period of study from 2000-2009 took into account the rule changes for head contact in 2003, and Kazemi et al. (2009) explain that this, “adds incentive to score more points via head strikes and thereby increases the risk of head injury.” (Kazemi et al. p. 3) The study involved 664 competitors total, and had the second highest injury rate reported in the head and neck, with 208 injuries for a rate of 23.3% (Kazemi et al. 2009. Table 3). All of these reports exemplify the high rate of head injury in Taekwondo sparring and how easy it is for the repeated head trauma to cause severe damage to the athletes.

While all of the injuries discussed above prove the danger of Taekwondo sparring, they do not show how part of the cause for the danger came with the 2003 rule changes that increase incentive to kick to the head. This can be shown by comparing the nine year study of Taekwondo injuries, which included a
six year period of data collection after the rule change, to a study done at the 1997 Canadian National Taekwondo Championships. In the 1997 National Championships, data was collected from medical reports filed by the first aid staff on site at the competition (Kazemi & Pieter. 2004. Methods). Out of the 318 competitors that were reported to the medical staff, only three closed head injuries were reported (ibid.). This comes out to a rate of only 6.9 head injuries per 1,000 competitors (ibid.) While the smaller amount of competitors in the study could give an unnatural bias towards a smaller percentage of head injuries, this rate of 6.9% is convincing in showing how before the rule changes towards head contact in Taekwondo, sparring was much safer for the competitors and had a much lower rate of serious injuries.

In their review of the biomechanical forces involved in Olympic style Taekwondo sparring, Pieter, Fife, and O’Sullivan (2013) mention how the rules of Taekwondo do not accurately protect the athletes, leading to “increases in head impacts and possible concussions…” (Pieter et al. p. 5). They continue on to discuss the difficult techniques that athletes are using to increase the points they get for a kick to the head and say “medical staff may anticipate more severe injuries due to
these techniques” (Pieter et al. 2013. p. 6). With the high risk of severe head injury, Pieter et al. suggest that the World Taekwondo Federation revise their rules to avoid full head contact, along with keeping medical staff at ringside to immediately assist athletes or stop the match if they see something dangerous being executed (Pieter et al. 2013. p. 8).

While it is so far proven that Taekwondo poses great risks for the athletes in terms of closed head injuries, part of the danger is not the chance of getting an injury, but how the injury will affect the brain. Reynolds (2012), a writer for The New York Times, published an article on how people who played concussion prone sports, such as boxing and football, during their teenage years, had premature aging and decreases in brain matter that were unseen in a control group who did not sustain head injuries (Reynolds, para. 7).

According to studies done by the University of Montreal, which used MRIs to scan the brain matter and volume of seniors ages 50-60 who were former athletes and compared their brains to control groups of people the same age, but without the closed head injuries as adolescents, seniors who had concussions and repeated head trauma, showed “slightly less volume in the hippocampus...slightly thinner cortexes, especially in portions
of the brain known to thin with age...some also showed signs of metabolic slowing and other abnormalities within their brain cells” (As cited in Reynolds, 2012, para. 7). This is known among scientists as premature or “abnormal aging,” where the parts of the brain that age and deteriorate over time naturally have the process accelerated by closed head injuries and trauma (Reynolds, 2012, para. 8). This shows how even if a closed head injury doesn’t have any immediate effect on the athlete, the mere fact that the injury was sustained is enough to change the mental processes and functioning of a human brain.

The dangers of closed head injuries sustained by athletes and how it affects their mental functioning can be seen in the essay of McKee, Cantu, …, and Stern on neurological deterioration caused by repetitive head trauma, the main concern being Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE), which is a progressive mental degenerative disorder found in those that have suffered multiple concussions and other closed head injuries (McKee, Cantu, …, & Stern. 2009. p. 1). They found that CTE was linked to repeated closed head injury and trauma suffered in full contact sports, and with the fact that there are no good treatments for neurological dysfunction after
the injury, recommends for athletes to “decrease the number of concussions or mild traumatic brain injuries. ...This [can be] accomplished by limiting exposure to trauma, for example, by penalizing intentional hits to the head...” (McKee, Cantu, ..., & Stern. 2009. p. 20). The danger that athletes put themselves through is not worth winning a match, as it could cause premature mental degeneration and permanent brain damage.

Head contact in Taekwondo sparring has revolutionized the sport. Athletes execute more complicated kicks, hit to the head with more force, and can win matches with massive point differences while expending less energy in kicking. Yet all of this can not justify the dangers that head contact presents to athletes. The risk of closed head injuries, concussions, premature brain degeneration, and brain damage all loom in the background, all so that an athlete can win. The rules and statues of the World Taekwondo Federation do not adequately protect athletes from these dangers, allowing knock outs, knock downs, and other dangers that unnecessarily put the competitors at risk for head injury. With all of these hazards, it is fair to say that the only way to keep competitors and their minds safe from permanent injury is to ban head contact from Taekwondo, as it was before the major rule changes. This way
athletes can return to the good sportsmanship that Taekwondo once operated under, competing in a moral and safe manner.

References
Relaxation
Steven Nelson

I made this piece in Human Life Drawing. I sketched the model in pencil on watercolor paper and then painted in the highlights, mid-tones, and shadows with acrylic paint.
Chill Life
Eric Liggins

This was done in a Life Drawing class during spring quarter 2015. My unintentional goal was to show different drawing techniques before “finishing” a drawing.
Eagle (Calder)
Shelly Alexander

This image is a study of the abstract sculpture by Alexander Calder. It is located at the Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle. The image was taken as a 5-image HDR and edited in Photoshop.
Abstract
Nidhi Bindlish

I am an artist and taking class from LWTech. I am exploring different mediums of painting like sketching, pastels, oil, and spray.
The Limits of Science
Mariya Artyushok

This essay was an assignment for my English 101 class. My professor Michael Lake taught me how to be realistic and how to critically think in my everyday life. At first, I barely knew anything about science and why people value it so much, but then with the help of the Mortimer Adler’s definitions and Mr. Lake’s lectures I came to a conclusion that science is limited.

Known as the best way to measure the universe with different techniques, science still has the limits on what it cannot measure. The editor of the Encyclopedia Britannica, Mortimer Adler defined three main terms science, knowledge, and reality and appearance. Adler was also an advocate that suggested for students to read the “Great Books” instead of the books about the books. Most of all, he believed that realistic philosophy of Aristotle can influence the idealism in our culture. Moreover, Adler many times came to a conclusion that we don’t know what is true or real, but science still continues its studies. From what I read I found science to be limited because it can only study the things that can be measured but not the things that cannot be measured.

So, what is science? How Adler defines the word science is “observational or investigational sciences, sometimes called
the empirical and experimental sciences” (Mortimer, A. pg.1). In other words, science is when something is measured or tested through a practical method. Today, scientists study the world trying to find connections and patterns to make valid predictions. Many times in his definition Adler mentions that being scientific is a praiseworthy method. Even history, philosophy, and branches of humanistic scholarship which are not part of science are praised when they are called scientific. Furthermore, science was originally driven form the Latin word scientia which has the same meaning as doxa and episteme in Greek. Doxa is a knowledge and first expressions, and episteme is an opinion. Not only that, there’s also a branch of philosophy called metaphysics which is also same as scientism. They both ask questions like how does the world exist? And if there’s God? But, they can’t find answers to them because they don’t have enough evidence. So, if there were no philosophy there would be no understanding of science. Adler confirms that by saying “for when scientists write about science, they do so as philosophers, not scientists” (Mortimer, A. pg.2). So, does that supposed to mean that science is the same thing as philosophy? To understand more about science it is important to have a clear understanding of knowledge.
Adler points out that having knowledge consists in processing the truth. That is, true and false knowledge’s. Unfortunately, there can’t be false knowledge only true knowledge that is theoretical and practical. Theoretical truth is descriptive truth that consists of theory when our judgments follow up with reality, practical truth, on the other hand, is when we practice or take action and our judgments go along with what we want to happen. When someone uses judgment it can be either probable or improbable. For something to be highly probable a person must go beyond doubt and have supporting reasons and evidence. We also need to use common sense to think about knowledge. To continue, the third term that was driven from Adler’s definitions was reality and appearance. The word “reality” was expressed as a thing in itself that we cannot explain. This is why realists believe in what appears to be real. Altogether, the terms science, knowledge, and reality mean something today.

Moreover, as most of the collage I have theoretical and practical methods involved in the field that I’m studying for. Hoping to get a degree as an accounted and having a good job would be a theoretical method, and studying and putting my mind and effort into becoming an accountant would be a
practical method. I think that practical method would definitely be more important because that’s what I’m doing right now I’m already in collage beginning my program. Already beginning my program is my evidence that I will someday become an accountant. I’m not so sure if my evidence is completely right, because I haven’t really critically thought if accounting is really what I want to do in my life. But, as much as I know this is the only job that I would enjoy working in.

So, back to why science is limited. Science has many things that cannot be proven such as, the existence of the world, the mathematics and logic, religions, and other things that have no evidence to them. Unfortunately, science can’t go beyond measuring the real world. On one side, science invented many things like electricity, light, medicine, etc., but it still has its limits. When it comes to Christianity we people see it as a faith, and when it comes to science we see it as a doubt. Not only that, science needs interpretation this is why it can’t answer our questions.

In my opinion, science is limited because it cannot go beyond of what it can do. It can observe, investigate, measure things, but it can’t explain the great history behind this world and the
reason why people believe in different religions. Also, science can’t make natural food or make people deathless. All of these things that science is limited to do. Reality is what we have, and dealing with it is what we are left to do.

References

selection from *Poems are food for thought*
Jeffrey Perry

*I have love for all and I hope these thoughts of love will inspire and bring together all diversities.*

Human

I am the beginning
I am the end
I am the hope for the future
I am the search for the cure
I am part of something wonderful
I am not alone
I am loved by everyone
I am admired by all who see me
I am master of all I survey
    I am Human!
I am too the beginning
I am too the end
I am at extinction for the future
I am blamed for the disease
I am part of something shameful
I am not loved and misunderstood by everyone
I am disrespected at moments glance
I am leered at, mistrusted, defaced
I am mastered by all who survey me
    I am human?
If love is truly the answer, hope will prevail
If hope will prevail, everyone will be part of something wonderful
If                                       If                                       If
An artist that was lost in corporate corridors and motherhood, I am glad I could rekindle the lost love and surprised myself!! This piece ‘The Companions’ portrays my kids as they are through vibrant pop art style on birch plywood.