Library Scholarship Application: Zoé Beaulieu Prpic

In Fall 2014, I registered for ENGL 449: Bibliography & Research. It was, hands down, the most practical course any high-level English undergrad could take. Taught by Kate Cushon, the course shows students how to research at maximum efficiency. We learnt how to navigate online search engines, how to evaluate citations and accurately format our own, how to make use of library programs like the LibGuides and Interlibrary Loan system, which I have since used in other classes.

By the end, we had to prove that we could apply these techniques we’d learnt. Hence our take-home final: a bibliographical essay on one of a selection of authors.

First and foremost, the library, via that class, taught me that a bibliographical essay is an essay that sums up the body of an author's work and the popular attitudes in critical reception to it. I had never had cause to write one before that class, but I don’t doubt it will come up again over the course of my academic career. Archer gave me intense coaching on an important, difficult genre of essay.

Beyond that, I could not possibly have completed my essay without Archer’s many resources. I chose to do my essay on the Lady Anne Clifford, a relatively obscure Elizabethan diarist. Archer, however, was very well stocked, both with critical editions of her writings and academic secondary sources. It took quite a while to go through all of them, but it gave me a strong base to write about her. And because the course put so much emphasis on proper citation, especially in the essay, I was more aware of citation software and programs, both those included in search engines, like JSTOR, and those on the library website, like RefWorks.

The programs and resources the library offers, in addition to the research course which its staff headed, provided an invaluable frame of support and training for academic research.