

**Columbia College Honors Program  
Honors Project Prospectus  
Cover Sheet**

This TYPED form is due to the honors office the semester before enrolling in HON 498 (for example, students taking the course during fall semester must submit the prospectus by the end of April). The proposal should be approximately 1000 words in length, demonstrating careful, detailed planning and vigorous, genuine collaboration with your faculty director. The Director of Honors helps to evaluate proposals.

Name Patricia Rose Cely

Title of project Gender in VA Lit.: A Critical Analysis of  
Cassandra Clare's *The Infernal Devices*

Hon. 498 Semester/Year Fall 2013 Credit hours 3  
(3-4)

The following items should be addressed in the prospectus:

1. Describe the goals of the project. Provide specific details about how the project will be conducted and state a specific hypothesis (if applicable). You may also want to provide some background information about your topic.
2. Describe how the project fits in with your educational background and experience and how the project is related to your post-graduation plans for career or graduate study. Describe how the project enhances your honors education.
3. Detail how your director will assess your project. Include specific details about the assessment criteria. Describe in detail any product that you expect to generate. For example, if you will be completing a written paper, provide information about the expected length of the paper, the number of resources to be used, and the citation style to be used (APA or MLA, etc.). If you will be doing a creative performance or preparing a portfolio or some other product, you may include a checklist of items to be included and details about how the project will be judged.
4. Provide a preliminary bibliography. Generally, a preliminary reference list of resources will be appropriate.

**Note:** Projects completed during spring semester are due to faculty directors for assessment by early April. Projects completed during fall semester are due to faculty directors for grading by early November. The project is showcased for students, faculty, family, and friends at the senior Honors Medal Ceremony held before graduation. Displays may vary from computer presentations, to poster displays, to video segments, to artifact collections or any other creative, appropriate means to share your project. Although students complete their project during the junior year, graduates are expected to participate in the showcase at the Medal Ceremony.

The undersigned agree to the guidelines set forth in the Honors Project Prospectus:

Patricia Rose Cely  
Student Signature

April 24, 2013  
Date

Jason B. Russell  
Faculty Director Signature

4/24/2013  
Date

Chris Ziegler  
Honors Program Director Signature

4/24/13  
Date

My project is a case study analyzing how the female characters in a popular young adult series are presented in order to determine if these characters conform to accepted gender roles, subvert them, or do both. The series I will be using is *The Infernal Devices*; a trilogy authored by Cassandra Clare. The books are historical fiction, and follow the American Tessa Gray as she travels to Victorian London to live with her brother. Once there, she discovers that she is not as human as she thought, and is aided by a group of warriors called Shadowhunters – individuals gifted with powers to hunt demons -as she strives to discover the mystery of her origins. The trilogy has enjoyed immense popularity, and the companion series, *The Mortal Instruments* is currently being made into a movie. My case study will take the form of an academic paper. This means that a good deal of research into the existing literature on young adult literature, girls and their reading habits, and female characters in popular culture will be conducted. Once I have thoroughly explored the existing research, I will conduct my analysis using a feminist critique, as described by Sonja Foss and Karen Foss.

My case study is related most directly to my Communication Studies Major. The analysis is examining something of social construction – gender. How gender is constructed often stems directly from how we communicate, whether that communication is verbal, written, or implied through nonverbals and images. Many of my classes have both examined this phenomenon and how it is challenged. While there have been many studies examining gender in popular culture using movies, music, music videos, and advertisements, there has been less attention paid to literature from a communications perspective. I think this is a mistake as novels still enjoy larger readership. Being one of those readers myself, I wanted to undertake this study.

I am also interested in this analysis because it combines two areas that I hope to continue to research. As a lifelong reader, literacy is a very important cause to me. Not only encouraging

and teaching people to read, but understanding the impacts that it can have on an individual. The continued research into gender roles and their construction is also very intriguing to me. My classes have taught me to examine everything around me with a critical eye, especially something like gender, which affects me so directly every day.

This analysis will enhance my honors experience because it will be a challenge. I am trying to fill a gap in research, which will mean diligent research, a complete understanding of my method, and a thorough interpretation of the work. This paper will be a synthesis of skills that I have learned in Honors classes, including research methods, creating sound arguments, using a critical perspective, and a genuine enjoyment in analysis.

Writing this paper will also fulfill the requirements for the Communication Studies senior capstone paper, written in the COMM 499 Communication Studies Research Methods class. The class is taught by Dr. Munsell, who will also be evaluating this project. This paper will be 25-30 pages long and is worth 70% of the classes' grade. Because my approach is humanistic I will be using MLA style citations. The paper is composed of four distinct parts, each of which will be turned in in stages. I will be given the chance to revise and edit each section as Dr. Munsell and I see fit.

The first section is called the literature review, and is usually between three and five pages. This section will tackle the existing research, and draw from scholarly academic resources, such as articles found on the Communication and Mass Media Complete database. More importantly, this section of the paper establishes why my analysis is significant, and how it is filling a gap in the existing research. Thus, the literature review serves to frame my purpose and thesis. The literature review is worth 20% of the paper's grade.

The second section will discuss my method: as noted above I will be using a feminist critique, the most well-known version of which was detailed by Sonja Foss and Karen Foss. This section will describe what the feminist critique is, how it is utilized in rhetorical analysis, and why I chose it. Worth 10% of the paper's grade, it will be around three pages long.

The third section is called the analysis. This section has a variable length, and is worth 25% of the paper's grade. In this section I will be applying my method to my case study, in this case the feminist critique to the female characters in *The Infernal Devices*. This section is less research based, but relies on clear understanding of my method, ability to apply evidence and cite examples from my text, and aptitude at creating coherent arguments.

The final section is called the conclusion, the implications, or the discussion. As with the analysis section it is of variable length, though only worth 15% of the paper's grade. This section demonstrates my analysis's contribution to the overall scholarly discussion. It also leaves the door open for further research to be conducted.

Dr. Munsell will be evaluating each section for its effectiveness as an academic paper. The grade for each section, therefore, depends on my ability to fully meet the requirements of each section as described above. Dr. Munsell will also be looking for other areas, including, quality and clarity of topic, quality and clarity of the thesis, effective use of scholarly articles, depth and clarity of paragraphs: including use of topic sentences, organization, grammar and mechanics, and diction, as well as overall sophistication of the paper.

So far my research has drawn from the following sources.

Bettis, Pam, and Mary F. Roe. "Reading Girls: Living Literate And Powerful Lives." *Research In Middle Level Education* Online 32.1 (2008): 1-18. Academic Search Complete. Web. 6 Apr. 2013.

Blackford, Holly. *Out of This World: Why Literature Matters to Girls*. New York: Teachers College Press, 2004. Print.

Hayn, Judith, Jeffrey Kaplan, and Amanda Nolen. "Young Adult Literature Research in the 21st Century." *Theory into Practice* (2011): 176-81. Print.

Johnson, Naomi. "Consuming Desires: Consumption, Romance, and Sexuality in Best-Selling Teen Romance Novels." *Women's Studies in Communication* (2010): 54-73.

Rabey, Melissa. "Historical Fiction Mash-Ups: Broadening Appeal by Mixing Genres." *Young Adult Library Services* (2010): 38-41.

Schweickart, Patrocínio. "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading." *Gender and Reading*. Ed. Elizabeth Flynn and Patrocínio Schweickart. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. N. pag. Print.

Segel, Elizabeth. "As the Twig is Bent...': Gender and Childhood Reading." *Gender and Reading*. Ed. Elizabeth Flynn and Patrocínio Schweickart. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. N. pag. Print.