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Festival extends the limits of student writers

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

In the typical university writing class, the professor gives the assignment, the students write their papers, the graded papers are returned and the students move on to the next assignment. However engaging the assignment may be, students usually are confined within the boundaries of the printed page, or those limits might be extended to an oral presentation.

Recognizing that many student papers have lives of their own and reach beyond the scope of the written word, Oakland University's **Rhetoric Program** is presenting its first **Festival of Student Writing** on Monday, April 15, and Tuesday, April 16, from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Oakland Center Gold Rooms.

Students will present their "three-dimensional" writing projects in "artifactual form" using assets that pertain to their work such as tabletop displays, exhibits, computer presentations, video and/or audio, artwork, posters, photographs, music, skits, and Web sites. Professional demonstrations on research and writing also will be offered, and the Rhetoric Program will provide information about what it has to offer students, the academic disciplines and the university community at large.

"Frequently, idea and thought can't be easily translated or transcribed satisfactorily into textual form," said John Simecek, special lecturer in rhetoric and festival coordinator. "Language is frequently inadequate to describe our various perspectives about life. It all too often falls short of describing our various realities as we perceive them.

"The objective of the festival is to allow students who've accomplished a writing project to go one step further and elaborate through the use of artifacts – extensions or fuller representations of ideas that students find are evoked when they create their works textually. Artifacts can begin to fill that language gap to help students more fully communicate the meanings of what and how they comprehend their various realities."

The festival is open to professor-sponsored students who have successfully completed a writing project in a humanities or social science course during the 2001-2002 academic year at Oakland University. Some students are collaborating on projects and others have prepared class projects. Most of the students and their sponsoring professors are from rhetoric courses. Simecek hopes to have more participation from across the disciplines in future years.

"We plan a kind of party atmosphere with refreshments, balloons and focused celebration," Simecek said. "In a relaxed, student-focused milieu, the viewers and listeners can indulge in both refreshments and the visual experiences of our students' hard academic and scholarly work. But the festival goes beyond that. It's students coming together to celebrate how they and their creations have a real place in the real world."

For more information, visit the **Festival of Student Writing** Web page or contact John Simecek at simecek@oakland.edu.

SUMMARY

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