

Dear Rachael, Family, and Friends!

Many, many congratulations to you, wonderful Rachael! You took my English 295 and 457 courses and you were a standout in both. I admired so many things about you as a student, including your serious, complete, excited commitment to learning and then illustrating your understanding through writing, presentation, and discussion with peers. You followed prompts meticulously and always went into great depth when analyzing and synthesizing the ideas, styles, and contexts you were learning about. When you didn't understand something in the lecture or assignment prompt you quickly let me know and, as a result, we always had granular and deeply engaged discussions that went into the material even more depth.

English teachers love to see students do "close readings" of texts, and you took to this like a fish to water: you loved doing the *explication de texte* and oral recitation assignments. Unlike most other students, you were always 2-3 weeks ahead in reading the lectures and doing the homework and discussion; sometimes you had to prompt me to open the modules up because you were not just wanting to keep ahead, but because of your joyful enthusiasm about learning.

I looked back on some of my comments to you and the following illustrate your excellence:

"Superb summary and analysis and comparisons made using lecture and well-chosen quotations," "Very fine use of *explication de texte* to really dig deep into how CD creates characterization (particularly Louisa); and very thoughtful comments to peers," "I think your comment to _____ is an example of having a scholarly, teacherly tone--one that is confident and expresses some of your own ideas based on deep analysis and extrapolation from (not just repetition of) the lectures." These tell me what a fine student you are.

Now you are considering graduate school; you love poetry and analyzing it. I encourage you to go for your MA because of your excellence as a student and your deeply committed sense of gaining a liberal education and what that means in terms of being a good citizen. I wish you the very best in your career. Celebrate safely and joyfully. Your family can be well assured that their daughter, sister, aunt, cousin was one of the best students UNM has ever seen!

Brava, Hear, Hear, Salud, Congratulations, Dr. Houston