

Grant Cos: Award In Communication

The trajectory of this project, Corinne's completed and defended senior thesis, started with a course she took in The Rhetoric of Free Speech. Corinne was intrigued by the idea that the Supreme Court has had significant impact upon how we use language in society. She chose to analyze *Cohen v. California*, a landmark case protecting a citizen's right to protest using language that conveyed both content and emotional meaning. Corinne took this preliminary analysis and further refined her approach to this important text in her course in Rhetoric and Discourse, where she framed her analysis through the lens of rhetorical theory and added a broader rationale for a rhetorically-grounded study of the case. With this foundation in place, Corinne went into her Senior Thesis class with a solid, informed rationale for a study and proposed a formal research question. She performed an extensive analysis and interpretation of the majority and dissenting opinions in the case, drawing conclusions that are compelling textual and legal analysis.

Corinne Griffiths, a Professional & Technical Communication senior, composed a senior thesis entitled "A Tendency to Incite: Applying Kenneth Burke's Pentad to *Cohen v. California*." In this work she examines the text of the majority decision and selections from the four dissenting justices. She argues, in accordance with Burke's ideas, that each position, majority and dissenter, consists of its own distinct "drama." What distinguishes Corinne's work from other student and professional Burkean analyses, is the particular care in interpreting these dramas through the frames of the competing philosophies of pragmatism and realism. She concludes that, although pragmatic legal reasoning is predominant in many contemporary case decisions dealing with provocation and incitement, a realist interpretation of these issues is always a possibility.

In addition to the Kearsse recognition, Corinne's paper was also voted a top paper at the Department of Communication's annual Conference for Undergraduate Research in Communication. She is being strongly encouraged to publish this exceptional study.