

2016-2017 Outstanding Thesis Awards

By Kelly Eatinger
Office of Graduate Studies



*D'Angelo Bridges,
Outstanding Thesis Award
winner.*

D'Angelo Bridges, a 2016 graduate of the M.A. in English Composition program, has been awarded the Outstanding Thesis Award for the Humanities, Social Sciences, Business, and Education category. Bridges' insightful thesis, entitled *Revising Rhetorical Theory in My Bondage and My Freedom: Narrativizing and Theorizing a Rhetoric of Blackness*, explores the redefining of rhetoric in African-American literature and culture, focusing on Frederick Douglass' famous work. Bridges writes that "his [Douglass'] descriptions, sequence of events, and the way in which he orchestrates his text enact a rhetorical framework for advocating for the humanity of enslaved African Americans."

Bridges became invested in the subject while taking a class called "The Western Rhetorical Tradition" and delved into a project to find "alternative histories of rhetoric"; in his research, he found that Frederick Douglass' presence in rhetoric defied all standards. "His voice emerged when he theoretically should not have been able to read or write," Bridges observes, "so I wanted to investigate that[...]African American rhetorical performances in the public sphere evinced broader imperatives than those of antiquity."

Bridges was recently accepted into multiple Ph.D. programs across the country for English, and accepted candidacy at Pennsylvania State University for a Ph.D. in English Rhetoric and Composition. He has served as an adjunct professor at both Moreno Valley College and Chaffey College, as well as an English and AVID teacher at Moreno Valley High School. As for the future, he says: "I aspire to do revisionist re-landscaping of rhetorical theory in my Ph.D. program. I'd also like to see where I can take my research on Frederick Douglass. I'd like to finish the Ph.D. program at Penn State in rhetoric with a job in my field, possibly get a job teaching college to start." He still has "questions unanswered by [his] research... and will continue to pursue answers for those questions."