

Jessica Brumley *Class of 2015*
Concentration(s): Literature and English for Secondary Teachers
By: Chelsea McCarty

While today Jessica Brumley is completing the final requirements for her December graduation from the English Department, when she first arrived at Western Kentucky University, she had a much different vision for her future. As her Biotechnology courses wore on, she realized she was in the wrong department. "I began to daydream of pneumonia or other semi-serious diseases that would take me out of commission for a little while," Brumley admits as she recalls her early days at WKU.



Struggling to find her true calling, Brumley assessed her passions: "I like to read; I like to have meaningful discussions about literature; I like to write; and most importantly, I like to convert the knowledge that literature holds and writing unlocks from fiction to something that is applicable to my life, with the power to inspire change and shift perspective." After this realization, Brumley knew she belonged in the English Department. Chemistry labs became history.

Since transferring into the department, Brumley has presented papers at the 2014 Kentucky Honors Roundtable and the 2015 Sigma Tau Delta English Honors Society International Language Conference, hosted by a fraternity of which she is a member. She has tutored English as a Second Language students at a local elementary school and taught English classes as a member of the Clinical Experiences in the Practice of Teaching Program at a local high school.

Brumley attributes the course "Honors Hemingway and Faulkner," taught by Professor Walker Rutledge, as inspiration for her Undergraduate Honors Thesis and some of her travels abroad. For her thesis entitled "老人与海: The Cultural Classroom Instructional Handbook," Brumley has used her experience as a student in the Chinese Flagship Program to translate Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* from English to Mandarin Chinese. Conducting research for her remarkable thesis, Brumley has traveled abroad to Taipei, Taiwan, and Havana, Cuba.

Brumley has many hopeful prospects for her future after graduation ranging from obtaining a Masters in Education or Literature, to pursuing a professional career that incorporates her international experience. She is also currently applying for a Fulbright scholarship to teach English in Taiwan where, if selected, she would teach for one year.

Reflecting on her undergraduate career, Brumley suggests that studying abroad is key to growing both as an individual and a culturally aware citizen. But, studying abroad is not the only way Brumley has found such growth. Brumley claims, "I have travelled many, many more miles through the pages of an anthology. I have gone back in time, into the future, through alternate dimensions, and even other worlds. I have lived snapshots of countless lives, and I have learned from each trip I take. My overactive imagination gives me the edge in any environment. The creativity that is unlocked in a book is the same original thinking that can save a business, institute an innovative government mandate, and author the next Great American Novel. You can't say that about a business degree."

Concluding her reflection of her time spent in Cherry Hall, Brumley leaves one final thought: "I just wish I had known how fulfilling it is to be an English major sooner; I wasted a lot of time daydreaming in my chemistry lab."