Ami Cox:  
“Animals Before the Fall: Whales in Literature as Makers of Meaning”  
My thesis was inspired by several of the courses I took in the MLA program and is indebted to the breadth and depth of the MLA education. In my paper I explored humankind’s break with nature, particularly with animals, following the Enlightenment and the possibility for reconnection explored in three modern novels whose characters have life-changing encounters with whales. I have had a lifelong fascination with whales and this topic allowed me to further explore the myths and wonders of the cetacean world, as well as to examine why whales convey such deep meaning to my own psyche.

Andrew Dennis:  
“The Wild West Portfolio”  
A liberal arts education can play an important role in correcting this problem. In a liberal arts setting, scholarly courage is best accomplished through the development and improvement of skill, civic participation, and character. My portfolio explores this as a teacher (me) in Wyoming shows how he has implemented this within his professional life.

Michael Ellis:  
“First in the Hearts of His Countrymen: George Washington and the Fate of a Nation”  
With the creation of the office of the executive, Americans were willing to betray many of the revolutionary principles for which they fought (limited government, executive consolidation) simply because they knew George Washington would be the first to fill and define that position. How does one man attain that level of cachet? This project will answer that question and will fully explain the central role Washington played in saving America from the ruin which threatened to destroy the young nation in the years following the American Revolution.

Bada Hebron:  
“Finding Their Voice.”  
I have an internship with the Metropolitan Washington Ear, which is a free multi-media service for the blind, visually-impaired and physically disabled individuals. I want to give the history of the rights established for blind and how this translates into the creation of “The Ear” (as it is affectionately known).

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Amy Paronto:
“Weaponizing Martin Luther: Propaganda of the Reformation and National Socialism”

Martin Luther, through his propaganda work during the Reformation, has achieved a status as a cultural hero of German history. The propaganda of the National Socialist Party exploited the Germans’ patriotic love of Luther to further its anti-Semitic agenda, drawing on Luther’s little-known work On the Jews and their Lies. This paper examines the connections between the propaganda campaigns of Luther and the Nazis, and explores the unique relationship Germans have with Martin Luther’s historical legacy.

Debi Rager:
“Artist, Immigrant, and Patriot: Constantino Brumidi’s Influence on American Art, Iconography, and Identity”

Few know the full story of Constantino Brumidi or his influence on art in America. In the mid-19th century, Brumidi, an Italian-Greek immigrant and master artist, brought the Old World painting technique of buon fresco to the United States. We can still view his magnificent works today in the U.S. Capitol and in several sacred spaces, including a church in Baltimore. This thesis explores how Brumidi’s background, training, and exposure to extraordinary art in his native Italy positioned him, perhaps uniquely, to create a visual and complex hymn to liberty in the young nation’s signature building as well as compelling religious paintings in a number of American cities and frescoes in private residences.

Patty Weber:
“THERE, BUT NEVER BACK AGAIN: A Tale of Growth and Understanding”

The five projects included in my portfolio represent the journey that I have taken in the MLA program. They seem disparate at first, but they share several things in common: all of them hold history in a special regard, whether it is thousands of years old as in the Egyptian book of the dead, hundreds of years old with Washington crossing the Delaware, or tens of years old as with the Science Fiction camp classic film Barbarella. There is also a certain emphasis on visual analysis that runs throughout these projects. I have always been interested in the visual, and how the appearance of something can convey meaning and evoke thoughts and emotions. I am proud of all of these projects in different ways, but I feel especially satisfied examining the body of work as a whole.