

Slide 1

Hi! My name is Jessica Bragg, and my project is called Rocky Waters: Exploring the Intersections of Romance and Travel. I have completed this project as a member of BGSU's Honor's College. This Honors Project took place over the Fall 2020 semester and Spring 2021 semester. I have been advised by Heath Diehl from the Honors Department and Bryan Gattozzi from the English Department. I am extremely pleased by the results of this project, and I am excited to share it with you all!

Slide 2

The first research question that guided me throughout this process was: How can a writer incorporate multiple settings into a novel while still emphasizing the importance of each one? One of my primary goals of this project was to write a novel where my characters explore numerous different countries and cities in one of the most beautiful places on earth: Greece and Italy. I had my characters do this by traveling onboard a cruise ship that transports them to and from various Mediterranean islands. Despite this large number of locations, I wanted to ensure that each individual setting is depicted accurately and fully in order for readers to obtain a better understanding as to why these specific cities are important, and the amazing powers of traveling.

Slide 3

The next research question that guided me throughout this process was: How do the genres of romance and travel intersect in order to generate a unique spin on international romance? There is an abundance of international romance novels currently circulating in the world, and I hope to produce an original take on this genre by incorporating specific aspects of both the romance and travel genres. In particular, I want to explore the challenges and benefits of developing a relationship on a cruise ship while being aware of the separation that is inevitable once returning home. Therefore, both topics of romance and travel are crucial to include in order to emphasize the unique attributes that traveling brings into a romantic relationship.

Slide 4

The last research question that guided me throughout this process was: What benefits can a student gain from completing a project that completely contrasts his/her area of expertise. I am currently a third-year senior at BGSU with a focus on marketing. I have taken over 100 credit hours' worth of business-related courses that have taught me the specifics of business operations, strategies, and communications styles. Despite this vast knowledge of the business world, I selected a creative Honors Project. Writing a romance novel strays from the style of writing and technical skillset that I have honed throughout the past three years. However, it has been very exciting to engage in an activity that I would never experience in the business world.

Slide 5

The main premise of my project was writing a romance fiction novel that has an emphasis on adventure and travel. The setting of this novel was in the Mediterranean cities of Greece, Italy, and Croatia, and it is a love story between two teenagers from two different countries. Their love story takes place onboard and offboard the cruise ship while many things attempt to stand in their way. Over the course of this semester, I wrote about 5,00 words per week.

Slide 6

Another important part of this project was the revision process. Each week I would meet with my advisors and receive feedback about what I had written thus far. Using this information, I continuously revised my story to ensure that it was as entertaining, factual, and grammatically correct as possible.

Slide 7

There are several reasons why I chose to tackle this project. Primarily, the idea arose from my extreme love for the romance genre. Reading has always been a hobby of mine, and the romance genre is my go-to. Famous authors such as Nicholas Sparks and John Green are majority of all I read, and I intended to write in a similar style to these authors. This is mainly contemporary romance. This subgenre focuses on realistic scenarios and outcomes, uses modern language, and has a general focus on the emotional development of a relationship. Hence, I tried to incorporate these features into my novel to convey the importance of love and travel.

My interest in International studies was also a catalyst for this project. After coming into BGSU as an undecided business major, I quickly selected International Business as one of my specializations. This stems from an interest in learning about other cultures and how they do business with one another. I also participated in a study abroad trip through BGSU's marketing department. These experiences have helped me develop a love for traveling which is why I wanted to place an emphasis on exploration in my story.

Along with what I just mentioned, this project was also loosely based off an experience I had during the summer of 2018. My grandmother took me on a Mediterranean cruise, similar to the one I wrote about in the story, and the locations, cultures, and people I encountered served as the perfect inspiration for a fictional narrative. I visited Greece, Italy, and Croatia over the course of ten days. I was also able to make several friends from other countries and learn about cultures during excursions. That experience sparked an internal desire to travel, and I wanted to have my protagonist experience a similar life-changing journey.

Slide 8

I am very proud of the results from this project. First, I have a complete 60,000-page manuscript. This is about 203 pages, or 12 lengthy chapters. It tells an entertaining story from start to end, and the process of completing this has enhanced my writing abilities greatly. In addition to my creative writing skills, my time management skills have tremendously increased. With being a full-time student, holding a part-time job, and maintaining a social life, the workload that I have had throughout the past 15 weeks is extremely heavy. However, I successfully prioritized and completed all necessary tasks which is a great accomplishment. Finally, the confidence that I have found in myself is one of the best rewards from this project. As stated, I am a marketing major at BGSU. Several business majors in the Honors College opt to complete a business-related project because of this. Yet, I was determined to produce a creative piece that I would likely never have the opportunity to do in the future. By completing this novel, I have expanded upon my versatility and ability to succeed in more areas than strictly my field of study. Now that I have finished, I feel exceedingly confident to step out of my comfort zone. Although it may not always be easy, the rewards are worth the risk.

Slide 9

I would say that there are many strengths of this project. The quality is impressive for the limitations that I was faced with. In addition, the quantity is very high. 60,000 words is not easy to write within a short time frame. And lastly, the content is enjoyable. The story that I produced is not only a complete story, but it is entertaining and fills a gap within the typical romance genre.

Slide 10

There were also many limitations of this project. The largest one was time. I had one semester to complete research, and one semester to complete writing. This is severely restrictive of how much I could produce each week. In addition, as mentioned earlier, my background is majorly in the business field. I have only taken one course on writing in my college career. Therefore, I do not have an extensive proper education on creative writing or the writing process in general. Lastly, I had to balance a heavy workload while completing this. This was not easy, but it ultimately made me a much better writer, student, and individual.

Slide 11

I am pleased with the opportunities that this project has created for me. Even though I am happy with the current manuscript, I will always have the opportunity to come back and revise or expand upon the story. In addition, I hope to self-publish sometime in the future. When beginning this project, I had no intentions of anyone outside my university reading my novel. I figured that this would be a personal piece I could keep to myself. However, after exerting an immense amount of hard work and receiving crucial feedback, I am proud of the story that I have constructed. I am eager to have others read this novel, and becoming a published author is an amazing achievement that I never anticipated as a realistic possibility. I am eternally grateful to have selected and completed this project as a part of my Honors curriculum at BGSU.

Slide 12

Finally, I would like to thank anyone and everyone that took the time to listen to my presentation. I am grateful to be able to share my project with others, as well as the process, obstacles, and rewards that I received from doing it. If anyone has any further questions or comments, feel free to reach out! My contact information is provided on this slide for your reference. Thank you again!