

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Older kids have effect on young**

**To the Editor:**  
Amid the newspaper stories, television reports and radio broadcasts about the Littleton shooting, there is one lesson we must learn. Guns, entertainment and society pressures did not drive Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold to kill 12 of their classmates and one teacher. We did.

As members of the coveted 18 to 35 advertising demographic, we influence young children more than any group besides parents.

We shape the market: Our purchasing power gets us what we want. And we want the same violent entertainment blamed for influencing the two Colorado high school seniors who slaughtered 13 people. Who chooses to support these shows? We do.

We must ask ourselves whether we will take responsibility for our choices. Motivated by our purchasing power, television companies air more explicit and violent programming each year.

We watch violent shows; advertisers pay networks to air commercials when we watch. Why all the violence on TV? We put it there.

Likewise, the movie industry releases movies featuring cynical killers dispassionately torturing, brutalizing and murdering their victims.

We know many of these characters appear in critically acclaimed movies touted as "art," but who understands when violence is gratuitous and when it is art? We do. Children don't.

While our media and entertainment choices alone did not cause the Colorado shootings, what those boys watched as children and young teen-agers affected the way they chose to act April 20. They watched and idolized movies featuring cold-blooded killers that laughed at their victims. Then they went and did likewise.

If you or I go to a movie this weekend, we should think about whether the next Eric Harris, Dylan Klebold, Kip Kinkel, Mitchell Johnson, Andrew Golden or Luke Woodham will one day see that same film.

How will it affect them? Who decides? We do. They don't.

**Lynn Rogers**  
English and Spanish Junior

**Placing blame solves nothing**

**To the Editor:**  
I'm glad to see *The Gamecock* doing something to stop the blame game surrounding the Colorado tragedy. The simple answer is that the answers to this horrid tragedy died with the gun-

men. We never will get the answers, and the more quickly the world can face that, then we can move on.

However, there is a group that has come under fire recently that wasn't mentioned in your article. The gothic culture has been the victim of an unfair backlash to the shooting.

Even though I am not in the strictest sense a goth, I, too, have come under fire. I run a site (<http://www.raven-srants.com>), and a television report in Philadelphia tried to tie my site, which is strictly literary, to the shooting.

I am appalled at this. Blaming video games and violent movies is one thing, but blaming an art form that has been around for centuries is completely insane. Gothic poetry has nothing to do with violence and hate, but rather a release.

There are rumors swirling around saying one of the gunmen had a link to my site off theirs. I doubt this rumor and have seen no proof of it. Even if he did, it means nothing.

I wish people would realize that while the tragedy is great and so is the pain, blaming people and things will only prolong the pain. I strictly condemn this act and all others like it, as do my friends.

However, I have no desire to see the tragedy continued by "passing the buck" until it drops squarely in someone's lap.

Let's move on, let's stop the blaming.

**Jonathan Bailey**  
Print Journalism Freshman

**Directors defend ENGL 101, 102**

**To the Editor:**

Your recent editorial (4/23) slamming freshman English and the university for not offering enough freshman English courses is based on inaccurate information. We're surprised that no one at *The Gamecock* called anyone associated with freshman English to check out the facts.

Although the damage has been done, we do wish you'd make some effort to set the record straight.

You said: "It is sad that some students must forego their initial choices [for classes] because the section or course is filled. Students should not have to worry about the availability of their courses." Although it is certainly disappointing not to get a particular teacher or time for a course, surely you don't mean to suggest that we should not have any limits on the sizes of classes?

In fact, because we want students to succeed in freshman English, the English department struggles every semester to keep these introductory classes small - 22 in 101, 24 in 102.



(We also require the instructors to take an intensive two-semester teacher-training course, and we offer - for free - individual tutoring in our Writing Center and Writing Studio Programs.)

It would be great for our budget, and it would let more students get the times they desire, if we allowed 40 or 80 students in every section, but our goal is to teach writing effectively, which requires small classes. Some sections and some times do fill up rather quickly.

We also can't believe that you mean to suggest that we should have an unlimited number of sections at any particular time of day. We are constrained, of course, by the number of classrooms on campus and by the schedules of our teachers (who can only teach one

class at a time). Therefore, unfortunately, some students will indeed find that their "initial choices" for a course are filled.

But no one, to our knowledge (and we've been involved in freshman English for many years), has ever been forced, as you claim, "to wait a semester or even a year before they can take these entry-level courses."

We understand very clearly that freshman English is a required introductory course, and we take very seriously our responsibility to provide these courses for students.

Later in the registration process, some particular time slots may not have any seats available, but other time slots do have seats. We may not have seats

available at every possible time, but we always have seats available at some time. When we do see, from time to time, that we might be running out of seats, then we add more sections or, if we absolutely must, we raise the cap by one student.

In other words, the starting assumption of your editorial, that we don't schedule enough classes to accommodate the students, is false. And while it would be nice to have enough seats at any given time to accommodate every student who might want to take a class at that time, such a schedule would be impossible.

If you do have other ideas about how freshman English might be better, we'd love to hear them. Rather than attack-

ing problems we don't have and programs that are committed to serving students, let's work together to make Carolina a better place.

**Steven Lynn**  
Professor  
Director of Freshman English (102)

**Carolyn Matalene**  
Professor  
Director of Freshman English (101)

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