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Gateway showcasing Appalachia

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EDGEWOOD - Appalachian culture and literature will be the focus on Saturdays this fall at Gateway Community and Technical College.

The school will host a series of events in conjunction with one of its classes.

"GCTC has a large Appalachian student body so it makes sense to do something relevant and meaningful," said Melissa Fry, an assistant professor of English at Gateway.

Fry teaches the class Literature and Place: Appalachian Women's Art and Literature.

"The series is a celebration of the contributions of Appalachian culture," said Fry. "A generous grant from the Kentucky Foundation for Women allows us to bring in guest artists and conduct activities that make the readings come alive for the students."

Events will include showings of the films "The Queen Family," "Songcatcher" and "The Dollmaker," a discussion of Appalachian folk remedies and healing, storytelling, doll making, weaving and a display of student art projects.

"The workshops with local artists and guest speakers go even further to help dispel myths and stereotypes about Appalachian people," said Fry. "Participants will have the opportunity to experience voices and hear stories that have long been silenced, perhaps finding their own connection to home and place along the way."

Fry believes a better understanding of Appalachian people is important for their perception.

"By allowing those that have been discounted in history to share their rich stories and contribution to our lives, we dispel stereotypes and realize our great debt to the people, specifically women who have come before us," Fry wrote in the grant application.

"I intend to empower and enlighten students as a result of this class not only to the huge contributions Appalachian women have made to our region and society but to also replace outdated and destructive stereotypes with images of real powerful and capable women."

The series consists of seven events, all scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. from Oct. 3 through Dec. 12 in Room E101 at the Student Services Center on the college's Edgewood Campus, 790 Thomas More Parkway.

For more information, contact Fry at 859-442-1179 or melissa.fry@kctcs.edu.
