

Elizabeth Kate Switaj: How's College?: Considering *Buffy* Season Four in the Context of University Fiction

While many critics have discussed the uses of genre in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, one genre that has not been often considered is that of campus or university fiction. Even the season that focuses most on life at UC Sunnydale—season four—is primarily considered through the lens of science fiction, in large part due to Adam's resemblance to Frankenstein. Another contributing factor to university fiction having been overlooked is that said genre primarily expresses itself through novels rather than television shows or even film—and this tendency was perhaps more pronounced at the time of the airing of the *Buffy* season that focuses most on life at UC Sunnydale: season four. While the expression of genres changes depending on the medium, however, some elements remain.

Considering *Buffy* season four in the context of campus fiction illustrates how the episodes that make the demons of the first-year college experience literal adapt a genre in parallel to the ways that the early seasons do with the genre of the high school film or series. More importantly, a critical consideration of this context also illuminates the relationship between Buffy and Professor Maggie Walsh. Walsh's roles as potential mentor and eventual adversary in fact both resemble pedagogical relationships that more standard works of campus fiction depict. More importantly, because adversarial pedagogical relationships in this genre do not necessarily preclude learning, Walsh's role can be seen as more ambiguous and complex than that of a mad or corrupted scientist.