



*DePaul University
Honors Program presents*

The Eleventh Annual

**HONORS STUDENT
RESEARCH CONFERENCE**

Friday, May 17th, 2024

Welcome to the
Honors Student Research Conference,
our celebration of the research and creative work of
DePaul University Honors students.

HONORS PROGRAM STAFF

Jennifer Conary, Director
Nancy Grossman, Associate Director
Priscilla Bautista, Assistant Director
Keith Mikos, Assistant Director
Mary Kate Turek, Assistant Director
Melanie Doweiko, Program Assistant



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 2:30-6:00** **Registration** — First Floor
Thesis Presentations — Second Floor Classrooms
Thesis Poster Sessions — Second Floor Atrium
Student Poster Sessions — Third Floor Atrium
Refreshments — Second & Third Floor Atriums
- 3:00-3:15** **Awards Ceremony** — Second Floor Atrium

Thesis Presentations

Session 1

- 3:30-4:30** Waxing Philosophical — Room 202
 Navigating the Environment — Room 203
 Cultural Journeys — Room 205
 At the Workplace — Room 207
 Healthy Considerations — Room 208

Session 2

- 4:45-5:45** Learning About Teaching — Room 202
 Depictions — Room 203
 Race, Identity, and Social Justice — Room 205
 Creative Reckonings — Room 207
 There's an App For That — Room 208

Thesis Poster Sessions

- 3:30-4:30** Second Floor Atrium
4:45-5:45 Second Floor Atrium

Poster Sessions

- 3:30-4:30** Third Floor Atrium
4:45-5:45 Third Floor Atrium

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is with the greatest pleasure that I welcome you to the eleventh annual Honors Student Research Conference. This is my fourth year as director of University Honors, and the fourth—and I hope final—time that I feel compelled to begin by saying that this year’s seniors have had an unprecedented college experience. Most spent the entirety of their first year in college online. They missed the experiences that usually introduce students to DePaul and the Honors Program—events like Premiere DePaul and Honors Retreat. Their Discover and Explore Chicago classes were limited to showing videos about the places they would have visited, leaving these students to experience the perils of the CTA on their own as sophomores. When some signed on to be Honors Mentors the following year, they found themselves needing to learn their way around campus alongside their freshmen mentees. Yet the students who are here presenting their senior thesis projects overcame the many challenges created by Covid that made college much more difficult than it normally would have been. I’m inspired by their resilience and their tenacious commitment to make the most of their education.

This conference showcases the work of senior Honors Students who decided to turn their passion for a particular subject into an extended independent research project. These students worked for two quarters under the guidance of a faculty thesis director and a faculty reader to produce a substantial original scholarly or creative project designed to contribute to the production of knowledge. They will be presenting their work today in panels as well as in poster format. In the poster rooms they will be joined by other students in the Honors Program who will be sharing the research they did in their classes this year. To be included in the Honors Conference, students had to submit top-quality creative and scholarly work, and then transform that work into a poster format. All the students participating in the conference have demonstrated exceptional creativity, innovation, and initiative, and I invite you to join me in commending them for their accomplishments. This conference is made possible through the hard work of the Honors Program staff and student workers. I am grateful to Assistant Directors Priscilla Bautista, Mary Kate Turek, and Keith Mikos, as well as our

amazing student workers Allison Scott, Liz Bazzoli, Gia Clarke, Huda Salahuddin, Stephanie Posey, and Samarah Nasir for all the time and energy they have put in to organizing this event. A special thanks goes to Melanie Doweiko, our Honors Program Assistant, who always takes on the hard work of planning the conference with incredible energy and enthusiasm. I also want to thank the many faculty who have served as thesis directors, faculty readers, panel moderators, and research award judges; without you, our students would not have this opportunity to realize their scholarly potential. My deepest gratitude goes to Associate Director Nancy Grossman, whose incredible dedication to our students is so apparent in all that she does. Eleven years ago, Nancy made the original vision for this conference a reality, and the success of today's event is due to her extraordinary leadership.

Congratulations to all of our student researchers, and thank you to everyone who has joined us in celebrating their achievements.

Warmest regards,

Jennifer Conary
Director, University Honors Program
Associate Professor, English

INDEX OF THESIS PRESENTERS

Thesis Poster Sessions will be held on the Second Floor Atrium

Honors students have the option to fulfill their Honors Capstone requirement through a thesis project of their own design, mentored by two faculty members. The following students will present their Honors Senior Thesis at the conference.

Merwa Alhindi, Philosophy

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 202

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Genesis Castello, English

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 207

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Joana Diaz, Philosophy

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 202

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Delaney Gobel, Communication & Media/Media Cinema Studies

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 207

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Sofia Gutierrez, Music Education

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 202

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Lauren Hunt, Environmental Science

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 203

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Emilija Irvin, Bassoon Performance/History

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 205

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Fiona Ivers, International Studies

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 205

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Ananya Jagtiani, Management
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 207
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Arabella Johnson, Art
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 208
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Arielle Kallan, Political Science
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 208
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Marisa Langston, Theatre Arts
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 202
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Grace Lanham, Secondary Education English
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 202
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Caroline Lucas, Theatre Arts/Communication & Media
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 203
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Valerie McDonough, English
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 202
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Gabriella Miles, Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 205
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Olga Mourgelas, Philosophy/French
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 202
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Phoebe Moy, Health Sciences
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 208
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Evan Mueller, Economics/Political Science
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 207
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Nelson Munene, Psychology
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 202
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Samarah Nasir, Neuroscience
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 208
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Zoe Parris, Communication & Media
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 203
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Camille Perry, Sociology
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 205
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Chance Reeve, Game Design
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 208
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Graham Reid, Film & Television
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 207
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Zachary Rienecker, Political Science
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 203
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Cristina Rosheger, Voice Performance
Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 203
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Claire Ruttencutter, Computer Science
Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 207
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Serena Schalk, Neuroscience

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 208

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Mayha Syed, Sociology

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 205

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Samuel Topa, Communication & Media

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 203

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Dan Tourville, Political Science

Thesis Presentation — 4:45-5:45, Room 205

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Emily Townley, Dramaturgy/German

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 205

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Eva Walsh, Neuroscience

Thesis Presentation — 3:30-4:30, Room 208

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

SCHEDULE OF THESIS PRESENTATIONS

WAXING PHILOSOPHICAL

3:30-4:30 — Room 202

Moderator: Prof. Andreea Smaranda Aldea, Philosophy

Merwa Alhindi — *The Intersection of Ethics and Religion: Political Philosophy in Islamic and Greek Thought*

Thesis Director: Sean Kirkland, Philosophy
Faculty Reader: Peg Birmingham, Philosophy

Islamic philosopher Al-Farabi asserts that religious law explains our place in the world. Both Al-Farabi and Greek philosopher Aristotle theorize about how people participate in the political world, but Aristotle does not introduce any necessitating religious foundation in his ethical and political thinking. This research offers interpretations of the political philosophies of Aristotle and Al-Farabi, arguing that deontological theory and virtue ethics can be interconnected in philosophical thought. I suggest that Al-Farabi is able to combine deontology and virtue ethics due to his insistence that philosophy and religion must be found together.

Joana Diaz — *A Critique of the Secular/Religious Divide: Revisiting Spirituality From Within Sylvia Wynter's 'Demonic Grounds'*

Thesis Director: Elizabeth Millan Brusslan, Philosophy
Faculty Reader: Rafael Vizcaino, Philosophy

This project explores the emancipatory spiritual possibilities that issue from an inhabitation of what Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick term the “Demonic Ground.” I argue that the demonic ground frees spirituality from its assimilation into the religious, giving alternate modes and locations from which the Human may find deliverance. I conclude that reading both the “Demonic Ground” and “Borderlands/Nepantla” in conversation provides a locus from which religion and spirituality, race, and the place of the Human may be rethought or spiritually liberated.

WAXING PHILOSOPHICAL

Continued

Olga Mourgelas – *Between Worlds: Aesthetic Experience as Radical Reflection in Revelation of the Alien*

Thesis Director: Andreea Smaranda Aldea, Philosophy
Faculty Reader: Kevin Thompson, Philosophy

This thesis project seeks to reveal the intertwined nature of selfhood and alterity, and how creativity might bring light to this relationship. Employing the philosophical concepts of reflection, embodiment, self-referentiality, and imagination this thesis considers a phenomenological framework for responding to experiences of the alien. Through examples of creative works from movements such as Surrealism, I argue that rooted in the aesthetic experience is radical reflection, revealing to us our relationship to alterity.

Nelson Munene – *Beyond the Modern Subject: Concept of Self in Husserl and Sartre*

Thesis Director: Andreea Smaranda Aldea, Philosophy
Faculty Reader: Sean Kirkland, Philosophy

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries Western Philosophy began to cast doubts on the idea of modern subjectivity. Around this time, phenomenology emerged, rethinking philosophy as a method of describing lived experience. The analysis and comparison of Edmund Husserl's and Jean-Paul Sartre's writings will prove, through their phenomenological descriptions of freedom, self-objectification, and the experience of the Other, that the concept of modern subjectivity cannot explain the lived experience of self, including the egoic aspects of political and emotional life.

NAVIGATING THE ENVIRONMENT

3:30-4:30 — Room 203

Moderator: Prof. Jill Hopke, Communication

Lauren Hunt – *Factors Motivating Clothing Choice: Environmental Impact of T-Shirts*

Thesis Director: Christie Klimas, Environmental Science

Faculty Reader: Liam Heneghan, Environmental Science

Second only to oil, the fashion industry is one of the most pollutive industries globally. Due to the rise of fast fashion, this environmental issue is continually growing. The level of production has dramatically increased while quality of apparel has decreased, causing shorter garment lifespans. This research utilizes life cycle assessment to identify the environmental impacts of various textiles used in the production of t-shirts from material extraction through garment disposal, and surveys consumer behavioral patterns surrounding clothing consumption and sustainability.

Caroline Lucas – *Finding Hope Amid Messages of Doom in the Environmental Crisis*

Thesis Director: Barbara Willard, Communication Studies

Faculty Reader: Christie Klimas, Environmental Science and Studies

Conversations regarding the environmental crisis often end in a despairing tone, driven by climate anxiety and a sense of helplessness which shock viewers into idle states rather than active ones. Although those messages are successful in grasping attention, the overall message must also incorporate hope. The goal of this research was to explore the reasons for hope through various aspects of the environmental crisis discussion and to transform the discussion of environmental crisis from debilitating to empowering — from doom to hope.

NAVIGATING THE ENVIRONMENT

Continued

Zachary Rienecker – *Potential Pedestrianization of Streets in Chicago, Illinois*

Thesis Director: Alex Papadopoulos, Geography

Faculty Reader: Winifred Curran, Geography

American cities dedicate significant real estate to cars and tend to lack true community-centered space for residents. Pedestrianization of select streets may help resolve this issue by bringing desperately needed public space, reducing traffic fatalities, promoting economic vitality, and disincentivizing environmentally damaging car travel. This thesis explores how the pedestrianization of streets in Chicago can create more people-friendly environments and play a role in making the city a better place to live.

CULTURAL JOURNEYS

3:30-4:30 — Room 205

Moderator: Prof. Anna Souchuk, Modern Languages

Emilija Irvin – *The Contradictory Existences of British WWI ‘Shell-Shocked’ Soldiers and Disabled Female Nurses*

Thesis Director: Eugene Beiriger, History

Faculty Reader: Martha Gardner, History

This paper aims to reframe the way we think about British “shell-shocked” World War I soldiers and mentally disabled female war nurses and the responses to their conditions by the public, medical world, Ministry of Pensions, and the people themselves. I argue that both “shell-shocked” soldiers and mentally disabled female nurses lived existences that ran contradictory to fictitious, yet socially meaningful, gender norms. Understanding their existences as contradictory enables us to contextualize how these populations were understood by both themselves and others, centering questions about gender as a social context and exploring its relative importance to society and systems of power.

Fiona Ivers – *Red Pilled Rage: A Cultural Analysis of The Involuntary Celibate Community*

Thesis Director: Gil Gott, International Studies

Faculty Reader: Michael McIntyre, International Studies

Involuntary Celibates are an online global subculture, congregating in spaces such as forum boards and social media sites, and defined by their inability to have a romantic relationship with women. This thesis aims to use an ethnographic examination of online primary sources to analyze the culture of involuntary celibates for the preventive education and awareness of the public.

CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Continued

Emily Townley – *Der Vater and how it functions as a Piece of German/Austrian Cultural Memory*

Thesis Director: Anna Souchuk, Modern Languages

Faculty Reader: William O'Connor, History of Dramatic Literature

Niklas Frank's novel, *In The Shadow of the Third Reich*, explores Frank's father, a high-ranking Nazi who was executed in the Nuremberg Trials. Unlike some children of prominent former Nazis who supported their fathers' ideology, Frank carries an immense hatred toward his father. With Joshua Sobel, an Israeli playwright, Frank turned his book into a play that premiered in Vienna in 1995. For this project, I translated the play into English and discussed it as a unique example of the Vergangenheitsbewältigung (coming to terms with the past) culture prevalent in Germany and Austria, and examined memory culture and its role in German, Austrian, and American society.

AT THE WORKPLACE

3:30-4:30 — Room 207

Moderator: Prof. Shiera Malik, International Studies

Ananya Jagtiani – *Enhancing Business Branding and Communication with the Application of AI in Digital Marketing*

Thesis Director: Jacqueline Kuehl, Marketing

Faculty Reader: Jennifer Finstrom, Writing and Rhetoric

This thesis examines how artificial intelligence can be effectively employed in digital marketing strategies to elevate brand identities and build brand communication. It explores how AI-driven solutions improve the effectiveness of digital and influencer marketing efforts by utilizing AI's strengths in data analytics, personalization, and forecasting. The thesis also shares insights and ethical concerns based on the potential for AI to optimize content creation, find the proper influencers, forecast consumer behavior, and improve the customer journey.

Evan Mueller – *The Impact of Unions on Labor Market Outcomes: Evidence from Right-to-Work Laws*

Thesis Director: Brian Phelan, Economics

Faculty Reader: Laura Owen, Economics

Given the recent surge in union organizing, this thesis will research the efficacy of unions, utilizing right-to-work laws as a natural experiment to measure its impact on union membership. The impact on union participation will help assess whether right-to-work laws materially weaken unions, while the examination of other labor market outcomes will assess the impact of that loss on union power.

AT THE WORKPLACE

Continued

Claire Ruttencutter – *ByteBack: The Importance of Community for Women in Computing at DePaul*

Thesis Director: Rebecca Cameron, English

Faculty Reader: Lucia Dettori, School of Computing

This project highlights the importance of community for women in Computer Science at DePaul University. By gathering existing research on the importance of diversity in CS and the role of community in achieving a gender balance in the field, this project aims to show why it is necessary for women in CS at DePaul to have a shared sense of community. As one strategy for improving community, this project will include a web platform with various features aimed at helping women in CS at DePaul interact with one another.

HEALTHY CONSIDERATIONS

3:30-4:30 — Room 208

Moderator: Prof. Sandra Virtue, Psychology

Arielle Kallan – *Teach Children About Their Own Bodies Through Comprehensive Menstrual Education*

Thesis Director: Molly Andolina, Political Science

Faculty Reader: Kathleen Arnold, Political Science

Expanding on previous research on the broad topic of the inequality of Period Poverty, this thesis focuses on the first failure that increases this disparity: ineffective menstrual education. As the age of menarche continues to get younger, education systems need to be reformed to provide more comprehensive and complex information to young women at the onset of their period. The current status of menstrual education leaves young menstruators with misinformation that can lead to unhygienic practices. Reforming menstrual education will reduce the stigma around periods and reverse period poverty for all.

Phoebe Moy – *Asian American Experiences with Family Caregiving of Older Adults: A Systematic Review and Analysis*

Thesis Director: Cricel Molina de Mesa, Health Sciences

Faculty Reader: Maya Steel, Health Sciences

Asian Americans are often influenced by filial piety to respect and honor aging parents by serving as primary caregiver. This population, particularly those who are less assimilated, is at risk for negative health outcomes. This thesis sought to shed light on the experiences of Asian American caregivers and their older adult care recipients to understand how best to support this group. Three overall themes emerged including the role of filial piety, the importance of social support, and the relationship between culture and knowledge.

HEALTHY CONSIDERATIONS

Continued

Serena Schalk – *Effects of Abnormal Asymmetry of Language in Autism Spectrum Disorder*

Thesis Director: Sandra Virtue, Psychology
Faculty Reader: Sean Austin Lim, Neuroscience

Autism spectrum disorder is characterized by social and behavioral difficulties including struggles comprehending and producing language. Many individuals with this disorder show reduced or reversed lateralization patterns, which is theorized to play a role in these language impairments. This thesis includes a model of how abnormal asymmetry of language processes affect the language capabilities of people with autism spectrum disorder.

Eva Walsh – *Exploratory Analysis of Eye Gaze Behavior to Understand the Influence of Self-Diminishment and Connectedness on Awe Valence*

Thesis Director: Kimberly Quinn, Psychology
Faculty Reader: Ellen Dulaney, Psychology

In this thesis project, I will conduct an exploratory re-analysis of Dr. Chris Cole's eye-tracking and self-report data in which he examined self-diminishment and connectedness as determinatives of positive or negative awe experience. I will examine participants' eye-tracking videos to determine whether specific patterns of visual attention are associated with awe and whether they can differentiate positive from negative awe.

LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING

4:45-5:45 — Room 202

Moderator: Prof. Cathy Elias, Musicianship

Sofia Gutierrez – *The Importance of Including Multilingual Education in Music Teacher Preparation Programs*

Thesis Director: Sara Jones, Music Education

Faculty Reader: Jacqueline Kelly-McHale, Music Education

In music teacher education, there is often little preparation for preservice teachers on how to approach teaching multilingual children. In this project, I will explore how multilingualism is addressed in music teacher preparation programs in Illinois through a content analysis of university course requirements for music education majors. Through this project I hope to bring the field of music education into the multilingual education interdisciplinary discussion as a tool for positive experiences in music education for multilingual students.

Marisa Langston – *Investigating the Relationship Between School Ratings and Quality/Access to Arts Education in K-8 Chicago Public Schools*

Thesis Director: Michelle Lopez-Rios, Theatre

Faculty Reader: Julie Ganey, Theatre

This project will analyze past effects of the School Quality Performance Rating system (SQPR) on the quality and access to arts education in K-8 Chicago public schools, comparing the previous system with the new accountability system while analyzing its potential impact on arts education and scores in non-art areas. Using quantitative metrics supplemented by anecdotal evidence, I will develop a comprehensive examination of the relationship between the SQPR and arts education, while advocating for increased attention towards arts educational policy.

LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING

Continued

Grace Lanham – *Liberating Literacy: Cultivating a Passion for Reading in High School Students*

Thesis Director: Christopher Worthman, Teacher Education
Faculty Reader: Marcy Dinius, English

Many students graduate from high school without ever reading a novel. This apparent lack of passion for reading presents an opportunity for educators to examine the ways that educational practices have inadvertently caused the decline in students' reading enjoyment. Because independent, free reading has both implicit and explicit impacts on students, educators must understand these benefits to justify the emphasis on free reading in the classroom. This thesis offers best practices for cultivating passionate readers and igniting the reader inside every high school student.

Valerie McDonough – *Reevaluating the Canon: Western Classics and their Merit in Continuing to Be Taught and Read Today*

Thesis Director: Rebecca Cameron, English
Faculty Reader: Jennifer Finstrom, Writing and Rhetoric

This thesis project explores the ongoing questioning, challenging, and reevaluating of works in the Western literary canon, arguing in defense of the persisting merit of classics. It examines the widespread debate and existing scholarship on whether classics still merit being valued so highly today based on the belief in their influence and withstanding of time, or if their inapplicability to modern audiences strips them of their current value.

DEPICTIONS

4:45-5:45 — Room 203

Moderator: Prof. Jennifer Finstrom, Writing & Rhetoric

Zoe Parris – *Harmful Stereotyping and the Transformative Power of Black Autistic Representation*

Thesis Director: Luisela Alvaray, Communication

Faculty Reader: Paul Booth, Communication

While the popularized white male savant autistic character, based in early Hans Asperger's theories, has become a common trope, film representations of autistic characters are often based on stereotypes that lack nuance and diversity. This thesis examines the representation of autistic characters in popular television shows and films, arguing that fictional representation of autism in Black individuals dismantles the white male savant trope and assists in curating a more nuanced view for audiences of what traits define autism and what an autistic person can look like.

Cristina Rosheger – *The Soprano's Fate: Romantic and Contemporary Women's Voices in Standard Operatic Repertoire, From Character to Composer*

Thesis Director: Cathy Elias, Musicianship

Faculty Reader: Linda DiFiore, Voice and Opera

Women have most often been featured in opera as characters beholden to the notions of the male composers and the patriarchal conditions of society. Currently, the majority of regularly performed operas are composed by men and disseminate a male perspective on women's experiences. Traditionally, the woman is only involved as the Soprano, the performer, the archetype in context. This project examines the relationship between women who compose and women's fate on the opera stage.

DEPICTIONS

Continued

Samuel Topa – *"Pipe Bomb": Professional Wrestling and the Commodification of Identity*

Thesis Director: Samantha Close, Communication

Faculty Reader: Adriane Stoner, Communication

On an episode of WWE's Monday Night Raw program, professional wrestler CM Punk delivered a speech that took the wrestling world by storm. Taking aim at WWE's organizational structure, his speech blurred the lines between performance and reality, serving as a case study in how both the in-ring and real-life identities of professional wrestlers are commodified by promoters for the sake of profit. The thesis will explore how this style of identity-based commodification manifests itself in other domains, such as reality television, politics and social media.

RACE, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

4:45-5:45 — Room 205

Moderator: Prof. Clement Adibe, Political Science

Gabriella Miles – *The Prison Industrial Complex: Financial Exploitation of the Incarcerated and Their Loved Ones*

Thesis Director: Christina Rivers, Political Science

Faculty Reader: Jennifer Kouba, Peace, Justice, and Conflict Studies

Slavery and prisons are two institutions that have dominated American popular culture and politics for centuries as part of the Prison Industrial Complex, which is a modernized form of slavery. Black and brown people comprise a disproportionate number of incarcerated individuals, and their incarceration creates a lucrative business for states, companies, and individuals. At both state and federal levels, the United States Prison Industrial Complex financially exploits vulnerable populations via telecommunication, commissary, and healthcare services.

Camille Perry – *Laughter is Serious: Black Americans, Native Americans, and Resisting Colonialism*

Thesis Director: Lourdes Torres, Latin American and Latino Studies

Faculty Reader: Martha Martinez-Firestone, Sociology

This paper evaluates the historical and cultural depictions of Black Americans and Native Americans through the lens of colonialism, which relies on representative imagery and narratives to maintain colonial control over subjects. In American culture, settler colonialist media narratives normalize the erasure of Native Americans, while Black exploitation colonialist media narratives dehumanize Black Americans. This paper concludes with the ways that Black Americans and Native Americans use humor to construct their own representative imagery to deconstruct colonialism.

RACE, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Continued

Mayha Syed – *Surveillance, Fear, and Peace: Unraveling Devon Avenue's Harmonious Paradox*

Thesis Director: John Schlichtman, Sociology
Faculty Reader: Jose Soltero, Sociology

Since the 1970s, Devon Avenue in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood has been a focal point for South Asian immigrants, fostering a sense of belonging. Despite seeming unified, the neighborhood reflects diverse South Asian identities and geopolitical tensions. This paper examines post-9/11 dynamics on Devon, analyzing if interactions with the legal system, assimilation, or fear of authorities mitigate conflicts between Pakistani and Indian immigrants, promoting a false sense of peace.

Dan Tourville – *From Outlaws to Outcasts: Exploring the Victories of the LGBTQ+ Movement and Examining the Limitations of Rights-Based Approaches*

Thesis Director: Joseph Mello, Political Science
Faculty Reader: Martha Gardner, History

This thesis will examine the history, tactics, ideological underpinnings, limitations, successes, and failures of the LGBTQ+ movement in the United States. Employing historical and critical perspectives and theorizations the thesis will conclude with ideas and formulations on how the movement can proceed in a more efficacious manner.

CREATIVE RECKONING

4:45-5:45 — Room 207

Moderator: Prof. Brad Riddel, Cinematic Arts

Genesis Castello – *Pa'Lante: Essays on Being Boricua*

Thesis Director: Francesca Royster, English

Faculty Reader: Barrie Borich, English

Puerto Rican history is primarily documented through personal narratives. This creative project consists of a series of essays about my lived experiences as a queer, disabled Puerto Rican and seeks to use these identities to frame some of the discourse about Puerto Rico. I will supplement these essays with a research paper on the importance of Puerto Rican narratives and, more broadly, the importance of personal narratives in academia. This project aims to inspire further discourse and explore Puerto Rican identity in connection to the island's history and revolutionary ideas, reframing the conversation away from the tropical paradise narrative to a more nuanced documentation, considering lived experience as well as the island's history.

Delaney Gobel – *Framing Fear: Analyzing Diegetic Camera Horror Content and Communities on YouTube*

Thesis Director: Blair Davis, Media and Cinema Studies

Faculty Reader: Daniel Bashara, Communication

This thesis analyzes fictionalized diegetic camera horror content on YouTube by outlining the subgenre's figurative and stylistic framing, as well as the social media platform's unique ability to allow engagement and knowledge democratization between content creators and their fan communities. The YouTube channel @alantutorial serves as the main case study alongside fan-made reaction and explanation videos created in response to the channel. Ultimately the thesis proposes that diegetic camera content is stylistically and aesthetically compatible with YouTube as a digital platform and acts as a powerful way to loosen the spatial and conceptual borders between spectator and creator.

CREATIVE RECKONINGS

Continued

Graham Reid – *Finding Grief*

Thesis Director: Rachel Bass, Cinematic Arts

Faculty Reader: Robert Steel, Cinematic Arts

Through the documentary I created to explore the grieving process of my mother and her siblings, which included discovering the family's past through the unearthing of trinkets and artifacts owned by my mother's family, I hope to examine the universality of grief. Research will illuminate the psychology of the grief process and the role of dealing with a loved one's belongings after their death.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

4:45-5:45 — Room 208

Moderator: Prof. Peter Hastings, School of Computing

Arabella Johnson – *Building Stronger Crisis Prevention and Response in Mental Health Apps*

Thesis Director: Nathan Matteson, Design

Faculty Reader: Susan Tran, Psychology

Mental health apps aim to support users in meeting mental health goals, but they do not always have tools in place should mental health challenges escalate and require professional help. This project researched and developed a mental health app prototype emphasizing speed, efficiency, and clinically-based methods of support. The findings are incorporated into a Figma-based prototype for a hypothetical mental health app, with an emergency mode that helps families and friends support loved ones.

Samarah Nasir – *Hidden Heart*

Thesis Director: Jacob Furst, School of Computing

Faculty Reader: Jessica Larva, The Art School

Social anxiety disorder is an extreme fear of social interactions that can lead to self-isolation. The game “Hidden Heart,” developed for this research project, is meant to represent a first step to a healing journey for those with this disorder. The game focuses on Lybao, a person whose social anxiety fueled by her tumultuous past causes her to isolate. In the game, Lybao is trapped in a strange world and the player follows her as she searches for the ability to face the monsters in her mind.

Chance Reeve – *Eternal Consumption: Investigating the Essence of Healing Through Player Experience*

Thesis Director: Michael DeAnda, School of Design

Faculty Reader: Allen Turner, School of Design

This thesis illuminates the intrinsic connection between social, psychological, and biological factors in healing dynamics, attempting to determine how individuals find emotional restoration while balancing the necessities of survival in adverse environments. By harnessing the unique platform of interactive media and the philosophy of ludonarrative resonance, this project will immerse the audience in a distinct exploration of healing set within a destructive ecosystem.

*My Honors Senior Thesis became the writing
sample and cornerstone of all my applications.
It was by a wide margin the most important thing
I did as an undergraduate, and perhaps the singular
reason for my graduate school admissions successes.*

Adam Syvertsen, Class of 2016
Ph.D. candidate in English,
Northwestern University

SCHEDULE OF STUDENT POSTER PRESENTERS

Student Poster Sessions will be held on the Third Floor Atrium

All Honors students are invited to submit their best work of the academic year for conference consideration. The following students were accepted for conference inclusion based on the quality of their research.

Aneesa Alamleh, Political Science

Offending Orientalism

Prof. Jennifer Finstrom

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Rifqa Alani, Health Sciences

Islam in the Atlantic World

Prof. Babacar Mbengue

Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Gerardo Avila, Marketing

The US Public School System & The English Language Learner Experience in Illinois

Prof. Martha Martinez-Firestone

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Samantha Berglind, Accountancy

Chicago Transit Investment and Racial Inequality

Prof. Jesse Mumm

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Roma Bickerton, Film & Television

Causes and Solutions to Coral Bleaching

Prof. Jennifer Finstrom

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Andres Brito, Network Engineering & Security

CPS Schools: Prestigious Versus Public Schools

Prof. Deborah Weiner

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Rayn Chanthaphone, Neuroscience

The Opioid Epidemic and its Unintended Consequences

Prof. Clement Adibe

Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Una Cleary, Political Science

Reproductive Justice and the Disposability of Minority Women: Examining the Impact of Roe v. Wade's Overturn
Prof. Martha Martinez-Firestone
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Madeline Curless, Film & Television

The Harms of Conversion Therapy: Why it Must be Outlawed in the United States
Prof. Sonnet Gabbard
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Nicole Davis, Accountancy/Marketing

Visit or Miss It: Herd Mentality's Effect on Restaurant Reviews
Prof. Caterina Mongiat Farina
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Amanda De Leon, History of Art & Architecture

Decolonizing Museums Through Policy Change
Prof. Jesse Mumm
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Taylor Dowdy, Exercise Science

Are We There Yet?: Understanding Inferno in a Modern Sociopolitical Context
Prof. Kristin Idaszak
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Anna Finerty, Costume Designer/Italian

Weaponized Christianity: Racism, Manifest Destiny, and Conservative White America
Prof. Jesse Mumm
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Jessica Fischli, History

Religion in US Public Schools
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Kate Fosco, Psychology

Federal Regulation of Music Education
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Swapna George, Accountancy
Breaking the Silence: Discursive Opportunities and Collective Identity in Domestic Violence Awareness
Prof. Eulalie Laschever
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Ana Gomez, Health Sciences
Westernization of Korean Media and Culture
Prof. Michael Gallaway
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Ella Grace, Jazz Studies
Psyche of a Jazzwoman: The Psychological Experiences of Female Jazz Musicians
Prof. Monica Reyes
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Juan Hernandez, Management
Is a Culture Selling its Culinary Tradition Selling Out: A Study of Commercialized Culinary Tradition in the United States as a Tool for Integration or Consequence of Assimilation
Prof. Caterina Mongiat Farina
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Zaina Homsi, Mathematical Sciences
Color-Blind Environmental Racism, Health, and Policy
Prof. Michael Gallaway
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Abigail Kane, Animation
The Second Sex No Longer: Modern Women and Their Disproof of Simone De Beauvoir
Prof. Michael Peterson
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Salvador Mata, Biological Sciences
Selective Enrollment: The Creation of (In)Equality
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Morgan Mucha, History of Art & Architecture
Inspirato Italia: The Theological Connection of Values, Tradition and History
Prof. Jennifer Finstrom
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Alice Müller Pereira, Psychology
*Beyond the Wardrobe: Exploring Religious Allegories through
Edmund Pevensie*
Prof. Christopher Robinson
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

LeeAnne Nakamura, Dramaturgy/Criticism
Dual Identities: The Work of Luis Nishizawa
Prof. Ryan Yokota
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Adriana Olaguez, Management/Finance
Inequities in Public School Funding
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Maddy Pot, Biological Sciences
*Reimagining U.S Policies: A Comprehensive Examination and
Reform*
Prof. Erik Tillman
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Jennica Sajor, Psychology
Constructions of Filipina Women in Japan
Prof. Ryan Yokota
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Nicole Sanders, Film & Television
Settler Colonialism and the Gender Binary
Prof. Sonnet Gabbard
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Lydia Schultz, Communication & Media
South Shore: Racial Injustice in Chicago
Prof. Michelangelo Giampaoli
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Reda Shadman, Heath Sciences
*Anatomy of a White Coat: Unveiling Gender Disparities in
Medicine*
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

- Zahraa Shaikh**, Health Sciences
Screen Time Codes Child Development
Prof. Deborah Weiner
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30
- Vanesa Simic**, History
*Judicial Juxtaposition: The Law vs Reality of Religious
Minority Legal Status in Al-Andalus*
Prof. Elena Boeck
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45
- LeAna Simpson**, Neuroscience
Finding The Future
Prof. Jesse Mumm
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30
- Lauren Sloan**, Film & Television
*“I Love Only the Fairer Sex”: Gentleman Jack, Queer
Victorians, and Neo-Victorianism*
Prof. Jennifer Conary
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45
- Angelina Squeo**, Diplomacy
*(Un)welcoming the “Other”: How Systemic Racism is
Wrongfully Ingrained in U.S. Immigration Law*
Prof. Jennifer Finstrom
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30
- Alexia Suarez**, Management
Health Inequities in Brazil
Prof. James Walker
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45
- Aiko Tai**, Accountancy
*How Climate Change Induced Natural Disasters Worsen Levels
of Economic Inequality*
Prof. Jennifer Finstrom
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30
- Annabelle Touma**, Criminology
*The Indigenous History and Brutalities of Assyrians and the
Effects They Have on the Community Today*
Prof. Jennifer Finstrom
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

Josephine Trasowech, Criminology/International Studies
*Signs as Symbols: Assimilation and Social Cohesion on
Devon Avenue*
Prof. Michelangelo Giampaoli
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Allison Tucci, Mathematical Sciences/Computer Science
The Responsibility of Asian Representation in Film
Prof. Michael Gallaway
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Annabel Viravec, Film & Television
The Ecology of Food Within Gothic Films
Prof. Caterina Mongiat Farina
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Payton Volk, Neuroscience
*How Psychopathy Has Been Affected by Misinformation in the
Media*
Prof. Jason Schneider
Poster Presentation — 4:45-5:45

Mads Wren, Theatre Arts/Diplomacy
*Flânerie: Obstacles and Opportunities for the Queer
Community*
Prof. Andreea Smaranda Aldea
Poster Presentation — 3:30-4:30

