

SENIOR SYMPOSIUM

APRIL 22, 2026

STERN HALL

SHARE
YOUR
PASSIONS

Sponsored by the
Center for Teaching and Learning



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH
COLLEGES

Office of the President

Dear Members of the Hobart and William Smith Community,

I am delighted to welcome you to the annual Senior Symposium – a wonderful tradition that celebrates the sustained and sophisticated work of our seniors and Master’s degree students who, under the mentorship of faculty, push the boundaries of their disciplines and enhance the intellectual community at HWS.

This year’s program features an impressive 82 presentations delivered by 99 student presenters. Whether in the classroom or studio, the library or laboratories, in the Geneva community or across the globe – the work of HWS students gives voice to new ideas and conversations.

I congratulate all of the participants in this year’s Symposium and thank them for their commitment to our community. I am grateful to the many members of the faculty who have engaged our students and encouraged them to pursue this challenging and vital work. And finally, it is with deep appreciation that I commend the Center for Teaching and Learning and Ruth Shields and her staff for the vision and leadership in making the Senior Symposium a highlight of the spring semester and pride point for the Colleges.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Gearan
President



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH
COLLEGES

The Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs

Dear HWS Community,

I am delighted to participate in HWS Day, a celebration of the accomplishments, progress, and success reflected in the scholarly and creative work of our students at Hobart and William Smith. Now in its seventeenth year, the Senior Symposium provides an important opportunity to reflect on the value of a Hobart and William Smith education and to recognize the learning, insights, talents, and intellectual growth of our community as we celebrate our seniors and their academic journeys.

I hope you will join me in attending the wide range of student presentations throughout the day. These events highlight what is distinctive about a liberal arts education at Hobart and William Smith: the achievements of our students; the central role of faculty and staff mentorship; interdisciplinary inquiry and multiple approaches to addressing the pressing issues of our time; and a shared commitment to rigorous intellectual engagement and thoughtful debate. As Provost and Dean of Faculty, I warmly invite you to take part in these presentations, discussions, and discoveries, and I commend our student presenters for exemplifying the very best of a Hobart and William Smith education. The questions they pose and the work they share point us toward a future of inquiry that is intellectually ambitious, deeply engaged with the world, and shaped by curiosity that will continue well beyond their time at the Colleges.

I also wish to express my sincere gratitude to my faculty and staff colleagues who have provided invaluable mentorship and guidance, nurturing these students and their work throughout their time at the Colleges. Your support, encouragement, and dedication are essential to the success of this experience. Finally, I thank all those who have contributed their time and energy by presenting work, moderating panels, attending sessions, and offering congratulations and support throughout the day.

Sincerely,

Sarah Kirk

Sarah R. Kirk
Provost and Dean of Faculty



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH
Office of the Hobart and William Smith Deans

Dear Members of the HWS Community:

We write to encourage you to take full advantage of this year's HWS Day and Senior Symposium sessions on April 22, 2026.

This event is an exciting way to hear from students about the projects and intellectual work that has captivated their thinking, writing, and reading in the best ways all year. The sessions make visible that which is often invisible: the long hours and hard work students dedicate to the intellectual journey at HWS and the mentorship from faculty that encourages them to follow their curiosity. Most importantly, the student presentations provide an opportunity for students, under the guidance of faculty advisors, to engage each other as teachers and learners.

As your Deans, we join with the Center for Teaching and Learning in celebrating all those who are participating as presenters. This is an important academic achievement that you now have as part of your legacy. We applaud the faculty and staff who will serve as panel moderators, and we look forward to the interactions and conversation that audience questions spur.

We look forward to seeing you on April 21st at our Blackwell-Hale Academic Achievement Ceremony and on April 22nd for HWS Day and Senior Symposium.

Sincerely,

Kelly Payne
Senior Associate Dean
Hobart and William Smith College

Amy Green
Associate Dean
Hobart and William Smith Colleges

David Mapstone
Associate Dean
Hobart and William Smith College

Kelvin Clark
Assistant Dean
Hobart and William Smith College



HOBART AND WILLIAM SMITH
COLLEGES

Dear Hobart & William Smith Colleagues, Students, and Friends:

Today is the best day of the year.

Over the course of eight hours, we will learn about everything from Zombie Worms in the North Atlantic to desire in dystopian fiction. We will hear about regime change in Latin America and about the experiences of LGBTQ students at Hobart and William Smith. We will learn how to use mathematics to study corruption, how gene editing might eradicate mosquitoes, and why all roads still lead to Rome.

Today we will experience the liberal arts in action: from the faculty moderator who can find that one question that ties together the presentations on chemistry, creative writing and sociology; to the community member who engages with a student about their work in local schools; to the many friends, family, and members of the HWS community who come together to listen, engage, and connect.

Today we will see our students at their very best: engaged, passionate, articulate, and clearly ready to step into the post-college world and lead lives of consequence.

Thank you, and enjoy the day.

The Staff of the Center for Teaching and Learning

Kimberly Crowley

Susan Hess

Chrissy Jacobs

Ingrid Keenan

Gretchen Marr

Ruth Shields

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The seventeenth annual Senior Symposium was made possible by the vision, leadership, and efforts of many in the Hobart and William Smith community.

Office of Academic and Faculty Affairs

Office of the President

Office of the Hobart and William Smith Deans

Office of Communication

IT Services

Center for Teaching and Learning

Kimberly Crowley, Susan Hess, Chrissy Jacobs, Ingrid Keenan, Gretchen Marr, Ruth Shields

CTL Student Staff

Jack Bjorklander, Lauren Davidson, Kaitlyn Hardy, Haley Levine, Mia Lyman, Holden May, Will Patton

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND AWARDS

Symposium Students have received generous support for their academic projects from the following organizations, programs, and funds:

Department of Psychological Science

Department of Physics

Hobart and William Smith Center of Global Education – Student Individual Initiative Fund Grant

Hobart and William Smith Office of the Deans

Hobart and William Smith Summer Research

Student Scholarly Experience 2025



Senior
Symposium
2026
Presenters

SENIOR SYMPOSIUM 2026 PRESENTERS

| Presenter | Sponsor | Department/Program | Panel Time | Room |
|------------------|---------------------------|---|-------------------|-------------|
| Abadi, Lilay | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 203 |
| Abnoos, Derrick | Sutton, James | Sociology | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 304 |
| Al Rousan, Wedad | Jacobsen, Joyce | Economics | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 304 |
| Amado, Cam | Ristow, Benjamin | Writing and Rhetoric | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 201 |
| Apple, Ky | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 201 |
| Barr, Rebecca | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 303 |
| Brady, Ryan | Shafer, Leah | Media and Society | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 203 |
| Brooks, Rachel | Philbrick Yadav, Stacey | International Relations | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 303 |
| Brunner, Elinor | Cole-Kurz, Joshua Bastian | Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectional Justice | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 203 |
| Brunt, Leia | Sutton, James | Sociology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 201 |
| Brunt, Leia | Sutton, James | Sociology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 304 |
| Carolan, Owen | Kenyon, Kristy | Biology | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 201 |
| Chace, Eliza | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 304 |
| Chapman, Cori | Szymanek, Angelique | Art and Architecture | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 304 |
| Citarella, Tait | Sutton, James | Sociology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 304 |
| Cole, Abigail | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 303 |
| Cooper, Marah | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 9:40 - 10:40 | Stern 201 |
| Crandall, Katie | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Crane, Olivia | Sutton, James | Sociology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 303 |
| Darius, Linnea | Cushman, Susan | Biology | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 304 |
| Darrow, Kyla | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 303 |
| Daudi, Aden | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 303 |
| Davidson, Lauren | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 201 |
| Deshon, Isabella | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 303 |
| Dingman, Madelyn | Bodenlos, Jamie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 303 |

SENIOR SYMPOSIUM 2026 PRESENTERS

| Presenter | Sponsor | Department/Program | Panel Time | Room |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Doufekias Emanuel, Lea | Belanger, Elizabeth | American Studies | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 203 |
| Fasig, Tristan | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 203 |
| Finnerty, Jessica | Cushman, Susan | Biology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 304 |
| Finnerty, Jessica | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Gallagher, Fiona | Ristow, Benjamin | Writing and Rhetoric | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 203 |
| Galvan, Hailey | Sutton, James | Sociology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 303 |
| Galvan, Hailey | Sutton, James | Sociology | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 201 |
| Garcia-Castrillon, Nicolas | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 303 |
| Girolamo, Isabelle | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 303 |
| Goldman, Elijah | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 203 |
| Hanuscin, Alyssa | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 203 |
| Hark, Abby | D'Angelo, Gabriella | Art and Architecture | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 201 |
| He, Sabrina | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 303 |
| Holland, Breanna | Capreedy, James | Greek and Roman Studies | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 304 |
| Hong, Randy | Dumitriu, Ileana | Physics | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 304 |
| Hong, Randy | Graham, Daniel | Psychological Science | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 201 |
| Howe, Kelly | Philbrick Yadav, Stacey | International Relations | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 304 |
| Hulburt, Erin | Leopardi, Liliana | Art and Architecture | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 203 |
| Johnson, Edie | Belanger, Elizabeth | American Studies | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Jones, Nicholas | Forbes, Cheryl | Writing and Rhetoric | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 201 |
| Joy, Maya | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 203 |
| Krueger, Madelyn | Forde, Jonathan | Mathematics | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 201 |
| Kuhn, Lily | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 9:40 - 10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Kutchukian, Bradley | Philbrick Yadav, Stacey | International Relations | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 304 |
| Larkin, Genevieve | Slade, Kristin | Chemistry | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 201 |

SENIOR SYMPOSIUM 2026 PRESENTERS

| Presenter | Sponsor | Department/Program | Panel Time | Room |
|---------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Levine, Haley | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 303 |
| Lonergan, Bode | Sutton, James | Sociology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 304 |
| Lutz, Niko | Sutton, James | Sociology | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 304 |
| Madison, Paige | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Malcolm, Alain | Jacobsen, Joyce | Economics | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 203 |
| Malhotra, Tarang | Drennen, Thomas | Economics | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 201 |
| Mandyck, McKenzie | Sutton, James | Sociology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 304 |
| May, Holden | Sutton, James | Sociology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 304 |
| McCabe, Riley | Hess, Susan | Center for Teaching and Learning | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 304 |
| McCarthy, Jaylynn | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 201 |
| McCarthy, Jaylynn | Brubaker, Kristen | Environmental Studies | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 304 |
| McCue, Thomas | Philbrick Yadav, Stacey | International Relations | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 201 |
| McDonough, Laura | Sutton, James | Sociology | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Mencia, Manny | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Mester, Colin | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 201 |
| Miller, Heaven | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 304 |
| Moore, Maxine | Sutton, James | Sociology | 1:10 - 2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Morrell, Lily | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 201 |
| Muldowney, Cheyenne | Dean, Jodi | Politics | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 203 |
| Nelson, James | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Peeler, Alexander | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Pero, Ryan | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 303 |
| Perun, Tulsi | Belanger, Elizabeth | American Studies | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 203 |
| Peters, Talya | Jordan, Meghan | Art and Architecture | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 203 |
| Pilet, Andrew | Conroy-Goldman, Melanie | English and Creative Writing | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 203 |

SENIOR SYMPOSIUM 2026 PRESENTERS

| Presenter | Sponsor | Department/Program | Panel Time | Room |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| Polga, Piper | Sutton, James | Sociology | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Pomerantz, Adam | Philbrick Yadav, Stacey | International Relations | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 303 |
| Proctor, Brielle | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 201 |
| Roll, Elena | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 201 |
| Satheeskumar, William | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 304 |
| Scheirer, Madison | Ikle, Michelle | Dance and Movement Studies | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 203 |
| Scherfling, Lydia | Anglin, Stephanie | Psychological Science | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 201 |
| Searle, Alexis | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 304 |
| Selover, Ian | Brown, Meghan | Biology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 201 |
| Sicchitano, Bryn | Sutton, James | Sociology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 303 |
| Snook, Grace | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 303 |
| Sullivan, Jacquelyn | Sutton, James | Sociology | 9:40-10:40 | Stern 303 |
| Teixeira, Julia | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 303 |
| Tissaaratchy, Sandeep | Yadav, Vikash | International Relations | 8:30-9:30 | Stern 203 |
| Tober, Aaron | Kingery, Julie | Psychological Science | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 303 |
| Trakhachov, Tim | D'Angelo, Gabriella | Art and Architecture | 1:10-2:10 | Stern 201 |
| Urban, Seneca | Sutton, James | Sociology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 304 |
| Utz, Linden | Sutton, James | Sociology | 10:50-11:50 | Stern 303 |
| Victor, Juliana | Hess, Susan | Center for Teaching and Learning | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 304 |
| von Krusenstiern, Magnus | Cushman, Susan | Biology | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 203 |
| Wepler, Lauren | Baker, Diana | Educational Studies | 2:20-3:20 | Stern 303 |
| Wilson, Paige | Burditt, Rebecca | Media and Society | 3:30-4:30 | Stern 203 |

Senior
Symposium
2026
Schedule

Life Experiences

Moderator: Peter Budmen , Director of Student Success and Retention

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 8:30 - 9:30 | Davidson, Lauren Scherfling, Lydia | Family Dynamics and Life Experience | Psychological Science |
| | Jones, Nicholas | Who Is Thomas Sowell? | Writing and Rhetoric |
| | Mester, Colin | Emotional Resilience as a Moderator for ACEs | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Risk Management

Moderator: Amy Green , Associate Dean

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|--------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 9:40 - 10:40 | Apple, Ky | An Intervention for Bisexual AFAB Childhood Abuse Survivors for the Prevention of Revictimization | Psychological Science |
| | Brunt, Leia | Exploring Victim Advocacy | Sociology |
| | Cooper, Marah | The Rhetoric of Illiberal Conservatism: Comparing Trump and Poland's Right Wing | Politics |
| | McCue, Thomas | Fukushima Backlash: European Security and Denuclearization | International Relations |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Complex Systems

Moderator: Chris Kerber , Head Coach, Hobart Rowing

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|---------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 10:50 - 11:50 | Hong, Randy | Messaging Passing Constraints Shape Mammalian Brain Network Structure | Psychological Science |
| | Krueger, Madelyn | Mathematically Modeling Petty Corruption | Mathematics |
| | Larkin, Genevieve | Effects of Molecular Crowding on Human Malate Dehydrogenase | Chemistry |
| | Roll, Elena | Evaluation of Bilingual Differences in Inhibitory Control and Predictors of Emergent Literacy: A Project Proposal | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Finding Solutions

Moderator: Mark Gearan, President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| 1:10 - 2:10 | Carolan, Owen | From Gene Expression to Reproductive Biology: The Case for <i>D. Melanogaster</i> as a Model Organism for Public Funding | Biology |
| | Malhotra, Tarang | Experiencing COP30: Climate Negotiations, Equity, and Emerging Energy Solutions | Economics |
| | McCarthy, Jaylynn | From Pets to Pest: How Lizards Are Adapting to Life in Florida | Biology |
| | Trakhachov, Tim | The Chornobyl Project | Art and Architecture |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Collective Impact

Moderator: Sarah Kirk, Provost and Dean of Faculty

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 2:20 - 3:20 | Galvan, Hailey | Inspiring Institutional Collective Action: Pathways to Intentional Engagement on College Campuses | Sociology |
| | Hark, Abby | Play by Design: From Copenhagen back to Geneva | Art and Architecture |
| | Proctor, Brielle | Screen Time Effects and a Parent-Led Reduction Intervention in Neurotypical and Neurodivergent Children | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Outspread

Moderator: Chuck Vesei, Library Director and Librarian of the Colleges

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 3:30 - 4:30 | Amado, Cam | All Roads Lead | Writing and Rhetoric |
| | Morrell, Lily | Green Crabs Are Spreading across the American Coast. Are They Unwelcomed Guests or the Key to Coastal Conservation? | Biology |
| | Selover, Ian | Swine Country: Potential Spread of Feral Hogs to the Northern United States | Biology |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Revolution and Reaction

Moderator: Kendralin Freeman, Associate Professor of Sociology

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|-----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 8:30 - 9:30 | Goldman, Elijah | Trump, the Counterrevolutionary Who Started a Revolution | Politics |
| | Malcolm, Alain | Economic, Political, and Social Effects of CIA-Orchestrated Regime Changes in Latin America: 1950 - 2014 | Economics |
| | Muldowney, Cheyenne | Trump and the Question of Conservatism: New Movement or Old Ideas? | Politics |
| | Tissaaratchy, Sandeep | Hindutva in Sri Lanka: An Analysis of the Spread of Hindutva Rhetoric Online and Its Influence on Sri Lankan Tamils | International Relations |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Artistic Expression

Moderator: Jonathan Forde, Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|--------------|---------------------|---|------------------------------|
| 9:40 - 10:40 | Brady, Ryan | <i>Crush Hour</i> : Writing a Feature Film | Media and Society |
| | Hulburt, Erin | The Myth of the Female Artist: Tintoretta | Art and Architecture |
| | Pilet, Andrew | Small Areas of Order: The Campus through Fiction | English and Creative Writing |
| | Scheirer, Madison | Dance Composition As Research: Choreographic Development through Performance and Revision | Dance and Movement Studies |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

This is America

Moderator: Kelvin Clark, Assistant Dean

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|---------------|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| 10:50 - 11:50 | Fasig, Tristan | What Kind of Conservative Is Donald Trump? | Politics |
| | Gallagher, Fiona | The Status of Citizenship | Writing and Rhetoric |
| | Perun, Tulsi | Palestine Is Our Compass: Understanding the United States as Empire and Settler Colony | American Studies |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Self and Society

Moderator: Audrey Roberson, Associate Professor of Educational Studies

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 1:10 - 2:10 | Abadi, Lilay | Treating Suicide Ideation Early: Prevention Program Implementation | Psychological Science |
| | Doufekias Emanuel, Lea | Feminism through Movement: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Generations Following the Greek Diaspora | American Studies |
| | Hanuscin, Alyssa Joy, Maya | Personality Differences in Risk-Taking Behaviors | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Images

Moderator: Whitney Mauer, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|--------------------------|--|---|
| 3:30 - 4:30 | Brunner, Elinor | Hyperreal Love: Performing and Denying Queerness in the Thai Television Industry | Gender, Sexuality, and Intersectional Justice |
| | Peters, Talya | (De)Constructing Absence: Photography and the Myth of the "Vanishing Indian" | Art and Architecture |
| | von Krusenstiern, Magnus | Media Framing of Waste: A Qualitative Content Analysis on Media Portrayals of Finger Lakes Landfills | Biology |
| | Wilson, Paige | Name, Image, and Likeness in the D3 Atmosphere | Media and Society |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

"I" and "We"*Moderator: Beth Belanger, Professor of American Studies*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|--|---|-------------------------|
| 8:30 - 9:30 | Daudi, Aden Garcia-Castrillon, Nicolas Levine, Haley | Social Anxiety and Sexual Preferences | Psychological Science |
| | Dingman, Madelyn | Facets of Mindfulness Predicting Social Functioning across Genders in a Low-Income Population | Psychological Science |
| | Pomerantz, Adam | Forced from Home: Diverging Conceptualizations of Internal Displacement | International Relations |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Bodies*Moderator: Chris Annear, Associate Professor of Anthropology*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|--------------|--|--|-----------------------|
| 9:40 - 10:40 | Crane, Olivia Sicchitano, Bryn Sullivan, Jacquelyn | Living on a Disabling Campus | Sociology |
| | Darrow, Kyla | Longitudinal Impacts of a Dance-Based Intervention on Childhood Anxiety and Depression | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Policy Making*Moderator: Gabriella D'Angelo, Associate Professor of Art and Architecture*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| 10:50 - 11:50 | Brooks, Rachel | Divided Islands, Divided Politics: An Investigation of Environmental Policies across Hispaniola and Borneo | International Relations |
| | Deshon, Isabella | Defending Christianity or Defending Virtue? Catholic Responses to Donald Trump | Politics |
| | Galvan, Hailey Utz, Linden | Hobart or William Smith? | Sociology |
| | Tober, Aaron | How Do Longer Recess Periods and Physical Activity Affect 4th and 5th Graders' Academic Performance? | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Impacts*Moderator: Shanelle France, Director of Intercultural Programs and Initiatives*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| 1:10 - 2:10 | Johnson, Edie | Examining American Studies through Knowledge Production | American Studies |
| | McDonough, Laura Moore, Maxine Polga, Piper | The Social Production of Belonging: Intersectional Narratives from Students of Color | Sociology |
| | Peeler, Alexander | Radiation and Resilience: Ecological Responses to Radiation Exposure | Biology |
| | Teixeira, Julia | The Multifaceted Effects of "ACEs" through the Lens of Poverty, Sexual Orientation, and Gender | Psychological Science |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Skill(s) Pathways*Moderator: Chrissy Jacobs, Associate Director of Disability Services, Center for Teaching and Learning*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| 2:20 - 3:20 | Cole, Abigail | Curious Minds: Reclaiming Science in Elementary Education | Educational Studies |
| | Girolamo, Isabelle | Anxiety and Motivation in the Foreign Language Classroom | Educational Studies |
| | Snook, Grace | Let's Talk Politics: Facilitating Political Discussion in the Secondary English Classroom | Educational Studies |
| | Wepler, Lauren | Clicking in or Checking out? Technology and Engagement in Elementary Special Education | Educational Studies |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Student-Centered*Moderator: Andie Huskie, Director of Teacher Education Program and Secondary Education*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| 3:30 - 4:30 | Barr, Rebecca | Think, Connect, Grow: The "Real World" in Fifth Grade | Educational Studies |
| | He, Sabrina | I Knew It! Culturally Relevant Literacy and Critical Thinking | Educational Studies |
| | Pero, Ryan | Rethinking the Math Classroom: A Student-Centered Inquiry Approach to Secondary Mathematics | Educational Studies |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Histories

Moderator: Kristen Welsh, Dean of Global Education

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|----------------------|
| 8:30 - 9:30 | Chapman, Cori | "Black Then. Black Now.": Challenging the Traditional Conventions of Art Presentation and Curation | Art and Architecture |
| | Darius, Linnea | Through the Eyes of Lake Trout: Understanding Diet Histories in Seneca Lake Using Stable Isotope Analysis | Biology |
| | Miller, Heaven | Donald Trump's Rise as a National Conservative | Politics |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

(Un)Healthy Systems

Moderator: Katie Flowers, Executive Director of Center for Community Engagement and Service-Learning and Centennial Center for Leadership

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| 9:40 - 10:40 | Crandall, Katie Mencia, Manny | Motivational Cynicism and Epistemic Skepticism: Political Identity and Perception of Public Health | Psychological Science |
| | Finnerty, Jessica Madison, Paige | Don't Trust Your Gut: Your Microbiome and Disease | Biology |
| | Kuhn, Lily | Donald Trump: The Billionaire Populist | Politics |
| | Nelson, James Searle, Alexis | No Rest for the Dead: Coral Expansion and the Disappearance of Zombie Worms | Biology |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Which Attributes?

Moderator: Nick Metz, Professor of Geoscience, Associate Provost

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|---------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| 10:50 - 11:50 | Citarella, Tait Loneragan, Bode May, Holden | Senior HWS Students' Confidence in Their Post-Graduation Plans | Sociology |
| | McCarthy, Jaylynn | Scales of Invasion: Mapping Nile Monitor Spread in Florida | Environmental Studies |
| | Satheeskumar, William | Gene Editing Mosquitoes: A Mode of Eradication and Management | Biology |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Potent Power*Moderator: Rob Carson, Associate Professor of English and Creative Writing*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1:10 - 2:10 | Al Rousan, Wedad | Board Gender Composition and Corporate Performance: Evidence from Key Committees | Economics |
| | Holland, Breanna | Back-seat Driving in the Roman Empire | Greek and Roman Studies |
| | Hong, Randy | sEMG-Based Motor Control of Neural Prosthetics | Physics |
| | Howe, Kelly | "Nothing About Us Without Us": Knowledge and Power in Sport Development and Peace | International Relations |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Configurations*Moderator: Joyce Jacobsen, Professor of Economics*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|-------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 2:20 - 3:20 | Abnoos, Derrick Lutz, Niko | Navigating Nightlife: Understanding POC and LGBTQ Students' Experiences at HWS | Sociology |
| | Chace, Eliza | Island Life: Kodiak Brown Bear Evolution | Biology |
| | McCabe, Riley | Writing a New Reality | Center for Teaching and Learning |
| | Victor, Juliana | The Biopolitical Technology of Sex: Reimagining Desire in Dystopian Literature | Center for Teaching and Learning |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Division and Disruption*Moderator: Sarah Whitten, Assistant Professor of History*

| Time | Presenters | Abstract Title | Department/Program |
|-------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| 3:30 - 4:30 | Brunt, Leia Mandyck, McKenzie Urban, Seneca | What Unites Us and Divides Us: Compulsory Experiences at HWS | Sociology |
| | Finnerty, Jessica | From "The Pill" to the Pond: The Ecological Impacts of the Endocrine Disruptor 17 α -Ethinylestradiol on Aquatic Animals | Biology |
| | Kutchukian, Bradley | Two Cypruses, One Island: Navigating the Multi-dimensional Realities of External Forces on Shared Land | International Relations |
| | Questions & Answers | | |

Senior
Symposium
2026
Abstracts

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TREATING SUICIDE IDEATION EARLY: PREVENTION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Lilay Abadi

Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the adolescent age range, especially in marginalized communities and the rate at which it is claiming lives of children is increasing (Liu & Wang, 2024, Van Meter et al., 2023). Thus, it is essential to design studies that aim to create effective solutions to decrease the rate of suicide across the country. This study focuses on offering the Youth Suicide Prevention Treatment Program Adapted for Community Mental Health Center (SPT-A) intervention program to children in age gap of 9-10 recruited from their closest mental health community centers to examine its effect in decreasing the risk factors related to suicide and suicide ideation itself.

It is hypothesized that the group that received the intervention treatment will show improvement in score of depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation. In addition, it is predicted females will benefit more from the treatment than males. Moreover, decrease in risk factors will be directly related to decrease in suicidal ideation. Lastly, it is expected that the strongest risk factor will be anxiety. Multiple measures and informants will be used to collect information about levels of depression, anxiety and suicide ideation at baseline, post treatment and at follow-up. Strength, limitation and future direction will be discussed.

Keywords: suicide, depression, suicidal behaviors, suicide ideation, anxiety

NAVIGATING NIGHTLIFE:
UNDERSTANDING POC AND LGBTQ STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES AT HWS

Derrick Abnoos and Niko Lutz

This project explores how LGBTQ and POC students navigate and enjoy nightlife at HWS, a primarily white institution (PWI) and a primarily heterosexual institution. Given the importance of social life during college, we wanted to understand how marginalized identities on campus navigate expectations surround friendship, race, and heterosexuality at HWS.

Previous literature demonstrates how rituals for going out and hookup culture can pressure students into engaging in risky behavior. Using focus groups, this project builds on that research, with the aim of understanding the racialized and gendered nightlife experiences of students at HWS.

Our goal is to explore how the HWS community can improve, as well as identify what the Colleges may be doing well for its marginalized student population.

BOARD GENDER COMPOSITION AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE:
EVIDENCE FROM KEY COMMITTEES

Wedad Al Rousan

In this project, I examine whether gender composition on corporate boards affects risk and overall performance in today's corporate environment. Building on my work from last semester and continuing this semester under Professor Joyce P. Jacobsen, this study focuses on where decisions are made, specifically within audit and governance committees. The motivation for this project comes from ongoing debates around diversity and inclusion in corporate leadership and the question of whether increased representation leads to meaningful influence in decision-making.

Using panel data from U.S. publicly traded firms, the analysis captures variation across changing market conditions, including periods of disruption and recovery. Outcomes are measured using indicators such as stock beta, leverage, and return on assets. I used regression analysis to evaluate whether differences in female representation, both at the board level and within key committees, are associated with differences in performance and risk-taking behavior. The analysis considers whether any observed relationship varies across industries and over time.

More broadly, I ask whether increased representation translates into measurable influence or remains largely symbolic. As conversations around diversity, inclusion, and corporate governance continue to evolve, I aim to clarify whether board diversity has real economic implications or reflects shifting norms without significantly affecting performance outcomes.

ALL ROADS LEAD

Cam Amado

I examine the influence of ancient Roman road networks on contemporary transit infrastructure in Italy. Roman roads were among the most advanced transportation systems of the ancient world, designed to support military movement, trade, and administrative control across the empire. I ask how the structure and planning of these early road networks contributed to the development of modern Italian motorway and railway systems.

I explore the design, construction, and intended use of Roman roads, with particular attention to their linear organization and grid-based expansion. Unlike routes determined primarily by geographic efficiency, Roman roads often followed direct, strategic alignments once a grid location was selected, reducing the role of terrain in determining network layout. A comparative analysis was then conducted between reconstructed Roman road maps and current Italian transit infrastructure, including major highways and railway corridors. I am planning to use GIS to generate map visualizations to best represent this comparative analysis.

Preliminary findings indicate a significant positive relationship between the integrated Roman road network and the configuration of modern transportation systems. Many contemporary routes follow or parallel ancient alignments, suggesting that early planning decisions continued to influence infrastructure development long after the fall of the Roman Empire. These results demonstrate the lasting impact of Roman engineering and urban planning on modern transportation networks in Italy.

AN INTERVENTION FOR BISEXUAL AFAB CHILDHOOD ABUSE SURVIVORS FOR THE PREVENTION OF REVICTIMIZATION

Ky Apple

Revictimization is defined as the rate at which childhood sexual abuse survivors are at a risk for adult sexual assault. Blackburn et al. (2023) found that 49% of all sexual minorities have experienced sexual revictimization. Although sexual minorities have an increased risk of sexual assault and revictimization, there have been no intervention strategies created specifically for sexual minorities for the purpose of prevention.

In this study, I aim to create a longitudinal group and module-based intervention to reduce alcohol use and increase education for sexual minority survivors of childhood abuse to prevent revictimization. It is hypothesized that the intervention will increase knowledge on risk cues and factors for revictimization, and reduce harmful alcohol use, depression, anxiety, and the rate of revictimization, these results lasting over time. The 12-week intervention will include weekly modules and group discussion on sexual assault education, prevention and practices in reducing harmful alcohol use. The modules are designed using safe alcohol consumption guidelines from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. There will be a post, 4-week and 4-year follow-up to test the effectiveness of treatment. Strengths, limitations, and future directions will be discussed.

Blackburn, A. M., Bystrynski, J. B., Rieger, A., Garthe, R. C., Piasecki, M., & Allen, N. E. (2023). Sexual assault revictimization among sexual minority individuals: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychology of Violence*, 13(4), 286-296.

HOW THE CLASSROOM COUNTERS POLARIZATION: THE AfD IN GERMANY

Emely Bacon

Does exposure to difference cultivate tolerance? What role does and can the state play in structuring the conditions that shape the way increasingly diverse populations experience coexistence? The stark increase in the popularity of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) throughout Germany makes apparent that anti-immigration rhetoric wins votes and, when paired with the stark increase in the diversity of Germany over the past decade, contributes to a fraught political atmosphere. Yet across Germany, school children of different backgrounds may be playing a role in dampening the effects of the polarization that is capturing headlines. Mapping AfD support onto migration patterns shows that areas with the highest levels of support often have some of the lowest levels of migration.

This project explores the impact of compulsory schooling on social integration in the context of a polarizing national debate over diversity and immigration. Gordon Allport suggests that prejudice decreases when one comes into contact with difference (Allport, 1954). This is supported by Nevin Aiken, who suggests that individuals on opposite sides of a fault line must be brought together through shared institutions in order to reconcile through a process of social learning (Aiken, 2013). I explored several alternative explanations that can account for the counterintuitive finding that the AfD is most popular in areas relatively less impacted by migration. I argue that Germans who were exposed to social learning models for a longer period of time show a greater ability to develop overlapping consensus with migrants and are consequently less likely to express support for AfD.

THINK, CONNECT, GROW: THE “REAL WORLD” IN FIFTH GRADE

Rebecca Barr

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is a continuous process. How does reflecting on self-awareness help students connect in-school learning to their experiences outside of school? This practitioner inquiry project explores how SEL, specifically self-awareness, is taught in a fifth-grade integrated co-taught (ICT) elementary school classroom. I examine how self-awareness impacts students' ability to generalize what they are learning. Data is collected through teacher interviews, student exit tickets, and researcher journal entries that allow for perspectives from a variety of stakeholders, including students, teachers, and the researcher.

Oftentimes, SEL is embedded into an ELA lesson, or it is introduced as a response to something happening in the classroom (e.g., a student takes something off the teacher's desk without permission). However, it is important for SEL, specifically the self-awareness component of SEL, to be incorporated throughout the day to provide students with opportunities for reflection. Research suggests that SEL is most effective when it is embedded throughout the school day and integrated across multiple subject areas, rather than being limited to isolated incidents¹. The results from this project build on existing research by suggesting that intentional space for reflection builds student and teacher self-awareness, SEL lessons are relevant in everyday life, and real-world math connections made by students are more prevalent than other learning connections.

¹ Jones, S., Bailey, R., Brush, K., & Kahn, J. (2018). Preparing for effective SEL implementation.

EASEL Lab. <https://doi.org/10.59656/yd-os3796.001>

CRUSH HOUR: WRITING A FEATURE FILM

Ryan Elizabeth Brady

“When a single father and his teenage daughter develop the same celebrity crush, they race across the country with the heart of one actress on their minds” (Sample trailer description).

I first came up with the idea for *Crush Hour* in a screenwriting class my junior spring, a concept I carried through summer research and into a year-long honors project in Media & Society. The screenplay follows Dani and Frank as a daughter and father both infatuated with actress Sandra Bullock, as they race from Buffalo NY to Los Angeles, each hoping to win her over. Accompanied by her best friend Suzie, Dani struggles as nothing on the road goes according to plan, and Frank catches up to her despite his own ineptitude.

The process of writing a feature film is extensive, and over the past several months I’ve read screenplays, studied films, written hundreds of pages, created storyboards, and shot a scene, with the goal of eventually making *Crush Hour* in its entirety. By sharing my inspirations, creative process, and a filmed scene from the script, I explore challenges and successes of the filmmaking process and introduce my project to an audience. Additionally, I’ll discuss comedy and American cinema, and the ways in which studying these genres played a role in the development of the script.

DIVIDED ISLANDS, DIVIDED POLITIES: AN INVESTIGATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES ACROSS HISPANIOLA AND BORNEO

Rachel Brooks

The global expansion of the agriculture and mining industries has led to widespread environmental degradation and deforestation, especially on environmentally threatened islands. Comparing case studies from the islands of Hispaniola and Borneo, I aim to explain how institutional differences help explain environmental policies. Each island is divided into more than one polity, with its own distinctive policy priorities, political system, and historical legacies. Different sides of each island can be compared to each other to explore these differences. At the same time, in Hispaniola, the states of the Dominican Republic and Haiti are fully located on the single island, whereas in Borneo, the reverse is true: the territories of Kalimantan (Indonesia), Sabah (Malaysia), and Sarawak (Malaysia) are each only a portion of larger polities and surround the tiny Sultanate of Brunei. The comparison of these two islands thus allows a careful examination of the significance of island ecologies in determining environmental policies of larger states, as well as of island states themselves. Divided islands serve as a unique opportunity to explore how different polities and institutions can influence environmental policies regarding the environmental consequences of industry expansions.

HYPERREAL LOVE: PERFORMING AND DENYING QUEERNESS
IN THE THAI TELEVISION INDUSTRY

Elinor Brunner

Over the last decade, queer television shows produced in Thailand have exploded in popularity both domestically and internationally. This popularity has given rise to the practice of pair branding, in which actors who see success as an onscreen couple will continue to be paired together for future projects. They are also marketed together outside of the context of their shows: they participate in events like fanmeets and concerts as pairs, interact flirtatiously with each other on social media, and sell merchandise with their faces on it. Some of these branded pairs have seen enormous success and gained fans around the world; careers are built on this performance of love. But these actors must walk a delicate line, acting as if they are in love with each other both on and off screen while always maintaining plausible deniability.

In this project, I will explore the particular ways in which actors in queer Thai dramas both perform and deny queerness in their role as public figures—that is, not in the shows themselves, but in how they present themselves at fan events and on social media. I will also discuss the fallout that ensues when branded pairs stop working together. I am interested in how the peculiar system of pair branding disrupts conventional relationships between public and private and between reality and performance.

EXPLORING VICTIM ADVOCACY

Leia Brunt

Victimization remains a heavily stigmatized subject, often leading to conversations and experiences being silenced or ignored. Not only does silencing happen by the broader public and criminal justice system, but often by victims and survivors themselves. Data from the 2023 and 2024 National Crime Victimization Survey (NVCS) highlighted that over half of the representative sample respondents did not report their experiences of victimization to law enforcement. This raises an important question: what changes can be implemented to create more inclusive systems and environments for victim's experiences to be heard?

Through a Summer Scholarly Experience in 2025, I developed a feasibility report for my study on *Launching a Victim and Survivor Writing Archive*. This is a potential alternative resource for victims and survivors of crime that is available outside of the criminal justice system aimed to welcome the experiences of victims and survivors to foster community, empathy, public education, and to humanize these individuals. My current independent study involves the current construction of the foundation for a victimization, crime, and justice initiative which would allow for community engagement, open dialogue, and awareness surrounding victimization at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. These projects highlight the potential for student-led and community-based approaches to destigmatizing victimization and exposing the injustices that privilege lends a blind eye to.

As a member of the HWS community, we are told consistently to “lead lives of consequence.” To me, fostering something bigger than oneself in the hopes that it will transform lives, perspectives, and have lasting impacts is taking everything we have learned from both inside and outside of HWS and using it for a greater good.

WHAT UNITES US AND DIVIDES US: COMPULSORY EXPERIENCES AT HWS

Leia Brunt, McKenzie Mandyck, Seneca Urban

Higher education often includes institutional mandates, hereafter referred to as compulsory experiences, that all students abide by. The compulsory experiences that we focus on are the four-year meal plan requirement and the residential housing lottery system at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS). Our project examines how these experiences are perceived differently across various undergraduate student demographics at HWS.

To understand variations in student perspectives, we will employ a quantitative research design, distributing an online survey to a representative sample of all undergraduate students at HWS. The survey focuses on several key themes, including meal plan accessibility and flexibility, as well as attitudes towards the residential housing lottery system and patterns in student housing arrangements.

This project allows us to explore how these systems may reinforce social and cultural inequalities amongst undergraduate students. Our research contributes to ongoing discussions about institutional decision making, as we aim to highlight the ways in which the four-year meal plan requirement and the residential housing lottery system at the Colleges impact student experiences, while identifying areas for improvement to better serve the undergraduate population.

FROM GENE EXPRESSION TO REPRODUCTIVE BIOLOGY:
THE CASE FOR *D. MELANOGASTER* AS A MODEL ORGANISM
FOR PUBLIC FUNDING

Owen Carolan

My study explores the expression of *Sine oculis* (so), *Sine oculis* binding partner (sobp), and *Eyes absent* (eya) protein in the development of *Drosophila melanogaster* (fruit fly) ovary. With mentorship from Professor Kenyon. I focus on identifying how each protein is expressed and what roles each play in the process of ovariogenesis.

Previous studies revealed that these proteins act in the formation of sensory organs such as the fly eye. This project represents a new area of investigation. The experimental approach involved mating different fly strains to generate offspring that either “showed” or “blocked” gene expression. Fluorescent reporters revealed when and where each gene was expressed. Results from the “block it” experiment indicate that each protein performs specific roles.

The ability to conduct research on this model organism is critical for public health. These three genes have been implicated in human disease, demonstrating an evolutionary relationship. *Drosophila* is a quickly developing, low-cost model system to study conserved genes. Examining gene function in fruit flies can lead to novel insights into human reproductive diseases.

ISLAND LIFE: KODIAK BROWN BEAR EVOLUTION

Eliza Chace

The Kodiak brown bear (*Ursus arctos middendorffi*) is a geographically isolated brown bear population. Brown bears colonized Kodiak Island 10,000-12,000 years ago, when land corridors connected the island and the mainland. As sea levels rose and these land bridges disappeared, the islands and the bears that occupied them became isolated. How does the ancestry of brown bears influence their traits today? Did the geographical isolation result in a new species of bear? Overall, my project explores, through a literature review, how ecological conditions, connectivity with the mainland bears, and evolution shape the characteristics and long-term viability of Kodiak bears.

The Kodiak bear is **not a distinct genetic group** separate from inland brown populations, but a subpopulation with low genetic diversity and isolation from mainland populations (Paetkau, Shields, and Strobeck 1998). Kodiak bears have low diversity in their immune-related genes, which could lead to lower resilience to diseases and increase the vulnerability of the Kodiak bear population when new pathogens emerge (Talbot et al. 2006). These island bears are larger than mainland brown bears, with a broader and wider skull and larger cheekbones, which may have evolved in response to their main food source, salmon. These traits reveal how long-term geographic isolation, combined with abundant and predictable food resources, has shaped the physical characteristics and vulnerabilities of the Kodiak bear population today.

Daele, Lawrence J. Van, Victor G. Barnes, and Jerrold L. Belant. 2012. "Ecological Flexibility of Brown Bears on Kodiak Island, Alaska." *Ursus* 23(1): 21–29.

Paetkau, David, Gerald F. Shields, and Curtis Strobeck. 1998. "Gene Flow between Insular, Coastal and Interior Populations of Brown Bears in Alaska." *Molecular Ecology* 7(10): 1283–92.

Talbot, Sandra L, Judy R Gust, George K Sage, Anthony Fischbach, Kristin Amstrup, William Leacock, and Larry Van Daele. 2006. "GENETIC CHARACTERIZATION OF BROWN BEARS OF THE KODIAK ARCHIPELAGO."

“BLACK THEN. BLACK NOW.”: CHALLENGING THE TRADITIONAL
CONVENTIONS OF ART PRESENTATION & CURATION

Cori Chapman

I am not a formal writer. I am not a formal painter. I am not a formal curator. Nothing I have ever done has been “formal” or “conventional.” I can attribute this to my identity as a Black woman in 21st century America: but I think I have been put on this earth to always disturb the traditional conventions of everything I encounter. As I have delved deeper into my career goals in the art world, I have fallen more and more in love with having the opportunity to create experiences and spaces for people to encounter the beauty of art and all its facets; but in this journey of discovery and love, I have noticed a culture of neutrality in the presentation of art: gallery spaces are often characterized mainly by their white walls, concrete floors, and minimal seating of a neutral tone to impede the inclination to sit and take up space.

This sterility removes the humanity from the gallery space. I believe that art is a reflection of the human condition and how we chose to reconcile with it; there is a deep humanity that elicits this form of creation, and in turn, gallery spaces should reflect that same care. I want to be able to walk into a gallery or museum and practically see the fingerprints of the handler on the glass, to smell whatever concoction of perfumes and fragrances that the team wore when installing the show, to sit in a seat with back support and just look at a piece without feeling like I have to navigate the entire space in half an hour. These considerations fueled the capstone exhibition I curated and presented in March 2025, “Black then. Black now.”

SENIOR HWS STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE
IN THEIR POST-GRADUATION PLANS

Tait Citarella, Bode Lonergan, Holden May

Students at HWS have taken many paths during their time at the college and naturally have a wide range of preparation for life after graduation. In this study, we explore what experiences positively and negatively affected their feelings of confidence in their post-graduation plan.

This project gives voice to seniors from diverse departments, regardless of their direction or confidence in their plans, to gain many different perspectives. Through participation in in-depth interviews, we are able to obtain personal narratives around how individual students think about confidence. Following these interviews, a focus group will allow participants to discuss how and why particular experiences have affected their confidence and how these ideas emerge in a group setting.

The purpose of this study is to understand what experiences have influenced students' confidence and why they have had these effects. With this information, we hope to help key stakeholders on campus understand what drives students' confidence in their final weeks leading to graduation. We believe this will be valuable information for fine-tuning programs and directing resources on campus, so that future graduating classes will be confident in their first steps off campus.

CURIOUS MINDS: RECLAIMING SCIENCE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Abigail Cole

Science education plays a critical role in shaping curiosity, critical thinking, and connections to the world, yet it often receives limited attention in elementary classrooms. Policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act have contributed to this decline by prioritizing standardized testing in reading and mathematics, reducing instructional time devoted to science in the early grades.² This practitioner inquiry project explores the value of early science instruction by investigating approaches to teaching elementary science in both a New York public school and an extracurricular summer camp setting in New Hampshire. Data from each site included lesson plans, student work, and field notes documenting the instructional setting and student population. To examine longer-term impact, surveys of adults in non-STEM fields identified which science experiences from adolescence remain most memorable and meaningful.

Because scientific thinking supports curiosity, evidence-based reasoning, and informed engagement with the world, it remains an essential skill for all students regardless of future career paths. The project's findings highlight the lasting impact of hands-on and place-based learning experiences. These insights, combined with existing literature on science education policy and instructional practice, suggest teaching approaches that may help reclaim science in elementary education. Through lesson design, implementation, and reflective analysis, I demonstrate how inquiry-based, interdisciplinary science instruction fosters curiosity and deepens engagement among young learners. Ultimately, I advocate for greater emphasis on early science education and for integrated, experiential approaches that connect scientific inquiry to students' lived environments.

² Hovey, Al, et al. "Science Education in the Era of No Child Left Behind—History, Benchmarks, and Standards." Nrel.org, Learning Point Associates, 2005, www.nrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/science/sc600/. Accessed 19 Feb. 2026.

THE RHETORIC OF ILLIBERAL CONSERVATISM:
COMPARING TRUMP AND POLAND'S RIGHT WING

Marah Cooper

Many believe Trump and his presidency are unprecedented, but Trump is not a unique character in the world of politics. As an illiberal conservative utilizing populist rhetoric, Trump and his party closely resemble that of Poland's right-wing Law and Justice party. While Trump is often compared to Hungary's Viktor Orbán and Russia's Vladimir Putin, Trump's actions within the United States government more closely resemble that of Poland's right-wing.

Trump, like Poland's right-wing leaders Kaczyński and Nawrocki, does not have unlimited power due to the nature of the system in the United States where the executive is just one branch of the system. Instead of being able to act unilaterally they must use other means to secure more power for themselves and their parties. To achieve their goals, they reinterpret and disregard the constitution where it benefits them and pack the judicial system with justices that they are ideologically aligned with. Trump's administration, like Poland's right-wing, aims to weaken the system of checks and balances and diminish legislative power, create perceived insecurity surrounding things such as the economy and crime, and use of identity politics to establish an us versus them mentality.

MOTIVATIONAL CYNICISM AND EPISTEMIC SKEPTICISM:
POLITICAL IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Kathryn Crandall & Emmanuel Mencia

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, trust in science and scientific institutions has become increasingly polarized and politicized. This shift has highlighted the need for more precise ways to measure how people evaluate scientific claims and the individuals who present them. We believe that epistemic authority – the degree to which an individual is perceived as a reliable source of truth in a given domain – directly feeds into this mistrust, and can be broken down into two subcategories: (1) epistemic skepticism, doubt of the evidence, focused on the content or idea presented; and (2) motivational cynicism, doubt of the authority figure’s (person presenting the information) motives and possible self-interest. Prior research on mistrust in science has often failed to separate these two forms of doubt in their measurement design, something this study seeks to address.

We developed and evaluated a new measure, the Measure of Motivational Cynicism and Epistemic Skepticism (MMCES), which assesses these two constructs through a combination of public health scenarios and general attitudinal items. We examine the reliability and validity of the MMCES, and evaluate its discriminant validity relative to related constructs such as Intolerance of Uncertaintyⁱ and Actively Open-minded Thinkingⁱⁱ. We also assess whether responses vary based on political orientation, given that attitudes towards science have become increasingly politically divided.ⁱⁱⁱ Participants were recruited from HWS psychology courses and from two local ambulance agencies in the Finger Lakes region.

LIVING ON A DISABLING CAMPUS

Olivia Crane, Bryn Sicchitano, and Jacquelyn Sullivan

By centering the perspectives of students managing a physical disability, this project aims to contribute to ongoing conversations about accessibility at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS), highlight areas for improvement, and create a safer and more accessible campus for everyone. Our project looks at the experiences of physically disabled students at HWS and how the campus environment shapes their everyday lives. We are using the social model of disability as our framework, which argues people are not disabled just because of their physical condition, but because spaces and institutions are not designed with all students in mind. Around 35 million Americans have disabilities that impact their mobility, or 1 in 7 adults. While reform is needed everywhere and people continue to fight for their right to move freely in our world, our hope is that our research makes a real impact for our community.

Here at HWS, we comply with ADA standards, but many locations on campus are not easily accessible. This fundamentally changes the way we interact socially and creates dynamics between students that we would like to uncover.

To research these experiences, this study uses a mixed-methods approach, focusing on qualitative data. We conduct interviews and a focus group with students who identify as having a physical disability. This includes students with long-term disabilities as well as those experiencing temporary disabilities due to injury or illness. We also have produced a map of our campus, where we can clearly label locations that are inaccessible or avoided by students with physical disabilities. We hope that our findings, informed by the students most impacted, will contribute to a more accessible campus.

THROUGH THE EYES OF LAKE TROUT: UNDERSTANDING DIET HISTORIES
IN SENECA LAKE USING STABLE ISOTOPE ANALYSIS

Linnea Darius

Lake Trout (*Salvelinus namaycush*) are important apex predators, maintaining ecosystem balance through their regulation of prey fish and invasive species, but populations have declined in their native habitats over the past two decades. Increasing presence of invasive species such as the Sea Lamprey and Round Goby negatively impact the health of Lake Trout, and additional threats from habitat degradation and increased sediment in spawning locations cause decreased fecundity.

Lake Trout eye lenses grow in layers, becoming metabolically inert during the next growth cycle, thereby making them a reliable tissue for understanding diet changes over ontogeny. Specimens collected from the 2023 and 2024 Seneca Lake Trout Derby were used to analyze stable isotopes in eye lens and muscle tissues. Eye lens layers were separated under a microscope, and otoliths were removed and aged using the crack and burn method. Hatchery and wild-raised fish were compared to determine whether there is a detectable difference in dietary shifts throughout lifespan. The ages of the Lake Trout studied spanned from 7 to 12 years old, with an average length of 69.57 cm and weight of 6.88 g (n=11). This research is work for my Senior Honors Thesis and contributes to a larger study of Lake Trout diets in the Finger Lakes.

LONGITUDINAL IMPACTS OF A DANCE-BASED INTERVENTION
ON CHILDHOOD ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Kyla Darrow

Multiple factors across development can have either a negative or positive impact on childhood anxiety and depression. I examine the impacts of a twelve-week dance-based physical activity intervention among kindergarten through sixth graders. I hypothesized that symptoms of anxiety, depression, internalization and externalization symptoms will significantly decrease in the intervention group compared to the control group. The participants of the study will include 1000 children from five regions of the United States, with ages ranging from 5-12. There will be a 1:1 male/female ratio, with a representative demographic of the United States. The intervention will be a 90-minute session that includes discussion and movement activities. The intervention strategies will use imagery, intention, dancing, and low impact cardio. A 2x3 ANOVA will be conducted for each measure to examine the effectiveness of the intervention from pre, to post intervention with a follow up post study.

Strengths of this study include the large and randomized sample size, can determine cause and effect, and high external validity. Potential drop out, cost, and active consent could limit sample size and diversity of the sample. Additional factors like biological markers like heart rate, blood pressure, cortisol levels, adrenaline, norepinephrine, acetylcholine, and adding more dancing to the intervention, as well friendship quality, memory, and self esteem are also of interest.

SOCIAL ANXIETY AND SEXUAL PREFERENCES

Aden Daudi, Nicolas Garcia-Castrillon, and Haley Levine

Our group is studying social anxiety through the lens of sexual preference in college students for our capstone course in personality psychology. We became interested in this topic because people often use sexual preference and sexual orientation interchangeably, but for our study, we are treating them as different constructs. We define sexual preference as the sexual interest and attraction a person experiences toward a specific gender, race, ethnicity, or identity. This differs from sexual orientation because sexual orientation includes the individual's own gender identity as part of the construct. Our study focuses only on the gender or genders a person finds sexually attractive. We aim to see whether sexual preference plays a role in how students experience social anxiety: does a person's sexual preference affect their level of social anxiety?

Our participant pool will be entirely college students, which provides a unique perspective because social anxiety can shape so many parts of college life, especially in social settings, relationships, and everyday interactions. We have created a SONA study using Qualtrics to collect quantitative data throughout the Spring '26 semester. This research can be used to support people experiencing social anxiety that might be related to their sexual preference.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND LIFE EXPERIENCE

Lauren Davidson and Lydia Scherfling

According to previous research, sibling relationships may have an association with the development of emotional intelligence (EI), and specifically the quality of relationships. The childhood years, in particular, are crucial for emotional intelligence because this is when children learn to understand their own and others' emotions. This study investigates the relationship between having a sibling and one's emotional intelligence.

We hypothesized that individuals who grew up with at least one sibling would have higher emotional intelligence compared to those who grew up with none. Further we hypothesized that individuals with a higher quality of sibling relationship in childhood will have higher emotional intelligence compared to those with a lower sibling relationship quality in childhood. We will ask college students to complete a questionnaire that includes a revised emotional intelligence scale, social awareness scale, and impulsivity scale. To validate the revised emotional intelligence scale, responses were compared to previously validated scales of social awareness and impulsivity. We predict that social awareness will provide evidence of convergent validity and impulsivity will provide evidence of discriminant validity.

DEFENDING CHRISTIANITY OR DEFENDING VIRTUE?
CATHOLIC RESPONSES TO DONALD TRUMP

Isabella Deshon

Donald Trump's relationship with Christian supporters presents a striking moral and political puzzle. Trump frequently appeals to Christians by portraying himself as a protector of religion, moral order, and the political influence of Christianity in American public life. Yet many Catholic commentators argue that his rhetoric and conduct contradict central Christian virtues such as humility, compassion, and respect for human dignity. This tension is crucial because it challenges assumptions about moral integrity in political leadership and invites readers to consider how religious values influence political support. This raises a deeper question about the role of religion in contemporary conservative politics: should Christian political judgment prioritize a leader's moral character or the defense of Christian moral priorities in law and public culture?

In this context, Trump's appeal among many religious conservatives reflects a form of protective, identity-based conservatism, where defending Christianity's place in public life can outweigh concerns about a leader's personal virtue. This ongoing tension is not simply about partisan loyalties, but about what it means to pursue the common good and embody virtue in the public square. These debates are significant because they reveal the core moral and political dilemmas faced by Christian communities, highlighting that the heart of the puzzle is not just a matter of policy or power, but about the deeper meaning of Christian engagement in American society.

FACETS OF MINDFULNESS PREDICTING SOCIAL FUNCTIONING ACROSS GENDERS IN A LOW-INCOME POPULATION

Madelyn Dingman

Communities with low socioeconomic status (SES) experience disproportionately high rates of poor physical health, depression, anxiety, and inflammatory conditions (Lenger et al., 2022; Benzeval et al., 2000). Mindfulness has emerged as an important trait for emotional well-being and resilience in economically disadvantaged settings (Burstein et al., 2020; Lenger et al., 2022). By supporting adaptive coping, trait mindfulness may help individuals in low-SES communities manage daily stressors and improve psychological and physiological outcomes, including social functioning (Burstein et al., 2020).

Social functioning is a critical determinant of well-being: High-quality social relationships predict greater thriving (Yeo et al., 2025), while compromised social functioning is associated with poorer mental-health outcomes across diverse populations (Fox et al., 2017). Mindfulness facets have been suggested to help better navigate compromised social functioning (de Vibe et al., 2012). However, mindfulness may not benefit all groups equally. Evidence suggests that males and females differ in stress exposure, coping strategies, and social-network structures (Vidic, 2024; Marks, 2008).

The secondary analysis study examined how facets of mindfulness relate to social functioning while controlling for stress in a low-SES community and exploring gender differences. Adults (N = 177; 49.7% female, 50.2% male) completed validated measures of mindfulness, stress, and social functioning. Acting with awareness was found to be a significant predictor of social functioning for females, and nonjudging a significant predictor of social functioning for males. Stress was associated with poorer social functioning for both genders.

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Helminen, E. C., Scheer, J. R., & Felver, J. C. (2021). Gender differences in the associations between mindfulness, self-compassion, and perceived stress reactivity. *Mindfulness*, 12(10), 2173–2183. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-021-01672-y>

Lenger, K. A., Mitchell, E., Garcia, D. J., Amer, Z., Shorter, R. L., & Gordon, K. C. (2022). Is mindfulness one-size-fits-all?: Consulting community members and stakeholders to adapt mindfulness for communities with low-income and economic marginalization.

FEMINISM THROUGH MOVEMENT: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF GENERATIONS FOLLOWING THE GREEK DIASPORA

Lea Doufekias Emanuel

Through autoethnographic research, unpacked and understood through transnational feminist theory, my honors thesis argues for the understanding of diasporic feminism as an extension of transnational feminism. I draw on my family's immigration history, exploring the untold narratives of women. Positioning embodied knowledge not just as family history but as a web of cultural knowledge passed down beyond borders and physical boundaries creates an independent diaspora of unconscious feminist practice. I grapple with these ever-changing definitions, hoping through my writing and research I am able to reimagine transnational feminist practices in order to accurately define Diasporic Feminism.

This project is organized as a research paper split into three phases: defining, exploring, and expanding diasporic feminism. This is paired with physical textile work in the form of a traditional Greek folk dress made entirely of denim, representing the homogeneous traditions of the "American Dream." My research considers how frameworks that travel across borders simultaneously expand and complicate transnational feminisms, introducing tensions around belonging, solidarity, and the politics of location. Finally, my project takes textile work seriously as methodology and argument, treating the making, unmaking, and remaking of cloth as a practice that enacts diasporic feminist knowledge rather than simply illustrating it.

WHAT KIND OF CONSERVATIVE IS DONALD TRUMP

Tristan Fasig

What kind of conservative is Donald Trump? I argue that Trump is not a fixed ideological figure, but a political actor whose identity has been continuously shaped by the movement surrounding him. At what precise moment did Donald Trump cross the line from populist to demagogue, and what forces compelled him to cross it?

Trump arrived on the political stage in 2015 as a recognizable type, the outsider populist. His rhetoric of “us versus them” had historical precedent in figures like Andrew Jackson and William Jennings Bryan. He was loud, he was provocative, but he operated within a framework that political historians could categorize. And yet, by the time of his second inauguration, something had fundamentally changed.

The clue lies in a single date, January 6, 2021. I contend that the Capitol riot was not just a political crisis, but a moment that revealed to the movement surrounding him that rhetoric alone was no longer sufficient. The evidence suggests that Trump did not radicalize his movement, his movement radicalized him.

I first establish clear definitions of populism and demagoguery, placing Trump within a long American tradition to demonstrate that this transformation is neither unprecedented or accidental. Second, I trace the evolution of the MAGA movement itself, from its origins as a rhetoric driven coalition centered on fighting perceived enemies through loose policy proposals, into a self-proclaimed revolutionary force that is no longer content with words alone, one that demands action and is willing to take it. Third, I examine two key policy areas, immigration and trade, to show through concrete evidence how Trump's approach escalated from populist in his first term to demagogue in his second. Ultimately, I suggest that when a political movement discovers it has no ceiling, the movement shapes the leader.

DON'T TRUST YOUR GUT: YOUR MICROBIOME AND DISEASE

Jessica Finnerty and Paige Madison

On TikTok, influencers encourage taking probiotics, chia seed drinks, and introducing more fermented foods into your diet to “eliminate bloating” and “balance your microbiota.” But do these methods promote good gut health, or are there other factors at play that can disrupt digestive health conditions? Can the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the viruses we get affect our gut microbiome and health?

The gut microbiota is a community of beneficial and specific bacteria that protect the cells that make up the structure and function of the intestinal tract. These microbes protect against pathogens, aid in digestion, and influence our health through the connection to the brain. However, when environmental toxins and pathogens disrupt the gut microclimate, the composition of different bacterial species shifts. These changes can increase inflammation and thus compromise human health.

Through a literature review, we found that exposure to pathogens, like *E. coli* and COVID-19 can change the intestinal bacterial community and make the gut cell lining more permeable. The disruption of the bacterial balance and introduction of pro-inflammatory bacteria into the microbiome alters key responses to external stressors. This causes a rippling effect throughout the body from digestion, to hormonal and reproductive disorders, immune function, and long-term disease risk. Overall, our findings show that gut health is shaped by more than diet trends: it reflects the constant interaction between our bodies, the environment, and the microbes that protect us.

FROM “THE PILL” TO THE POND: THE ECOLOGICAL IMPACTS OF THE ENDOCRINE DISRUPTER 17 α -ETHYNYLESTRADIOL ON AQUATIC ANIMALS

Jessica Finnerty

Point source pollution, specifically from a conglomeration of chemicals called endocrine disruptors (EDs) like 17 α -ethynylestradiol (EE2) has have been historically overlooked. Due to its effect on the reproductive systems of animals and humans by causing disruption to endocrine hormones, it is coming to the forefront of pollution concerns.

Large farms use synthetic hormones to enhance growth rates and improve feed efficiency. In 2020, eighty-two waterways were sampled in the European Union and China, and seventy-five environments were found to have levels of estrogen in the water that exceed the predicted “no-effect” concentration. This type of chemical contamination is a problem everywhere; no place will escape the effects of endocrine disruptors.

The physicochemical properties of EE2 in water determine how it is absorbed into the body of different organisms. Synthetic hormones have high resistance to the process of natural degradation and once in aquatic environments, they bioaccumulate in sediment and concentrate in biota. When absorbed, these chemicals alter sex determination, delay sexual maturity, and decrease the development of secondary sexual characteristics. Behaviorally, exposure to EE2 alters necessary mating efforts such as finding successful nesting sites and defending off intruders from the nest. Environmental exposure to EE2 is already of concern, but exposure into higher trophic levels through contaminated prey causes increased risk of reduction of organismal health and therefore ecosystem integrity.

THE STATUS OF CITIZENSHIP

Fiona Gallagher

Chicago has had a long history of welcoming immigrants and relying on them to help run and maintain the city. Starting in 2022, Republican elected officials began using human bodies as political ploys, illegally bussing migrants to the sanctuary city of Chicago with no warning, and overflowing their resources. These migrants were forcefully sent to an unfamiliar city, with no where to stay, no resources, no work, and no citizenship. Flash forward to 2025 President Trump: has allowed unqualified ice agents to unleash violence and chaos in Chicago, arresting innocent Chicagoans and pulling families apart because of the color of their skin, language and sometimes "illegal" status.

This project for my Senior Capstone in Writing and Rhetoric is a reworking of material began in a sophomore-year course about citizenship in the U.S. Looking at the history of Immigration in Chicago's twenty-first century through the example of Operation Lone Star in 2022 and Operation Midway Blitz in 2025 unveils implications of unequal citizenship status. Criminalizing the status of citizenship harms our nation by reducing diverse experiences and groups that make our democracy representative of everyone. This work is dehumanizing and only pushes America further away from a true democracy that represents EVERY American regardless of their status.

INSPIRING INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIVE ACTION:
PATHWAYS TO INTENTIONAL ENGAGEMENT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES

Hailey Galvan

I examine the role of collective action on college campuses using a social psychological lens to understand why individuals participate. Collective action is more than an extracurricular activity; it offers students a unique opportunity to apply their learning to address societal issues.³ Research suggests that collective action operates as a shared institutional responsibility, and that sustainable engagement requires collaborative efforts across departments, faculty, and community partners⁴. It is necessary to recognize collective action as a vital component of campus life, and create infrastructures that normalize sustained engagement. I introduce eight different models and offer a framework for sustaining social movements that embed collective action into curricular and co-curricular structures through credit-bearing courses, certificate programs, and student-led initiatives, offering a pathway to transform civic engagement from episodic to enduring. This work was developed as part of a SOC 450 independent study supervised by Professor of Sociology Jim Sutton.

³ Barnhardt, C. L. (2015). Campus educational contexts and civic participation: Organizational links to collective action. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *86*(1), 38–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2015.11777358>

⁴ Lawson, H., & Lawson, M. (2020). Student engagement and disengagement as a collective action problem. *Education Sciences*, *10*(8), 212. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10080212>

HOBART OR WILLIAM SMITH?

Hailey Galvan and Linden Utz

In 2018, the HWS Board of Trustees passed a resolution to increase efforts to become more gender-inclusive by altering aspects of student experience including matriculation, honors and traditions, and resources. We examine the extent to which institutional efforts created a unified Hobart and William Smith identity. We use a survey to measure perceived affiliation with Hobart College, William Smith College, or HWS as a unified institution among a generalizable sample of students.

Traditions are often defined as symbolic aspects of campus culture that are practiced.^{iv} At HWS, they can take the form of ceremonial events, college designations, and athletics. They hold meanings and beliefs about values communicated to the campus, often passed down through generations. While changes have been made to create a more gender-inclusive campus by eliminating college-based distinctions in these spaces and traditions, certain aspects of campus life continue to maintain such distinctions, such as varsity athletics, where women's teams are still called "William Smith" and men's teams are still called "Hobart." We explore how other variables, such as class year and campus engagement, compare with recent institutional efforts in shaping a student's affiliation. By making comparisons, we can highlight how the variation in types of engagement may shape how students interpret their institutional identity and sense of affiliation.

¹ Renn, K. a., & Patton, L. D (2017). Institutional identity and campus culture (Chapter 4). In Schuh J. H., Jones S. R. & Torres V.(eds.), *Student services: A handbook for the Profession* (Sixth ed.). Jossey-Bass.

ANXIETY AND MOTIVATION IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Isabelle Girolamo

In New York State, taking a foreign language class for at least one year is a high school graduation requirement.^[1] However, many students have little motivation and willingness to communicate due to a fear of making mistakes, a lack of understanding, and a lack of confidence in the classroom. This reluctance to participate and continue learning a second language suggests a need to reconsider how language is taught in the high school environment. By identifying strategies for engaging students, teachers can attempt to increase students' motivation to learn while decreasing the anxiety surrounding learning a second language.

The aim of this study is to determine to what extent personally and culturally relevant and engaging lessons influence student motivation and anxiety in the foreign language classroom. Through practitioner inquiry-based practices, I implemented Spanish lessons, such as creating a podcast, performing job interviews, and fun skits, that encouraged student autonomy, comfort, and engagement in the classroom. To measure student sentiments, students were asked to complete the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale^[2] at the beginning and end of the teaching period as well as write biweekly reflections regarding their feelings about the lessons given. My findings suggest that culturally and personally relevant teaching practices allow for student autonomy and opportunities for real-world applications, decrease student anxiety and increase their motivation in the foreign language classroom.

[1] *Graduation requirements*. New York State Education Department. (2023, November 23). <https://www.nysed.gov/world-languages/graduation-requirements>

[2] Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>

TRUMP, THE COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY WHO STARTED A REVOLUTION

Elijah Goldman

Donald Trump has demonstrated an unprecedented level of control of the Republican party. While his campaign and presidency were framed as efforts to restore traditional bygone America, his rhetoric and policies have caused significant shifts in political alignment, voter mobilization, and political discourse. This paper investigates how Trump's counterrevolutionary language has resulted in the MAGA revolution, mobilizing adherents to produce a political revolution within the traditional GOP. It builds on Cory Robin's idea of the "family, factory, and field" by tracing how Trump applies counterrevolutionary rhetoric across multiple areas: speeches, campaign messaging, immigration policy, official government communications, and attacks on institutions such as universities, media, and the federal bureaucracy. This is all in an effort to construct perceived threats to social hierarchy and mobilize class-based grievances. I also look at how Trump used his rhetoric to reframe institutions as corrupt bastions of the elites, who were hostile to ordinary Americans. Also considered is the influence of key advisors and intellectual figures, such as Christopher Rufo, in shaping narratives around education, culture, and institutional power.

At its core, this paper examines the relationship between Trump's counterrevolutionary and revolutionary political mobilization policies to better understand what kind of conservative he truly is and what actually caused such a substantial political change.

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PERSONALITY DIFFERENCES IN RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS

Alyssa Hanuscin and Maya Joy

College students are known for being the prime demographic to engage in risky behaviors (Blais et al. 2006). Risk-taking behaviors refers to the conscious partaking in dangerous acts for gratification. The Risk Propensity Scale (Meertens & Lion, 2008) and the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006) have been popular scales used to assess risk-taking behaviors, particularly in college-aged students. Prior research with these scales has shown that individuals who have a lower perception of risk are more likely to engage in risky behaviors (Meertens & Lion, 2008; Blais & Weber, 2006). Using the Openness to Diversity and Challenge scale (Taylor et al. 2023), research has also shown that college students that scored higher in openness engaged in more social risk-taking behaviors such as challenging different perspectives. We have also distinguished risk-taking from impulsiveness with the Barrett Impulsiveness Scale (Moynihan et al. 2017) in our study. With this prior research, we can further explore how willing college students are to participate in a variety of risk-taking behaviors.

In this project, we examined the relationship between personality traits and student's willingness to participate in risk-taking behaviors. We use revised versions of the Domain-Specific Risk-Taking Scale (DOSPRT) and Big Five Inventory scale (John et al. 1999) to establish correlations between likelihood of participating in risk-taking behavior and Extraversion, Openness, and Conscientiousness. We would like to determine what risky behaviors college students are more likely to participate in. Our study furthers research in risk-taking behaviors by distinguishing risk-taking from impulsiveness, as well as shows students' perceptions of risky behaviors and their willingness to participate in them.

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PLAY BY DESIGN: FROM COPENHAGEN BACK TO GENEVA

Abby Hark

Play by Design encompasses 15 months of work beginning in January 2025 when I arrived in Copenhagen for study abroad. As part of an individual project to visit playgrounds and play spaces throughout the country, I set out to research how Danish play is unique and prevalent in communities. In conversation with the World Playground Research Institute, a playground architect, and other Danish professionals, as well as over 40 playground site visits across Denmark and other European countries, I gathered information about the power of thoughtful play design.

Upon return from Copenhagen, I pursued a project with HWS architecture professor Gabriella D'Angelo about "Reimagining a Playful City" and began summer research on Geneva, New York's neighborhood parks in May 2025. My work transitioned to an internship in August with the Geneva Parks Collective, where I have continued to work alongside community members to rethink Geneva's parks to be more engaging and effective. My interest in intentional design of play space has only grown due to these projects. My playful practices culminated in an accordion portfolio that allows the viewer to "play" beyond the portfolio's standard pages. This consideration of play will continue to be a part of my architectural practice: from the playground inspiration in Copenhagen to actively working on community play design in Geneva, one thing is clear— designing thoughtful play spaces can change communities for the better.

I KNEW IT! CULTURALLY RELEVANT LITERACY AND CRITICAL THINKING

Sabrina He

Students enter the classroom with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Being able to incorporate culturally relevant literacy practices into the classroom not only helps students connect personally to the material, but also encourages critical thinking and fosters an understanding of diverse perspectives. Culturally relevant writing pedagogy⁵ involves using students' cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and personal experiences to inspire writing, making the learning process more meaningful and reflective of students' realities. It also allows students to explore cultural themes, compare and address global issues from personal perspectives, making the writing process more engaging while challenging students to think critically about their own identities. This research will shed light on the ways in which culturally responsive teaching practices can foster both academic growth and personal development, and nurture their curiosity, critical thinking, and appreciation for diverse perspectives. To guide this inquiry, I will focus on the central research question: *In what ways do culturally relevant literacy practices activate students' schema, improving their critical thinking in the classroom context?*

Data will be collected from upper elementary classrooms (grades 3–5) in two different school settings—one in upstate New York and one in New York City. Through classroom observations, student responses, and writing activities I examine how culturally relevant texts help activate students' schema and support stronger comprehension of reading material. The findings highlight the importance of incorporating culturally relevant practices into elementary classrooms to promote meaningful connections, increase engagement, and support students' overall literacy development, particularly in writing. These results will help determine whether culturally relevant instruction contributes to improvements in writing abilities and whether it can play a role in narrowing achievement gaps.

⁵ Djoko Sutrisno, Abbas, A., & Muhammad, N. (2024). Enhancing Writing Skills through Cultural Integration: Exploring the Impact of Culturally-Responsive Writing Instruction in Diverse EFL Classrooms. *Global Synthesis in Education Journal*, 2(3), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.61667/rpm4cp30>

BACK-SEAT DRIVING IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

Breanna Holland

My research investigates the changing power dynamics of the later Roman Empire through the actions of the great general Ricimer. Ricimer (c. 418-472) was a powerful military leader of Germanic barbarian lineage who sought out his position of power alongside Emperor Majorian in a coup to overthrow Emperor Avitus. He was involved in the placement and/or deposition of 5 emperors between 456 and 472 CE.

Using a combination of primary and secondary sources to find out who Ricimer was and how he climbed the ranks to general, I hope to demonstrate that although the idea of “emperor” was still thought important in the functioning of an empire, the greater involvement of military leaders who were not of Roman blood led to the opportunity for other, more capable people to hold the reigns. By diving deep through both Ricimer’s desire for the power of an emperor and his inability to obtain it for himself, a greater truth is revealed about what being an emperor even meant.

sEMG-BASED MOTOR CONTROL OF NEURAL PROSTHETICS

Randy Hong

Motor function occurs when neural signals formulate within the brain, traverse down the spinal cord, and arrive at skeletal muscles to produce movement within a limb. For amputees, these neural signals conclude at their stump but fail to produce movement without a limb to innervate. These signals can be recorded at the stump using surface electromyography (sEMG), a widely utilized biomedical technique that employs non-invasive sensors to capture electrical activity on the surface of an amputee's skeletal muscles. Processing recorded neural signals using deep learning algorithms can predict an amputee's movement intention, communicate their movement intention to a prosthetic, and reproduce that movement within the motorized prosthetic. Consequently, we can engineer a functioning neural prosthetic capable of substituting for an amputee's missing limb.

In this independent study under the direction of Professor Ileana Dimitriu, I demonstrate the recreation of humanistic movement within robotic systems by engineering a motorized prosthetic hand controlled by an Arduino. Using sEMG sensors, I recorded neural signals to perform gesture classification with our deep learning algorithm and decipher the user's hand gesture from a library of preselected gestures. These predicted gestures are communicated to an Arduino that recreates the predicted gesture in the prosthetic via rotation of the appropriate respective servo motors. I conclude considering the implications and contemporary challenges of the restoration of sensorimotor function in amputees using neural prosthetics.

MESSAGING PASSING CONSTRAINTS SHAPE MAMMALIAN BRAIN NETWORK STRUCTURE

Randy Hong

Connectomics has provided insights into the organization of the human brain, showing for example that topological motifs like high connectivity among hub regions may be important for healthy function. However, detailed anatomical studies in rodents and primates, as well as imaging studies in a range of mammals show that the main feature determining connectivity between regions is not topology but rather spatial proximity. The exponential distance rule (EDR) predicts connection strength between region pairs. The rule applies at the level of cortical gray matter as well, and even in the projectome of *Drosophila*. EDR is thus a fundamental principle of brain organization and may reflect universal metabolic constraints. Yet, EDR does not predict all aspects of connectivity. It cannot explain directional asymmetries in connection strength.

To explain these asymmetries, I embarked on an Honors project to explore how brain organization is shaped not only by metabolic demands, but also by the need to pass messages polysynaptically across a vast network whose topology is essentially fixed in adulthood, and do so while managing message congestion. As a result of this research under the direction of Professors Graham and Hao, I show that a one-parameter dynamical message-passing model implemented on the unweighted mouse and marmoset connectomes generates message flux imbalances that predict absolute differences in the largest directional connection weights in the animals' brains. The copy-spread-annihilate (CSA) model succeeds without any consideration of the brain's embedding in space, suggesting that alternative dynamic message passing models as well as network structural statistics either fail to explain weight asymmetries at all or predict less variance than CSA. The model is Markovian and has two key features: message broadcasting, which has been recognized in recent work as promoting message survival, and is here modeled as duplication of injected messages to all neighbors; and message-message interactions (e.g., classical inhibition, XOR, and other gating mechanisms), which have been almost entirely ignored in the brain network communication literature, and are here modeled as mutually destructive collisions at nodes.

Although the CSA model is abstract, and does not aim to capture biophysical interactions directly, it highlights the underappreciated problem of network-wide communication in the presence of message congestion, and can go some way in explaining empirical brain organization purely in terms of network topology and message dynamics, as long as we take a sophisticated view of message routing demands.

“Nothing About Us Without Us”:

Knowledge and Power in Sport for Development and Peace

Kelly Howe

Sport for Development and Peace (SDP) programs have become a broadly accepted mechanism in conflict, post-conflict, and disaster zones around the globe. While many are funded by donor organizations and governments, they are often countered by grassroots movements mobilizing sport for peace. This project approaches the study of SDP programs as a lens for exploring the hierarchized relationship between knowledge and power in international policy.

A comparison of Palestinian communities in the West Bank, Gaza, and among Palestinian citizens of Israel before and after 2023 highlights how asymmetries of access shape donors’ understandings of Palestinians’ everyday experiences and contribute to the difficulties that Palestinian youth encounter when they seek to challenge entrenched forms of policy knowledge. This work leads to a deeper understanding of how local forms of knowledge and first-hand experiences are generally disconnected from the agenda of externally funded peace-building projects.

THE MYTH OF THE FEMALE ARTIST: TINTORETTA

Erin Hulburt

Marietta “il Tintoretta” Robusti was the firstborn daughter of the famous Venetian artist Tintoretto. By all contemporary accounts, she was a talented artist and portraitist. Despite this, the details of her life and career are sparse. For my art history capstone project, I examined recent scholarship that attempts to reassess the life and “oeuvre” of this artist. In order to understand “the Problem of ‘Tintoretta,’” I argued that it is vital to examine the historiography of the discussion and study of other Renaissance women artists like her. I articulated the social conditions and the nature historical representations of woman artists, which I then compared to the unique life of Marietta. I argued that the longstanding biases of art history influenced the way Marietta and other women artists’ stories were told.

Art history has exhibited a trend of utilizing demeaning language and representation of women artists’ and their work. Contemporary praises for women artists were qualified by acknowledgments of their beauty and virtues, and talented women artists were heralded as the “exception” to the rule and discussed typically in connection to other male artists. These tendencies would be absorbed by art historians who based their knowledge on the masculine “genius,” separating woman artists from the mainstream narrative. I hope to use Marietta’s life as a model of this issue in the field of art history.

EXAMINING AMERICAN STUDIES THROUGH KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

Eddie Johnson

How do we think about knowledge? Who gets to decide and communicate truth? Knowledge, the gathering of knowledge, and the perpetuation and communication of knowledge are not absolute: language changes, needs evolve, and problems are identified in the quest for the greater good. Language is paramount in shaping how we think about our fellow humans. I argue that we need to constantly reevaluate norms, customs, language, and ideals that have been accepted as truth through the lens of epistemology and Americanness. I will ask who produces knowledge, who can access it, who it is for, and how it has connected to power, ideas, culture, and identity politics.

In my portfolio for my American Studies capstone, I will examine four artifacts—two pieces of writing and two pieces of physical, visual work—showing patterns that we do not often question, ranging from race and gender to culture and different identities. This examination is closely tied to my own consciousness as a scholar and as a person, and the discussion on how we may redefine and perhaps even reconstruct notions of power, place, and ideas surrounding who belongs and who does not. Human commitment to human flourishing requires ongoing reevaluation and increased inclusivity, compassion, and willingness to give voice to all voices.

WHO IS THOMAS SOWELL?

Nicholas Jones

Who is Thomas Sowell as both a thinker and an individual? I examine his life alongside a focused analysis of his book *Basic Economics*, which I have studied closely as the foundation of this project. Born into poverty in 1930 and rising to become a leading economist and scholar, Sowell's personal experiences and academic training shaped a perspective grounded in skepticism of assumptions and a strong emphasis on real-world outcomes. Understanding his background provides essential context for interpreting the ideas he presents in his work.

In *Basic Economics*, Sowell explains how economic systems function without complex mathematics, instead emphasizing incentives, trade-offs, and unintended consequences. I analyze how his life experiences and intellectual influences inform his arguments about markets, government intervention, and resource allocation. Sowell's insistence that economic decisions are about choices rather than perfect solutions reflects both his academic training and his broader worldview.

By intertwining Sowell's biography with his economic ideas, I aim to present a more complete understanding of why Sowell's work should be known. Drawing directly from *Basic Economics*, I will demonstrate how his framework for thinking about economic issues connects to larger questions about policy, society, and human behavior, offering insight into both the man and the ideas that define his legacy.

CORRUPTION AND SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

Madelyn Krueger

Corruption is typically modeled as a distortion that reduces economic efficiency. However, empirical observations in many service environments suggest that small amounts of corruption—such as informal payments used to bypass queues—may sometimes improve system performance. My research develops a framework to study corruption within a queueing model with endogenous bribery decisions: customers arriving at the system may choose whether to engage in corruption based on expected waiting times, heterogeneous preferences, and beliefs about the behavior of others.

Through a discrete-event M/M/c simulation in which agents can **endogenously reevaluate** their corruption decision as the queue evolves, including when new arrivals or service events occur, I can capture strategic responses to changing congestion conditions. My analysis explores how corruption affects waiting times, queue dynamics, and system efficiency, with particular focus on whether limited levels of corruption can reduce congestion in capacity-constrained systems.

The goal of my research is to provide a formal framework for analyzing whether small amounts of corruption may, under certain conditions, generate short-run efficiency improvements in otherwise rigid service systems.

DONALD TRUMP: THE BILLIONARE POPULIST

Lily Kuhn

Like many concerned citizens, I was left in the wake of the 2024 Presidential Election struggling with one major contradiction: How does a billionaire become the voice of the average American?

The trail to this answer is revealed through decades of conservative political development. This project uncovers a network of actors, beginning in the 1990s, that work together to define modern conservatism best shown in Trumpism. Figures like Newt Gingrich emerge not as side characters, but as early architects whose combative rhetoric and media strategy reshaped the Republican Party. Behind the visible actors lies a quieter network, less televised, but just as influential. Through think tanks, media platforms, and educational initiatives, this network helped construct a political environment where certain ideas about power and authority could flourish. By following the money, a shift becomes visible: Within this environment, doctors, lawyers, academics, and bureaucrats came to represent a form of elite control that felt out of touch and restrictive. Trump's appeal, then, is not necessarily mysterious. He mobilizes those who believe something has been taken from them, channeling these emotions into a political force that thrives on the rhetoric Gingrich had coined. This reveals a paradox that exists within our two-party political system, billionaire populism, a conservative movement that claims to fight elites while being built, funded, and sustained by them.

The evidence suggests that Trump is not the cause of this political chaos, but rather the result. Trump's campaign is not a one-off rebellion, but a construction funded by those with the most to gain, the outcome of an embedded conservative effort.

TWO CYPRUSES, ONE ISLAND: NAVIGATING THE MULTI-DIMENSIONAL REALITIES OF EXTERNAL FORCES ON SHARED LAND

Bradley Kutchukian

This article examines the intricate dynamics between small, externally dependent jurisdictions and their patron states within divided polities. Focusing on the case of Cyprus, the study investigates how reliance on neighboring “parent” states in Turkey and Greece influences the political autonomy and institutional development of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) and the Republic of Cyprus (RoC). While traditional perspectives often dismiss these entities as mere extensions of their patrons, this project highlights the role of local agency and negotiated exchange.

Using a qualitative comparative design and process-tracing, I analyze the mechanisms of policy diffusion and the moderating influence of the European Union while following trends within the “parent” states. I show that factors such as the "democratic yardstick" and international engagement shape institutional resilience. Ultimately, I hope to refine and contribute to understandings of sovereignty by exploring how dependent actors navigate and renegotiate their political identities within a complex geopolitical landscape.

EFFECTS OF MOLECULAR CROWDING ON HUMAN MALATE DEHYDROGENASE

Genevieve Larkin

Human malate dehydrogenase 2 (hMDH2) is a metabolic enzyme located in the mitochondria that catalyzes the reversible redox reaction of L-malate to oxaloacetate coupled with cofactors NAD⁺ and NADH. As a critical enzyme in the citric acid cycle, hMDH2 helps contribute to cellular energy creation by driving the production of ATP.⁶ Despite its importance in metabolic pathways, hMDH2 is normally studied under dilute laboratory conditions. In reality, cells operate in highly crowded intracellular environments with proteins, macromolecules, and chemical interactions. This project aims to mimic realistic cellular conditions, showing how hMDH2 activity is regulated by crowding agents.

To model intracellular environments, three crowding agents were studied, each with different chemical and structural properties: glucose, polyethylene glycol (PEG), and dextran. Glucose, a small six carbon sugar, mimics the chemical environment of the cytoplasm and does not significantly occupy physical space.⁷ PEG, a flexible polymer, mimics the cytoplasmic network found in cells.⁸ Dextran, a bulky branched polysaccharide, represents large proteins and macromolecules in the cell, occupying substantial physical space.⁹ To measure hMDH2 activity, the absorbance of NADH was measured using UV spectroscopy, and reaction rates were compared across crowding conditions.

Results suggest that hMDH2 activity depends on the type of crowding agent used, showing that enzymes are affected by the physical properties of the cellular environment. These findings indicate the importance of studying enzymes under physiologically accurate conditions.

⁶ Nicholls et al., "The Importance of Arginine 102 for the Substrate Specificity of Escherichia Coli Malate Dehydrogenase."

⁷ Wilcox et al., "Macromolecular Crowding Effects on the Kinetics of Opposing Reactions Catalyzed by Alcohol Dehydrogenase."

⁸ Gómez Casati et al., "Kinetic and Structural Analysis of the Ultrasensitive Behaviour of Cyanobacterial ADP-Glucose Pyrophosphorylase."

⁹ Cozzolino and Graziano, *The Magnitude of Macromolecule Crowding Caused by Dextran and Ficoll for the Conformational Stability of Globular Proteins.*

ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND SOCIAL EFFECTS OF CIA-ORCHESTRATED
REGIME CHANGES IN LATIN AMERICA: 1950 – 2014

Alain Malcolm

During the Cold War, the United States and CIA often used covert operations to destabilize Latin American societies, sometimes inducing regime change to depose governments unsupportive of their hegemony. I use an 18-country, 64-year sample and declassified CIA documents to construct a dataset of these events and study the economic, social, and political effects of the CIA's operations.

I find the CIA's overthrows and covert operations to be exogenous. I then show that CIA orchestrated regime changes led to negative GDP growth, increases in infant mortality, and erosion of democracy, civil liberties, and rule of the law, but had marginal effects on corruption levels. Evidence from the study also suggests that covert operations without regime change lowered GDP growth, made countries more authoritarian, and reduced civil liberties while having little effect on corruption, rule of law, and infant mortality. In the very long run, however, I find the effects of CIA orchestrated regime changes to be minimal, suggesting that new regimes must have effective policies to maintain their legitimacy beyond American support.

Experiencing COP30:

Climate Negotiations, Equity, and Emerging Energy Solutions

Tarang Malhotra

I reflect on my firsthand experience at the 30th Conference of the Parties (COP30) to the UNFCCC in Belém, Brazil. I explore how key negotiating blocs—including G77 + China, the European Union, AOSIS, the African Group, and the Arab Group—approached issues such as climate finance, mitigation, adaptation, and energy transitions, and highlights how concepts like equity, fairness, and environmental justice were used to shape competing priorities across developed and developing countries.

As I review major outcomes of COP30, including commitments to scale adaptation finance, the launch of the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, and progress toward a Just Transition Mechanism, I also address key shortcomings such as the lack of agreement on a fossil fuel phase-out and unresolved climate finance commitments. I further examine how the UN's consensus-based process drives compromise but often results in non-binding outcomes.

Drawing on observations from within the negotiations, I reflect on the roles of negotiators, NGOs, and observers, emphasizing the complexity of multilateral climate diplomacy, concluding by connecting global policy discussions to emerging solutions such as Virtual Power Plants (VPPs), highlighting their potential to support renewable integration, grid reliability, and new climate finance pathways.

WRITING A NEW REALITY

Riley McCabe

The American “South” has often been portrayed as a homogeneous, conservative space shaped by rigid norms surrounding race, gender, sexuality, and class. These depictions, grounded in the region’s historical legacy, have helped construct the South as the nation’s “other.” In response, many modern Southern writers push back against these narratives, centering marginalized perspectives and reframing difference as a site of resistance and transformation. My project explores how contemporary Southern fiction redefines regional identity by challenging long-standing cultural stereotypes and reclaiming stigmatized identities.

Drawing on sociological theories of stigma and deviance, I argue that stigma operates as a socially constructed and relational mechanism that reinforces dominant norms while marginalizing those who deviate from them. I approach this question through close readings of contemporary Southern texts, alongside literary and sociological critiques, to examine how these works disrupt and rework these structures. By focusing on characters whose identities are shaped by queerness, racial hybridity, mental illness, and gender nonconformity, I show how New Southern fiction challenges historically dominant expectations.

Ultimately, I argue that contemporary Southern fiction transforms “otherness” into a generative force, destabilizing traditional hierarchies and reimagining the South as a more dynamic, inclusive, and evolving cultural space.

FROM PETS TO PEST: HOW LIZARDS ARE ADAPTING TO LIFE IN FLORIDA

Jaylynn McCarthy

Pet trade is a major pathway for the introduction of non-native reptiles. Florida's environmental conditions allow for many species to survive and reproduce outside of captivity, and several reptiles have established invasive populations after being released or escaping. This includes the Argentine black and white tegu (*Salvator merianae*), the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*), and the green iguana (*Iguana iguana*). Biological attributes that have contributed to their invasion success include the ability to adapt to different environments, which allows lizards to persist in a wide range of habitats and environmental conditions. Tegus, for example, can maintain stable body temperatures and remain active despite seasonal changes, while Nile monitors use canal systems, and green iguanas thrive in urban environments. Additionally, reproductive traits also play an important role in the species' ability to establish new populations: invasive tegus and iguanas can produce large quantities of eggs and reach sexual maturity quickly.

Collectively, behavioral flexibility, physiological tolerance, and high reproductive output contribute to the rapid establishment and spread of these reptiles in Florida. Knowledge of these topics allows for the improvement of management strategies, including targeted removal efforts that have successfully reduced invasive lizard populations in some areas.

SCALES OF INVASION: MAPPING NILE MONITOR SPREAD IN FLORIDA

Jaylynn McCarthy

Invasive species threaten native wildlife, disrupt ecosystem balance, and impact human communities. In places like Florida, where warm conditions allow non-native species to survive and spread easily, invasions can rapidly become difficult to control. This project will assess habitat suitability for the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) across Florida using geographic information systems (GIS). By integrating environmental variables such as land cover, temperature, water availability, and human development, areas most vulnerable to current and future range expansion of Nile monitors can be identified.

Nile monitors pose significant ecological and economic risks by disrupting food webs, preying on native species, and altering ecosystem dynamics. Their presence can lead to cascading effects that threaten native species diversity and place additional strain on conservation resources. Additionally, managing invasive species presents an ethical challenge, as control efforts often rely on lethal methods. This raises important questions about how to balance humane treatment of animals with the need to protect native ecosystems. Identifying high-risk habitats can improve early detection and rapid response efforts, allowing for more efficient and potentially more humane management strategies.

Habitat suitability maps will serve as valuable tools for wildlife managers and policymakers. Ultimately, this project demonstrates how GIS can strengthen invasion biology efforts by improving the ability to predict, manage, and reduce the impacts of invasive species before they become unmanageable.

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FUKUSHIMA BACKLASH: EUROPEAN SECURITY AND DENUCLEARIZATION

Thomas McCue

Nuclear energy has been represented in political discourse both as a futuristic cure-all for the risks posed by an unstable energy regime, and as a potential cause of total annihilation. The understanding and presentation of the security risks of nuclear energy represent primary objections of the anti-nuclear movement. In the wake of the Fukushima nuclear accident, Germany and France represent key cases for investigating why some states have pursued radical de-nuclearization and others have not.

My project explores the backlash to nuclear energy following Fukushima in the contexts of French and German understandings of security and risk. Understanding the French and German reactions will provide insight into broader ways of understanding security across contexts.

THE SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF BELONGING: INTERSECTIONAL NARRATIVES FROM STUDENTS OF COLOR

Laura McDonough, Maxine Moore, and Piper Polga,

While universities often frame diversity as a collective institutional value, the everyday experiences of students suggest that recognition and inclusion are unevenly distributed. Drawing on an intersectional framework, we explore how race interacts with other social identities, including class background, first-generation status, gender, and nationality to shape how students of color navigate institutional spaces here at HWS. We seek to understand how policies, administrative practices, and campus norms influence students' experiences of inclusion, belonging, and representation. Through these responses, we hope to improve student life and the safety of students of color. Our project aims to explore and identify how institutional practices at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (HWS) determine which students of color are made visible, heard, and represented.

Our study will be based on in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of students who self-identify as students of color, ensuring students feel comfortable sharing their perspectives in a safe environment, and illuminating experiences of racial disparity on campus. The outcomes of these discussions may contribute to institutional decision-making in the future.

EMOTIONAL RESILIANCE AS A MODERATOR FOR ACES

Colin Mester

Previous research has found strong correlations between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and mental health. However, resilience and more specifically emotional resilience could potentially be a moderator between these two variables. I will present a research proposal for an original study created as part of my capstone research in Developmental Psychology, the purpose of which is to establish emotional resilience as a moderator between adverse childhood experiences and mental health disorders of anxiety and depression.

I hypothesize that participants with higher ACE scores will have higher mental health symptoms, and those with high ACE scores who also report high levels of emotional resilience will have lower levels of mental health symptoms. Participants will be made up of 100 college students in each of the Big 10 schools, which will total to 1800 students. Participants will complete three questionnaires that will provide an ACE score, the amount of anxiety and depression experienced, and degree of emotional resilience. Correlations and a multi-step regression model will be used to test and explain variance in the outcome variables of anxiety and depression. Strengths, limitations, and future directions will be discussed.

TRUMP'S RISE AS A NATIONAL CONSERVATIVE

Heaven Miller

Donald Trump is best understood not as a traditional conservative but as a nationalist conservative who prioritizes national identity, sovereignty, and populist anti-institutionalism over the free-market orthodoxy, democratic internationalism, and constitutional restraint that have historically defined mainstream American conservatism. I will argue that Trump's type of nationalist conservatism emerges out of historical developments in American political economy and culture, and then review four lines of scholarship that study these developments. Lichtenstein and Stein argue in their book (2023) *A Fabulous Failure* that the failures of the neoliberal consensus helped give rise to Trump: the free-trade globalism and financial deregulation pursued by the Clinton administration destroyed both the working- and middle-class, which Trump used to rally resentment against elites in politics. In *The Industrialists* (2020), Delton argues that industrialists resisted the postwar conservative consensus favoring globalism and consistently circulated a version of economic nationalism that Trump resurrected in his appeal to workers disillusioned by deindustrialization. Zhou Shaoqing's *American Evangelical Nationalism* (2022) traces the rise of a politicized evangelical nationalism that provided Trump with a mass social base dedicated to a culturally particular vision of America against liberal pluralism. The book *Conservatism in Trump Time* (2021) follows Goodheart's argument by contending that Trump replaced conservative principles with a personality-driven politics of cultural grievance and anti-institutionalism. Overall, these works establish the ideology of nationalist conservatism is key to understanding Trump's rise and shift of the Republican Party away from conservatism.

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GREEN CRABS ARE SPREADING ACROSS THE AMERICAN COAST. ARE THEY UNWELCOMED GUESTS OR THE KEY TO COASTAL CONSERVATION?

Lily Morrell

As I walked into a local coffee shop on the East Coast of Massachusetts this summer, I discovered a bag of dog treats made from invasive Green Crabs. This unique conservation effort sparked my interest in the Green Crab invasion that is impacting salt marshes. Green Crabs, *Carcinus maenas*, were first introduced to North America from Europe through global shipping ballast water in the 1800s. Green Crabs are omnivores, aggressive and tolerant to a variety of environmental conditions. These traits have allowed them to be successful invaders, warranting concern within the scientific and broader community. This invasive species quickly established populations and colonized coastal America, with reports in New England by the 1820s and in California a century later. To understand their ecological impact, this project investigates if there are differences across their East and West coast invasions through a literature review.

This research first investigated the known environmental damages associated with this species. This includes their consumption of eelgrass, which harms marine nurseries. They also consume clams, oysters, and mussels that are important to coastal ecosystems and the seafood industry. Next, my research dove into the crab's potential benefits. In Cape Cod they eat native, plant-eating crabs, allowing cordgrass (a critical nearshore plant) to be restored. In California, Green Crabs are an important food source helping the sea otter populations recover. Thus, Green Crabs can be both the villain or hero in their story, and they should be managed with careful attention to this nuanced role.

TRUMP AND THE QUESTION OF CONSERVATISM:
NEW MOVEMENT OR OLD IDEAS?

Cheyenne Muldowney

For much of the late twentieth century, mainstream conservatism was closely tied to ideas like free markets, limited government, and traditional social values. Yet during the Trump era, nationalist rhetoric, hardline immigration politics, and ideas connected to far-right movements became much more visible within conservative political discourse. Did Trump really create a new kind of conservatism, or did he simply bring nationalist and racial politics that were already present within the conservative movement more out into the open? My research looks at the intellectual history of conservatism and the rise of far-right ideas to try to answer that question.

My interest in this question grew out of research I have done on the alt-right and white nationalist political thought, especially the ways ideas that once existed on the political fringe began appearing more openly in mainstream conservative conversations during the Trump times. Drawing on intellectual histories of American conservatism as well as scholarship on the MAGA New Right, I examine Trump's political movement fits into the longer history of reactionary politics in the United States. By analyzing political rhetoric, conservative intellectual debates, and scholarship on the contemporary far right, this research examines how nationalist and populist ideas moved from the margins of political discourse toward the mainstream. I argue that Trump did not simply invent a new political ideology. Instead, his movement mobilized and amplified older forms of nationalism and racial politics that have repeatedly surfaced throughout the history of American conservatism.

NO REST FOR THE DEAD: CORAL EXPANSION AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ZOMBIE WORMS

James Nelson and Alexis Searle

Damage to marine ecosystems during the Anthropocene (period of human activity on climate and environment) includes hypoxic water and ocean acidification. As a result, the variety and balance of these ocean regions is experiencing decline at a rapid rate. We conducted literature reviews to spotlight the rising of oxygen minimum zones (OMZ), expansion of corals and environments on the Northern Atlantic, and the diminishing environments for zombie worms in the Pacific Northeast. Zombie worms (*Osedax roseus*) are a deep ocean creature that bores into whale bones that decades later provides a diverse ecosystem for crustaceans and eventually filter feeders. Smith's et al. (2024) study found that over almost a 10-year period there was no colonialization of zombie worms within the Northeast Pacific of Vancouver. These deep-sea creatures are important for nutrient cycling and biodiversity expansion.

Separately, there are new expansions of coral ranges due to the increased pH of the ocean. Vogt-Vincent et al. (2025) analyzed an expansion for non-reef corals such as Northstar Coral (*Astrangia poculata*) and Deadmans Finger (*Alcyonium digitatum*) to establish themselves in northern waters, which has potentially good implications for local ecology (Vogt-Vincent et al. 2025).

The changing of oceanic habitats has led to unique circumstances where different species can either thrive or die, and we aim to raise awareness of potential solutions, such as moving species to safer or more suitable environments, to promote biodiversity and expansion of important invertebrates.

RADIATION AND RESILIENCE: ECOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO RADIATION EXPOSURE

Alexander Peeler

Radiation is a powerful and effective energy source with notable environmental concerns, but insufficient data on its ecological impacts was available until the Chernobyl nuclear accident in 1986. When reactor 4 exploded near Pripyat in the USSR (modern-day Ukraine), it released 50-200 curies of radiation into the air and surrounding environment, leaving the surrounding area contaminated for many years into the future, providing an opportunity to analyze the long-term effects of this environmental disturbance. Over the past 40 years, research on the ecology of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone (CEZ) has outlined the effects that radiation has on species diversity and how species cope with radiation-based disturbances. A study on European tree frog populations in the CEZ showed reduced mitochondrial diversity compared with populations in the surrounding unaffected area. However, in terms of species richness, the total species diversity of microbes in similarly contaminated locations showed no significant reduction. In addition, macroinvertebrate lake populations supported the data of no significant reduction in total taxon richness.

Additionally, as a result of the new radiation exposure, species began to adapt to improve fitness in this new ecosystem. The development of fungal species using radiation as an energy substitute is similar to that of photosynthesis. The combination of a reduction of mitochondrial diversity and maintained species diversity suggests that the exposure of an ecosystem to radiation has resulted in a potential bottleneck and subsequent adaptation of species.

RETHINKING THE MATH CLASSROOM: A STUDENT-CENTERED INQUIRY APPROACH TO SECONDARY MATHEMATICS

Ryan Pero

My traditional mathematics instruction often follows a procedural model in which teachers demonstrate a method, guide students through similar problems, and then assign independent practice. While this approach may allow students to replicate procedures, it often limits opportunities for deeper conceptual understanding and authentic mathematical reasoning. Motivated by my own experiences as a mathematics student and teacher candidate, my practitioner inquiry project explores how shifting toward inquiry-based instruction can better support students as active participants in mathematical learning.

The study took place in an AP Pre-Calculus Honors classroom in a suburban secondary public school in the Northeastern United States. I examined instructional practices in a unit of Trigonometry by looking at three sources of data: students' exit tickets, teacher reflections, and observations by a student-teaching supervisor. Student responses were analyzed using conventional content analysis to identify themes related to engagement, conceptual understanding, and perceptions of learning. Additionally, interviews with two experienced secondary mathematics teachers who regularly implement inquiry-based pedagogy were conducted. The interviews served as a means to extend student-centered inquiry beyond the setting of an AP Pre-Calculus Honors classroom and provided insight into how this instructional approach can be adapted to support diverse learners across different mathematics courses and ability levels.

I aim to better understand how inquiry-based approaches can foster mathematical reasoning, encourage student ownership of learning, and potentially increase enjoyment of mathematics. My findings may provide practical insights for teachers seeking to balance standards-based instruction with meaningful, student-centered mathematical exploration.

PALESTINE IS OUR COMPASS: UNDERSTANDING THE UNITED STATES AS EMPIRE AND SETTLER COLONY

Tulsi Perun

Palestine is a moral compass that can guide our struggle for collective liberation. My portfolio for my American Studies capstone course centers around the theme of coming consciousness on Palestine, understanding Israel as a settler colony, and focusing on how this process deepened my understanding of the US as empire and settler colony. This connects American Studies' because disciplinary concerns such as power and resistance. American Studies offers an alternative discipline within the university—with its complicity in colonialism, capitalism, and militarism—that honors the interconnectedness of all oppression.

Four artifacts from my American Studies journey trace my process. “Understanding the United States: A Memoir of Learning” reflects my initial engagement with and understanding of United States ‘exceptionalism’ rooted in poverty, inequality, mass incarceration, and empire. “Alternative Kinship: Correspondence for the Revolution,” the first instance where I incorporate Palestine into my coursework, builds on this foundation by considering methods of resistance, inheriting and passing down letter-writing practices of revolutionaries and activists. My third artifact, a reflective journal entry, continues the theme of resistance and illustrates my recognition of the US as a genocidal settler colony, as I reflect on how the US Constitution drew from the Haudenosaunee’s Great Law of Peace while erasing its Indigenous origins through crucial alterations. Finally, in “From Propagandized to Realized: James Baldwin’s Position on Palestine,” I track Baldwin’s journey into Palestine comradeship, while presenting a model of progression that in some ways mirrors my own consciousness path, moving from a stance of indoctrination to an evolution of solidarity.

(DE)CONSTRUCTING ABSENCE: PHOTOGRAPHY
AND THE MYTH OF THE “VANISHING INDIAN”

Tayla Peters

From 1880 to 1930, landscape and ethnographic photography circulated the myth of the “vanishing Indian” across the United States. Through strategies such as framing, composition, vantage point, and staging, these photographs constructed dominant historical records that depicted Indigenous lands as empty and Indigenous peoples as disappearing. *(De)constructing Absence* explores how photographic framing, both literal and ideological, either shapes or contests these narratives, reframing photography not as neutral documentation as a political act. In this project, I interrogate the ways in which decisions about what is included, excluded, or staged within a camera’s lens actively produces or contests the dominant historical record regarding Indigenous presence.

In *(De)Constructing Absence*, I also investigate the lack of Indigenous art within our own collections and how curatorial practices can shift that power towards more collaborative, decolonial approaches that center Indigenous voices, sovereignty, and ways of knowing. Museums and archives have long excluded Indigenous voices, shaping incomplete histories. Presenting this work within a colonial institution revealed key tensions: while the exhibition critiques exclusion, it remains constrained by the very structures it seeks to challenge, underscoring the limits of intervention within institutional frameworks. Through this project, I consider the position of the curator and the visitor within the discourse around the relationship between colonial histories, curation, and art, and decolonial strategies of resistance.

SMALL AREAS OF ORDER: THE CAMPUS THROUGH FICTION

Andrew Pilet

As I was in the process of transferring colleges, I became frustrated and obsessed with campus fiction, those novels attempting to transcribe the college experience. After extensive reading and research — of works including *Stoner*, *The Groves of Academe*, *Japanese by Spring*, *The Idiot*, *The Secret History*, and others — I have found that the genre of campus fiction is dead. Owing to the liminal space created by the physical campus and the American cultural status of college as a secondary ‘adolescence’ between high school and adulthood, campus fiction is rarely able to expand beyond its formulaic boundaries. When an author takes on the task of writing a ‘campus novel’, they engage a series of potential masterplots — the adulterous professor, hedonistic student, reactionary and/or apostatic town, etc. — that each pull the fiction back into the genre’s static default.

In response to this, I have written *Small Areas of Order*, a collection of campus short stories. Set at or deconstructing the various meaningful college-spaces of my own life, these stories attempt to disrupt the genre, free its fiction, and think-through what writing-from-within a space, like a college, may do. Every story in the collection is a fragment of my own experience exaggerated or made slant. They are kaleidoscopes through which, in their multivoiced and near-surreal refractions, the campus and the college may be better felt and understood.

FORCED FROM HOME: DIVERGING CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

Adam Pomerantz

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the global population of internally displaced people (IDPs) reached 67.8 million in June of 2025. This project juxtaposes two conceptions of displacement: a “managerial” approach that views displacement as a top-down policy problem to be solved and an emergent approach to displacement as lived experience that may open up options beyond the deficit model. The comparison highlights the institutional entrenchment and bureaucratic capture of the managerial approach, and how this has shaped policies that impact displaced people through an impersonal, one-size-fits-all, approach to aiding IDPs. The newer conception emphasizes aspects of displacement as experience, rather than focusing on causal drivers, whether conflict or disaster. This newer conceptualization has struggled to break into the policy world, leading to the continued dominance of a managerial approach to aid. I use both models to map data on internal displacement in Yemen and Syria, considering the implications of rethinking displacement in an experience-centric way.

SCREEN TIME EFFECTS AND A PARENT-LED REDUCTION INTERVENTION IN NEUROTYPICAL AND NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN

Brielle Proctor

As digital media use among children continues to increase, understanding its potential impact on developmental functioning has become an important area of research. I outline a research proposal for an original study developed as part of the Capstone Research in Developmental Psychology course to examine the relationship between screen time and developmental functioning in neurotypical and neurodivergent children. Additionally, this study evaluates the effectiveness of a parent-led intervention designed to reduce children's screen time.

I hypothesize that higher screen time will be positively correlated with greater developmental and behavioral challenges among neurotypical and neurodivergent children, and that children in the intervention group will show greater improvements in behavioral, emotional, and sensory outcomes than children in the control group. Participants will include 200 children aged 5-12 years (100 neurotypical and 100 neurodivergent) and one primary caregiver per child. Caregivers will complete screen-time logs and measures of developmental functioning at pre-intervention, post-intervention, and follow-up. Participants will be randomly assigned, with stratification, to a four-week intervention or a control group. Pearson correlations, multiple regression analyses, 2×3 mixed-design ANOVAs, and post-hoc tests will be used to examine the associations between screen time and developmental outcomes, as well as to assess the effects of the intervention. Strengths, limitations, and implications for future research will be discussed.

EVALUATION OF BILINGUAL DIFFERENCES IN INHIBITORY CONTROL AND PREDICTORS OF EMERGENT LITERACY: A PROJECT PROPOSAL

Elena Roll

Research generally suggests that bilingual children possess certain cognitive advantages, including inhibitory control. In my capstone in Developmental Psychology, I proposed a research project that would seek to examine the relationship between bilingualism in children and performance on inhibitory control tasks and implications for potential advantages in predictors of emergent literacy, namely phonological awareness and early orthographic knowledge.

I hypothesize that children who are bilingual would not differ on performance on response inhibition tasks compared to monolingual children, but would have advantages on interference suppression tasks. The proposal hypothesis also included that these advantages in interference suppression held by bilingual children would be correlated to higher performance on predictors of emergent literacy, both phonological awareness and early orthographic knowledge, compared to monolingual children, and interference suppression would serve as a mediator between children's language skills (bilingual or monolingual) and the emergent literacy skills. One hundred 4-5 year olds would be recruited from preschools in Geneva, New York. Participants' language status would inform comparison groups, and participants would be assessed on each of the four measures, interference suppression, response inhibition, phonological awareness, and early orthographic knowledge.

I conclude with a plan for analysis of data and discussion of future research directions and limitations. This project helped me gain skills in navigating research, collecting evidence, and developing research questions and appropriate methods for carrying out research in psychology.

GENE EDITING MOSQUITOES:
A MODE OF ERADICATION AND MANAGEMENT

William Satheeskumar

For centuries, humans have dealt with one of the world's smallest yet most bothersome pests, the mosquito. Every year, millions of individuals face infection and potentially death from mosquito borne diseases like dengue, malaria, west nile, yellow fever, and zika. Insecticides can be ineffective and harmful to the environment, so editing genes associated with fertility in mosquitoes and development genes in the disease-causing microbes is a promising strategy.

I conducted a literature review to better understand how genes, traits, and fitness affect the environment. Specifically, this project explores the use of gene editing with CRISPR, which utilizes an apparatus that functions like scissors and glue to alter genetic code and change how a gene is passed to offspring. The first method edits a fertility gene in mosquitoes such that females lose the ability to successfully reproduce when the gene is inherited. Since the edit has a gene drive attached, the gene is passed down to offspring at a higher rate and is spread throughout the population, eventually sterilizing the majority of females and drastically reducing the population. The second type of gene editing aims to prevent malaria transmission through increasing the production of antimicrobial compounds in mosquitoes, which then destroy the malaria parasite before it is passed on to a human.

Together, these approaches use advanced genetic technology to facilitate the control of mosquito populations and reduce mosquito-borne disease. This technology can be used for the betterment of the human condition and should be employed at scale if effective.

DANCE COMPOSITION AS RESEARCH: CHOREOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PERFORMANCE AND REVISION

Madison Scheirer

I will explore dance composition as a form of research through the longitudinal development of an original choreographic work titled *her sun moon and stars*. Originally created in January 2025, this piece has undergone multiple revisions for and through performances at the HWS Junior/Senior Choreographers Concert (April 2025), Dances at MUCCC (July 2025), and the American College Dance Association (ACDA) conference (March 2026). Through this extended timeline, the work serves as a compositional case study that examines how choreographic processes evolve as a dance matures through performance, feedback, and revision.

I will highlight key compositional elements explored throughout my process, including the development of movement vocabulary and motifs, the use of abstraction, simplicity and subtlety, the structuring of theme, and considerations of space and time. Particular attention is given to how my choreographic process shifted between performances, including refining compositional choices with new casts, removing unnecessary movement material, and clarifying artistic intent. Through two professional adjudications, Jr/Sr Choreographers Concert and ACDA, this piece received professional feedback that reinforced many of the compositional approaches explored throughout the process.

Additionally, I will discuss my choreographer's evolving relationship to the work, including the transition from observer to performer in the most recent iteration, offering insight into embodiment as a research method within dance composition. By framing composition as an evolving research practice, I demonstrate how creative process, performance experience, and revision deepen both the work itself and the choreographer's experience with composition.

SWINE COUNTRY: POTENTIAL SPREAD OF FERAL HOGS
TO THE NORTHERN UNITED STATES

Ian Selover

While wild pigs (*Sus scrofa*) are not native to the Americas. Their introduction has led to rapid establishment, particularly in the southern United States. The ancestry of American feral pigs can be traced to two dominant sources: escaped domestic pigs and introduced Eurasian Wild Boar. Within these hybrid populations, new genetic mutations are appearing that suggest the feral pigs are evolving in response to the American environment. Pigs naturally have a broad tolerance for conditions, and have generalist diets, but access to water and resources can limit growth. As an invasive threat, they are aggressive and rapidly reproduce with very little competition or threats to their population growth.

My literature review examines the history surrounding feral hogs' success in their expansion throughout the United States and aims to discern which environment characteristics predict northward expansion. Current research demonstrates populations moving to locations with colder winter temperatures, mirroring the range of the ancestral Eurasian boar. Agriculture land use is often associated with pigs' expansion potential, but due to their generalist diets, they are capable of expansion without it. Feral pigs continue to adapt to the environment of the United States, and predictive capability about colonization will be critical to managing spread.

LET'S TALK POLITICS: FACILITATING POLITICAL DISCUSSION
IN THE SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Grace Snook

Nation-wide Secondary English curricula seek to imbue students with the tools they need to think critically, and to think for themselves—how to assess a source for validity, how to determine a speaker's point of view, how to evaluate the argument of a given text. All of these skills are essential to being not only a thoughtful person, but a participatory member of society; these life skills directly interact with our students' political climate, which means that politics are necessarily inextricable from our classroom teaching practices. However, that doesn't mean facilitating tough conversations is an easy feat for teachers.

Influenced by Miklikowska, et. al's 2022 study on deliberative political discussion in classrooms, I sought to find the best practices a teacher could embody to facilitate the safety, growth, and learning of their students.¹⁰ By conducting in-depth interviews with secondary English teachers, and comparing my findings with quantitative survey results assessing the impact of those practices on their students, I hope to discover where teachers fit politics into their classrooms, and how teachers can best navigate these conversations with their students in the context of an ever-changing political landscape.

¹⁰ Miklikowska, M., Rekker, R., & Kudrnac, A. (2022). A Little More Conversation A Little Less Prejudice: The Role of Classroom Political Discussions for Youth's Attitudes toward Immigrants. *Political Communication*, 39(3), 405–427. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.hws.edu/10.1080/10584609.2022.2032502>

THE MULTIFACED EFFECTS OF “ACEs” THROUGH THE LENS
OF POVERTY, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND GENDER

Julia Teixeira

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events occurring before age 18 and are associated with increased risk for internalizing symptoms. This study addresses gaps in the literature by examining how poverty, gender, and sexual orientation relate to ACE exposure and symptoms of depression and anxiety. We hypothesize that (1) higher ACE exposure will be associated with greater internalizing symptoms, that (2) greater economic hardship will be associated with higher ACE exposure and higher depression and anxiety, and that (3) ACEs will be more prevalent among sexual minorities, and that (4) women will report higher levels of depression and anxiety than men. Participants were recruited through online snowball sampling. Gender and sexual orientation were assessed via self-report; anxiety and depression were measured using the GAD-7 and PHQ-9, respectively; ACEs were assessed using the Revised ACE Inventory; and poverty was evaluated through self-assessment relative to the U.S. poverty line. Analyses will include correlations, a 3×6 ANOVA, and multiple regression. Strengths include the use of validated clinical measures and a focus on underrepresented populations. Limitations include the cross-sectional, correlational design and reliance on retrospective self-report. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, larger samples, and multidimensional assessments of childhood poverty across diverse contexts.

HINDUTVA IN SRI LANKA:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPREAD OF HINUTVA RHETORIC ONLINE, AND
IT'S INFLUENCE ON SRILANKEN TAMILS

Sandeep Tissaaratchy

With the end of the 2009 civil war in Sri Lanka and the abolishment of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), power vacuums have been left behind as elected regimes failed to address the needs of Tamil and Muslim communities in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. The purpose of my research is to explore how, when conflict ends and regimes fail to address communal needs, radical ideologies seep into a society. I explain how, with the rise of social media, algorithms move groups into echochambers, which enhances the mobility of ethnonationalist movements.

My research focuses on Hindutva ethnonationalism in the Northern and Eastern regions of Sri Lanka, areas of ethno-nationalism that have been under-analysed. I researched “up and across,” by studying social media of organizations and content creators, rather than religious members and local community members. My research adds to existing literature by showcasing how Hindutva groups are strategically incorporating communally charged narratives to normalize prejudice and threaten the stability of an already fragile post-war Sri Lanka.

HOW DO LONGER RECESS PERIODS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AFFECT 4TH & 5TH GRADERS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE?

Aaron Tober

Since the introduction of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, many US school districts decreased the length of recess periods under the assumption that they disrupt learning. The present study proposal for my capstone course in Psychology aims to add to the growing research that recess is essential for children. It is expected that students will show variations in academic performance over time, improvements depending on the length of recess they participate in, and the amount of physical activity they engage in.

For this study, all 4th- and 5th-graders from nine randomly selected public schools in Massachusetts' 3rd Congressional District would be randomly assigned to 20-, 40-, or 60-minute recess periods. Physical activity data would be gathered through accelerometers and a direct observation system, and academic performance data would be gathered through standardized exam scores, school grades, and an on-/off-task observation system. Baseline measures would be taken for each student for all the variables, and then compared with the data for these variables collected by the end of the study. A 3 x 2 repeated-measures ANOVA would be performed to examine differences between the recess groups, and then a 3 x 2 repeated-measures ANCOVA performed to control for physical activity and examine how the recess break and physical activity independently affected academic performance over time. Strengths, limitations, and future directions of the proposed study will also be discussed.

THE CHORNOBYL PROJECT

Tim Trakhachov

The Chernobyl Project is a modular research station designed for sites where prolonged human exposure is dangerous or impossible. It is the result of my work in ARCS-300. Set in the Chernobyl Nuclear Zone in Ukraine, the project explores how architecture can support research in contaminated terrain while reducing harm to human life. Rather than treating Chernobyl only as a symbol of disaster, I approached it as a real site with its own history, physical conditions, and architectural demands.

I began with archival and cultural research in Ukrainian, Russian, and English. From that research, I developed the main ideas that shaped the project: the octagonal geometry of the reactor, rapid change of state, and the tension between containment and rupture. Early paper and wood prototypes explored deformation, movement, and systems. One wooden prototype tested a device for safely grabbing and storing hazardous artifacts. Although this device was not part of the final proposal, it helped establish the larger design logic of controlled interaction, distance, and containment.

The final design became a transportable and self-moving research station organized around a central core with attachable modules for laboratories, command space, storage, and decontamination. Deliverable to the site but also capable of moving across terrain on its own, the station is not tied to a single location and can support longer operations while minimizing exposure for researchers and first responders.

THE BIOPOLITICAL TECHNOLOGY OF SEX:
REIMAGINGIN DESIRE IN DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE

Juliana Victor

Joseph Needham began the *Science and Civilization in China* project in 1948 as a means of amassing the scientific and technical inventions that originated from China. Included among Needham's research is an exploration of sex, sexuality, and sex practices as a technology of alchemy and chemistry, "Sexuality and the role of theories of generation." Needham argues that while there were elements of sexual prudency through Chinese movements and philosophies, such as Confucianism, for much of Chinese history, sex was seen as material immortality, beneficial to health and a catalyst for longevity under Taoist thought.

While sex can be considered a most natural process, within the subject of humanity, sex deviates from the necessary and includes the unnecessary, where sex becomes the technological contrivment of desire and politics. Using Needham's ideas as a starting point, I posit that sex, sexuality, and sex practices evolve as a technology to reflect and enforce social inventions of rules, values, and politics. Sex absorbs meaning through rules and stigma, and through its meaning, sex becomes highly political, controversial, and reflective of moral discourse. Sex is routinely catalyzed for social movement and change in both its assembling and dismantling. My analysis of sexual behavior and the reimagining of sex practices in dystopian literature will demonstrate that sex is a manifestation of the political, moral, and conflictual nature of humanity, continuously built, regulated, standardized, and then dissected as a means of political commentary and disillusionment

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MEDIA FRAMING OF WASTE: A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS ON MEDIA PORTRAYALS OF FINGER LAKES LANDFILLS

Magnus von Krusenstiern

Our lives are unavoidably intertwined with the waste we produce, and the average American produces 4.9 lbs of waste per day (EPA, 2025). The Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York is one of the places where we see a concentration of this waste accumulate, in the form of solid waste landfills. There are 25 solid waste landfills in NYS, a large portion of them found in this roughly defined Finger Lakes region. One of these landfills, Seneca Meadows, accepts around 30% of its annual waste from New York City alone (NYSDEC, 2020), and the status of landfills in the area is most prominently defined by waste imported from outside the county. Concerns surrounding the landfill are often voiced by the area's residents, especially those within close proximity. The question is, how are people formulating these concerns? A significant portion of these concerns and claims are most often expressed in local media outlets and newspapers.

I will be addressing these media portrayals of landfills using a Qualitative Content Analysis. Using select articles published by *The Finger Lakes Times* on Seneca Meadows Landfill to establish the view conveyed to the public. Through deliberate categorization such as key words and phrases I will define the media's framing and establish the perception of landfills being conveyed to the public.

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CLICKING IN OR CHECKING OUT? TECHNOLOGY AND ENGAGEMENT
IN ELEMENTARY SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lauren Wepler

Technology has become a regular part of instruction in many elementary classrooms through tools such as Chromebooks, Smartboards, and assistive communication devices. How does classroom technology influence student engagement and participation during instruction in elementary special education classrooms?

My interest in this topic developed through my classroom experiences in the Teacher Education Program here at HWS, where I frequently observed technology being used during lessons. I became even more interested in this topic during my student teaching placement in a 12:1:1 elementary special education classroom. In this setting, I noticed that technology sometimes helped students access learning and participate more independently, but at other times distracted students from the lesson.

Using a practitioner research approach, I collected classroom observations, field notes, and reflective voice memos during my placement. I also conducted interviews with a special education teacher and a teaching assistant to better understand their perspectives on technology use in the classroom. Preliminary findings suggest that technology can support engagement when it is used intentionally to remove learning barriers, such as through text to speech features or communication devices. However, access to technology does not automatically lead to engagement, highlighting the importance of thoughtful and intentional technology use in special education classrooms.

NAME, IMAGE, AND LIKENESS IN THE D3 ATMOSPHERE

Paige Wilson

The legalization of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) rights in 2021 fundamentally reshaped the economic and cultural landscape of college athletics. This project examines how NIL has influenced athlete identity, team culture, and self-presentation within the context of Division III athletics. While much public discourse has focused on the financial impact of NIL in high-revenue Division 1 sports, I explore how the policy operates in spaces historically defined by amateurism and limited commercialization.

Drawing on theories of neoliberalism, platform capitalism, and influencer culture, I investigate how athletes increasingly navigate dual roles as both teammates and entrepreneurial subjects responsible for cultivating personal brands. Through interviews with Division III athletes, coaches, and athletic staff, I analyze how NIL intersects with social media practices, locker room dynamics, and perceptions of individual versus collective success. Particular attention is given to tensions described through concepts such as the “disease of me” and the “palms up” mentality, which reflects anxieties about individualism in team environments. At the same time, I consider how NIL may provide opportunities for athlete empowerment, financial autonomy, and greater control over personal narratives. Motivated by an interest in the intersection of sport, media, and digital culture, my research situates Division III athletics as a revealing site for understanding how neoliberal market logic increasingly shapes contemporary college sport.

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