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UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE
ANNUAL ACADEMIC AND LEADERSHIP AWARDS CEREMONY
SPECIAL EVENTS HIGHLIGHTING STUDENTS' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

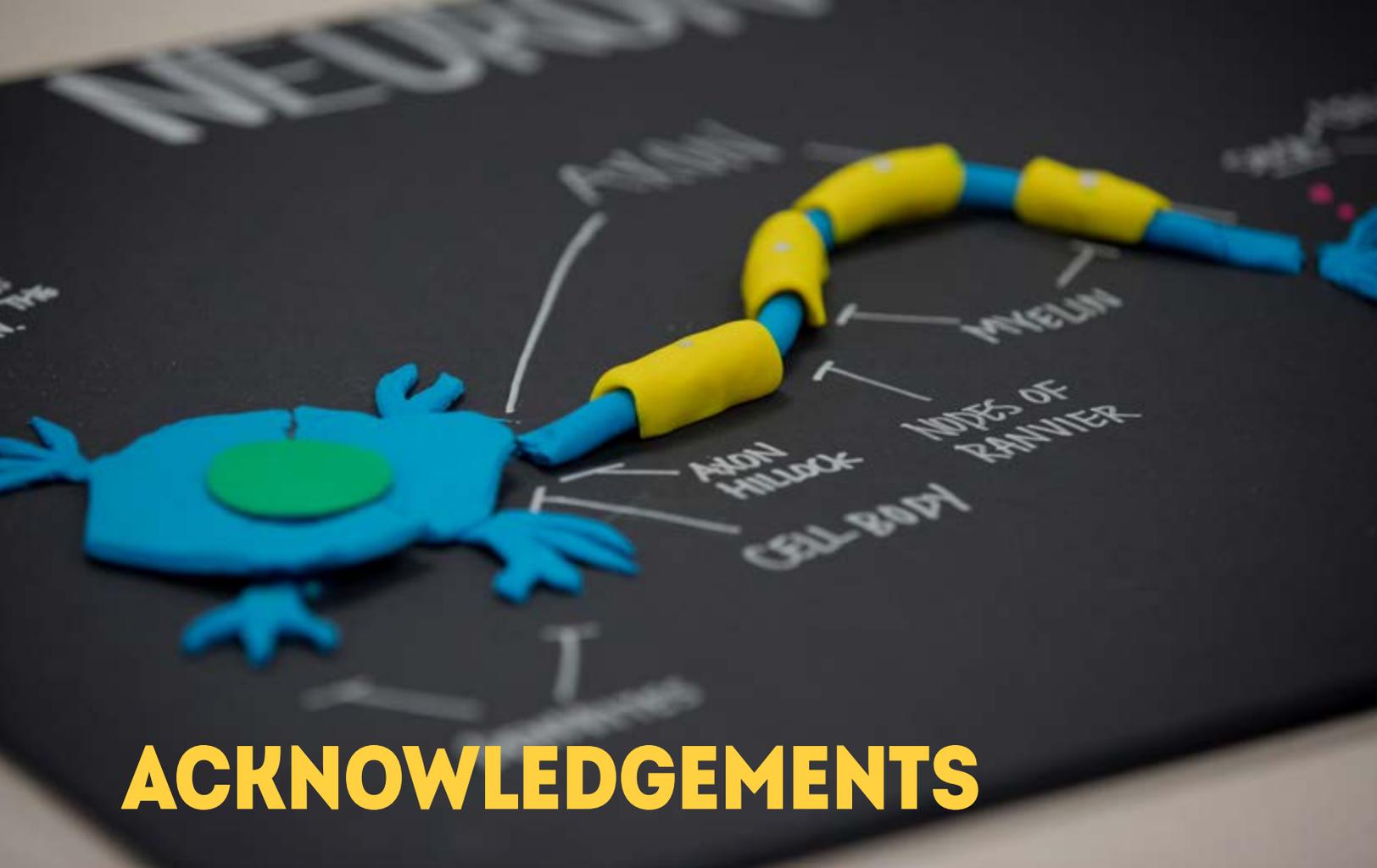
19TH ANNUAL CELEBRATING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Program of Events
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SHOWCASES

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Kappa Pi Induction Ceremony and Senior Recognition

“Defining Home” Student Showcase

Dance Showcase

The Colton Review

Honors Colloquia Showcases



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ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS

THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL MEREDITH COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE, APRIL 15, 2021

Not Your Typical Neuroatypical Experience: Changing Portrayals of Neuroatypical Individuals in Popular Media

Safa Ahmed

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Social and Behavioral Science*

One way people understand disabilities is from how they are depicted in popular media, such as movies and television shows. For example, in the 1960s, people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) were misdiagnosed as mentally ill, and the most common representation of them was as temperamental savages. In the media in the 1980s and 1990s, it was made to seem as if an ASD diagnosis was a burden to the person, their families, and the community. In the last decade, however, there has been a shift in the depiction of people diagnosed along the neuroatypical spectrum, with neuroatypicalities being seen as an advantage. While these are improvements in how people with neuroatypical disorders have been portrayed, one major criticism of media portrayal of atypicalities overall is how one-dimensional they make these characters look.

Ultimately, this presentation will focus on the changing depictions of neuroatypicality in media and on ascertaining whether this is a benefit to the larger neuroatypical population. The secondary purpose is to learn about the possible ramifications of stereotypical portrayal of autism-spectrum disorders in the media. This research project will examine interviews with the creators, directors, writers, and actors to determine what they were hoping to accomplish, if they had to make compromises for narrative purposes, and what resources they drew from in order to shape their portrayal of the life of someone living with ASD. The purpose of this is to see where the

conflict between narrative constraints and the lived reality of individuals and their families is coming from and to find any possible resolutions.

Beyond Black History Month: Art Curriculum for the 21st Century

Shila Alexander

*Research Adviser: Dr. Emily Howard;
Arts and Humanities*

Black and African art are often minimized in the art classroom, with the exception of Black history month. From here, the topic seems to dissipate until the following year. The purpose of this research was to create a visual art curriculum unit for grades 6-8 that engages students to learn about Black and African artists and to explore art beyond the Western, European-centric perspective. The lesson plans range from weekly to daily activities and feature several Black and African artists. The curriculum uses North Carolina's Visual Arts State Standard Course of Study. As part of my research, I investigated and identified the state standards and took a look at where a lack in Black and African art occur. In addition to this research, the presentation will offer book resources and a grading guide that educators can use to implement a more diverse and culturally relevant classroom for all.

Symbolic Violence in Popular Romance Films: How Film Normalizes Violence Against Women

Charlotte Allman

*Research Adviser: Dr. Kris Macomber;
Arts and Humanities*

Violence against women is a persistent social problem. According to the World Health Organization, 1 in 3 women will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence

against women is often thought of as physical violence, but a common and more insidious form of violence is symbolic violence. Symbolic violence consists of "invisible" forms of violence that have the potential to become physical forms of violence. As with physical violence, symbolic violence is tied to gendered power differentials and men's control over women. This study examined the enactment of symbolic violence within popular romance films. These films were found to reproduce and normalize violence against women in invisible ways, most commonly through loss of temper, justification of actions, minimization of behavior, and sexist slurs. While these forms of violence were often invisible, they had the potential]to lead to physical violence, especially when one person lost their temper with their partner. For this reason it is important to understand how symbolic representations of violence shown in relationships can become normalized and result in physical violence. However, symbolic violence in film has not been something that previous research has focused on. This research seeks to add to the understanding of symbolic violence and how film reproduces our social myths about violence in relationships.

Examination of Factors Predicting Cesarean Sections at a Large, Multi-site Obstetrics Practice

Peyton Barfield

*Research Adviser: Dr. Betty-Shannon Prevatt;
Social and Behavioral Science*

Current infant and maternal mortality and morbidity rates suggest that cesarean deliveries, also known as C-sections, are overused, accounting for 32.3% of deliveries in North America (Caughey et al., 2014; Betrán et al., 2016). Although the purpose of C-sections is to save the life of the fetus and mother, maternal risks are associated with the procedure, including increases in the incidence of a ruptured uterus and increases in placenta accreta or previa. Ectopic pregnancies are also possible, affecting subsequent pregnancies (Mylonas et al., 2015).

Patients are at an increased risk of C-section delivery if they are of increased maternal age (35 years or older), have gestational diabetes or diabetes mellitus, have a multifetal pregnancy as a result of fertility treatments, or have previously delivered via C-section (Mylonas and Friese, 2015). Aside from medical emergencies, providers also influence the likelihood of C-sections in their patients (Schneider, 2002; Mylonas and Friese, 2015). This study's purpose is to identify patient and provider factors contributing to cesarean deliveries at a large, multi-site obstetrics practice in North Carolina. Data consist of de-identified medical records from patients delivering between 2015-2020 including patient demographics, delivery method, and complications as well as provider demographic information (race and gender). A logistic regression will be used to identify predictors of delivery by C-section. This information will be useful in educating providers and patients about the associations between patient and provider factors and cesarean deliveries. The results of this study can inform interventions to reduce C-sections and improve maternal-child health.

Contextualizing Graphic Design: A Material Culture Approach to Ethical Design and Consumption in the U.S.A.

Bailey Birtchet

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Arts and Humanities*

In America, graphic design is more than a form of communication—it is a culturally specific practice that influences everyday lives by reflecting the different aesthetic and moral priorities of that culture. In order to do this, designers should understand the context in which they design and the context in which their designs will be understood—the habitus of the American consumer. For example, understanding the link between product and identity in America is what makes advertising campaigns for Nike so successful. Designers leverage consumers' desires for strength and achievement in the design and

visuals of the campaign, reinforcing Nike's brand image as being synonymous with victory. In turn, consumption of Nike products becomes the solution to satiate the consumer's need or desire to embody victory. While a different message can be conveyed, it is still articulated and understood within a context and culture that shapes its meaning.

By analyzing how design is utilized within society, this presentation will demonstrate how consumerist values—competition, consumption, and wealth—are embedded in American design practice. The presence of these values shapes both the professional practice of designers and the lived experience of consumers. As a result, the design, production, and consumption of material goods simultaneously reflects societal moral concerns and priorities as much as it reinforces and perpetuates them. Informed by theories of material culture and the writings of de Certeau and Bourdieu, this project will include designs that critique America's obsession with material culture and elevate design as a tactical practice meant to counter hegemonic consumerist norms.

The Effects of an Affective Education

Elena Blackwelder

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Arts and Humanities*

The myth that voting reflects the voter's rational self interest obscures the role of emotions in shaping perceptions of candidates and policy. Rather than being naturally developed over time, political ideologies are historically constructed because social studies is what turns students into American citizens. Attitudes towards government, policy, political parties, etc. are shaped early in life through an educational experience that creates affectively loaded mattering maps that organize how individuals first feel, then think, about politics. This paper explores how affectively loaded symbols and phrases used in elementary and middle schools form political emotions in students that surface later in life. Utilizing words

and phrases that are affectively tied to liberal or conservative ideals may influence students' political beliefs during these formative years. Although the whole of a student's educational experience is affectively loaded, this presentation will focus on examples from social studies textbooks that may shape attitudes towards America's past, government, institutions, and sense of civic responsibility; social studies curriculums are spaces where an affectively loaded American identity is shaped. To explain how political emotions are formed, this presentation will explain and apply affect theory, which explores how emotions combine with a variety of social factors to surface individuals and communities. Specifically, it will examine how emotions are attached to concepts in civics education to guide students to certain perceptions of America. Ultimately, this research will analyze the American political and public education systems, how they have come to intersect, and the consequential influence they have over citizens.

Employing Diversity: Improving Hiring Practices for All

Tasia Bromell

*Research Adviser: Dr. Lisa Delise;
Business and Economics*

Even though approximately 50 million people in the United States have a disability that affects their relationship to their work, disability employment is a fairly new research topic that is often overlooked in organizations' diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate how companies can improve the hiring process for people with a range of disabilities: physical, intellectual, and psychiatric. First, through literature, pervasive problems within the current hiring practices for people with disabilities are identified. Then, the current legal requirements are defined; barriers, benefits, and challenges to hiring people with disabilities are explained; and the best practices are cited to suggest solutions in changing the hiring process to support the selection and

retention of individuals with disabilities. Based on information from scholarly journals, it is clear that improvement in hiring disabled applicants can be beneficial for all organizational stakeholders. This research, in particular, is essential in inciting change in diversity, equity, and inclusion and for organizations. This presentation concludes with a discussion of how the findings differ from my personal thoughts and experiences of disability employment discrimination.

Adulting: A Study of Life Skills and the Millennial and Gen Z Cohorts

Jill Bromenschenkel

*Research Adviser: Dr. Alexandra Howell;
Social and Behavioral Science*

The term "adulting" has emerged in pop culture as a reference to managing the responsibilities that correlate with being an independent adult, also known as life skills. This term has been most popularized by the millennial and generation z cohorts as they have emerged into adulthood. The Pew Research Center defines millennials and gen z as people born between 1981-1996 and 1997-2012, respectively (Dimock, 2019). These generational cohorts have been challenged in the areas of finance, cooking, career, relationships, housing and other skills that transition and sustain an individual in adulthood.

The objective of this study was to examine the status of life skills among the youngest generations and to better support them through the field Family and Consumer Sciences. An in-depth analysis of relevant contemporary and historic literature was completed between September 2019 - February 2020. To gain the perspective of members of the millennial and generation z cohorts, the researcher conducted eight focus groups of female students who were born between the years 1982-2002. The researcher transcribed the focus groups and conducted a qualitative analysis using open, axial, and selective methods. The researcher gained insight about how the individuals of the generations

feel about their emergence into adulthood as well as their experiences with Family and Consumer Sciences classes. The major findings of this study include "adulting" is a transitional period navigated through the acquisition of life skills which are obtained through a variety of resources, relationships, and experiences.

The Use of Music and Finger Castanets to Promote Hand Control in Children with Autism

Kearstyn Brown

*Research Adviser: Dr. Mark O'Dekirk;
Social and Behavioral Science*

Music has been used to motivate children for many years and has been seen through different therapeutic interventions. Previous research by Walcer (2016) indicates that adding music into movement classes improved gross motor as well as fine motor abilities. The current study used prerecorded music and finger castanets to determine if they promote hand control in children with Autism. A multiple-baseline design across subjects was used to measure the baseline and intervention. The baseline was a child snapping a button. The intervention was where the child listened to music and played the finger castanets and afterwards, they were exposed to the baseline measurement again. The researcher conducted a multiple-baseline design across subjects. The dependent variable was the amount of time it took the child to snap a button together. The researcher hypothesized that by using the music-based intervention, children with Autism will be able to improve their hand control. There were N = 3 participants from the ages of 4, 5, and 6-years-old who were diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Preliminary data indicates early improvement in hand control, although data collection is ongoing and final results will be reported at the conclusion of all program sessions in mid-March.

The Impact of Othering on Central American Immigrants and Refugees at the Southwestern Border of the United States

Natalya Brown

*Research Adviser: Dr. Callie Debellis;
Social and Behavioral Science*

The [1] United States excludes immigrants, degrades them through written and spoken rhetoric, and perpetuates the idea that they do not belong. But what are the impacts of Othering [2] on the lived experiences of Central American immigrants in detention camps at the Southwestern border of the United States? Othering occurs when a society treats a person or a group of people in a separate, often lesser way. This research dives into the history of immigration policy, analyzes current rhetoric, and evaluates how narratives from Central American immigrants demonstrate the impacts of exclusion and hateful discourse. The analysis compared the definitions of sociological theories with the lived experiences of immigrants to establish that Othering occurred. Secondary sources demonstrated that these experiences had adverse effects. Utilizing the lenses of Othering and membership theory, this research demonstrated that Central American immigrants are treated as a distinct, separate group [3] [NB4] of people in the United States and that this distinction is used to justify inhumane conditions at the border. Immigrants have expressed mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety originating from their time incarcerated in detention camps. However, due to the compounding nature of trauma, it is difficult to predict the long-term psychological impacts. This work demonstrates that the system of immigration and immigrant detention in the United States must change. To end the maltreatment of immigrants, private contracts for detention centers must end, the quota system for immigrants must be altered, and detention should shift to a community-based model.

Non-Binary Evolution of the Spanish Language

Miryam Bryant

*Research Adviser: Dr. Jonathan Wade;
Arts and Humanities*

In early Spanish classes, students learn that the language includes more than one option for the second person singular (i.e., you). The distinction between tú and usted is one of formality. While students learn this important lesson on cultural respect, they are not given any instruction regarding Spanish gender pronouns that may help them identify themselves or anyone else outside the gender binary. The challenge rests on the fact that Spanish does not officially have non-binary language (at least according to institutions like the Real Academia Española, who decide which emerging words will be adopted into the official Spanish language). Being gendered correctly is important; mis-gendering causes significant psychological distress and can lead to other issues. To negate some of the hardship that non-binary Spanish speakers experience while living in a very gendered society and speaking a very gendered language, teachers of Spanish classes should broaden lessons on gender and pronouns to include non-binary people. Based on a review of the scholarly literature written about this topic, the following presentation discusses the existing options for non-binary inclusive Spanish, summarizes some of the problems related to these possibilities, and offers suggestions for how to implement said options in Spanish courses and daily conversational Spanish. With this presentation I will locate a starting place for classroom conversations about non-binary Spanish as well as dispel misinformation about the topic because everyone deserves respect, regardless of their gender identity or the language they speak.

The Effects of a Global Pandemic on College Students' Mindset, Self-Efficacy, and Grades

Emilee Buff

*Research Adviser: Dr. Betty-Shannon Prevatt;
Social and Behavioral Science*

In a period of time when the unknown seems to control thoughts and college student's mental health is already on the brink, everyone is in a vulnerable state without a novel pandemic. The purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of a global pandemic on college students' mindset, academic self-efficacy, and grades. Mindset is a self-theory that people hold about themselves. The focus being on the difference between growth and fixed mindsets. These mindsets play a vital role in education because it is the individual's perception of whether or not they can attain something. Self-efficacy is defined as a judgement of "how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with the perspective situation" (Bandura, 1982). This applies to academics because it impacts the confidence in academic performance and can lead to behaviors that encourage or discourage academic performance. Growth mindsets and self-efficacy are both linked to academic success; when a student is faced with an academic challenge, self-efficacy and mindset can help or hinder successful outcomes, like grades. Participants (N = 34) who were recruited to complete an online survey that addressed mindsets, self-efficacy, and grades from the Fall 2019 and Fall 2020 semesters. A Repeated Measure MANOVA will examine the effects of mindset and self-efficacy on grades while controlling for COVID exposure. Findings can offer insights on how to best support students during crises. Continued studies should further investigate the effects events like this have on college students.

You Give Love a Bad Name: Making Sense of the White-Washed Philosophy of Love

Scout Burch

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Arts and Humanities*

Helen Fisher's *Why We Love* explores the different ways that people come to understand and express romantic love based on what they see modeled in popular culture. This paper focuses on how various seasons of *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette* television shows demonstrate the discrimination and struggles that interracial couples have faced in American culture. Drawing on Fisher's idea that romantic love and attraction are culturally constructed, two additional shows will be compared to *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette*: *Love is Blind* and *Unreal*. First, *Love is Blind* is unique in that the participants are not allowed to see one another until they have gotten engaged. Despite the effort to represent love as transcending different constructions of race, the couples on the show had open and frank discussions about interracial relationships. *Unreal*--a show about the production and filming of a *Bachelor*-like reality show--will be used to demonstrate the artificial nature of these shows as well as some of the issues that such a show would face with a person of color as the lead. A comparative analysis among these shows, in light of various scholarly studies on race, reveals an effort to obscure issues of race in order to construct an idea of love as somehow independent of these factors. Ultimately this promotes a white understanding of love. This way of looking at love harms people of color by discounting their experiences and asking them to lose part of their identity when they enter into a romantic relationship.

Relationships Between Mental Health and Academic Behaviors in College Students

Ally Cefalu

*Research Adviser: Dr. Andrea McPherson;
Social and Behavioral Science*

In a time full of technological distractions, motivation and procrastination have become important aspects of university life. The literature explains that an individual's academic motivation occurs on a continuum of internal (IM) and external (EM) styles, while procrastination varies situationally. When these behaviors are combined with anxious or depressed symptoms, academic achievement can suffer. The researcher sampled undergraduate students ($N = 61$) using modified snowball sampling. The hypothesis was that students experiencing depression would have external motivation styles, higher procrastination, and lower GPAs, while students experiencing anxiety would have internal motivation styles, lower procrastination, and higher GPAs. Depression and anxiety were significantly correlated with IM-for stimulation ($r = .926, p < .01$) and ($r = .621, p < .01$), respectively, but neither interacted with other motivation types. GPA did not interact with depression, anxiety, motivation, or procrastination ($r = .078, .200, -.127, -.077, .015, p > .05$), respectively. A multiple linear regression analysis found that depression was a significant predictor of procrastination, $F(3, 38) = 3.48, p < .05, R^2 = .216$. Students are seemingly able to maintain grades despite the presence of mental health challenges, although this does not equate to healthy handling of stressors. If motivation and procrastination have minimal effects on student mental health and grades, further research will be required to identify factors that do affect student mental health. Future research should pursue a better understanding of student motivation and procrastination, which can bring attention to students who may be resilient in maintaining grades at the cost of their mental health.

The Effects of Remote Teaching on Teacher Motivation

Madisyn Clark

*Research Adviser: Dr. Mark O'Dekirk;
Social and Behavioral Science*

This study investigated the effects of remote teaching on teacher motivation. Prasad et al. (2020) investigated the effects of occupational stress and remote working on one's psychological well-being and found that remote working can be a challenge for employees due to working too much, not working enough, family disturbances, and workplace isolation. While remote teaching is different than remote working for companies, the two jobs and implications share many similar characteristics. In the present study, the quasi-independent variable was the format of the teaching (e.g., face-to-face, online remote, or a combination of both). The dependent variables of the study were teacher motivation, self-reported stress levels, and self-reported energy levels (as measured by an anonymous online survey). Responses were categorized based on whether the teacher taught face-to-face, remotely, or a combination of both. The researcher hypothesized that teacher motivation would decrease for those teachers who were teaching remotely, as compared to those teaching face-to-face or combination. The study consisted of a convenience sample of 33 public school teachers (pre-K through eighth grade). An ANOVA test revealed no significant differences between the groups, possibly due to a small sample size. Results were trending towards higher stress levels and tiredness in online/combination formats when compared to face-to-face format, and conversely, higher excitement levels in face-to-face format when compared to online/combination formats. The highest amount of preparation time occurred in the remote teaching condition. Future research should focus on a larger sample size to detect any effects and create intervention strategies to support teachers facing burnout.

Intuitive Eating Practices: An Expanded Mixed Methods Project

Caroline Coleman

*Research Adviser: Dr. Jennifer McMillen;
Natural and Physical Science*

Intuitive eating is defined as the process of listening to one's hunger and fullness cues and allowing them to guide eating choices. In previous research conducted along with other fellow Meredith students, two institutions in the Triangle area (Meredith College and North Carolina State University) were surveyed via a qualtrics survey (N=283) and contacted via email. To further investigate the concept of intuitive eating, the Qualtrics survey was sent to undergraduate students at a community college, Johnston Community College, JCC, in Smithfield, NC via email. The final question in the survey invited participants to attend an online Zoom focus group to discuss students' eating habits, motivations, and barriers. The Intuitive Eating Scale (IES-2) and the Visceral Sensitivity Index (VSI) were used to quantify degrees of intuitive eating and gastrointestinal symptomatology, respectively. Extensive qualitative training, memoing, open coding, and consensus were utilized to identify emergent themes and minimize bias. Results from the survey have not yet been analyzed and are currently still being collected. Focus group analysis has not been conducted as participants are being recruited to participate. Thematic analysis will be conducted comparing the data from JCC community college population as well as the previous data gathered from Meredith College and N.C. State University. The hypothesis for the quantitative component was that students who scored higher on the IES-2 would score lower on the VSI and based on review of the literature, JCC scores will score low on the IES-2 scale compared to Meredith and North Carolina State University .

The Relationship Between Participation in Collegiate Athletics and Academic Performance

Ally Copenhaver

*Research Adviser: Dr. Stephanie Little;
Natural and Physical Science*

The lifestyle of today's society has begun to change with fewer people choosing to participate in physical activity. Previous research documents that students who participate in physical activity or sports teams may perform at a higher level academically. Few studies have been conducted at the Division III level. This study was conducted through a survey via email to 138 student-athletes assessing the effect of intercollegiate athletic participation on academic achievement and time management skills. In total, 42 participants completed the study out of 138 student-athletes at the institution, Meredith College. The study was distributed through google forms in an email consisting of an informed consent, explanation of the study and the survey. Survey results indicated 80.9% of the participating student-athletes hold a grade point average of a 3.0 or higher, with 38.1% indicating belief that they would not have better grades if they did not participate in collegiate athletics, and 31% not agreeing or disagreeing with this statement. When asked about time management, 64.3% strongly agreed that athletics helped them develop better skills, while 21.4% agreed with this statement. Current study results were similar to past research and indicates students who participate in athletic sports teams at the intercollegiate level may also perform better academically in the classroom at a Division III institution, which may in part be due to the impact athletics has on the development of time management skills. Higher standards implemented by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) to uphold a specific grade point average as well as expectations of coaching

staff to attend class were considered. The culture and expectation held by the school or individual sports teams could also impact the level of performance on and off the field or court. The data of those results would cause a different variation in the results and findings of the data analysis. Additional research and investigation on this population is advised.

The Evolution of Federal and State Education Policies and Their Effectiveness in Public Education

Casey Corpening

*Research Adviser: Dr. Cece Toole;
Arts and Humanities*

Historically, formal education was reserved for wealthy men. Presently, equal access to free public education is guaranteed to all students in the United States according to the 14th Amendment and federal court cases. Since the mid-1900s, federal and state governments have placed economic value on education. Politicians needed to be able to measure their "return on investment," which led to the introduction of education policies designed to measure school success and ensure the government was not losing any taxpayer dollars by funding public education. Every new policy was designed to increase success in public schools, but these policies were designed by politicians rather than teachers. This project will analyze the effectiveness of government involvement in increasing the success of public schools from the viewpoint of teachers in the state of North Carolina. My essential questions are: (1) does federal and state government involvement, such as the "No Child Left Behind" Act and "Race to the Top," increase the success of students and teachers, and (2) is increased government involvement in public education better for students and teachers? Included in this project will be information on the history of education policies, along with qualitative data from North Carolina teachers on how their schools and classrooms have changed with new education policies. To measure success, I will be

using teachers' views. This is helpful because every classroom and district is different. In contrast, using teachers' views as a measurement for success will be based on their individual experiences and can not be standardized. By the end of this project, I expect my results will show evidence of overreach by the government in public education, with few indications that these policies have enhanced student and teacher success overtime. The policies are changing and evolving, but student and teacher success has not improved.

Conservative or Liberal? The Problematic Politics of Film and Abortion

Raynor Dail

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Arts and Humanities*

Abortion is one of the most controversial topics in America, intersecting with race, religion, education, economics, and politics. The purpose of this presentation is to analyze how topics related to reproductive choice are discussed in contemporary film and television, and second, to argue that those depictions are often more conservative than not. Using a scale developed to rank lobbying groups, politicians, media, and states, I have analyzed how they rank compared to one another. The scale addresses issues including access to abortion, specifically time limits and access to different procedures, as well as sex education, the moral and legal relevance of fetal pain, diverse representation, and various abortion-related topics. Elements of that scale were applied to examples from popular media to better understand where films or television shows stood on these and other aspects of reproductive justice. For example, the film *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Always* appears liberal with abortion, but it is not as progressive as its reputation due to lack of diversity. The sample films and television shows chosen were compared to lobbying groups to analyze how liberal or conservative they actually were. Analyzing how popular media treats abortion-related issues reveals that they take

more conservative positions on abortion rights and reproductive justice than it appears. This presentation will conclude with an analysis of the lack of diversity in these depictions of abortion. Doing so made clear that the depiction of abortion and issues surrounding reproductive justice appear liberal because they are simply addressing the topic of abortion, but are actually more conservative in their politics and understanding of fetal life and development.

Potential Treatment Options for Akinetopsia

Miranda Demers

*Research Adviser: Dr. Francie Cuffney;
Natural and Physical Science*

Akinetopsia is a disorder involving the eyes and brain that results in an incorrect and inhibitive perception of motion. The purpose of this literature review is to find what treatment options are available for patients afflicted with akinetopsia and research them fully. Factual information from verified scientific journals and research-based articles was studied to find how the neurological connections between the eyes and the brain become damaged and if there are any ways to reverse this occurrence. While there is no cure for akinetopsia, the results of this literature review found antiepileptic drug therapy and the inhibition of the MT/V5 area of the brain via transcranial magnetic stimulation function as treatments. The information found during this research can be used by those interested in learning more about the ocular nerve and its connection with the brain in addition to those interested to learn about methods to treat neuro-ocular disorders.

One More Thing to Hate: Toxic Masculinity in 10 Things I Hate About You

Anne Edwards

*Research Adviser: Dr. Steven Benko;
Arts and Humanities*

The movie 10 Things I Hate About You (1999) displays a variety of masculine stereotypes. Most

of the movie focuses on the relationship between Kat and Patrick, but Bianca, Joey, and Cameron's relationship triangle shows different ways of performing masculinity. This paper analyzes media portrayals of masculinity and seeks to review and apply the findings from psychological studies about hegemonic masculinity in teenagers. Between Cameron and Joey, the movie juxtaposes two forms of masculinity: Joey's hypersexualized masculinity and Cameron's sensitive masculinity. First, Joey's reason for dating Bianca is to have sex with her; Cameron is portrayed as more romantic and passive. Second, Joey is portrayed as a bully while Cameron is shown to be the easily intimidated social outcast. When Bianca chooses Cameron, it is meant to be seen as a victory for the good guy, but this is because Joey's toxic masculinity overshadows equally toxic elements of Cameron's masculinity. To assert his masculinity, Cameron obsesses over Bianca's purity and tries to defend her from others. Because Cameron adopts the mindset that Bianca owes him for defending her, he lashes out after she rejects him. This paper will argue that the contrast between Joey and Cameron's masculinity serves to elevate Cameron, even though he presents a new form of hegemonic masculinity that is more toxic than Joey's. Based on insights from the work of Judith Butler and Regina Hansen, Cameron's masculinity is dangerous because it creates a sense of othering, which feeds into an obsession to assert power over others.

Who's in Charge Here? How Traditional and Feminist Scholars Explain the Story of Jesus and the Canaanite/Syrophenician Woman

Anne Edwards

*Research Adviser: Dr. Shannon Grimes;
Arts and Humanities*

In New Testament times, a woman's sphere of influence was restricted to her home and family. Because this was the status quo, stories involving Jesus healing a woman typically cast the female in a silent and passive role. However, the story of

the Canaanite/Syrophenician woman disrupts this pattern of submission and silence. Rather than waiting for Jesus to heal her daughter or asking politely, this woman demands healing from Jesus. Because of her initiative, interpretations of this passage in the Gospels have differed greatly in traditional and feminist scholarship. Through reviewing the literature on these interpretations, I argue that the differences in interpretations are due to traditional scholars focusing on Jesus's actions and messianic identity, while feminist scholars fixate on the woman's bold actions and motivations.

Comparison of Aerobic and Anaerobic Exercise on Executive Function Using the Stroop Test

Brooklynn Flanigan

*Research Adviser Dr. Heather Sanderson;
Natural and Physical Science*

Previous research has shown that acute exercise benefits the prefrontal cortex which controls executive functioning. While many studies have investigated the effects of acute bouts of aerobic and anaerobic exercise on executive functioning with older populations; few studies have examined the effects of exercise on executive functioning in young adults, particularly college-age students. The purpose of this study will be to compare acute effects of aerobic and anaerobic exercise on executive functioning in college students. Thirty-six college age females, 18-22 years old, enrolled in either an anaerobic course (n=18) or aerobic course (n=18) participated. A familiarization presentation was given to the participants the week prior to the exercise session. The aerobic exercise protocol included thirty minutes of cardiovascular exercise at a moderate intensity of 75% maximal heart rate. Anaerobic exercise included thirty minutes of six multi-joint resistance training exercises performed at three sets of 10-12 repetitions at a moderate intensity. After completing the exercise protocol, participants immediately took the Stroop test. This online test is one of the most widely used

neuropsychological assessments to measure executive functioning of the prefrontal cortex and has been used in previous studies measuring executive functioning and exercise performance. Statistical analysis is in process. We predict we will see a greater increase in executive function in the aerobic group than with the anaerobic group.

Gender Bias in Schools: Role of School Dress Code Policy Enforcement, Body Shaming on Female Adolescent Development

Amyia Gorham and Hannah Porter

*Research Adviser: Dr. Pamela Norcross;
Social and Behavioral Science*

Adolescence is a time of transition from being a child into becoming an adult. A time for adolescent students to examine who they are, and who they want to become. Clothing is an important medium that can be used as an outlet for self-expression, particularly for female students. Accordingly, strict school dress code policies may negatively impact student's social identity development by limiting opportunities for self-expression, while promoting cultural, racial, and gender bias. Often, dress code enforcement is subjective and arbitrary. Females often report receiving negative messages about their bodies. Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine the effects of dress code policy and messages female students receive about their bodies. A qualitative study was conducted, including a combination of open-ended questionnaires and a focus group, with participants that consisted of female students ages 13-18 years (N=9). After coding the data, gender and the body emerged as themes from both the questionnaires and focus group. Participants typically reported negative commentary from peers and adults about their bodies, and they elaborated in the focus group that they felt self-conscious about what they wear to school as a result of the scrutiny that accompanies consequences of dress code policy enforcement. Further, findings suggest

enforcement of dress code policies in schools needs major reevaluation, as messages from adults are influential. Without major shifts in policy, young women are at risk of losing educational time as a result of developing poor self-image, and valuing oneself only through the way they appear.

The Effect of Personality Trait on Coping Styles During COVID-19

Hannah Groover

*Research Adviser: Dr. Betty-Shannon Prevatt;
Social and Behavioral Science*

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the effect of personality traits on coping strategies in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has led to extended periods of isolation that correlate with increases in depression and anxiety with coping strategies protecting against long-term effects. Personality is related to the choice of coping strategies and the effectiveness of those methods. Hypotheses were 1) Neuroticism would correlate strongest with avoidant coping and 2) Extraversion would correlate strongest with socially supported coping. Using the "Big Five" personality trait assessment (John and Srivastava, 1999), participants (N=175) were categorized according to their dominant trait: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Participants completed the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997) that was analyzed according to 3-factor and 2-factor models. Multiple MANOVAs were used to examine the relationship between personality trait, direct COVID-19 experience, and coping. Avoidant coping strategies were used significantly more by individuals dominant in Conscientiousness [$F(5, 172)= 2.35, p<0.05$]. Individuals without direct COVID-19 experience used significantly more socially-supported coping [$F(1, 172)=3.93, p<0.05$] and adaptive coping [$F(1, 172)=4.35, p<0.05$] strategies. The results suggest that direct COVID-19 experience inhibited healthy

coping strategies indicating the importance of interventions to decrease isolation during quarantining and recovery.

Culturally Informed Approaches to Development in Latin America

Ansley Harris

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Arts and Humanities*

Latin America has high rates of inequality with respect to basic services such as water and sanitation. This project aims to explain why water and sanitation infrastructure projects in Latin America have had varying degrees of success and sustainability and how this serves to exacerbate existing inequalities. It will also look at the intersection between engineering and culture and the unique ability that engineers have to either alleviate or worsen problems in a community. While a project may be effective in one community, the same project may be ineffective or detrimental in another community. This paper will assess the role of culture in sustainable development, or more specifically, the importance of a culturally informed approach to resolving water and sanitation inequalities in Latin America. Using literature sources regarding development programs conducted in Latin America as well as numerical data regarding access to services and inequality, this paper will show that the unique cultural, social, economic, and geographical circumstances of a community must be considered when making decisions regarding infrastructure development. In addition, the paper will evaluate projects and implemented solutions in peri-urban, rural, and indigenous communities for their effectiveness and sustainability. Understanding the varying degrees of success of these projects and procedures informs a general outline for tackling future infrastructure projects in a culturally competent manner.

Match Makers: A Comprehensive Review of Optimal Mentorship Pairing Criteria

Veronica Harrison

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Social and Behavioral Science*

In recent decades, there has been extensive research done on mentoring relationships (also called mentorships) in occupational and academic settings. A mentorship is a type of functional relationship characterized by a more experienced person (mentor) agreeing to assist in the professional and social development of a less experienced person (protégé.) Mentoring can be done informally, where both parties enter into a spontaneous relationship without outside assistance, or formally with an organization facilitating the pairings (also known as dyads.) Many studies have found positive correlations between career mentorship participation and increased employee job satisfaction, higher compensation, and employee retention. Academic mentoring has been associated with greater student performance and achievement, student persistence, and increased psychosocial wellbeing. While much is already known about the value of mentorships, less is known about what specific factors are needed within the mentor dyads to ensure satisfactory outcomes. An extended literature review was conducted on published studies of formal and informal adult mentorships to identify patterns within dyad pairings consistent with successful outcomes. Drawing from three major article databases, broad a priori article selection criteria was permitted for comprehensive depth, including meta-analyses and mixed-methods research.

A summary of findings from 31 articles suggests that successful mentorships most often result when mentor-mentee expectations align, dyads are paired by deep-level similarities with sensitivity to race and gender, and frequent interactions are prioritized. Recommendations for suitable first principles are discussed providing guidance for human resource management and program

directors toward the optimization of future mentoring programs.

Investigating How Students of Color Build Social Capital at a Predominately White Institution

Rachel Hefner

*Research Adviser: Dr. Joy Learman;
Social and Behavioral Science*

The purpose of this study is to explore how students of color attending a predominantly white institution build social capital. Social capital can be defined as a network of relationships that are beneficial in nature and enable society and individuals to function effectively. The study will analyze how these beneficial relationships are created, why they are perceived to be beneficial, and how they are maintained. The participants will be enrolled in the study utilizing email outreach to campus clubs and academic departments. Participants who self select to enroll, will then complete semi-structured qualitative interviews over Zoom. The data will be summarized based on qualitative analysis measures. The lessons learned from research participants will be used to inform institutions and the broader community on how to create meaningful and valuable opportunities for the development of social capital among students of color at a predominately white institution. Study findings and specific recommendations will be presented.

Purchases and the Pandemic: The Influence of COVID-19 on the Spending Patterns of College Students.

Rachel Hill

*Research Adviser: Dr. Mary Jane Lenard;
Business and Economics*

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted many demographic groups in the United States including college students. Many students have faced job insecurity and issues locating jobs in a suffering economy; however, most college students were not eligible for stimulus

payments. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate patterns of spending vs. saving and the types of purchases students have made over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic including categories of purchases and how spending habits have changed. A qualtrics survey was emailed to Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors at Meredith College in Raleigh, NC in November through the end of December 2020. Through this method, 95 responses were received. Quantitative and qualitative questions were asked to find a sense of what students spent their money on since the beginning of COVID-19 and how their spending vs. saving habits may have changed. The results indicate that COVID-19 has enhanced fiscal responsibility of the target population and has made them more cautious with their spending. The population also showed more concern with their financial health. Respondents also indicated their new spending habits may not change once the pandemic is over due to becoming more cautious with spending. With students looking to be more financially responsible following the pandemic, there should be more implementation of financial knowledge and support at Meredith College, as well as other universities, to help better prepare current students and future students.

Culture, Context, and Communicating Christianity: The Missionary Career of Dorothy Mainhood

Jessica Jacks

*Research Adviser: Dr. Amy O'Keefe;
Arts and Humanities*

In 1957, at the age of 26, Dorothy Mainhood sailed across the Atlantic to Southeast Asia where she was trained and sent out by Overseas Missionary Fellowship to Thailand. Mainhood faithfully dedicated fifty years of her life to serving the Thai people. For my research, I used Mainhood's journals, letters, and other personal documents, as well as the scholarly literature pertaining to missionaries in Thailand. Several scholars of missiology have asserted that understanding your own cultural values and the values of the

country in which you work is one key to properly contextualizing Christianity. I have examined Mainhood's goals as a missionary and how she achieved her main goal of discipling Thai Christians and helping young Christians grow spiritually. Recently, I set out to understand how she communicated her Christian values to the Thai people in a culturally relevant way (contextualization of Christianity). I concluded that some of Mainhood's personal values were aligned with Thai cultural values from the outset, and it was this attribute, along with her excellent language skills, which gave her an advantage in effectively communicating with the Thai people. Over time, as Mainhood embedded herself within the Thai culture, she developed a deep cultural understanding and internalized some cultural values of the Thai people, which further increased her effectiveness in communicating Christianity. Examining Mainhood's lifetime of service with Overseas Missionary Fellowship gives us a better understanding of the growth of the organization and the impact of a single Christian woman in Thailand between 1960 and 2010.

Determining if Meditation Increases Sleep Quality and Sleep Hours

Maygan Jackson

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Social and Behavioral Science*

Sleep disorder diagnoses, such as insomnia, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome, and narcolepsy, affect approximately 70 million Americans (Sleep Disorders, 2013) and can result from a variety of reasons (i.e. medication, illness, stress). Researchers have found alternative treatments, such as meditation (Corliss, 2020), mindfulness (Gong et al., 2016), and yoga (Khalsa, 2004) also have demonstrated success in reducing sleep disorders. The purpose of the present study was to determine if using meditation before going to sleep would help increase the quality of sleep and hours of sleep a college student receives. The hypothesis of the present study was that the participants' sleep would improve in quality and

hours by using meditation before sleeping. The participants (N = 18) were female undergraduate students from Meredith College. The researcher used an ABAB design for the study, meaning the study began with no intervention to gain a baseline for the participants (baseline A), and then incorporated the intervention (intervention B), the researcher then withdrew the intervention (A), the study ended with participants using the intervention (B). The intervention used by participants was a mindfulness meditation app called Insight Timer (Insight Network, 2009). When using the intervention (B) the participants mean sleep score increased. There was a significant difference between the baseline and intervention. Sleep scores were significantly higher in participants when using the mindfulness meditation intervention compared to the baseline with no meditation intervention. Results supported the hypothesis that meditation would improve sleep quality for the participants. The present study as well as previous studies can help numerous people who struggle with insomnia and increase sleep quality.

Shakespeare's Comedic Heroines Who Continue to Define Strong: Portia, Rosalind, and Beatrice

Kaylee Kalaf

*Research Adviser: Dr. Garry Walton;
Arts and Humanities*

In my thesis, I explore the contemporary relevance of Shakespeare's heroines. I chose to compare three female protagonists from the comedies – Portia from *The Merchant of Venice*, Rosalind from *As You Like It*, and Beatrice from *Much Ado About Nothing* - because they have dominant roles in their plays and in this Shakespearean genre. By analyzing the characters through close reading, performance study, and a review of the critical commentary, I discovered that each of these characters has a steadfast personality, extraordinary skills, sharp wit, and potent knowledge which they use to rebel against the patriarchy, educate the narrow-minded men of

power they encounter, and devise for themselves a more equal marriage than is typical for the period. My research concludes that the comedic heroines' traits and actions qualify them as strong women for their time and as role models today.

"A Country of Possibilities": Race and Gender in American Politics

Karli Keller

*Research Adviser: Dr. David McLennan;
Arts and Humanities*

In American politics, women and people of color are elected at much lower rates than white men. Subsequently, they are underrepresented and underserved. This research examines how race and gender affect voter perception of political candidates, as perception influences electability. My hypothesis is that race and gender play a role in voter perception. I conducted a two-part study to further test this. The first part used survey questions from the Meredith Poll about perceptions of women and minority candidates. In addition, I compared these responses with demographic data, also collected through the Meredith Poll. Additionally, I used a standard set of questions to measure racial resentment. The second part of this study was a quasi experiment. I took photographs of four candidates of color and Photoshopped their skin tones to be lighter and darker. Respondents were presented with all three photographs and asked questions regarding the candidate's electability. 105 respondents participated in this study. One quarter of the respondents participated in the experimental portion. respondents cared more about the issues and character of the candidate than candidate appearance. I was surprised by the amount of support for women and people of color in the survey results. Two demographics in particular indicated greater acceptance: education and gender. Going forward, determining how to fill in the education cracks could lead to a greater amount of representation for women and minority candidates.

Maternal Mental Health and Adverse Birth Outcomes

Joselyn Marroquin Aparicio

*Research Adviser: Dr. Betty-Shannon Prevatt;
Social and Behavioral Science*

Perinatal mood disorders are characterized by anxiety and depression symptoms that significantly interfere with functioning during pregnancy the year postpartum. Perinatal mood disorders are associated with adverse pregnancy outcomes and affect approximately 20-25% of mothers representing an important health concern. The aim of the present study was to examine if the presence of mental health symptoms during pregnancy put women at a higher risk for birth complications. Relevant demographics such as age, race, and socioeconomic status have been identified as predictors of maternal mental health and will be included in analysis. This study consists of a secondary data analysis on de-identified medical records from a local OBGYN practice. The records contain demographic information, mental health screening data, and birth information such as type of delivery (vaginal or Cesarean section), any complications, and type of insurance for patients who delivered from January 2015 until December 2020. Analyses will focus on the outcome of the first pregnancy (presence of complications or not) and will include symptoms of anxiety and depression identified during pregnancy. A stepwise logistic regression analysis will estimate the odds of birth complications with demographics as the first step in the model and prenatal depression and anxiety scores included as the second step of the model. Findings will clarify the connection between perinatal mental and physical health. Further implications will center on emphasizing the importance of treatment and providing resources to better manage mental health symptoms during pregnancy.

Women and The American Dream in “The Great Gatsby”

Madison Parker

*Research Adviser: Dr. Ashley Hogan;
Arts and Humanities*

My thesis explores the women of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* in relation to the American Dream. Written and based in the 1920s, *The Great Gatsby* presents many outlooks of the American Dream, which in the Jazz era revolved around wealth and power, but Fitzgerald uses the female characters to deconstruct preconceived notions of the American dream. My thesis seeks to answer: how is F. Scott Fitzgerald using female characters to present the elements of the American Dream that he detests or questions? Through my research I was able to come to the thesis statement that in *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald crafts his female characters to explore the flawed nature - or the myth - of the American Dream and to highlight how the pursuit of the American Dream was, for women of the 1920s, very different from a man's pursuit of the same. I will examine *The Great Gatsby* first through its representation of the American Dream, and then narrow my focus to the interaction between women of the novel and the American Dream.

Components of Microaggression in Female College Students

Jahnvi Patel

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Social and Behavioral Science*

The impact of microaggressions on self-esteem has been a widely studied phenomenon. Microaggression is defined to be events that refer to everyday derogations, slights, and invalidations that are often delivered to people of a minority or marginalized background. Microaggressions carry a dynamic power that has the potential to hurt the self-esteem levels of individuals in this

group (Lui and Quezada, 2019). The current study looked at the impact racial microaggressions have on individuals of color on a private women's college campus. The 45-item survey administered was an adaptation of Nadal's (2011) Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (REMS). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale. Sixty-eight participants were recruited through various Meredith College clubs and organizations that focus primarily on students of color or minorities, such as e.g. Meredith International Association Black Student Union and Meredith Immigrant and Refugee Club. Results showed that students of color experienced micro-aggressions in the classroom and on campus more than the students that identified as Caucasian. Additional results will be discussed along dimensions including discrimination in the classroom performed by staff and faculty, discrimination experienced on campus from other students, the lack of responsibility taken for racially charged actions, and how the campus can improve in creating a safe space for the student body and faculty as a whole.

The Theatre Classroom: A Space for the LGBTQ+ Individual

Anna Phillips

*Research Adviser: Dr. Catherine Rodgers;
Arts and Humanities*

Theatre often comes from a place of vulnerability, especially when you are in high school and all eyes feel like they are on you. However, theatre provides a sense of comfort and support for many members within the LGBTQ+ community, one of the most vulnerable groups at this period in their lives. How does this add up? In this presentation, I explore further into the notion of how and why theatre can create a safe space for these young people searching for a space to call their own. The unique experience of theatre as well as the classroom environment it creates helps support their mental wellbeing as they are on their pathway to discovering their identity, all while discovering a passion for an amazing art form.

The Effects of an 8-week Online vs. In-Person Physical Education Course on Perceived Stress in College-Aged Women During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Lauren Phillips & Kaley Sharpe

*Research Adviser: Dr. Edward Robinson;
Social and Behavioral Science*

Stress is a common response in college-aged students, especially women. Many studies indicated the benefits of exercise on stress levels. Studies have determined that stress plays a huge role in an individual's health which is why it's important to find ways to alleviate it. Physical and psychosocial health in college freshmen increased after participating in recreational sports. Major sources of stress among college students resulted in stressors being intrapersonal, environmental, interpersonal and academic. Change in sleeping and eating habits, new responsibilities, and workload are all sources of college related stress. Interpersonal relationships are an important factor in maintaining and performing regular physical activity. Current requirements for social distancing have led to a need to engage in online and hybrid learning for PED courses. Research suggests that engagement of students in online and hybrid physical activity requires investigation to determine the efficacy of distance learning to traditional models of instruction. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects on stress levels on college-aged women when comparing online versus in-person physical education courses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Stress levels were assessed at the beginning and end of an 8-week PED course. Participants completed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) examining current stress levels. The PSS measures the perception of stress and the degree to which individuals find their lives unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded. To date, 116 surveys have been collected and individual responses are still being scored. Wilcoxon and Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA tests will be used to analyze the completed data.

Elevators are Not Enough: A Proposal for Better Accessibility on Campus

Vivian Porch

*Research Adviser: Dr. Catherine Rodgers;
Arts and Humanities*

For my research, I'm proposing the idea to renovate entertainment areas at Meredith College to make them more accessible for disabled individuals. For example, in Jones Hall, there is a ramp for those who use wheelchairs, but bathrooms and elevators are relatively inaccessible. The biggest concern is making sure those who are disabled are seen as equals and have easy access to entertainment venues without being perceived as a burden. No one should be excluded from the chance to enjoy live performances. Research methods included gathering evidence on campus: lack of easy access to elevators, lack of rails to provide support for those who need canes, and lack of ramps on other buildings on campus. Studies show that when universities adapt their environment to be more accessible, their numbers have increased in both applications and support of the school. Similarly, private entertainment centers have shown an increase in audience members as accessibility increased. Meredith should adapt its environment to help students and faculty on campus. With these changes, life on campus will increase in both activity and enjoyment. Diversity and representation is a key factor to having a university thrive, and not just from students alone. Visitors who are visiting a friend, looking at options for higher education, or even just applying for a job, will be thrilled to see how much Meredith cares for everyone. Everyone would have access to big events, and no one would be left out from making their college experience a memorable one. I hope this proposal will result in changes that will benefit incoming students, faculty, and staff.

The Rise of Virtual Learning: How ESL Teachers Use Technology to Promote Engaged Literacy in K-2 Non-Native English Speakers

Hannah Porter

Research Adviser: Dr. Cece Toole; Education

The continual globalization in the United States has sparked increased conversation regarding the education of non-native English-speaking students. Engaged literacy is classified as a facet of literacy, and it aims to address the question of how educators can consistently keep students interested and engaged with reading and writing. Research shows that technology implemented in the elementary education setting can help non-native English-speaking students, specifically students ranging from kindergarten to second grade, more effectively master the English language. With the emergence of COVID-19 and the switch to virtual learning that teachers and students are navigating, there is inquiry on how technology promotes literacy engagement among non-native English-speaking students. The present investigation was a qualitative study designed to examine how non-native English-speaking students in kindergarten through second grade can grow in their engaged literacy as a result of technology. A literature review was conducted, followed by an online survey via Google forms of seven current ESL educators across the state of North Carolina who work with K-2 non-native English-speaking students on a daily basis. Teachers were asked about technology resources that they found were helpful in promoting engaged literacy, their confidence levels with promoting technology, as well as their perspectives on particular research terminology. Data was analyzed by identifying the primary themes that emerged. The consensus was that technology resources can promote engaged literacy among K-2 non-native English-speaking students. However, COVID-19 did not provide the right context for this to be attained due to accessibility and the sudden nature surrounding virtual learning.

Trauma and Masculinity in Slaughterhouse-Five

Kali Ranke

*Research Adviser: Dr. Laura Fine;
Arts and Humanities*

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut is the schizophrenic, science-fiction telling of his experience during World War II, specifically focusing on being a prisoner of war during the catastrophic bombing of Dresden through the protagonist Billy Pilgrim. Through psychoanalytic research, I analyze Billy and his experience in World War II as well as the traumatic incidents he endures throughout his life and how these things affect his psychological state and his understanding of his masculinity. I first examine how critics analyze the novel through the lenses of postmodernism and deconstruction, new historicism, and new criticism. Much of my research is spent analyzing how the trauma Billy experiences during childhood, in the war, and after the war leaves him with negative, lasting effects on his psyche. I explain how Vonnegut intentionally uses Slaughterhouse-Five to depict war negatively and express that war has been caused by and, in turn causes, dysfunctional ideas of masculinity. Finally, I explain that, because of his trauma and his misunderstanding of his masculinity, Billy uses the alien planet Tralfamadore as an escape. Ultimately, my research allows me to conclude that trauma, when dealt with in an unhealthy way, can negatively affect one's mental state and understanding of masculinity, which leads to a deterioration of the psyche.

Assessing Vaccine Hesitancy Among Undergraduate Students

Kelsieanne Schmidt

*Research Adviser: Dr. Carolina Perez-Heydrich;
Natural and Physical Science*

Motivation: Approved COVID-19 vaccines are projected to become available to college students by mid-2021, yet little is known about students' acceptability of a COVID-19 vaccine.

Problem: The purpose of this study is to access

COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among Meredith College undergraduate students and identify factors associated with these attitudes.

Approach: All undergraduate students were invited to participate in a survey, which included questions on COVID-19 knowledge and perceived risks, benefits, and barriers via mass email between October 26th and November 16th, 2020. 439 undergraduate students responded to the survey. Participants were assigned scores based on their responses for the constructs: knowledge, severity, and risk perception.

Results: 60.95% of participants agreed in receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Students were more likely to agree to get a vaccine for others' benefit rather than themselves. Students were also imperceptive to asymptomatic transmission. The overall mean knowledge score was 85%, the overall mean knowledge score for transmission was 56%, and the overall mean knowledge score for preventive measures was 96%.

Conclusion: Based on this survey conducted in October and November, a little more than half of the participants were willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Recent surveys of Americans have shown that COVID-19 vaccine acceptance has decreased. A reconducted survey is predicted to show a decrease in the percentage of those who initially agreed to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Findings can help guide future efforts to increase COVID-19 vaccine acceptability through health education programs.

FINE TUNING PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Unpacking Barriers That Inhibit a Positive Experience

Kimberly Schuh

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Students' experiences within physical education are diverse. When students reminisce on personal experiences, they might recall positive memories and laughs, or negative feelings and experiences. There is a universal link between these two drastic

ends and those are the common everyday barriers that students and their families face. This research addresses these common everyday barriers that affect student experiences in physical education and how they inhibit students from having a positive experience. This detailed literature review explores five different barriers that have the potential to create negative associations with physical education. After collecting, analyzing, and reviewing research on students' experiences in physical education, I decided to examine the barriers that became common recurrences in the literature I was reading. After dissecting these barriers, I dove deep down into how each of these barriers inhibited positive experiences in physical education. These findings include barriers of (1) perceptions of competence; (2) body image and social media; (3) the influence of friends and family; (4) the influence of teachers and coaches; and (5) environmental factors. Exploring and understanding why students may not have had positive physical education experiences can help colleges and universities design curriculum to better accommodate students' needs.

Single Cell Transcriptome of Human Endometrial Stromal Fibroblasts

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The changes that occur between the stromal and epithelial compartments of the endometrium during the transition from non-pregnant to peri-pregnant and decidualized is notated as decidualization. This process transforms stromal fibroblasts (HESFs) into cells that morphologically resemble epithelial cells and form the decidua. The decidua is vital for a successful pregnancy as it provides nutrients and protection until a placenta can form. Decidualization can be visualized using a mouse model, which is an ortholog to humans. The sex hormones progesterone and estrogen

are essential to the transformation process of decidualization. However, aspects of HESFs and the changes they undergo during decidualization are unknown. For this reason, HESF transcriptomes of three primary cell lines and one immortalized cell line were profiled and assayed. From these processes, more than 6000 genes were mapped per cell. These genes were then divided into 10 clusters – 0 through 9 – based on batch effect corrections. The most common genes in each cluster were determined using a 1.5-fold higher than average expression and a p-value of less than 0.05. The genes identified as marker genes were then subjected to a literature review using key words: progenitor cells, stem cells, smooth muscle cells, cell proliferation and cell cycle. The findings from this literature search were used to create data tables and define patterns between HESFs and subsequent gene expression. The data revealed that there is a heterogeneous composition of HESF transcriptome profiles that allude to the complexity of this model system.

Racial Composition of North Carolina's Sheriffs & County Arrest Outputs

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This study sought to understand the effects the races and political affiliations of North Carolina sheriffs had on their county's arrest rate outputs by race in 2015, 2016, and 2017. Reflecting common societal perceptions of police violence and the literature review, it was hypothesized that counties with white sheriffs would experience higher arrest rates for Black people, while the opposite would be true for counties with Black sheriffs. Data from the North Carolina Uniform Crime Report, the North Carolina Sheriffs Directory, and the United States Census Bureau were used for comparisons and correlations of averages within this study. Through analysis of variance tests, the hypothesis of this study could not be supported. Within this study,

counties with white and Republican sheriffs were significantly more likely to have higher average arrest rates for white people and counties with Black and Democrat sheriffs were significantly more likely to have higher average arrest rates for Black people. While this is a promising result for North Carolina, this conclusion should be approached with caution as racial discrepancies within policing and arrests still exist.

A Generational Analysis of Attitudes Toward Women in Politics

Olivia Slack & Paola Cira

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Using a combination of focus groups and an online survey, this study examines Generation Z's political attitudes, specifically toward women in politics. The researchers primarily explore how generation, gender, and political party affect respondents' views of women. A qualitative analysis of 37 members of Gen Z was conducted in order to understand how the independent variables influence views of women in politics. The hypothesis stated that Gen Z men have more traditional, conservative views toward gender roles, while Gen Z women have more progressive views. The hypothesis was not entirely supported. After conducting a thematic analysis of participants' responses, researchers found that both men and women in Gen Z have positive views toward women in politics, even if they could not pinpoint a specific woman they would vote for currently. Themes from the respondents' focus group discussions include the idea that neither gender has innate characteristics that would make them more or less qualified to be politicians and that if there were more women in politics, this would empower young girls to believe they are capable. The benefits of diversity in the political sphere were also highlighted. Based on these findings, the potential impacts of Gen Z on women's prominence in

politics in the coming decades should not be underestimated.

Analyzing Racial Roots of Nationalism in the United States

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This study seeks to answer how racial identity and feelings of racial resentment play a part in having nationalistic tendencies. It was hypothesized that having a strong white identity will lead to a high likelihood of supporting nationalist movements, and that having stronger feelings of racial resentment toward any race will result in a higher likelihood of supporting nationalist movements. By analyzing data from the American National Election Studies 2018 Pilot Study (n = 2,356), it became clear that white respondents did have higher levels of support of nationalism, with 35.2% of white respondents falling into the highest third of nationalism scores compared with only 5.2% of Black respondents. Racial resentment was also strongly correlated with support of nationalism for all races ($r = .767, p < .01$). Men, older people, and people with less education demonstrated higher levels of both nationalism and racial resentment than women, younger people, and those who had completed an undergraduate or post-graduate education. While whites had the highest levels of nationalism and racial resentment, there was a strong minority of nationalistic, racially resentful Hispanic participants, with 16% falling into the highest third of nationalism scores and 27% into the highest third of racial resentment scores. This was the case even though nationalistic policies in the United States often target people of color and immigrants. These findings demonstrate that nationalism at its root is strongly tied to racism and prejudice and that nationalism in the United States has a broad and diverse base of support.

Effects of Helicopter Parenting and Parenting Styles on College Students' Risky Behaviors

Bailey Southard

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College students may engage in a variety of risky behaviors once they are no longer living with their parents and have some freedom. Risk-taking behaviors are activities that could be considered potentially dangerous, such as underage drinking. Determining why students partake in these behaviors can facilitate developing interventions to support healthy college transitions. Helicopter Parenting for college-aged children is defined as a parent being extra-involved and intrusive in their child's life, such as calling every day or contacting professors on their behalf. Permissive parents are characterized as being very warm with having little to no control over their child with little to no rules while Authoritarian parenting is defined by extremely rigid rules with little to no warmth. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of parenting styles on college student's risk taking behaviors. I hypothesized that students with Authoritarian, Helicopter parents are more likely to participate in risk-taking behaviors when they have freedom at college when compared to their peers raised by Permissive, Non-helicopter parents. There were two independent variables, Helicopter parenting or not and parenting style (Permissive or Authoritarian). The dependent variable was the number of risk-taking behaviors reported by the student. Data were collected through an online survey and will be analyzed using a Factorial ANOVA 2x2 Design, so a total of 4 conditions. Findings will clarify the relationship between Helicopter parenting and parenting styles on college student's risky behavior. Interventions, based on these findings, may be used to promote healthy college student independence. Keywords: hover parenting, parenting styles, risk-taking behaviors, students

Effective Treatments for Pediatric Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

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Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a psychiatric disorder where the individual affected experiences the presence of obsessions, compulsions, or both. With approximately 1-3% of children being diagnosed with OCD, researchers are studying which treatment approaches are most effective for decreasing symptoms. The review will assess articles (k =15) examining treatment effectiveness for OCD: CBT alone, CBT combined with pharmaceuticals, and pharmaceuticals. Treatment effectiveness in each study, measured by change in score (pre-post) on the Children's Yale-Brown Obsessive-Compulsive Scale (CY-BOCS) will be reported. Preliminary results indicate that the greatest reduction in symptoms are reported by studies using CBT combined with pharmaceuticals. Findings of the present literature review will offer an overview of the state of science and a foundation for a future quantitative meta-analysis. With these findings, mental health professionals could become more knowledgeable on ways to effectively treat clients experiencing symptoms of OCD. Keywords: OCD, children, adolescent, cognitive-behavioral therapy, exposure-response prevention, sertraline, pharmaceuticals

Challenges Impacting Small-Scale Producers in North Carolina's Seafood Industry

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Commercial fishing has been a vital part of North Carolina's economy and history since the first settlers inhabited its shores centuries ago. As a primary food source for our nation, means of employment for many, and cultural

identity for residents of coastal communities, the importance of the commercial fishing industry cannot be emphasized enough. Challenges such as increased government regulation, mass importation of seafood, lacking public knowledge and understanding, and the extreme development of waterfront properties have resulted in tremendously negative impacts. These circumstances have shifted a once thriving industry to one that is struggling to survive. This research identifies and analyzes these troubles through mixed methods of data analysis, literature review, and interviews, while providing recommendations for bettering the conditions of the industry. Various economic analyses within North Carolina, as well as two interviews with local fishery experts provided robust insights to this industry's growing challenges. Consumer preference based marketing strategies, expanding a western route of distribution, promoting the organic and local agenda, and educating consumers are all discussed as potential solutions to industry issues. Recognizing the importance of the seafood industry and the necessity of its survival is crucial to not only commercial fishermen, but North Carolina as a whole.

Retail Sales Forecasting of Lilly Pulitzer Using Time Series and Machine Learning Techniques

Katherine Thompson

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Retail sales have plummeted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of this study is to model and forecast the sales for the retail fashion company Lilly Pulitzer for the fourth quarter of 2020 and the year 2021 accounting for the economic downturn. This study analyzes Lilly Pulitzer's quarterly sales data using two approaches: time series modeling (including ARIMA and SARIMAX), and the Random Forest algorithm from machine learning. The anticipated findings of this study entail that, based on Lilly Pulitzer's historical growth trend, sales are

predicted to return to their pre-pandemic levels within a few years. This study will help retail brands project their sales revenue given unplanned catastrophes, such as COVID-19, and make business decisions accordingly.

Fostering Online Classroom Communities through RTTP and Slack

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Relationship ties in the classroom, whether they be friendships or acquaintanceships, are key to fostering an effective classroom community. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 many universities worldwide have had to make the switch to online learning. Now more than ever teachers need tools and strategies to foster classroom community in online settings.

The rising popularity of immersive and engaging historical role-playing games such as *Reacting to the Past* (RTTP) led previous researchers to study how RTTP games affected the classroom community in face-to-face (F2F) settings. The aim of our current study was to determine whether RTTP could help build friendship and/or acquaintanceship networks between students, and whether network formation in online settings works differently from F2F settings. Our study also aimed to provide instructors with information on what barriers are present (or what barriers students perceived) to network formation and building an effective classroom community in an online setting. For this reason, we collected both qualitative and quantitative data using three surveys distributed to an online class at set points in the summer term, along with observations of the online class, and a separate survey sent out to spring semester students.

From this data, we created network visualizations that showed significant growth in student relationships over the summer term RTTP class. Students expressed appreciation for platforms like Slack that provided opportunities for informal student-led interaction.

El acuerdo de paz y el ambientalismo en Colombia (The Peace Agreement and Environmentalism in Colombia)

Kristen Viera

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Combating and mitigating global environmental crises are among the most pressing challenges of our time. It is increasingly important that communities work together to protect environmental hotspots such as the diverse regions of Colombia. The aim of this research was to understand the relationship between the growth of grassroots environmental non-profit organizations (NPOs) in Medellín and Bogotá and the 2016 Peace Agreement (PA) between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Specifically, this research assesses how the PA sparked the growth of such environmental organizations and how they influence the PA and other future policies, based on the environmental challenges that remain. After defining peace and the PA's ethical stance, a comparative analysis was conducted of the stances taken by a number of organizations formed prior to and after the PA. A close reading of their mission statements connects them to an ethical stance to determine whether or not they reflect the anthropocentric or deep ecological ideals of the PA. A guide was developed to propose practices organizations can take to successfully promote peace in society as peace for the environment. Guides to follow Medellín and Bogotá's successful interventions will serve as models for other communities and their ongoing efforts to develop ways to support the sustainability of our most precious resource—the environment.

Key Words: Environmental Ethics, Colombia, Nonprofit, Organizations, el Acuerdo de Paz, Peace Agreement, Peacebuilding, Sustainability

A Comparative Analysis of the Effects of Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors on Maternal, Infant and Child Health Outcomes

Kezia Wafula & Noelia Rodriguez

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The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effects of demographic and socioeconomic factors on maternal, infant and child health outcomes, and compare these effects across countries. Specifically, we will focus on outcomes related to infant mortality, child stunting and wasting, maternal morbidity, and HIV infection, along with predictors related to urbanity, race/ethnicity, household size, educational attainment, and income. Effects associated with these predictors will then be compared across countries, which vary according to gross domestic product (GDP) and human development index (HDI), in order to identify how country-level factors contribute to individual-level health outcomes. The countries being compared are the United States (which will be used as the standard), Uganda, Haiti, Peru, India, Philippines and Pakistan. Recent data (2016-2019) will be obtained from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) surveillance systems for the US, while data for the rest of the countries will come from the Demographic Health Survey program (DHS). Adjusted Odds ratios and 95% confidence intervals will be calculated across all indicators and outcomes for each of the countries, and compared across countries. Through this analysis, we hope to identify how country-level factors may influence the effects of demographic and socioeconomic factors on maternal, infant and child health outcomes.

Effects of the Safe and Sound Protocol on Social Engagement and Resilience in Children with Developmental Disabilities

Charli White

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A study was conducted to examine the effects of the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP) on social engagement and resilience in children with developmental disabilities. SSP is a new technique being introduced to occupational therapy clinics nationwide. SSP is a listening system based on the Polyvagal Theory that uses specially filtered music to train the neural network, stimulating the vagus nerve to induce a state of safety and calm. SSP is made of three pathways that help to warm up the nervous system, build the capacity of the nervous system overtime. Compared to other interventions, it is expected that the implementation of SSP would have more long-lasting effects on social engagement and resilience than other interventions similar to it. It was hypothesized that the implementation of SSP would increase social engagement and resilience in children with developmental disabilities, allowing them to feel safe during treatment in order to be more receptive to the therapeutic process, as well as safe in their everyday environments. I was hoping to find that SSP increased social engagement and resilience allowing them to be more receptive to the therapeutic process and engage with their environment. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, quantitative data on SSP has been unavailable at this time due to OT clinic closures; therefore, an analysis of the literature concerning vagal tone and social engagement was conducted and will be presented.

An Archetypal Analysis of the Characters in C.S. Lewis's The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

Krista Wiese

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Since its publication in 1950, C.S. Lewis's debut children's novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* has enjoyed immense popularity and more recently has been made into a highly successful film by Disney. Because Lewis identified primarily as a Christian theologian, many readers, including some literary critics, label the work as straightforward religious allegory. It is important, however, to recognize that Lewis himself rejected an allegorical interpretation. Instead of looking at this work allegorically, I will focus on the author's successful deployment of Jungian archetypes through the contrasting characters Aslan and the White Witch. My analysis will draw upon the works of critics who have taken a similar archetypal approach to the novel; in addition, I will incorporate a reader-response approach in order to examine Lewis's narrative effects. Using these theoretical frames, I will propose that Lewis is able to engage readers more deeply in his story and impact them on a more personal level by drawing on the power of archetypal characters. Through an archetypal reading, I hope to provide a richer and more nuanced reading that accounts for the novel's enduring power.

Mixed Message Media

Anna Wisniewski

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As with all technology, the growing presence of social media continues to change the way people live, work, and communicate with others. Based on the findings of recent scholarly studies, a Meredith campus-wide student survey, and unstructured

video interviews with light and heavy social media users, this short documentary explores both positive and negative influences of social media in the life experiences of college-age adults. Several paradoxical themes emerge, including 1) connection vs. isolation, 2) public vs. private, and 3) truth vs. untruth. As media users become increasingly involved in social networking sites, it is important to analyze these mixed messages and the potential impact on the quality of everyday life.

Gender Presentations And Rebellions In Harper Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird

Katie Womble

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Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* makes great strides toward shattering Southern gender norms and expectations of young women. Lee's main character, Scout, defies the limitations of gender roles and demands readers to question the gender expectations they have come to accept as boundaries in their own lives. This paper explores the fluidity of gender roles in *To Kill A Mockingbird* through Scout's rebellion and what this character teaches young readers about their role in society.

To better understand gender presentations in the novel, this paper explores the observations and conclusions of various literary scholars in conjunction with the writer's own interpretations of Lee's work. The research focuses on the typical Southern gender roles and expectations presented in the novel as well as Scout's tomboyism, the female and male influences in her life, and the message Scout sends to young readers. This analysis of the novel shows the complexity of gender and concludes that young girls do not always fit into the boxes of gender stereotyping.

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