

April 28, 2021

University of Rhode Island

Honors Program

2020-2021 Honors Projects

HONORS PROJECT CONFERENCE, 2020-21

April 28, 2021

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for his ongoing support of the program
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HONORS POSTERS

KRIS ADAMS

Psychology

Sponsor: Emmett Goods (Music)

Female Perpetrated Violence in
Media

DEBORAH ADENEKAN

Cell and Molecular Biology,
Biochemistry

Sponsor: Lenore Martin (Cell and Molecular
Biology)

Sharing Raw Data from Bacterial
Genomes for Collaborative
Research on the AMPed Server
at URI

DANIEL BAGLINI

Applied Mathematics, Finance

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Science and Leadership)

Analysis of Officer Retention and
Success in the US Army by
Commissioning Source

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English, Philosophy, Business

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Exploring the associations between femininity, burnout, and health behaviors among middle aged women

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Public Relations, Political Science

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Low Wage Labor and the Undervalued Essential Worker through the Lens of COVID-19

REBECCA DICKINSON

Cell and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Spanish

Sponsor: Megan Echevarria (Modern and Classical Language and Literature)

Seeking Asylum in a Modern Society: Global Responses to Latin American Migration

HONORS POSTERS

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Health Studies, Philosophy

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Social Justice Attitudes and Health:
A Cross Sectional Study

JAMES DONOVAN

Criminology and Criminal Justice,
Psychology

Sponsors: Megan Parry (Criminology and
Criminal Justice), Natalie Pifer (Criminology and
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Patterns in Groups' Perceptions of
Sex Work

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An Anthology on Human Suffering
in America: Notes on Black Lives
Matter

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A Look at the Anti-Vaccine
Movement and its Impact on
COVID-19

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Biological Sciences

Sponsor: Kathleen Melanson (Nutrition and
Food Sciences)

Nutritional Data and Corresponding
Performance Impacts of URI
Student-Athletes

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Finance

Sponsor: Erik Loomis (History)

Masculinity in 1990's Post-Cold
War American Thriller Films

HONORS POSTERS

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Psychology

Sponsor: Rebecca Lebeau (Psychology)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Dual Diagnosis: Treating Adolescent Substance Use Disorder and Co-Occurring Mood Disorders

ELI GOLDFARB

Supply Chain Management

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The Impact of Running Intramural Sports During the COVID-19 Pandemic

KENDRA GRAHAM

Kinesiology

Sponsor: Susan D'Andrea (Kinesiology)

Swimmers' upper trapezius activation during shoulder abduction compared to non-overhead athletes

RAEHEL GRIFFIN

Mathematics

Sponsor: Michael Barrus (Mathematics and Applied Mathematical Sciences)

A University Forest Fire: Examining the Spread of the Coronavirus through College Social Networks Using a Modified Forest Fire Probabilistic Model

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Economics, French

Sponsor: Liam Malloy (Economics)

Bankruptcy and the Debt-Unemployment Relationship: Evidence from a Natural Experiment

MARA KLEINMAN

Psychology, English

Sponsor: Tiffani Kisler (Human Development and Family Science)

Equine-assisted Services for Children with Disabilities

JORDAN LAFERRIERE

Nursing

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

I Saw the Sunrise in Their Eyes: An Endeavor in the Novel Writing Process

HONORS POSTERS

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Nursing

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The Bloody Reality: An Analysis of Menstruation Representation and Perception in the United States from the 1940s-2010s

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Health Studies

Sponsor: Steven Cohen (Health Studies)

Health Communication Support in Baseline Health Literacy Research

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Effects of a Pandemic on Supply Chain Networks

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MASTROIANNI

Biological Sciences

Sponsor: Bryan Dewsbury (Biological Sciences)

The Journey to Reach Herd Immunity: The United State's Efforts Towards Controlling SARS-CoV-2

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Communication Studies, Writing and Rhetoric

Sponsor: Nikolaos Poulakos (Communication Studies)

The New Normal: Crisis and Communication in the Age of COVID-19

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Economics, Mathematics

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Rising Costs, Stagnant Prices: How Video Game Companies Truly Earn Profit

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Communicative Disorders

Sponsor: Skye Leedah (Human Development and Family Science, Political Science)

Taking the Pulse for URI as an Age-Friendly University

HONORS POSTERS

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Marketing

Sponsor: Art Mead (Economics)

The Evolution of Women's Opportunities in the Workplace: A Look at the Past to Interpret the Present

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Health Studies

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Climate Change and Vaccines: Distrust of Science in Politics and the Media

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Health Studies, Cell and Molecular Biology

Sponsor: Mary Greaney (Health Studies)

Ethnic and Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Infections in the United States

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Cell and Molecular Biology

Sponsor: Niall Howlett (Cell and Molecular Biology)

Analyzing the Impacts of Loss of the FANCA Protein on Chromatin State

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Psychology, Gender and Women's Studies

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

An Intersectional Analysis of LGBTQ+ Healthcare in the United States

VINCENT NOCELLA

Biological Sciences

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Combating Public Vaccine Misinformation Through an Educational Podcast for Middle and High School Students

HONORS POSTERS

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Biological Sciences, Philosophy

Sponsor: Douglass Reed (Philosophy)

Plato, Aristotle, and the Political
Landscape of the Present

KATIE PAPARELLI

Criminology and Criminal Justice,
Psychology

Sponsor: Megan Parry (Criminology and
Criminal Justice)

Examination of the effects of
speech disorders on juvenile
delinquency and the potential
benefits of speech therapy for
offenders

ELIZABETH POULIN

English, Philosophy

Sponsor: Judith Swift (Communication
Studies, Coastal Institute)

Seeing Color: America's Judicial
System

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Biological Sciences

Sponsor: Zoey Stites (Art and Art History)

Tomorrow is Not Promised

SYDNEY RAYMOND

Psychology, Biological Sciences

Sponsor: Christie Ward-Ritacco (Kinesiology)

The Association Between Type-2
Diabetes Pathophysiology &
Exercise Adherence

KATHERINE RIORDAN

Political Science

Sponsor: Kathleen McIntyre (Gender and
Women's Studies, Honors Program)

Early 20th Century African American
Women's Suffrage Movement in
Rhode Island

HONORS POSTERS

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Mathematics

Sponsor: Kathleen McIntyre (Gender and Women's Studies, Honors Program)

"This is (still) a man's world": Gender Inequality in Hollywood from the Silent Era to #MeToo

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Predicting and Measuring Support for Populism

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Biology, Sociology, Italian

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Home Birthing: Analyzing the Value of Home Births to American Mothers

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Marine Biology

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Particle tracking reveals Pelagic Red Crabs as indicators of climate-driven range expansion in the California Current

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Plant Sciences, Biology

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

A Guide to Freshwater Aquariums

MIRANDA SEGALLA

Cell and Molecular Biology

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on College students through an Analysis of Oral Histories

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Political Science

Sponsor: Sara Murphy (Honors Program)

An Analysis of Four Decades of Gender Archetypes on the American Silver Screen

HONORS POSTERS

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Kinesiology

Sponsor: Susan D'Andrea (Kinesiology)

Comparative Gait Analysis of
Transfemoral Amputees versus
Healthy, Able-Bodied Individuals

ARIANA WYNN

Psychology, Communication
Studies

Sponsor: Melissa French

Fostering Ethical Awareness in
Youth: A Technological Game

KRIS ADAMS (Psychology)

Female Perpetrated Violence in Media

Sponsor: Emmett Goods (Music)

In music, movies, and television, we have long since eliminated the idea that a man needs to keep his woman in line, however; women portray violent acts against men regularly as a way of putting him in his place. Whether it is verbal or physical, abusive behaviors toward men can be seen on screen or heard in music and in most cases, we are expected to cheer on the woman who has perpetrated the behavior. On its surface, this seems detrimental to men because it normalizes the idea that a real man should just take it but, the social implications of women as abusers are crushing to women as well. This project explored different instances of female perpetrated violence against men in music, movies, and television to identify patterns of violence and the intended reactions to the violent behaviors. After identifying these patterns, I reflected upon their meaning regarding the normalization of abusive behaviors and discussed the meaning of this messaging for social progress regarding gender equity. I discussed ways that media reaffirms binary roles and finished with personal reflection on how we can hold content creators to a higher standard to dispel these unrealistic and unhealthy binaries.

DEBORAH ADENEKAN (Cell and Molecular

Biology, Biochemistry)

Sharing Raw Data from Bacterial Genomes for Collaborative Research on the AMPed Server at URI

Sponsor: Lenore Martin (Cell and Molecular Biology)

The AMPed (*AntiMicrobial Peptide Editable Database*), is a research server at URI that links researchers all over the world so that they can share their data and collaborate on developing new antimicrobial peptides. This server is being expanded to also provide users and collaborators with raw bacterial genomes sequencing data to yield better reproducibility in research. This research project marks the first steps taken to upload high-throughput genome sequencing data on this URI server. The human pathogens used in this research are *Staphylococcus aureus* (gram-positive and found on the skin), *Escherichia coli* (gram-negative and found in the gut microbiota), *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* (gram-negative, multidrug-resistant pathogen and found in the skin flora), and *Enterococcus faecalis* (gram-positive and found in the gastrointestinal tract of humans). These species underwent genomic DNA extraction, then isolated genomic DNA was evaluated as to yield and purity using analytical measurements on the Nanodrop Spectrophotometer and via DNA Gel Electrophoresis to evaluate the integrity of the samples prior to sequencing. The 4 bacterial genomes used for antimicrobial testing in the Martinlab are then sequenced using a single MiSeq NextGen sequencing run; the raw sequencing data that is acquired from the Illumina MiSeq Next Generation Sequencing provides sequences of gene fragments that are then assembled by aligning the raw data with the ATCC standard reference strains for these pathogens. Once the experimentally determined genomic sequences have been aligned with the reference genomes and assembled into a single contig, the sequences will be imported into the AMPed database, thereby facilitating the sharing of experimental data with other researchers around the world.

DANIEL BAGLINI (Applied Mathematics, Finance)

Analysis of Officer Retention and Success in the US Army by Commissioning Source

Sponsor: LTC Cornelius Granai (Military Science and Leadership)

There are four primary paths to commission as an Officer in the US Army. The most common way of commissioning is through the Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), which allows students to enroll in elective leadership and military courses at colleges and universities. Then, at graduation, ROTC Cadets are commissioned as Second Lieutenants. The second most common route is through the United States Military Academy at West Point (commonly referred to as USMA or West Point), where Cadets are immersed in military customs and traditions while working toward a college degree and upon graduation are commissioned as Second Lieutenants. The third most popular route is Direct Commissioning, which provides individuals with specialized skills in professional fields like law, medicine and religion an immediate way to apply their skills in the Army, these Officers usually begin their Army careers as Captains. Whereas the least common path to becoming an Army Officer is through Officer Candidate School (OCS), an officer training school which trains applicants who are already college graduates on the skills necessary to become a US Army Second Lieutenant.

This project sets out to determine if commissioning source can be used as a predictor for Officer retention. It will analyze the general traits of Officers coming from each commissioning source and provide an explanation for inequalities amongst commissioning sources. Equipped with this academic information I will also interview officers of various ranks in order to build a profile of the successful Officer who aims to make the Army a career. I will use my findings to create a road map in order to be as successful an Officer as I possibly can be.

DANIELLE BEATRICE (English, Philosophy, Business)

URI and Its Students: A Contract for the Provision of a Safe Environment

Sponsor: Judith Swift (Communication Studies, Coastal Institute)

When students begin to attend college, they expect to be consumed with busy schedules, heavy workloads, and an exciting social life. Students do not anticipate being in dangerous situations. However, this does not mean that such situations do not occur. Therefore, it is essential to teach students to be active participants in educating themselves and their peers regarding prevention and response to emergency situations. My Honors Project aims to increase the awareness of safety-related issues at URI with a detailed analysis of why it is necessary to update policies and resources coupled with essential improvements needed to ensure a safer environment. I address existing issues on campus and discuss the strategies that can be implemented for improvement. Areas of focus include drug and alcohol abuse, violence and sexual assault, active shooter events, and public safety. Critical situations rely on informed decisions and fast response times; that is why it is essential to recognize, respond, and report dangers on and around campus. As an advocate on behalf of the student body, I believe that the URI community can enhance campus safety for everyone. Improving and maintaining campus safety requires a multidisciplinary approach employing strong communication and adherence to professionalism. My analysis prescribes solutions such as continually updating campus safety protocols and procedures and ensuring proper technology and readily available resources to better equip students in dangerous situations. The risk of psychological harm or physical injury on campus can be dramatically reduced with transparency and consistency, but it takes the entire community's participation.

LAUREN BERTSCH (Animal Science)

"Mortality's Wilting Flower:" Terror Management Theory and Music in Animated Films

Sponsor: LuAnne Roth (Writing and Rhetoric)

There's something about animated films - so full of light and wonder - that invokes this "warm and fuzzy" feeling when you sit down to watch it. Yet an entire spectrum of human emotion is demanded from us as an audience. Buried in the heart of animated films are these dark themes, problems that lie in the bedrock of humanity. And it leaves us pondering: why? The answer may actually stretch back to when our species developed thought and reason. In 1973, American anthropologist Ernest Becker uncovered the mental foundation that allows us to live, function, and thrive in a world where we know that we will die.

Terror Management Theory refers to a type of psychological defensive mechanism that stems from an awareness and fear of death. This evolutionary byproduct serves as a proverbial shield between humans and their realities, enabling a consistent (and largely subconscious) denial of death. Animated films differ from each other culturally and ideologically, and therefore, vary in their response to tragedy. Due to the immersive nature of film narratives, individuals connect with characters and observe experiences that otherwise may be difficult to comprehend. Cinematic narratives force the primacy of emotional response without the first-hand experience of responsibility within the real world, creating a cathartic-but-safe encounter with difficult realities. Music aids in this experience through the metaphysical dimension of sound, providing sensations that are pleasurable and allowing humans to live within a symbolic world. By combining these elements, animated films provide a safe window frame through which viewers may examine death and mortality.

After conducting a literature review of scholarly sources related to Terror Management Theory (TMT), film analysis, and music theory, I carefully screened and analyzed eleven animated films and created a 10-part mini-series of video essays published on YouTube for public viewing. The first half of the series builds a detailed understanding of how humans fight (subconsciously or not) to maintain a successful denial of death by embracing cultural worldviews, symbolic immortality, child-like wonder, and heroism. The second half investigates "death-reminiscent" events: how we use terror management to cope with situations that do not threaten our mortality directly, including female oppression in patriarchal societies, fears and anxieties, and mental conditions threatening the ability to maintain control of one's terror, such as PTSD. Through the practice and utilization of terror management, we placate our mortal terror, and soothe this fear back into its slumber.

CARLOS BORGES (Biological Sciences)

The Public Health Crisis of Alcoholism: What could be done better in Rhode Island?

Sponsor: Jason Kolbe (Biological Sciences)

Alcoholism is a chronic issue that affects over 3 million people per year in the United States. It is characterized by an individual who is physiologically dependent on alcohol to the point where they cannot carry out common social activities such as having friends, holding down a job or eating regularly. Approximately 88,000 people per year die due to alcohol related events in the US. The economic impact due to hospital bills, criminal justice cost, and lost productivity of the abuser is estimated at \$400 billion annually. Alcohol abuse can be used as a coping mechanism in adolescents who are struggling with behavioral health issues that will eventually lead to long-term abuse and lowered life expectancy. Given the harsh effects alcohol use can have on society, it is important to address this issue from a public health point of view where we can confront its direct causes and put in place prevention and treatment programs at the national, state, and local levels. Rhode Island is a densely populated state that has issues with substance abuse and alcohol abuse in particular. A 2015 CDC study showed that 17% of Rhode Island adults admitted to binge drinking in the past month. This rate is between the highest (North Dakota 24.9%), and lowest (Utah, 11.4%) states. The focus of this research is to understand alcohol abuse disorder and research the causes, complications, and treatment options. An overall theme is to understand what Rhode Island could do better in terms of prevention and treatment options. The research done in this article will be supplemented by interviews with healthcare workers who work directly with alcohol abuse patients. Studies have shown that screening children for alcohol abuse risk factors, implementing more residential inpatient treatment centers and decreasing alcohol outlets may lower the alcohol abuse prevalence.

MICHAEL BRENNAN (Cell and Molecular Biology)

On the Front Line: URI's Response to COVID-19 and the Role of the Student-Run Emergency Medical Services

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of society, including universities, and we are just beginning to understand its impacts. This project looks at how universities have responded to the pandemic by focusing on the University of Rhode Island, the largest university in the state of Rhode Island. A key aspect of this project is a timeline that documents the policies implemented by URI leadership and relevant policies adopted by the state of Rhode Island. The timeline also includes data about the number of cases at URI and state-wide, as well as figures for the number of students in isolation and quarantine. Data has been assembled into weekly case counts and plotted in order to clearly visualize trends. Compiling this information into a single document facilitates comparison and is vital in associating specific URI or state policies with potential spikes in case numbers that may directly succeed them. The results of this analysis will be used for a brief comparison against other past and present institutional responses to infectious disease.

In addition to documenting URI's policies and responses to COVID-19, I have included a personal, qualitative reflection on working in healthcare during the pandemic. As a lieutenant for URI's Emergency Medical Services, I am tasked with leading ambulance crews, completing operational department duties, and providing continuous training to all of our members. As a medical scribe in the emergency room, I have also experienced the pandemic from the hospital perspective and witnessed the vast effects of COVID-19 on both patients and providers. Descriptions of the challenges faced while working on an ambulance and in a local emergency department were documented.

ADELAIDE BROWN (Health Sciences)

Exploring the associations between femininity, burnout, and health behaviors among middle aged women

Sponsor: Natalie Sabik (Health Sciences)

To date research on how traditional feminine traits and gender role ideology may impact burnout and health behaviors in women is limited. This paper examines how the aforementioned may be associated with higher burnout rates in a community-based cohort of middle-aged women (40-65 years). This study focuses on western traditional feminine traits and gender role ideology, which describe an individual's attitude regarding their assigned role in society and the strength of association with their role. Women who report a stronger connection to more traditional traits or ideology were expected to report higher rates of burnout.

This study also assesses whether burnout is associated with engagement in specific health behaviors. The study utilizes survey data from the 2018 Online Midlife Women's Data Collection survey to examine these factors. Traditional gender ideology was assessed using the Passive Acceptance subscale of the Feminist Identity Development Scale. Feminine traits were assessed using the Bem Sex Role Inventory. Health behaviors included intuitive eating, frequency of cigarette smoking, exercise frequency, and the average weekly number of alcoholic beverages consumed. Burnout is assessed using the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory.

Findings indicate that traditional gender ideology was not associated with burnout, while feminine traits (e.g., compassionate, sympathetic) were negatively associated with both personal and work-related burnout. In addition, higher levels of burnout were associated with decreased intuitive eating. Higher levels of burnout and a strong endorsement of traditional gender roles were also associated with less frequent exercise. The frequency of cigarette smoking and number of alcoholic beverages consumed are not associated with any of the predictors assessed.

This study is significant in building a stronger understanding of what may cause women to engage or disengage in specific health behaviors. The information gained may be used in future health promotion programs to enhance the lives of middle age women.

MADELINE BURTT (Public Relations, Political Science)

Reimagining Non-Profit Communications: The Importance of a Digital Media Plan for Rhody Outpost

Sponsor: Regina Bell (Public Relations)

Ever since social media went viral in the early 2000s with the platform MySpace, the theory of what media is, and how to spread one's ideas, has never been the same. The emergence of digital media, specifically, social media, has reimagined what it is to market products, organizations, and ideas. With the ever-growing population of social media users, it is important now more than ever to develop a strong, consistent social media presence, no matter how big or small an organization might be, and the findings of my Honors Project prove just that.

In this Honors Project, I will be focusing on the importance of a digital media plan for the University of Rhode Island's own non-profit organization, the Rhody Outpost, and will be addressing the question of: Why does the Rhody Outpost need a social media presence? Through this project, I answered this question by consulting experts in the field of hunger and poverty, such as the Food & Housing Security Coordinator for URI, and the Director of the URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger-Free America. I also created and distributed a survey to URI students that asked questions surrounding social media usage and social media content preferences that gave me invaluable insight into the digital media habits of students at URI.

Evident from the findings of my survey, as well as consulting with experts in the field of hunger and poverty, it is extremely important for the Rhody Outpost to develop a digital media plan, as many URI students consume and share media digitally in this new age of social media. This project demonstrates the revolutionizing of how students consume media, and how non-profit organizations such as the Rhody Outpost should use this revolution in increasing accessibility to more students.

CARLY CALDARELLA (Health Studies)

A Story Told

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

How do we educate our future generations about topics that are difficult to discuss? Oftentimes, children ask us questions that make us think, “How do I respond to this?” It is essential for our young generations to understand the history of racism, its present manifestations, and solutions and methods of action in order for a bright and revolutionary future. It is not always a simple task for children to comprehend such intricate topics. However, through text and pictures in storybooks, children can better grasp the concepts of such subject matter. “A Story Told” shares the story of young children in an elementary setting who face concerns around racism when coming into school on a day-to-day basis. Eight-year-old Olivia must encounter difficulties of being one of few children in her grade who appear to be different on the outside from her fellow classmates. Olivia tells the story of her family and educators, and brings light to her friends, classmates, and teachers about racism. As this story is framed around the elementary-aged audience, all members of society can learn something from it.

GRACE CODY (Communications and Public Relations)

Women's Self Perceptions and Fashion Industry Rhetoric

Sponsor: Stephanie West-Puckett (Writing and Rhetoric)

Clothing choice is both an extremely personal and public project of self-making. Young women, particularly those of diverse size and race, must navigate a hostile fashion industry as they develop body image awareness and self-perception. This study critically examines the limited and limiting rhetorics used in the fashion industry and explores the effect those rhetorics have on the development of women's body images. Using secondary research as well as primary research in the form of surveys and interviews conducted at the University of Rhode Island, this study provides candid and personal accounts of women's feelings towards the fashion industry and its effect on their self perceptions. Findings indicate that the clothing and the fashion industry do have a substantial impact on women's feelings towards their bodies. Major sources of frustration for women include the idealization of cis-gendered, white, slim body types and the use of vanity-sizing and size segregation. Finally, it is important to understand that the fashion industry has the power to both mark and unmark female bodies. Of late, progressive changes in the fashion industry are showing the promise of promoting inclusivity and body-positivity for women, including those women at the University of Rhode Island.

JACOB CORDEIRO (Political Science)

Free Speech in the Internet Era: Reviewing Policies Seeking to Modify Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act

Sponsor: Christopher Parker (Political Science)

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act (CDA) has for over two decades provided “interactive computer services” a legal liability shield for defamatory or otherwise actionable user-generated content posted on their platforms and, for lawsuits stemming over unequal enforcement of their content policies, provided enforcement efforts are taken in “good faith.” This law, passed in the early day of the Internet, incubated the Internet and social media, giving it the regulatory freedom it needed to grow into a platform where hundreds of millions of Americans can exchange ideas and engage in political and social discourse.

Yet, for all the good Section 230 did, the negative implications of the expanding role social media platforms in American political life have spurred calls for change. Concerned parties often cite alleged bias by social media companies in enforcing community standards and moderating content, as well as the role of social media platforms in political radicalization and the spread of misinformation. Proposals for change differ greatly, but at their heart, they involve the balancing of three incredibly important interests: the interest of the government to limit the spread of dangerous content, the interest of the people to engage in “free speech,” and the freedom of companies to regulate their products as they see fit.

This article first examines the current state of the law, and then analyses the ultimate extent to which potentially objectionable, user-generated online content may be regulated within the context of constitutional protections for free speech. Next, it analyzes the potential implications—legal, economic, and social—of popular policies seeking to amend Section 230 and more broadly regulate “interactive computer services,” and their effects on constitutional protections of free speech and of a free press. Finally, based on these analyses, it recommends changes for Congress to pursue.

BRIGID CULLEN (Finance)

What to See, Eat, and Enjoy Near URI's Campus

Sponsor: Gilberto Marquez Illescas (Accounting)

Rhody Raves is a student developed blog that serves as a platform to showcase places to explore and enjoy delectable dishes in the South County area of Rhode Island. During the fall of my first semester at the University of Rhode Island, I interviewed for and received a tour guide position on campus. One of the most frequently asked questions on tour was always-what is there to do in the area? I always wished I had the perfect resource at my fingertips to provide prospective students and families with a well-rounded view of all of the beautiful outdoor areas to visit and delicious local restaurants to enjoy. My project-Rhody Raves-enables this vision to come to life by providing a resource that allows individuals to virtually explore the local area. Through weekly postings and photography exhibits I have been able to improve my written communication skills as well as my photography skills, all while compiling a portfolio of the reasons why University of Rhode Island students rave about the area in which we live and go to school. The blog has been developed throughout the semester, with thirteen postings for the thirteen weeks of class, and includes a wide variety of local beaches, fishing spots, and some locations off of the beaten path as well as the best places to grab ice cream, hamburgers, Philly cheesesteaks, and more. Following the conclusion of blog postings it is my hope that the blog can serve as a resource for anyone looking to become better acquainted with the area and all of its local offerings.

ALEXANDRA DeIPICO (Supply Chain Management)

Low Wage Labor and the Undervalued Essential Worker through the Lens of COVID-19

Sponsor: Ann-Marie Sacco (Accounting)

In this project, I examine the wealth gap in the United States, low wage labor and how we have come to where we are today in relation to these topics. According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2017, 58% of the workforce in the U.S. was earning minimum wage (or less).

Over the course of the pandemic, it appears there has been a shift in public thought surrounding the importance of specific types of labor. We have seen certain jobs deemed as “essential work” during the past year. These are the people who put food on our tables, care for us and provide sanitation, transportation and medical attention, etc.. Many of these workers can also be classified as some of the lowest earners in our economy. Without these workers doing their jobs, we would have seen far greater consequences of disruption during the ongoing pandemic.

Essential workers have continued to work “in person” jobs. For this reason, these workers have faced some of the highest risks of contracting the virus, while typically receiving low reward. The previously mentioned newfound respect for essential work has not typically translated to higher reward for these workers. These are the people who kept certain parts of the economy running, often while they were offered little protection from the government, their places of labor and the public. In this project, I wanted to not only reflect on low wage labor and growing wealth disparities, but also on how this can be viewed in the current societal landscape of the pandemic. This project explores “essential labor” throughout the pandemic.

REBECCA DICKINSON (Cell and Molecular Biology, Biochemistry, Spanish)

Seeking Asylum in a Modern Society: Global Responses to Latin American Migration

Sponsors: Megan Echevarria (Modern and Classical Languages and Literature)

The United States is no stranger to asylum seekers and refugees. The most famous seaport in the country houses a 305-foot tall statue of a woman bearing a torch with words from the poem *The New Colossus* by Emma Lazarus etched at her feet: “Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” The Statue of Liberty is a symbolic representation of open arms to immigrants from all walks of life. But if everyone is welcome, why do so few actually gain entrance?

US interventionism policies in the 20th century have defined the lives of millions of Latin American citizens and created or contributed to deteriorating political, social, and economic conditions. These, along with the threat of violence from persecutory groups, is a common cause of forced migration. Due to its geographic position and relative stability, the United States offers an appealing location for many individuals who must flee their homes.

However, entry into the United States as a migrant is not an easy task. Many who reach the southern border apply for asylum to escape persecution, only to discover that not all violence is protected and the process itself takes time with no guaranteed result. The process of asylum in the United States is a complicated and extensive procedure riddled with injustice, frequently failing to protect the most vulnerable. By studying the history and trends of asylum policies in the United States we hope to learn more about the system in place in our country and how years of policy changes have impacted one of the largest groups of asylum seekers and refugees. Furthermore, by contrasting these trends against comparable countries, we can evaluate their balance and identify potential areas for change.

EDWARD DONOVAN (Health Studies, Philosophy)

Social Justice Attitudes and Health: A Cross Sectional Study

Sponsor: Molly Greaney (Health Studies)

Background: Increasingly, social justice is being considered as a key factor associated with health outcome. In addition, there is growing interest in exploring perception of discrimination in healthcare settings. This study explored perceptions of social justice, health care discrimination, health care status and utilization of healthcare resources. The investigators predict a significant association between the level of social justice awareness and healthcare utilization based on the hypothesis that those who are cognizant of social inequities are more likely to be informed self-advocates in healthcare settings.

Methods: First, a survey was created based on a review of existing literature. The survey assessed attitudes toward social justice, experiences of perceived discrimination the health care setting, and socio-demographics. The study was approved by the University of Rhode Island's (URI)s institutional review board (IRB). A cross-sectional exploratory study was conducted, and URI students were recruited via email and word of mouth. Interested students provided informed consent online and then were directed to the survey via Qualtrics, an online survey tool.

Results: While results are pending, as of 4/3/2021, 31 participants have completed the survey. The data will be analyzed using SPSS version 26. Frequencies and descriptive statistics will be used to describe the sample. Chi square test and t-test will assess the relationship between study variables. The significance for testing will be set as $p < .05$.

JAMES DONOVAN (Criminology and Criminal Justice, Psychology)

Patterns in Groups' Perceptions of Sex Work

Sponsors: Megan Parry (Criminology and Criminal Justice), Natalie Pifer (Criminology and Criminal Justice)

Historical evidence suggests that sex work, both legal and illegal, has long been part of society. Today, the majority of governmental bodies restrict individuals from selling and buying sex through criminalization, however some jurisdictions are beginning to rethink this approach. Social science research shows that while sex workers are, as a population particularly vulnerable to victimization, their vulnerability is often overlooked or disregarded, likely because of the stigmatization that surrounds their work. This stigmatization is likely due to the fact that the criminalization of sex work casts the individuals who engage in sex work as criminal. Because sex workers are a vulnerable population, understanding misperceptions is an important step in destigmatizing sex workers. This study seeks to explore the beliefs and opinions people have about sex work and sex workers. This was done by surveying undergraduate students at a university in the North Eastern United States. Respondents are asked a number of questions to gauge their level of agreement about a number of popular myths about sex work and sex workers. These data are analyzed to examine what patterns of perception exist among different groups of people, based on respondents' self-reported answers to demographic questions about their gender, field of study, and religiosity. Comparing those who report supportive views toward sex work and sex workers to those who do not may suggest what characteristics are associated with having misperceptions about sex work and sex workers. These patterns are then analyzed using literature on gender, occupations, and religiosity in order to offer a potential explanation about what drives misperception. The paper concludes by discussing how the study's findings might inform policy efforts to destigmatize sex workers.

KATELYN DUBOIS (Chinese, International Studies and Diplomacy)

An Anthology on Human Suffering in America: Notes on Black Lives Matter

Sponsor: Ann Salzarulo-McGuigan (Communication Studies)

For far too long systemic racism has protected inequality and suffering in the United States, preaching that one's worth and opportunities are determined by the color of their skin. Despite the foundational values of freedom and equality in the United States, the Black community continues to be killed and discriminated against in disturbingly disproportionate amounts to their peers, and are precisely 3.23 times more likely than caucasians to be killed by police. "An Anthology on Human Suffering in America: Notes on Black Lives Matter" was created with the intent to bring greater awareness to the racism and social injustices experienced by the black community in a peaceful, educational, inspiring and powerful way that is accessible to all through the art of creative writing and self-expression. Initiated just after the murder of George Floyd in June of 2020, the anthology features over forty poignant and historical pieces from authors all over the United States motivated by this call to participate. Here they unleash unedited details of their own, personal experiences and thoughts on racism in the form of poetry, memoirs, short essays, and short stories with the hope that their words will empower and inspire Americans of all backgrounds and races to fulfill their civic responsibilities of fostering a truly free and equal nation for all.

KATHRYN FAMIGLIETTI (PharmD)

A Look at the Anti-Vaccine Movement and its Impact on COVID-19

Sponsor: Anne Hume (Pharmacy Practice)

Vaccines are heralded as one of the greatest contributions to public health by working with the body's immune system to build immunity to viral or bacterial infections, reducing the risk of contracting a disease. The protection of vaccines also works through herd immunity, which occurs when a certain percentage of a population, 70-90%, is vaccinated, slowing and preventing transmission. However, in recent years, a surge in vaccine hesitancy and anti-vaccine sentiments have been observed. Anti-vaxxers refuse vaccinations because of the belief that all vaccines are harmful, whereas vaccine hesitant people have concerns about vaccines, but do not necessarily refuse all vaccinations.

In 2020-2021, the topic of vaccines became even more important with the emergence of the novel coronavirus. Three vaccines have been given Emergency Use Authorization in the United States: two mRNA vaccines produced by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna, and a viral vector vaccine developed by Johnson & Johnson.

The development of these vaccines, especially the mRNA vaccines, has been met by vocal opposition by anti-vaxxers, making headlines and sparking debate about the safety and efficacy of the new vaccines. Covid-19 has given the anti-vaccine movement a larger platform to spread their message since online anti-vaxxer accounts have increased their followers by 25% since 2019.

The pandemic has caused people who are not usually vaccine hesitant to become wary of the new vaccines for fear of rushed development, overall safety, and long-term effects with mRNA technology. Anti-vaccine organizations have more extreme views on the Covid-19 vaccines including: that it mutates DNA, contains microchips, and that Covid-19 is not dangerous. This paper analyzes the impact of the anti-vaccine movement during the pandemic by looking at both vaccine hesitant and anti-vaxxers and addressing the main concerns from each group about the Covid-19 vaccines, as well as analyzing how the anti-vaccine movement during the pandemic impacts public health.

ABIGAEL FENBERT (Biological Sciences)

Nutritional Data and Corresponding Performance Impacts of URI Student-Athletes

Sponsor: Kathleen Melanson (Nutritional and Food Sciences)

This research project investigates the diets of various sport athletes at the University of Rhode Island. The question that this project aims to answer is if our athletes are meeting recommended daily values nutritionally, and if not, why? Research continues to grow regarding how performance implications are tied to varying nutritional disparities for athletes. Various studies show malnourishment leads to performance decline, increased injury risk, and improper recovery. This is influenced by factors such as deficits in caloric intake, macronutrient and micronutrient availability, and dehydration. For college athletes, a lack of food availability and nutritional knowledge leaves them especially predisposed to the implications of malnourishment for their sports. Across the nation, colleges are beginning to recognize this problem and address it through implementing nutrition stations. By collecting data of athletes on our campus, finding possible inconsistencies in nutrition may influence resource allotment for dietary programs. To study this, a group of athletes from the University of Rhode Island performed 24-hour nutritional recalls for days in which they had practice or competitions. Data was organized in Excel and ASA 24 was used to assess each recall. This recall not only screened for disparities in diet, but also asked the participants if they felt properly fueled for their activities, and if not, why? Prompts such as no nutritious food available, not enough time to eat, could not afford nutritious food, did not know what to eat, or other were given.

JOHN FERGUSON (Finance)

Masculinity in 1990's Post-Cold War American Thriller Films

Sponsor: Erik Loomis (History)

The 1990's marked a period of stark transition in American culture from the fear of the Cold War era to a generally more hopeful look towards the future. This decade experienced a relative state of peace following the Gulf War, with a booming economy and technology reaching new heights. However, even with all of these positives, a recurring theme throughout history resurfaced: the crisis of masculinity. As a result, the film industry too underwent a transition. Mostly gone were the days of the 1980's idealistic teen comedy or action stories and in came a return to

1970's-esque hard-hitting narratives, focusing on the feelings of powerlessness that men felt towards major institutions such as the government, military, and mass media. In this paper, I analyze 1990's thriller films and related academic literature to evaluate this new representation of masculinity on the big screen.

Along with these societal changes, came the subsequent newfound popularity of the thriller genre with fresh perspectives on masculinity. Male-dominated, often dark and brooding, lead roles pervaded these films, which frequently dealt with violent and aggressive themes of middle-class frustration, increased consumer paranoia, and distrust of authority. Through an exploration of these films, I examine the concepts of masculinity in 1990's thrillers and suggest why these visions of masculinity became prevalent during this period.

MELODY GATELY (Psychology)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy for Dual Diagnosis: Treating Adolescent Substance Use Disorder and Co-Occurring Mood Disorders

Sponsor: Rebecca Lebeau (Psychology)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) is a comprehensive, evidence-based treatment method that was originally established to treat individuals with Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD; Bedics, 2020). Research has since provided evidence that DBT can be useful for treatment of mood disorders, suicidality, and behavioral health issues such as self-injury and Substance Use Disorder (SUD; Bedics, 2020). Based on these findings, DBT may be a promising treatment option for a variety of mental health conditions. This paper will review the literature and synthesize existing evidence in order to evaluate the potential of DBT as a successful treatment for adolescents diagnosed with SUD and a co-occurring Mood Disorder. It will also act as a foundation for the design of a therapeutic workbook that focuses on helping adolescents with this form of dual diagnosis to incorporate DBT into their lives. Research shows that there are notable similarities between individuals with BPD and typical adolescent behavior (Aguirre, 2014). Both populations appear to struggle with emotion regulation and impulsivity (Aguirre, 2014). Additionally, both groups have been associated with being at an increased risk for developing SUD when compared to the general population (Aguirre, 2014). These characteristic similarities among adolescence and BPD symptomatology indicate that DBT could be effective for adolescents as it has been for BPD. Further, research has shown DBT to have biological and psychological impacts on emotional regulation (Bedics, 2020). This, coupled with research showing that more than half of adolescents in community SUD treatment programs also meet diagnostic criteria for another mental health disorder, make DBT a strong choice for intervention in this dually diagnosed population (NIDA, 2021). Surprisingly, even with the research literature suggesting that many adolescents are dually diagnosed, less than one quarter of SUD programs, and even fewer mental health programs, actually meet criteria for services that are capable of treating those who are dually diagnosed (NIDA, 2021). This indicates a drastic need within this population for integrated treatment options that are adequate and effective.

ELI GOLDFARB (Supply Chain Management)

The Impact of Running Intramural Sports During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Sponsor: Sean Butler (Campus Recreation)

The COVID-19 Pandemic has changed lots of things in the normal day-to-day life of most people across the globe. The importance of things that many took for granted has been brought to light after quarantines, stay-at-home orders, and disruptions in the way people perform everyday tasks. With The University of Rhode Island managing to run a hybrid school year, it is important to provide normalcy and healthy outlets to the students wherever possible. The Intramural Sports Department has been adapting its services since August to provide the best experience for the student body.

Following Rhode Island COVID protocols, Intramural Sports has been able to offer a variety of leagues, events, and other programming to the student body. This project looks at various

participation metrics of the Intramural Department as well as a survey of the participants to gain an understanding of the impact of Intramural Sports at The University of Rhode Island on participants. The survey has been distributed through the registration and scheduling software, IMLeagues, as well as at game sights as participants are coming to or leaving their games.

Intramural Sports has managed to find programming that meets the students where they are – whether that is virtual trivia or 5 on 5 basketball with accommodations to make playing sports as safe as possible. Based on contact tracing data, Intramurals has managed to provide an outlet for students with minimal spread of the virus and very few quarantines triggered because of it. Nearly 1,500 unique participants have engaged with Intramural Sports for over 6,100 participations. 94% of participants surveyed have indicated that their games are something to look forward to on a weekly basis and 88% have indicated that their Intramural participation has helped them gain new friendships or strengthen existing ones.

KENDRA GRAHAM (Kinesiology)

Swimmers' upper trapezius activation during shoulder abduction compared to non-overhead athletes

Sponsor: Susan D'Andrea (Kinesiology)

Overhead sports such as baseball, tennis, volleyball, softball and swimming are known to cause rotator cuff imbalances and injuries. These injuries are typically caused by the repeated use of “throwing motion,” where the humerus is externally rotated and shoulder abducted and elevated. Previous research has shown that the function of the upper trapezius muscle in overhead athletes is likely to have improper activation (timing, magnitude) during various shoulder motions and/or activities of daily living. Swimmers are especially susceptible to this improper activation due to the use of their upper limbs in a repeated throwing motion. The added resistance of the water during the catch of the stroke intensifies the risk of muscular dysfunction. Unfortunately, research is limited surrounding muscular activation in these athletes and it is unclear how the rigor of swimming affects long-term muscular function. Understanding the muscular function in swimmers will aid not only athletes in better understanding their body, but also coaches and athletic trainers in creating the most effective training programs and injury prevention protocols. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to assess swimming's effect on the upper trapezius activation of these athletes. Shoulder abduction, or shoulder “fly,” exercises were performed at a pre-selected and self-selected weight. Surface electromyography sensors were attached to the participant's upper trapezius, bilaterally, in order to measure muscular activation levels. Additionally, motion capture technology was utilized to quantify shoulder and arm position. The results of this study will add to the limited body of knowledge surrounding the competitive swimming and, hopefully, assist exercise professionals and athletes alike in understanding swimming's effects on muscular activation.

RAEHEL GRIFFIN (Mathematics)

A University Forest Fire: Examining the Spread of the Coronavirus Through College Social Networks Using a Modified Forest Fire Probabilistic Model

Sponsor: Michael Barrus (Mathematics and Applied Mathematical Sciences)

The coronavirus has proven to be a powerful and deadly force, wreaking havoc across the globe. Gaining information regarding the spread of the virus and how human prevention measures can abate the spread has become crucial in keeping communities safe. Mathematical modeling has long been a way to predict epidemics using typical models like SIR. Unfortunately, due to the lack of knowledge and data on how exactly the Coronavirus behaves, models like these may not depict the whole picture. In this paper, the transmission of the virus is modeled based on graph theory and its applications to social network analysis. Using a modified forest fire algorithm, a probabilistic model is developed to depict who in a social network may be infected with COVID-19 and if they would spread the virus to other nodes in their community based on scientific data and behavior of the pod. Furthermore, using degree centrality as a measure of 'importance' for people in the network, the model compares the spread of the virus originally to the spread given the most influential node is deleted. This model in particular focuses on the college communities in Rhode Island and behaviors associated with this demographic.

GINA JOUANEH (Economics, French)

Bankruptcy and the Debt-Unemployment Relationship: Evidence from a Natural Experiment

Sponsor: Liam Malloy (Economics)

This paper examines the effect of a change in bankruptcy law on the relationship between household debt and longer-run unemployment in the United States. In consumer bankruptcy cases, filers can be eligible for two different types of bankruptcies: Chapter 7 and Chapter 13. Chapter 7 frees filers from debt repayment by liquidating their assets and using those proceeds to pay creditors, while Chapter 13 allows filers to enter a debt repayment plan of three to five years rather than discharge debt altogether. In 2005, Congress passed the Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act (BAPCPA), which greatly increased the difficulty of filing for Chapter 7 bankruptcy by making eligibility based on income. However, for unemployed households with already low levels of income, this change may have made it easier for them to declare Chapter 7 bankruptcy. Building off the finding in Donaldson et al. (2019) that high levels of household debt lead to high unemployment, I aim to model whether BAPCPA changed the relationship between high levels of debt and longer-run unemployment in the United States. Using OLS regression on state-level panel data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the American Bankruptcy Institute, and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York from 2003 to 2019, I find that since BAPCPA was enacted, higher longer-run unemployment has led to more Chapter 7 bankruptcies. I also find that higher household debt has led to more longer-run unemployment since BAPCPA was enacted. However, higher student loan debt, which saw some minor changes in the new bankruptcy law, influences longer-run unemployment more than other types of debt. These findings lead to further questions about the relationship between debt and unemployment, with the possibility that relaxing bankruptcy laws, perhaps through permitting simpler discharge of student debt, would help reduce longer-run unemployment.

MARA KLEINMAN (Psychology, English)

Equine-assisted Services for Children with Disabilities

Sponsor: Tiffani Kisler (Human Development and Family Science)

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability. Equine-assisted Services (EAS) are an effective-based therapeutic approach for children with disabilities. While there are a number of studies to date addressing the benefits of EAS for all individuals, there are few studies that focus on children with disabilities specifically. This project presents data from an investigation of program directors and instructors of therapeutic equestrian facilities in the northeast United States. Using a 17 question Qualtrics survey, the researcher explored the program directors and instructors' perceptions of the benefits, rewards, and challenges of EAS. Research indicates that the benefits of EAS vary based on the type of disability (physical, mental, and cognitive). Main themes that emerged around the rewards of EAS include goal achievement, community engagement, and the value of working with horses. The challenges included finding funding and finding horses for these programs. Implications for future intervention and research will be discussed.

JORDAN LAFERRIERE (Nursing)

I Saw the Sunrise in Their Eyes: An Endeavor in the Novel Writing Process

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

Mystery novels are a well-respected genre of literature. They have risen to fame through authors such as Agatha Christie and Arthur Conan Doyle. Mysteries challenge us to solve the puzzle presented, they make the reader question their own morals, and so much more. As a longtime fan of the genre, I have wondered what it takes to write a novel that not only captivates the reader, but that makes sense. Using “Save the Cat! Writes a Novel” by Jessica Brody, I have tried to do this by writing a novel of my own. In this project, I have outlined how to systematically create a plot, through separate essential plot points, and how to create an engaging story. Additionally, I have included my own original plot line. Using this, I have written the beginning chapters of my novel, “I Saw the Sunrise In Their Eyes.” The story revolves around a struggling, young woman in high school. Without her parents’ knowledge, she stays in the woods overnight drinking with a group of her friends. She wakes up to find all of her friends dead around her, throats slashed. Who would have the motive to kill a bunch of high school students? Some think she did it, she knows she didn’t. The question that disturbs her more is, Why was she the only one left alive?

ALIYA LINDER (Nursing)

The Bloody Reality: An Analysis of Menstruation Representation and Perception in the United States from the 1940s-2010s

Sponsor: Kathleen McIntyre (Gender and Women's Studies, Honors Program)

Menstruation has long been a taboo topic. Despite half the world experiencing this natural biological process, the shame that comes with menstruation continues to be an issue for many women. By analyzing a variety of primary sources, including newspaper articles, magazine advertisements, and educational short films, this paper looks into the stigmas that women in the United States face every day. These sources include, among others, the advertisements used to sell menstrual products and the everyday dialogue that is used to subliminally imply that women are inferior to men, simply because they don't have menstrual cycles. In chronological order, a few of the points touched upon are: 1) a 1946 Walt Disney Production short film entitled "The Story of Menstruation", 2) what drove many women of the 1970s to undergo the risky procedure of menstrual extraction and, 3) how social media and advertisements have both empowered and silenced women in the 2010s. The roots of this form of gender stigmatization have always been present, even as it has grown and adapted to fit the mold of the times. Through the analysis conducted within this paper, it can be concluded that the paradigm of menstrual stigma still exists today and has permeated various outlets as it evolved throughout history.

OWEN MANAHAN (Health Studies)

Health Communication Support in Baseline Health Literacy Research

Sponsor: Steven Cohen (Health Studies)

Health literacy refers to the ability to obtain, understand, and use health information to make good health decisions. Improving health outcomes in Rhode Island requires removing health literacy barriers.

In the spring of 2019, researchers at the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College received funding from the Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services to assess health literacy in Medicaid beneficiary outpatient health centers. Such research has never before been conducted in Rhode Island. Researchers administered a modified health literacy assessment to collect self-reported data on patient health status, measure patient confidence in accessing health information, measure patient confidence in making health decisions, and record patient feedback for improving cultural competence among medical providers. The data collection period was from April 2019 to March 2020; the research is ongoing.

I have served as an undergraduate research assistant since the project began. I have assisted the principal investigators in data collection, data entry, quantitative analysis, thematic analysis, and literature review. For my Honors Project, I developed health communication materials to support the translation of our findings into easily accessible information for healthcare providers and patients. I created two data briefs and one video.

Each data brief included general health literacy information, research project purpose and goals, data summary, key patient responses, and demographic information. One brief summarized information from our Providence Community Health Center sites; the second brief summarized information from our Thundermist Health Center sites.

A five-minute video was created to increase patients' understanding of what the term 'health literacy' means. The video uses simple language, clear examples, and animation to provide a straightforward conceptualization of health literacy.

RICHARD MANKAVECH (Supply Chain Management)

Effects of a Pandemic on Supply Chain Networks

Sponsor: Liam Malloy (Economics)

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a colossal impact on the lives of people across the globe. Just like the lives of the people who have had to live through this pandemic, supply chains around the world have been disrupted and permanently changed as well. 94% of Fortune 1000 companies have experienced supply chain disruptions as a result of COVID-19. The effects of the pandemic on global supply chains has not gone unnoticed, as many people had to make adjustments in their shopping to account for items that are always expected to be available suddenly not being able to be purchased. This project focuses on exploring why supply chain networks were disrupted by the pandemic and the consequences these disruptions had on the companies as well as their customers. I analyze three global supply chain networks that were challenged greatly by the pandemic and break down why the supply chain broke down, how the supply chain network originally should have been set up to avoid the risk of breaking down, and how the company attempted to fix their logistics after the disruption. This analysis provides a deeper understanding of how to properly set up a supply chain network to avoid the risk of a disruption by researching these real world examples, as well as how supply chain management will change in the future as a result of the pandemic.

NATALINA MASTROIANNI (Biological Sciences)

The Journey to Reach Herd Immunity: The United State's Efforts Towards Controlling SARS-CoV-2

Sponsor: Bryan Dewsbury (Biological Sciences)

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) which emerged in December of 2019 and has been the leading global health concern since. SARS-CoV-2 is a positive sense single-stranded RNA virus coated with viral spike proteins that has led to over 500,000 deaths in the United States and is approaching 3,000,000 deaths worldwide. As COVID-19 persists globally in such high numbers, the virus has been able to undergo mutations, leading to three prominent variants: the United Kingdom variant (B.1.1.7), the South Africa variant (B.1.351), and the Brazil variant (P.1). These variants are more transmissible, causing an increase in cases and adding an additional layer of complexity when it comes to controlling the virus. For the majority of the population to be protected, herd immunity must be reached. Herd immunity is achieved when a sufficient amount of the population is immune to the virus, either by previous infection or vaccination, making the spread of illness less likely. Many experts estimate that the herd immunity threshold is 70%, while some experts claim the threshold to be closer to 80%. There are currently three vaccines that have been approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration: the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccines. When it comes to reaching herd immunity, the United States faces multiple social and biological factors that are halting progress. These factors include emerging variants, prominent anti mask sentiments, failure to follow social distancing guidelines, fear and misinformation surrounding the vaccines, and accessibility to the vaccine. How these challenges are faced will be reported along with major milestones from January 2021 to April 2021 as they will determine whether reaching herd immunity is possible for the United States in the near future.

EVAN McALICE (Communication Studies, Writing and Rhetoric)

The New Normal: Crisis and Communication in the Age of COVID-19

Sponsor: Nikolaos Poulakos (Communication Studies)

This project tackles a self-reflexive question posed to us by the event of the global pandemic COVID-19 disrupting routine patterns of everyday life - what are we observing, understanding, or communicating by describing our changing reality as “the new normal?” I explore how this seemingly simple phrase points to serious complications in understanding how a major event disrupts understanding itself, and how this phrase represents a struggle to elucidate our current communication context or new mediated situation specifically.

Because disruptive events bring on new structures of how we are connected and novel ways to look at them, my project participates in this approach as its method. Instead of a more conventional research paper where student looks at texts, I explore alternative means of connecting with media theorists and entangling myself with ideas of disruption. I interview three professors in various media fields to see how COVID-19 might be imagined as a reflection of society’s collective reaction to change. I synthesize these interviews into videos that explore the undefinable nature of paradigm shifts, the relationship between internal and external forces, and the implications of the rifts in trust between traditional media and its audience. I juxtapose this with a conspiracy chart that signifies the counterintuitive search for truth during crises that often lead to further confusion. I place this all in a context of a website that displays a duality in media as a resource of understanding, using a stabilizing and familiar space to hold elements that are unstable in nature.

LUCAS McCULLOCH (Economics, Mathematics)

Rising Costs, Stagnant Prices: How Video Game Companies Truly Earn Profit

Sponsor: Liam Malloy (Economics)

Despite being one of the youngest forms of entertainment, video games have grown from a relatively niche market into an economic juggernaut, easily eclipsing both film and music in market value. In particular, the global video games industry has doubled in value in under a decade, from an estimated global revenue of approximately \$80 billion in 2012 to approximately \$160 billion in 2020. In order to better understand the economic principles underlying the rise of the gaming industry over the past decade, this project includes an interview of game developer and industry insider Rami Ismail and an in-depth literature review.

This meteoric growth in revenue reflects two major shifts in the gaming industry. The first was the rise in digital distribution as a replacement for physical media. This digitalization in turn allowed developers to shift away from the traditional business model of one transaction per customer per game, and instead towards a model of games-as-a-service (GaaS) wherein each game continually offers new content for players to purchase.

The standard launch price of premium games has not risen above 60 USD since 2005, with many games costing far less, despite the fact that inflation means that \$60 in 2021 is worth much less than \$60 in 2005. Customers have shown a strong resistance to price increases, with many even complaining about current prices. As such, firms have had to find additional means of increasing their revenue in order to remain profitable. The most common solution has simply to give gamers more opportunities to pay for the same game. Taking advantage of a microeconomic pricing strategy called price discrimination, many developers have taken to offering additional purchases in order to earn the maximum amount of revenue from the players with the greatest willingness to pay.

LOUISA MELCHIONNO (Communicative Disorders)

Taking the Pulse for URI as an Age-Friendly University

Sponsor: Skye Leedah (Human Development and Family Science, Political Science)

The Age-Friendly University (AFU) Initiative was launched in 2012 at Dublin University, and became an international group of institutions of higher education who have committed themselves to becoming more age-inclusive in their program and policies. The University of Rhode Island became part of the AFU Initiative in 2018. As a Communicative Disorders major seeking to help older adults, I became inspired to help the AFU initiative through the following project. This project had four main tasks. First, I tracked campus wide AFU and related activities since the university got its designation, and collaborated with Dr. Leedah to create a detailed report of URI's progress. I gathered this information by reaching out to faculty members and examining administrative and correspondence documents to extract information. Second, I gathered quantitative data to complete the AFU inventory, a tool created by researchers studying AFU efforts across the country. This inventory consisted of questions for 14 entities/offices on campus related to age-friendliness; this helped to identify areas where the university is doing well and areas of improvement. I reached out to faculty and staff in each of these entities and compiled their responses to questions. Third, I explored what classes across campus could be included for a possible intergenerational certificate. Last, I reviewed literature on AFU and used this along with the rest of the information I compiled from the report and inventory to make recommendations for URI and its continuation of becoming more age-friendly. My project serves as a reference to AFU happenings at URI, and also acts as a tool for recommendations that URI can adopt to become more age-inclusive as a university.

EMILY MILICH (Marketing)

The Evolution of Women's Opportunities in the Workplace: A Look at the Past to Interpret the Present

Sponsor: Art Mead (Economics)

Women's roles in the workplace have seen drastic developments in the last century and they are still changing today. We see this in their participation in the labor force, and the nature of their work that have coincided with changes in the structure of the economy, public policies, and technological advancements. Today, we see the environment transform again with the introduction of new technological advances including social media. By analyzing the way these factors have affected women's roles regarding work in the past, we can better understand more about these differences today. The technological changes that brought about social media are changing the roles and opportunities for women in work, and one of the areas that we see this is with social media influencing.

The concept of the influencer is defined through this project in both a factual manner and a perceptual one. This project then goes into gender comparison and touches on the misconceptions associated with the high visibility of women in influencing. Not only will the current situation of influencing and the role of women be analyzed, but the future of it as well. For my project I created an Instagram account, utilizing one of social media influencers' biggest platforms, to share a story that encapsulates the past, present, and future. This platform is by far one of the most notable ones used by female influencers, therefore, it would be the best way to convey this story. By utilizing all the features that Instagram offers to users to paint a picture to an audience, the utilization of text, images, curated story highlights, and clips presented through Reels will help share the information collected and compiled throughout the course of this project in an informative and engaging manner.

NATALIE MONTALBANO (Health Studies)

Climate Change and Vaccines: Distrust of Science in Politics and the Media

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Distrust in science and the scientific process has increased significantly over the last fifty years, and this distrust is particularly apparent in the fields of climate change and vaccination. Climate change, a relatively new scientific issue, has become one of the hottest topics discussed in both U.S and world politics. The existence and real threat of anthropogenic global warming was publicly declared by National Geographic in 2004, but climate scientists had acknowledged that humans were causing the warming of our Earth as early as the 1980's. Vaccines, despite being safe and effective in curbing the spread of infectious diseases, have also become highly debated and a growing number of persons worldwide now distrust vaccination. In trying to discredit the scientific backbone of both climate change and vaccination, people have developed similar arguments and have unfortunately used both politics and social media to their advantage. This paper will explore shared trajectories of efforts to challenge trust in scientific research supporting climate change and vaccines and explain how politics and the media influenced the public's ability to receive accurate information on each topic. In my research I have also compiled a timeline that demonstrates how deeply political both topics are and why social media has only exacerbated the distrust in fundamental science. I will also propose several solutions to combat the epidemic of distrust in science and what we can do to further scientific discovery and success.

SERAPHINA NEGASH (Health Studies, Cell and Molecular Biology)

Ethnic and Racial Disparities in COVID-19 Infections in the United States

Sponsor: Mary Greaney (Health Studies)

In 2020, the world was changed by the novel COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and causes severe upper respiratory infections. Patients with co-morbidities such as obesity, chronic lung diseases and diabetes have higher risk of negative outcomes with COVID-19. These conditions are more prevalent in certain populations. Health disparities are differences in health outcomes based on an identity like socioeconomic status, gender or racial/ethnic identity. Research has shown that a person's area code, racial identity, and education level can have tremendous effects on their life-long health. In the context of COVID-19 and its unknown long-term effects, the role of disparities in prevalence and outcomes is especially important to consider. Following PRISMA guidelines, I performed a literature review in order to learn more about the association of racial and ethnic identities to COVID-19 infection rates and outcomes. Using the database PubMed, studies published within the review parameters were identified, and then reviewed based on their relevance to the topic. Keywords included SARS-CoV-2, disparity, socioeconomic, equity, and race. In order to have a national and local view, I looked for articles studying the United States as a whole and also individual states such as New York. Over twenty articles were found, and thirteen articles were used for review. The articles reviewed showed consistent disparities amongst Black, Asian, and Hispanic people in infection, testing availability, and morbidity. Differences in exposure to COVID-19 and testing access affected prevalence amongst different populations. Across the studies, at the adult and pediatric level, non-Hispanic black and Hispanic patients had higher rates of infection. Race was also associated with increased rate of hospitalization and mortality. This review highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a fresh light on existing health disparities and indicates the space for future work on this topic.

MILEENA NGUYEN (Cell and Molecular Biology)

Analyzing the Impacts of Loss of the FANCA Protein on Chromatin State

Sponsor: Niall Howlett (Cell and Molecular Biology)

Fanconi Anemia (FA) is a rare human genetic disease, which occurs 1 in 160,000 individuals. Patients with FA have a high risk for clinical manifestations such as bone marrow failure, organ malformations, and increased susceptibility to cancer. The median lifespan of FA patients is 29 years; this disease is usually diagnosed during childhood and the treatment options for these patients are limited. Mutations in the FANCA gene are responsible for about 60 percent of all cases of FA. FANCA is an essential protein in the FA core complex which activates two proteins, FANCD2 and FANCI. Previous studies have shown that FANCA associates with BRG1, a subunit of the SWI/SNF chromatin remodeling complex. The SWI/SNF complex restructures nucleosomes to make DNA accessible for transcription, translation, and DNA repair. We hypothesize that FANCA may promote the recruitment of this complex to sites of DNA damage to facilitate chromatin remodeling during DNA repair. In this project, we are analyzing the role of FANCA in chromatin plasticity by determining if the absence of FANCA impacts chromatin state. To study the role of FANCA in this process, we immunoprecipitated (IP) BRG1 protein complexes from FA-A patient cells and the same cells complemented with FANCA and performed mass spectrometry (MS) to analyze SWI/SNF proteins in these complexes. Our IP-MS studies were then complemented with immunoblotting experiments using two distinct FA-A cell systems. FA-A patient cells were sent in for Assay for Transposase-Accessible Chromatin with high-throughput sequencing (ATAC-seq) in order to analyze chromatin accessibility across the genome. Our experiments have established that a particular SWI/SNF variant complex - the PBAF complex - is downregulated in the absence of the FANCA. Ongoing experiments aim to establish the functional consequences of downregulated PBAF to the molecular etiology of FA.

NICOLE NILES (Psychology, Gender and Women's Studies)

An Intersectional Analysis of LGBTQ+ Healthcare in the United States

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

LGBTQ+ healthcare has made some significant progress in the last few decades, yet countless studies have shown that the American healthcare system still lags behind in equitable healthcare. My project sought to identify the issues that prevent the LGBTQ+ community from receiving quality healthcare, which involved the curation of over twenty academic journal articles for an annotated bibliography, along with a paper discussing these articles.

One of the most important concepts to gender studies is intersectionality. Coined by legal theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality describes the concept of how one's individual characteristics, including race, class, and gender, intersect and create overlapping systems of discrimination or disadvantage. To capture the full scope of the inequities surrounding LGBTQ+ healthcare, intersectional identities had to absolutely be accounted for when creating this project.

My paper focuses on several core topics that have shown the most relevance as barriers to LGBTQ+ healthcare. These topics include the education provided for healthcare workers, attitudes held about healthcare by both LGBTQ+ patients and their healthcare providers, the impacts intersectional identities have on LGBTQ+ healthcare, the stigma of HIV/AIDS, the complexities surrounding gender affirming care, and the unique circumstances brought on by COVID-19. This project provides important information on the current state of LGBTQ+ healthcare in the U.S. and offers a useful resource for patients and healthcare providers alike. In order to get to a place of equitable healthcare for all Americans, we must be able to identify and discuss barriers that impact the most vulnerable populations.

VINCENT NOCELLA (Biological Sciences)

Combating Public Vaccine Misinformation Through an Educational Podcast for Middle and High School Students

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

Current health education classes, in both middle and high schools, rarely include vaccine education in their curricula for adolescents and their parents. Due to this absence of information about immunizations, adolescents and their parents are at a disadvantage when deciding how to manage their health appropriately. Parents can be misinformed about vaccine safety, efficacy, and the overall immunization schedule. Increased internet use and accessibility has made combating misinformation difficult to say the least. Including immunization in school health education would provide an important source for accurate information about vaccine benefits, herd immunity criteria, and how/where to identify credible resources for further questions and concerns pertaining to vaccines. One way to include education about immunization is through podcasts. I have developed a podcast which discusses the history of vaccine education in schools and highlights critical misinformation entrenched in today's public mindset. This podcast brings attention to the increasing skepticism around the controversial MMR and HPV vaccines, the urgency of the immunization schedule, and mentions an overview of the COVID-19 pandemic and the immunizations available to protect against it. The goal is to encourage U.S. middle/high schools health education classes to include the podcast as a homework assignment for students. Students and parents would listen to the podcast to enhance dual learning, while also promoting future generations to be included in their vaccine decisions. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically raised awareness of the impact of infectious disease and the vital role immunizations play in their control. Therefore, its vital everyone becomes well informed to generate accurate views on immunizations and hopefully increase their uptake.

TANNER PACHECO (Biological Sciences, Philosophy)

Plato, Aristotle, and the Political Landscape of the Present

Sponsor: Douglass Reed (Philosophy)

Plato, Aristotle, and the political landscape of the past are all decidedly far removed from our current place in time and space. The works of the former two philosophers, and the political ecosystem established two millennia ago can appear too foreign to retain any relevance to today's society. Though, I argue that these thinkers' insights into political philosophy can serve as support for addressing our own political challenges either indirectly, or in some cases directly.

Few would contest that in the United States we face a variety of substantial difficulties concerning the wellbeing of our political system. In fact, a project may even be executed solely with the aim to identify these issues. However, it is not the objective of this project to accomplish the above; it is not to be a comprehensive review of the issues that have seeped into our political infrastructure but rather, my project will be a constructive synthesis, a threading of sorts, between the political theory of the past, namely that of Plato and Aristotle, and the state of polity at present.

The influence of these thinkers, and the value of their philosophy as it relates to political theory will become evident as not only relevant artifacts, but those that are wholly imperative for our consideration concerning the political landscape of the present. After all, it may well be incumbent on us to engage in the rumination of political theory if we are, as Aristotle states, naturally political animals.

KATIE PAPARELLI (Criminology and Criminal Justice, Psychology)

Examination of the effects of speech disorders on juvenile delinquency and the potential benefits of speech therapy for offenders

Sponsor: Megan Parry (Criminology and Criminal Justice)

In the United States, there are currently over 50,000 juveniles housed in youth confinement facilities for delinquent acts ranging from truancy to murder. To decrease that number, it is pertinent to identify possible risk factors of juvenile delinquency, but also to establish impactful preventative strategies as well as reactive solutions. Speech disorders and speech differences have been identified as potential risk factors for juvenile delinquency. Having a speech disorder/difference has an undeniable impact on a child's life, with potentially negative impacts ranging from poor engagement with school and bullying—both risk factors in themselves for juvenile delinquency. Unsurprisingly, researchers have found that an overwhelmingly large number of juvenile offenders show signs of speech disorders. The extensive research—which is detailed and evaluated in this literature review—demonstrates that having a speech disorder is a risk factor of becoming a juvenile delinquent. Due to this, it is imperative that possible treatment and prevention strategies are identified to help prevent these juveniles from entering the juvenile justice system, and barring that, prevent them from recidivating once released. This white paper aims to inform and present solutions to juvenile justice administrators regarding these issues, as well as serve as a means to educate the general public regarding these issues.

ELIZABETH POULIN (English, Philosophy)

Seeing Color: America's Judicial System

Sponsor: Judith Swift (Communication Studies, Coastal Institute)

Through the eyes of many, it often seems as though being white in America is easy, or a privilege. Being white in America is considered a safety blanket, with an abundance of opportunities beneath it. Yet, how does a physical difference such as skin color manifest itself as privilege? Noticing color is not wrong, hateful, or oppressive. Even children notice color, and we define them as the ultimate innocence. But in fact, skin color is often a trigger. When the world has preconceived notions about people of color, an oppressive system designed to harm people who have never done anything to deserve it erupts, also known as racism.

As an aspiring attorney, I have elected to examine the racial disparities within the U.S. judicial system. By weaving together, history, laws, and statistics, I create a tapestry of stories that tell of unjust bias towards POC. My research begins in dissecting the historical construct of race, starting with the Triangle Trade, the Civil War, Emancipation, Reconstruction, and Jim Crow. This paper examines a dark history that has infested American ideals and beliefs for almost four centuries, leaving behind a social construct of blacks as inferior. Such an association has arguably led to modern day systemic racism, which many scholars believe to be prominent within our criminal justice system. By researching contemporary jurisdictions involving people of color, examining prison demographics, and looking at Rhode Island case law, this project aims to shed light on racial disparities and how they play out in America's judicial system today.

DALIA RAJEH (Biological Sciences)

Tomorrow is Not Promised

Sponsors: Zoey Stites (Art and Art History)

Generations to come will hear a lot about the year 2020 and the major impacts it had on the world. 2020 affected thousands of people in many ways, including not only the loss of jobs but the loss of loved ones as well. People worked to adapt to remote workplaces and schools. Even a year later things are far from being 'normal'. Some of us cannot even remember what normal is anymore. The mindset has always been "I'll just do it tomorrow" but what if tomorrow never comes? One impact of the pandemic that affected many students around the country was the loss of graduation ceremonies or time of recognition. Graduating seniors had a rapid transition to online learning that tore them away from the friends, classmates, and planned senior activities.

This project is a series of photographic images that show how different that experience was from what it might have been, from what seniors might have expected, from what I expected. Each image is a photo within a photo. Over the past three months I brought printed images that were taken during 'normal' times to many locations on campus and recreated the images in those spaces, spaces that are now very different. All of the original photos are from pre-COVID years and all of the new images were taken during COVID times. These photographs show the difference between what we used to call normal and what is our now "new normal". I have selected 20 of these images that I feel most effectively show how the academic experience has changed for us during COVID. They provide a visual reminder of how much and how quickly expectations can change. We have seen that this past year, even until today. Photos speak a thousand words, so remember tomorrow is not promised.

SYDNEY RAYMOND (Psychology, Biological Sciences)

The Association Between Type-2 Diabetes Pathophysiology & Exercise Adherence

Sponsor: Christie Ward-Ritacco (Kinesiology)

According to the American Diabetes Association, 1 in 3 Americans will be diagnosed with diabetes. While some of these individuals will be prescribed medications as part of their treatment, most will also be advised to begin an exercise program to assist with blood glucose control. Additionally, while regular exercise is associated with lower HbA1C and decreased insulin/medication dependence, it is estimated that only about half of those diagnosed with diabetes will adhere to their exercise plans. Social, psychological, and physiological factors all play roles in affecting ones ability to adhere to an exercise regiment, and individuals with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus (T2DM) may be particularly prone to drop out due to increased pain and discomfort resulting from diabetes related outcomes, including peripheral neuropathy, connective tissue glycosylation, altered joint mechanics, and increased reliance on anaerobic metabolism. Therefore, this study examined individuals with T2DM in order to assess the associations between effects of T2DM pathophysiology and exercise adherence. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected using an in-person focus group (n=3, all female, 61.5+6.6 yrs), individual phone interviews (n=5, 3 female, 56.8 +7.8 yrs) and an electronically distributed survey (n=9, 67% male, 33% female, 52+23 yrs). In those who exercise regularly, the most common reasons for continuing to be active included: 1) genuine enjoyment of their chosen physical activity, 2) increased feelings of energy, and 3) weight loss. The most common reasons cited for poor exercise adherence were: 1) bodily pain related to T2DM neuropathy, 2) feelings of fatigue, and 3) lack of motivation. Participants also noted that having a tailored exercise experience would help to increase exercise adherence. This valuable information can be used to better develop intervention and outreach programs geared towards increasing exercise adherence in individuals with T2DM.

KATHERINE RIORDAN (Political Science)

Early 20th Century African American Women's Suffrage Movement in Rhode Island

Sponsor: Kathleen McIntyre (Gender and Women's Studies, Honors Program)

August of 2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment granting women the right to vote. But did this mean equal suffrage for all women? African American women faced a series of obstacles in exercising suffrage rights. Some of these challenges came from within the suffrage movement itself.

Post-1920, Black women voted in Rhode Island (unlike the Jim Crow South) and made great strides in cross-racial suffrage collaboration. Yet Rhode Island was no exception when it came to divisions over race. African American suffragists in Rhode Island have a story unique from the overarching popular narratives of the predominately white women's suffrage movement. My paper examines the following question: How did African American women organize their suffrage clubs and what impact did this have on the overall struggle for women's suffrage in the state of Rhode Island?

My study begins with an analysis of the relationship between African American women suffragists and the predominately white mainstream suffrage movement. I then primarily focus on how suffragists used mobilizing structures, such as Black Churches, to organize their movement. Specifically, I analyze the understudied role of individual Black suffragists, including Mary E. Jackson, in pushing forward women's rights. The contributions of African American women suffragists are crucial to understanding voting history in Rhode Island.

KIANA ROSS (Mathematics)

“This is (still) a man’s world”: Gender Inequality in Hollywood from the Silent Era to #MeToo

Sponsor: Kathleen McIntyre (Gender and Women's Studies, Honors Program)

Film is an art form, a powerful medium used to inspire, educate, and entertain. The history of the film industry is a long event packed road that demonstrates key societal and technological advancements. In a matter of 100 years, the industry went from producing minute-long silent pictures to major Hollywood feature-length films. While there has been significant growth throughout the history of film, one thing remains stagnant: the clear gender inequality. Women have been involved in the film industry since the early 1920s as directors and actresses, but they rarely receive recognition. Despite major roles and efforts, women in the industry are left in the dust, while the men flourish.

This project investigates how the current U.S. film industry perpetuates gender inequality through many interrelated factors, noting the key differences. This inequality has been consistent across all occupations in the industry since its emergence in the late 1800s. Further research regarding male vs. female portrayal, underrepresentation, and wages in the profession demonstrate how this disparity reinforces gender stereotypes and bias.

I conducted an in-depth analysis of women in film from the early 1900s to 2021, focusing on factors such as the pay gap, production role gap, and the lack of recognition toward feminist films. One similarity between all these issues is they result from resistance to change. This project will examine these issues and present a potential explanation regarding why this inequality exists, despite years of activism, speaking up, and fighting for change. There is a long road ahead, but with continued support and campaigning, one day women will be treated as equal not only in this industry but all industries.

JAY RUMAS (Political Science, History)

Predicting and Measuring Support for Populism

Sponsor: Brendan Skip Mark (Political Science)

Through reading the most recent research and case examples, I have discovered that the conventional wisdom on how political actors appeal to voters is rather obsolete. I have done my best to establish a profile of the “populist voter” and predict which parties they may be inclined to support. Cas Mudde, an expert on populist movements, labels populism as the use of a narrative that constructs the struggle of “the people (the majority) vs “the elite” for political purposes. It has neither a positive nor negative connotation. Populist movements often appeal to those among groups that feel as though they have lost previously held power, and which have a deep dissatisfaction with the political status quo. Ultimately, I assert that voters care more about progressive economic issues due to the importance of the economy in fulfilling basic needs like food, housing, and security. Thus, if a voter is indifferent or not particularly passionate about social wedge issues, they are able to be wooed by right-wing or left-wing populism that promises economic change. Popular populist leaders who appeal to these kinds of voters with their rhetoric are politicians like President Donald Trump in the United States, and Marine Le Pen in France. This has dramatic implications for American and world politics, as it means that for a significant portion of the population, the divide is not so much “left-right” but populist-establishment. To back up these assertions, I focus on several case studies, and use research from Bert Bakker et al, Todd Donovan, and Gerard Seijts, as well as many others.

JULIA SANTINI (Biology, Sociology, Italian)

Home Birthing: Analyzing the Value of Home Births to American Mothers

Sponsor: Alana Bibeau (Sociology and Anthropology)

There were about 3.7 million births in the United States in 2018, and a maternal mortality rate of 17.4 deaths per 100,000 live births (37.3 for non-Hispanic black women). The US also has high rates of birth interventions such as episiotomy and instrumental vaginal births, and increasing rates of cesarean sections, and while these interventions can be life saving, they do not always result in better birth outcomes. When the high US maternal mortality rates are compared to those of peer countries such as Canada and the UK, the data suggests that there is much room for improvement in how the US healthcare system regulates birth.

My experience studying reproduction practices globally exposed me to the diverse ways other countries approach reproductive and prenatal care, particularly more frequent use of midwives as birth attendants and home as an acceptable setting. Though this is a complex issue, this course made me question the necessity of frequent birth interventions. This paper explores how a more widespread adoption of homebirth and midwifery practices, moving towards a more normal physiological birthing process, could improve birth outcomes. The research was conducted through an in-depth examination of the current literature around this subject and an interview with an experienced nurse midwife who attends home births. It was evaluated to see how a more hands-off birth approach could improve both birth outcomes such as maternal mortality and women's experiences during labor. The results suggest that women are served well physically and mentally when they are allowed to have more control during labor. Further research to gain both qualitative and quantitative data around and from women in the US who chose to give birth at home, and its value to mothers' health is needed as this becomes a more popular option.

ELIZABETH SARAF (Marine Biology)

Particle tracking reveals Pelagic Red Crabs as indicators of climate-driven range expansion in the California Current

Sponsor: Jacqueline Webb (Biological Sciences)

Since their first recorded occurrence in 1859, Pelagic Red Crabs (PRC; *Pleuroncodes planipes*) have experienced increased frequency of episodic mass stranding events in the Eastern Pacific Ocean. PRC's are transported over 1,000 km northward of their central domain from the coast of central Baja California, Mexico. They have been reported by the thousands on the beaches of central and southern California. Their presence influences the surrounding ecosystem and commercial fisheries because they are nutritional prey items and large predators change their diet to incorporate PRC's when they are available. Seasonal coastal currents and the California Undercurrent transport warmer waters northward by a process called advection, presumably carrying the PRC's with them. The Poleward Advection Hypothesis predicts that the California Current is responsible for the northward range expansion of the PRCs. Further, this suggests that PRC's can be used as indicators of anomalous (intermittent) conditions in the California Current Ecosystem. We tested this hypothesis by using daily sea surface (GlobCurrent data, <http://www.globcurrent.org/>) and subsurface current velocity (GLORYS data, <https://www.mercator-ocean.fr/en/ocean-science/glorys/>) from 1997-2020 to generate simulations of particle (PRC) transport from Baja California, Mexico northward to Monterey Bay, California. We found that anomalous current velocities correlate with historical PRC stranding events (1997-2020) and simulations indicated that PRC transport is influenced by the California Undercurrent and may be affected by El Niño. By understanding climate-driven variability in the California Current Ecosystem, we can predict the timing and location of PRC mass stranding events. Initial stages of this study were funded by a 2020 NOAA Hollings Scholarship summer internship and this work was done in collaboration with scientists at the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Monterey CA.

NOAH SAVASTANO (Plant Sciences, Biology)

A Guide to Freshwater Aquariums

Sponsor: Sarah Toatley (Honors Program)

The objective of this project was to create a complete guide, useful for any aquarium expertise level, describing how to set up and care for an aquarium. This guide explains the science behind processes involved in setting up and maintaining an aquarium. It also educates the reader on how to properly prioritize the safety of the fish. A full text was first created including all relevant information gathered from scholarly texts and online sources. Original photographs were incorporated as a supplement to the text. Fish and aquatic plants were drawn to further illustrate the concepts that were described within the text, while also being an educational tool to give a more detailed understanding of fish and plant anatomy. The guide was completed in a format to be uploaded and available online for free. In completing this project, this guide provides free and accurate information in a single concise place, making education on this topic more accessible. The accessibility of this information aids readers in the responsibility of both financial aspects of fishkeeping and the safety of the fish that will inhabit home aquariums.

MIRANDA SEGALLA (Cell and Molecular Biology)

Understanding the Impact of COVID-19 on College students through an Analysis of Oral Histories

Sponsor: Andrea Rusnock (History)

COVID-19 has caused immense pain and suffering across the globe. Families are unable to spend time together, people are dying alone, and thousands of people have lost their jobs. My honors project explores the different ways COVID-19 has impacted students from different backgrounds and shaped their experiences. My research is based on an analysis of 25 of the 160 oral histories collected as part of The COVID-19 Oral History Project, with a majority of them coming from students at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas and Northeastern University in Boston. Demographic factors such as age, where they live and what year they are in school were most influential in determining their experiences with COVID-19. My research illustrated the different hardships individuals felt throughout the pandemic. High school seniors shared missing major milestones in their lives, such as graduation, prom, and their senior year in general. Incoming college freshmen had to adapt to college life virtually and college students who were dependent on housing at their university shared the experience of being told they had to move out of the dorms - when there was really nowhere else for them to go. Through my analysis of the oral histories, I have realized the importance of healthy behaviors and getting vaccinated, both of which can contribute to immunity within communities. Once immunity has been achieved, students could hopefully return to their normal lives. I have created a public service announcement (PSA) in the form of a flyer for URI students to spread awareness on the impact the pandemic has had on my age group along with ways we can stay safe and allow future students to be able to experience a normal education, without some of the unique hardships seen within the oral histories.

XAVIERA VALENCIA (Political Science)

An Analysis of Four Decades of Gender Archetypes on the American Silver Screen

Sponsor: Sara Murphy (Honors Program)

Hollywood has come under fire recently from producer Harvey Weinstein's role in sparking the #MeToo movement to the predominantly white, male composition of the Academy Awards' voting members. Yet the film industry also provides a platform to actors, directors, and other crew members -- through acceptance speeches and movies themselves -- to spread awareness about pressing societal issues, including climate change, sexual assault, racism, and homophobia.

Art, especially film, has a tremendous effect on society and can either perpetuate stereotypes or dispel myths. For instance, *Philadelphia* (1993) brought into the mainstream the story of a man who was HIV+ and his wrongful termination lawsuit due to his HIV status. This film had an affirming impact on the LGBTQ+ community and helped those struggling with stigma from their status by inducing empathy from the public.

My project is a close analysis of Academy Award-winning films, culminating in a multi-part meta-analysis and cultural criticism thesis on the portrayal of women in canonical and award-winning films over four decades. I demonstrate that these films' stature and content reflect not only the awarders' values but also the movie-goers. The Academy chooses nominees and winners that reflect the institution's male, white-dominated disposition while at the same time occasionally awarding films that subvert what one would expect to be the Academy's best interests. The Academy does not represent those who have been marginalized and do not necessarily have the power and ability to tell their stories or obtain the resources necessary to produce films on a large enough scale that they enter the purview of the Academy. Given these factors, the Academy's choices reflect dominant culture's views and opinions of women while occasionally promoting stories that center on people who have been oppressed and ostracized by society. These are the complex gender and social attitudes that this thesis uncovers. Grounded in theory straddling the fields of gender studies, film studies, and sexuality studies, I contextualize my analysis with data that reflects the real-world status of women. Ultimately, this paper explores and uncovers the subconscious stereotypes and ideas that audience members consume simply by watching a movie.

CHARLOTTE VITALE (Kinesiology)

Comparative Gait Analysis of Transtibial Amputees versus Healthy, Able-Bodied Individuals

Sponsor: Susan D'Andrea (Kinesiology)

While individuals with lower limb prosthetics make up a very small percentage of the population, their musculoskeletal deformities impair their abilities to produce “normal” biomechanical actions. The deviations in their walking patterns can further inhibit their efficacy in other activities of basic living. Understanding the distinct kinematic comparisons during gait between lower limb amputees and able-bodied individuals is critical for those planning to enter such a field of study working with this specific population. As an aspiring specialized Physical Therapist, it is very likely that I will be assisting clients to regain a healthy walking pattern after a traumatic accident, bone or joint deterioration, or other health conditions causing a form of lower limb amputation. In the following project, angles of both hip and knee joints have been assessed through hands-on experimental work as well as online data collection. An in-person study recruited seven able-bodied, healthy individuals to walk at preferred speeds while a 16-camera motion capture system recorded and calculated their lower limb joint angles. Literature research was also utilized to incorporate discussions from published journals of the hip and knee angles observed from multiple transtibial amputee gait studies. This research focuses on the following question: “How do lower limb gait biomechanics of normal, healthy individuals compare to that of transtibial amputees, specifically looking at joint angles of the hip and knee?” The results from the hands-on study and the incorporated online research will further enhance the limited research relevant to gait analysis. This study will assist in defining the baseline kinematics of walking patterns while also facilitating pinpointing the potential deviations of this everyday action.

ARIANA WYNN (Psychology, Communication Studies)

Fostering Ethical Awareness in Youth: A Technological Game

Sponsor: Melissa French

This project started with me wanting to explore why educators have seen a decline in empathy and ethical awareness among today's youth. With technology being at the forefront of everyday life, much more so than in previous years, there has been some debate over how constant and continual use of technology early in life might affect a child. While most studies focused on violent games and their correlation to aggression, I wanted to see if technology could be used in a way that resulted in something positive. To that end, I designed the game "What Would You Do?" that poses hypothetical questions to children and asks them to choose from a set of responses based on what they would most likely do. Depending on what they choose as their answer, they will be awarded a specific number of spaces to progress on the board (either no spaces, 1 space or 2 spaces). The thinking is that the progression of movement across the board will help to guide youth into figuring out which actions are the most ethical. This game is designed to be used as an aid for teachers and therapists as a fun way to help develop these ethical skills in youth ages 6-12 who have demonstrated need. To showcase "What Would You Do?", I compiled a research proposal that details previous research, my findings, and the potential experimental design associated with testing the game. Additionally, I have created a technological version of the game; however, due to limitations in available programming, not all components could be included. Finally, I have also built a supplemental physical version of the game to provide a more complete look at the playability and functionality of the game.