



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2020

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

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Economics Theses

**Kevin Angell**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics (Concentration in Financial Economics and Econometrics)
- Supplementary Major: Theology
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Sorin Fellow
- Advisers: Jeff Harden and Ethan Lieber

Professional Innovation? An Analysis of Legislative Professionalism and Legislative Innovation

Are more professional legislatures more innovative? For decades, one common criticism is that U.S. legislatures are too slow to innovate to address new issues. Many suggest that professionalizing legislatures, that is, making legislating a full-time job and providing greater resources, leads to greater innovation. In this thesis, I use a novel 40-year panel dataset to assess whether or not professionalization improves legislative innovation overall and in specific policy areas.

This topic lies at the intersection of my interests in American legislative politics and quantitative analysis. The number of American state legislatures and their diversity in professionalization provide a valuable way to obtain insight into the impact of professionalization. Additionally, the recent growth in publicly available data about state governments has enabled the use of more advanced methods and more detailed analysis.

**Griffin Baker**

- Majors: Economics and Finance
- Adviser: Rüdiger Bachmann

Trump, Twitter & The Taylor Rule

This paper analyzes whether President Donald Trump's tweets relating to monetary policy threaten the independence of the Federal Reserve in the United States. Specifically, I study whether the proliferation of these tweets has introduced a "Trump" variable into the policy rule observed by the Fed.

I chose this topic due to my interest in macroeconomics and, more specifically, monetary policy. I have always enjoyed studying these disciplines, and my thesis allowed me to conduct research of my own in these fields.

**Logan Boyle**

- Majors: Neuroscience and Behavior and Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Chris Cronin

Arms Race: How Arm Injuries Impact the Earning Power of MLB Pitchers (and the Relationship Between MLB and Its Players)

I studied the impact that prior arm injuries have on Major League Baseball pitchers' career earnings when controlling for age and performance. Additionally, I looked at the broader scope of labor relations between Major League Baseball and its players association, along with how the impact of arm injuries may play a role in these relations.

I grew up playing baseball, and I suffered my own devastating arm injury at a young age, which effectively ended my playing career. Furthermore, I am going to law school after graduation and plan to focus on labor law. Thus, I thought a thesis on labor relations in baseball, which is a major problem facing the game's pitchers, would be a fitting project.

**AnneMarie Bryson**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Mathematics
- Adviser: William Evans

Effects of the Opioid Epidemic on Different Labor Market Outcomes

I looked at the effects of multiple years of exposure to the opioid epidemic on labor market outcomes, such as the probability of being in the labor force, being employed, and being idle. I found that, conditional on being in the labor force, exposure reduces the probability that one is employed, showing that those affected by the epidemic are still looking for jobs, but are not getting hired.

I chose this topic because I have done other research on the opioid epidemic at Notre Dame, and it is a topic that I will continue to research in my job next year. I also read an interesting paper by my adviser, William Evans, on spillover effects of the crack cocaine epidemic and wanted to see if there were similar effects from the opioid epidemic.

**Abigail Campbell**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- CUSE Sorin Scholar
- Adviser: Maurizio Albahari

Rhetoric of Exclusion and Networks of Inclusion: An Analysis of Italian Politics and Refugees in Rome

As populism has emerged in Italian politics, migration has become a contested topic in society. In this thesis, I trace a genealogy of Italian refugee policy, which culminates in the current exclusionary political atmosphere. Further, I discuss the politics of refugees, while underscoring the consequences of persistent “emergency” rhetoric. Lastly, I define and analyze a “political instability paradox” which implies deeper complexities within the relationship between politics, networks of inclusion, and refugees in Italy.

In 2018, I lived at a refugee center in Rome, which provided insight into the complexities of the refugee journey and the barriers that hinder integration into Italian society. This began a three-year research project into the continuously evolving sphere of restrictive Italian refugee policies. After seeing the humanity of refugees that is often overshadowed by political rhetoric, I chose this topic to explore how policy impacts the refugee experience from an individual and institutional standpoint.

Traveled to Rome with funding from the Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

**Aaron Cox**

- Majors: Economics and Political Science
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Daniel Hungerman

Place and Happiness in the United States: The Effect of Migration

The question of whether people are happier in cities or in rural areas has received considerable attention. Using General Social Survey (GSS) data, I examine how migration from one type of place to another changes the effect of place on happiness.

Differences in urban and rural lifestyles have always interested me, and I was surprised to learn that people in rural areas are generally happier than those in urban areas. I was inspired to see whether that remained true for people who moved from one place to another.

**Margarita Diego**

- Major: Economics
- Minor: Education, Schooling, and Society
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Adviser: Anthony D'Agostino

Corrupting Civil Service and Adolescents' Aspirations: Human Capital Losses from Non-Competitive Politics in the Philippines

Social scientists have increasingly begun to investigate what effect nepotism in the labor market — a hiring practice that favors social ties over human capital endowments — might have on individuals' instrumental motivation to invest in their education. My thesis seeks to apply this line of thinking to the sociopolitical context of the Philippines, given the country's long history of dynastic family rule or, in the context of this study, political nepotism.

I was born and raised in the Philippines, so I am familiar with the organization of schools and politics in the country. My own motivation to pursue further schooling stemmed from a desire to serve in public office and, one day, become president. I was interested in studying how the public's perception of corruption — and consequently dim prospects for meaningful political participation — might diminish motivations to invest in further education.

**Caroline Dumon**

- Majors: Economics and Psychology
- Adviser: Michael Pries

Twitter Trade Policy: Trump Tweets and Financial Markets

My project explores the effect of President Donald Trump's tweets about trade policy decisions on financial markets, namely the prices of futures contracts.

In the Trump era, tweets have become a source of news. I was initially curious to see how tweets fit into the conceptualization of news in economic theory, such as the efficient markets hypothesis. I wanted to explore how financial markets react to Trump's tweets in order to understand how social media policy announcements fit under the umbrella of financial theory and analysis.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.



Katherine Fugate

- Major: Economics
- Minors: Poverty Studies and Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Charles Wilber

Climate Change and a Just Transition: Worker Cooperatives as a Pathway to Economic Empowerment

To avoid climate catastrophe and reach IPCC-recommended net-zero emissions by 2050, 1.1 million fossil fuel workers in the U.S. must lose their jobs. My thesis explores whether worker cooperatives might be a source of sustainable, stable employment for displaced workers, especially those in rural communities with economic dependence on the fossil fuel industry. For my research, I visited Opportunity Threads, a textile manufacturing cooperative, and interviewed worker-owners to construct a case study.

In my economics courses, I only learned about neoclassical capitalist theory, and I wanted to correct some of the bias in my education by studying cooperative economics. I am also deeply concerned by the climate crisis. For my thesis, I connected these interests to explore how climate justice and economic justice are intertwined.

Traveled to North Carolina with funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**Katie Heatt**

- Majors: American Studies and Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Perin Gurel

Whiteness in *Orange is the New Black*

The series *Orange is the New Black* tells the story of a white, middle-class woman who is sentenced to a year in prison. Although the show is hailed for its feminist, reformist message, the racial messaging is ambiguous. I investigate this using the throughline of white character representations. In an era of mass incarceration, it is essential to pay critical attention to how imprisoned people are represented. It's impossible to understand the representational politics without analyzing race and the ideology of whiteness. I thought *OITNB* was the perfect site to dig into this important topic.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

**Godsee Joy**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Peace Studies
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Balfour-Hesburgh Scholar
- Adviser: William Evans

Universal Basic Income: Fertility and Poverty Effects via the Alaska Permanent Fund

Using Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results population data and Integrated Public Use Microdata Series census data, I evaluate the effect of annual dividends given to all Alaskan residents from the Alaska Permanent Fund on fertility and poverty. I do this by comparing fertility and poverty trends in Alaska before and after the first dividend to comparison states that match Alaska's pre-APF fertility and poverty trends.

I have always been very interested in studying poverty solutions. After taking community-based learning classes and electives in economics focused on inequality and development, and working for the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities for the past two years, I knew I wanted my senior thesis to evaluate an anti-poverty initiative. Universal basic income seemed like a great program to investigate in a U.S. context, considering its political salience.

**Steven Lanasky**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) and Economics
- Sorin Fellow
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

***Ulysses* in Circulation**

My thesis looks at how James Joyce dealt with tradition, as one who picked up the wasteful bits and attempted to transcend the canon. Joyce rejects the clean narratives of the past and rejoices in the sensuous and vulgar — the unedited and subconscious parts of life — to give life. I explored modes of circulation, such as economy and body, in an attempt to explain the strange relationship between an artist and the tradition preceding them.

I wanted to work with the text of *Ulysses*, and due to my work at Trinity College Dublin and the advising of Joseph Rosenberg, this topic essentially spilled out organically. It critically questions, in a broader sense, what we owe to the past as we try to forge anew.

**Lauren Lemaignen**

- Majors: Economics and Political Science
- Adviser: Susan Pratt Rosato

The Role of Conventional Military Capability in Great Power Conflict

My thesis examines the relationship between conventional military innovation and great power conflict. Drawing from four historical case studies, I look at the major technological and tactical changes in each period and the ways in which they make conventional arms more usable. Based on the balance of power, balance of threat, and power transition theories, I attempt to determine their effect on a rising power's willingness to go to war to challenge a dominant power.

In both my courses and internships, I have learned how the United States national security strategy and national defense strategy are shifting away from counterterrorism and counterinsurgency and back to great power conflict. Since most research into great power dynamics date from the Cold War, I became interested in studying what this type of competition would look like in modern times and how conventional arms affect the likelihood for escalation.

**Olivia Lyons**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) and Economics
- Adviser: Emma Planinc

Narrative Representations of Reality: The Necessity of Narrative in the Human Search for Understanding

In my thesis, I argue that humans need representations in order to understand the world around them, but that, simultaneously, human beings must acknowledge that representations are inherently limited in order to actually gain understanding from them. I make this argument using the example of narrative as a representation of reality, focusing on narratives about American community based on the notion of man as a naturally communal and storytelling animal.

I chose this topic because I was fascinated by Plato's argument in the *Republic* about the dangers of the imitative arts. I was struck by the fact that he denounces poets but, simultaneously, uses a narrative (the allegory of the cave) to explain his metaphysics. It seemed to me that while Plato sees imitative arts like narrative as dangerous, he also recognizes that human beings need imitations in order to make sense of the world.

**Emily Merola**

- Major: Economics
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Adviser: Chloe Gibbs

Teacher Staffing, Student Achievement, and 'Good Neighbor Next Door'

High teacher turnover is a persistent problem in the United States and is especially strong among already underperforming schools. In recent years, housing discounts have been introduced to try to keep teachers in struggling schools, but there is little to no research on their impact. My project examines the effects of one of these programs, the federal Good Neighbor Next Door program, on teacher staffing.

I chose this topic because I am passionate about education and how we might improve educational quality and equity. Additionally, I am interested in research that looks at the effectiveness of public policy.

**Aya Nagai**

- Major: Economics
- Minor: International Development Studies
- Adviser: Melissa Paulsen

Educate to Cultivate Awareness

My research concerns the impact of the new state policy to mandate menstrual education in public schools in Maharashtra, India, on individuals and its unintended consequences of discouraging conversations around menstruation at home.

I believe that the issue of menstrual hygiene management is an aspect of development that calls for more attention and urgent action and that it is time for us to move beyond the stigma and taboo around it and address the issue. It affects 50 percent of world population directly, but its implications concern everyone, as inappropriate menstrual hygiene management can lead to the loss of human and social capital.

Traveled to Dharavi, India, with funding from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

**Claire O'Brien**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics
- Minor: Poverty Studies
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Lakshmi Iyer

The Effects of Primary Education on Women's Fertility and Health Outcomes

My project studies the effects of the District Primary Education Project (DPEP) — a 1994 program in India designed to improve education in districts with low female literacy rates — on women's health, fertility, and child mortality. I used a quantitative difference-in-difference approach and found that the DPEP has a small, but significant effect on health outcomes and age at the birth of her first child, but no effect on child mortality rates.

I became interested in this topic because health and education are essential to well-being, and there have been large efforts worldwide to improve both. However, there has been little study on whether more education leads to better health in the developing world. I became interested in India while working as a research assistant with my adviser, Lakshmi Iyer.

**Bruna Paz Roca**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) and Economics
- Adviser: Katie Bugyis

Vestments for Lay Women: Recognizing their Historical Hidden Role Within the Catholic Church

Lay women have a long hidden history within the Catholic Church. They used to produce religious vestments without getting any recognition. Today, with the ongoing priest shortage, they have taken up leadership roles in their parishes. Since women cannot be ordained as deacons, recreating these religious vestments and allowing women to wear them when performing parish functions is a way to give them recognition for the work they are doing today.

I began my thesis thinking about the connection between clothing and our sense of self. Clothing serves to protect us, but it also deeply shapes our identity. The Catholic Church, just like individuals, has used clothing (and continues to do so) as a way to express and understand its teachings and beliefs. I wanted to analyze whether vestments could be a way to bring to light the work lay women do in the Catholic Church.

**Mita Ramani**

- Majors: Economics and Philosophy
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Michael Rea

An Exploration of Institutional Gaslighting

My thesis explores the question of whether non-agential gaslighting can exist. The concept is depicted through two key scenarios which tell the story of a paradigm case of gaslighting and a less clear case from which the idea of non-agential gaslighting is formed. I explore the idea of institutionally caused gaslighting and the consequences of expanding the idea of gaslighting to include this phenomenon.

I took various feminist philosophy classes at Notre Dame with my adviser, Michael Rea, and after doing quite a bit of reading on different topics I was introduced to the concept of gaslighting. The concept piqued my interest, and as there has not been much philosophical work done on it, I decided it would be a good topic to pursue for my thesis.

**Julia Randall**

- Major: Economics
- Minor: Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Jing Cynthia Wu

The Effects of the Bank of Japan's Exchange-Traded Fund Purchasing Program

My project explores the economic effects of the Bank of Japan's Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) purchasing program. An analysis of the changes on asset prices, and other macroeconomic variables suggests the efficacy of incorporating stock purchases into central banks' monetary policy frameworks.

After researching different central banks last summer as a part of a summer internship project, I became interested in unconventional monetary policy. Japan is the only country that has undertaken a long-term ETF-purchasing program in an attempt to stabilize financial markets and assets. This presents a unique opportunity to examine whether these types of programs can be considered an effective tool in monetary policy going forward.

**Julia Reyes**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics
- Adviser: Michael Pries

The Effects of Monetary Policy on Income and Consumption Inequality after the Great Recession

During the Great Recession, the Federal Reserve had to implement unconventional monetary policy tools. Although these actions led us to one of the longest economic expansions in modern history, they have also coincided with a great widening of the gap between rich and poor. Could monetary policy have anything to do with this trend?

This project allowed me to hone the quantitative skills I've developed in both of my majors. Although relating monetary policy to inequality is a somewhat unconventional and less studied relationship, I believe it could help us take a different perspective on how we think about the role and influence of the Federal Reserve in our economy.

**Anna Scartz**

- Majors: Anthropology and Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Sorin Fellow
- Adviser: Eric Haanstad

Beyond the Glass Box: *Keepers of the Fire* Exhibit and Native American Museum Representation

My thesis examines museum anthropology, specifically that of Native American representation. It centers on an exhibit that was on display in the South Bend History Museum for several months — *Keepers of the Fire: The Pokagon Band of the Potawatomi*. The project questions the display of current peoples in museums and the implications for cultural understanding.

I became aware of the exhibit at the South Bend History Museum last summer, and it quickly became the focus of my thesis. As anthropologists, we learn about other cultures, and I wanted my thesis to reflect how important that is. Native American communities are facing many challenges, and representation is an urgent problem.

Received funding from the Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement and the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**William Stewart**

- Majors: Anthropology and Economics (Concentration in Financial Economics and Econometrics)
- Adviser: Michael Pries

Does ESG Investment Spending Lead to a Reduction in Investor Perceived Left Tail Risk?

I examined the relationship between ESG (environmental, social, and governance) initiative spending and investor perceived left tail risk — as measured by the implied volatility smirk of their underlying options. This allowed me to identify whether strength in particular ESG practices provides tangible shareholder value.

I chose this topic because I completed an internship at an ESG mutual fund and developed an interest in the space. It allowed me to make a case for why investors should focus on incorporating ESG strategies into their portfolios and why managers should spend money investing in ESG initiatives.

**Benjamin Testani**

- Major: International Economics (Arabic)
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Advisers: Forrest Spence and Chloe Gibbs

The Relationship Between Domestic Hate Crimes Against Muslims and Combat Deaths of American Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan

My research explored whether there is a correlation between the deaths of American armed forces in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and hate crimes committed domestically against Muslims. I used data from the FBI to track hate crimes and casualty logs to track combat deaths.

I decided on this topic because I thought it would be interesting to see if anger about military deaths leads to an increase in hate crimes against Muslims, similar to what happened after the terror attacks of September 11.

**Matthew Trimberger**

- Major: Economics
- Minor: Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Michael Pries

Preferred Equity Abnormal Returns Due to Index Rebalances

My paper analyzes whether abnormal returns exist for preferred equity securities that are added or dropped from the S&P U.S. Preferred Equity Index. Every quarter, a group of securities is added or deleted, and abnormal returns are determined by comparing returns during the event periods to the expected returns.

I wanted to write a thesis on financial economics, and conducting an event study is one of the methods that was most interesting to me. There have also been stories in the news about rebalances affecting security prices in the common stock markets, and I wanted to see if those returns are replicated in a different asset class.

**Owen Ulicny**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Advisers: Amitava Dutt and Susan Pratt Rosato

The Political and Economic Motivations of the Scottish Independence Movement

The Scottish independence movement is a serious concern for the post-Brexit United Kingdom. I explored how factors like national identity, political party preferences, unemployment and income per capita, and perceptions of public service provision could motivate a vote for Scottish independence in the future. I hope that this study helps explain the motivations of independence movements around the world by identifying the most powerful factors in the Scottish case.

I was fortunate enough to spend my spring 2019 semester at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. My interest in this topic stemmed from conversations I had with my new English and Scottish friends at St. Andrews and their opinions on Brexit and the possibility of another Scottish independence referendum.

**Patrick Zimmer**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Statistics
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Chloe Gibbs

Kindergarten Entrance Age and Academic Achievement: Evidence from State Entrance Age Cutoffs and Early Interventions

I explored the effects of kindergarten entrance age on early academic performance. I estimated both the direct effect of entrance age as well as the differential effects of full-day kindergarten and reduced class sizes for students of varying entrance ages. I exploited state variation in kindergarten entrance cutoffs, maximum class sizes, and full-day kindergarten exposure to identify causal effects of these variables on kindergarten and third-grade test scores.

I have long been interested in education and understanding how students best learn. I became specifically interested in the effects of age on academic performance after reading *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. After some exploration, I realized that there was room for further research.

International Economics Theses

**Anthony Bell**

- Major: International Economics (Italian)
- Minor: Data Science
- Adviser: Forrest Spence

Political Turnover and Productivity in the Aftermath of Italy's *Mani Pulite* Investigations

After Italy's *Mani Pulite* (Clean Hands) investigations of the early 1990s, thousands of politicians at all levels were indicted for corruption crimes. What followed was a great period of political turnover, in which Italy's Second Republic was formed. I investigated the effect of local political turnover on productivity and economic growth at the regional level.

I chose this topic because it allowed me to follow my passion for Italian studies by examining what I think is Italy's most interesting political movement since World War II. When we think of Italy, we think of food, music, art, and beautiful vacation destinations, but it is also one of the most complex and dynamic political environments in the world, and I hope to bring light to that.

**Alex Engel**

- Major: International Economics (Spanish)
- Adviser: Forrest Spence

Spanish Populism After the Financial Crisis of 2008

I researched Spanish populist parties after the financial crisis in order to determine whether they were more successful in regions that were affected more by the crisis. Through the use of regional mortgage data and election results, I could see how the people of various regions responded to economic issues.

Through various classes, I have enjoyed learning about the recent economic history of Spain, as well as general political movements in Europe. I felt that this topic was a good way to combine all of my coursework and pursue a question that interested me.

**Mark Fedoronko**

- Majors: International Economics (Arabic) and Accountancy
- Adviser: Forrest Spence

Income Discrimination Among Different Arab Groups in Israel

Over the course of Israel's history, one group of Arabs, the Druze, have held an unusual position. Despite being "second-class" Arab citizens of the state, they still participate in military conscription — a privilege usually reserved for Israeli Jews. My project sought to determine whether Druze Israelis experience less income discrimination than their Arab Israeli counterparts.

While studying in Jerusalem, I had several opportunities to interact with the Druze. Despite being Arab, there exists a fascinating dichotomy and paradox in their identity, specifically in regards to their military service. As a result, I began to wonder if the Druze receive any economic benefit for their services and unique positions.

**Jack Meloro**

- Majors: History and International Economics (Spanish)
- Adviser: John Deak

'The Stadium and the Street': The Cultural Impact of Spanish Soccer

This project traces Spanish soccer's complex relationship with culture, politics, and society, from its inception through the present day. I focused specifically on its function as a form of resistance to the fascist Franco regime.

I chose this topic to combine my two passions, sports and history. I began my work almost two years ago when I wrote a history capstone on propaganda in the Spanish Civil War. That project gave me the platform I needed to dive deeply into the nature of the Franco regime and the people who lived under it.

Traveled to Spain with funding from the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

**Maggie Moriarity Miltko**

- Major: International Economics (French)
- Supplementary Major: Peace Studies
- Advisers: Illenin Kondo and Denise Della Rossa

Coffee, Cotton, and Politics: A History of Haitian Trade

This historical and comparative analysis looks at trends in trade between Haiti and France and Haiti and the United States to explore Haiti's development between 1829 and 1986. I found that changing relations with France and the United States affected trade and that the early decolonization of Haiti made it an outlier from other countries in the Caribbean region.

I am extremely interested in post-colonial history and how that intersects with development and conflict. This project combines all my fields of study — French, economics, and peace studies.



Regina O'Brien

- Major: International Economics (German)
- Advisers: Denise Della Rossa and Rüdiger Bachmann

Central Bank Monetary Policy Decisions and Stock Prices of Commercial Banks in Germany

My project looks into the European Central Bank monetary policies' effect on investment in Germany's largest commercial banks over the past 10 years. The analysis came up with an average 3-cent decrease in the stock price of Deutsche Bank, given a one-basis-point increase in the relevant rate while below the zero lower bound.

Negative interest rates are a relatively new economic tool, only introduced in Germany in June 2014. Although there is much research on the relationship between monetary policy and financial investment, I thought a focus on commercial banks would be extremely telling as to the attitude and behavior of investors above and below the zero lower bound.

Jade Panlener

- Major: International Economics (Spanish)
- Advisers: Forrest Spence and Kasey Buckles

The Effect of the Great Recession's Unemployment on Drug Consumption in Spain

When the property bubble burst in Spain, unemployment skyrocketed to figures surpassed only by Greece. This problem is still persistent today. Economists have studied how unemployment is correlated to mental health or other health behaviors, so my project examines the impact on drug abuse in Spain during and after the recession.

It is important to understand how the business cycle may impact health behaviors and habits. Understanding these relationships can help policymakers plan for crises that may come as the result of an economic downturn.

**Sydney Schlager**

- Major: International Economics (Spanish)
- Supplementary Major: Peace Studies
- Advisers: Christopher Cronin and Denise Della Rossa

Individual and Cultural Determinants of Female Labor Force Participation in Chile

Although the Chilean female labor force participation rate has increased since 1990, it remains one of the lowest rates in Latin America and among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development member states. My paper explores the potential factors that contribute to this statistic and considers which of these factors may have changed since 1990.

After studying abroad in Santiago during the fall of my junior year, I was interested in exploring a topic related to the Chilean economy. My interest in women in the labor force grew from my experience volunteering at a daycare in Santiago and interacting with the mothers of the children.

Laura Schoonmaker

- Major: International Economics (Italian)
- Minor: Constitutional Studies
- Adviser: Christian Moevs

How Does the Way Government Is Conducted in Italy and the U.S. Determine Its Susceptibility to Corruption?

My thesis compares Silvio Berlusconi, a former prime minister of Italy, and President Donald Trump and how their demonstrated corruption has affected the institutions meant to maintain government's integrity.

I chose this topic because I am extremely interested in politics, particularly the differences in how it is conducted across nations and how the leaders shape their governments and vice versa.

**Georgia Twersky**

- Major: International Economics (Spanish)
- Minor: Peace Studies
- Adviser: Forrest Spence

The Effect of Air Pollution on Santiago's Housing Market

PM₁₀ is a measure of breathable particles of air pollution. Santiago, Chile, a city surrounded by mountainous regions and in the Santiago Basin, experiences high levels of PM₁₀. Using housing price data from the Central Bank of Chile and PM₁₀ levels from another source, I found the economic cost of pollution, and how air quality affects where people choose to live in Santiago.

I chose this topic after my semester abroad in Santiago. The air pollution there was visible. Climate change and major weather events cause great mass movements, and I think my research can help policy makers see how much people value air quality and how low air quality causes higher levels of domestic migration (i.e., across neighborhoods).

Traveled to Santiago, Chile.

**Luis Urrea**

- Major: International Economics (Spanish)
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Advisers: Chris Cronin and Forrest Spence

Soccer Club Performance's Impact on Re-election Rates

I investigated the relationship between the performance of soccer clubs in a region and provincial governor reelection rates, giving governors an incentive to invest in local sports organizations in anticipation of their upcoming re-election.

Soccer has been an integral component of Argentine culture and remains a priority for many people in the country. I was interested in looking into the way it might have permeated into politics and its impact on provincial elections.

Business Economics

Theses

**Stephen Anderson**

- Majors: English and Theology
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Steve Tomasula

Dewfall

Israel means “wrestles with God.” My project, a portion of a spiritual and apocalyptic novel, embodies this sentiment, dramatizing and scrutinizing issues of belief, institution, power, and inspiration. Zach, a young seminarian, becomes a reluctant spiritual leader for a remnant of believers. Unordained and inexperienced, his role as prophet and leader leads to deep personal struggle as well as public conflict that might just decide the fate of Christianity in a new world.

I focused on the topics of eschatology, apocalypse (which means “unmasking”), and the prophetic life as a way to explore human nature and the instinct for religious meaning. Considering these topics challenged me to write about how the public nature of religion is performed and institutionalized, as well as the intensely personal inner dimension of religion — the desire and doubt it can engender all at once.

Mark Beach

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS)
- Minors: Business Economics and Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Sorin Fellow
- Adviser: F. Clark Power

Distributed Learning and Higher Education

Given the technology available today, higher educational institutions need to ask themselves whether they truly are using the most effective and efficient methods. Regarding questions of timeline-based learning, flexibility of instruction, cost, and the need to educate students throughout their whole lives, universities should consider integrating elements of distributed and online education.

My experience teaching in Kitete, Tanzania, during my International Summer Service Learning Program, coupled with my own engagement in the potential of online learning, sparked my interest in using technology to help better higher education.

**Jonathan Biagini**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Constitutional Studies
- Sorin Fellow
- Adviser: Dan Lindley

The 'Poor Man's Bomb' and the Rich Man's Problem: U.S. Security Implications Regarding Synthetic Biological Weaponry

The project addresses the growing concern over how the use of gene-editing technology (such as CRISPR) poses national security concerns for the U.S. — both in the country's ability to oversee such development and its capability to address threats that stem from it, such as the technology falling into the wrong hands.

I chose this topic because nature has been trying to kill human beings since day one, especially in terms of disease, viruses, etc. As such, trying to manipulate nature for one's own agenda can have serious repercussions — and biological weapons are one of them. Unlike nuclear weaponry or chemical weaponry, biological weaponry is a very understudied field in international relations theory, and synthetic biological weaponry seemed like the perfect topic to address this lack of preparedness.

**Elly Bleier**

- Majors: Political Science and Russian
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Susanne Wengle

The Politics of the Most Vulnerable: The Dima Yakovlev Law and Public Opinion in Russia

I argue that the Dima Yakovlev Law was more than just a political move or a purely public reaction to tragedy. By examining media coverage of international adoption in Russia, I argue that it was also a prime opportunity for Russia to take advantage of pre-existing suspicion of the West and scandalize the relatively few adoption-related tragedies in order to further the narrative of a paternal and morally superior Russia.

I was adopted from Crimea when I was 3 years old. During my various trips to Russia, I was confronted with questions about the adoption ban and heard for the first time that at least some Russians see America as a potentially dangerous place for orphaned children. I wanted to explore the politics behind that narrative.

**Emily Cline**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS)
- Minors: Anthropology and Business Economics
- Adviser: Christopher Chowrimootoo

Exploring the Problem of Bad Art in Contemporary America

My project examines “bad” art from an aesthetic, philosophical perspective, and attempts to carve out a new definition for art that is “bad” and aesthetically flawed but nonetheless enjoyed. My case study, the movie *The Room*, examines the paradox of “good bad art,” and I argue that good bad art is a direct response to the highbrow artistic culture that persists despite the dissolution of an aesthetic hierarchy as a result of mass culture.

During a Program of Liberal Studies fine arts tutorial, I became interested in Susan Sontag’s camp sensibility as it is used to describe and explain certain kinds of traditionally bad art. However, I began to question whether camp alone could explain the phenomenon of art that is “so bad that it’s good.” After seeing *The Room*, I thought it would be really interesting to explore it from a serious philosophical and sociological perspective.

**Reilly Connor**

- Major: Psychology
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: G.A. Radvansky

How Procedural Memory Affects the Retention of Skill-Based Tasks Over Time

This study examined the pattern of procedural memory and forgetting over time. Participants were trained on three procedural tasks and tested on them again with retention intervals of immediately thereafter, one day later, and one week later. The training scores were compared with the later test scores to determine procedural retention.

As someone who is interested in sports psychology, I believe studying procedural memory, and how certain motor skills were retained over time, is an interesting topic because I was able to combine aspects of sport and physical activity into a study on memory.

**Emily Figueroa**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Sustainability and Business Economics
- Adviser: Jazmin Sierra

A Future for Feed-in Tariffs: Evaluating Policy Tools That Encourage Solar PV Deployment

Using policy case studies from Germany, the United States, and China, my thesis compares the impact of various renewable development strategies on solar PV electricity generation.

I have always been passionate about environmental policy and adamant that world governments consider more aggressive renewable development strategies. With this thesis, I am able to contribute to the greater knowledge base surrounding renewable development policy and, hopefully, speed up a clean energy transition.

**William Gannon**

- Major: History
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Rebecca McKenna

Frank Hague, FDR, and the Transformation of Jersey City Under the First New Deal

I focused my research on Jersey City and its storied mayor, Frank Hague, who served from 1917 to 1947, as well as the changing nature of the Democratic Party. An old-fashioned machine politician, Hague moved away from his traditional approach in the wake of the Great Depression to support President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and was able to transform the streets of Jersey City under the first New Deal.

My geographic and familial connections were crucial in my decision to focus on Jersey City, but the changing dynamics of the Democratic Party at the time of Hague became really interesting to me after my initial research on the topic. Under Hague's political career of nearly 50 years, his city and his party underwent transformative changes that stand at the core of both institutions to this day.

Traveled to Jersey City, New Jersey.



Mary Glass

- Major: Neuroscience and Behavior
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Josh Koen

Comparing Methods for Estimating Cerebrovascular Reactivity in fMRI Data

This project was designed to compare the gold standard method to a new method for estimating cerebrovascular reactivity (CVR), or the degree to which blood vessels in the brain respond to stimuli, in fMRI data.

I have always been intrigued by neuroimaging and was extremely excited for the opportunity to work with fMRI data from the Memory, Aging, and Cognition Laboratory. Further, studying methods to estimate CVR is important, as it is used to obtain more accurate measures of brain activity in fMRI.

**Hanna Kennedy**

- Majors: English and Spanish
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Declan Kiberd

Love in the Time of Text Messaging: Sally Rooney and the Impact of Internet Language on Interpersonal Relationships

My thesis investigates how Sally Rooney's two novels, *Conversations with Friends* and *Normal People*, capture the ways in which technology-mediated communication deepens interpersonal relationships for her generation, as well as how it creates a generational divide between those who know the new rules of language and those who do not.

I chose this topic after multiple people recommended Rooney's books to me while I was studying abroad in Dublin. Her novels are set at Trinity College, where I was studying at the time, and really helped me to get to know the school and the city of Dublin.

**Hanna Kennedy**

- Majors: Spanish and English
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Ben Heller

Exilio, Errancia, y lo Imaginario: La Escritura Como Relación en Cuentos Negros de Cuba

My thesis, written in Spanish, investigates the interplay of errantry and exile, themes outlined by Édouard Glissant in his *Poetics of Relation*, in the short stories of the Cuban author and ethnologist Lydia Cabrera. By looking at the publication history of *Cuentos Negros de Cuba*, I aim to demonstrate how translation both changes and spreads a cultural imaginary and that this has an impact on the culture's present identity.

I chose to write about Lydia Cabrera after taking two Spanish classes focused on the Caribbean. I loved learning the history of the place, but I was curious about why there were not very many female authors on either syllabus. One of my professors recommended I check out Cabrera.

**Raechel Kiesel**

- Major: Sociology
- Supplementary Major: Theology
- Minor: Business Economics
- Sorin Fellow
- Adviser: Kraig Beyerlein

Virtual Religion and Offline Networks of Emerging Adults

Emerging adults today are engaged online all of the time. Their activities online are not limited to social media and email, but extend into other factors of life, including religion. Religion has made its way online in the form of websites, social media groups, videos, podcasts, and more. This study explores how emerging adults are interacting with their religion online and how that affects their offline religious social networks.

As a lay minister in my dorm and beyond, I am interested in the implications these results have on ministry for emerging adults and future generations. As emerging adults are known for leaving religion, I was curious to find out whether online or offline communities would be likely to keep them involved and which is more important to them.

Traveled to Chicago, Illinois, with funding from the Center for the Study of Religion and Society.

**Kate Lenahan**

- Major: History
- Minors: Constitutional Studies and Business Economics
- Adviser: Emily Remus

How Mary Dent Crisp and the Equal Rights Amendment Shaped the Trajectory of the Republican Party in the 1970s

My project discusses the impact Republican National Committee co-chair Mary Dent Crisp and her fierce advocacy for the Equal Rights Amendment had on the GOP in the 1970s. Crisp was publicly expelled for her support of the ERA right before the 1980 Republican National Convention. I argue that Crisp's insistence that the GOP focus on women's rights issues caused the party to examine its identity and, ultimately, move in an increasingly conservative direction.

I began this project with an interest in the opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, and I was directed to Crisp's files at the Schlesinger Library at Harvard University by one of Harvard's archivists. Crisp's position as a pro-ERA activist in the GOP provided an interesting angle to explore the ERA's impact and allowed me to contribute to the scholarship on this topic in a unique way.

Traveled to Cambridge, Massachusetts, with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

**Katherine Leyden**

- Major: American Studies
- Minors: Business Economics and Collaborative Innovation
- Adviser: Korey Garibaldi

The Evolution of Design and Inequality in Housing

In my project, I explore the history of housing and track the changes in housing culture that have occurred, from post-World War II prefabricated homes to modern day.

I chose this topic because I was drawn to the idea of consumerism. After doing a project on smart home technology, I became very interested in the complexity and disparity within the housing industry.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

**Whitney Lim**

- Major: Theology
- Minors: Sustainability and Business Economics
- Adviser: Sam Miller

Developing a Strategic Plan for Notre Dame's Student Garden

Starting with research on dozens of higher education institutions' sustainable agriculture programs, including six site visits and in-person interviews, my project works toward establishing a sustainable farm and garden at Notre Dame.

I chose this topic because everyone needs to eat and because it beautifully integrates my major and minors. Stewardship of God's creation, accessible provision of healthy produce, and a feasible business model are all key to sustainable food systems.

Traveled in Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois with funding from the Otterbeck Family Endowment for Excellence in Undergraduate Sustainability Studies.

**Emily Luong**

- Major: Psychology
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Lira Yoon

Relations Among Internalizing Stereotypes, Outward Parental Affection, and Depression in Asian Americans

My thesis investigates the relationship between the internalization of Asian American stereotypes and depression. It also examines the differences in parental affection in Asian Americans and caucasian Americans and how parent-child relations are associated with depression. Additionally, I looked at emotional reservation — another stereotype of Asian Americans — and its moderating effects on the relationship between parental affection and depression.

Depression is important to monitor because it is consistently ranked as one of the most common disorders treated at college counseling centers. This disorder is especially important to understand within the Asian American population because they are the fastest growing minority in the United States and have consistently exhibited higher rates of mental illness than caucasian Americans.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program and the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies.

**Natale Mancuso**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS)
- Minor: Business Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Tom Stapleford

The Separation of Corporate Ownership and Control and the Proxy Voting System

My thesis examines how corporate structure separates the interests of ownership and control and how many of the resulting problems manifest themselves in the corporate proxy voting system.

I will be working in the financial markets after graduation, and the implications of this topic for the average retail investor make it interesting to me in serving the cause of protecting the rights of all investors.



**Leah Peluchowski**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS) and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Jim Collins

The Moments of Jane Austen

My project traces the “moments” of Jane Austen, starting with her first publication and ending with the most recent adaptations of her work. I focus on the relevant texts of the time, as well as her readers and how they interact with and interpret her texts, dealing with the increasing intertextuality and various reading formations that have developed over time.

My project was inspired by a desire to combine my majors and the opportunity I had to be part of the Kennedy Scholars program while studying in London. I came to my topic from the perspective of Austen writing great books, being an English author, and also the root of a cultural phenomenon filled with adaptations.



Kendrick Peterson

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Adviser: Carolina Arroyo

Dynamic Bipartisanship: Effective Solutions to the Issues of Recidivism

As exemplified by extensive research, the systemic barriers that often lead to the conviction of the marginalized also entrap these same individuals into cyclical imprisonment. In this joint capstone project with fellow political science major and Hesburgh Program minor Andrew Jarocki, we focused on the tendency for incarcerated individuals to re-offend, known as recidivism, within St. Joseph County. We also explored the possibility of a halfway house for graduates of the Moreau College in Prison program. Through a combination of ethnographic studies and data analysis, we outlined a bipartisan policy recommendation for recidivism on a local level.

Though many recognize that inequities exist within the criminal justice system, there is not a consistent bipartisan approach to rectifying the situation. We chose this topic not simply because it is extremely pressing for marginalized communities, but also because it is rare to see those from differing sides of the aisle striving to make a difference in this field.

Through my experiences as a QuestBridge Scholar, Gates Millennium Scholar, Building Bridges Fellow and Public Policy International Affairs Fellow, I was given the necessary background to successfully add skills to this capstone team.

Traveled to juvenile justice detention centers, the nonprofit Dismas House, and St. Joseph County correctional facilities with funding from the Hesburgh Program in Public Service.

**Sarah Powell**

- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Business Economics
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Adviser: Joseph Parent

Strong Armed: International Arms Transfers as a Coercive Tool

My thesis seeks to determine under what conditions the cancellation of an international arms transfer program can be used to successfully coerce a client state. Through the use of historical case studies where the United States was the supplier, I challenge the conventional knowledge that arms sales are only useful for rewarding allies.

I chose this topic because the arms market in particular, and the military-industrial complex in general, lie at the intersection of my main interests — security, policy, and economics.

**Anthony Ramirez II**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies (PLS)
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Eric Bugyis

***Evangelii Gaudium* and Its Influences**

My thesis examines the theological influences that shape Pope Francis' pontificate and the way he understands the role of the Church in the world. I then offer a non-politicized reading of Francis' first apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

I chose to write this thesis to learn more about how Pope Francis views the place of the Catholic Church in the present. With secularization increasing at a higher rate than ever, understanding how the Pope will respond to these changes becomes a matter of great importance.





Jacob Rush

- Major: Design (Concentration in Industrial Design)
- Minors: Business Economics and Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Adviser: Ann-Marie Conrado

Finding Truth in Online Media

The purpose of this project is to develop a tool that helps individuals become cognizant of fake news on the internet. The internet has allowed politicians, journalists, and foreign entities to rapidly spread “fake news,” ultimately endangering our democratic process. My thesis presents a venue for such fake news to be exposed.

I chose this topic because of the increasing relevance of internet media in politics and the drastic consequences to our democratic process seen during the 2016 election.

**Peter Sabini**

- Majors: Spanish and Music
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Ben Heller

The Poetry of Carmen Colón Pellot

I translated and analyzed Carmen Colón Pellot's book of poetry, *Ambar Mulato*. Her poems deal predominantly with race but also with topics such as gender, nationalism, nature, and beauty. My project has a standard translator's introduction, an analysis of the major themes of her poems, and then the poems themselves, both in the original Spanish and my English translations.

Two years ago, I read a poem by Pellot for one of my Spanish literature classes, and then in a translation course with my adviser, Ben Heller, I continued to research Pellot for a smaller translation project. I felt quite captivated by her writing style and content, and when it came time to do a longer thesis project, I knew I had to keep working on Pellot's poems.

**Ana Sarmousakis**

- Major: Sociology
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Mim Thomas

Presentation of Self in the Age of Instagram

Unrealistic standards of female beauty are not a new phenomenon, but new apps like FaceTune and Airbrush allow users to alter their faces and bodies in photos before sharing them on social media, thereby heightening unrealistic standards. My project explores the prevalence, motivations, and effects of this practice among young women.

Growing up as social media sites like Instagram gained popularity, I've seen firsthand how the curated presentation of self has driven my peers' online behaviors, as well as my own. This project is a way of adapting classic sociological theories about impression management to explain contemporary social media behaviors and the increasing presence of altered photos.

**Julia Stengle**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Minors: Business Economics and Collaborative Innovation
- Adviser: Christine Becker

It's Not 'Who Are You Wearing?' But 'Why?': Performative Politics and the Red Carpet as an Instrument of Orchestrated Activism

Fashion and fame have maintained an inseparable relationship since the conception of celebrity status. Red carpets provide an international platform for celebrities to advance cultural movements. Donald Trump's presidency and active engagement with Hollywood's elite further elevated celebrity activism, particularly on the red carpet, and ignited a culture of trendy advocacy.

My thesis idea is heavily inspired by my adviser Christine Becker's Media Stardom and Celebrity Culture class and bridges my passions for the fashion and entertainment industries. In the contemporary political environment, celebrities are becoming more influential than our political systems. The red carpet, therefore, becomes a prime platform for such discussion, which is further spread through social media impressions and news headlines.

**Catherine Truluck**

- Major: English
- Supplementary Major: Japanese
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Valerie Sayers

On Through

On Through is a story about healing and growth. It focuses on these themes through the lens of Saf, who has just left an unhealthy relationship with an enigmatic voice from a shell and is spending a fall break trip with friends she made while studying abroad. She copes with emotions that have bubbled up from the past while struggling to sort through her current ones.

I chose this topic after my own study abroad experience (unsurprisingly). The catharsis that emerged from being in such foreign and beautiful places and meeting new people made me look at myself even more critically. I wanted to encapsulate this parallel in a more imaginative format, in an effort to further analyze these beliefs and the consequences past choices have on the self and on others.

**Michael Vanic**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Adviser: Geoffrey Layman

Gaming the System: Partisan Gerrymandering and Redistricting Reform in Pennsylvania

My thesis researches the history of partisan gerrymandering in Pennsylvania, focusing specifically on the map drawn after the 2010 census that was ruled unconstitutional in 2018 by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. I used map drawing software to show the tradeoffs one must consider when choosing which redistricting criteria to focus on, such as compactness and competitiveness, and then discussed redistricting reform in Pennsylvania after the upcoming 2020 census.

Last summer, I interned at a nonpartisan government watchdog group which ran a program called Draw the Lines that educated people on partisan gerrymandering and encouraged them to draw their own Pennsylvania maps. This opened my eyes to how important redistricting reform is in Pennsylvania and inspired me to research it on my own.

**Alex Yom**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Asian Studies
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Adviser: Kyle Jaros

Spreading the Wealth: How Decentralization Differs in Beijing, Seoul, and Washington, D.C.

To address overpopulation and the lack of developable land, Beijing and Seoul are making efforts to decentralize their political, economic, and cultural functions. I explored how China's greater land size and the existence of other global cities affect decentralization in Beijing compared to the process in Seoul, a primate city in a much smaller country. I contrast these cities with Washington, D.C., where the United States has a long history of decentralizing functions from its political center.

With my interest in economic development, I wanted to explore how cities choose to decentralize their functions to address problems such as overcrowding and soaring land prices. Having family in Seoul and studying abroad in Beijing encouraged me to analyze these two cities in particular. By comparing these cities with Washington, D.C., I aim to bring the impact of decentralization into an American context.