



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



# 2021

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.<sup>SM</sup>

**Natalie Armbruster**

- Majors: Political Science and Arabic
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Madhav Joshi

## Competing Pathways to Peace: Analyzing the Implications of the Astana and Geneva Processes on the Future of Syria

Ten years after the inception of the Syrian Civil War, the West and Russia have proposed competing peace plans: the Geneva and Astana Processes, respectively. Using the Peace Accords Matrix through the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, my thesis analyzes the implications of the proposed peace plans and predicts how the proposed peace process would potentially affect Syria and the myriad of regional and international actors involved. I chose this topic because it combines my interests in compassion and pragmatic policy decisions.

My thesis represents the culmination of my last four years. During this time, Notre Dame has generously enabled me to travel to Germany and Jordan to study Arabic and international law; to work at a think tank in Washington, D.C., researching the Syrian Civil War; and to serve refugee survivors of domestic violence at the International Rescue Committee.

While the COVID-19 pandemic ended my time in Jordan prematurely, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to live with a Syrian family and to be fully immersed in both the Arabic language and Jordanian culture.

*Traveled to Amman, Jordan, with funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Marcela Baquerizo**

- Majors: Political Science and Studio Art
- Advisor: Thomas Mustillo

## Ecuador and Conditional Cash Transfer Programs: An IAD Study of the Human Development Bond (BDH)

The Human Development Bond (*Bono de Desarrollo Humano*) is a conditional cash transfer program led by the Ecuadorian government to cover the economic vulnerabilities of nuclear families under the poverty line. My thesis implements Elinor Ostrom's institutional analysis and development framework to understand the existing pattern of exclusion regarding the BDH beneficiaries.

The Human Development Bond is the most extensive conditional cash transfer program in Ecuador. It is a critical structure in providing the Ecuadorian population the necessary resources to break out of the intergenerational poverty cycle. Therefore, it is essential to understand why the BDH fails to capture the population in extreme poverty adequately and what measures can strengthen the current methodology.

*Traveled to her home country of Ecuador.*

**Aaron Benavides**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Digital Marketing; Theology; and Journalism, Ethics, and Democracy
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: David Campbell

## The Right Gospel: American Catholicism and the Politics of Christian Conservatism

My senior thesis delves into the formation of the religious right: namely how evangelicals and Catholics came together on the issue of abortion and aligned with the Republican Party. Through this lens, I examine Catholics' views on abortion and the religiosity of candidates, seeking to understand what matters more to Catholics in politicians: faith or politics.

I have always been fascinated by the intersection of religion and politics, especially in the Catholic context. The massive shift in Catholic politics from left to right in the 1960s and '70s was an interesting phenomenon to research, and I appreciated the opportunity to learn how the U.S. Church's focus on abortion affects Catholic politics today.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Spencer Bindel**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Theology
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisor: Eugene Gholz

## Ethnic Lobbies and Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of Ethnic Interest Group Influence

My thesis analyzes the mechanisms through which ethnic interest groups attempt to influence U.S. foreign policy. It compares the Indian lobby, the Albanian lobby, and the Jewish lobby to understand what makes ethnic lobbies influential and what, if anything, distinguishes them from other types of lobbies.

After visiting Israel during my sophomore year, I became interested in U.S. foreign policy toward Israel. Many academics believe the United States is staunchly pro-Israel because of extensive lobbying efforts by Jewish Americans. This made me wonder if there was anything unique about ethnic interest group lobbying and how this might contribute to the formation of U.S. foreign policy.

**Clark Bowden**

- Major: Political Science
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Joseph Parent

## Am I My Brother's Keeper? Why Colombia Welcomes More Migrants

Colombia has employed far more welcoming refugee and migration policies than their neighbors throughout the Venezuelan refugee crisis. My thesis seeks to determine why. I argue that Colombia has acted this way due to regional power dynamics and strong American support and assistance.

No one seems to be talking about the Venezuelan crisis, but they are on track to surpass the Syrian refugee crisis with over 6 million people fleeing the country. Colombia's actions have been commendable and deserve to be researched. This is a fantastic natural experiment and case study, and I feel that because it has been so overlooked, I can make a significant contribution to the field.



### Patrick Brady

- Majors: Russian, Economics, and Political Science
- Minor: Middle Eastern Studies
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Michael Desch

## Future of U.S. Naval Grand Strategy in the Persian Gulf

My thesis proposes a new maritime strategy for the U.S. in the Persian Gulf by evaluating developments in naval technology, Middle Eastern geopolitics, and American energy production. It looks to the future of these three rapidly evolving domains, laying out a framework for the U.S. Navy to efficiently and effectively maintain sea power in the gulf.

I saw this thesis as an opportunity to synthesize what I had learned through the Notre Dame International Security Center and my Middle Eastern Studies minor — a chance to channel my passion for geopolitics, grand strategy, and the Arabic and Persian languages into a single project. This topic also allowed me to better understand and appreciate the weapon systems, ideas, and people with whom I will be working as a naval officer after graduation.



### Patrick Brady

- Majors: Russian, Economics, and Political Science
- Minor: Middle Eastern Studies
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Zachary Stangebye

## Macroeconomics of Russian Hybrid Warfare

In this project, I studied the impact of Russian hybrid warfare efforts against former Soviet-bloc states by analyzing various macroeconomic indicators during incidents of hybrid warfare. Specifically, I examine cases in which cyber, political, cultural, and financial tactics were used to augment conventional military action by Russia, evaluating the effectiveness of these hybrid tactics in damaging the target nation's economy.

While I have always wanted to study international relations through an economic lens, I developed a special interest in Ukrainian and Russian geopolitics while studying at a Russian language school in Kiev two summers ago. Additionally, hybrid and asymmetric tactics have become especially prevalent today, both in regards to contemporary Russia and the overall future of warfare.

**Patrick Caslin**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics
- Minor: Catholic Social Tradition
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Jeff Harden

## Forecast Models for California State Legislative Elections

I developed a statistical model to predict the results of state legislative elections that took place in California in November 2020. In a pre-analysis report published last October, I reported both expected vote shares (what percentage of the vote I expected each candidate to receive) and probabilities of victory (how likely each candidate was to win the election) for each election taking place. I predicted the winner correctly in 95 out of 96 contested races.

I thought quantitative election forecasting was a good way of integrating what I had learned in my political science and ACMS coursework. I chose to focus on California because of my prior knowledge and experience with California politics and because the unique top-two primary election system created interesting challenges with regard to predicting election results.

**Zoe Desch**

- Majors: Political Science and Studio Art
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Eugene Gholz

## Chinese Espionage and Technology Theft

For my project I engaged in theory building about the means and methods of technology theft, as well as the feasibility. Can technology IP be stolen? Can governments contribute? And can companies effectively take the stolen information and recreate the technology? My thesis goes over the motives, limitations, and other factors in order to analyze whether Chinese espionage is a threat to technology IP.

I chose this topic because it is a relevant national security issue, and I am a member of the Notre Dame International Security Center. With growing alarms over China's rise, its dubious history with intellectual property, and its stated desire to become a global technological leader, this is an issue that deserves close scrutiny.

**Christina Dulal**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- AnBryce Scholar
- Advisors: Ani Aprahamian and Carolina Arroyo

## How Has Politics Shaped the Dissemination of Nuclear Medicine in America and Armenia?

My thesis explores how domestic government structure, international relations, and foreign policy all immediately impact patient access to quality healthcare. More specifically, I assert that with increased political cooperation through international collaborations, access to novel medical practices and technologies would increase dramatically. One example is the prospering of nuclear medicine in recent years throughout Armenia — a nation that only gained its independence from the USSR in 1991.

I chose this topic because it sheds light on the disconnect between having the means (medical knowledge and technology) necessary to provide medical care and a reasonable method (domestic and international policies) to do so. I felt that the study of underlying politics that prevent equal access to healthcare is often neglected. I believe that it is only through the examination and modification of deficient administrative policies that we can improve global health.

*Traveled to the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio and AZI Isotopes in Bunker Hill, Indiana, with funding from the Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarly Engagement.*

**Caroline Elser**

- Majors: History and Political Science
- Advisor: John Deak

## Lions Led by Donkeys? How the Tragedy of the Somme is More Than the Blunders of a Few Powerful Generals

My thesis explores the most important factors that contributed to the Battle of the Somme in World War I, specifically institutional corruption within the British Expeditionary Force, technology and communication problems, and outdated strategies and tactics. Rather than focusing on mere questions of generalship as many historians have done, I explored other pervasive factors that contributed to the Somme and how soldiers' and generals' diaries give us insight into these problems.

I chose this topic after visiting the Somme battlefield in France with my Great War and Modern Memory class during my junior year. Getting to see and stand on the actual ground where the battle was fought was deeply moving, and I knew then that I wanted to delve into the topic further to better understand the battle and the lives that were affected as a result.

Conducting a history honors thesis has been the highlight of my senior year, and I am so grateful for my history professors and those at the Nanovic Institute for European Studies who helped make it happen, even with the pandemic.

*Received funding from the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.*

**Mary Regan Fitzgerald**

- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Theology
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Andrew Gould

## Inclusion Through Engagement: Roma Political Participation in Central and Eastern Europe

My project examines the political participation of the Roma minority in Europe, with a particular focus on Central and Eastern Europe. I examine the factors that aid or inhibit Roma participation, and I then rely on three case studies to analyze how such participation can influence non-Roma attitudes.

The Roma are Europe's largest minority, and yet their marginalization and experiences of discrimination are relatively unknown to many in the U.S. Further, the situation of the Roma is routinely ignored as an issue worthy of attention or study in Europe. I therefore chose this topic because I wanted to call attention to this issue while also contributing to a still nascent literature.

*Received funding from the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.*

**Carolyn Gehan**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics
- Advisor: Sebastian Rosato

## Historical Analogies and U.S. Foreign Policy

Historical analogies are everywhere. Policymakers and historical analysts have long spoken in analogical terms, with the dominant view that analogies influence U.S. foreign policy and that the analogy pervading U.S. consciousness is that of Vietnam. My paper questions that conventional wisdom on two grounds — by highlighting flaws in the argument’s logic and examining two case studies on U.S. policy decisions in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I learned about historical analogies in class and wondered, if “Vietnam syndrome” is so powerful, why did the U.S. go to Afghanistan and Iraq, and why are we still there? I think it is important to understand the reasons behind policymakers’ decisions if we hope to shape, influence, or criticize them. But, in doing so, we should perhaps not be so quick to look to the past.

**Marin Gorman**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: History and Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Advisor: Rachel Sweet

## Navigating Nuance: An Analysis of the Government's Role in Sustaining the Congo Conflict

My project looks at the role of the government and national military in conflict markets. I compare this role to the actions of rebel groups in the same territory and show that even throughout the initial conflict, the government acted as one of the most extractive, violent powers, despite never being addressed as a combatant.

I chose this topic because I had watched a film in class where community members said the indictment of Ugandan rebel Joseph Kony wasn't enough. They said that Western businessmen were the ones really benefiting. As I got further into my research it became clear that the main reason for this was the government. I wanted to see how and why the international community has supported it and allowed it to get away with so much.

**John Hale**

- Majors: Political Science and Italian
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisor: Christian Moevs

**Manifestations of the Divine**

I examined ancient architectural treatises, including the work of Vitruvius, and the ways in which the ancients were able to come to knowledge of a divine and transcendent order by observing coherent patterns, rationality, and proportionality thoroughly creation. I then looked at how Christian Renaissance architects like Alberti and Michelangelo rediscovered this work and applied it to Christ to create beautiful architecture that communicates the divine, such as St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.

I chose this topic because I am interested in natural law and the ways in which God communicates Himself through His creation and to humankind so that He might be known, loved, and served.

**Shantae Harris**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Asian Studies
- Advisor: Alexander Hsu

## South Korea: The Intersectionality Between K-Pop, Cyberbullying, and Gender Inequality

My paper explores how K-Pop has become a form of “soft power” for South Korea and how societal norms (e.g., gender inequality), stereotypes, and values rooted in Confucianism have helped to create a toxic environment within the entertainment industry and within society overall, which has contributed to an increase in the suicide rate.

South Korea is known for their soft power — from food to idols, cosmetics, and technology, all have been exported. Despite being known for producing great idols and innovation, it is also known for having one of the highest suicide rates in the world. As someone who has struggled with my own mental health, I wanted to understand why mental illness is such a large issue in South Korea and how it manifests in popular idols.

**Martin Heli**

- Majors: Political Science and Russian
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Michael Desch

## Post-Truth or Truthful Posts? Truth and Falsehood in Twenty-First Century Disinformation

With all the concern about “fake news” and falsehoods in modern propaganda, I decided to evaluate the performance of truth and lies on social media. Analyzing Russian Facebook ads in the final month of the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaign, I found that truth still has an important role to play in propaganda and, in many ways, outperforms lies.

I read article after article about Russia’s interference in the 2016 election. Many mentioned fake news; some even showed it. But no one paid much attention to when IRA trolls used what we might call “real news.” Unconvinced that we are living in a post-truth society, as some have argued, I wanted to look at what actually got results in modern propaganda.

**Nicholas Holmes**

- Majors: History and Political Science
- Minor: Constitutional Studies
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisor: Ian Johnson

## Unity in Desperation: The Origins of the Franco-British Union Proposal of June 1940

Days before the French armistice with Germany during World War II, Winston Churchill and the British War Cabinet proposed to join France and the United Kingdom in a formal "Franco-British Union." I investigated the origins of this early effort at British integration with Europe and why it gained the support of the British Government before being rejected by the French Cabinet.

The Franco-British Union proposal had the potential to change European politics, but it has received little scholarly attention. In particular, I chose this topic because understanding the origins of this proposal sheds valuable light on historical British attitudes toward European integration, Churchill's decision-making, the interwar European federalism movement, and solutions to the challenges of coalition warfare.

**Margaret Horan**

- Majors: International Economics and Political Science
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: John Firth

**Child Labor and Schooling in Rural Peru**

My project uses data from the 2014 Peruvian Rural Household Survey to identify the determinants of child labor in rural Peru. I use children's birth order and sibling gender to analyze the household cost-benefit analysis regarding the labor-schooling decision. This analysis offers additional insight into the factors that affect child labor in rural Peru, which has implications for implementing policies to reduce its prevalence.

I chose to research the interaction between child labor and schooling because understanding a poor household's decision to engage in child labor is crucial to designing effective policies to reduce it.

**Rachel Ingal**

- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Business Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Christina Wolbrecht

## Run Like a Girl: How Gender and Race Work Through the Role Model Effect to Increase the Political Ambition of Adolescent Girls

In the United States today, we are still far from gender parity in our elected governing bodies. But this is not due to the fact that women aren't winning — it's because they aren't running. My research explores how the visibility of women candidates affects girls' political ambition throughout their lives. I am interested in investigating the effects of both gender and race in visibility and representation.

As someone who believes policy is essential to enacting justice, I believe that having a diversity of policymakers is vital to representing and creating equity for the variety of perspectives and voices in our country. Women, especially women of color, are heavily underrepresented in our government. As a woman of color myself, I am interested in exploring why that is and how to work toward meaningful representation.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Grace Johannesen**

- Majors: Political Science and International Economics (Italian)
- Advisor: Andrew Gould

## Strict Lockdowns vs. Trust in Citizens: Policy Responses to COVID-19 in Italy and Sweden

Sweden and Italy took drastically different approaches in their responses to the coronavirus. My thesis explores their policies and the impacts of those policies, looking into their health care systems, institutional setups, and governments as possible determinants of their specific responses to COVID-19. Six months into the pandemic, Italy and Sweden saw very similar results in terms of death rates and other metrics, but after a year, the results of their policies have diverged.

During the spring 2020 semester, I looked into how various European countries handled COVID-19 as part of a European Politics course. This was of particular interest to me as I had been studying in Rome until the pandemic hit. Countries across Europe took different approaches and encountered the virus with varying levels of severity. Two countries that stood out were Italy and Sweden, whose policies covered both extremes.

I was not planning on writing a thesis until my professor, and now advisor, encouraged me to follow up on the research I did last spring. Since the subject matter of my thesis is current and ongoing, new information is constantly available as both countries work to curb the spread of the virus. Changes to policy or, in Italy's case, changes to the current government after the resignation of the prime minister, have led me to continuously make updates to my project and have shown me just how quickly everything can change.

**Grace Johannesen**

- Majors: Political Science and International Economics (Italian)
- Advisor: Forrest Spence

## Populism and Economic Growth in Italy

For my international economics senior research project, I analyzed how the recent rise and election of populist parties Lega and the Five Star Movement in Italy have affected economic growth.

I chose this topic due to my interest in the Italian government, particularly at a point in time when it has been so susceptible to crisis and collapse. The recent rise in populism is a worldwide phenomenon, and Italy — the first Western European country to have a populist majority — can provide insights into the relationship between populism and the economy.

Disagreements over the Italian response to COVID-19 and the use of EU relief funding led to the collapse of the Italian government in January 2021. This has only added to the political and economic instability now typical of Italy and has made this study ever more important.

**Liam Karr**

- Majors: Arabic, Political Science, and History
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Michael Hoffman

## Come Together: The Effects of Exclusion, Its Sources, and Regime Structure on Islamist Parties' Acceptance of Pluralism

I analyzed the history of Islamist parties in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia to assess how their experiences of inclusion/exclusion prompted or hindered their acceptance of pluralism. I find that exclusion — specifically from society not the state — is the best promoter of growth in the long-term ideological pluralism shown by Islamists.

I chose this topic because I'm extremely passionate about organic democracy in the Middle East. I had done previous work on the prospects for Islamic-inspired democracy and wanted to analyze which situations are more likely to bring such hopes to fruition.

**Fenian Kenney**

- Majors: Political Science and Theology
- Minor: French
- Advisor: Mim Thomas

## The Micro-physics of Power: Ritual and Mythology in Capital Punishment

My thesis explores how the power of the state is manifested in the mythology and ritual surrounding the death penalty. I explore how such manifestations have changed over time and across different political structures. I also consider the way in which art, particularly 20th-century film, has historically reflected the existing power structure and contributed to the lore of execution.

I have long been fascinated by the types of political structures that undergird the death penalty and by the ways in which crime and execution are portrayed across different media. After reading the work of Michel Foucault, my interest in writing a thesis that explores the intersection between the political and social theory of capital punishment was solidified.

**Kaya Lawrence**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Global Affairs (Concentration in International Peace Studies)
- Posse Scholar
- Advisor: Jason Springs

**Brick by Brick: Pathing the Way to Prison Abolition**

Bringing an end to mass incarceration requires a different intervention than what has been seen in the history of prison reform. Creating a path to prison abolition that challenges the forces benefitting from oppressive systems requires critical imagination and effective decarceration strategies that can ultimately lead to a world without prisons, instead of simply building a more benign carceral state.

In the movement to end mass incarceration, proposed strategies almost inevitably focus on implementing changes that will result in a better prison system. In other words, these critical discussions restrict themselves to the narrow scope of prison reform. However, such prison reforms have often resulted in worsening the institutional violence of the prison system. A pressing question thus arises: How can effective strategies of decarceration be implemented?



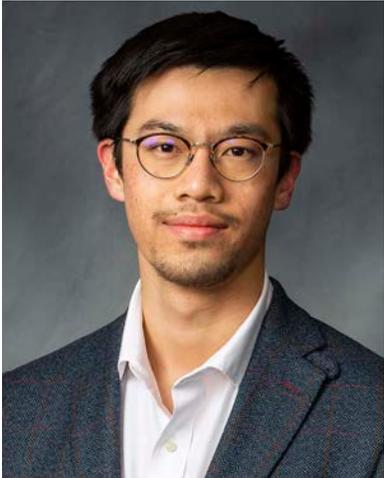
### James Luk

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Asian Studies and Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Alexander Hsu

## Engaged Buddhism in Global Affairs

For my capstone project, I created a podcast on engaged Buddhism. Episode 1, titled *A Conversation Between Engaged Buddhist and Catholic Perspectives*, discusses different approaches to natural law, the impetus for social engagement, demythologization, human development, and interreligious dialogue. Episode 2, *Engaged Buddhist Perspectives in Israel Palestine*, is a discussion on introducing a non-Abrahamic faith perspective to the Holy Land.

The goal of my capstone project is to contribute Eastern concepts, such as engaged Buddhism, to the discourse on global affairs heavily influenced by Western thought and ideas.

**James Luk**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Asian Studies and Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Michel Hockx

## Self-censorship and the Limits of Political Expression in Hong Kong

My thesis for the Department of Political Science explores why people self-censor — and, more specifically, how the National Security Law in Hong Kong influences fear and self-censorship in society. Using ethnographic interviews, I aim to uncover how political ironic discourse emerges from self-censorship.

While conducting research for my faculty advisor as part of the Kellogg International Scholars Program, we encountered the difficulty of defining and proving the existence of self-censorship due to its inconspicuous nature. The implementation of the National Security Law in 2020 induced an atmosphere of extensive worry in Hong Kong, presenting a unique and important opportunity to access the presence of self-censorship in the city.

**Noah Mattapallil**

- Majors: Philosophy and Political Science
- Minor: Business Economics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Jeffrey Harden

**Factors Predicting State Levels of COVID-19**

In this project I attempt to delineate factors that predict a U.S. state's level of COVID-19 case positivity. These include political factors like support for Donald Trump during the 2020 election and social factors like community mobility.

I chose this topic because COVID-19 was an emerging issue at the time, and the United States was weathering the storm far worse than most other nations, despite its massive health care apparatus. That phenomenon fascinated me, so I decided to focus on states as the perfect case studies for how public health responses succeed and fail.

**Patrick McCabe**

- Majors: Political Science and Arabic
- Minor: Peace Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Jaimie Bleck

## Rising Gateways and Gatekeepers: Middle Power and Migration Diplomacy at Global Crossroads

A world connected by trans-regional trends of trade, migration, and security creates opportunities for well-positioned countries at crossroads to exert diplomatic influence. Building a case study of Morocco through expert interviews and multilingual sources, my thesis identifies how the kingdom links cooperation on issues of Africa-Europe trade, Mediterranean migration, and religious diplomacy to its own national interests. By capitalizing on linking these issues, well-positioned countries such as Morocco can rise as diplomatic powers.

I lived in Morocco in 2017 when it was reentering the African Union and beginning an EU-supported migration regularization program. With support from a Kellogg research grant, I returned in 2019 to meet with migrants, activists, and policymakers to learn about the implementation of migration regularization policies. Conversations with a range of people in Morocco convinced me that actors at global crossroads will shape some of the most pressing issues of globalization.

**Sean McConville**

- Majors: Economics and Political Science
- Advisor: Robert Collinson

## Does Collaboration Amongst Service Providers Reduce Homelessness? Evidence from Coordinated Entry

Coordinated Entry is a policy that encourages homeless service providers to operate collectively and work together in fighting homelessness at a local level. In my project, I studied whether Coordinated Entry has been effective in reducing levels of homelessness from its introduction in 2012 to 2019.

I have had the opportunity to work as a research assistant at the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) for two years at Notre Dame. While working on a study related to homelessness, I came across Coordinated Entry and found it fascinating. In talking to my advisor, Robert Collinson, I thought that it would be an interesting topic and one that would benefit from more research.

**Rosemary McGovern**

- Majors: Political Science and Business Analytics
- International Business Certificate
- Advisor: Kyle Jaros

## Titans of the East: Analyzing How Cluster Policy Affects Innovation in Beijing and Tokyo

In this case study, I analyze how the local and national governments of Beijing and Tokyo use cluster policy to promote a strong innovation ecosystem in their cities. By looking closely at the innovation institutions, resources, and environment that their cluster policies interact with and enhance, I was able to form a clearer picture of the sustainability of their innovation policies in the long term.

As a business and political science major, I have always been interested in the intersection between policy and economics — where innovation lies. Cluster policy is heavily reliant on economic scholarship, and governments have been taking a greater role in forming them. I took an East Asian studies class with Kyle Jaros during my junior year that sparked my interest in the East Asian case studies of Tokyo and Beijing.

**Evan Muller**

- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Russian
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Eugene Gholz

## Political Interference on the Military Justice System During Counterinsurgencies

My thesis examines when political interference, such as cover-ups or pardons, is performed on the military justice system in war crimes proceedings during counterinsurgency operations.

As someone who is entering the Marine Corps, hopefully as a judge advocate, I find the intersection of law, morality, and counterinsurgency extremely relevant.



**Evan Núñez**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Advisor: Geoffrey Layman

## Pro-life Democrats: The Solution to Democrats' Structural Disadvantages in Congress

I examined the electoral performances of pro-life Democrats, showing that, on average, they outperform the partisan baseline of their district by 11 percentage points. Then, I outline how Democratic strategists might deploy pro-life Democrats in swing districts and red-leaning districts in order to overcome the structural disadvantages that the Democratic Party faces in the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate.

I chose this topic because I think that the Democratic Party is giving up on around 20 to 30 House seats and a handful of Senate seats every election cycle. While those seats are presently out of reach, they might be competitive if the party ran candidates who reflect the ideological composition of the districts in which they run.

**Maria Paul**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Minor: Journalism, Ethics, and Democracy
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Guillermo Trejo

## The Rise of the Venezuelan Human Rights Movement and What Actors/Changes Are Necessary for Justice to Ensure

The systemic human rights violations perpetrated by the Venezuelan government are widely recorded. In fact, hundreds of organizations have been created to record victims and bring justice. However, the human rights movement is more like a collection of islands than a united front. In countries like El Salvador and Guatemala, a wide and united movement led to important transitional justice reforms. I explore what conditions and actors must change to achieve this in Venezuela.

I first became interested in transitional justice and human rights movements in Latin America after taking Guillermo Trejo's class Dictatorship, Democracy, and War. As I learned about other countries' efforts, failures, and achievements, I began to wonder how these lessons could be applied to Venezuela's case, especially since the United Nations and several other international organizations have published reports about Venezuela's gross human rights violations.

**Tatiana Perneti**

- Majors: Political Science and Management Consulting
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Guillermo Trejo

## Colombia vs. Venezuela: the United States' Differing Approaches to Democracy Promotion

My thesis explores the various ways that the United States provides financial assistance to the neighboring countries of Colombia and Venezuela. Both countries have recently undergone, and continue to face, economic and political crises. Yet, the U.S. has only attempted to ameliorate human rights conditions in Colombia. The majority of aid to Venezuela involves vague democracy promotion programs. My research seeks to determine the root of this discrepancy and the most effective assistance methods.

Growing up in Miami, I met many people who arrived there after leaving an unstable or unjust Latin American country. My mother's family came in the '60s after the Cuban Revolution. I was interested in studying how U.S. involvement can worsen or improve the conditions of Latin American countries. I am pursuing international law and have a passion for human rights. My goal is to discover the best approaches to encourage government accountability.

**Ellen Pil**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Jeff Harden

## State Legislative Attention and Longitudinal Trends in Central Appalachian Opioid Policy

Opioid overdoses have attracted attention from the general public, health care providers, and news media — all of which have pressured government entities to pursue solutions. My thesis examines the relationship between introduced state legislation in the Central Appalachian region and the severity of the opioid epidemic in those states. My results offer insight into legislative attention to the opioid crisis.

As an EMT in the Appalachian region, I have witnessed the devastating impact of the opioid epidemic. My research has given me a strong understanding of state legislative policy approaches to this crisis, which prepares me to serve as a powerful advocate for my patients and my community.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Marissa Plante**

- Major: Political Science
- Minor: Sociology
- Advisor: Elizabeth McClintock

## The Effect of Christian Environments on the Welfare of Gender Nonconforming Students

In this study, I use quantitative and qualitative strategies to compare the welfare of gender nonconforming students attending Christian and secular higher education institutions.

In my junior year, I discovered that the University of Notre Dame is one of many Christian colleges that does not protect gender identity/gender expression in its nondiscrimination policy. This inspired me to investigate the effects of Christian higher education environments on gender nonconforming students.

**Andrew Powers**

- Major: Political Science
- Advisor: Debra Javeline

## The Wind that Carries the Germ: Social Media's Role in Ethnic Riots

A worrying trend of social media posts sparking ethnic rioting has been on the rise in recent years. Singular posts on Facebook and elsewhere have directly led to cities burnt and civilians killed. My thesis attempts to decipher whether these conflagrations are more likely to occur in communities that have more or less social contact with opposing ethnic groups.

I chose this topic because the phenomenon struck me as almost absurd. People in a variety of locations were engaging in deadly communal violence due to discourse occurring in the digital sphere. With social media becoming more widely used in areas with histories of ethnic conflict, seeking to better understand the conditions under which social media induced-riots occur seemed especially relevant.

**Kate Ragan**

- Majors: Music (Concentration in Piano Performance) and Political Science
- Advisors: John Blacklow and John Liberatore

**Senior Piano Recital**

My senior piano recital consists of pieces spanning Baroque, Romantic, 20th-, and 21st-century repertoire. My recital involves both solo and collaborative works, including a piece for piano and viola. Furthermore, it integrates my piano and composition studies under the direction of John Blacklow and John Liberatore, respectively, by including my original piano preludes.

Ultimately, my recital is a culmination of my music education at Notre Dame.

**Claire Reid**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Advisor: David Campbell

## Leveling the Playing Field: An Examination of Pay-to-Play Policies Across America

Extracurricular participation fees, otherwise known as pay-to-play policies, have become increasingly commonplace throughout the United States as school districts grapple with strict budget constraints. At the same time, a growing gap in extracurricular participation has emerged between low- and high-income students. I examined the prevalence of extracurricular fees and their corresponding effects on participation rates to determine the extent to which pay-to-play policies have contributed to this gap.

This topic allowed me to explore my interest in alleviating economic inequality through education-related interventions. Since the benefits of extracurricular activities are far-ranging and numerous, barriers to participation only exacerbate preexisting inequities. After reading about pay-to-play policies in one of my classes, I became interested in how something as seemingly harmless as a participation fee could be having extremely detrimental effects on low-income children.

**Maria Ritten**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Sociology and Poverty Studies
- Advisor: Andy Gould

## Without a Trace: Enforced Disappearances as a Method of Political Repression

Enforced disappearances are defined as the arrest, detention, or abduction of civilians against their will by government officials, those acting on behalf of the government, or non-state actors and the subsequent refusal to disclose information about the disappeared individuals. The theory behind their use is uncommon in political science literature, and my project aims to fill this gap by asking why enforced disappearances are used as a method of political repression.

After first reading about enforced disappearances in Patrick Radden Keefe's book *Say Nothing*, I was struck by the cruelty of the act. Enforced disappearances are tragic because they are simultaneously a physical attack on the disappeared individual and a psychological attack on the victim's family that does not know what happened to their loved one. I was drawn to writing about a topic that affects so many people but is largely unknown.

The senior thesis experience has been extremely rewarding for me. The ability to write about a topic that I care so deeply about, but that I would not have explored in a classroom setting, has been incredible. It has been the perfect way for me to wrap up my undergraduate experience, and I definitely recommend writing a thesis to everyone.

**Simon Roennecke**

- Majors: Psychology and Political Science
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Advisor: Andrew Thompson

## Police and Intergroup Contact

My project involves a study of South Bend, Indiana, residents to observe whether increased frequency or different forms of contact between police officers and community members can ameliorate relations among the two groups.

I chose this topic because it is very timely. In the wake of a large “Defund the Police” movement this past summer, my project aims to use data to determine whether certain policing policies are beneficial or detrimental to members of the community.



**Courtney Sauder**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Poverty Studies
- Advisor: Aníbal Pérez-Liñán

## Political Ideology's Role in State Variation in the Abortion Rate

In my thesis, I tell the story of political ideology's influence over state variation in the abortion rate for the past 40 years. Traditionally, political ideology influences the abortion rate through voting for politicians who enact restrictions. However, it can also play a role in people's personal pregnancy decisions. To test this, I compiled data on 28 variables for all 50 states from 1974 to 2014 and ran linear regressions.

Abortion is one of the most controversial and partisan issues in American politics. I wanted to know what actually influences the abortion rate. Instead of listening to polarized political anecdotes, I let the data be my guide.

**Frederick Schemel**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Constitutional Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: David Campbell

## Nationalization of Politics as NIMBY Antidote

My project explores the potential for nationalized partisan politics to overcome local not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) attitudes, especially with regard to housing issues. I seek to explore if, for example, Democrats in major cities and suburbs would change their minds on opposing housing development if national partisanship were injected into the scenario.

I was influenced by events near my home in Connecticut. I saw a large amount of activism against housing development while, at the same time, the area was moving rapidly toward the Democratic Party. I wanted to understand if the shift toward the Democratic Party, which is generally in favor of development, could change anti-housing development opinions.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Charles Sedore**

- Majors: Political Science and Russian
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Sebastian Rosato

## The Russian Waltz: Predicting Future Russian Alliances

The uncertainty of future U.S.-China relations and the resurgence of Russia on the world stage have raised questions about who Russia will ally with and support. With this issue in mind, my thesis uses a theory of alliance formation to predict future Russian alliances under the different possible circumstances Russia may face in the near future.

If asked who Russia would side with, given the choice between the U.S. and China, many individuals would probably choose China. However, I was not convinced that this answer is correct. It was this dissatisfaction that drove me to find an answer that is supported by data, through my own efforts and understanding of alliance formation theories and the history of Russian alliances.

**Timothy Silva**

- Majors: International Economics (French) and Political Science
- Advisor: Forrest Spence

## Relationship between French Nationalism and Opinions on Frexit

My project explores how the recent rise in right-wing nationalism in France and the increased popularity of right-wing leader Marine Le Pen may have affected the opinions of French citizens on a French exit from the European Union.

France's role in the European Union is even more essential after Brexit. Now, with the rise of nationalism and Le Pen's popularity, it becomes even more important to study how these recent changes influence opinions of the country's role in the international sphere.

**Joseph Simone**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Minor: Digital Marketing
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Dan Lindley

**An Overview of the South China Sea Dispute**

Six countries all claim part of the South China Sea. I assessed the validity of those claims and then assessed the countries' military strength and relationships with China and the United States to predict the likelihood of a violent conflict in the region. I used different international relations theories to aid my prediction.

I interned in China during the summer of 2019, and I became very interested in the country. I thought it was fascinating how so many countries claim territory in the region, yet it never seems to be in the mainstay of the news.

**Daniela Simons Arango**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Digital Marketing and Business Economics
- Advisor: Elizabeth McClintock

## Confinement, Dry Law, and Domestic Violence in Panama During the COVID-19 Pandemic

I explored the effects of enforced confinement and of the imposition and removal of the dry law on reported cases of domestic violence in Panama during the months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In doing so, I examine actions taken by the government and suggest ways in which the situation could have been handled in a more efficient manner, considering other objectives besides the control of infection.

Living in an extremely chauvinistic country, with one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates, I knew this was a matter I wanted to look into. In Panama, sexism is ingrained in the mentality of its people and the workings of its systems. With COVID-19, I knew the issue of domestic violence had become even more serious, and I needed to explore this topic.

**Victoria Smith**

- Majors: History and Political Science
- Advisor: Brian Collier

## Red Cloud Indian School: From Assimilation to Integration

My thesis investigates the 20th-century transformation of Holy Rosary Mission School to Red Cloud Indian School, focusing on the agents that facilitated the shift in the 1960s. I posit that the Jesuits of Pine Ridge Reservation acted as the gatekeepers to the institution of new policy, the U.S. federal government exerted contextual pressure in favor of self-determination, and the Lakota were the primary activists working directly for reform.

I was inspired to conduct a research project on Native American education after learning about the generational trauma and breakdown of traditional culture that came as a result of the aggressively assimilative educational practices of the early 20th century. I wanted to see if there existed any difference between Catholic and federal indigenous education and stumbled across the story of RCIS that details the indigenous reclamation of a historical source of oppression.

**Natalie Ying**

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Supplementary Major: Japanese
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Jazmin Sierra

## Shifting Green Visions: Rising Economic Powers and Climate Change Discourse

My project investigates what conditions cause emerging economic powers to shift their climate change discourses. Major carbon emitters have shown varying commitments to mitigating climate change. While some countries have remained consistently devoted or opposed to the international efforts of climate change mitigation, other countries have shifted their climate change discourses over time.

With more visible extreme climate conditions occurring around the globe, increasing international attention is now devoted to the issue of climate change. However, climate change is mostly still understood through the scientific realm. I hope to connect the scientific and human narratives to contribute to solving arguably the most depressing issue in our world today.

**Lauren Yoo**

- Majors: Political Science and Sociology
- Minor: Korean
- Advisor: Daniel Philpott

## Why States Apologize

My thesis explores the factors that influence states' decisions to apologize for human rights violations they have committed against minority groups. I offer five hypotheses and apply them to two cases — a lack of apology to Black Americans for slavery in the United States and an apology provided by the Australian prime minister to the indigenous people of Australia for the forced removal of indigenous children from their families.

I learned a lot about human rights violations in my political science classes, and I learned that most states do not apologize for their crimes. Since apologizing is such a common method of mitigating tensions in everyday life, I wanted to know why states were so hesitant to provide apologies to their people.

**Emma Ziegler**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Business Economics and Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Advisor: Matthew Hall

## Connecting Low-Income Litigants With Lawyers: Measuring the Impact of Civil Legal Aid

As legal aid organizations have become more strapped for resources over the years, they have turned to innovative methods in order to assist their clients. Often these methods consist of brief service interventions — a statement of advice or instructions for filing paperwork — instead of full representation. My project examines these interventions and the effects they have on case outcomes.

Over the past two years, I have volunteered with a legal aid organization in South Bend. There, I have witnessed firsthand the difficulties that lawyers face when trying to serve such a large client base with limited resources. Thus, I wanted to examine which services and forms of aid allowed the organization to reach as many clients as possible, while still remaining effective.

*Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.*