



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS AND LETTERS



# 2019

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

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

**Hannah Arcentales**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Sociology
- Adviser: Richard Pierce

***Black Music in a White Nation: The Role of Native-Born and Immigrant Black Jazz Musicians in Britain from 1919-1950***

I examined the history of black jazz musicians in Britain, in the broader context of West Indian and African immigration to Britain in the interwar and post-war periods. My research provides insight into the 20th-century black British experience and the role of race in British jazz by contextualizing primary historical and biographical sources. As I traveled to swing dance events during college, I became interested in how communities form around music and dance. While studying abroad, I began researching British jazz history and was intrigued by how local black musicians were marginalized, but also sometimes spotlighted for their race amid the British pursuit for musical "authenticity." The story of these musicians provides a compelling perspective on how Britain engaged with the importation of jazz and immigrant peoples.

*Conducted archival research in London with funding from the Kennedy Family Research Fellowship.*

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**Sabrina Battiston**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Steve Fallon

***Private Property and Class Conflict in King Lear***

I am conducting a new economic reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, observing how economic conditions in Elizabethan/Jacobean England and the rise of capitalism in Europe contribute to how readers understand the text. I have written extensively and engaged with scholarship on Shakespeare during my undergraduate career. I felt that an economic reading was an appropriate means of combining my major and minor.

*Traveled to Oxford, England.*

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### **Joan Becker**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Advisers: Amy Mulligan and Kyle Peets

## **The Book of the Enchanter**

My thesis consists of a hand-printed, hand-bound book of woodcuts, illustrating the legend of King Arthur. It is accompanied by a supplementary paper detailing my sources for the project and my aims in the creation of the book. This project allowed me to synthesize my interests in medieval studies, the history of the book, and metafiction, while using the skills I have developed in studio art classes at Notre Dame. I wanted to comment on the power of narrative and the book form, and the creation of an actual handmade book allowed me to do so in a vivid and compact form.

*Traveled to Wales, Germany, Belgium, and France with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.*

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### August Bonacci

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Italian
- Adviser: Theodore Cachey Jr.

## ***Represented Space and the Space of Representation in Dante's Divine Comedy***

Dante's *Commedia*, as a poem in terza rima, is a space of representation which articulates the represented space of the *aldilà* — an Italian word meaning the beyond, the hereafter, or the afterlife. I explore how meaning is created by the way in which the space of representation articulates the represented space. Dante's contributions to and his incredible poetic synthesis of the disciplines of theology, philosophy, literature, natural science, poetry, and politics make me think he would have been a good Program of Liberal Studies major. Indeed, writing about his *Commedia* provided the perfect bridge between my PLS and Italian majors. Engaging with his profound meditation on the nature of reality has been the greatest intellectual experience of my life.

***Traveled to Rome with funding from the Nanovic Institute for European Studies and the Rome International Scholars Program.***

**Monica  
Coundouriotis**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

***Boredom in 21st-Century America***

I discuss various manifestations of boredom in current American society, specifically among the millennial generation. I also discuss a brief history and philosophy of the emotion and how it has changed over time. I emphasize boredom's prevalence in current society and its implications. I was inspired by a previous paper I wrote that touched on boredom. I became intrigued the more I thought about what boredom is and why it occurs.

**Maggie Dever**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minors: Business Economics and Theology
- Adviser: Clark Power

***Aiding in Moral Development In and Outside of the Home***

My thesis is a historical approach to our understanding of childhood and child rearing, focusing on the intersect of the parent-child relationship and the school system. I love working with children and seeing how they develop. How they have been thought to develop is really interesting to me. I'm also interested in public policy, especially in relation to family and education policy, which I hope to continue exploring after graduation.

**Clare Driscoll**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Jennifer Newsome Martin

***Charles Péguy: The Poet of the In-Between***

This thesis consists of a translation of Charles Péguy's narrative poem "The Mystery of the Holy Innocents" from its original French and a critical commentary on the poet's intellectual influence on Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement in the United States. Charles Péguy has a beautiful approach to theological writing. I was first introduced to his writing through his poem "The Portal of the Mystery of Hope" and was amazed at the simplicity with which he conveyed complex ideas. He was originally a political writer and did not begin writing poetry until the end of his life; the Personalism movement he influenced was important in the development of the ideology of the Catholic Worker.

**Joseph Everett**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Peace Studies
- Adviser: Clark Power

***Solidarity Through Sport: The Virtue of Play as Aiding the Manifestation of the Beloved Community***

By exploring the philosophy of sport, we can discover and implement its potential to develop individual virtues like teamwork, fairness, and respect that consequently mold societal values such as justice, kinship, and solidarity. These are values that contribute to the manifestation of Martin Luther King Jr.'s vision of the "Beloved Community," where relationships are rooted in loyalty, solidarity, and self-giving love. Ever since my dad handed me the sports section of the *South Bend Tribune* when I was 4 years old, my love of sports has never diminished. I wanted to combine the historical arc of our PLS seminar readings — from Homer to King — with peace studies concepts, and this thesis places an appreciation of sport within the context of exploring how we aim to build our everyday community and help everyone to flourish.

**Margaret Feighery**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Peace Studies
- Adviser: Tarek Dika

***An Examination of the Proof of the Corporeal World in Descartes' Meditations on First Philosophy***

I looked into the details of the proof of the corporeal world in Descartes' Sixth Meditation. Historically a confusing and controversial proof, my thesis seeks to determine what concepts presented in the proof might be considered inconsistent within the logical structure of the work as a whole. I loved reading the *Meditations* for my PLS seminar but felt unsatisfied with the Sixth Meditation. I discovered that this is a common sentiment, but found that the scholarship on the matter did not help me accept the proof, nor did it help me understand why I felt it inadequate. So, I decided to try to find out for myself.

**Lauren Fox**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Journalism, Ethics, and Democracy
- Adviser: Stephen Fallon

***Milton's Ovidian Pursuit in Paradise Lost***

In my thesis, I argue that John Milton labels Ovidian pursuit as immoral by having the evil characters in his poem *Paradise Lost* pursue in this fashion. Ovidian pursuit, which I have defined through examination of the stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, includes deception, transformation, and rape. Adam's pursuit of Eve, on the other hand, is the inverse of Ovidian pursuit and Milton's example of a moral pursuit. *Paradise Lost* and *Metamorphoses* were two of my favorite texts I read in PLS, and I wanted to explore the beauty of their poetry in fuller detail. Pursuit jumps out as an obvious theme in *Metamorphoses*. What originally intrigued me most about *Paradise Lost* was Death's pursuit of his mother Sin. Thus, I decided to expand my examination of pursuit in *Paradise Lost* and compare it to Ovid.

**Mary Freeman**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

***Friendship Love's Evolution from the Classical Period to the Post-New Testament Era***

Fundamental aspects of the definition of love of friends have evolved since the Classical Era. My thesis explores how the New Testament acted as a catalyst of this evolution and the tensions created by the change. I chose this topic because I believe that love of friends is one of the things that makes life worth living, and I wanted to become more knowledgeable on this topic.

**Moira Griffith**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

***An Exploration of Self and Linguistic Boundaries of Self-Expression***

My thesis explores questions such as what is the self? How do we express the self to others? How does language facilitate or hinder the expression of our most radically interior experiences? To answer these questions, I analyze one of Emily Dickinson's poems and one of Samuel Beckett's short stories to show how they grapple with this phenomenon of self-estrangement and the linguistic realm we are forced to work in as humans. I chose this topic because I am fascinated by how humans, particularly writers, express themselves through language. I wanted to reveal the the inherent downfalls of language but also its incredible beauty and power to connect us with one another.

**Evelyn Heck**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Thomas Stapleford

***Pedagogy and Progress/History, Epistemology, and Scientific Teaching***

I challenge the assumption that science develops in a linear and cumulative manner by examining the nature of scientific revolutions. The study of such revolutions, however, is peculiarly absent from professional scientific training — how might studying the discipline’s historical development enhance knowledge acquisition and progress within the field? I analyze the limitations of specialized science pedagogy and discuss new possible ways that science can be taught, learned, and practiced. I was inspired by my first Program of Liberal Studies science course. When we studied the nature of scientific revolutions, I was fascinated to learn how new discoveries could cast doubt on what was previously held to be true and lead to the reconstruction of norms within a field. I wanted to learn more about the phenomenon of intellectual revolutions/paradigm shifts. Writing my senior thesis was a fulfilling learning experience. I learned so much about the topic and how to conduct a productive research project.

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



### Mary Grace Henry

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Peace Studies
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Adviser: Jennifer Newsome Martin

## *Illustrating Dante: Sandow Birk and the Critical Representation of Immanent Space in The Divine Comedy*

My thesis is about modern artist Sandow Birk's adaptation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Birk situates Inferno in Los Angeles, Purgatorio in San Francisco, and Paradiso in New York. Placing Dante's poem in a contemporary, American context, Birk advocates for an immanentized and religiously plural reading of it. I studied Dante's *Divine Comedy* in my third Program of Liberal Studies seminar and fell in love with the text. Dante's words evoke such vivid imagery that I was interested to explore how artists interpreted his work. Birk's work, in particular, caught my attention due to his radical redesign of the landscape.

**Tobias Hoonhout**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Economics
- Minor: Constitutional Studies
- Adviser: Steve Fallon

***'Pantomime, Passion, Poison': 150 Years of Scottish Tribalism Epitomized in the Old Firm***

My project centers around a historical analysis of the Old Firm — a soccer rivalry in Glasgow, Scotland, that has espoused competing religious, political, and cultural identities built around two respective clubs, Celtic F.C. and Rangers F.C. Ultimately, I focus on the recent controversy surrounding Scottish legislation passed to proscribe against supporter songs as proof that the origins of the animosity are still prevalent today. As someone interested in the intersections of culture, religion, and sport, the Old Firm is the perfect microcosm to explore larger questions of tribalism and identity. I was also lucky enough to have the opportunity to travel to Glasgow to do hands-on research, which as a budding journalist was something I definitely wanted to incorporate into my project.

***Traveled to Glasgow, Scotland, with funding from the Center for Ethics and Culture and the Program of Liberal Studies Neus Family Senior Thesis Grant.***

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

**Zachary Huber**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Physics
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Tim Machan

***J.R.R. Tolkien and Medievalism: Performance and Portrayal***

My thesis considers the relationship of Tolkien's work, particularly *The Lord of the Rings*, to medievalism — a way of thinking about the medieval world by post-medieval people that is either influenced by or deliberately trying to evoke the medieval for some philosophical, aesthetic, or political purpose. After examining how Tolkien's own work constitutes a medievalism, I explore how Tolkien portrays his characters as creators of medievalisms to drive his narrative. This project grew out of a series of reading groups I did with students in the Medieval Institute and my coursework while studying abroad at the University of St. Andrews. It allowed me to combine my interest in Tolkien with my interest in medieval literature and language in a unique way.

**Jarek Jankowski**

- Majors: Philosophy and Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Theology
- Adviser: Jeff Speaks

***God For Us, Good For Us: A Geachian Account of Divine Goodness***

Inspired by Peter Geach's views on the uses of the word "good," but reconditioned in light of critiques by later thinkers, my thesis defends an attributive theory of goodness and applies it to God in a manner consistent with both reason and the Christian tradition. This topic lies at the bridge between fields — philosophy and theology, historical work and contemporary research, constructive theorizing and deconstructive critique, and more. Our language about God is so important, yet we use it so imprecisely. I hoped this thesis would help clarify religious language for me and for others.

**Benjamin Kilano**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Economics
- Minor: Italian
- Adviser: Theodore Cachey Jr.

***The Stolen Years by Settimia Spizzichino: A Study of Translation and Italian Shoah Testimony***

My thesis is an Italian-to-English translation of an autobiography called *Gli anni rubati* (*The Stolen Years*). The book recounts the arrest, deportation, and experience of Settimia Spizzichino in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps. The project included researching the Shoah in Italy, Spizzichino's life and advocacy, and the nature of the text's unique publication. I chose this translation project because it was an important continuation of the research I performed as a Rome Scholar. The text has never been translated into English before, and even in Italy, it does not have wide readership relative to other Italian Shoah survivors. I hope the project will diffuse the testimony and increase readership of Spizzichino's incredible story.

*Traveled to Rome, Italy.*

**Rachel Kubiak**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Supplementary Major: Mathematics
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

***The Unheimlich Manuever: Sigmund Freud's The Uncanny and Henry James's The Turn of the Screw***

My thesis is an analysis of the literary mode of the uncanny within Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* using Sigmund Freud's own account of "unheimlich" — the unhomely. The uncanny is distinguished between other literary modes such as the weird or the eerie. I chose this topic because of my personal interest in "weird" literature and what makes it so.



# 2019 Senior Thesis Projects

## Harrison Latham

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Italian Studies
- Adviser: Charles Leavitt IV

## *Italian Neorealism*

My thesis examines Italian neorealism, an aesthetic cinematic movement that developed in the 1940s in response to the rise of Fascism, World War II, and the subsequent widespread oppression and impoverishment of the Italian people. I chose this topic because of my interests in film history and Italian culture.

**Victoria Llorens**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Sustainability
- Adviser: Laura Dassow Walls

***Tracing Western Thought and Proposing Adaptations in the Face of Global Change***

My thesis explores the use of language in the Western world that has led to a mindset permitting abuse of the Earth. I propose alternatives to this mindset as we move forward in the 21st century. My topic allows me to combine my Program of Liberal Studies major and my sustainability minor. I am passionate about the environment and shifting our Western perspective.



## **Cristian Magdaleno**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Anthropology
- Adviser: Eric Haanstad

## ***Minimalist Consumerism***

My thesis explores the growth and development of minimalism in mainstream production and whether the rise in minimalism is the result of millennial preferences towards product selection. I chose this topic because I am fascinated with material and consumer cultures, especially among young people, and I wanted to understand why people choose their products, beyond mere marketing tactics.

**Sarah Morris**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Gretchen Reydams-Schils

***Migrant Children, Literacy, and Reading for Joy***

My thesis explores the relationship between literacy outcomes and trauma for children of Latino descent who migrate to the United States. I argue that reading should be seen as much more than a grade to be earned; rather, it can teach empathy, provide comfort, and help address trauma, particularly in migrant populations. Finally, I offer suggestions to orient curriculums toward developing a passion for reading rather than simply a skill. My experiences living and working at Annunciation House, a migrant shelter on the U.S.-Mexico border, showed me the resilience and struggle of migrants, particularly children. In addition, I've always been an avid reader. I wanted to understand how to motivate children to read for more than a grade.

**Joe Nolan**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Jennifer Newsome Martin

***Justifying Genealogy: Louis Dupré's Hermeneutics of Culture***

Launched in the 19th century by Nietzsche, genealogy foregrounds micro-practices and the psychological causes behind systems of control. It makes a virtue of suspicion and a metaphysics of contingency. But this has not prevented Christian philosophers from trying their hand at it. I considered the possibility of a Christian appropriation of genealogy, focusing on Dupré's treatise that defends it. This project integrated several of my interests, including modernity and the question of what comes after it. Also, as a Catholic, I naturally appropriate cultural objects at my disposal to explain the faith in today's terms. This project allowed me to determine whether genealogy can sustain the weight of Christian evangelization of a suspicious, historically aware age. Most importantly, my Program of Liberal Studies education is itself genealogical. I wanted to examine its philosophical foundations.

***Received funding from the Program of Liberal Studies.***

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### **Sarah Ortiz**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Supplementary Major: Classics
- Adviser: Elizabeth Mazurek

## ***Poetic Wanderings in Italy: Ovid's Literary Engagement with Homer and Virgil in The Metamorphoses 14.308-434***

For my thesis, I did a close analysis of about 100 lines from Ovid's Latin epic poem, *The Metamorphoses*. Written around A.D. 8, Ovid's poem is about transformation told through mythology. I focused on the first Italian myth and looked at how the poem engages with its epic predecessors, Homer and Virgil. I first translated parts of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in a Latin class junior year, and I loved it. I've always loved Latin poetry, and I wanted to know more about Ovid's poem in relation to other poets. I was also lucky enough to study in Italy last summer and do some reading there for this project.

***Traveled to Italy with funding from the Program of Liberal Studies Monteverdi Prize.***

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

**Isabella Penola**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Supplementary Major: Theology
- Minor: Constitutional Studies
- Adviser: Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

***The Lukan Paul and the Reconciliation of Rupture: Selective Narrativity in the Acts of the Apostles***

I argue that the book of Acts is a project in showing continuity where there has been major rupture — that the author of Luke-Acts uses the figure of Paul and his conversion as a central point of that continuity while also proposing an ecclesiology that is rooted in the act of unification through narrative construction. I chose this topic as a strange meeting point among my love for the figure of Paul, my interest in Augustine's theory of memory and identity as demonstrated in his *Confessions*, and my dedication to the cause of ecumenism and the act of healing the many ruptures present in Christian life and the Christian church.

**Maria Pope**

- Majors: Neuroscience and Behavior and Program of Liberal Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Robert Rosenbaum

***Origami as Data Separation: An Artificial Neural Network That Folds and Cuts***

I am designing an artificial neural network in which each layer is similar to folding a piece of paper and the final layer is similar to cutting it. If successful, it will greatly simplify the optimization process for binary classification. I chose this project because I want to go to graduate school for computational neuroscience. Working with artificial neural networks is a great way to prepare because it gave me a background knowledge in coding and linear algebra while using many of the same paradigms.

**Andrew Rebholz**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Classical Heritage
- Adviser: Yasmin Solomonescu

***Percy Shelley and Satire***

How does satire function? How ought it function? In Percy Bysshe Shelley's fragment "A Satire Upon Satire," the poet acknowledges how satire must walk a line between the too violent and the uncritical — Shelley wants to apply satire so that he convinces while it critiques, and I explore the unique way he does. I fell in love with Shelley and how he experienced the Italian spirit, which led me to explore his works as a Rome International Scholar last spring. His satire, a very unresearched topic, was something that really enticed me, so I decided to pursue the topic vigorously.

**Hannah Stubbs**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Adviser: F. Clark Power

***How Can We Heal the Harm?: Why Restorative Justice is Necessary for Juveniles***

My thesis explores the effects of discipline in school and how the current practices lead students to the prison pipeline. I assert that it is necessary to use restorative justice practices instead of retributive responses for juveniles. I chose this topic because I was interested in the U.S. criminal justice system, and this led to a desire to learn more about restorative justice.

**Kiera Stubbs**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Adviser: Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

***Fideism in Pascal, Kierkegaard, Kant***

Scholars have classified Immanuel Kant, Søren Kierkegaard, and Blaise Pascal as fideist, supporting the theory that faith is independent of reason and rejecting the notion that God's existence can be proven or His nature known. My thesis explores the question of whether there are different examples of fideism, and if so, whether they are equally valid or if one is superior to the others. Can an understanding of fideism benefit from them all? In the Program of Liberal Studies, we spend a lot of time reading the history of Western philosophy and theology and discussing the mysterious relationship between faith and reason. For my senior thesis, I wanted to get to the bottom of the questions we've been asking for three years — namely, "Can I know, rather than simply believe, that God exists?" and "Is faith rational?"