

College of Arts and Letters — 2017 Senior Thesis Projects



Leah Billion

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Spanish
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

Franz Kafka's Creation of an Uncanny Experience

My thesis is focused on Franz Kafka's works of legal fiction. I delved into his use of horrific and uncanny imagery, which he uses to disrupt the reader's sense of comfort with the world. I ultimately analyze how Kafka crafts for the reader a disturbing, highly sensual experience. He uses this experience to de-familiarize the reader with the real world and the human experience as a whole. I was fascinated by Kafka's creation of a nightmarish, disorienting reality, and I decided to dig deeper into the question of how and why Kafka writes the way he does.

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Edward Bozik

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Pierpaolo Polzonetti

Prison Education Program

I evaluate multiple U.S. prison education programs and provide recommendations for further improvements in the prison system. Additionally, I attempt to provide a philosophical framework for the concept of punishment as a whole. I believe that the U.S. prison system is deeply flawed but not broken. I wanted to shine a light on systems that have a positive impact on inmates and show that they can be justified philosophically.

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Sean Brady

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Denis Robichaud

Illuminating the Multiverse Theory Through Science Fiction Literature

I make an argument for the importance of science fiction's role in connecting the two cultures (arts and sciences) and contributing to the advancement and perfection of human knowledge in ways often underestimated and underappreciated. I've always been an avid science fiction reader because I am interested in predictions of the future, and sci-fi brings the future to light in imaginative and detailed ways. Similarly, I chose PLS because I'm curious about aspects of knowledge we don't yet understand. Studying one of those subjects — the nature of time — led me to the multiverse theory.

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Sarah Brennan

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Finance
- Adviser: Henry Weinfield

Human Instinct and Divine Judgment in The Divine Comedy

I studied *The Divine Comedy* and, in particular, examined the ways in which Dante juxtaposes his poetic structure against the doctrinal demands of Christianity to highlight potential conflicts between the Divine Justice and human feeling. Further, I am looking at how Dante uses the relationship between the pilgrim and poet to create pathos with his readers and to explore man's individual struggle with his own faith. I read *The Divine Comedy* in a seminar, and it was, by far, my favorite piece of writing in PLS.

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Madeleine Cook

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS)
- Adviser: Christopher Chowrimootoo

A Dance of Death and Apollo's Lyre: Stravinsky's Evolving Theatricality

Characterized by stories of violence and rioting, the premiere of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* has become a legendary symbol of the modern reaction to theatricality. Showcasing the excessive the ballet accurately portrays Stravinsky's theatrical tendencies. However, his later work *Apollo* highlights a simplicity in direct contrast to the *Rite of Spring*. What, in the end, is Stravinsky's relationship with the theatrical aesthetic? I find the controversy surrounding the *Rite of Spring* fascinating, and since I am a violinist and former ballet dancer, a thesis involving music and ballet was a perfect fit.

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Cassandra Dinaro

- Majors: English and Program of Liberal Studies
- Advisers: Peter Holland and Steve Fallon

Performing Women in The Winter's Tale

My thesis explores the way that productions of *The Winter's Tale* since 1912 have portrayed their female protagonists. By examining acting choices, technical design, theatrical reviews, and performers' writing, I consider whether various productions can be labeled "feminist." I also argue for the importance of considering feminist contexts in production. In spring 2016, I studied abroad in London. Four months of frequent trips to the Globe Theatre and a reader's pass at the British Library remind me of how much I love Shakespeare. *The Winter's Tale* is a wonderfully frustrating example of some of his best art because of its gorgeous, but obscure, language and its surprising turns. *Traveled to London and Stratford-upon-Avon with funding from the Nanovic Institute.* In some ways, it's a great puzzle.

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Gregory Eagan

- Majors: Arabic and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

The Mood of Entrapment in Joyce's Dubliners

This essay examines the relationship between physical spaces and the treatment of characters' psyches within James Joyce's *Dubliners*, a collection of 15 short stories. The colonial setting of these stories creates a mood of entrapment that intensifies the existing problematic human condition of the mind being trapped in the body.

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Ann Gallagher

- Majors: Classics and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Hildegund Müller

Qui Profert Nova et Vetera: A Commentary on the Carmen de Iona and its Place in the Biblical Epic Tradition

My thesis translates and comments on the Latin biblical epic *Carmen de Iona*. An unfinished rendition of the story of Jonah and the whale, the poem allowed me to undertake an original translation, study the interactions between Christian and classical pagan poetry, and perform hands-on work in paleography, philology, and textual editing. I spent last summer in Monteverdi, Italy, researching what early Christians thought about great pagan poetry, how they justified studying texts like Vergil's, and what Christians to write poems, like the *Carmen de Iona*, in imitation of pagan epic poetry. I also traveled to Rome, Florence, and Siena where Christian artwork and architecture demonstrate the integration of pagan antiquity with Christianity.

Received the Monteverdi Prize from the Program of Liberal Studies for research on Iona

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Kate Hardiman

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)
- Adviser: John Schoenig

School Choice and Human Dignity

My thesis examines the Indiana voucher program's impact on low-income parents. I conclude that these programs enable equality of opportunity and freedom of religion for all parents, regardless of income, and therefore are valuable. I am passionate about education policy and eventually hope to work in this area as either a litigator who defends school-choice programs or a policymaker. I also hope to teach in the Alliance Catholic Education program after graduation, and many schools in which ACE serves have been greatly assisted by these programs.

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Kelly Koerwer

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Medieval Studies
- Adviser: Joseph Rosenberg

Forget Me Not: Archives, Museums, Memory, and Nostalgia

My thesis explores the topic of memory as presented in archives and museums. Both institutions create environments in which things of the past can be remembered. I argue that while archives and museums are mnemotechnics, they do not necessarily speak of the past but rather an idealized past that is entrenched in nostalgia. After a summer internship in Hesburgh Library's Rare Books and Special Collections, the concept of archives intrigued me. I wanted to explore them as a materialization of memory, which led me to questions about why people collect things and the driving force behind the societal memory found in archives and museums.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

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Steven Kos

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE)
- Adviser: Walter Nicgorski

Recovering a Democratic Republic: Wisdom and Consent in the Political Thought of Thomas Jefferson and Leo Strauss

I explore the democratic theories of Thomas Jefferson and Leo Strauss, particularly the surprising similarities in their conceptions of democracy. I became interested in the topic while doing directed readings with Professor Nicgorski during my junior year.

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Warren Kraemer

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Advisers: Peter Casarella and Jennifer Newsome Martin

The Role of the Papacy in Restoring Cuban-American Relations

My thesis details the history of the papacy during the last century in regard to the restoration of Cuban-American relations. Starting with Pope John Paul II and moving to Pope Francis, I trace the important role the Catholic Church plays in international affairs through papal visits and back-door diplomacy. I traveled to Cuba twice before attending Notre Dame and became fascinated with the role religion played in a socialist country.

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Patrick Lyon

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

Myth and Magic: Tolkien's Christian Fairy Story

Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* is one of the most popular and influential books of the last century, yet it tends to be underestimated or relegated to “fantasy” shelves in bookstores. The work is an attempt to construct a myth, or a fairy story, which connects us to a transcendent truth inherent to Christian understanding. I have been a lifelong fan of Tolkien's books, and have felt more and more that *The Lord of the Rings* is almost criminally underestimated. It is arrestingly strange when compared with other works, and its character deserves to be examined.

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Gabriela Malespin

- Majors: Political Science and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Clark Power

Community School Partnerships and their Impact on Latino Student Civic Engagement

Community school partnerships recognize that education reform efforts must address systemic factors — such as poverty, malnutrition, and mental health — in order to effectively help students of low socioeconomic status. In addition, these schools can foster strong bonds among community entities and model appropriate behaviors of civic engagement for students. I examine whether these organizations increase civic participation among Latino students. I wanted to explore whether these programs could function on a larger scale and how school programming could effectively incorporate civic engagement programs.

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Makayla Manta

- Majors: Economics and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Tom Stapleford

The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction: A Comparison of Dracula and The Woman in White

The exploration of the “Other” in 19th-century Victorian fiction is a prevalent theme in gothic and sensation literature. The Other represented all things foreign to experience, reality, and especially the self. In *Dracula*, the Other are vampires, and in *The Woman in White*, they are foreigners. Bram Stoker’s invocation of the supernatural in *Dracula* not only accelerates the period of discovery among the characters, but reveals human truths that Wilkie Collins never touches upon. The novels from Victorian England built a special place in my heart, and I wanted to explore the nuances of the genres at the time.

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Maria Paulina Manzur Martinez

- Majors: Sociology and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Henry Weinfield

The Tragic Nature of Retributive Justice: Punishment and Suffering in Greek Tragedy

Retributive justice is intrinsically tragic because it attempts to compensate the suffering of victims by harming other members of society. Greek tragedy produces tragic feelings because it portrays applications of retributive justice. Ancient Greeks found a way to strengthen citizens' support for the institution of justice by depicting the punishment of criminals as just and necessary. I have always been obsessed with Greek tragedy, and this topic allows me to combine my interest in ancient literature with my passion for justice.

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Hollianne Kaheke Martinson

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Business Economics
- Adviser: Julia Marvin

The Invention of Good Women: Exploring Ideals and their Manipulation in Chaucer's The Legend of Good Women

My thesis focuses on Chaucer's depiction of women as victims of male cruelty or as devoted, sacrificial wives and the implication of equating these traits with "goodness" and "virtue" on the role development of women in society. I've always been interested in the way women are perceived and treated in various periods across the world, and I wanted to take a feminist view on a controversial work regarding women.

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Nicolas Munsen

- Majors: Theology and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Rev. Daniel Groody, C.S.C.

Where Mercy and Justice Meet: A History of Sanctuary

My thesis strives to understand the theological underpinnings of the concept of sanctuary, as it is expressed in the biblical, medieval, and modern eras. My goal is to understand how sanctuary has changed in its usage and to conclude if sanctuary today is a legitimate successor to the tradition of sanctuary. Hailing from Tucson, Arizona — where sanctuary continues to be a salvific reality for people of great need — I wanted to understand more fully the origins and motivations behind this practice.

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Michael O'Callahan

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Declan Kiberd

A Terrible Beauty Deformed: Revisiting the Easter Rising Poets

My thesis explores the legacy of the poets and leaders of the Easter Rising in Ireland. Analyzing nationalism and religious imagery in their poetry, I argue that the poems are more an exploration of an interior crisis than a direct call for religious martyrdom, and I push back against the way their poetry has been read historically. Studying in Dublin during the centenary of the Easter Rising, I discovered the rebel leaders' poetry and found the imagery hugely powerful. Criticism of their poetry is often one-dimensional and ignores the interior conflict, and I wanted to offer a new, poetry-based reading.

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Melchior Perella-Savarese

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Italian (Honors)
- Adviser: Stuart Greene

A Tale of Two Schools: A Comparative Analysis of Public Education in the United States and Italy

I studied the intricate relationship between students in public high schools and their surrounding environments. My essay explored the overarching contexts of each country and its relation to public education. Education is a passion I have fostered over the past four years. I will be teaching with Alliance for Catholic Education after graduation, and I wanted to explore education while abroad.

Conducted research in Rome as part of the Rome International School Program.

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Leah Powers

- Majors: Political Science and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Julia Marvin

Language at its End: The Ninth Circle of Hell and the Celestial Rose in Dante's Divine Comedy

My paper explores the roles that language and non-language have throughout Dante's *Divine Comedy* by examining the two extremes of Dante's spiritual journey — the City of Dis in the *Inferno* and the celestial rose in the *Paradiso*. I read *The Divine Comedy* in a PLS seminar during my sophomore year, and I really enjoyed the text.

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Sizhen Qu

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

Freudian Psychoanalysis of Hamlet's Oedipus Complex

Hamlet's delay in killing Claudius is the central problem of the play, and many critics have come up with different explanations. I wanted to address the problem with Freudian psychoanalysis and demonstrate that Hamlet's Oedipus Complex is the primary cause of his hesitancy. After considering a psychology major and taking some Freud classes during my first year, I wrote about this topic for my second literature tutorial and decided to further develop it for my thesis.

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Abigayle Rhode-Pausina

- Majors: Arabic and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: G. Felicitas Munzel

The Development of Authoritative Methodology: Descartes, Bacon, and the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment

Assessed in relation to a modern consequence, my senior essay examines the philosophical origins of the shift between metaphysics/ethics and scientific inquiry. It begins with a survey of Hellenist practical philosophy, provides an in-depth study of Cartesian and Baconian methodology, and ends with an examination of the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment. It was fascinating to explore the historical origins of scientific inquiry and the shifting role ethical concerns have played over the ages. I was especially interested in examining a modern example where I believe scientific inquiry went too far.

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Anna Schaffer

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Supplementary Major: French
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Henry Weinfield

Cemetery by the Sea

Paul Valéry's *Le cimetière marin*, a classic of 20th-century French poetry, poses a translator with many difficulties, including its rhyme scheme, musicality, and allusions. My thesis is a verse translation of the poem, with an accompanying prose translation and linguistic research. Translating a poem rather than writing an analytical paper allowed me to engage with language, poetic form, and thematic content in a new way.

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Elaine Schmidt

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor: Latino Studies
- Advisers: Peter Casarella and Jennifer Newsome Martin

Un Oído al Pueblo: Finding Grace and Beauty in the Catholicism of the Peruvian Andes

My thesis highlights how Andean spiritual practices and cosmological beliefs have been enculturated into the practice of Catholicism. By interviewing farmers, priests, street vendors, and a fisherman from Chucuito, Peru, I create a cohesive narrative of how locals understand humans' relationship to God, the communion of saints, and how humans are called to live and act in community. After teaching English in Peru last summer, I was struck by how Peruvians approach their faith lives differently than American Catholics. I wanted to see if and how liberation theology has affected the beliefs and practices of rural, impoverished Peruvians. *Traveled to Puno, Peru, with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program and the Flatley Center for Undergraduate Scholarship Engagement.*

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Taylor Seeman

- Majors: Sociology and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Henry Weinfield

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”: An Existential Elegy

I analyze T. S. Eliot’s poem “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” as a deeply pessimistic work. I explore the influence of Eliot’s life on the poem, as well as deleted sections that did not appear in the final draft. My goal is to determine why the poem profoundly affects the reader. Why are we equally drawn to poems with such negative subject matter? How do these poems retain beauty and value despite their pessimism? Eliot’s poem is not only one of my favorite works, but also one of the most popular poems of the 20th century.

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Megan Toal

- Majors: Spanish and Program of Liberal Studies
- Adviser: Juan Vitulli

The Representation of Women in Baroque Spanish Literature

Women in Baroque Spanish literature are typically depicted as incredibly oppressed. While that is not entirely untrue, Baroque Spanish women actually had more complicated lives. I studied how Baroque male and female authors depicted Spanish women. I love analyzing books and learning about the representation of women. I took a Spanish class two years ago that featured novellas by Cervantes and Maria de Zayas and decided that I wanted to write my thesis on their works.