



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2022

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

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Greetings!

I'm delighted to present this collection highlighting senior thesis projects completed by students in the College of Arts & Letters Class of 2022.

Within these pages, 280 seniors describe their 298 theses, capstones and creative projects. This package represents countless hours of original research, practice, analysis, interviews, writing, and creative work.

The projects detailed here are as interesting and diverse as the students who chose them. They include exploring the foundation for cluster algebras, writing a musical comedy, studying the role of faith in political participation, preserving an endangered language, and examining discrimination in the mortgage lending market.

During these endeavors, seniors have worked one-on-one with their advisors, who have provided valuable support, expertise and guidance. Many students also have benefited from generous grants that enabled them to travel, view archived manuscripts, purchase materials, and gain knowledge and cultural experiences. They have also demonstrated tremendous resiliency throughout the many challenges that COVID-19 has posed to their undergraduate careers — including the ways it forced many of them to reshape or recalibrate their projects.

Each year, seniors affirm that both the process and knowledge gained are invaluable, and often transformative.

I am proud of these seniors for pursuing their interests, making discoveries, and contributing to academic scholarship and the creative arts. I'm also extremely pleased that the percentage of Arts & Letters seniors completing theses, capstones, and creative projects has increased from 8% in 2008 to approximately 40% the last few years.

I hope that you enjoy learning about their projects as much as I have.

Sarah A. Mustillo

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I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean
College of Arts & Letters

**Lincoln Bargender**

- Majors: Philosophy and German
- Minor: Constitutional Studies
- Advisor: Robert Audi

The Complementarity of the First Two Formulations of Kant's Categorical Imperative

My thesis addressed the question of whether Immanuel Kant's first two formulations of the categorical imperative are equivalent and, thus, whether his ethical theory can rightly be called a master principle theory. I examined the first two formulations of the categorical imperative — the rational universalizability and humanity formulations. I argued that they are complementary to, rather than distinct from, one another, which makes Kant's ethical theory, with relation to the first two formulations of the categorical imperative, a master principle theory.

I decided to write about Kant's ethical theory because I have found his moral system the most appealing in my study of moral philosophy, and I wanted to reconcile this seeming contradiction in his moral philosophy between the claim that the categorical imperative is the sole principle of morality and the categorical imperative being presented in various formulations.

**Megan Brinkman**

- Major: Political Science
- Minors: Russian Studies and the Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Allan J. and Reda Radwan Riley Scholar
- Advisor: Dan Lindley

Never Say Never: Analyzing the Effectiveness of 'No Negotiation' Policies in Minimizing Terrorist Group Violence

I hoped to answer the question of under what conditions will “no negotiation” policies alter terrorist group strategies. My research focused on why terrorist groups pursue cooperation or escalation with the state in the face of “no negotiation” policies. Finally, I was curious what predictive power these questions hold for ongoing conflicts, more specifically with organizations operating in Central Asia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including the Taliban and the Islamic State–Khorasan Province (ISIS-K).

My coursework through the Notre Dame International Security Center and with the Program in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies encouraged me to consider which factors determine the resiliency of violent non-state actors. In particular, I am interested in how the communication of state intentions affects the strategy of insurgent and terrorist groups.

Kate Connolly

- Majors: International Economics (Russian) and Political Science
- Minors: Computing and Digital Technologies and European Studies
- Advisor: Forrest Spence

Impact of the 2014 Amendment of Federal Law No. 115-FZ on Russian Migration

I did an economic analysis of the impact of a 2014 migration policy change on Russian immigration numbers, specifically on the Commonwealth of Independent States, to see if the policy was effective in bringing in more economic migrants into the Russian Federation.

I am passionate about migration topics and find Russia's approach to migrant policymaking and control to be unique. I believe that understanding how migration policy functions can allow governments to improve policy and allow for more humane management of migrant flows.

**Kate Connolly**

- Majors: International Economics (Russian) and Political Science
- Minors: Computing and Digital Technologies and European Studies
- Advisor: James McAdams

The Constitution as an Authoritarian Tool: Orbán and Hungary

This was a case study of Viktor Orbán's rise to power in Hungary and how he evolved as an authoritarian leader. I identified key characteristics that he exhibits as a leader, and how these characteristics are reflected through his interactions over time with the Hungarian constitution.

I believe that populism and democratic backslides are the biggest threats to international peace. Understanding how authoritarian leaders come to power and how they gain influence is growing even more relevant, and I believe that analyzing Orbán's rise to power can contribute to understanding the populist phenomenon.



Catherine Fitzpatrick

- Major: International Economics (German)
- Supplementary Major: Applied and Computational Mathematics and Statistics
- Minor: History
- Advisor: Forrest Spence

The Effect of the 2016 Gender Quota on Female University Enrollment in Germany

In 2015, Germany passed the "Frauenquote," which required 30% female representation on supervisory seats as of 2016. This applied to boardrooms of publicly listed companies that have a 50/50 co-determined supervisory board. The effects of this policy on female human capital decisions was examined using a difference-in-differences empirical strategy. Specifically, women's enrollment to business schools was compared to men's before and after the implementation of the policy. I chose this topic because gender quotas and policies to enforce diversity are controversial and there is a lack of evidence of the effects of such policies.



Alex Ford

- Majors: English (Concentration in Creative Writing) and Theology
- Minor: Russian Studies
- Advisor: Xavier Navarro Aquino

Nor the Bee: A Novel

This literary fantasy novel is a parable about the Church disguised as an adventure novel about magical treasure-hunting teens, where magic is an allegory for queerness, farming is an allegory for ministry, and hidden treasure is an allegory for erased history and lost ancestry. The concept for this book was born in 2017, and it has gone through many iterations and transformations since, but the central image remains the same: A boy under a big blue sky wants to be rid of the magic in his hands. This is a book for and about people with parts that don't fit.

To paraphrase the late James Baldwin's words about his debut novel, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, which incidentally also was about faith, youth, and Americana, this book is the one I had to write if I am ever going to write anything else. It's the book I wished I had as a teenager, a summary of colors I've seen and questions I haven't answered. I am very excited to integrate my artistic pursuits with my academic career in the form of a thesis.

The long winter break we had in 2020-21 provided extra time to write the first 100 pages of this novel. Special thanks to my mom's coworker who helped me recover the first 56 pages when my computer crashed trying to download *World of Warcraft* in a fit of cabin fever.

**Clare Hillen**

- Majors: Political Science and Russian
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Christina Bambrick

Russian Foreign Agent Law

In my thesis about Russian foreign agent law, I discussed how the term “foreign agent” has developed and changed over time, and how the law has impacted free speech in Russia. I explained the Soviet Constitution and laws regarding “enemies of the state” and explored how this term is similar and different to the modern foreign agent law in Russia. I analyzed the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the law itself, and Constitutional Court opinions regarding the law.

I major in political science and Russian and became interested in the foreign agent law after speaking with Russians and former Soviet citizens. I am very interested in how the legal and constitutional aspects of the foreign agent law relate to the legal philosophies of the Soviet Union and Russia, and how the legal system is utilized in the name of protecting national security.

**Katherine Mansourova**

- Majors: Finance and Political Science
- Minor: Russian
- Kellogg International Scholars Program
- Advisor: Susanne Wengle

Russia's Pursuit for Digital Sovereignty and its Effectiveness

Russia has made a dramatic shift in how it regulates cyberspace over the last decade. Regulations have become more overall stringent over time, yet it is notable that the Russian government has not treated each private actor with the same severity. This study examined the uneven ways in which the government has pursued digital sovereignty, and it answers questions that arise about the effectiveness of Russia's digital sovereignty policy.

I chose this topic because I wanted to combine my interests in political science and business into one project that is relevant in today's environment. The relationship between the Russian state and these private actors in the digital sphere has several important implications in Russia and beyond.

**Brigid Meisenbacher**

- Major: Economics
- Supplementary Major: Mathematics
- Minor: German
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Kirk Doran

The Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Economic Resources of Unauthorized Immigrants

I estimated how increased immigration enforcement has impacted the public benefits usage of unauthorized immigrant households in the last decade to further investigate the relationship between enforcement and take-up. I am interested particularly in public benefits addressing food insecurity, health care, and financial insecurity.

I used empirical methods that combine the likely unauthorized status with state-level immigration enforcement activity to determine if variation in enforcement leads to variation in benefits usage for these households. Research on households with unauthorized immigrant parents indicates that children of these households are vulnerable to several risk factors associated with their parents' unauthorized status. Additionally, national immigrant enforcement policy has faced many reforms in the last decade that provide a natural context for further exploration into public benefits and immigration.

**Ana Miravete**

- Majors: Economics and Russian
- Minor: Computing & Digital Technologies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Jeffrey Campbell

Predicting Cybersecurity Attacks and the U.S. Response to Cyber Threats

My thesis looked at cyber attacks from the past 20 years that exceeded more than \$1 million. I analyzed the Department of Defense's spending on cybersecurity since the 2000s and analyzed if there is a way to predict cyber attacks on the United States and around the world.

I chose the topic because of my interest in cybersecurity. I learned about its importance at my job as a digital forensics analyst with Notre Dame's Cyber Crimes Unit. Working as a cyber incident response associate during the summer, I was exposed to the detrimental effects of cyber attacks and I wanted to further explore if there were trends as to why specific targets were chosen.

**Naya Tadavarthy**

- Majors: Studio Art (Concentration in Painting) and German
- Minor: History
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisors: Denise Della Rossa and Martin Lam

Once Upon an Author: A Children's Book on Gisela von Arnim

I wrote and illustrated a children's book about Gisela von Arnim, a 19th-century German author who published proto-feminist fairy tales and founded a female-focused literary circle as a teenager. My fairy tale-style biography with watercolor illustrations subverts traditional gender tropes.

Geared toward students in mid-to-late elementary school, I hope the book empowers young people to share their narratives through their own creative process, fostering the same sense of personal and artistic agency that von Arnim and I demonstrate by telling tales.

I have wanted to write and illustrate a children's book since elementary school, and this thesis offered the perfect opportunity to combine my majors in studio art and German and minor in history.

Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program to take a children's book illustration course at the Rhode Island School of Design during summer 2020.