



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2023

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

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Hello, friends!

I am thrilled to present the 2023 College of Arts & Letters Senior Thesis book, highlighting the 226 students who devoted a significant portion of their final year at Notre Dame to producing an original work of research or creativity.

While reading these synopses, I've been delighted to see that a number of students were again able to travel — throughout the state and around the world — to inform original research and enrich their experience. I hope that you enjoy perusing these yearlong projects. They showcase the academic and innovative skills, as well as the wide-ranging talents and interests, of the Class of 2023.

For instance, students visited the Peace Walls in Ireland, translated a portion of the *Odyssey* into the Hawaiian language, staged a late-night comedy show, analyzed the function of the coxsackie-adenovirus receptor, tested the accuracy of predicting commodity spot prices, designed sustainable dental floss, examined political rhetoric, performed a recital that included *Quatuor pour la Fin du Temps: III. Abîme des oiseaux*, and studied minimal surfaces within differential geometry.

As is the case every year, I'm grateful for the faculty members who have so generously shared their expertise and provided support to students undertaking this invaluable undergraduate academic experience.

While I will miss these seniors, individually and collectively, I am heartened that they'll continue to follow their dreams, contribute to scholarship, and serve their communities. Just as they've made the University of Notre Dame a better place, I'm confident they'll make the world a better place.

Sarah A. Mustillo

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

**Sarah Chong**

Hometown: Chattanooga, Tennessee

- Major: Russian
- Minor: Compassionate Care in Medicine
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Cindy S. Bergeman

The Relationship Between Perceived Clinical Compassion and Health Outcomes Across Population Subgroups in Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan

This project investigates the relationship between perceived clinical compassion and health outcomes across population subgroups in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan. It evaluates trends in clinical compassion and health outcomes scores across different demographics, the relationship between clinical compassion and health outcomes, and the potential modulating effects of demographics on this relationship. Differences in clinical compassion scores and health outcomes were predicted between ethnicities due to understanding of variances in social support and access to medical care.

Last summer, I traveled to Kyrgyzstan — a diverse multi-ethnic country due to its history as a country of the Soviet Union and its borders with many culturally distinct countries. For six weeks, I lived with a host family and attended a Russian language school, which helped me complete my research project.

I chose this topic because understanding trends of perceived clinical compassion and health outcomes scores across all demographics is important to guiding and informing low-income multi-ethnic countries about improving the quality of health care, especially for vulnerable populations. I hope to continue researching this topic in medical school and afterward to contribute to global health care.

Traveled to Kyrgyzstan and received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**Abigail (Abie) Craff**

Hometown:

Albuquerque, New Mexico

- Majors: German and Economics
- Cathy and Jack Brennan Family Scholars Program, Glynn Family Honors Program, and Notre Dame Scholars Program
- Advisor: Mark Roche

Early German Cinema as a Model for Hitchcock's Pure Cinema

My thesis explores the impact of Weimar-era German cinema on Alfred Hitchcock, who spent many of his early years working in Germany and learning from great German film directors like Fritz Lang and F.W. Murnau. The German expressionist techniques had a deep impact on Hitchcock's style and films. I traveled to Berlin to conduct research in the Deutsche Kinemathek (German Film Museum). I viewed documents in the archives pertaining to the films I am writing about, and used the microfilm machine to look through film magazines from the 1920s and 1930s.

I chose this topic because I took a class my sophomore year titled The Cinematic World of Alfred Hitchcock. I fell in love with Hitchcock films and later took several German classes with the same professor, Mark Roche. In these classes, I learned about German cinema and how Hitchcock got his start in Germany. Professor Roche suggested this topic for my thesis, as it connected with my interests in German, Hitchcock, and cinema.

Traveled to Berlin and received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program and Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

**Eoghan Fay**

Hometown: Dublin, Ireland

- Major: History
- Minors: German, Italian, and European Studies
- Advisor: Ian Ona Johnson

'More of the Fugitive than of the Scarlet Pimpernel:' Hermann Goertz and Irish Neutrality & Sovereignty in the Second World War.

My thesis investigates the mission of Nazi operative Hermann Goertz to Ireland during World War II as German liaison to the Irish Republican Army. Goertz's work with the Irish Republican Army drove one of the largest national security operations in Irish history. His intrigues undermined Irish neutrality and sparked panic of a German invasion. Eventually, the counterintelligence efforts to capture Goertz succeeded and, ultimately, demonstrated how Ireland defended its still-new sovereignty in World War II. During summer 2022, I traveled to Dublin to conduct archival research on the Goertz mission. I reviewed records from the National Archives of Ireland, the Archives of University College Dublin, and the National Library of Ireland. I also had the fortune to become the first researcher to access the fully cataloged military intelligence files on Goertz at the Irish Military Archives in Cathal Brugha Barracks.

The Goertz mission was a natural choice for my thesis, as it combined military history, Irish history, and my family's past. My great-grandmother's neighbors, the Farrell sisters, harbored Goertz. My great-grandmother maintained there was "something funny" about them. Imagine my delight when I found a police report calling the sisters "central to the conspiracy [to assist Goertz]."

Traveled to Dublin and received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts, Nanovic Institute for European Studies, and the Department of History Dingens Research Award.

**Lingxiao (Linda) Gao**

Hometown: Beijing, China

- Major: History
- Supplementary Majors: German and Asian Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program, Greater China Scholars Program, and Globally Engaged Citizens Program
- Advisor: Mark Roche

American, German, and Chinese Rip Van Winkle: The Transnational Tale of an Anachronistic Traveler

I trace the transnational travel of the Rip Van Winkle archetype — an anachronistic long sleeper, a “refugee” from another historical reality — from its German folktale origin to post-revolutionary America, to late 19th-century China. I illustrate how the story’s internal logic became replicated in its cross-cultural reception history, where configurations of alternative spaces and times served to resist the lineal, progressive temporality and to lodge experiences of anachronism, displacement, and nostalgia.

Based on my studies of German (I traveled to Germany to study the German language), Chinese, and American literature, this project reflects my interest in transnational literary encounters and human experiences of temporality, especially during times of dynastic changes, discontinuities, and traumas. The project also prepares me for my future Ph.D. studies in comparative literature. The project’s initial idea and inspiration came from my conversation with Professor Nan Z. Da in the Department of English. I also received generous help regarding translations of classical Chinese texts from Professor Xiaoshan Yang in the Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures.

Traveled to Germany and received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**Joseph (Joey) Jegier**

Hometown: Charlotte, North Carolina

- Major: Philosophy
- Supplementary Majors: Education, Schooling, and Society and German
- Globally Engaged Citizens Program
- Advisor: Maria McKenna

Exploring, Deciding, Becoming: Discernment at the University of Notre Dame

This thesis investigates the nature of discernment at the University of Notre Dame. Research, including interviews and focus groups, center around questions of how students decide upon careers and courses of study. After speaking with 18 faculty members and more than 30 students, several themes emerged. People, time to reflect, and experiential learning are important parts of the discernment process. Factors that hinder discernment include fear of the unknown, social pressures, and lack of time.

I chose this topic because I experienced an unusual discernment journey. I began my undergraduate studies as an engineering major. After one year, I switched to philosophy and added an ESS supplemental major. For my thesis, I want to discern the common factors that lead students to make wise decisions about their futures.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

**Alexis Kelly**

Hometown:

Newport Beach, California

- Majors: Art History and Psychology
- Minor: German
- Sorin Scholar Honors Program
- Advisor: Tatiana Reinoza

Framing Graciela Iturbide: Representations of Indigeneity in Mexican Photography from the 19th Century to the Present

In this project, I frame the work of contemporary photographer Graciela Iturbide with a historical lens, using comparisons to Hugo Brehme and Paul Strand, and I consider how she perpetuates and subverts anthropological representations of Indigenous people from early Mexican photography.

I chose this topic after I saw an exhibition of Iturbide's work in Paris. (While studying abroad in Heidelberg, Germany, I went to Paris to see Heliotropo 37 at the Fondation Cartier.) I was struck by the way she engages with the history of Mexican photography in her work, which I was able to recognize due to my role as a research assistant in the photography department at the Snite Museum of Art. Over fall break, I also went to Chicago to see more of Iturbide's work at the National Museum of Mexican Art.

Traveled to Paris and to Chicago, and received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

**Benjamin Malloy**

Hometown: Naperville, Illinois

- Majors: French and Political Science
- Minor: Russian
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Alison Rice

The Influence of French Colonialism on the Legal Systems of the Maghreb: A Comparative Analysis of Personal Status Law and the Death Penalty

The Maghreb, consisting of the countries of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, were formerly under French colonial rule and incorporated numerous aspects of French culture and law into their society. My thesis examines laws that came from the French tradition and the legal convergence and divergence from traditional Islamic systems. Tracing the colonial history of the Maghreb, my thesis reports the extent these nations “Westernized” under French rule or turned more toward Islamic traditions after independence.

**Elizabeth (Liz) May**

Hometown: Boston, Massachusetts

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Russian
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Susan Rosato

Oil in International Relations

This project investigates the connections between oil and conflict on the international stage. More specifically, it investigates the different conditions under which petroleum net-exporting and net-importing states will instigate conflict in connection to oil.

I took a great class with Professor Rosemary Kelanic on the Geopolitics of Energy and the discussions about oil and conflict were of particular interest to me. Combined with my Notre Dame International Security Center thesis requirement, this topic stood out to me as an obvious choice.

**Michael O'Loughlin**

Hometown: Norfolk, Massachusetts

- Majors: Political Science and Economics
- Supplementary Major: German
- Globally Engaged Citizens Program
- Advisor: A. James McAdams

Surprise, Surprise: Explaining the Unexpected Persistence of the Alternative for Germany

In my senior thesis, I offer an explanation of the unexpected persistence of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), Germany's largest populist, radical-right party, and the first far-right party to enter German parliament since World War II. I examine several points during the party's 10-year history, at which many could have predicted the party's extinction. I evaluate key hypotheses which may explain the continued success of the party despite the challenges it has faced.

During my semester abroad in Germany, I witnessed the 2021 federal election firsthand and visited Dresden, Leipzig, and Berlin to interview journalists, political scientists, government officials, and politicians. Through conversations with friends and peers, I became fascinated by the rise and persistence of the AfD. After returning to Notre Dame, I felt motivated to write my senior thesis about the often-surprising story of the AfD.

Traveled to Germany and received funding from the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.