



Olivia Chen

Major in Anthropology

Minor in Constitutional Studies

Adviser: Gabriel Torres

“Fishing and Sense of Place: The Landscape of Edisto Island”

My thesis explores how inhabitants of Edisto Island, South Carolina, construct a localized selfhood, or sense of place, through the cultural activity of fishing. I have always found the concept of fishing very interesting, and I feel fortunate to have been able to combine this interest with my love of the fascinating Edisto Island.



Alexis Palá

Major in Anthropology

Minor in Theology

Adviser: Vania Smith-Oka

“No Somos Animales: Stigma, Discrimination, and Adults with Intellectual Disabilities in Spain and Chile”

I evaluated the opportunities afforded to adults with intellectual disabilities in Spain and Chile. In particular, I focused on societal perceptions and feelings of inclusion to discover if adults with intellectual disabilities continue to experience discrimination within their respective communities. I became interested in this research because my older sister, Lauren, has Down’s Syndrome, and in high school I finally realized the ways that I had discriminated against her growing up. During my first year at Notre Dame, I had the opportunity to live in a L’Arche community in Canada, which inspired me to conduct a cross-cultural thesis study and explore the opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities in other countries.



Shella Raja

Major in Biological Sciences

Minors in Anthropology and Sustainability

Adviser: Susan Blum

“Aquaponics Across the Spectrum: Bridging Science Education to STEM-Based Careers and Eco-Stewardship”

I have designed a STEM-based sustainability and aquaponics after-school program for local sixth to eighth graders in collaboration with Green Bridge Growers, St. Mary’s College, and IUSB. The curriculum is designed for students with autism spectrum disorder and for “neurotypical” students. It features hands-on activities and iPad technology. I wish I had learned about sustainability at a much younger age, as well as how to think about the environment in new ways. My goal in choosing this topic was to help local students engage in sustainability and innovation and to build a stronger partnership between Green Bridge Growers and Notre Dame.



Rebecca Mayus

Major in Anthropology

Major in Pre-Health Studies

Minor in AL/SC Honors Program

Adviser: Susan Sheridan

“A comparison of genetic and morphometric sex determination techniques in a commingled collection from Byzantine St. Stephen’s monastery, Jerusalem”

The St. Stephen’s skeletal collection represents approximately 250 individuals interred at a Jerusalem monastery during the 5th to 7th centuries AD. The commingled nature of this collection makes it extremely difficult to construct accurate demographic profiles. This study sought to overcome the obstacle of commingling in regard to sex determination by employing a variety of nonmetric and metric

morphological techniques. Additionally it attempted to use ancient DNA testing as a method by which to confirm the results of morphological analyses. The study found that nonmetric traits consistently suggest a preponderance of males in the collection; this finding is consistent with historical accounts of a Byzantine monastery at the site. The lack of known-sex individuals in the collection prevents the construction of discriminant functions, meaning that metric traits cannot currently be used for sex determination. Ancient DNA, while present in teeth in the collection, is not in a good enough state of preservation to yield meaningful results regarding sex determination.