

College of Arts and Letters — 2016 Senior Thesis Projects



Mark Brahier

- Major in Biological Sciences
- Minor in International Development Studies
- Adviser: Rahul Oka

“Going Green: Unintended Consequences in Informal Sector Recycling”

My thesis examines unintended consequences in informal sector recycling in a garbage dump community outside Granada, Nicaragua. My research suggests that the global recycling movement is a factor in decreasing incomes among garbage pickers, which impacts their lives in many ways—from nutrition and health care to education and housing. The IDS minor inspired me to choose an interdisciplinary research topic. I worked with a partner organization in Granada for this project, and I hope to continue in this field after graduation. I will be presenting my work in the plenary paper session of the annual Society for Economic Anthropology Conference in Athens, Georgia, and publishing the paper in the *Journal for Economic Anthropology*.

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Steven Goicoechea

- Major in Anthropology
- Supplementary Major in Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Adviser: Lee Gettler

“Social Support, Rank, and Testosterone in Performance Art”

I followed an improv comedy group to assess the interactions between social support, rank, and testosterone. Performance art provides a unique study population because group members compete to be cast over their peers, but must be collaborative to do so. I asked study participants to rate friendships within the group and to rank other members based on importance to the group, and I measured salivary testosterone in all study participants. Previous research shows that high levels of testosterone are advantageous during competition and public performance, while low testosterone is correlated with nurturing and empathetic behaviors. I wanted to investigate the fluidity of competitive and cooperative behaviors.

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Teresa Kennedy

- Major in Anthropology
- Supplementary Major in Peace Studies
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Adviser: Gabriel Torres

“Lo Que Quieren Es un Espacio de Dignidad”: How Land Shapes Notions of Identity and Human Dignity in Traditional Communities”

My thesis focuses on how notions of identity and human dignity emerge in traditional cultural settings in Chile and England. Both of these case studies are based on fieldwork I did with individuals with Mapuche heritage in Chile and with shepherds in the Lake District of England. I went to Chile with a different research topic in mind, but what emerged from speaking with people once I arrived was how nebulous and confusing the term “Mapuche” is within Chile. I was inspired to include the England case study based on my time in the Lake District and because of its links to the concept of indigeneity.

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Carlisia McCord

- Majors in Anthropology and Arabic
- Advisers: Gabriel Torres and Meredith Chesson

“Social Mobility and the Military”

My thesis seeks to capture the change in social mobility for African-American soldiers in the U.S. military over time. I compared archaeological and archival evidence of upward social mobility among the Buffalo soldiers at Fort Davis, Texas, with ethnographic evidence collected from current African-American male veterans. By making this comparison, I was able to reach a more well-rounded understanding of sociocultural continuities, race, and identity. After reading Laurie Wilkie’s *The Archaeology of Mothering* in an Archaeology and Gender course, I was compelled to explore how evidence of everyday life could point to the construction of identities and communities. After two summers working on California-Berkeley’s Fort Davis Archaeology Project, I wanted to delve further into the subject.

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Caitlin McCreary

- Major in Program of Liberal Studies
- Minor in Anthropology
- Adviser: Andrew Radde-Gallwitz

"The Devil in the Details: Interpreting Misconceptions About Doctrinal Development"

I examined the way the Catholic community views doctrinal development and how changes within the Catholic Church reflect on the decisions of the Papacy and the clergy. Using documents written during the Second Vatican Council on the doctrine of religious liberty, I explored how a misunderstanding of the Church's capacity for development can impact the acceptance of a doctrine and how it is put into practice. As someone who is in her 16th year of Catholic education, I had always been frustrated by what I knew of the Catholic Church's history. I took this as my opportunity to finally research the things I had always questioned but never fully understood.

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Emma Nalin

- Majors in Anthropology and Music (Vocal Performance)
- Adviser: Karen Richman

“Spiritual Gifts in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Community”

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement, with roots in Latino Catholicism and Christian Pentecostalism, values the experience of spiritual gifts as a reflection of a personal relationship with the divine. Among these gifts are healing, prophecy, and speaking in tongues. My thesis considers spiritual gifts in the light of anthropological theories of the non-spiritual gift, in which gifts serve to create and maintain interpersonal relationships. The Catholic Charismatics present an energetic revival for a religious tradition with a reputation for emotional restraint. As a case study, Latino Charismatic Catholicism was particularly interesting in its leadership opportunities for the laity.

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Thomas Rieth

- Major in Anthropology
- Supplementary Major in Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Adviser: Susan Blum

"Fear of Failure in Elementary School Children"

I am studying how the U.S. education system creates a fear of failure in many elementary school children. Due to the extreme pressure to succeed, many students develop a fear of school. This fear has many negative consequences and can discourage students from wanting to learn. I became interested in this topic because I volunteer with grade school children in the South Bend area. While working with these students, I noticed that many of these students have become discouraged and learned to dislike school. I wanted to understand how school can cause these students to become so frustrated and fearful of education.

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Daphne Reynolds

- Majors in Anthropology and Economics
- Adviser: Jada Benn Torres

“Brothers Yesterday, Brothers Today: An Ethnohistory of the Three Fires Confederacy Among the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi”

This study examined the nature of the relationship between the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, Odawa, and Ojibwe based on linguistic similarities, a historical socio-political alliance, and the possibility of a common ancestor. If this is indeed the case, then there should still be connections between these groups. I was interested in learning more about the Pokagon because of my time as a member of the Native American Association at Notre Dame.

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Molly Seidel

- Major in Anthropology
- Minor in Sustainability
- Adviser: Gabriel Torres

“Connectivity Along the Ice Age Trail”

I analyzed how trail networks, such as the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, influence social and environmental connectivity within nearby communities. Last summer, I worked with the Ice Age Trail Alliance in Cross Plains, Wisconsin, on trail building and community-outreach projects. I was amazed by how the trail brings people together and encourages greater environmental sustainability. Seeing this made me want to investigate the positive effects the trail had on its users.

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Victoria Sluka

- Major in Anthropology
- Minor in Studio Art
- Adviser: Ian Kuijt

"International Intellectual Property Law & Traditional Craft Technologies: A Case Study"

Using historical looms and weaving paraphernalia from around the world, I examined how modern intellectual property law succeeds and fails to protect traditional technologies. I also considered the cultural incongruities between Western intellectual property concepts and traditional concepts of ownership. I intend to study traditional crafts as an experimental archaeologist. I chose to investigate this because of an experience I had in Tanzania. A Maasai woman was reluctant to teach Westerners the method of producing traditional jewelry because she feared we would steal the knowledge and outsell her and her tribe. I am presenting my thesis at the annual Society for American Archaeology Conference in Florida on April 7, 2016.

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Connor Velasco

- Major in Anthropology
- Adviser: Gabriel Torres

"The Celebration of Distinction: Craft Beer Culture in the Midwest"

The purpose of my thesis was to research the unique culture that is craft beer drinking. Through ethnographic interviews and numerous surveys, I was able to form a hypothesis as to why craft beer has become so popular since the early 2000s. My topic is in the field of socio-cultural anthropology. Out of the four areas of anthropology, this has been the field I've been most interested in because it deals so closely with people's shared experiences. The topic I chose is unique since there has been very little work published on craft beer culture.

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Rebecca Wornhoff

- Major in Anthropology
- Supplementary Major in Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Adviser: Susan Blum

“There's No Parent Training’: The Interplay of Medical, North American, and Traditional Parenting Models in Nicaragua”

As North American influence increases in southwestern Nicaragua through tourism and NGOs, Nicaraguan parents face challenges to their traditional parenting methods from medical and North American authority figures. This paper explores how the community is responding to this increased influence in their lives by asking how they raise, and believe they should raise, their children. After receiving a grant to intern at a pediatric clinic in southwest Nicaragua from the Kellogg Institute last summer, I found that the organization faced challenges of both a medical and cultural nature in the changing community. As a hopeful future pediatrician, I was excited to explore the intersection of childhood development and international development in my thesis.