

# STUDENT ANTHROPOLOGY RESEARCH FORUM



## Introduction

University of Notre Dame  
Department of Anthropology  
Student Anthropology Research Forum

As a department, our commitment to collaborative learning and immersive engagement results in the annual production of innovative research projects by undergraduate and graduate students in the classroom, the laboratory, and the field. These theses, posters and multi-media presentations highlight the original research and innovative work of our undergraduate and graduate students. The forum emphasizes the diverse and integrative academic environment at the University of Notre Dame

We are pleased that you have joined us to celebrate our students' achievements in creating and disseminating anthropological research. Thank you for joining us for this event!

Faculty Hosts: Dr. Eric Haanstad &  
Dr. Christopher Ball

Friday, April 22nd, 1:00-3:00pm  
Department of Anthropology

# Research Presentations

## Undergraduate Presentations

(in-person in 278 Corbett Hall and via [zoom link](#))

Introduction Eric Haanstad.....1:00 PM  
Madison McCafferty .....1:05 PM  
Jackson Oxler .....1:10 PM  
Veronica Kirgios .....1:15 PM  
Godiya Simon .....1:20 PM  
Gabriel Ramos .....1:25 PM  
Hope Gilbride .....1:30 PM  
Jess Staggs .....1:35 PM  
Olivia Dopheide .....1:40 PM

Poster Presentations.....1:45-2:15 PM

## 2nd Floor Corbett Hall

Emily Chen

Marlena Muszynska

Rachel Dinh, Kwesi Banafo Abbeyquaye, Juliana  
Couri, Rachel Dinh, Analie Fernandes, Megan  
Kendall, and Vania Smith-Oka, PhD.

Victoria Toledo, Annika Barron and Clare Pryor

## Graduate Presentations

Tutor Room – 278 Corbett Hall (& via [zoom link](#))

Introduction Dr. Christopher Ball.....2:15 PM

Graduate Presentations.....2:20-3:00 PM

*Collective Memory: How the Traumas of the Past  
Shape Us Today*

**Madison McCafferty**

## Anthropology Honors and Irish Studies

My thesis seeks to analyze and interpret the effects had by Ireland's former Mother and Baby Homes. These former institutions were ran by the Irish government in partner with the Catholic Church, and are responsible for the forced removals and deaths of thousands of children. I hope to examine present day feelings about these institutions to interpret their effects on Irish people.

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Haanstad

*The Biopolitics and Structural Violence of Housing:*

*Tenants' Rights in New York City*

**Jackson Oxler**

**Anthropology Honors, Political Science, Global Affairs, and International Development Studies**

Through interviewing and ethnographic methods, my thesis explores the structural violence and inequalities that tenants in New York City face. Particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the removal of renter protections like the eviction moratorium, my project seeks to understand the impacts structural violence has on access to housing and the affordability of housing.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Catherine Bolten**

**Funding: Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA), Department of Anthropology**

*Impact of Grammatical Structures on the Perceptions of Mental Health*

**Veronica Kirgios**

**Anthropology Honors and Mathematics Honors**

In this paper, I explore linguistic and cognitive anthropology as I summarize the current connections and findings between language and culture and also language and mental health. I finish the paper by positing my own theory regarding grammatical structures and their influences on the perceptions of mental health in different communities.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Eric Haanstad**

*Preserving My Endangered Language/Nuwar Nyar na:  
Towards an Expanded Dictionary of Cibak (Kibaku)*

**Godiya Simon**

**Anthropology and Studio Art**

There are about 7,000 languages spoken across the world. Estimates suggest that 90 percent of these languages will be severely endangered or gone by the year 2100. My research project focuses on the documentation and preservation of one of these endangered languages, Kibaku, which is communicated by over 200,000 people in Northern Nigeria. Over the last century, historical events have resulted in a rapid decline in the amount of Kibaku speakers in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains. This has resulted in lower probabilities of people passing it on from one generation to the next. To address this issue, I am constructing an English-Kibaku dictionary which includes basic English grammar, as well as some unique terms used by Kibaku people online (i.e., social media). My work stands to confront the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical and ecological knowledge preserved within the Kibaku language.

**Faculty Mentors: Dr. Eric Haanstad and Dr. Brian O'Conchubhair, Department of Irish Language and Literature.**

*Excess Death and Detriments: An Essay on COVID-19  
and Its Impacts on Health*

**Gabriel Ramos**

**Anthropology Honors and Pre-Health Studies**

With an estimated toll of 5.89 million deaths (“Global Covid caseload rises to 425.7 million, fatalities at 5.89 million”), in just over two years COVID-19 has ravaged the world. However, the toll enumerated by those infected and lost to the Virus, itself, illuminates only the surface of the deeply multifaceted impact the presence of the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on society. In an effort to explore the nuances of all that the world has lost, this paper turns to an exploratory analysis of excess deaths, the deaths that exceed those expected (“Excess Deaths Associated with COVID-19”), and delay and denial of care alongside their interconnectedness to ontological and systemic violence. While COVID-19 touched many in America, this paper explores especially the lives of vulnerable and marginalized communities, those who in many ways were the most impacted. The paper then turns to explore the roots of these exacerbated outcomes for certain groups, and proposes solutions in order to remediate outcomes, transforming lessons learned over the last several years, informed by the violent systems in place in the United States for decades, into ideation regarding our future. In all, through reflection on medical, racial, and economic systems on physical and mental well-being, this paper that a paradigm shift transforming thought on poverty, fear, and multigenerational barriers creating inequalities is paramount to the beginning of societal healing.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Catherine Bolten**

*Meeting the Machine: An Exploratory Analysis of Perceptions of Social Interactions and Machine Learning Algorithms on TikTok*

**Hope Gilbride**  
**Anthropology Honors and Industrial Design**

This research sought to understand how older generation Z users of TikTok perceived social interactions on the popular social media app TikTok. These perceptions were then compared to how users perceive the algorithm on the app's "For You" page in order to hypothesize how interactions with an algorithm may be different or similar human social interaction.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Haanstad**

*Nature and Culture at the Indiana Dunes National Park*

**Jess Staggs**

**Anthropology, Sociology, Science Technology & Values, and Sustainability**

This research was done to understand how visitors to the Indiana Dunes National Park understood nature and humanity's place in it. Background research was based on prior work investigating how humanity's conceptualization of humans as a part of or separate from nature affects their treatment and use of nature. Results indicate that visitors mostly believe humans to be a part of nature, but that different areas of the Park are more or less natural depending on the amount of human influence visible in the area.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Donna Glowacki**

**Funding: Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA), Minor in Sustainability**

*Finding New Roots:*

*Refugee Emplacement Through Agriculture*

**Olivia Dopheide**

**Anthropology Honors, International Development Studies, and Latino Studies**

This paper illuminates how refugee farmers in Kansas City interact with place-making processes through an agricultural perspective. To create feelings of home, the farmers strived to utilize family networks within their farm to create a sense of normalcy and intimacy during their daily routine. The farmers exhibited a strong desire for personal growth and growth within their farms, demonstrating how refugees may transform new spaces into places of growth. During their place-making processes after resettlement, the ties to the land itself varied among the farmers, some valuing nature itself, while others prioritized entrepreneurial success.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Catherine Bolten**

**Funding: Kellogg Institute for International Studies**

**Poster Presentations**

**2nd Floor Corbett Family Hall 1:30-2:00 PM**

*Adjusting to the New Normal: University Students' Physiological Cortisol Production and Psychosocial Stress During COVID-19*

**Emily Chen**

**Science-Business and Anthropology**

This project aims to investigate Notre Dame undergraduates' psychosocial well-being and social relationships and their correlations to a stress-related physiological marker (cortisol) during a COVID-19 impacted semester. Using data collected during the Spring of 2021, it also aims to assess undergraduate students' satisfaction with Notre Dame's COVID-19 response HERE program. Through the measurement of cortisol production in fingernail clipping samples and students' psychological well-being through validated survey instruments at the Hormones, Health, and Human Behavior Laboratory, this study will provide valuable information on individual differences in young adults' stress-related physiological profiles and sources of psychosocial resilience during on-campus student life, as educational institutions return to in-person instruction and the Omicron variant spreads.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lee Gettler**

**Funding: Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA)**

*Eastern Europe's Communist Alcohol Crisis: A Systematic Review of History, Politics, and Social Dynamics Behind the Cultural Habit*

**Marlena Muszynska**  
**Biological Sciences and Anthropology**

Many nations of Eastern Europe are often grouped together and portrayed as detrimentally impacted by high levels of alcohol consumption. This study aims to synthesize evidence that contextualizes the intricate historical, political, and social paradigms of the pervasive cultural habit and its resulting stereotype. A thorough review of existing literature that relied on both qualitative and quantitative data collection was conducted with focus on the political ideology of the time and explained the resultant social dynamics, those manifesting in a stark gender divide in responsibilities, alcohol consumption, and health outcomes. The applicability of multiple anthropological theories to the behavioral patterns seen in Eastern Europe shed light on the complexity of the human condition.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Eric Haanstad**

*Why mental health is a complicated conversation for Mexican doctors: analyzing the social and material factors that impact physician well-being during Covid-19*

**Kwesi Banafo Abbeyquaye, Juliana Couri, Rachel Dinh, Analie Fernandes, Megan Kendall, and Vania Smith-Oka, PhD.**

Prior to Covid-19, a multitude of external and environmental stressors shaped the medical practice and mental well-being of doctors in Mexico. However, the pandemic incited drastic changes to medical practices and work environments that all healthcare workers were expected to immediately navigate. This study is an analysis of a survey completed by 52 doctors in Mexico between the months of June and September 2020 consisting of 33 questions about how Covid-19 has affected their personal and professional lives. Initial analysis of the results cultivated the research question, what factors affect physician well-being and their self evaluation of coping during Covid-19? In this poster, we will discuss the factors that influence physician's mental health during Covid-19, including rank, access to supplies, and social support. We will then analyze potential causes for the disconnect between evaluation of well-being and ability to cope, looking at how the social context of Mexico during the pandemic could affect physician's feelings of responsibility to report coping well despite suffering mental health.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Vania Smith-Oka**

**Funding: Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts (ISLA)**

*They Treated Us Like Chickens:" A Bioethical Approach to the Humanization of Mother and Baby*

**Victoria Toledo, Annika Barron and Clare Pryor**

A study in Mexican healthcare indicates that the hyper-medicalization of childbirth can lead to dehumanization during labor. Previous research on obstetric violence indicates that women can face mistreatment before, during, and even after delivery. Such mistreatment, to obstruct human dignity, strips away inherent, human uniqueness and patient autonomy. An analysis of keywords related to humanity and autonomy in midwife and patient interviews indicate that dehumanization of mothers and babies occurs in medical settings even while midwives attempt to combat these attitudes.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Vania Smith-Oka**



**DEPARTMENT OF  
ANTHROPOLOGY**

**Thank you for joining us!**