



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

2012 Senior Thesis Projects
Department of Anthropology
College of Arts and Letters



Catherine Ahern

Department of Anthropology

Adviser: Deborah Rotman

“Occupational Opportunities of Irish Women in America: Comparing Women’s Roles Within the Local Economies of Beaver Island, Mich.; San Francisco; and Butte, Mont.”

My project explores gendered occupational roles in Irish communities during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. I compare employment opportunities of women and how those women impacted the economic sphere. I participated in Professor Deborah Rotman’s summer historical archaeology course on Beaver Island and became so fond of its fascinating history that I decided to pursue further research there as part of my thesis.



Elise Alonzi

Department of Anthropology

Double major in environmental science

Adviser: Mark Schurr

“Dietary Variation on the Edge of History: Human Stable Isotopes and Maize Consumption at Protohistoric Caborn-Welborn Villages and the Angel Site in Southern Indiana”

The Caborn-Welborn phase was a protohistoric culture in southwestern Indiana composed of villages, hamlets, and farmsteads. In contrast, the neighboring Angel site was a heavily maize-dependent, Middle-Mississippian, civic-ceremonial center. Using stable carbon-isotope ratios from human burials, I am comparing the two to determine the possibility of migration from Angel into the Caborn-Welborn sites. This project has had a direct impact on research I will pursue next year in graduate school, where I will work in archaeological bone chemistry.



Shelly Birch

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in preprofessional studies

Adviser: Vania Smith-Oka

“The Effect of Stress on Health Care Delivery in Public Hospitals in Mexico”

This project explores how stresses in physicians’ lives affect the relationships they have with their patients in the obstetrics ward of a Mexican public hospital. As a pre-medical intern in Mexican public hospitals in summer and fall 2010, I observed less-than-ideal patient care, as well as extremely stressed physicians. This project elucidates a more global understanding of the effects of physician stress and informs better patient-care protocols.



Jessica Bock

Department of Classics

Double major in anthropology

Adviser: Meredith Chesson

“Political Maneuvering at Rachel’s Tomb and the City of David: Implications for Israel and Palestine”

I studied the political manipulation of the sites of Rachel’s Tomb and the City of David to further Israeli nationalism through an exclusion of the Palestinian claim to the land of Israel, and what implications this has on the peaceful co-existence between the Palestinians and Israelis. Misrepresenting archaeological evidence to further political agendas is prevalent in many countries, but I was drawn to study these in particular after studying abroad in Jerusalem.



Kelly Colas

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in preprofessional studies

Adviser: Vania Smith-Oka

“Empowerment, Education, and Experiencing Birth: Factors Contributing to a Disillusioning Birth Experience for Young Mothers in a Public Mexican Hospital”

My work examines social factors contributing to a disillusioning, voiceless birth experience, especially for young mothers. My findings reveal that lack of sex education in the family, internalized patient stereotypes by physicians, an overcrowded public health system, and gender roles in Mexico all result in a disenfranchising birth experience for young mothers.



Michelle De La Cruz

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in preprofessional studies

Adviser: Susan Sheridan

“The Evolution of Attractiveness”

Perceptions of attractiveness vary through time and space and are not homogenous across cultures or individuals, but there are identifiable trends in the biological and cultural traits. My thesis critiques the evolutionary psychology field, under which the study of assortative mating and sexual selection fall, and makes conjectures about the direction it is heading.



Ellen Kozelka

Department of Anthropology

Adviser: Fr. Patrick Gaffney, C.S.C.

“Endurance Through Fluidity: The Changing Nature of Mongolian Shamanism”

Using the case study of Mongolian shamanism, I argue that religion and politics are inextricably intertwined. I spent the summer in Mongolia as part of my internship with the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of Natural History, and I became interested in the differences of Eastern religions and worldviews.



Caroline Maloney

Department of Art, Art History, and Design (art history)

Double major in anthropology

Adviser: Kathleen Pyne

“God-Daughter of a Witch and Sister to a Fairy”: Pamela Colman Smith and the Celtic Twilight”

This art historical study analyzes Pamela Colman Smith’s involvement with the Celtic Twilight movement in the first decade of the 20th century. I examine how Smith learned to artistically and personally operate through the Irish folkloric and mystical strands of Celtic Twilight discourse, and I endeavor to understand her legacy as one of the few illustrators and watercolorists to visualize Celtic Twilight themes.



Caitlin Monesmith

Department of Anthropology

Adviser: Patrick Gaffney

“Social Life After Death: Cemetery Placement as Evidence of Social Mobility”

I am using grave placement in three London cemeteries to demonstrate the importance of Victorian social morals and values in a cemetery setting, and to show how people who had been marginalized in life used the physical constructs of placement and design to create a legacy of social conformation. I did a great deal of research in London while studying abroad.



MacKenzie Nunez

Department of Anthropology

Minor in Mediterranean/Middle East studies

Adviser: Susan Guise Sheridan

“Long in the Tooth: Tracing Migration Through Stable Isotopes in Dental Enamel From Byzantine St. Stephen’s”

This study sought to reexamine the origins of those buried at the Byzantine monastery of St. Stephen’s in Jerusalem, from the fifth to seventh centuries C.E. Many years of investigation have gleaned extensive knowledge about this urban monastic community; however, questions of the geographic origins of those interred at there still remain.



Hanna O'Brien

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in preprofessional studies

Adviser: Rahul Oka

“Quality of Life for the Sick and Dying: Perspectives of Health Disparities, Challenges in Ugandan Palliative Care, and Its Relation to Disease-Modifying Services”

Through narrative, I analyze the challenges in Ugandan palliative care and their relation to disease-modifying treatments as they present in patient and provider perspectives. I examine the accessibility and allocation of services as well as the nature and impact of the palliative care institution in the dynamics of Ugandan society. I spent time in Uganda traveling to medical facilities in the central and eastern regions performing ethnographic research.



Kirsten Prabhudas

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in preprofessional studies

Adviser: Carolyn Nordstrom

“Health, Identity, and Movement: Being Rwandan in South Bend”

This paper is about people in movement and how they define themselves within that movement. I approach these themes for Rwandans through concepts of health and the body, finding that these are central to identity. This affects the doctor-patient encounter and, thus, has implications for the practice of medicine. As an anthropologist and preprofessional studies student, I am interested in the best way of practicing cross-cultural medicine.



Andrew Steier

Department of Anthropology

Double major in classics

Adviser: Donna Glowacki

“Investigating Paint Recipes of Mesa Verde Black-on-White Bowls Through PIXE Analysis”

Particle Induced X-Ray Emission (PIXE) was used to analyze the paint on 45 Mesa Verde black-on-white bowls (1150–1300 C.E.) from Aztec Ruins National Monument in New Mexico. By comparing these paints to 15 samples of one of the possible source materials, beeweed, I hope to draw larger conclusions about pottery production at Aztec West.



Andrew Webster

Department of Anthropology

Double major in Italian

Adviser: Mark Schurr

“Slicing Through Our Past: Knives and Other Flatware at the Collier Lodge Site”

Through stylistic analysis and comparison, as well as research of historical flatware available through publications and collections, I seek to use the flatware unearthed at Collier Lodge in Indiana to shed new light on the importance, origins, and use of flatware in a local and regional context, providing new insight into 19th century life in the rural Midwestern United States.



Caitlin Wilson

Department of English

Double major in anthropology

Adviser: Sara Maurer

“Ethnography in Victorian Children’s Literature”

I argue that the works of Lewis Carroll, Charles Kingsley, and George MacDonald were influenced by contemporary ethnographic portrayals of foreign cultural systems. After establishing these authors’ fictional cultures as legitimate, I then claim that the authors take up contemporary issues and interrogate them.



Melissa Wrapp

Department of Anthropology

Supplementary major in peace studies

Minor in international business

Adviser: Catherin Bolten

“Left Empty: Subjective Morality and Squatting in London”

In summer 2011, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in London on the squatting community in light of threatened criminalization and austerity measures. This fieldwork is the basis of my thesis, which interrogates the moral framework that informs squatters’ negotiation of the housing market and explores the community’s effort at collective political mobilization and resistance.