



2014

Student Research Symposium

October 24th

8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Selby Auditorium



Schedule of Events

**All events will be held in Selby Auditorium*

- Check-in.....8:00am - 8:30am**
- Welcome.....8:30am - 8:45am**
- Poster Presentations (#1-8).....8:45am - 10:15am**
- Coffee Break.....10:15am - 10:30am**
- Oral Presentations - Group 1 (#1-4).....10:30am - 11:30am**
- Coffee Break.....11:30am - 11:45am**
- Oral Presentations - Group 2 (#5-8).....11:45am - 12:45pm**
- Lunch.....12:45pm - 1:45pm**
- Keynote Speaker.....1:45pm - 2:00pm**
Dr. Jennifer Mariano from the College of Education
- Awards Ceremony.....2:00pm - 3:00pm**

Poster Session

8:45am - 10:15am - Selby Auditorium

#1 Jesus the Cultural Conqueror; March of the Martyrs; and Constantine's Creed: A Triptych of the Rise of Early Christianity

Presenter: John Noe (History)

Mentor: Dr. Jonathan Scott Perry

The rise of early Christianity can be analyzed through a triptych of three seminal events: The life of Jesus; the persecution of the Christian martyrs; and the early years and reign of Constantine. An analysis of these events using an interdisciplinary approach shows that extant contextual circumstances led to the outcomes of each seminal event. That is, the seminal events did not happen the way they did because the groups were Christian, the seminal events transpired as they did because of what was going on within the local areas. Using research analysis of primary and secondary sources, cross-cultural case studies, and strong correlational research it is shown that a web of psychological, anthropological, and sociological contextual events framed and held the seminal events in place, which allowed the seminal events, much like falling dominoes, to cause the rise of early Christianity. Jesus angered the local scribes by preaching, among other things, generalized reciprocity against the local cultural practice of negative reciprocity; the martyrs were looking for a way to affirm their faith at a time when the local populaces were looking to start a 'witch hunt' due to anomie; and Constantine, whether he was a true believer or not, learned enough politics during his life watching other failing leaders to realize which way the wind was blowing. Beginning to end and the arch is complete: Jesus sets the course for social revolution, the Martyrs carry on his battle, and Constantine draws the final curtain at the Council of Nicea.

#2: Evangelizing the Eucharist: 21st Century Grace for Millennials of the ELCA

Presenter: William Kittinger (History)

Mentor: Dr. Jonathan Scott Perry

Eighty million Americans are known as the Millennials, one of the most spiritually conscious generations in history due to their upbringings. Yet of the Christians that identify themselves within this generation, over 30% are affiliated with no religious denomination. Mainline Protestant denominations have seen a continual decline in the population of their youth and desperately seek answers to this issue. This project declares that the Evangelization of this generation will not be solely through the Word of the Bible, but also through the ritual of the Eucharist. Evidence discovered through this research has concluded that Millennials seek a more participatory role in worship via the use of ritual. The purpose of this research is to seek a connection between Eucharistic aspects of liturgical worship of the early Christian church and 21st century Millennials, through historical Lutheran-Reformation figures. By analyzing qualitative aspects of corporal worship in early Christianity through the lens of prominent historical Lutheran theologians; this study's intent is to identify ritual practices of the Eucharist that potentially provide a method of spiritual evangelization and reinvigoration for Millennials of the ELCA. This study also identifies current parishes of the ELCA that use the Eucharist as their primary tool of Evangelization. Finally, this research seeks pragmatic rituals found in early Christianity and the Reformation; to develop a liturgical model of Eucharistic worship that best fits the spiritual needs of Millennials based on the ELCA document The Use of The Means of Grace.

#3: Social and Emotional Distress Among Humanitarian Aid Workers Operating in Armed Conflict Situations

Presenter: Kathryn Sandland (Interdisciplinary Social Sciences)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

Armed conflict is defined as prolonged warfare carried out between two or more state or non-state actors. It is generally characterized by extreme violence, social disruption, and economic destruction. Armed conflict may be thought of as a necessary evil; however, the purpose of this study sought to explore the lasting emotional and social impacts armed conflict has on humanitarian aid workers. Humanitarian aid workers respond to global emergencies and supply assistance that saves lives and alleviates suffering. If those who provide aid are as vulnerable as those who receive it, there is a loss of effectiveness and sustainability. To provide a stronger understanding of the topic, I collected the data using a mixed methods approach. To do this, I conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with six present and former humanitarian aid workers from around the globe who have worked in armed conflict situations, as well as reviewed and analyzed previously published literature relevant to this topic. The data revealed that while there is a prevalent need for emotional and social support for humanitarian aid workers that experience the trauma of armed conflict, there was also overwhelming evidence that personal faith was used as a major coping mechanism when confronting traumatic situations. The practical implications of this study will not only benefit those living in armed conflict situations, but also provide awareness to readers and individuals interested in this line of work by shedding light on the trauma and experiences faced by humanitarian aid workers. Further research may lead to constructive methods for humanitarian organizations to implement better training and support systems.

#4: Cubans-American Bilinguals' Emotional Experiences

Presenter: Massiel Monteagudo (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

This study reports qualitative data gathered from Cubans-American Bilinguals about their emotional experiences in their places of work when switching from native to non-native languages in order to communicate with others. The purpose of this study is to offer insight of how bilingualism may interfere with emotions when the participant switches from first to second language. This study is concentrated on the bilingual effect, which states that bilinguals usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, and with different people depending on the circumstances or environment. In order to gain data, interviews were conducted with 6 Cuban-American Bilingual participants. After obtaining the data, the following 5 themes were observed: social support, self-efficacy, self-management, personality, and language use. These themes contributed to the basic understanding of the bilingual effect as well as for the management of emotional experiences that can arise depending on the language use. The findings highlight the different emotional phases that bilinguals experience when engaging in their second language. The study reports that the time length using the second language was a very crucial factor for the participants' emotional experiences. The findings of this study are consistent with previous research in which the mother tongue does not seem to have a stronger impact on the participants' emotional experiences but rather the qualities of a specific language, whether it's the first or second language, used together with the role that language plays in the individual's life experiences.

6: Acquisition of 21st Century Skills Through Small Group Learning in an Arts Integrated Context

Presenter: Cassandra LaBounty (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. A. Helene Robinson

One of the main goals of education today should be to give students the necessary tools to succeed in the workplace. For this reason the acquisition of 21st century skills (Creativity, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Communication) should be the goal outcome for today's educational model. The focus of my research was to explore the following question: Do students increase their 21st century skills more in an arts-integrated small group learning context than in non-arts integrated small group learning context? I've employed research methodology such as classical content analysis and constant comparison analysis of the current literature. This review will explore the similarities and differences of small group learning in each context. Preliminary results point to the efficacy of small group learning in a coequal cognitive arts integrated context. More studies need to be conducted to combine and clearly define the marriage of small group learning and co-equal cognitive arts integration from another person's perspective. Large companies stand to benefit from having a multicultural work force in an ever demanding and growing diverse society and global market.

7: Accommodations Within Education for Students with Hearing Loss

Presenter: Jessica Ploss (Speech Language Pathology)

Mentor: Dr. Susan Fulton

This literature review investigates accommodations provided for deaf and hard-of-hearing students in mainstream education. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires schools to utilize accommodations to assimilate all student populations into the school and schools are evaluated through standardized testing, which includes students with hearing loss. Specifically, this review is examining how students with hearing loss are accommodated in classrooms and standardized testing, in addition to how accommodations are employed in the classroom. Different types of accommodations are used, depending on how the school views hearing loss: as a disability to be corrected or as a different language to be incorporated. Cannon, Fredrick & Easterbrooks (2010) acknowledge the stress NCLB puts on schools by requiring overall standards to be met with students with disabilities incorporated into the entire population. From a language perspective, Cannon et al. used American Sign Language (ASL) DVDs as a tool for teaching reading to students with hearing loss. The DVDs helped the children, though the process was time-consuming for teachers, and the study concluded the process needed to be streamlined. Results of the literature review showed the number of sources addressing hearing loss as a disability to outnumber those utilizing a language approach. The literature shows a greater focus on accommodating for hearing loss by utilizing techniques employed in learning disabilities (i.e. extra time) than managing hearing loss with language accommodations (i.e. interpreters). Overall, this research showed that several techniques are used to accommodate hearing loss in education in order to comply with standardized testing requirements.

#8: A Re-visitation of Stanovich and West's Cars Paradigm Study of Myside Bias

Presenter: Oluwatosin Adekanye (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Christine Ruva

This study will re-examine the cars paradigm experiment used by Stanovich and West (2008b) to study myside bias. Myside bias is defined as a tendency to evaluate incoming information in a way which is biased in favor of one's preexisting opinions. Myside bias in the original experiment was interpreted as a favorable bias towards an American car (Ford explorer). However there are other factors, to be assessed in this study, which could have caused the observed myside bias. The 2 (Car Make) x 2 (Country) factorial design of the current experiment will allow for the main and interactive effects of the car and country variables to be assessed. Furthermore, relationships of affiliation, familiarity, favorability, and patriotism to myside bias will be explored as possible underlying causes of bias. Additionally, this study will further investigate any possible links between cognitive factors and degree of myside bias by testing how scores on the Need for Cognition Scale and the Cognitive Reflection Test relate to degree of myside bias. It is predicted that higher scores on these cognitive measures will be associated with lower degrees of myside bias.

Oral Presentations—Group I

10:30am-11:30am Selby Auditorium

#1: Total Assimilation, Marxism, and *The Imported Bridegroom*

Presenter: Caleb Jordan (Major)

Mentor: Dr. Valerie Lipscomb

Abraham Cahan's novella *The Imported Bridegroom* is a complex story of ethnic and ideological pride. This paper investigates the Marxist ideology in the story that coexists with a sincere pride in Jewish identity. I will explain how the story rejects the Marxist concept of total assimilation—which calls for the middle class to forget their national and ethnic identities and combat the bourgeois—and strives for an amalgamation of Jewish identity and socialist ideology. I employ some aspects of Marxist critical theory in order to achieve my goal, such as researching Abraham Cahan's biography to understand his own personal ideology, and how it is filtered through the main characters of the novella: Asriel, Flora, and Shaya. The story's ideology seeks to highlight the deception and inequality of capitalism through the aspirations of Flora and Asriel. The story then attempts to reconcile a desire to retain Jewish identity with socialist beliefs through the character of Shaya, who rejects the philosophy of his Jewish relatives but continues to adhere to Jewish customs and practices. The conclusion of the novella hints at the beginnings of a Marxist revolution while also rejecting the idea of total assimilation. Cahan's body of literature is a valuable source of Jewish culture, and studying his formative work may lead to a better understanding of his social realist style, and how his work has influenced later Jewish writers in a similar tradition.

#2: José Martí: Vision Transformed to Reality? The Philosophical Reality of Contemporary Cuba

Presenter: Kaitlyn Daniel (Interdisciplinary Socieal Sciences)

Mentor: Dr. Roberto Jimenez-Arroyo

This research works to explore the idea that José Martí was the intellectual author of the Cuban Revolution. Whether or not it was the intention of Martí, the evidence suggests that his literature may have impacted current situations and governmental procedures generated by the Cuban Revolution. The intent of this research is to display examples that might indicate how José Martí's ideals are being implemented by the Cuban Revolution in terms of the racial involvement in governmental affairs and the relationships that are sustained between Cuba and the United States. Fidel Castro, in his 1953 History Will Absolve Me speech, is recognized saying José Martí was the author of the Revolution. Subsequently, Ernesto Guevara, one of the most instrumental figures in the success and ideological development of the Revolution, constantly made reference to José Martí's political thought and teachings in significant portions of his political writings. This idea has been examined by analyzing five separate works of Martí that span his final decade and comparing the ideas presented with the current conditions of the Cuban state. The comparison reveals how there has been a deliberate implementation of different portions of Martí's political vision that have negatively impacted the degree of participation of different members of Cuban society as well as the prospects of a healthy relationship between Cuba and the United States. An in depth exploration of the profundity of Martí's influence in Cuba's landmark stances on political, cultural and foreign affairs promises to uncover new perspectives on the topic.

#3: Narrowing the Achievement Gap: Mindfulness, Integrated Arts, and the Disadvantaged Student

Presenter: Vincent Buckwalter (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. A. Helene Robinson

In America today, one of the big educational questions is how to bridge the achievement gap that is seen between socio-economic classes. Based on Honneth's (2002) theory of the role of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem in self-realization and the Framework for 21st Century Learning, this literature review posits that combining the techniques of mindfulness based cognitive therapy and mindfulness based art therapy in a co-equal cognitive integrated art classroom will increase motivation, resiliency and success for disadvantaged students. Some recent studies indicate that Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness Based Art Therapy (MBAT) have been effective in treating anxiety and depression. These same studies also point to an increase in attention, working memory, listening skills, and self-efficacy. Many other studies have also shown that learning through and with the arts in a co-equal cognitive approach to education has increased the motivation, as well as improved the behavior and academic success of disadvantaged children. This article reviews this recent literature using qualitative constant comparison analysis and classical content analysis to integrate the results. This analysis will explore the effects of combining these approaches in today's classrooms with the hope that they will bridge the socio-economic achievement gap by improving the 21st century skills of creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication among disadvantaged children. The cutting edge combination of these practices in the United States school system is yet to be realized and further research into practical field outcomes of combining these strategies is needed.

#4: Haitian-American College Students' Motivations for Pursuing Postsecondary Education: The Role of Parents' Low-Wage Occupation

Presenter: Ashley Metelus (Interdisciplinary Social Science)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

Approximately 25% of US children are either immigrants or children of immigrants and are pursuing postsecondary education in large numbers. Researchers have projected that Caucasian attendance in postsecondary education will decrease slightly, causing educational research to look at the rise of immigrant children's attendance in postsecondary education. Haitian Americans are underrepresented within the literature. Nicholas, Stepick, and Dutton-Stepick (2008) looked at the subgroup of Haitian American students pursuing postsecondary education; they concluded that Haitian American students pursued postsecondary education because of cultural obligation. However, the term cultural obligation is wide-ranging. Instead of assuming cultural obligation, this research examines the specific aspect of low-wage parental occupation as an alternative explanation for Haitian American students' pursuit of postsecondary education. The principal question for this research was: Do immigrant parents' low-wage occupations serve as a motivator for Haitian American students to pursue postsecondary education? Data were collected through qualitative methods; participants were recruited through a convenient sampling strategy, and in-depth interviews were conducted with six Haitian American postsecondary students. Participants had to meet specific criteria: be Haitian American students, be currently attending a postsecondary institution, and have parents who held low wage immigrant occupations. The results showed that the majority of participants' pursuit was for a variety of reasons such as self-efficacy, negative perceptions of parents' low wage occupation, parental support, and family honor. These results identified other alternatives for the direction of future research; it is important because it coincides with the rise of Haitian Americans and second-generation immigrants in postsecondary education.

Oral Presentations - Group 2

11:45am-12:45pm Selby Auditorium

#5: The Association of Vulnerability and Strength of Character in Highly Successful People

Presenter: Sara Jones (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

This study addresses the gap that exists concerning vulnerability and character by linking how the experience of emotional vulnerability is often transformed into and helps shape the development of strong character in highly successful people. The purpose of this study is to understand how highly successful people are able to acknowledge emotional vulnerability and use it in a positive way to achieve strength of character. These two concepts have been studied separately in the research, however they have not been linked together in prior empirical work. It is felt that by establishing a positive correlation between the two ideas it will facilitate a change in the way society regards emotional vulnerability and the role it plays in the development of strong character. Data collection consisted of qualitative interviews with ten highly successful people, 6 men and 4 women in different professions. The results of the study reveal a pattern that helps to bridge the gap between vulnerability and character by establishing key similarities among highly successful people such as the determination to succeed, a strong work ethic, the resilience to overcome failures, and the importance of emotional management in the work place. These key similarities provide valuable understanding to the importance of emotional vulnerability experienced by highly successful people as a beneficial means of building strength of character. By connecting emotional vulnerability to strength of character it will provide insight into the value of feeling weakness, overcoming it, and continuing forward to accomplish a goal and obtain success.

#6: The Role of a Gay Straight Alliance in the Lives of LGBTQ Youth

Presenter: Jennifer Huck (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

Research has shown that Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) youth participation in Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs) is associated with less risky behavior, better academic achievement, more comfort with one's own sexual orientation, and a greater sense of empowerment. Within the research there exists a lack of perspective from the LGBTQ youth, allowing the youth to speak on their own behalf provides insight into their unique circumstance. The goal of this research is to understand from the LGBTQ youth perspective the role a GSA has in their lives and what LGBTQ youth gain personally from participation in a GSA. Youth, age 16 to 18, at a community GSA participated in individual face-to-face interviews and a focus group regarding their experiences with the GSA. Preliminary analyses reveal that many LGBTQ youth are unable to confide in their families about matters pertaining to their sexual orientation, participation in a GSA not only lends support it also removes the sense of feeling different. The GSA offers a context in which the youth form a personal identity not predicated by their sexual orientation. A qualitative approach provides for a more detailed understanding of the issues LGBTQ youth face as they gain acceptance of their LGBTQ identity and become a member of the greater LGBTQ community. This information can benefit those communities and schools that have yet to establish GSAs or understand how important such a program is the life of an LGBTQ youth who is in need of support and guidance.

#7: Human Trafficking: Perceiving a Notorious Phenomenon in Society

Presenter: Michaela Cook (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Melissa Sloan

Human trafficking continues not only as an international enterprise, but a thriving institution in the United States. Previous studies have focused on immigration theories, evaluations of organizations, and legislation, yet all have failed to examine the characteristics of human trafficking using an in-depth mixed methods approach to describe the issue on a personal level. Through qualitative interviews with law enforcement personnel and anti-human trafficking advocates, as well as a survey assessing the community's current state of knowledge and perspectives on human trafficking, this study uncovers the underlying structural and cultural issues that support human trafficking. Theoretical perspectives developed from the qualitative interviews were used to design a survey so that the perceptions of human trafficking could be measured quantitatively. The preliminary results of the interviews demonstrate that in the communities where human trafficking organizations work closely with local law enforcement agencies, the members of those communities are more likely to be aware of the issue of human trafficking and influenced by the way that human trafficking is perceived. However, the data also suggest that there is still much more progress to be made to successfully target the problem. The final results of this research will address ways in which our community can adapt more effective strategies to raise awareness and reveal the underlying issues found in human trafficking that may be preventing society's progress toward identifying and abolishing modern-day slavery.

#8: Reversal learning impairments during alcohol exposure are mediated by impairments in discrimination learning

Presenter: Mackinzie Fakh (Psychology)

Mentor: Dr. Kimberly Badanich

The orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) is a brain region that mediates cognition. Specifically, patients with damage to the OFC experience difficulty with behavioral inhibition. Alcoholics exhibit similar cognitive impairments, suggesting chronic alcohol exposure impairs OFC function. The role of the OFC in mediating behavioral flexibility has been modeled by similar impairments in rodents with lesioned OFC regions. However, the impact of alcohol on behavioral flexibility has not been fully investigated. Previous reports suggest rats exposed to binge alcohol exposure similar to humans, impairs performance on a reversal learning task. Building from previous work, the significance of the present study was to develop an animal model of alcohol induced cognitive impairments. It was hypothesized that alcohol will impair performance on reversal learning tasks. Rats were given alcohol injections, while control rats were given a placebo injection of saline. Behavioral intoxication and blood alcohol concentrations were measured to quantify tolerance. Following injections and a one week abstinence period, rats were then taught a simple discrimination and reversal learning task that requires associations with a previously ignored cue with a food reward. Results indicated a Main effect of Task [$F(1,13) = 8.63, p < .05$] and a Main effect of Treatment [$F(1,13) = 8.41, p < .05$], indicating reversal learning is more difficult than odor discrimination. Alcohol also impairs performance during reversal learning, however, this effect seems to be driven by alcohol-mediated impairments in simple discrimination learning alone. These results were replicated in a second series of identical experiments that revealed the same effects. Together, these findings will improve methodologies for treating cognitive impairments and alcohol dependency.

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