



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

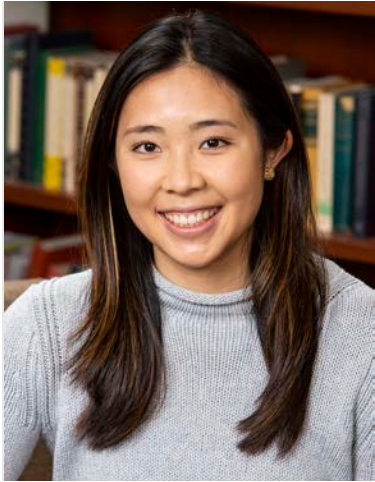
ARTS & LETTERS



2022

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.SM



Emily Chen

- Major: Science-Business
- Minor: Anthropology
- Advisor: Lee Gettler

University Students' Physiological Cortisol Production and Psychosocial Stress During COVID-19

This project investigated 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 spring 2021, it also aimed to assess undergraduate students' satisfaction with the previous "HERE" campaign that was part of the university's COVID-19 response.

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, the study provided valuable information about individual differences in young adults' stress-related physiological profiles and sources of psychosocial resilience during on-campus student life.

I am interested in the combination of biological and psychosocial factors that play into individuals' health and well-being. It was difficult for everyone to adjust to new routines during the pandemic, and the experiences the student body witnessed during fall 2020 were unlike others at universities that suspended in-person instruction. Many of my peers, myself included, were worried about our health, social relationships, and academic performance during the semesters we were on campus before the vaccine was released.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

**John Clark**

- Major: Anthropology
- Minor: Collaborative Innovation
- Advisor: Maurizio Albahari

The Conflict Between Ideology and Agency in the British Punk Subculture of the 1970s

My thesis is about the ways women of the male-dominated British punk subculture rebelled against the rebels of their own community. Relying on memoirs, interviews and autobiographies from the past decade that challenge the revisionist myth of gender equality in punk, I explored the dynamics of practice and agency that these women of punk have articulated in their own words. I already had a wealth of knowledge about the British punk subculture. I arrived at the specificity described above after reading Viv Albertine's autobiography, *Clothes, Clothes, Clothes. Music, Music, Music. Boys, Boys, Boys.*, which was the first source I'd read that challenged the dominant patriarchal discourse.

I read recently that anthropologist David Graeber wrote so that his mother, who didn't have a college education, could read and understand it. I also read that shortly before he died, when speaking to a friend about *The Dawn of Everything*, he remarked with a mischievous tone, "This is going to mess things up!" As an anthropologist and as an accomplice, I aspire to produce work that is both accessible and mischievous.



Emma Connors

- Major: Design (Concentration in Visual Communication Design)
- Minor: Anthropology
- Advisor: Neeta Verma

Enhancing Educational Experiences of Visitors to Public Lands

Knowledge is power. Our world needs us to use our power positively. Public lands, “America’s Best Idea,” conserve ecosystems, culture, and playgrounds to explore. But they’re in danger. In Glacier National Park, glaciers are melting, but most visitors don’t know that. Knowing something fosters care about it; care compels positive action. Enter Park Pack, trading cards I designed that encourage visitors to hike, explore visitor centers, and ask rangers questions. Cards about wildlife, Indigenous history, and more can be collected physically and digitally — encouraging folks to collect, care, conserve.

Hiking and skiing mountains, fly-fishing rivers, camping in Yellowstone, and backpacking in GNP made me who I am. I gained respect for diversity, care for the vulnerable, confidence, and grit. Following my curiosity fostered a deep care for public lands that manifests in action. I pursued a thesis to enhance the education of visitors to public lands, guided by a belief that knowledge fosters care; care fosters positive action.

In the fall, I visited Glacier National Park to explore, take photos for my trading cards design, collect materials, and chat with park rangers and visitors. I visited both sides of the park, hiked five different trails, and talked with six groups of visitors about their reasons for visiting, what they know about the park, and how they’d like to learn more about it.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program to travel to Glacier National Park in Montana.

**Haleigh Czarnecki**

- Major: Neuroscience and Behavior
- Minor: Anthropology
- Advisor: E. Mark Cummings

Interactions of Typically Developing Siblings and Siblings with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities: Behavioral Responses During a Family Problem-Solving Task

My thesis involved developing a behavioral coding system to identify specific behaviors and the constructiveness and destructiveness of interactions between typically developing siblings and siblings with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD). The codes were examined to determine how emotional security in the family and exposure to interparental conflict were related to the observed communication, as well as how the constructiveness of sibling interactions changed over the course of a family intervention.

Experiences throughout my life have shown me the important role of siblings of a child with an IDD. Through this project, I hoped to better understand how this unique sibling relationship functions within a family context and perhaps offer insight into ways to better support these individuals.

**Olivia Dopheide**

- Major: Anthropology
- Minors: Latino Studies and International Development Studies
- Advisor: Catherine Bolten

Refugee Integration via Agricultural Incubation Programs

My senior international development capstone explored how an agricultural training program in Kansas City facilitated holistic integration for recently resettled refugees. I emphasized the reciprocal aspect of integration, including actions by both refugees and host community members to create a welcoming environment and provide the opportunity for refugees to retain their cultural identity. My research utilized anthropological methods to observe that farming offers refugees and host community members many opportunities to engage with holistic integration processes. But barriers still emerge.

I chose this topic to engage with an international humanitarian issue within the United States context. I wanted to frame integration and refugee resettlement within a sustainability lens by exploring the interactions between small-scale farming, integration, and the experiences of refugees in Kansas. I conducted fieldwork for 10 weeks in my hometown of Kansas City, working with the New Roots for Refugees program as a farm volunteer and with Catholic Charities of Northeast Kansas as a case aide.

Received funding from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

**Olivia Dopheide**

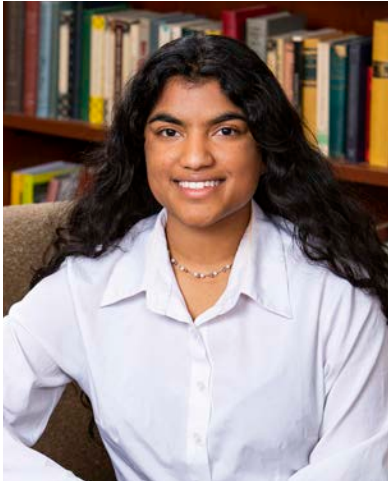
- Major: Anthropology
- Minors: Latino Studies and International Development Studies
- Advisor: Catherine Bolten

Human Dignity and Refugee Farmers

My senior thesis was an anthropological exploration of refugee farmers' experiences with dignity. By utilizing interviews and observations, I sought to understand how farming contributes to an individual's realization of their human dignity. My research focused on an agricultural training program in Kansas City called New Roots for Refugees. I demonstrated that agriculture spurs multidimensional experiences of dignity for farmers, highlighting the individualized nature of human dignity itself.

I chose this topic because I wanted to explore the role of human dignity in human development. Human dignity does not have a concrete definition, so I wanted to provide original insight into how small-scale agriculture interacts with experiences of dignity. With a growing number of refugees, I wanted to provide a person-centered perspective on sustainable solutions to potentially improve well-being. For 10 weeks, I worked in my hometown of Kansas City with the New Roots for Refugees farming program as a farm volunteer for resettled refugees.

Received funding from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies.

**Analie Fernandes**

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Arts & Letters Pre-Health
- Minor: Poverty Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Notre Dame Scholar
- Advisor: Vania Smith-Oka

Caring Communities: Evaluating the Trauma Processing Group Model

My thesis explored the impact of a newly formed women's trauma processing group in South Bend, Indiana, and evaluated its effect in the community, contextualizing the group within existing literature on community healing and trauma-informed care. The thesis focused on themes, including socioeconomic status, access to health care, and clinical mistrust. Recognizing that the impending physician shortage will impact future availability of clinical care, this thesis aimed to shed light on the possible utility of processing groups to supplement traditional clinical care.

I wanted to choose a topic that would allow me to translate the classroom knowledge I've been privileged enough to accrue into real change in my community. I've learned so much about health equity, systemic barriers to care, and patterns of trauma. And I've seen myriad ways in which a community can support its members in healing, which gives me hope. Originally, this was intended to be an exploration of medical mistrust involving data collection in clinical settings for comparison. Due to COVID restrictions, my data collection process changed, and my focus narrowed to trauma processing in group settings.



Annie Foley

- Major: Anthropology
- Supplementary Major: Global Affairs
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Advisor: Rachel Sweet

Evidence Quality in Conflict Settings: Blurring the Lines Between Regional Armed Group and International Terrorist Regime

This project critically analyzed the production and circulation of (mis)information about armed conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the Islamic State (ISIS) has increasingly claimed responsibility for attacks carried out by state-sponsored militias.

When ISIS claims responsibility for attacks that it did not commit, state-rebel collusion goes unpunished. This project investigated how the international media legitimizes ISIS's claims and deflects attention from the real perpetrators.

This stemmed from my work with assistant professor Rachel Sweet on her project examining violence misattribution in eastern DRC. I enjoyed the investigative nature of that work and wanted to build it out by conducting my own analysis of conflict dynamics in the region.



Helen Gu

- Major: Neuroscience and Behavior
- Minor: Anthropology
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: James Brockmole

Body Posture Attentional Cueing in Multi-Person Social Contexts

Social cues from the body provide crucial information about an individual's internal state, as well as the environment around them. It is well-established that some social cues, such as eye-gaze and head direction, can direct visual attention.

Since we often interact with groups of people at a time, such as when speaking to an audience, my thesis project sought to extend these findings to body postures in a multi-person social context. Specifically, we sought to determine whether attentional cueing occurs for group body cues, whether these effects differ from individual body cues, and whether these effects can influence perceptual judgments.

I have always had an interest in body postures and body language, especially in relation to how they are interpreted in social settings. Combining this interest with my lab's focus (visual cognition) led to this project. The projects I worked on previously in the lab also helped to inform my design process.

Received funding from the College of Science and the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**Bridget Kelley**

- Major: American Studies
- Minors: Collaborative Innovation and Anthropology
- Advisor: Perin Gürel

Podcasting and the Production of History: Rememory of Silenced American Narratives in the Aural Medium

My thesis explored the connections among podcasting, history, memory, and sound. I identified and analyzed three podcasts and their creators who are doing the ideological work of rememory; that is, attempting to re-insert silenced narratives from United States history into the collective memory of the American public.

I closely listened to Radiotopia's *This Day in Esoteric Political History*, the independent podcast *You're Wrong About*, and Crooked Media's *This Land* and analyzed rememory strategies, hosts' construction of authority, and usage of the audio medium. I treated these texts as primary documents and focused on how the authors of the sources are seeking to rememory events centered on historically marginalized groups, in pursuit of justice.

I took the American studies course Podcast America in 2020 and learned that podcasts — a medium that I love — can be studied critically the same way literature and films can. I'm also interested in how historical narratives and popular culture can have real effects on culture, policy, and justice. My topic combined these research interests in an exciting way.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.



Veronica Kirgios

- Majors: Honors Mathematics and Anthropology (Honors)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Eric Haanstad

Influence of Grammatical Structures on the Perceptions of Mental Health in Different Communities

I explored linguistic and cognitive anthropology as I summarized the current connections and findings between language and culture and language and mental health. I also posited my own theory regarding grammatical structures and their influences on the perceptions of mental health in different communities, more specifically Spanish-speaking and English-speaking communities.

Through an anthropological lens, many stones remain unturned in the discussion of mental health and linguistics. Often, we see statistics indicating suicide is a leading cause of death around the globe, especially in young people. As mental health awareness becomes more important in society, many scientists can contribute original research that explores the various structures and dimensions of language that affect mental health, how mental health is viewed, and care for mental health. As someone who has struggled with mental health, I view this research as being extremely impactful to our society.



Veronica Kirgios

- Majors: Honors Mathematics and Anthropology (Honors)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Michael Gekhtman

The Foundations of Cluster Algebras

Cluster algebras is a very new, small field in mathematics. My paper focused on one of the main motivations for the development of the field, total positivity. This thesis offered an accessible exposition to the foundations of cluster algebras by focusing on the notions of total positivity and primary examples found today in research: square matrices, Grassmannians of 2-planes, and basic affine spaces.

Throughout my years at Notre Dame, I have grown to greatly love theoretical algebra. The opportunity to work with one of my highly esteemed professors on a topic such as cluster algebras was an opportunity I could not pass on.



**Madison McCafferty**

- Major: Anthropology
- Minor: Irish Studies
- Advisor: Eric Haanstad

Collective Memory: How the Traumas of the Past Shape Us Today — Ireland's Mother and Baby Homes

My research looked into the atrocities committed at Ireland's mother and baby homes, exploring their historical context as well as the effects they have had on the current generation of Irish people. Furthermore, my research sought to discover how these instances occurred in a more global context, and how reparations can begin to be made to their victims.

I chose this topic because it combined my interests in anthropology and Irish Studies. Furthermore, as the research into Ireland's mother and baby homes is relatively recent, it's important to expand the field of academic sources about them. Only through education can we redress the wrongs of the past.

**Marlena Muszynska**

- Majors: Anthropology and Biological Sciences
- Advisor: Eric Haanstad

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

Many nations of Eastern Europe are often grouped together and portrayed as detrimentally impacted by high levels of alcohol consumption. My thesis aimed to synthesize evidence that contextualizes the intricate historical, political, and social paradigms of the pervasive cultural habit and its resulting stereotype. I conducted a thorough review of existing literature that relied on both qualitative and quantitative data collection. I focused 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.

As a first-generation Polish-American, I have sought the opportunity to pursue thorough study of a cultural stereotype of particular personal relevance and interest. Completing this thesis allowed me to better understand the history, politics, and other structural elements that inevitably, continuously change and shape societal interactions and functions throughout time. The applicability of multiple anthropological theories to the behavioral patterns seen in Eastern Europe shed light on the complexity of the human condition.



Maggie O'Brien

- Major: Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Italian
- Minor: Anthropology
- Advisor: Joshua Kaplan

The Politics of Historical Preservation and its Connection to Controversies about Monuments/Statues

My thesis explored the complexities of historical preservation and connected it to current political issues about statues and monuments, attempting to use the broader context of historical preservation to better understand them. I am from Virginia and have had a lot of exposure to these issues and historical preservation more broadly, so I wanted to explore the connections between them.



Jackson Oxler

- Majors: Anthropology and Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Global Affairs
- Minor: International Development Studies
- Kellogg International Scholars Program
- Advisor: Catherine Bolten

Good Cause Eviction: Tenants' Rights and Structural Violence in New York City

My thesis examined the history and current state of tenants' rights in New York City through a structural violence theoretical framework. Structural violence occurs when systems of power and social institutions directly harm individuals. Tenants have always faced uphill battles in maintaining stable and affordable housing; the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the vulnerabilities that renters face.

Over winter break, I traveled to New York City to interview tenants, tenants' unions, housing rights organizers, and politicians. These interviews and ethnographic methods provided the bulk of the data for my thesis. I got interested in housing after reading the book *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond. Inspired by his exploration of the injustices in eviction processes, I wanted to apply a structural violence lens to the general rights renters have to protect themselves.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program and Department of Anthropology to travel to New York City.



Jackson Oxler

- Majors: Anthropology and Political Science
- Supplementary Major: Global Affairs
- Minor: International Development Studies
- Kellogg International Scholars Program
- Advisor: Catherine Bolten

Queens is the Future: Immigrant Experiences of Structural Violence in Housing in New York City

My capstone in international development studies was an ethnography of three neighborhoods in New York City: Jackson Heights, Corona, and Elmhurst. They're three of the top five neighborhoods for immigrants in New York. During summer 2021, I lived in New York City and interviewed immigrants living and working in the community. I also did research in the public archives, and embedded myself in the community.

Understanding the particular vulnerabilities that immigrants face in the housing industry, my capstone highlights the structural violence present in the housing market. With broad research experiences, my capstone brought together interests in housing, immigration, and development studies. Housing is a basic human right. Without a stable home, the future possibilities an individual has are limited. I wanted my project to shed light on some injustices that American immigrants face in the housing industry.

Received funding from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies and Department of Anthropology to travel to New York City.



Angelica Ruiz

- Major: Sociology
- Supplementary Major: Latino Studies
- Minor: Anthropology
- Advisor: William Carbonaro

Asian American Academic Outcomes in Schooling Contexts

I looked at how Asian Americans perform in schools based on the racial composition of the schools. I examined if there are peer effects — any externality in which peers' backgrounds, behavior, or outcomes affect an outcome — when more Asian students are in a classroom. I wanted to focus on educational achievement for my thesis and I realized that Asian Americans are an understudied group in academia, and I wanted to contribute to that literature.

**Cristina Ruiz**

- Majors: Anthropology and Sociology
- Supplementary Major: Latino Studies
- Advisor: Calvin Zimmermann

'A Fork in the Road': Multiracial Student Identity

My thesis sought to find how and why multiracial students identify the way they do and how education plays a role in self-identification. I interviewed 13 undergraduate students at Notre Dame who identify as mixed-race/multiracial/biracial about their experiences in school and how race has played a part in it.

As someone who identifies as both Mexican and Chinese, I chose this topic because of my experiences regarding race in school. I wanted to learn more about other people who may have had similar experiences and decided to do this project.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.



Godiya Simon

- Major: Anthropology
- Minor: Studio Art
- Balfour-Hesburgh Scholar
- Advisors: Eric Haanstad and Brian O'Conchubhair

Preserving My Endangered Language: Toward an Expanded Dictionary of Cibak (Kibaku)

My research project focused on the documentation and preservation of an endangered language, Kibaku, that is spoken by more than 200,000 people in Northern Nigeria. Over the last century, historical events have resulted in a rapid decline in the number of Kibaku speakers in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains. This has resulted in lower probabilities of people passing it from one generation to the next. To address this issue, I constructed an English-Kibaku dictionary that includes basic English grammar and unique terms used by Kibaku people on social media.

In my second semester of freshman year, I was inspired to pursue this project after taking an excellent class, Fundamentals of Linguistic Anthropology, with Professor Susan Blum. I learned that about 90% of all languages may be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the 21st century. As a native speaker of Kibaku, I knew that I could make a unique contribution and I became focused on how to help the next generation learn and read in Kibaku.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts and Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies to travel to the University of Hawaii Manoa's Language Documentation Training Center.



Jessica Staggs

- Majors: Anthropology and Sociology
- Minor: Sustainability; Science, Technology, and Values (STV)
- Advisor: Donna Glowacki

Nature and Culture at the Indiana Dunes National Park

This study used ethnographic observations and interviews at Indiana Dunes National Park to understand how visitors defined nature and humanity's role in nature. During the summer at Indiana Dunes National Park, I performed ethnographic observations and interviewed more than 200 people.

My interviews revealed how visitors viewed nature and culture at the park and how the presence and actions of humans there changed the delineation of park land as human or natural. I chose this topic to contribute to an interdisciplinary body of work investigating the way that humans think about nature and how an integrated understanding of humanity and nature can advance sustainability.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts and the Minor in Sustainability and traveled to Indiana Dunes National Park on Lake Michigan.



Jessica Staggs

- Majors: Anthropology and Sociology
- Minors: Sustainability and Science, Technology, and Values (STV)
- Advisor: David Gibson

Packing for University Quarantine During COVID-19

This project used survey data to investigate what University of Notre Dame students took with them into University quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. Responses about what they took and how various social groups influenced their packing choices were used to better understand what kinds of environments students wanted to create during a period of high stress and uncertainty.

This project was inspired by quarantining during the pandemic. I chose it because wide-scale quarantining at universities is a new phenomenon. Not many studies had examined what students chose to have with them, the broader reflections about these choices, and the social importance the material objects held.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.

**Colin Stoll**

- Major: Psychology
- Supplementary Major: Arts & Letters Pre-Health
- Advisors: David Watson and Catherine Bolten

Teletherapy and the COVID-19 Pandemic

This project investigated the impact of COVID-19 on mental health services. In particular, I researched how the transition from in-person therapy to teletherapy impacted mental health outcomes, particularly in relation to substance use disorders.

This topic was chosen as a means to elucidate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on psychological services. The COVID-19 pandemic facilitated this project, as it prompted the transition from in-person therapy to teletherapy.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.