Honors Thesis Forum
Thursday, November 16, 2017
Lampasas 407A

9:00am-9:20am Adams, Julissa
Resisting Bullying a Poem at a Time: A Collection of Poems to Defeat Bullying
Supervising Professor: Dr. Teya Rosenberg, Department of English
Second Reader: Dr. Roger Jones, Department of English
Abstract:
The term “bullying” is one which varies among researchers, but is generally known as: an act in which there is a perpetrator and victim, where unwanted harm (either physically or psychologically) is done, resulting in emotional distress. It is a serious problem which has plagued many adolescents for decades, and with new technology has come new outlets for bullying (cyberbullying), which only demonstrates that this epidemic continues to grow as years pass by. As a victim of bullying myself, I feel as though it is crucial to face this issue. I have researched various articles concerning bullying and its’ outcomes, and as a result I have addressed my findings through writing and art. My research included articles which researchers studied the methodology of educating adolescents and adults about bullying, various forms of bullying, common reasons children and young adults are bullied, and I have also studied children’s poetry books surrounding a specific topic (as inspiration for writing and creating a children’s poetry book). In creating this children’s poetry book, I am hoping to reach a large variety of individuals, ranging from children in primary and secondary school, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators. It is important for all of these individuals to confront bullying, rather than ignoring it. This book contains various poems which directly encounter common bullying situations, including race, religion, homosexuality, concerns with appearance, gossiping, and more.

9:40am-10:00am McRae, Natalie
Final Conversations from the Millennial Generation
Supervising Professor: Dr. Maureen Keeley, Department of Communication Studies
Abstract:
This thesis aims to collect final conversations between millennials and their loved ones. Although important, not enough research has been done from the point of view of the Living, which is the person who continues on after the Dying have passed. Millennials are a unique generation, in that they have created the ability to grieve online since the number of millennials who have experienced a close-range death are very few compared to those who have not. Ten millennials were interviewed about their last conversations with a terminal loved one and the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. From this data, common themes discussed between the Living and the Dying were discerned. Findings are expected to reveal an uncertain generation that isn’t completely sure how to tackle a conversation with the Dying.

Break 10:00am-11:00am
**11:00am-11:20am Shannon, William**  
*An Ecological Case Against Development: Remote Sensing Analysis of Ecology and Vegetation Around Spring Lake, Texas, USA*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Andrew Sansom, The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment  
**Abstract:**  
Anthropogenic development of the environment is negatively affecting global ecosystems by affecting habitat, toxifying the earth and reducing biodiversity. Humans are dependent on healthy ecosystems. Thus, our own activity threatens our survival as we continue to test the limits of the living earth system. Ecosystems are complex, nested systems, which means the local affects the global and vice versa. This study looks at the ecological health of the grassland ecosystem around Spring Lake, San Marcos, Texas via remote sensing of vegetation and offers a comparative analysis of outcomes for land management practices based on the conclusions of those analyses. The land management practices being compared are: wildland vs. recreation field (golf, baseball, etc.).

**11:20am-11:40am Adams, Laura**  
*Houston Toad Phone: Compression and Transmission of Toad Calls*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Harold Stern, Ingram School of Engineering  
**Abstract:**  
The Toad Phone project is a collaborative effort to remotely monitor and improve the Houston Toad population. This product will aid property owners in acquiring an agricultural tax exemption appraisal. The operation of the prototype includes being able to record, compress, and transmit audio and environmental data to a cloud server (via a cell phone network) for further research purposes. The goal of my team is to create a cost-effective method and procedure for a device that will transfer recorded data for remote research. From experience with audio data, the size and number of files, for this scale of research, can become substantially large as recorded intervals increased. This can potentially become a large cost of the research project due to cellular network data transfer rates for large files as well as cloud data storage costs. We have decided to compress the data for better on-board storage as well as for file transfer procedure. We have to consider the desired product’s functionality based on researchers’ requests for ease of remote monitoring. We must also be mindful of the ethical, environmental, and social constraints and applications of this device being used in a public environment. We designed a procedure on a Raspberry Pi that will automatically compress recorded audio files and use an Internet of Things module to send the files to a cloud data base. The procedure has eased the mode of how often recorded data is physically collected from the field environment, but improvement in transmission and storage costs is still being investigated.

**11:40am-12:00pm Garcia, Samantha**  
*By Tweet and by Speech: An Examination of Values in Donald Trump’s Metaphor*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Amelie Benedikt, Department of Philosophy  
**Abstract:**  
This honors thesis examines Donald Trump’s use of metaphor and explores how he expresses his values through those metaphors. By examining examples of Trump’s political remarks, I reveal the central metaphor by which Trump operates and consider how American citizens may reestablish their political power by understanding Trump’s metaphors. The time period studied includes the start of Trump’s 2016 Presidential campaign up until the present. First, I classify Trump’s public speeches and tweets into separate categories, which include the ways in which his
speech has affected public reaction. Then, I apply George Lakoff and Mark Johnson’s philosophy of language to Trump’s remarks, and I reveal the values expressed in Trump’s metaphors. After this, I discuss the central metaphor Trump uses in his remarks, and I develop an appeal and course of action that American citizens who are opposed to Trump’s presidency must make in order to expose Trump’s non-egalitarian values. My findings will illuminate the power that metaphors have in contemporary American society and the impact they have made subsequent to the 2016 Presidential Election.

Break 12:00pm-1:40pm

1:40pm-2:00pm Evans, Clayton
*Spatio-Temporal Variability of Microbial Chitinase Activity in the Narragansett Bay*

Supervising Professor: Dr. Robert McLean, Department of Biology
Second Reader: Dr. Pia Moisano, Biology, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Abstract:
Chitin is a highly abundant biopolymer on Earth that serves as a semi-labile source of both carbon and nitrogen for microbes. It is a structural biopolymer that in marine environments is found at high abundances in invertebrate exoskeletons such as the abundant mesozooplankton, copepods. Bacteria excrete chitinases, proteins that degrade chitin, into their surroundings, to degrade the polymer into its monomer and disaccharide forms. Most marine research on the chitinases has focused on what bacterial genes take part in the degradation, but relatively little is known about in situ chitinase activity rates and controls. Using the reagents from a commercial chitinase kit based on three types of fluorescently tagged chitin substrates, we devised a methodology for detection of relative chitinase activity in estuarine samples. We investigated the presence of chitinases in water and zooplankton samples from Narragansett Bay. By concentrating the samples, increasing the incubation time, and incubating under conditions similar to the native environments, chitinase activity could be detected in the Narragansett Bay water samples through the summer season. Our findings show variable activity at four stations along the estuarine gradient (7.13 ng ml⁻¹ – 553.18 ng ml⁻¹), with the most riverine stations having a tendency for highest activity. A significantly elevated activity in copepod associated bacteria was also present (269.58 ng copepod⁻¹ – 2508.93 ng copepod⁻¹). Of a range of environmental parameters tested, pH had a significant negative correlation with chitinase activity in all three chitin substrates tested, similar to what has been previously reported in terrestrial environments. The described method should be beneficial for future studies on spatio-temporal distributions and controls of chitinase activity in marine environments.

2:00pm-2:20pm Jaimez, Daisy
*The Exclusion of Central American Unaccompanied Minor Children (UMC) Under the Refugee Regime in the United States*

Supervising Professor: Dr. Sarah Blue, Department of Geography

Abstract:
The current definition of a refugee used by the United States grants asylum to those who are fleeing persecution because of race, religion, nationality, membership to a particular social group, or political opinion. This narrow definition does not take into consideration new factors forcing Central American unaccompanied children (UMC) to seek asylum in the U.S. This paper argues that youth migrants from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras would qualify for asylum if the
parameters were expanded to include gang violence and the lack of state protection, in the asylum definition used by the United States. Adopting Alexander Betts’ definition of survival migrants, people leaving a fragile state, would pose a solution to the large influx of unaccompanied minors who arrived at the U.S.-Mexico border between 2014-2016. This paper uses 26 interviews of Central American UMC interviewed in the summer of 2015, while they were detained by Mexican immigration officers in Tamaulipas, Mexico. The findings consist of identifying the factors influencing the migration of these UMC, as well as analyzing how they could argue for asylum in the U.S., or how they are excluded from the refugee regime. The paper found that UMC who had received gang threats could qualify for asylum if they claimed to have different political opinions than non-state actors, like gangs, or lacked membership in these groups. Other UMC could receive asylum if the refugee definition were expanded to include the factors listed under survival migration. In conclusion, the United States needs to ensure the protection of children who navigate its immigration system, but there is also a desperate need for an in-country solution in the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras.

2:20pm-2:40pm Guerrero, Juliana
Music as a Source Memory Enhancer
Supervising Professor: Dr. Rebecca Deason, Department of Psychology
Abstract:
It is common belief that music can facilitate memory performance when paired with new information. Although this memory aid is widely accepted as effective, there is relatively little investigation of how music serves as a memory enhancer and its potential limitations. The current study examined whether musical encoding could improve source memory judgments. First, participants listened to 100 sets of novel lyrics, 50 sung recordings and 50 spoken recordings, with written lyrics presented on the screen as well. In the subsequent test phase, the participants were presented with 200 pictures (half old, half new). Participants were asked to decide whether they had heard lyrics related to the picture before or not, and if they had, whether the lyrics had been accompanied by a sung or spoken recording. After each source memory judgment, participants were also asked to provide a confidence rating about their decision. The results showed that the source memory performance for pictures related to sung lyrics was marginally better than for pictures related to the spoken lyrics. Interestingly, there was also significantly higher confidence in the source memory judgments for the pictures related to the sung lyrics compared to spoken lyrics. Potentially musical encoding provides more distinctive information that can be used at retrieval to improve source memory and also lead to higher ratings of confidence. Investigating more about the role of music as a memory enhancer can potentially help both healthy adults and those with memory disorders.

2:40pm-3:00pm Barry, Kiley
Sell Seamlessly to Each Social Style
Supervising Professor: Dr. A. Wayne Noll, Department of Marketing
Abstract:
This thesis explores how to identify, understand, and ultimately sell to the four personality types categorized by the ever-popular Merrill-Reid method. How can you identify the personality type of a buyer, and effectively alter your personality type in a selling role to become more appealing? Assessment of many academic journals along with the research of Merrill & Reid, Personal Styles and Effective Performance serves as a basis for an in-depth understanding of the personality types. Findings indicate that there are many ways to identify each personality type, and that we can alter our styles
temporarily for the sake of dealing more effectively. In determining your buyer's personality type you can better meet their desires helping you answer some of their concerns before they make even make them known to you, and more importantly you can potentially avoid their pain points and dislikes. Further dividing the personality types using secondary styles may give a stronger understanding of how individuals think and stronger approaches to communication.

3:00pm-3:20pm Bintliff, Charles
_An Exploratory Study of Nature Edge Effects_
Supervising Professor: Dr. Shawn McCracken, Department of Biology
Abstract:
This study’s primary purpose is to acquire knowledge on how the edge effect gradient changes as it penetrates from natural clearings into surrounding forest. Most studies on edge effects focus on those edges caused by anthropogenic forces. By studying the naturally occurring edge effect on microclimate changes I hope to gain insight on the potential effects to the floral and faunal communities within these areas of disturbed microclimate. This study will contribute to our understanding of the effective size and critical level of disturbance sustainable by interior forest habitat. Understanding the effects on microclimate of these forest margins will provide more accurate and practical knowledge for guiding future studies, and development of more informed policies for habitat preservation.

Break 3:20pm-3:40pm

3:40pm-4:00pm Sprague, Darcy
_The Fight Against SB4: A Look at How the City of San Marcos and Local Activists Responded to the Anti-Sanctuary City Law_
Supervising Professor: Dr. Gilbert Martinez, School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Abstract:
In 2017, the Texas Legislature passed what has been called the toughest anti-immigration bill in the country – Senate Bill 4, also known as the anti-sanctuary cites law. Several cities, including Austin and San Antonio, joined a lawsuit against the bill, but the city of San Marcos did not. This thesis will tell the story – drawing on over 500 emails from city officials and interviews with activists – of how the city went from voting unanimously against the lawsuit to voting unanimously to file their own amicus brief a week later. It will examine the timeline between when activists first began lobbying for city support for the lawsuit to when city council filed the amicus brief.
9:00am-9:20am Arzola, Emily
A Theoretical Framework: Effectiveness of Acceptance in Reducing Anxiety in Stuttering
Supervising Professor: Dr. Farzan Irani, Department of Communication Disorders
Abstract:
Childhood onset stuttering, while being an established speech impediment, often operates on spectrum of severity. Anxiety’s influence on stuttering has yet to be fully explored, however, the two are believed to be strongly correlated. People who stutter (PWS) often find that they lose control of fluency when experiencing strong negative emotions such as fear and anxiety. Consequently, anxiety seems to be significant in understanding how to regain a degree of fluency. To understand the rehabilitation of fluency, the establishment of disfluency must first be understood. The process of encoding and storage of information from the environment leads to memory consolidation. Memory consolidation primes the mind for automatic processing which eventually leads to the construct of unwanted belief systems that trigger anxiety. A new third wave of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), has only recently began being utilized as therapy for stuttering. ACT’s uniqueness lies in is its engagement of acceptance, which allows for processes to occur that are vital for long-term functional change of cognitions that sustain anxiety. This paper presents a theoretical framework of acceptance and memory reconsolidation, how they operate together in ACT, and examines the similarities and differences between CBT and ACT.

9:20am-9:40am Jones, Kiley
How to Get the Job? The Role of Innovation and Creativity in the Job Application Process
Supervising Professor: Dr. Linda Nasr, Department of Marketing
Abstract:
This thesis identifies solutions for individuals in order to effectively promote themselves in the job application process. With the United States work force being so competitive, elements of the job application process being hundreds of years old and the job application process progressing into an impersonal process, individuals are struggling to find success with their job hunt. To come up with a solution I examined both traditional job application processes, such as resumes, curriculum vitae, cover letters and the job search itself, and nontraditional job application processes, such as applying with a video, video game, social media account and much more. Overall, evidence shows that innovation and creativity are prerequisites to success in the job application process, as well as different disciplines and specialities. Finally, I recommend ways for individuals to implement creativity and innovation into their job application process in order to succeed.
9:40am-10:00am Sneed, Jaysen  
*Gender Norms in Horror Slasher Movies*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Marian Houser, Department of Communication Studies  
**Abstract:**  
This study was inspired by Gender Schema theory, which proposes we as humans develop expectations for people depending on personal gender identity (Blum, 1981). In Western culture, the film industry plays a prominent role in perpetuating gender stereotypes and gender expectations, which goes back to the gender schema theory on how we continue to see information that enforces our gender expectations (Diekman & Eagly, 1999). With the horror-film-genre serving a valuable role in the movie industry, it is an important area to investigate - especially among young people who are some of the primary consumers (Chung, 2009). This association has created my interest to discover how gender is represented in horror/slasher movies, the specific characteristics for men and women in those films, and the perceptions of young millennials today (Cowan & Margargaret, 1990). Of primary interest is how young people perceive gender roles that may be perpetuated in horror/slasher films and how it influences their self-perceptions (Keisner, 2008). Preliminary research has helped me discover how the killings in horror/slasher films appear to reinforce the gender role stereotypes that society has created for men and women (Welsh, 2009). I have been able to discover research that investigated why men and women have specific gender portrayals in horror/slasher movies and how they are specifically incorporated into the plot of the film (Welsh, 2010). Welsh also talked about how the younger audience that can watch horror movies tend to consume more information from these slasher films. This allowed me to look more into research on how the portrayal of gender in media helps to teach and reinforce the idea of gender that many people are continued to be taught (Wood, 1994). What is uncertain, however, is whether today’s millennials perceive these gender stereotypes to be evident and whether each resonates with them, personally.

10:00am-10:20am Rener, Cole  
*Plants as Protest: Guerrilla Gardening and Its Role in Urban Environmentalism*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Frances Le Duc, Department of Agriculture  
**Abstract:**  
The simplest definition of guerrilla gardening is growing plants on land owned by another person. While guerrilla gardeners commit their crime for a variety of reasons, using guerrilla gardening as a way to protest against the civil abandonment of urban land by reclaiming it for the people has had success in generating neighborhood revitalization efforts that are based on cooperation between motivated citizens and local government bodies. Three groups (Liz Christy and the Green Guerrillas, Richard Reynolds, and Ron Finely) have had significant impacts on the spread and acceptance of the movement. All of these gardeners went beyond their personal projects to further the guerrilla gardening movement and environmentalism in general. Guerrilla gardening appears to have a strong influence due to its grassroots nature, especially in moving the urban food revolution forward, and serves as a good model for other radical and non-radical environmentalism movements in industrialized countries.
10:20am-10:40am Heitmann, Austin
Synergistic Effects of Roundup and Corticosterone on Growth in Incilius nebulifer Tadpoles
Supervising Professor: Dr. Caitlin Gabor, Department of Biology

Abstract:
Exposure to pesticides, especially in early life stages, may negatively impact amphibian populations. These effects may arise as a function of direct mortality of individuals, but indirect effects such as impacts on hormonal regulation of homeostasis or of other necessary survival traits, can also negatively impact populations. Corticosterone (CORT) is the main amphibian stress hormone, and elevations of CORT increases tail depth and rate of metamorphosis with a lower body mass. We examined the synergistic effects of an herbicide, Roundup (active ingredient = glyphosate), and exogenous CORT on tadpole growth, corticosterone levels and antipredator responses in Incilius nebulifer. Glyphosate, also increases CORT and tail depth. We exposed tadpoles for one week to one of four treatments: exogenous CORT, Roundup, CORT plus Roundup, and control. We then measured water-borne CORT levels, obtained mass and photographed tadpoles to measure snout-vent length. We found that tadpoles exposed to CORT or CORT plus Roundup had significantly higher CORT levels prior to predator exposure than those in the other two treatments. We also found no effect of treatment on body condition, but CORT and Roundup plus CORT tadpoles had shallower tail depths. We also found that body condition was significantly positively correlated with CORT in the Roundup treatment. We conclude that there are synergistic effects of Roundup and CORT on the physiology and growth of Incilius nebulifer tadpoles, indicating that more stressed tadpoles are less likely to survive predator attacks when exposed to the herbicide Roundup.

Break 10:40am-11:00am

11:00am-11:20am Schautteet, Anna
Below the Surface: An Anthropological Discussion About the Deeper Significance of Surface Found Artifacts
Supervising Professor: Dr. Michael Collins, Department of Anthropology

Abstract:
The collection studied in this thesis is the Colonel Charles M. Fergusson, Jr. Native American Artifacts Collection, housed at the Center for Archaeological Studies, Texas State University, San Marcos. This collection was donated to the Texas Prehistory Research Project at Texas State University for preservation in the manner the institution saw most fitting. In general, we study avocational collections to retrieve information that may otherwise be lacking. This benefits the holder of such collections (as for example, a curation facility) and it affords research opportunities for scholars, etc. The end goal for this collection will be the creation of a reference base for Texas projectile points. Essentially meaning, there will be a subset of artifacts pulled from the collection that will serve as a guide for morphological characteristics of projectile points. A tangible reference such as this will prove to be beneficial for students and interested individuals alike. And, will also serve to highlight one of the manners in which surface found collections can be a meaningful resource in the field of archaeology.

The other ways in which a collection such as this can serve to be important is conveyed through the scientific, as well as the cultural data obtained from it– these areas are ones which will be discussed in this thesis. The purpose of this thesis will be to convey the importance of surface found artifacts based on aspects of anthropological study, both scientific and cultural in nature.
11:20am-11:40am Tleimat, Jacquelyn
*The Effects of Vertical Gradients and Forest Types on Beetle Diversity*
Supervising Professor: Dr. Shawn McCracken, Department of Biology

**Abstract:**

Beetles belong to the order Coleoptera, the largest in all the animal kingdom. They are distinguished by the hardened wing casing that encloses their front wings. Beetles are found in virtually every habitat and can exploit many food sources. Though often considered pests, beetles can provide ecosystem services such as pollination, nutrient recycling, and pest control. Jacquelyn's research will take place over two locations; Freeman Ranch and Tiputini Biological Research Center. To see if vertical and latitudinal differences cause a difference in beetles, Jacquelyn will be placing black light traps along vertical transects in a subtropical and a tropical environment. Five trapping events will take place at Freeman Ranch and five trapping events will take place at Tiputini. For each trapping event, three traps will be placed on a transect up a randomly selected tree. One trap will be placed at the ground level, the next at mid canopy, and a final trap at the top of the canopy. The traps will be placed in the evening and checked at sunrise.

11:40am-12:00pm Shannon, Mary Kate
"If I Said No to Sex, It Was My Fault.": Comparing the Influences of Method Choice on Romantic Relationships
Supervising Professor: Dr. Deborah Harris, Department of Sociology
Second Reader: Dr. Amy Meeks, Department of Psychology

**Abstract:**

This study asserts that a woman’s contraceptive method of choice has an impact on the dynamics of her romantic relationship. Research today focuses mostly on the physical side effects of specific birth control methods. However, as this research shows, the psychosocial effects of contraceptive methods—both hormonal and non-hormonal, also need to be considered before a woman selects a method. This research specifically analyzes the influences of hormonal birth control (HBC) as compared to fertility awareness methods (FAM) on the dynamics of long term monogamous relationships. Through qualitative analysis of interviews, themes were collected from each group. Themes of increased communication and unique dynamics of voluntary abstinence was found in the FAM group. The HBC group saw a shift in stress levels and a rise in self-consciousness. Finally, the two groups had contrasting perspectives in the areas of mutual understanding, supportiveness, decision making and shared responsibilities. These findings demonstrate the weight contraceptive method choice has on the dynamics of a romantic relationship.

**Break 12:00pm-1:00pm**
**1:00pm-1:20pm Dunn, Emily**  
*Blue is the New Black: How Popular Culture has been Romanticizing Mental Illness*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Jon Lasser, Department of Counseling, Leadership, Adult Education, and School Psychology  
**Abstract:**  
Over the past two decades, there has been a trend of romanticizing mental illness amongst the younger generation. I define this age group as high school to college-age, around 13-22 years old. In this thesis I clarify several reasons as to why this is happening, focusing on the influence of popular culture. I assert that due to the well-meaning intention of destigmatizing mental illness in society, there has been a movement in film and social media to humanize various mental illnesses, which in twist of perception has caused it to be sensationalized. I will be using the examples of depression, anxiety, personality disorder and schizophrenia. I use film as the main medium of influence because historically, film has mirrored and magnified social issues and changes of opinion as time progresses, a key example being both social opinions towards women’s, and civil rights. Films depicting empowered women after the second world war, and films showing hot-button situations such as interracial couples in the 1960s. The parallel here is that the changing attitudes towards mental health are now being shown through film as well. I add social media to the mixture of influences because it is just as, if not more of an influence to attitudes as film is, because social media is interactive. The consequence of admiration towards mental illnesses are varied. On a lesser scale, it has shown in behaviors such as using disorders such as depression or anxiety as accessories to make one’s personality more interesting. On a more critical scale, it may lead to the tendency to not seek out help if one is experiencing symptoms of poor mental health due to the weary opinions of the older generation suspicious of fakery for attention. On the flip-side, over diagnosis can also occur. There is not a problem with trying to humanize mental illness through depictions in film and social media. However, it needs to be done so more objectively, with realistic information, and with the “faded flower” aesthetic removed.

**1:20pm-1:40pm Weaver Lewis, Rikki**  
*Consumer Preference for Organic and Local Food Purchases: Lessons for Leafy Green Vegetable Markets in Greater Austin*  
Supervising Professor: Dr. Madan Dey, Department of Agriculture  
**Abstract:**  
Organic and local foods are increasing in demand, but still maintain a relatively small portion of the market. In an effort to provide information to Texas markets, this thesis sought to increase understanding of consumer preferences and purchasing behaviors by conducting a literature review of related materials in the U.S. and elsewhere, and analyzing survey data collected in the Greater Austin area. In conclusion, initial survey data analysis supports the literature that suggests consumers have positive attitudes toward organic foods, but freshness, location of store, and price may be more important than production method or origin.
1:40pm-2:00pm Boyenga, Sydney

*Next-Level Drama: Advanced Arts Integration in the Standard Classroom*

Supervising Professor: Ms. Vlasta Silhavy, Department of Theatre and Dance

**Abstract:**

Arts integration is a popular aspect of cross-curricular education, but often is misused in the traditional core (math, science, English) classroom. The typical attempt at ‘arts integration’ in the classroom, particularly with theatre and drama, do not attempt to include theatre TEKS or state standards. Instead, in these scenarios, a shallow attempt at the integration is incorporated, where students reenact scenes from history or physically embody scientific concepts without regard to actually teaching theatre. This paper strives to serve as a critique of this method and offer a more in-depth version of arts integration.

The following thesis provides a detailed framework for any potential teacher who hopes to bring drama into the classroom in a successful way, incorporating the state standards to the subject. A unit plan and example units are also included, allowing for any instructor to get a full taste of what a cross curricular lesson with drama can look like. A key is also included at the end, indicating important theatrical concepts used in the example unit and can be used in the future for both long-term units and five minute activities.

One of the lesson plans from the unit was implemented in a classroom, where students were allowed to acquire both theatre skills and skills that meet state standards for core curriculum. Any aspect of the example lesson can be implemented and adapted in other classrooms.

2:00pm-2:20pm Sohns, Kayla

*They Deserve Better: A Look Into the Lives of the Most Vulnerable Texans*

Supervising Professor: Dr. Rose Pulliam, School of Social Work

**Abstract:**

The mentally incapacitated are the most vulnerable population. Due to their vulnerability, they are unable to advocate for themselves, so others must advocate on behalf of them and their well-being. This thesis, rooted in experience serving as a Court Visitor on behalf of the Travis County Probate Court, argues that mental health parity would provide equitable funding for facilities to afford proper care and staff, would lessen accidental deaths, and would encourage screening for mental illness in children to offer preventative care. This position is supported by detailed observations and research into the effects of the lack of mental health parity. This thesis discusses the blatant differential in care across the gradient of facility funding from purely Medicare and Medicaid funded facilities, to purely high-end private pay facilities observed through visits conducted on behalf of the Travis County Probate Court. These disparities were identified by the author when she visited mentally incapacitated wards and spoke with guardians of mentally incapacitated people. This thesis also discusses data related to the number of individuals who are affected by mental illness in this country, the number of forensic commits, and prevalence of mental illness in criminals, and makes the case that the state would actually save money if preventative mental health care was a priority.
2:20pm-2:40pm Elliot, Tiffani
The Consumer/Recovery Movement and Involuntary Mental Health Treatment: An Examination of State Policies Regarding Forced Medication
Supervising Professor: Dr. Toni Watt, Department of Sociology
Abstract:
This thesis examines state psychiatric civil commitment laws that dictate involuntary treatment and the use of forced medication for mental health treatment. It considers the ongoing and highly controversial debate between those in favor of involuntary treatment and those in opposition. My research emphasizes the latter by looking extensively at the consumer/recovery movement – a mental health empowerment movement largely consisting of people who have been treated against their will in the past. Through the fight for social justice, they urge states to make mental health policies that respect and well represent the rights and autonomy of people with mental health conditions. A content analysis of psychiatric civil commitment laws from ten states were analyzed using variables that capture the essence of consumer/recovery movement objectives. This analysis investigates to what extent the consumer/recovery movement has impacted state policy. For the state laws analyzed variability existed between and within states in the amount of consumer/recovery movement representation. Collectively however, consumer/recovery movement objectives were underrepresented in state psychiatric laws for the involuntary use of treatment and medication.

2:40pm-3:00pm Frost, Ashley
Change in Adaptability and Satisfaction with Life in Students Who Study Abroad
Supervising Professor: Dr. Sarah Angulo, Department of Psychology
Abstract:
This thesis takes place in two parts: the first in a scientific study analyzing the change in students who study abroad. The second part of this thesis is a memoir of the author’s personal experience abroad. Previous research has suggested that study abroad is a powerful and transformative experience that increases open-mindedness and self-confidence (e.g., Dwyer, 2004). The objective of the current study was to investigate the changes that university students experience while abroad. Forty-one students completed online measures of personality, satisfaction with life, and adaptability before and after a five-week study-abroad experience. Satisfaction with life increased from before study abroad to after study abroad, with the trend toward significance ($p = .057$). Students’ adaptability from before to after studying abroad showed significant increase ($p = .002$). These findings will be useful for universities, students considering studying abroad, and social and personality psychologists interested in culture and identity.

3:00pm-3:20pm Hellman-Lohr, Aisha
To Write Press Play: Teaching Creative Writing Basics with Video Games
Supervising Professor: Dr. Anne Winchell, Department of English
Second Reader: Dr. Laura Sims, Department of English
Abstract:
This thesis creates a video game-based creative writing class combining group-based learning, workshops, and lecture. Examples and techniques, like studying characters from video games, will be applied to the basics of creative writing, in this instance helping students create their own characters. Because character, setting, and plot are key in creative writing and are the focus of this class, each session will dissect these elements using video games like Sly Cooper: Honor Among
Thieves, Pokémon, and Fable III. The variety of games and styles studied in this class will help students understand various approaches to writing. For example, when looking at character the class will focus on actions and interactions in order to demonstrate how they can implement those techniques in their creative writing. Setting is also included, but the focus is not solely visual, we examine games in which the setting has a significant impact on the character’s actions and mood through other factors and how to translate that into student writing. In addition to character and setting, plot is an element that holds the story together. In this class, we will look at non-linear, branching narratives and use this to help students understand how to become more motivated when writing because they realize the possibilities their stories hold. The class is offered twice weekly in order to give students time to prepare and also to give families flexibility. Students finish the class with the opportunity to write a story of their own that combines character activity, multifaceted setting, and plot variations. This class will be a benefit for students in grades eight to twelve looking to improve their creative writing skills.

3:20pm-3:40pm Wofford, Nathaniel
The Effects of a Brief Nap on Stress
Supervising Professor: Dr. Carmen Westerberg, Department of Psychology
Abstract:
Current research suggests that sleep plays an important role as a stress buffer and helps the body respond appropriately to future stressors. Napping has been shown to have a host of benefits including improved mood, tolerance for frustration, and working memory capacity, as well as decreased anxiety and reaction to negative stimuli. However, the effects of napping on an individual’s ability to cope with acute stress is unknown. Due to the effects that sleeping can have on the body’s response to stress and the positive effects that napping can have, it is reasonable to hypothesize that a nap could have stress reducing and buffering benefits. To test this hypothesis, undergraduate participants were stressed using a modified version of the Trier Social Stress Test, in which participants completed a difficult math task and then were informed that at the end of the study they would have to write and recite a 5-minute-long speech from memory to a panel of three judges, who were trained to monitor their behavior and assess speech performance. After this stressor, participants took a 40-minute break. During the break, half of the participants took a nap monitored with electroencephalography (EEG; nap group), while the other half of the participants watched an educational TV show (wake group). After the break, all participants were given their speech topics and ten minutes to prepare their speech. After the preparation period was over, they were informed that they would not have to give a speech and the study was finished. Stress and positive and negative affect were measured at four-time points; prior to the Trier Social Stress Test (baseline), prior to the break, after the break, and after the speech preparation period, using the State Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) and the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) respectively. Additionally, sleep quality/quantity for the previous night and the previous month were assessed and working memory was measured before and after the break using the WAIS Digit Span – Backward. Data collection is currently in progress. Scores from the STAI and WAIS prior to and following the break, and scores from the STAI following the break and after the speech preparation period will be compared. If napping reduces stress and increases working memory capacity, it is expected that the nap group will show a larger decrease in STAI scores and a larger increase in WAIS scores after the break than the wake group. If napping serves as an effective stress buffer, it is expected that the wake group will show a larger increase in STAI scores after the speech preparation period is over than the nap group. Sleep quality/quantity and EEG measures will also be examined to determine if any aspects of sleep are associated with nap-related changes in stress, affect, or
working memory capacity. Results from this study will increase our understanding of effective techniques to reduce and control stress.

3:40pm–4:00pm Krell, Judith

Government and Nongovernment Reproductive Healthcare Organizations: A Communication Comparison

Supervising Professor: Dr. Emily Ehmer, School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Abstract:

There is little research that analyzes reproductive healthcare organizations’ communication strategies in Texas. Previous research shows there is a need for adequate reproductive healthcare for men, women, and children to lead healthy lives. To enhance the understanding of the need for improved reproductive healthcare in Texas, I examine and compare the strategic communication characteristics of government and nongovernmental organizations. For this thesis, I employ Grounded Theory to perform a qualitative, comparative, textual analysis. Separating these two types of organizations, exploring their available online content will enhance the research that discusses the relationship between communication tactics and accessible and affordable reproductive healthcare for young adults in Texas. Identifying the subjects’ audiences, goals, communication strategies and tactics, and then performing a comparative analysis of the data, allows for an in-depth evaluation of health communication efficacy, education and engagement.