



THIEL
Dietrich Honors Institute

Thesis Bulletin

Fall 2020

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Introduction from the DHI Director

November 14, 2020

I am very proud to present this collection of DHI Theses to the Thiel community. These projects demonstrate the focus and determination of our students through an unusually condensed and tumultuous semester. Below you will find a range of theses that demonstrate students' engagement with pressing public issues close to home and around the world. Our DHI Seniors have applied their knowledge, skills, and experience to questions about climate change, poverty, education, the arts, and more.

I am grateful to Dr. George Branch-Trevathan for his careful attention in mentoring our thesis writers, and to the advisors and readers who dedicated their expertise to these projects.

Congratulations to the DHI Class of 2021! On behalf of the Dietrich Honors and Thiel College communities, know that you have our support and admiration. We look forward to your future joys and successes.

With gratitude

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sheila Nowinski', written in a cursive style.

Sheila Nowinski, PhD

Director, Dietrich Honors Institute

Message from the Fall 2020 DHI Thesis Mentor

Dear Seniors,

You faced an incredible array of challenges this semester: the coronavirus, remote learning, several personal crises, and an exhausting presidential election.

And yet you chose important thesis topics, conducted research, outlined, wrote, wrote more, revised, talked joyously about what you were learning, and started saying *signposting* in everyday conversation.

Your work is high quality. Your resilience is impressive. I am proud of you. I am incredibly proud of you.

I hope you are proud of yourselves too.

Go into the world with confidence and in peace.

With gratitude that I have had the privilege of working with you,

George

George Branch-Trevathan, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Religion

DHI Theses, Fall 2020

John Aarestrup

From Riches to Rags: The Root of Haiti's Underdevelopment

Advisor: Aubree Herrin, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Political Science

Reader: Gary J. Witosky, C.P.A., C.G.M.A., M.Acc. '79, Professor of Business Administration and Accounting, David M. Miller Endowed Chair of Accounting

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere and remains the least developed. However, the country was once one of France's most valuable possession before its colonial rule concluded in 1804. How has a country that was once the richest colony in the world become the most impoverished and least developed in the western hemisphere? Many studies have been conducted to figure out why Haiti has had such a hard time developing. Factors such as Haiti's past of poor internal governance combined with recent environmental disasters have been directly linked to the Caribbean country's inability to develop. Although these factors played a large part in Haiti's underdevelopment, they are not where the problem originated. These studies fail to mention the impact of all the external factors that played their roles in Haiti's downfall. This study will be focused on arguing that the root of Haiti's underdevelopment can be attributed to its past of being victim to the impacts of harsh colonial rule, and the invasion of other foreign powers interrupting the way of life of the country's inhabitants. The consequences of being the first Black independent republic struck promptly after many lives were lost fighting for the country's independence from France's treacherous rule. This thesis will prove that national isolation, financial oppression, and invasion, all from foreign powers, are not only contributions, but are the roots of Haiti's underdevelopment.

Madison Acor

Will the Future of Funeral Homes Only Involve Creamations?

Advisor: Anna Reinsel, Ph.D. '06, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Chemistry

Reader: Casey Rose, Funeral Director, Black Funeral Homes, Stoneboro, Pennsylvania

Funerals in the eastern part of the United States are moving further away from traditional funerals as cremations have proven to be a more affordable option. This thesis dives into the depths of cremation services in hopes to educate and inform the audience on changes within the death care industry. I interviewed four different funeral home directors for the purpose of validating my research and confirming the role cremations will play in the future portfolio of funeral services. There has been a renewed focus on cremations in recent years due in part to the affordability and flexibility it provides those burying a loved one.

Tyla Belton

Thesis Lights, Camera, Colorism! The Exploration of Colorism in Television Series and Its Effects on Self-Esteem among Young African American Women

Advisor: Cynthia L. Sutton, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology

Reader: Anthony E. Jones, M.A. Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion

Skin color continues to play an essential role in the lives of individuals in the United States. Though many may not be aware, the phenomenon of colorism affects people of color daily. African American individuals who are of darker-skin experience racial discrimination more often than individuals who are of lighter-skin. African American actresses who star in lead roles often have light-skin and long straight hair. Hollywood films rarely portray natural dark-skinned African American women as the main character of their series. Due to the lack of adequate and positive representation of dark-skin African American women in television series, we may notice its effects on self-esteem. Using a small convenience sample from the total population of young African American women at a liberal arts college, I will study the relationship between the depiction of colorism in television series and the effects on self-esteem. Gaining greater knowledge regarding colorism and its impact on young women is a step towards creating a nation that is accepting, welcoming, and understanding of others.

Jonathan Burkley

Poetry Therapy: A Creative Outlet for Mental and Spiritual Health

Advisor: Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D. Professor of English

Reader: Kara Zuschlag, M.Ed. Assistant Professor of Education

Poetry is a form of writing that has served as a creative and expressive outlet throughout time. It can be used as a form of therapy to express and heal one's mind. In order to show how this may be done, I look first at three different poetic forms in the following format: an analysis of a personal created work, an analysis of a canonical work, and then a consideration of the form itself. During this analysis, I also consider the value of this form of poetry therapy to younger generations in secondary and collegiate education. The outcome of this project is to create a teacher and/or student workshop utilizing poetic forms to express and cope with psychological upheavals as well as alleviate forms of stress. This workshop will serve as a starting point to discuss and interact with creative ideas as forms of healing for the mind and spirit.

George Cupec

The Future of Yesterday: Using Game Theory to Propose a New Climate Policy

Advisor: Douglas Kinnear, Ph.D. Institutional Researcher, Adjunct Professor of Business Administration and Accounting

Reader: Marie Courtemanche, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Political Science

Climate change is an issue that affects every facet of life and has yet to have an effective solution. International policy on climate change tends to be weak and under enforced with major economic powers being apprehensive to embrace policy efforts. This paper analyzes climate change from an economic perspective to inform a new policy design. The economic analysis will be combined with an analysis of previous policy to draft a novel proposal. This policy will include a tier system to allow for states of varying levels of development to be addressed in different ways. The policy will operate under an intergovernmental organization (IGO) to allow for better monitoring and idea convergence. Thus, the IGO will allow for more effective policy through state interaction. Setting up a novel IGO presents issues, and persuading states to enter into an agreement that restricts autonomous decision making is difficult.

Dakota Forrest

Let's Talk about Sexuality: A Comparison between the United States and Iran

Advisor: George Branch-Trevethan, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Religion

Reader: James Koshan, Ph.D. Professor of History

Sexuality throughout much of United States history has been something that, despite being rarely talked about openly, due to its overtly personal nature, has been regulated in a way that can only be described as imposing. With a comparison between the United States and Iran and by bringing to light the flaws that both countries exhibit when discussing sexuality, what will be shown is ultimately a more efficient way of handling the facets of sexuality. This comparison will be made by considering the differences in religion and legislation that exists between both countries.

Wes Gerber

Positive Learning Environments

Advisor: Kara Zuschlag, M.Ed. Assistant Professor of Education

Reader: Gage Gladysz '20, Volunteer Assistant Wrestling Coach and Resident Director

There are a variety of environments in which students and athletes learn. Some settings allow learners to thrive and succeed, while other environments cause students to become complacent or even unmotivated. In both athletic and educational settings, positive and negative settings can be observed. Some coaches and teachers use tactics such as instilling fear, yelling, and delivering harsh consequences to yield specific results. This is not the type of environment that I thrive in, nor the type of environment I hope to create when I am teaching or coaching. On the other hand, others create positive settings, characterized by strong student-instructor relationships, embedded with trust and strong communication. Is one of these methods truly superior to the other? Research has shown that the most effective way to teach a new behavior is through positive interactions, not through these seemingly “old school” and harsh methods.

Ryann Gollings

The Association between Parasomnias and Feelings of Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

Advisor: Kristel Gallagher, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology

Reader: Laura Pickens, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between parasomnias, specifically sleepwalking and sleep talking, and feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression. The current research literature on this potential association is surprisingly sparse. The literature that does exist is mostly in the form of case studies, rather than more general research on healthy samples of adults. It remains to be understood why adults experience parasomnias. There has been some speculation about potential triggers, such as stress and anxiety, but there is little empirical data to support these speculations. This study used a mixed-methods research design with both qualitative and quantitative measures to determine whether feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression might be related to, or trigger, experiences of parasomnias in college-aged adults. The results of the qualitative study showed that as levels of stress, anxiety, and depression increased, parasomnia scores increased. For the qualitative study, most of the participants stated that they believed stress, anxiety, and depression could be a potential trigger for their parasomnias. This study fills that gap in research and can be used to help those who suffer from parasomnias to better understand how to control their circumstances.

Hailey Hause

Inclusion Includes Benefits for All

Advisor: Kara Zuschlag, M.Ed. Assistant Professor of Education

Reader: Nancy Castor, M.Ed. Associate Professor of Education

Inclusion is a word in Special Education that is thrown around, but the question is do educators really know what it means to include students with special needs? This paper will discuss students' rights to be included, the journey of getting included and how teachers can make this work. Inclusion is a beneficial practice for students with and without special needs. Teachers need to have the skills and strategies to make inclusion successful for all students and staff involved. Do you believe in inclusion? Learn how to make inclusion work in all environments.

Sophia Kostoff

No One Is Perfect, but Perfectionists Try: An Examination of the Emotional, Cognitive, and Physical Effects of Perfectionism

Advisor: Laura Pickens, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Psychology

Reader: Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D. Professor of English

Most humans have the natural desire to achieve success in their careers, education, and personal lives. In many cases, this desire can lend itself to perfectionism. Perfectionism is a human tendency that enables one to positively hold one's self to high expectations and negatively criticize one's self and actions. There are two main types of perfectionism, which are adaptive, or the more positive, and maladaptive, or the more negative. This paper sought to answer one main question: what effects—including emotional, cognitive, and physical effects respectively—do adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism have on those individuals who live with the tendencies? Through addressing the emotional, cognitive, and physical effects of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism and case studies addressing mental and physical illnesses related to them, this paper sought to establish two arguments. First, adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism have different emotional, cognitive, and physical effects on college students. Second, adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism produce similar effects over time. The findings showed that there were not significant differences between the effects of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism and both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism produced negative effects over time.

Alyssa McClimans

Traveling with Thiel

Advisor: Steven Kandray, M.B.A. Assistant Professor of Business and Marketing

Reader: Cynthia L. Sutton, Ph.D. Professor of Sociology and Study Abroad Coordinator

At Thiel College, not all students know about the study abroad program and the opportunities that come with the program. Study abroad has always been a good option for students to gain in personal growth, career development, and intercultural competence. However, students are not always aware of the study abroad options available to them. Developing a marketing plan for the program that would work for Thiel could help students learn of opportunities that would in turn help them grow as a person. A marketing strategy was made to create awareness for the program. This can help students find out about their options which will help them become more well-

rounded and culturally aware. By creating a marketing plan, students will know more about study abroad and how it can help them develop skills and knowledge for the future.

Amy Meighen

Respect the Drawl, Y'all: Applying Linguistics to Morgan Wallen's "The Way I Talk" and "Talkin' Tennessee"

Advisor: Mary Theresa Hall, Ph.D. Professor of English

Reader: Sheila Farr, Ph.D. '10, Assistant Professor of English

Throughout music history, songwriters and listeners have been intrigued by the variety of ways by which musicians express human emotion and connect with their audience. One specific way people learn to appreciate country music, in particular, is through a linguistic analysis: by considering the features of phonology, semantics, and the lexicon, the southern area of the United States has gained increasing importance and significance as a legitimate form of musical expression. The contemporary artist, Morgan Wallen, composed two songs in particular that serve as the focus of this project: "The Way I Talk" and "Talkin' Tennessee." Like many other Southern songs, these two songs capture the themes of alcohol, women, and trucks, which all play a symbolic role in conveying a larger meaning. By consulting dissertations on sociolinguistics, the *Journal of American Speech*, linguistic textbooks, and online interviews, this project blends the fields of musicology and linguistics to lend legitimacy and credibility to the increasingly popular genre of Southern music as an art form: a part of the creative process. This study proves the totality of the human experience: the links between song, literature, and science.

Mikayla Caitlyn Mirich

Media Coverage and Child Abduction in the U.S.

Advisor: Jared Hanneman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology

Reader: Kristin Carlson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Languages

Child abduction is a horrific event for everyone involved including the abducted child, the perpetrator, the family of the abducted child, the family of the perpetrator, and even the local communities in which the abduction takes place. Research has proven that there are many reasons children are abducted and that the media covers stranger abductions more than family

abductions. Although stranger abductions occur less often than family abductions the media sensationalizes these incidents to capitalize on viewer ratings. This causes family abductions to be unnoticed by the public resulting in longer recovery times due to the fact that this type of abduction is receiving much less attention. Changes need to be made in the way that family abductions are reported so that they gain the same amount of national media attention as stranger abductions. The news media tends to report stranger abductions more than family abductions because the child is perceived to be in more danger when abducted by a stranger. All children are innocent members of society and deserve to have the same protection. Taking care of the most vulnerable members of society is the responsibility of everyone and all children deserve to have the same media coverage regardless of their circumstances.

Chad Pakozdi

Roads Traveled by Road Salts: Stop and Go Traffic but to What Destination?

Advisor: Anna Reinsel, Ph.D. '06, Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Chemistry

Reader: Melissa Heike, M.S., C.S.P. Assistant Professor of Environmental Science

In the winter months, a key to keeping roadways free of snow and ice is road salt. Your average driver would only see this as an issue when the salt causes rust on the underside of their vehicle but there are far reaching effects that are less well-known. Salt is able to dissolve very easily in runoff which allows it to travel to places that you would never expect. In this research, the question of how and where salt travels lead to the testing of how salt can affect growth in plants. The conclusions of the research are drawn from others' research as well as an experiment meant to imitate how saline runoff could affect plants into the spring and summer. Outside research shows how the salt can affect soils and waters where it is stored during periods of drier weather. It also leads to a plausible route for road salt runoff to be stored in the soil and later released during precipitation events. This precipitation could then find its way into gardens and flower beds that would not typically be linked to the effects of winter application. The experiment supported this as can be seen with the correlation between the rising salt levels and the declining growth rates. This study evaluated and supports the idea that the use of road salts can lead to detrimental effects on soil and water quality to a greater extent that one would expect. It also opens up another pathway for deposition of road salt that can have negative effects on plant life.

Jessica Peters

The Catalonian Quest for Independence

Advisor: Aubree Herrin, Ph.D. Assistant Professor of Political Science

Reader: James Koshan, Ph.D. Professor of History

Catalonia, an autonomous region of Spain, has been fighting for independence since the 1880's. This region hosts a significant portion of Spain's population and economy. Through centuries of battles against Spain, this social and political movement has only strengthened. If Catalonia succeeds in their quest, many other regions and states around the globe can pursue the same path using this precedent. This qualitative case study compares definitions of statehood and different processes in which a nation or region could transition to statehood. Analyzing the economic and political abilities of Catalonia to be able survive without its host country will shed light on the likelihood of this outcome, as well as what it means for other autonomous regions around the globe to be successful in their nationalistic independence movements.

Mak Sanders

This Is What Democracy Looks Like: An Analysis of the Use of Direct Action in Three Periods of African American Activism

Advisor: James Koshan, Ph.D. Professor of History

Reader: George Branch-Trevethan, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Religion

This paper examines historical and contemporary trends in social movements in America, in this case highlighting continuities in tactics and strategy between three major African American led groups: African American involvement in the Communist Party, U.S.A. in the 1920s and 30s, the non-violent movement and the Black Nationalist movement of the 1950s and 60s, and the current civil rights movement, focusing on the Black Lives Matter organization. The paper outlines similarities in methods, ideologies, and strategies employed by the respective groups, as well as gives insight as to the historical progression that informs the movement today.

Maxwell Siguenza

The Price for Excitement

Advisor: Eugene Torigoe, Ph.D. Associate Professor of Physics

Reader: Sheila Nowinski, Ph.D., Director, Dietrich Honors Institute

Some see casinos as a way to double and maybe triple the cash in their pocket, while others think they will lose everything they have if they go play a couple games. Although casinos mostly hide the favor they have in the games they offer patrons, most people see nothing wrong with gambling in the United States. This paper explores how casinos work, how some games are operated, and how they benefit the casino. This paper also examines the results of a survey to understand perceptions of casinos.

Noah Trimpey

A Check to the Head Is a Check to the Career: An In-Depth Look at the Effects of Concussions in the National Hockey League

Advisor: Gregory Kingston, Ed.D., C.S.C.S. Assistant Professor of Exercise Science

Reader: Kara Zuschlag, M.Ed. Assistant Professor of Education

There are debates regarding the effectiveness of the National Hockey League's concussion protocol. The league, at times, has been notorious for its minimal punishment system of players who injured other players on the ice. This paper explains why concussions occur in the NHL and how they can better be prevented.

