



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



# 2020

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.<sup>SM</sup>

**Erin Albertini**

- Major: Sociology
- Supplementary Major: Arts and Letters Pre-Health
- Minor: Latino Studies
- Adviser: Rory McVeigh

## Hear Me Out: Migrant Voice, Gender, and American Empathy for the Immigrant Narrative

My thesis explores how the presence or absence of migrant voice in immigration-related news affects the level of empathy American readers express towards the migrant's story, and immigration issues in general, and how that expression of empathy can vary between men and women.

I chose this topic because we live in an era in which anti-immigrant sentiment and the Latino threat narrative have been heightened and disseminated through the news media. I wanted to conduct research that could potentially contribute to remedying this problem in the media and evoke more empathy for migrant narratives.

*Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.*

**Jebraune Chambers**

- Majors: Political Science and Latino Studies
- Adviser: Luis Fraga

## Finding Aspiration in Political Discourse

I sought to understand the role political discourse may play in educational aspirations among youth. My thesis explores the extent to which youth are exposed to and aware of political discourse and how it is shared with them in terms of their education. Can the generalizations of minority groups in politics have unaddressed impacts on the youth of those communities?

A critical time for any young person is deciding what to do after high school. With political discourse being circulated more in social media and politics becoming more partisan, I wanted to know what effects that may have on youth decision-making.

**Paige Curley**

- Major: English
- Minors: Latino Studies and Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS)
- Advisers: Sarah Quesada and Maria McKenna

## Canon, Curricula, and Classrooms: The Power of Multicultural Latino/a Literature in English Education

My project includes community-based research at Holy Cross Elementary School, alongside literary analyses of two exemplary Latino/a texts. Through this interdisciplinary approach, I argue that multicultural Latino/a literature is critical in social justice-oriented English education at all grade levels.

I strongly believe in the power of literature as a vehicle for action-oriented, change-making, empathetic education that serves students of diverse backgrounds. This topic was a way to combine my passions for education and literature while also meeting a local community need. The partnership that emerged from this project between me and the Holy Cross Elementary School's dual-immersion program made my senior thesis experience so much more meaningful and allowed me to make real-world connections and impact through my work. I plan to further pursue this topic through research in graduate school and my professional career.

**MacKenzie Isaac**

- Major: Sociology
- Minors: Latino Studies and Data Science
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Mim Thomas

## Skin Bleaching Across the Caribbean Diaspora: Intergenerational Perspectives and Practices

Through a series of semi-structured interviews with college-aged young adults, my project explores how members of the Caribbean diaspora are in literal and metaphorical conversation with one another about the social, economic, and health systems underlying the practice of skin bleaching. In conjunction with research on health promotion best practices, these interviews further shed light on how community health education programs can better address behaviors like skin bleaching in culturally competent and empathetic ways.

As an aspiring academic, I'm interested in how social systems and health systems converge to affect individual and community-level health behaviors and outcomes. I could not think of a better topic than skin bleaching — which has so much global relevance yet remains under-studied. Using a research-driven, advocacy-motivated model of research, I hope to raise awareness of the prevalence of this health behavior in a way that empowers black and brown bodies.

*Received the Edward W. Devine Scholarship.*

**Sarah Konkey**

- Major: Anthropology
- Supplementary Major: Latino Studies
- Adviser: Deb Rotman

## “Not From Here and Not From There” ... Then From Where? A Spacio-thematic Remapping of East Los Angeles Through Chicano Murals

This project investigates the extent to which the emergence and distribution of Chicano murals allows for a reclaiming of Mexican territory and, therefore, identity in East Los Angeles. Through a spacio-thematic analysis of maps of Chicano muralism in East Los Angeles, I seek to understand how the historical loss of land by Chicanos is contested through the use of public murals.

At a time when globalization has accelerated movement and communication within and across borders, the idea of territories is constantly being deconstructed and reconstructed, as culture and identity are re-territorialized based on experience rather than the constraints of the nation-state. Here, I wanted to understand how Chicanos, who have a binational and bicultural identity, creatively express this experience in East Los Angeles.

*Traveled to East Los Angeles, California.*