

THE BROTHER

DAVID S. BAGINSKI, FSC

SCHOLARS PROGRAM



Thirteenth Annual Senior Symposia

Class of 2017

Dr. Patrizia Costa Frezza and Mr. John J. Allen, Co-Directors

The Zupancic Family STEM Center
Central Catholic High School

April 24-26, 2017



THIRTEENTH ANNUAL SENIOR SYMPOSIA



CLASS OF 2017

WELCOME

Welcome to the thirteenth annual Senior Symposia for The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program. This is an opportunity for students to showcase some of the interesting discoveries they made while working on their theses projects. It is also an opportunity for the Central Catholic community to experience the intellectual vitality that is created when talented students work under the direction and mentorship of dedicated faculty. This combination of discovery-based learning and faculty-student mentorship has been transformative for everyone involved. The students are now better-prepared to take on the rigor of academic research at a university. The faculty has expressed satisfaction in having enabled a sense of direction in their mentees. Strong collegial relationships were formed.

The breath and scope of the oral presentations featured in these symposia reflect not only a wide range of academic interests; they also speak to the caliber of the students themselves. Enterprising and thoughtful, these students have delved into a deepened knowledge within a specific field of study. They worked on multiple drafts of their theses and presented their ideas at an oral defense. These experience have enriched their education, sharpened their skills in critical thinking and strengthened their self-confidence as scholars.

All of the theses, whether they were based in the arts, humanities, social sciences or applied sciences, stemmed from a desire to advocate for positive change the world. Some of the students tackled society's most pressing issues: human rights, affordable housing, immigration, education reform, workplace accommodations for people with serious health issues, and the importance leisure in our daily lives. Because of their noble ambitions, this symposia is very much a celebration of their fine efforts and impressive writing achievements.

We extend our sincerest thanks to the Central Catholic community for their generosity in providing a challenging and supportive learning environment. Browse through this abstract book and you will find named the many faculty members who guided this year's participants. We are most grateful for their efforts.

Enjoy the symposia!

DIRECTORS

Patrizia Costa Frezza
John J. Allen

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Glenn Campbell
Mary Ann Lynch
Todd Rooney
Harry Sirockman



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April 24, 2017 6:00 pm

Welcome

Br. Tony Baginski, FSC

Opening Remarks

Patrizia Costa Frezza

Student Presentations

Reception

April 25, 6:00 pm

Student Presentations

Reception

April 26, 6:00 pm

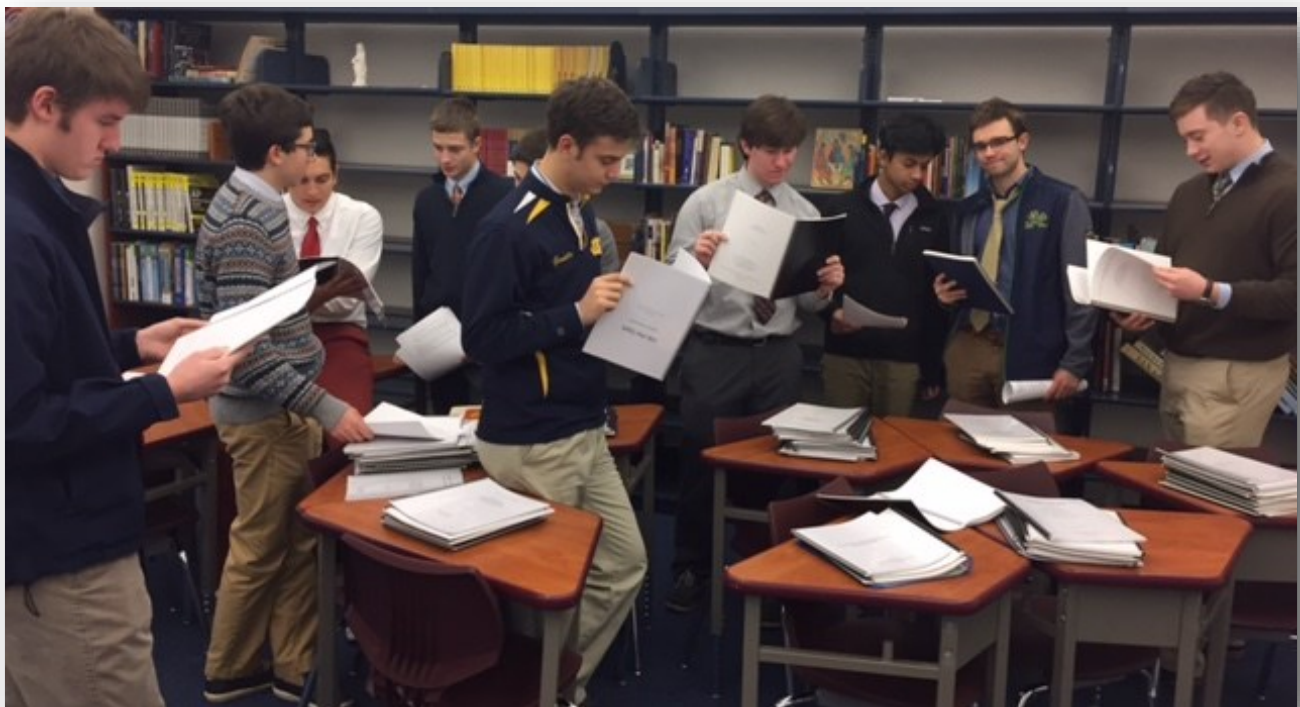
Student Presentations

Awards

Closing Remarks

John J. Allen

Reception



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CONGRATULATORY REMARKS FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

For many years now, the symposium has been the capstone of your experience as part of this wonderful program. You are part of a long tradition of young men who have gone ahead of you and many more to follow. I know you will look back on your years together of camaraderie and brotherhood as wonderful memories in the years to come, and I hope that you will continue to strive for excellence in all that you do.

Glenn Campbell
Chair, History and Social Sciences

With this symposium, you all have reached what is, hopefully, the first of many milestones in your academic careers. Like Ulysses in Tennyson's poem, take pleasure in the journey that lies ahead, enrich your life with the experiences along the way, and pursue all with passion. Good voyage.

Mary Ann Lynch
Faculty, English Department. Director, Bishop McDowell Program

While congratulations are certainly in order, be sure to see your completion of this program as the start of something lifelong. Now more than ever, the world needs disciplined and inquisitive minds. Your work in the Baginski Scholars program must lay the foundation for your life's work, whatever and wherever that may be. Be always like the son in Seamus Heaney's poem "Digging" who, upon watching his father drive his spade deep into the peat, says of himself:

"Between my finger and my thumb

The squat pen rests.

I'll dig with it."

Todd Rooney
Chair, English

Congratulations, gentlemen. I hope your participation in the Baginski Scholars Program will catapult you to a lifetime of learning and a love of learning. All of us can benefit from open and inquisitive minds.

Harry Sirockman
Faculty, Mathematics

INTRODUCTION

Happy the one who finds wisdom, the one who gains understanding. (Proverbs 3:13)

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the thirteenth annual Br. David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program Symposium Presentation. This three-night event represents the culmination of thoughtful research and disciplined thinking by some of the best young minds at Central Catholic and in Western Pennsylvania.

The research questions chosen by our scholars do not lead to easy answers. Easy answers come from trivial questions, or worse yet, a lack of understanding of the complexity of the issue. The senior thesis requires each scholar to do serious research, separate facts from opinions, and, the most difficult part, decide if the facts support his research question. The scholar must be able to change his mind if the preponderance of evidence supports a view or opinion that the scholar did not initially hold. He must also be prepared to argue his point, based on the facts, when others may not agree. This is the start of wisdom.

I commend the co-directors of the Scholars Program, Dr. Patrizia Costa-Frezza and Mr. John Allen, who have carried on the tradition of the program begun by Br. Ernest Miller, FSC in 2002 and further developed by Matthew Sudnik. Having co-directors has allowed the program to further evolve and to provide deeper and more varied opportunities and perspectives that ask the scholar to wrestle with the perennial questions: What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to live a moral life?

I also thank the Faculty Advisory Council and the mentors who volunteered their time and talents in support of this excellent program.

I congratulate our scholars on their successful completion and defense of their theses. I look forward to hearing the oral presentations and taking part in the question and answer periods. To the Scholars: I hope that your participation in the Br. David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program is a portent of future academic achievements as you continue to grow into Men of Faith, Men of Scholarship and Men of Service.

Live Jesus in our hearts. Forever!
Fraternally,

Br. Tony Baginski, FSC

Br. Tony Baginski, FSC
Principal



DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Humanity's Search for the True and the Good


"The unexamined life is not worth living." Plato's Apology (38a 5-6)

Whether in the context of Plato searching for the World of Forms, or Buddha following the Middle Way, humans have always sought to know the meaning of the world around them and to know how to live within it. This dual search for the True and the Good is the foundation of the intellectual life. Today, we are rapidly approaching an age wherein the mere possession of an opinion is tantamount to truth. The danger of such relativism and the questioning of the validity of education itself, cannot be overstated. The fate of our free society and the life of humanity is bound up in the great questions of philosophy and ethics. A world that does not know the meaning of life, or fails to recognize the value of forming an educated and existentially honest worldview, is a world that has lost its soul.

Luckily, "hope springs eternal," and especially among you, young scholars. Through your industrious endeavors, evidenced at this symposium, I see the grace and blessings of a future age. Your involvement in this program has been, and always should be, grounded in a genuine love of learning and a desire to bring good into this world. This thesis project has been for many of you an introduction to the arduous process of research, critical thinking, and self-reflection that is at the heart of academic work. My hope for you is that this demanding undertaking be revealed to you as your cherished ticket to engage with the lives of others and the gravity of the world.

Commitment to this process of questioning, to doing the reading, to making sacrifices, will serve you for the rest of your life. By learning to nurture a love of learning, you will be far more capable of wrestling with the questions of human existence, to engage with the great poets, the historians of the world, the scientists and artists of nature. You will be able to discuss at length, and with depth, the meaning of life, with mentors and friends, believers and questioners, strangers and lovers. The great beauty and joys of life will be yours to observe and behold.

All this is possible because you have recognized, at an early age, the importance of putting in the work and participating intently in the journey. The education process has taught me that all of us, each in our own particular way, are genuine seekers of truth and goodness. I have found that life without such a philosophical and moral quest is void of meaning. The advice that I would give you would be that of the psychologist and Holocaust survivor, Victor Frankl, from *Man's Search for Meaning*: "Ultimately, man should not ask what the meaning of his life is, but rather, must recognize that it is he who is asked." We are all questioned by our being in this world; may you always have the courage to respect the dignity of life in others and strive to live your own meaning by a life in accordance with the good.



John J. Allen, M.A.
Co-Director, The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program

DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

On the Making of a (Baginski) Scholar

How is a Scholar formed? In grade school, scholarly pursuits begin with discovery and delight. A poem might be memorized and celebrated for its quirky repetitive rhythm; it is not yet necessary for the student to bog himself down with intellectual content.

The middle school student occupies himself, instead, with building important foundations. There are thousands of practical facts to be learned, multiplication and periodic tables to be mastered, and pesky grammar rules become habitual. Learning is very much a ritual. It is systematic and progressive, like building blocks.

In high school, the child disappears. The focus is on assignments: read page 56 to 112 in your textbook ... do the following laboratory exercise ... interpret this stanza by Chaucer ... write a report on The War of 1812. There are standards to adhere to and grades are assigned based on a teacher's reasonable expectations. There is also one other important development. Sometime before the beginning of Senior year (and the earlier the better), the high school student must learn to rise above the task of completing assignments for a good grade and nothing more, for that is the golden mediocrity within our educational system. They must become active, critical thinkers. Three important consequences will befall the student if he does not: he will graduate with a false sense of what scholarship is or where it can take him; he may spend a precious part of his university experience trying to figure out how to make that education work for him; he will not be able to navigate in the unknown.

The third of these off-shoots is the most problematic. It leads to an education of conformity, of habit, with a focus on productivity for the sake of production and, eventually, lack-luster leadership. This type of student may be obsessed with counting credits toward his Bachelor's degree, but give him a more open ended assignment such as "Here, read this book!" and the cry will return "But, professor, what do you want me to do with the book? How much should I read? Is there a study guide or a rubric to follow?" The scholar is less likely to ask these kinds of questions. Relying confidently on the critical thinking skills he developed, he will read with nourishing thought. He will ask lots of questions on his own. He will not read for the sake of reading or tailor his efforts in proportion to the grade he hopes to obtain. He will read, instead, in order to assimilate material and context into new and worthwhile knowledge.

The poet John Keats had a famous phrase: "negative capability." He used it to describe a man's ability to accept "uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." ["At once it struck me, what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously- I mean Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason."] What Keats described was the capacity of human beings to transcend and revise their contexts. The term has been used by many poets and philosophers since to describe the ability of the individual to perceive, think, and operate beyond any presupposition of a predetermined capacity of the human being. Reading a book without a guide, as our imagined college professor intended for his/her students do to, and emerging out of that task with an original perspective is a "negative capability." It is also one of the hallmarks of a true scholar.

The senior theses in these symposia are not just the culminating experience of the three years they have invested in the Baginski Scholars program, they are also an affirmation of their ability to navigate uncertain waters *as scholars* —with proficiency, intellect and courage.

By “proficiency” I mean their ability to do research and to assimilate information in a clear and orderly fashion with efficient judgment about the material before them. A scholar must be capable of examining the available record of knowledge —the stuff that someone else already knows or has written about— with mastery and proficiency.

“Intellect” is, instead, needed to make good decisions about what to do with that material. The scholar must be willing to join dialogues started by scholars and contribute to those dialogues with an intellect of heart and of mind. For example, it is not enough to write an interesting summary of the virtue and shortcomings that others have found in Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* or a report on the facts of World War II (as interesting as that work may be). The Scholar must, instead, examine the positions of others in a social, theoretical and cultural context and offer ethical conclusions of his own. This is worthwhile work. It is worthwhile because it advances the frontiers of knowledge. Scholarship is a function of reflection.

The last of the three *modus operandi* mentioned is “courage.” And here lies the heart of the scholar’s mystery. The scholar must be courageous enough to take a stand. He must be willing to let go of pre-conceived notions if his research shows him, albeit unexpectedly, a more truthful and viable path. He must also be willing to take his positions out for a spin in the public realm. For the Baginski Scholars, this happened during the oral defenses in February. They shared their positions on such things as education reform, civil rights, the importance of work-place accommodations for people with disabilities and even the music business. It was an opportunity to solicit feedback and respond to that feedback, on the spot, with conviction or humility, both of which are noble acts of courage.

All of this is to say how rich and worthwhile the work of a scholar is. The true scholar is not a pundit stuffed with eruditions. He assimilates knowledge in order to take an ethical stand that can potentially lead to action in areas that need it or where we have only knowledge. In 1837, the poet Ralph Waldo Emerson offered the following definition of what an American Scholar should be: “man thinking.” Let this be a reminder to us all that scholarship is not what our minds can hold but what we can produce, with sound judgement and courage, for the betterment of our world.

We are so proud of the work that Baginski Scholars have done this year!



Patrizia Costa Frezza, PhD
Co-Director, The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program





The Impact of Online Consumption on the Music Industry

Eric James Ashby — Music

In the past decade, online streaming has emerged as one of the main platforms for music consumption. Today it is convenient to have the world's catalogue of music at your fingertips. However, there are repercussions that the development of streaming has spawned. This study examines the impact of online streaming for musicians. Streaming companies such as Spotify and Pandora have changed the landscape of the music industry and forced musicians to change their previous practices in marketing, distribution, and record label involvement. The modern musician faces new challenges but also has the opportunity to capitalize financially if they are savvy in their use of innovations in the music industry. Musicians and composers depend heavily on royalty payments among other things to finance their careers. New streaming technologies have necessitated the revision of royalty practices in the music industry. However, the royalty process remains complicated and inadequate in providing equal and comprehensive compensation for all musicians. The findings from the research indicates a need to simplify the royalty system and work to create a more systematic approach to compensating musicians. These changes in the royalty system require positive relationships between streaming companies and musicians to propel both mainstream and lesser known genres into the future. Music contains a unitive quality that brings people of all backgrounds together. The current music industry now has the tools to make the unitive power of music reach more people than ever before, promoting commonalities in a world filled with division.

Reader: Joseph Wilson, Chair, Performing Arts



Pablo Picasso, *Three Musicians*, 1921

HUMANITIES

Minority Language Policy: A Phenomenon of the Past or a Key to the Future?

Joseph Matthew Connolly — Linguistics

In the modern era, globalization has become increasingly influential in the social, commercial, and educational lives of those living in contemporary nation states. Not only has globalization changed the way people interact with one another— it has forced nations to reconsider their identities with regard to culture and language. In fact, due to globalization, most nations find themselves in one or more distinct situations, including binary cultural competition, cultural hostility, and metropolitan atmosphere. As a result, each nation has had to deal with competing interests in the language diversity debate and decide for itself the value minority languages have in their specific national contexts. Since determining the exact value of minority languages as a whole is impossible from an empirical standpoint, this thesis serves to examine whether minority languages have value in modern national education systems. The methodology in determining their value in education was the analysis of educational histories, language proficiency data, and surveys of language attitudes. Through studying the educational policies and attitudes of Ireland, Spain, and Mongolia, a few fruitful conclusions were drawn about minority languages in education. Among the most important conclusions was the fact that students are more likely to be linguistically proficient if they are exposed to a minority language early in their education and are made aware of its cultural importance in their lives. Based on such conclusions, a model was proposed to help modern nation states, specifically the United States, improve linguistic education. It was determined that, despite foreseeable obstacles, making Spanish a national language in the United States and regionally emphasizing the cultural and educational value of learning minority languages would be the ideal initiatives the United States could take to improve its education system.

Reader: Ashley Salamacha, Faculty, English

The Paradox of American Moral Relativism

Andrew Klabnik — History

This thesis began as an attempt to discover the source for American high school teachers' enthusiasm for discussion in the classroom. It slowly evolved into an exploration of moral relativism and the state of the American student. It first traced public education from its origins in the Utopia of Plato's *Republic* to the founding of American public education in Massachusetts. Then, it recounted the gradual rise of cultural relativism in 1960s America. It found a connection between the education practices and cultural trends of that decade, emphasizing their focus on individuality and personal fulfillment. Next, it described two theories of moral education: values clarification and Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. It compared both theories of moral education with three purposes for literature education. A literature education which emphasizes discussion can lead students to adopt a philosophy of moral relativism. Finally, it used the writings of David Allan Bloom to comment on the state of intellectual apathy and hopelessness among college students that has resulted from teachings on moral relativism.

Reader: Brother Benedict, Director, Writing Center

A Virtue Ethics Analysis of The Lord of The Rings

Jack Maier — Literature

Have you ever noticed that basically none of the good characters in *The Lord of the Rings* die? It is one of the most popular and well-loved adventure books of all time, and yet there is no serious tragic death that occurs. Pretty much all acclaimed fantasy books involve the death of some faultless character to demonstrate the evil that the hero is up against. Take J.R.R. Tolkien made a choice in his writing to have all good characters, even those that are rarely mentioned or not integral to the plot, survive and thrive at the end. This very strong correlation between good characters and good endings is the mark of a fable or story meant to teach a lesson. This thesis analyzes the *Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien as a didactic work. It examines the choices made by characters and how those choices relate or can be used to predict that character's ending. To synthesize the findings of the character analyses into a broader lesson/argument, information from outside of the book was used. Elements of the story, such as the ring, were researched, which provided useful information for the tying together of the character analyses into a single system. The research around the ring in particular led to an examination of the work in light of Plato and those who built upon his philosophies. Through the philosophies of Aristotle, Ambrose, and Aquinas, the didactic analysis of the work was further refined yielding a system that very nearly matches the system of Christian virtue ethics. This examination found that characters who acted according to virtue ended up in much better places than those who did not. The thesis argues that, taken as a didactic book, *The Lord of the Rings* seems to be promoting an ethical system very similar to Christian virtue ethics.

Reader: Daniel Gallagher, Faculty, Religion



J.R.R. Tolkien, *Middle Earth*, 1920's

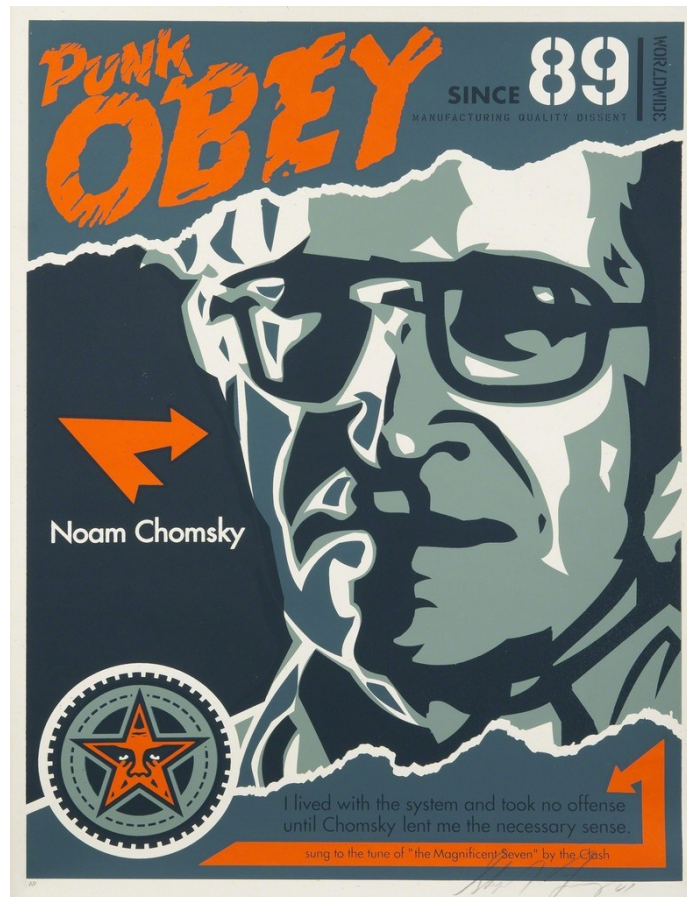
HUMANITIES

Using a Chomsky-Herman Lens to Understand Fear in the Media

Max Joseph Nowalk — History/Communications

News media outlets are vital institutions in our modern society. Their roles as information distributors and watchful guardians help preserve bureaucratic and commercial integrity. However, many have argued that there are serious performance deficiencies within the media. Whether you are Noam Chomsky who is of the persuasion that the media act as a propaganda machine or an average news consumer who is displeased with biased and sensationalistic reporting, the news media are clearly in need of reform. This project uses the theories laid out in Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman's 1988 *Manufacturing Consent* as a critical lens to approach the medias' implementation of fear. By analyzing the news coverage of topics such as the Anti-Vaccination Movement, Ebola Outbreak, and Domestic Gun Violence, the project reveals fundamental behaviorisms of the media in their utilization of fear. Exposing the commodification of fear conducted by these outlets opens paths needed to correct the media in its current form.

Reader: Glenn Campbell, Chair, History and Social Sciences



Shepard Fairey, 'Noam Chomsky', 2001

The Leisure Gap

John Patrick Peilert — History

The income of individuals has the ability to help or hinder their participation in leisure activities. Leisure activities benefit individuals and build the culture of any society. This has been the outlook of philosophers regarding leisure since antiquity. This thesis seeks to reconcile the philosophical ideal of leisure with a more secular modern concept, investigate the effects of leisure, examining the connection between income and leisure, and propose ways to increase the availability of leisure activities for the those who are at a deficit. Often leisure is dependent on income, but leisure is something that everyone is entitled to and is deeply connected to our physical and mental health. Whether it be an outdoors activity or a night at the opera, leisure is a crucial part of humanity.

Reader: Justin O'Connor, Faculty, English



Georges Seurat, *La Grande Jatte*, 1884-1886

SOCIAL SCIENCES

The Perceived Free Man: How Economic Standards Have Given Rise to Cheap Labor in America

Jose Miguel Esquivel Vergara — Political Science

Migrant workers overcome many challenges to be able to make their way to the United States, in most cases illegally. Working in terrible conditions and for pay under the legal minimum wage, they hope to attain a better future for themselves and their families. Under the current political climate though their future is yet to be determined with the new reforms pushed forward by President Donald Trump. Motivated by the political climate of the 2016 United States Presidential Election, this study aims to examine the migrant worker under a Marxist lens. Furthermore, it seeks to form a connection between the treatment of slaves in the United States before the American Civil War and the treatment of illegal immigrants in the United States.

Reader: Todd Rooney, Chair, English

Addressing the Issues of Affordable Housing in Pittsburgh with Data and Ethical Questions

Joseph William Gatti — Urban Planning

There is not enough affordable housing in cities across the United States to support the amount of residents who need it. Specifically, there are a disproportionate number of City of Pittsburgh residents of modest means who are being forced to spend greater than 30 percent of their annual income on housing. A buildup of these issues is leading towards a crisis in the city and the surrounding neighborhoods. Creating a solution to this problem is a difficult task because of the complexities of the affordable housing market. In light of this potential crisis, the City of Pittsburgh is currently considering a number of strategies to address the problem, such as tax incentives and development programs, to reduce the effects of severe cost burdens, which plague members of the city every day. This thesis will attempt to address the issues of the housing market in Pittsburgh by combining the data collected over the last fifteen years with ethical questions that have been circulating over the past century.

Reader: Devin Crummie, Assistant Principal for Faculty and Curriculum Development

SOCIAL SCIENCES



Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House as a model for affordable housing, 1951

Correctional Efficacy: The Prison Industrial Complex of Private Prisons in the United States

Abid Mohideen — Criminal Justice / History

The relatively recent spike in prison populations has led many to discuss prison reform and whether today's facilities are fulfilling the correctional aspect of prisons. In addition to the Federal Prisons, there are private corporations that have gained a significant market share in the prison industry, with a strong hold in the southern U.S. states. It begs the question, are these companies driven by money or ambitions of streamlining the justice system? This paper examines how the prison has progressed as an industry, as well as the internal effects this has on inmates. The effects include inmate medical care and reform opportunities, as well as how well prison employees are trained and function. In order to examine such issues, this paper employs statistical data and interpretations from think tanks like The Sentencing Project and the Reason Foundation. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice and investigative journalism is referenced to paint a better picture of the inner workings of prison facilities. These inner workings consist of the prisoners themselves, as well as those who make a livelihood working the facilities. It was hypothesized that privatization is more negatively related to correction aptitude with federal prisons being the better option. The findings support the prediction that there is a negative correlation between privatization of prisons and their correctional aptitude, as money becomes the primary motivator. This study advances our understanding of the prison system, a component of the justice system that is often overlooked, and will be of particular interest to those interested in law and beyond.

Reader: Brother Mark Lowery, Faculty, Guidance

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Electronic Money: The Permanent Currency of the Future? Why Electronic Currencies Cannot Function Independently and Bitcoin Will Remain a Niche Form of Money

Matthew Olon — Economics

Have you ever made a purchase online, or used a smartphone to pay in a store? These are just two examples of how money has changed in recent times, given the new and improving technology. In this study, I look at one way in which payment has changed, Bitcoin, an online form of currency that is independent of all global currencies. Many websites have been accepting Bitcoin, and its usage has grown exponentially in the previous five years. In fact, many people hypothesize about Bitcoin becoming a primary currency in the future, becoming the world's most trusted and first global currency. In my paper, I evaluate this claim with cases both for and against Bitcoin, thus arguing the future of electronic payment forms. Many pamphlets, books, and articles have been written about this new currency. After my research and analysis of Bitcoin, I have found that although it is new, exciting, and fit for this generation, the currency is not currently in a position where it could become a global power. My thesis includes examples of how a beginner can use Bitcoin, a qualification of the positive claims, China's attempted trust of Bitcoin, and an in-depth look at *arbitrage*, the easy profit that is allowed under the current, flawed Bitcoin market.

Reader: Michael Traficante, Faculty, Science

Human Wildlife Interaction in the Urban Environment

Joseph Richard Shulik — Environmental Policy

In his second Encyclical, Pope Francis stated, “Regrettably, many efforts to seek concrete solutions to the environmental crisis have proved ineffective, not only because of powerful opposition but also because of a more general lack of interest”. Today, many species of wildlife struggle to survive amidst urbanization and the rise of infrastructure, from roadways to strip malls. In this thesis, the adverse conditions particular species face as a result of human development are brought to light. It is important to note that amidst the issues discussed and information presented, this is not in any facet a call to dismantle the current facilities of mankind—testaments to the ingenuity and progression of modern society. Rather, a presentation aimed at identifying means to combat the issues that arise when wildlife and human beings interact in the urban environment. The solutions to many of these problems are practical and cost efficient; it is often times a matter of eliminating apathy and raising awareness to enact change. In order to create a harmonious environment with the wildlife that surrounds one’s daily life, society must combat the “general lack of interest” Pope Francis addresses.

Reader: Timothy McCarthy, Faculty, Foreign Languages

Veteran Unemployment: an Overshadowed Issue

Noah Stickel — Public Policy

In recent years, many armed forces veterans' issues have come to light, especially those pertaining to mental health. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, commonly abbreviated to PTSD, has become the focus of many veteran activist groups, and as a direct result, there is an increased awareness of these crucial health issues in our society. Significant amounts of funding, time, and effort have been devoted to researching PTSD and other mental and emotional conditions, to the point where they seem quite overworked. Unintentionally, an increased awareness of mental health has resulted in many Americans overlooking major difficulties veterans face when they return home from their service. Unemployment, a key indicator of economic status, is far too often ignored. This thesis seeks to evaluate the issue of veteran unemployment, as well as consider homelessness, a typical byproduct of economic struggles. Additionally, this thesis will look into how President Trump perceives the state of the issue, and use this analysis to accurately describe the current economic conditions that veterans face during their assimilation back to a civilian lifestyle. Ultimately, this thesis will look into an issue which has been overlooked in some respects, and offer suggestions for both the causes of the initial problem and how to best fix the current situation.

Reader: Brother Kevin Dalmasse, Faculty, History and Social Sciences

Common Core and Its Impact in the Classroom

Adam M. Szalay — Education

America is in the midst of a transition from the Democratic Obama administration to the Republican Trump administration. One of the major issues facing America right now is education and what policy we should adopt in order to provide a quality education to the most students. These two administrations have very differing views on education. The Obama administration supported the Common Core, or the government standards for measuring student performance in the classroom. The new Secretary of Education is Betsy DeVos, a woman who has openly opposed the Common Core. This thesis aims to assess if the Common Core has been accomplishing its original intentions. It will evaluate what the standards actually are, as well as take a look at factors such as the achievement gap and diversity, the Common Core in respect to honors students, as well as the confusion in "text complexity." After considering all these factors, it is decided that the Common Core does a poor job in regards to maintaining the standards set by the government, and fails to close the achievement gap in minority students, as well as bore the gifted students in the classroom. The conclusion looks at means to improve the current situation by increasing communication between educators and teachers, as well as look at different things educators can do to make learning more appealing, as there is currently no reasonable alternative to the Common Core.

Reader: : Brother Benedict Oliver, Director, Writing Center

APPLIED SCIENCES

Workplace Accommodations for Individuals with Multiple Sclerosis

Luke Anthony Giannetta — Health Sciences / Public Policy

This thesis will focus on individuals afflicted with Multiple Sclerosis and their relationships with the modern workplace. The paper will explore how the work environment influences stress related disorders and how this connects to the symptoms of MS. The mechanisms of the disease will be laid out in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how the illness operates within the body. The way in which the disease operates will serve as the basis for an analysis of disease-related impairments as well as an explanation of available treatment methods. Each of the several courses of the disease will be laid out and tied into two case studies that illustrate two different ways in which the ailment can affect everyday life. Both cases will be analyzed based on the ways in which they indicate the need for accommodations as well as the aspects of a solution that they suggest. This will then begin a discussion on existing MS accommodations and references to accommodations for other chronic illnesses. Based on what is lacking in current plans and what is included support systems for other diseases, a solution involving increased workplace unity and the implementation of specific chronic illness counselors will be proposed.

Reader: Sara Mozur, Faculty, English

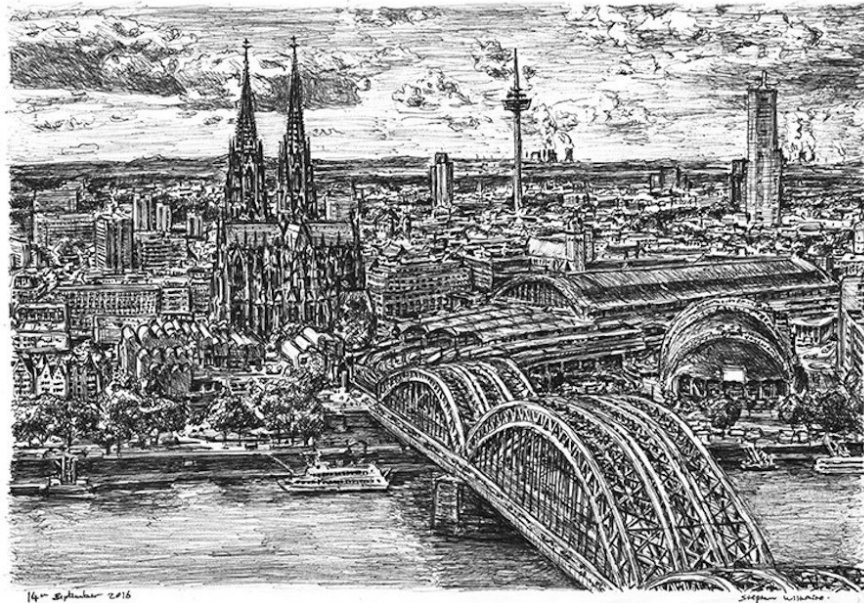
Autism and Unemployment: A Modern Challenge

Anthony Michael Patsy — Health Sciences / Public Policy

Unemployment in autistic individuals is a very large problem today, and there is much that can be done to curb the high-rate, which currently stands around 90%. In doing such things, it is imperative to explore established scientific theories. One theory of great relevance is the Intense World Theory, by Doctor Henry Markram, which states that rather categorizing autism as a hypoperception, it is a hyperperception of sensory. Through analyzing this theory and exploring the modern education system, this thesis will analyze reforms regarding what should be done to fix this problem. My propositions to improve the current unemployment rate in autism would include: 1: Advocating for an early diagnoses and introductory treatment of autistic children. 2: Having placement exams which examine certain possible career paths or subjects based off the student's affinity for a subject or sense. 3: Raising awareness of the problem by erasing the current stigma that autistic people cannot not hold a job, while also providing examples of how an autistic could effectively work in an employment-setting.

Reader: Todd Rooney, Chair, English

APPLIED SCIENCES



Drawing of Cologne Germany by autistic artist Stephen Wiltshire, 2016

The Plague of Iatrogenic Opioid Abuse in America

Trent Lambert Uhlemann — Health Sciences / Public Policy

This thesis will be centered around the epidemic of prescription opioid addiction in America caused by overprescription. In the last few years, it has become an increasingly serious issue with more people abusing prescription drugs and dying as a result. This is the result of a number of factors, for example the notion that prescription drugs are less dangerous than illegal ones. This is because the medication is coming from trusted doctors as well as the inundation of advertisements by pharmaceutical industries almost deifying their products to patients. It is important to not simply attempt to assign blame, but rather to look for possible solutions to the epidemic. In this thesis, the underlying cause of the continued overprescription of these pills despite legislation is examined. It is important to see that both the pharmaceutical industry and antiquated ideas of addiction are contributing to the problem of abuse. When looking at this issue more carefully, this thesis comes to the question of how as a society we can find a better alternative to overprescribing that can both help those with ailments and prevent further individuals from suffering iatrogenic opioid addiction. This will encompass the ethical issue of aiding those with pain, alternative analgesics to opioids, the commercialization of an industry designed for relief and aid, preventative legislation, and educating the populous. Focusing on these central issues, this thesis presents an answer to the problem of iatrogenic addiction. The conclusion is a synthesis of the writings on this topic and an exploration of the four main solutions presented in the body of the text.

Reader: Todd Rooney, Chair, English

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CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Central Catholic High School, a college preparatory, diocesan school for boys, is guided by the educational principles of Saint John Baptist de La Salle. The school strives to provide a challenging, relevant, and diverse program of studies and extracurricular activities in an environment that fosters a life of faith and learning and develops leaders rooted in the Gospel values of integrity, respect, service, justice and peace.

THE BROTHER DAVID S. BAGINSKI, FSC

SCHOLARS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program was created in 2002 by Brother Richard Grzeskiewicz in honor of the beloved teacher and Vice Principal for whom the program is named. Embodied by three related concepts —scholarship, brotherhood, and service it offers an engaging intellectual forum to highly motivated students. These students become part of a community of peers and faculty advisors and meet regularly through seminars, mentoring, programmatic retreats/trips, and symposia.

Students in the program prepare for advanced studies at the university level through a liberal arts curriculum that is interdisciplinary and multi-faceted. They will explore the humanities and understand their intersection with science and technology through issue-oriented investigations. They will grapple with such critical questions as “What shapes our knowledge?”, “What makes good science?”, “How does one live a just and happy life?”, and “What does it mean to be human?”

Students are expected to enroll in Honor or AP sections of academic courses starting in the year prior to applying to the program. Once in the program, they will practice all of the following: analytical and critical thinking skills, advanced research techniques, writing acuity, and effective verbal communication. The Junior Humanities Seminar will engage the students in critical inquiry, social justice perspectives and community-focused service projects rooted in the Lasallian tradition. In their Senior year, students will use the skills they have acquired to develop, defend and present an original research thesis.

At its core, the program is designed to encourage students to understand the intrinsic connections between their intellectual development and their responsibilities as global citizens. Many of the enrichment activities offered by the program are fueled by this intent.



The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program

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