



SENIOR SYMPOSIA 2019

The Brother David S. Baginski FSC
Scholars Program

April 9, 10 and 11

The Zupancic Family Stem Center
Central Catholic High School

Dr. Patrizia Costa and Mr. John J. Allen, Directors



Athena goddess of wisdom and her symbolic attributes a shield with the head of medusa, an owl, dragon and olive branch.



WELCOME

FIFTEENTH ANNUAL SENIOR SYMPOSIA

CLASS OF 2019

Welcome to the fifteenth 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 and in community with other researchers. This combination of discovery-based learning, faculty-student mentorship, and collegial relationships with other researchers has been transformative for everyone involved.

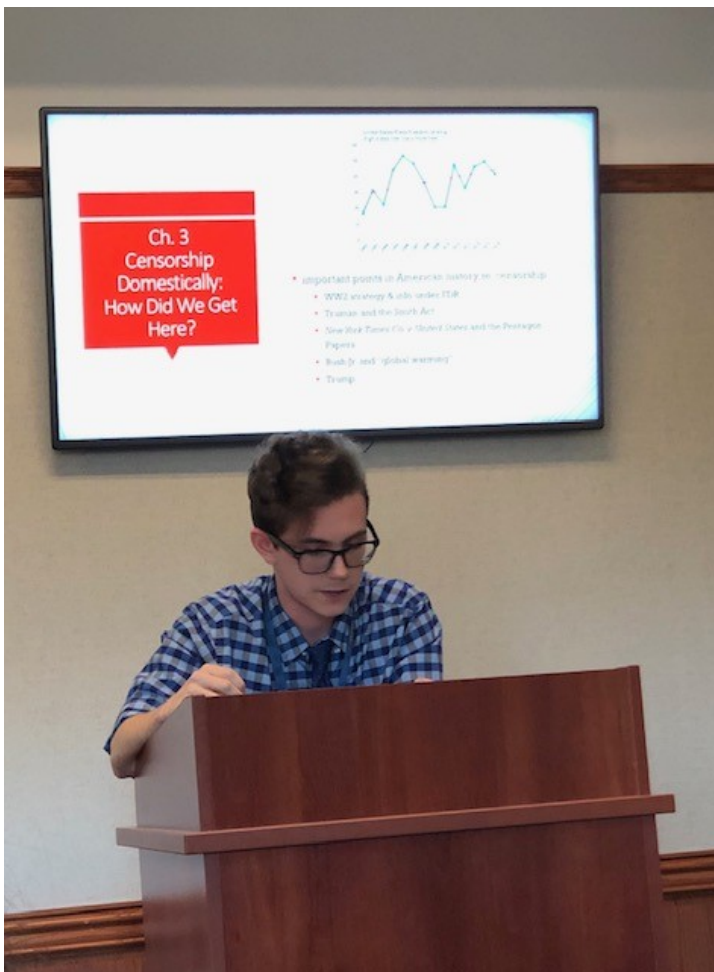
The breath and scope of the oral presentations featured in these symposia reflect not only a wide range of academic interests; they also speak to the caliber of the students themselves. Enterprising and thoughtful, these students have delved into a deepened knowledge within a specific field of study. They worked on multiple drafts of their theses and discussed their ideas often with their peers in a thesis writing seminar. Last February, they stood before a faculty panel and advanced an ethical position or proposition through argument. These experiences 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 or social sciences stemmed from a desire to advocate for positive change in the world. Some of the students tackled pressing issues: mitigating the societal impact of climate change, pornography and brain development in adolescents, the vaping epidemic, fashion as a vehicle for social transformation and self-expression, flaws in collegiate athletics, and dark comedy as a positive coping mechanism in bleak times. Because of their noble ambitions, these symposia are 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
John J. Allen



SYMPOSIA OVERVIEW

April 9, 2019 6:00 pm

Welcome and Prayer

Br. Tony Baginski, FSC

Opening Remarks

Patrizia Costa

Student Presentations

Reception

April 10, 6:00 pm

Student Presentations

Reception

April 11, 6:00 pm

Closing Remarks

John J. Allen

Student Presentations

Awards

Reception



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CONGRATULATORY REMARKS FROM THE ADVISORY COUNCIL

Congratulations on a wonderful achievement. I am truly blown away by the quality of your work and the effort that you put into this program. I hope that you take the opportunity to reflect on your successes before transitioning to the challenges that are ahead of you next year. Please also continue to challenge yourself intellectually. We need bright, thoughtful, and moral young men like you to become our future leaders.

Justin Belardi
Faculty, Science

You have reached true success in your tenure in The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program. You have taken this opportunity and countlessly seized your potential. We hope that Central has instilled the skills and dedication for your future success. Ralph Waldo Emerson reminds us that: "Success comes from within, not from without."

Sara Budacki
Faculty, English

A British dictionary defines a scholar as a learned person, especially in the Humanities. We hope that your years here at Central have helped you earn this title of erudition and that you continue on the journey of learning for the rest of your life. A true scholar is a curious person and a lifelong learner.

Glenn Campbell
Chair, History and Social Studies

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

INTRODUCTION

In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your work show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned. (Titus 2:7-8)

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fifteenth 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.

All But Dissertation (ABD) are three words, like the sword of Damocles that hang over the head of so many PhD hopefuls. ABD signifies successful completion of required coursework as well as comprehensive exams, and a committee approved dissertation topic. There is no doubt regarding the intellectual ability of the candidate nor the worthiness of the topic. In order to change that ABD into a PhD, well developed executive function skills like goal setting, time management, and perseverance need to be employed. Many of our scholars will go on to earn a doctorate in the future and the senior thesis includes all the components but scaled down to something achievable for our scholars. I am impressed by the quality of their work over the course of the year and am pleased with how their executive function skills improve. This is borne out in the oral presentations and the confident manner in which they handle audience questions at the senior symposium.

I commend the co-directors of the Scholars Program, Dr. Patrizia Costa 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 scholars to wrestle with the perennial questions: What does it mean to be human? What does it mean to live a moral life?

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

Drawing upon the Wisdom of Athena

Athena, the patron Goddess of Athens, is associated with several symbols from which she derived her powers: a shield emblazoned with the head of the medusa (for averting evil), a dragon (to denote the prophetic gifts she received after bathing in its blood), an olive branch (from a tree that she presented to the people of Athens), and an owl (the source of her wisdom and judgement).

Of these, the owl seems most important because its scientific name “Athene” is clearly associated with that of the Goddess. The owl came to represent wisdom from its associations with the dark and, in her earliest incarnation, Athena was known as the goddess of darkness (not wisdom). She relied on the bird’s nocturnal vigilance and acute vision to help her guard the Acropolis. During the day, the owl sat on Athena’s blind side, so that she could see the whole truth. The sacred bird also appeared on the obverse of a silver, four-drachma coin that bore Athena’s image. That coin is still the most famously recognized from antiquity.

It is particularly interesting to me that the ancient Greeks chose to celebrate “wisdom” more than any of Athene’s other powers. They could have easily chosen her ability to defeat enemies, to see into the future or to produce abundant gifts in nature. Instead, they focused on her ability to see what others could not, with the help of a sacred bird, and to make sound decisions on their behalf.

Scholars, both ancient and modern, have long aligned themselves with Athena’s “wisdom” and made it a priority for their education. Not only is it a good thing to have, but the more wisdom a scholar has, the better he/she will succeed in living a good life. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness, something we universally recognize as a defect and a detriment.

I’d like to explore the importance of wisdom with you, the members of the 2019 Scholars class, at this transitional moment in your lives: you are about graduate and will soon be off to the college of your choice. What forms of wisdom have you gained from your journey as a Scholar at Central Catholic? And, more importantly, what will you do with this wisdom moving forward?

The Proverbs tell us that the house of wisdom has seven pillars. Many explanations exist for what these pillars are. Perhaps they made for fascinating discussion in one of your religion classes or in junior seminar with Mr. Allen. If I had to choose names for these pillars based solely on my experience with you over the past year, I would choose the following: knowledge, integrity, imagination, courage, perseverance, discipleship and faith. These are the things I have watched you wrestle with, hone and in some instances, impress the faculty and your peers with, while working on your senior thesis projects.

Knowledge is the beginning of the way to wisdom. You embraced knowledge through self-direction and have practiced manifesting it in draft after draft of your theses through sound and reasonable judgement. This was not without the realization that there is still more to learn. “Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much,” wrote the English poet William Cowper, “wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

Integrity demands that knowledge be used with understanding. In developing your topics, you had to make good choices about what truths to go after. We, the faculty, tried to steer you toward truths that

contributed to human betterment instead of its destruction. We did this by asking you to always consider “how and why does this matter?” Because here is the truth about truth: it must be discerned. This is not an easy task, especially because we are inclined to treat truth as absolute. And it is. But each day, new knowledge in the sciences and in the humanities forces us to discard old knowledge. Concepts are continuously reinterpreted in order to meet the test of new facts. Therefore, we need to make careful choices about the truth we are after. We do this through a filter of integrity and justice. Integrity and wisdom need each other.

Imagination solves problems that have no precedent. The past teaches us much and is an important foundation upon which to build the future. But the uncharted areas of our ignorance need our imagination. The mind that is agile with imagination, that dares to dart off into a new direction when old avenues lead nowhere is one that will always serve you well. I applaud those of you who were trusting enough to allow imagination to guide the most difficult parts of your theses.

Courage meets fear with firmness and fortitude. This is not the same as a lack of fear. You will need to be dauntless in their pursuit of knowledge and truth if you have any ambition at all to help lead this world of ours. The times we live in demand great courage. Keep in mind that this was also true of the past and that it will probably be the same in the future.

Perseverance takes courage too. Its not only a matter of practicing fortitude, but it is also for your self-protection. If you want your voice to be heard, beyond half-truths and vague generalizations, you’ll need to persevere. This perseverance must go beyond prejudice and be tolerant of the points of view of others. Will you persevere with the recommendations for change that you made in your theses?

Wisdom requires a *Discipleship* to ideals in life that are noble and worthwhile. This is important because you will end up testing all your basic assumptions against these ideals. Your ideals will influence your commitment to the knowledge you acquire. Your assumptions will, instead, insure that your ideals are reasonable. The relationship you cultivated with your second readers nurtured this skill in you.

The last pillar, *Faith* is wisdom’s strongest pillar. “Live by the spirit of faith” says St. John Baptist DeLa Salle. “In the light of faith, you [will] see things quite differently.” As a Scholar, you must have faith in yourself, in others and above all in God. Without faith, wisdom is unsustainable.

Please don’t forget to pack each of these pillars in addition to the comforts from home and take them with you to college. And far as the “what will you do with your wisdom next?” question goes ... Don’t try to answer it now. Give yourself time to settle into your next life and be open to the opportunities it presents before returning to the question thoughtfully and with faith.

Practice wisdom always. Trust that a sacred owl will guide you when necessary, just as it did with Athena.



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



DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

The Intersection of Narrative: Tradition

Every particular life as a whole exists in its particular parts, in that range of particular actions, transactions and projects which are the enacted narrative of that life...I have to learn how to discover that my life has the continuity and unity of a quest, a quest whose object is to discover that truth about my life as a whole.

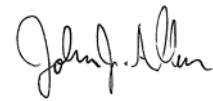
Macintyre, *Three Rival Versions*, 197

The world, especially at this time, searches and yearns for serenity and purpose. Within the wider culture, one can identify a multiplicity of ways whereby meaning is sought. These multivalent pursuits, be they career driven, family oriented, religiously minded, or intellectually fulfilled, ascribe meaning to people, places, and things. If one is not careful, the desirous drive to succeed could propel us too quickly past those very aspects of life that signify our purpose, those tangible encounters with the everyday. We must find time to remain reflective of our situation in life, to take stock of our talents, to identify and correct our flaws, and to assess our deepest desires in life. Matriculation from the Scholars Program and commencement from high school occasion such a time of reflection.

As many of you set your sights on a future yet to be lived, it is helpful to look back on the community within which you have spent so much of your time—Central Catholic. Your time within these halls has been one of study but also of friendship, a journey that has hopefully prepared you for the challenges and opportunities ahead. One of the paramount qualities of a scholar as reinforced by the tradition of this program, is the ability to give narrative to life and to appreciate and empathize with the narrative history of others. Alasdair MacIntyre reminds us that our defining human characteristic—language—allows us to “tell each other stories about our projects, our heroic enterprises and our tragic failures, stores that we narrate, stories that we enact, stories that we sing, stories from which we learn.” (*Ethics in the Conflict of Modernity*, 27). The Scholars Program should have prepared you well to give voice to your own story and provided you the nascent resources required to begin to weave your narrative into the larger history of this world and of humanity.

The many books that all of you have read in your high school career are no different than your own stories; they are but fictionalized versions of the everyday drama of living that you each embody in your scholarly pursuits and personal struggles. They tell the tale of human longing, of loss and recovery, of reunion and of joy. Standing at the turning point of individual lives and communities in crisis, with a precipice on either side, we are called to review our past, neither as a mere prologue for the present nor as a mask of disillusionment against which we struggle. But it is only by encountering the past as re-appropriating the lessons that we have endured that we can move together with greater confidence toward our *telos*, our final purpose in communion with each other and with God. The past tradition then, becomes an inexorable key that can unlock the mystery of the present and provide one with the right kind of questions to propose to the future. Certainly, if there is one characteristic of Central Catholic that no one denies, it is that when you leave here, you will have a story to tell. Tradition is embedded within these walls, the mystique ingrained within the memory of those privileged to contribute to its mission.

The mark of a true scholar then, is someone who recognizes the virtues of the past, the flaws of the present, and an integrated hope for the future of human flourishing. A scholar within this program is one who sits down at tables in a soup kitchen with those whose personal stories have taken a critical turn. A scholar is one who seeks to bring aid to impoverished or marginalized communities, to re-connect with lost souls. A scholar does not shrink too quickly away from critical analysis of personal character but takes courage from others along their quest. A scholar seeks to bring the 'good' to the world, despite societal pressure or trends to the contrary. In essence, scholars can both tell their own stories, as well as listen with compassion to those of others. At this intersection of narrative, which you all embody a part, we find the true meaning of community, and a sense of scholarship that is ordered to the common good of others.



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



Implementing Minimalist Music in the Classroom to Improve Comprehension and Retention

Colin McSteen — Music/Psychology/Education

Why is it that music has seemingly always been an essence of human existence, and yet has not been utilized to its fullest potential? Researchers involved with music and psychology are studying the effects background music can have on students in a classroom. However, most of these studies focus on either how lyrics pose a distraction, or the cognitive benefits of *classical* music. These benefits, enhancing concentration and mood, are brought about through simplicity and patterns. While these qualities are apparent in classical music, they are evermore enhanced in what is considered minimalist music. This style, popularized by Philip Glass, involves common chord progressions and repetition of simple patterns. If minimalist music were to be played in the background of classrooms during lectures or presentations, students could connect the information to the musical patterns. Moreover, if the same music is played during testing, the familiarity of the patterns will help students to recall information and perform better academically.

Reader: Michael P. Mackey, Co-Director, Performing Arts Program

HUMANITIES

The Relationship Between the Press and the President of the United States: an Analysis of Trump's War on the Media and a Prediction of the Future of Journalism

Paul Beer — History/Cultural Studies

The United States is often heralded as the land of free speech and the free press. What the average American citizen does not realize is that the government often interferes with that exact premise. In recent years, The United States' press freedom ranking has dropped, and now under the Trump administration, new concerns are arising for the future of journalism in a culture dominated by government-manufactured "news". It is my goal to analyze the historical relationship between the president of the United States and the media. This thesis first offers an answer to the question: How did we get here? Most major presidents have had some kind of negative relationship with the press in their time period, with some being worse than others. These examples serve as a precursor to the Trump administration, who has escalated the media war to further than it's ever been. Next, I identify some major results (where are we headed?) of this war: violence against individuals in the media, a general decline in voter knowledge, and a move to subjective/emotional commentary. The conclusion persists that this is a major problem for the democracy of America as a whole and needs to be remedied by a culture shift that forces the president to co-exist with the media.

Reader: Glenn Campbell, Department Chair, History and Social Studies

The Happiness Habit: An Introduction to the Skills and Practices Conducive to Happiness

Simon Hebert — Philosophy

This thesis aims to explore the nature of happiness and how the average person might approach such an all-important goal. Descriptions of happiness usually center on pure transient feeling: joy, euphoria, nostalgia, and excitement, to name a few. My study combines aspects of ancient philosophy, Buddhism, and modern psychology to posit that happiness is something deeper—and more attainable—than just a fleeting feeling. I was able to define happiness for the purposes of this thesis as an emotional state which manifests in enjoyment of life as well as the ability to productively deal with negative events, a sense of positivity deeply rooted in fulfillment. This happiness emerges from specific mental habits and lifestyle trends—namely mindfulness, ego resilience, and purpose. Mindfulness and ego resilience are measurable and trainable mental constructs which allow one to live in the moment and deal with stressors in a productive way. Both aid in the third facet of happiness, having a purpose or meaning in life. The importance of a purpose to happiness, drawing on Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia, is widely supported by modern psychology. Based on my study, genuine happiness arises from a lifestyle lived with a mission, with the skills of mindfulness and ego resilience clearing the way for effective action in one's life.

Reader: Daniel Gallagher, Religion

Fashion: More than Just a Way to Clothe the Body

Brendan Lawlor — Cultural Anthropology/Ethics

Fashion is written in the history of humanity. From the Chiton in Ancient Rome to the romps of the 21st century, fashion affects how a society functions. This thesis aims to argue that fashion is not just a way to clothe the body, but an expression of a person's individuality. A person portrays how they want to be perceived by others through fashion; through fashion we can be anybody that we want. This study has three main goals: to educate the reader on the history of the fashion industry and the emergence of the fashion show, to show how fashion brands utilize their visibility to be a platform to enact social justice and to highlight different avenues in which people use fashion as a portrayal of their true selves. Alessandro Michele, the Creative Director at Gucci asserts that "[Fashion] is the idea that you can be who you want to be. You just have to give yourself permission. You just have to decide." We can be whoever we want to be through fashion, that is why I conclude that fashion allows us to harness our unique individuality and portray it to the world through our own personal style. This study advances our understanding of the fashion industry and helps show how people use fashion to express themselves.

Reader: Ashley Salamacha, English

Painfully Funny: A Study in Dark Comedy

Joe McShea — English

Mankind has consistently demonstrated a necessity of constant entertainment and pleasure. At first glance, such a Dark comedy is a commonly dismissed and misunderstood medium. My study analyzes the nature of dark comedy, illuminates the many ways in which it is used, and prove why it is an important critical tool within a society. My study was motivated by a singular research question: why does dark comedy matter? I conducted analyses of different forms of dark comedy, from books to films, from the middle of the 20th century up until present day; this analysis examined what particular message was being conveyed through the content, the manner in which it was conveyed, and the historical context of the piece. My findings show that there is a trend within the dark comedy genre that facilitates introspection of the viewer, and fosters a commonality between the comedian and the audience. These results show that there is in fact a use for controversial comedy, and provides insight into how pieces of such a nature can be used. Dark comedy aids in dealing with times that may seem bleak; dark comedy's presence will be felt even further, and understanding the nature of it is key to successfully managing it.

Reader: Justin Morgan, English

HUMANITIES

An Examination of Racial Cycles in American History

Tyler Royster — History/Racial and Ethnic Studies

After drawing comparisons between the Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights movements, two social resistance efforts led by African Americans, I investigated different racial moments in American history that were pivotal for the African American community. I discovered that most modern situations dealing with race have historical counterparts. The permanency of black people in dealing with racism poses a question of whether it is possible to escape the intolerance and discrimination they have faced for hundreds of years. First, I establish the oppressed nature of black people since the foundation of America. Second, I examine three historically pivotal moments of race in their community: The Civil Rights Movement, Racial Redlining, and Los Angeles riots. I draw parallels between these events and their twenty-first century counterparts: The Black Lives Matter movement, Modern-Day Redlining, and Ferguson unrest, respectively. I establish that the reforms that follow these events do not sufficiently address the problem that is rooted in the historical foundation of a nation. The resemblance between the racial problems of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is not a coincidence. It is a reflection of our complacency as a society in dealing with the underlying racial climate that has existed for years. I conclude that the cycles of social movements and riots used by African Americans to receive justice will continue until the racial archetypes of the African American community have been deconstructed.

Reader: Kurt Retenauer, English

Examining the Effects of the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) on American Sports Culture

Oscar Shaver — Cultural Anthropology/Ethics

In May of 2018, the Supreme Court overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act of 1992 (PASPA) in a 6-3 decision, ending the federal ban that restricted the majority of states from legally participating in sports betting. Now, each state has the ability to legalize this activity and American sports fans are currently being tested. After researching the history of gambling and its popularity trends in America, I decided to compare it to a relatively new phenomenon, fantasy sports, to predict how the recent overturning of PASPA will transform sports betting into a thriving market in the American economy. I make the connection between two studies: Lee Farquhar's "Types of Fantasy Users and Their Motivations," and Valeria De Bonis's "Game of Luck or Game of Luck? Motivations for Gambling," to compare aspects of an already legal activity, fantasy football, to characteristics of traditional gambling that make it such a popular and addicting activity. Following this analysis, I predicted how American sports culture will change as a result of legalized sports betting. In order to do this, I first established the idea of "traditional American sports culture," which includes three main virtues: loyalty, passion, and integrity, and then explained how these ideals will be compromised as a result of sports gambling. Because my analysis showed that sports betting will become popular very quickly, examining these scenarios from economic and ethical standpoints show how this one activity can affect the entire culture of American sports. Fans will be tested, having to choose between money and their hometown team. Athletes will be viewed in an entirely different light, as financial assets rather than human beings. The recent overturning of PASPA poses many questions that I will answer by looking at past and present issues to provide a holistic view of sports betting and offer insight into how it will affect American sports culture.

Reader: Jacob Schramm, English Department

The Lord of the Rings and Tolkien's Legendarium as Fundamentally Applicable Works of Literature

Brian Sproule — Literature

This study investigates the literary concept of applicability in J.R.R. Tolkien's works of fantasy. I conducted a literary analysis to discover the truth behind Tolkien's statement that his works are applicable as opposed to allegorical. As defined by Tolkien, applicability fits the thought and experience of the reader, while allegory is purposed domination by the author, and leaves little room for independent thinking. In order to demonstrate this, I examined three seemingly allegorical cases, and used these to display the expansive nature and applicability inherent to Tolkien's works. The first case focused on the parallels between Tolkien's work and Christianity, the second on Tolkien's work and WWII nationalism, and the third the rise of global terrorism and environmental change. In addition to this, I examined archetypes that are present in other pieces of literature and media and found their existence within Tolkien's works. Doing this proved Tolkien's works as an applicable body of literature and showed the superiority in analyzing literature through an applicable lens.

Reader: Todd Rooney, Department Chair, English

The Healing Shadow-Mask: Using Jungian Analysis of Fairy Tales with The Purpose of Facilitating Healing

Ezekiel Stuart — Comparative Literature/Psychology

The purpose of thesis is to allow for fairytales to be utilized more effectively for the purpose of integrating the animalistic parts of the mind successfully and dealing with all types of mental disorder (depression, anxiety, OCD, etc.) through narrative therapy. This thesis attempts to analyze the tales of animal transformation in the Brother Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* through a Jungian lens as an example of the usefulness of works of fairytales. The Grimm brothers were chosen due to their status as the best known of fairytale collectors. A Jungian approach was chosen due to the interesting connection between folklore and the Jungian version of the mind, demonstrated in *The Women Who Run With Wolves*, *The Uses Of Enchantment*, and *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. Previous works studying the Brothers Grimm through the lens of Jungian narrative therapy are fairly uncommon and are generally dedicated exclusively to the archetypal story structure rather than its potential for personal growth. For this study I have conducted an in depth survey of the literature surrounding Jung's archetypal theory as well as articles recounting the history and applications of narrative therapy. In future studies, may be beneficial to study the Grimm's counterparts, fairytale collectors and authors, from other cultures such as Charles Perrault, Madame d'Aulnoy, Andrew Lang, Joseph Jacobs, and Peter Christen Asbjørnsen.

Reader: Todd Rooney, Department Chair, English

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Vape and Mirrors: A Psychological Analysis of Electronic Cigarette Diffusion and Regulation

Renne Cabacungan — Public Health

Adolescents have been drawn to a new alternative to smoking, as many big tobacco names have switched to a “smoke free future.” The aim of this thesis is to assess the impact of advertising and social psychology on the recent development of electronic cigarette usage trends, current popular products such as JUUL, and predictions of future vaping trends. Learning from past cases of tobacco advertisement lawsuits and the nature of social anxiety facilitated by the internet, the first step in combatting adolescent electronic cigarette is through the leveraging of effective anti-vaping advertisement campaigns. The current advertisements campaigns are ineffective in creating a lasting impact with their audiences. With current physical market regulations in contention, the mitigation of the electronic cigarette epidemic must begin with a change in public opinion. The findings and analyses of the paper can be used to design future anti-vaping campaigns and reform the way we think about vaping education in schools. Additionally, the proposed factors of a theoretical and effective anti-vaping advertisement can lend themselves to redesigning public health advertising.

Reader: James Donahue, Counseling

A Review, Analysis and Recommendations to the Process of Judicial Review in the Supreme Court

Luca Consalvi — Law

The United States Supreme Court is the governing body of what is ultimately deemed legal or illegal within the confines of The United States Constitution. For several hundred years, this institution has grown in influence and prestige, as well as authority. Since the Supreme Court ruling of *Marbury v. Madison* in 1803, The Supreme Court was granted the authority of Judicial Review. With that authority, the court has notoriously made errors in its rulings, which have affected the American people. My investigation used Erwin Chemerinsky’s book *The Case Against the Supreme Court*, as a guide to understand where the Court has failed, succeeded, and how and why it can and should be revised for American posterity. This investigation was conducted by looking at various factors that made a court or ruling good or bad, based on who it impacted and the reasons for the ruling. I conclude with analyzing whether our current process of Judicial Review is valid or the best that our government and courts can offer its citizens a fair, equal, and socially enhancing justice system.

Reader: Br. Kevin Dalmasse, History

SOCIAL SCIENCES

An Investigation of the Flaws in Collegiate Athletics: Examining African American Student Athletes

Will Gatti — Sports Management / Education

Collegiate athletics have played a large role in American culture for decades, as they provide scholarships for students, increase school popularity, and unite fans. This study examines the system of collegiate athletics. Through discussions I had with employees of athletic departments at Duquesne University, examinations of interviews with former college athletes done by Kyrstal Beamon, a professor of sociology and anthropology at the University of Texas at Arlington, and analyses of various scholarly articles, I discovered that there was a major problem in the system. Currently, many student athletes attend universities with the mindset that they are only athletes. This mindset mainly stems from a cultural influence, as they come to college with high expectations from their families and friends to play professional sports. Most universities do not do enough to prevent this, as they simply use the students to improve their athletic programs, and in some cases, bring in millions of dollars in revenue. This study concludes that the most viable solution to this problem is to focus on the education of student athletes. It presents that the most effective way to accomplish this is through direct and meaningful interactions with professors and peers. This allows students to become socially and academically integrated into their college environment, which most often leads to academic success.

Reader: Devin Crummie, Assistant Principal

The Effects of Pornography on the Adolescent Brain

Nolan Jacob — Neuroscience/Psychology

According to statistics on pornography viewership, 64% of adolescents, ages 13-24, view pornography at least once a week. I conducted research from various scientific experiments and case studies to explore the full extent to which watching pornography affects the viewer. The research demonstrated various examples of physical and psychological effects such as addiction, changes in taste and attraction, and unrealistic relationship expectations. Evidence even showed it going as far as to cause people to become bored by what they once loved and to desire what they once repulsed. These changes pose the greatest threat to the developing and constantly changing brains of adolescents. Not only do the neurological changes have a greater impact, but the current education system is failing to inform adolescents of the negative implications or falsehoods of pornography. Because pornography is treated as taboo by society, the topic is generally excluded in schools and adolescents are essentially left on their own. In my thesis, I propose steps to help educate children about pornography and teach them the differences between the real world and the porn world. Because the education system has failed to show the dangers of pornography, Generation XXX is on the rise and members of it pose a serious threat to the future of all relationships.

Reader: James Donahue, Counseling

SOCIAL SCIENCES

An Analytical Evaluation of the Ethical Permissibility of the Human Psychological Necessity of Recreational Distraction

Thomas Maier — Climate Change

Most of the adverse effects of climate change, as they are understood today, are unavoidable. Rather than attempt to stop the climate from changing, this thesis explores the measures that can be taken which would mitigate the societal impact of the effects of climate change in the contiguous United States. To do so, it first investigates historical situations similar to what the United States will face/is facing in terms of climate change, including the Dust Bowl (1930s) and Hurricane Katrina (2005). Then, with knowledge about what has happened in the past and what is happening currently with climate change, which include increasing temperatures, rising seas, and regional weather pattern changes, this thesis makes predictions about what the most pertinent problems will be in the coming decades. With those problems in mind, the thesis ends with recommendations about how to deal with these problems in a way that affects society least in the long term, such as suggested migration strategies and alternative agriculture techniques.

Reader: Justin Belardi, Science

To Dam or Not to Dam: A Study of Energy in Africa

Steele Mercer — International Public Policy

1.2 billion people in the world have no access to essential electric power. The countries that contain these people are subject to international laws on human rights put into place by the United Nations. However, this thesis finds that without basic human energy those people would not be able to have the human rights the United Nations decrees they should have. Within this thesis, it is discussed that to bring power to these developing nations in need of it, a cleaner source of power is needed. The thesis then proposes a viable solution for countries in Africa; hydroelectric power. Africa was the continent that the research was focused on due to most people within its multiple countries being in both extreme poverty and low energy areas. The model within the region, used to show an economy that can thrive with hydroelectric power, is the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current model being used is one of large hydroelectric dams, called the Grand Inga Dam. Although it can bring enough power to last the country a very long time there are major problems, both sociologically and environmentally. This thesis then proposes a different kind of dam, a run of the stream micro dam. These dams have a smaller ecological impact and can reach more rural environments to help with the country's economy. They can also be incentivized more easily, this is discussed within the paper. With all this in mind, hydroelectric power is a viable option for bringing countries in development and poverty out of the hardships they currently face. With help from other countries and a program to incentivize building dams, many countries could receive the help they need.

Reader: Glenn Campbell, Department Chair, History and Social Studies

SOCIAL SCIENCES

An Examination of Public School Inequalities

Tim Olson — Sociology/Education

Education provides skills that are among the most fundamental for a person to be an active member of society. To deny anyone an adequate education is to deny them a chance at success in nearly every aspect of public and private life. This, however, is the case for many children around the country who must try and learn without a teacher, desk, or even ceiling. In this thesis, I examine the question as to why the conditions in lower class, inner-city schools are unacceptable by any means, and are even more shocking when you consider that the same conditions that are a reality for so many higher need schools, are unimaginable in white suburban public schools. This is established through presenting the denial of the most fundamental aspects of a learning experience in lower-class schools: qualified teachers, a safe and functional building and learning environment, and necessary resources (i.e. Curriculum, desks, textbooks, lap equipment). This incredibly significant issue is rooted in funding. Because education is largely funded by local taxes, there are some neighborhoods that are incapable of providing the funds necessary to give their children an adequate education, which in turns adds to the cyclical nature of poverty. My thesis presents moving away from such a heavy reliance on local taxes and more towards federal and state taxes, along with a stricter set of mandates in these three fundamental aspects of education, as the first two steps we need to take to ensure that every student has access to a more equal chance at education.

Reader: James Donahue, Counseling

Building Team Values Through Team-Based Video Games: A Study in Youth E-Sports

Jack Rooney — Varsity esports/Game designing

The invention of video games with internet connectivity has bred a new type of sport: esports. This thesis explores to what extent esports can be a supplement for traditional sports. This is accomplished first by looking at the history of esports and analyzing how it morphed into the modern leagues (both on the professional and the collegiate levels) that gained recent popularity. I then looked at the values that team-based activities promote and what the criteria for these values are. I analyzed esports through this criteria to come to the conclusion that they too promote these values and can be used on youth level as another way to build these values. From there, I am able to show the advantages esports have had over traditional sports. The two big advantages are the cost and accessibility. Everyone is able to participate no matter who they are and where they come from. Esports are about inclusion and this thesis shows why they should be validated as a worthwhile activity that can stimulate growth and teamwork.

Reader: Robbie McKinstry, Faculty, Engineering and Computer Science

A LEGACY OF IDEAS

American Democracy cannot flourish with a mitigated “free” press. —Paul Beer

See through the vape and mirrors. The new nicotine epidemic is spreading.
—Renne Cabacungan

When our courts begin to lose touch with the rights of the people, they begin to represent the wrong things. —Luca Consalvi

College athletes are facing a lot more than just wins and losses. —Will Gatti

Working toward a meaningful goal is synonymous with working towards happiness.
—Simon Hebert

The minds of adolescents are being altered by what they see in pornography and there is almost no education provided to teach them the unrealistic nature of the images it delivers. —Nolan Jacob

It is through fashion that humanity expresses itself to the world.
—Brendan Lawlor

Climate change will only destroy us if we let it. —Thomas Maier

By looking for less, we are capable of so much more. —Colin McSteen

Dark comedy can be quite illuminating. —Joseph McShea

A LEGACY OF IDEAS

Energy is a Human right, that should be enjoyed by all nations. —Steele Mercer

To deny anyone an adequate education is to deny them invaluable skills necessary to finding success in public and private life. —Tim Olson

The oppression and unequal treatment of the black man in America is deeply rooted in the white man's wealth-driven exploitation of a power dynamic.
—Tyler Royster

Teamwork makes the dreamwork. Lets' get in the game. —Jack Rooney

Our obsession to make money will create a culture wherein sports become an exploitation of talent, merit and integrity. —Oscar Shaver

By understanding the value of applicability, we stand to gain a new perspective of our world through the pages of our favorite stories. —Brian Sproule

Fairy tales are the stuff by which dreams and the human psyche are made from. —Ezekiel Stuart

NOTES

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of The Brother David S. Baginski, FSC Scholars Program is to foster intellectual, cultural and ethical growth essential to leadership in the service of humanity. Participation in this program provides Scholars with foundations and opportunities in: intellectual curiosity, civic engagement, balance, diversity of perspectives, leadership, creativity, innovation, experiential learning, applied learning, integrity, effective communication, building community. A deeper goal of the Baginski Program is to motivate Scholars to reach beyond their individual niches and to understand that they can effect justice in society and, in fact, have a responsibility to do so.

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, citizenship and discipleship, 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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