HONORS CANDIDATES
2013-2014

JENNIFER L. ABRAMS
Adviser: Professor James Spates/Sociology

Do distinct approaches to holistic urban revitalization of low-income neighborhoods exist in the Canadian culture of Peace, Order, and Good Governance and the American culture of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness? The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has developed a Choice Neighborhoods grant program to combat some of the consequences of urban renewal in the mid to late 20th century. In 2011, Baltimore City received a HUD Choice Neighborhoods grant to create a holistic plan for the development of mixed-income neighborhoods in Central West Baltimore. Toronto’s Regent Park, a project similar to that in Central West Baltimore, is also working to create a mixed-income community. I hypothesize that the distinct cultures of these countries yield different approaches to engaging the community in the planning process and prioritizing for these urban revitalization projects. I conducted interviews with people involved in the planning process of these initiatives including planners, community members, and leaders of the communities. I analyzed the interviews in terms of the ways interviewees spoke about community engagement and planning priorities of the revitalization initiatives. This study is critical because these different approaches to planning the Central West Baltimore and Regent Park projects could lead to different outcomes including high or low levels of displacement of existing residents, destruction of community networks, gentrification, and/or racial segregation. Countries must approach urban revitalization in a way that effectively provides an increase in access to resources without destabilizing communities.

LAURA M. ALEXANDER
Adviser: Professor Maggie Werner/Writing and Rhetoric
“She Asked for It: The Perpetuation of Digital Rape Culture in Social Media”

For my research, I’ll be investigating and exploring the meaning of rape in contemporary culture and how popular media shapes common perceptions.

SHANNON M. BESTON
Adviser: Professor Susan Cushman/Biology (completed Fall, 2013)
“The Ecological Effects of Black Spot Disease on Stream Health in the Seneca Lake Watershed”

My honors project studies the ecological effects of the trematode Uvulifer ambloplitis on stream health in the Seneca Lake watershed. This parasite utilizes three hosts—the kinifisher, snails, and minnows. When the parasite embeds itself in the musculature of the fish, small black cysts appear. Because of this, infection is sometimes referred to as “black spot disease.”

I have decided to look at how black spot disease affects fish individually, at the population level, as well as the ecosystem level. I have hypothesized that minnows with a higher abundance and severity of black spot infection will have a decreased body condition. I have also hypothesized that these infected fish display odd behaviors that likely lead to a higher susceptibility to predation. I’ve predicted that poor stream health is helping to propagate this infection. Specifically that streams with higher levels of nutrients and pool water quality located in agriculturally dominated sub-watersheds will have a higher black spot infection prevalence and severity.

By taking a multi-level approach to this project, I hope to gain a better understanding of how stream health may be influencing infection. If a relationship is found between the parasite and poor water quality it could be possible to use U. ambloplitis as a biotic indicator.
**RICHARD Y. BONNEY**  
*Adviser: Professor Craig Rimmerman/Public Policy*  

I will be conducting my honors project with Professor Rimmerman on hydrofracking in the Southern Tier (of NY). I will explore the public health and environmental risks associated with drilling in addition to the implications for the local economies.

**SARAH R. BUCKLEITNER**  
*Adviser: Professor Hannah Dickinson/Writing and Rhetoric*  
“Finding the Surface”

For my Honors project, I am deconstructing a novel that I wrote as a high school student and revising it as a means to explore the planning, writing and revision process. The ultimate goal of my project is to create a publishable work, while coming to a better understanding of the mental effort that goes into successfully writing a book. In addition to revising, I will explore other themes and patterns that Young Adult fiction generally addresses, and work to understand how my book can make a positive impact on today’s youth.

**SHAN CAO**  
*Adviser: Professor Michael Bogin/Art (completed Fall 2013)*  
“Movement and Countermovement in the Form and the Color”

My project is about studio work based abstract paintings. Being inspired by three artists Pablo Picasso, Robert Delaunay and George Seurat as well as their leading style of Cubism, Orphism and Neo-impressionism, I am exploring and developing my own type of work which focus on the relationship between color and form, different from representational painting, which is based on an imitation of the reality. The type of painting I am working on is about exceeding the reality and using the idea of representing the reality as basic geometric shapes. For colors, I am focusing on using color contracts to achieve light and dynamic movements. Therefore, form and color works in a harmonious way to achieve the spatial dynamic and hold the overall structure of the painting.

**EMILY S. DOVE**  
*Adviser: Professor Kelly Johnson/Dance*  
“Dance as Resistance: Zulu Identity in South Africa from 1840-1947”

My honors project focuses on the changing function of dance from pre-colonial to colonial South Africa. The focus of my work is on how dance connects with the body, community, and politics during this time in a specific region of South Africa called KwaZulu Natal. My honors work is bi-disciplinary and will include both a performative and written aspect.

My honors performance is entitled *Belonging* and will take place on Thursday May 1st, at 7:30pm at the Cracker Factory.
MELISSA FREITAG
Adviser: Professor Jack Harris/Sociology
“A Fading Soul: The Preservation of Traditional Vietnamese Music”

My honors project is a sociological study on the preservation of Vietnamese traditional music. I use interviews with musicians and experts in the field of traditional Vietnamese music to measure their overall beliefs about whether the next generation of Vietnamese will be able to preserve it. I also use a survey to see whether the younger population of Vietnamese students value Vietnamese traditional music. Through the use of these two research methods, I hope to be able to give a detailed picture of Vietnamese traditional music and whether there is a desire in the younger generation to preserve it.

ANA GARCIA
Adviser: Professor Jeffrey Blankenship/Architectural Studies
“From Obscurity to Center Stage: Redesigning Bicentennial Park”

For my Honors project I will be working with the GNRC on redesigning Bicentennial Park. I will first research the current use of the park and how and why it is being underutilized and from there will develop a design plan. I will also research the properties of functional and successful urban park design.

RAYMA GARCIA-DECENA
Adviser: Jeffrey Blankenship, Architectural Studies
“Exploring Urban Cityscapes and Their Spaces Through the Study of Situationist Theory and Laban’s Movement Analysis:

The focus of my Honors project will be to combine the Situationist Theories of psychogeography and technique of the dérive with Laban’s theories of Movement Analysis. The goal is to gain a better understanding of the natural human tendency to interact with space. I hope to discover how certain structural forms will dictate the movement that will occur within them, around them, and at a distance from them. Essentially, I will be translating the idea of a dérive into the Laban vocabulary and then into my own vocabulary. With this information a designer could be able to assess the city via movement. My final portion of the project will be to create a set of vocabulary words that can be used by designers when describing how their spatial design will influence human movement through neighborhoods and communities.

MEGHAN GAUCHER
Adviser: Hannah Dickinson/Writing and Rhetoric
“Indigenous Identity-Making: The Turkana, Development, and the Western Aid Culture”

The purpose of my Honors project in Writing and Rhetoric is to examine and explore the ways in which the Turkana pastoralists and community members, including non-profit employees, use language to shape the Turkana identity and definition of culture in the wake of oil development and the presence of aid agencies and, in turn, understand how the language used has material consequences. The Turkana are an underserved population of nomadic pastoralists that are being threatened by the influx of aid culture and oil exploration by a foreign company called Tallow Oil. The Turkana’s unique situation made them an interesting group to study to understand the impact of both development and aid on their identity as a people and their culture.

I was awarded a Research Travel Grant through the Career Services Center to travel to Kenya to interview 14 Turkana pastoralists, non-profit employees, and one Tallow Oil employee. I conducted an ethnographic field study in which I interviewed stakeholders in the Turkana community. Upon return from Kenya, I used Critical Discourse Analysis and Ideological Analysis on my interviews and one human rights publication to reveal the complexities of language in different discourses (non-profit publications and one on one interviews).

Thus far, I have found that the testimonies I analyzed conceptualized culture, identity, and development through Western values. My thesis is still shifting as I continue to analyze the testimonials I collected in Kenya through various discourse and rhetorical methods, which brings to light new findings and conclusions.
YUGI GE
Adviser: Professor Warren D. Hamilton/Economics
“Art Finance and Economic Crisis: A Study of Capital Gains on Art Sales”

Sales of art and antiques reached 47.4 billion euros ($65.9 billion) in 2013, fell just short of the record 48 billion euros in 2007. (Kazakina, 2014). So how has the economic crisis changed the art market since 2008? This research is intended to study the returns of art investment and the influence of economic crisis on art investment, art market and art market participants. It studies art investment and market activities of both individuals and organizations. It also studies the psychology and social aspects behind art investment. The objective of this research is to provide a rational suggestions to those who are interested in art investment in the future.

STEPHEN GEMMITI
Adviser: Professor Lester Friedman/Media & Society
“Sex, Drugs, and the Authentic College Experience: The Story of Young Adulterated”

My honors project is entitled “Young Adulterated. When imagining the representation of the college experience in media, you’d be forgiven for picturing something between Animal House (1978) and Revenge of the Nerds (1984). Let’s face it, togas and solo cups are as synonymous with the college experience as the cap and gown. We live in a media culture where our imagining of these formative years is comprised of extremes. For such an iconic time in an individual’s life, we are left with a cartoonish caricature that paints the college experience in a fantastically unrealistic way.
Young Adulterated, a 10-part, five-hour series follows the interconnected stories of five college students as they navigate through a turbulent junior year. Based on a 295-page original screenplay, the series explores hard-hitting social topics such as young alcoholism, drug addiction, eating disorders, issues with body image, and the exploration of one’s sexuality and how each plays a prominent role in the ‘modern’ collegiate experience. The series strives to bottle the essence of what it means to be in college by standing by the idea that there is no singularly ‘ideal’ experience. College is a time for exploration and self-discovery that is often riddled with self-reflection and insecurity. By tackling these raw and often harsh topics head-on, Young Adulterated aims to spark a conversation about how we support our students and more importantly, how our students see themselves reflected in the media.

GRACE C. GIST
Adviser: Professor Stephen Cope/English
“Shotek & Divana”

The focus of my project is to study some of the theory and practice involved in radio drama, and to apply them—and my previous coursework—to the development of a new series for radio airplay. The series, tentatively titled Shotek and Divana, is about a nomadic, prophetic card-reader who learns he is meant to be with a young woman from a remote mountain village who is promised to someone else. To this end, I will read analyses of works, and works of theory, history and practice, and analyze existing works from several periods of radio history.

BENJAMIN D. GOULD
Adviser: Professor David Kendrick/Geoscience
“Transition Into the Sun: Perspectives on the Basal Angiosperm Immigration to Sunny Habitats”

The earliest flowering plants, angiosperms, first appeared on Earth about 125 million years ago, and since then they have evolved into the dominant type of plant to inhabit the terrestrial portion of our planet; but where did this phyla of plants come from, and how did it get to be what it is today? I will be examining fossilized leaves from early flowering plants (approximately 100 million years old) and examining the
patterns of the veins in their leaves. Using the pattern of venation it is possible to determine how “primitive” or “advanced” these specimens are with regards to fossils from earlier time periods. This data will be added to an ever-growing pool of data and analyzed to help determine the origins, and evolutionary path, of angiosperms.

**MICHAEL GREEN**  
*Adviser: Professor Yan Hao/Mathematics*  
“A Mathematical Model of College Friendships”

We are creating a computer model to study the social interactions between college students. In this model, we will use the exchange of available social hours between friends to study the interactions between friends. From this study we will look to find how well college friendships help students to distress, how long college friendships typically last, and the optimum number of friends to have.

**ANDREW C. HELLMUND**  
*Adviser: Professor Ted Aub/Studio Art*  
“Sculptural Passages: A Convergence of Industry and Nature”

My honors project explores sculpture in the tradition of 20th Century formalist abstract art. The welded sculpture uses found metal to create sculptural passages composed of found, formed and fitted elements. By reusing recycled metal and former industrial elements, I seek to transform the materials into new sculptures that foster community and highlight the many overlooked resources in our environment. In rediscovering the value and worth in them again, we can find new ways to utilize these resources while still maintaining and acknowledging recognizable elements from the objects’ former histories and uses.

**ALEX B. E. KENT**  
*Adviser: Prof. Craig Rimmerman/Public Policy*  
“The Confidence Game”

Since 1964, confidence in U.S. political institutions has declined 53 percent. Scholars have attributed this decline to media polarization, the failure of policy implementation to meet the public’s expectations, and personal presidential characteristics. The research for my Honors Project draws on longitudinal data from the American National Election Study (ANES) and attempts to identify why presidents repeatedly fail to inspire confidence in the electorate. However, by chiefly treating confidence as a dependent variable, scholars trivialize its importance. Low levels of confidence contribute to an environment where presidents are less effective, Congressional deadlock is commonplace, and voter turnout dwindles each year. Rather than merely identifying the influences of confidence, my work seeks to deepen our understanding of what declining confidence means for the future of American Democracy. I suggest that specific policy areas—campaign finance, taxes, and effete economic policy—ensure the preservation of this environment by mobilizing money and political influence on behalf of the wealthy. This, in turn, reinforces the vicious cycle of confidence’s downward trend.

**SAMUEL C. KNOPKA**  
*Adviser: Professor Bradley Cosentino/Biology*  
“The Spatial Distribution of the Terrestrial Salamander *Plethodon cinereus* Along a Forest Fragmentation Gradient in Finger Lakes National Forest”

The focus of my honor’s project is on the spatial distribution of the terrestrial salamander Plethodon cinereus along a forest fragmentation gradient within the Finger Lakes National Forest. A multi-use land management policy within the National Forest has resulted in a gradient of forest cover ranging from a patchwork of forest and agriculture to large homogeneous forest tracts. Fragmentation is known to cause increases in temperature and decreases in soil moisture within forest patches. Terrestrial salamanders, an indicator of forest health, are susceptible to hot and dry conditions due to their physiology. I hypothesize that salamander
occupancy patterns within the National Forest will follow this fragmentation gradient. More specifically, factors at a local and landscape scale which influence temperature and moisture will effect Plethodon cinereus occupancy. The results of this project should help explain the relationship between terrestrial salamander distribution and forest fragmentation, and potentially inform forest management about current land use and its effect on forest health."

**DEVYN F. LACAMERA**  
*Adviser: Professor Lisa Patti/Media and Society*  
“What Sex Sells: Examining the Displays of Women in Advertising”

In my honors project for media and society, I will be focusing on the objectification of the female body in advertising, and the endurance of this objectification throughout modern American history. I plan to be curating a digital media gallery of print and television advertisements with annotations that support a larger claim in the form of a catalog essay. I also wish to include a vine reel in my digital gallery that will present various television advertisements in an interesting and innovative way.

**LUKE C. LATELLA**  
*Adviser: Professor Stephen Cope/English*  
“Deus ex Modernism – Mythology and Nationalism in the Irish Literary Renaissance”

My idea for my honors project is regarding mythological representations in modern literature and art (i.e. early 1900’s). I plan to focus largely on the works of James Joyce and the Irish Literary Revival, specifically the debates between John Eglinton and W.B. Yeats over the use of mythology in the literature of the period.

**GUANQUN LI**  
*Adviser: Professor Sigrid Carle/Biology*  
“Characterization of Agrobacterium vitis chvB Mutant”

My honors project focuses on characterizing the chvB gene in Agrobacterium Vitis, which is a grape bacterium that causes crown gall disease on grape vines. Crown gall is a devastating disease, particular to areas with heavy grape production, such as Finger Lakes region. This project allows me to investigate the roles of chvB gene in attachment, biosurfactant production, biocontrol, necrosis, hypersensitive response, and swarming. In order to do it, various molecular techniques are used, such as cloning.

**ERIN K. MINTY**  
*Adviser: Professor Cheryl Forbes/Writing and Rhetoric*  
“Rome, Sweet Conqueror Still”

My honors project for the WRRH Department will be a short anthology of literary journalism in the genre of travel writing. After my experience abroad, and as an English and Writing and Rhetoric double major, I have combined my coursework and experiences to create a collection of short stories. All centered around Rome and Italy (the place I studied abroad), the collection will tell multiple stories from different character’s perspectives. It is not a piece of fiction, rather, literary non-fiction, based on my life and experiences while in Italy last semester. The project will incorporate my skills in creative writing, journalism, and travel writing, and combine them into one genre of writing.
**HILLARY F. MONAHAN**  
*Adviser: Professor Christopher Annear/Environmental Studies*  
“Negotiating with Nature: A Study of Genetic Modification in Food Production and its Cultural Effects on a Central New York Amish Community”

Is it possible for Amish communities to incorporate biotechnology into their agricultural practices while still maintaining the integrity of their belief system? What are the environmental impacts that come with such widespread use of genetically modified (GM) seeds? How do we determine if these GM crops are inherently good or bad? My Honors thesis seeks to answer these questions from both an ecological and an anthropological perspective. Genetically modified food is inherently controversial. As biotech companies push the supposed benefits of altering genes in crops to breed for desirable traits and higher yields, we must step back and consider the potential long-term consequences regarding environmental and human health. The fact that biotechnology has made its way onto Amish farmland in the United States arguably provides evidence for loss of culture in a society that prides itself on resistance to assimilation and modern technology. By way of personal visits with the Schwartz family of Schwartz Farm in Waterloo, NY, I have conducted ongoing interviews to gain first-hand knowledge of the agricultural practices and beliefs of this commercial farm that produces and sells GM crops. I compare these findings with a neighboring farm that is owned by a Schwartz relative who runs an organic operation entirely rid of GM seeds and pesticides. By observing the practices of these two farms, taking into consideration the backgrounds of each family, religious beliefs, income levels, and cultural circumstances, I ultimately gain insight on the negotiations involved with Amish agriculture when faced with the capitalist market system.

**AARON P. O’BRIEN**  
*Adviser: Reneé Monson, Sociology*  
“Good Kids, M.A.A.D. Culture: How Race, Class and Racial Composition of Home Town Affects a Listener’s Interpretation of and Response to Hip-Hop and Rap”

Hip-hop/rap was born out of the struggles of oppressed minorities in inner city New York in the 1970’s. Hip-hop/rap provided a voice through which these artists could criticize the inequality and prejudice they faced in America’s White hegemonic culture. While facing growing criticism that it promotes messages of violence, misogyny and the sexual objectification of women, hip-hop/rap grew into one of America’s most popular music genres, expanding its audience to suburban White listeners. Are Black and White listeners interpreting the song differently? Are Whites as critical of the White hegemonic culture as Blacks? Does race and class affect how a listener internalizes, interprets and responds to hip-hop/rap? My primary hypothesis is that Whites are more likely to interpret rap in ways that reinforce White hegemonic culture, while Blacks interpret rap in ways that resist White hegemonic culture. In order to test this I conducted an interview with a rap artist and asked him to explain his intended message. Secondly, I used content analysis to analyze the meaning of a given song from my own perspective. Lastly, I played the song for three focus groups: White men, Black men, and a mixed group (Black and White men) interviewing each group on the song’s meaning. I compared the interpretations of the song by the focus group members, the artist’s intentions and my own content analysis. I also looked at the influence of race, class and experience with racial diversity on the focus group respondents’ interpretation, response and internalization of a given hip-hop/rap song. Some of my other hypotheses are that the groups of Whites will be more likely to have positive responses regarding the beat of the song, while not focusing on the song’s message. While inversely, I hypothesize that Blacks will be more likely to have a positive response regarding the message. I hypothesize that listeners from areas of high racial diversity will be more likely to internalize the song as “eye opening” to racial injustice and interpret it as resisting White hegemonic culture. Furthermore, I hypothesize that lower class men will internalize the song as a way to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Blacks, interpreting the song as resisting White hegemonic culture. Finally, I hypothesize that upper class men will be more likely to internalize the song as a way to perpetuate negative stereotypes of Blacks and interpret the song as perpetuating White hegemonic culture.
**DONA G. OCCHIPINTI**  
Adviser: **Professor Mark Deutschlander/Biology (completed Fall, 2013)**  
“Approaches to Cardiovascular Research and its Future Implications in Translational Medicine”

My honors project, tentatively titled is: "Approaches to Cardiovascular Research and its Implication in Medicine". The goal of this project is to provide an overview on the way heart research is employed while directly applying it to my personal experimental research, especially potassium ion channels as related to heart failure and stress. Ultimately, this will be done with a translational focus so that the relevance to medicine can be highlighted and future direction determined.

**AVA D. PAVAO**  
Adviser: **Professor Iva Deutchman/Political Science**  
“Why Women Deserve a Chance: Breaking the Glass Ceiling for Women in Politics”

My honors project is centering around women in political power. I will then be analyzing the different media stereotypes (then and now), pop-culture (historical to present), and recent political events surrounding the ideas of women in the Presidential race. Also, my hope is to compare and contrast recent Presidential/Vice Presidential hopefuls Sarah Palin and Hillary Clinton and analyze the "good" and the "bad" aspects of their recent campaigns. Finally, I will conclude my own assessment of what would make up the best potential women candidate for an upcoming Presidential race, and who (if anyone) fits the specific requirements.

**JACOB POWELL**  
Adviser: **Professor Joseph Rebello, Economics**  
“The Origins of Crisis – A Marxian Analysis from 1970s to the Great Financial Crisis”

For my Honors project I will be examining the economy through a Marxist paradigm. I will be analyzing the period from 1970s to the Great Financial Crisis of 2008. Specifically, I will be examining the economic and political forces that shaped the institutions of this period. Moreover, I will be examining how these institutions, and their contradictions, led to the Great Financial Crisis of 2008.

**NICHOLAS SCHMIDT**  
Adviser: **Professor John Vaughn/Computer Science**  
“i3: An Environmental Sensor Base Station”

My honors project is in two parts. One is creating a weather base station that collects weather and sensor data. The second is a mobile application that shows the collected data to the user. The base station is cube-shaped and the mobile platform will be iOS.

**CLARISSA SULLIVAN**  
Adviser: **Professor Steven Lee, Philosophy**  
“The Hurdles of Prosecuting Rape: The Social Standard of Proof Necessitated by Juries”

For my honors project I have evaluated the ways that rape cases are addressed in our current criminal legal system and the social barriers that work against victims of rape. These social barriers produce a higher standard of proof for prosecutors as juries hold rape victims to standards of social norms and a traditional conception of gender roles, including how men and women should act in sexual situations. I specifically focused on date rape and the increased social barriers faced by victims in getting juries to recognize their circumstances as real instances of rape. I have evaluated the radical, liberal, and conservative feminist points of view pertaining to rape and what solutions they each propose to the difficulties of date rape. In the end, I address the New York State penal law and how it is inadequate in protecting victims of rape. Finally, I address what changes, if any, I believe can be made to our current criminal legal system.
**ARIANNA WHITE**  
*Adviser: Daniel Graham, Psychology*  
“Maya Dreams Big: An Examination of Children's Literature and its Affect on Personal Growth”

My honors project will be developing a children’s book that addresses achievement mechanisms and healthy gender development in children. I’ve developed the story and I’m doing all the illustrations myself. I’m also sending it along to be published and distributed so that children can actually benefit from the concepts it conveys. My research addresses how stories have shaped our culture and how they make us human. I’m also conducting a literature review on the current theories regarding the two concepts my story addresses specifically.

**NICOLE ZANGHI**  
*Adviser: Heather May (Health Science & Society)*  
“Theatre for Social Change in Health and Medicine: A Case Study”

Theatre for social change is an expanding field that uses theatrical approaches to address complex and difficult issues such as trauma, social inequality/injustice and potential methods of reform in an informative and engaging manner. As a pre-med student and a theatre enthusiast, I am particularly interested in applying theatre for social change to issues of health care inequality, medical ethics, and end of life care in an accessible and interesting way. Anna Deavere Smith’s *Let Me Down Easy* explores questions of health, life, loss, medicine, and the health care system through 20 individual character portraits ranging from athletes to patients to politicians to doctors. Through the public production of this play, I hope to trigger dialogue among audience members and the wider community regarding the social issues of health and medicine, especially in the arena of health care reform. A talkback session after the performance initiates this discussion, revealing and hopefully altering attitudes about health care in our society. Audience responses to the show and the discussion will be collected to assess the effectiveness and hopefully the social impact of the production.