

WRHC



52nd Annual Conference
April 3-5

PLACE*

MSU DENVER

WESTERN REGIONAL HONORS COUNCIL

**52nd Annual Conference
April 3-5, 2025**

**Hosted by Metropolitan State University of Denver
at Auraria Campus
Denver, CO**

Conference Organizers:

MSU Denver Honors Program

Dr. Megan Hughes, Honors Program Director
Jennifer O'Dell, Honors Program Coordinator
Meredith Nation, Honors Program Specialist
Cassie Gibbs, Honors Program Assistant
Marissa Erickson, Honors Program Student Employee and Graphic Designer
(*conference merchandise, logo, website, program design and layout*)

MSU Denver Honors Program Associate Directors

Dr. Rebecca Forgash, Honors Associate Director
Dr. Philip Bernhardt, Honors Associate Director
Dr. Rey Hernández-Julián, Honors Associate Director

MSU Denver Honors Council Members

Dr. Peter Schimpf
Dr. Cynthia Sutton
Dr. Maria Akrabova
Dr. Lunden MacDonald
Caroline Blackwell
Dr. Sarah Schliemann
Dr. Brandon Olson
Dr. Jessica Weiss

Honors Program Interns

Sofia Castillo Pavon
Shane Coleman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

National Collegiate Honors Council (Sponsor)

Western Regional Honors Council 2024-2025 Officers:

President: Dr. Sandra Perez

Vice President: Dr. Megan Hughes

Past President: Dr. Timothy Nichols

Treasurer: Dr. Ryan Swanson

Secretary: Dr. Diana H. Polley

Member-at-Large: Dr. Christopher J. Syrnyk

Two-Year Student Representative: Sarah Hibbard

One-Year Student Representative: Ashley Hartwig

Scribendi

Amaris Ketcham and Scribendi team

MSU Denver Provost's Office and Undergraduate Studies with special thanks to:

Interim Provost: Dr. Matt Makley

Associate Vice President of Undergraduate Studies: Dr. Elizabeth Parmelee

Program Manager-Undergraduate Studies: Shayla Bischoff

Our student, staff, and faculty volunteers!

THANK YOU!

PLACE*

place, n. /plās/

A particular part or region of space; a physical locality, a locale; a spot, a location. Also: a region or part of the earth's surface."

place, v. /plās/

put in a particular position; find a home or employment for.

The places people come from influence who they are, and people impact the places they inhabit. Sometimes, even after a place is gone, its memory and its impact remain. But onto place we can build more: transplace, displace, misplace. We can be placeists or feel placeless. What makes a place what it is? What happens to a place after it is replaced with a new place? What parts of a place can be left behind, and what can we take with us? Finally, what happens to places when people don't think about tomorrow?

Thank you for being here!



TABLE OF CONTENTS

6-7	Conference Map & Info
8-9	Welcome from Honors Director Dr. Megan Hughes
10	Keynote Speaker Phillip Rothwell
11	Attending Institutions
12-13	Conference Schedule (At a Glance)
14	Places to Eat
15	Thursday Detail Schedule
16-29	Friday Detail Schedule
30-53	Saturday Detail Schedule
54	Upcoming Conferences
55	MSU Denver BFA Thesis Show (Friday Art Walk) Flyer
56-65	Notes

CONFERENCE MAP & INFO

REGISTRATION

Please check in with the WRHC Registration and Information table to obtain your conference badge, program, and other conference materials. Registration will be available Thursday and Friday.

NAME BADGES

Name badges are required for entry at all WRHC events. Badges are provided with the conference registration materials you receive at registration. Badges may not be transferred. If you lose your badge, please contact WRHC staff.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS

All conference sessions will be held on MSU Denver's campus. Please refer to the map on the opposing page for building locations. Most other activities - including the Scribendi reception - will take place at Springhill Suites Hotel.

MEDIA/AV

Each room will be equipped with a computer, projector, and a screen. Presentations should be uploaded to your folder in Google Drive. Bring your presentation loaded on a flash drive as a backup.

PARKING

Parking regulations are enforced 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on Auraria campus. Parking instructions have been emailed. Code is: 1092954. There is overnight parking at the Springhill Hotel.

DENVER, CO

We invite you to explore downtown Denver. Maps and additional information have been provided in your registration packet to discover our campus and our city at your own leisure.

WRHC

The Western Regional Honors Council (WRHC) is a professional organization of faculty, administrators, and students dedicated to the promotion and advancement of undergraduate honors education. The WRHC represents Honors programs in universities across the Western region.

The objective of this council shall be the promotion and advancement of Honors and similar programs in Western colleges and universities.

AURARIA CAMPUS POLICE

303-556-5000

AURARIA CAMPUS



MSU DENVER HONORS HOUSE



SPRINGHILL SUITES



JSSB



TIVOLI TURNHALLE

SCAN TO ACCESS



INTERACTIVE MAP

WELCOME

From the MSU Denver
Honors Program Director

DR. MEGAN HUGHES



March 28, 2025

Dear WRHC Conference Attendees,

It is my privilege to officially welcome you to Metropolitan State University of Denver and to the beautiful city that is our home. We are thrilled to host you for the 52nd annual Western Regional Honors Conference and we hope that you will enjoy your time here.

The theme of our conference is Place*. The asterisk is included to reference the way that one can search online databases in a library system to find all words with the root term "place," suggesting the multiple ways that this word can be inflected and possible meanings that arise. During the conference, we invite you to contemplate the notion of place, and the impact that places have on us and that we have on them.

On Friday morning, you are invited to join us for the Campus as Text activity where you will have the opportunity to explore, observe, and decipher aspects of the MSU Denver campus. Through this activity you may learn something about the past, present, and even the future, of this particular place.

In preparing for the conference this week, I have been thinking about the nature of university campuses in general, all that they signify, and what they are supposed to do. A university is a place where students come to earn a degree that will hopefully impact both their personal and professional paths in meaningful ways. It is a place where we gather, as we will this week, to share ideas. It is also a place where critical thinking is promoted with one result being that the status quo is challenged, and debate happens. Given the role they play in the formation of citizens, it is not surprising that university campuses have often been the setting for important historical events.

While our campus is relatively young, this place, located at the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, has witnessed gatherings of many peoples, from the local indigenous nations of the Cheyenne and Arapaho, to neighboring Ute, Shoshone, and Comanche, to the diverse immigrant communities that lived here prior to the establishment of the campus and the many voices that have since come here to speak. These peoples have shaped the place that now shapes us.

The role of the university, and of education, in our society is currently being scrutinized. This week our campus newsletter published an article stating that the Board of Trustees has reaffirmed our commitment to our values and mission. These are represented in the following words:

Community. Access. Diversity. Respect. Excellence.

I know that many of the institutions represented here today have a similar set of expressed values that guide their work. As I look through the program at the titles and the descriptions of all the projects presented at this conference, I see these values represented over and over again, and I am inspired by the drive to increase knowledge and the intent to better our world. I am certain that this conference will reflect the capacity that university communities have to ask important questions, generate new ideas, and uphold values that can improve lives. And together, we will add one more layer of history to this place.

Students, you should be so proud of your work. Thank you for being here and for sharing your ideas.

Sincerely,



Megan Hughes, Ph.D. | Honors Program Director
Metropolitan State University of Denver



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

PHILLIP ROTHWELL

**LUNCH AND KEYNOTE
FRIDAY, APRIL 4TH, 11:30-1:00**

Phillip Rothwell has lived in many places. Born in Ecuador, he studied mathematics at the University of Cambridge, which he then taught in Mozambique. There, he acquired a taste for the multiple literatures of the Portuguese language. After a stint in South Africa, he returned to Cambridge to complete a doctorate in Mozambican literature. From there, he moved to New Jersey, where he taught at Rutgers University for over a decade. In 2013, he was appointed the King John II Professor of Portuguese at the University of Oxford, where he now lives and works. His academic interests center on the literatures and cultures of the Portuguese-speaking world and how these challenge many of the parameters of anglophone and francophone theories of nationhood and the postcolonial. He has a particular interest in gender theory, and is currently researching how a series of marginalized Angolan women writers subvert the male-centered discourses of the revolutionary struggle for independence.

His publications include *Pepetela and the MPLA: The Ethical Evolution of a Revolutionary Writer*; *A Canon of Empty Fathers: Paternity in Portuguese Narrative*; and *A Postmodern Nationalist: Truth, Orality, and Gender in the Work of Mia Couto*. He co-edited with Hilary Owen the volume *Sexual/Textual Empires: Gender and Marginality in Lusophone African Literature*. He has translated into English novels by Helder Macedo and Isabela Figueredo.

ATTENDING INSTITUTIONS

ARIZONA:

Chandler Gilbert Community College
Glendale Community College
Mesa Community College
Paradise Valley Community College

COLORADO:

Colorado School of Mines
Colorado State University Fort Collins
Community College of Denver
Front Range Community College (Larimer)
Metropolitan State University of Denver
Red Rocks Community College
Regis University
United States Air Force Academy
University of Colorado Boulder
University of Colorado Denver
University of Denver
University of Northern Colorado
Western Colorado University

IDAHO:

Boise State University
Idaho State University

OREGON:

University of Portland
Western Oregon University
Oregon Institute of Technology

MONTANA:

University of Montana
University of Montana Western
Flathead Valley Community College

NEW MEXICO:

University of New Mexico

ALASKA:

University of Alaska Fairbanks

WYOMING:

University of Wyoming

UTAH:

Salt Lake Community College
Southern Utah University
University of Utah
Utah Valley University

NEVADA:

University of Nevada Las Vegas
University of Nevada Reno

ARIZONA:

University of Arizona
Scottsdale Community College
Paradise Valley Community College
Chandler-Gilbert Community College
Mesa Community College

WASHINGTON:

University of Washington Tacoma
Washington State University
Central Washington University

CALIFORNIA:

California State Polytechnic University Pomona
California State University Fullerton
California State University Long Beach
California State University Los Angeles
Cañada College
Chaffey College
Chapman University
La Sierra University
Las Positas College
University of California Davis
University of California Irvine
Woodbury University
San Diego State University

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY 4/3

4:00-7:00 Conference Registration-Springhill Suites Lobby

FRIDAY 4/4

8:00-10:00 Conference Registration
(Tivoli Turnhalle Lobby)

8:00-9:00 WRHC Business Meeting (JSSB 211)

9:30-11:00 Place as Text on the Auraria Campus (Tivoli Turnhalle)

11:30-1:00 Welcome Lunch and Keynote 🍴(Tivoli Turnhalle)

1:15-2:05 Session I (JSSB 2nd Floor)

The Impact of Musical Genres in Shaping Societal Change (Room #200)
Reflections on Monetary Policy (Room #202)
Reckoning with Campus History (Room #203)
Experiences and Perspectives in the Criminal Justice System (Room #204)
Nerds Are People Too! (Room #205)
The Arctic: Science and Security (Room #206)
Radiation: What is it Good For? (Room #207)
Critical Perspectives on Social Change (Room #211)
Creative Structures for Supportive Educational Environments (Room #215)

2:15-3:05 Session II (JSSB 2nd Floor)

Support and the (Dys)functional Family (Room #200)
Innovative Approaches to Honors Education (Room #202)
Support Systems for Honors Students (Room #203)
Engineering Robots, Recreation, and Motion (Room #204)
High Impact Honors Experiences (Room #205)
Belonging in Honors (Room #206)
The Role of Honors Programs in Social Issues (Room #207)
Animal Ecology (Room #211)
Artforms that Shape Communal Values (Room #215)

3:15-4:05 Session III (JSSB 2nd Floor)

Environmental Sustainability (Room #200)
Protecting our Spaces (Room #202)
Methods of Communication Across Creative Mediums (Room #203)
Of Mice and Medicine (Room #204)
Innovations For Efficiency (Room #205)
Innovations in Genetic Therapies (Room #206)
Intersectional Exclusion: Race, Gender, and the Marginalization of the Female Experience (Room #207)
Novel Application of Statistical and Mathematical Models (Room #211)
Evolving Views: Approaches to Ethics and Aesthetics (Room #215)

5:00-6:30 **Scribendi Reception with hors d'oeuvres 🍴 - Across from SpringHill Suites in the Hospitality Event Lab**
Formal program starts at 5:30pm.

7:00 Art Crawl - Santa Fe Blvd. Between 5th and 14th

MSU Denver BFA Thesis Opening Reception at the Center for Visual Arts on Santa Fe Blvd.
closes at 8:00pm (free).
The rest of the Santa Fe Art Walk goes until 9:30 (free).

AT A GLANCE

SATURDAY 4/5

7:30-8:30 Breakfast 🍴 - JSSB 2nd Floor Mezzanine

8:00-9:20 Poster Session - JSSB 1st Floor

9:30-10:20 Session IV - JSSB 2nd Floor

Storytelling Through the Material World (Room #200)
Health Discoveries in Diabetes and Alzheimer's (Room #202)
Learning Opportunities Outside the Typical Schoolday (Room #203)
Power and Resistance Through Art (Room #204)
Supporting Identity for Success in Higher Ed (Room #205)
Virtual Realities and Behavioral Health (Room #206)
Creating Space and Opportunity for Inclusivity (Room #207)
The Power of the Pariah: Faith, Dogma, and Gender (Room #211)
Narrating Identity: Navigating Systems, Structures, and Media (Room #215)

10:30-11:20 Session V - JSSB 2nd Floor

The Systematic Failure of Caring Institutions (Room #200)
Building (for) the Team: Implementing Changes that Work (Room #202)
Navigating the Cosmos of Application Essays: How to Find Light in a Black Hole (Room #203)
Diversity in Approaches to Health (Room #204)
The Evolution and Impact of Global Violence (Room #205)
Data-driven Approaches to Healthcare (Room #206)
The Small but Mighty Microbe (Room #207)
Finding Your Voice and Making It Heard (Room #211)
Climate Change and Air Pollution (Room #215)

11:30-12:20 Session VI - JSSB 2nd Floor

Myth, History, and the Politics of Dystopia (Room #200)
Imaginary Worlds, Real Issues: Exploring Violence and Greed in Video Games (Room #202)
Immigrants Navigating Challenges of Integration (Room #203)
It Will Tik but Will It Tok? Social Media, Parenting, and Child Development (Room #204)
Marginalization in America: Implicit Bias and Explicit Obstacles (Room #205)
Binge Watch This: Theories of Social Interaction and Ethics in Popular TV and Film (Room #206)
It Happened Again: Themes from the 2024 Election (Room #207)
Reconceptualizing Business Strategies Using AI (Room #211)
Honors Student Engagement through Community and Climate (Room #215)

12:30 Conference grab-n-go lunch and wrap up 🍴 - JSSB Lawn or JSSB Mezzanine (in case of weather)

12:45-1:30 Rocky Mountain Honors Council meeting -JSSB 211

PLACES TO EAT

We hope you enjoy not only the time you spend at the conference, but within our great city as well. There are plenty of restaurants, things to do, and fun events to explore during your weekend here. Thank you for attending, and we hope you have a great time at WRHC 2025!

RESTAURANTS

We have partnered with three restaurants that will give conference attendees a 10% discount if you use the code word "NERDHERD". Brooklyn's Finest Pizza is offering 25% discount to conference attendees with show of badge!

Nola Jane

1435 Market St. Denver, CO 80202

Nola Jane is a southern Cajun/Creole restaurant with a Mardi Gras Vibe. www.nolajanedenver.com will have all the pictures, videos, and the full menu.

Society

1434 Blake St. Denver, CO, 80202

A premier local sports bar in the heart of Denver. Serving drinks and food, this is a great place to visit and watch sports on one of their many TVs.

Passport

1437 Market St, Denver, CO, 80202

The Passport is a global journey in the heart of Downtown Denver. Step in to Explore the world's finest flavors, where each drink represents a unique destination, and the ambiance captures the timeless charm of vintage travel.

Brooklyn's Finest Pizza

825 16th St, Denver, CO, 80202

A classic pizza joint in the heart of Denver makes for a great place to get a New York slice. This restaurant is offering a 25% discount for all event attendees, just show them your badge!

THURSDAY APRIL 3RD

**REGISTRATION OPEN | 4:00-7:00
SPRINGHILL SUITES LOBBY**

Welcome to Denver and to WRHC 2025!

Please check in with the WRHC Registration and Information table to obtain your conference badge, program, and other conference materials. Registration will be available Thursday and Friday.

Enjoy exploring our city this evening!



THURSDAY

FRIDAY APRIL 4TH

8:00-10:00 CONFERENCE REGISTRATION (TIVOLI TURNHALLE LOBBY)

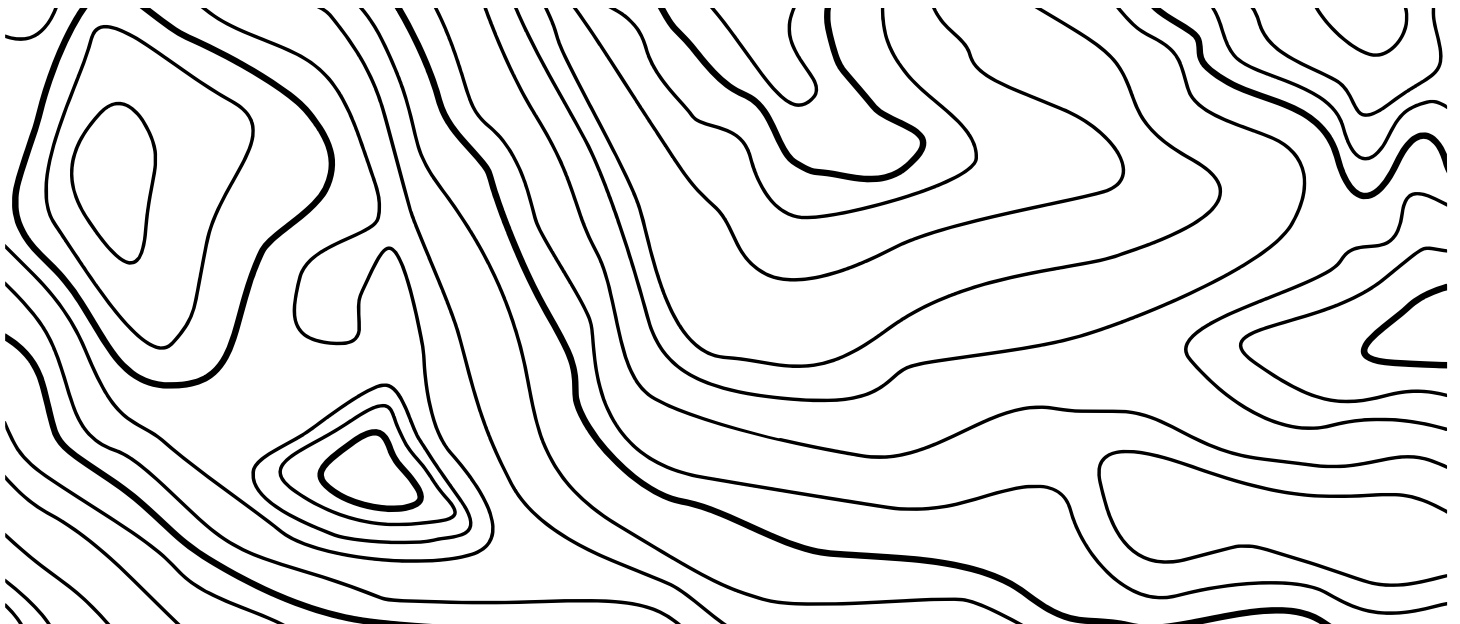
Please check in with the WRHC Registration and Information table to obtain your conference badge, program, and other conference materials. Registration will be available Thursday and Friday.

8:00-9:00 WRHC BUSINESS MEETING (JSSB 211)

9:30-11:00 PLACE AS TEXT ON THE AURARIA CAMPUS (MEET AT TIVOLI TURNHALLE)

11:30-1:00 WELCOME LUNCH AND KEYNOTE

FRIDAY



SESSION I | 1:15-2:05

THE IMPACT OF MUSICAL GENRES IN SHAPING SOCIETAL CHANGE JSSB ROOM #200

Nadya Rued - Chapman University, CA

"The Fabric of K-pop: Orientalism and Hybridity"

This presentation discusses the line between attraction, objectification, and fetishization in K-Pop by looking through postcolonial concepts and themes such as orientalism and hybridity.

Brandon Mattesich - Central Washington University, WA

"Engaging in West Coast Hip-Hop as an act of Education: What it Means to Participate in Music Beyond Your Cultural Background"

Through the perspective of industry leaders, as well as everyday people across LA, find out what it means to engage in music as an outsider to the culture that produced it, how to engage respectfully, and what it means to be a participant in a music scene outside your own.

Eddie Galicia - Paradise Valley Community College, AZ

"The Influence of 1970's Jazz Funk in Contemporary Pop Music"

This presentation focuses on the parallels between the jazz funk music from the 1970s and the contemporary work of pop and fusion artists. I emphasized the cultural and social similarities between the two time periods, but also delved into the musical and technological overlap between the two eras.

REFLECTIONS ON MONETARY POLICY JSSB ROOM #202

Frederick Langley - University Of Washington Tacoma, WA

"The Global Effects of United States Monetary Policy"

This presentation investigates the effect of U.S. monetary policy on the rest of the world. In consulting previous research on the subject, and analyzing historical data, I find that U.S. monetary policy appears to greatly influence the economies of other countries; in particular, developed countries seem to be influenced strongly.

Artemis Thea'Leona Douglas - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"How to Move the Needle: Is MMT Rhetoric an Avenue for Change Within Advocacy?"

If U.S. eligible voters understood the scientific basics of Modern Monetary Theory, that is, if they understood the federal government doesn't need or use their tax dollars to pay for any spending, would they support increased federal spending and intervention to provide universal basic services and the politics of caring?

Carter Kelash - Chandler-Gilbert Community College, AZ

"Analysis of the Legal, Ethical, and Regulatory Environment During and After the 2008 Financial Crisis"

The presentation details the 2008 Financial Crisis, its causes, ethical and regulatory failures, and long-term impacts. It covers the evolution of financial policies, such as Quantitative Easing, and the lasting changes in economic and legal frameworks.

RECKONING WITH CAMPUS HISTORY

JSSB ROOM #203

Rachel Gross, Julie Jurkowski, Sarah Le, Heran Russom - University of Colorado Denver, CO

"Reckoning with Campus History: Applied Research in the Honors Classroom"

CU Denver has worked to commemorate the history of the Auraria neighborhood and its largely Chicano community that was demolished to build the Auraria campus 50 years ago. A faculty member and two students will discuss the benefits and challenges of community-engaged research on the Auraria campus.

NERDS ARE PEOPLE TOO!

JSSB ROOM #205

Emi Oaks - University of New Mexico, NM

"Cat Comix;"

XeO is presenting XeO's two semester zine-format comics project. In an 8-book Risograph-printed anthology exploring the shared animalness between XeO and Kurdle, XeO's cat, philosophical musings and biographical narrative merge in a fascinating study of similarities between us and our non-human kin—and how we activate each other.

Garrett Salyer - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Integrating Dungeons and Dragons in Secondary Language Arts Classrooms"

I will summarize culturally relevant pedagogy and why it is important. Then I will introduce how roleplay and D&D can be used in the classroom and summarize my 3 units, highlighting the opportunities for culturally relevant pedagogy for each.

Alexis Yrigoyen - Chaffey College, CA

"From Shelf to Self: How Collectibles Contribute to Nerd Identity"

Collecting is a prominent part of nerd culture, but why? This mixed methods research examines the emotional, social, and psychological motivations of collecting. Findings show that collecting is a profoundly personal and meaningful experience for nerds. Collectibles shape identity, foster connections, and reaffirm one's place in the nerd community.

THE ARCTIC: SCIENCE AND SECURITY

JSSB ROOM #206

Emma Loeber - University of Denver, CO

"Tensions in the Arctic: Avoiding Escalation"

This presentation highlights the current stances of the Arctic states on the increasing regional tensions and whether they appear to be in a security dilemma. I will explain a few recommendations for mitigating conflict based on those findings, security dilemma theory, the motivations of the states, the communication between them, and the militarization of the region.

Alexander Turner - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Total Column Ozone and its Interactions with Polar Vortices as a Result of Sudden Stratospheric Warming Events"

With the impacts of human ozone emissions becoming more readily discussed in media, certain phenomenon have become sensationalized. By analyzing the impacts ozone has on the stability of the polar vortex, a feature of the upper atmosphere, insight into the future of winter weather and how it can change can be provided.

RADIATION: WHAT IS IT GOOD FOR?

JSSB ROOM #207

Ronald Chu - Red Rocks Community College, CO

"Simple Muon Detector for Cosmic Rays"

This project investigates low-cost, accessible photodetectors using silicon photomultipliers (SiPMs) and plastic scintillators to detect cosmic ray muons. It demonstrates reliable muon detection and showcases how particle physics research can be conducted at a community college level, aiming to inspire students to explore opportunities in high-energy physics research.

Ava Holubar - Paradise Valley Community College, AZ

"Radionuclides in Medical Imaging"

This presentation explores the use of radionuclides in medical imaging, focusing on PET scans and their ability to diagnose conditions such as cancer and Alzheimer's. It discusses isotope decay, tracer mechanisms, and comparative imaging techniques like SPECT. The study highlights advances in diagnostic care through chemistry concepts like half-life and radioactive decay.

Alison Jensen - University of Wyoming, WY

"Atomistic Investigation of Phonon and Electron Transport in Nuclear Fuels in the Presence of Fission Products"

Currently, nuclear fuel performance simulation codes require empirical equations, based on costly experiments. Our goal is to develop a multi-scale computational framework from first principles to model thermal transport in nuclear fuels with decreased reliance on experimental data. This presentation will detail our early work in atomistic modelling.

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL CHANGE

JSSB ROOM #211

Aydan Williams - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Idolization and the Humanity of History's Brilliance"

I will present a brief history, the great accomplishments and perceived moral failings, of 5-7 notable historical figures like W. E. B. DuBois, Marie Curie, Vincent Van Gogh, and Martin Luther King, Jr. At the end, I will use anecdotal experience relating to human mentality and sociality to reaffirm audience members and these historical figures as equals.

Jake Hooning - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Revolutions of Thought: Science as a Mechanism for Cultural Evolution"

This project focuses on the influence of scientific discoveries, such as heliocentrism, evolution, and quantum mechanics, on cultural norms and societal values. By considering their transformative impacts, we can highlight and forecast the role of scientific progress in reshaping our worldviews and encourage discourse on the many potential impacts associated with things like artificial intelligence or genetic engineering.

Kindra Roden - University of Wyoming, WY

"Ignored and Forgotten: A Look at Minorities' Contributions to American History"

Since the 1900s, advances including scientific, political, artistic, and more have been ignored, attributed to others, or erased entirely by historians because those who made them were women, queer, disabled, or of color. Who has history ignored and why?

EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

JSSB ROOM #204

Madison Liechti - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"Understanding Attitudes and Burnout Among Juvenile Justice System Professionals"

Juvenile offending is a consistent issue in the United States. Justice-involved youth often face challenges and adversity. For the best chance of change, further research is done with surveys and interviews to understand juvenile staff's role, their attitudes towards providing mental health care, and how burnout may affect attitudes.

Haven Colley - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Reforming the Courts: Affirmation Bias and Power Imbalance Within Criminal Trial Courts and Appellate Courts"

Confirmation bias causes issues in criminal trials and appellate courts, and these issues are reinforced through procedure and tradition. Knowing this, the proposed solutions are requiring new trial judges to review motions and appeals, implementing weight manifest reviews, and dismantling the majority ruling practice in appellate courts.

Cy'anne Beasley - Mesa Community College, AZ

"Death Classification"

Have you ever wondered how the different classifications of death impact legal investigations and societal perceptions of mortality? My project explores the five death classifications, their subcategories, and the difference between medical and forensic autopsies. My goal is to educate the public about the scientific aspects of death and its implications in the criminal justice system.

CREATIVE STRUCTURES FOR SUPPORTIVE EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

JSSB ROOM #215

Peter McDonough & Catelyn Davick - University of Montana, MT

"What If You Don't Get an A?"

Think of the most engaged you've ever felt in a class. What relationships, self-awareness, or other factors made learning truly creative in that moment? How teachers assess and students self-assess affects the learning environment, and changing our practices requires an honest conversation about what we value as teachers and learners.

Cicero Smith - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Study Through Story"

This presentation explores the benefits of storytelling in medical education, highlighting its potential to enhance memory retention, comprehension, and understanding of complex concepts. It uses case studies and real-world applications to demonstrate how storytelling can help medical students retain knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and improve student engagement and success.

Jordan Robinette - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"Pandemic Preschooling: Exploring the Link Between Supplemental Education During the Pandemic and Academic Performance in the 2023-2024 School Year"

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted early education, affecting preschoolers' development. This study examines the link between parental involvement and academic outcomes, revealing that supplemental education positively influenced performance. Findings underscore the importance of equitable resources and integrating parental support to promote resilience and address educational inequities during crises.

SESSION II | 2:15-3:05

SUPPORT AND THE (DYS)FUNCTIONAL FAMILY JSSB ROOM #200

Jordanelle A. Caldwell - Southern Utah University, UT

"Physiological Effects of Stress and Perceived Social Support: The Impact of Quality of Relationships"

There has been substantial research on the physiological effects of stress and how they impact the body and mind. This study explored how the physiological effects of stress are impacted by social support hypothesizing that positive-quality relationships will have a more significant reduction in physiological reactions than negative-quality relationships.

Winchela Luc - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"The Lasting Impact of Family Dysfunction"

This presentation examines the long-term effects of growing up in unstable families, focusing on mental health and life choices. It highlights how early family dysfunction impacts stress, trauma, and decision-making, and offers insights into support strategies for those affected by childhood instability.

Gayanna Victoria Rule - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"Support For Caregivers of Loved Ones With Personality Disorders"

There is support for people with personality disorders, but the support providers are often overlooked. We conducted interviews with adult participants supporting someone with a diagnosed personality disorder. By gaining understanding of the experiences and needs of support providers, we can inform policies and interventions that promote better outcomes.

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO HONORS EDUCATION - JSSB ROOM #202

Tekla Schmaus - Washington State University, WA

"Wise Interventions in Honors Classrooms"

In this presentation, I discuss the preliminary results from adding wise interventions to my social science courses during academic year 2024-2025. I hope to discuss strategies that worked well for honors students, and ways the interventions might be improved in the future.

Dr. Cara Hersh, Adin Sokol, and Liam Rogan - University of Portland, OR

"Ethics and Entrepreneurship: A Model for Applied Learning in Honors"

This presentation is on an Honors course that introduces students to models of leadership, teamwork, and project management while also deconstructing corporate tools and stressing an ethical mode of change. We will share our ethical approach to social entrepreneurship and introduce technology platforms we use to promote students' career readiness.

Jennie McStotts - University of Arizona, AZ

"Re-Thinking the Honors Thesis: Experience Over Product"

The twenty-first century honors thesis should be about exploratory experiences rather than wholly academic research products. This talk will unpack many assumptions behind the honors thesis to reimagine its learning outcomes and design. Are we over-valuing individual demonstration of disciplinary expertise when our students need transdisciplinary thinking and collaborative creation.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR HONORS STUDENTS

JSSB ROOM #203

Aubrey Mindlin - Boise State University, ID

"Beyond the Books: How Honors Supports Students Beyond Graduation"

Would you like to learn about new ideas for your Honors Student Association? During this presentation, you will learn what an Honors Student Association looks like at Boise State and how to promote students' future careers, professional development, and networking abilities to prepare them for life after college.

Becky Murray - University of Nevada - Reno, NV

"Promoting Honors Students' Well-being: A Proposal for Case Management"

Supporting students holistically, both academically and non-academically, ensures personalized guidance, intellectual growth, and mental well-being. The University of Nevada, Reno Honors College pilot case management program aims to address students' diverse needs, enhance their overall college experience, and increase graduation and retention rates.

Camille Thompson - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Consumption Norms and Substance Profile Safety: Perceptions Among Students in Higher Education"

This study assesses how Utah college and university students perceive peer substance use norms and behaviors within Utah's unique demographic environment. Research examines perceived social norms, peer influence, substance safety perceptions, and knowledge of consumption guidelines to inform campus health programs.

ENGINEERING ROBOTS, RECREATION, AND MOTION

JSSB ROOM #204

Andy Le - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA

"Untethered Isoperimetric Soft Robot"

Exploring soft robots for space exploration: overcoming traditional rigid robot limitations by enhancing adaptability, terrain navigation, and durability. We propose a design integrating these criteria to create a new paradigm in space robotics, making soft robots more viable for future space missions.

Daphne Prakash - La Sierra University, CA

"Study of the Effect of Ionic Strength on the Pseudo-First Order and 2nd Order Degradation of Methyl-Green under Basic Conditions"

This study explores the degradation kinetics of Methyl Green under basic conditions, focusing on the effects of ionic strength on pseudo-first order and second-order reactions. Using a low-cost 3D-printed chemical reactor, we investigate how buffer concentrations and ionic strength influence reaction rates, providing insights into optimizing flow chemistry conditions.

Pranav Arora - Chaffey College, CA

"Computerized Simulation of Projectile Motion"

This project contrasts idealized projectile motion with real-world trajectories by exploring the effects of air resistance, drag, lift, Coriolis and Magnus effects. By creating a program to run computerized simulations of projectile motion, I contrast theoretical and experimental models of projectile motion.

HIGH IMPACT HONORS EXPERIENCES

JSSB ROOM #205

Stacey Sinclair - San Diego State University, CA

"A Minor with High Impact: Engaging Diverse Students in Transformative Learning through an Academic Minor in Interdisciplinary Studies"

SDSU has successfully embedded interdisciplinary thinking into its honors curriculum, while simultaneously making it accessible to a diverse student body. This workshop highlights how an interdisciplinary minor offers students the breadth of perspective, flexibility, and ability to "connect the dots" that is required to succeed in today's dynamic, complex world.

Bethany Applegate, Oliver Jepson, & Ryan Fleetwood - University of Montana, MT

"Honors Pre-College Programming: A Toolkit for Program Development and Assessment"

Participation in pre-college programming provides exceptional opportunities for recruitment, community development, and leadership among honors students. Our presentation provides a toolkit for program development and assessment utilizing the Schwanke Honors Institute, at the University of Montana's, Davidson Honors College, as a case study.

BELONGING IN HONORS

JSSB ROOM #206

Jacob Carlisle - Boise State University, ID

"Gryffindor or Gyrfalcon? Swapping Magic for Raptors: A New Take on the House System, and Creating Community in the Honors College"

"The lights off in the great ballroom, candles scattered on the tables, the music playing as the Heads of House walk in, carrying their flags embroidered with Idaho's birds of prey. Come learn how this sets the stage for building community with the Boise State Honors College. "

Ahtziry "Chachi" Granados Gonzalez - Idaho State University, ID

"Your Path Doesn't Have to Look Like Someone Else's: A Photovoice Exploration of Belonging at an Honors Program in the Intermountain West"

This study utilizes PhotoVoice to explore how honors students experience belonging at a predominately white and public university in the Intermountain West. The study focuses on 11 participants from historically underrepresented backgrounds who shared their experiences through photographs. This presentation will examine the following key themes: navigating boundaries, familial repayment, acknowledgement, and imposter phenomenon.

THE ROLE OF HONORS PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL ISSUES

JSSB ROOM #207

Emily Jasso, Vincent Miramontes-Andrade, Jessika Donis, Cherell Johnson-Davis - California State University - Long Beach, CA

"From Disruption to Innovation: Redesigning the Honors Peer Mentor Program for the Future"

Attendees will gain insights from a student leadership perspective into how a peer mentorship program can evolve through challenges presented by the pandemic, engage students meaningfully, and provide sustainable, impactful support that aligns with current educational trends.

(CONT.) THE ROLE OF HONORS PROGRAMS IN SOCIAL ISSUES

JSSB ROOM #207

Dr. Sandra Pérez - California State University - Long Beach, CA

"Upholding a Social Justice Honors Mission: Seeking Foundation, Community, and Campus Partnerships to Reach Collective Goals"

This presentation draws on recent honors education research focused on creating more equitable experiences within honors programs and colleges in order to explore how collaborating within institutions of higher education, with community-based organizations, and foundations promotes more successful, long-term impact on social justice goals.

ANIMAL ECOLOGY

JSSB ROOM #211

Kira Welch - University of Wyoming, WY

"Genomic Characterization of a Hybrid Zone between North American Milksnake Lineages"

American milk snakes are a widespread group of species spanning from across North America to South America. Two milksnake lineages have formed a hybrid zone in eastern Kansas, and investigating this source of interest will give us insight into how these lineages diverged and what processes maintain differentiation today.

Hannah Noelle Cook - Mesa Community College, AZ

"Southern-Border Ecology: The Ecological Impact of Border Wall Construction"

This presentation explores the history of barrier construction along the US southern border in the context of its actual and potential ecological impact. Concerns of biodiversity loss due to ecological disruption of the physical barrier are examined. Multidisciplinary efforts to mitigate those impacts are also discussed.

Ben Flickinger - University of Wyoming, WY

"Cultural Keystone Species in the Urban Environment: a Pilot Study on Sakura Trees in Japan"

This presentation explores cultural keystone species' potential existence and implications within urban environments. Using findings from literature review and interviews with Japanese residents from across the country, Sakura trees and their cultural significance could influence environmental conservation and perceptions and value of nature within cities across Japan.

ARTFORMS THAT SHAPE COMMUNAL VALUES

JSSB ROOM #215

Alison Larson - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"The Traditional Performance Art of the Ewe and Others"

From a Western understanding, dance and music are separate activities, but from the Ghanaian Ewe perspective, dance and music are inextricably linked together, and one does not exist without the other. This mini-ethnographic study explored the artistic culture around Ewe dance and music, including immersive observation and interviews.

Ryan Tiet - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"Advertising: The Key To Unlocking Your True Self™©"

My presentation seeks to analyze advertisements and how they relate to and change cultural values over time. The advertisements I selected range from the 1950s to today. I'll also dive into how advertisements came to be today and present literary works that emphasize how influential advertisements are in society.

(CONT.) ARTFORMS THAT SHAPE COMMUNAL VALUES

JSSB ROOM #215

Eavin Leitner-Woolf - University of California - Davis, CA

"Gilded Thrones and Divine Propaganda"

My presentation will examine gilded thrones from across the globe that share characteristics of using celestial divinity as propaganda supporting divine right. It will focus on the Cathedra Petri as the central example, while working to establish this phenomenon as a broader trend.

SESSION III | 3:15-4:05

PROTECTING OUR SPACES

JSSB ROOM #202

Jhenica Mei Magana - Scottsdale Community College, AZ

"Making Matches: Developing an Interactive Web Application for Connecting the Community to Native Plants"

This presentation explores the development, usage, and impact of creating an interactive web application for assisting community members' familiarity with native plant species. By making connections between general native plant information and personal interests, purposeful gardening can be encouraged in support of local biodiversity preservation resources and efforts.

David Alfonso Esguerra - University of Washington Tacoma, WA

"Overtourism Education: Analyzing Hawaii and Japan's Tourism and the Need for Tourist Education"

The presentation consists of an analysis of Japan and Hawaii's tourism economy before and after Covid, and how they drastically reframed tourism in their economy, plus reviewing reports of tourist crimes in these two locations as an understanding of the internal issue.

Eliza Wenger - Chapman University

"Colonizing Movement: How the Westernization of Yoga is Ignored, Embraced, and Marketed"

Yoga, at its roots, remains a sacred practice for those seeking to detach from the physical world to reach Enlightenment. If Enlightenment is \$12.7 billion dollars, it seems the West has reached it. This project analyzes the Western practice of yoga, and why criticisms of it are scarcely seen.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

JSSB ROOM #200

Yasmin Berumen Martinez - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"The Role of the Aphid Salivary Effector, Apolipophorin, in Plant Interaction with Pea Aphids"

The Apolipophorin (Lip) gene provides insights into pea aphids (*Acyrtosiphon pisum*) and aids development of alternative pest control strategies. This study delves into the role of Lip gene in salivary glands, hypothesizing that RNA interference will impair feeding and colonization of *Medicago truncatula*, thereby enriching our comprehension of aphid-plant interactions.

(CONT.) ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

JSSB ROOM #200

Radhika Epps - California State Polytechnic University Pomona, CA

"Revelations in Waste: How Our Refuse Patterns Showcase Globalized Consumer Trends and Behavior"

My presentation will spotlight the inconsistencies between our refuse patterns and globalized consumer trends and behaviors with trash analysis from CPP. Additionally, I will present the maps and object itineraries I created with GIS technology that physically map the interconnected trade network of garbage and interconnected globalized relationships.

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION ACROSS CREATIVE MEDIUMS

JSSB ROOM #203

Grace Steindorf - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"Time after Time: The Effect of Time on Communication in Today's Society"

This research contributes to understanding how time perception influences communication depth and has implications for educational and professional settings where task completion is valued above interpersonal connection, while raising broader questions about how time consciousness shapes human relationships in an increasingly digitally mediated world.

Atticus Christian Parker - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Positive Psychology Tools in Foreign Language Acquisition in the Classroom"

This project approaches how positive psychology tools align with previous studies and findings in foreign language classrooms and how effective these tools are in creating better student performance in the classroom.

Katherine Ware - Mesa Community College, AZ

"An Investigation of the Emergence of Unique Language on Social Media and its Implications"

This project investigates the development of language on social media in the 2020s as driven by the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms, and sociopolitical events. It discusses social media language as a virtual dialect and examines its effect on virtual communication.

OF MICE AND MEDICINE

JSSB ROOM #204

Gabriella "GiGi" Searle - Washington State University, WA

"Exploring the Impact of Hair Follicle Density on Dermal Architecture in Mouse Back Skin"

For decades, mice have served as models in human disease research, including skin biology. However, significant differences in skin structure, such as thickness, limit the reliability of findings. We hypothesize that hair density influences dermal architecture thickness and aim to create a more human-like mouse model.

(CONT.) OF MICE AND MEDICINE

JSSB ROOM #204

Andres Vassaux - University of Colorado Boulder, CO

"Suvorexant's Effect on Sleep in Male and Female C57BL/6J Mice during Nicotine Abstinence"

The presentation will revolve around the dual-orexin antagonist drug, suvorexant, and its possible implications for treating sleep disturbances experienced during nicotine abstinence. This includes presentation of data collected from mouse models, and how their sleep was impacted by suvorexant during nicotine withdrawal.

INNOVATIONS FOR EFFICIENCY

JSSB ROOM #205

Nathan (Marty) Martinson - Utah Valley University, UT

"Verdikt Mountain Ski"

This presentation details the design and development of a summer mountain ski equipped with wheels and suspension for groomed trails. The presentation also includes pictures of the 3D printed prototype, comprehensive design stages, and finite element analysis. Initiated in 2020 at UVU, the project exemplifies innovative engineering and collaboration.

Ethan Motta - Mesa Community College, AZ

"USA 2023 Electrical Industry Analysis"

This project analyzes U.S. electricity prices and consumption in 2023 across sectors and states, using Power BI for interactive visualizations. It highlights trends like industrial sectors benefiting from lower rates and residential sectors facing higher costs. Users can explore detailed insights by sector or state to support informed decision-making.

Brendan D. Church - University of Colorado - Boulder, CO

"East Asia's Technological Interdependence: Consumer Power, Supply Chain Efficiency, Institutional Corruption, and Emerging Innovation"

This presentation explores the shifting focus in 21st-century economics from total manufacturing output to innovation-driven growth. It examines how protectionist policies, supply chain complexity, and geopolitical competition shape technology sectors, focusing on East Asia's dominance in semiconductors, telecommunications, and renewable energy. Key questions include government roles in fostering innovation, balancing consumer wealth, and addressing economic concentration.

INNOVATIONS IN GENETIC THERAPIES

JSSB ROOM #206

Avantika Gokulnatha - University of California - Davis, CA

"Investigating the Roles of SMARCA5 in Lethal Pediatric Gliomas"

This project investigates the role of SMARCA5, a chromatin remodeling protein, in the epigenomic development of pediatric gliomas (DMGs) and its therapeutic potential.

(CONT.) INNOVATIONS IN GENETIC THERAPIES

JSSB ROOM #206

Riya Desai - University of California - Davis, CA

"Monte-Genie: A Monte-carlo Simulation for Modeling Splicing in Genetic Sequences"

This is an algorithm that identifies exon and intron regions of the genetic sequence for the purpose of modeling alternative splicing, which is a process vital in phenotypic variation. It approaches the problem by mimicking the binding and splicing behavior of snRNPs using a Monte-Carlo based simulation and molecular dynamics.

Elisa Pizzocaro - Southern Utah University, UT

"Exploring New Possibilities: Immunological Mechanisms as an Approach to HIV Cure"

To achieve an HIV cure, we must address viral latency, immunological evasion, and viral persistence. The discovery of monoclonal antibodies, the increase of B-cell immunity, and latency-reversing techniques are some of the new strategies that are going to be addressed. These techniques support the global effort to end the pandemic and give hope for HIV cures.

INTERSECTIONAL EXCLUSION: RACE, GENDER, AND THE MARGINALIZATION OF THE FEMALE EXPERIENCE

JSSB ROOM #207

Aleena Gillette - Regis University, CO

"The Danger Isn't Strangers: Exploring Injustices in the Social Construction of Women's Victimization Experiences"

Women are often taught to fear victimization by strangers, yet research shows that women are more likely to be victimized by someone they know. This project analyzes the limitations of the Stranger Danger campaign and how these limitations may impede women's ability to make sense of their lived victimization experiences.

Gianella Sosa - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Intersectionality in SLCC, Utah"

Have you ever thought that women do not suffer from discrimination anymore in 2025? In this research presentation you are going to witness how young women in Utah and around the world still experience sexist comments, racism, and xenophobia. Also, we are going to see how Intersectional Feminism help individual women to tell their own unique stories.

Artemis Thea'Leona Douglas - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Real Girls' Talk: Demonstrating Trans Women's Precarity"

Trans women are the women of women, that is they are women at once denied access to women's supports, recognition, literature, and resources and forced to face the harshest edges of patriarchy alone. This study uses trans women's words to demonstrate their precarity and the conditions they live in.

NOVEL APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL AND MATHEMATICAL MODELS

JSSB ROOM #211

Delaney Finley - United States Air Force Academy, CO

"Investigating Bipolar Disorder with Differential Equations"

Investigating bipolar disorder with differential equations to investigate how certain factors translated into parameters effect the stability of a patient overtime.

(CONT.) NOVEL APPLICATION OF STATISTICAL AND MATHEMATICAL MODELS

JSSB ROOM #211

Toluwalase Adeniyi - Mesa Community College, AZ

"How Statistical Methods can be Applied to Improve Decision Making and Problem Solving in Everyday Situations like Personal Finance, Healthcare, and Business Management."

This presentation explores the application of statistical techniques in personal finance, healthcare, and business management. It emphasizes how methods like trend analysis, regression, and predictive modeling enhance decision-making, while addressing misconceptions. A mixed-method approach integrates qualitative depth and quantitative objectivity, showcasing practical insights through case studies, expert surveys and reports with data simulations.

Sidhant Parashar - Las Positas College, CA

"Decoding Bitcoin Trends: Using Mathematics to Create Custom Cryptocurrency Market Indicators for Trading"

Applying custom calculus-based derivations of price, volume, and other market factors, provides holistic and valuable insights for making profitable trades in Bitcoin markets.

EVOLVING VIEWS: APPROACHES TO ETHICS AND AESTHETICS

JSSB ROOM #215

Hailey JY Sato - University of Washington - Tacoma, WA

"Sapient Not Conscious: History's Lessons on Ethical Tolerance for Novel Biology"

With the development of brain organoids, GMOs, and other innovations that push the limits of engineering life, the maintenance of ethical standards must be at the forefront of novel science. This presentation critically analyzes biomedical science history to investigate the evolution of tolerance in policy and the public eye.

Whitney Wygant - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Aesthetic Knowledge: An Argument Against Physicalism"

This presentation is a philosophy honors thesis, suited for a general audience. A substantial portion of the presentation will be understanding the debate over whether things are fundamentally physical or not. This will be followed up by a new thought experiment which argues that aesthetic knowledge poses problems for physicalism.

Charlie Kirkham - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"On the Evolution of Cooperation across Different Biological Scales"

The history of life's complexity has yet to be fully explained in evolutionary biology, however, it is understood that cooperation has underpinned this complexity. This presentation will philosophically analyze different definitions of biological individuals, how cooperation has led to their evolutionary development, and how these definitions affect debates over explanations

5:00-6:30 SCRIBENDI RECEPTION - HOSPITALITY BUILDING

7:00 ART CRAWL- SANTA FE BLVD. BETWEEN 5TH & 14TH

SATURDAY APRIL 5TH

7:30-8:30 BREAKFAST 
JSSB 2ND FLOOR MEZZANINE

POSTER SESSION - 8:00-9:20
JSSB 1ST FLOOR

#1 Emmalie Parker - Utah Valley University, UT

"Creating Educational Framework Promoting Health Insurance Literacy"

Information shared will be based on the Utah health insurance market. The themes of the project will cover and include terminology, selecting the right coverage plan, and managing out-of-pocket costs. The goal is to instill confidence into students to make educated decisions as they become more familiar and involved with the healthcare system.

#2 Randy Hernandez - California State Polytechnic University Pomona, CA

"Kaposi's Sarcoma-Associated Herpesvirus Targeting of CD1c by the K8.1 Glycoprotein"

Kaposi's Sarcoma is a form of cancer that is primarily caused by infection from Kaposi's Sarcoma-Associated Herpesvirus (KSHV), the 8th known Human Herpesvirus (HHV8), especially in person who is immuno-compromised. This work is important towards understanding this mechanism KSHV used to avoid immune activation by downregulating CD1c, and how these methods allow the rapid growth of KSHV in the development of Kaposi's Sarcoma.

#3 Larissa Helena Silveira - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Navigating Identity: Immigrants' Journey to Feeling American"

This presentation explores how environmental factors impact the Hispanic/Latinx community's connection to American identity. The research explores cultural adaptability, language barriers, and the influence of surroundings on forming a sense of belonging in America, among immigrants who have lived in the U.S. for over five years.

#4 Loren Swaney - University of Portland, OR

"Effect of Shear Stress on Coronary Smooth Muscle Proliferation during Development"

Shear stress from blood flow governs how the developing heart remodels itself. I am evaluating how this shear stress affects smooth muscle proliferation around the coronary arteries as an embryo develops.

#5 Emma Walker - Chapman University, CA

"We aren't dying yet, but we're on the hospital bed." An Analysis of Scottish Culture and Desire for Independence"

After centuries of pushback on expressing Scottish culture post the Union of the Crowns in 1603, Scotland has now emerged as a leader protecting and advocating for its culture. This project analyzes how Scotland's cultural pride has changed and how this has also led to a political movement for independence.

#6 Abbey Graham - Chapman University, CA***"Why Don't I Belong?"***

Finding one's place in the world is intimidating. Oftentimes, we as people struggle to assuredly pinpoint what makes our identity. Through research in attitudes regarding midlife crises, resistance to change, and personal growth, this project outlines critical aspects of defining identity, changing those definitions, and establishing self-acceptance.

#7 Natalie Teeter - Chapman University, CA***"Let's Talk About Sex: Exploring Sex Communication"***

Exploring the factors that impact sex communication, how sex is communicated to us, and how we communicate about sex can help individuals become better communicators and more sexually literate. Sex is communicated through gendered childhood socialization, media representations of sex and relationship dynamics, and sexual scripts presented in pornography. These influences shape the way adults communicate about sex. Developing strong sex communication skills reduces sexual violence and enhances relationship health and satisfaction across diverse relationship types.

#8 Maverick Shuck - Chapman University, CA***"Are Americans Losing Trust in the Government? An Interdisciplinary Examination into the American Zeitgeist"***

2024, a year full of partisanship the United States that has not seen in many years. What are the causes for this exponential uptick within the United States? What are its implications on the foundations of our shared American Democracy? All of this will be answered in an interdisciplinary examination.

#9 Angele Domitilla Traore - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Empowering Futures: The Role of Education in Juvenile Justice"***

This presentation examines the impact of educational programs in juvenile prisons, focusing on how they foster personal growth, skill development, and rehabilitation. It will explore innovative initiatives aimed at reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration, while highlighting the importance of building self-esteem and self-acceptance among incarcerated youth for a better future.

#10 Indigo Peppard - University of Northern Colorado, CO***"Creasing as a Candidate Mechanism for Foveal Pit Formation in the Eye"***

The foveal pit is a region in the eye corresponding to a high photoreceptor density, thinner tissue and displaced vasculature, and is thought to be largely responsible for high acuity vision. This current research tests some proposed mechanisms for the formation of this pit, focusing on creasing behavior.

#11 Clare Bolon - University of Northern Colorado, CO***"The Missing Void: Womenswear, Lack of Pockets, and its Effect on Daily Life"***

This mixed methods study examined the lack of pockets in womenswear and how it affects daily life. Preliminary analysis found that lack of pockets does impact daily life and often negatively.

#12 Iliana Guerena - California State University, Long Beach, CA***"The Role Social Learning Theory Plays in the Development of a Serial Killer"***

This research explores the influence that social learning theory has on the development of serial homicide, specifically the impact of first-hand and second-hand exposure to violence (independent of physical abuse). The childhood experiences of known serial murderers will be examined to investigate social learning theory's role in shaping their behavior.

#13 Natalie Cabrera Mansilla - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Navigating Doubt: The Overlooked Impact of Impostor Syndrome on College Students"***

This project will analyze the prevalence of impostor syndrome among college students, identifying which profiles are more susceptible and the factors that trigger it. It will be explained how this phenomenon affects students' lives in personal, health, and academic aspects. Solutions, resources, and strategies will be proposed for its effective approach.

#14 Marjorie Burnes - University of Northern Colorado, CO***"Perceived Success of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs from the Perspective of Felony Offenders in Northern Colorado"***

Criminal justice rehabilitation programs in the U.S. have developed as studies have found that older methods of criminal punishment are ineffective in reducing recidivism. This project attempts to determine which reintegration and rehabilitation programs are most effective in reducing recidivism in felony offenders in the U.S. is critical.

#15 Saige Chapin - Red Rocks Community College, CO***"Using AI to Distinguish Between Bi-Modal Expressions"***

This project dives into research studies that are using AI Facial Recognition (FR) to try and detect pain in non-verbal patients. It explores what different factors contributed to studies' successes and limitations.

#16 Grant Rickard - Washington State University, WA***"High Seroprevalence of Sin Nombre Orthohantavirus in Rodents across the Inland Northwest"***

Sin Nombre orthohantavirus (SNV) is the primary causative agent of hantavirus pulmonary syndrome (HPS) in North America, and since 1993, it has been detected throughout the western US and Canada. Through specimen collection and tissue analysis, a better understanding of the characteristics of SNV infection and prevalence can be achieved.

#17 Foram Shah - University of California Davis, CA***"Data Magic: Building Machine Learning Tools"***

As Machine Learning evolves, understanding its fundamentals is crucial. Data Magic addresses knowledge gaps through an interactive platform where users learn data cleaning, preprocessing, and ML basics via videos and hands-on modules. By making these concepts inclusive, the goal is to empower underrepresented groups and foster diversity in technology.

#18 McKayla F Mercado - Chapman University, CA***"Mi Cultura y el Baile (My Culture and Dance)"***

This project explores the Pre-Columbian dances representing the Mayan and Aztec civilizations, the influences of colonization in these dances, and the stories of the Mexican Revolution that continue to live through Folklorico. This project aims to display the importance of Folklorico in education as a way to keep Mexican culture and traditions alive.

#19 Kadra Guillermo - The University of New Mexico, NM***"Albert Camus's The Stranger and Buddhist Ethics: The Empathy Impairment Problem"***

This presentation explains Albert Camus's *The Stranger* through a Buddhist philosophical lens and addresses some dangers of absurdism that cause suffering in the contemporary world. Ways theory can become practice to help lessen the suffering of human beings, including recognizing the empathy impairment problem, are explored.

#20 Brittany Case - Central Washington University, WA***"Suicide Rates Amongst Veterans"***

A poster presentation on the change in suicide rates amongst veterans over the past 20 years and what the factors that have led to that are. I also will add the difference in suicide rates for male veterans and female veterans.

#21 Taylor Page - Washington State University, WA***"Investigating the Role of Uterine FBXW7 during Pregnancy in Mice"***

This study investigates the role of the FBXW7 protein in uterine function during pregnancy using a conditional knockout mouse model. By depleting FBXW7, implantation failure and abnormal uterine morphology was observed. Insights gained may advance our understanding of infertility and contribute to therapeutic strategies for reproductive disorders.

#22 Rebeca Reyes Diaz - University of Nevada - Reno, NV***"Gastrointestinal Dysfunction in Rett Syndrome"***

Gastrointestinal (GI) dysfunction is an understudied feature of Rett syndrome (RTT), caused by a mutation on the MECP2 gene. We deleted the MECP2 gene in murine enteric neurons and used force transducers in ex vivo colon preparations. It is found that MECP2 deficiencies specifically in enteric neurons lead to GI dysfunction in RTT.

#23 Paul Tristan Anvir Calpito - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Beads of Identity: Exploring the Symbolic Connection Between Craft Traditions and American Cultural Identity"***

This research offers an overview of how beadwork and crafting traditions serve as symbolic cultural artifacts that preserve the identity and heritage of underrepresented communities while contributing to the comprehensive American story.

#24 Gaia Steinberg - University of Nevada - Las Vegas, NV***"Divided Attention and Stimulus Complexity for Long-term Memory"***

This presentation explores recognition memory research by examining more complex, real-world materials like podcasts and news headlines. In this study, naturalistic stimuli, specifically news headlines, were utilized alongside a divided attention task to investigate recollection and familiarity. This research examined impacts of divided attention on long-term memory for naturalistic stimuli.

#25 Ana Olivas - University of New Mexico, NM***"Different Futurisms in Media : Decolonizing the Past, Present, and Future"***

In my presentation, I will be talking about futurisms, specifically Latino and Indigenous futurisms, what they are, how they are represented in different forms of media, why they are important, and how they decolonize a white enforced narrative and ways of thinking.

#26 Presly Truong - Utah Valley University, UT***"How Congested Airspace Affects the General Aviation Training Environment for Pilots and Flight Instructors at Utah Valley University"***

This project examines the effects congested airspace has on Utah Valley University's flight training program. This work explores how certified flight instructors and students, varying in levels of experience, are impacted by the growing congestion by airliners, corporate jets, and other flight schools in the area.

#27 Samantha Coyle - Central Washington University, WA***"Identifying the Deficit: The Impact of Language on Bias Toward Autistic People"***

In the current study, I investigated whether deficit-based terminology impacts explicit and implicit bias toward autistic people when compared to value-neutral language. Participants read a scenario describing an autistic coworker that implemented either language model and then completed the Measure of Attitudes Toward Autism survey and an Implicit Association Test.

#28 Raychel Kool - The University of New Mexico, NM***"Hey, I could do that! Zines as Permission-giving Objects in the Classroom"***

Zines are small, not-for-profit, self-published booklets often featuring DIY hallmarks like off-kilter scanning and cut-and-paste text. Zines, with all their seams showing, make readers say, "Hey, I could do that!" Particularly for students who don't consider themselves creative, zines inspire creation and change ideas about who can be an artist.

#29 Alexandra Kraft - Chapman University, CA***"Emotional Expression and Regulation: A Cross-Cultural Comparison of the United States and Japan"***

Emotions are a universal human experience, yet the space they occupy varies widely across cultures. This presentation examines how emotions are perceived, regulated, and expressed in individualistic and collectivist societies. Through a comparative analysis of American and Japanese cultures, the presentation highlights how cultural norms shape emotional behaviors and social well-being.

#30 Amaneet Brar - University of Colorado Boulder, CO***"Developing a Machine Learning Pipeline for Automated Behavioral Analysis in Prairie Voles"***

I will discuss the development of a machine learning pipeline combining DeepLabCut and SimBA to analyze social behaviors in prairie voles. Key topics will include pose estimation, behavior classification, and insights into bonding dynamics across time points and pairings. I will also evaluate three behavior sets (10, 7, and 5) for their validity and accuracy in behavior classification in SimBA.

#31 Sage McCarty - Chapman University, CA***"Feasibility of Studying the State of Israel's Nuclear Ambiguity: The Lacanian "Other," Sensationalized Reporting, and Antisemitic Rhetoric"***

The State of Israel, in a policy described as "nuclear ambiguity," refuses to confirm or deny whether it possesses nuclear weapons. This project develops a framework for the role of media in influencing collective perceptions of a nuclear arsenal in Israel to determine ways to study the state's nuclear policy.

#32 Ashley Peden - University of Washington - Tacoma, WA***"Mickey Mouse: Global Icon, Brand Ambassador, the Foundation for The Walt Disney Company"***

This project explores how one mouse went from screen star, to a symbol of hope across the globe allowing him to not only become the face of The Walt Disney Company but utilized as their vehicle for globalization. TWDC is known for "Disney Magic", the core of which is Mickey Mouse.

#33 Natalie Trichel - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"What are the Benefits of Higher Education for Non-Traditional Students?: Is It Worth It?"***

Non-Traditional students in higher education is a growing demographic of students that shows what there is to be accomplished through the challenges faced by this type of student. This research will explore the importance of higher education for students and will highlight their personal growth (mental/physical health), career advancements, and financial stability.

#34 Truchell Calabaza - The University of New Mexico, NM***"Seeing in Three Dimensions: An Interactive Photography Journey"***

This poster presentation highlights the process of my senior thesis project that combines traditional photography with three-dimensional sculptural techniques. The work explores how photographic prints can be transformed into physical installations, engaging viewers in both visual and tactile dimensions. It examines the creative process, material experiments, emotions, and spatial dynamics of interactive photography.

#35 Sarah Maloney - Chapman University, CA***"Movement for Justice: How Dance Amplifies Voices of Protest"***

Dance is an essential tool for expression and can be used to highlight specific social and political issues prevalent in the world. Specific works by Kyle Abraham, Kurt Joos, and Pearl Primus use their choreography, staging, lighting, and costuming to ignite conversations of education, awareness, and political change.

#36 Jake Allen - Utah Valley University, UT***"Utah Art Market Consumer Research"***

The Utah Art Market Consumer Research Project. Find out the who, what, where, when, why, and how of Utah art consumers.

#37 Gavin Hood - University of Colorado Denver, CO***"Mental Health Issues in Honors Program Students"***

Some evidence suggests that high-achieving students may face unique mental health challenges, particularly highlighting self-concepts, motivation, and perfectionism. Focus groups with Honors Program students at the University of Denver highlighted these issues in addition to burnout as prominent in their cohorts. Suggestions for institutional intervention were offered using this review.

#38 Jevahjire France - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Understanding the Health Damages of Mechanical Vibration on Workers"***

This presentation examines the effects of mechanical vibrations from vehicles like tractors, dozers, and trucks on drivers and workers. Focusing on Whole Body Vibration (WBV), I'll present data from controlled experiments, including biodynamic measurements and heart rate data, to assess the physical toll and guide future mitigation strategies.

#39 Ana Beatriz Carrillo Leon - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Touch and Tell: Do Stingrays Really Enjoy Pool Interactions?"***

The study observed stingray behavior at a Utah aquarium, comparing Atlantic stingrays in touching pools and Southern stingrays in tanks. Findings revealed that gentle human interaction is tolerated by Atlantic stingrays, while rough contact prompts avoidance. Southern stingrays' behavior mainly changes during feeding, unaffected by human presence.

#40 Kerstin Lewey - University of Colorado Denver, CO***"Metabolomics Analysis of Astrocyte Activation in Neurological Long-COVID and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury"***

I will introduce long neurological COVID, traumatic brain injury, and neuroinflammation. I will explain how metabolomics and exosomes were used. Key figures, such as metabolite heat maps and metabolic pathways, will be included to illustrate the findings and support the conclusion that neuroinflammation causes metabolic changes in brain cells.

#41 Ephraim Mortenson - University of Montana, MT***"Using Analytical Ultracentrifugation to Characterize Protein Binding"***

Ric-8A regulates G α , an integral component in the G-protein coupled receptor signaling pathway. Using analytical ultracentrifugation and UV spectroscopy, this study aims to determine their binding affinity, providing essential information for future research on the binding site and mechanism within the cell.

#42 Ester Peiro - La Sierra University, CA***"Enzyme Characterization of β -Glucosidase in Point Mutations Q139E, E388Y, and N239V"***

A point mutation, altering a single nucleotide in DNA, can change a protein's amino acid sequence, affecting stability and function. Mutations like Q139E, E388Y, and N293V in β -glucosidase provide data for Design2Data (D2D), a UC Davis initiative that involves students in protein design research, improving predictive algorithms.

#43 Jannat Musawi - University of Washington Tacoma, WA***"Generational Trauma and Wellness in the Czech Republic"***

This presentation explores the impact of communism on the Czech Republic and its food habits. It discusses the generational trauma experienced by Czech citizens and how it influences their culinary traditions. The insights are shared through firsthand experiences of a student who studied abroad in the country.

#44 Keerthi Sreeram - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA***"Telescope Scheduling Optimization Using Proximal Policy Optimization Algorithm"***

Astronomical scheduling requires adaptive solutions to complex constraints. Greedy algorithms often fail to balance long-term goals and short-term performance, leading to inefficiencies. This research leverages Proximal Policy Optimization (PPO) to develop a stable, efficient framework for the Palomar Telescope, optimizing scheduling precision while addressing current and future challenges effectively.

#45 Caroline Blackwell - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO***"The National Composting Plan"***

An average U.S. citizen disposes of more than 4 pounds of waste per day and this number is exponentially rising. Implementing a national composting plan that fits the needs of individual communities will allow for substantial waste diversion, more consistency within composting, and contribute greatly to reducing the waste problem.

#46 Katie Kirby - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO***"Abort the Court"***

Exploring the Supreme Court's impact on civil liberties and women's rights, the discussion advocates for institutional reforms, including judicial term limits, court expansion, and a restructured appointment process. These reforms are designed to restore fairness and protect individual freedoms from political influence.

#47 Spencer Seanor - Red Rocks Community College, CO***"Measuring Radioactivity in Colorado"***

This project sought to test two different Geiger counters to determine two things; how both counters might differ, and how radioactive certain locations and minerals are. Unsurprisingly, public spaces are not radioactive, but certain minerals or industrial locations can be very radioactive in comparison.

#48 Mackenzie Campbell - University of Colorado Boulder, CO***"Using Otolith Aging Techniques to Compare Acanthurus tractus Age and Length with Infection Load of Scaphanocephalus spp"***

Coral reefs are vital ecosystems facing increasing threats, yet marine host-parasite interactions remain understudied. This study examines the relationship between age, size, and parasite load in ocean surgeonfish. While no significant correlation was found, this validates otolith aging techniques and highlights the need for further research on reef host-parasite interactions.

#49 Hasti Abbasi Kenarsari - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA***"Actor-Critic Based Solutions for Scheduling Astronomical Observation"***

Astro-TSP is a variant of the Traveling Salesman Problem in combinatorial optimization, dedicated to efficiently scheduling the observation of celestial bodies. An Actor-Critic Reinforcement Learning approach is an optimal solution for observations at NASA JPL, leveraging the generalization of agent strategies, long-term reward maximization, and analysis of initial state sequences.

#50 Anai Hernandez - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA***"Steve Reich vs. African Drumming"***

In 1970, Steve Reich, a well known American composer, traveled to study African drumming at the University of Ghana. Reich has composed a number of unique pieces from the 1960s until now, but did his trip to Ghana just influence his works, or much more?

#51 Noelle Ortega - Paradise Valley Community College, CA***"The Effects of Psychological Stress and the Immune System"***

My presentation ties in my BA in psychology with my current studies as a pre-PA. My presentation goes through an introduction of both topics extensively giving details about each, some past/future research of how these topics correlate to one another, preventions, conclusions and even a few fun facts.

#52 Elliot Summers - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA***"Measuring the Relationship between LGBT+ Identity and Gender Expectations Using an Implicit Association Task"***

Using an Implicit Association Task (IAT), we will compare implicit attitudes about gender expectations in LGBT+ and cisgender-heterosexual adults. We predict cisgender-heterosexual participants will demonstrate a more pronounced implicit bias towards gender expectations than LGBT+ participants as seen through IAT reaction times.

#53 Addison Page - University Colorado Boulder, CO***"Shifting Diagnostic Paradigms: A Critical Analysis of Gender Dysphoria in the DSM-V-TR"***

This thesis examines the history of transgender identities, tracing its roots from early recognition to pathologization in the DSM. Through interviews with trans individuals, this thesis explores how medical classification as mental illness amplifies social stigmatization, reflecting parallels with the treatment of homosexuality in the DSM's past.

#54 Tessa Small & Emma Shaffer - University of Colorado Boulder, CO***"The Effects of Professor's Feedback on Students' Academic Self-Perception"***

Shaffer (2024) and Small (2025) examine how aptitude test feedback in a hypothetical college STEM course influences students' academic self-perception. Shaffer found that modifying or removing feedback benefited students, particularly women. Building on this, Small introduced more inclusive, growth-oriented feedback and found no significant effect of condition on student outcomes.

#55 Ari Rabinovich - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO***"Building Students' Social Justice-Based Critical Thinking: An Action Research Plan"***

This research works to establish a connection between literacy skills and a propensity for progressive thinking. I further explore the transformative potential of integrating critical pedagogy with literacy and civic engagement education in classrooms to address social inequities brought on by anti-progressive and anti-intellectual values in America today.

#56 Rena Cohen - University of California - Davis, CA***"When do Republican Legislators Support Climate Policy?"***

This presentation includes a table of Republican legislators and their voting pattern on the BIL, IJJA, and other bills with bipartisan support. I will have points discussing the policy content, legislative packaging, and media framing of each bill and how it impacted voting. This is still a work in progress as my research is not completed.

#57 Theo Kyser - University of California - Davis, CA***"Effect of Maternal Experience on Predator-Threatened Behavior in Amazon Mollies"***

This project analyzes the effect of maternal experience on the behavior of the clonal fish Amazon mollies. Individuals whose mothers were or were not exposed to a predator were introduced to an alarm cue to observe their behavioral response.

#58 Isabella Goveia - California State Polytechnic University - Pomona, CA***"Evaluation of Structure-property-catalytic Activity Relationship in Colloidal Photocatalysts for the Sustainable Synthesis of Pharmaceutical Drugs"***

This project develops sustainable silica nanoparticle-bound colloidal photocatalysts for efficient drug synthesis. The use of UV-VIS and fluorescence spectroscopies evaluates the effect of structure and properties on photocatalytic activity of these photocatalysts. Overall, this aims to aid in the development of sustainable and efficient organic synthesis of pharmaceutical drugs.

#59 Mingxin Samuel - University of California- Davis, CA***"Phenology Matching between Common Sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) and *Melissodes* Bees in Commercial Agricultural Fields"***

This study investigates whether sunflower-specialist *Melissodes* bees can synchronize their active period with commercial *Helianthus annuus* (common sunflower), which have a much shorter blooming period compared to wild sunflowers.

#60 Drew Youngquist - University of Utah, UT***"Transforming Emergency Medical Services Documentation: An Updated Approach to Artificial Intelligence-Assisted Quality Assurance"***

This research investigates the potential of utilizing AI to assist EMS quality assurance. We trained ChatGPT to assess patient care reports for quality metrics and then tested it, evaluating the inter-rater reliability, efficiency, and accuracy of automated reviews compared to human reviews. Given rapid AI advancements, this presentation discusses our findings from a new perspective, proposing updated methodologies for AI integration into EMS QA.

#61 Samantha Killmer - University of Wyoming, WY***"Quantification of Chipmunk Torpor Utilizing Hidden Markov Modeling"***

Chipmunk torpor, or hibernation, is an efficient energy-saving strategy characterized by a low body temperature that can affect many physiological processes. To better understand the effects of torpor, hidden Markov modeling can be an extremely effective tool. This model utilizes Bayesian statistics to predict behavioral states from multiple variable inputs.

#62 Kalise McCurry - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO***"The Effects of Idealistic Romance in Rom-Coms on People's Romantic Beliefs"***

This poster discusses the different ways romance is presented in rom-coms, and how these romanticized and idealistic portrayals affect our own romantic beliefs. A future qualitative study will be conducted to gain insight on how MSU Denver students view these portrayals of romance in rom-coms, and how it has affected them throughout their romantic experiences.

#63 Monica Ball - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO***"The Dead Internet Theory, Black Box Algorithms, and Our Future"***

The Dead Internet Theory has been reinvigorated by the popularity of Artificial Intelligence. This theory stems from disappointment in the state of the Internet today, citing the oversaturation of generated content, bot activity, and black box algorithms that prioritize generated content as the reasons. What's the influence of these factors?

#64 Tatiany Battista - Salt Lake Community College, UT***"Are you a Burden to the Government? What is 'Public Charge'? - Trump Edition"***

This intersectional case study examines how the articles of 'Public Charge' were changed during the Trump administration and its subsequent impact on immigration policies such as the "Muslim & refugee ban". The case study will result in more people being informed in ways administrations are able to modify immigration policies by executing changes to 'Public Charge.'

#65 Jacob Short - United States Air Force Academy, CO***"Past, Present, and Future: Politicization of the U.S. Military"***

This project analyzes the politicization of the U.S. military from 1957 to 2024, exploring causes, patterns, and risks. It offers actionable recommendations to restore impartiality, safeguard public trust, and ensure the military's apolitical role in democracy, by bridging historical and contemporary perspectives on civil-military relations.

#66 Izzy McGee, Austin Rodriguez, & Jasmine Chavez - Chandler Gilbert Community College, AZ***"Short Term Effects of Natural Antibiotics on Nitrifying Bacteria"***

Farmed fish in the U.S. are plagued with a variety of bacteria and microbes that decrease the viability and profitability of the current farming apparatus and due to these issues the development of organic freshwater fish farming has been hindered completely. We looked at the effects food with antibacterial properties have on nitrifying bacteria.

#67 Saige Chapin - Red Rocks Community College, CO***"Human Trafficking in the Denver, CO Area"***

This project explores the problem of human trafficking in Denver, CO. It examines how Denver's unique geography and market contribute to the prevalence of human trafficking. It covers the various misconceptions and stereotypes regarding the dynamics of trafficking and its victims.

#68 Rae I. Wilson - University of New Mexico, NM***"Power and Coping: Public Defense and the Struggle for Control in the Criminal Legal System"***

Public defense occupies a unique space within the criminal legal system that is under researched and client centered. But what can we do to better support clients if we do not understand the barriers public defenders face? My ethnographic research outlines these challenges and how defenders cope within the system.

#69 Dre Hoover - Mesa Community College, AZ

"Body Composition Assessments in Premenopausal, Postmenopausal, and Menopausal Women: Which is the Most Valid?"

My presentation will show validity in certain body composition assessments compared to others and the effects they have on premenopausal, menopausal, and menopausal women.

#70 Aditi Shankar - University of California - Davis, CA

"Assessing Artificial Intelligence's Influence on Stock Valuation"

Artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly evolved, reshaping market dynamics across industries. Using NVIDIA as a proxy, the AI Factor analyzes how exposure to AI advancements influences stock valuations, industry returns, and risk. By grouping stocks based on AI exposure, it offers insights into the connection between technological innovation and broader market trends.

#71 Gugulethu Ndlovu - Cañada College, CA

"Is there an Association Between the Religion you Currently Follow and the Number of Times you Have Been Married?"

In this research we are going to investigate the association between the religion people currently follow and the number of times they have been married, as if their race has any influencing factors in such decision making and if people follow their intuition. We will go about using data which was collected from the add health codebook and conduct further investigation by forms of a hypothesis test which will provide us with clarity on whether there is an association between the two variables.

#72 Victoria Mattsson - University of California - Davis, CA

"Post-fire Seed Predation in a Mixed Conifer Forest"

A field-based experiment reveals the understudied significance of seed-predating mammals in California's novel mixed conifer forest fire regime. Results from this study indicate that seed predation may contribute to recent observations of low overall seedling recruitment and disproportionate dominance of a historically fire-sensitive conifer species.

SESSION IV – 9:30-10:20 **JSSB 2ND FLOOR**

STORYTELLING THROUGH THE MATERIAL WORLD

JSSB ROOM #200

Sequoia Stark - Metropolitan State University Denver, CO

"Past, Precedent, and Future: A Critical Examination of Colonialism's Role in Museum History & Proposal of Ethical Standards of Decolonization"

The process of decolonization begins with the self reflection by museums of their role in colonialism, and acknowledgement of the communities affected by colonization; from that acknowledgment derives the need for museums to collaborate with the affected communities resulting in the adherence to the following standards: Reparation, Communication, Representation, Permission, Decentralization, and Inclusion.

(CONT.) STORYTELLING THROUGH THE MATERIAL WORLD

JSSB ROOM #200

Makayla Kocher - University of Wyoming, WY

"Look, Look Again, and Look Beyond: How Story and Material Rhetoric Inform Visitor Experience in Museums"

This research is part of a master's thesis project that blends scholarly and public-facing research and writing. In it, I offer case studies of museums and a toolkit of scholarly practices (field rhetoric), theoretical understanding (material rhetoric) in conversation with Rob Walker's *The Art of Noticing*.

Sophia Parmenter - Front Range Community College (Larimer Campus), CO

"Arrowheads for Ammunition: Northeast American Warfare Pre- and Post-Colonization"

This study examines changes to Northeast Native American warfare from The Columbian Exchange and their broader impacts on culture, economy, and the environment, primarily highlighting the introduction of firearms and ammunition. Findings indicate pronounced concomitant changes to combat, technology, culture, and trade with repercussions on environment and intertribal relations.

HEALTH DISCOVERIES IN DIABETES AND ALZHEIMER'S

JSSB ROOM #202

Tiana LaFollette - Washington State University, WA

"Neurotrophic Actions of Insulin in the Hippocampus"

Type II Diabetes is linked to obesity and insulin resistance. This study shows insulin promotes dendritic spine growth in the hippocampus using in-vitro and in-vivo models. It also demonstrates how dominant-negative mutants of BDNF and its receptor TrkB block insulin's effect on dendritic spine growth.

Danya Al Nazal - University of Colorado Boulder, CO

"The Effect of Sleep Disruption on Subclinical Amyloid Expression in Alzheimer's Disease"

This study examines the effect of sleep disruption in subclinical Alzheimer's disease (AD) mice. Neuroinflammation is hypothesized to be mediator between sleep disruption and AD. Western blotting was used to assess the expression of various proteins.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE TYPICAL SCHOOLDAY

JSSB ROOM #203

Isaiah R. Wilson - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"Extracurriculars and Student Success: A Literature Review and a Self Study"

The presentation explains the current literature on extracurriculars and their relationship to GPA. It then discusses why GPA alone misses the mark, showcasing the broader benefits of extracurricular involvement. Next, it presents an original autoethnography. Lastly, it concludes with a compelling call to action advocating for participation in extracurricular activities.

Shiro Huffman - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Afterschool Academic Programs"

Extended education opens new opportunities for students who may need or want help with their education. This project explains how important learning is to kids and adults alike. PEAK not only helps students get a chance to have one-on-one with educators, they also learn independence, academic discipline, and build community.

(CONT.) LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE TYPICAL SCHOOLDAY

JSSB ROOM #203

Mandie Reish - University of Wyoming, WY

"Creating Touch Point Learning Environments: Making Space to Learn Outside the Classroom"

Learning happens constantly in many different places. In this session, I will discuss what I do to curate enjoyable and engaging learning environments for students and ask what other colleges are doing to make these spaces for their students.

POWER AND RESISTANCE THROUGH ART

JSSB ROOM #204

Atlas - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"ADELANTARTE: Bridging Gaps for Minority Artists: A Model for Community Equity"

AdelantARTE is a non-profit business model based in community collaboration and focused on language justice and equity for underrepresented artists within Northern Colorado. This venture aims to address current barriers to minority success by empowering minority voices, fostering inclusion and supporting creative growth through grassroots initiatives.

TuongVan D. Do - Cañada College, CA

"Decolonization in Asian Art: Three Masters of Vietnamese Modernism"

Existing within a third space, colonized populations are liminal – "in between" – thus never fully part of the colonizer's culture nor completely belonging to their own. Three Vietnamese Masters interrogated this complex space, (re)imagined identity, and crafted a singularly subjective voice that (re)directs the gaze towards Native reclamation, (re)presentation, and agency.

Ava Snyder - Glendale Community College, CA

"Anthems of Resilience"

This honors project aims to examine the application of music as a robust sociological tool for change, using each piece to create a connective framework which exhibits the spirit of resilience and creativity demonstrated historically by artists of color.

SUPPORTING IDENTITY FOR SUCCESS IN HIGHER ED

JSSB ROOM #205

Camila Saad - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Why International Students are Important for Universities and Colleges."

This research delves into the essential contributions of international students to higher education, emphasizing their significant economic impact through tuition payments and local spending, as well as their role in cultural enrichment and promoting diversity. It further explores how their presence enhances global perspectives, strengthens campus inclusivity, fosters cross-cultural exchange, and supports the ongoing development, growth, and global reputation of universities and colleges.

(CONT.) SUPPORTING IDENTITY FOR SUCCESS IN HIGHER ED

JSSB ROOM #205

Alyna Nguyen - Central Washington University, WA

"Ethnicity, Race, and Academic Success: A Self-Efficacy Study"

This study features a correlational design where participants are asked to complete a survey, followed by demographic questions. The study is still ongoing. I predict that there will be a significant relationship between ethnicity, race, and self-efficacy.

Kiarah Bojorquez - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"An Exploration of Factors that May Influence the College Adaptation in Latinx Students"

With an increased number of Latin American students enrolling in higher education, it is important to understand the potential challenges that may influence college adaptation among this population. By exploring both general and cultural specific factors we hope to better understand the ways we can best support our Latinx students.

VIRTUAL REALITIES AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

JSSB ROOM #206

Garrick Zaleski - Southern Utah University, UT

"Associated Outcomes with VR Soft Skills Training"

This project explores how virtual reality (VR) can revolutionize behavioral health by providing an innovative way to improve soft skills. This project addresses a critical soft skills gap in the behavioral health industry using VR which remains largely unstudied and underutilized in the field.

Katie Englert - Southern Utah University, UT

"Implementing Virtual Reality (VR) Content into an Honors Humanities Course"

This presentation provides an overview of virtual reality (VR) software, how it has been implemented into the HONR 2010 Interdisciplinary Topics course, provides preliminary student data and perspectives, and includes future plans on how VR, used as an educational tool, can continue to benefit students in honors programs.

CREATING SPACE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR INCLUSIVITY

JSSB ROOM #207

Halle Romine - Southern Utah University, UT

"Let's Talk About Sex: Changing Sexual Health Education and Support in Southern Utah"

This presentation examines the influence of abstinence-based sex education in Southern Utah on early adulthood. It underscores the necessity of comprehensive sexual health education and introduces the "BedSide Box," an initiative providing students with educational resources and health supplies to promote informed decision-making and facilitate open discourse on sexual health.

(CONT.) CREATING SPACE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR INCLUSIVITY

JSSB ROOM #207

Jai Sutaria - California State Polytechnic University Pomona, CA

"Retention of Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming (TGNC) Students in STEM"

Past research indicates that transgender and gender non-conforming students face marginalization, but there is limited investigation into their experiences in STEM majors, especially regarding intersectionality. This research studies why TGNC students may leave STEM fields and identifies factors to improve retention. A mixed-methods approach is used to develop solution-driven recommendations.

Jonah Lindsey - University of Montana Western, MT

"STEM K-12 Outreach: A Gateway to Community Involvement"

Students resonate with genuine, applicable experiences and challenges, yet modern schools and mainstream education models may struggle to meet this need. Inspired by previous outreach initiatives, a trial STEM outreach program for K-12 students aims to explore student potential by guiding interdisciplinary college-level discussions to inspire K-12 community involvement.

THE POWER OF THE PARIAH: FAITH, DOGMA, AND GENDER

JSSB ROOM #211

Hannah Wells - Chapman University, CA

"Sapphic Women Transplanted in The Church"

A church is a place for Christian worship, whereas The Church represents an institution and its people. Sapphic women navigate their juxtaposed place in The Church through reconstructing their spiritual beliefs and communities in acts of radical love, ultimately transplanting them from their foundational theology in their church of origin.

Isabella Praslin - California State University - Fullerton, CA

"Faith and Martyrdom: The Stories of Christian Women in Late Antiquity"

My research delves into the history and hagiography of female Christian martyrs from the 6th-century Najran massacre. I examine their hagiographies alongside male accounts, as well as Greek late antiquity women martyr texts, to identify differences in language between Eastern and Western hagiographies of women.

NARRATING IDENTITY: NAVIGATING SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES, AND MEDIA

JSSB ROOM #215

Faith Mbakadi - University of California Davis, CA

"Beyond the Box: Embracing the Complexity of Black Identity at UC Davis"

This presentation explores the complexities of Blackness in higher education, highlighting how institutions flatten diverse identities. It examines the psychological toll of racial categorization, student resistance to institutional narratives, and African and African American solidarity dynamics, offering pathways for fostering inclusivity and celebrating cultural diversity in academic spaces.

(CONT.) NARRATING IDENTITY: NAVIGATING SYSTEMS, STRUCTURES, AND MEDIA JSSB ROOM #215

Tey Hairston-Chase - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"I'm the 'Alpha;' Negotiating Black Manhood Under the Aegis of Hosting Podcasts: A Systematic Media Analysis"

I will present on Alpha Male podcasts hosted by Black men and provide a thematic analysis. Understanding identity construction as a reflection and a creation of societal standards, expectations and cultural norms is essential to breaking down systems of oppression that limit and restrict the human experience.

Calla Shosh - University of Wyoming, WY

"Let Them Tell their Stories: Giving Marginalized Groups a Voice in Journalism"

This presentation examines the difficulties journalists and academics face when writing or creating media about historically marginalized groups they aren't a part of. This presentation will outline why this problem matters, and present best practices, while highlighting the importance of letting people tell their own stories.

SESSION V – 10:30-11:20 JSSB 2ND FLOOR

THE SYSTEMATIC FAILURE OF CARING INSTITUTIONS JSSB ROOM #200

Carter Norris - University of Northern Colorado, CO

"Popular Perceptions of Willowbrook Institutional School versus the Lived Experience"

The practice of institutionalization in the late twentieth century housed and educated individuals who were deemed too disabled to function normally in society. My current study seeks to unravel the lived experiences of Willowbrook Institutional residents through the testimonies of employees, legal transcripts, newspapers, and other media publications.

Danya Al Nazal - University of Colorado Boulder, CO

"Sheltered but Still at Risk: Addressing Tuberculosis Prevention, Mitigation, and Treatment in a Homeless Shelter"

Tuberculosis (TB) is on the rise, and it disproportionately affects the unhoused community. Through interviews with shelter staff, barriers were identified, and optimized pathways to improve disease efforts were proposed with the goal of addressing TB among sheltered unhoused individuals.

Eden Almgren - Regis University, CO

"More than a Footnote: An Exploration of Health Care Marginalization and Self-Advocacy for Women with Intellectual Disabilities"

Teaching women with intellectual disabilities how to be self-advocates in health care settings is an important step in bringing disabled voices into the center of conversations surrounding women's healthcare issues. Improvements for this population would have far reaching effects for gender justice in the health care field.

BUILDING (FOR) THE TEAM: IMPLEMENTING CHANGES THAT WORK

JSSB ROOM #202

Nyla Provost - La Sierra University

"The Development of Synthetic Rubber and its Significance in World War II"

This presentation will discuss the history behind the development of the synthetic rubber industry in the United States and the politics surrounding it. The United States' transition from natural rubber to synthetic rubber highlights not only the nation's ability to overcome challenges but also the significant roles of scientific discoveries, wartime policies, and global trade.

Mark Tang - United States Air Force Academy, CO

"Bridging the Recruitment Gap: Innovative Strategies for Air Force Recruitment and Retention"

This presentation explores innovative, media-first strategies to address Air Force recruitment challenges through reallocated budgets, 70-20-10-marketing, and force reorganization. Drawing on the author's Stamps Scholarship research and insights from NATO experts, this project demonstrates how the Air Force and civilian employers can innovate their organizations to align with GenZ interests.

Hunter Bentley - Southern Utah University, UT

"Third Floor Crew"

The Southern Utah University (SUU) library was built in 1996 to accommodate 4,000 on-campus students. Current numbers project 12,000 on-camps students. Library layout and purposes have changed over time. This capstone project incorporates architectural best practices to address these changes by expanding and remodeling the library to create a more modern space.

DIVERSITY IN APPROACHES TO HEALTH

JSSB ROOM #204

Luke Cho - University of Nevada - Las Vegas, NV

"Understanding Healthcare Utilization in Asian American Subgroups through Disaggregated Analysis"

This presentation explores the significant healthcare disparities within Asian American subgroups often obscured by aggregated data. By analyzing disaggregated data from the 2015 Asian American Quality of Life survey, we examine variations in healthcare utilization patterns, including preventive care, alternative medicine, and preferences for ethnic concordance. Findings highlight the influence of ethnicity, income, and cultural factors on healthcare behaviors, emphasizing the importance of nuanced approaches to addressing health equity in this diverse population.

Mia Escobar - University of Washington Tacoma, WA

"HIV in the Asia Pacific Region: A Cross-Sectional Analysis with GDP for 2023"

This presentation will cover the relationship between HIV transmission and GDP per capita in the Asia Pacific region. There will also be a focus on key populations and how different types of human rights-based policy could help in countries with a lower GDP.

Rosanne Huang - California State University - Los Angeles, CA

"Frequency of Food Pantry Visits and Dietary Quality of Food Pantry Clients in Los Angeles County and Antelope Valley"

Food pantries are a resource designed to fight food insecurity; however, the diet quality of food pantry clients remains low. This project aims to address whether there is a relationship between the frequency of food pantry visits and the diet quality of clients in Los Angeles County and Antelope Valley.

THE EVOLUTION AND IMPACT OF GLOBAL VIOLENCE

JSSB ROOM #205

Mason Rothenberger - University of Denver, CO

"Ecuadorian Gang Violence Development as a Reaction to Public Policy"

A contextualization of Ecuadorian public policy in relation to gangs over the past ~20 years followed by an explanation of its relation to gang violence development through both interviews and a comparative case study

Nathan Tam - Cañada College, CA

"Impact of COVID-19 and Asian Hate Incidents on the Mental Health of Older Asian Adults in High-Crime Areas"

This research looks at how the COVID-19 pandemic and Asian hate incidents impacted the mental health of older Chinese adults living in San Francisco's Tenderloin district, a high-crime area. It shows significant declines in their mental well-being, difficulties in getting mental health services, and the need for targeted support and better policies to help them.

(WORKSHOP) NAVIGATING THE COSMOS OF APPLICATION ESSAYS: HOW TO FIND LIGHT IN A BLACKHOLE

JSSB ROOM #203

Breezy Taggart, Peter Parolin, & Ella Daniel Gray - University of Wyoming, WY

"Navigating the Cosmos of Application Essays: How to Find Light in a Blackhole"

This hands-on workshop is designed to develop a fine-tuned foundation on which to write a compelling personal statement. Tailored for students applying for scholarships or graduate programs, as well as mentors guiding students through the process, this session will provide essential strategies for crafting stellar application essays.

THE SMALL BUT MIGHTY MICROBE

JSSB ROOM #207

Elizabeth Riffel - University of Washington - Tacoma, WA

"The Close Relation of the Maternal and Offspring Microbiomes"

This study challenges the sterile womb theory, proving that the maternal microbiome influences the offspring microbiome and begins developing during gestation. It explores the effects of preterm birth, feeding practices, and mode of delivery on microbial colonization, emphasizing the early onset of microbiome development in infants.

Heather Menger-Elite - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Bio-informatic Profiling of Bacteriocin Regulation and Response in Combating Antimicrobial Resistance"

Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) increases mortality in combating infectious disease. The complex, multi-gene strategies conferring AMR require deployment of novel therapeutics like Bacteriocins as adjuncts to current antibiotic-based treatments. Bioinformatic profiling of Bacteriocin Producer and Target gene pathways identify areas for in vitro analyses in therapeutically-aligning Bacteriocin regulation and function.

DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES TO HEALTHCARE

JSSB ROOM #206

Monica Ward - University of California - Davis, CA

"Strategic Interventions to Improve Perinatal Health and Resource Allocation Equity in Rural Communities"

Research shows that maternal mortality is 1.5 times higher in rural areas compared to urban areas. Additionally, infant mortality rates in rural areas are significantly higher, often due to preventable complications such as preterm birth, low birth weight, and maternal hypertension. This proposal aims to identify and implement strategic interventions to improve perinatal health outcomes in rural communities, with a focus on overcoming the barriers that lead to these inequities.

Varsha Thalladi - University of California - Davis, CA

"Beyond Self-Reporting: A Multi-Source Analysis of Glaucoma Medication Adherence"

This presentation explores the discrepancies in actual glaucoma medication adherence by analyzing pharmacy claims data. While a large number of patients reported compliance, a potentially small number of patients maintained consistent refills. Key barriers included complex dosing, costs, side effects, and limited disease awareness, indicating the need for comprehensive monitoring and intervention strategies.

Alice Gottlieb - Cañada College, CA

"Comparison of Surgical Methods for Genital Male-to-Female Gender Confirmation Surgery"

Two main techniques, penile inversion and peritoneal vaginoplasty are used in male-to-female vaginoplasty. As rated by those receiving it, vaginoplasty is a widely successful surgery. Understanding of surgical anatomy, patient needs, better data-gathering techniques, and differences in post-operative sensation and lubrication can help further improve this surgery.

FINDING YOUR VOICE AND MAKING IT HEARD

JSSB ROOM #211

Mary May Morgan - University of California Davis, CA

"From Vietnam to Palestine: Transcending Solidarity Building within Social Movements"

This presentation shares research findings from the UC Davis student newspaper, Third World News in order to discuss parallels between mid-twentieth struggles in college student movements in solidarity with wars in Vietnam and Israel/Palestine. The presentation stresses the importance of solidarity movement building between different movements for creating change.

Milo Halpern - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Thoughtful Debate: Making Disagreements Less Divisive and Giving Everyone a Seat at the Table"

How do you maximize the diversity of voices in interpersonal, intramural, and political debate while preventing the platforming of misinformation and hate speech? By building an environment of humanity, respect, and kindness, and holding yourself and others to standards of compromise, togetherness, and prosocial progress.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND AIR POLLUTION

JSSB ROOM #215

David Alfonso Esquerra - University of Portland, OR

"PM 2.5 Measurements from Combustion of Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fuels during a Simulated Wildfire"

Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) fires are concerning due to dangerous smoke exposure to humans. Using lab-simulated wildfire conditions (wind tunnel, etc.), our study showed lower wind speed, larger fuel size, and lower input heat increase the harmful particulate matter in smoke.

Kimberly Giannone - University of Montana Western, MT

"Integrating Agricultural Perspectives: Enhancing Water and Drought Management through Producer Insights in Southwest Montana"

Irrigators are the largest consumers of water and are often seen as contentious stakeholders in collective water management efforts. While substantial research exists on water availability and irrigation practices, there has been limited exploration into the factors influencing irrigators' decisions about water usage. A deeper understanding of these variables could foster more collaborative drought and water management strategies, create beneficial partnerships among competing stakeholders, and promote long-term sustainable water use.

SESSION VI – 11:30-12:20

JSSB 2ND FLOOR

MYTH, HISTORY, AND THE POLITICS OF DYSTOPIA

JSSB ROOM #200

Meg Skeeahan - University of Washington - Tacoma, WA

"Fascism and Nationalism: A Historical and Contemporary Examination"

By identifying and comparing the propaganda and the mechanisms used to oppress marginalized populations in Nazi Germany, explore the parallels between the rise of fascism and nationalism in the modern United States and the hope to take action through policy and informing policies and direct social activism.

Joseph Bowman - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Cyberpunk and Dystopian Parallels in American Life"

MSU Theater major and Honors Program candidate Joseph Bowman presents a play in development. A story of America burdened by an authoritarian President and his wealthy corporate enablers. Can The American Dream survive or are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness now just commodities sold to us at a higher cost than we realize?

Tirien Bodonyi-Kovacs - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"How Socialism Shaped Hungary"

This presentation explores how communism and socialism affected the nation of Hungary during its 20th century Soviet occupation. This will be investigated through the lens of both history and literature: by analyzing historical research and by exploring autobiographies and other literature from the time period.

IMAGINARY WORLDS, REAL ISSUES: EXPLORING VIOLENCE AND GREED IN VIDEO GAMES

JSSB ROOM #202

Nicolas Palaia - Central Washington University, WA

"The Theory of Peaceful Violence in Video Games"

I will explore legendary Video Game Director Hideo Kojima's counter-cultural approach to video games by providing players with a more pacifist approach in comparison to other video games where the act of killing is a key feature to that game's experience.

Kevin Fortin - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"The Satire and Science of Subnautica"

The presentation begins with an introduction to *Subnautica*, where it then explores the satire and political implications found within the game. Then the science that is found within *Subnautica* is explored, linking it back to the satire.

IMMIGRANTS NAVIGATING CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATION

JSSB ROOM #203

Tawananyasha Dzenga - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Immigration Policy in the United States – Displacement, Refugees, Border Crises, Healthcare, Economic Impact, and Education"

Immigration remains a central issue in the United States, both as a driver of economic growth and a source of social and political tension. This paper will critically explore these challenges, aiming to provide a comprehensive analysis of how immigration impacts U.S. society. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to more informed policy solutions that address both the challenges and opportunities presented by immigration.

Tonjala Galery - The University of Northern Colorado, CO

"Analyzing Readiness"

This presentation explores the attitudes of current and postgraduate Speech-Language Pathology students and faculty at the University of Northern Colorado toward nonmainstream English dialects. The study aims to assess readiness, self-efficacy, and potential biases in working with diverse language varieties in clinical settings through surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Kevin Ruiz - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Processing Times, Political Stability, and the Dynamics of Undocumented Immigration: Evidence from U.S. Border Encounters"

This presentation explores the link between undocumented immigration and various push/pull factors to identify key migration drivers. It also examines the factors influencing documented migration, highlighting the differences between the two.

IT WILL TIK BUT WILL IT TOK? SOCIAL MEDIA, PARENTING, AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

JSSB ROOM #204

Sairee Carr - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"What Happened to the Kids?: An Investigation into the "Sephora Kid" TikTok Phenomenon"

Explore the "Sephora Kid" TikTok phenomenon as a lens into Generation Alpha's behavioral shifts. This presentation examines permissive parenting, social media influence, and consumer culture, highlighting their role in shaping entitlement and early maturity among tweens, with insights into mitigating these trends for healthier future generations.

Ysabel Jumarang - California State University - Los Angeles, CA

"Associations Between Parent-Child Engagement and Prevalence of Educational Language in Educational YouTube Videos"

In this study, we examined parents' self-report engagement with their children while watching educational videos and the frequency of educational language used throughout the video. However, no correlation was found. Further analysis, however, supports that older children experienced less engagement from parents during media learning compared to younger children.

MARGINALIZATION IN AMERICA: IMPLICIT BIAS AND EXPLICIT OBSTACLES

JSSB ROOM #205

David Ariza - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Implicit-Explicit Dynamics: Hispanic Acculturation Analysis (2023-2024)"

This presentation analyzes data from the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) to compare implicit biases and explicit attitudes toward Hispanic acculturation in 2023 and 2024. By examining shifts in perspectives during an election year, this study uncovers key trends that shape the understanding of acculturation and intergroup dynamics in the U.S.

Diego Maldonado Lopez - Metropolitan State University of Denver, CO

"Undocumented Undergraduate College Students: An Examination of College Persistence and Mental Health"

This presentation will introduce the literature concerning undocumented college students and present preliminary results. The survey questionnaire addresses students' demographic information, college enrollment and experience, barriers, support systems, campus resources, goals, and mental health. Data will continue to be gathered to present final results at the end of the semester.

Ana Belen Gonzalez Sosa - Salt Lake Community College, UT

"Ni de Aquí, ni de Allá"

I will discuss bridging the gap of being a child of a Mexican immigrants in a place that doesn't welcome those different than you. Including language and cultural barriers, this presentation examines the struggle of belonging, the search for community, and the reality of being caught between two worlds.

IT HAPPENED AGAIN: THEMES FROM THE 2024 ELECTION

JSSB ROOM #207

Grace Tesar - Regis University, CO

"MAGA and the Moral Majority: Influence of the New Christian Right on American Politics"

This presentation reviews the history of the New Christian Right's involvement with and influence over American politics, seeking to understand how being an Evangelical American Christian and aligning with right-wing politics have become nearly colloquially synonymous. Popular understanding of this history is crucial towards encouraging productive bipartisan political dialogue.

Jazzel Gardea Pinera - Regis University, CO

"Latines for Trump"

This presentation examines how economics, media messaging, Trump's political persona, and the Latine identity through the "Good immigrant" and "Bad immigrant" lenses influenced U.S. Latines voting for Trump. I argue that Latines voted for Trump because of their alienation from American political systems, Trump's political persona, and economic issues, and familial ties to the United States that uncovers a need to assimilate to American norms and culture.

Angeline Rios - University of Nevada - Reno, NV

"The Social Media Mirage: Why Kamala Harris's Online Success Didn't Translate to Votes in 2024"

This presentation examines how the Harris-Waltz 2024 campaign's focus on social media trends and influencer-driven outreach failed to mobilize young voters. By analyzing campaign videos, podcasts, and influencer content, it reveals how prioritizing online popularity over policy-driven messaging cost the campaign critical support from Gen Z voters.

RECONCEPTUALIZING BUSINESS STRATEGIES USING AI

JSSB ROOM #211

Brian Yorke - Utah Valley University, UT

"Effects of AI and Human Creativity on Large Scale Marketing in a Digital World"

This project seeks to determine the best use of human creativity and advancing technology when it comes to creating marketing materials. This project will seek to make a conclusion by testing AI vs human performance through text-based marketing, image and video-based marketing, and a combination of the two based on earlier findings.

Grace Wingate - Utah Valley University, UT

"The Economic Impact of AI Policy on Utah Communities"

This presentation examines Utah's and the nation's evolving AI regulations, assessing their economic and societal impacts. As lawmakers navigate emerging policies, identifying effective strategies forward is crucial. This ongoing research aims to outline the current regulatory landscape and proposes approaches to regulation that balance innovation and consumer protection when developing AI.

Amanda Isabel Molina Lopez - Cañada College, CA

"Impact of Generative AI Applied in Graphic Design"

Exploring the impact of generative AI in graphic design, this project compares its adoption and challenges in Ecuador and the USA, highlighting the economic, technological, and cultural factors while addressing its influence on creativity, professional practices, and the future of the design industry.

BINGE WATCH THIS: THEORIES OF SOCIAL INTERACTION AND ETHICS IN POPULAR TV AND FILM
JSSB ROOM #206

Isaac Rietema - Flathead Valley Community College, MT

"Mutations and Mind Control: Satire and Science in The Hunger Games"

We often forget that man's unending quest for technological advancement often leads down dangerous roads. Suzanne Collins' satirical piece *The Hunger Games*, through exaggerated examples, comments on real-world dangers of said advancements. This includes the government's ability to control the people through advanced technology, just as the CIA tried to do with Project MK-Ultra.

Toni-Ann Gardner - Mesa Community College, AZ

"The Hidden Challenge of Gender Interactions in Survivor"

How often do you think about gender identity in your day-to-day life? In "The Hidden Challenge of Gender Interactions in Survivor" presenter Toni-Ann Gardner uses the hit CBS show *Survivor* to analyze various gender dynamics and reveal their presence in our daily lives.

HONORS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY AND CLIMATE
JSSB ROOM #215

Ephraim Mortenson, Sarah Hibbard, Catelyn Davick, Emily Feiling, & Kylla Benes - University of Montana, MT


"Building Community through the Honors Experience"

One of the great strengths of honors education is the community that it offers. We will provide an overview of what has worked for us and how we have used programming to build community. We will also engage in discussion to be inspired by how other programs have facilitated belonging.

Emily Feiling, Ryan Fleetwood, Oliver Jepson, & Peter McDonough - University of Montana, MT

"Honors Students Engage 'Wicked Problem' of Climate Justice"

This presentation highlights honors students' engagement in a year-long series of high-impact learning opportunities focused on climate justice. These include an interdisciplinary colloquium, hack-a-thons, a field course, and partnering teams of students with a local non-profit to develop approaches for making the Missoula community more climate just.

12:30 CONFERENCE GRAB-N-GO LUNCH AND WRAP UP 
(JSSB LAWN OR JSSB 2ND FLOOR MEZZANINE -IN
CASE OF RAIN)

12:45-1:30 ROCKY MOUNTAIN HONORS COUNCIL MEETING –
(JSSB 211)

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

**NATIONAL COLLEGIATE HONORS COUNCIL CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 6-9TH, 2025
SAN DIEGO, CA**



**2026 WRHC CONFERENCE
(UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS)**



SPRING 2025 BFA Thesis Exhibition

Metropolitan State University of Denver

Opening Reception

April 4, 6 - 8 pm

Open Hours

Tues - Fri, 11 am - 6 pm

Sat, 12 pm - 5 pm

Ruth Álvarez Luna
Stephanie Blanco
Joshua Carpenter
Mia Conley
Sydney Davis
ryan lee dorman
Kiersten Downing
Yomi Fadeyi
Jocelynne Farfan Zamudio
Noé Gonzales
Giovanni Gurrola
Paul Guzman-Raygoza
Laura Isabel
Katie Knudsen
Delanee McKenna
Taylor Mead
Jessica Morcom
Maya Peterson
Elle Rothschild
Chloe Schippers
Sarah Sophia
Ashley Street
Taylor Trujillo
Barbara Uzcategui Luna
W. Wolfe
Cole Zimmerman



Exhibition Dates

April 4 - May 9

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