

# THE HONORS SCHOOL RESEARCH CONFERENCE



***It is with great pleasure that the  
Honors School presents its  
Fall 2017 Research Conference.***

*Student presenters include research in the following fields:*

*Anthropology (AN)*

*Biology (BY)*

*Business (BU)*

*Chemistry (CE)*

*Communication (CO)*

*Economics (BUBE)*

*Education (ED)*

*English (EN)*

*Finance (BUBF)*

*History (HS)*

*Marketing (BUBK)*

*Psychology (PY)*

**FALL 2017  
HONORS SCHOOL  
RESEARCH CONFERENCE SCHEDULE  
Friday, December 8, 2017**

**SESSION A: 8:45 a.m. — 10:00 a.m.**

**Opening Remarks: Dr. Walter D. Greason  
Dean of the Honors School**

Marissa DeTorre, Biology

Emily Rohlf, English & Secondary Education

Richard Felicetti, Psychology

David Glass, History & Secondary Education

Brenna Sermarini, Business Finance

Randi Jobes, Business Marketing

**SESSION B: 10:30 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.**

Vincent Welch, Business Economics & Business Finance

Hannah Van Note, Anthropology

Susan Schuld, English & Secondary Education

Casey Schellinger, Psychology

Kristi Miceli, Psychology

Bridget Nocera, Communication

Emma Stowell, Chemistry

**Closing Remarks: Dr. Walter D. Greason**

## Welcoming Remarks

**DR. WALTER D. GREASON, *Dean of The Honors School***

### *Presenters (in alphabetical order)*

**MARISSA C. DETORRE (BY) | *Seasonal Diet and Prey Selectivity of the Endangered Atlantic Sturgeon, *Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*, in a Marine Coastal Aggregation Area***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Keith Dunton

Atlantic Sturgeon, *Acipenser oxyrinchus oxyrinchus*, is a federally protected species that undergoes large coastal migrations. Aggregations of Atlantic Sturgeon are known to occur in several coastal locations which included large seasonal aggregations in the spring and fall off the coast of New York, which largely consist of sub-adults from the Hudson River. To understand potential reasons why sturgeon aggregate, seasonal changes in diet as well as prey availability were examined within this known aggregation. Stomach contents of Atlantic Sturgeon were collected through non-lethal gastric lavage in the Spring (n=39) and Fall (n=40) of 2013 and compared against benthic invertebrate samples collected simultaneously (Spring, n=24; Fall, n=24). Overall, sturgeon had 66 species of prey items identified available to them but consumed only 28 species of these items. In both seasons gammarid amphipods, *Ampelisca Verrilli*, proved the most important prey item, with the highest Index of Relative Importance (IRI) values; accounting for the most abundant weight, frequency and abundance of all prey taxa. In addition to gammarids, sturgeon consumed considerable numbers of polychaete; *Glycera* spp. and *Nephtys* spp., as well as crustaceans; *Squilla empusa*. Atlantic sturgeon showed an opportunistic feeding behavior due to slight variations in diet seasonally with macroinvertebrate prey availability as seen in the increase of importance of polychaete species from fall to spring. Selectivity analysis, in comparing the availability of prey items compared to consumed prey items, shows that the sturgeon are not actively selecting amphipod species, especially *Ampelisca Verrilli* although this species constitutes the bulk of their diet. Concurrent studies indicate that this area is important for migrating Atlantic Sturgeon, and the high abundance of prey resources indicates an important feeding habitat which aids in explaining temporal aggregations in this region. The identification of essential foraging areas is an important step in future management of the species.

**RICHARD M. FELICETTI (PY) | *Race and Prejudice: Factors Influencing Adoption Decisions***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Christine Hatchard

The present study examined factors influencing perceptions of children available for adoption. Undergraduate student participants (N = 118) were randomly assigned to one of 4 conditions and asked to read a vignette describing a child available for adoption, with profiles differing only by the race (White, Black, Hispanic, Asian) of the child. Participants then rated the desirability of the child along multiple domains, and completed the Modified Godfrey-Richman ISM scale, which measures overall prejudice and racial prejudice. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) did not find a significant difference between groups on the desirability ratings of the child. However, participants who reported more overall prejudicial attitudes rated the child as possessing significantly less desirable qualities,  $r(113) = -.210$ ,  $p = .025$ , and lower cognitive abilities,  $r(113) = -.232$ ,  $p = .013$ . Additionally, when rating a child of a different race than the participant, higher scores of racial prejudice were correlated with significantly lower desirability ratings of the child,  $r(87) = -.234$ ,  $p = .027$ . This suggests that the race of a child alone might not influence adoption decisions, but those with more prejudicial attitudes may have less positive perceptions of the child.

**DAVID GLASS (HS EDS) | *The Peasant Response to Collectivization and Dekulakization***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Thomas Pearson  
Second Reader: Dr. Veronica Davidov

Research was conducted on the peasant response to collectivization and dekulakization between the years of 1928-1932. During the period, Joseph Stalin launched a massive assault on the countryside in an attempt to squeeze the peasants of their grain in order to fund mass industrialization. Collectivization served as an assault on the peasants and their way of life. It was as much an attack on peasant culture as it was an attempt to squeeze the peasants for grain and resources. The assault on the peasants in the era of collectivization served as a unifying mechanism that brought all classes of peasants together under a common cause. Through fear and hatred of the state, peasants unified within their respective regions to form a resistance movement against the Soviet state. Resistance was headed not only by the kulaks, as the state had claimed, but also by members of all stratum. Through the spread of rumors, fear, and the belief of imminent doom, the peasants were driven to resist. Peasant resistance manifested itself in the following forms: attacks on party officials, sacrifice of livestock, writing of letters, self-dekulakization, vandalizing party equipment, the burning of grain, the withholding of taxes or grain, and other various forms of protest.

**RANDI A. JOBES (BUBK) | *Relations Between Hollywood and China: An Exploration of the Cultural and Social Effects of Global Hollywood Penetrating China's Film Market***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Michaeline Skiba  
Second Reader: Dr. Michael Chattalas

A basic principle behind any international business is to maintain cross-cultural marketing strategies. The United States, or more specifically, Hollywood, does just that when portions of films incorporate Chinese culture, whether it be Chinese celebrity cameos, scenes shot in China, or a plot that includes the Chinese (i.e. the 2014 film, X-Men: Days of Future Past, or the 2015 blockbuster, The Martian, which brought in over \$50 million the first weekend it was shown in China). This bridge between China and Hollywood is incredibly strategic, as China has recently surpassed the United States for the largest film audience in the world. The People's Republic of China puts strict censorship laws in place that allow only a certain number of foreign films to be shown in their theaters each year. If Hollywood producers wish to have a film be shown in China, the film must typically appease the Chinese censors in some way. In addition to all of this, it is important to consider the effects that Hollywood's efforts to portray American culture could have on Chinese moviegoers and the industry as a whole, as China is historically much different than the United States both culturally and politically. Although China and the United States are so different in terms of cultural values, Hollywood blockbusters still find immense success in China. This project delves into the details of the bridge between Chinese theaters and Hollywood by exploring how the Hollywood film exemplifies American Culture, as well as how Hollywood film has catered to Chinese culture in order to gain access to its lucrative market.

**KRISTI N. MICELI (PY)** | *The Effects of Gender-Preference Congruity on Job Desirability*

Chief Advisor: Dr. David Strohmetz

Research on gender disparities in the workforce shows that women prefer predictability and opportunities for social interaction in a job, whereas men seem to value jobs that provide opportunities for personal advancement. This research suggests that men and women focus on different aspects of a job. Could describing a job in a way that highlights desired characteristics address gender disparities in a field such as STEM? To test this, 123 undergraduate students (43 males, 80 females) read a job description designed to highlight either male-preferred values or female-preferred values and rated how desirable they found that opportunity. Results showed that regardless of gender, the participants preferred the description that emphasized male-preferred values. The hypothesized interaction where women who read the job description that emphasized female-preferred values would find it more desirable than men who read it was not supported. These results may be due to the fact that most undergraduate students are not focused on creating a work-life balance because they do not have a career or family of their own yet.

**BRIDGET C. NOCERA (CO)** | *Journalist or Joker: Analyzing the Journalistic Ethics of HBO's "Last Week Tonight" with John Oliver*

Chief Advisor: Dr. Eleanor Novek

In a controversial time where outlets are being labeled "fake news," people are more concerned than ever about whom they can trust when it comes to news. But if it looks like journalism, acts like journalism, and affects like journalism, then is it journalism? The lines have begun to blur with the introduction of the Internet and the rise in popularity of some political satire programs. One of the most popular, and one who is most often considered a new type of journalist, is John Oliver from HBO's Last Week Tonight with John Oliver. If viewers and the media want to treat his show like journalism, and if this is the future of the profession, why shouldn't it be held to the same standards as other journalists? In this analysis, two clips from the program are examined in order to find if, and how, Oliver performs basic journalism ethics. This content analysis employs the use of five principles from the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics to determine whether Oliver follows these standards and can be considered a journalist.

**EMILY E. ROHLFS (EN EDS) | *Care Ethics: Developing a Protocol for School Administrators***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Carolyn Groff

Second Reader: Dr. George Gonzalez

Education has been a term attached to the notions of equal opportunity, freedom, and possibility. Yet, juxtaposed with these notions were the limitations assigned to the role of those who became educators. During WWII, women, for one, could enter into the profession of teaching as men went off into theaters of combat. With these opportunities to break into a new career, women took over as the dominant force in education; however, with this new representation within educational institutions, women were also pigeonholed in that they were sought after for their supposed “natural” inclination to serve others. However, education is always changing, thus requiring the need for Care Ethics as a necessary practice among all educators—not just women. Care Ethics is a neglected practice in education, due to its historical associations with feminism, but it reminds educators that in order to be caring for students, to provide each pupil with opportunities to grow and flourish, the labels must be dropped. Care Ethics must be valued for its unique ability to foster success in all who encounter its magic. Aside from an exploration of important feminist movements that shaped women’s roles as teachers, this study will present the benefits of Care Ethics theory by outlining the transformations of teacher-administrator and student-teacher relationships that can occur with its implementation. The final aspect of the study is to offer a protocol for administrators to use for future teacher evaluations, which is based on the core principles of Care Ethics theory.

**CASEY K. SCHELLINGER (PY) | *“Love Shouldn’t Hurt”***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Gary Lewandowski

This project aims to raise awareness of the widespread impact of intimate partner violence and its prevalence in our current society, with an emphasis on breaking the common stereotypes. This was achieved through a three-part collection of dance works that will appear on social media websites, along with a brief paper explaining the project. This project aligns with the findings of the current research on intimate partner violence. It acts as a bridge between scientific research and the layperson, in order to make the information more accessible and comprehensible. While it is uncommon for an average person to read an academic journal in their free time, it is likely that he or she will visit social media multiple times a day. This project takes my own psychological research, as well as the research of others, and creates a tangible work that can circulate the findings to a wider audience.

**SUSAN E. SCHULD (EN EDS) | *Reflections on International and Domestic Practices of Service-Learning***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Alison Maginn  
Second Reader: Dr. John P. Hanly

Within the field of service-learning pedagogy, there is a noticeable gap in research regarding international practices. While many scholars have researched American service-learning abroad, there lacks information regarding specific curricula and methods used by other countries within their own educational systems and their implications for service-learning pedagogical theory and practice in the United States. Throughout my research, I focus on Spanish service-learning practices and search for ways both countries can engage in collaborative and reciprocal learning. Drawing first on textual research, I observe trends in the literature including positive and negative impacts, characteristics of international and domestic service-learning programs, and factors influencing the lack of service-learning in Spanish secondary schools. Furthermore, I use personal reflection as well as empirical research and materials obtained from my own study abroad experience in the region of Andalucía, Spain (where I was enrolled in a Spanish service-learning course) to work toward conclusions regarding the best practices of reciprocal service-learning pedagogy found within both the American and Spanish educational systems.

**BRENNA SERMARINI (BF) | *A Study of Undergraduate Students' Perceptions About Their Student Loans***

Chief Advisor: Dr. Scott Jeffrey

The cost of attending college has steadily increased over the past decades as the financial aid available to students has plateaued. In the United States, student debt is estimated to be approximately \$1 trillion (Arnold, Buchanan, & Robertson, 2012). It is imperative that the effects of student loans on the economy are studied in order to understand how it will impact the macro-economy; a more in-depth look at how student behavior is influenced by student loans provides insight into how student loans impact the overall economy. A study of 200 student participants at a private four-year university measures the relationship between student loans and student behavior through a thirty-six question survey. Of these students, 38.7% (n=48) expected to graduate with no student loans; a majority of students who did have student loans expected to graduate with between \$10,000 and \$99,999 in loans (n=47). One key finding was that students expect certain majors to yield higher earnings than others, a finding that is consistent with other studies (Wiswall & Zafar, 2013). Business majors (n=48) were a key group of students that overestimated their starting salary significantly; they expect to make a whopping \$100,563.83. The mean amount of student loans that participants were expected to graduate with and who were also full-time students at the same institution for their entire college career was \$29,432.20 (n=125), with a standard deviation of \$46,053.80. The average expected starting salary was \$75,199.15 (n=125). Furthermore, when students were asked if they would still choose the same major if earnings for all majors were equal, over 46% (n=58) of respondents claimed that they would choose a different major. There was no significant relationship found between the number of credit hours that students take per semester and the amount of student loans that they expect to graduate with. Overall, there is a clear impact that student loans (or a lack of loans) has on student behavior, especially when selecting majors. If students are selecting their major based on expected earnings, and students with student loans are more heavily influenced to do this, then there will be a shortage of students in perceivably less valuable majors and overall happiness will decline. Educating students on the effects of student loans and approaches to managing them would prove beneficial to students and society.

## **EMMA A. STOWELL (CE)** | *Selection of an Aptamer that Binds Glucose*

Chief Advisor: Dr. Jonathan Ouellet

Second Reader: Dr. Davis Jose

Type 1 diabetes is a metabolic disease which occurs when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin, resulting in high blood sugar levels. It can be a debilitating condition, as the most popular form of treatment involves regular injection of insulin. The medical burden of diabetes is only increasing, and because of these factors, there is an immense need for research and development to mitigate these issues. My project will eventually lead to the development of a new treatment method for diabetes that would be pain free for patients. This will be done by converting an aptamer that selectively and specifically binds glucose into a riboswitch, which will regulate the production of insulin in the presence of glucose. To develop the biosensor, I used systematic evolution of ligands by exponential enrichment (SELEX). However, after sequencing I found that the aptamer was not binding glucose selectively. Thus, I implemented more stringent SELEX conditions. After three generations of stricter SELEX, I have seen a decrease in RNA which binds to molecules other than glucose and an increase in RNA which binds to glucose, indicating that the aptamer is more selective to glucose.

## **HANNAH G. VAN NOTE (AN)** | *The Gender Gap in STEM Career Interests and Pursuits: A Cultural Analysis*

Chief Advisor: Prof. Brooke Nappi

This thesis will examine the gender gaps present in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) degrees and careers from a cultural perspective, with a focus on the gender roles and expectations present in American culture. I will argue that cultural ideas of gender are instilled in males and females from a young age through different social systems, such as the educational system and their own family systems. These instilled ideas of gender present a positive relationship between males and STEM and a negative relationship between females and STEM. The gender gaps are the effect of cultural roles, norms, and stereotypes that are placed upon both men and women that teach them what professional roles they belong in. The goal of this study is to prove that culture, rather than biology, is the root of gender gaps present in STEM fields. The pressure to fit into these gender roles, specifically the pressure on females to be in nurturing roles, results in the lack of female desires or interests to pursue STEM.

## **VINCENT G. WELCH (BUBF BUBE)** | *The EpiPen Epidemic: A Case Study of Pricing in the Pharmaceutical Industry and the Underlying Ethical Dilemma*

Chief Advisor: Dr. Robert H. Scott III

The purpose of this study is to examine the recent accusations against Mylan of price gouging and rent-seeking behavior in regards to one of their most popular life-saving products, the EpiPen, and how it correlates with the rest of the pharmaceutical industry. With the prices of drugs continuing to rise annually at an alarming rate, it calls into question the ulterior motives of corporate executives and whether or not such business decisions are justified. The research presented will provide a historical context in order to compare and contrast the EpiPen model as it relates to other drugs in the market that have come under similar public scrutiny. The study hopes to explain such pricing models through an analysis of economics and policy, legal issues, distribution methods, health care and insurance, as well as other empirical data. This is being done to shed light on the underlying ethical dilemma and to offer possible alternatives and solutions that can potentially shape further regulations and future legislature.

# HONORS SCHOOL



# ENHANCING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY

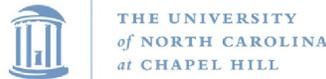
# Recent Graduate Schools Accepting MU Honors Students



COLUMBIA  
UNIVERSITY



THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC



UNIVERSITY OF  
CENTRAL FLORIDA



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA



VILLANOVA  
UNIVERSITY



Georgetown  
University



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON, DC



UNIVERSITY  
AT ALBANY  
State University of New York

PURDUE  
UNIVERSITY.



MONMOUTH  
UNIVERSITY



Yale SCHOOL OF NURSING



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE

RUTGERS

THE STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF NEW JERSEY



University at Buffalo  
The State University of New York



Thomas  
Jefferson  
University



JOHNS HOPKINS  
UNIVERSITY



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

