VILLANOVA HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR THESIS DEFENSE DAY

APRIL 28, 2023
GAREY HALL
Check out the Honors Thesis Blog!
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Dottie Callard
Jordan Case
Maddie Cerulli
Cynthia Choo
Tess Cogan
Michele Danigelis
Tommy DeStefanis
Dayna Deakin
Nick Downing
Alexander Fezza
Fiona Gavin
Olivia Gordon
Mia Hamel
Becca Jacobson
Colin Lilly
Grace Lundell
Katherine Mayer
Bronwyn Mogck
Amanda Mulligan
Eleanor Noone
Hillary O’Neill
Elise Pelletier
Juliana Perri
Avelina Petri
Patrick Riss
Katie Reed
Alla Spano
Noah Swan
Stephen Terry
Morgan Torre
Lexi Tramontano
Nina Williams
Liam Woods
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<td>Tess Cogan</td>
<td>Sexual Assault and Survivance within USA Gymnastics</td>
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<td>Stephen Terry</td>
<td>A History of History Textbooks: How Native Americans Have Been Portrayed in the 20th Century</td>
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<td>Katie Reed</td>
<td>Never Let This [Be] Where It Ends: An Analysis of Institutional Violence in Fiction</td>
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<td>Inclusive Education in the Classroom: How Administrators and Teachers Can Lead</td>
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<td>Nicholas Downing</td>
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<td>The End of Liberalism?</td>
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<td>Beyond the Barriers: The Power of Migration Memoirs</td>
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<td>Mia Hamel</td>
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<th>Katherine Mayer</th>
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<td>Lexi Tramontano</td>
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<td>How to Improve Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System</td>
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NOMINATED PRESENTATION
GAREY HALL ROOM 103, 4PM

ELISE PELLETIER
“Don’t Let My Kid Be Gay”: A Preliminary Analysis of Counseling Methodologies on the Identity Development of Young Queer Individuals
Immigration Restriction and Reform: The Rise of Manhattan’s Chinatown

JULIA BOETTIGHEIMER

Major(s): History, Political Science
Tutor: Dr. Eugene McCarraher
Reader: Dr. Ken Sun

Julia Boettigheimer is a History and Political Science double major with a minor in Peace & Justice from Westchester, NY. From a young age, Julia was fascinated by U.S. History, the American political system, and the inextricable tie between the two. Growing up just outside of NYC as a Chinese-American adoptee, Manhattan’s Chinatown has always been somewhere that felt like a connection to her heritage. For her thesis, Julia is exploring the rise of the Manhattan Chinatown, home to the highest concentration of people in the Western Hemisphere and one of the oldest Chinese ethnic enclaves. Specifically, she’s interested to see how changing immigration laws, including the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Immigration Act of 1924, and the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965, have all contributed to the changing landscape of the neighborhood. After graduation, Julia hopes to work in the social justice realm for a few years before going back to school, either to pursue a graduate degree in one of her majors, or attend law school.
Dottie Callard is a senior Political Science major with a minor in Economics from Cincinnati, Ohio. Between her classes at Villanova and internship on Capitol Hill this past summer, she has developed a strong interest in domestic environmental and energy policy, inspiring her senior thesis. In her thesis, she looks at the effectiveness of the Plug-In Electric Vehicle Credit, a tax credit given to qualified purchasers of eclectic and hybrid vehicles. Her evaluation involves consideration of both the economic and environmental impacts of the Plug-In Vehicle Credit in determining whether this credit is an effective tool for encouraging the transition to more renewable energy sources. After graduation, Dottie hopes to pursue a career related to public policy in Washington D.C.
Effects of Early Life Adversity on Stress Susceptibility and Depression in Adulthood

JORJMAN CASE

Major(s): Biochemistry, Spanish
Tutor: Dr. Benjamin Sachs

Jordan Case is a Biochemistry and Spanish double major from Minnesota. She conducts neuroscience research in the Sachs lab, studying the neurobiological mechanisms of mental illness using mouse models. Jordan additionally works with Nemours Children’s Health, studying neonatal brain injury that confers neurodevelopmental disability. Her interest in early-life adversity and its relationship to neurological development has inspired her thesis. After graduating from Villanova, Jordan plans to attend medical school and explore the intersection of disability ethics and medicine, within the subspecialities of pediatric neurology and neurodevelopmental disability.
MADELINE CERULLI

Major(s): Political Science, Peace & Justice
Tutor: Prof. Lance Kenney
Readers: Dr. Cera Murtagh, Dr. Christa Bialka

Maddie Cerulli is a senior from Holliston, Massachusetts. She is a double major in Political Science and Peace & Justice with a Spanish minor. On campus, she is involved in a number of organizations that reflect her passion for relationship-building and social change, including Best Buddies, Special Olympics, and the McNulty Institute for Women’s Leadership. Maddie is excited to be crafting a thesis that combines many of her academic, extracurricular, and personal interests by exploring how Disability Studies can expand upon and challenge traditional notions in international relations (IR). In particular, she will build upon existing feminist and postcolonialist frameworks in an effort to diminish the gap in IR literature related to disability.
What is a “great book”? Exploring the Western Canon Through High School Literature

CYNTIA H. CHOO

Major(s): English, Humanities  
Tutor: Dr. Michael Tomko

Cynthia Choo is a senior English and Humanities double major with a minor in Education from Fort Lee, New Jersey. During her time at Villanova, she has participated in the Korean Students Association as treasurer, vice president, and president, in the Intercultural Ambassador Program and Intergroup Relations (IGR) Program as an ambassador, and in the Writing Center as a tutor! She is also a student-affiliate research fellow for the ‘Steenth Street Project under the Anne Welsh McNulty Institute for Women’s Leadership. Upon graduating, she hopes to continue her studies in literature, and obtain her master’s degree and teaching certification for secondary education! As for her thesis, Cynthia is interested in the various contentions of the Canon Wars, and how this not only shapes our current perspective on the Western Canon, but also produces new, potential criteria for the “classic.” She will analyze different literature that meet these criteria and expand the notion of the Western Canon, then reflect on the teaching of canonical literature in high school English classes.
Tess Cogan is a Communication major with minors in Peace & Justice, Sociology, and Political Science from Fairfield, Connecticut. On campus, she is involved in multiple organizations, including serving as Director of Recruitment for NOVAdance, Mentor Coordinator for VUnited, mentor for the VUnited Scholars Program, and Recruitment Director for Alpha Phi Omega. Throughout her coursework, Tess has taken a variety of classes that have allowed her to research the experiences of women in various contexts, and her love for sports piqued her interest in researching more about the USA gymnastics sexual assault scandal. Her thesis has given her the chance to research more about sexual assault within large organizations, and to understand it within the context of a rhetorical analysis. She will study the ways in which the Rhetoric of Survivance can be applied within the context of the USA gymnastics scandal in order to better understand the way victims regained their strength and voice throughout the trial of Larry Nassar.
Social Movements Through The Screen: The Role of Social Media Activism in Political Mobilization

MICHELE DANIGELIS

Major(s): Political Science
Tutor: Dr. Lowell Gustafson
Reader: Prof. Amy Emerson
Alumni Mentor: Athan Koutsourumbas ’00

Michele Danigelis is a senior Political Science major from San Mateo, CA. She is involved in many organizations on campus including Villanova Special Olympics and NovaPJP. After graduation, Michele is returning to California to pursue a J.D. at USC Gould School of Law. In her thesis, she investigates the impact of social media on political mobilization through the lens of social movements. More specifically, she examines how campaign advertisements on the platforms Facebook and Instagram can influence political action by analyzing user engagement and voter behavior in a case study of recent midterm election ballot issues on reproductive freedom.
Inclusive Education in the Classroom: How Administrators and Teachers Can Lead

DAYNA DEAKIN

Major(s): Communication, Spanish
Tutor: Dr. Evan Schares
Alumni Mentor: Oriana Sengos ’15

Dayna Deakin is a Senior Communications and Spanish double major from Farmington, CT. She is the founder of The Bandana Project at Villanova as well as a teacher for Villanova's inclusive higher education program. Her interest in disability education research stems from her passion for advocacy in all spaces and the hope for more inclusive classrooms. After graduation, she plans to continue work in an educational space.
THOMAS DESTEFANIS

Major(s): Biochemistry, Art History
Tutor: Dr. Peter Palenchar

Thomas DeStefanis is a senior at Villanova University majoring in Biochemistry and Art History, with a minor in Spanish Studies. He has been researching in the Palenchar lab since the beginning of his sophomore year, focusing on better understanding intrinsic and extrinsic variation in gene expression. He plans to pursue a PhD in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology after graduation, with a particular interest in studying the genetic factors that play a role in host-pathogen interactions. His broader goal is to create affordable infectious disease treatments and advocate for a better understanding of how human diversity affects disease outcomes.
Nick Downing is a senior Political Science and Humanities double major with minors in Business and Spanish from Malvern, PA. He sees this Senior Thesis as the culmination of many of the economic, political, and cultural questions that he has been reflecting upon throughout his time here at Villanova. His political theory-oriented thesis covers humanity’s arrival at our current liberal system, which along with its successes has brought with it many challenges that need addressing. After graduation, he plans to teach English abroad in Madrid, Spain before potentially attending law school back in the States.
Female Athletes: How Inequality in the Industry Affects Mental Health

Lejla Elmazi

Major(s): Psychology, Sports Studies
Tutor: Dr. Edward Hastings

Lejla Elmazi is a Psychology and Sports Studies double major with a minor in Sociology at Villanova University. Her passion for Sports Psychology informs her thesis and is what led her to individually design her own Sports Studies major. As a first-generation college student and an aspiring Sports Psychologist in a male denominated industry, Lejla is no stranger to adversity. The challenges that Lejla and many other women continue to face in the inequitable sports domain are the grounds for her thesis’ exploration of the psychological effects of gender discrimination amongst athletes. As delineated by her choice of majors and minor, Lejla finds great importance in the connections between mental health, social issues, and the sports world, which she hopes to embody through her thesis.
Should We Just “Let People Enjoy Things”?: An Examination of Pleasure and Popular Appeal as Bases for Value Judgments

ALEXANDER FEZZA

Major(s): Humanities, Communication
Tutor: Dr. Paul Camacho
Reader: Dr. Eugene McCarraher

Alexander, or A.J., Fezza is a Humanities and Communication double major and Political Science minor from Manalapan, New Jersey. At Villanova, A.J. writes for The Villanovan, makes films with friends in Villanova Television, and participates in Club Taekwondo. He has a wide variety of interests, but all are undergirded by the conviction that goodness, beauty and truth really do exist and can be sought for on Earth through human endeavor, a view that he developed while taking transformative Honors and Humanities courses. In his thesis, A.J. will draw upon great works of philosophy, theology, and artistic criticism to distinguish between righteous and unrighteous judgment and evaluate the extent to which the value of things goes beyond merely our enjoyment of them.
FIONA GAVIN

Major(s): English, Spanish  
Tutor: Dr. Michael Dowdy  
Reader: Prof. Lance Kenney

Fiona Gavin is a senior double majoring in English and Spanish with minors in Latin American Studies and Business from Mahwah, New Jersey. On campus, Fiona is very passionate about the Special Olympics and the mission of inclusion. She has greatly enjoyed her time in the Villanova Honors Program and was a member of the Good, True, Beautiful cohort, in addition to being a peer mentor. For her thesis, Fiona is using memoirs written by migrants to explore the experiences and barriers faced by individuals who migrate to the United States. She appreciates the human perspective and the emotions that are conveyed by memoirs, which she believes is an important addition to the modern understanding of the immigration experience. Fiona plans to unite her interests in advocacy, language, and literature as she completes her thesis.
Women in Sports Media: Improving Equity Through Audience Engagement

OLIVIA GORDON

Major(s): Communication, History
Tutor: Dr. Thomas Ksiazek
Reader: Dr. Allyson Levin
Alumni Mentor: Chris DiLullo ’22

Olivia Gordon is a senior Communication and History double major with a specialization in media production from Pleasantville, NY. Throughout her time at Villanova, Olivia has been heavily involved with Special Olympics, serving on the Media and Publicity committee as well as being a mentor in VUnited. She also is a member of the Women’s Club Ice Hockey team. Her interest in sports media has inspired her to explore this in her thesis, and after graduation Olivia hopes to work in the sports media industry.
Mia Hamel is a senior Psychology major with Global Health and Honors Medical Humanities minors from Ridgewood, New Jersey. She has always been passionate about healthcare, but during her time at Villanova her interests shifted from direct patient care to public health. Frustrated with the American healthcare system and disparities in healthcare access and outcomes, her thesis combines her studies in the Medical Humanities cohort and the Global Health minor and was inspired by her passion for equitable healthcare. She seeks to analyze the historical factors that contributed to the current health landscape and where American health disparities stand today. The need to address health inequity through the lens of social justice and Catholic social thought will also be discussed. The exacerbation of health disparities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic will serve as the focal point of her thesis.
Colin Lilly is an Economics major with minors in Business and Political Science from Oxford, Pennsylvania. Coming from a family of teacher, he has long-since believed in the transformative power of education for young people. Through his participation in the Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) cohort within Honors and semester abroad in Cambridge, U.K., Colin has developed a deep interest in how our institutions influence economic outcomes and, ultimately, human flourishing. Blending his interests in economics and education, Colin’s thesis examines how school quality, as measured by the value-added approach, impacts student achievement and life outcomes. Outside of the classroom, Colin enjoys travelling with friends, listening to music, and personal fitness. After graduation, he plans on moving to New York to begin work as a management consultant.
War, What is it Good For?: The Effect of Military Conflicts on Trust in the EU

GRACE LUNDELL

Major(s): Political Science, French/Francophone Studies
Tutor: Dr. Deborah Seligsohn
Reader: Prof. Lance Kenney

Grace Lundell is a double major in Political Science and French and Francophone Studies. She is from Washington, DC and plans to attend graduate school this coming fall to obtain her master’s in international relations. At Villanova, she is president of the Honors Events Board, president of the French Club, and a member of the CLAS Academic Reform Committee. Grace also works in Honors as an Office Assistant. Grace’s Honors Senior Thesis analyzes the effects of conflict within Europe or involving European Union (EU) states on trust in the EU. Using survey data, she aims to discover if a rally around the EU flag can occur, just as one commonly sees rallies around country flags in response to war.
From Lochner to Dobbs: The Evolution of Substantive Due Process in American Jurisprudence

KATHERINE MAYER

Major(s): Political Science, Economics
Tutor: Dr. Michael Moreland
Alumni Mentor: Marguerite Walsh ’76, JD

Katherine Mayer is a political science and economics double major from Middletown, Maryland. During her time in the Honors Program, she has studied in the Politics, Philosophy, and Economics (PPE) cohort and served as a peer mentor. After graduation, she plans to attend law school. Katherine’s thesis is inspired by this goal, and examines the historical evolution of substantive due process in American jurisprudence.
Bronwyn Mogck is a Biology and Humanities double major from Simsbury, Connecticut. She served as a volunteer, leader, and eventually chair of the RUIBAL program, and now continues to tutor at North Light Community Center as a COV leader. Bronwyn also conducts research on campus, tutors in genetics, and leads trips with the Outdoors Club. She is excited to be using her senior thesis as a way to explore how her two majors inform one another as she thinks through her future goals.

AMANDA MULLIGAN

Major(s): Political Science
Tutor: Prof. Frank Pryor
Alumni Mentor: Josh Procario-Foley ’18, MeD

Amanda Mulligan is a senior Political Science Major from Park Ridge, New Jersey. She is passionate about criminal justice and the process of policy making, and she plans to go to law school after graduation. In her thesis, Amanda analyzes the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (1994 Crime Bill) and examines the social, political, and economic environment that influenced its creation. Her research focuses on political rhetoric, the public perception of crime, and how the criminal justice policy-making process can be improved today.
ELEANOR NOONE

Major(s): Communication, French
Tutor: Dr. Etienne Achille
Reader: Dr. Allyson Levin

Eleanor Noone is a senior double majoring in Communication and French. She is originally from Bridgeport, West Virginia. On campus, she is the Vice President: Panhellenic of Delta Gamma, a former representative on the Panhellenic Judicial Board, and a member of Pi Delta Phi among other organizations. In Honors, she was a member of the Interdisciplinary cohort and served as a peer mentor. The inspiration for her thesis came from her interests in politics and media, as well as wanting to incorporate both of her majors.
Hillary O’Neill is a senior Psychology major with minors in Sustainability and Peace and Justice from Norwalk, CT. She was a member of the Interdisciplinary Scholars cohort in the Honors Program which has remained a defining feature of her Villanova experience. Her interest in first responders for this thesis stems from her involvement with emergency medical services, beginning when she was 14 years old. At Villanova, she serves as the Training Lieutenant for Villanova Emergency Medical Service (VEMS). Through her involvement with EMS, she has noticed the lack of mental health research and resources available to first responders, as well as the stigma surrounding these issues. In her thesis, she will explore the mental health impacts of high acuity and critical incidents on first responders, as well as the effectiveness of programs used to treat these impacts. Through this research, she hopes to learn how EMS organizations can best support their personnel following these incidents.
"Don’t Let My Kid Be Gay": A Preliminary Analysis of Counseling Methodologies on the Identity Development of Young Queer Individuals

ELISE PELLETIER

Major(s): Psychology, Spanish
Tutor: Dr. Krista Malott
Reader: Dr. Evan Schares

Elise Pelletier is a Psychology and Spanish double major with minors in Cognitive Science and Counseling from Waterbury, Connecticut. Outside the classroom, Elise can be found playing Badminton in Alumni gym, singing and playing guitar with the Pastoral Musicians, and working at the Davis Center or the Dobbin mailroom. Elise is using this opportunity to explore their interest in counseling while also bringing light to a topic that they have had personal experience with. Their thesis looks at the effect of counseling on identity formation in queer adolescents. It explores the impact of the therapeutic relationship and counseling methodologies and analyzes their impact on identity development of young queer individuals. They are interested in researching this topic as they want to go into the counseling field post-graduation and are enjoying the opportunity to do more in depth research on counseling after scratching the surface with introductory courses. They hope their thesis can raise awareness and be an educational resource for those in the counseling field.
It’s the End of the World As We Know It: Gender-based Violence and Oppression In Contemporary Apocalyptic Literature

JULIANA PERRI

Major(s): English
Tutor: Dr. Heather Hicks
Reader: Dr. Melissa Hodges
Alumni Mentor: Steve Purcell ’17

Juliana Perri is an English major with a Spanish minor from Rye, New York. While at Villanova, she has been a Teaching Assistant for American Sign Language, a member of the English Student Advisory Council, and a member of Alpha Phi Omega, the Villanova service fraternity. Juliana has always believed that language is a powerful tool used to form perspective and create culture. While fictional narratives are full of imaginative elements, they are often grounded in a truth or reality that can offer insight into critical conversations. As such, her thesis will look at the genre of apocalyptic literature, which offers a theoretical framework in which we can consider human behavior in the face of chaos. In a society that crumbles, where institutions dissolve, and lawlessness runs rampant, violence is theorized by authors to be largely and disproportionately targeted at women. However, this violence explored in apocalyptic literature is only an exacerbation of what already exists in our contemporary society. By reflecting on existing patriarchal values and structures, this thesis aims to expose the harrowing nature of present-day violence against women. In this way, it uses apocalyptic narratives to demonstrate just how close we are to a societal apocalypse ourselves. Juliana’s thesis will join the rapidly growing conversation about contemporary apocalyptic literature and the role of gender in end-of-the-world narratives.
Avelina Petri is a Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience major with a concentration in Medical Humanities and minors in Spanish, Psychology, and Peace & Justice. In addition to research, she has held leadership positions within service organizations including Villanova’s Alpha Phi Omega, the Sophomore Service Learning Community, and Norristown’s Centro de Cultura, Arte, Trabajo y Educación where she teaches adult English classes. Avelina conducts research in the Sachs lab, studying the impact of stress on anxiety and depression in mouse models. Stress is generally accepted as a contributing factor to mental illness, and genetic perturbations to neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine are thought to influence the risk of psychopathology in part through the regulation of stress susceptibility. Through this project Avelina (in collaboration with other members in the Sachs lab) analyzes whether the genetic loss of the dopamine transporter can confer resilience to stress. Avelina seeks to explore behavioral research that will inform her future as a medical professional.
Never Let This [Be] Where It Ends: An Analysis of Institutional Violence in Fiction

KATIE REED

Major(s): English, Communication
Tutor: Dr. Mary Mullen
Reader: Dr. Adrienne Perry

Katie Reed is a senior from Bellingham, MA majoring in English and Communication. She has always found that literature has a great power to shape the way we see the world, so her thesis seeks to analyze what contemporary fiction can tell us about the violence that permeates our everyday lives. In particular, she will be looking at institutional (structural) violence, with her institutions of interest being academic spaces. She will be utilizing two novels as case studies: Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*, which explores the more subtle, invisible forms of violence, and Marieke Nijkamp’s *This Is Where It Ends*, which explores more overt forms of violence, such as gun violence. Outside of the classroom, Katie is the news columnist for *The Villanovan*, a Lorenzini Leadership Ambassador for the Anne Welsh McNulty Institute for Women’s Leadership, and an Office Assistant in the Honors Program.
Patrick Riss is a Philosophy major with minors in both Physics and Chinese from Chester, NJ. Through all his time at Villanova Patrick has wanted to maintain a focus on both the sciences and the humanities—hence his choice to study both Philosophy and Physics. His thesis topic is the culmination of that choice as he combines his understanding of the two fields into a paper on the Philosophy of Quantum Physics. In particular, Patrick is exploring some of the more radical and revolutionary portions of the science alongside the metaphysical interpretations that come with it. Outside of the classroom he is the president of our Mock Trial Club, as well as the captain for the Ethics Debate Team. Post-grad he plans on attending law school, perhaps with a focus towards international law.
The Racial Implications of the Great Gun Debate

ALEXANDRA SPANO

Major(s): Psychology  
Tutor: Dr. Mark Wilson  
Reader: Prof. Lauren Shohet

Alexandra Spano is a Psychology major with a Cognitive Science minor from Yonkers, NY. Throughout her Villanova career, she has been a member of the Villanova Cheerleading team, the treasurer of Alpha Phi Omega, and a research assistant for Dr. Markey through which she codes 911 calls to help determine if it is possible to detect deception cues in individuals making missing persons reports. She worked as a judicial intern for Judge Murphy at the Westchester County Courthouse in the Summer of 2022, and this experience sparked her interest in the controversy of gun reform and confirmed her plans to pursue a legal career.

Alexandra’s thesis will discuss the racial aspects of gun policy and the debate surrounding it as well as argue for the need to include race within these conversations in order to make progress in America’s issue of gun violence.
NOAH SWAN

Major(s): Mathematics
Tutor: Dr. Michael Curran
Reader: Dr. John McCombie
Alumni Mentor: Matthew Fagerstrom '19, MA, MsC

Noah Swan is a senior Mathematics major with minors in Statistics, French, and Economics. Noah is from Nashville, TN. He is on the executive board of the Sports Analytics Club and formerly the Business in Entertainment Society. He became interested in pursuing an economic thesis while studying abroad at the University of Cambridge last fall. He hopes to eventually pursue a graduate degree in economics.
A History of History Textbooks: How Native Americans Have Been Portrayed in the 20th Century

STEPHEN TERRY

Major(s): History, Humanities
Tutor: Prof. Gina Talley

Stephen Terry is a history and humanities major from Indianapolis, Indiana. On campus, Stephen is involved with Special Olympics, VUnited, and loves to play intramural sports. In his thesis, Stephen hopes to explore how the history of marginalized groups, specifically Native Americans, are either omitted or underrepresented in these textbooks. Through analyzing primary sources of textbooks in different time periods, Stephen will analyze the progress, or lack of progress, made in creating a more accurate and nondiscriminatory approach to American history. Given Stephen’s interest in teaching history post graduation, this thesis will help ground him with the knowledge to be better aware of systemic issues within the education system.
Morgan Torre is a Peace & Justice and Gender & Women’s Studies double major with minors in Philosophy, Communication, and Political Science from Long Island, New York. She has a strong passion for social justice as evidenced by her work with Special Olympics, Inclusion Week, the McNulty Institute for Women’s Leadership, Last Letter Films, and as a Sr. Thea Bowman Student Fellow in Ethics. In her spare time, you can find her reading, enjoying music, or doing yoga. Morgan is excited to bridge her passion for social justice with the peace of her hobbies as she explores the philosophical connections between trauma-informed yoga and survivors of sexual violence.
How to Improve Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System

LEXI TRAMONTANO

Major(s): Communication
Tutor: Dr. Evan Schares
Reader: Dr. Allison Payne

Lexi Tramontano grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut. At Villanova, she is majoring in communication and minoring in music and criminology. Most of her time on campus outside of academics, is spent with her friends or working on the executive board of her sorority. Lexi has been interested in criminal justice work since she visited the Equal Justice Initiative in high school and learned about the work they were doing relating to wrongful convictions and children in adult prisons and on death row. That visit is what motivated her to pursue more research on the juvenile justice system for this project.
NINA WILLIAMS

Major(s): Political Science, Humanities
Tutor: Dr. Jesse Couenhoven
Reader: Dr. John Harles

Nina Williams is a Political Science & Humanities double major and Spanish minor from Park City, Utah. During her time at Villanova, she has pursued interdisciplinary coursework that places policy in conversation with human flourishing. In her thesis, she continues to explore the normative dimensions of policy by examining what raw political calculations leave out in the context of migration admissions decisions in rich, liberal democracies. Drawing from philosophical and theological frameworks, Nina hopes to present a compelling account of the obligations both states and individuals owe to asylum seekers, and the ways in which this recognition can influence immigration reform. On campus, Nina has served as the President of the Villanova College Democrats and completed internships with the ACLU and other nonprofits. After graduation, she aims to teach English abroad before ultimately attending law school.
A native of Milford, Connecticut, Liam Woods started at Villanova in the Fall of 2019. He’s been interested in politics and political thinking for a long time, much to the chagrin of friends, classmates, and Thanksgiving dinner tables for years. Originally planning on being a double major in Political Science and Economics, he instead discovered that Economics was not quite what he expected, falling in love with Philosophy instead, selecting this as his second major. He is also an avid fan of Curling, serving as the Club Treasurer for the Villanova University Curling Club, placing in 4th with his teammates at College Curling Nationals 2022 in the sunny city of Fargo, North Dakota. After graduation, he plans to pursue a PhD in Philosophy, with a specialization in Continental Philosophy, Critical Theory, or Political Philosophy. He has a twin sister named Rory, currently attending Hamilton College, 2 parents (Melanie and Robert) who love him, even when he refuses to get a haircut, and a dog named Holly whom he misses most of all.