



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS AND LETTERS



2019

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

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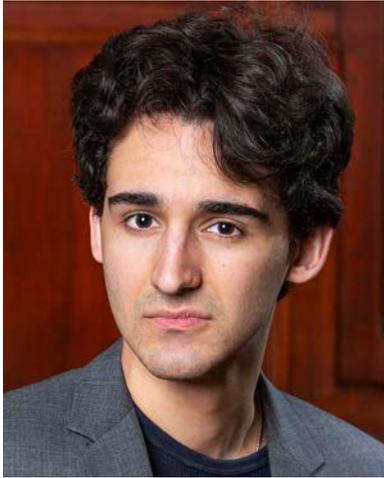


Maggie Behan

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Supplementary Major: Spanish
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Grant Mudge

Ever-Burning Lights: A One-Act Play

For my thesis, I wrote and directed a one-act play. In a modern examination of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello*, three young women struggle to navigate abusive relationships, discovering that love doesn't always look like you think it does and that life never has as many clear answers as you'd like. After working on productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Othello*, I began to deeply consider the troubling nature of their attitudes toward and treatment of women. Women are still, with absurd frequency, abused and mistreated by their intimate partners. I thought that tying the old to the new would be an interesting way to highlight the everlasting presence of this type of abuse.

**Joseph Blakey**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Adviser: Kevin Dreyer

Cargo: A Documentary Theatre Project

Based on works like *The Laramie Project* and *Fires in the Mirror*, my senior thesis is a verbatim documentary theatre project titled *Cargo*. To create this project, I interviewed people from all over the Notre Dame community and transformed those interviews into a one-act play, whose theme is how people find their calling in life and their place in the world when they don't fall into a particular narrative. I've had personal experience in documentary theatre and wanted to apply this form to the Notre Dame community. At Notre Dame, with its Catholic tradition and concentration of young people, there is rich potential to delve into how people discover their vocation and what they do with it.

Received funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

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**Sophia Costanzo**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Advisers: Bill Donaruma and Anne Garcia Romero

Remembering Cuba: A Documentary

Remembering Cuba is a documentary feature film that looks into how the story of a family leaving Cuba in the 1960s impacted the identity of first-generation and second-generation relatives once in America. This topic is particularly important to me, as the documentary is about my own family's journey from Cuba to America. I chose to make it now because immigration is a particularly polarized issue, and we often forget to look beyond the politics and see the people who went through the struggle of immigrating. The stories in this documentary humanize that experience.

Traveled to Arkansas, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Texas, and Havana, Cuba, with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

**Adrianna Fazio**

- Majors: American Studies and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Adviser: Jason Ruiz

Katie Couric's Career and Shifting Perceptions of Femininity in Broadcast Journalism

My thesis looks at the changing roles, expectations, and responsibilities of a modern-day journalist, specifically at the impact Katie Couric, longtime *Today Show* and *CBS Evening News* anchor, has made. I argue that Couric shifted public perceptions of journalism to prove that femininity is not at odds with credibility. As a lifelong *Today Show* fan, I have always considered Couric a role model, and my exposure to her on television ultimately influenced my own career aspirations. I knew that if she directly impacted me, her career likely has made larger impacts as well. While conducting research in New York, I was able to connect with Couric and sat down with her to talk about her career. This experience was invaluable and largely shaped my argument. In addition, I met with professionals at NBCUniversal to hear about Couric's impact on *Today* and their experiences as women in the industry.

Traveled to New York City with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program.

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**R. Tyrel London**

- Major: American Studies and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Advisers: Perin Gurel and La Donna Forsgren

A Poetics of Liberation: Art as Counterhegemony

Using Audre Lorde's dictum "poetry is not a luxury," I explore and engage in art as liberation through the lens of postcolonial feminism. I wanted to use both of my majors in my thesis project, and art as liberation was the intersection of my experience in the two.

**Alexander Mansour**

- Major: Music (Cello Performance) and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Advisers: Katinka Kleijn and John Liberatore

Alexander Mansour: A Senior Recital

My senior recital was an opportunity to present my various musical interests. The program included a first portion of significant cello solo works composed by Bach, Kodaly, and Piazzolla, followed by a second act of my original compositions/jazz combo. A recital is an opportunity to share wonderful music with others. It is also a terrific goal that allows for much musical growth. As I prepare to begin my master's degree in the fall, the recital is a celebration of my current artistic achievement and ambition.

**Laura Migliore**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Minor: European Studies
- Adviser: Olivier Morel

Perspectives on Preservation: The Challenges and Necessity of Preserving European Art Cinema

By exploring multiple perspectives on the preservation of European art cinema, I aim to concisely chronicle the problem at hand and demonstrate the necessity of film preservation. My project aspires to account for all parties associated with films, including historians and preservationists, as well as film creators and viewers. Although I had long planned to write my European studies capstone on something film-related, it was renowned German filmmaker Wim Wenders' visit to campus in October 2018 that inspired this project. Wenders's words on how art cinema and documentaries struggle to compete with Hollywood productions led me to declare an unofficial topic of "an argument for the restoration and/or renaissance of European art cinema."

**Paul Rowe**

- Majors: Neuroscience and Behavior and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Adviser: Matthew Payne

The Evolution of Saturday Night Live in the Age of Internet Television

My thesis explores how *Saturday Night Live*, a popular and long-running late night comedy program, has evolved in response to new media technologies and changing viewing habits. I address how the show's live format, topicality, and the stardom of its cast has been affected by the emergence of the Internet as a way of consuming television. I am interested in the critical analysis of television, as well as trends in the entertainment industry. *SNL* has always been my favorite show, and I was interested in studying its history and production more closely.

Traveled to Chicago and New York City with funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.

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Beatty Smith

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Advisers: David Barba and Christine Becker

The Exhibit: A Screenplay

Displays of human remains in museums provide the public with information about the past and the ever-changing nature of the human experience. However, there is increasing concern that museum visitors treat human remains in the same way as material artifacts. Are museums disrespecting the rights of the dead to rest? My thesis explores the potential future of human remains displays in museums, within the framework of a feature film screenplay titled, *The Exhibit*. Since arriving at Notre Dame, I've known I wanted to write a screenplay for my thesis because I will be pursuing a career in the entertainment industry. After taking an Archeology and Ethics class as a junior, I was intrigued and perturbed by the numerous ethical issues surrounding human remains displays in museums. This initial spark grew into the foundation for a science-future crime film.

Traveled to London and Los Angeles with funding from the Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program and the Nanovic Institute for European Studies.

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Zoe Usowski

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- AnBryce Scholar
- Advisers: Tarryn Chun and Anne García-Romero

Dymphna

For my thesis, I wrote a full-length play, centering on a women's ward of a mental asylum in 1930s New England. The piece focuses on the ethical dilemmas in medicine at the time, as well as the perception and stigmatization of mental health issues. The play is centered on a young nurse as she navigates her morals and discerns what is right from wrong in a place that is definitively grey. I chose this topic because I felt that mental health issues, which are personally important to me, are underrepresented in theatre. I also wanted to use the medium of playwriting to explore a history that is not widely known to the American public. I felt that it would allow for greater discussion on mental health stigmatization today, specifically in women, and address where we still have room to improve in health care. My play explores themes of Catholicism, religion, Irishness, and mental illness, in addition to subjects such as assault, misogyny, and unjust social systems.



Tristan Vitale

- Majors: International Economics (Italian) and Film, Television, and Theatre (FTT)
- Advisers: Lakshmi Iyer and Forrest Spence

The Consequences of Anti-Mafia Law Enforcement: A Study of Mafia Growth in Northern Italy

The mafia has long been thought to exist only in southern Italy, but in reality, it has been spreading to northern Italy since the end of World War II. In the early 1990s, Italy intensified its anti-mafia law enforcement, but mainly focused on the southern regions where the traditional mafia strongholds are. My project examines whether this intensification of law enforcement in southern Italy encouraged mafia growth in northern Italy. I am aware that many people get excited by the word "mafia" because they may have seen *The Godfather* or *The Sopranos*. However, many fail to realize that organized crime is a real issue which has deeply impacted Italy economically, politically, and socially since the year of its unification. All four of my grandparents were immigrants from southern Italian regions traditionally associated with the mafia, so it is an important topic to me.