



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



# 2021

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.<sup>SM</sup>

**Ashley Cavuto**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minor: Science, Technology, and Values (STV)
- Advisor: Terrance Brown

***The Secret History***

My senior thesis is a creative project in which I adapt one of my favorite novels, Donna Tartt's *The Secret History*, for the big screen. I translated the story from the literary medium to the cinematic medium and sought to find the balance between remaining faithful to the source material and crafting a narrative that requires it to be told as a film.

I have always been interested in the intersection between literature and cinema. As a film major and an avid reader, adaptations have always fascinated me. Rather than continue to simply study them, I wanted to learn more about the process for myself. I've always believed you learn most from real experience, so I wanted to take on an adaptation of my own, focusing on a challenging text I admire.

**Mary Crawford**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minor: Computing and Digital Technologies (CDT)
- Advisor: Susan Ohmer

## Story, Immersion, and Comfort in Galaxy's Edge: Intellectual Property Adaptation and Themed Entertainment

I wrote and designed a web installation about the design challenges and benefits of adapting pre-existing intellectual properties into immersive experiences, especially in the context of theme parks. I focused on the example of Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge at Walt Disney World.

I've been interested in themed entertainment all throughout college, and after taking Susan Ohmer's Disney in Film and Culture class, I decided I really wanted to write my thesis about Walt Disney Imagineering. This project was a perfect opportunity to bring together my interests in film, theme parks, design, and digital technology.

*Traveled to Orlando, Florida.*

**Jack Emory**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minors: Catholic Social Tradition and Irish Studies
- Advisors: Matthew Payne and David Lantigua

**Patreon: The Rise of Middlemen**

I created a series of video essays that explore Patreon, the platform for independent creators to earn an income directly from their fans. The piece examines Patreon as one example of tech company/user interactions in the platform economy, specifically examining the justice and security of this remuneration system.

This topic is a synthesis of my interests and fandom of independent media and my concerns about justice in labor and the economy. This project allows me to closely examine a platform with which I interact, while still making a larger argument about the shifts in the economy.

**Julia Goldschmidt**

- Majors: Program of Liberal Studies and Film, Television, and Theatre
- Advisor: Anne Garcia Romero

***To Be Well: A Modern Play Inspired by Julian of Norwich***

*To Be Well* is a full-length play inspired by the writings of medieval female Christian mystic Julian of Norwich. This play explores, through a modern lens, the complexities that arise when a high schooler's profound spiritual experiences come as a result of mental illness.

I am passionate about expressing personal religious experiences through the medium of drama. I have been drawn to the writings of Julian of Norwich because of the powerful and often disturbing imagery she employs. Exploring the relationship between spirituality and mental illness has been fascinating and led to this unique project.

*Traveled to Norwich, England.*

**Philip Lally**

- Majors: English and Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minor: History
- Advisor: Pamela Robertson Wojcik

## 'Elusive Allusiveness': The Compilation Scores of Wes Anderson & Models of 'Auteurist Spectatorship'

This project examines the prevalent but obscure cultural allusiveness present in the films of Wes Anderson. Using the prerecorded popular music employed in his films as a point of reference, I posit that Anderson's idiosyncratic filmmaking tendencies invite a revitalized form of viewer engagement that encourages repeated viewing and supplemental analysis to deduce meaning, which I term "auteurist spectatorship."

The use of popular music in film has always fascinated me, and Anderson's films in particular demonstrate an especially unique conceptualization of the relationship between music and cinema. In this project, I aim to draw attention to this uncommon employment of prerecorded music and identify the implications that Anderson's peculiar and allusive sonic sensibilities have on the relationship between music and film in general.

**Ellen O'Brien**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minor: Digital Marketing
- Advisor: Terrance Brown

***The Bent and the Broken: An Original Screenplay***

My senior thesis is an original screenplay about a Native American woman who becomes involved in a police investigation when a Native boy goes missing. It's a thriller that explores themes of grief, guilt, and trauma, as well as race relations and the role of the police in the United States.

I chose this topic because I love the thriller genre, and I wanted to say something important with my screenplay. I am passionate about Native American studies, but this community is seldom seen on screen. I hope to elevate their voices and the struggles they face through my thesis.

**Katherine Paulsen**

- Majors: Economics and Film, Television, and Theatre
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Richard Donnelly

## Using Fabric Modification to Design and Construct Costumes for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

For my creative thesis project, I researched and implemented fabric modification techniques such as fabric dyeing, fabric painting, and flower-making into the design and construction of two costumes for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

In FTT, I have had amazing opportunities to explore costume design and construction over the years. For this project, then, I wanted to learn and do something entirely new to build upon my skill set. Costume crafts and fabric modification are rarely taught at the undergraduate level, but they are a very integral part of costuming that can be learned through independent study.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*



**Mariella Stephens**

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minors: Musical Theatre and Business Economics
- Advisor: Anne Garcia-Romero

***How to Catch a Mad Dog: A Contemporary Play***

*How to Catch a Mad Dog* is a contemporary play set in American suburbia about a young, biracial girl trying to understand her role in the world while on a mission to catch her beloved (and mischievous) mutt, who has escaped from her house.

As a biracial, American woman myself, I have experience with what it feels like to be alone and confused about the intersection of my ethnic, national, and personal identities. That's not to say this is some magnum opus because it's so personal, but rather that I've been eager to find a way to shed light on experiences that many Americans may never have — and this play is just that.