



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2024

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.SM



Dear colleagues, students, and friends,

I am delighted to present this College of Arts & Letters book that highlights 193 original works of research and creativity by 190 seniors. These yearlong projects showcase the Class of 2024's academic prowess and innovative skills, as well as its fascinating array of scholarly interests.

The wide-ranging scope of research includes projects that examine presidential populist rhetoric, the relationship between wilderness and accessibility, analytic class number formula, the impact of Taylor Swift's tour on the hotel industry, implementation of a campus carbon food-labeling pilot program, and dark matter.

Seniors also demonstrated their talents and imagination through the development of a comedy television show, design of dinnerware, transformation of language in environmental lawsuits into poetry, and a performance of classical and musical theatre works by Laitman, Mahler, and Bernstein.

Many of these seniors — who started their college careers when COVID-19 restrictions were in place — traveled throughout the nation and around the world to inform their research and enrich their experiences.

I'm heartened when students say their thesis/creative project is a defining part of their undergraduate careers. For some, it even shapes their future in surprising ways — like Anna Bachiochi, a philosophy major and A&L pre-health supplementary major, it also led to an exciting academic opportunity prior to medical school.

"I have grown as a researcher, writer, and philosophical thinker. I loved the project so much that I applied to a few philosophy master's programs for my gap year before medical school," she wrote in her reflection on her thesis. "I got full funding to one and will be doing that next year! I don't know if I would have made that decision if it were not for my thesis."

As is the case each year, I applaud the many faculty members who generously shared their expertise and goodwill to help make the enriching experiences described in this book possible.

To the Class of 2024, I am so proud of all you have accomplished and am grateful for your many contributions to the College and our University. I wish each of you blessings as you continue to learn, grow, create, and make the world a better place.

Sarah A. Mustillo

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I.A. O'Shaughnessy Dean
College of Arts & Letters

**Micaela Alvarado**

Hometown: Santa Ana, California

- Majors: Film, Television, and Theatre and Sociology
- Advisors: Anne García-Romero and Terrance Brown

Elevated Heights

I developed my own half-hour comedy television show, *Elevated Heights*, inspired by Quinta Brunson's *Abbott Elementary*. I created a pitch deck/document and wrote a pilot episode. I also wrote a paper outlining the research I did for my show world's themes, topics, and culture, in addition to a TV script analysis as part of the pilot and show bible process.

My favorite TV series is *Abbott Elementary* because of how much representation it gives me — a Mexican-American first-gen student from a working-class community who attended public school my entire life. I wanted to create something like this for my own community.

**Joyce Fu**

Hometown: Hong Kong, China

- Majors: Film, Television, and Theatre and Economics
- Supplementary Major: Global Affairs
- Minor: Data Science
- Advisors: Terrance Brown and Cecilia Kim

The Human-to-Noodle Transformation: A Short Film

My thesis is a short film about my alter ego, Fred, turning into a noodle. It's an absurdist, body-horror X food-porn crossover borne of my noodle-based diet and passion for methods of cultural consumption that can uplift diverse voices.

I hope this story can inspire reflection about how our communities are capable of pushing beyond tokenism to enjoy the benefits of plurality.

This project is a natural extension of my research interests in coloniality and the Asia-Pacific region. Through the language of filmmaking, I challenged myself to find agency in the space between academic literature and our lived-in experiences.

Received funding from the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts.



Lindsay Goldschmidt

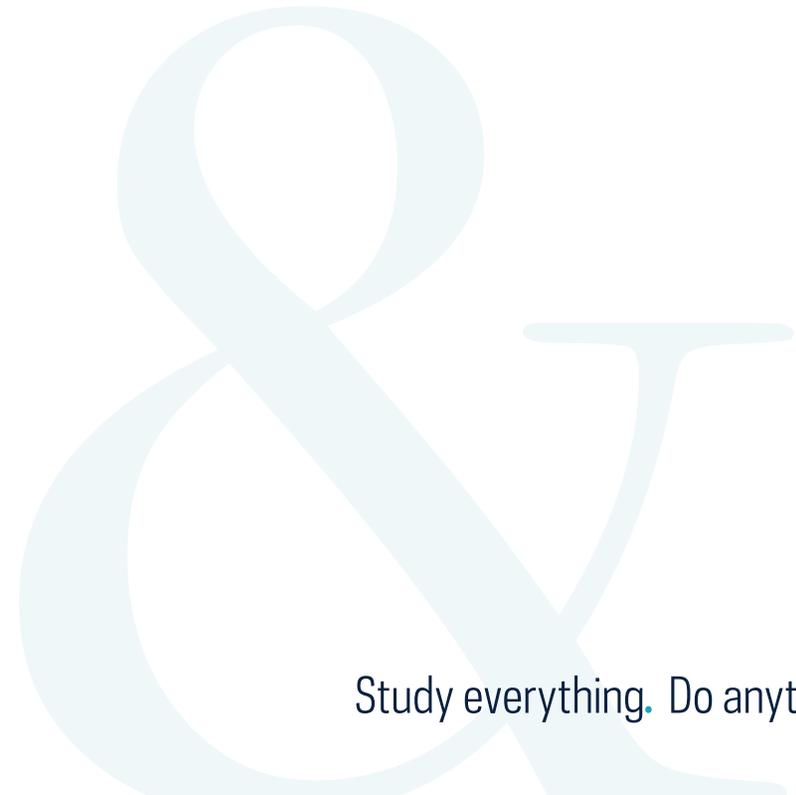
Hometown: Wayne, Pennsylvania

- Major: Film, Television, and Theatre
- Minors: Musical Theatre and Digital Marketing
- Sheedy Family Program in Economy, Enterprise, and Society
- Advisor: Anne Garcia-Romero

The Ballerina's Burden: A Play and Case Study

This project is a one-act play exploring a ballerina's dreams turned nightmares and a research paper providing a case study about professional precarity in the ballet industry. I am directing a staged reading of the play, as well.

I chose this topic because I am infatuated with dance, and was curious about how professional ballet dancers have discerned their career paths and navigated uncertainty.



**George Henry (Hank) McNeil**

Hometown: Norristown, Pennsylvania

- Majors: Film, Television, and Theatre and English
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisors: William Donaruma and Jim Collins

We Must Create Magnificence

We Must Create Magnificence is a 15-minute short film in which an undergraduate photography student has one night to finish her senior thesis — a series of portraits of her fellow artists on campus — or she won't graduate in the morning.

Alongside her narrative, the film reveals my personal creative process by documenting my revisions of the script, conversations with my advisors, and my thoughts and feelings regarding our impending graduation through conversations with my protagonist.

Filmmaking is an intensely collaborative process, but a senior thesis, at times, feels like a very individual undertaking, so I knew I needed to make a project which demystifies what it means to make art while acknowledging and celebrating the talented artists I've learned with during the past four years.

Received funding from the Notre Dame Department of Film, Television, and Theatre.

**Christina Sayut**

Hometown: Melbourne, Florida

- Major: BFA in Design
(Concentration in, Visual
Communication Design)
- Minors: Musical Theatre and
Studio Art
- Advisors: Sarah Martin and
Clinton Carlson

Kinware: A Self-Authored Ceramics Brand

Kinware is a self-authored brand that centers around accessible design in ceramics.

All aspects of the brand — logo, brand values and marketing materials — were built from an idea. The brand focuses on connecting a family through dinnerware and sitting around the table.

Brand creation is an interest of mine within the world of design, and I have a love of creating functional and aesthetically pleasing ceramic ware.

Received funding from the Department of Art, Art History & Design's William and Connie Greif Art Award.

**Julia Warden**

Hometown: Ambler, Pennsylvania

- Majors: Business Analytics and Film, Television and Theatre
- Kellogg Developing Researchers Program and International Business Scholars
- Advisors: Tarryn Chun and Kyle Jaros

East Asian Intellectual Property Diplomacy: Identity, Geopolitics, and Business

My thesis explores intellectual properties in East Asia, focusing on Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea. Through case studies, it examines cultural intricacies through diverse reactions to specific intellectual properties.

Investigating Tokyo Disneyland and Hong Kong Disneyland, the red panda from Disney's *Turning Red* (2022), as well as Baby Shark and Nintendo's Mario, my research contributes to the conversation on cultural assimilation, soft power dynamics, authenticity interpretations, and identity preservation to offer insights into cross-cultural dynamics between East Asia and the United States.

My goal was to immerse myself in cross-cultural experiences to enhance my ability to communicate and empathize with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Furthermore, conducting research abroad and engaging directly with locals enriched my perspective, for which I am deeply grateful. I learned a lot and enjoyed myself along the way.

Received funding from the Liu Institute for Asia and Asian Studies and the Institute for Scholarship in the Liberal Arts. Traveled to Hong Kong, Japan, and South Korea.