

URSCA SYMPOSIUM: CELEBRATION OF STUDENT SCHOLARS 15 APRIL 2026 | CONCORDIA COLLEGE

Concurrent Session 1

Morrie Jones A-B

C01. “Gatekeeping Parenthood: Institutional Discrimination in Social Work and Its Effects on Adoption Access”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Sky Johnson

Mentored by: Dr. Darren Valenta, Dominic Meyers

Abstract: Adoption systems in the United States are intended to connect children with stable families, yet structural inequities within the social work profession limit who is granted access to parenthood. This project examines institutional discrimination in social work and how it affects adoption opportunities for mixed-race and LGBTQ+ families. The study follows the framework of equity and representation in social services, addressing the problem of how professional gatekeeping, biased licensing structures, and insufficient education contribute to discriminatory adoption outcomes. The purpose of this research is to argue that structural barriers within social work, particularly racial disparities in licensure and a lack of required LGBTQ+ education, enable discriminatory decision-making that prevents qualified families from adopting. It highlights how inequities within the profession translate into real consequences for families and children seeking permanent homes. Research methods include personal, and found, interviews with families from diverse adoption backgrounds. Additional research was conducted on laws and policies governing social work and adoption programs, alongside collaboration with students to better understand educational practices/barriers within the profession. The results of this project are tangible solutions that can be implemented at Concordia and within student communities. These include educational resources, licensure study support, and advocacy to raise awareness about discrimination in adoption systems. By giving students knowledge and tools, we can support the next generation of diverse social workers and encourage change within the profession.

Concurrent Session 1

Morrie Jones A-B

C02. “Deepening Perceptions of “Musicking” within Civil Rights Pilgrimage”

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Ephriam Cooper

Mentored by: Dr. Jeff Meyer

Abstract: By studying the way pilgrims go about “musicking,” or music as action, this paper aims to examine how music is utilized to heighten the transformational effect of Civil Rights Pilgrimage (CRP). Supplemented by interviews with organizers, students, and participants, we learn that music is inherently intertwined in how pilgrims reckon with the often-brutal history of the Civil Rights Movement. Pilgrims may find themselves listening contextually to a historic recording, singing in a church service, performing at a shrine, or recalling a prior event by reanimating actions or movements from that event, among other engagements. By performing this range of actions, one can recontextualize the feelings that activists experienced, without the limit of words. Pilgrimage happenings on CRP welcomes a Turnerian ideal of *communitas* via the shared experience pilgrims have as their understanding of the Civil Rights Movement grows. Musical choices for active listening and performances on a CRP range from emotional laments and ballads of hope to incendiary diatribes and longings for liberation and justice. Juxtapositions are created within genres and topics, which creates the emotional complexity that informs the pilgrim’s understanding of the movement. This paper ultimately seeks to extend this sector of scholarship by articulating how the soundscape of modern pilgrimage can aid student learning and enhance the transformative aspects of pilgrimage. One can find new insights as to how 21st century pilgrimage can incorporate music and modern/contemporary artistic creation into the programming of a pilgrimage.

Concurrent Session 1

Morrie Jones C-D

C03. “Women Will All Turn Monsters’: Misogyny and Villainization of Femininity in Shakespeare’s King Lear and Macbeth”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: India Carlson

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: The goal of this project is to dive into two of William Shakespeare’s well-known tragedies, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, and describe misogyny that is shown throughout the two selections. Although Shakespeare’s plays feature a wide range of well-developed women, his assessment of the female mind, body, and experience, is inherently misogynistic. While these characters have been studied in depth, both in an effort to condemn Shakespeare’s portrayal of women’s bodies, minds, and lives, as well as to redeem him and his writing, his portrayal of femininity cannot be saved by the rare depictions of ‘good women’ that he includes in his plays. The analysis of *King Lear* will focus on the use of misogynistic language. It will also dissect the systematic misinterpretation and at times unnecessary vilification of Regan and Goneril, reframing some of their actions as rational responses to abuse of power rather than a specifically female type or cruelty and instability. *Macbeth’s* section will home in on how traditional gender roles and performances are critiqued, as well as analyzing the differences in the *Macbeth’s* individual descents into madness and their ability to deal with power. The throughline between examinations of the plays will be the positioning of the female mind as weak, both in the face of men and power. Overall, this presentation makes clear that both plays contain a significant amount of sexism, and Shakespeare’s portrayal of the female mind is irredeemably misogynistic.

Concurrent Session 1

Morrie Jones C-D

C04. “Escaping the Shackles of Misogyny- Medea”

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Ava Rolfson

Mentored by: Dr. Stephanie Lemmer

Abstract: My research is an analytical look into Euripides' "Medea", using Sara Ahmed's theory of the circulation of emotion. My method for this research is a deep dive into lines 1019-1080 in Euripides' "Medea", and my framework is Sara Ahmed's theory of the circulation of emotion. The circulation of emotion is the theory that emotions circulate through objects and "stick" certain emotions to them. So, rather than the psychological look at emotions, Sara Ahmed's theory suggests that emotions are stuck to objects because of predisposed factors in society. For example, a child is not afraid of sharks because sharks are inherently scary, but rather because the 1975 movie Jaws attached the emotion of fear to sharks. So how does this work in "Medea"? "Medea" is a classic Greek Tragedy following Medea, an outcast woman who seeks revenge on her husband after he abandons her for the princess of Corinth. In "Medea", Medea is presented as a woman struggling to unstick the emotional language associated with her. As a woman who has been left by her husband, she is seen as vulnerable and weak, and as a mother she is seen as obedient, and loving. In lines 1019-1080, the reader witnesses Medea struggle to unstick these emotional attributes from her and sacrificing her humanity by taking the life of her children, ultimately removing these stuck emotions; while also making herself an anomaly, mother (creator)/killer (destroyer)—leaving her alone, however no longer a subject to patriarchal oppression.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 201

C05. “Breast Cancer Survivor”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Anna Jaeger

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Eric Bailly

Abstract: Breast cancer treatment is a rapidly changing area of healthcare, and understanding patient experiences is essential for improving service delivery. This project examined a case study of a patient who was diagnosed with breast cancer, completed treatment, and is now doing very well. Drawing on a review of her medical history, current breast cancer screening and diagnostic guidelines, and system-level service and quality challenges. Her experience revealed several healthcare service issues and quality-of-care concerns that shaped her journey, including: initial appointment delays, misdiagnosis, long wait times, issues with imaging, and difficulty scheduling follow-up visits. These concerns highlight broader gaps in timely access, diagnostic accuracy, and care coordination that many patients continue to face when navigating cancer care. This analysis helped identify where breakdowns occurred and how they mirror common barriers within the healthcare system, particularly for patients seeking timely and coordinated oncology services. I first presented this case in my HCL 207 class, where it was well received for its relevance to healthcare service delivery and its clear connection to real-world patient experiences. This presentation hopes to emphasize the importance of improving access, diagnostic accuracy, and patient support for individuals facing breast cancer.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 201

C06. “The Fall and Rise of a Richardson’s Ground Squirrel Population: Using Translocation as a Supplement to Recovery”

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Caitlin Haasser, Peter Weinzierl, Katie Waugh, Maria Ramstad

Mentored by: Dr. Joseph Whittaker

Abstract: Richardson’s ground squirrel (*Uroditellus richardsonii*; RGS) is the second-largest ground squirrel in Minnesota. Living colonially, these squirrels play a significant ecological role as prey, and as ecosystem engineering through burrowing, soil cycling, and creating important habitat for a variety of species. Throughout Minnesota, they have undergone significant population decline, and a large mortality event occurred during 2022 in one of the state’s largest populations. Concerns regarding the long-term viability of this reduced and isolated population have led to discussion of employing genetic rescue to help the population recover. Genetic rescue and translocation of individuals from outside the population are usually only considered when populations become critically low and endangered. However, recent research has supported the benefits of proactively using nearby populations, adapted to similar environmental conditions, to safely reinforce an at-risk population before they become critically endangered. To test the potential for translocation to help reestablish a healthy population, we live trapped two juvenile male ground squirrels at a private site and reintroduced them with radio collars to assess the success of the translocation. After their translocation, their dispersal and establishment were tracked via radio telemetry. Location data were mapped to establish areas of movement for each squirrel. As a reference for these two relocated individuals, one resident squirrel was collared as well. The dispersal areas for the two relocated individuals were substantially larger than the area of the resident individual. In the future, we hope to conduct additional translocations, track movements, and monitor changes to the population.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 260

C07. ““Why do I have to put up with this crap”: Advancing the onboarding experience”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Janae Owen

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Dr. Stephanie Lemmer

Abstract: The onboarding process is the most dreaded part of starting at a new company. Many companies are experiencing high employee turnover within the first few months due to their ineffective onboarding process. Employees often feel disconnected, unprepared, and undervalued, leading to early resignations. The current onboarding processes are inconsistent, overwhelming, and lack personalization. New employees are not properly integrated into the company culture or given sufficient feedback and support, which negatively impacts retention. This can all be avoided if companies build a welcoming community and culture for the new employees to join and a greater structured training to enhance skills and knowledge for new employees. This project aims to create a new onboarding process that gives new employees a better experience when transitioning to a company and gets rid of the constant worry of having to fill another position. Continuous and ongoing support to create a safe and open environment for communication. With \$12,208, organizations can implement a new onboarding process that allows for a smooth transition for higher ups, current employees, and the new employees. Moving forward, this new onboarding process gives new employees the correct amount of information, personalizing their experience, valuing them for their work, and keeping them connected to the company’s culture can make a constructive onboarding process for everyone. They can create a process that continues to keep employees at a company long term.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 260

C08. "A Second rump Presidency: The First 100 Days"

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Jordon Perkins

Mentored by: Dr. Vincent Reusch

Abstract: POETRY READING: These poems were selected from a documentary poetic collection I wrote in response to the first 100 days of the second Trump presidency titled "A Second rump Presidency: The First 100 Days". Through writing this collection, I gained a better understanding of documentary poetry as a genre. The purpose of this collection was to engage with the second Trump presidency and create poems that harnessed the chaos of the first 100 days. Documentary poetry is a genre that appropriates preexisting texts to create poetic works that engage with historical events. To make these poems, documentary poets utilize base texts in a variety of formats. In my poems, I collaged and remediated material and forms from Truth Social posts, executive orders, songs, emails, and other sources. "A Second rump Presidency" is broken up by "Ole" poems throughout. These poems' forms are based on the Scandinavian American Ole and Lena jokes. They are meant to serve as more light-hearted breaks in the collection as well as call out the hypocrisy of Trump's attempts to halt immigration into the United States, as Ole, Lena, and Sven—the characters in these jokes—are immigrants themselves. These poems make use of a Scandinavian American dialect to additionally comment on Trump's English-only policies. Other poems take aim at President Trump's frenetic Truth Social posting, the renaming of the Gulf of Mexico and Denali, censorship, as well as his stances against diversity, equity and inclusion, among other topics.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 301

C09. “Resonance Induced Hyers Ulam Instability in Undamped Spring Mass Systems”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Collin Smolke

Mentored by: Dr. Douglas Anderson

Abstract: A recent study employing Fourier transform techniques presents an incomplete treatment of the Hyers--Ulam stability of linear differential equations with constant coefficients, particularly in the context of the second-order undamped harmonic oscillator (i.e., the spring-mass system). That paper asserts that such systems are universally Hyers--Ulam stable. This paper aims to clarify that the Hyers--Ulam stability of these equations is, in fact, more nuanced and critically dependent on system parameters such as the mass, damping coefficient, and spring constant. Specifically, the undamped spring-mass system is Hyers-Ulam unstable when the mass and spring constant are both positive or both negative. This instability arises due to resonance phenomena in the perturbed system. We also discuss and illustrate additional instability cases to provide a more complete stability analysis.

Concurrent Session 1

ISC 301

C10. “A Gas Chromatography–Mass Spectroscopy Analysis of Aromatherapy Products”

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Madison Van Binsbergen

Mentored by: Dr. Mark Jensen

Abstract: Aromatherapy is a form of alternative medicine that can be used for improving sleep, easing congestion, and maintaining overall wellness. Aromatherapy products contain essential oils that are composed of many different chemical compounds that contribute to the specific scent of the oil. Gas chromatography–mass spectroscopy (GC-MS) is an analytical technique used to separate the compounds in the mixture based on their boiling points. We used GC-MS to analyze various aromatherapy patches from different brands to determine both rate of release and chemical composition. Our primary goal was to first discover the best injection method for GC-MS analysis (split or splitless). Our next step in the process was to test the rates of release for patches containing different scents. We then used the former research methods to gather data to illustrate the similarities and differences between different aromatherapy products’ chemical profiles. The information surrounding the chemical profiles of these products could be especially useful to consumers of aromatherapy methods and essential oils.

Concurrent Session 1

Olin 124

C11. “Performing the Antihero: Hasan Piker; Masculinity and the Rhetoric of Digital Politics”

10:30 - 10:50 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Brennan Jensen

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Dr. Darren Valenta

Abstract: Hassan Piker is a digital political personality on twitch, x, YouTube and other platforms who presents politics and debates. This presentation will explore how Hasan Piker builds an online antihero persona that both challenges and reinforces right wing ideas about masculinity. How does Hasan Piker’s construction of an antihero persona through conservative ideals of masculinity reaffirm the right wing rhetoric that he seeks to challenge? Using Victoria A. Newsom et al.'s 2020 framework on alt right masculinities, the study focuses on three key concepts: hypermasculine performance, commodification of persona, and spectacle of transgression. Although Piker promotes progressive politics, his muscular image, aggressive communication style, and use of controversy resemble the same masculine traits often associated with right wing influencers. By applying this model, the paper argues that Piker reclaims masculine credibility for the political left, but also relies on the same link between strength, dominance, and authority that he seeks to critique. Through media examples and analysis of his digital presence, this project shows how online political power today is shaped by performance, branding, and outrage, often placing spectacle above thoughtful policy discussion.

Concurrent Session 1

Olin 124

C12. “More Than My Body - A Poster Protest Surrounding Body Image on Concordia’s Campus”

10:50 - 11:10 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Saige Mattson

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: On October 27, 2025, approximately 75 posters were hung up in all female-identifying and gender-neutral restrooms throughout Concordia’s campus. The posters, depicting a black and white mirror, read “you are more than your body” in a large, handwritten font. A QR code was provided at the bottom, giving students the opportunity to share their thoughts on the message of the poster, personal body image, and Concordia’s approach to such topics. The posters were hung up as a protest of the societal systems which have created a culture of intense shame within sexually deviant bodies. 23 total responses were recorded, with eighteen providing valuable qualitative data. Many students expressed Concordia’s need for more messaging surrounding body image. The posters seemed to have a net positive effect, though 5 responses perceived the poster negatively. Based on the data, it is recommended that Concordia consider implementing body-image-based programs.

Concurrent Session 1

Christiansen Recital Hall

C13. “The Power of Small Moments”

10:30 - 11:10 a.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Emily Lubenow, Ayden Schauer, Lea Altic

Mentored by: Dr. Darren Valenta

Abstract: The significance of this panel is to shed light on how some things that others might think are minuscule, unnecessary, and simple can have lasting mental health effects on someone else. While the situations we are all discussing are different issues, they have always been growing up with us. Silently, but uncomfortably, bugging us like a pebble in a shoe. Each of our pieces centers on a life-altering moment. For Ayden, it was being adopted; for Emily, a bocce ball quiz in middle school; and for Lea, the highs and lows of high school hockey. While these moments may seem small or insignificant to others, they profoundly shaped our perspectives and changed the way we see the world. The autoperformances in this panel were developed through a two-stage creative process. Participants first completed a series of autowriting exercises designed to encourage reflection and spontaneous responses connected to personal experiences. These writings generated material that participants later shaped and incorporated into autoperformances that draw on personal narrative while gesturing toward broader social, cultural, and political contexts. Our final products are our performances; our thematic panel amplifies the way simple memories from the past can be central to a person’s experiences. While a large part of autoperformance is the experience of the performer, an equally significant part of autoperformance is the experience of the audience member. In this way, our results will become actualized as we transform the script into a live performance.

Concurrent Session 2

Morrie Jones A-B

C14. “Effects of Teacher Retention Rates on Incarcerated Youth: A Literary Synthesis of Works on the Inequalities in Educational and Special Educational Services in Juvenile Detention Centers.”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Henry Skatvold, Jacob Thomas

Mentored by: Dr. Michelle Lelwica

Abstract: This paper addresses the systemic issue of low teacher retention rates in juvenile detention facilities, as well as how low teacher retention rates impact all youth educated within them. More specifically, we will address how teacher retention rates differ between juvenile detention centers and public schools through studies of workplace environments, legislation, and professional experience. We will also analyze the leading factors contributing to inequitable teacher retention rates between these different education environments. Our research pulls from various academic sources to show how lower teacher retention rates impact students negatively at juvenile detention centers. Our paper will answer how and why we, as future professionals and citizens, should support these educators and students in juvenile detention centers throughout the United States via legislation within our communities. Through our research, we’ve concluded that the main causes of low teacher retention include dissatisfaction with the work environment, lack of resources, and high stress due to insufficient support from administration. These factors affect students by increasing recidivism rates, and lowering future outcomes due to a lack of quality education, especially special education services for incarcerated youth. We’ve compiled ample evidence that this is a systemic issue with clear actionable solutions that have been neglected to be implemented by the Departments of Education and Justice nationwide.

Concurrent Session 2

Morrie Jones A-B

C15. “Examining ICE Through the Prison Industrial Complex: Inequality, Power, and Justice in the Modern Legal System”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Mari Kader

Mentored by: Dr. Stephanie Lemmer

Abstract: This project examines inequality within the legal system, with a focus on how justice is not applied equally, specifically recent cases involving U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Research shows that marginalized groups often experience disproportionately harsher legal outcomes compared to white defendants, raising concerns about systemic bias. Disparities in wealth and power play a significant role in shaping legal outcomes, as individuals with financial resources are able to access stronger legal representation and achieve more favorable results. This project precisely explores whether teenagers and young people are aware of these inequalities, as many may assume the justice system operates fairly despite evidence suggesting otherwise. Using a Critical Race Theory framework and thinking with scholars who examine the prison industrial complex, I analyze the role of social media in shaping public perceptions of justice, particularly in high-profile ICE-related cases where videos and posts can rapidly influence public opinion. In some instances, social media has helped expose potential injustices, while in others it has spread misinformation or led to premature judgment before legal processes are completed. Recent cases have shown individuals detained or prosecuted under questionable circumstances, sparking public debate and online reactions. By combining existing research and real-world examples, this project aims to highlight how inequality operates within the legal system and how public understanding of justice is formed.

Concurrent Session 2

Morrie Jones C-D

C16. “Spilling the Tea: Safety, Resistance, and the Platformization of Gossip”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Jonah Krogstad

Mentored by: Dr. Amy Watkin

Abstract: Over the years, the popular Facebook group 'Are We Dating the Same Guy?' has developed as a form of protection, resistance, and a means of community building. In these spaces, individuals, largely women, share pictures of the men they are dating, and other members of the group respond with anecdotal experiences about these men. Through this information sharing, these groups serve as a form of resistance against harmful men in the uncertain and often dangerous landscape of modern dating. However, as these groups have grown in popularity, concerns about doxxing, or the intentional sharing of private information, have grown. In 2023, the “Tea Dating Advice” app was released. Modeled after these Facebook groups, the app became popular in July of 2025, but was subject to controversy due to a series of doxxing incidents and data leaks culminating in its removal from the Apple App Store. Gossip has historically served as a means of protection for women from harmful men, and, in many ways, the Tea app functions as a modern extension of that protection. However, its failures also highlight the harm of centralizing and digitizing that information. This presentation will explore the history of ‘Are We Dating the Same Guy?’ Facebook groups and analyze how they function. Then it will apply that understanding to the Tea app to analyze how it functioned (and failed to function) as a form of protection and resistance. Finally, it will draw implications about gender essentialism and the future of this type of information sharing.

Concurrent Session 2

Morrie Jones C-D

C17. “Race Based Gender Dysphoria”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Qwame Martin

Mentored by: Dr. Sinjin Roming, Dr. Madison Clark

Abstract: This research project examines the concept of Race-Based Gender Dysphoria (RBGD), a framework that expands on the traditional concept of gender dysphoria. By incorporating experiences like race, culture, and systemic inequality, gender dysphoria is typically understood as distress arising from incongruence between assigned sex and gender identity. This study highlights how such distress is intensified for transgender people of color through racialized stereotypes, social surveillance, and structural barriers. Bringing in intersectionality as a guiding framework, this paper argues that gender dysphoria cannot be fully understood without considering the compounded effects of racism and transphobia. The purpose of this research is to introduce and conceptualize RBGD as a distinct yet interconnected form of dysphoria shaped by overlapping systems of oppression. Using an interdisciplinary approach, this study synthesizes already existing literature from psychology, sociology, gender studies, with Black feminist theory. It analyzes themes such as racialized gender norms, minority stress, healthcare disparities, and historical shifts in clinical definitions of gender dysphoria. Findings suggest that transgender individuals of color, particularly Black transgender individuals, experience a unique yet intensified form of psychological distress due to the interaction of racial and gendered expectations. These layered stressors contribute to barriers in healthcare access, misdiagnosis, and unmet mental health needs.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 201

C18. “Project NOURISH: Teacher Perceptions of Interdisciplinary Science Engagement Strategies”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Jenny Bratsch

Mentored by: Dr. Ashley Roseno, Dr. Meredith Wagner

Abstract: Background: Interdisciplinary instruction integrates multiple subject areas and reflects collaborative approaches used in health professions for patient-centered care. Although middle schools increasingly emphasize interdisciplinary teaching, consistent implementation remains limited. This gap may contribute to lower academic performance and reduced interest in natural sciences and health-related careers. This study assessed teachers’ perceptions of interdisciplinary educational strategies that may increase science interest among middle school students. Methods: After establishing content and face validity, a 19-item needs assessment containing Likert-scale and open-ended questions was distributed via email to grade 3-8 teachers in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Minnesota. Teacher emails were obtained from school websites and staff directories. A total of 48 teachers completed the survey. Data were analyzed using SPSS. Results: Most teachers agreed interdisciplinary instruction connecting science with other subjects improves student engagement (76%). However, only 42% of teachers reported that cross-curricular lesson integration would be helpful for implementing engaging science activities. Responses regarding nutrition-based science lesson plans (35%) also indicated limited perceived effectiveness in increasing engagement; however 56% teachers indicated that community partnerships with health professionals was important. These findings suggest that while teachers value connections with health professionals, nutrition may not yet be recognized as an interdisciplinary tool for student engagement. Conclusion: Although literature and educator responses suggest interdisciplinary education can enhance middle school science engagement, a gap remains between recognizing its value and implementing it in practice. Few teachers identified cross-curricular lesson integration as an effective strategy, suggesting challenges in translating concepts into everyday classroom instruction.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 201

C19. “Experimenting with Locally Housed LLMs”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Cheryn Lindsay, Temiloluwa Afolabi

Mentored by: Dr. Ahmed Kamel

Abstract: In this research, we worked on studying the capabilities of the different APIs (Application Programming Interfaces) which have been developed to be used by software professionals to customize general AI tools (such as ChatGPT, and Gemini) for custom applications of the many available AI platforms and designing experiments to test and compare these capabilities. Our primary focus was on smaller models run on a local computer. We studied several models and their application to computer coding, literature understanding, and writing exercises. We studied the applicability of the different models to the different tasks and compared the results obtained from these different models. Finally, we performed a preliminary comparison between the use of these models and larger models over the web. This paper presents the results of this research and provides suggestions for further studies.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 260

C20. “Framing the North Star: Media Coverage of the 2026 Minnesota ICE Protests”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Ross Motter

Mentored by: Dr. Aileen Buslig

Abstract: News outlets frame each story differently, but the reporting varies on geographic proximity and political leaning. Framing can result in very different interpretations and perceptions of the same event and influence audience perceptions and reactions. The purpose of this content analysis study is to understand how different news coverage varies in reporting during the 2026 Minnesota ICE Protests. This study aims to paint a clear picture of how reporting was conducted, considering geography and political ideation. I will analyze around 80 diverse news stories between January 5th and February 13th, 2026. Articles will be examined through the protest paradigm theory (Hertog & McLeod, 1995, 2001), coding for rioting, confrontation, federal confrontation, spectacle, and debate; devices used (Dardis, 2006), including characterization of protesters’ tactics and actions, reference to protesters’ appearance, and reference to protesters’ mental abilities; sourcing, including number of individuals cited and inclusion of protesters, citizens, local officials, and federal officials; and use of episodic or thematic frames (McLeod & Hertog, 1999). Additionally, photos included within each article will be analyzed through an adapted version of Kress and van Leeuwen’s (1996, 2006, 2020) multimodal analysis coding scheme, which will analyze photos based on number of individuals present in each photo, categorization of visible crowd members, and objects mentioned, including, but not limited to flags, symbols, weapons, smoke, fire, and vehicles. This study will be useful for understanding how the same story is framed across various news organizations during a politically charged event with both local and federal involvement.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 260

C21. “An Analysis of Influences of Supreme Court Decision Making and Case Outcome”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Aidan Dahl, Britta Nordin

Mentored by: Dr. Nicholas Howard

Abstract: The Supreme Court’s decision making can often be seen as a straightforward process consisting of the Justices’ interpretations of the Constitution relating to certain issues. However, that is not always the case. While the Supreme Court is an independent body, detached from the traditional representative democracy, and supposedly shielded from public thought, justices do respond to public opinion and other democratic inputs. To address this disconnect, our project asks why Supreme Court cases are decided in a liberal or conservative direction. We expect the Court to respond to public opinion and the nature of disagreement with the lower courts regarding their decisions, as well as variance across different Chief Justice regimes. To understand these influences and their affects, we used a linear regression model on data for the ideological direction of court opinions, public mood, Chief Justice regimes, and nature of lower court disposition. We also identified several variables which we used as controls in our modeling, ideology of the median Justice, alteration of precedent, and jurisdiction through writ of certiorari. In a vacuum our modeling showed significance across all of our models, which would prove our initial theory of their impacts correct, however this was not approached as a simply cause and effect question. When our modeling included the control variables, significance across our time period and public opinion concepts became negligible. However, lower court decision direction had a significant, inverse relationship, with the outcome of the Supreme Court’s decision.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 301

C22. “Microgravity and the Vertebral Column”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Celani Gonzalez-Vazquez, Genesis Weekes, Alin Oray

Mentored by: Dr. Krys Strand

Abstract: Microgravity causes swelling of the intervertebral discs and unloading of the muscular and skeletal systems, which increases likelihood that reloading would cause chronic pain and incidences of herniation of the IVDs. The purpose of our project is to understand the strain the vertebral column faces in microgravity and propose a solution to counteract health issues that may occur upon returning to Earth’s gravity. We hypothesize that the combined use of the Space-GAC suit, exercise, and targeted massage and stretching routines will reduce the risk of intervertebral disc (IVD) herniation while mitigating bone density loss and muscle atrophy. We propose that the next ISS crew this year use the Space-GAC suit alongside targeted spinal muscle exercise to support axial compression of the vertebral column and transition to Earth’s gravity.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 301

C23. “An Integrated Fungal-Plant-Fish Bioregenerative Life Support System (BLSS) as a Countermeasure for Neurocognitive Decline in Isolation and Confinement in During Space Missions.”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Aitor Burillo Arellano, Anusheh Shreonty

Mentored by: Dr. Krys Strand

Abstract: This research proposes a multi-trophic Bioregenerative Life Support System (BLSS) designed to mitigate Long-Term Spaceflight Composite Stress (LSCS), which causes hippocampal GABA depletion and structural brain decay. Our "Hybrid Psycho-Ecological System" integrates *Oreochromis niloticus* (Tilapia), *Lemna minor* (Duckweed), and *Hericium erinaceus* (Lion's Mane) into a circular resource loop. By recycling aquaculture waste into a nutrient-rich substrate, the system provides a continuous source of targeted biochemicals that actively improve neuroplasticity and repair synaptic thinning. To evaluate this intervention, a rigorous testing framework is employed to quantify improvements in cognitive resilience and circadian stability using neuroimaging and biomarker analysis.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 338

C24. “Microculture over Food”

11:25 - 11:40 a.m. | Nano

Student Presenter: Dylan Knecht

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: Ethnography is the study of peoples and their customs. This project aims to focus the study through a smaller lens onto the Concordia Dining Services food court and its microculture(s). The intent is to find a narrative, or multiple, underlying the everyday interactions of students over food. Daily observation of these groups will be recorded in field notes which, alongside six individual interviews, should establish a thorough through line in the development of this microculture. Current findings include a noticeable distinction has been observed between the Extro- and Introverted, where the extroverted will form small groups in the court's center, while the introverted will place themselves at the windows along the room's exterior.

Concurrent Session 2

ISC 338

C25. “Drinking the Future Part 1: Creating the foundations for a portable filtration system to combat water pollution and scarcity.”

11:40 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Casper Miller

Mentored by: Damian Lampl

Abstract: Due to water use in Data Centers, access to clean drinking water is a growing global concern. This concern is heightened in regions battling water scarcity and aging infrastructure in rural communities. Inconsistent monitoring systems and underdeveloped government efforts increase the population’s risk of consuming contaminated water. This project addresses the need for an affordable, personal automated system that monitors water quality, alerting users when water may be unsafe for consumption. The primary goal of this project is to develop software capable of detecting potential contamination through pH monitoring. I hypothesize that continuous pH measurement can serve as an early indicator of unsafe conditions, even when contamination is not visible, educate its user on ways to correctly clean water by providing a step-by-step guide and creating visual analyzations for users to record the best water sources for future use. Through detection and analysis automation, this system aims to support safer water consumption decision and education on the dangers of drinking unsafe water. Water samples will be collected from lakes and ponds in the Fargo-Moorhead area over a two-week period. Instruments such as a Raspberry Pi and pH probe will be integrated with Python programming to conduct cycles at 30-minute intervals. Each cycle will be recorded into pH data and stored in a cloud base for later visualization use. After collecting the system will generate optimal cleaning instructions with the then treated samples being retested. This system will offer a scalable, low-cost approach to freshwater monitoring in resource limited settings.

Concurrent Session 2

Olin 124

C26. “Competing for Care: How Rural Minnesota Hospitals Can Thrive in Today’s Healthcare System”

11:25 - 11:45 a.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Erik Hedstrom

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: This project examines strategies that rural community hospitals can implement to remain competitive within an increasingly consolidated healthcare environment dominated by larger healthcare systems. This project is qualitative in nature using structured interviews with current rural hospital leadership teams. These sources were analyzed to identify recurring governance approaches and operational strategies that support competitiveness among smaller hospitals. Findings suggest that implementing community-centered decision-making models emphasizing local engagement and responsiveness to community needs can be vital for sustaining rural hospitals. This presentation highlights community decision-making models that may support the long-term sustainability of rural hospitals, with a particular focus on healthcare systems and rural hospital networks in Minnesota.

Concurrent Session 2

Olin 124

C27. “Anchors of Care: The Role of Federally Qualified Health Centers in Sustaining Rural Healthcare”

11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Karsten Stumo

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) play a vital role in supporting rural communities, especially during times of hospital closures and provider shortages. This project emerged from my Healthcare Leadership coursework and a 500-hour administrative internship at a rural FQHC, where I saw firsthand the challenges of providing care in underserved areas. The presentation will be thoughtfully organized following the COSS abstract model: introduction, methods, and findings. In the introduction, I'll provide some background on the disparities in rural healthcare and explain the federal designation of FQHCs. The methods section will detail how I combined insights from my internship experience with what I've learned in healthcare finance, leadership, and health policy courses. In the findings, I will highlight that FQHCs serve as vital anchors within rural health systems, harmonizing a mission-driven approach to care with financial sustainability. This presentation is a great way to connect classroom learning with real-world administrative practice. It underscores how adaptive leadership can help improve rural health equity and build resilient health systems for the future.

Concurrent Session 2

Christiansen Recital Hall

C28. “Getting It Off Our Chest: Autoperformance, Confession, and Healing”

11:25 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Soren Thompson, Meredith Tullbane

Mentored by: Dr. Darren Valenta

Abstract: Our goal is to give an auto performance that gives us a way to get something off our chest or confess something that's been bothering us. I believe that our auto performance can show how getting things off our chest or essentially confessing can help the person in question to move on in a way and heal. It can be a very strong way to express ourselves and when people listen it makes us feel validated and seen. The purpose of this presentation will be to show the many ways we give auto performances in our day to day lives, whether it's a rant about how marvel is going down the drain or just sharing one's testimony. We all perform whether we are aware of it or not. Autoperformances at their core are the utilization of narratives. That can take the form of many things which can be arguments or confessions. The anticipated result is a deeper understanding of how autoperformances are utilized and function in an everyday context and how it can be used as a form of emotional expression and therapy in a way. Ultimately, this project argues that we are constantly performing our stories, and that intentional acts of confession can transform those performances into meaningful, restorative experiences. We plan to perform our performances that we did in our Intro to Performance Studies class.

Concurrent Session 3

Morrie Jones A-B

C29. “Exploring Mental Health Coping Mechanisms Across Different Religious and Spiritual Practices”

1:45 - 2:25 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Mame Diarra Bouso, Safiyo Bakar

Mentored by: Dr. Anne Mocko

Abstract: Mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, and stress, are common among college students. Religion and spirituality often play an important role in helping individuals cope with these challenges. Many studies suggest that faith-based practices, such as prayer, mindfulness, meditation, or community support, can improve emotional well-being and resilience. Understanding these coping mechanisms is important for creating programs for college students from diverse religious backgrounds. This research project aims to explore mental health awareness and coping strategies across three religious faiths: Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. Through literature review of peer-reviewed articles, we examine the connection between religion and spirituality in mental health disorders, analyze mental health illness stigma and religiosity, and describe faith-based strategies used to cope with mental health challenges. Empirical research indicates that, for some individuals, religion/spirituality can be a source of mental support and comfort while for others, they may contribute to distress or challenges in coping with mental health. Therefore, while spiritual and religious coping mechanisms can support and strengthen mental care, they should not replace professional mental health treatment.

Concurrent Session 3

Morrie Jones C-D

C30. “Values of Peace and Dialogue in Norwegian Upper Secondary Education”

1:45 - 2:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Yelitza Hernandez-Guitron

Mentored by: Dr. Erik Cleven

Abstract: Norway is often described as a “peace nation,” with a strong international reputation for diplomacy, conflict mediation, and humanitarian engagement. This project examines how that identity is reflected and sustained through education, focusing on the role of curriculum in promoting values of peace and dialogue. Understanding how these values are embedded in schooling is important for evaluating how education can shape democratic participation, intercultural understanding, and responses to conflict. This study asks: to what extent does Norway’s upper secondary education curriculum, particularly the history curriculum, promote values of peace and dialogue? This research argues that while the curriculum embeds these values through its emphasis on democratic participation, critical reflection, and engagement with conflict and reconciliation, challenges in implementation can limit their full realization in practice. To explore this question, this study uses qualitative content analysis of Norway’s LK20 curriculum, including the general curriculum framework and the History curriculum at the VG2 and VG3 levels. The analysis focuses on curriculum language, competencies, and learning objectives, alongside materials from the Dembra program and academic literature on peace education. The findings show that the LK20 curriculum strongly reflects values such as human dignity, cultural diversity, ethical awareness, and democratic participation, while encouraging engagement with multiple perspectives and historical injustices. However, factors such as teacher preparedness, resource disparities, and time constraints affect how these values are implemented. Programs like Dembra help address these gaps by providing training and resources that support democratic dialogue and inclusive education in practice.

Concurrent Session 3

Morrie Jones C-D

C31. “Friluftsliv & Inclusion; Exploring How Outdoor Spaces and Activities Foster Social Inclusion for Refugees and Immigrants in Norway”

2:05 - 2:25 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Phia Revoir

Mentored by: Dr. Erik Cleven Dr. Jenn Sweatman

Abstract: Norway has a robust integration program in response to the increase in immigration the country has seen in recent years. Immigrants report feeling integrated, but not included, which has caused the Norwegian government to shift its focus to promote inclusion as part of their integration policy. To promote inclusion, a rising number of integration programs utilize friluftsliv—a core part of Norwegian culture centered on direct connection with nature. The main objective of this research paper is to discuss how organizations operating in outdoor spaces can create programs that use practices like friluftsliv to foster social inclusion of refugees and immigrants in Norway. Utilizing a literature review and four qualitative interviews with Oslo-based organizations, this research found that these organizations foster social inclusion for refugee and immigrant groups through practices of friluftsliv in outdoor spaces by creating activities and programs which allow those communities to form social networks, adapt and continue friluftsliv in their own cultural context, and increase representation of immigrants and refugees in the Norwegian wilderness. However, these programs fall short of including refugee and immigrant communities because of structural segregation, lack of awareness of the barriers immigrant and refugee groups face in everyday life, and perpetuation of Norwegian cultural superiority. While this research suggests that nature can be used to promote social inclusion, it also acknowledges that nature is not “culturally neutral.” These findings offer insights for national integration policy and future programs that seek to promote commonality between groups.

Concurrent Session 3

ISC 201

C32. “Phones, Fatigue, and Performance: How Screen Time Impacts Athletes”

1:45 - 2:05 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: David Johnston

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: Smartphone usage has become nearly constant among college student-athletes, raising concerns about its impact on performance, recovery, and overall safety. This topic addresses a growing quality and safety issue by examining how excessive phone use, particularly before sleep, can negatively affect athletic outcomes. The framework for this analysis draws on principles of quality and improvement science, focusing on measurable performance indicators such as sleep quality, reaction time, and injury risk. This presentation argues that increased smartphone usage is associated with decreased athletic performance due to disrupted sleep patterns, reduced cognitive focus, and impaired physical recovery. To explore this relationship, this study uses a literature review of peer-reviewed research in sports science, sleep medicine, and behavioral health. Scholarly sources examining screen time, sleep disruption, and athletic performance outcomes are synthesized to identify consistent patterns and findings. Improvement science concepts such as Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles are also applied to evaluate potential interventions. Anticipated results suggest that limiting smartphone use, especially before bedtime, can lead to improved sleep duration and quality, enhanced reaction time, and reduced injury risk. These findings support the implementation of simple, evidence-based interventions such as screen time limits, digital wellness education, and team-based accountability strategies. Overall, this topic highlights how behavioral factors like phone usage can be addressed through structured improvement efforts to enhance both performance and athlete well-being.

Concurrent Session 3

ISC 201

C33. “The Three Layers of Extractivism in Artificial Intelligence”

2:05 - 2:25 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Iqra Hassan

Mentored by: Dr. Jan Pranger, Dominic Meyers

Abstract: In 2016, Klaus Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), published his book *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, coining the term for a new industrial era. He argued that this period is characterized by digital technology that is now a part of our everyday life and has changed global industrial work forever. In this era, industry leaders such as Nvidia’s Jensen Huang emphasize that Artificial Intelligence is the breakthrough technology for addressing the global crisis. However, many environmental advocates express concern about AI infrastructures’ contribution to climate change. This presentation will document the real-world price of our digital revolution. I will break this down into three key layers: the extraction of natural resources, digital mining, and the global labor force that maintains these AI data centers. By looking at these layers, we can see the hidden environmental and human costs of the “fourth industrial revolution”.

Concurrent Session 3

ISC 260

C34. “How Fracking Reshapes Social Conditions, Water Security, and Gendered Harm in the Bakken Oil Region”

1:45 - 2:25 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Delaney Claggett, Lily Medved-Charpentier, Leah Lenz, Naima Sharif

Mentored by: Dr. Jenn Sweatman

Abstract: This paper argues that oil extraction in the Bakken oil field, particularly through hydraulic fracturing (fracking), produces significant socioeconomic and environmental changes that heighten the vulnerability of Indigenous women to exploitation. Population influxes associated with oil booms contribute to increased demand for housing and services, as well as rising crime rates, including gender-based violence. An additional impact of fracking, environmental degradation, disproportionately impacts nearby Indigenous communities, compounding existing structural inequalities. Drawing on existing research, this paper examines the intersection of environmental harm, public health outcomes, and social instability. We analyze data on environmental impacts, mental and physical health trends, crime statistics, and rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW) to identify patterns linking extractive industries to increased risk. Additionally, we incorporate reviews of existing literature to contextualize our findings within the broader discourse of resource extraction and systemic marginalization. Our findings suggest that extractive projects located near Native reservations and communities function as a “risk multiplier,” worsening preexisting vulnerabilities, increasing exploitation and violence. We suggest that these outcomes are not isolated but are rather embedded within broader disruptions caused by oil development. This research has important implications for policy. We argue that future oil and gas projects, particularly those involving fracking, should require comprehensive assessments that explicitly address potential increases in crime rates, environmental harm, and gender-based violence prior to approval. Such measures are necessary to promote greater accountability in extractive practices.

Concurrent Session 3

ISC 301

C35. “Small Course, Big Impact: Undergraduate Learning in a Week-long Rat Behavior Lab”

1:45 - 2:25 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Al Sterling, Brynn Drevlow, Asher Utsch, Kolton Goehring

Mentored by: Dr. Susan Larson

Abstract: Many undergraduate students are interested in research but have limited opportunities to experience the research process in a hands-on and approachable way. This panel presentation explores the value of short-term, immersive laboratory courses as an entry point into undergraduate behavioral research. Using our experience in an animal behavior course working with laboratory rats, we examine how direct observation and interaction with animal models helps students better understand the principles behind behavioral research and experimental design. The purpose of this panel is to highlight how short-term research experiences can support student learning and engagement with scientific research. We argue that even within a condensed timeframe, students can develop a stronger understanding of animal behavior, research methods, and the ethical considerations involved in working with animal models. These experiences help bridge the gap between learning about research in the classroom and actively participating in it. Our presentation will describe the structure of the course and the process of participating in behavioral observation and data collection. As student presenters, we will reflect on our experiences working through the research process, including learning behavioral protocols, interpreting animal behavior, and collaborating with other students. We will also discuss informal feedback from students about how the course shaped their understanding of research. Overall, this panel aims to demonstrate the educational value of short-term research courses and how they can increase student confidence, curiosity, and interest in future research opportunities.

Concurrent Session 3

Olin 124

C36. “Locked In: A Proposal for Increased Campus Safety”

1:45 - 2:25 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Elise Halvorson, Avalon Hughs, Ben Heil, Megan Greshowak, Evan Froslie

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: In order to increase safety and security on campus, we propose that academic buildings on campus should be exclusively fob-access. In this panel-structured speech, we address the problems of campus safety risks, the causes behind those risks, a proposed solution, as well as its benefits. According to national school violence studies and reports in the field, crime rates on college and academic campuses have increased in recent years, with trends continuing to rise. We aim to examine these occurrences and add a Concordia-specific perspective on the issue. During the process of researching for this speech, we interviewed Mr. MacDonald, the director of security and public safety here on campus. Through the interview, he helped to provide further information about the status of safety at Concordia, explain potential security improvements, and clarify our primary proposal. The implications of our findings will help to create a more secure and stable campus, assuring students, professors, and faculty that our plan will leave Concordia in a safer standing.

Concurrent Session 3

Christiansen Recital Hall

C37. “Poetry and Autoperformance – Language as a Means to Communicate Identity”

1:45 - 2:25 p.m. | Panel

Student Presenters: Oliver Fluegel-Murray, Saige Mattson

Mentored by: Dr. Darren Valenta

Abstract: In the current sociopolitical climate, silent conformity is often rewarded, with language that breaks this silence remaining a powerful tool for cultivating understanding, empathy, and connection. Autoperformance is an effective way to embody these principles. Grounded in performance theory, autoperformance positions the performer as both researcher and artist, channeling personal experience into performance and offering the audience new insight into lived experience and identity. In these autoperformances, poetic language is used to share experiences of marginalization related to queerness and neurodivergence, relying on poetry’s power to perform and convey identity and meaning. Autoperformance, as both a research method and an aesthetic process, is able to connect personal experiences of marginalization with the broader social context of contemporary society, creating a reciprocal relationship with the audience that allows for empathy and fosters a deeper, mutual understanding of social issues. This process will be presented through original autoperformances accompanied by reflective discussion.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones A-B

C38. “The Price of Participation: Who Can Afford to Be Politically Active?”

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Andrew Traeger, Cale Bauer

Mentored by: Dr. Nicholas Howard

Abstract: Democracy centers upon on the idea of the consent of the governed, and the American political experiment is no different. However, there is a rise in the U.S. of unequal levels of political participation among individuals of different socioeconomic backgrounds and demographics. As a society, we have built barriers that hinder the most basic functions of democracy – if individuals participate less, they are less likely to be represented. To address this important differentiation in representation, this project asks how resources and opportunities shape an individual’s ability to engage in democratic life. This study uses the Civic Voluntarism Model to examine how socioeconomic status and media consumption shape political participation, drawing on data from the 2022 Cooperative Election Study. We expect that more resourced and informed individuals are more likely to participate in political acts. Our results reflect that higher socioeconomic status is associated with greater political participation. Additionally, media consumption emerges as one of the strongest predictors of political participation. These findings aim to uphold the Civic Voluntarism Model while simultaneously highlighting the evolving information and resource landscape that reshapes how political participation is understood, underscoring the importance of engagement pathways in shaping contemporary political participation.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones A-B

C39. “Community in Practice: An Ethnographic Review of Service and Connection at Churches United”

3:00 - 3:15 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenter: Kaelyn Van Dellen

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: The relationship between people experiencing homelessness and/or food insecurity and those who devote their time and energy to helping them is one that is riddled with nuance and complications. For many volunteers, it is easy to develop a prejudiced view of those receiving services and a savior mentality about the work that they are doing. Ethnography offers a methodology to immerse oneself in this culture to learn from and about these people and their dynamic. My creative scholarship was an ethnographic research project, that is a genre of writing based on participant observation and interview during immersion in an unfamiliar group with the purpose of documenting and discovering how members of the group interact with one another. I hypothesized that by doing so, I could gain valuable insight into my chosen community; Churches United for the Homeless. My research process consisted of over 24 volunteer hours with instantaneous jottings about the events that transpired and full field notes written after the fact. After careful reflection on my field notes, I will write a full ethnography that makes a claim about the staff and volunteers at Churches United. Once I am done with my research, I anticipate finding a significant pattern in interpersonal relationships within the organization, which I can use to flesh out a claim about the organization. I predict that I will find a significant pattern related to how the regular staff and volunteers treat one another, new volunteers, and guests differently.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones A-B

C40. “Compassionate Care: An Ethnographic Review of the NICU Community”

3:15 - 3:30 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenter: Eleanor Culloton

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: To shed light on the powerful and positive effect of NICU staff on families, I have been conducting an ongoing ethnographic research project studying the NICU community at Essentia Health in Fargo. Ethnography is a research methodology defined as the systematic study of the customs of a group. Branching from anthropology, the purpose of this project is to immerse myself through participant observation into a group, writing fieldnotes, and conducting interviews along the way. To better understand this community through an ethnographer’s lens, I have been conducting an ongoing project consisting of getting access to the group through extended communication and actions, conducting at least twenty-four hours of in-person observations, writing a set of detailed fieldnotes from jottings made in the field, and writing the final ethnographic essay based around a common theme discovered during time spent in the field. In my research thus far, I have found the NICU staff and providers to value teamwork between departments to achieve their shared goal of patient discharge, communication during rounds and throughout the day, and compassionate, unbiased care as the standard. Anticipated results will bring focus and light to the selfless efforts of those working in the NICU to provide families with exceptional patient-centered care, and the effects of their efforts on families. The project will culminate in an oral presentation and an ethnographic essay, which will serve as a written chronicle of my research and fieldwork.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones C-D

C41. “The Ethnographic Study of Adult Ballet Classes”

2:40 - 2:55 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenter: Alexis Miller

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: There are many benefits that can occur from adults involving themselves in dance classes, specifically ballet. I have discovered through studying these dance classes ethnographically that taking adult ballet classes can provide good exercise, a way to build friendships, and a healthy hobby to occupy time. Ethnography is a way to study a group or culture by immersing yourself in the environment. I started my study by researching Gaspers School of Dance, then started taking weekly classes. By participating in these classes I am able to experience and learn about the culture at a different level than you would by simply studying from the outside. I have conducted interviews with a wide range of ages of people in this class, which has given me even more insight into the culture. I have learned how easy it is to integrate yourself into an environment like this, and why others have decided to take classes like this. Overall, in my speech I will discuss the process I went through, interview results, and how the class culture is different than anything I have seen before.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones C-D

C42. “Coaching for Success: Insights from Athletic Coaches”

2:55 - 3:10 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenters: Kaylie Zimmerman, Dylan Sipe, Xermoua Loranxay

Mentored by: Dr. Shontarius Aikens

Abstract: Our project focuses on interviewing athletic coaches to understand common themes in what help athletes succeed and what challenges they face. The purpose of this project is to learn what works, what doesn't, and how coaches mentor and guide athletes both on and off the field. This topic is important because coaches play a major role in athlete development, confidence, and long-term success. Throughout these interviews, we explored how coaches support athletes through motivation, communication, accountability, and building strong relationships. A common theme that came up was the importance of trust, consistency, and creating a positive team culture. Coaches also shared challenges such as managing athlete mindset, handling pressure, and helping athletes stay focused during difficult times. The goal of this project is to better understand effective coaching strategies and how mentorship impacts athlete growth. This information can be helpful for future coaches, athletes, and anyone interested in leadership and team development. Overall, this experience helped us better understand the value of strong leadership, communication, performance, growth, and personal development.

Concurrent Session 4

Morrie Jones C-D

C43. “Paul Bissonnette Interviewing Techniques”

3:10 - 3:30 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Chase Rawson

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Dr. Kirsten Theye

Abstract: This classic project analyzes the interviewing style of Paul Bissonnette (Biz) on the hockey podcast Spittin’ Chiclets and in his live television role as an TNT intermission analyst. Developed as a part of a media and communication course, this research examines how Biz’s on-air persona influences his ability to conduct compelling and revealing interviews. Drawing from selected podcast episodes and televised segments, I conducted a qualitative analysis of his questioning techniques, tone, structure, and rapport-building strategies. Findings suggest that Biz’s self-deprecating humor and “clown” persona create a sense of comfort and authenticity that allows him to ask direct, sometimes difficult questions without alienating guests. His credibility as a former NHL player further strengthens this dynamic. However, findings also show a tendency toward lengthy, double-barreled questions that can limit clarity and guest response depth. Overall, this project highlights how personality, credibility and question structure shape effective sports media interviewing.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 201

C44. “Queer Social Structures in US Women’s Rights Movements from 1889 to 1918”

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Samwise Tritabaugh

Mentored by: Dr. Madison Clark

Abstract: Queer history is not taught thoroughly at Concordia College. Aspects that are spoken about are hushed and often flawed. In our modern day, queer history is incredibly important; queer individuals deserve to know their legacy and that there are countless valuable lessons to learn from studying and discussing it. By banishing this section of our history, we, as a society, do a disservice to ourselves, the memory of those who we are exiling, and to future generations who may benefit from this knowledge. From the late 1800s till the passage of the 19th amendment, American women’s rights groups were infused with a non-traditional social structure that emphasized bonds between women, both platonic and non-platonic. Many women within these groups embraced a familial title system wherein they adopted mentees and encouraged close-partnerships, often sapphic. Queer relationships, both platonic and non, were so infused within the social structure that these movements cannot truly be studied without them. Through a presentation on queer social structures in women’s rights movements from 1889 to 1918, I will develop the conversation on queer history to Concordia students. My hope is that by continuing this topic in public discussion, Concordia students will be encouraged to freely discuss and learn about this previously ignored segment of history. I intend to continue openly pursuing the education of queer history through a series of presentations I will conduct during the 2026-2027 school year with the partnership of SAGA.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 201

C45. “The Pilgrim And The Artist: Connected Through Liminal Space”

3:00 - 3:20 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Henry Skatvold

Mentored by: Dr. Jeff Meyer

Abstract: Are the pilgrim and artist more similar than different? Are their mediums of “travel” through paint, sound, and trail interconnected through similar processes? Liminal space belongs in both the fields of art (audio and visual) and pilgrimage through their transformative structures. Thus, this allows for these venturing souls to consciously transcend their lives through the adventure in their processes and communities. This paper aims to bring correlation between these fields to display the vast experience gained in the liminal space that is crucial in both the arts and pilgrimage, exploring the concept through three structures. First, performance in art and pilgrimage focuses on the ways in which both their subjects present a transformation to their audience as well as to their communities and themselves. Second, *communitas* brings the lens of the core experiences in community, both in the performance and perception of art, as well as the community experiences along the journey through a pilgrimage. Third, creativity as a facilitator of the liminal space, brings both artist and pilgrim to build their own understood path and is imperative to a transformational experience through their respective mediums. Throughout, this study utilizes scholars work to bridge liminal space and it’s relationships to performance, *communitas*, and creativity focusing on the conscious contemplative experience of the pilgrim and artist, applying it to the fields of, and adjacent to, art and pilgrimage studies to show that the pilgrim and pilgrimage, is a closely related experience to that of the artist.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 201

C46. “The Medieval Poet-Musicians as Pilgrims: Reimagining the Traditions”

3:20 - 3:40 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Zachary Catalan

Mentored by: Dr. Jeff Meyer

Abstract: The poet-musician traditions of the Middle Ages, making up a significant part of secular music during this period, incorporated physical movement into facets of their work. Among these are their festivals or meetings, known to us through recorded verse or narrative, where these musicians allegedly gathered together. These locations, including the Château de Puivert in Occitania or Eisenach’s Wartburg Castle, served as sacralized space for members of these organizations; these were places where the attendants likely partook in lively activities such as singing, composition of new verse, and competitions between one another. Because of the nature of these gatherings and ritualistic events, the capacity for *communitas* and the possibility for transformation would be compelling motivations for the poet-musicians to make physical journeys. Motivations for travel are also emphasized through the focus both of self and communal identity at these gatherings. The “pilgrimages” were often powered by these core ideas of *communitas*, transformation, and identity, ideas that also relate to the historical contexts of the southern French “pays” and German themes of nature. While medieval pilgrimage itself has been comprehensively analyzed within pilgrimage studies, other topics within secular music during the same period warrants more study, which includes the poet-musician traditions. Focusing on the lives of the Troubadours and the Minnesängers, this paper explores the meaning and importance of movement and gathering within the medieval poet-musician traditions and aims at a “re-presentation” (as Simon Coleman describes) of these traditions into the field of pilgrimage studies.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 260

C47. “AI in Fraud Detection and Prevention”

2:40 - 2:55 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenters: Eric Cockhill, Morgan Sauvageau, Emma Ravnaas, Jillian Martinez, Zach Ellerbusch

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Lindsey DiFiore

Abstract: Advanced Intelligence or AI already plays a role in fraud detection and prevention. AI can be very helpful if it is used correctly, but there is also so much that we as people do not know about AI. This project analyzes the impact of AI, how we can make it better, and will analyze the current AI usage across fraud detection and prevention systems. The results indicate the potential displacement of humans in this field of work, the privacy of people’s information, and the predictive analysis that AI falls back on when it has never seen the data the user presents to it. The goal of this project is to deepen everybody;s understanding of how beneficial AI can be in everyday jobs.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 260

C48. “The Power of Power: An Analysis of Russia's Resource Driven Foreign Policy”

2:55 - 3:15 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Grace Phan

Mentored by: Dr. Jan Pranger

Abstract: This research examines the critical juncture of natural resources and foreign policy. As great power global political dynamics continue to intensify, a thorough analysis of global conditions is required to understand the complexity of issues. Russia is one of the world's largest energy producers. Its vast wealth of natural resources are inextricably linked to Russia's foreign policymaking, with the two components both shaping and being shaped by each other. These resources are supported by a variety of infrastructure, including pipelines, refining facilities, nuclear plants, and oil fields. In turn, the state's gross domestic product (GDP) and state-funded energy companies are supported by mass exportation, predominantly to Europe and Asia. Natural resource wealth influences relations with Western liberal-democratic countries, allows Russia to dominate dependent states, and drives foreign policy through the need for energy security and infrastructure. This research uses literature review to analyze the use of natural resources in policymaking by authoritarian states, with a focus on Russian diplomacy. Through this review, an understanding of the complicated implications on the world stage can be found.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 260

C49. “Examining Partisan Congressional Oversight of the Executive Branch”

3:15 - 3:35 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenters: Silas Dahlseid, Robbie Kreps

Mentored by: Dr. Nicholas Howard

Abstract: Modern Congresses have long struggled to advance any significant legislation when it is against the preferences of the President. The inability to pass this type of important legislation poses a long-term threat to the balance-of-power in the American political system. Identifying key factors associated with committee consideration is the first step in identifying bills that have momentum towards becoming law. Therefore, this project asks why bills limiting the executive receive attention in Congress. By having better insight into producing executive limiting bills which gain momentum in the House, the Congress will be better able to legislate on issues that require the curtailment of executive power. Our research hypothesizes several possible factors associated with committee consideration, including whether the bill sponsor is the chair of the committee, the number of cosponsors on the bill, and the presidential support of the committee chair. We identify a sample of bills from the 114-116th Congress based on identified grammatical relationships between the words of bill summaries. We estimate an OLS regression based on the several factors we hypothesize to be significant. We expect there to be a clear advantage for bills that have measurable committee chair support, and a less clear advantage for bills with implied presidential support.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 301

C50. “Who Taught You to Hate Yourself’ Malcolm X’s take on internalized racism”

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Nader Said

Mentored by: Dr. Stephanie Lemmer

Abstract: Internalized racism, the adoption of negative racial stereotypes by members of a marginalized group, remains a significant psychological and sociopolitical phenomenon rooted in systems of oppression. Understanding how self-hatred is constructed and sustained requires examining the rhetorical mechanisms used both to impose and to dismantle it. This paper analyzes Malcolm X's 1962 speech "Who Taught You to Hate Yourself?", delivered at the funeral of Brother Ronald Stokes, as a foundational text in the rhetoric of Black identity and resistance. The central argument is that Malcolm X employed repetitive interrogative rhetoric and a deliberate us-versus-them binary not to incite division, but to redirect internalized shame outward toward its true source, systemic white supremacy, while simultaneously calling the Black community toward unity and self-affirmation. Drawing on close rhetorical analysis of the speech alongside Sara Ahmed's cultural theory of "stickiness," the way certain words and affects become attached to particular bodies and communities, this paper examines how language like "inferior," "violent," and "oppressed" was weaponized against Black Americans and how Malcolm X worked to unstick and reclaim those associations. The analysis reveals that Malcolm's rhetoric functions as both diagnosis and remedy: naming the external origin of self-hatred while constructing an alternative framework of collective pride and solidarity. This study contributes to ongoing conversations about race, identity, language, and the enduring power of activist oratory.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 301

C51. “Gustave Caillebotte's Man at His Bath (1884)”

3:00 - 3:20 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Grace Dowden

Mentored by: Dr. Susan Lee

Abstract: Much of the art historical discourse of impressionism focuses on this character who is calm, aloof and apart from the crowd. The flaneur, an upper-class man who was depicted in a nice suit and jacket with a top hat and a cane, he was the subject for many impressionist painters. I center my work on Gustave Caillebotte examining his unconventional male nude painting, *Man at His Bath* (1884). Male nudes, while very prevalent in neoclassical works, were not as often seen in late nineteenth century paintings. The few nudes that were depicted were done heroically expressing a sure sense of masculinity. I examined this painting as a flaneur in the act of badauderie. The badaud is ungendered and part of a crowd seeking spectacle through the mundane in everyday life. It is only very recently that research has been done on the concept of the badaud as a figure in 19th century impressionist art. I argue that it is through the badaud he can make the man a spectacle to question the overlapping identities people have. I argue Caillebotte uses this unconventional male nude to question the societal boundaries of gender and class in Parisian society because he is personally and politically invested in these concepts. At this time Parisian society was very binary in terms of gender constructs and class hierarchies; overlapping was frowned upon. There was, however, a social idea that allowed for the merging and blurring of boundaries, and this was the concept of the badaud.

Concurrent Session 4

ISC 301

C52. “Documentary Poetry as a Tool for Rehumanization”

3:20 - 3:40 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Jordon Perkins

Mentored by: Dr. Vincent Reusch

Abstract: Documentary poetry is a genre that appropriates preexisting texts to create poetic works that engage with historical events. Documentary poets utilize base texts in a variety of formats—books, emails, articles, transcripts, etc.—and collage and remediate them to create new poetic works. My project aimed to determine how documentary poetic works alter perception of the events and people they document. I conducted a literature review of documentary poetic collections, interviews with documentary poets, and academic criticism focusing on the genre. I found that through the use of real-world, preexisting texts, documentary poems work to rehumanize previously dehumanized people. In Mark Nowak’s *Coal Mountain Elementary*, for example, Nowak collages newspaper articles, lesson plans, oral history testimonies, and images to document mining disasters in West Virginia and China. Heimrad Bäcker’s *Transcript* quotes Nazi documents to call out the Holocaust being referred to as “unspeakable.” In both of these collections, the works aim to humanize those affected by these events, instead of viewing those involved as simply “numbers.” Documentary poetry is a genre that is increasingly connecting poets with broader conversations about social justice in our society and culture. Using the poetic format and tools like appropriation and collage, poets craft new views of real events and challenge hegemonic ways of thinking about them.

Concurrent Session 4

Olin 124

C53. “Building a Business with Intention: Cobbertunity Fund”

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Kiya McLaurin

Mentored by: Heather McDougall, J.D.

Abstract: This presentation highlights the evolution of Key Event Planning and the steps taken to reach this point in my business. It focuses on how clarity in vision, intentional decision making, and investment in growth can reshape both the direction of a business and the mindset of the person leading it. At its core, Key Event Planning was built on meaningful connections and a strong desire to create memorable experiences for clients. The business thrived on personalization and trust, but much of its energy was directed toward immediate client wants and needs. While this allowed for strong service, it limited the ability to focus on long term positioning, scalability, and brand development. A major shift occurred when Key Event Planning received support through the Cobbertunity Fund. This created space to think beyond day to day operations and invest more intentionally in the future. The focus shifted toward strengthening the brand, refining services, hiring staff, and building a more recognizable presence. The fund acted as both a resource and a catalyst, allowing the business to move from reactive decisions to more strategic growth. With clearer direction, the business began to see stronger interest, more aligned client inquiries, and increased opportunities. Just as important was the internal shift. Leading with greater confidence and intention created a more proactive, structured, and aligned business. This presentation shows that meaningful growth is not about doing more, but doing things with purpose, creating a stronger and more sustainable future for Key Event Planning.

Concurrent Session 4

Olin 124

C54. “Color Theory's Role in Marketing”

3:00 - 3:20 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Maya Parkin

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers

Abstract: In marketing color plays a major role in shaping consumer perceptions, influencing people's emotions, as well as it helps with brand recognition. The purpose of this project is to analyze how brands use color theory in marketing by comparing small brands such as 787 coffee, and Rifle Paper Co. to large brands such as Bubblers, and Starbucks. This project is an extended literature review, in an attempt to answer the research question: How do small and large brands market differently based on their use of color theory? My anticipated results are that while both small and large brands use color as a way to communicate and appeal to consumers their approaches will differ in terms of the use of it. Larger brands will be found to rely on more simplified color palettes that support a global consistency and strong brand recognition whereas smaller brands might be more inclined to experiment with more strong or diverse colors as a way to establish more individuality as well as to attract attention.

Concurrent Session 4

Olin 124

C55. “Inside Third Spaces: An Ethnographic Review of Brewhalla”

3:20 - 3:35 p.m. | Nano

Student Presenter: Julia Vickers

Mentored by: Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: This ethnographic project examines the social and cultural dynamics of Brewhalla, a mixed-use food hall, vendor and shopping hub, community gathering space in Fargo. Through participant observation and conversations with vendors and coordinators, this study explores how Brewhalla functions as more than a marketplace; it operates as a curated social environment that shapes how people interact, consume, and experience local culture. Particular attention is given to spatial design, patterns of movement, and the ways individuals and groups occupy shared spaces. The research also considers how the venue blends elements of craft consumption, regional identity, and entertainment to create a distinct atmosphere that appeals to diverse audiences. By observing everyday behaviors such as vendor behavior, socializing, and navigating the space, this ethnography highlights how Brewhalla contributes to Fargo’s evolving urban culture and reflects broader trends in contemporary communal third spaces. Initial findings conclude that Brewhalla functions well as a third space, with vendors enjoying open concepts.

Concurrent Session 4

Christiansen Recital Hall

C56. “The Grapes of Wrath and the Resisting Reader”

2:40 - 3:00 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Sarah Schroeder

Mentored by: Dominic Meyers, Dr. Karla Knutson

Abstract: In her book, *Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*, Judith Fetterley discusses how women are often taught to read literature from a male perspective. Due to this, there are many significant parts of written works that may be overlooked because their importance is not traditionally understood by men. Due to this, Judith Fetterley proposes the idea of being a resisting reader and examining literature from a female perspective. In this project, I examine how the concept of Judith Fetterley’s “resisting reader” can be applied to *The Grapes of Wrath*, and what it uncovers. Reading John Steinbeck’s *The Grapes of Wrath* as a resisting reader demonstrates the agency and authority that results from the domestic space. For my research, I examine previous analysis of the domestic space in *The Grapes of Wrath* and connect that analysis to examining literature as a resisting reader. I then do my own analysis of *The Grapes of Wrath* utilizing the resisting reader perspective. As a result of this research, I am able to see how analyzing *The Grapes of Wrath* from a resisting reader perspective demonstrates power that is associated with domestic work. It is seen in the consistency of the domestic space within the book, the influence the domestic space allows female characters, and the understanding of collectivism that derives from working in the domestic space and how it impacts the family on their trip to California.

Concurrent Session 4

Christiansen Recital Hall

C57. “Growing Music and Business Entrepreneurship”

3:00 - 3:20 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Elisabeth Grack

Mentored by: Bree Langemo, J.D.

Abstract: The crossroads of music and business is where creative and entrepreneurial spirits thrive. Founded in 2021, Concordia’s Music and Business Entrepreneurship program fosters the entrepreneurial spirit of musicians and music industry professionals who will impact our community. This project explores ways to grow the existing Music and Business Entrepreneurship program, bridging the gap between disciplines in a meaningful and effective manner. This research is grounded in interviews with students, faculty, alumni, and music business professionals. The findings will guide us in shaping valuable educational opportunities that best cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit in students who are the future of the music industry.

Concurrent Session 4

Christiansen Recital Hall

C58. “Women in Music: Interpreting Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel’s *Das Jahr*”

3:20 - 3:40 p.m. | Classic

Student Presenter: Maria Clapp

Mentored by: Dr. Jay Hershberger

Abstract: In recent years, increasing scholarly and musicological interest in women composers has led to renewed recognition of Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805–1847). A highly gifted composer and pianist, she wrote over 400 works. Although she was unable to pursue a professional musical career due to societal limitations, she received an exceptional musical education and remained musically active. One of her most significant works, *Das Jahr* (The Year), is a cycle of twelve character pieces—one for each month of the year—plus *Nachspiel* (postlude), composed in 1841 as a Christmas gift for her husband, Wilhelm Hensel. Nearly 150 years later, the manuscript was rediscovered and published for the first time in 1989. Due to its relatively recent publication, *Das Jahr* has received limited analytical and performance attention, which has left room for further exploration. This presentation will provide an examination and performance of portions of *Das Jahr*. The first part of the presentation will explore her artistic development, education, relationship with her family, while also providing a chronological overview of her compositions to illustrate her evolving compositional style. The second part of the presentation will include a performance of one to two pieces from *Das Jahr* to further demonstrate Hensel’s musical ideas and let the audience experience her music. Ultimately, this presentation seeks to deepen our understanding of *Das Jahr* as one of Hensel's most significant works, highlighting her distinctive compositional voice and her contributions to 19th-century piano literature.