

Communication Arts and Sciences Honors Thesis Projects

The Rhetorical Situation and Penn State: Apologies, Emotions, and the Call for Unity
by Rebecca Alt

Rebecca Alt investigated the contexts and communicative actions surrounding The Jerry Sandusky Scandal. Her project examined the texts across different audiences to better understand the chain of events that led to the scandal and the response of the Penn State community in the weeks that followed. The analysis suggested unity amongst students, faculty, and administrators in protecting the identity and morale of community. Moving forward, healing and image restoration became common goals that strengthened both the integrity and the importance of the university.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/17850/>

How Does the Democratization Impact Public Health Outcomes in Developing States?
by Carey Bell

Carey Bell investigated the health outcomes and messages in first, second, third, and fourth wave democratized countries. As countries are democratized, the funds and access to healthcare typically also increases. While no differences were found in the access to immunizations, fourth wave democratized countries, such as the Middle Eastern countries, had the least access to prenatal care for newborns and contraceptive methods. Additionally, third wave democratized countries, such as African nations, had the least access to clean water. The impact of her project suggests that greater exposure to health messages is needed to improve women's health and access to water in developing countries.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/1689/>

The Effect of the Passage of Time on the Perceptions of Hurtful Messages within Romantic Relationships
by Carolina Better Romero

Carolina Better Romero investigated the changes in perceptions of hurtful messages over the course of two weeks. Hurtful events, such as flirting with someone outside of the relationship or infidelity, can damage a partner's trust and the relationship. She found that perceptions of hurtful events did not change over time, suggesting that a longer time may be needed for some couples to "let things go." Despite societal views that females are traditionally the ones to never forget a hurtful event, there were no differences between males and females in their perceptions of hurt over time. Partners who were hurt intentionally were likely to have stronger feelings towards the event, which may show that accidental hurt can be forgiven in the long term.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/1164/>

Museums as Public Memory Texts: A Comparison of Holocaust Museum Narratives and Their Implications

by Nina Boscia

Nina Boscia investigated the National Holocaust Museum as a place that holds and revives public memory through artifacts. Museums allow us to examine multiple viewpoints on the same topic, such as the views of the Holocaust survivors, the Nazi soldiers, and the liberators. Her research suggests that in remembering the events of the Holocaust through artifacts, as a society, we should be able to eradicate persistent societal issues like genocide, racism, and persecution. Further, through different perceptions of the same event, we should be able to construct the events with more honesty and integrity than our history books hold.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/25161/>

The Rise and Fall of the Preemptive Presidency: The Great Recession and Barack Obama

by Marisa Fraimow

Marisa Fraimow investigated the rise and decline of public opinion on Barack Obama's presidency over the course of The Great Recession. Specifically, Marisa looked at the crisis management strategies engaged by Barack Obama to gain power of the presidency. When the same strategies were engaged two years later, they were perceived as less effective due to the ongoing economic crisis. Her research suggests that the rhetoric used at the beginning of a presidency creates an idealization, or unrealistic positive image, about the character of the president that cannot be sustained during a nation's crisis unless the country rebounds quicker than the public's expectations.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/25555/>

Health Communication and Malaria: The Applicability of EPPM in Predicting Bed Net Use

by Caitlin Mingey

Caitlin Mingey investigated the impact of emotion, cognition, and bed net usage on Malaria prevention in sub-Saharan African nations. As one of the most rampant diseases across Africa, the effects of Malaria are often deadly. She found that people who feel more threatened by Malaria are not necessarily fearful of an outbreak or more willing to use bed nets as a prevention measure, regardless of having the means to protect themselves. Overall, her results suggest that health campaigns are needed in sub-Saharan Africa to raise awareness of the risk of death from Malaria and prevention strategies that can be taken in the future.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/1737/>

Changes in Communication between Mothers and Daughters during a Mother's Breast Cancer Diagnosis

by Taryn Noll

Taryn Noll investigated the mother-daughter communication surrounding disclosure of breast cancer. Breast cancer is one of the leading causes of death of women in the United States, and the social support that comes from disclosure can increase positive health outcomes. She found that mothers who disclosed to their daughters about treatment were more likely to suggest prevention measures in the future. The impact of this research suggests that the daughters of mothers with breast cancer also need to be encouraged to seek support while undergoing this trying time.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/17938/>

A Proposal for the Application of Culturally Grounded Narrative Theory and Stigma Management Communication in Exploring Help Seeking Behaviors among Depressed College Students

by Emily Reichert

Emily Reichert investigated the practical applications of reducing stigma for patients seeking treatment for depression. Depression is one of the most common mental illnesses in the United States, and the ability to reduce stigma could also prevent suicidality behaviors. Her research suggests that health messages should be tailored to the language of the culture to reduce stigma of depression. In the future, she suggests using popular celebrities in advertisements for depression treatment and training healthcare professionals to use empathy to encourage patients to continue treatment.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/14455/>

This is Where I Live: Photovoice as Perspective on Adolescent Rural Identity

by Anthony Hemming

Anthony Hemming investigated the development of individual identity through photovoice. In other words, how does identity develop through photographed memories? He found that a country identity is shaped by four major factors: strength and importance of relationships, rural values, space and isolation, and rural values. The results suggest that photographs help support identity away from home and prevent new identity construction when moving to a new place. This type of tailored campaign may also help to increase the persuasiveness of messages and provide tools for new intervention advertisements in the future.

<https://honors.libraries.psu.edu/paper/1187/>