

Summer 2009 Student Research Fellowship Recipients

* indicates research conducted outside the United States

Karina Berrospi (SIS '10)

*“A Shift in Japanese Identity in Peru: Understanding Fujimori’s Presidential Election” **

Faculty Mentor: SIS Professor Anthony Quainton

In 1990 Alberto Fujimori, the first person of Japanese descent to be a presidential candidate, was elected president of Peru. Fujimori’s presidential election in Peru is a puzzle. Taking into account Peru’s history of Japanese discrimination, considered among the worst in Latin America, how was Fujimori elected? In the beginning of Japanese migration in the 1890s, Japanese immigrants arrived to work in Peru as domestic servants, barbers or small grocery owners – they were typical poor recent immigrants. What then makes possible the rise of Fujimori, a son of Japanese immigrants, despite a century long history of racial discrimination in Peru?

Trent Buatte (SIS '10)

*“Black, Blanc, and Beur: Understanding Social Integration from French Immigrants’ Perspectives”**

Faculty Mentor: SIS Professor Cathy Schneider

In October 2005, the suburbs of Paris erupted in a flash of violence incited by police brutality and catalyzed by nascent social tensions. Within weeks, riots spread to immigrant communities in Lyon, Belfort, Strasbourg, Lille, and Toulouse. However, the largest immigrant city and the entry point for thousands of North Africans, Marseilles, remained calm despite the surrounding turmoil. This investigation aims to answer the unresolved question of why Marseilles – a city with such a large North African and African population – remained quiet when all the rest of France was in flames. This study will test the hypothesis that Marseilles was saved from violent uprisings because of its more socially integrated residents. Through extensive interviews with Algerian immigrants residing in Marseilles, this research should reveal how immigrants cope with transnational identities and become accepted by host nationals.

Gerard Dougher (CAS: Anthropology '10)

*“Globalizing Vang Vieng: Backpacker Enclave Communities, Citizenship and Social Geographies”**

Faculty Mentor: CAS Professor Brett Williams

The transnational globalizing force of tourism, and more specifically, backpacker tourism, permits a number of outside agents – eco-tourists, student tourists, and independent backpackers – to gain access to the mechanisms, frameworks and ideologies that create and perpetuate social geographies, economic infrastructures, citizenship requirements, and the culture of daily life in Vang Vieng. Locals with access to the tourist economy – hotel owners, shopkeepers, trek operators – can acquire Western wealth and power that ironically obliges them to become potent agents through which the backpacker community/infrastructure exerts its self-constructed citizenship rights. I propose to examine how multinational backpacker infrastructure/community creates, maintains and perpetuates a community whose membership is consistently transient yet has the power to exclude and manipulate long-term residents of Vang Vieng for its self-interest. I also want to examine if backpackers are cognizant of this trend, how local citizens contest these existing structures, and what broader theories on backpacker tourism can be extrapolated from this ethnographic study.

Shirin Johari (CAS: Biology '11)

“Assessing the characteristics of multiple myeloma cancer cells”

Faculty Mentor: CAS Professor Kathleen De Cicco-Skinner

Multiple myeloma represents 10 percent of blood cancers in the United States. It is caused by mutated B cells, which normally contribute to our immune system and protect us from diseases. All B cells are formed from bone marrow and have antibodies on their surface that serve to recognize and destroy pathogenic bacteria and viruses. In myeloma cancer cells, the mutation causes them to secrete bone-deteriorating proteins, such as IL-6, which result in physical

manifestations such as chronic bone pain, lesions and eventual death. Dr. DeCicco-Skinner has recently obtained a series of multiple myeloma cells lines that must first be characterized before they can be tested for drug resistance or susceptibility. I will measure the growth properties of these cells and collect the proteins necessary for genetic analyses.

Erin Lockwood (SIS '11)

Catherine Manhardt (SIS: '11)

“Peg Legs, Treasure Maps, and AK-47s: How Historical Representations of Pirates Inform Our Understanding of Contemporary Piracy in the Gulf of Aden”

Faculty Mentor: Director of General Education and SIS Professor Patrick Thaddeus Jackson

We seek to discover how parallel legal and cultural understandings of piracy have operated in concert to shape evolving popular perceptions of and governmental responses to maritime piracy. Ultimately, we endeavor to understand how this social construction informs public reaction to modern-day Somali pirates. To discover how contemporary perceptions of pirates evolved, we will analyze popular and media representations of piracy, drawing upon historical, literary, and legal texts. To evaluate how pirates are perceived differently from other non-state actors we will use the methods of literary discourse analysis and hermeneutics to study the vocabulary, tone, and imagery associated with pirates. The process of social construction informs – and is informed by – the broader historical and legal contexts in which pirates have operated. In the acts of Somali piracy, motivations for piracy are economic, not ideological. Similarities facilitate links between historical acts of piracy, their subsequent romanticization, and contemporary instances of maritime violence. We will draw upon historical and cultural representations of piracy to analyze contemporary news media coverage of the Somali pirate attacks. To ensure our project’s relevance, we will examine the discourse of governmental responses to piracy in the Gulf of Aden to determine if these representations effect state action taken to combat piracy.

Julie Oswald (SIS '10)

“ Collective Memory and the Miami Holocaust”

Faculty Mentor: CAS Professor Pamela S. Nadell

Though the Holocaust occurred more than a half century ago and on another continent, America has incorporated it into its collective memory. While the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum sits in our nation’s capital, others small and large continue to appear across the country in towns and cities. These memorials help to improve their community’s consciousness of the Holocaust and more recent genocides and to connect them with others pursuing the same goal. The Miami Holocaust Memorial is one such memorial, and the deeper story behind its development, creation, and maintenance remains unexamined. This research will explore the efforts and emotions that the Miami Jewish community has and continues to put into their Holocaust Memorial. Through participant interviews, site visits, and local archival research, a picture of how this community has developed a local, collective memory of the Holocaust will emerge.

Emily Pfefer (SIS '11)

“NGO”ing Your Cause to Death (and How to Survive)”

Faculty Mentor: SPA Professor Sean Cain

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are generally virtuous entities that put all their efforts into improving some sector of society. Disagreements on what is *good* for society aside, for liberal NGOs in Missouri, the researcher believes their competitive action to make similar progress often becomes counterproductive to their collective goals. In an election year, working with an electorate that overwhelmingly supported new Democratic Governor Jay Nixon last November, neither the Democratic Party nor the myriad of liberal NGOs were able to garner a Democratic majority in the state legislature. This researcher hypothesizes the desire for credit, the intense competition in Missouri’s Democratic lobby, is hindering the success of the movement. Research will be gathered by oral interviews of a representative from the Missouri Progressive Vote Coalition, its 25 members and a representative from the Missouri Democratic Party. Organizations will be scored based on responses to survey questions about degree of collaboration over the past year. The dependent variable will score the level of policy success the organization has experienced within the past year.

Kate Pinkerton (CAS '10)

*“Measuring Base Line Health of Seagrass Meadows as an Indicator of Nutrient Pollution in Guam”**
Faculty Mentor: CAS Professor Kiho Kim

Coral reefs all over the world have been subjected to higher nitrogen levels due to nutrient pollution. These higher nutrient levels could increase disease among the marine organisms, and threaten species. This issue, along with threat of bleaching by the warming of the ocean, is a reason to study these endangered ecosystems so that we can ensure their continued existence. On the island of Guam, poor sewage practices are releasing high levels of nutrient pollution into coral reefs. The goal of my work is to perform a base line study of the health of these in order to stress the negative impact of more people on the island. An important component of many coral reefs is the seagrass communities that act as a buffer against nutrient pollution. Thus, the health of seagrass meadows is an important indicator of coral reef health. As an assistant to Professor Kim’s study on the health of coral reefs, I intend to measure the productivity of adjacent seagrasses as an indicator of nutrient pollution and to examine whether seagrasses buffer the flow of nutrient onto the coral reefs.

Rosie Scott (CAS: Economics '10)

*“An Evaluation of the Plataformas Program in Ecuador”**
Faculty Mentor: CAS Professor Paul Winters

My research project seeks to analyze the Plataformas de Concertación program (Multistakeholder Platforms) in Ecuador. The program directly connects poor potato farmers to high-value markets and provides them with the resources to produce high-quality potatoes in the time frame that businesses demand. This allows them to circumvent intermediaries and obtain higher prices for their production. Further research is necessary to extract information on the mechanisms by which the program benefits were obtained and the extent to which this strategy of poverty eradication can be expanded to other contexts. My research will occur in Ecuador over three months at the International Potato Center (CIP) under the direction of Jorge Andrade, a phytopathologist who runs the project at CIP, and under the guidance of Professor Paul Winters, who managed the initial data collection. Along with analyzing existing data and collecting information to complement that initial dataset, I will assist Ecuador’s National Institute for Agricultural Research (INIAP), a partner of CIP, in the design and implementation of new surveys.