



Undergraduate Research Scholar Award Previous Recipients

2022-2023

Lindsey Co

Junior; Popular Music and Film Studies, Westminster College of the Arts

Faculty Advisors: Cynthia Lucia, Department of Film and Media Studies; Richard Zdan, Department of Sociology

Asian American (In)Visibility in 21st Century Film and TV: Representation and Its Implications for Asian American Identity

This study will analyze the production contexts, content, and reception of prominent film and TV works released in the past 20 years in order to assess the path Asian American entertainment media has taken to achieve unprecedented heights of mainstream success. While this progress is cause for celebration, many vulnerable communities within Asian America remain underrepresented. By considering how media portrayal of Asian Americans impacts the perception of Asian American identity, I hope to explore how Asian American media can promote equity for its community both within film and television and society as a whole.

Shamiya Ford

Junior; English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Advisor: Kelly Ross, Department of English

Spirituality in Slave Narratives: Patriarchy, Power, and Religious Coercion in the American South

This project's goal is to write a 25-30 page research paper on the manifestation of spirituality in slave narratives written before the Civil War, with special attention to the intersection of race and gender. This essay argues that the planter class used religious coercion to create and maintain patriarchal value systems amongst enslaved African communities. This essay also evaluates the role of performance in religious worship as it pertains to the divide between Christian religious practices enforced on the enslaved community by the planter class and the practice of liberation theology that the enslaved truly embraced.

Evelyn McNelis

Senior; Behavioral Neuroscience, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Advisors: Jonathan Karp, Department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience, and Health Sciences; Danielle Jacobs, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Potential Anti-Inflammatory Actions of Baicalin Derivatives on Behavior

Baicalin is used in traditional Chinese herbal medicine to treat inflammatory disorders. There exist two limitations in advancing understanding of the mechanisms of action of baicalin (1) baicalin is not soluble and (2) verification of the anti-inflammatory properties on behavior. I will synthesize derivatives of baicalin and evaluate the solubility of these compounds. Second, I will evaluate the ability of the novel soluble baicalin-derivatives to reverse well-known inflammation-mediated changes in mouse behavior. This research will provide novel molecule(s) to study the potential baicalin-mediated responses and provide data addressing the possible these molecules might have anti-inflammatory effects in living animals.

Emily Porter Siegel

Sophomore; Acting, Westminster College of the Arts; English, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Advisor: Laurel Harris, Department of English

Of bodies changed: Modern Adaptations of Ovid's Metamorphoses

This project will explore the power of mythology as the means by which, historically, the human condition is documented and processed. While myths endure through time, they also capture the transformation of individuals and society. Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, being an anthology of mythological transformation, reflects the change that humanity sees within itself as it progresses. I propose a project with three final outcomes. First, a 15-page research paper, based on collaborative discussion on the works in my bibliography. Following that, I will direct a cabaret showcasing those works, the culmination of which will be a group reflection to display this project's contribution to *Metamorphoses'* lasting power.

Emma Zinser

Junior; Health Science, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Advisor: Julie Drawbridge, Department of Biology, Behavioral Neuroscience, and Health Sciences

Physarum Polycephalum: Learning About and Responding to the Environment

The limited environment of *Physarum polycephalum*, an acellular slime mold, has made scientists interested in how this organism responds to its environment. However, information surrounding this organism's behavior is severely limited. This experiment will study the behavioral responses to environmental cues and the learning ability of this organism. Cultures of *Physarum* will be trained to feed under adverse conditions and forced to choose between food sources under different conditions. The preferences of the *Physarum* will be indicated by the food of choice. Studying how *Physarum* respond to and learn about the environment can establish further studies on learning and memory.