

19th Annual Student Research and Ideas Fair

March 17th, 2023

ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1: POLITICS, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL

CHARLES HANSCOMB

Political Science, 3rd year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Patrick Malcolmson

The Past and Future of Electoral Reform in Canada

This presentation will examine two questions: “What does Canada’s history of electoral reform attempts say about Canadian’s views on electoral reform and what implications does Canadian’s perceptions on electoral reform have for the future of electoral reform in Canada?” The study of this question will rely on examining several sources such as William P. Irvine’s 1979 book, “Does Canada Need a New Electoral System”, reports produced from provincial electoral reform efforts in British Columbia and Ontario as well as Francis Scarpaleggia’s 2016 committee report entitled “Strengthening Democracy in Canada: Principles, Process and Public Engagement for Electoral Reform.” Some of the key themes that this presentation will seek to examine include the broad arguments for and against electoral reform in Canada, what recommendations in terms of electoral systems that these reports produced along with seeking to analyze why we have not pursued any of these reform efforts on a provincial or federal scale. In essence, it will be focused on looking at the ways in which Canadians look at our current electoral system as well as alternatives proposed in the various literature around this subject.

ERIN ELLIOTT

Human Rights, 3rd year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Patrick Malcolmson

Domestic Conduct & International Treatment: Examining the Complex Relationship Between Hamas and Palestinian Self-Determination

The proposed subject of this thesis is the relationship between Hamas and Palestinian self-determination. The primary research question is: Does Hamas’s conduct and the treatment of Hamas by the international community act as a barrier to Palestinian self-determination? Other questions include: What factors motivate Hamas’s conduct within Palestine? What are the implications of this barrier for Palestinian citizens? Examining how Palestinian self-determination is threatened by one of its own governing bodies offers an alternate perspective to the polarizing, decades-old Israel-Palestine conflict. By examining both Hamas’s conduct as the governing body of Gaza and how Hamas is treated by the international community this study will discuss how Hamas’s place in power is disruptive to the goal of Palestinian self-determination.

KATIE MACMILLAN

Psychology, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sarah Vannier

Links Between Psychology Course Descriptions and Mental Illness Stigma

Abnormal psychology is a popular undergraduate course in Western universities. Recent discussion suggests the term 'abnormal' may be stigmatizing to those with psychological disorders. Stigma is described as a product of labelling, stereotypes, discrimination, separation, and status loss (Link & Phelan, 2001). It is also known to deeply discredit an individual, or sometimes even a group (Goffman, 1963). Concerns about the term 'abnormal' raising mental health stigma has led some academic journals into removing the term from their title (Frick, 2021; Macdonald et al., 2021). However, there is currently a lack of research on the term 'abnormal' raising stigma. Since abnormal psychology is such a popular course among post-secondary institutions, the present study aims to observe stigma levels in university students at STU, UNB, and NBCC when looking at language used in course descriptions. The participants will read a course description, and afterward, they will each fill out a measurement of stigma. Results may help to inform mental health professionals about vocabulary that may be harmful. To date, data has been collected from 26 participants, and data collection is ongoing.

RACHEL DOMNO

Psychology, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mihailo Perunovic

Personality Traits, Attitudes, and Conspiracy Theory Beliefs

Conspiracy theories are beliefs that actors such as governments or secret powerful groups are conspiring to achieve a malevolent or unlawful goal; they are often used to explain a real chain of events but make allegations that may be untrue (Douglas et al., 2019). The relationship between conspiracy theory beliefs and personality has been previously investigated, but such research continues to be relevant following the Covid-19 pandemic and simultaneous rise in online mis/disinformation and conspiracy theories (Garneau & Zossou, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2020). The importance of this research is also underscored by the possibility of future health crises. The present study investigated associations between several variables and undergraduate students' beliefs in both general and health related conspiracy theories (including COVID-19 conspiracy theories). The results showed that conspiracy theory beliefs were associated with collective narcissism, perception of anomie, and distrust in government. They were not associated with the Big 5 or Dark Triad personality traits. Furthermore, the association between distrust in government and conspiracy beliefs was mediated by anomie. The implications of the results will be discussed.

PANEL 3: GERONTOLOGY AND YOUNGER CANADIANS

GISELE GALLIBOIS/CAROL ALVAREZ

Gerontology/ Psychology and Gerontology, 4th year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Albert Banerjee

Let's

s Connect: Dec

Social isolation and loneliness are key health challenges among older adults and particularly among older adults living in institutionalized settings such as long-term care homes. In this presentation we summarize the preliminary results of a pilot project, "Let's Connect," that partnered eight St. Thomas University students with residents of York Care Centre for weekly, one hour face to face visits. A midway evaluation using Survey Monkey was conducted and found that volunteers had strong connections with residents. The residents enjoyed companionship while doing inside walks, manicures and having in person conversations. The students reported learning from the older adults and enjoyed the intergenerational connections. We conclude by outlining some of the challenges identified through the pilot and suggests ways to move forward and grow the pilot project.

ADRIENNE MCNAIR

Gerontology, 4th year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Janet Durkee-Lloyd

Empowering Persons Living with Young-onset Dementia: The Young-onset Dementia Workplace Promotion Project

The research hypothesizes that with the increasing number of persons living with dementia, there will be an increased number of persons living with the disease in the workforce. This directly impacts those diagnosed with young-onset dementia, which affects those 18 to 64 years of age. An analysis of the academic and grey literature found that there is little support to allow a person living with dementia to make the decision to remain in the workplace. Dementia is considered a disability, therefore there are requirements from employers to support a person to remain in the workplace within reason. The project will highlight methods that could successfully give individuals living with dementia the opportunity to make informed choices on when they want to leave the workforce. This can happen through awareness, individual support as well as education and information sharing for employers and employees. The Young-onset Dementia Workplace Promotion Project will reduce the barriers experienced by individuals living with the disease and allow them to continue to be included in their workplace while reducing negative perceptions of dementia.

PANEL 4: HUMAN RIGHTS IN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

ELISHA GUNARATNAM

Human Rights, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Shannonbrooke Murphy

Why Should the European Union be Held Accountable for Human Rights Abuses that Occur as a Result of its Refugee Policy?

The world is undoubtedly in the midst of one of the greatest refugee crises since World War II. This research presentation seeks to demonstrate why the European Union should be held accountable for the consequences of its refugee policies. I propose that because countries in European Union are bound by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights which both prohibit refoulement, inhuman or degrading treatment, or any other action that would amount to a violation of a non-derogable right, they should be held accountable for the human rights abuses that have taken places under migration agreements that are in place on the European continent such as the Dublin Convention and the Schengen Agreement, as well as extraterritorial migration agreements such as the Libya Memorandum and the EU-Turkey Joint Action Plan. Furthermore, because European Union law instructs all Member States to respect their international law commitments as well as customary international law, I propose that EU Member States should also be held by accountable by the Court of Justice of the European Union for their violations of the Refugee Convention and other international human rights law treaties.

MERCEDES ORTIZ

International Relations, 3rd year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Shaun Narine

Limitations of R2P: the Principle of Sovereignty

After the events of World War 2, the principle of sovereignty was challenged, which caused the concept to evolve and shift over time. Now, the globalized world faces new challenges in the context of human rights violations and states' responsibility to protect their citizens. In some cases, the original concept of the principle of sovereignty can become a limitation to meeting these new needs. This project aims to examine why the principle of sovereignty is a limitation to the protection of human rights, especially as it can prevent outside intervention on behalf of human rights. The areas this research will encompass are the origins of the sovereignty concept, how it has evolved throughout history and within international institutions, particularly the United Nations. It will also analyze the concept of the Responsibility to Protect and how the principle of sovereignty interferes with this concept, limiting people's security. For the theoretical framework, constructivist theory will analyze this controversy.

PANEL 5: PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

ADAM MCDOUGALL

Political Science, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tom Bateman

Deradicalizing the Online Alt-Right

This presentation will examine the identity theory of radicalization with specific attention paid to online alt-right radicalization and how it is facilitated through online filter bubbles.

MARIA GUERRERO

Political Economy, 4th year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Fariba Solati

'I know I' Informal Markets.

Research revealing the impact of women's work in informal markets in the Global South is in its infancy. In Ecuador, the informal economy makes up 51.3% of overall employment. Moreover, 53.9% of all employed women in the country work in the informal sector. This qualitative research aims to provide insight into the decision-making process of women to enter the informal sector. Eighteen consenting women working in informal markets in Ecuador participated in in-depth interviews that touched on their lives as workers, caregivers, providers, mothers, daughters, sisters, and women living in a patriarchal society and how their socio-economic and personal contexts have affected their economic decision-making process. Based on our results, complex factors that influence these decisions include the male breadwinner/female caregiver model, neoliberal policies adopted by the country, intersectionality between gender, class and race, and domestic violence. The study also shows that the informal sector provides women autonomy, and flexibility to care for and provide financial assistance to their families. This has allowed them to give their families a livelihood that is often hidden behind vacuous numbers in National Accounts. Yet, working in the informal sector does not rescue women from poverty, violence, and hardship.

PANEL 6: CRIMINOLOGY AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

MOLLY REID

Criminology and Criminal Justice, 4th year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Claire Goggin

'He didn' Attitudes and Decision-Making Processes Towards Mentally Ill Offenders and the Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder Defence

This project investigates the attitudes of undergraduate students toward mentally ill defendants, their knowledge and understanding of the Not Criminally Responsible on Account of Mental Disorder (NCRMD) defence, and the influence of these attitudes on juror decision-making in a fictional NCRMD case. STU students responded to an adapted version of Skeem's (1999) Conception Checklist, Skeem's (1999) Insanity Defence Attitudes – Revised measure, and Day's (2003) Mental Illness Stigma Scale, read a trial transcript (adapted from Power (2015) and Fenwick (2014)), and responded to questions surrounding verdict confidence and reasoning, and perceptions of the defendant and their disorder. Understanding public attitudes and misunderstandings of the NCRMD defence is helpful for its potential influence in shaping legislation and public policy. Outcry toward these kinds of cases may promote prejudicial beliefs about mentally ill individuals, potentially leading to stigmatization and harsh treatment. Without readily available and reliable information to debunk these myths, the primary source of information is media reports of high-profile cases, which are overly negative in tone and content, promote a climate of rejection and misunderstanding of mentally ill individuals, and reinforce stigmatization of this vulnerable group.

JOYCE ANG

Criminology and Criminal Justice, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Prof. Josephine Savarese/Dr. Mike Fleming

An Exploration of the Role of Supportive Housing for Marginalized Women: Perspectives from Service Providers in Fredericton, New Brunswick

Marginalized women in New Brunswick are often alone in navigating the criminal justice system, mental health and addiction services, and other social services. In 2022, the Human Development Council reported that Fredericton was the city that had the most expensive prices for shelter, largest increase in living wage from 2021–2022, and required the highest living wage in New Brunswick. These circumstances have only marginalized women who experience homelessness further, shrinking their safety nets and creating higher barriers for their survival. In supplying coordinated services and resources along with a temporary residence, supportive housing programs aim to aid marginalized people in realizing equitable and empowering outcomes for themselves. Even so, the impact that supportive housing has on marginalized women, measured especially in reference to this goal, has been under-studied. This presentation will shed light on the preliminary analysis of interviews conducted with 3 individuals who have knowledge of services in Fredericton and who have past or present experience in working with marginalized women through the provision of supportive housing programs. By applying a public criminology approach and inclusionary control theory, these findings will offer important reflections on the role of supportive housing for marginalized women.

ERIN FRANKHAUSER

Criminology and Criminal Justice, 4th year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Dawne Clarke

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls as Un/Deserving Victims

The 2019 National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women specified that Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than other women in Canada—16 times more likely than Caucasian women—and are sexually assaulted three times more often than non-Indigenous women. How we understand the phenomenon of MMIWG is shaped in part by the news media, where “newsworthiness” is based on value judgements and filtered through a Western, white, middle-class male lens. Using Crenshaw’s intersectionality and Goffman’s frame analysis, I analyze representations of MMIWG in the Vancouver Sun and The Province from 1997 to 2000. I argue that news media acts as a neoliberal system of oppression, portraying MMIWG as deserving of violence perpetrated against them, and undeserving of public sympathy. My preliminary analysis reveals that through carefully crafted frames, such as “high-risk lifestyle”, “zones of degeneracy”, and the stereotypical “squaw” framework maintain the status quo of settler colonial society. Through these frames, victimization is individualized, abstracted from histories of colonialism, racism, sexism, and classism, upholding and reifying settler dominance and the erasure of long-standing traumas of (settler) colonialism.

PANEL 7: THE PLUTONIUM PROJECT

ALEX COMPTON/CHRIS RODDIS

Journalism, 4th year/ Environment & Society, 3rd year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Laura Levick

Plutonium Economy: The Road to Nuclear Armageddon

Global security is a concerning topic as Canada works toward expanding its nuclear market to produce energy including an expansion in New Brunswick. With an expansion like this Canada will be moving toward a “plutonium economy”. This study will explore the risks and history explaining why plutonium economies have not caught traction, but countries continue to show interest while examining the bigger issue of the security threat it poses not only to Canada but internationally. As of December 31, 2021, the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) of the IAEA contained 3928 confirmed nuclear material trafficking incidents since 1993. This will only continue to increase in a plutonium economy. A plutonium economy has also been widely regarded as an economy that would create too much nuclear proliferation threat with increasing the popularity of the radioactive material and exports to countries that have unstable governments. Still, Canada is adamant about growing its nuclear sector and being a key player in nuclear reprocessing. Such development could see plutonium, a product used in nuclear weapons, become an article of commerce when introducing a plutonium economy.

ALEXANDRA GUITARD/ MARIA GUERRERO

Political Science, 3rd year/ Political Economy, 4th year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Andrew Secord

Following the Money: Small Modular Nuclear Reactors in New Brunswick

Currently the government of New Brunswick and NB Power are subsidizing two private companies (one American and one British) in their attempts to design small nuclear modular reactors (SMR) in New Brunswick. Both designs are unrelated to the traditional Canadian CANDU design and would involve new applications in Canada of plutonium reprocessing, uranium enrichment, and fast breeder technology. The New Brunswick government defends their interest as a development initiative which has the potential to make New Brunswick a world centre for modular design, manufacture, and servicing. NB Power views the SMR technology as the next generation of nuclear to replace their coal generators and their aging CANDU reactor. Our research identifies the SMR’s beneficial owners, individual and corporate investors, financial capacities, intercorporate linkages, monetary linkages (especially in New Brunswick), and political lobbyists. At the provincial level, the research includes an identification of the monetary links with specific government agencies, academic institutions, and private businesses. The research is contextualized in terms of the Canadian nuclear industry’s connections with private industries engaged in transportation, engineering, construction, consulting, waste management, mining, software development and research facilities.

EMILY GREEN/ ERIN HURLEY

Environment and Society, 4th year/ Environment and Society, 3rd year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Janice Harvey

Rhetoric vs. Reality: An Analysis of Public Media Discourse Concerning the Development of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors in New Brunswick

Online news outlets and social media serve as important sources of information that shape our understanding and opinions of public issues. Thus, it is essential to critically evaluate content in the media pertaining to highly politicized issues. Using the research methodology of critical discourse analysis, we identify and analyze the various frames that appear in news stories covering the proposed development of small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs) in New Brunswick. This presentation will examine the dominant and counter-discourses found in the mainstream media regarding these new nuclear projects. How are these projects portrayed? What claims about them are being made, and by whom? Do these claims stand up to scrutiny? Is nuclear power a climate solution and a risk-free and reliable source of energy that will bring jobs into the province, or is it a form of climate delay and economic wishful thinking, posing health risks and the threat of nuclear proliferation? The topic of nuclear energy is often deferred to the experts, but considering its far-reaching implications, increased public engagement with this discourse is critical.

VALERIA SOLIS/ EMMA FACKENTHALL

Environment and Society, 3rd year/ Environment and Society, 2nd year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Susan O'Donnell

Plutonium Project – Indigenous Perspectives on Radioactive Waste

The Government of New Brunswick is proposing the construction of two Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) in New Brunswick. The two companies proposing to build these SMRs, ARC and Moltex, have provided limited information on how much radioactive waste their nuclear reactors will produce and where they plan to dispose of it. Moltex plans to recycle waste stored at the Point Lepreau Nuclear Generating Station; however, Moltex can only effectively utilize less than one percent of Lepreau's used fuel – mainly the plutonium - as new fuel for its SMR. Where will the remainder of this toxic liquid waste be stored? Point Lepreau's radioactive waste is being temporarily stored on Indigenous lands without previous and informed consent. The management and storage of radioactive waste disproportionately impact Indigenous communities across Canada, perpetrating environmental injustice. By drawing upon Indigenous declarations; analyzing the official information, and the lack thereof, concerning radioactive waste disposal; and looking at the waste flows of Moltex and ARC's reactors designs, we aim to identify the serious

The stories will be shared with the community at large, and the topics raised in those conversations will be collected in a report for policymakers. The methodology of this project can also be shared with other communities.

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

MEGHAN URQUHART

Gerontology, 3rd year

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Albert Banerjee

Mental Health of Older Adults when Transitioning into Long Term Care.

For my project I will be looking at the mental health of older adults who have transitioned into long term care. I will also consider caregiver perspectives. Transitioning into a nursing home can be difficult decision for older adults. Research shows that trust is hard to find in the beginning for older adults and can cause more stress and anxiety while transitioning. Many older adults have a hard time accepting change, along with changing their familiar surroundings. Having to make the move from their beloved well-known home into a non-familiar long-term care facility with new people can be a very stressful event for most. This poster presentation will review the main mental health challenges that older adults can experience when moving into a long-term care home to better prepare individuals and their support network. From being around familiar surroundings and faces to being in a long-term care facility away from your family and lots of new faces can cause

Meaghan O'

Gerontology/Criminology and Criminal Justice, 2nd year
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Albert Banerjee

Neill

Older Offenders & Aging in Prison: How Being Incarcerated can Affect Healthy Aging and What Prison Conditions Look Like for Older Inmates

My research topic will review the problems of aging in prison while looking at research that suggests the special requirements of older inmates; there are five categories that the older inmates' needs can be grouped under: adjustment to imprisonment, vulnerability to victimisation, adaption to physical conditions, lack of suitable programs, and diversity of the elderly inmate population (Vito & Wilson, 1985). My research will include these five categories, as well I will explore the effects of later life diseases in older inmates. (Greene et al., 2018). Furthermore, while analysing the research from McCarthy & Langworthy (1988), I will be applying their arguments of "the elderly criminal 78.1m rr