Undergraduate Research & Creative Project Grant Awards: 2013-2014

Awards to Students in Arts & Humanities

Student Name: April Ruback
Project Title: "Dear Walter"
Faculty Sponsor: John Roberts, Art
Project Abstract:

“They say everybody dies twice. One time when you stop breathing and a second time, a bit later on, when somebody says your name for the last time." (-Irvin D. Yalom)

My Grandfather Walter’s life and death have been a driving force for me throughout my life and within all of my work. He passed away when I was young and even though we had very little time together, the impact he had on my life was enormous. My Grandfather’s death was the most heartbreaking event of my life, and continues even 17 years later. I regularly live in that moment when I realized what “passed away” really meant. It was at his funeral. I was seven.

My series is an illustrative visual of a correspondence between my Grandfather and myself after his death. I am creating this series using Stone Lithography, one of the oldest and most physical printmaking methods. My images are created using some parts digitally manipulated photography transferred onto the stone, and other parts hand drawn abstract, organic and industrial materials. The finished images are run through a press and printed on several pieces cotton paper to create many editions of the prints. I will be displaying these in the Thorne Art Gallery at the end of this semester and will continue to push these to other galleries to help other people cope with the loss of their loved ones, as well as keep the memory of my Grandfather Walter alive.

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Student Name: Kori White
Project Title: Building Memory
Faculty Sponsor: Rosemarie Bernardi, Art
Project Abstract:

Building Memory is the installation of drawings I am creating to be displayed in the Thorne-Sagendorph Gallery this April as part of my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree thesis exhibition. This installation is meant to represent the idea of capturing a single moment in time, a flashback to a particular second across an entire lifetime. I am writing in request of this grant to help me finance this project. Your assistance will allow me to complete the vision I have for it as effectively and professionally as possible. There are very few materials that go into each piece; however each is essential to the outcome of the show.

Building Memory will be an installation that is a compilation of drawings, prints, and one structural piece inspired by both my own recollections, and those I experience through the stories told by my loved ones. The combined compositions of the faces of the past four generations of my family will be displayed across the walls, encased in glass panels and accompanied by an altar-like structure holding a hand
crafted hour glass. By manipulating a variety of pictures that come from previous days and decades, both during and prior to my lifetime I intend to invite the viewer to think about the experience of time and memory as it pertains to their own life.

Awards to Students in Sciences & Social Sciences

Student Name: Julia Oberst
Project Title: Disruption of Diurnal Cortisol Secretion in Horses as an Indicator of Chronic Stress
Faculty Sponsor: Susan Piscopo, Biology

Project Abstract:

The release of stress-related hormones, primarily cortisol, is a normal and healthy response to acute stress in animals. However, chronic exposure to stress and stress hormones can have adverse effects on the health and well-being of animals, including domestic horses. Cortisol is normally secreted in a diurnal pattern in the resting horse. A peak concentration, called the cortisol awakening response, occurs in the morning and a trough occurs in the evening. Chronic stress can disrupt this pattern, essentially eliminating the cortisol awakening response. Therapeutic riding programs are designed to offer people with physical and emotional challenges a method of therapy through horseback riding. However, there is concern that the horses carrying these riders experience chronic stress that may persist over the working life of the horse. This study will measure morning and evening cortisol concentrations in horses used in a therapeutic riding program in order to test the hypothesis that horses used for therapeutic riding experience a disruption in the normal diurnal pattern of cortisol secretion.

Student Name: Adam Lawley
Project Title: Motivational Goal State Effects on a Working Memory Task
Faculty Sponsor: Donna Viveiros, Psychology

Project Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to determine how induced motivational states will affect verbal working memory. This study is drawn from previous research on achievement goal theory, an educational theory in student motivation. Achievement goal theory attempts to explain achievement and task-related outcomes in educational settings through differences in motivation. The theory identifies two main types of motivation; achievement and mastery. These types can be further classified into approach and avoidance categories. Previous literature has established that performance on working memory tasks can be significantly affected experimentally, both positively and negatively, through instruction-induced manipulations of mastery and performance approach motivations (Avery, Smillie & de Fockert, 2013; Crouzevialle & Butera, 2013). However, experimentation has yet to assess how the induction of
mastery-avoidance and performance-avoidance states would impact a working memory task. The task performance in four conditions, mastery-approach, mastery-avoidance, performance-approach and performance-avoidance, will be compared to the performance of a neutral control group. Working memory performance will be assessed through a task requiring students to form words, in a short amount of time, from a set of randomly produced letter blocks (as in the game Boggle©) that change across trials. It is expected that avoidance groups will do worse than control while approach groups will do better. These results will help us understand how to maximize student efficiency by avoiding strategies that may hinder academic performance.

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Student Name: Brandon Roy
Project Title: Dimensions of Subjective Well-Being: Is Body-Esteem a Fifth Dimension?
Faculty Sponsor: Karen Couture, Psychology
Project Abstract:

This study seeks to determine if body-esteem is an independent dimension of subjective well-being. Previous research has identified four dimensions of subjective well-being, life satisfaction, use of strengths, positive and negative effects, and meaning and purpose in life, all of which have been shown to correlate to one another leading to higher levels of subjective well-being on an individual basis. There have been no prior studies involving all four dimensions of subjective well-being nor has body-esteem ever been correlated to subjective well-being. Participants will complete a compilation of questionnaires from the four dimensions and body-esteem. This study will correlate body-esteem to each of the four dimensions of subjective well-being in order to discover whether body-esteem is an individual factor or if it is a sub-area to one of the other dimensions. Two sets of analyses will be performed. Initially a single summed score for each measure of well-being will be compiled. These total scores will be intercorrelated. All the items from the five scales will be subjected to both orthogonal and oblique rotation to discern the number of independent or correlated factors. Once results have been compiled this study expects to find that body-esteem is a separate dimension of subjective well-being.

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