



UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



# 2021

## SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.<sup>SM</sup>

**Elaine Adams**

- Majors: Classics and Anthropology
- Advisor: Tadeusz Mazurek

***Ab Antiquo, De Nuevo: Latin for Latinx Students***

I researched third-language acquisition pedagogical methods in order to apply them to teaching Latin to Spanish heritage speakers. I argue that the connection between Latin and Romance languages makes it a more accessible language and that Spanish speakers have an advantage in the classroom.

I studied Spanish for six years before beginning Latin in my first year at Notre Dame, and I started researching this topic during an internship with the Paideia Institute, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to promoting the study of the classical humanities, with a focus on Latin and ancient Greek. Paideia has now published a Latin curriculum that specifically draws on the connection between Latin and Spanish.

**Andrew Biondo**

- Majors: Philosophy, Classics, and Italian
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisors: Christopher Shields and Christian Moevs

**The Active Intellect Thesis: *De Anima* III.5; *Luce e Trinità nella Commedia: La visione metafisica di Dante della Trinità Immanente ed Economica***

My research on Aristotle is centered on his work regarding the soul, called the *De Anima*. I used tools from analytic philosophy and Greek textual analysis to study the line in Book III, Chapter 5, where Aristotle says that the so-called active mind is separable, unmixed, and unaffected. My research on Dante regards the *Paradiso* and centers on his discourse around the Trinity and his notions of causation, which is his metaphysical theology.

I chose these topics, ultimately, because they are interconnected and regard the state of human nature and its relationship with God. On the one hand, I have engaged in the technical aspects of scholarship, trying to work out the details of Aristotelian theories of the human nature. On the other hand, I have engaged in complex literary and theological notions found in Dante. The picture that they offer together is beautifully unified and nuanced.

**Curry Cappel**

- Major: Classics
- Minor: Education, Schooling, and Society (ESS)
- Advisor: Elizabeth Mazurek

## Latin in the 21st Century: Why and How

My project examined Latin pedagogy and common teaching methods in the 21st century and their history in the Latin classroom. I then went on to argue in favor of applying teaching techniques more commonly found in modern foreign language classrooms to the Latin classroom, especially for younger students.

I chose this topic due to my time in the Department of Classics' Aequora Program, in which we taught Latin to fifth graders at Clay International Academy. Seeing how much they enjoyed the material — as well as seeing how it helped their English skills — led me to research how we teach Latin to young students today.

**Natalie Casal**

- Majors: Classics and Program of Liberal Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisors: Hildegund Müller and Catherine Schlegel

**Alypius' Role in the *Confessions***

I examined a selection of passages in Book VI of Augustine's *Confessions* in which he discusses his close friend and future bishop, Alypius of Thagaste. I learned that through these stories Augustine articulates broader truths about sin and conversion, and I believe, unlike some scholars, that they are thematically integrated with the whole biography.

I fell in love with Augustine's *Confessions* when I first encountered it in high school and have grown to love it more in the several times I have encountered it in class at Notre Dame. It was nice to spend more time with this text.

**Edwin Donnelly**

- Majors: Theology and Classics
- Minor: Liturgical Music Ministry
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisors: Aldo Tagliabue and Max Johnson

**Mark: The Secret Narrative**

In this thesis project, I explore how the narratological principles of immersion and distance function in the Gospel of Mark to invite the reader into two dispositions of prayer: participation and contemplation.

Because I enjoy studying early Christianity, namely its texts, writing two theses — one on the Gospel of Mark and the other on the Didache — is a result of Providence. As I progressed in both the classics and theology majors, I developed an appreciation for Greek that has proven to complement my vocation as a theologian.

**Edwin Donnelly**

- Majors: Theology and Classics
- Minor: Liturgical Music Ministry
- CEC Sorin Fellow
- Advisors: Aldo Tagliabue and Max Johnson

**The Rites of Christian Initiation in the Didache Communities**

In this project, I offer an exegesis of the Didache and its surrounding texts in order to better understand the shape of Christian Initiation in the early Church.

Because I enjoy studying early Christianity, namely its texts, writing two theses — one on the Gospel of Mark and the other on the Didache — is a result of Providence. As I progressed in both the classics and theology majors, I developed an appreciation for Greek that has proven to complement my vocation as a theologian.

**Emma Ferdinandi**

- Major: Program of Liberal Studies
- Supplementary Major: Classics
- Advisor: Tadeusz Mazurek

## Divine, Natural, and Human Law: The Portrayal of Criminals in the Ancient Roman World

My thesis is divided into two parts. First, I demonstrate that an effective and widespread courtroom rhetorical strategy in ancient Rome was to portray a criminal as having violated divine, natural, or human law — laws much more commanding than statutory law. Second, I show how the introduction of Christianity into the Roman world did not change the use of the rhetorical strategy, but rather the understanding and definitions of the laws themselves.

The idea for my research came from my interest in Cicero's depiction of criminality in *De Republica*. I pursued this interest by taking Tadeusz Mazurek's class on ancient Roman criminal law, through which I was exposed to many of the legal cases I analyze in my thesis. Furthermore, I was able to conduct research in Rome, which allowed me to renew interest in my topic and expand my thesis to two parts.

*Conducted research in Rome.*

**John Kling**

- Majors: English and Classics
- Minor: Business Economics
- Advisors: Greg Kucich and Ian Newman

## 'There Was Nowhere to Go But Everywhere': Wordsworth, Kerouac, and the Self-Epic as Shelter from Revolutionary Storms

I am comparing the British Romantics' and the American Beats' responses to periods of political and social crisis. My two primary texts, William Wordsworth's *The Prelude* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* confront the dilemmas of the French Revolution and World War II, respectively. By adapting older quest narratives through the lens of the individual poet-prophet, both authors use their journeys as personal refuges from issues that their institutions have failed to effectively solve.

I was inspired by my University Seminar on the history of quest literature with Greg Kucich, in which we studied both of my primary texts. The Romantic period and the Beat generation both sought lofty revelation inspired by disillusionment with their political eras. Although these two movements have not been widely compared, this topic allowed me to work with two well-established periods and draw interesting new connections between the seemingly disparate eras.

**William LaMarra**

- Majors: Classics and English
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Aldo Tagliabue

## The Representation of Difference in *The Odyssey* Books 9-10

My project examines how Odysseus, as an embedded narrator in *The Odyssey* Books 9-10, represents difference in the narration of his journey home from Troy. By observing his use of both narrating and experiencing focalizations, I show how he represents his foes as absolutely other but, at the same time, subverts his own characterization by subtly showing the ways in which they occupy a middle ground between self and other.

The topic emerged from a paper I wrote in my Homer class during my junior year in response to a book chapter written by Carol Dougherty that examines the colonial themes in *The Odyssey*.

*Received funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.*

**Nicholas Mungan**

- Major: Classics
- Minor: Business Economics
- Advisor: Brian Krostenko

## The Sermon on the Mound: Political Realism Applied to the *Commentarii* of Caesar

My thesis project is a novel approach to the literary analysis of Julius Caesar's history of his own conquest of Gaul. By applying the modern political science of realism to ancient text, one can see the timeless nature of international relations in Caesar's narrative of his diplomacy with the Germanic chieftain of the Suebi, Ariovistus, in Book 1 of the *Commentarii de bello Gallico*.

Unlike other Roman authors, Caesar writes not only from firsthand experience but also as the driving force behind the events in Gaul he describes. Therefore, the *Commentarii* becomes a source for both a literary and political approach, and the two intertwine frequently in discussing the meaning and thought behind Caesar's words and actions.