

**Hanna Holborn Gray Undergraduate Research Fellowship**  
**2023 Fellows Abstracts**

**Xenya Currie '24**

**Literatures in English**

*"The Submergence of Self in Communion with Divine Perfection": Religious and Erotic Repression in Middlemarch*

My project examines George Eliot's 1871–2 novel *Middlemarch* with an attention to repression in the text. I propose that *Middlemarch* can be read as depicting protagonist Dorothea Brooke's trajectory from one paradigm of repression to another. Specifically, I argue that she begins the novel in a paradigm of willed and voluntarily enacted repression, drawing from Victorian scholar John Kucich's articulation of repression as self-denial and Friedrich Nietzsche's notions of the will to power and the figure of the ascetic priest. After her uncanny encounter with Roman Catholicism on her honeymoon, however, she moves towards a more Freudian paradigm of repression, in which the return of the repressed is inevitable. This new paradigm offers her increased psychological health, greater somatic incorporation, and makes room for the possibility of genuine noncompetitive sympathy. In this way, I suggest that *Middlemarch* can be understood as prefiguring the Freudian understanding of repression, the uncanny, and the inevitability of the return of the repressed before Sigmund Freud himself, who published "The Uncanny" in 1919, thereby situating George Eliot in the intellectual prehistory of Freud.

**Zoë Kaufman Fall '23**

**History**

*Placing Memory: Unearthing Jewish History in Parisian Memorial Culture*

While Paris contains many memorials and sites commemorating the lives lost in the Holocaust (including the Mémorial de la Shoah and the Mémorial des martyrs de la Déportation), few museums, historical sites, or historical markers cast light on the medieval Jewish community which thrived in the city for centuries. While it is undoubtedly crucial to remember and commemorate the lives of those murdered by the Nazis and the Vichy government, to focus exclusively on the horrors of the Holocaust without its context—the violent antisemitism of the early modern and medieval past—casts anti-Jewish oppression as a single, aberrative event rather than a long-standing component of European culture. This project analyzes Jewish memorial culture in Paris to unearth the physical traces of Jewish medieval communities and to argue that the French obsession with the Holocaust and with the nation's own tangled relationship with the Second World War has resulted in a Parisian memorial landscape which elides the complexity of medieval Jewish lives. There is a deep need for new lieux de mémoire, and for extant museums and historical sites to fulfill their own obligations as spaces of memory for the medieval Jews of Paris.

## **Tasneem Mabrouk '24**

## **Growth and Structure of Cities**

### *Creating Community: Identity, Belonging, and Immigrant Spaces in South Philadelphia*

South Philadelphia is home to numerous immigrant communities, each of whom have created transnational enclaves that memorialize and preserve cultures and countries that they left behind, while also serving as gateways to their new lives. In this project, I seek to understand how place has been utilized by two immigrant communities in South Philadelphia - the Italians and the Southeast Asians. Using the concept of placemaking to guide my research, I study the functions place serves and the meanings it takes on within each community, as well as the way the meaning of place shifts as each enclave evolves. I first set up a theoretical framework on placemaking and ethnic enclaves, focusing on the use of place in ethnic enclaves. I then draw on several aspects of each community's history to understand the factors that shaped their enclaves, using insights from field visits to illustrate key ideas. The analyses from my case studies allow me to highlight the purposes these enclaves serve as well as the challenges they face. Ultimately, I find that though place is essential to immigrant communities, mitigating the trauma of displacement and easing their transition into a new city, their access to space is threatened by gentrification and insufficient systemic protection. This negatively impacts not only immigrants in South Philadelphia, but also the city as a whole, preventing residents from having equal rights to the city.

## **Regan Riehl '24**

## **Literatures in English**

### *Yet There Be Method In 't: An Interdisciplinary Investigation of Hamlet Adaptations and the Adaptive Process*

This project is an interdisciplinary investigation of *Hamlet* adaptations and the adaptive process, examining how playwrights reshape and reimagine Shakespeare's story. Adaptation facilitates a conversation between the adaptive playwright, past playwrights, characters, and the crowd that places *Hamlet* adaptations in an interconnected web with each other, forming a complex relationship where past plays both serve as a foundation for adaptive playwrights and propel them to explore new terrain. In looking at adaptations like James Ijames' *Fat Ham*, Heiner Müller's *Hamletmachine*, and David Ives' *Words, Words, Words*, this project also uncovers the structural and cyclical aspects that make *Hamlet* a compelling source for adaptation. My research focuses on the symbiotic relationship between scholarship and creative work. Alongside traditional research, I have also written *Butterball*, an original theatrical adaptation of *Hamlet*.

Focusing on the sibling relationship between Ophelia and Laertes, *Butterball* follows the imagined futures Ophelia envisions to cope with their shared trauma. By engaging in the creative process as a playwright, this research unearths the irrational elements of adaptation that cannot be fully captured through scholarly analysis alone.

## **Chloe Rimmerman '24**

## **Art History/French**

*Cut from the Same Cloth: Byzantine textiles, Henri Matisse, and the fabric of l'Art Moderne*

This project investigates the conferences documenting a twenty year campaign (1896-1914) conducted by the archeologist Albert Gayet (1856-1916) in the Byzantine-Egyptian city of Antinoë (modern Cheikh-Abadeh). Gayet presented his findings, notably mummified corpses, to which he assigned an identity, and presented through bizarre, romantic spectacles — creating personalities which later appeared in the archeologist's auto fictional novel, *Le Roman de Claude d'Antioche* (1914). Visited by throngs even in record summer heat — from the President of the Republic, Emile Loubet, to the adolescent Georges Bracque — Gayet's displays became a touchstone of Parisian pop-culture and would have a far-reaching impact on artists, writers, and intellectuals for generations, among them Fernando Pessoa, Henri Matisse, and Jean Cocteau. Despite his cultural impact, contemporary scholarship often refers to the archeologist as amusing and exceptional, and dismisses his work as anecdotal rather than as evidence for broader cultural patterns rooted in time, place, and discipline. Popular across the boundaries of gender and class, Gayet's work synthesized the major preoccupations of the Belle Epoque: communion with the occult by literary and artistic circles, the emergence of the modern woman — or the lethal femme nouvelle — and the popular culture of spectacle manifest in elaborate international expositions. I argue that by resurrecting, reinventing, and eroticizing the female mummies of Antinoë, their garments, and the city itself, Gayet asserts the centrality of French culture through possession and shaping of the cultural other into a totem for French intellectual progress across the threshold of time, space, and even death.

## **Caroline Robertson '24**

## **Growth and Structure of Cities**

*Public Transportation Culture: Case Studies on the New York City Subway, Washington D.C. Metro, and Los Angeles Metro*

Subway systems are underground worlds that tend to be overlooked by those navigating the city above. This project explores a variety of subway systems to better understand these worlds and explore how public transportation culture varies across the United States. Public transportation culture includes the reputation of a system, quantifiable culture such as ridership statistics, and finally rider experiences. Firsthand experiences navigating the New York Subway, Washington D.C. Metro, and Los Angeles Metro are at the core of this project. The comparison of these three systems grasp how the age of a system can influence the structural and social rider experience. In addition to personal observations, interviews conducted with residents of each city revealed a variety of ridership experiences. Themes of safety arouse in these interviews illuminating the delicate balance between having effective safety policies and having a public transportation culture where riders respect these policies.

**Vivian Sandifer '24****Classical Languages***Women's Work: Weaving as Place, Process, and Product in Homer*

This paper examines weaving imagery in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Using the scene of Helen weaving her web of the Trojan War in *Iliad* 3 as a case study, I analyze the significance of weaving in Homer and show that weaving can signify place, process, product, or a combination thereof. When weaving signifies place, the image of the loom is used to indicate that a woman is in her proper place in the household and thus also in society. Weaving as process is more indicative of metaphorical weaving, where the emphasis is on the aspect of creation inherent in both physical and metaphorical weaving. The last category, weaving as product, refers to when the textiles produced by weavers are emphasized rather than the process of weaving or the placement in domestic contexts of women at the loom; these products act as symbols of the weaver's identity. Each of the three types of weaving, place, process, and product, I argue, assists the poet in crafting more nuanced and variegated identities for his female characters.

**Edward A. Sullivan '24****Growth and Structure of Cities***When Empires Meet: Encounters Between Assyria and London in Nineteenth Century Urban Space*

In mid-nineteenth century London, intellectual currents ranging from foreign policy to scientific innovations held a central place in society. Many of these trends were key to an emerging sense of urban production in the imperial capital. Steeped in this landscape and empowered by new discoveries, a distinct discipline emerged: Assyriology. This archaeology of the pre-Classical past was being conducted for the first time in what is now modern-day Iraq, at the outskirts of British, and even Ottoman, influence. London, reflecting the empire it presided over, also began to expand at its edges in the form of suburbs. As Assyrian material culture was imported to London and legitimized as part of the accepted cultural canon, suburbia adopted Assyria for its own monuments. Case studies of the Albert Memorial in South Kensington and the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, as well as other visual and spatial evidence from the era, demonstrate this transformation from periphery to legitimacy for both Assyriology and suburban space in London.

**Jian (Tom) Wei '24****Growth and Structure of Cities***Navigating Imperial Desires: Land Ownership and Place Making of Chinese Communities in Philadelphi and Los Angeles 1882-1943*

My project concerns Chinese American involvement in US urban development using Los Angeles Chinatown from the 1910s to the 1930s as a primary example and Philadelphia as a comparison. Through examining the primary documents available in the archives along with information presented in secondary sources, this project argues that the Chinese Americans were

**Jian (Tom) Wei '24** (*continued*)

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not simply a community made up of involuntary coolies, but a complicated group with members acting with their own volition. Specifically, this project uses historical Chinese restaurants as the metaphor of Chinese American experience. Comparing the change of ownership, naming convention, menu composition and other characteristics of the Far East Chinese Restaurant in Philadelphia and the Li Po Restaurant in Los Angeles to show the concentration of social change that took place over these decades. Therefore, the theoretical goal of this project is to define this unique form of agency exhibited by Chinese Americans during the Chinese exclusion era which set them apart from being simply Chinese or simply American. The significance of this project is to examine how American racial politics during the early twentieth century created a lasting international impact while also provoking various attempts of resistance and cooperation.

**Charlotte Yuan '24**

**International Studies, Sociology**

*Difficult Conundrum or Rare Opportunity?*

*How High-Tech Middle Powers in East Asia Navigate the U.S.-China Chip War*

Despite rich research by IR scholars on middle powers' behaviors in the great power competition, little is known about their strategic choices in the area of technology, including the semiconductor sector. As Biden further tightens chipmaking export controls to China to limit its growth, high-tech middle powers face a difficult dilemma: Do they follow US's containment policy against China, or do they support China's national technology development goal? This paper aims to explore this question by analyzing three semiconductor leaders in East Asia: South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. Contrary to the seeming conundrum, I find that all three middle powers have much to benefit from the great power technology competition by aligning closer with the US and forming internal alliances with other like-minded middle powers. Compared to China, the US is an indispensable and more reliable partner in the semiconductor industry. Furthermore, cooperation among middle powers themselves not only improves competitive advantage but also reduces potential risks in the existing vulnerable global supply chain.

**Priscilla Zhao**

**Philosophy**

*Women and Epistemic Injustice in Medicine*

According to Miranda Fricker's recent suggestion, *Hermeneutical Injustice* occurs when a significant area of one's social experience is obscured from understanding due to (prejudicial) lacuna in shared resources for social interpretation. This paper challenges the original definition by Fricker. I argue that there exists a distinct form of hermeneutical injustice which occurs owing not to lacuna in/a lack of collective interpretive resources, but rather to failing to apply existing interpretive resources to due social groups and their experience.