Fourth Year Thesis Titles and Abstracts—April 2016

Mackenzie Austin

Ain't No City Quite Like Mine: The Representation and Interpretation of Hip Hop Landscapes

In this thesis, I argue that the representation of Hip Hop Landscapes as exemplified through Compton, California have obscured the original intent of the Hip Hop movement and have led to the reinforcement of racial stereotypes in urban "ghettos".

From the creation of the sonic elements of Hip Hop, its artistic manifestations have always been rooted in physical space. Created in the South Bronx in the wake of post-industrialization and massive razing across the borough in the 1970s, Hip Hop music was a rose that grew from concrete. Beyond simply a music genre, Hip Hop originally emerged as an art form that attempted to assert ownership over physical space to which marginalized communities had been relegated. Despite the dilapidated state of the physical space, my research shows that graffiti art, breakdancing, DJ-ing and emceeing have always been an attempt to assert ownership over urban space. The Hip Hop movement was also imbued with a political element through its solidification in the ZULU Nation by Hip Hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa.

As Hip Hop culture and music spread across the country throughout the 1980s, other urban landscapes became the canvases upon which the artistic movement unfolded. One of the most important landscapes to enter the Hip Hop sphere was Compton, California. In this thesis, I analyze three Hip Hop albums: N.W.A.s *Straight Outta Compton*, Dr. Dre's *Compton*, and Kendrick Lamar's *good kid, m.A.A.d city.* Through these three case studies of concept albums on the city of Compton by three artists that have come to represent the landscape, I detail the trends and similarities of the representation that has come to define Compton in Hip Hop albums. My research found that the overwhelming representation is one-dimensional in that it paints Compton as a gang and drug-ridden landscape from only the black male point of view.

One of the most important developments in the history of Hip Hop music is its consolidation in the corporate music distribution model, which expanded Hip Hop's listenership from the local to the national. No longer were Hip Hop albums only consumed by those from the

urban landscapes described in the lyrics; the albums became a window into life in the "ghetto" for those that had never and would never live in or visit the space. This created a stark difference between the artist and the listener within which misinterpretations of the art form could take place.

I argue that because listeners take Hip Hop albums as authentic representations of blackness in urban settings, the albums on specific places become critical methods of the reinforcement of preconceived notions of black inferiority. The albums also become a one-dimensional, negative representation of urban spaces like Compton, California, that are far more complex than the gang-ridden spaces that these albums perpetuate.

The corporate music distribution model, an apathetic audience and a misunderstood art form have led to the reinforcement of negative stereotypes regarding specific urban spaces, like the city of Compton, and the misinterpretation of what started as a political movement: Hip Hop.

Samantha Ariel Dreyer

John Everett Millais's "Labour of Love": The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ

There is a rich tradition of social art historical analyses on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and John Everett Millais. A significant amount of literature has been written on Pre-Raphaelite paintings such as *Christ in the House of His Parents* and *Work*. However, less, if any, sociopolitical analysis has been conducted for Millais's Illustrations for *The Parables of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Many of Millais's paintings are world famous, however his parable illustrations, begun in 1857 and completed c.1864, have not been, in my opinion, given enough attention in art historical literature. In the history of art, prints and the reproductive arts are often viewed as less significant than paintings. In the few sources where these parable illustrations are mentioned, they are characterized as a means for Millais to make additional money.

In this thesis, through a broader sociopolitical and religious analysis, I argue that there is more at stake for Millais in these illustrations than mere income. Additionally, I consider Millais's biography and legacy as artist and implement contemporary, popular parable interpretations to glean further insight into these illustrations and Millais's motivation in accepting the Engravers, the Dalziel Brothers', commission to do them. I put forth several interpretations for five of the twenty illustrations Millais completed. I attempt to interpret their meanings for Victorian society at large and for Millais as an individual and artist.

I begin my thesis with a review if of the work of art historians Tim Barringer and Jason Rosenfeld. My review shows how Millais's and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's art is conducive to social art historical analysis and is often viewed as serving as a commentary on Victorian society. In my next chapter I trace Millais's life during the years he worked on the parables and review the current, but scarce literature on the illustrations themselves. In my third chapter, I

examine the manifestation of Victorian notions of labour and working-class rights in two illustrations—"The Parables of the Labourers in the Vineyard" and "The Parable of the Hidden Treasure." In my fourth chapter, I analyze Millais's version of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son," which is one of the most popularly illustrated parables in the history of art. Millais's version I argue is distinctly Victorian, reflecting his individual values as well as mid-Victorian social mores at large. In my fifth chapter I examine the parable illustrations, which depict women at work—"The Parable of the Leaven," and "The Parable of the Lost Piece of Silver." I discuss how these illustrations reflect the Victorian emphasis on gender and class divisions of labour.

My interpretations are by no means the only possibilities. Nevertheless, his parable series as a whole, I believe, are, like his paintings, artistic sociopolitical and religious reviews and manifestations of the Victorian era from which they emerged.

William Evans

The Chiquibul: Decolonizing Conservationism in Belize

This thesis builds on a growing ethnographic literature on conservation that challenges universalist assumptions of virtue in environmental discourse (Anderson & Berglund 2004; Vivanco 2006; West 2006). The focus on culture and politics within this literature recasts diverse instances of environmentally inspired action in contexts of colonial histories and struggles for social justice. For local members of a small NGO in San Jose Succotz, Belize called Friends for Conservation and Development (FCD), their conception of successful conservation management evinces a history of structural violence, a colonialist legacy, a territorial conflict and a binational heritage that links back to early forest product industries. This thesis presents an ethnography of progress that examines all four of these elements in an effort to gain new insights into effective conservation of the Chiquibul National Park (CNP).

Drawing on Walter Benjamin's political writings on political perceptions of historical change, my argument shifts from one "imagery" of progress to another, as I work to develop a thematic decolonization of conservation knowledge (i.e. conservationism) in Belize. This theme serves to: expose a neocolonialist grip on environmental management and the disappointments arising from it; acknowledge a common anti-colonialist bid to self-determination in alternative instances of environmental action; and re-conceptualize the conservation of the CNP in light of its colonialist legacy.

Chapter one investigates a post-materialist ideology, which appeals to a conception of progress defined in opposition to a Western-centric history of industrial expansion. The point here is not to criticize the intentions of the transnational conservation lobby that has guided land tenure policy in the country since the 1960s. Rather, I argue that the lobby's presumption of a universalist ethic has had the *effect* of stifling alternative notions of "development," which in turn, has sparked an unwitting epistemic conflict between conservationists and the indigenous communities they were allegedly trying to help.

The remaining four chapters remove the idea of FCD from a neocolonialist, i.e. *imposed*, discourse in order to grasp at more contextualized notions of "conservation" and "development." Drawing on interviews with villagers of San Jose Succotz, Benque Viejo, San Antonio and Red Bank village, Chapters two and three chronicle a relevant history of feeble forestry management and political tensions originating around the border since Independence in 1981. Chapter four shifts focus to recent manifestations of an anti-colonialist politics, which paradoxically centers its nationalist cause on the image of a lush Belizean landscape preserved under multiple phases of imposed power. I conceptualize this effort to negotiate postcolonial tensions, and to reclaim Belize by reclaiming territory under the sign of conservation, in terms of a *reclamation project*. FCD, while cast as part of this project, departs from an overt Belizean nationalism given its sense of *ladino* familiarity with those often publically portrayed as an invasive national enemy. This cultural linkage affords them deeper insight into the conditions of structural violence that have displaced thousands of Guatemalan *Peteneros,* driving many into joining an illicit market of *xate* palm, gold and macaw.

Chapter five illustrates how all of these historical, political and cultural elements inform the central method of FCD: science diplomacy, which envisions an official border resolution as essential to delivering fairer land governance across the binational landscape. Not only does this tactic constitute a bid for self-determination, but it also measures its idea of success in terms of a future in which that bid is reaffirmed for the Belizean citizen and Guatemalan *campesino* alike. Science diplomacy thus also bears potential to reconcile this historic tension between conflicting national and cultural loyalties.

Amber Nicole Finlay

A Dream Deferred: The Prosperity Gospel and the Changing Face of Black Economic Ideology

In this thesis, I argue that the prosperity gospel, the doctrine that it is God's will for Christians to be rich, challenges traditional Black social and economic discourse. With respect to the political and social history of the Black church, I analyze contemporary theological discourse on economic inequality and racial oppression to answer the question: *What is the future of Black theological politics?*

In the introduction, I outline the contemporary debate pertaining to the prosperity gospel and the effect that it has on the concept of Christian community. I argue that the merits and tensions of the prosperity gospel are multi-faceted. The notions of self-help and personal responsibility that the theology espouses creates a narrative that differs from the traditional notion that the function of the Black church is to challenge existing oppressive structures and catalyze political change.

In my first chapter, I consider the history and political nature of the church, emphasizing its ability to provide a means for the Black community to navigate difficult political and social spaces. With respect to the growing trends in Black religious practice, I assert that the increasing presence of megachurches and the prosperity gospel undermines the political potential of the church.

Chapter two focuses on the four main tenets of the prosperity gospel—health, wealth, faith, and victory. I assert that although the prosperity gospel masks as a theology of hope and promise, it threatens the traditional political role of the Black church, which has been to advocate for the rights of the oppressed and contextualize difficult social challenges. The emphasis on individualism, self-help, and personal responsibility deconstruct concepts of Christian community, as the prosperity gospel attributes negative outcomes to the sufferer rather than systems of inequality. I assert that this view has an especially detrimental effect on the Black community, as the church has historically played a critical role in the fight against social structures that marginalize or favor certain groups over others.

In the third and final chapter, I discuss the significance of the exclusion – and inclusion – of racial discourse in the prosperity gospel and its possibility to intensify socioeconomic hardship amongst congregants. With respect to the social and theological teachings of three of the most prominent Black preachers of the contemporary age: T.D. Jakes (The Potter's House), Creflo Dollar (World Changers Church International), and Frederick K.C. Price (Crenshaw Christian Center), I assert that each minister contributes something valuable to the conversation on how the prosperity gospel should address difficult conversations on race and reconciliation.

I conclude my work with a reflection on the manner in which the prosperity gospel will influence the future of Black economic ideology and religious practice. I discuss how the theology transforms the meaning of what it means for the Black Church to respond to present-day economic and political strife, explaining the larger significance of academic study on the future of the political landscape and scope of Black theological politics.

Ashley Reid Gerrard

Paul Kagame and the Development of Post-genocide Rwanda

I argue that Paul Kagame, Rwanda's president, both unified and stabilized Rwanda post 1994 genocide. Kagame faced numerous challenges following the genocide, and worked against immense odds to fix his crippled country. After the genocide, Rwanda was destroyed. Families were systematically murdered over a period of three months, and infrastructure was demolished. Through all adversity, Kagame transformed the country, and has done an impressive job in restoring order in a country plagued by adversity.

I begin my first chapter with a detailed overview of the genocide and Hutu and Tutsi ethnic tensions that contributed to the social time bomb. I define the term genocide, and further

analyze the causes of the historical event. I also attempt to understand how the world stood by and allowed the atrocities to occur without any significant humanitarian intervention. In my next chapter, I analyze Kagame at all stages of his life and argue that his early life experiences both shape his perspective, and craft him into the visionary leader that he is. In my third chapter, I examine how Kagame dealt with three challenges post-genocide including the absence of the international community, the immense number of returning exiled Rwandans, and dealing with the acceptance of foreign aid. I specifically consider the failures of the UN, U.S., Belgium and France as they held some responsibility for the tragedy itself. In my last chapter, I concentrate specifically on what Kagame has accomplished since assuming the presidency in 2000. Rwanda has made significant progress since one of the 20th century's greatest tragedies. Kagame is a revolutionary leader and focuses on three important objectives to propel Rwanda forward. This includes a strategic plan to achieve economic stability, a reformed justice system, and a transitional government.

Lastly, in my conclusion I focus on Rwanda's future. Despite the progress made in a country tormented by loss, its leader has been criticized for his inability to "pass the baton" of leadership to a successor. Kagame's successor will undoubtedly be hard to find, but unitary rule can breed resentment and it is up to Kagame to foster long-term political, social, and economic success. Although post-genocide development was difficult, Kagame was strategic, and the leader Rwandan required to both embrace chaos and help rebuild a country once greatly divided.

Benjamin Harris

No Fighting in the War Room: The Limited Utility of Nuclear Weapons in Deterring Conventional Attacks

The success of the Trinity nuclear test fundamentally reshaped the technological capability of humanity. One of the primal forces of the universe was harnessed to create a weapon of unfathomable destruction, a new instrument of war which threatened utter annihilation.

The Second World War ended when Japan surrendered after two of its cities succumbed to atomic flames—and after the Soviet Union entered the war—but since then the nuclear saber has remained in its scabbard, even when nuclear weapons states were attacked by non-nuclear weapons states.

This thesis analyzes three separate case studies in which a non-nuclear weapons state attacked a nuclear state. In 1950, China crossed the Yalu and engaged American forces in Korea. In 1973, Egypt and Syria invaded Israel on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. In 1982, Argentina mounted a surprise assault on the British-controlled Falkland Islands. In each case, nuclear weapons failed to deter and were not used during the subsequent wars.

This thesis examines this failure of nuclear deterrence and the puzzling non-use of nuclear defenders. It argues that a mix of realist and normative reasons explains the two

phenomena. However, it argues that as the nuclear taboo has grown stronger over time, normative reasons have taken clear precedence over realist reasons.

Nuclear weapons are the most powerful weapons ever created by humanity—so powerful that they lack the needed credibility to deter. Because of the constraining effects of the nuclear taboo, non-nuclear states have been able to attack nuclear states without fear of nuclear reprisal.

Julia Horowitz

Hanged at the Twitter Gallows: On Public Shaming in the Age of the Internet

I argue that in the age of the Internet, public shaming—an age-old mechanism for enforcing social norms—has taken on a new tenor, and is more often utilized as a weapon than as a punishment. The frequency and ferocity of online shaming, which increasingly targets otherwise private individuals, has thrust the issue into the spotlight, spurring calls for mercy and turning online reputation management into a legal curio and corporate moneymaker.

My research first examines how Internet shaming fits into the long-running academic debate about shame and its role in society. Using Aristotle, John Rawls and Martha Nussbaum as a foundation, I define shame as a uniquely moral, highly potent emotion that differs from regret, humiliation, embarrassment and guilt; feeling shame inherently involves a negative assessment not just of a particular act, but of the entire self. I then explicate the role shaming has historically played in society, either as a criminal punishment or a social process to reinforce norms. Lastly, I examine how the Internet distorts the traditional shaming mechanism, heightening deindividuation, augmenting aggressive tendencies and lowering barriers to entry. These changes increase opportunities for harm and abuse. For this reason, I argue we need to define a better path forward, curbing the online shaming of unnecessary victims and rehabilitating those who have experienced undue harm.

I then explore existing remedies for this new problem. The most seductive of these is Europe's "right to be forgotten," recently enshrined in a ruling by the European Union's top court. A look at how views on privacy diverge between Europe and the United States, however, as well as a brief look at how U.S. courts have ruled on cases weighing the public's right to know against an individual's right to privacy, shows it is unlikely the right to be forgotten will take hold across the Atlantic. Other propositions—including eraser button laws that would allow netizens to remove regrettable content, the use of private reputation management firms, and encouraging newsrooms to grant unpublishing requests—either prove to be too facile, too expensive, or too harmful to a free press to advocate for on a large scale.

The lack of plausible back-end solutions led me to examine what can be done to hinder online shaming at the outset. In my final chapter, I aver that news organizations with digital newsgathering capabilities, which are often complicit in the shame-storm, must create online

codes of ethics that reflect the realities of online disclosure. Right now, the vast majority of digital publishers operate either with decades old codes of ethics, or without a code at all. Few news organizations remind journalists to weigh the public's need for information against potential harm caused to an individual, and fewer still note that in the online realm, in particular, information disclosed lives on forever. I highlight specific ways newsgathering groups may bring codes up to snuff, giving journalists the tools they need to make responsible decisions about disclosing personal information about subjects on the Internet. Though this will not solve the complex issue of online shaming outright, it marks an important start.

Joseph Patrick Kyle

The Rise and Fall of the "B" in BRIC: Investigating the Discourse Surrounding Brazil as an Emerging Market Economy

In this thesis, I investigate the Anglophone financial media discourse surrounding Brazil's economy between the years 2001 and 2015. This discourse was heavily influenced by the acronym "BRIC," a term created by American multinational investment bank Goldman Sachs. By investigating the particular case of Brazil's experience as a key member of BRIC, my thesis shows how the BRIC phenomenon engendered discourse that was disconnected from reality. Further, my thesis gathers evidence to demonstrate that this disconnect from reality had real consequences for millions of people.

My first chapter begins with a brief analysis of the "Wall Street Perspective," namely the arguments underlying the creation of the BRIC acronym. BRIC refers to the countries Brazil, Russia, India and China. Together, the four were projected to grow larger than the "G6" economies—the most advanced in the world—within the first half of the twenty-first century. In this vein, BRIC became a catch-all term meant to be representative of an impending global macroeconomic shift. Subsequently, I analyze contemporary emerging markets terminology in the context of the history of global capitalism. In doing so, I show that the underlying concepts of emerging markets terminology are not particularly new.

In my second chapter, I discuss the economic history of Brazil. Specifically, I highlight how, at different points throughout its history, Brazil has been branded as an emerging economic power. Additionally, the second chapter discusses instances of foreign economic activity in Brazil as well as previous "boom" and "bust" cycles.

My third and fourth chapters examine the BRIC-related discourse surrounding Brazil as an emerging market. Covering the years from 2009 until roughly 2012 when Brazil experienced high rates of GDP growth, Chapter 3 focuses on the "boom" discourse. Chapter 4 focuses on the "bust" discourse from 2013 to the present, emphasizing coverage in the financial media of Brazil's worst recession since the Great Depression.

Brazil's inclusion in the BRIC grouping was initially met with skepticism both within Brazil and outside of it. Despite the doubts, foreign financial media warmly embraced Brazil's status as a BRIC once economic events in the country began to fit with the previously established BRIC narrative. It is true that Brazil experienced a commodity boom post-2008. However, comparing the discourse of Brazil's boom period with that of its dramatic bust reveals some of the ways in which the media makes inconsistent use of history. As this practice pertains to the B in BRIC, it downplays the role of Brazilian agency in the economic boom while emphasizing the country's active role in the bust. Moreover, the media's appropriation of history employs problematic themes and stereotypes regarding Brazilian agency, attaching a particular moral valence to Brazil's economic stagnation and contraction. I argue that the media employs these tactics to hide its own general shortsightedness, its mis-forecasts about the future of the Brazilian economy, and its own contribution to these events. My thesis concludes by exploring broader questions about the roles of discourse and narratives in contemporary global capitalism.

John Mathew

"Understanding the Indian American Identity": An Examination of the Indian Diaspora

In this thesis I argue that there has not been enough of a contextualization of the Indian American identity. In many forms of research Indian immigrants and second generation children are often lumped into the Asian American demographic. Many individuals play off the Indian American identity by lumping the entire community into a "model minority identity."

This thesis tracks the push and pull factors of Indian immigration to the United States. The community of Indians in the United States numbers a little over 3 million. Despite the relative lack of size compared to other minority groups, Indian Americans have made a name for themselves in business, politics, and media. As a result, some individuals are quick to label Indians as "smarter" without taking into account the historical, educational, and cultural factors that go into forming the Indian American identity.

Chapters two and three delve deeper into the colonial factors that have influenced the Indian American identity. Although the British implemented many institutions in India because of an underlying belief that Indian culture was antiquated and backward, their presence in India undoubtedly has had a huge effect on the daily life of Indians. British influence on the Indian subcontinent is very evident, but there exists a further argument that the institutions have had a greater impact for those immigrating to the United States. One of the main reasons the British stressed the use of English or western legal systems was to create a ruling gentry in India that could conduct business with British subjects and remain loyal to the crown. The majority of Indians coming to the United States on H-1B visas are governmentally titled "highly educated" or "specialized." I argue there exists a deeper colonial influence for Indian Americans because of the immigration policy in the United States.

Chapter four emphasizes the impact of combining Indian culture and western influence in forming the contemporary Indian American. Despite India having over 2,000 distinctly different ethnic and linguistic groups, there is often a strong camaraderie and search for a collective identity. I argue that the portrait of the Indian American is a combination of historical influences and the strong ties that Indians have to their own culture. When the Indian Sepoys rebelled against the British in 1857, it was primarily due to a prevailing opinion that the British were trying to completely acculturate the Indians. Despite the influence of colonial rule, there were many tenants and traditions in Indian culture that never changed; these factors are vital in explaining the scope of the Indian diaspora in the United States.

Overall, I argue that a combination of United States immigration policy and attitudes towards immigrants, historical factors such as British colonial rule, and roots of Indian culture are required to paint an adequate picture of the Indian American identity.

Porter Nenon

Sexual Politics in James Baldwin's Early Fiction

James Baldwin (1924-1987) was one of the most visible and prolific American writers of the twentieth century. Yet for many years before he rose to literary acclaim, Baldwin struggled to articulate himself. Growing up in Harlem, Baldwin wrestled with his race, his sexuality, and his family's crushing poverty. He felt marginalized and suffocated by American culture. Eventually, he left America for Paris, where he would publish a series of increasingly personal essays and complete two novels. This paper explores Baldwin's attempts to make meaning from his identities while resisting the politicization of his work.

Chapter one tells the story of Baldwin's early career. Using David Leeming's well-regarded biography, I detail some of Baldwin's childhood before examining his early essays and works of fiction. I discuss two significant essays, "Everybody's Protest Novel" and "Preservation of Innocence," and his first two novels, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* and *Giovanni's Room*. I argue that over the course of his early career, Baldwin became increasingly adept at translating dislocation and marginalization into art.

For the remainder of my thesis, I ask: why is Baldwin's work is so difficult for publishers, readers, and literary critics to neatly categorize and interpret? In each chapter, I compare early critical interpretations with Baldwin's own comments on his work. I conclude that most reviewers lacked the critical tools to understand the complexity of Baldwin's work. I supplement those reviews with modern queer, feminist and critical race theorists to examine features of *Go Tell It* and *Giovanni's Room* that eluded early critics.

In Chapter two, I analyze the protagonist's "huge, black, [and] shapeless" fear of damnation in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. I contrast early reviewers' understanding of the novel as a religious text with Baldwin's critiques of Christian theology in "Everybody's Protest Novel."

Informed by modern queer and critical race theorists, I argue that Baldwin's images of darkness subvert the racialized binaries between sin and salvation that require the mortification of black flesh.

Though homoeroticism heavily influenced Baldwin's thought, his understanding of sexuality is not reducible to it. In Chapter three, I consider three minor characters in *Go Tell It on the Mountain*: Deborah, Esther, and Richard. I employ a number of black feminist critics—including Saidiya Hartman, Patricia Williams, Hortense Spillers, and Patricia Hill Collins—to understand those marginal characters as figures of heterosexual non-conformity. I argue that Deborah, Esther, and Richard suffer the lingering effects of slavery as an economic disruption of black sexuality.

Chapter four borrows from Judith Butler to read three scenes from Baldwin's second novel, *Giovanni's Room*, as visual illustrations of the "fear of becoming gay." I consider the way David looks at his first lover, at two drag queens in Paris, and at an American sailor. I suggest that Baldwin locates David's crisis of masculinity in his neurotic inability to look honestly at the world in all its complexity.

Jaeyoon Park

Nonmodern Worlds: On the Thinking of Bruno Latour

In this thesis I explicate the recent thinking of Bruno Latour (b. 1947). I focus on his 2012 book, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* (*AIME*). I propose to situate *AIME* in the context of two related intellectual developments: the first concerning the limits of critique; the second concerning the West's self-identification as the paragon of modernity. My view is that we can understand *AIME* as responding to a situation in which, within the imagination of the West, both critique and modernity will have come to an end.

In this study, I treat modernity as a mode of self-understanding for the West that entails certain essential features. On Latour's account, the most obvious feature of modernity is its expression of a particular temporality, its way of organizing time. Modernity imagines time as an "irreversible arrow," as Latour puts it, along which the present is traveling away from a past of confusion and error and toward a future organized purely by ideals.

Over the past half-century, the identity of the West as modern has become increasingly unstable. One thinks of such developments as the proliferation of nuclear weaponry, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the eruption of identitarian conflicts, and the mounting evidence of anthropogenic climate change. These represent just a few in a vast series of hammer blows against modernity's picture of the present as moving continually toward an ideal future.

Who, then, are we in the West? Our response to this question would not simply satisfy a theoretical curiosity; rather, it would actively provide a source of normative orientation.

Obviously, an idea of who "we" are is the precondition for articulating what "we" desire, what "we" are capable of, who "we" shall become.

Following Latour, I suggest that to reimagine Western collective identity in the wake of modernity's collapse requires revising the idea of critique. It turns out that the critical tradition that we have inherited is essentially constitutive of modernity, with the result that critique can only register the collapse of modernity in modern terms. The view that modern critique offers of its own end is what we know as postmodernity, which Latour claims is not so much a solution to modernity's end as it is a symptom. I present postmodernity as a condition of *trauma*, within which the West mourns the loss of modernity while remaining entangled in its conceptual roots.

Latour opens a different path. Inaugurating a new tradition of criticism, Latour attempts to bring into view the regions of experience obscured by the single rationality of modern critique. Latour grounds this effort in a new metaphysics, centered on articulated relations rather than on stable essences. No longer the prophet who reveals the one true reality below, the Latourian critic strives to describe the plural realities and rationalities—"modes of existence"—that weave the worlds of our experience. With these descriptions, Latour hopes to make possible the work of diplomacy—the composition of commonality from ingredients of difference. Perhaps then we shall be able to make some sense of who "we" are, we who have never been modern.

Zachary Peak

A Reconsideration of Gentrification Through a Study of Union Market

Gentrification, the process of redeveloping an urban working-class neighborhood for people with higher levels of economic and social capital, has become one of the most contentious topics in urban development. Debates over gentrification have intensified as many cities in the United States have become more desirable places to live. Many critics of gentrification argue that once the process begins, social exclusion and displacement are predetermined outcomes and that it produces urban landscapes that lack authenticity and meaningful social diversity.

In this thesis, I reconsider gentrification through a study of Union Market in Washington, DC. Although negative signs of gentrification do exist in Union Market's surrounding neighborhood, I argue that what is happening at the market is more complex than traditional critiques of gentrification would suggest. Based on my personal observations and in-person interviews that I conducted with customers, proprietors, security personnel, and other people involved with the project, I argue that Union Market has become a successful public space conducive to a form of urban sociability. Inspired by the work of Jane Jacobs, this form of sociability can best be described, in Iris Marian Young's words, as "being together with strangers." I contend that this form of urban sociability is an important precondition for the healthy functioning of a democratic society. Without the process of gentrification, a public space of

sociability would not have emerged at Union Market. Many critiques of gentrification fail to consider these possibilities.

At the same time, I argue that critiques of gentrification are focused too narrowly on social exclusion and displacement. These negative consequences brought on by the process of gentrification are a symptom of broader social and political inequality. I contend that this inequality stems from the impoverishment of the public sphere of citizenship, where active citizens are engaged in the political process and willing to pay what political theorist Michael Walzer terms "the costs of urbanity." These costs range from actively participating in the political process to committing adequate financial resources through taxes to achieve public goals.

In short, I suggest that gentrification is a more complicated process than many critics would suggest. I argue that society, as a diverse public, should actively mobilize to exercise its "right to the city" by putting pressure on the state and the market to address the negative consequences of gentrification. At the same time, I also argue that we should consider gentrification's possibility to create spaces of genuine sociability. Ultimately, I argue that instead of criticizing gentrification outright, critics should focus on maximizing the possible social benefits of gentrification while minimizing the worst outcomes to achieve more equitable urban development goals.

Annie Plotkin

"Stirred by Necessity and Promise": Strategies for Environmental Justice and Alternative Economics in the United States

My thesis stems from the political ecology of J.K. Gibson-Graham and the academic research network known as the Community Economies Collective (CEC). This political ecology is particularly oriented towards destabilizing "capitalocentrism," or the dominant representation of all economic activities in terms of their relationship to capitalism. The CEC realizes such destabilization through academic and activist production of different representations of economic identity and the generation of alternative narratives about economic development. I argue that in particular, Gibson-Graham's diverse economies framework provides a useful methodology for considering the possibilities for environmental justice work, a movement closely tied to racial and economic justice. Through this framework that understands varying forms of economic life as viable options, the CEC proposes that diverse scholarly and activist efforts can open the economy to ethical debate and provide space for exploring different economic practices. Utilizing CEC's research methods, I analyze the structure, visions, and

strategies of three U.S.-based organizations enacting radical visions of the economy and intersectional justice.

My first case study organization is the Sustainable Economies Law Center, which conducts research, advocacy, and provides legal services in an effort to develop a new economy that democratizes resources, rejects environmental exploitation, and empowers marginalized communities. The second is the Common Counsel Foundation, a philanthropic foundation that gives grants exclusively to organizations seeking environmental, racial, and economic justice through radical, grassroots-based work. The third is the Schumacher Center for a New Economics, with a particular focus on their newest program, the Schumacher College for New Economists. The Center has been a leading think tank, educator, and engineer of new economics particularly in the Eastern United States, and have begun planning a post-graduate program which would provide students with the ability to implement new economic models like community land trusts and local currencies in their communities.

Each group has their own vision of the "new" or "alternative" economy. Often, these ideas about more just economic models involved visions of many different community econom*ies* that took alternative ethical orientations to matters of ecological wellbeing, distribution of surplus, labor, and justice, instead of a single normative economy. I also identify how each group develops legitimacy behind a radical agenda, finding that each group did so through rather mainstream means. SELC maintains a fruitful relationship with local governments, CCF attains its influence through its proximity to vast wealth, and the Schumacher Center leverages its almost 50 years of experience in new economics to establish itself as an authority. However, I argue that instead of compromising the radical aims they affirm, these entanglements strengthen their potential for concrete outcomes. Utilizing the diverse economies framework, I take these entanglements as an argument for the expansion of economic logic, not to offer more explanations about human behavior, but to orient ourselves away from narratives about the inevitable dominance of capitalism and towards re-thinking and re-enacting economies.

Robert Rust

In the Driver's Seat: Human Liability in the Context of Autonomous Machines

I argue that technological progress has introduced a new type of machine into the human world, which I call the "decision-making machine." To be considered a decision-making machine, a computational device must have the capability to receive stimuli from the external world, translate those inputs into information, evaluate that information, and finally act on its evaluation. The category isolates a specific group of machines which have resulted from the increase in human capabilities for the manufacturing and development of complex

computational devices. Because these machines possess the ability to act, they have the potential to play an analogous role in many given situations to that of humans themselves. Autonomous vehicles such as self-driving cars serve as examples of such machines.

I explore the ways in which humans make decisions and compare these systems to the early attempts at creating decision-making algorithms for machines. I note the similarities between the two schemas and highlight the distributed parallel processing inherent in many complex machines today.

The category of decision-making machines serves not as a technical distinction but as a classification for argumentative purpose. All such machines pose serious challenges to legal frameworks of intention and liability, since it is extraordinarily difficult to prove either exist in the decision-making and actions of a machine. Research indicates that self-driving cars, as the first decision-making machines to necessitate legislation in any systemic way, are the first set of machines to truly challenge theories of liability for accident cases.

Using self-driving cars as a case study, I examine the legislation already passed in a number of states concerning autonomous vehicles. The laws passed concern themselves primarily with the safety of operators and the technical requirements for road-safe autonomous vehicles; all liability for crashes involving such vehicles is assumed either to exist either by the fault of the operator or the negligence of the manufacturer. I argue against considering liability of the operator as a realistic continued future avenue of lawmaking, since autonomous vehicles will soon navigate without any input from users whatsoever. I argue, too, that manufacturers are not at all clearly at fault for any potential decisions made by their machines, since these machines make decisions in ways that may be completely unpredictable. I conclude that no strict, assumed liability should exist in cases involving decision-making machines.

I examine alternative methods of ensuring safety and victim compensation by studying recommendations for the implementation of new systems of insurance for autonomous travel. I conclude that these offer more reasonable avenues for ensuring justice.

I argue that Actor-Network Theory, as explained by Bruno Latour in *Reassembling the Social*, serves as the best method for describing networks which include actors previously unnoticed by legal theory. Earlier misapplications of liability law stemmed from a misunderstanding of the networks that lead to accidents and a legal bias towards assigning guilt solely to human parties. Through application of Actor-Network Theory early in the legislative process, I believe lawmakers will more likely avoid the trap of assuming liability and intention when it is not clearly present. But if law is to remain internally consistent, it must apply this method of description to all of its branches, not simply future ones.

My research shows that there exist methods of description that introduce greater consistency to lawmaking and would integrate easily enough with current legal theory. I advocate institutionalizing the practice of description to avoid future inconsistencies in law.

Stephanie Sacco

Radicalization in Western Individuals to Violent Islamist Extremism: Theories & Cases

Using theoretical justifications as well as empirical evidence, scholars find multiple unique factors leading to radicalization must be present, often by chance, to create a situation where individuals will act violently or seek membership in a group that acts violently. Many of these factors have nothing to do with a personal belief in fundamentalist Islam. Some scholars have studied psychological factors that lead an individual to perpetrate religious violence for political purposes, while sociologists, historians, religious scholars, and political scientists study group dynamics of terrorist organizations and fundamentalist groups who act violently.

The majority of the scholars who reject an assignment of blame on Islam as a motivating factor in radicalization focus on theories like concrete grievances or relative deprivation, such as the absence of economic and political opportunity, to explain the radicalization of individuals, most often in comparison to the freedom enjoyed by the West as a world hegemon. These theories have merit when examining radicalized Islamist extremists in areas like the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – or the non-West – but do not withstand scrutiny when applied to the growing trend of Western individuals becoming radicalized to Islamist extremism. The conditions in which cognitive and behavioral radicalization occur in Western individuals seem to defy past theories on political violence; "normal" grievances are often absent in the radicalization process for Western upper-middle class, educated individuals.

This leads to the overall interrogative of my thesis, where I seek to understand the complex process by which Western individuals reject cosmopolitan, pluralistic values to become radicalized to violent Islamist extremism, through the study of the relationships between theories and case studies. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the process by which an individual becomes radicalized to violent Islamist extremism, it is beneficial to assess the strength of a combination of theories and models on their relationships to the empirical studies, where some characteristics may bolster one element of a theory while detracting from others.

The degree to which any theory or model corresponds to the purposefully heterogeneous case studies will be a key factor in analyzing the accuracy these theories. Many of the theories will be shown to be over-claiming their applicability to the large, diverse group of Westerners becoming radicalized, while others will be so general they could apply to any young adult in the West or non-West searching for an identity. There will be elements of many theories and models that through their application to the case studies prove to be more persuasive than others.

Erin Seagears

Fleeting Fathers: Responding to the Absence of Fathers in Inner City Communities

In inner cities across the United States, millions of children are growing up without a father. First, this thesis explains the problem of fatherlessness in inner city communities: its causes and its effect on inner city youth. There are a few different causes for fatherlessness including increasing trends of divorce and unwed motherhood, but looking specifically at urban America, one significant cause of fatherlessness is mass incarceration. There are over a million black men in jail and therefore, almost 3 million black children living without a father present as a result of that. This has had a huge impact on these children. Serious issues including poverty, suicide, violence and aggression, teen pregnancy, and more have strong connections to fatherlessness. Even more concerning, several of the issues at hand are very cyclical in nature and have been passed down through generations, with the current expectation that they will continue to be passed down. Literally millions of children across the United States are suffering from this widespread epidemic of fatherlessness and if the current trends continue, it is expected that millions more will continue to do so.

There are measures being taken, however, to combat the harms and risks of fatherlessness in inner city communities. In my thesis I analyze both children and father focused responses to the problem of fatherlessness, looking at various programs and assessing their effectiveness. There are several organizations and programs that support and care for poor, black fatherless children in the inner city; giving them tutoring, opportunities for fun and life – enhancing activities, and providing them with caring mentors and friends. Several of these programs have been proven to be highly successful. In addition, there are programs devoted to training inner city men to be good fathers – inviting them into support groups and mentorship relationships – and those have been proven to make a positive difference as well.

Though studies have proven the positive and significant impacts of these responses to fatherlessness in inner city communities, I argue that they are not sufficient to protect these innocent children from the dangers faced because of fatherlessness. These programs are important and necessary but because they do not directly attack the root causes of the issue, the actual problem of fatherlessness in inner city communities cannot be eradicated as a result of them. I argue that the effects of having a father in jail on inner city children and youth cannot be ignored when discussing the phenomenon of mass incarceration. By sentencing this huge population of black men for drug crimes, an even larger population, innocent children, is suffering. It is important to respond to the problem of fatherlessness in inner city communities and many of the current responses are yielding great results, but there is still a need in pursuing ways to end the issue of fatherlessness itself.

Chloe Frances Squires

Sovereignty and Survival: South Sudan's Turning Point

In this discussion of South Sudan's pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history, I argue that the economic stagnation and propensity for war impeding the country today is the consequence of racial oppression conducted by external powers. Regarding geopolitics, South Sudan's shared borders with both the pariah state of Sudan and the volatile Great Lakes region have caused the country to become a site for proxy wars between East African powers, compounding the complexity of the current civil war.

In an assessment of two seminal transitional justice processes on the African continent, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa following the end of apartheid in 1990 and Rwanda's collective efforts after the genocide in 1994, I identify lessons from the examples of survivor's justice and victor's justice in the two respective countries. South Sudan intends to implement a transitional justice initiative as soon as the civil war ends. The country should learn from mistakes made in South Africa and Rwanda to avoid repeating them.

I argue that the tension between realism and idealism in international relations is reflected in positions for and against military and humanitarian interventions, specifically in the case of South Sudan. Countries whose civil wars end in a rebel victory tend to enjoy longer periods of peace, however, I argue that the international community ought to provide comprehensive peacekeeping forces to hasten an end to the current civil war. Aiding the transition from a failing state to a liberal democracy, two policies would temporarily diminish South Sudan's sovereignty in exchange for long term prosperity. These include a shared sovereignty contract monitoring the oil industry and a neo-trusteeship between South Sudan and an external power governing its civil and political institutions.

Katelyn Villany

Baby Redistribution as a State-Building Mechanism: From Fascism to Capitalism

Between the 1940s and 1990s in Spain, babies were taken from their biological parents and placed in different families. What began during Francisco Franco's authoritarian dictatorship as a political scheme later developed into a disturbing business network. Lawyers now estimate that approximately 300,000 of these "*niños robados*," or stolen children, were taken and redistributed in connection with this massive baby trafficking scandal. Participants in this system of illicit "adoptions" mainly included doctors, nurses, priests, and nuns, who ensured the longevity of the scandal through a careful system of deception and fear. I examine why baby redistribution began,

why it continued after Franco's death, and what consequences contemporary Spain has experienced.

In the first two decades of the scandal (the 1940s through the 1950s), it seems that babies were redistributed as part of a broader political strategy. In 1939, Francisco Franco assumed unprecedented power as Spain's dictator. The Franco regime was staunchly Catholic and conservative, and Franco was intolerant of anyone who did not conform to his ideology. In fact, he worried that foreign or liberal influences would destroy Spain. In an attempt to "purify" Spain, participants in the scandal took babies from liberal parents or single mothers—those believed to be political opponents—and placed them in pro-Francoist, Catholic families. Reallocating babies seemed to provide the opportunity to construct a country that was politically and religiously aligned with Franco.

In the 1960s, the motivation for trafficking babies shifted: now, the scandal was driven by economic incentives. With Franco's death approaching, and Spain undergoing a process of secularization, the Spanish Church was beginning to fear for its future. Still dependent upon State funds, the Church had discovered some form of financial insurance, which would provide security in the post-Franco era. I argue that religious figures capitalized on the baby "market," selling babies to wealthy families to earn a profit. I further posit that this "business" continued after Franco's death in 1975 as an attempt by participants to maintain influence as Spain prepared for drastic political and social change.

A scandal that spanned approximately five decades and that has affected an enormous number of people has, of course, had serious effects upon contemporary Spain. Contributing to the emotional complexity of the scandal, public discussions regarding the atrocities of the Franco era were essentially silenced until the early 2000s. In the aftermath of the regime, I argue, Spain is experiencing a moment of "identity crisis," as well as distorted historical memory. While individuals attempt to piece together their family histories and discover their true identities, Spain's national identity is unclear.

Today, attempts to seek justice for crimes of the Franco era often meet difficult challenges in the Spanish courts. Though some former participants have been charged in connection with the *niños robados* scandal, many cases alleging baby redistribution lack sufficient evidence. Many individuals doubt the legitimacy of the central government, as well as the Catholic Church, perhaps due, in part, to accusations of corruption and criminal activity leveled at both institutions. The next several years will be critical for Spain, and I hope that the future will provide victims with closure for the pain they have experienced.

Tamar Ziff

Speech, Please!: Freedom of Expression in Israel's Emergency Legal Regime

Israel's legal infrastructure did not have any entrenched provisions for freedom of expression at the founding of the state in 1948. Bereft of a constitution, rule of law in Israel was relatively arbitrary: the Knesset (Parliament) passed laws as needed, and the judicial branch was given little power or precedent to take issue with them. All that could guide Israeli legal practice was common law and the rhetoric of the 1948 Declaration of Independence, which promised to create a state that "will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex…will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture… will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations." The legal paradigm shifted in 1992 with what former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak deemed the "constitutional revolution," when a Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty was ratified by the Knesset and set formal legal precedent for the protection of civil liberties such as freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech is the civil right that warrants the most protection in the Israeli regime, being, as it is, an "emergency" regime with various recourses to inhibit freedom of expression. I take particular focus on freedom of *artistic* expression because I believe that it is the most effective means of gauging tolerance to a plurality of viewpoints and expressed cultures in the Israeli state. Art is the most eloquent and most powerful means for the expression of human dignity, both as the realization of personal worth and as the medium for accessing civil and political discourse. The introduction of a law that explicitly invokes dignity raises questions as to its interpretation in Israeli legal discourse and how it is related to freedom of speech. I will explore the ways in which the introduction of this law changed – or failed to change – the attitude of the Israeli Supreme Court towards freedom of artistic expression. Current threats to civil liberties by Israel's conservative regime make the questions of freedom of expression, and dignity, particularly pressing; this inquiry will also delve into the nature of the governmental opposition to certain instantiations of expression, and how they relate to the Israeli national narrative. Through this inquiry, I hope to untangle Israel's complicated emergency legal regime and see what real obstacles exist for freedom of expression in Israel, and how the Israeli Supreme Court can work to mitigate them. Furthermore, in identifying the core of the government's opposition to certain kinds of speech, I hope to find meaning and reason behind the almost irrationally vehement opposition to open art and expression in Israel.