

## Undergraduate Research Symposium May 18, 2018 Mary Gates Hall

### Online Proceedings

---

2L

#### MCNAIR SESSION - ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA: ENVIRONMENT, GOVERNMENT, SEX, GENDER AND RACE

*Session Moderator: Stephanie Selover, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization*

**MGH 287**

*3:30 PM to 5:15 PM*

\* Note: Titles in order of presentation.

##### **Totally Inadequate: The Sierra Club, the Save the Redwoods League, and the Battle for Redwood National Park**

*Joshua Friedlein, Senior, History, Portland State University  
McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Catherine McNeur, Portland State University*

This project is an environmental and political analysis of the 1968 creation of Redwood National Park in northwestern California. As the most expensive public lands acquisition ever authorized by Congress, Redwood National Park represents a crucial point in the evolution of the American conservation movement. This paper examines the cause and nature of the conflict that arose between the Sierra Club and the Save the Redwoods League—two of California’s oldest and most influential conservation organizations—over the location and scope of a Redwood National Park; and what effect that conflict had upon the final iteration of the Park once it was signed into law on October 2, 1968. I examine the methods of political influence through which the Sierra Club and the Save the Redwoods League each fought for the Park that they believed to be most essential to the continued protection of the *Sequoia sempervirens*. This paper will scrutinize the successes and failures of the populist-driven approach of the Sierra Club and the elitist-driven approach of the Save the Redwoods League, and the ways in which those opposing approaches clashed. Finally, this paper delineates how the last remaining virgin redwood stands on Earth were held hostage to a political standoff and will highlight what can be lost when two organizations dedicated to the same cause refuse to compromise over the methods through which they seek to achieve their shared goal. Through the examination of political influence and environmental agency, this paper contributes to our understanding of the modern conservation movement in the United States.

##### **Argentina - The U.S.’ Struggle Against Communism**

*Erika Arias, Senior, International Studies, Law, Societies, & Justice*

*McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Daniel Bessner*

Beginning in the 1960s, civil unrest in Latin America engendered worldwide concerns. The uprisings were fundamental to the Cold War as tensions were heightened between the capitalist U.S. and the communist U.S.S.R. The U.S. worked to prevent communism from spreading to the Americas. My research explores the degree to which the United States’ economic policies played a vital role in the outcome of Argentina’s Dirty War and how they impacted U.S. relations with Latin America today. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. foreign policy elites viewed Argentina as an essential puzzle piece whose loyalty was critical to maintaining order in Latin America while preventing other countries from turning to socialism. I hypothesize that by issuing economic policies that funded a capitalist and U.S.-friendly Argentine government, the U.S. hoped to prevent socialist ideas from developing in the Americas. In turn, the economic policies would create a domino effect of capitalism across Latin America that would ultimately help win the Cold War. Drawing on several scholarly articles, declassified documents, and secondary sources, I argue that the configuration and development of U.S. policies were done primarily for American gain, to continue being a superpower and prove that capitalism was the most superior social system. By taking a look at hidden involvement of the U.S., one can begin to understand the reasoning behind the implementation of policies. In my research, I analyze the consequences, both good and bad, of the U.S. economic policies throughout the Dirty War, as well as how attitudes changed and shaped current relations not only with Argentina but with other Latin American countries as well. Ultimately, I hope that the findings of my research will give more emphasis on the financial role the U.S. had and its core responsibility in atrocities committed by its

economic policies.

**The Future is Black: A Critical (Re)Imagining of a Feminist, Afro-Diasporic Epistemology and Methodological Framework in Archeology**

*Nala Williams, Senior, Anthropology, Near Eastern Studies: Lang & Cultures*

*McNair Scholar, UW Honors Program*

*Mentor: Stephanie Selover, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization*

Archaeologists have made efforts to increase archaeology's accessibility to those with marginalized identities and to be accountable to communities around archaeological sites. However, alternative ways of knowing and understanding the past from non-Western perspectives remained excluded from contemporary archaeology. The impact of European epistemological hegemony in archaeology limits the frameworks and methodologies that are utilized and considered valid. As more people with marginalized identities have joined the academy, however, archaeological literature has grown to incorporate previously excluded epistemologies. The Black feminist lens only recently has been applied to archaeological theory and practice. The lens attempts to acknowledge the intersectionality of Black women's identities as racialized and gendered people and disrupt master narratives used to demonize, control, and limit Black women. The Black feminist theoretical model relies on intersectionality and development of an empowered community, while acknowledging the difficulties Black women experience due to class, education level, etc. This paper utilizes semi-structured interviews with Black women archaeologists in the United States to gain insight into their methodologies and perspectives in the field. Additionally, this paper incorporates personal ethnographic diaries entries that are connected to my experiences as a Black undergraduate student to explore the impact of the current sociopolitical climate on my research. The broader implications of the work are towards the recognition of Black women's intellectual production within archaeology and support the presence of Black women in the discipline as necessary interlocutors in developing liberational archaeology that uplifts voices from marginalized groups through interviews with Black women in archaeology.

**Alumni Reflection on Fraternity Lifestyle and its Impact on Individual Values Towards Women and Sex**

*Alisha Ram, Junior, Social Work, Portland State University*

*McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: Gita Mehrotra, Portland State University*

Literature on sexual violence has suggested that some fraternity members are more likely to adopt and maintain the values found in hegemonic masculinity. This is significant as it can aid our understanding of how fraternities play a part in

promoting and engaging in sexual violence. Additional looks into fraternity parties, and more specifically, encounters between fraternity men and women in this environment are necessary. This study investigates alumni perceptions about how their participation in fraternities impacted their views and interactions regarding women and sex and aims to better understand how the encounters that occur in fraternity life influence alumni's attitudes towards women and sex. Interviews were conducted with participants of the study, and they were asked questions that covered several different categories: atmosphere of fraternity parties, interactions with women, consent, beliefs towards sex, gender, and relationships. Understanding how individuals view and experience sex, gender, relationships, and sexual violence is essential to prevention. Anticipated results include alumni reflection on condoned behaviors and beliefs that endorse negative masculine values, which are fostered in the fraternity lifestyle between brothers. Those values paired with the strong male social bonds created within the concentrated environment may surface negative and inappropriate behaviors towards women and sex. Implications include discussion of the relationship between hegemonic masculinity among fraternity members and sexual violence. Findings also point to the importance of identifying strategies to engage with fraternity men about sexuality and sexual violence in more constructive ways.

**Incomprehensible Black Survivors: Rape, Rape Culture, and the Struggle for Visibility**

*Alexis Me'Kayla Jackson, Junior, Psychology, Washington State University*

*McNair Scholar*

*Mentor: David Leonard, Washington State University*

As the nation openly confronts the issue of sexual violence, black women remain confined to the periphery. The emergence of the #MeToo movement continues a centering of white women, most evident in the displacement and erasure of the founder of the movement. While this is just one example, it speaks to a larger history of dehumanization and erasure that renders the victimization of black women as illegible. Through the hyper sexualization of black women, which makes their victimization impossible, and systemic erasure, victims of sexual violence and black women have become a contradiction of terms. In my project I utilize discourse analysis of media representations and interviews with young black women who are sexual assault victims to offer a critical analysis of public conversations about the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses, focusing on the #MeToo Movement and the lack of media coverage surrounding Daniel Hotzclaw. Through this study, I show how these public discourses contributed to the erasure of black female survivors and, ultimately, a lack of justice and support for these women. This research seeks to better understand reporting methods for young women of color in a rural area, the

varying types of sexual assault experiences, accountability of sexual assault perpetrators, the importance of non-profit organizations as means of social support, and the impact of a lack of visibility and resources for sexual assault victims who are minority women. By examining the lack of media and literature coverage of rape and sexual assault against black women, my project aims to identify the faults within sexual assault reporting methods and increase support for black women survivors.