Current Affairs Through Multiple Lenses
Session Moderator: Kirsten Foot, Communication
MGH 234
3:45 PM to 5:15 PM

Note: Titles in order of presentation.

Between Unrighteous Walls: A Socio-Legal Study of the Construction of the Enemy
Marleyna Kate Beene, Senior, Law, Societies, & Justice, Comparative History of Ideas
Mentor: Arzoo Osanloo, Law, Societies, and Justice
Mentor: Nicolaas Barr, Comparative History of Ideas, University of Washington-Seattle

Often in the language of law, individuals exist in the abstract. In immigration and criminal justice, the practical application of legal processes is undermined by relationships of power which create a hierarchy of access to law. In this project, I will define two populations, migrants and incarcerated, as surplus. Surplus populations are communities characterized by an enmity spearheaded by the state through persistent antagonistic rhetoric, and subsequently geographically separated and erased from society. My research is centered around the following question: how do frameworks of human rights ideology and racial capitalism explain the rhetorical and geographical construction of surplus populations? Through discourse and secondary data analysis, I investigate state policies passed in the United States and Australia regarding politics and practices of migration and incarceration as they relate to the antagonism and the removal of these populations. Next, I explore the relationship between these populations and the sites of separation (prisons and detention centers). Specifically, I will be looking at the separation geographies of three institutions: Guantánamo Bay Migrant Operations Center, Rikers Island Prison, and Manus Island Regional Processing Center. Guided by the analytical work of critical race scholars Achille Mbembe and Angela Davis, I reveal a pattern of societal removal, in which rhetoric manifests policy manifests disparate and oppressive corporeal geographical outcomes. With this pattern, the foundations of a global scale pattern become possible, embedded in historical racism and xenophobia. In conclusion, I suggest that these attitudes of oppression have become ingrained in legal doctrine and application in a way that is incurable by a human rights approach and subject surplus populations to undue overrepresentation behind bars.

In reprieve, I use critical imagination to question the intrinsic nature of the nation-state and their borders, inspiring the possibility of long-term solutions outside these societal structures.

“War on COVID-19:” History, Trends, and Implications of Metaphors in Pandemic Mass Media
Marika Margaret Bierma, Senior, Microbiology, Comparative History of Ideas
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Amanda Friz, Communication

As we enter year three of the COVID-19 pandemic, the news is still awash with daily updates. For many, terms such as ‘frontline workers’ have become part of mainstream vocabulary signifying the work of medical personnel during the pandemic. Although it may be common terminology now, the phrase ‘frontline worker’ carries a long rhetorical history rooted in military medicine in the Philippines during the early 20th century. This term stems from a broader biomedical ‘war on disease’ metaphor that has pervaded pandemic rhetoric for over one hundred years. Given the historical context and the widespread use of this rhetorical tool, my research explores the following questions: How does the use of the ‘war on disease’ metaphor within mass media publicly valorize ‘frontline workers’ during the COVID-19 pandemic while also hiding the lack of safety measures taken to protect these individuals from disease? How does the history of ‘war on disease’ rhetoric and the use of this metaphor in the context of a modern pandemic continue to perpetuate the ‘heroic sacrifice’ narrative and the use of ‘magic bullet solutions’ within the medical field? What are the trends in the characterization of ‘frontline workers’ in newspaper articles throughout the U.S. and among different time periods of the pandemic? How do these rhetorical trends produce real-life disparities across forms of difference, especially race, gender, class, and ability? Using media, discourse, and historical analyses and focusing on medical rhetoric and history of rhetorical tools frameworks, my research explores the trends in the use of the
term ‘frontline workers’ in prominent COVID newspaper articles from different regions of the U.S. and across different time points throughout the pandemic. I also analyze how the history of the ‘war on disease’ metaphor contributes to those rhetorical trends, and the broader social implications for those deemed ‘frontline workers’.

[Unable to Present] U Visa Certifications in the State of Oregon: How ICE Entanglement with Local Law Enforcement Affects Accessibility
Ellie Scot Kerbs, Senior, Law, Societies, & Justice
Mentor: Angelina Godoy, Jackson School of International Studies

The U Visa was introduced by Congress in 2000 as a form of relief for undocumented victims of violent crime. To qualify for the U Visa, an applicant must submit an I-918B Certification, signed by a local legal authority, certifying that the applicant has been helpful in the prosecution of the crime to which they are victim to. However, in some localities throughout Oregon and the United States at large, the efforts and interests of local law enforcement are entangled with those of federal immigration enforcement. Thus, for undocumented individuals, the act of contacting a local legal agency may present daunting consequences. This study explores the question—how does a collaborative relationship between local law enforcement and federal immigration enforcement affect the extent to which U Visa protections are accessed by undocumented individuals in the state of Oregon? The purpose of this study is to assess the dichotomous relationship between local policing practices and forms of protective legislation offered to immigrants at the federal level. I hypothesize that fewer U Visa applications are successfully submitted in areas in which local law enforcement maintains a collaborative relationship with federal immigration enforcement, as I anticipate that undocumented individuals are ultimately deterred by the risk of deportation. To test this hypothesis, I compare the rate at which U Visa Certification requests are received and subsequently, approved and/or denied throughout the 36 counties of Oregon. The findings of this study will make clear how local policing practices may affect and ultimately, inhibit federally-offered forms of protective legislation. By understanding the ways in which undocumented individuals are systemically barred from mobilizing legislation, we may revise legal language and redefine local policing practices to make the U Visa more accessible and ultimately, better support immigrant communities.

How Far Away Is It?: Examining The Effect of Differing Temporal Distance Perceptions of a Deadline on Team Task Performance
Spencer Onstot, Senior, Community Psychology (Bothell), Society, Ethics, & Human Behavior (Bthl)
NASA Space Grant Scholar, Undergraduate Research Conference Travel Awardee
Mentor: Deanna Kennedy, School of Business, University of Washington Bothell

In a world where the pace of change is increasing drastically, it has become less feasible to complete tasks alone. The skill of being able to communicate and work in a team has become valuable, if not necessary. Working with others, however, can be challenging for many reasons. One reason, which affects project teams across all fields, is when one team member worries that the deadline is close (e.g., “the deadline is only a week away!”), while another team member believes the deadline is further out (“we still have an entire week to work on it!”). This disparity occurs because the team members have different Temporal Distance Perceptions (TDP) of the deadline. This project seeks to analyze how these individual differences in team members’ TDP af-

Exploring Success: How Evaluators of Multisector Collaborations View Collaborative Success
Georgia Willow Mauney, Senior, Communication, History
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Kirsten Foot, Communication

Societies have a range of complex problems that are unable to be solved by the efforts of one individual or organization. The complexity of these problems necessitates collaboration between organizations from multiple sectors of society to generate positive, measurable changes in the problem arena, called outcomes. Despite outcomes being a crucial element of collaborative success, it is difficult to link the actions of collaboration to outcomes in the problem area it is trying to address. Ongoing research has sought to connect elements in the collaborative process of multisector collaborations to successful outcomes. What has been missing from this academic discussion is the perspective of evaluators who are brought in to assess the success of collaborations. This study explores how evaluators from the United States and Canada view success in multisector collaborations. The research questions guiding this exploratory study are: a) How do evaluators link success within a collaboration, through its processes and outputs, to outcomes in the problem area? and b) How do evaluators approach evaluating collaborative success depending on the stage of development a collaboration is at? To answer these questions, I conducted twenty semi-structured interviews with expert evaluators via Zoom. I recruited the study’s participants through purposive sampling and referrals from other participants. I am currently analyzing the transcripts of the interviews, of which I am conducting a thematic analysis. By the time of the symposium, my analysis will be completed, and I will be ready to report my findings which will provide multifaceted answers to my research questions. Results of this study will help create a richer understanding of collaborative success and hopefully lead to new ways of optimizing evaluation.
fects the team’s performance. Evaluating divergent TDP can improve team project planning, helping them work better together. In this project, I contacted faculty members from University of Washington Bothell’s School of Business to gather data from 11 undergraduate classroom teams, working on a quarter-long team project in their courses. The duration of this task allows them to establish their own perception of the deadline’s temporal distance. I disseminated a survey, comprised of only validated scales, to the project teams one week before the project’s due date. The procedures used for data collection, which included a consent form that implied use of their performance on the project, were submitted for review and approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to survey dissemination. I compared an individual team member’s TDP with the rest of the team’s individual TDP to determine the team’s collective TDP. Then I compared this collective TDP with their performance, determined by the team’s grade earned. I expect to find a positive correlation between collective TDP and output performance.

Understanding Friendship Dissolution Using The Communication Theory of Resilience
Sophia Viola, Senior, Communication
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Kristina Scharp, Communication

Despite extensive research addressing the distress surrounding romantic breakups, divorce, and family estrangement, hardly any scholarship has addressed the experience of friendship breakups. Friendship breakups occur when at least one person in a friendship voluntarily and intentionally decides to distance themselves from the other person because of a perceived negative relationship. These breakups, like involuntary distance from any close relationship, can be rife with stress and turmoil, but also go unacknowledged and unsupported. I am framing my study by the Communication Theory of Resilience. The purpose of this study is to understand the difficulties people experience with breaking up with a friend and how they manage those difficulties to enact resilience. When people experience difficulties, they often enact five resilience processes: (a) crafting normalcy, (b) foregrounding productive action while backgrounding negative feelings, (c) affirming identity anchors, (d) maintaining and using communication networks, and (e) putting alternative logics to work. Crafting normalcy is creating new rituals/routines; foregrounding action illustrates how people move forward; affirming identity anchors is grounding the self; maintaining networks corresponds to garnering support; alternative logics is a sense-making process to see things differently. Using data from narrative and semi-structured interviews conducted via Zoom, and based on a thematic co-occurrence analysis, this study will reveal common difficulties (i.e., resilience triggers), resilience responses, and whether particular resilience processes co-occur with specific difficulties. My findings from this research will illuminate the experience of friendship breakups and their aftermath with the goal of helping distressed people better cope with a significant relationship loss. I am in the process of conducting interviews with participants that must be 18 years of age or older, can read and write in English, and have experienced a friendship breakup. By the time of the symposium I will have 10-15 interviews completed and a draft of my thesis.

Misinformation: An Erosion of Trust During the Coronavirus Infodemic?
Chris Wagner, Senior, Economics, Political Science
Mentor: Rebecca Thorpe, Political Science
Mentor: Ryan Goehrung

The national sense of uncertainty and chaos surrounding the Coronavirus pandemic has been compounded by the spread of COVID-19 misinformation on social media. This has fostered an Infodemic as users struggle to separate fact from fiction in their news feeds and develop conflicting perceptions of reality. This project studies the relationship between the exposure to COVID-19 (re)tweets with misinformation or questionable levels of veracity and governmental trust during the Coronavirus pandemic. I create a continuous User Engagement Index to compare the differences in user engagement for COVID-19 twitter posts that were created/shared by influencers on the right, who tend to be problematic as they have a history of sharing or dog whistling COVID-19 misinformation, to influencers on the left who tend to post neutral content in terms of veracity. Furthermore, I created an ordinal Public Confidence index in which I compare changes in the User Engagement index for posts from the right and left to changes in public opinion survey data to gauge the levels of trust in government institutions. I conduct two separate multivariate regression analyses to evaluate the relationship between the User Engagement Index and a Public Confidence Index. I then assess whether the spread of COVID-19 (re)tweets that are likely epistemically problematic negatively impacts an exposed user’s trust in government. I theorize that exposure to misinformation fosters political cynicism and epistemic confusion, which both fuel a decline in public trust. The findings of this study will help us better understand the cultivation of polarized perception gaps that may inhibit collective action and a unified response during times of crisis and uncertainty. This erodes trust and undermines democratic governance and institutions.