

MASSASOIT
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Spring 2023 Honors Conference

Wednesday, May 10, 2023
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COMMONWEALTH HONORS
at MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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In June 1997, the Board of Higher Education established a free-standing honors college of distinction at the University of Massachusetts Amherst called Commonwealth College. This organization has since approved Commonwealth Honors Programs at 24 public higher education institutions including community colleges, state colleges and all UMass institutions. As an accredited Commonwealth Honors Program institution, each semester Massasoit Community College's honors students produce semester-long honors papers and projects. This booklet reprints the essays written by the recipients of the Spring 2023 Honor Garden Scholarship. This booklet also represents a portion of honors students' research in abstract format and produced in various academic disciplines under the tutelage of students' respective faculty sponsors.

HONORS ABSTRACTS

Each of the abstracts in this collection describes an individual research project of students enrolled in Honors courses. These Honors courses include Seminar in Ethics and individual Honors Directed Studies.

Student abstracts are the original work of the student and based on personal study and research.



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STUDENT PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Student: Ebruphihor Emmanuella Aruoren

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities and Communication Arts

Undocumented Immigrants in the United States: Causes, Effects, and a Way Forward

Undocumented immigrants in the United States have long been the focus of much debate and deliberation. The consequences, both positive and negative, of having over one-fifth of the United States population occupied by migrants makes the topic of immigration a dominant one. The dilemma, however, lies in the fact that some immigrants are considered an essential part of the US society, while others, especially undocumented immigrants, are viewed as problematic and dangerous for United States citizens and the country at large. So, do undocumented immigrants really pose a threat for the United States and its citizens? Are imposing stiffer policies the best methods to control and eradicate this persisting issue? These are some of the ethical questions this paper aims to answer through an in-depth examination and analysis of the issue. Additionally, a secondary research methodology will be used in which multiple works and existing literature on undocumented immigrants will be analyzed and reviewed. This paper argues that undocumented immigrants are more favorable for the United States and its citizens, and easing policies relating to immigration will improve this debatable issue.



Student: Johanne Barthold

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities & Communication Arts

Spirituality vs Psychosis

Spiritual phenomenon predates what is known as modern-day psychosis and evidence suggests that humans have experienced audible hallucinations since biblical times. Spirituality was the main form of treatment for mental distress and delusions before psychology became a discipline. Through researching published academic articles, this paper will explore the similarities and differences between spiritual phenomena and psychosis. Research appears to show that embracing auditory hallucinations through spiritual practice can serve as a respite to those who hear voices. At the same time, this research has found that spirituality that consists of stigmatization and shame can be harmful. Representations that bring on feelings of separation and withdrawal can be problematic and prolong recovery from mental distress. Furthermore, this paper looks to understand the ways spiritual phenomena and psychosis occur within the individual. In addition, it is important to consider the individual's own opinion of their experiences with auditory hallucinations and the ways their faith can be incorporated into a treatment plan for recovery. This paper also shows that it is important to build a strong recovery model that includes the person's faith. Most importantly, it is necessary to keep in mind that spirituality can become a hindrance to recovery, although there are many ways it can be incorporated into a treatment plan for recovery.



Student: Dana Ford

Faculty: Brenda D'Alotto

Humanities and Communication Arts

William Apess: Native American Activism and Advocacy in the Early 19th Century

The early 19th Century was a time fraught with social changes and movements in America's social fabric. Born into the Pequot tribe as a mixed-race child, William Apess was shaped by the turbulent forces of antebellum America. Apess, a Methodist preacher, stood against the orthodox forces in New England and America at large to fight for equal rights for Native Americans. William Apess' *A Son of the Forest* is the first published Native American autobiography and stands as a testament to the struggles of Native Americans in the early 19th Century. By connecting Apess with the people and social movements around him research establishes the role they played in shaping him into an activist. This research paper also uses secondary sources to help fill in the gaps in the record of Apess' life. Using these qualitative methods concludes that William Apess was forged into an activist by the extraordinary circumstances and individuals that he encountered during his life.



Student: Alanna Glass

Faculty: Henry DiCarlo

Public Service Social Science

Guilty Until Proven Innocent: The Science of Solving Cases

The criminal justice system is relying on the scientific community to assist in solving cases. Forensic evidence has evolved since it was first introduced in the 1970s. Methodologies have come a long way since blood typing and restriction fragment length polymorphism (used for gene markers). Precisely, the development of DNA technology known as next-generation sequencing has caused apprehension about the dynamic nature of forensic science. Quality assurance practices must be established in accordance to anticipate and account for any extraneous variables that are likely to occur and potentially affect the outcomes. In the case of extraneous variables, it is important to investigate as the variable could potentially affect the outcomes leading to inaccurate conclusions. In retrospect, as technology has advanced the criminal justice community has learned with previous forensic testing methods of blood evidence can potentially lead to an erroneous conviction. The forensic science community must adhere to strict standards to provide law enforcement with adequate confidence that the evidence collected can be used to convict. Each crime lab must operate by implementing techniques that are suitable to achieve objectives. The criminal justice community has valid concerns about relying on DNA evidence to solve cases, importantly, the negative impact specifically on those who were wrongfully accused. This paper will highlight the primary proper considerations for the use of DNA technology by examining three cases of wrongful convictions and how Forensic DNA played a role.



Student: Travis Lawrence

Faculty: Katherine DiMarca

Humanities and Communications Arts

A History of The Los Africanistas: When Colonial Practices Come Back Home

Throughout the history of war, from the ancient Babylons to even the modern day, expanding empires would swell their militaries with conquered peoples. Most famously in history were the Roman Auxiliaries, forces comprised of non-citizen subjects of the Empire used to pacify lands. These “foreign” armies were instrumental tools in the subjugation of their fellow natives. One such example and the topic of this paper, the Spanish Army of Africa, also known as the Los Africanistas, was comprised of native Moroccans with the goal of garrisoning Spanish territory in Morocco. Like most other colonial armies, these soldiers were often tasked with committing vicious war crimes against their own people. In this paper, I will be deconstructing the history of the Los Africanistas, with their start as freedom fighters to their collaboration with Spain and eventual evolution into one of the crown jewels of the Spanish military. My ultimate goal is to highlight the crimes and injustices wreaked not only by the Spanish on the Moroccans subjugated under their colonial rule but also the same terror committed by the Los Africanistas in Spain as they fought on the side of the Nationalists during the Spanish Civil War. These Moroccan soldiers inflicted the same terror upon their colonial overlord’s kingdom as they had been mandated to do within the Spanish army in their own homeland. With the use of historical analysis from Sir Paul Preston’s *The Spanish Holocaust* and other historical texts, I will be outlining the facts and dates of crucial moments of Morocco’s colonization. I expect my paper to reveal the true horrors of colonialism.



Student: Poppy Mulligan

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities and Communication Arts

The Biased Power of The Judicial Supremacy

The Supreme Court of The United States has been known to controversially rule in landmark cases against the side of humanity throughout the country's history. In the past decade, there have been growing trends of grassroots movements to fight for social justice to change policies and laws that have disadvantaged and marginalized certain groups and populations at the state and federal levels. Nevertheless, the people's efforts to achieve equality and fundamental human rights to create a just society in a democratic nation are often thwarted by the final judicial rulings of the Supreme Court. This paper aims to find answers to the questions of how and why the Supreme Court established such uncontested judicial supremacy and examine the "thinking" processes of the Supreme Court Justices in reaching the conclusions of its controversial rulings. This paper uses researched data analysis to find the answers to these questions. It examines Supreme Court landmark cases to learn about the specific case briefs, particularly the opinions of the Majority and the Dissenting Justices. This paper intends to highlight the problem with ethical and moral dilemmas of the Supreme Court Justices in concluding their rulings. Furthermore, this research paper intends to reveal that the institution itself is ethically and morally problematic for the people of this country.



Student: Ailish Olmstead

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities and Communication Arts

The Fear of Overpopulation: The Ethics of Procreation in a Malthusian Context

The ethics of procreation have been philosophically questioned for centuries, with records dating back to Ancient Greece. The discourse around the ethics of procreation has shifted with agricultural and technological advancements, which have improved quality of life and steadily increased global populations. This paper explores several anti-natalist and pro-natalist viewpoints throughout history with an emphasis on environmental and Malthusian contexts. A general understanding of the historical and contemporary concerns regarding procreation are gained by using various articles, books, and recounts of social and political movements throughout history. The theories of overpopulation, abortion, birth control, and climate change are all examined as they relate to the main ethical dilemma of procreation. This paper aims to outline the social concerns affecting people's choices around procreation and proposes alternate solutions to counter the narrative of overpopulation, which places the blame on individuals rather than examining larger sociopolitical factors at play.



Student: Clifton Pierre-Antoine

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities and Communication Arts

The Rise and Fall of Cryptocurrency

Despite its humble beginnings in the 1980s and 1990s, the cryptocurrency phenomenon finally rose to prominence in 2008 with the official launch of Bitcoin by Satoshi Nakamoto. Cryptocurrency went on to take the world by storm in the late 2010s, providing financial success for many people around the world and gained massive support by celebrities and business magnates as the future of commerce—a payment form that would eventually surpass the dollar. As with many trends, famous celebrities often seek the support of their fanbase, encouraging them to invest their own money into these cryptocurrencies; however, many of these ordinary individuals would never see a return on their investments. Through extensive research from digital databases, legal cases, and news articles, this paper aims to document the rise and fall of one of the fastest-growing trends of the 21st century as well as the people involved. This paper's research dives into the allure of cryptocurrency, how the masses were influenced by public figures to invest in an uncertain financial future, the resulting consequences, and considers the of probability of whether or not the rise of cryptocurrency will ever return.



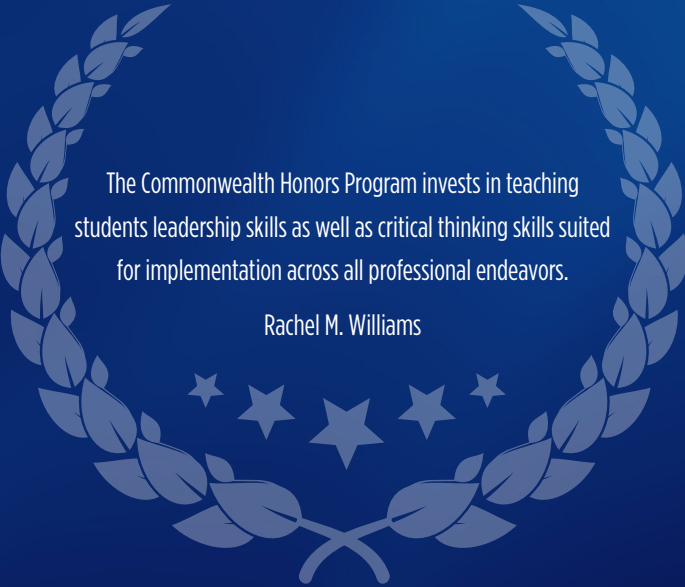
Student: Vanessa Watkins

Faculty: Suzanne Morris

Humanities and Communication Arts

The Dark Reality of Human Trafficking in the United States: A Comprehensive Study on its Causes, Consequences, and Solutions

Human trafficking is a crime that violates basic human rights and affects millions of people worldwide. Despite efforts to combat this issue, human trafficking remains a pervasive problem in the United States. This research aims to provide an overview of the current state of human trafficking in the United States and its causes, consequences, and solutions. The research draws on various sources, including academic articles, government reports, and NGO publications. The findings show that human trafficking is a complex and multifaceted issue that involves the recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of people for the purpose of exploitation. Victims of human trafficking are often vulnerable individuals who are coerced, deceived, or forced into labor or sex trafficking. Efforts to combat human trafficking in the United States have focused on the prevention, prosecution, and protection of victims. Federal laws provide resources for law enforcement agencies, establish penalties for traffickers, and offer support for victims. Human trafficking is a serious problem in the United States that requires continued attention and efforts to combat. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that involves collaboration among law enforcement agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to raise awareness, provide support to victims, and hold traffickers accountable.



The Commonwealth Honors Program invests in teaching students leadership skills as well as critical thinking skills suited for implementation across all professional endeavors.

Rachel M. Williams

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