

GULF COAST INTERCOLLEGIATE
CONSORTIUM ACADEMIC SYMPOSIUM 2023

A yellow balloon is tied to a piece of dark driftwood. The driftwood is propped up on a pile of grey rocks on a beach. The background shows a blue sky and the ocean.

Translating, Reframing, & Embracing Contradictions

MAR. 31
2023

9 A.M - 3 P.M.

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER
BUILDING 8, LRC 131

G.C.I.C.
GULF COAST INTERCOLLEGIATE CONSORTIUM

College of the Mainland®

WELCOME

to College of the Mainland's Ninth Gulf Coast Intercollegiate Consortium Academic Symposium 2023!

Humans are complex. We are complicated mobile ecosystems riddled with internal and external battles, competitions, and incongruities. Yet, we like simplicity for its ease and sense of conviction.

We tell ourselves we seek, want, and need comfort, habits, consistency, and the sleekness of the concrete and symmetrical. Unwittingly, though, we are attracted to fissures, shadows, and the underbelly of what we know to be good, just, and better.

We want to know but shy away from knowledge. Knowledge is power, but power is also burdensome and requires levels of decisiveness that feel, too much and too often, like insurmountable work.

We want to live on Earth and protect it but spend most of our time—ignorantly or consciously—destroying it.

But it is not only individual humans who live in contradiction. As a society and at the macro level, as a world, humans instigate far-reaching paradoxes.

We want equality, we say, but not if it means radical inconvenience to our economies or social structures.

We say we live for the future but act as if there is no future coming. We are kind and cruel. We are wise and idiotic. We are thoughtful as much as thoughtless. We love as often as we hate.

Or some of us do. Or maybe it is not you, it is them. Or maybe it is you, and it is them.

We can publicly commit to what we empirically measure while simultaneously abiding by myths that control our wants, needs, and actions.

Contradictions saturate human existence: there is a misalignment in what we say and do and what we think. We can want to be or do one thing yet be or do another.

This year's theme is broad and lends itself to cross-disciplinary examination, which is the driving force of our academic symposium. Today's student scholar presenters promise to surprise us with their take on the theme. We invite you to peruse the presentation schedule and choose sessions that best suit your interests; when in sessions, **we ask you to engage actively with student presenters during Q&A**. The aim is for them to grow as scholars during this experience and for their work to enrich the day's conversation.

Our hope for this symposium is that it serves multiple goals including enhancing students' communication skills, facilitating networking across disciplines and colleges, and helping students build self-confidence and feel ownership of their work.

Enjoy yourself and thank you for supporting student scholarship.

Sincerely,

Professors Dalel Serda and Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow

GCIC Academic Symposium Co-Chairs

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

9:00 – 9:20 a.m. **Welcome Remarks and Overview of Day's Events:** **LRC 131**
College of the Mainland Administration Remarks
Professors Dalel Serda and Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow, GCIC Academic Symposium Co-Chairs

A SESSIONS: 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A1: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #1** **LRC 258**

“Universal Health of Geriatrics”
Le Nguyen, Houston Community College Central | Advisor: Nicholas Rangel

“The Impact of Texas Abortion Ban for Women”
Alexa Del Aguila, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Shinya Wakao

“How Point of Care Sickle Cell Screening Equipment Can Save Kids’ Lives with the Help of the Sickle Cell Club”
Karina Beglova and Dulce Guerrero Lopez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: James Mubiru

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A2: Understanding Contradictory Social Schisms** **LRC 257**

“The Other Side of the Presidential Election of 2016”
Angel Huerta Gomez, Houston Community College - Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

“To the Black, White, and Hispanic Male: Let’s Work Together”
Matthew Coleman, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Tige Cornelius

“Pupusas”
Stephanie Jimenez, Houston Community College-Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A3: Disturbing Contradictions in Virtual Communication** **LRC 255**

“Best Ethical Practices for Digital Journalism”
Elias Lilienfeld Quevedo, Houston Community College - Northwest Honors College | Advisor: Brandon Williams

“Echo Chambers and Misinformation: Twitter’s Role in the COVID-19 Infodemic”
Josue Canaza, Houston Community College - Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

“Literally Me”
Jessica Gomez, COM | Advisor: James Francis

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A4: Contradictions in Family and Community**..... **LRC 212A**

“Moving Forward on American Soil: An Analysis of the Multigenerational Experiences of Mexican-Americans”
Kylee Valadez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

“Oppression By the ‘Mythical Norm’ in Silko’s ‘Lullaby’”
Priscilla Guerra, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

“The Effect of Environment in McFarland, USA”
Leina Cantu, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A5: Contradictions in Gendered Identities #1** **LRC 212B**

“Traveling Against the Current”
Yudith Salas, University of Houston - Clear Lake | Advisor: Dalel Serda

“The Entrapment of Gender Roles in Disney Films”
Mariana Flores, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

“The Greeks Devaluation of Women”
Jennifer Anyanwu, Houston Community College Central | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A6: Contradictions within Our Economies and Society**..... **LRC 213**

“An Analysis of the Wells Fargo Scandal”
Jamie Andaur, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

“The Importance of Financial Literacy”
Cameron Lanier, College of the Mainland, Dual Credit | Advisor: Elaine Childs

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Session A7: NONJURIED SESSION**..... **LRC 252**

Starting a Community College Literary Journal: The Badelynge Review
Madison Howell, Regino Briones, Aurionna Simmons | Advisor: Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow

B SESSIONS: 10:40 to 11:40 a.m.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. **Session B1: Session B1: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #2**..... **LRC 258**

“Confronting Hispanic Healthcare Disparities in the Land of Opportunity”
Elizabeth Pena, Houston Community College | Advisor: Nausheen Pasha

“Medical Ultrasound”
Maggie Gabadadze, San Jacinto North Campus | Advisor: Cody Pogue

“The Rising Cost of Healthcare”
Joann Hernandez, Houston Community College - Central | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B2: Contradictory Ideas about Art LRC 257

“Forever/Over”
Brooke (Ellie) Burnett, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Stacey Burluson

“Get A Real Job: The Inconsistencies Between Consuming and Pursuing the Fine Arts”
Madison Howell, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow

“The Two Sides”
Mackenzie Jones, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Stacey Burluson

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B3: The Contradictory Nature of Knowing LRC 255

“Psychology vs. Neuroscience: What Are We Exactly?”
Bogdana Semchenko, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

“Personality Type: How Did Different Intelligences or Cultures Create a World Full of Knowledge and Experiences?”
Abiatou Sidibe Samira, Houston Community College | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

“What Does it Mean to Know?”
Janis Richards, San Jacinto College - North | Advisor: Cody Pogue

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B4: Contradicting Interpretations of Identity LRC 212A

“Why It’s Wrong to Outlaw the Hijab”
Tooba Qureshi, Houston Community College - Spring Branch | Advisor: Brandon Williams

“Nurturing a Giving Lifestyles: How Community Volunteerism Lessens Economic Hardship Stigma”
Carrie Cobb, Serenity Reeves, Michelle Mizuhata, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Kristina Jantz

“Nationality and Soccer: Contradictions in the French Soccer Team’s Ethnic Makeup”
Noah Mubiru, Alvin High School | Advisor: James Mubiru

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B5: Contradictions in Gendered Identities #2 LRC 212B

“Exploring The Workplace Feminism That Changed It All: The 9 to 5 Movement Through Media and Modern Day Perception”
Rebecca Currie & Diego Moreno, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

“The Inherent Contradiction within Feminism”
Rawan Aljaouni, Houston Community College | Advisor: Brandon Williams

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B6: Economics and Related Contradictions LRC 215

“The Origins of Accounting”
Olivia Sanchez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

“Early Retirement Plans - Simple and Doable Strategies”
Kingsley Okeleke, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

“How to Keep Our Clothes from Killing Us: The Real Facts About Fast Fashion’s Corruptive Behavior”
Keira Elizabeth Moorehead, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Anna Munson

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. Session B7: NONJURIED SESSION LRC 252

Creative Writers’ Reading: Transforming Selves: Confronting and Reimagining Reality through Narrative and Poetry
The session will be moderated by Lisa Frase and Courtney Pugh. Student readers include Regan Payne, Sophia George, Cody Bassett, Emma Wilkerson, Courtney Hobby, Kedrin Fuqua, Brittany Rios Amaya, and Destiny Tobey.

C SESSIONS: 11:50 a.m. to 12:50 p.m.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. Session C1: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #3 LRC 258

“Nursing: I’ll be There for You... But Who Will Be There for Me? How Stress-Related Anxiety Affects Nursing Students’ Success”
Rayven Toler, Stacey Flowers, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Rachel Fano

“Iodine Deficiency: Could It Get You?”
Yhovanka Marquez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Luke Turner

“The Impact of Childhood Trauma on the Adult Psyche and Development of Coping Mechanisms”
Alyssa Garcia, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. Session C2: Analyzing Contradictions in Film and Literature LRC 257

“Generational Violence Against Black Men in *Candyman*”
Ysel Alcalá, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

“Making Memories Human in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*”
Marissa Ledbetter, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

“*Frankenstein* & The Societal Acceptance of Others”
Alex Rathjen, Houston Community College Southwest | Advisor: Nausheen Pasha-Zaidi

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.	Session C3: Learning from Historical Controversy	LRC 255
	<p>“Causes for the French Defeat in the Seven Years War” Noah Gosswiller, San Jacinto College South Campus Advisor: Abbie Grubb</p> <p>“Gun Violence in Schools” Marissa Marshall, Isabel Santos, Elizabeth Arriaga, San Jacinto College Central Campus Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele</p> <p>“Contradictions in Using ‘Mexica-centrism’ as a Bridge: Moving Forward from the Chicano Movement into Indigeneity” William (Andy) Gomez, College of the Mainland Advisor: Dalel Serda</p>	
11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.	Session C4: Embracing Contradictory Impulses	LRC 212A
	<p>“Today’s Tomorrows Yesterday: Power of Perseverance” Blake Williams, College of the Mainland Advisor: Lisa Frase</p> <p>“Wonders of the Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich” My’Kayla Waines, Houston Community College Advisor: Nicolas Rangel</p>	
11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.	Session C5: Contradictions Linked to Gender and Sexuality	LRC 212B
	<p>“LGBTQ Youth in Schools” Carlos Perez Ramirez, Nayla Samaniego, Arianna Olivo, San Jacinto College - Central Campus Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele</p> <p>“Graham Crackers and Kellogg’s Cereal in Relation to Sexuality” Deannery Dior Muankaew, San Jacinto College - South Campus Advisor: Abbie Grubb</p>	
11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.	Session C6: Contradictions in Education	LRC 215
	<p>“America’s Education System vs Undocumented Students” Liz Rangel, Rylie Lopez, Nathalie Davila Lozano, Laura Alvarez, San Jacinto College – Central Campus Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele</p> <p>“Doesn’t That Sound Like a Factory Worker?: Industrial Values of Education and Restricted Student Passions” Adrian Castaneda, La Marque High School dual credit at College of the Mainland Advisor: Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow</p> <p>“Time to Acknowledge Community College!” Emily Uzner, Paul Tran, Ashish Ajish, Andrea Guillen, Luz Hernandez, Houston Community College Southwest Advisor: Nausheen Pasha-Zaidi</p>	
11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.	Session C7: NONJURIED SESSION	LRC 252
	<p>Protection, Security, and the Dangers of Sex Student speakers will be Julia Juarez, Elias Ramirez, Alexander Simpson, Gabrielle Liwag, and Jada Lozano Advisor: Seraiah Smith</p>	
1:00 – 1:50 p.m.	Complimentary Lunch: Expanding Our Scholarly Network	LRC Breezeway
	Please mingle with others from across the region.	
2:00 – 2:45 p.m.	Keynote Talk and Q & A: Ms. Maria T. Grimaldo	LRC 131
	Embracing Contradictions While Framing and Defining Your Career: Perspective from a Student and Young Professional	
2:50 – 3:00 p.m.	Awards, Photos, and Wrap-Up	LRC 131

STUDENT PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

In order of scheduled presentation; please see the presentation schedule above.

NOTE: These abstracts have only lightly been edited to preserve students' intellectual property and authenticity.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A1

LRC 258: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #1

Le Nguyen, Houston Community College Central | Advisor: Nicholas Rangel

"Universal Health of Geriatrics"

We socially value our elders, yet we contradict it with being careless about their health. Personal perceptions about aging, such as age stereotypes and subjective aging, may have an influence on the outcomes of overall health later in life. Over the last 20 years or more, a large number of experimental and epidemiological investigations have produced sufficient evidence for this relationship. As a consequence, it looks like it is time to better grasp the courses that this partnership has taken. The previous study has mostly focused on age stereotypes or subjective aging. This theoretical study provides a detailed examination of major theoretical tools that explain how various viewpoints on aging may affect health. Following a brief review of evidence on the short- and long-term effects of different views on aging on health outcomes, we provide theoretical methods that support the explanations of underlying mechanisms for the influence of both unidimensional and multidimensional perspectives on aging on health outcomes. We investigate the particular features of numerous methodologies, give a heuristic framework, and make recommendations for further study. A better understanding of the impact of different aging perspectives on health outcomes is critical not only for basic research in lifespan developmental psychology, geropsychology, and health psychology, but also for intervention research and public health policy.

"The Impact of Texas Abortion Ban for Women"

Alexa Del Aguila, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Shinya Wakao

In June 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court overruled *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to an abortion and leaving the state governments to decide. Texas, along with other states, immediately banned abortions with and without exceptions or after a certain pregnancy week. State politicians wish to ban abortion for their residents, but will that stop these residents from receiving an abortion? A state ban on abortion will only make abortion illegal in the state, not nationwide. Thus, women will/may travel to other states for an abortion, such as Colorado or New York. Women choose to get an abortion for a variety of reasons ranging from financial difficulties to focusing on the children they currently have. While analyzing the 2021 Induced Termination of Pregnancy Statistics (ITOP) of Colorado, Kansas, and Texas, the numbers in age and race varied. The numbers may vary in those states because of differences in population, beliefs, and accessibility to abortions. The 2022 ITOP statistics for other states are yet to be released, so the research is ongoing. The aim

for this research is to analyze the impact of new abortion laws in age, race, and other socioeconomic backgrounds.

"How Point of Care Sickle Cell Screening Equipment Can Save Kids' Lives with the Help of the Sickle Cell Club"

Karina Beglova and Dulce Guerrero Lopez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: James Mubiru

Sickle cell is a red blood cell disorder. It is inherited. That means that it's passed down the same way people get the color of their eyes and skin, and hair from their parents. The sickle cell club is a student run club at COM. The aim is to raise awareness of SCD at COM and in the community. The club carries several activities like bake sales, outreach in the local schools and inviting outside experts. The club is also doing outreach to communities in Uganda that are burdened with SCD. Last year we did a bake sale to raise money for purchasing a screening equipment that was donated to Kiboga Hospital. We partner with a Company in Oregon (Hemex Health Inc) that has a subsidiary in Uganda. Gazelle is a compact, rugged, and portable battery-operated point-of-care test diagnostic device for anemia and SCD with results in just minutes. Using our donated equipment, the hospital has screened 1000 children for sickle cell disease. About 10% of the screened patients have sickle cell disease. Now our goal is to raise money for a transcranial Doppler to detect patients who have a high chance of getting a stroke. After detecting them, the doctors put them to red blood cell transfusion. In the absence of screening and primary prevention methods, stroke occurs in 7-4% and 11% of patients by the age of 14 years and 20 years, respectively. It has long been recognized that regular red cell transfusions significantly reduce the risk of stroke or stroke recurrence. The challenge prior to the advent of transcranial Doppler screening was to reliably identify an at-risk population. Even small efforts by students can make a big difference. In the Houston area many adults are unaware of their SCD status. SCD patients fail to hold jobs due to excessive job absences. They are mislabeled as drug abusers because the excessive pain problems forces to ask for strong narcotic medications or to self-medicate. It is important that we get rid of the stigma associated with SCD and the COM sickle cell disease club is finding ways to raise awareness in our community.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A2

LRC 257: Understanding Contradictory Social Schisms

Angel Huerta Gomez, Houston Community College - Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

"The Other Side of the Presidential Election of 2016"

When the Trump campaign gained steam back in 2016, the United States saw a rise in crimes involving discrimination against

minorities, which only served to divide the nation between those who felt empowered to express themselves freely through the voice of someone who shared their values and those who fell into the cage of fear and powerlessness. Ever since the beginning of his presidential campaign and throughout his term in office, Donald Trump has used racist and discriminatory stereotypes and expressions towards minorities, which has incited thousands of his predominantly white supporters to express their true colors towards these communities without any concerns about the consequences since they were simply imitating Trump's conduct towards the nation. Trump is a racist and misogynist individual who plays on the base nature and more selfish aspects of American society. He was able to gain thousands of supporters by making alarming promises, which at the time featured the United States of America as a racist, classist, and protectionist country in a chaotic and unsafe environment. Trump's offensive slurs attracted Americans who share the same views and beliefs toward minority communities in the United States, therefore, making possible his election as President for the 2016 presidential election.

"To the Black, White, and Hispanic Male: Let's Work Together"

Matthew Coleman, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Tige Cornelius

Humankind naturally has a tendency to flock toward people that are similar to them. Whether it be ethnicity, extracurricular, or occupation, we like to be surrounded by others most like us. Typically, most of us wouldn't jump out of our chairs to work with someone quite different from us and I'm just as guilty of it. But I believe we're missing something powerful there. Rightfully so, being surrounded by people you don't have much in common with can be extremely uncomfortable and awkward. There have been times when I sat in rooms being the only person of that ethnicity, and I began to feel enclosed and timid. But what would have happened if I asked questions about the conversations they were having? How much more could we have all learned, collectively, if I put forth my thoughts or ideas? I believe there is a lot we can learn from whenever we take the step to get to know people of other ethnicities. There are different perspectives on life, different ideas, motives, and even great food out there! I believe working with people of different cultures translates, reframes, AND embraces the contradiction that can come with such a step. For this year's symposium, I conducted research on the power between Black, Hispanic, and White males by deciding to make three different songs of three different genres with each ethnic group. I made a rap song with an African-American male, a corrido with a Hispanic male, and a country song with a white male. Video documenting my journey throughout, and I would like to share my findings, my thoughts, and how much we can learn as people whenever we step out of our comfort zone.

"Pupusas"

Stephanie Jimenez, Houston Community College - Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

A pupusa is a Salvadorian street dish that is very well-known in the Central American community. Though it may seem like a simple dish, the history, and the representation that it brings to El Salvador are important. This essay will not only explain what a pupusa is and the cultural implications behind it, it will also explain how easy and cheap it is to make, the versatility of the dish and why it deserves greater attention than it gets.

Pupusas are an underrated dish because it is not known outside of the Central American community and people don't consider the variety of options they could try because of the versatility of the dish. Throughout the years, El Salvador has had a negative representation due to high homicide rates and criminal gangs, but pupusas can be new ambassadors for the country by explaining the history of the country through food. Since pre-colonial times, the Pipil Indians have relied on pupusas for survival. Now for generations, Central Americans have created different versions of the dish and continue to eat it. This shows the longevity and nutritious value of the dish due to being able to sustain civilizations up to the modern day. Salvadorian communities have introduced this dish to other parts of the world and continue to share their culture through this historical dish.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A3 LRC 255: Disturbing Contradictions in Virtual Communication

"Best Ethical Practices for Digital Journalism"

Elias Lilienfeld Quevedo, Houston Community College - Northwest Honors College | Advisor: Brandon Williams

In the modern world, online journalism has become fundamental for our democracy and way of life. The technological advancements of the last decades have outpaced conventional journalism, and currently, there is a lot of skepticism and distrust toward media. Journalism is reinventing itself, and the ethics for best practices in digital journalism are the cornerstone of modern journalism. The pursuit of best practices in digital media can be related to three major emphases in ethical thought: duty, virtue, and care. A duty-based approach based on Kant's deontological ethics. The virtue-based approach is based on Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics. Lastly, a care-based approach is based on the feminist perspective of Carol Gilligan. I will argue why there is a need for better practices in journalism and summarize the historical contexts behind these three emphases. I will expose what journalists and media should do to adhere to these best practices and I will conclude with my opinion and why this approach to the best ethical practices for digital journalism should be the guidelines for all journalists.

"Echo Chambers and Misinformation: Twitter's Role in the COVID-19 Infodemic"

Josue Canaza, Houston Community College - Central Campus | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

The COVID-19 pandemic brought attention to the role of social media platforms in disseminating accurate information to the public. Twitter was a breeding ground for misinformation, leading many people to act on inaccurate information and endanger themselves and others. Although Twitter introduced new policies and enforcement measures to combat this issue, they were ineffective due to the platform's dependence on positive reinforcement. Despite implementing new procedures and enforcement measures, Twitter failed to counteract misinformation-sharing activities effectively. The platform's algorithm inadvertently amplified political biases and polarized public health discourse, further contributing to the spread

of misinformation. Social media platforms like Twitter must prioritize accuracy and reliability over user engagement and popularity to address this issue. This requires a transparent transformation of the platform's algorithm and a reframing of its objectives. Efforts should increase to improve the Machine Learning training of the algorithm that curates the timeline. Which ultimately will increase the speed of time of convergence between different opinions across the spectrum in a healthy manner to allow diverse voices to converge, and maximize the reach of a commonly agreed message to the population. By creating an environment that fosters constructive dialogue and promotes the sharing of reliable and accurate information, social media platforms can play a vital role in promoting public health and safety during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Literally Me"

Jessica Gomez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: James Francis

Social media claims to connect people, although anyone who has ever roamed its soulless realm knows it's more isolating than most would like to admit. All its users' "perfect" and "happy" lives are displayed on a phone's screen and their falsified reality can make one feel stuck and maybe inferior to these influencers in plastic realities. There are some groups online that focus on the complete opposite, hating those "perfect" icons and echo-chambering their way into a (mostly) misogynistic approach to their self-imposed isolation. Having been deemed incels, meaning "involuntary-celibates," these young men blame modern society and women for their social shortcomings. Cinema has allowed these men to identify with some rather dangerous characters, many of them believing that their stories are similar, adopting the slogan "literally me." Characters in this category include the Joker, Patrick Bateman from *American Psycho*, and Tyler Durden, the narrator from *Fight Club*. These characters are dismissive of women in the least, at worst outright violent while others like the Joker, yearn for the typical nuclear family until they are rejected by their love interest and the pressures of society finally break them. The problem of this specific group is that their feelings of alienation seem to be rooted in their lack of contact with any feminine figure; this rejection of femininity can be tied to a strongly repressed subconscious desire to be perceived, and maybe stereotypically treated like a woman. This unconscious desire is violent in trying to reach the conscious mind and the subconscious uses more violence to keep it repressed. Always paranoid that these impulses get out, they get covered by fear, rage, and contempt.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A4 LRC 212A: Contradictions in Family and Community

"Moving Forward on American Soil: An Analysis of the Multigenerational Experiences of Mexican-Americans"

Kylee Valadez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

This project explores the socioeconomic and cultural differences among Mexican-American generations and answers the questions of what can be gained and lost for these generations as they move forward on American soil; what shapes the American experience for Mexican-Americans; what different traditions

are challenged as one's family becomes more Americanized; and how does each generation affect the next? Using a family ethnographic study, a literary analysis of *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya, and research by Levine and others, this project analyzes the generational differences that have been taking place since the early 1900s. I will also be able to examine the different aspects of how individual family members across generations construct personal and familial philosophies and identities. For the generations after the Mexican immigrant, there are different identities like Chicano and Tejano that go beyond the technical term of the native-born Americans of Mexican descent. These identities help embody the Mexican-American experience and represent a long history of the struggles that have been faced as minorities in the United States. These terms enable individuals to develop names and affiliations that truly fit them. By conducting an ethnographic interview with my family members, I will gather first-hand accounts of the different experiences of the Mexican-born immigrant and the United States-born Mexican-American, as well as learn how they have shaped my identity as a young Chicana woman. In this project, *Bless Me, Ultima* is a cultural, literary artifact that adds more perspectives, reflects similar ideas concerning intergenerational identity and philosophical construction, and represents different cultural beliefs with each character. Lastly, the research I examined by Levine and others will help frame the socioeconomic and educational contexts that contribute to the Mexican-American experience.

"Oppression By the 'Mythical Norm' in Silko's 'Lullaby'"

Priscilla Guerra, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

Audre Lorde speaks of the American "mythical norm," characteristics that are associated with typically white, patriarchal power in society. When one is different from the mythical norm that is established, when they do not fit the cookie cutter, one then faces the powers of oppression. Lorde explains, "We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate" (Lorde 115). This shows that when the oppressed are faced with the pressure of power from the mythical norm, society's cookie cutter, they are instinctively wired to react in ways that result in a negative outcome. Leslie Silko's "Lullaby" can be used to look at how some oppressed peoples, such as the Navajo family in the story, try and emulate the mythical norm to avoid the inexorable oppression from power. The story is about a Navajo family of five that lost a child in war and two to the government, leaving only a grieving mother and her broken husband Chato trying to survive in a world designed to work against him. In this presentation, I will analyze Silko's story through Lorde's "lens," to show how people respond to difference and try to gain power in destructive ways.

"The Effect of Environment in McFarland, USA"

Leina Cantu, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

A film about an inspiring track coach in an impoverished border town, *McFarland, USA*, released in February 2015, and directed by Niki Caro, has been criticized for its portrayal of a "White

Savior” by critics. However, applying Sidney I. Dobrin’s “Writing Takes Place” to this film sheds light on the more complex story. Dobrin’s work emphasizes places’ impact on identity, stating, “We write our places, and in turn those places write us” (18). Whether an environment affects people positively or negatively, it plays a significant role in their life. This can be seen in the film, as it is based on a true story that follows members of a track team who live in a small, impoverished town composed primarily of Mexican immigrants who work long hours in agricultural fields. A cross-country coach comes into a limiting environment with his team and provides possibilities to see other environments, gain educational access, and experience other ways of life. However, simultaneously, the runners and their families expand the coach’s limited viewpoint as he gets to know the community he serves; the runners “save” Coach White as much as he “saves” them. In this presentation, I will analyze the film *McFarland, USA*, using Dobrin’s ideas to show that the cross-country team and the coach affected each other equally by exposing each other to new environments, ways of thinking, and possibilities for overcoming limitations.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A5
LRC 212B: Contradictions in Gendered Identities #1

“Traveling Against the Current”

Yudith Salas, University of Houston - Clear Lake | Advisor: Dalel Serda

Brandy et al. (2013) claim, “Marianismo is a cultural value that denotes the gender role expectations of Latina women. Marianismo shows that it encompasses expectations that a Latina is dedicated to one’s family, be subordinate to others, and self-silencing in order to maintain harmonious relationships” (p. 491). In many Latin cultures, women are expected to cater to the family while disregarding their own wants and needs. As a first-generation Chicana, I went against my parents’ wishes of staying at home and finishing school by backpacking to five countries at age of twenty-two by myself. I left home and traveled to Latin America for ten months. However, before leaving, I faced rejection from my family who did not support my decision. My dream contradicted what my family wanted for me which was to stay home and finish school. In May of 2022, I came back home as a completely different person. I was a much happier and wide-eyed person who looked at the world with a different lens. After coming home, I realized that marianismo harms and holds a lot of women back from doing what they want to do. Remembering the first day I landed in a different country, all my worries and stress from caring about my family’s opinions ceased because I went after my dream. Growing up, I wanted to avoid conflict as much as possible by listening to my family’s “consejos” up until this point. In the end, I chose to no longer be silent even if it disrupted the harmony between my family and me. In the end, I lost several family connections and gained freedom from the expectations and limits placed on me. Being a courageous Chicana means one must break generational curses, including a long lineage of marianismo.

“The Entrapment of Gender Roles in Disney Films”

Mariana Flores, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

In Plato’s “The Allegory of the Cave,” prisoners are in a cave bound by their necks and legs, unable to turn their heads, and forced to stare at shadows created by puppeteers and illuminated by a fire behind them. One prisoner breaks free and goes through a difficult process to see the light outside of the cave and reach enlightenment. Having learned the truth, the escapee returns to the cave to share his newfound knowledge but is quickly rejected by the remaining prisoners. Plato’s allegory can be used as a lens to analyze Disney films in a deeper context. With Disney taking over the screens of the world, ideas of gender roles and stereotypes are continuously fed to the audience and are widely accepted. The gender role shadows Disney perpetuates have trapped and imprisoned audiences in a cave, shaping their perceptions of gender while simultaneously encouraging the continuation of those gender roles. In this presentation, I will be analyzing said gender roles portrayed continuously throughout early and more recent Disney films, Disney’s worldwide exposure through most prominently streaming platforms, and its influence on the future perceptions of children on gender roles.

“The Greeks Devaluation of Women”

Jennifer Anyanwu, Houston Community College Central | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

It has been often said that the stories and tales that originate from a place give us deep insight and understanding as to the character of the people, the structural foundation, and the norms and values that are present in such a place. African folklores tell us a lot about Africa in its many facets. I grew up listening to African folklore and before I could figure out the world for myself, I had already grown accustomed to our values and belief systems. Greek mythology, as well, gives us insight into the way the Greeks have structured their society, their way of life, their values, and laws. It also gives us insight into how they view women. While reading the stories of Oedipus Rex the king, Antigone, and Medea, I was able to gain insight as to how the Greeks viewed women as emotionally driven beings and not worthy to perform the governing and leadership roles of a man. They viewed them as just being fit for family roles and frowned upon them when they became vocal and chose to defend themselves. They were only depicted when it came to love, casting spells, or performing a family role.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A6
LRC 213: Contradictions within Our Economies and Society

“An Analysis of the Wells Fargo Scandal”

Jamie Andaur, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

In 2008, Wells Fargo beat the odds by achieving unorthodox success amidst an economic recession. This was a success that thrived throughout the recession. However, behind their phenomenal growth lay fraudulent activity that was conducted by the employees yet forged by their superiors and organizational executives. A deeper dive reveals the company culture of cut-throat, unethical yet accepted behaviors. Wells Fargo executives utilized their power, by setting employees up

for failure if they did not meet the unrealistic goals set forth for their teams. This led to over 1.5 million unwanted bank accounts being opened, and an estimated 565,000 unauthorized credit cards in employees' names. Wells Fargo encouraged this fraudulent activity by providing benefits for those who met their goals and would ultimately fire those who didn't. In 2014, Wells Fargo tried to combat fraudulent activity by creating an ethics workshop that elaborated on the importance of not creating fake accounts under customers' names. By 2015, there was a decline in the number of fake accounts however accounts were still being created. In 2016, Wells Fargo was fined a total of \$185 million for fraudulent activity, the CEO John Stumpf resigned, and approximately 5,300 employees were fired for committing fraudulent activity. This study analyzes the organizational behaviors that propelled a scandal and condoned a pure disregard for ethics. I advocate for Wells Fargo's termination and loss of licenses due to their blatant disregard for laws, policies, and employee obligations which was overshadowed by greed. Their accountability was meniscal compared to those that were affected. This project will illustrate how this scandal happened, why it happened, how the company survived it, and how other businesses and business students can learn from this scandal.

"The Importance of Financial Literacy"

Cameron Lanier, College of the Mainland, Dual Credit| Advisor: Elaine Childs

Financial literacy is the ability to understand many financial concepts such as budgeting, saving, and investing while also being able to apply them in life. The skill is experiencing a decline in the number of people who are financially literate, as a result of the skill being removed from the curriculum in education around the world. In an article by Péter Kovács, studying the comprehensive knowledge concerning financial literacy in high school students, the following was said, "Our findings show high school students to have inadequate and superficial financial knowledge" (Kovács). Students are no longer being taught about financial literacy in school and it is partly due to a lack of understanding from not just the students, but teachers as well. Financial literacy is a growing issue that needs to be addressed before it is too late, and a large portion of society goes financially illiterate, leaving an extremely limited amount of people left to teach the skill. It has already begun to affect an immense amount of people, preventing them from retiring at the expected age, and forcing them to continue working into the latter part of their life. Financial literacy is a skill that is just as relevant as math and science skills, which are critical pieces of curriculum around the world. While math, science, and many other subjects help countless obtain jobs, being financially intelligent would additionally ensure that their life is lived more comfortably financially. Not only would this ensure comfort while working, but as well as during retirement. Due to the importance of financial literacy, it should be a required part of education, just as math and science classes are, because, without it, many people are illiterate in a skill that is essential.

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. | Session A7 LRC 252: NON-JURIED SESSION:

Starting a Community College Literary Journal: *The Badelynge Review*

This session will be moderated by Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow. Student speakers will be Madison Howell, Regino Briones, Aurionna Simmons

The students behind the launch of a campus literary journal at College of the Mainland share their experiences of this pilot year. The *Badelynge Review* is a student-produced literary journal that publishes poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction, and academic essays written by COM students. Since the start of the year, several students have joined on as Readers, who evaluate the submitted writing, and Editors, who work with the selected authors to prepare their writing for publication. This session will discuss the process of starting the journal, the types of necessary student involvement to make it happen, why the journal is an important contribution to the campus, and how it might grow in the future.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B1 LRC 258: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #2

"Confronting Hispanic Healthcare Disparities in the Land of Opportunity"

Elizabeth Pena, Houston Community College | Advisor: Nausheen Pasha

Across the world, the United States is perceived as a dominating nation for healthcare innovation. These advancements are meant to contribute to the overall health of the American population and improve the use of resources in the healthcare sector. In reality, these benefits are far from reach to America's largest minority, the Hispanic population. To Hispanics, the United States is the land of opportunity and cultivation of prosperity in their own life. They make up a large portion of the most physically demanding jobs in America such as agriculture, construction, and maintenance. Their contributions impact the economy of the United States and flourish its diverse culture. Nevertheless, Hispanic communities are marginalized with the myth that their language barrier, economic disparity, and lack of accessibility excludes them from their right to healthcare. The focus of this presentation will be on dissecting these factors in detail and how they negatively impact the Hispanic population in America.

"Medical Ultrasound"

Maggie Gabadadze, San Jacinto North Campus | Advisor: Cody Pogue

Ultrasound technology has been revolutionized in recent years in two important ways. First, existing technology has been reduced in size and price so much so that individuals will soon be able to afford their very own ultrasound devices that are no larger than an iPod. Second, new capabilities have been added to ultrasound technology that enables devices to scan organs that they were unable to map before. These new capabilities are at the center of my study, as we are within striking distance of completely substituting harmful x-ray imaging technology with harmless ultrasound devices. The real added value can come from finetuning sensors that receive sound signals and

convert them into images that are then used for diagnostics. As these sensors become more nuanced and precise two things can happen: 1) Produce accurate images of all organs; 2) Produce a real-time “live” video of continuously, moving, pulsating or throbbing organs which, in turn, can revolutionize robotics-assisted surgeries.

“The Rising Cost of Healthcare”

Joann Hernandez, Houston Community College - Central | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

In today’s world, the medical field has made a huge impact around the world and anyone we see. For that, the medical field has made a huge difference by changing people’s lives, creating medicine, and making huge advancements in cures. Yet, there’s a big problem in the medical field with the rising cost of healthcare. That has left many people questioning whether they can even afford healthcare and the result is that routine checkups often get neglected. Relatedly, the medical field has grown over the years, and its growth has encouraged many students to pursue a medical education. Although the American healthcare system is advanced, it can be reasonably argued that it is not high quality compared to other nations. The US ranks low compared to other countries in terms of life expectancy, childbirth fatalities, and preventable hospital visits.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B2 LRC 257: Contradictory Ideas about Art

“Forever/Over”

Brooke (Ellie) Burnett, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Stacey Burleson

In this presentation, I will showcase a piece of art that resembles the change, translation, and reframing of the personal self to the song “forever//over” by the music artist EDEN. This piece will also include some research on the condition of chromesthesia and how it affects different individuals, including myself, and how it reframes the concept of what most people understand about music and the world around them. The song illustrates the changing and reframing of perspective as we grow up and experience different events in our life such as people coming and going, our plans differing from those of our friends, and taking challenging treks alone, as well as how we cope with all of these events. This image of an abstract is derived from what I see when I listen to the song due to a condition I have, called chromesthesia, which causes me to construct images or visualize colors when I hear sound or music.

I feel like this condition would be a unique addition to the symposium this year, and I would love to share my visions with others.

“Get A Real Job: The Inconsistencies Between Consuming and Pursuing the Fine Arts”

Madison Howell, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow

Throughout history, one force has persisted across generations of civilizations, consistently finding new ways to reflect the spectrum of emotion and behavior that humanity has always exhibited. In every aspect of existence, art thrives. Film, literature, theater, and music are able to capture and replicate

human nature in ways only lived experience can rival. Despite this universal desire for the arts, actively pursuing these paths is often condemned. Through research and one-on-one interviews, this paper analyzes the preconceived notions many people have regarding the study of the fine arts, as well as how the systems currently in place exploit creatives and contribute to common misconceptions. In addition, this paper discusses the strangled creativity and disregard of employees in creative industries. Rather than dismissing the study of these subjects, a shift in perception is necessary in order to begin aiming for the improvement and reform of the various fine arts industries.

“The Two Sides”

Mackenzie Jones, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Stacey Burleson

I decided to base my abstract on the two sides of depression. Depression is thrown around loosely today. As someone who suffers from depression, I decided to show it in the only form I know how. Paint. My painting is a two-faced piece inspired by my favorite artist Thomas Donaldson. I chose this topic because I want to show that depression is not a term that people can use loosely. The two sides of this mental illness are very scary, and I want to show how drastically a person can change with having it. In this painting, I want to show the emotions that people with depression feel. One side is going to be that happiness that one might feel before their mentality changes and I’m going to do that by doing rainbows going down the canvas and with a face that has the “golden smile.” On the other side I’m going to show what someone might feel like when the illness takes over so it going to be gray and dark and gloomy with another half of that face sad, but instead of that “golden smile,” it’s going to turn into a golden tear. Hopefully, this painting will get my point across and show that depression is not a joke, and it is actually a very serious thing.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B3 LRC 255: The Contradictory Nature of Knowing

“Psychology vs. Neuroscience: What Are We Exactly?”

Bogdana Semchenko, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

Human beings like to consider themselves to be in control. We are complex, unique, powerful beings who dominate the food chain and the world with our superior technology, powered by our incomparable brains. The inner monologue creates language (no other species can do that!) and analyses, communicates, and problem-solves with that language. Despite our glorious inventions, we have yet to replicate any machine that can mimic the power of the human mind. We are, indeed, the most fascinating creatures on Earth, and as we know – the whole cosmos.

What sets us apart – our brilliant ability to critically think – is something incredibly personal to us. Our interpretation of the world, our personality, all of our opinions – it is our definition of Us. The consciousness is all that we are, and all our world. Where, exactly, does that consciousness begin? The automatic breathing performed by our brain does not define us – yet it is part of the same system that contains our entire universe. At what point does the machine become our sentimental soul?

We may think that we are fully responsible for each decision that we make, yet each step we take has been molded by our environment and everything that ever happened before us. Human beings are often fed by the illusion that we are completely in control. It may be time to step back and accept that despite our immensely unique situation, we are still just as much a part of this universe as each insignificant piece of dust.

"Personality Type: How Did Different Intelligences or Cultures Create a World Full of Knowledge and Experiences?"

Abiatou Sidibe Samira, Houston Community College | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

Psychology, in addition to being the science of behavior, is also the science of the human brain functioning. Its presence is everywhere and is important for the understanding of the relations between human beings. Personality types are one aspect of psychology and are crucial for understanding others. Science has shown that there is a mutual attraction between opposites. We can see that magnets attract each other only when the north pole (positive), encounters the south pole (negative). This principle can also be found in reality in a way that people tend to learn more when they are around people who stand for a different point of view than their point of view. The main point of this presentation will be to demonstrate how through their differences, people learn and unite. This research will focus on personality types and how those findings helped us shape a better world. My presentation will include the history of the idea of "personality types," how the findings on personality types went prominent in the psychological world, the divergences toward the theory, some personality traits' pros and cons, some personality type compatibility, and some tips on how to deal with those personality types.

"What Does it Mean to Know?"

Janis Richards, San Jacinto College - North | Advisor: Cody Pogue

"What does it mean to know? Is feeling knowing? Is seeing knowing? Is experiencing knowing? Is believing knowing?" I will apply these questions to a foundational statement that will introduce my thesis on answering these questions, as my contribution toward participating in this project. I will employ generally accepted definitions for the words. I will then make general statements that express my own view. My purpose is to tie the five questions to a theory of knowledge that expresses a workable relationship, using an example from history with regard to economics, law, and politics. An example from history is the populist movement in Texas that took place roughly between 1870 and 1930. For this, I will call on Dr. Roscoe C. Martin, a professor of history at the University of Texas in Austin in the 1930s, who presents his research in his book, "The People's Party in Texas." I will also call on Dr. Deepak Chopra, who proposes a theory of knowing he presents in his book, "You Are the Universe." I will sprinkle in spiritual beliefs followed by the New Thought Movement, as expressed in Earnest Holmes' book, *This Thing Called You*.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B4 LRC 212A: Contradicting Interpretations of Identity

"Why It's Wrong to Outlaw the Hijab"

Tooba Qureshi, Houston Community College - Spring Branch | Advisor: Brandon Williams

Muslim women should be free to wear Islamic head coverings, face coverings, and dress because it is highly immoral to legally enforce otherwise. In this essay, I will talk about the meaning and use of hijab, places where it is banned and why, places where it is enforced, as well as a few philosophical theories that address the issue. Those philosophical theories discuss discrimination, the absence of religious tolerance, and diversity and why those are immoral. The word hijab, in this context, is the garment that covers a Muslim woman's head. This includes hair, ears, and neck. The main reasons they wear a garment to cover themselves include being identified as a Muslim woman, observing modesty, etc. Muslim women were commanded by God in the Holy Quran and in the Hadith to practice hijab in front of those who are not their mahram. The term refers to males who are "related" to the woman. That list doesn't include the majority of the male population and therefore a Muslim woman would be Islamically required to wear a hijab in their presence. In a hadith that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) states to Aisha's (May Allah be pleased with her) sister, Asma, he states "O Asma! When a lady reaches her menstruation (puberty) nothing of her should be shown except this and this" and he pointed towards the face and hands (Zoreh, 182)." This practice of wearing the hijab has been targeted and the right has been stripped in several states and countries all over the world. When done so, it falls under the categories of bigotry and religious prejudice. Moral values I have researched discuss that society should consider basic respect, an inclusive understanding, and open-mindedness rather than degrade and seclude.

"Nurturing a Giving Lifestyles: How Community Volunteerism Lessens Economic Hardship Stigma"

Carrie Cobb, Serenity Reeves, Michelle Mizuhata, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Kristina Jantz

In recent years, economic issues have been intensifying in the U.S., especially among those already struggling to provide for themselves and their families. When those struggling with financial hardships can only turn to government programs, they are discouraged from reaching out because of the stereotypes of being lazy and having no ethics that are then attached to them. Hands-on volunteer work has been shown to support those in our community struggling and combat these generalizing beliefs. Whether giving time to a food bank or creating clothes for those in need, providing an in-person and hands-on service pushes volunteers to see more points of view and connect with others, all while creating personal fulfillment. To combat stereotypes and promote a life of servitude, Sigma Delta members collaborated with M.I. Lewis Social Service Center in Dickinson, TX, to expose the community to the experience of volunteering and allow those receiving assistance to tell their stories. By incorporating physical play into these actions, volunteers learned from the experience and enjoyed what could become a future habit for many of the community involved.

"Nationality and Soccer: Contradictions in the French Soccer Team's Ethnic Makeup"

Noah Mubiru, COM | Advisor: James Mubiru

When you think of sports and the national representation of a country you would think, race or ethnicity would play a significant role in a country's team and would represent the country's main population. But it doesn't in many countries and can be seen in several sports leagues which break this thought, and a key example of this is the French national soccer team whose team comes from all corners of the world and represents a nation that many would argue they shouldn't because it is not their origin of birth or heritage. But to the French, the different cultural backgrounds of their players build their team and represent their country as a whole which they can express through the game of soccer in the European cup and the World cup showing the nation's multicultural population.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B5 LRC 212B: Contradictions in Gendered Identities #2

"Exploring The Workplace Feminism That Changed It All: The 9 to 5 Movement Thorough Media and Modern Day Perception"

Rebecca Currie & Diego Moreno, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

In the midst of gender inequality in the workplace in the 70s— a time when women were the majority of the workforce—women sought out methods for change. They sought to change that which was necessary for female office workers, as they were left out of both the Labor Movement alongside the Women's Movement. Through this pursuit, the 9 to 5 movement was born. After eight years of successful protest and demands, the film "9 to 5," directed by Colin Higgins, was released in 1980 to assist the movement in gaining momentum. The movie did just that. After the release of "9 to 5," the popularity of the movement sharing the same name skyrocketed. Representation in media by prominent stars was exactly what the 9 to 5 movement needed. However, the film demonstrated ideals that were completely juxtaposed with those of the movement. This undermined, underrepresented, and contradicted the initial purpose of the film: to promote equality and inclusivity. Within this presentation, we will be applying the theme of the conference to the 1980 film "9 to 5". Rebecca Currie and Diego Moreno will be translating the movement to modern times, reframing conceptions about women's workers' rights, and will acknowledge the contradictions seen within the film.

"The Inherent Contradiction within Feminism"

Rawan Aljaouni, Houston Community College | Advisor: Brandon Williams

Feminism and feminist ethics is a vague yet restrictive topic that creates a barrier between women of different lifestyles and their ability to connect to femininity. Modern feminism is focused on encouraging women to take on new roles in society, believing that it is the best way to gain respect and equality among the sexes. Traditional ladies embracing an "old-fashioned" way of life, while still fighting for their rights, seems completely contradictory. Regardless, these ideals can coexist, and have for decades. But even those who preach acceptance and female empowerment are excluding the same people they try fighting

for. By explaining 'maternal feminism' and its controversy, the struggle of traditional housewives wanting to be seen as feminists, and the difficulty that modern, independent women face when attempting to reclaim their womanhood, I will argue that ethical conversations concerning feminism will never be fully inclusive of all women.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B6 LRC 213: Economics and Related Contradictions

"The Origins of Accounting"

Olivia Sanchez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

This project will cover and explain the Origins of Accounting, and will include a PowerPoint, excerpts (if possible), images or audio (if possible), and an informative verbal presentation. Not only will this presentation be a large learning experience for me, but it will also present a fresher, yet historical side of accounting as opposed to reviewing a scandal/mishap of inappropriate accounting. The 'source behind the creation of accounting,' 'its purpose/usage,' and the 'overall importance of accounting' are the forerunning ideas of modern accounting and have made way for anything that happened since them and has yet to take place in the accounting world. It is crucial to understand accounting of the past/early accounting, and that it is the reason modern accounting exists.

"Early Retirement Plans - Simple and Doable Strategies"

Kingsley Okeleke, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Siromi Wijesinghe

The topic of this presentation is *simple and doable strategies for early retirement plans*. The study will explore the various methodologies that can be utilized to achieve financial independence and thereby arrive at early retirement. The research findings come from several articles reviewed and information gathered from financial industry operators. The study will provide financial education, needful financial solutions and/or services. It is also geared to an audience of regulators, counselors, and public institutions to increase the propensity of young people to plan for their future and guide them towards attitudes and behaviors most likely to increase their savings for early retirement. It will also help provide a strong financial foundation to support various life goals, such as saving for education and early retirement, running a business, using debt responsibly or managing debt, and tracking personal spending. The process will include steps, stages, and options to consider. It will involve determining income goals, identifying sources of income, sizing up expenses, implementing a savings program, managing assets and risks, etc. It will compare retirement income analysis for early retirement savers and late savers. The income highlights will be illustrated with clear charts. The impact will be more rewarding and works best for those who make required financial plans as early as possible to ensure a safe, secure, and fun early retirement. This connects to the theme of reframing and embracing contradictions because many people prefer to avoid thinking about it and saving early for their retirement, which they might consider burdensome. However, it is expedient for young people to consider doing so to enjoy their retirement.

"How to Keep Our Clothes from Killing Us: The Real Facts About Fast Fashion's Corruptive Behavior"

Keira Elizabeth Moorehead, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Anna Munson

Shein, Zara, and H&M are all trendy stores that teenagers shop at, but do those teenagers know what their clothes are made of? Or what it's doing to the world they live in? Water pollution, toxic chemicals, textile waste, greenhouse gas emissions, soil pollution, and rainforest degradation are some of the environmental impacts of the [fast fashion] industry (Dethmers et al., Introduction). Even with all this knowledge known about fast fashion, the reality of it being completely eradicated is idealistic. Given the choice, consumers will always choose what is easily accessible. This brings about the concern of how to stifle further global pollution if it's impossible to eliminate its cause. How do we keep from ignorantly, or consciously, destroying the planet we live in? The answer, although not perfect, is to try to be more conscious about our clothing sources and production process. Uneducated consumers are falling prey to perfectly placed advertisements without realizing the low cost of their clothes now means a high cost for the world to come. To quote Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." So, before we can reframe or embrace contradictions, we must first educate ourselves on what others are gainsaying.

10:40 – 11:40 a.m. | Session B7 LRC 252: NONJURIED SESSION

Creative Writers' Reading: Transforming Selves: Confronting and Reimagining Reality through Narrative and Poetry

The session will be moderated by Lisa Frase and Courtney Pugh. Student readers include Regan Payne, Sophia George, Cody Bassett, Emma Wilkerson, Courtney Hobby, Kendrin Fuqua, Brittany Rios Amaya, and Destiny Tobey.

Creative writing is an artistic endeavor where authors paint with words to immerse readers into exploring experiences that are uniquely human. Approaching the craft of creative writing necessitates confronting the contradictions of existence, the paradoxes presented by human awareness and intelligence as it exists alongside mortality and a sometimes-uncertain reality. The emphasis in creative writing is on the narrative tradition and poetics, character development, and language awareness, as well as celebrating the written word's power to move, reflect, and interpret reality. Stories and poetry arise from the oral tradition, which is at the heart of the human condition. Personal experiences and observations blend into factual narratives in creative nonfiction, and some writers experiment with the way these genres intersect. The writers in the session, students in the COM Creative Writing Club and current Intro. to Creative Writing class, will share short, original pieces of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C1 LRC 258: Seeming Contradictions in Healthcare #3

"Nursing: I'll be There for You... But Who Will Be There for Me? How Stress-Related Anxiety Affects Nursing Students' Success"

Rayven Toler, Stacey Flowers, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Rachel Fano

Anxiety is described as fear, dread, and uneasiness that play a role in an individual's life. When looking into the causes of anxiety, a significant factor is stress. This is commonly referred to as stress-related anxiety. Nursing students, as a whole, experience different levels of stress-related anxiety because nursing school is notoriously difficult. To succeed, students must manage heavy course loads, rigorous examinations, and a high-grade average. As students manage stress-related anxiety, it can affect many aspects, such as nursing focus, class participation, clinical skills, and home-life balance. It can also lead to students dropping out or even early nurse burnout. This project will explain how stress-related anxiety affects nursing students, causes early burnout, and other factors that can ultimately affect patient care. We will provide insight into primary and secondary data to demonstrate the effects on nursing students' success and mental well-being. Some questions to consider are: Does it ultimately affect our knowledge base and skills because of the intense and overloaded material? Will it affect the care we provide for others? Does stress-related anxiety in nursing students contradict the means of being a successful nurse? Do the means to be successful and caring for others contradict the need to care for ourselves along the way?

"Iodine Deficiency: Could It Get You?"

Yhovanka Marquez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Luke Turner

Iodine deficiency drains the energy out of your body, but when most people hear "iodine," they are just taken back to their high school chemistry class. Ignorance can blissfully end one's joy in many ways. In this case, it could lead to severe hypothyroidism or impaired neurological development of a fetus if the victim is pregnant. Even if you feel fine today, it is never a bad idea to educate yourself on the symptoms, cures, or how to avoid the deficiency. The National Library of Medicine states that this issue is a worldwide problem that is estimated to affect 2.2 billion people. The most common outcome after attaining such poison is a goiter. In other words, the thyroid gland will expand, reaching an irrational size and could potentially cause throat tightness or trouble breathing. We all have loved ones we hope to never see ill and although some diseases are non-avoidable, this one could be by simply reframing one's mindset, intaking the right amount of iodine, and monitoring your health.

"The Impact of Childhood Trauma on the Adult Psyche and Development of Coping Mechanisms"

Alyssa Garcia, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

We imagine childhood to be a time of innocence and safety, but contradictorily, childhood trauma is often described as serious adverse childhood experiences and is generally classified by four main subtypes: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect. Regier et al. stated, "36.3% of individuals

living in the U.S. have a history of at least one form of child maltreatment”; childhood trauma is more common than we’d like to think. Research shows that as of 2022, three out of every four children regularly suffer physical punishment and/or psychological violence at the hands of parents or caregivers. My research, conducted by way of an anonymous, voluntary online survey, showed that only 10 of the 52 participants denied having childhood trauma. Those results can support the statement that almost everyone has some sort of trauma from their childhood. The most common theme among participants was almost all of them used negative coping mechanisms to deal with their trauma, whether it was drugs, self-harm or not respecting their bodies, especially among the women participants. From my research, I hypothesize that unprocessed childhood trauma can predispose a person to long-term mental health concerns. Regier et al. help to support that point by stating, “Experiences of excess or sustained stress can have a lasting impact on long-term physiological, behavioral, and psychological health and well-being, particularly when it occurs early in life.” Mental health issues can impact every aspect of life, including but not limited to, school, work, and social skills, thus affecting the way we present ourselves in the world. Childhood trauma impairs the ability to adapt and evolve which in turn impairs the goals and standards we set in life, creating a new cycle of disappointment and despair. As the instances of childhood trauma increase, the likelihood of developing further as a country decrease, and the next wave of doctors, presidents, and teachers are being emotionally crippled and therefore hindering the advancement of not just us as individuals but, as a whole.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C2 **LRC 257: Analyzing Contradictions in Film and Literature**

“Generational Violence Against Black Men in *Candyman*”

Ysel Alcalá, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

In “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” Audre Lorde advocates recognizing all forms and intersections of oppression. Though Lorde’s work focuses primarily on the oppression of black women, it can be further applied to black men to understand the forces that lead to generational racism, discrimination, torture, and brutality. In Nia DaCosta’s *Candyman* (2021), a sequel to the horror film *Candyman* (1992), viewers follow a black male artist through a newly gentrified Chicago neighborhood, as he uncovers the truth behind the legend of the Candyman, a representation and reminder of black men wrongfully killed in racially motivated murders. Candyman is an identifier for all the black men that have faced systematic oppression that ultimately led to violence or death. In this presentation, by applying Lorde’s analysis to the film *Candyman*, I demonstrate how the film’s portrayal of racial violence remains relevant today.

“Making Memories Human in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*”

Marissa Ledbetter, Lee College | Advisor: Georgeann Ward

To consider a world without sadness or the aches and pains of human life is almost euphoric in our current world of dejection, yet such a world does not consider the full human experience.

Similarly, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004) hones into the one emotion all humans can pinpoint, heartbreak, and shows audiences its value. French-born director Michel Gondry takes this simple, tragic feeling and turns it into the film *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* which can teach audiences to value upstanding and discouraging memories for they are both spectacular creations. Using interesting techniques, the film opens a wall into mental health but in an unreachable way. In this presentation, I will show how in *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, director Michel Gondry uses the film styling of mise-en-scene, sound, and futurism to prove that memories are not data to be destroyed.

“Frankenstein & The Societal Acceptance of Others”

Alex Rathjen, Houston Community College Southwest | Advisor: Nausheen Pasha-Zaidi

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* explores the relationship between Victor and the Creature, which serves as a metaphor for the inner turmoil and fragmented psyche of Victor. The Creature’s rejection from society due to his appearance and subsequent rage and aggression lead him to turn against Victor and humanity. The Deconstruction theory describes Victor and the Creature as binary opposites, with Victor representing the mind and the Creature the body. While the Creature possesses the intelligence to fit into society, he is rejected because of his appearance, unlike Victor. Victor’s subjectivity is evident in his creation of the Creature, which he perceives as beautiful and perfect, whereas society deems it horrendous and monstrous. Victor’s fractured self is reflected in the Creature, which represents his negative characteristics. Victor’s creation of the Creature leads to his shattered self, and every time he looks at the Creature, horror and dread fill him, signifying his biggest realization of what he has done. Victor’s distorted and fractured whole is further represented by his desire to love the Creature despite its ugliness and negative characteristics. *Frankenstein* highlights the dangers of playing god and the consequences of one’s actions, revealing how the inner turmoil and fragmented psyche of an individual can lead to disastrous consequences for society.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C3 **LRC 255: Learning from Historical Controversy**

“Causes for the French Defeat in the Seven Years War”

Noah Gosswiller, San Jacinto College South Campus | Advisor: Abbie Grubb

The purpose is to examine why the French lost the French and Indian War and how that knowledge may be used in today’s world alongside attempting to solve some issues the French have faced. Particular areas of interest for today’s world primarily include the United States’ military and businesses. To examine how these areas may be positively influenced, research will be done on the logistical problems and development in regions, adaptation to the current situations, putting trust into others, and even, potentially, health and disease. My sources will be primarily online periodicals or other online documents and books recording the experiences of those in the war.

Ultimately, this research should show how these issues not only brought down the French in North America but also how it could have potentially been avoided and how we may improve businesses, government, or even humanitarian efforts and aid from these mistakes and issues.

“Gun Violence in Schools”

Marissa Marshall, Isabel Santos, Elizabeth Arriaga, San Jacinto College Central Campus | Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele

Gun violence has become a huge problem, especially when it comes to our schools. According to SIERP (Stanford Institute for economic policy Research) more than a hundred thousand students between 2018-2019 were involved in school shootings. As of October 31, 2022, there were forty school shootings. Twenty-eight of the victims were students and the other six were staff members. School shootings have been found to have an effect not only on students’ academic performance but also on their mental health. Parents are afraid to send their students to school because they are afraid this might happen again. School should be a place where children want to go to learn and make new friends, and a place where they can feel safe and secure. As educators, we need to find ways to help make schools safer no matter what. If it is locking the doors during class time or providing training for staff members in these situations. Research shows the need for gun laws need to be implemented and the need for more school counselors in schools, so students and staff members feel like they have someone to go to after a school shooting. Children should not be scared to lose their life just by going to school. They should not live in fear every day they wake up. As Mayor Bloomberg said in 2008, “Students Success begins with student safety” (Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg NYSED, 2008).

“Contradictions in Using ‘Mexica-centrism’ as a Bridge: Moving Forward from the Chicano Movement into Indigeneity”

William (Andy) Gomez, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Dalel Serda

The Chicano movement utilized a Mexica-centric framework to label all Mexican-Americans as descendants of the Mexica, or Aztec nation. This glamorization of the Mexica nation allowed for a deeper appreciation of Chicanismo’s indigenous roots as well as a departure from colonial identities. It also established an arguably essential unification between Mexican Americans. However, through further analysis aided by a modern lens, Chicanos have since realized the contradictions and faults within their Mexica-centrist ideology. It has essentially done more harm than good for the indigenous aspect of Chicanismo, even though Mexica-centrism is heavily centered within indigeneity itself. For example, even though an aim of the Chicano movement was to amplify indigenous voices, their Mexica-centrism instead contributed to the erasure of other Native American nations. The Mexica-centrism within the Chicano movement also caused an “othering” of other Native American groups, which led to a sort of exclusionary nationalism within the movement. It is also important to mention that the Mexica-centrism within the movement also blindly encouraged the appropriation of Mexica and Nahua culture. Nonetheless, Chicanos have since learned from these contradictions and expanded their minds. Instead of simply claiming Mexica descent and identity, Chicanos have recognized that they are

much more likely to be of another nation. There is a newfound responsibility within Chicanos to research their own lineage, and it is this consideration of other possible tribal identities that allows for a genuine acknowledgment of other Native American nations. Overall, it was through the contradictions of Mexica-centrism that allowed Chicanos to cross the bridge from a colonized identity to the true goal: genuine indigeneity.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C4 LRC 212A: Embracing Contradictory Impulses

“Today’s Tomorrows Yesterday: Power of Perseverance”

Blake Williams, College of the Mainland | Advisor: Lisa Frase

Today is tomorrow’s yesterday but today is called “the present” for good reason. If you decided today after living 6,575 days to do everything correctly and to the best of your abilities, the amount of time it took to reach success would be surprising. After living 10,958 days the results may be even greater due to experience and living. The resources for success have changed significantly over time due to technological advancements and societal changes. That means if there was a delay in your business start-off or education in 2007, procrastination has paid off with the major developments today in 2023. Perseverance and procrastination are two opposing forces that often play a significant role in determining the outcomes of our endeavors. Perseverance refers to the ability to persist in pursuing one’s goals despite setbacks and obstacles, while procrastination refers to the tendency to delay or put off tasks until later. Despite their opposing nature, perseverance and procrastination are not mutually exclusive. In fact, many individuals who struggle with procrastination also exhibit a strong sense of perseverance. This is because perseverance requires the ability to overcome obstacles and push through challenges, which is precisely what individuals with a tendency to procrastinate must do to successfully complete tasks. In the end, the key to achieving success in the face of procrastination lies in cultivating a strong sense of perseverance and determination, while also recognizing and addressing the factors that contribute to procrastination. By doing so, we can overcome obstacles and achieve our goals, no matter how challenging they may be.

“Wonders of the Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich”

My’Kayla Waines, Houston Community College | Advisor: Nicolas Rangel

A peanut butter and jelly, or PB & J, is a classic childhood lunch, known by many kids in America. It is peanut butter spread on a slice of bread and jelly of any kind on another, combined in order to make a magical sandwich. Although the PB & J is widely popular in many people’s childhood years, it starts to grow more unappreciated as we age into adulthood. In this essay, I will explain how the peanut butter and jelly sandwich is underappreciated, why it deserves more attention, and why a reader should care more about this food. The peanut butter and jelly sandwich deserves greater attention than it currently gets. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are underappreciated because people only see it as a kid’s dish and nothing more. As people grow up, they stop eating most of their childhood foods. This classic then goes from something used weekly on a lunch to a

memory of the past. However, foods like the PB & J should still be made, not only throughout childhood but also through adulthood.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C5 LRC 212B: Contradictions Linked to Gender and Sexuality

"LGBTQ Youth in Schools"

Carlos Perez Ramirez, Nayla Samaniego, Arianna Olivo, San Jacinto College Central Campus | Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele

Young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) grow up in a homophobic and sexist society with few, if any, resources, or role models to guide them as they define their sexual orientations. They frequently experience peer aggression, bullying, discrimination, and mental health problems. Many organizations have started to mitigate bullying through bullying prevention programs, however, due to a lack of knowledge and preventive initiatives, LGBTQ youth are still at risk. Schools should offer a crucial context within which protective factors are developed and utilized to improve the health and well-being of these populations, especially given the amount of time LGBTQ students spend in school. This literature review looks at the key issues that the LGBTQ youth community, including immigrant youth, is facing today and offers some suggestions for how to make them feel heard and understood.

"Graham Crackers and Kellogg's Cereal in Relation to Sexuality"

Deannery Dior Muankaew, an Jacinto College - South Campus | Advisor: Abbie Grubb

The research used for my paper consisted of twenty-nine sources including scholarly sources from San Jacinto's College databases including JSTOR and Gale, and primary source documents from the historical book, "Attitudes Towards Sex In Antebellum America" to provide quality evidence to prove my assertion. The conversation about sex has been a polarizing and controversial topic in society throughout the centuries. To look at the changes and continuities concerning sex more wholly and comprehensively, one must look at the broader spectrum of the present and past. Which presents the historical question: To what extent does sexuality in Antebellum America differ from modern sexuality in the 21st century? By specifying the time in the past to the Antebellum American era, we are acknowledging that sex was a prodigious conversation at that time due to the four lenses historians classify sexual discussion under which were folk wisdom, evangelical Christianity, popular science, and sexual radicalism. Also, by specifying the time to the modern-day, 21st century, we have firsthand accounts of the controversy of the topic of sex as we are living in today's time, therefore making the research more valuable and explicit. In all, by researching the different views and perspectives on sexuality from the Antebellum American era to the 21st century, we are bound to see the constancies and metamorphosis of sexuality, creating a bigger picture of what sexuality truly is.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C6 LRC 213: Contradictions in Education

"America's Education System vs Undocumented Students"

Liz Rangel, Rylie Lopez, Nathalie Davila Lozano, Laura Alvarez, San Jacinto College – Central | Advisor: Judith Maima Skeele

The American education system is made to provide students access to a bright future; however, for undocumented students that is not always the case. Many undocumented students are left to figure out the education system on their own, ultimately setting them up for failure. Due to this, undocumented students face issues related to their mental health, emotional well-being, lack of access to resources, racial injustice, and effects on households. The lack of solutions has led to an unequal education system; however, there is little being done to come up with solutions. While some students have the help of DACA, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, they are still limited when receiving an education. Limitations should not exist when it comes to an education that will be the door to an unlimited future. Their fear of getting deported leads to unattended emotional and mental issues (Lad, 2013). Their fear of an incomplete household leads to an unfocused school career (Rangel, 2022). Their lack of resources leads to unreachable goals (Terriquez, 2015). The struggles of others' stereotypes lead to an unfair pathway to success (Lopez, 2018). There needs to be more support offered to undocumented students to mitigate these challenges and obstacles.

"Doesn't That Sound Like a Factory Worker?: Industrial Values of Education and Restricted Student Passions"

Adrian Castaneda, La Marque High School dual credit at College of the Mainland | Advisor: Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow

The U.S. high school education system is not well-equipped to provide the tools for success to students in our rapidly changing society today. History has shown that the system was made during a different time with different needs that no longer provide satisfaction in our modernized world. This study aims to shine a light upon the now flaws in our education system and how powerful they are. A series of online reports, academic journals, archived essays as well as photos, and even videos on the web have been analyzed in the process of this essay. It is also based on surveys that have been passed to students all over the country asking their thoughts on different aspects of their systems. Analysis of the primary and secondary sources has shown that the current system no longer supports students in today's world, in fact, it does the complete opposite. The results indicate that there needs to be a drastic change in the way high school is introduced and taught. On this basis, it is recommended that high schools implement Integrated Learning Systems (ILS) as a key unit when designing education programs and campaigns. Further research is needed to identify other factors that could improve the success rates of high school students.

"Time to Acknowledge Community College!"

Emily Uzner, Paul Tran, Ashish Ajish, Andrea Guillen, Luz Hernandez, Houston Community College Southwest | Advisor: Nausheen Pasha-Zaidi

Why do individuals follow what society has deemed normal?
Why do most individuals choose to attend costly four-year

universities when they could receive the same education at community colleges for a quarter of the cost? Higher education is a term often associated with universities, but in fact is not limited to four-year institutions. Community colleges are a viable option for those wanting to pursue higher education at a much lower cost than four-year universities. However, the stigma surrounding community colleges has allowed society to believe such institutions are inferior to four-year institutions simply because they do not appear as abundant with resources and fail to meet the expectations of college life as set forth by the media. In this pilot study, our team gathered perceptions of community college as a viable higher education option. Survey participants were high-school students from various socioeconomic backgrounds and school districts in the Houston metropolitan area. Most students indicated that they would prefer to attend a four-year university rather than a community college. However, participants were also concerned with the high tuition cost of four-year universities. Interviews with three participants further indicated that high school students may overlook community colleges because they have limited knowledge of the opportunities available to students at community colleges. This presentation discusses the study outcomes and potential ways to promote community college as a viable option for higher education. Our goal throughout this research project was to generate valuable insights to address and reduce the stigma associated with community college education.

how women are shamed for having sex, while men are praised for it. Furthermore, when it comes to reports of sexual assault, the stigma around reporting rape prevents most people from speaking about it. This reflects on collected sexual violence data, as most women who are sexually assaulted refrain from speaking up, contradicting the purpose of performing such research in the first place. In this presentation, we will delve into even more contradictions in how society perceives and deals with the topic of sex.

11:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m. | Session C7 **LRC 252: NONJURIED SESSION**

Protection, Security, and the Dangers of Sex

This session will be hosted by College of the Mainland's Science Club and moderators by Seraiah Smith, their faculty advisor. Student speakers will be Julia Juarez, Elias Ramirez, Alexander Simpson, Gabrielle Liwag, and Jada Lozano.

In the state of Texas, sexual education is not required and emphasizes abstinence. Young adults aren't properly educated and are often pressured into having sex while knowing nothing about it. Therefore, they often make harmful decisions when it comes to sex, leading to unwanted pregnancies in a state where abortion is banned. Others may feel safe and secure making love with their partner(s), so they tend to ignore or forget about the dangers of sex. These dangers include misconceptions, a lack of education, and harmful social norms, all of which can lead to unwanted pregnancies, STDs, unconsidered effects of birth control, and PTSD.

Sex myths are common, despite their absurdity. Although birth control can prevent pregnancies, few women are informed of the harmful side effects. Limiting sexual education in Texas to promote abstinence has proven to be counter-intuitive, as studies have shown that it only increases the rate of teen pregnancy within the state. Thus, this contradiction hinders our progress as a society and is only one of many recent instances of our society's devolution. Even with having enough knowledge about sex, we are still prone to following harmful social norms. The stigma surrounding sexual assault stems from a system of social constructs. A common contradiction is

KEYNOTE

Maria T. Grimaldo

Maria T. Grimaldo is a Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Biomedical Sciences student with the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UTHealth Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences in Houston, TX and is affiliated with the Immunology program. Ms. Grimaldo began her academic studies at Pan American School in Panama City, Panama and moved to League City, TX, USA at a young age. Extracurricularly, Ms. Grimaldo partook in classical ballet training through the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Webster, TX, and later through Feijoo Ballet School in Dickinson, TX. She was also a company dancer for the Bay Area Houston Ballet and Theatre where she performed in various classical ballets including *Coppelia*, *Edward Scissorhands*, two seasons of *Dracula*, and eight seasons of *The Nutcracker* as well as various contemporary repertoires including *A Tribute to The Beetles*. She was also an active member of the Clear Springs High School Band program in League City, TX where she played the Alto Saxophone and Oboe. Ms. Grimaldo continued her academic studies at Texas A&M University where she obtained a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Plant & Environmental Soil Science while completing her pre-Medicine requirements. Ms. Grimaldo was President (2020) of Aggies for Charity: Water through Texas A&M as well as a service leader and co-coordinator (2019) of Advocates for Christ Today and member (2018-2021) of Pescadores through St. Mary's Catholic Center.

Ms. Grimaldo has been actively participating in biomedical research through various summer experiences including a Tissue Engineering lab at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, TX (2015, 2016) and a Reproductive Immunology lab at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine in Nashville, TN (2019). She has also partaken in long-term research experiences through a Neuroscience lab at Texas A&M University Health Science Center in Bryan, TX (2020-2021) and a Tissue Engineering lab at the Houston Methodist Research Institute in Houston, TX (2021-2022). Currently, Ms. Grimaldo is a Graduate Research Assistant in

the Department of Pulmonary Medicine at MD Anderson Cancer Center where she is actively working on her master's thesis project that is focused in better understanding the role of mucin in modulating lung cancer progression using a K-Ras mutant mouse model of lung adenocarcinoma. Following graduation, she intends to pursue medical training with the goal of becoming a physician scientist in the future.

Embracing Contradictions While Framing and Defining Your Career: Perspective from a Student and Young Professional

Maria T. Grimaldo, MSc Student at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center UT Health Houston Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences

From a young age, we are asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up," with the natural response being one simple thing – a doctor, engineer, firefighter, dancer, or musician. Later, when making our plans post-high school, we continue to seek simplicity in our response but are uneasy about choosing one role for the rest of our lives. However, it is not until we realize and embrace that one's position is to fulfill multiple multifaceted roles that are constantly transforming and evolving that we find true freedom in our decision. In this talk, I will outline various relatable crossroads I have experienced in the student and young professional stages of my life and discuss their simple and complex nature. The crossroads to be discussed include deciding between being a professional dancer or pursuing a more traditional career as well as choosing a terminal degree or embracing a career that requires graduate and post-graduate education. The goal of this presentation is to 1) highlight the contradictions when defining our careers, 2) stimulate discussion about the multiple multifaceted roles that will be constantly present as we go about life, and 3) provide a few tips and tricks to help you embrace the contradictions in your own crossroads as you frame and define your next steps.

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Jennifer Bieszke	Courtney Pugh
Stacey Burlison	Debra Ramsey
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Elizabeth Haden	Bevan Warren
Kristina Jantz	Siromi Wijesinghe
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Lastly, thank you, Board of Trustees, for being valuable advocates for College of the Mainland. Events such as these would not be possible without your support.

Sincerely,

Professors Dalel Serda and Gwendolynn Barbee-Yow
GCIC Academic Symposium Co-Chairs