



**1-1:10pm**

***Opening Remarks***

Saul Newman, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

Justin Williams, Associate Director, Undergraduate Recruitment & Retention

**1:10-2:40pm**

***Concurrent Sessions***

***Break Out Room 1***

***Social Issues and Policy Implications***

Kathryn Esterly

Broadband Policy in the United States

*Faculty Advisor: Professor James Quirk*

Broadband internet connection is critical to ensuring that individuals have access to information and resources online. While efforts have been taken to reduce the “digital divide” within the United States, there remains a disparity in coverage between rural and nonrural areas. While all agree that broadband plays a significant role in 21st century America, policymakers disagree on to what extent government should play a role in guaranteeing it. Some assert that these disparities in access cause adverse economic and social consequences for the left behind, and that this compels active government involvement in advancing broadband implementation. Others question its necessity and contend that guaranteeing equitable internet to all is cost-prohibitive and does not necessarily generate socially desirable outcomes. In this paper, I will address this debate and analyze the current situation of broadband access and policy in the United States. I will discuss the challenges and benefits of wide-spread broadband implementation and adoption, as well as how COVID-19 has shaped the conversation. In considering the importance of broadband has for our present and future, I will propose a model for broadband deployment. Finally, I will call into question key assumptions about the nature of broadband as a social good.

Max Robbins

American Child Marriage: A Comprehensive Lobbying Framework

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Jessica Waters*

American child marriage is an issue which lawmakers and the electorate remain widely unaware of despite its profound impact on thousands of young girls every year. This paper seeks to create a comprehensive lobbying framework which, if applied, would effectively lobby legislators and drive voter support for the necessary reforms to do away with this problematic practice. My brief literature review explores existing scholarship and research on lobbying and advocacy techniques and practices. Employing a qualitative approach, my paper incorporates interviews with advocacy experts and scholarship on lobbying techniques to produce a comprehensive framework which may be used to advocate for reforms to American child marriage. Strategy components, closely following the structure suggested by Griffin and Thurber, include a political environment assessment of the policy, process, players, and politics surrounding the issue, action plan development, exploration of a communications and messaging tactical playbook, and an analysis of direct lobbying and coalition building approaches. Lastly, the paper’s conclusion considers how the legislative priority of American child marriage may be raised.

Adelaide Spitz

Cyber-Enabled Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Divya Ramjee*

This paper dives into the origins of the commercial sexual exploitation of children as it relates to the internet, the World Wide Web (WWW) and the Dark Web. The rise to prominence of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s paved the way for new forms of criminal enterprise, especially those involving children. In addition, cryptocurrency has made it much easier for criminals to purchase

child-exploitative materials without leaving a transactional trail. As a result of these developments, the United States and most other countries have become much more aware of the issue and have been involved in efforts to combat sexual child exploitation. In the U.S., laws such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) have made the jobs of prosecutors much easier when dealing with trafficking against women and children. Still yet, among other problems, U.S. federal law regarding child exploitation and trafficking, overall, has been more focused on prosecution than on prevention and services for child victims of exploitation. On the international scale, the United Nations has declared human trafficking affects every continent and type of economy and that one hundred-sixty-one countries are either the source, transition, or destination for human trafficking. The United Nations 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets minimum standards of protection for children, which is nearly universally ratified. The CRC remains the first, most comprehensive international treaty regarding the rights and protections of children; it contains provisions that establish civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights of children. There remain many issues surrounding the United Nation's efforts to address sexual child exploitation and trafficking; the non-uniformity among countries with regards to defining certain words remains a highly consequential issue, in addition to contradictory objectives of major treaties and a nearly nonexistent means of evaluating countries' efforts to advance the goals of the CRC.

Alagu Vishwanathan      Health insurance Coverage by Geography - Visualizing and Describing the Zip codes with Low Health  
James Carney              Insurance Coverage

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Taryn Morrissey*

This study explored the patterns or differences of health insurance coverage among locality, community race, ethnicity, and immigrant composition and examined how healthcare coverage changes over time. The research was primarily based on relevant census data from ZIP codes in and around the District of Columbia. This study compared ZIP Codes in the DC metropolitan area where health insurance coverage rates were especially low and identified the other commonalities which these ZIP Codes share. The study also sourced data and graphics from the DC Fiscal Policy Institute.

**\*Dana Colarocco              Internal & External Factors Impacting LGB Identity Disclosure to Healthcare Providers**

***Faculty Advisors: Professor Kimberly Cowell-Meyers and Professor Ethan Mereish***

Marginalized individuals, for a multitude of reasons, experience detriments to their health, and health outcomes. For people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, or another identity within the LGBTQ+ community, these hindrances can take many forms. Ability to disclose one's LGBTQ+ identity is a necessary precursor to competent, relevant, honest healthcare experiences. However, willingness to be 'out' with providers has not been studied. This research seeks to understand what internal and external factors affect the willingness of LGB individuals to disclose their sexual identity to healthcare providers using the Generations Study (Meyer 2020) of 1,518 LGB individuals. I perform a hierarchical regression analysis to explore the impact that internalized homophobia, identity centrality, perception of threat within healthcare, and experiences of everyday discrimination have on identity disclosure to healthcare providers. The results indicate that being lesbian or gay rather than another sexual minority, being older, appearing outwardly LGB, having fewer experiences of internalized homophobia, and fewer experiences of healthcare stereotype threat all contribute to higher rates of identity disclosure to healthcare providers. Thus, while internal factors impact an individual's outness to healthcare providers, demographic information also influences one's choice of whether or not to disclose their sexual identity to their provider. These findings are relevant to the larger field of LGBTQ+ health outcomes, because trust and safety are crucial within healthcare spaces, especially for individuals with no other allies or confidants.

Jaclin Ngo                      Partial Justice: Acknowledging Bias and Building Diversity in the Judiciary

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Douglas Klusmeyer*

Our society is a make-up of different narratives and perspectives that dictate how each person views the world around them. Therefore, human beings are naturally impartial beings; Any person who says that they are totally objective is inherently partial to that stance and leaves themselves vulnerable to unchecked biases and personal motivations. This is why it is important to further the dialogue surrounding bias and partiality within the adjudication method. This paper will be addressing two major schools of thought brought out by drastically different justices by exploring the positive and negative aspects of both Posner's Pragmatic

Adjudication and Scalia's Originalism in order add to the conversation on the impartiality of judicial decision making; This paper will explore these two schools of thought and provide a different solution to the inescapable problem of bias in our legal system. Although there are pros and cons of both theories of judicial decision making addressed in this paper, it is clear that judges, being partial human beings, can "cherry-pick" when they use each method of interpretation. Although this paper argues that a pragmatic adjudication method is superior to the originalist method to promote the progression of society as a whole, there is no way to ensure that all judges will use a pragmatic model to make their decisions and there is no way to ensure that all judges will not have an underlying bias or motive being pushed in their decision. Therefore, by recognizing that achieving complete impartiality is not humanly feasible or even desirable, the only true method to eliminating bias in judicial decision making is to diversify the judicial court through an institutionalized method. If we start from the assumption that every judge will inevitably use their personal perspective to adjudicate, having a diversified judicial court in which the differing ideas interact with one another is vital to lessening the harm and violence caused by our legal system.

## **Break Out Room 2      Economics and Politics Mixed Together**

Thomas Scott                      Towards a Political Economy in Tension through Karl Marx

*Faculty Advisors: Professor Samuel Tyler and Professor Farhang Erfani*

In his political economic theory, Karl Marx presents competing visions on the importance of both the individual as the primary producer of economics, and the social as the site of economic and political activity itself. Although these claims may seem contradictory, they can be reconciled by understanding Marx's theory through an ontology of tension: it is neither exclusively within the individual or the social that political economy lies, but in the tension between these two forces. Together, both individuals and their social conditions are one in the same whole that produces political economy. This theory is extended through Marx's positive communist project that he argues to be the future that political economy should be directed for. His criticism of present political economic conditions lies thus in its artificial division between the individual and collective, and his proposal for communism suggests that these forces might once again be reunited to achieve the most just and natural political economic system. This latter aspect of Marx's argument has some theoretical soundness, though also reveals important contradictions in his own theory that detract from his projects as whole.

Reid Fauble                      American Capitalism: How the Current Economic Model is Disadvantageous to Women

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Vicky Wilkins*

The United States has relied on capitalism since its formation. Traditionally thought as a strictly economic model, capitalism in the United States has remained constant through global market changes, tremendous political upheaval, and immense social unrest. The resilience of capitalism is due to its molding into a political system. No longer can capitalism in the United States be viewed through an economic lens alone. Instead, capitalism must be examined critically as a political system; this is a system in which the economic and political elite cooperate for their mutual benefit. As such, the consequences of capitalism as a political system are unequally distributed. Women in America face distinct social, economic, and political disadvantages because of this system. My aim in this research is to explore the ways in which capitalism disadvantages women specifically. First, I will explore feminist economics to highlight how the market value of men and women is unbalanced under capitalism resulting in vast political implications. Next, I will examine consumerism under capitalism which has hyper-sexualized women, specifically women of color. Finally, I will highlight imperialism, the highest and purest form of capitalism, that has resulted in refugee and immigrant women in America facing particular kinds of oppression. In short, I will argue that many, if not all, of the issues women face in American society are the result of the binding of capitalism to our political and economic systems.

Mohammad Kazi                      The unforeseen attack COVID-19 on the US financial system

*Faculty Advisor: Professor James Quirk*

On April 9th, 2020, President Trump stated, "we have waged a fierce battle against the invisible enemy". Sadly, no one is really talking about the unforeseen attack by this invisible enemy. COVID-19 has affected the population socially, economically, and

mentally. But what will the real economic cost be during the next decade in the United States? How can you even begin to calculate that? The aim of this paper is not to discuss the current impact of COVID-19, but to delve into the unexplored secrets of the financial strain on the United States caused by this pandemic.

Normally, when the US enters a recession or depression, the saving race is always either fiscal policy or monetary policy. During the Great Depression, the dotcom bubble and the financial recession of 2008, the Federal Reserve jumped into lower interest rates and used every available tool to put the economy back on track. In 2020, both fiscal and monetary policies were implemented to avert a disaster. The government even sent people checks with zero interest rates and tax cuts. Based on the analysis that I have conducted; my worst fear is that the combined power of these two guardian angels is not enough to offset the incoming catastrophe. How can a nineteen-year-old view and analyze numbers that even the greatest minds in the White House cannot do? Being preoccupied with other matters of short-term interest, very few minds are investigating the long-term effect of COVID, such as David M. Cutler and Lawrence Summers. Briefly, David Cutler is the applied economics professor at Harvard University. He was given a five-year term which was recognized with excellence in teaching. He is a board member of Harvard Kennedy School of Government and the Harvard School of Public Health. On the other hand, Lawrence Summers is a pioneer in his field in every single way, from being the Director of the National Economic Council, to becoming the President of Harvard University, to being the US Secretary of Treasury. Cutler and Summers (2020, p.1) argue that the effect of COVID is going to cost the government sixteen trillion USD, which is a value of almost seven-million-dollars for every statistical life. But even that is not my biggest concern.

**\*Asher Weinstein**

**Corporate Campaign Finance Bans and Their Impact On Executive Proxy Contributions**

***Faculty Advisors: Professor Kimberly Cowell-Meyers and Professor Karen Baehler***

Limiting corporate influence in politics has been the crux of campaign finance law since the Roosevelt-era Tillman Act banned direct corporate contributions. As a result of these limits, studies suggest that corporate executives view themselves as strategic proxies for their companies in the campaign finance system (Fremeth, Richter, and Schaufele 2015). Studies of executive contributions in federal elections found higher levels of executive spending on campaigns that voluntarily declined PAC money (Richter and Werner 2017), and this study seeks to find whether this relationship persists at the state-level where contributions are limited by statute. I employ a newly constructed dataset using contribution data from 14,241 corporate executives in the 25 states that require occupation disclosures and regress state corporate contribution restrictions on executive spending in state-level races. The results suggest that corporate executives spend considerably more on state-level races when corporations are prohibited. This implies that corporate contribution bans succeed in limiting corporations' ability to influence elections and shape public policy but fail to curb that influence altogether.

Michaila Peters

Unpacking the American Psyche: Innovating two tools for better matching political psychological identities with effective communication strategies

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Kimberly Cowell-Meyers*

This study, in partnership with one of the U.S.'s leading civil discourse depolarization initiatives, Braver Angels, aims to develop two analytical tools that can help the organization diversify its audience and better evaluate the outcomes of their programming. The first is a typological system for political psychological identities they can use to understand and target new audiences. This project creates this schema using a hierarchical mixed methodological approach. First, I map dialogues conducted through Braver Angels programming using communication analytics in order to identify the broad psychologically influential regions of a conversation. I then use political theory to construct causal narratives of each region. Finally, I align the behavior-altering variables found in each region with operational definitions in psychology and sociology studies in order to synthesize one metric for each conversational primary variable, the complete set of which will serve as the indicators for that identity type.

The second tool uses a multivariate matrix to assess and reconcile Braver Angels' multidimensional programming goals. I use James Foster's multidimensional poverty matrix as a methodological model to construct this tool. These data metrics are valuable measures that can be provided in grant applications to substantiate proposed investment strategies. This study does not aim to evaluate any existing data, or the programming effectiveness of Braver Angels, but informs how they can improve their data collection process, and better interpret this data both for their own internal strategizing and to demonstrate the validity of their strategies to donors.

Truman Jury

Democracy and Authoritarianism in Serbia

*Faculty Advisor: Professor Saul Newman*

When studying democracy and world politics, it is important to understand the factors that bring about democratization in nations across the globe. An example of these factors in action in recent memory was in Serbia with the overthrow of Slobodan Milošević. A number of factors contribute to the spread of democracy in post-authoritarian nations like Serbia, and the limiting of those same factors can contribute to a backslide into authoritarianism. In studying various literature on the subject, such factors that contributed to the period of democratization in Serbia, and the limiting of those factors that have led to a potential backslide include the emergence of a political opposition, the strengthening of a free press and civil society, and foreign influence. In reviewing said literature, this paper concludes that the aforementioned factors were key in contributing to the democratization process in Serbia, and a decline of such factors has led to the country experiencing a potential backslide.

2:40pm

***Closing***

Saul Newman, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education

***\*Indicates winner "Best Of" for that session.***

**Thank you to our 2021 Faculty Judges:**

- Professor Sonja Walti
- Professor Thomas Kahn
- Professor Bill Davies
- Professor Jeremy Janow