

Sample Abstracts

Sample Physical and Life Sciences Abstract

Do Voles Select Dense Vegetation for Movement Pathways at the Microhabitat Level?

Biological Sciences

The relationship between habitat use by voles (Rodentia: *Microtus*) and the density of vegetative cover was studied to determine if voles select forage areas at the microhabitat level. Using live traps, I trapped, powdered, and released voles at 10 sites. At each trap site I analyzed the type and height of the vegetation in the immediate area. Using a black light, I followed the trails left by powdered voles through the vegetation. I mapped the trails using a compass to ascertain the tortuosity, or amount the trail twisted and turned, and visually checked the trails to determine obstruction of the movement path by vegetation. I also checked vegetative obstruction on 4 random paths near the actual trail, to compare the cover on the trail with other nearby alternative pathways. There was not a statistically significant difference between the amount of cover on a vole trail and the cover off to the sides of the trail when completely covered; there was a significant difference between on and off the trail when the path was completely open. These results indicate that voles are selectively avoiding bare areas, while not choosing among dense patches at a fine microhabitat scale.

Sample Social Science Abstract

Traditional Healers and the HIV Crisis in Africa: Toward an Integrated Approach

Anthropology

The HIV virus is currently destroying all facets of African life. It therefore is imperative that a new holistic form of health education and accessible treatment be implemented in African public health policy which improves dissemination of prevention and treatment programs, while maintaining the cultural infrastructure. Drawing on government and NGO reports, as well as other documentary sources, this paper examines the nature of current efforts and the state of health care practices in Africa. I review access to modern health care and factors which inhibit local utilization of these resources, as well as traditional African beliefs about medicine, disease, and healthcare. This review indicates that a collaboration of western and traditional medical care and philosophy can help slow the spread of HIV in Africa. This paper encourages the acceptance and financial support of traditional health practitioners in this effort owing to their accessibility and affordability and their cultural compatibility with the community.

Sample Humanities Abstract

Memoirs of Genocide: From Poland to Sudan

For this project, related to my research assistance for Dr. Kenneth Waltzer in his work on "The Rescue of Children and Youth in Buchenwald," I will look at several different memoirs rooted in experiences of mass violence undergone by children and youth. I want to draw parallels between memoirs of youthful survivors who lived through the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, and the "Lost Boys," who survived recent violent conflict in Sudan. My sample of memoirs includes works in French by Polish Jewish boys who survived the Holocaust in ghettos and work camps, finally winding up in Buchenwald. The Sudanese memoirs trace the paths of boys as they fled from destroyed homes to refugee camps. They are written in English, often involving the collaboration of American authors. Besides engaging each story individually, the exploration of these works urges broader questions about memory of horrific violence. How is memory presented and organized in memoir? What is emphasized and why? What are the motivations for speaking as witnesses of horror and survivors of violence? What are the implications of personal memoir for the larger task of preventing violence and genocide? These stories are diverse—they take place in worlds and times apart, they involve different actors and contexts. Yet they are also connected, involving experiences by youth of mass violence, survival, and finally efforts to represent memory years later as warning, as remembrance, and as an effort to help others understand.

Sample Visual and Performing Arts Abstract

The Integration of Historic Periods in Costume Design

Theatre

As productions turn away from resurrecting museum pieces, integrating costumes from two different historical periods has become more popular. This research project focuses on what makes costume integration successful. A successful integration must be visually compelling, but still give characters depth and tell the story of the play. By examining several Shakespearean theatre productions, I have pinpointed the key aspects of each costume integration that successfully assist the production. While my own experiences have merged Elizabethan with the 1950s, other designers have merged Elizabethan with contemporary and even a rock concert theme. By analyzing a variety of productions, connecting threads helped establish "rules" for designers.

Through this research, I have established common guidelines for integrating two periods of costume history while still maintaining a strong design that helps tell a story. One method establishes the silhouette of one period while combining the details, such as fabric and accessories, of another period, creating an equal representation of the two. A second option creates a world blended equally of the two periods, in which the design becomes timeless and unique to the world of the play. A third option assigns opposing groups to two different periods, establishing visual conflict. Many more may exist, but the overall key to costume integration is to define how each

period is represented. When no rules exist, there is no cohesion of ideas and the audience loses sight of character, story, and concept. Costumes help tell a story, and without guidance, that story is lost.

Sample Journalism Abstract

International Headlines 3.0: Exploring Youth-Centered Innovation in Global News Delivery

Traditional news media must innovate to maintain their ability to inform contemporary audiences. This research project analyzes innovative news outlets that have the potential to draw young audiences to follow global current events. On February 8, 2011, a Pew Research Center Poll found that 52 percent of Americans reported having heard little or nothing about the anti-government protests in Egypt. Egyptians had been protesting for nearly two weeks when this poll was conducted. The lack of knowledge about the protests was not a result of scarce media attention. In the United States, most mainstream TV news sources (CNN, FOX, MSNBC, ABC) ran headline stories on the protests by January 26, one day after the protests began. Sparked by an assignment in International Reporting J450 class, we selected 20 innovative news outlets to investigate whether they are likely to overcome the apparent disinterest of Americans, particularly the youth, in foreign news. Besides testing those news outlets for one week, we explored the coverage and financing of these outlets, and we are communicating with their editors and writers to best understand how and why they publish as they do. We will evaluate them, following a rubric, and categorize them based on their usefulness and effectiveness.