

THESIS DEFENSE DAY



THESIS DEFENSE DAY

Wednesday, November 19th, 2025

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2025

AUDB 218

2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

[Join Here!](#)

Hope Kelly

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tammy Kinley

Modern Media and Corsets

Synopsis

This study explores how corsets are represented in media, what misconceptions surround them, and how these misconceptions are maintained. For data collection, three movies and three television shows were examined to determine how corsets were discussed and depicted. The study compares these representations to fashion historians' research on corsets and highlights the differences. Findings indicate that corsets were intended to be supportive and even empowering garments, but have been morphed into an oppressive and restrictive undergarment.

Wednesday,
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2025

AUDB 218

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

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Molly Kelly

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Amie Lund

Characterizing the effects of diesel exhaust particulate matter and probiotic treatment on the development of polycystic ovary syndrome in female C57BL/6 mouse model

Synopsis

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is one of the most common reproductive and endocrine disorders that affects women of reproductive age. PCOS is characterized by hyperandrogenism, inflammation, and ovarian dysfunction, but its environmental contributors remain poorly understood. This study investigates whether exposure to diesel exhaust particulate matter (DEP) contributes to the development of PCOS. Using a mouse model, several assays examined the effects of DEP on ovarian function and Notch signaling, as well as probiotics' potential therapeutic role. These results may reveal how air pollution contributes to PCOS and point toward probiotics as a possible therapeutic strategy for women's reproductive health.



THESIS DEFENSE DAY

Friday, November 21st, 2025

Friday, November 21st, 2025 Sage 354 8:30 AM – 10:00 AM Join Here!	Keelie Jones Faculty Mentor: Dr. Tanya Zuk Over to Under: An Exploration of Media Overconsumption and the Development of Eating Disorders Synopsis My thesis, "Over to Under: An Exploration of Media Overconsumption and the Development of Eating Disorders," analyzes the relationship between media overconsumption and the formation of eating disorders during COVID lockdown in 2020. This examines how prolonged exposure to thin ideals, algorithm-driven content, and poor representation in traditional media can contribute to the alteration of self-image and support unhealthy eating habits. Through a versatile examination that includes personal, sociocultural, and media research, the study determines how online environments can create vulnerability and risk. Ultimately, the purpose of this research is to advance knowledge regarding the influence of the media on body image and to inform prevention and awareness.
Friday, November 21st, 2025 Sage 356 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM Join Here!	Ryann Ragsdale Faculty Mentor: Dr. Katherine Ritter Contemporary Representations of Cannibalism in Film and Literature Synopsis "Contemporary Representations of Cannibalism in Film and Literature" focuses on the representations of cannibalism in contemporary media, specifically novels and feature length films, released in the past decade. The sites of analysis include A Certain Hunger by Chelsea G. Summers, Tender Is the Flesh by Agustina Bazterrica, Bones and All by Camille DeAngelis, and Bones and All directed by Luca Guadagnino. The focus of the project is to uncover what these sources argue about food politics, meat-eating, cannibalism, and the industrialized meat industry. In addition, the project will address the racialized implications of cannibalism as a literary device and how it operates within each text.

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Friday, November 21st, 2025

Kendall Lipscomb

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Nicole Smith

Gender in Chaucerian Romance

Friday, November
21st, 2025

Sage 356

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

[Join Here!](#)

Synopsis

My thesis will focus on the following Chaucerian romances found within The Canterbury Tales: The Knight's Tale, The Wife of Bath's Tale, and The Franklin's Tale. Throughout these tales, Chaucer explores the limits placed on female autonomy within patriarchal systems. These systems include religious doctrine, genre conventions, and secular institutions of government. In these three romances, Chaucer explores the conflicts between femininity and masculinity, ultimately demonstrating the inverse relationship between the two. In each tale, feminine power is presented as a threat to masculine authority and is subsequently subordinated by it. This analysis will cover both Christian and chivalric contexts, with the aim of exploring the following research questions: How does Chaucer reinforce and/or challenge the gender hierarchy found within chivalric romances?

Katherine Hernandez

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Adam Manfredi

Moments of Change: The Narrative Design of Kishōtenketsu in
Contemporary Video Games

Friday, November
21st, 2025

Sage 355

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

[Join Here!](#)

Synopsis

This thesis focuses on how the East Asian storytelling structure of kishōtenketsu (起承転結) impacts of the narrative and game space in video games. Through analysis of Sonic Adventure and Super Mario Odyssey, the study explores how kishōtenketsu shapes player engagement by emphasizing discovery, contrast, and resolution without relying on traditional climax or escalation. Sonic Adventure demonstrates this structure through its multi-perspective character arcs and narrative convergence, while Odyssey applies it to spatial design and exploration. Together, these examples reveal how kishōtenketsu redefines narrative impact in games, highlighting progression and surprise as central experiences.



THESIS DEFENSE DAY

Thursday, December 4th, 2025

Alex Kent

Faculty Mentor: Dr. James Bednarz

Too Green, Too Sparse, Just Right: The Goldilocks Zone of Vegetation for Harris's Hawk Supporting Nesting Activity

Synopsis

The purpose of this study was to examine how vegetation vigor, measured using the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), influences nesting productivity in Harris's Hawks (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) across the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. NDVI is a remote-sensing measure of plant greenness that reflects ecosystem productivity and water availability. NDVI values were derived from satellite imagery and paired with field surveys spanning five breeding seasons (2018, 2019, 2020, 2023, and 2024; $n = 218$ surveyed territories). Nest presence or absence likelihood was analyzed using random forest and generalized linear modeling employing NDVI summary statistics (minimum, maximum, range, mean, and median) across priority landcover types. Overall NDVI range emerged as a significant positive predictor of nest detection, while shrubland maximum, wetland range, and cropland mean showed significant negative effects. Results suggest Harris's Hawks preferentially nest during seasons with moderate NDVI variability, indicating that vegetation heterogeneity—rather than peak greenness—drives nesting productivity for South Texas Harris's Hawks.

Thursday, December
4th, 2025

AUDB 218

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM

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THESIS DEFENSE DAY

Friday, December 5th, 2025

Friday, December 5th, 2025 Sage 356 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM Join Here!	Tanzania Harris Faculty Mentor: Dr. Calvin Sims Designated Paths: The Relationship Between Feeder School Patterns and Adolescent Psychosocial Development Synopsis This study explores the relationship between public feeder school pattern attendance and one's own personal development during school transition. Existing literature has outlined the importance of viewing school transition as a dynamic process rather than a uniform event experienced by students. However, little-known research has examined the role of intradistrict transfer— when a student does not follow their designated pattern of school campus transition but remains in-district. Using a combination of statistical and qualitative analyses, the responses will be compared for variations between and within transfer groups. Research is currently ongoing.
Friday, December 5th, 2025 Sage 356 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM Join Here!	Christopher Holmes Faculty Mentor: Dr. Robert Upchurch John Bunyan: A Study On Catechetical Literature Synopsis This study seeks to explore parallels between John Bunyan's catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism. The purpose of this study is to understand how the Heidelberg Catechism influenced Bunyan's catechism to further understand how Christian education shaped Early Modern English literature. The study analyzes the Heidelberg Catechism and Bunyan's catechism, Instruction for the Ignorant. The study's findings revealed that although the Heidelberg Catechism did not directly affect Bunyan's own catechism, it molded the culture around him and became a part of the atmosphere he breathed and, as a result, shaped his own thinking and, consequently, his catechism.