



URCAD
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH AND
CREATIVE ACHIEVEMENT DAY

Oral Presentations – Morning Session 2

Location: NC 231

Time: 9:20 AM – 12:00 PM

Looking at the Great Depression through a Multicultural Lens

Rafael Rodrigues
History-Secondary Education
Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

This is my abstract. This presentation re-examines the Great Depression through a multicultural lens, focusing specifically on the unique socio-economic impact on African Americans. By analyzing how systemic inequality policies shaped access to New Deal relief, we move beyond the monolithic narrative of the 1930s. This session explores the distinct survival strategies and racial hurdles that defined the era for African Americans.



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Mss. Morales Classroom Website

Daniela Morales

Education

Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

This project is a classroom website for Ms. Morales's class, designed to enhance student engagement, communication, and learning by integrating innovative technological tools. The purpose of the website is to create a dynamic digital space where students can access resources, participate in interactive activities, and extend their learning beyond the classroom. In today's educational environment, technology plays a vital role in supporting different learning styles, increasing motivation, and building 21st-century skills. This website reflects those goals by combining creativity, accessibility, and meaningful instructional design. The homepage of Ms. Morales's classroom website is welcoming and visually engaging. It includes a short introduction video where Ms. Morales greets students and families and introduces herself. One of the most exciting features of the website is its integration of interactive technological tools. For example, students can practice vocabulary using digital websites and games created through platforms like Smartboard and iMovie. There are also embedded Kahoot quizzes that allow students to review content in a competitive and fun way. The website includes two engaging Spanish lessons focused on greetings.



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Multicultural Unit Plan

Margaret Taylor

Education

Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

This will be on a presentation on a multicultural lesson plan I created in EDTE-316, the unit revolves around teaching westward expansion, but through a multicultural lens focusing on the different cultural groups that played a pivotal role in Americans push west.



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The 4QM Model: Advantages and Disadvantages

Kendall Marshall
Health Science Biology
Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

As an education major, a key part of my studies is field experience. Currently, I am placed at West Bristol School with Mr. Sirianni and his eighth grade social studies classes for my field experience. His class utilizes a newer teaching model entitled 4QM. This model takes typical textbook texts and transforms it into separate, more digestible paragraphs for students. After each paragraph is an area for students to take guided notes based on the paragraph they just read. Usually these spaces are intended for students to summarize the text above. At the end of every reading is some kind of activity to assess students' comprehension of the entire passage. These activities usually involve enhancing students' literacy skills as well. For example, students have to finish sentences based on the text using different conjunctions. It is especially helpful for middle school students making that transition into high school. However, there are some disadvantages of this model that I would like to highlight during my presentation. Condensing the text into shorter, digestible paragraphs leaves out a lot of important content for students. The 4QM model should not be relied on as the sole source of information and content for students; it should be used as an additive to enhance students' content and reinforce important literacy and note taking skills. At my presentation I plan on bringing real 4QM packets that my host teacher uses with his students as examples for others to enjoy.



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Steps Toward Connection

Jonathan McCray

History

Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

For my URCAD presentation, I will explore how individuals connect to their community through guided “community walks” in Glastonbury, CT. I will work with two groups, residents and workers, to examine how local history influences their sense of connection and appreciation for the town. Participants will visit key sites such as Glastonbury Town Hall, Riverfront Park, Glastonbury High School, and longstanding local businesses. To measure the impact made, I will use before and after walk questions assessing participants’ knowledge, connection, and appreciation of the community. As a history major with personal ties to Glastonbury, this project aims to highlight how place based learning can deepen understanding and empathy. Ultimately, I hope to encourage future educators to engage more intentionally with the communities they serve.



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Hot Cities, Cold Reality: Climate Inequality in Urban America

Sherrod Cuttino and Aya Modni

History

Advisor: Dr. Jacob Werblow

Climate change is often seen as a global issue, but its effects are not the same for everyone. This project explores how climate change impacts low-income communities in urban areas more severely and explains the historical reasons behind this inequality. Cities face higher risks from extreme heat, flooding, and air pollution due to dense buildings and limited green space. These conditions are worsened by the urban heat island effect, which makes cities hotter than surrounding areas. Low-income communities are more vulnerable because they often have less access to resources such as air conditioning, healthcare, and transportation. They are also more likely to live in areas with poor housing and higher exposure to environmental risks. These patterns are tied to past decisions, such as redlining and unequal development, that placed marginalized groups in more dangerous environments. This project also shows how climate change can be taught in social studies classrooms using real world examples and historical context. By connecting past decisions to present issues, students can better understand how inequality shapes environmental outcomes. Overall, this project argues that climate change is both an environmental and social issue. Understanding who is most affected and why is important, especially in urban areas where vulnerable communities face the greatest risks.



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The Moderating Effect of Sense of Community in The Relationship between Perceived Discrimination and Psychological Well-Being Among Muslim-Americans

Satil Moni

Psychology - Community Track

Advisor: Dr. James Conway

This study examines the moderating effects of sense of community on the relationship between perceived ethnic discrimination and psychological well-being among Muslims living in the United States. As incidence rates of discriminatory and hate-related incidents against Muslims in the U.S. increase, it is likely that their psychological wellbeing decreases. Previous research established a significant, negative relationship between discrimination and higher stress levels that contribute to poorer mental health. While there are global studies demonstrating the protective benefits of social relationships and interactions (that create a sense of belonging and social support) on mental wellbeing on Muslim populations, there has yet to be significant research looking at a greater scale measure such as sense of community and its relation to discrimination. This study posits that sense of community also has potential, protective benefits, where it may act as a moderator by weakening the relationship between perceived ethnic discrimination on psychological wellbeing specifically among Muslim-Americans. About 120 participants from a mix of sources (including the Prolific crowdsourcing platform, social media and the Muslim Student Association at Central Connecticut State University) will complete an online self-report survey for insight on these factors.



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The Value of Educational Field Experience

Billy Smith

Secondary History Education

Advisor: Jacob Werblow

This project is about my first field experience as an education major. In just one year I've gone from being undecided, to being in a classroom, preparing to teach. Over this semester I have learned a lot about how to be a teacher. I have learned teaching strategies that I plan on using in the classroom. I have learned how to communicate better with kids. I have learned the challenges of the classroom that I need to be prepared for.