

College of Arts and Letters — 2016 Senior Thesis Projects



Abigail Bartels

- Major in Political Science
- Supplementary Major in Gender Studies
- Minor in Theology
- Adviser: Joshua Kaplan

“My Strategy Brings All the Boys to the Yard: An Analysis of the Gender Gap and its Impact on the Swing Vote in United States Presidential Elections”

In American presidential elections, statistics show that women vote differently than men. This empirical observation has led to a common understanding called the gender gap. In my thesis, I address the widespread misunderstanding of this concept in relation to vote choice. I selected this topic because I am interested in what aspects of identity affect levels of political participation in the United States.

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Connor Hayes

- Major in Political Science
- Supplementary Majors in Gender Studies and Peace Studies
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Hesburgh-Yusko Scholar
- Kellogg International Scholar
- Adviser: Rev. Sean McGraw, C.S.C.

“Outing the Party: Irish Political Culture and the Shaping of Activist Behavior in the 2015 Same-Sex Marriage Referendum”

Conventional wisdom in Ireland says that the 2015 same-sex marriage referendum represented a massive departure from normal Irish political culture. I argue, however, that activist behavior during the campaign indicates more stability in the political system than popular commentary would suggest. Given the decline of the Irish Catholic Church and the “Celtic Tiger” economic boom and crash in recent decades, I became deeply fascinated by the ways these massive cultural shifts have impacted Irish politics, especially the LGBTQ movement in Ireland. My semester in Dublin coincided perfectly with the same-sex marriage referendum campaign, giving me a clear way to develop my interest into a thesis project.

Shannon Sheehan

- Majors in Sociology and Gender Studies
Adviser: Mary Ellen Konieczny

“Inverse Inequality: How Both Genders Navigate Identity Amidst the Sexual Double Standard of Hook-up Culture in College”

Research on the sexual double standard traditionally views men as benefactors. However, since traditional notions of heterosexual masculinity value sexual conquests, I hypothesize that gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between sexual activity and identity. Virginity can serve to protect women from stigmatization; however, men are scrutinized for not participating in hook-up culture, meaning that virgin men in fact experience stigmatization and shame similar to that of casually sexually active women in college. I was fascinated by the way sexuality shapes my friends' views of themselves, and wondered how this differed for my male friends.