

Abstracts

McNair Summer 2009



Left to right front row: Gaelle Gourgues (Counselor), Nasreen Hosein, Soumia Aitelhaj, Ashley Woods, Amber Williams, Kristin Reed, Rossanna Contreras-Godfrey (Assistant Director); **left to right back row:** Stefanny Andujar, Karina Xart, Khalif Jackson, Keerror Colquitt, Nila Aburto

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Nila Aburto

Mentor: Kristen Lindquist, Psychology Department
Title: Are Women More Emotional? Do Men Really Experience More Anger?

Stereotypes about sex differences in the expression of emotion are common in Western cultures and the source of these gender differences have been the topic of much investigation in the psychological literature. One possibility for these gender differences is that men and women experience the same physiological state differently which leads to the appearance of differences in self reported experience

This paper aims to explore the hypothesis that men experience their physiological state as evidence that the world *is* a certain way, while women experience their physiological state as evidence that they are emotional. This study will look at the specific effects and interactions of gender, anger, and self v. world focus. The methods used to test this hypothesis include an essay task meant to induce an emotional response (anger, shame, or neutral), a questionnaire meant to manipulate self v. world focus, and three measures of aggression.

Ashley Woods

Mentor: Roberto Avant-Mier, Professor in Communication
Title: Female Rappers in the New Generation: 2005-2009

This paper explores the lyrical content of female rappers over the years of 2005-2009. It takes into account the decline of

female rappers in this time period and examines how the female rappers still in existence portray women through their lyrics. Emphasizing popular trends during this four year span, this paper surveys distinct female artists who have made a notable impact on music which is determinable by their success on pop culture rankings of different mediums—music charts, music video popularity lists, and music editorial critiques.

Stefanny Andujar

Mentor: Eve Spangler, Professor in Sociology
Title: Dominican Immigrant Women in Washington Heights

Dominican women are too often considered invisible within American society. They are deemed as one whole faceless group that makes up most of the working poor population. In the world of academia, the majority of these women are only discussed when pertaining to issues of poverty, educational disparity and responsibilities within the home. However, countless Dominican women have succeeded both academically and economically; particularly in the neighborhood of Washington Heights where the population is largely of Dominican descent. This paper will seek to show the success of these women who have built strong ties within their communities and have amassed tremendous influence within non-profit and civic organizations.

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Keerror Colquitt

Mentor: Ricco Siasoco, Professor in English

Title: Heteronormative Language in the Black Church and its Impact on Black Perceptions of Homosexuality

Sexual prejudice, more commonly referred to as homophobia has been an issue throughout various communities. With the onset of the gay rights movement, particularly same-sex marriage in the United States, homophobia in the form of discrimination has increased. In the fall of 2008, Black communities were scrutinized because they voted solidly ‘Yes’ on Proposition 8. News sources and gays blamed the Black Church for the anti-gay sentiment prevalent throughout black communities. This research uses content analysis to examine the hetero-normative language used by the Black Church and the effect of that language on Black perceptions of homosexuality and acceptance of homosexuals.

Nasreen Hosein

Mentor: Marina McCoy, Professor in Philosophy

Title: Examining The Link Between Greek and Medieval Islamic Philosophy

This study examines the notion of intellect within Islamic medieval philosophy and the ways Greek writings have affected it. It will also explore the way in which these ideas affected the conceptions of political systems by these Islamic scholars. Some issues included within the discussion of their various opinions is the position of religion, the purpose of political science, and the existence of definite truths. The

particular scholars involved will be primarily Plato with some hints of Aristotle on Greek philosophy, and Averroes, Al-Farabi, and Ghazzali on Islamic philosophy.

Khalif Jackson

Mentor: Eve Spangler, Professor in Sociology

Title: What factors contribute to African Americans raised in the inner city excelling in Higher Education

The importance of the pursuit of intellect through education has always been recognized and understood throughout Black history in the United States especially at the turn of the nineteenth century. This research explores black men and black women’s academic success in a predominantly-white institution of higher learning. According to W.E.B. DuBois, “the significance of a collegiate education” for Black Americans is not to teach making money but its purpose is to define the difference between life and the endlessness of the knowledge within it. The purpose of this study is to determine how being African American and brought up in the inner city affects academic achievement in higher education

Kristin Reed

Mentor: Julia Whitcavitch-Devoy, Professor in Education

Title: Effects of Parental Involvement on Adolescent Academic Achievement

Looking specifically at time spent with children, time spent reading or engaged in educational activities with children, and monetary support for academic affairs, this study examined

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how parental involvement affects adolescent academic confidence and accomplishments looking closely at student reports of external observable data i.e. grades and internal intra-psychic data i.e. feelings about/toward school and learning. This qualitative study used semi-structured interviews to construct a retrospective narrative analysis of the experiences of an ethnically diverse, low income sample of Boston College McNair Scholars recounting the function and extent of parental involvement in their lives prior to and including ages 13-14.

Amber Williams

Mentor: Laura Hake, Professor in Biology

Title: Endocrine Disruption: Cadmium in Shrimp

The goal of this study is to link the levels of cadmium in shrimp (*L. vannamei*) tail muscle to the physical, chemical, and pathological characteristics of the shrimp itself. This paper contains details on endocrine disruption, shrimp farming, cadmium, RNA extraction using Trizol Reagent, and RNA quality analysis. In the near future, real-time PCR will be performed in order to link cadmium levels and gene expression. This will lead to the creation of a gene bank containing genes that are potential targets of endocrine disruption due to cadmium. This study is situated among discussion on endocrine disruption in our daily lives and is relevant because shrimp is the number one seafood consumed in the United States.

Soumia Aitelhaj

Mentor: Marla Derosa, Professor in English

Title: The Tuareg Rebellion

This paper will trace the historical and cultural, political, and economic causes of the Tuareg rebellion to show that even though the Tuareg rebels use violence against the government to rebel, it is the corrupt government that perpetuates violence, because the governmental leaders have the power to stop the rebellion by building schools, hospitals, and simply sharing the wealth from the natural resources of the North. Furthermore, investigating the causes of the rebellion shows that colonialism has never left Africa and its affects have been ingrained in the governmental leaders who are exploiting and abusing their own people in order to stay in power.

Karina Xart

Mentor: C. Patrick Proctor, Professor in Education

Title: The effects of relative care, childcare, or pre-school on Spanish speaking kindergarten children's emergent literacy and math skills

According to recent statistics Spanish speaking Hispanic students are attending school at lower rates, obtaining lower test scores, and are least likely to be exposed to literacy at home, all of which have been proven to determine later success in school and profession. However when these students do attend an early educational program they are scoring significantly higher on tests and doing better in school in comparison to their non-preschool counterparts. This study will

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test 40 kindergarten students of low socio economic status (SES) that primarily speak Spanish at home. They will be tested to determine if they are ready to attend kindergarten according to their math, literacy and general knowledge skills. The children will be separated among those who attended preschool, daycare, and relative care. The results are expected to indicate that preschool attendance yields higher preparation for kindergarten than any other form of care.