

What Are Some URSA Supported Projects from the *College of Humanities and Fine Arts*?

“Marian Anderson: A Voice for the Seemingly Silent”

Rebecca Feldhaus—Music
Dr. Sonya Baker—Faculty Mentor

In 1955, the classical singer Marian Anderson was the first African-American to sing a lead role with the Metropolitan Opera. She was not only a pioneer for African-American singers, but also an advocate for composers of her time. During her performances, Anderson often sang contemporary works, particularly those of African-American composers, thus allowing the literature to become more mainstream. This project was based on research completed at the Marian Anderson Collection in Philadelphia and explored the works inspired by and written for Anderson.

“Queen Marie Antoinette's Pre-Revolutionary Image: A Product of Media Fabrication or Personal Flaws”



Brittany Fiscus—History
Dr. Terry Strieter—Faculty Mentor

This project looked at the relationship between Queen Marie Antoinette and the press in the years leading up to the French Revolution. The study explored whether or not much of her negative image was brought on by her own bad habits and personal flaws, and how much of it was exaggerated or even completely fabricated by the press. Primary sources from the period (including drawings, printings, cartoons, caricatures, manuscripts, pamphlets, and newspapers) as well as secondary sources, both in English and French, were used. The effect of the Queen's negative image on the entire monarchy was presented.

“An Examination of Party Positions and Valence Issues of the 21st Century”



Caroline Jones—Government, Law and Int'l. Affairs
Dr. Mark Wattier—Faculty Mentor

The purpose of this project was to examine and assess the positions (for and against) and valence issues (how to address topics of interest or conflict) as present in the party platforms of the two major American Political Parties. The included documents are the Democratic National Platform of 2000 and 2004 and the Republican National Platforms of the same years. The paper presents points of interests and examines changes and differences between and with parties over time.



“MSU can Provide a Better Educational Condition for International Students”

Eun Jeong Kim — English Literature
Dr. Gina Claywell — Faculty Mentor

Since I am an international student, I have dealt with different obstacles from American students. For example, the language barrier became the first issue in every class. Therefore, I was wondering what kind of issues or problems other international students deal with and how they overcome them. Moreover, I wanted to study what and how MSU provides for international students in various programs. My project started last spring semester and over the summer break. I surveyed over 80 international students on campus as well as interviewed 10 individual from different countries. I also visited three other universities and learned how they help their international students.

“Changes in Alcohol Perceptions Based on Current Usage”

Ryan Leach—Psychology
Dr. Paula Waddill—Faculty Mentor



I tested a large group of students to see if the amount of alcohol a student used had any relationship with the degree to which they changed their alcohol use perceptions when presented with alcohol related information. A pretest survey was administered which measured alcohol use and the perceived use of alcohol by the typical Murray State student. Next, one of three PowerPoint presentations was shown: the control group saw unrelated information; the first experimental group received information about general college life, including the actual level of alcohol use; the second experimental group received a presentation that only covered information related to alcohol. This was followed up with another survey measuring the new level of perceived use. Those who viewed the experimental presentations changed their views about alcohol significantly more than the control group, and the first experimental group changed significantly less than the second experimental group. Those who drank more changed their perceptions more than lighter drinkers. The possible interaction between alcohol use and presentation format was discussed.

“Effects of Congruent, Non-congruent, and Neutral Color-words on Memory”



Reagan Rudolph — Psychology
Dr. Alysia Ritter — Faculty Mentor

Memory is a vital cognitive function that people rely on constantly. Much research has been conducted in order to understand the functional processes of memory. In addition, much research has also examined how memory and other aspects of cognition work together or against one another. Previous research (Sagi, 1980) identified interference in recall ability when subjects were presented with a color word (e.g. BLUE) in a non-congruent color (e.g. red) and the subjects were asked to recall the printed color. Research by Musen and Squire (1993) suggested that when color and words are correlated by repeated association, the recall rate of the color becomes quicker and more accurate. Research also suggested that visual media, when presented in color, has a better chance of being more accurately recalled both immediately and over a one week period (Farley and Grant, 1976). This research projects seeks to combine elements of the aforementioned studies to further determine the effect of three color conditions on memory recall: a congruent condition (e.g. GRASS presented in green), a neutral condition (e.g. CHERRY presented in black), and a noncongruent condition (e.g. BLOOD presented in yellow). This experiment also investigated whether Stroop-like effects occur when participants are asked to recall words instead of the printed color in a noncongruent color condition.