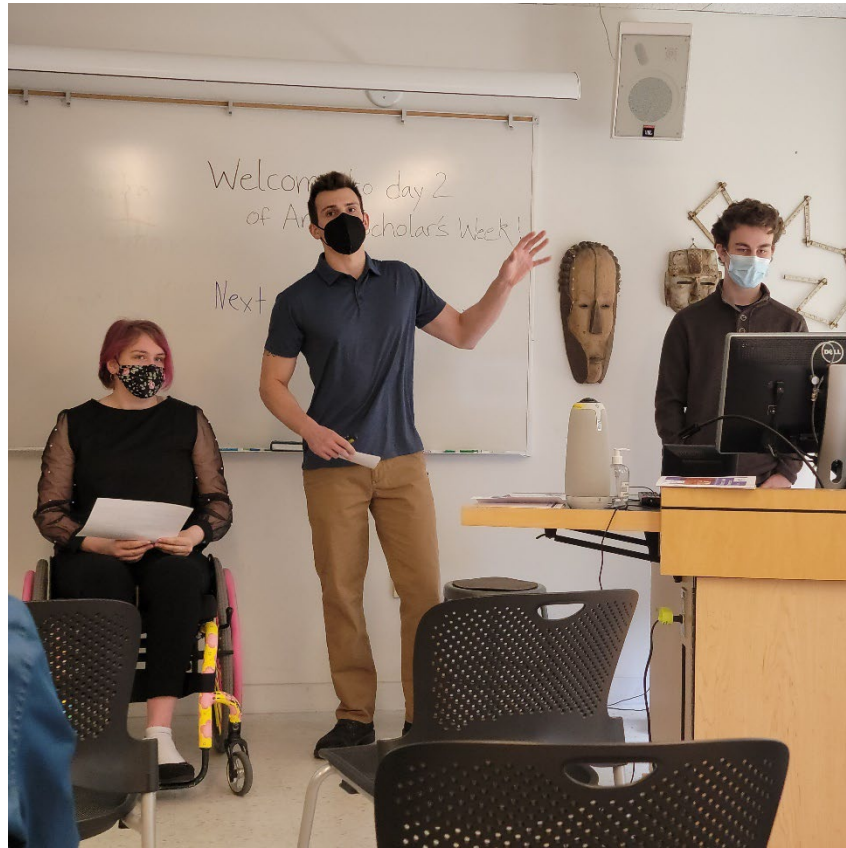


Anthropology Scholars Week Conference

May 18 & 19, 2023



Olivia Rose, Lance Tulloch, and Marcus Benson, student presenters, last year's Anthropology Scholars Week Conference, 2022



DEPARTMENT OF
ANTHROPOLOGY





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www.wvu.edu/anthropology/scholars-week for
more information:



Thursday May 18, 2023

Noon-1PM KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Elizabeth Gibbs, class of 2015, “Cleared for Takeoff”

Driven at first to find a solution to the question “what will you do after graduation?”, Elizabeth Gibbs pursued a Museology internship that took her down an unexpected career path, unlocking a passion for aviation. Cleared for Takeoff is a reflection on the flight path of one former WWU Anthropology student, and a story to inspire those who may be stuck on the ground to look up and find their wings.

Bring your lunch and join us!

1-2PM ARCHAEOLOGY

Adrena Hamilton, “On the job research; Volunteering for the USFS Passport in Time”

Embarking on a new career path is a daunting experience, but it does not have to be in the dark. Job shadows, events, and volunteer opportunities are a great way to get insight into a new industry and get a real feel for what one’s future may look like. Fortunately for those looking into CRM, the need is high and the opportunities to volunteer are plentiful. When first researching a career in archaeology, I landed myself on a project for the Forestry Service’s Passport in Time program and continued to contribute over the next ten years. I have completed four historical restoration projects, one site survey (with a site evaluation coming this summer) within three different national forests in two different states. The projects, combined with the community education and knowledgeable archaeologists, help to give an in-depth understanding to the duties and goals of the field. The program has expanded my understanding of archaeology as a profession, the various fields of archaeology, and skills and techniques I have applied in my daily life. I have met people there that have become lifelong friends and developed contacts that are key to my future research and studies here at WWU and beyond. The knowledge gained through Passport in Time allowed me to enter the

Anthropology program at Western with confidence, as well as provided a firm foundation for the courses in the program.

Jack Tillman, "Pots, Pendants, and Picrolite: Bidirectional Interaction in Cyprus During the Third Millennium BCE"

During the third millennium BCE, Cyprus became increasingly connected with the eastern Mediterranean after a period of insularity since the 7th millennium BCE, and underwent a multiplicity of changes in material culture. These changes in pottery, architecture, and mortuary practices have been viewed as the result of social interaction between the indigenous Chalcolithic population and an intrusive Anatolian population represented by the Philia Facies. Characterizing the nature of this interaction and the processes that resulted in the "Anatolianizing" of Cypriot material culture is a central problematic in the prehistory of Cyprus. In this study, following Bernard Knapp, it is argued that rather than a top-down process of colonization by Philia migrants, changes in Cypriot material culture can be better understood as a bottom-up process of bidirectional hybridization between Chalcolithic and Philia communities. Pottery, architecture, and mortuary practices will be considered from both communities to assess how Philia migrants defined new identities and how Chalcolithic peoples selectively adopted new practices and re-negotiated the meaning of exotica. A class of Philia material culture referred to as "spurred annular pendants" will be examined as a case study to explore the ways in which Chalcolithic and Philia cultures intermixed via the agency of local interest groups, driven by political instability, inter-marriage, and the picrolite trade. This study will demonstrate that the social interaction between indigenous Cypriots and Philia migrants in the third millennium BCE was not a process of acculturation into a hegemonic Philia culture, but rather a bidirectional intermixing in which difference within Philia and Chalcolithic identities were naturalized, resulting in the emergence of the Bronze Age.

2-3PM ROUND TABLE

Graduate School Decision- The View from Grad Students

Graduate students in the MA Anthropology program provide their insights and advice to undergraduates.

3-4PM POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Skeletons and the Occult (Group 1)

Group 1 abstracts page 7-15. Students in Dr. Tesla Monson's course ANTH 320 Skeletons and the Occult share posters in AH 319 and the 3rd floor hallways of Arntzen Hall. Course description: Training in osteology, bioarchaeology and evolutionary biology. Critical reading and discussion of scientific literature that deals with the biological and biocultural interpretation of the human skeletal record, focusing on occult themes. Topics include mummies, cannibals, vampires, paleopathology, mystical sites (i.e., Stonehenge), and more.

Friday May 19, 2023

1-2PM ROUND TABLE

Graduate School Decision- The View from Faculty

Anthropology Department faculty provide their insights and advice to undergraduates.

2-3PM POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Skeletons and the Occult (Group 2)

Group 2 abstracts page 15-21. Students in Dr. Tesla Monson's course ANTH 320 Skeletons and the Occult share posters in AH 319 and the 3rd floor hallways of Arntzen Hall. Course description: Training in osteology, bioarchaeology and evolutionary biology. Critical reading and discussion of scientific literature that deals with the biological and biocultural interpretation of the human skeletal record, focusing on occult themes. Topics include mummies, cannibals, vampires, paleopathology, mystical sites (i.e., Stonehenge), and more.

3-4PM CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

Ryan Marinelli, "Navigating Your Place when it's Not Your Space: Perpetuating Positive Allyship"

The gift and burden of living in a globalized society is the shadow you cast. The paths we choose to walk find us walking parallel with many people, our lives intersecting with theirs, casting an ever longer shadow as the decisions we made or don't make seem to define us. As our identities and personalities grow, we make unconscious frameworks for understanding the world around ourselves, and those networks of navigating life are often informed by complex familial structures belonging entirely to the individual. What we are not often prepared for is when those frameworks fail us. It is inevitable that by internalizing dominant ideas we should find ourselves passive beneficiaries of oppressive structures at the best of times and unknowing or unknowing perpetrators of these structures at worst. Exposure to new perspectives and willingness to open one's self up to a community of knowledge gives us the tools to ask uncomfortable questions about ourselves, and hopefully inspire us to do better. When we wish to speak on an issue requiring a perception of the world entirely at odds with our own however, how do we maximize the benefits of our privilege. Allies play a vital role in creating a more inclusive and equitable society. This research paper aims to define allyship, explore its significance, and offer practical strategies for becoming an effective ally to underprivileged communities. Drawing from the literature and real-life examples, this paper emphasizes the importance of recognizing Intent and social location, understanding how allyship can become commodified as well as transactional, and amplifying voices without occupying a dominant position.

Adela Machackova, "Drug Addiction: The Full Story"

Drug Addiction has predominantly been studied from the perspective of the addict and the substance they use. This has only led to an in-depth understanding of the drugs themselves, not the individual. Through this autoethnographic study, I looked at my experience with my brother who was a heroin addict and wanted to see the impacts we had on each other as people and our environment. Along with the state programs provided for addicts as another element that affects the individual. Heroin, as we know it now, is an opioid meaning it attaches to our opioid receptors (that cause our pain relief). This constant stimulation puts the individual into a euphoric state and long-term use causes them to lose some cognitive functions along with other health risks. The course of my brother's addiction was in my adolescent years starting at 13 and ending when I was 19, living in a house with him caused me to have trauma responses that I have broken down into three categories: doors, people, and sleep. Since we live in Washington I wanted also to see what rehabilitation our state provides for addicts. This research has left me with more questions and wanting to see further collaboration between social sciences to have a more well-rounded understanding of drug addiction. With my research, I have found that the environment and personal relationships are key factors in understanding addiction.

Lance Tulloch, “Necropower and Biopower in Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery”

Human Trafficking is one of the most widespread illicit economic activities globally. This is due in part to the global "race to the bottom" which characterizes the way in which international capitalism seeks to drive down costs to increase profit. This combination allows for the illicit market of slave labor to blend with licit markets producing goods and providing services globally. This process has necropolitical and biopolitical dimensions, both acting on the macro level of international business and crime while simultaneously acting on the micro level of individuals: traffickers, the trafficked, and consumers. This literature review places the human trafficking paradigms found in The Palgrave International Handbook of Human Trafficking into conversation with the theoretical lenses of biopower and necropower. In doing so, biopower and necropower work to nuance the ways in which human trafficking is conceptualized as they reveal themselves within the behaviors which cause or contextualize the process(es) of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

4-5PM OUTSTANDING STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS & AWARDS

Lily Berver “Gender and Repression in Argentina’s Last Dictatorship”

From 1976 to 1983, Argentina experienced a civilian-military dictatorship that terrorized its population, creating a societal wound from which the country continues to work to heal. As a predominantly Catholic nation with strong ties to Europe, Argentina’s dictatorship attempted to violently reinforce Eurocentric patriarchal norms throughout its society. The politicized guerrilla woman would epitomize the subversion of this traditional social order. Exploring issues related to motherhood, domesticity, objectification, and politicization, I review existing literature about gender, citizenship, and the dictatorship in Argentina to understand how

women had distinct experiences during the dictatorship because of their gender and, considering that they have traditionally been confined to the private sphere, how they have had limited visibility in Argentina's collective process of recovery. Considering that women experienced the dictatorship in a distinct way due to their gender identity prompts the question of how other and intersecting marginalized groups who did not align with Argentina's status quo may have uniquely experienced the dictatorship and if they are currently being excluded in discourse related to healing, indicating how the dictatorship may continue to remain with us.

Luke Heinen "Art Against Tyranny: Ukraine's Resistance of Occupation Through Cultural Expression"

The analysis of art is vital for understanding cultural conflict and can shed light on the origins of the current war between Russia and Ukraine. Suppression of art is used to extinguish culture, and Russia has been responsible for this several times in Ukrainian history. The first attack on Ukraine's culture was under Peter the Great, as he tried to reform the Russian Empire to be more European and stole Ukrainian's culture in the process. Then the October Revolution and creation of the Soviet Union forced all member nations, including Ukraine, to abide by an overarching Soviet culture. But culture is not easily extinguished, and Ukrainians preserved their cultural and artistic expression both internally and abroad, even if it needed to adapt to bypass Soviet scrutiny and appeal to foreign tastes. Foreign interest also allowed many Slavic artforms to survive when they were suppressed to extinction domestically. But after the fall of the USSR, Ukrainians became free to define their own culture for the first time in centuries, just for the Russian Federation to try and take it from them again. Now that Ukrainians have been free to display their culture, they have a newfound sense of cultural pride and identity they will not let die. Through the analysis of their art, both past and present, it can be seen how Ukrainians preserve their culture through hardship and use that culture to fight against oppression by tyrants.

Payton Hyatt & Laila Kleven "Unsettling the Settler Teacher: An Indigenized Inquiry into American Public Education"

For many people who received education through American public schools, Indigenous cultures and histories have been missing or misrepresented (cf. McInnes 2016). As a result, there is a significant lack of comprehensive understanding about the lived experiences and histories of Indigenous people within American society and the ongoing expressions of settler colonialism. In this presentation, we share a research and curricular development proposal we created to address this gap. Our research was significantly shaped through the work of Indigenous scholars who advocate for the transformation of educational systems. Specifically, we drew inspiration from Calderon et al. 2020 and their call to develop land education and center Indigenous epistemologies of place to articulate our vision of teacher professional development workshops that center upon land education by positioning Indigenous epistemologies and understandings of place. Therefore, we suggest the implementation of

Indigenous led and centered teacher development workshops that unsettle the colonial ideologies structured into k-12 American public education.

5PM RECEPTION

Join us for light refreshments in celebration of anthropology students' scholarship and hard work!

POSTER ABSTRACTS- GROUP 1

Zarah Ahmed "Djinn, The Devil, and the Occult of the Islamic World: A Discourse"

The blue-skinned genie of Disney's Aladdin is the most popular identifying factor of the Arab-Islamic imagination of the djinn, an intelligent spirit of lower rank than the angels, able to appear in various forms with the ability to possess humans with the intention to lead men astray. Genie is a main character through-and-through but is widely considered by Arab and Muslim viewers to be a poor representation of the primary occult figure. Superstition and belief in these mischievous spirits have been accredited to rapid changes in environment in the Arab and Islamic world for thousands of years; organized religion has provided explanations for these supernatural phenomena, ultimately rooted in faith to Allah (SWT) and the influence of The Devil on the individual. But what exactly is the importance of the djinn? This review of literature will compare the similarities and differences between the spiritual beliefs of major organized religions by analyzing ecological changes as response to major historical events. We will also be reviewing Muslim literature on mysticism in relation to the physical sciences – such as alchemy and psychology – in objectifying the study of the Islamic occultist beliefs and analyze what a Muslim identity is in the modern social context, as well as the relationship faith has with spiritualism and the occult, including examples of vampirism, witches, and relations with pagan Islamic tradition.

Austin Baker "Occult Crime and Criminal Justice: Ritual Crime, Satanic Panic and the Real Life X-Files"

Audiences have historically held a morbid fascination with the occult that is arguably only surpassed by their fascination with crime. Countless books, video games and movies have combined the two by pitting members of law enforcement against the occult. TV shows such as Twin Peaks and The X-Files remain popular thirty years after they first aired. From startling real-life incidents such as the Satanic Panic and the Manson Family to pop culture phenomena, the threat of occult crime has terrified, entertained and fascinated spectators. Because of its sensational nature, the public perception of occult crime and the reality of occult crime are often at odds with each other. When occult crimes do occur, they present a variety of unique challenges to members of law enforcement and criminal justice systems. It can be difficult to discern between the unknown, the macabre and the dangerous. Occult themes have on one hand caused crimes to become sensationalized and on the other hand caused them to not be taken seriously. In the United States, occult crime has been found to most often be associated

with ingenuine belief and antisocial rebellion. However, responding to occult crime in other contexts can blur the line between religious liberty and confronting dangerous behavior. In most cases, addressing occult crime becomes a practice in anthropology to understand the beliefs, motivations and cultural factors that integrate crime with occult practices.

Sheridan Barrier "Changelings: The Prescientific Explanation for Autism"

The concept of a changeling is common within European folklore, with stories saying that a human child would be abducted by fairies leaving a fae offspring in its place. These concepts emerged throughout European folklore in pre-Christian times, and remained an important aspect until modern medicine became prominent. Changelings were often described as deformed, possessing notable physical characteristics alongside abnormal behavior. These children displayed symptoms presently associated with autism, such as a lack of social skills, language development issues, a need for consistency, and routine. Many were misunderstood because of the lack of scientific knowledge at the time and required mythical allegory as an explanation instead. The belief that these children were not human was reflected by the inappropriate treatment that they received from their own parents and society. This idea is reflected within historical folklore, which also shows that autism was occurring long before theories of modern medicine developed. In this paper, I looked at various historical folklore and found that behavioral descriptions of changeling were commonly associated with symptoms of autism. I also found that these misconceptions were connected to the lack of understanding of neurological disorders, leading to the development of folklore as a method to explain these disorders.

Christopher Bottman "Folkloric Transformations Into Beasts and the Prescientific Rationalization of Mental Health"

Before we were able to use modern medicine to understand how the mind worked, we were forced to rely on folklore and myth to teach these lessons through allegory. In Norse and Germanic myth, the transformation into beasts was a common allegory to explain the complex behaviors of neurodivergence. Later will be discussed the werewolf, one of the most common monsters found in English stories, as it is used to explain and vilify the behaviors of ostracized groups. The transformation based off of a monthly cycle, and its bloodlust when in its bestial form has made for numerous allegories through history. In Old Norse culture, able bodied members of society with dissociative and post traumatic stress disorders were preyed upon, turning the mentally ill into savage warriors. Commonly understood as entering a trance through the ingestion of certain psychedelics, evidence shows that these men and women may have been victims as well as warriors. Using myth and stories to understand what cannot be actively perceived has been a common treatment of the unknown. Using scientific literature and historical analysis, we are able to see how this treatment of the mentally ill or nonconforming has been prevalent throughout human history. However, we must understand that it is not monsters disguising themselves as humans, but rather humans turning others into monsters.

Sascha Branam "Chronic Wasting Disease the Cause and Spread of 'Zombification' in Deer and Moose"

Transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) also known as prions are progressive neurodegenerative disorders with long incubation periods and spongiform changes resulting in neuronal loss and failure to induce inflammatory responses that affect both humans and animals. Despite being rare, understanding prions is important to us because some forms of prions can affect both humans and some of the animals we commonly eat such as cows. In mule deer, white-tail deer, moose and elk these take the form of a deadly infection called Chronic Wasting Disease; a condition that results in drastic weight loss, listlessness, drooling and other neurological symptoms. Animals infected with this disease have been labeled in sensationalized news and media as "Zombie Deer". Chronic Wasting Disease is most commonly assumed to spread by CWD proteins in bodily fluids and shedding from infected animals into the environment, but cases of interspecies spreading have been found. Methods of prevention are currently being explored in both the legislative and biological fields. CWD is cause for concern because despite not occurring in humans or most domesticated animals the disease has manifested in laboratory mice that carry some human genes and some primates in experimental settings.

Sam Chapman "HOWLING AT WHITE WALLS: An Examination of Clinical Lycanthropy"

The legend of the werewolf is a worldwide horror trope nearly as infamous as Dracula and his vampires. Every culture in the world has its own interpretation of the myth, but there is an almost completely unknown counterpart - clinical lycanthropy, in which a person, commonly those with a psychotic disorder such as schizophrenia or bipolar, believes they have turned into a wolf to some degree for stretches of time ranging from hours to years. The exact cause of this specific delusion is still undetermined. Despite the fame of the werewolf in myth and legend, the cultural impact it has on individuals is often overlooked, especially when it is not just the excitement of a fan. While the hallucination is rare, there are several documented cases, including that of a 20-year-old man who, after erratic and aggressive behavior, became admitted into the hospital and continued to display animal-like behavior, such as howling and running around on all fours. Unlike werewolves in legend, helping these disorders does not equal a silver bullet or a helping of wolfsbane. He was started on ziprasidone and the dosage was gradually raised until his delusions lessened until they vanished altogether. Like other mental disorders, raising the awareness about these sorts of delusions will hopefully increase the acceptance and ability to treat it safely and without discrimination or harm.

Arcilla Davis "From Brains to Bytes: Examining the Intersection between Technology and Biology in the Pursuit of Immortality"

Whether motivated by altruistic intentions or self-preserving instinct, humanity's quest to extend our finite lives may soon surpass fantasy as it is now the subject of legitimate scientific inquiry. Advancements in computer and biological sciences has aroused speculation as to the applicability of these technologies in radical extension of human life. One such speculative theory involves transcending biology and transferring the human consciousness to a digital

medium to achieve virtual immortality. Though this idea is popularly depicted across science fiction, the feasibility of this method is subject to much contention and poses many philosophical and ethical considerations. Some theories are based within the limitations of biology, such as the mastery and manipulation of cellular mechanisms to extend life as it is more traditionally understood. These ideas are subject to their own series of ethical considerations as well as contested feasibility. This paper will address the ethical dilemmas and feasibility of both methods as well as their predicted scalability and whether or not this is an endeavor worth pursuing at all. Though different in approach, these methods serve as possible means to attain what was once thought to be unequivocally unattainable. As such, questions pertaining to these possibilities deserve serious consideration and require meaningful answers.

Taylor Deatherage "Pinpointing the Public's Problems with Witchcraft"

Occult topics are a popular fixation in media, but does the media possess the ability and interest to accurately represent those who practice witchcraft? Can the media we consume have a negative effect on those being depicted or is it all in good nature for entertainment purposes? When portraying witches to the public eye we can see common themes of darkness, ostracism, and amplification of sexualization within the practice. However, when taking a look at some practices like paganism it seems there has been a miscommunication. Important roots in paganism and other spiritual practices like romanticism and fertility have been boiled down into simple terms for media use. A big example of that simplification can be seen in the sex appeal often used in media. In addition to boiling down important elements of spiritual beliefs, the media splits those involved into two categories. These categories have been simplified into good and bad. This divide provides the ability to villainize those involved in the bad category the media defined and take what content they perceive as beneficial to fit their own narratives. The world is not seen in black and white and the judgement of practices different from your own should not be either. Making money at the expense of others is not ethical and ethicality is a largely important aspect of anthropology.

Lily Granadillo "Profiting from Death: Tourism and our Morbid Fascination with the Cemeteries of New Orleans"

Sitting below sea level, the unique methods of burial in New Orleans have made the city famous with its gothic mausoleums built to withstand constant flooding. Recent hurricanes serve as grim reminders of the need for these types of burials in south Louisiana to ensure the protection of interred human remains. New Orleans' cemeteries tell a story of class and race inequality, with some cemeteries still bearing the posthumous remnants of racial segregation. This wealth disparity is visible in the burial methods used, ranging from elaborate mausoleums to below-ground graves. New Orleans possesses a haunted mystique that its tourism industry capitalizes on, attracting those with dark curiosities. Cemetery walkthroughs are a common occurrence there, often doubling as ghost tours. However, these tours often spread misinformation, decontextualizing the city's rich history for monetary gain. The morbid curiosity surrounding death is a powerful draw to areas where tragedy has left its mark.

Cemeteries are the perfect place to study how this mixture of fear and awe comes together and draws us in. These “cities of the dead” merge the physical and the spiritual, where people can gather and mourn, or simply stroll through, maybe passing by enthusiastic tour groups along the way. How do we justify this cognitive dissonance, and how does the way we represent the dead and their stories affect how we see history and place in the modern world?

Calyssa Graves "The Misconceptions of Vikings Disproven Through Archeological Sites"

Oral storytelling from the Middle Ages perpetuated the misconceptions surrounding the modern construction on the history of ‘Vikings’ and many of these ill-truths have been proven false by archeological excavations. The etymology of the word Viking is highly debated in academic communities. One of the theories surrounding the verb Viking originates from the Old Norse word Vik, which means creek, inlet, or bay. While on the other hand, the Old Norse word Viking translates roughly to mean “pirate” or “raider.” Compared to other countries at the time, Norse women had a high degree of freedom contrary to popular belief. In Scandinavian society, Norse women had the ability to own property, initiate divorce proceedings, and had protection against unwanted advances. Furthermore, another misconception that has evolved and made its way into popular culture and television is surrounding the appearance and hygiene of Vikings. Vikings contrary to popular belief were very proud of their appearances and used a variety of tools to maintain a well-kempt presence. During the Coppergate dig of the 1970s located in York, archeologists uncovered a buried Viking city. This excavation opened the door to unearthing many of the hidden secrets about Viking society and culture. There are many varying myths and legends surrounding Vikings that have been produced from tales of terror, but how many of these are false claims? The Vikings spread fear by raiding coastal towns and expanding their domains, but the misinformation caused by the tales of terror has influenced inaccurate accounts of Vikings.

Halley Grebenc "Voodoo Death: Exploring the Connection Between Spiritual and Biological Causes of Sudden Unknown Death (SUD)"

Sudden Unknown Death (SUD) is a crucial area of study in order to better understand the human experience. Historically these deaths have been attributed to a number of spiritual practices, such as Vodou, obscuring the scientific causes behind them. The term ‘Voodoo Death’ was coined by Walter Cannon in 1942 to describe SUD’s that people were attributing to curses or other supernatural forces. In this study I will analyze and critique Cannon’s original research while using more recent studies to point to the connection between the mind and body and how the internalized stress and belief that a person is dying can lead to their eventual death. Studies show that neurogenic factors cause stress that damages the cardiovascular tissue potentially leading to the cause of SUD. The idea has also been stated in academia that people, once they believe they are going to die, purposefully accelerated death through dehydration and starvation. While not categorized as SUD these deaths are often attributed to ‘Voodoo Death’ leading to a lack of understanding of this critical biological anomaly. Further research on SUD and ‘Voodoo Death’ within the cultural context of Vodou and other spiritual practices could lead to a better understanding of psychosomatic diseases

such as Munchausen. The connection between the mind and body is a vital area of study in order to better treat and prevent Sudden Unknown Death.

Luke Heinen "Resurrection to Infection: Portrayal of Zombies Past and Present"

Zombies are iconic in modern culture, but their interpretation in modern media deviates dramatically from their Haitian origin. Understanding the context of why this deviation occurred can give further insights to how different cultures have shaped the portrayal of zombies. These cultural differences can further enhance zombie's portrayal in films, games, and other media by including lesser-known cultural interpretations. This knowledge can be used further to educate the public on the origin of zombies as a cultural icon, and their use in increasing public knowledge on disease prevention. Through this project I analyze research on both the past and present of zombies in culture to find how their presentation changed so dramatically. In addition to the change of zombies from reanimated dead to pathogen infected individuals, their movement from Haitian into American culture is also important, and the pieces of media that facilitated this are analyzed. George A. Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* was cataclysmic to zombie's outbreak into American media, and it and other crucial pieces of zombie media were particularly important to this cultural movement. Understanding this past is important to bringing zombie media into the future, as it can facilitate more diverse zombie interpretations in media and enhance the public's cultural and disease prevention knowledge.

Meara Hitchcock "Mermaids and Manatees: The mythology and its real-life representation"

This poster will discuss in depth the consideration of manatees as real-life mermaids and where that connection originates. There are many historical accounts of sailors encountering mermaids across the world and in some cases it's possible to ascertain that what these sailors were actually encountering were manatees. One of the most well-known examples of this comes from Christopher Columbus from his voyage in 1492, wherein he encountered what he described as three mermaids—though explained that they did not look as beautiful as represented, saying that instead they were more masculine than he had expected them to be. In this vein, understanding how manatees have existed as analogous to mermaids in some form or other over the centuries is one primary focus, another is understanding why they stand as the main marine animal that has been misconstrued as mermaids. This is done through a thorough study of the body of the manatee, understanding its physiology and traits in comparison to a hypothetical mermaids. Furthermore, dissecting various accounts of peoples interactions with mythological creatures is important for understanding how people saw marine animals in the past, and how various myths—like the mermaid—continue to persist to this day. In short, after careful research and examination of their morphology it is clear to see how manatees have maintained their connections to mermaids for so long, and the benefits that can be gained by doing more research on mythological creatures and their marine animal counterparts.

Kati Hoch "What Lies Beneath: The Worldwide Belief of Mythological Sea Creatures"

Belief in the unknown or supernatural is a common feature across cultures worldwide. Specifically, the ideas of allegorical sea creatures are a fascinating part of folklore and mythology. The belief in the unknown is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon that can be influenced by a myriad of cultural, social and psychological factors. Common themes such as Fear of the Unknown, Meaning and Purpose, Historical/Cultural traditions, Desire and even Personal experiences all have a part to play in these illusions. Mythological Sea Creatures are a recapitulated in various cultures. Sea entities such as Sirens, Krakens, Mermaids, Selkies, Naiads and Sea Serpents are widely and favorably known. It is said there is no current biological proof of the existence of these mythological sea creatures, as they are often associated to be purely fictional. However, there have been many eyewitness accounts and stories attributed to these phenomena. It is important to note that the characteristics and behaviors of mythological sea creatures often go beyond what is known to be biologically possible; however, who is to say that these creatures are not real if we have neither proof of deniability or actuality.

Lucas Mabry-Smith "Insight into Ancient Egyptian Culture: The significance of Mummification in Religion, Society, and the Afterlife"

While the art of mummification is categorized as one of the earliest forms of anatomical practice, its inherent importance is derived from a method by which ancient Egyptians deemed spiritually beneficial. Historically mummification originated in the 4th dynasty of ancient Egypt and involved the removal and preservation of the body and its internal organs. Once this was done properly, the Book of the Dead would then guide the spirits to their place in the afterlife. The mummification procedure involved removing the organs, drying and embalming the corpse, and wrapping it. The heart was left in place and would have a scarab marked on top. In lieu of this procedure, mummies played a heavy role in ancient Egyptian cultural and religious soundness, as ancient Egyptians believed in the afterlife. The process of mummification seems to go hand in hand with ancient Egyptian beliefs, as most believed that in order for the spirit to survive in the afterlife, it would need its original vessel. The heart was believed to be the seat of the soul and was left in the body. Overall, the practice of mummification in ancient Egypt involved a complex process that allowed for preservation by the removal of internal organs, drying, wrapping, and embalming the deceased. The study of mummification in detail can further our insight into ancient Egyptian culture and society, how their view on death was deeply intertwined with religious, social, and cultural practices, as well as the role of the physical body in the afterlife.

Lucy Mallory "Vampires: The Fear and Romanticization"

Vampires are commonly seen throughout many cultures in the world, and are often portrayed with fangs and enhanced abilities, with a craving for blood. This infamous monster is most well-known in art and pop culture, although simultaneously having deep cultural connections from all over the world. Despite many commonalities in different myths, vampiric legends differentiate depending on historical circumstances from that time period. Many medieval

legends believe that vampires bring disease and famine, a rational fear for that era. In the 1800's, vampires are seen in a more romanticized gothic light representing a more abstract fear of death and lust. In the more recent years, vampire interest spiked with teenage romance novels with an emphasis on the corruption of celibacy and fear of aging. This paper will look into what feared characteristics of vampires came from in the surrounding environment, the theories of how an individual can defend themselves from this fear, and how that impacts the historical waves of hysteria. This will be verified through archeological grave findings, historical accounts, and studies of environmental factors. These are important sources to incorporate into this research because it gives insight into first-hand accounts of individuals struggling with the hysteria of vampirism in historical cultures, and how that bleeds into today's art and media.

William Powers "More than bog-standard: Analyzing the cultural implications of bog bodies from Northern and Northwestern Europe"

Peat bog environments have long been a subject of interest to those in the fields of archaeology and folklore studies, playing significant roles in both the ecological and cultural history of many Northern and Northwestern European communities. This review examines naturally occurring bog mummies preserved by acidic wetland ecosystems and what they tell us about the lives and folk beliefs of those living near bogland. Peat bogs are found to have long standing cultural associations with danger and the supernatural, with possible connections being drawn between well-preserved bog remains and ideas of the undead. Additional cultural inferences are found in regards to mortuary ritual, with certain bog remains implying purposeful burial and possible acts of human sacrifice. Bog bodies are also found to offer key insight into the health of past populations, providing further understanding of how individuals were affected by disease, and what their diets consisted of. There is much speculation about the nature of these mummies and what circumstances led to their widespread existence. Sacrificial practice, formal burial, murder, and drowning are found to be relevant subjects of discussion. This review finds bog bodies to be a valuable and highly unique source of cultural information that has great potential for further research and exploration. Future research focusing on the relationship between folklore, death customs, and bog bodies is recommended for a fuller comprehension of these distinctive remains and their place within a larger cultural landscape.

Taylor Ronning "Fear Archeology, 'Othering' in Isolated Areas, and Witch Burials between the 1300s-1800s in Christian Dominated Areas in Europe, North America, and the West Indies"

Christian Ideology was used to perceive any women that demonstrated unexpected social behavior that could potentially threaten gender and social norms as witches in the early 1300's to the mid 1800's in Northern Europe, North America, and the West Indies. We can infer this from the practice of deviant burials as well as written records of such incidents. This phenomenon occurred in isolated communities because of stressors from disease, plagues, and other forms of uncontrollable events that caused these people to scapegoat feelings of distress and anger within their own communities. As a result of this stress, people withdrew

into traditional norms to feel a sense of security to control their fears. When feelings of danger and stress are heightened, women are negatively impacted because of Christian Ideology to maintain patriarchal norms to control women. A witch is defined as a woman having sex with demon and using her body to gain power to do harm to those who may have harmed her. Thus, the practice of utilizing deviant burial practices to prevent her from coming back from the dead were put in place whenever a witch was killed. The findings include othering people as an act to justify scapegoating women in their communities to destress a community and return to patriarchal norms. Because of the importance of understanding how women were feared and persecuted in times of high stress, these findings will add contextual understanding to how women today are viewed in Christian dominated areas and why witches are so feared.

Ethan Simmerman "The Eternal Consequences of Colonial Trauma"

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role colonial empires of force play in the causation and transmission of trauma intergenerationally. This will be done through the accumulation of background knowledge on the science and world systems that help us define and understand the different components of intergenerational trauma transmission such as coloniality, Empire of Force, PTSD, resilience, and our stress response which then allow us to confidently assess real-world examples of intergenerational transmission of trauma through systems of colonialism and empire. Allowing us to discern the different environments and situations that lead to biological mechanisms making permanent changes to our psychological and physical health which directly impacted the oppressed generations as well as the generations to follow. This provides evidence to the claim that just because the physical manifestation of colonialism and empire no longer exist in such strength the consequence felt by said colonialism still deeply impacts the world today. Proving that despite what some might say, colonialism is alive and running through the veins of the very people that were oppressed and subjugated by colonial empires of force. This forces us to face colonialism in today's day and age and recognize it for what it is instead of easily discarding it as a "mistake" of the past and hushedly determining that we should "forget about it and move on" which only devalues and discredits the experiences of the oppressed and instead should be focusing on making sure such acts never happen again.

POSTER ABSTRACTS- GROUP 2

Isabella Conover "Unearthing Fear: Apotropaic Burials in Oral and Written Tradition"

As part of human culture, we have developed a wide variety of ways to cope with the universal phenomenon of death. Funerary practices have evolved along with other aspects of culture and are distinctly human. Some particularly fascinating funerary practices are apotropaic burials: atypical grave goods or alteration of the grave or human remains for the purposes of warding off evil. Learning more about these unusual burials can tell us about how humans thought about and responded to death in the past, including through occult practices. This poster examines the association of apotropaic burials with regional oral and written traditions through reviewing current literature. I investigate potential correlation between apotropaic

burials and folklore traditions in their respective regions. Several studies show many similarities between local folklore and the archaeological evidence found of deviant burials. These phenomena have occurred in many forms throughout the world, ranging everywhere from a 19th century grave in Connecticut to an apotropaic burial dating to the Roman era in Sardinia. Although there are similarities between the apotropaic rituals prescribed by folklore and burials studied by archaeologists, the causes behind these practices remain unclear. There are many hypotheses in current literature attempting to determine the motivating factors of apotropaic burials, but they remain inconclusive. There may be no single cause but instead multiple factors that were taken into account. Further research and documentation of oral traditions as well as investigation of apotropaic burial sites is needed in order to reach a more definite conclusion.

Adela Machackova "The Spiritual History of Schizophrenia: The Connection Between the Belief in Demonic Possession and the Science of Mental Illness"

Schizophrenia is now a regularly diagnosed mental disorder identified within the DSM 5 by psychologists. Before its medical identification within the discipline of psychology, conceptions of schizophrenia were rooted in religion and believed to be some form of possession or delusion. Through this literature review I will shed light on the history and evolution of schizophrenia and how we understand it in modern medicine. During ancient times and in the middle ages most medical help was rooted in religion as that was the dominant knowledge structure. This means most people believed that mental disorders were linked to the body being possessed by evil spirits. The most common treatment practiced was exorcizing the demons out of the individual through ritual. There are an array of ways the ritual is performed. The transition into the early modern era, there was the scientific revolution which sparked other modes of research and ideas about medical treatments. Emil Kraepelin was a German psychologist who helped identify the common symptoms that are part of schizophrenia. After the scientific revolution, our modern understanding of the disorder has five subtypes of schizophrenia. Through research psychologists and psychiatrists were able to pinpoint key symptoms like delusions and hallucinations which in the past was linked to the notion of people being possessed by evil spirits. Modern psychology has been crucial to separating the idea of people being possessed by a spirit and instead pinpoint what type of mental disorder the person has to treat them accordingly.

Maxwell McCarron "Global Conception and Influences on Mummification Practices of the Past"

Mummification practices show us how humanity has conceived and developed burial rites and a relationship with death. Mummification's appearance in various cultures may give us insights into how humans interacted in the past and how these interactions may have formed a homogenous philosophy regarding death and burial. Mummies can be naturally or intentionally preserved. Our abilities to identify the methods of mummification allow us to determine which civilizations or groups valued preservation of bodies. Furthermore, we can identify which mummification techniques these groups performed. The identification of techniques and feasibility of travel gives us insights into if (and how deeply) groups of the past

communicated. Civilizations who lived within travelable proximity (i.e., Egypt and Portugal) and performed similar mummification techniques is evidence that supports the idea of communication deep enough to influence peoples' perception of death. Societies on different continents that perform mummification (i.e., Peru and Britain) provide us no evidence of communication as they likely invented mummification practices independent of one another. While more evidence must be gathered, similar techniques of mummification in different civilizations may provide a basis for communication and influence between two or more relevant civilizations from the past.

Sophie Nguyen "Shamanism and the Evolution of Psychedelic Use"

Shamans held a high rank in their communities for centuries providing not only medical care but acting as mediators in socio-political gatherings and as the connection to the spiritual world among other highly respected roles. Evidence of the use of psychoactive and consciousness-altering substances, mainly plants and fungi, has been found in the archaeological record and studied through ethnographies of various communities. The ingestion of psychoactive substances such as psilocybin and ayahuasca are thought to cause various effects, such as visions and other sensory hallucinations, feelings of euphoria, increased stimulation of the sympathetic nervous system, etc. and recent studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have been implemented to study neurological effects. It has been proposed that the use of these drugs by shamans was used to obtain diagnoses for their community members or to receive knowledge from the spiritual world regarding land and nature, known as divination. Studies suggest that in addition to connecting shamans to the spiritual world, psychedelic drugs may have also played a role in hominini psychological evolution, leading to more social behaviors. Although their ceremonial practices and rituals have historically been overlooked and misunderstood, it is now commonly recognized that shamans provided medical care through the use of psychedelics, and this acceptance has caused an exponential increase of Westernized, recreational use. Although psychedelics are being implemented in Western medicine, it is important to shed light on the origins of use, and their cultural and societal significance.

Allie Oberg "THE EBU GOGO"

The legend of the Ebu Gogo from the Nage people of Flores tells a story of a small humanoid creature that lived on the island with humans. They were fast runners with their own language who lived in the caves. The physical description of the Ebu Gogo is eerily similar to what *Homo floresiensis*, a small hominin found on the island of Flores, looked like. It may be possible that what these villagers were actually interacting with was not Ebu Gogo or monkeys, as the Ebu Gogo has often been attributed to, but few surviving *Homo floresiensis* before what is believed to be their extinction. Though the fossil record has not proved this, we should consider how rare fossils are. Some scientists even think it is possible that Ebu Gogo still exist on the island today and have yet to be found. Arguing that it has happened before that a once believed to be extinct species is found again. Is it possible that they could have survived to today, how would

they have adapted over time and why wouldn't they have been found by now? It is definitely possible that the folklore of the Ebu Gogo came from early interactions between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo floresiensis* however it is probably unlikely that they still exist in hiding today.

AJ Riley "Changing Life Changes Death: An Examination of How Funerary Practices Adapt in Response to Larger Cultural Change"

Death is a natural and unavoidable end to a person's life. The only part of death that we have any kind of control of when it arrives for someone in our community, is what to do afterwards. I am of the opinion that the ceremonies, rituals and practices around death are a reflection of our larger cultures norms and when there is a significant change in our culture, it is also reflected in our funerary practices. The first example of this I will examine is how the funeral practices and the concept of the "sleeping soul" adapted to changing cultural norms, in this case the changing belief system, with the incursion of Christianity throughout Indonesia. The second example I explore is the American funeral home during the 20th century, whose initial rising prevalence was due, in part, to the increased popularity of embalming the deceased as part of the funeral practice. In the last few decades, however, it has seen a slow decrease as people seek alternate forms of laying their deceased to rest. Funerals and funerary practices adapt and change in response to larger cultural shifts, keeping with older traditions while incorporating new thoughts, beliefs or cultural norms.

Olive Salas "Blood Rituals Represent Historic Biocultural Knowledge"

Blood as a symbol transverses culture and history. The conceptualization of blood as a force of life represents a prehistoric understanding of blood as essential to biological function. The contexts under which humans interact with blood have led us to associate it with life, death, birth, and pain. It is a highly valued anatomical feature of humans. The way blood is contained in veins deep below the skin lead many cultures to find it protected and sacred, adding a level of significance to its release. When humans are born, they are covered in blood and when they lose enough, they die. These associations are the foundation of blood's symbolism as a sacred life force. When cultural emphasis is placed on blood, it makes it a common substance for ritualistic behavior. Blood rituals most often involve the letting of blood from an animal or human, and usually symbolizes a return of a sacred life force to the universe. This project will examine how the crucifixion of Yeshua of Nazareth resulted in sacrificial blood rituals. Ritual blood sacrifices are seen in Christian religions as an atonement for sin. The crucifixion of Yeshua for blasphemy has been seen as the ultimate sacrifice in Christian sects. Followers of a religion attribute serendipitous events as acts of God, such as the blasphemy committed by Jesus leading to his death. Yeshua's crucifixion, the cultural values of servitude, and the symbolic representation of blood have led to ritualistic blood rituals in Christianity that spans cultures.

Laura Smith "Fear of the unknown: a paleopathological analysis of the occult and disease"

Depictions of the occult, analogous in appearance to symptoms of disease, may provide evidence required to form formal diagnoses in lieu of supporting archeology. In particular, diseases targeting the flesh and mind are often absent in the fossil record, leading paleopathologists to seek diagnosis through retrospection of the occult. Distortions of the human form embodying paranormal myth, or emerging afflictions previously unknown to a culture, are especially subject to this interpretation. Figures like zombies and lepers are characterized by their degradation of flesh, mirroring corresponding symptoms of disease. Conditions affecting human behavior and cerebral function have similarly been attributed to the paranormal, describing behavior considered “deviant”. This deviance, met with diagnoses of lycanthropy and witchcraft, resemble symptoms of neurodivergence, or adjacent physical afflictions affecting neural function. This study observes connections between historical records of the occult and symptomatic disease founded by a common theme: fear of the unknown. Despite this knowledge, further study into occult paleopathology may be confounded by diseases whose morbidity out-paces its expression of symptoms. A lack of diagnostic documentation due to taboo and ostracization of symptomatic individuals compounds the issue. Occult diagnoses of disease align with taboos and fears prevalent throughout human history, informing issues in modern day regarding stigma and seeking care.

Veronica Smith "Unrest In Peace: The Victims and Perpetrators of the Illegal Bone Trade"

The sale of illegally obtained human skeletons for display in medical practices or as collectibles has occurred for centuries. Despite this, the process of acquiring these remains is poorly understood due to its secretive nature, making it challenging to identify those involved. Within the trade, there is a disturbing pattern whereby low-income minorities are disproportionately affected due to the inadequate legal protection surrounding anonymous human remains wherein deceased humans do not have the same legal safeguards as when they were alive. My research has shown that the majority of buyers in this illicit trade are located in the Northwestern hemisphere, while most of the sellers operate from the East. Intermediary bone-trading factories unjustly obtain the remains, which are then stripped of flesh and sold to other parties. This illicit process obscures the victims' identities and allows traders to avoid legal consequences. This literature review aims to address the lack of information about the illegal market for human skeletal bone trading using a combination of forensic data, ethnographies, social media analytics, and historical accounts. Ultimately, this review will shed light on a lucrative black market that has persisted for centuries, with the hope of informing policy and practice changes to better protect human remains and prevent further exploitation of marginalized communities.

Abbigail Sweetser "Pre-Monotheistic Occultic Practices Across The Levant: Plastered Skulls, Idol Worship, and Teraphim"

The development of monotheism necessitated the departure from pre-existing notions of faith and their embedded cultural rituals. Before the rise of worshiping an omnipotent God, there was a widespread reverence for alternative sacred practices. The 1953 discovery of 7 Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period skulls with faces of plaster in the ancient Palestinian city of Jericho

paved the way for anthropological research of pre-monotheistic occultic practices. Since the discovery of the Jericho skulls, there have been over 73 skulls found across the Levant that are believed to be a part of a greater culture consisting of divination, necromancy, and ancestor worship. In this paper I discuss the use of modern forensics and funerary taphonomy, as well as the regional differences in skull treatment and preservation. The 'plastered skulls' can offer crucial data on an ancient culture that has since been lost to religious assimilation and time. Evaluations of the Torah/Old Testament within a historical framework can produce critical accounts of 'idol worship' which are observed through the use of 'talking heads' and 'teraphim' both of which point towards sacred skulls. I will discuss the commonly occurring use of Pagan practices within monotheistic religion as a form of integration and dominance along with the etymology of the Hebrew 'teraphim', tying both concepts to the skulls. The Levant is a region full of ancient cultures beyond the origins of modern religion, anthropology can shed light on what these people once believed to be holy - before God.

Erin Truong "The Cultural Interpretations of Mental Health as Witchcraft in Sub-Saharan African Countries"

Mental illness has been a growing problem for both those afflicted and their caregivers. Those in Sub-Saharan African countries especially struggle to find proper care for mental disorders as they are often perceived as witchcraft. Witchcraft is a belief had by almost every African society, each having unique social, religious, and cultural ideologies that may or may not dictate the actions of the individuals in each community. Regarding Western medicine, there is far more acceptance of physical medical techniques than mental health practices. There is a fear of mental health issues because of the prevalent belief in Witchcraft in Sub-Saharan countries, leading to the ostracization, abuse, and overall neglect of those accused including children and the elderly. In addition to cultural ideologies revolving around supernatural forces, there is also a lack of education on mental health disorders such as dementia, schizophrenia, etc. among local populations and medical professionals that reside in these countries. Because of this, people with mental illness often get misdiagnosed and do not receive proper treatment. Since a large majority of African societies believe in the existence of witches and trust in traditional and spiritual help, the key to providing education on mental health is the collaboration of both healthcare professionals and local authorities. Proper mental health education will save those affected from social stigmatization and help give the vulnerable adequate healthcare.

Trevor Turpen "Killing Folklore: The Deviant Burials of Slavic Vampires"

Popular culture and media have warped the way that vampires have been perceived over time. Vampires are an important aspect of Slavic culture and folklore, especially around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Archaeologists have uncovered many grave sites throughout Poland where several individuals had been buried in a deviant fashion similar to practices that can be found in Slavic folktales. The burial practices include placing apotropaic artifacts, like sickles, bricks, and stakes on top of or inside the body. These burial methods have been detailed in folklore throughout the region and have shown up in several old cemeteries across Eastern

Europe. At one of the sites in Draskow, Poland, there were studies done on the teeth that showed the bodies belonging to members of the community rather than outsiders. There are many reasons why a person may have been entombed this way. It is believed that manner of death is a potential reason for why the vampires are found staked to the earth. The way someone dies can lead to them being seen as a vampire, where vampire is a blanket term used to describe someone who may have lived an 'unclean' life or someone that died a violent death. It is believed that these people were more susceptible to postmortem demonic activity therefore they were buried in a way that protected their bodies from evil. Folklore is important to archaeology because it can help us explain why we might find oddities we would otherwise have no explanation for.

Grace Wales "The Folklore Behind Ghosts: Burial Rituals Enacted to Prevent the Haunting of the Living"

A ghost can be defined as the spirit or soul of a dead human or animal that can appear to others and is often seen as a bad omen. Belief in ghosts and the afterlife is present cross-culturally, and rituals have frequently been performed in attempts to ensure safe passage to the afterlife so that spirits do not linger to haunt the living. There is folklore centered on these beliefs and rituals that spans the period from the ancient Egyptians all the way to the present day. Stories focusing on ghosts are often related to religious ideas and may also consider an individual's cause of passing. For example, if someone died a premature or non-peaceful death, many cultures would perform ceremonies and burial rituals to ensure that their spirit would move on to the afterlife. For millennia, legends about ghosts have existed in society and these legends will likely continue to be passed on along with other folklore. Why is it that ghosts, spirits, and souls have been a common subject throughout our society for hundreds of years? Is it something that has been passed down generationally, is it related to religious purposes, or perhaps a combination of both? The cultural and archaeological reasons behind ghosts are important to our society because it is a window into the past and provides food for thought to what happens after we die.

Tess Wassermann "Witchcraft and the Growing Practice of Herbalism"

Medicinal healing and the practice of herbalism has been around for ages and is becoming a growing practice among many communities. Using herbs for a multitude of different purposes is still around and even used among more modern spiritual groups like witchcraft and practicing witches. With its beginnings in Indigenous communities, the practice was popular for curing physical ailments as well as using certain herbs as offerings, or for cleansing the soul and spirit. They are part of rituals as well as home remedies. Certain herbs in witchcraft have attachments to certain things such as love, wealth, cleansing, and even luck. These can also help with ailments. I want to find out the science behind such practices and how these associations came to be, I also believe it is important to recognize the history of the practice and how it has been appropriated in modern culture. I want to know what makes certain herbs and spices have certain effects on the body as well as the brain given the growing popularity

of the practice. What is the connection between the herbs and spirits on both sides of the spectrum, if any at all.

Sydney Wong "From Fear to Fascination: The Impacts of Community and Media on Individual Perceptions of the Occult"

Occult legends and supernatural beings are rooted in the concepts of difference and the unknown. Supernatural subjects have been present in popular culture for thousands of years, however, portrayal of them as protagonists in media is a relatively recent phenomenon. The shift from fear to fascination can be analyzed through the interactions between individual experiences and overarching cultural norms. Connections between both cultural and individual identity, and the subsequent response to defiance of cultural norms through occult examples are demonstrated through comparisons of popular media such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and Taika Waititi's *What We Do in the Shadows*. I explore the effort to preserve cultural identity through rejection of the unknown, as well as the potential ostracization of community members that may occur as a result. Additionally, this literature review investigates the connection between community and human empathy, addressing the tendency to anthropomorphize and romanticize occult subjects; as well as the subsequent projection onto these characters and the relationship between this behavior and social ostracization. Ultimately, this review discusses the sociocultural factors that influence individual perspectives on occult subjects; focusing on the psychology of human empathy and the impacts of social ostracization— interpreted through an occult lens from origins to modern media.