

September 2019

To: Second Term Seniors in Social Studies
From: Anya Bassett, Director of Social Studies
Re: Thesis Titles and Paragraphs Due October 8th

Please submit a working title and a five-sentence description of your project to Katie Greene (kgreene@fas.harvard.edu) by **October 8th, 2019**. This list will go out to potential readers. Titles should clearly indicate the subject of the essay, and descriptions should cover methodology and general approach. Please note your title may change for the final version of your thesis.

Below please find four sample titles and paragraphs:

Neil Alacha

Rhetoric or Right?: The Reality of Response to Humanitarian Crises

This project enters the academic conversation of whether a “rights-based approach” or a “human welfare/human development-based approach” is a more appropriate mechanism for bettering lives in response to a humanitarian crisis, hypothesizing that the two must go hand in hand in order for a short-term response to be paved into a long-term reality. The thesis uses the case study of policy set for Syrian refugees in Jordan by various UN agencies and international NGOs working in concert. The researcher conducted 30 interviews of these policymakers in Amman, Jordan during the summer of 2015, and analyzed dozens of UN and NGO reports produced during that time period regarding the approach to the refugee crisis and its response priorities. The researcher discovered that though the Syrian refugee response in Jordan does represent a blended rights and development approach termed “resilience,” the approach has been a haphazard political move meant to placate the security concerns of the Jordanian government and Western donors, rather than a guiding principle for improving refugees’ lives.

Jenny Choi

Die If We Scatter: Korean Americans and Transnational Civic Engagement

This thesis explores how first-generation Koreans evaluate their immigrant realities and identities and how their efforts to survive in their new socioeconomic, racial, and other social orders materialize. To that end, I collected ethnographic and interview data from approximately 30 first-generation Korean Americans who are ethnic leaders in the Korean immigrant community of Greater NY. The impetus for the thesis is an ongoing debate over whether transnational involvement or identification has a positive or detrimental effect on mainstream civic/political engagement in the receiving country. I consider the ways in which my subjects engage with concepts such as social citizenship and ethno-nationalism (although they are not necessarily equipped with the vocabulary), and attempt to justify, from their perspective, the transnational civic space that they have created between Korea and Korean America.

Rebecca Gonzalez-Rivas

I Agree to the Terms and Conditions: How Data Collection Threatens Privacy

The pervasiveness and popularity of the Internet, with its unprecedented amounts of sharing, have led some to argue that privacy no longer matters, while others suggest that privacy should be replaced by transparency. I refute both of these claims, arguing that privacy assures individuals control and autonomy of choice, while transparency only benefits those already in positions of power. The

development of the Internet was supposed to level the playing field for all users, but its subsequent commodification dealt a crippling blow to privacy, one that is only worsened by calls for transparency. Through conceptual and interpretive analysis of social theory, I examine threats to information privacy brought on by governmental and corporate bodies and analyze how privacy, not transparency, allows for self-determined behavior.

Teagan Lende

A Fruitful Business: The Sustainable Nature of Informal Produce Vending and the Rastafari Moral Economy in Cape Town, South Africa

This thesis explores the role of informal fruit and vegetable vendors in the broader economy and society of Cape Town, South Africa. Many academics and development organizations view informality as an intermediate step in development and promote the idea that governments should help those in this sector find formal employment. In light of the background literature, this thesis asks if informal produce vending is sustainable for the economy, the society, or the environment. Drawing on ethnographic interviews and secondary sources, this thesis argues that the informal fruit and vegetable vending sector, especially the parts run within the moral economy of local Rastafari communities, provides an innovative space for members of various socioeconomic classes to create economic, social, and environmental benefits.