

Thesis Titles and Paragraphs Due October 4, 2022

Please submit a working title and a five-sentence description of your project to Katie Greene (kgreene@fas.harvard.edu) by **October 4, 2022**. This list will go out to potential readers. Titles should clearly indicate the subject of the essay and the description should cover methodology and argument. You may change your title before submitting your thesis.

Below please find four sample titles and paragraphs:

Eloise Ackman

No Way Out: Reification in Western Marxism and Contemporary Consciousness

This thesis explores the concept of reification as articulated by Karl Marx, Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno, and Mark Fisher, among others. I address the following questions: How can Lukács' theory of reification and Adorno's account of the "culture industry" help us understand what Mark Fisher calls "capitalist realism" prevalent in neoliberal society today?; How do Lukács and Adorno foreshadow today's belief that there is no alternative to the capitalist order?; Is today's capitalist realism a more advanced form of reification or something qualitatively different? I approach these questions through the critical reconstruction of seminal philosophical texts, and I argue that contemporary reification is more insidious and totalizing than the reification described by Lukács and Adorno.

Isabel Bernhard

Democratic Consolidation through Denuclearization in (Post-) Cold War Argentina and Brazil, 1983-1994

This thesis investigates how and why Argentina and Brazil's civilian governments consolidated control over each country's military-managed nuclear program in the 1980s and 1990s. Through this case pairing, I address the larger question of how new democracies formed after military rule can decisively subordinate military institutions to civilian authority. My analysis relies on process tracing methodology, over 900 pages of archival documents, and 11 interviews. I find that Brazil's democratic government had significant difficulty consolidating control over the military-run nuclear program, while Argentina's government did so with relative ease. From these divergent narratives, I argue that the democratic consolidation literature's key idea of civilian "control" should be nuanced, and I propose a revised definition. I also argue that different processes of civilian control can be explained by structural factors present during these countries' democratic transitions.

Segan Helle

'You Can't Squeeze Blood Out of A Turnip': Understanding Homeless Courts in the Age of Penalizing Poverty

In response to the criminalization of acts associated with homelessness, a number of American communities have developed alternative sentencing programs where homeless individuals who

are receiving rehabilitative services can have their criminal cases resolved. This project examines the advent and spread of homeless court programs and considers how they affect understandings of the relationship between poverty and culpability. Based on 31 interviews with legal actors and service providers in homeless court programs in San Diego, California and Birmingham Alabama, I argue that homeless court programs have the ability to cross cultural and political boundaries by appealing to claims of practicality, social justice, and charity. By humanizing people experiencing homelessness, homeless court programs create an opportunity for critiquing the neoliberal structures that penalize poverty and draw attention to the need for further reforms. However, my research shows that actors in San Diego frame their program as a response to injustice, while actors in Birmingham frame theirs as an act of Christian charity, suggesting a limit to the extent that homeless courts can redefine conceptions of justice for those experiencing homelessness.

Francesco Rolando

Temporaneous Existences: Migrants' Access to and Exclusion from Healthcare Services in Turin, Italy

Migration in Europe is often discussed as a security crisis occurring at the borders of the continent, thus overshadowing forms of reception and exclusion that take place in the mainland. My ethnographic thesis investigates the relation between immigrants and the state in Italy beyond narratives of arrival, specifically at the interface between foreigners and healthcare services. The question I address is whether welfare services, and in particular healthcare services, act as boundaries separating citizens and non-citizens or—in other words—what is the role of healthcare in defining the “migrant” in contemporary Italy? To answer this question, I conducted more than 300 hours of participant observation while volunteering at a clinic which provides basic medical assistance to those unable or unwilling to access the national healthcare system in Turin. In my thesis, I argue that healthcare services participate in the creation of the unstable temporalities that define the lives of non-citizens because assistance is provided on a temporary basis to uphold human rights and deal with emergencies, while stable, long-term migratory pathways are ephemeral and disappointing.