

2019 McGregor proposals for students

Faculty Name	Dept.	Project Title	Project Abstract
1. Alford, Kristen	Social Work	Water and Health: Contextualizing and Evaluating Water Filter Distribution in Liberia (Phase 3)	<p>This project will be in conjunction with the Clean Water Institute of Calvin College (CWICC) who has been contracted by Sawyer Products, Inc. to analyze the distribution, use, and efficacy of Point One Water Filters in Liberia, West Africa. Between 2016 and 2020, Sawyer Inc. is partnering with local Liberian NGOs to distribute Point One Water Filters to 100,000 households in Liberia in an effort to provide means for clean drinking water. In order to test the use and efficacy of the water filters among these households, the NGO partners have been collecting household data at baseline, 2 weeks, and 8 weeks. This winter (2019) the teams are gathering one-year follow-up data from a subsample of villages. Sawyer Inc. has partnered with the CWICC for the data analysis portion of this project. The major goals of this project are to understand whether the filters are being used (and being used correctly) as well as if the water filters are influencing social and health outcomes (diarrheal rates, missed days of work/school, etc.). Better understanding of these variables will help us as we look towards addressing global clean water needs and solutions.</p> <p>This aspect of the project will focus on evaluating the public health effects of filter distribution, most notably researching the effects of water filter distribution on diarrheal rates of children under five in Liberia. The McGregor student will be part of an interdisciplinary team from the CWICC, mathematics and statistics department, and geology, geography, and environmental sciences department. The McGregor student will work with the faculty member to analyze data and produce meaningful ways of presenting the data to a larger audience through the development of conference abstracts and academic papers.</p>
2. Bjelland, Mark	Geology, Geography, & Environmental Studies	Post-Industrial Places: The New Inner City and What Was Left Behind	<p>This project explores the fate of inner-city industrial land in North American cities. Urban scholar Allan Mallach writes in <i>The Divided City</i> of the unevenness of the urban revival across American cities. Some cities have undergone a renaissance while others languish. This project uses inner-city industrial districts as a vantage point from which to assess how individual city's have fared within an increasingly global economy. While land devoted to manufacturing, warehousing, railroad yards, and port facilities typically comprises just 5-20% of a city's land area, it is ground zero for the environmental, economic, and social transformation of cities. Whether such land remains in industrial use, lies vacant, or has been converted to new uses speaks volumes to the path a city has taken. Remediated, reimagined, and redeveloped former industrial lands are now synonymous with thriving mixed-use neighborhoods such as Milwaukee's Beerline B, Minneapolis' North Loop and Mill District, Portland's Pearl District, and Vancouver's Yaletown and Coal Harbour. Spaces of physical work have been transformed into spaces where a new class of urban dwellers live, play, and engage in post-industrial service sector work. The goal of the project is to begin assembling data for a larger project that will narrate the behind-the-scenes story of post-industrial urban rebirth and its uneven geographies. What makes this project unique is that it pays attention to the details of the land transformation process including toxic residues, public subsidies, and overlooked spaces of disinvestment and decay. Focusing on a select group of large and mid-size North American central cities, these are the specific questions to be addressed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> How much deindustrialization, measured in jobs, value-added, and establishments, has occurred in different cities? Where and to what extent has former industrial land been converted to new uses? What fraction of recent population growth in major North American cities has taken place on or adjacent to converted industrial lands? What are the demographic characteristics of the neighborhoods that have emerged on converted industrial lands? In what ways does redeveloped industrial land contribute to environmental sustainability? What lingering toxic chemicals remain in converted industrial lands?
3. den Dulk, Kevin	Political Science	Restorative Justice for Returning Citizens: A Mapping Project	<p>Men and women returning from prison have a range of immediate and long-term needs, from employment to housing. But the information about service providers who are friendly to returning citizens is often fragmented and difficult to find. The Henry Institute, in partnership with Calvin's Geography Department and with support from the Michigan Department of Corrections, is addressing that problem by mapping services at a county level in the state of Michigan.</p> <p>So far we have gathered data on a half-dozen counties in the state of Michigan. The map is publicly available in beta form at http://gis.calvin.edu/rc. Families, service providers, parole officers, government agencies, and returning citizens themselves are already actively using it. To our knowledge, the map is the first of its kind in Michigan, and perhaps nationwide.</p> <p>The project is ongoing as we expand the map to new counties and use the underlying data on providers to identify and explain service "deserts". We hope to cover most of the state of Michigan within a few years, largely with the help of a cadre of student researchers who gather data on services, help engage potential map users, and refine the map interface.</p>

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4. Lam, Maria	Business	Managing diversity and inclusion in organizations	<p>The project is to examine how organizations change their leadership, organization systems and practices to maximize the potential advantages of diversified workforce and minimize its potential disadvantages. The researcher will investigate the flexibility and inclusiveness of the organizations as well as the individuals. She will use the framework proposed by Fly and Thomas (2001) to explore what structures, systems, policies, practices, and processes that support diversity and inclusion. She will investigate how culture-identity-group memberships affect people, their relationships, and their work. This scholarship will enable her to collect the data of the best practices in the area of managing diversity, and to develop new insights and applications. The data will be collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and secondary data. Her team will contact organizations which have earned diversity and inclusion awards in the recent three years. They will enter the organization, negotiate the terms of inquiry, collect data, and provide feedback in the summer of 2019.</p> <p>During the process of collecting data, the team will access archival data or secondary data to reinterpret their findings.</p> <p>The researcher will discuss the findings with her student helper, the participant organizations, and other experts to generate new insights in this area.</p>
5. Lim, Sung Soo	Economics	"The human mind and economic decisions in developing countries: what we know and what we don't."	<p>The mainstream economics represented by the neoclassical economics assumes that human beings and their behavior are fundamentally rational. This project revisits the implications of the neoclassical assumptions and robustness of the foundation in the context of developing countries, where people face substantial risk and uncertainty. Economists have provided an array of economic theories to explain how individuals make their choices facing uncertainty, typically under the paradigm of the neoclassical economics. In contrast, there is a growing literature, in both psychology and behavioral economics, which suggests that human psychology plays an important role in economic decisions especially under uncertainty. The findings of these studies challenge the view that decisions made by individuals can be rationalized in that their economic behaviors are often found to be seemingly irrational under the paradigm of the neoclassical economics. This project examines the role of human mind in economic decisions in the context of developing countries, where many people suffer from deep and persistent poverty. Understanding the role of human mind in economic decisions is important as it helps to derive better policy implications for the wellbeing of the poor in developing countries. To this end, this project reviews the literature and investigates the role of human mind such as perception, confidence, pessimism, fear, and aspirations in economic decisions made by individuals in developing countries. Overall, this project intends to overview what we do know and what we don't know about the human mind and economic decisions in underprivileged societies.</p>
6. Mulder, Mark	Sociology	Rust Belt Religion: Rural Consciousness, Politics, and Religious Identity	<p>As we all know, the 2016 US Presidential election has had many repercussions. One of the loudest has been the renewed attention given to different strains of white voters and their political identities. In particular, much has been written about the segment of white evangelicals who remain seemingly undaunted in their staunch support for President Donald Trump to the point where a colleague of mine has suggested that someone should write a book entitled, "Christianity and Evangelicalism", an intimation that contemporary white evangelicalism should no longer be categorized as being within the orthodox Christian tradition. Many pages have also been devoted to rural white voters who seem to have taken a decidedly conservative turn in their partisanship. Terms like "mourning", "resentment", "rage", "grief", and "rural consciousness" have been implemented as frequent descriptors of members of these demographic locales. Our early reports from the field, though, indicate that "malaise" and "indifference" might better capture the political dispositions of voters from the area.</p> <p>The "Rust Belt Religion" project utilizes participant observation and semi-structured interviews in and around Waupun, WI to better understand how religion might inform rural political identities. The study began with participant observation fieldwork in late 2017. At that same time, a first round of semi-structured interviews were conducted with persons identifying as either mainline Protestant or Catholic. A second round of interviews with white evangelicals occurred in the summer of 2018.</p>
7. Noe, David	Classical Languages	Research on 16th- and 17th-Century Latin Theological and Philosophical Works	<p>This project continues my growing body of work in translations from Latin to English of a variety of 16th and 17th century authors. Recently concluded and published work includes Franciscus Junius (On True Theology), Theodore Beza (A Clear and Simple Treatise on the Lord's Supper), and William Perkins (Two memory treatises). This coming summer the finished translation of John Calvin's <i>Duae Epistolae</i>, on which a McGregor Fellow worked in the summer of 2018, will be published. Additional work under contract includes a nearly finished translation of John Arrowsmith's <i>Tactica Sacra</i>, John Owen's <i>Theologoumena Pantodapa</i>, a portion of Peter Martyr Vermigli's <i>Loci Communes on Romans</i>, and works by Oliver Bowles (editor), Samuel Rutherford (translator), and Anthony Tuckney (translator). In addition, I was invited to contribute a panel proposal for the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference (October 2019, St. Louis Missouri) to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Theodore Beza's birth. This will be turned into a book chapter for a forthcoming anthology edited by Dr. Kirk Summers and Dr. Scott Manetsch.</p> <p>Finally, I was invited to submit a manuscript proposal for the <i>Collected Works of Erasmus</i> series, published by University of Toronto Press and edited by Riemer Faber (University of Waterloo). I will be working on Erasmus' Annotations to the Gospel of Mark, and submitting a proposal July 1.</p> <p>This project then concerns developing a number of different lines of research on these closely related authors. The student researcher would begin by helping to edit either Vermigli or the Beza paper, and then move on to Erasmus or Owen. The student researcher would need to have good proficiency in Latin and be astute with bibliography. In addition, the selected individual would need interest in theological and philosophical topics, be able to summarize complicated essays and articles concisely, and have good editing skills.</p>

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8. Smit, Laura	Religion	Beautiful Theology	<p>C. S. Lewis says that a student can often get more help from another student than from her teacher, since the teacher has forgotten the sorts of questions that someone is asking who is new to the topic, whereas the other student, especially one who is just slightly ahead of the one just starting out, will remember what was initially confusing.</p> <p>I'm writing a book targeted to students, and I need a student (or three) who will help me to answer the right questions, the questions I will not think of. The book is an attempt to capture what I try to do in REL131, which is to teach theology through the lens of beauty. I'm looking for a student fellow who would enjoy reading systematic theology and other theologically-informed literature, trying to understand how this aesthetic approach has been used in the past; who would be able to write clearly in response to such reading, highlighting both the insights and the questions that seem pressing to him/her; who would be competent to offer helpful feedback on my own drafts for this book; and who would be a creative, thoughtful conversation partner as we work through the resources that we are exploring.</p> <p>I don't know where a McGregor fellow would be housed in the Religion department, but it's possible that we will be working in close proximity for at least part of the day, meaning there might be plenty of informal conversation. However, I would expect that we would meet 3 to 5 times each week for an extended conversation, usually in the late afternoon, to review any writing either of us has done since we last met, to go over the day's reading and the insights it has sparked, to do some brainstorming about questions and possibilities, and to make a plan for the next day.</p>
9. Timpe, Kevin	Philosophy	Beyond the University: Public Scholarship and Social Engagement	<p>Our project would explore the feasibility and scalability of adapting Calvin faculty member's current scholarly work for a public audience. The impetus for this comes from the opening statements of Calvin's 2030 vision: Calvin will become a Christian liberal arts university with an expanded global influence. We envision Calvin University as a trusted partner for learning across religious and cultural differences and throughout the academy, the church, and the world. While Calvin professors' current scholarship impacts the academy and our scholarly communities, too much of it fails to engage the church and general public. Experimenting now with new practices aimed toward gaining influence and building trust outside the academy will help Calvin fulfill this mission in the future.</p> <p>The process of transitioning current scholarly work into formats compatible with public scholarship has already begun for Prof. Du Mez, who has been working with John Hwang (see https://kristindumez.com/resources/). Prof. Du Mez's current work includes the final stages of her book project on evangelical masculinity and militarism, and her ongoing public scholarship on issues related to gender, religion, and politics. Prof. Rienstra has a long track record of writing and speaking for general audiences. Her current project, now in its initial stages, combines nature writing and spiritual writing, exploring what it will take to create deeper, more resilient connections to place in a changing climate, with the West Michigan dunes region as a case study. Prof. Timpe's work, especially on disability and advocacy, has direct but currently under-explored potential to benefit parts of the general public. His ongoing work seeks to bring scholarly work on advocacy and public policy directly to bear on disability advocacy in local communities and schools. All of these projects aim to translate academic expertise in order to inform and challenge public audiences.</p> <p>We'd like to capitalize on our scholarly endeavors, John Hwang's expertise, and other campus resources, combining these resources to show what scholarly public engagement can look like. The three faculty will work with two students to develop a prototype system for preparing current faculty scholarship and teaching materials for public engagement, primarily through online platforms.</p> <p>Prof. Du Mez's initial forays into public scholarship have yielded promising results. Her author Facebook page, set up in October, has over 1100 followers and averages 11K post reaches and 15K post engagements per month. Her website, set up in November and not yet promoted, has garnered 6500 page views and 1225 users. Projects highlighted on the website and social media have led to national media interviews, speaking invitations, offers of book deals, and have helped build networks with fellow academics, journalists, pastors, publishers, and laypeople. For instance, a recent talk given at the 2019 American Historical Association drew attention on social media; after the audio was posted at kristindumez.com the talk was covered by The Christian Post, and a revised version will appear as an op ed next week at Religion News Service.</p>
10. Westra, Joel	Political Science	Shaping the International Security Order: Global Security Governance in a Changing World	<p>Since the close of World War II, states have undertaken efforts to shape the institutional architecture of the existing, postwar international security order by proposing to build and/or to rebuild institutions and associated institutional entities and agents pertaining to global security issues. These include formalized arrangements, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), and legalized arrangements, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty (CFE). Proposed arrangements have varied, both in the design features they entail and in their subsequent acceptance and implementation by states. The Faculty Mentor and Student Researcher will continue work on multiyear research project seeking to explain such variation. Thus far, the project has produced a dataset containing observations of (1) design features entailed within proposed institutional arrangements, (2) subsequent acceptance and implementation of proposed arrangements by states, and (3) power asymmetries among eligible member states within proposed arrangements, which the Faculty Mentor is using for quantitative analysis of institutional design processes and outcomes. This summer, the Faculty Mentor and Student Researcher will continue work on the project by collecting observations of bargaining processes in selected cases (i.e. qualitative data), which will be used to help answer additional questions regarding institutional design processes and outcomes.</p>