

2022 McGregor proposals for students

Faculty Name	Dept.	Project Title	Project Abstract
1. Bjelland, Mark	Geology, Geography, & Environmental Studies	The Revitalized Rust Belt	<p>This project is part of a broader, multi-year research project on post-industrial cities. The central thesis is that while deindustrialization has led to rising poverty and population decline in Rust Belt cities such as Detroit and Flint, it has also set the stage for dramatic economic, social, environmental, and landscape change in other cities. This project examines how revitalized industrial cities have been transformed by the redevelopment of polluted, former industrial lands into new places to live, work, and play. In Grand Rapids this has taken the form of derelict furniture factories converted to offices and residences and factory sites redeveloped into civic facilities.</p> <p>In order to spur these transformations, successful cities have relied upon local philanthropists, public-private development partnerships, public subsidies, and entrepreneurial modes of governance. Revitalized Rust Belt cities have transitioned from manufacturing tangible goods to a knowledge economy focused on the production of intangibles—data, computer code, websites, education, and health care.</p> <p>This project involves documenting landscape changes in inner city neighborhoods in Chicago, Detroit, Grand Rapids, and Milwaukee, by exploring land use changes and specific redevelopment projects. One student researcher will focus on documenting the histories of specific urban redevelopment projects while another research student will focus on mapping the changing land uses, land values, and demographics using a geographic information system (GIS). Students will conduct archival work with historic maps, photographs, city directories, and government agency files. In the field, researchers will photograph and document redeveloped areas. Some overnight travel to Midwest cities is planned. For Grand Rapids, an area of focus will be the role of philanthropists and public-private economic development collaborations, in particular the Grand Action Committee and Grand Action 2.0 non-profit organizations.</p>
2. den Dulk, Kevin and VanHorn, Jason	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>
3. Du Mez, Kristin	History	Live Laugh Love: A Cultural History of White Christian Womanhood	<p>This project examines popular religious culture such as inspirational fiction, contemporary Christian music, mommy blogs, HGTV, Hallmark films, and MLMs, and examines how these products shape the religious, political, and cultural ideals of white Christian women. These cultural products are analyzed in terms of neoliberalism, postfeminism, and white supremacy. This project examines the ways in which the Christian market is gendered, and how it is deliberately crafted to appeal to conservative, white, middle-class women. Significant attention will be given to the ways in which beauty and domesticity are celebrated, and to the economic ideals that are imparted through pop culture. The end product is a book that will be published in 2023.</p>

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4. Hanson, Craig	Art & Art History	Calvin's Knollcrest Campus: A Fifty-Year Celebration, 1973-2023	<p>Developed according to Master Principles established in 1959, Calvin's Knollcrest campus opened gradually during the 1960s and early 70s, with students continuing to take some classes on Franklin Street. 1973 was the point at which all classes began meeting on the new campus.</p> <p>We as members of the Calvin community are regularly reminded of the challenges of maintaining 50-year-old buildings, but we rarely have been given opportunities for explicitly celebrating an extraordinary campus. With the fiftieth anniversary approaching, the Center Art Gallery plans to mount an exhibition focusing on Bill Fyfe, the architect who still today is responsible more than any other individual what Calvin's built environment entails.</p> <p>Fyfe and his vision for Calvin are subjects woefully under-researched, shamefully so, given the widespread pride that the Calvin community takes in the campus. Because Fyfe worked with Frank Lloyd Wright in the early 1930s, many of his papers and other projects have been preserved in a few repositories across the country. There are source materials. Unfortunately, members of our community have been content with a fairly thin understanding of Fyfe's larger career (largely mediated, ironically, by Frank Gorman, who though he thought the world of Fyfe, in many ways worked against his architectural vision for campus).</p> <p>This McGregor Project is ideal preparation for a student (or two students) interested in learning more about architecture, archives, curatorial practice, and historical methods. Craig Hanson will be the primary faculty member directing the project, but it will also move forward with close cooperation of Brent Williams (Center Art Gallery director and co-chair of the Visual and Performing Arts department) and advice from Michael DeMaagd Rodriguez (a Calvin alum, who recently finished his M.Arch at Notre Dame).</p> <p>The summer research will support an exhibition at the Center Art Gallery. Possible areas of exploration include: *Bill Fyfe's vision for campus (what did he think he was doing?) *Contextualizing Calvin's campus within Fyfe's wider career *A richer understanding of the relationship between Fyfe and Spoelhof *Documentation of students' experience of the new campus (particularly students who attended classes on both campuses.</p> <p>Given the scope and collaborative character of the project, we are asking for some flexibility in student selection. We believe the project is ideally suited for *two students*. That might entail two students sharing the regular hours/salary of a single fellowship; or it might entail two full fellowships. An oral history of Calvin's campus in the early 1970s could itself constitute an entire fellowship. The project has some flexibility, and we suspect that the applicant pool could also be factors in the decision. We realize it also may depend upon the number of others applying for McGregor funds. Because the project is inherently about collaboration, we believe that spirit of teamwork makes more sense with two students than with one.</p>
5. Koopman, Doug	Political Science	Indispensable Supports? Religion, Public Morality, and Politics in American Culture	<p>This summer's work is to complete a book project, begun last Summer in the McGregor program, with Prof. Koopman and a Wheaton College professor colleague, already under contract with Cambridge University Press. The book's working title is, as above, "Indispensable Supports? Religion, Public Morality, and Politics in American Culture. We are closing in on completing the book, and expect to have it finished for the publisher by August 1. The first portion of the book sets the current stage, of strong and polarized religious messaging into American politics, and the rise of populist nationalism in a portion of Christianity, along with the rise of a variety of Seculars, including some very respectful of religion. The key question we ask is in the title, and derived from George Washington's Farewell Address as president, claiming religion produces a morality that is valuable for civic participation. We openly examine whether this is still the case--is current religion-infused nationalism now inappropriate for civic participation, and are "Seculars" civic and civil enough without identifying religion in part of their framework? After introducing the questions, the book follows wide religious traditions, Protestants, Catholics, Other Religious, and Seculars, historically and in the present time. The book ends with two chapters, one of concerns, and one of hopes. The book has eight chapters, five or so which are almost entirely written, and the other three sketched out. This summer will be used to finish those three chapters and make sure the book holds together generally.</p>
6. Lim, Sung Soo	Economics	Optimism and Economic Decisions	<p>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. In this project, students will explore the academic literature that examines the role of human mind such as optimism, pessimism, and aspirations in economic decisions of people. For example, optimism may affect financial decisions, rural to urban migration decisions, human capital investment, work choices, career choices, retirement choices, and marital choices. Furthermore, the optimistic risk taking of entrepreneurs plays a vital role in the economic dynamism of a capitalistic society.</p> <p>There are two types of optimism. One is wishful thinking and the other is aspirational hope. If a student is optimistic about getting an A grade in a course, that optimism is more likely to reflect aspirational hope. In contrast, when you are optimistic about Detroit Tigers's™ performance this year, it is more likely to be a wishful thinking. The difference is in the formation of optimism. Part of optimism is formed by aspirations which is within one's™ control. It is also formed by external factors outside one's™ control. Depending on the relative influence of aspirations and external factors, optimism may be closer to wishful thinking or aspirational hope. This research project will expand this idea further and examine how optimism affects economics decisions in real life especially in developing countries.</p>

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7. Lundberg, Matthew	Religion	Justice, Vocation, Kingdom of God, and Sabbath: New Course Development for "Reflecting Faith: Resources for Christians in the Academy"	<p>One of the long-term projects of the de Vries Institute is "Reflecting Faith," a platform of digital learning modules focused on theological and practical topics related to Christian faith and faculty work in higher education. These short courses are being used within the Calvin community and beyond Calvin, both elsewhere in the United States and throughout the world (20 countries so far).</p> <p>By the summer of 2022 the series will include courses developed on biblical interpretation, creation, imago dei, sin, shalom, hospitality, community, classroom pedagogy, and online pedagogy. Courses involve (a) reflection on key biblical texts and pivotal voices from the Christian tradition; (b) readings and videos on the topic from contemporary scholars; and (c) readings and videos that offer examples of faculty across disciplines applying the course topic to their teaching and academic work.</p> <p>Beginning in the summer of 2022, de Vries Institute staff will begin work on new courses on the topics of (1) kingdom of God, (2) vocation, (3) productivity and sabbath, and (4) justice. A McGregor scholar would contribute to the development of these new courses by doing research in these topic areas to identify promising content, from a variety of global perspectives, with relevance across the range of academic disciplines, and with an eye to what will be transformative for the students that faculty teach.</p> <p>The goal of these courses, to which the McGregor scholar would contribute, is to help Christian faculty around the world to integrate faith with teaching and scholarship in ways that honor the integrity of Christian theology as well as the rigor of the disciplines they teach and the teaching and learning processes they use.</p>
8. Mesick, Clair	Religion	Social Justice and Public Health in the Bible	<p>Karl Barth famously said that we ought to read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Especially in this day and age when questions of justice are constantly in the media how can we think with the Bible on pressing social issues like poverty, incarceration, gender, disability, and healthcare?</p> <p>This past fall I developed a new course for the Religion department, "Social Justice from the Prophets to Jesus" and was astonished to discover that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Despite the relevance of the topic, there was no textbook I could use for the class. Furthermore I confirmed with a publisher that not only does no such textbook on Social Justice and the Bible exist but none was in development that he knew of. 2. Accessible, nuanced, undergraduate-friendly scholarly resources exist on many of the topics we studied (poverty, race, immigration, ecology) but were harder to come by for other topics (mass incarceration, restorative justice, disability in the Bible). In particular, I plan to focus my research this summer in exploring the intersection of health and justice: disability, psychological health (concepts of 'madness' in the ancient world), women's health (infertility, childbirth, #MeToo), healthcare, as well as issues of public health such as poverty, incarceration, natural disasters, or domestic abuse. <p>My task this summer will be to dig deeper into the literature on issues of social justice (and particularly, health-related justice issues) in the hopes of constructing either a general textbook or survey on justice issues in the Bible or engaging in academic research targeted at issues like disability, healing and healthcare, prison justice and mass incarceration, or gendered violence.</p> <p>I am looking for a student fellow who is passionate about both the Bible and social justice issues (gender, disability, systemic poverty, and/or others), who is eager to delve into serious biblical scholarship (in its historical, literary, and theological dimensions) and open to multiple viewpoints, and who can be a conversation partner for me in both thinking through how to present complicated issues to a broad audience. The fellow would also have some freedom "within reason" to direct their research toward issues of particular interest under the umbrella of social justice/public health and the Bible.</p>
9. Moes, Jesse	Nursing	Exploring learning styles to enhance higher education instruction.	<p>Students often disclose their preferred learning style: a visual learner; a hands-on learner. However, students may not understand the best way to learn is not according to their preferred style, but to the type of material to be learned. Instructors must also be aware of the various modes of teaching to enhance student learning. By exploring the cognitive processes underlying knowledge acquisition and long-term memory formation, faculty can facilitate meaningful learning experiences to ensure student learning.</p> <p>This project will involve a literature review and synthesis of current evidence related to learning styles and effective instruction. After gaining a foundational knowledge on the subject, a student and faculty will establish parameters and strategies for conducting a systematic review of the literature. In consultation with a library liaison, the student and faculty will search for, review, collate, and analyze findings related to effective teaching and learning strategies surrounding the topic of learning styles. Results will be organized into themes with specific recommendations for teaching to be presented during future institutional and nursing department seminars.</p>