A close-up of a logo

AI-generated content may be incorrect.

**March 31, 2025**

Alumni Hall, VC102, VC211 and Vic ABB Moore Foyer

Victoria College

University of Toronto

91 Charles St. West

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**Schedule Overview**

**10:00 AM – 4:00 PM: Interdisciplinary Poster Display**

A.B.B. Moore Foyer

**1:00 – 2:30 PM:Northrop Frye Centre Undergraduate Fellows Symposium**

VC102

**2:00 – 4:00 PM: Material Culture and Semiotics Symposium**  
VC211

**2:30 – 4:00 PM: Capstone Humanities Symposium**

VC102

**4:00 – 5:00 PM: Keynote Address: Matt Ratto, “Critically Making Impact”**

Alumni Hall

**5:00 – 6:00 PM: Awards Ceremony**

Alumni Hall

**6:00 PM: 8:00 PM” Reception and CRE “Nuit Blanche” Takeover**

A.B.B. Moore Foyer and First Floor Classrooms

**4:00 – 5:00 PM: Keynote Address: Matt Ratto, “Critically Making Impact”**

**Alumni Hall**

There are many forms of making within the academy. Some are focused on supporting learning and reflection, deconstructing our social, technological, and political systems to better understand how they weave together social and material concerns. Others seek to intervene more directly in these systems, constructing new weaves to address local or global issues. In this talk I address the complexity of critical practices, using my own “making” projects from the last 20 years to frame the possibility - and the difficulties - of positive change as enacted through vectors that include creative, scholarly, and material work. My goal here is to highlight the diversity of forms of impact and the positive role played by the creative application of critical humanities knowledge.

**Matt Ratto** is Professor and Associate Dean, Research in the Faculty of Information at the University of Toronto and the Bell University Labs Chair in Human Computer Interaction. He studies and practices ‘critical making’, work that combines humanities insights and engineering practices and has published extensively on this concept across a wide range of disciplines including the digital humanities, human-computer interaction, design, and Science and Technology Studies. Current projects include conceptual and technical explorations of ‘humanness’ within generative AI conversational agents and community-based research on energy transitions and vulnerable populations. Matt is always ready to speak with students interested in the intersection of Science and Technology Studies, Human-Computer Interaction, AI, and critical social perspectives.

**1:00 – 2:30 PM:Northrop Frye Centre Undergraduate Fellows Symposium**

**VC102**

1:10-1:20: Milena Pappalardo | The Horror of an Unstable Self: Fear of Pregnancy Discourse on Social Media

1:20 – 1:30 Kyra Menezes |Scaling Caste Walls With Capitalist Ladders: The Rise of Dalit Entrepreneurialism in Independent India

1:30 – 1:40 Joy Xu | Moulding China's Revolutionary Identity: An Examination of the Development of Jingdezhen During the Cultural Revolution

1:40 – 1:50 Rick Wei | Liminal Loyalties: Rewriting the Narratives of Zheng Pingru and Yoshiko Kawashima in the Second Sino-Japanese War

1:50 – 2:00 Noah Sokoloff | The Bracero Program Through its Song: A Transnational Spatial History

2:00-2:10 Eunice Der | "Lost From *Oblivion*: The Heirlooms of Chinese Canadian Soldiers of the Second World War"

**2:00 – 4:00 PM: Material Culture and Semiotics Symposium**  
VC211

 2:10 PM – Hannah Guiang – Divination and the Role of the Material in its Practice of Knowing Thyself.

2:20 PM – Mark Bagnall – Clay Signs and Songlines: The Aesthetics of Information Technology in Ancient Mesopotamia and Aboriginal Australia.

2:30 PM – Arlo Grzyb-Reed – Liminal Lives of Sinistral Scribes: The Materiality of Scribal Techniques Through Left-Handed Writers.

2:40 PM – Liam Neill – One History of Jonathan Ashbridge: Critical Fabulation in Heritage Sites.

2:50 PM – Jessica Contini – Reconceptualizing the Uniform: A Case Study of a Canadian Militia Coat.

BREAK

3:10 PM – Florence Lu – The Materiality of Resistance: Greek Canadian Anti-Junta Movement in Toronto, 1967 to 1974.

3:20 PM – Shebonti Khandaker – Reading Intimacy in the Archive: Affective Historiography in AIDS-era Photography.

3:30 PM – Parker Bloom – Faking It: Modern Mythmaking in Pro Wrestling.

3:40 PM – Zaina Soliman – Look, but Don’t Touch: Museum Labels as Gateways and Barriers.

3:50 PM – Zamrath Naazer – Despised and Rejected: A Viewers Agency to Define Art.

**2:30 – 4:00 PM: Capstone Humanities Symposium**

**VC102**

“Mentorship from Multiple Perspectives”

*A group presentation by students in VIC451: Capstone: Learning Communities and Higher Education:*

Louis Branch

Marissa Lombardi

Danielle Lui

Elias Quenano

Justin Song

Rachel Tan

BREAK

*Presentations by students in VIC493: Vic Capstone Research Colloquium*

Claire Allen | “hot, intelligent, and probably mentally ill: Representational selfies and subversion in contemporary girlblogging subcultures on Instagram”

Mitzi Badlis | "The Hardest Working Chorus: Epic Theatre and Chorality in *Hadestown*"

Christopher Chang | Being a Soul and Unable to Speak: Silence, Longing, and the Ineffable in the Poetry of Louise Glück

**6:00 – 8:00PM: Reception and CRE “Nuit Blanche” Takeover**

**A.B.B. Moore Foyer (Visual Displays)**

**VC102 (Sound Displays)**

**Alumni Hall (Readings, from 7:00PM onwards)**

***Creative Displays in the A.B.B. Moore Foyer include the following:***

Julia Pelitis – a selection of poems inspired by Taylor Swift albums

Jeremy Mytkowski – a play, some props, and an original painting

Lellow Sedio –a storyboard

Teo Gayoso Tello – a selection from their first novel

Lily Kay Van Bergen – a Zine

Burak Batu Tunchel – Presentation of a research essay on cinema in poster form

Alex Chick – the script of an audio play

***Audio and Hologram exhibits in the NFC include:***

Ria Ghambir – an original song, to be available at a listening station in the NFC

A selection of holograms from Prof. Emanuel Istrate’s Holography Course

***Literary Readings****, occurring in Alumni Hall after 7pm from Mikhael Klassen-Kay, Grace Eaton, Caitlin Joy-Boos, Lily Kay Van Bergen. Staged reading of a short play by Amelia Grace Winnifred to begin at 7:45.*

**Interdisciplinary Research Poster Prizes 2025**

**Dean of Student’s Social Impact Award**

Awarded to projects demonstrating potential for positive social impact.

**E. J. Pratt Library Primary Sources Prize**

Awarded for the exemplary demonstration of primary source literacy, or the “abilities needed by researchers to conceptualize, find, analyze, and use primary sources.” (Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy, 2018). Two E.J. Pratt Prizes will be awarded for 2025. One prize will be awarded to a project from the Social Sciences discipline, and the other to a project from the Humanities discipline.

**Science, Technology, and Society Program Prize**

Awarded to projects involving some consideration of the relationship between Science, Technology, and Society.

**Material Culture and Semiotics Program Prize**

Awarded to a poster presentation that demonstrates a connection to the Material Culture and Semiotics program, such as an object-centered project or a project that employs semiotic theory, as well as scholarship related to the field, originality and creativity.

**Principal’s Science Prize**

Awarded to projects demonstrating excellence in any area of the sciences.

**Victoria College Student Choice Research Prize**

Awarded to the project receiving the highest number of student votes

**VUSAC Student Experience & Wellbeing Award**   
Awarded to projects that consider the university as an institution and the experience of students or student communities within it. Such topics might include, but are not limited to, student organizations and organizing, student success or wellbeing, the institution of the university on a national or international scale, or issues of equity and diversity as they relate to undergraduates. Research that aligns with the overarching themes of community, pedagogy, and student life is eligible to be considered for this prize.

*We undertake to thank all the sponsors of the 2025 prizes: the Dean’s Office; the EJ Pratt Library; the Science, Technology and Society Program; the Material Culture and Semiotics Program; the Principal’s Office; and the Victoria University Students’ Administrative Council (VUSAC).*

**Interdisciplinary Research Poster Display**

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM in A.B.B. Moore Foyer

*In alphabetical order by presenter’s last name*

**Can Blocking Inflammation Make Antidepressants Work Better for Postpartum Depression?**

Bhakti Almoula (She/Her)

Postpartum depression (PPD) is a serious condition affecting many females after childbirth, yet standard antidepressants (SSRIs) do not always work effectively. Research suggests that inflammation, particularly the immune molecule IL-1β, may interfere with antidepressant response. Using a rodent model of PPD, we investigated whether blocking IL-1β with an anti-inflammatory drug (Anakinra) could enhance SSRI effectiveness. We examined changes in maternal brain cells and immune signaling to better understand how inflammation impacts neuroplasticity in PPD. This research may help improve treatment approaches for individuals struggling with PPD.

**Investigating Novel Functions of the Epstein-Barr Virus Lytic Switch Protein**

Esther Cho

Epstein-Barr virus (EBV) is a herpes virus that infects approximately 90% of adults worldwide. While known to cause infectious mononucleosis, or the “kissing disease”, EBV can also cause some cancers. EBV reactivates from latency to lytic infection, where it manipulates the host cell to promote virion production. This “switch” to lytic infection is mediated by the lytic switch protein BZLF1. Our lab discovered that BZLF1 interacts with several cellular components, and my project involves characterizing how BZLF1 interacts with these factors as their mechanism remains unclear. Ultimately, this may provide new insights into the roles of BZLF1 in EBV infection.

**Using Stem Cell-Derived Brain Organoids to Model Myelination and Demyelination**

Hannah Consunji (she/her)

Myelin - the insulating sheath surrounding neurons in the nervous system - ensures rapid impulse propagation and is essential for maintaining cognitive function. As the demyelination mechanism is incompletely understood and we lack human models to interrogate this process, disorders where myelin is lost (i.e. multiple sclerosis and adrenoleukodystrophy) lack effective treatments. My lab created a central nervous system model using stem-cell-derived 3D cultures to elucidate the role of the brain’s resident immune cells, microglia, in this process. In the future, this will be used to screen for pharmacological and cellular therapies to prevent inflammation and demyelination, or promote remyelination.

**Palimpsest: A Queer Memoir**

Grace Eaton (they/them)

"Palimpsest" is an experimental book-length memoir about my life and family history. It explores themes of queerness, class, and disability, revealing how disenfranchised experiences shape our relationship to time. Formally, it is nonlinear—with nonchronological anecdotes written from multiple perspectives—and genre-bending, crossing boundaries of speculative fiction and nonfiction realism (ex: the character “the Shadow” is a symbol for intergenerational trauma). Overall, it is a life-affirming queer story of resilience: an essential narrative as far-right anti-LGBTQ+ hatred is so pervasive. This year, I completed two drafts of the work and intend to continue editing it towards publication after graduation.

**Mapping Archaeology: A Comparative Analysis of Ontario's Archaeology Standards**

Brigitte Gervais (she/her)

Ontario archaeologists are bound by the Ontario Heritage Act, but what happens when there are no guidelines regarding repatriation? Through Ontario Heritage Trust's collection from Hunter's Point, this poster will map the different archaeological guidelines put forth by Ontario's stakeholders, including the Ontario provincial government and the Saugeen Ojibway Nation. As repatriation becomes more prevalent in Canadian archaeology, this project aims to map, compare, and contrast a variety of repatriation guidelines through a single archaeological collection. This project will also demonstrate how the law influences material culture, given that it dictates how and where artifacts are stored and managed.

**Brain Waves & Mental Health: When Different Matters**

Ifrah Ismail (she/her)

This study investigates how brain networks change over time in people with psychosis compared to healthy individuals. Using advanced brain imaging techniques, we analyzed brain activity patterns in 183 participants to understand how these patterns relate to thinking and problem-solving abilities. Our findings suggest that when someone's brain activity patterns are more similar to the typical pattern of the group, they tend to perform better on cognitive tests. This research helps us better understand how brain connectivity patterns influence cognitive function in both healthy individuals and those with psychiatric disorders.

**Views from Abroad: The Impact of Students Studying Abroad on Democracy at Home**

Vedant Iyer (he/him) and Ipek Akyol

This research expands on “Democracy and Foreign Education” (Spilimbergo, 2009), which demonstrates individuals educated in democratic nations promote democracy in their home countries. Despite this, little is known about whether these effects persist today.

Using an updated dataset of 177 countries spanning 1950 to 2020, this paper finds the effect of foreign education on democracy is now null. This is driven by the diminished impact of studying in a democratic host country since 2000, likely because the internet has democratized global information flows. This has policy implications, pointing to the obsolescence of scholarships historically designed to encourage democratic nation-building globally.

**Technology and the Border-Industrial Complex at the San Diego-Tijuana Border**

Sijil Jindani (she/her)

This project explores the topic of technology and the companies involved with it at and around the San Diego-Tijuana border. It questions the concepts of borders and nation-states and traces the connections between border policy and the growth of the defense industry. It uses primary and secondary research to discuss how the technology industry contributes to and continues to uphold the militarization of the border. It argues that the nexus of the defense and technology industries and their economic agendas influence the lives and realities of people situated around the borders.

**Wealth, Health, and Childhood Lupus: A Mental Toll**

Jasmine Jing (she/her)

Children with childhood-onset lupus (cSLE), a long-term autoimmune disease, often face mental health challenges. This study examined whether factors like race, income, and neighborhood marginalization affect anxiety and depression in 100 young lupus patients (ages 9-18) at SickKids Hospital. Researchers found that children in the most financially disadvantaged neighborhoods were over four times more likely to show signs of depression. However, these findings raise important questions: How can healthcare systems address neighborhood inequalities? And what role do social policies play in shaping health outcomes for marginalized youth with chronic illnesses?

**Advocate or Assimilator? Egerton Ryerson’s Role in Shaping Indigenous Education in 19th-Century Upper Canada**

Shane Joy (he/him)

This research explores Egerton Ryerson’s shifting views on Indigenous education in Upper Canada from the 1820s to 1840s. Initially supportive of Indigenous rights and self-determination, Ryerson later endorsed industrial boarding schools aimed at assimilating Indigenous children. Using his correspondence, Methodist records, and government documents, this study situates Ryerson’s transformation within broader Methodist, governmental, and Indigenous discourses. It argues that his 1847 report reflected a convergence of interests that framed education as a tool for survival but ultimately advanced colonial assimilation. This project contributes to understanding the complex foundations of Canada’s residential school system and the tensions shaping 19th-century settler-Indigenous relations.

**Dens: A Housing Loophole**

Suha Kazmi (she/her)

This research examines the misuse of dens - small, windowless spaces - as bedrooms. Despite failing to meet habitability standards, dens have become a last resort for low-income residents grappling with Toronto's housing crisis. The Ontario Building Code's lack of a standardized definition for dens obscures the distortionary effects of their proliferation on real estate, including inflated rental and property values. No action has been taken to address this regulatory gap, jeopardizing the city's progress in housing quality, public health, and sustainability. By exposing legislative inconsistencies, this study calls for urgent policy reforms to ensure safe and livable housing for all.

**Got sIgA? Potential Targets of Breastmilk-Derived Therapeutics**

Ani Khachatrian (she/her) and Shivanshi Dhuria

Secretory immunoglobulin A (sIgA) is the principal antibody on mucosal surfaces (eyes, nose, lungs, gut, genitourinary organs) and the first line of immune defense. To highlight potential therapeutic applications of sIgA, this narrative review identifies medical conditions from primary literature that are associated with impaired sIgA responses. Across mucosal surfaces, sIgA impairment was found to be associated with various diseases, including allergic conjunctivitis, sinusitis, asthma, inflammatory bowel disease, and ovarian cancer. Next steps will elaborate upon the potential of the first-in-class, breastmilk-derived, sIgA therapeutic developed by Lactiga US, Inc., to treat the identified candidate medical conditions.

**Intimacy in the Archive: feeling history in AIDS-era photography**

Shebonti Khandaker (she/her)

What does it mean to ‘feel’ history? This paper explores how the subjective and affective nature of photography allows viewers of an image to understand and situate themselves within the past. Drawing on theorist Roland Barthes’s framework for reading photography, affect is posited as a potent historiographical tool for reinterpreting photographs. This is particularly pertinent in exploring the histories of marginalized communities, whose perspectives are vulnerable to erasure and alienation. The paper applies this framework to the HIV/AIDS-era photography of Nan Goldin, positing it as a form of affective documentary which contributes to a nuanced understanding of historical experiences.

**Fundamental Fairness Beyond Legal Counsel: Envisioning a Less Lawyer-Centric Refugee Status Determination System in Canada**

Artin Khiabani (he/him)

This research compares how Canada and Germany determine who qualifies as a refugee. Canada’s system relies heavily on legal representation, disadvantaging claimants who cannot afford quality lawyers and prolonging wait times to an average of 24 months. In contrast, Germany’s caseworker-driven model minimizes financial strain and ensures faster decisions. This study argues that Canada could improve fundamental fairness, both in process and outcomes, by adopting a system similar to Germany’s, where trained officials guide claimants through the process. Reducing reliance on lawyers would make refugee decisions more accessible, efficient, and equitable for those seeking protection.

**Narratives of Resilience from the Thai-Myanmar Border**

Natalie Lau (she/her)

Since the military coup in Myanmar in 2021, throngs of migrants have fled to Thailand, where they continue to reconcile with loss while negotiating survival and belonging in a new society. This research consists of some 20 interviews with various actors in the mosaic of cross-border migration, including people who worked in Parliament in Myanmar, informed Thai immigration policy, a descendent of Shan royalty, and various academics, students, businessmen, artisans, teachers, Buddhist monks, Christian missionaries, and leaders of local and international NGOs. In recording these stories, this research seeks to preserve a historical and cultural memory of defiance threatened by erasure.

**Unlocking Success: How Mental Health Literacy is Transforming Education**

Kyana Lewis (she/her)

Mental health literacy (MHL) is crucial for student well-being and success, with schools playing a key role in promoting it. This aligns with the World Health Organization's Health Promoting School (HPS) framework, introduced in 1995, to enhance health literacy. Following increased mental health concerns post-COVID-19, Ontario updated curricula to include MHL components. This research examines MHL curricula, education, and resources across six school boards in Toronto, exploring successes, barriers, and key factors for effective HPS implementation, including teacher perspectives on the curriculum.

**The Ordinary is the Extraordinary: How Mundane Objects Revolutionized the Early Invention of Television in the 1920s**

Yat Lok Man (she/her)

My research focuses on how everyday objects played a significant role in the early development of television, particularly in the 1920s. Because television was a groundbreaking technological advancement, there may be a misconception that scientists only used high-tech objects during the experimental process. However, John Logie Baird—the father of mechanical television—used lamps, hatboxes, and tea chests to create apparatuses that led to his success. Moreover, Philo Farnsworth—the father of all-electronic television—was inspired by a harrow disc, an everyday tool that farmers use to mow fields, to conduct television experiments. Additionally, Felix the Cat—the first ever television star—was a paper maché figure bought by the Radio Corporation of America from a toy store as a test subject.

Using a material culture and objects-oriented approach, I will argue that ordinary objects are actually extraordinary, and they have immense power to shape our society, specifically the trajectory of television, everyday media, popular culture, and our way of life. I wish to call attention to the objects that have been forgotten by history because this very history was actually constructed by them.

**Despised and Rejected: A Viewers Agency To Define Art**

Zamrath Naazer (she/her)

This poster looks at the painting "Despised and Rejected of Men," by Sigismund Christian Hubert Goetze. It was discouraged to hang the painting on campus due to its heavy Christian iconography. This project aims to encourage others to find more contemporary meanings in this painting. To inspire discussions that allow people to create their own meanings, it will introduce semiotic ideas. This presentation will look at potential examples of contemporary meanings, but the conclusion is open-ended, as interpreting art is different according to the viewer. Viewers can also participate by writing down their interpretations and looking at an original sketch of the painting.

**What do we do with our "problematic" portraits?**

Milena Pappalardo (she/her)

Eliza Field Jones was the English wife of Kahkewaquonaby, an Ojibwe chief and Christian missionary in 19th century Canada. Her family portrait hangs in the Burwash common room at Victoria College. Jones’ personal history of Jones vexes contemporary notions of what qualifies as a “problematic” figure; her and her husband were in an interracial marriage and advocates for Indigenous land rights, but they were also close friends of Ryerson and active missionaries during the height of Canada’s Anglo-Christian state-building project. Blending archival research with semiotic and curatorial theory, I argue that institution walls should be a site of dialogue, where colonial portraits are juxtaposed with arresting decolonial responses rather than erased from public memory.

**Establishment of SIMPL2 Stable Cell Lines for Drug Screening**

Raj Parekh (he/him)

Dysfunctional protein-protein interactions (PPIs) are often associated with deadly diseases such as cancer, making them attractive therapeutic targets. MSIN1 is a subunit of a protein complex often involved in cancer. KRAS is another protein whose mutant forms are widely implicated in cancer. Recent evidence suggests that the MSIN1-KRAS interaction directly promotes cell proliferation and ultimately cancer progression. This has fuelled interest in the search for drugs that inhibit this interaction. Here, we use CRISPR gene-editing technology to generate a mammalian cell line expressing MSIN1 and KRAS. We then use SIMPL2, a novel technology that relies on protein splicing, to detect the PPI. SIMPL2 can be adapted to perform high-throughput drug screens to identify small molecule inhibitors of PPIs from chemical libraries. Generating stable mammalian cell lines is the first step in establishing a reliable platform for studying the MSIN1-KRAS interaction and identifying novel inhibitors to combat cancer progression.

**Minimum Wage Paradox: Unraveling Employment Effects Across Economic Cycles**

Saanvi Prasanth (she/her)

Minimum wage policies sit at the intersection of economic equity and labor market efficiency, yet their true impact remains contested. This study leverages data from the Labour Force Survey to examine how minimum wage increases influence employment across three distinct economic periods: pre-recession (2001–2006), recession (2007–2010), and post-recession (2011–2019). Our findings reveal that while wage hikes typically exert downward pressure on employment, recessionary periods exhibit a counterintuitive positive effect. By disentangling demographic dynamics- particularly among teenagers and women- this research underscores the need for policy frameworks that adapt to macroeconomic conditions and labor market sensitivities.

**Episodic Disability and Accommodation Access at Ontario Post-Secondary Institutions**

Dani Pucci

Pursuing post-secondary education presents challenges for young adults, marking a pivotal transition to adulthood. For some, health conditions and new diagnoses add complexity, introducing unique social, educational, and emotional obstacles. This study examines how Ontario post-secondary institutions define, address, and support students with episodic disabilities (EpDs) in accommodation processes. Often, policy operates on a temporary versus permanent disability binary, leaving students with EpDs uncertain about their eligibility. By analyzing institutional policy alongside student perspectives, the research examines the challenges students with EpDs face when seeking accommodations. Ultimately, the findings aim to amplify the voices of students with EpDs, informing more inclusive and responsive practices in post-secondary institutions.

**3D Spatial Analysis of Alteration Halos and Short Wavelength Infared (SWIR) Characteristics of the Lalor and 1901 Volcanogenic Massive Sulfide Deposits in Snow Lake, Manitoba, Canada**

Nicole Schoenherr

Volcanogenic massive sulfide (VMS) deposits are rich in zinc, lead, gold, and silver, forming on the seafloor during volcanic activity. The Lalor and 1901 deposits in Snow Lake, Manitoba, Canada, are ancient VMS deposits, dating back 1.89 to 1.85 billion years. Over time, these deposits have undergone significant geological changes, leading to mineralogical differences caused by heat and pressure. This study uses 3D modeling and spectroscopy to map alteration patterns in the 1901 deposit, set for mining in two years, and compare it to the actively mined Lalor deposit.

**Through the Looking Glass: PLATO Spectacles and the Birth of Augmented Reality**

Ava Spurr (she/her)

What do you do when you come across an object you’ve never seen before? During my research with the University of Toronto’s Scientific Instruments Collection (UTSIC), I had to figure just that out when I encountered a pair of PLATO Visual Occlusion Spectacles. Designed by Paul Milgram in the 1980s, these goggles were a groundbreaking piece of augmented reality (AR) technology. Using liquid crystal lenses, they allowed researchers to control when and how visual information was presented, manipulating perception in ways that foreshadowed modern AR devices. Through observation and analysis of Milgram’s work alongside foundational texts on human-computer interaction, my research explores how these early AR systems shaped contemporary user experience design. This study also emphasizes the crucial role of collections like UTSIC in preserving both artifacts and the rich technological history they embody.

**As Is: Jane Austen's Sanditon**

Miran Tsay (she/her)

Jane Austen’s last draft sits unfinished at 24k words. She only starts to draft and introduce her protagonist, Charlotte Heywood, and Charlotte to the typical social tensions of an Austen book, before the prose is abruptly cut off. Austen passes four months later. In 1871, her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh publishes her unfinished manuscript of Sanditon, a gateway to examining Austen’s first-draft and approach to the page. As Is attempts to contextualize Austen’s writing process and editorial practices, and apply them to the manuscript fragment and to defend Sanditon as a more than sufficient beginning.

**The Little Ruled Lines of the Middle Ages**

Sera Tulk (she/her)

The creation of mediaeval books began with ruling, where the scribe would determine how much text would appear per page before writing. Ruling lines tend to blend in with the final product despite their foundational importance, so I examined exactly how this hidden element may have influenced the reception of mediaeval stories. I contrasted two copies of The Wife of Bath’s Tale by Geoffrey Chaucer and penned my own version to uncover the fascinating interplay between the eyes and the brain utilized by medieval scribes, even if the cognitive science behind it would not be discovered for centuries.

**Magic Mushrooms: A New Frontier in Mental Health**

Nicolas Viulet (he/him)

Major depressive disorder (MDD) affects millions worldwide, yet many do not respond to conventional treatments. Psilocybin, the active compound in "magic mushrooms," has shown promise as an alternative antidepressant. The Engaging Mood Brain Circuits with Psilocybin (EMBRACE) clinical trial and systematic review aims to examine how psilocybin alters brain networks linked to mood regulation in both healthy individuals and those with MDD. By analyzing changes in functional connectivity, this research will uncover psilocybin’s therapeutic mechanisms and its potential as a novel treatment. These findings contribute to ongoing psychiatric research at Sunnybrook, advancing understanding of depression and its treatment.

**Fairness and Feelings: Unveiling Infants' Early Moral Awareness**

Aaron Wang (he/him)

By their first year, infants expect equal resource distribution and prefer fair agents, believing unfair distributors should be reprimanded However, in reality, social interactions are rarely governed by rigid, predictable rules. Instead, they unfold within a complex landscape where unfair distributions emphasizing equity over quality may, in some situations, be more beneficial. One way young children navigate this social ambiguity is by interpreting the emotional reactions their behaviours evoke. This raises the question: does this ability emerge in infancy? Specifically, do infants in their first year of life already possess a preliminary understanding that negative actions elicit negative emotions?

**Informal Jubao (Reporting) and Citizen Activism In Contemporary China**

Chelsea Wang (she/her)

Over the past decades, China has become a pivotal player in global affairs, often discussed in light of its authoritarian, state-centric leadership, and top-down policies. While this perspective is valuable, it can overshadow the dynamism of the role of its citizens and civil society.

This presentation aims to explore an alternative perspective that highlights the agency of the Chinese people. Specifically, it examines the rise of informal Jubao (reporting) channels, which have increasingly demonstrated an engaged and active citizenry. This phenomenon challenges the conventional view of Chinese citizens as passive actors and instead reveals their participation in discourses of dissent.

**Conrat Meit’s Funerary Effigies of Margaret of Austria: The Changing Notions of Death in the Early Netherlandish Renaissance**

Maddisyn Wegner (she/her)

The funeral effigies of Margaret of Austria were designed by Conrat Meit in the 1530s. In Netherlandish funerary sculpture tradition, the transi effigy (the underlying body of the sculpture) depicted a decaying corpse reminding its viewer of what they too will succumb to. However, the transi of Margaret of Austria depicts the corpse of a youthful girl, not at all the older, decaying body now “returned to dust.” This research project explores the increasing individualization in the process of death in the early Netherlandish Renaissance through Margaret's personal philosophical and theological beliefs regarding death and the afterlife, of which are present in the composition of her sculpture.

**Gender-Affirming Gear Matters to Trans Well-being**

Chris Wong (he/him)

Gender-affirming gear (GAG) are items such as binders (to flatten chest tissue) and packers (to simulate the appearance of a penis) that provide transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) people non-medical ways to feel more comfortable with their bodies and express their gender identity. Very little is known about why TGD people use or avoid GAG. This study uses an approach-avoidance motivation framework to examine different reasons (e.g., expressing their identity, reducing discomfort) for using or not using GAG and how they relate to their mental health, sense of gender identity, and feeling like their true selves.