

**Faculty Name:** Epstein, Louis

**Student Collaborator:** Whear, Christine

**Project Title:** Cross-Cultural Integration in Northfield: Identifying Barriers and Pathways to Community Belonging

**Full description of the project:** This research project aims to develop a long-lasting, cross-cultural exchange program that fosters community integration for Latino/x and Hispanic\* residents in Northfield. This program will strive to utilize music as a way to bridge communities across linguistic and cultural differences, and build empathy amongst Northfield residents. To achieve this goal, Christine and Dr. Epstein will first conduct a comprehensive mapping of existing community resources, identifying both strengths and critical accessibility barriers.

Despite the existence of programs and advocacy efforts that support Latino residents in Northfield, there appears to be a lack of cross-cultural involvement in these organizations, contributing to the lack of integration of Latino residents in the Northfield community. Yet, there is clear evidence that there is interest amongst residents for intercultural connection. The Northfield Public Library and St. Olaf College each host language conversation tables, where either Spanish or English learners can practice speaking their target language with fellow learners. While this is a great opportunity to practice producing the language, there is a lack of linguistic as well as cultural immersion that could be cultivated by facilitating language exchange, where both English and Spanish learners and speakers can practice speaking their target language, but also be informed by the culture of those who natively speak the language. In January of 2025, Christine implemented a language exchange with this cultural exchange in mind. She has been facilitating an event in the Contented Cow Pub called Conversaciones Contentas on Thursdays from 6-7pm. St. Olaf students, professors, and adult community members who are practicing Spanish have attended the language exchange. Some St. Olaf students who natively speak Spanish have also attended the event, facilitating Spanish language learning and cultural exchange. This program has been successful in facilitating Spanish language learning, but has not yet reached English learners in the Northfield community. After communicating with the coordinator of the English language tables at the Northfield Public Library, we learned that those have low attendance as well.

In order to be able to expand on this program and implement reciprocal cross-cultural exchange, we will seek to thoroughly comprehend the priorities of Latinx English learners in Northfield, as well as holistically understand the existing community resources for Latino residents in Northfield, identifying both strengths as well as accessibility barriers of these community resources. We will spend the summer months connecting with organizations such as the Community Action Center, HealthFinders, Healthy Community Initiative, Northfield City Hall, Vecinx Unidx/ Rice County Neighbors United, Northfield Public Schools, Northfield Community Center, and Northfield Public Library. We will conduct interviews with program leaders that will seek to highlight their efforts to increase access for Latinx residents, but also uncover remaining limitations of these organizations, such as linguistic, cultural, and geographic barriers. Additionally, we will seek to connect with Latino residents in Northfield, in order to identify what factors contribute to accessibility and belonging within community programming. Once this foundation is established, we will continue to collaborate with existing community programs that are interested in strengthening cross-cultural exchange amongst Northfield residents. By August 2025, we will have developed a report that illustrates which community organizations currently serve Latinx residents, what their services include, an assessment of their accessibility including engagement statistics, whether they have bilingual or culturally informed staff, hours of operation, location and access via public transportation. The report will be published on St. Olaf's website so that others at St. Olaf students and faculty can access it, such as St. Olaf's Academic Civic Engagement site alongside the "Ethical Community Engagement" models (<https://wp.stolaf.edu/smithcenter/ethical-community-engagement->

modules/) and/or on the Smith Center's site on "The Northfield Community Page" (<https://wp.stolaf.edu/smithcenter/the-northfield-community/>). Additionally, we will share the report with community organizations and aim to publish it where it will be equally accessible to community members outside of the academic institution.

Building off of the research collected during the summer, Christine and Dr. Epstein will implement a collaborative program that will aim to utilize music and other creative mediums to build cross-cultural empathy amongst Northfield community members. Music is an effective medium that provides a platform for sharing cultural narratives, and cultivates a comfortable space for this storytelling to take place. These musical activities may include song-writing, dance events, performances in the community. By creating a safe, communal space where Latino residents' experiences are to be learned from, we will expand upon Northfield's community infrastructure that values integration for immigrant residents, and values learning about their language, culture, and experiences. Through this project, we hope to create an accessible pathway for academic institutions and community members to maintain relationships with one another. By creating reciprocal language and cultural exchange spaces, this project aims to dismantle traditional power dynamics between English speakers and Latino immigrants, fostering mutual cultural curiosity and building genuine allyship within the Northfield community.

\*Latinx aims to promote gender inclusive language, and is often utilized in academic spaces. Many Northfield residents do not identify with or use this term. Hispanic encompasses all Spanish-speaking countries, including Spain. I use "Latino" throughout the proposal because that is what is the term that is largely used in Northfield, but I still want to recognize all identities and terms that encompass them.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** This project lays the groundwork for implementing a program that bridges cultural gaps in Northfield through music, centering the experiences and priorities of Latino residents while creating artistic pathways for deeper community understanding and engagement. Despite numerous programs supporting Latino residents in Northfield, significant barriers to community integration persist. This summer research project aims to comprehensively map existing community resources, identify accessibility challenges, and develop sustainable cross-cultural exchange initiatives. In summer of 2025, researchers will collaborate with key community organizations and Northfield residents to compile a report that will be shared both within academic circles and the broader community, ensuring accessibility and potential for lasting impact. In fall of 2025, the researchers will continue collaborating with community organizations to launch musical programming that meets the goals that our partner community organizations identified.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025, Fall term 2025, J-term 2026, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

~15 hours / week from June-August; Up to 6 hours/week during academic year September-May

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

This project represents an intersection of my academic interests and passion for fostering inclusive communities. While my interest in learning Spanish and connecting with Hispanic communities has always inspired me, my study abroad experience in Sevilla, Spain inspired me to critically reflect on my communities when I returned to St. Olaf. In Sevilla, as a visiting student not directly enrolled in the university, I experienced firsthand what it means to be disconnected from community structures. The language exchange events I discovered became vital spaces where people seeking connection, friendship, and language practice could find belonging. Witnessing how these structured opportunities created community across differences offered me a model for what might be possible in Northfield. The ACE courses that I have taken at St. Olaf for the Music for Social Impact Major have equipped me with an ethical framework for community partnership that complements these experiences. In my Music for Social Justice

class, a group of 7 students and I organized an event at Northfield Retirement Community called "Songs and Stories," which aimed to promote intergenerational connections between St. Olaf students and NRC residents through songs and storytelling. Other students in my class collaborated with organizations such as Northfield Pride, The Northfield Public Library, and SARN. Through each of my classmates' projects, I was able to see music utilized as a tool to harness positive change-making. I am excited to apply these principles to create not just a temporary project, but a foundation for long-lasting relationships that unite Northfield residents, including students and faculty at both colleges, across cultural and linguistic differences. After spending the summer months mapping out the existing resources for Spanish-speakers in Northfield, I will spend the following academic year working with community organizations to implement a long-lasting program, one that I hope will prepare a pathway for future cohorts of Music for Social Impact majors to make meaningful connections with Northfield residents. Dr. Epstein will provide me with the guidance and mentorship necessary to navigate the complex dynamics of a community project of this magnitude, ensuring that the report and future program is shared in a respectful and ethical way. While I anticipate obstacles, these challenges will develop critical skills that will serve as valuable preparation for a future career where I am informed by community priorities and equipped to advocate for positive change.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

I have been working for several years to develop the new BA in Music for Social Impact, which explicitly centers community engaged work as a vehicle for developing musicianship as well as social, entrepreneurial, and administrative skills. The major is currently enrolling its second cohort of majors, which means it is very much still under development. In collaboration with Rehanna Kheshgi, I am developing a syllabus for the major capstone course, which will heavily emphasize experiential learning and collaborations with community partners. This summer, Christine and I hope to engage in relationship-building with the Spanish-speaking community in Northfield as a foundation for further student work with one or more community organizations that work with Northfield Spanish speakers during the capstone course in the spring and beyond.

My role in the project is that of facilitator, mentor, and co-author. I will connect Christine with individuals and organizations in Northfield that currently work closely with Spanish-speaking communities in our area. I will mentor her through the challenges of establishing and maintaining relationships with community members who have very different priorities than those of college students and professors. Finally, Christine and I will co-author the report that we hope will serve as a resource for other students, staff, and faculty at St. Olaf, both within and beyond the Music for Social Impact major. One important piece of that report will be an interactive map that visualizes resources and locations of historical and culture importance to Northfield Spanish-speakers, which builds on the extensive mapping work I've done with students through [www.musicalgeography.org](http://www.musicalgeography.org).

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

2 hours per week

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

There are existing efforts to increase accessibility and awareness of community resources, such as Carleton's project "Radio and News," which was a course project that focused on increasing access to legal and mental health resources for immigrant members in the metro area. Dr. Epstein and I plan to expand upon these efforts by developing a comprehensive report that illustrates the assets of community programs and initiatives in Northfield, as well the factors that contribute to gaps in accessibility and belonging within these programs. This will be presented in an accessible, online format, so that both community organizations and academic institutions can comprehend the priorities of the Latino/x community, as well as orient themselves to the spaces in which they are trying to expand on existing initiatives. This may include an interactive map where people can visualize resource distribution, and click on each place where it provides readers with service usage statistics, contact information for each program, and information about the organization. This presentation will be shared with St. Olaf and Carleton's

Academic Civic Engagement departments, as well as community organizations that contribute to the development of the report.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

Communication materials (posters, website domain)

\$50

Community Picnic with Conversaciones Contentas participants August or September 2025 (food, drinks, plates, utensils, park reservation (\$40)

\$800

Interview Support Expenses (beverages, transportation, childcare)

\$500

Creative materials for events (art supplies, music equipment rental)

\$650

**Faculty Name:** Dorn, Henry

**Student Collaborator:** Soto Solari, Romina

**Project Title:** Sounding Our Times: Composing a Musical Response to Today's Challenges

**Full description of the project:** This project is a component of both research and composition. This project will build upon very successful past CURI experiences. As stated in that proposal, one could imagine that it's still safe to say most of us have been emotionally and spiritually whiplashed by the struggle to make sense of the unsettled nature of our world right now. Whether it be the pandemic or social justice issues, the troubling and frightening civil and political unrest or the deepening concerns over the climate and our environment, we are battered from all sides, and it's tough to make sense of the world right now. The fine arts offer a way of understanding that can be illuminating for the artist and audience member alike. This project will support the creation of music by a student who will compose a work for the St. Olaf Band of 5-8 minutes duration that will be a personal expression in response to some aspect of the major issues confronting our existence. The works will be premiered during the 2025-2026. During the last project, three students participated in the project, creating works that dealt with the Delta variant's tragic sweep through the composer's home nation of India, our society's understanding of the challenges encountered by those living with chronic pain, and the issue of gun violence. In this case, contrasting to the past CURI projects, this project will be during the fall semester instead of during summer. This research will include the aspect of fieldwork, including trips to see the Minnesota Orchestra and other conferences and meetings.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** One could imagine that most of us have been emotionally and spiritually whiplashed by the struggle to make sense of the unsettled nature of our world right now. Whether it be the pandemic or social justice issues, civil/political unrest or concerns over the climate, we are battered from all sides, and it's tough to make sense of the world right now. The fine arts offer a way of understanding that can be illuminating for the artist and audience member alike. This project will support the creation of music by a student who will compose a work for the St. Olaf Band of 5–8 minutes duration that will be a personal expression in response to some aspect of the major issues confronting our existence. The work will be premiered during the 2025-26 academic year.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Fall term 2025, During the Fall of 2025. The project outcome will be performed during Interim 2026.

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

3 hours a week. This does not include fieldwork trips (MN orch and others), which would not be weekly.

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

I am a composition student, it can be difficult to find performance opportunities that allow you to express your voice, your concerns and your experiences. As an international student that holds various underrepresented identities, the current state of the US can be scary, but it can be used as a vessel to share thoughts, share our concerns and uplift the voices that need to be heard. A great passion that I have is community engagement, and I believe that with the prior musical coursework I have done at St. Olaf, the path for academic civic engagement is paved and more things could be done to share and express ourselves. I believe that through research, discussion and musical expression (in composition) Dr. Dorn and I can tell a story that needs to be shared and can present. Having held several music administration positions that have provided me with background knowledge and skills, this research and creation project would allow us to foster an inclusive environment that performs underrepresented artists.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

As a conductor and composer, it is important to me to integrate the current situations and concerns into musical expression. Composition is my main area of study and I have been wanting to consolidate and add to the opportunities that I know have been granted in the past. My predecessor, Dr. Timothy Mahr, has executed a variety of CURI projects and proposals in which he has engaged in mentorship, conversation, discussion and inquiry on current topics and carried out projects that turned the impact of current times and concerns into student compositions. The St. Olaf Band has a history of performing a variety of student compositions, more than 25 in the years before, and it is important to me that this musical tradition is continued. I expect to mentor and supervise a project for a student who demonstrates commitment to local and global issues and a passion for musical composition through lessons, discussions and musical-related trips that will provide a strong foundation for composing in current times.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

One hour a week, separated from our 30 m composition lesson.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

We only have one student (Romina) doing the project, so she would compose the work for the St. Olaf Band

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The project will be presented in concert with the St. Olaf Band. In addition to this, a talk about how the project was pursued and developed, including the research and implications regarding today's challenges.

**Total budget for the project? 800**

**How will the budget be used?**

I will include here a drive document that has a table breakdown:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ExvyGQI\\_BlcjqgerXgUcz-e0WVlwEs66FU1DBoL2-eY/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ExvyGQI_BlcjqgerXgUcz-e0WVlwEs66FU1DBoL2-eY/edit?usp=sharing) (this table includes reasons for the price) -

List: Music engraving software if needed Dorico \$350; midi controller keyboard for music entry \$150; Production of music bound full scores and set of parts \$50. Related Minnesota Orchestra trips \$200 (each ticket costs 40\$ + tax), miscellaneous (printing, supplies, gas for transportation) 50\$ + faculty and student stipend.

**Faculty Name:** Kheshgi, Rehanna

**Student Collaborator:** Vireaksouphea, Kolbot

**Project Title:** Exploring Intergenerational Musical Connections with Immigrant Communities in Minnesota

**Full description of the project:** This project is focused on bringing together Kolbot Vireaksouphea's and Rehanna Kheshgi's musical knowledge and experience working with immigrant communities in Minnesota around themes of intergenerational connection. Regular conversations between Kolbot and Kheshgi throughout the project period will provide opportunities for each to bring their own research, reflections on experiences with community partners, and musical creations into conversation, benefitting both project participants. Kheshgi's mentorship and experience conducting community-based work in music will be valuable to Kolbot as he is just starting to formally explore themes of intergenerational connection through music. Kolbot's experience as a musician and someone who is part of an immigrant community in Minnesota will benefit Kheshgi as she learns from his firsthand knowledge of the challenges and affordances of intergenerational relationships. We seek to explore and document similarities and differences between Cambodian and Somali immigrant and refugee experiences in Minnesota through the arts in order to support community initiatives related to preserving and reinvigorating cultural heritage in diaspora across generations.

Kolbot's vision for the Magnus project is to explore intergenerational connections within Cambodian musical traditions, focusing on Minnesota's immigrant and refugee communities. His part of the project seeks to understand why past generations of Cambodian musicians stopped making music, how these experiences shaped their artistic identities, and what this means for younger artists. The main activity will involve working directly with Cambodian musicians—elders and youth—through interviews, performances, and storytelling sessions to uncover their musical journeys' emotional and historical depth. Kolbot will collaborate with Kheshgi and other researchers to blend academic studies with practical experience, fostering intergenerational exchange and mentorship. The goal is to revitalize Cambodian music by using these stories to inspire new compositions and offer young generations a chance to reconnect with their heritage. Ultimately, Kolbot's part of the project aims to amplify marginalized voices, encourage a cultural renaissance, and inspire the next generation of Cambodian artists in Minnesota to rediscover and advance their musical traditions.

Kheshgi's goal for the Magnus project is to draw on the knowledge of local Somali parents and elders in order to create culturally relevant, media-rich, open-access resources for Somali youth, thereby recognizing their value and importance in multiple ways, including but not limited to financial compensation. During the project period, working with Surad Academy Charter School interim director and Ole alum Najax Siciid ('23), Kheshgi will host a series of monthly meetings at the school in Faribault with Somali parents/elders of Surad students to learn about their perspectives on Somali culture and arts. Some primary questions will be: What do parents and elders want Somali youth to learn about Somali arts, culture, and music? What (content) and how (method) do they want their children to learn about their own culture? How should this information be framed and presented (context/interpretation)? Kheshgi will gather materials generated from discussions with parents and elders, interactions with teachers and students at Surad Academy (which primarily serves Somali families), and local Somali artists, to create resources that could potentially be used by Surad Academy teachers and beyond. She will then solicit feedback from participants and external experts, and integrate suggestions before finalizing and sharing materials on an online, open-access platform, pending permission from contributors.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** This project is focused on bringing together Kolbot Vireaksouphea's and Rehanna Kheshgi's musical knowledge and experience working with immigrant communities in Minnesota around themes of intergenerational connection. Through working directly with

Cambodian musicians—elders and youth—through interviews, performances, and storytelling sessions to uncover their musical journeys' emotional and historical depth, Kolbot seeks to understand why past generations of Cambodian musicians stopped making music, how these experiences shaped their artistic identities, and what this means for younger artists. He will create and perform new musical compositions based on interactions with Cambodian project partners. Kheshgi will host a series of monthly meetings with Somali parents and elders of students at Surad Academy Charter School in Faribault to learn about their perspectives on Somali culture and arts, in order to create culturally relevant, media-rich, open-access resources for Somali youth. Working together as a team, Kolbot's and Kheshgi's intentional reflections on their goals, methods, and progress will provide a generative space for growth that will sustain and nourish the dynamic core of this collaborative project.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025, Fall term 2025, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

Summer 2025: 8-10 hours/week; Fall 2025 and Spring 2026: 3-4 hours/week

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

As a musician and part of a Cambodian immigrant community in Minnesota, Kolbot is passionate about documenting and preserving the musical heritage of his community. The Magnus project presents an extraordinary opportunity to connect with older and younger generations of Cambodian musicians, discover their individual and collective histories, and understand the reasons for the abandonment of music activity among the majority of former musicians. This project aims to record these stories along with their emotional and historical context, using them as a basis for the composition of new music that draws on historical and contemporary styles. Kolbot's background education in music and his work experience within the Cambodian community prepare him to act as a bridge between different generations. He looks forward to contributing to the project through direct interaction with Cambodian artists, conducting interviews, organizing performances, and participating in storytelling workshops. These encounters will give him essential information and stories to incorporate into his musical work, thus increasing the depth of his artistic performance. This project also aligns with his academic trajectory, merging his passion for music and cultural preservation and his aspiration to become an entrepreneur. In advocating for mentorship and facilitating intergenerational dialogue, he envisions the Magnus project as a vehicle for developing his community involvement, research skills, and creative collaboration abilities, which will be highly significant for his academic and professional growth. By doing so, he hopes to contribute towards reviving Cambodian musical heritage and inspiring future generations of artists to relearn their affinity with and reinterpret their cultural heritage.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

Rehanna Kheshgi's interest in the project is based on her ongoing work with Somali families and students in Faribault, MN. This project builds on community engagement work she has been carrying out for the past five years with Somali partners in Faribault and will be connected to the ACE course she will teach in Fall 2025, "Music 347: Somali Community Engagement through Music." Kheshgi's goal is to bolster Somali students' confidence and pride in Somali cultural heritage and arts, therefore contributing to their overall wellbeing. Scholarship affirms the importance of culturally relevant learning materials to increase student self-confidence and resilience. Kheshgi's research will explore how, specifically for Somali youth, experiencing generational trauma from the extended impact of the 1990s civil war and communication challenges with elders in the diasporic context of Minnesota is impacting growth into their own identity as Somali-Americans in Minnesota. For Somali parents and elders, Kheshgi seeks to recognize the embodied knowledge they possess about their own cultural heritage that their children and others would benefit from learning about. Scholarship also affirms the effectiveness of intergenerational collaboration for addressing pressing social challenges, including rising rates of youth loneliness, addiction, and self-harm. The arts and humanities are particularly effective tools for addressing these complex challenges. Working with Kolbot on a project that shares themes of intergenerational collaboration in MN-based immigrant communities will benefit



Kheshgi's research immensely as his lived experience and community connections provide a unique and valuable perspective on these pressing issues.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

In-person meetings for one hour, every other week, beginning in early Fall 2025 and continuing throughout the fall and spring semesters of the academic year, with a break during J-Term. Communication over email during summer 2025 and the academic year, amounting to around 1 hour per week.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

While the primary activities related to Kolbot's work with Cambodian elders and youth, and Kheshgi's work with Somali elders and youth, will be carried out independently, our bi-weekly meetings will provide a generative space for reflection and growth that will sustain and nourish the dynamic core of this collaborative project.

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The results of our project will include musical materials created during the project period and discussion of our methods and collaborative processes working with two immigrant communities in Minnesota. In addition to sharing project results at the CURI Fall Showcase, we would like to submit a collaborative presentation to be shared as part of the Inclusive Excellence Summit or a similar campus-wide event, and potentially facilitate an interactive session with students on campus hosted at the Taylor Center. We also plan to explore the potential for facilitating an interaction near the end of the project period at Faribault Middle School and/or High School. Kheshgi is connected to the music departments at both schools through their choir directors and has begun exploring potential collaborations.

Digital Platform: A website or digital archive where the music, interviews, and project materials can be accessed by the public for educational and cultural purposes, with permission from contributors.

Public Performances: Live performances featuring the music created during the project, both on campus and in the community.

Musical Compositions: New musical works created through the collaboration, potentially blending traditional Cambodian/Somali music with contemporary influences.

Documented Interviews: A collection of interviews with Cambodian musicians, both elders and youth, documenting their personal stories, struggles, and resilience.

Cultural Insights: A preliminary community-informed understanding of how the experiences of past generations shaped their artistic identities and influenced modern musicians.

Short Documentary: A short documentary (10-20 minutes) that highlights the personal stories of Cambodian musicians in Minnesota, showcasing their musical journeys, challenges, and the intergenerational connections within the community. The documentary will feature interviews, performances, and insights into the process of creating new music based on traditional Cambodian sounds.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

\$1000 - Honoraria for Musicians & Other Project Participants (\$400 for Kolbot's interviewees and collaborators; \$150 stipend for Najax Siciid, current Surad Academy Interim Director and Ole Alum; \$200 for stipend payments of \$100 each for two Somali parents who agree to take on leadership roles in the project, working closely with Kheshgi; \$250 for Somali musician(s) to collaborate on creating musical materials based on parent/elder discussions in the community)

\$450 - Travel & Transportation (Travel expenses for in-person interviews, performances, and community outreach in Minnesota, including visits to Surad Academy in Faribault for Kheshgi and her fall ACE course students - campus vans and/or personal vehicle mileage)

\$200 - Hospitality (Funds for refreshments at community gatherings with Somali parents and elders in Faribault)

\$150 - Recording Equipment and Materials (Funds for microphones, audio recorders, or software to capture music and interviews.)

\$100 - Documentation and Editing (Purchase of software, etc.)

\$100 - Marketing Materials, Website, and Social Media

**Faculty Name:** Al Atiyat, Ibtesam

**Student Collaborator:** Goodman, Tobias

**Project Title:** A Fanonian Book Review of "Fear of Black Consciousness" by Lewis Gordon

**Full description of the project:** In this project, Ibtesam Al Atiyat and Tobias Goodman will review Fear of Black Consciousness, by Lewis Gordon, our most recent Belugum Lecturer here at St. Olaf. We will frame the review in light of Fanonian philosophy, specifically his phenomenology of race, to see where Gordon answers for, and departs from the writings by the great postcolonial theorist, Frantz Fanon. Ibtesam and I will embark on this project this summer, reading Fear of Black Consciousness along with Fanon's great texts: The Wretched of the Earth, Black Skin, White Masks, and A Dying Colonialism.

Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks specifically will be of utmost importance for the analysis of Fear of Black Consciousness. In both texts appears a phenomenology of race. A critical, side-by-side comparison will be of importance in our analysis because in the conclusion of such an analysis, as is in Fanon's case, lies a philosophy of decolonization. Where Black Skin, White Masks, and The Wretched of the Earth are often read in opposition, we will read them in succession, as scholars such as Homi Bhabha argue should be done. It can be said then, where we find differences in the logical steps by Fanon vs. by Gordon, we can find differences in their conclusions. Gordon might have a different understanding of colonialism than Fanon, and from that, a different theory of liberation. A critical analysis of differences in these philosophies is important for understanding race today. From those different understandings, different forms of political conclusions come, may it be decolonial praxis, or antiracist protest.

Today in this country, a critical and accurate understanding of race remains of pressing importance, and is specifically important in the field of Philosophy. From an accurate understanding of race, a philosophy of liberation will be realized.

Our end goal is to publish a critical book review in a journal, and be prepared to present our research at the CURI Fall Showcase and beyond.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Ibtesam Al Atiyat and Tobias Goodman write a critical comparison of philosophies of race and liberation between the originator Frantz Fanon, and the contemporary philosopher, Lewis Gordon, who brings Fanonian thought into a modern day America. In this movement, philosophical differences present themselves. With a critical analysis of these philosophies, the pair of researchers write a book review of Fear of Black Consciousness, by Lewis Gordon

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

15

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

I am interested in Franz Fanon's work, and aim to learn more about it. In my recent interactions with Lewis Gordon here on campus, I am curious about how Fanon is being conceived of today by leading philosophers of race. There are differences that I intuit, and am eager to study them deeply. This research fits into my academic trajectory towards grad school after I earn my bachelors degree in Philosophy. A goal of mine is to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy, and a special interest of mine is in decolonial philosophy and critical theory.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

As a faculty collaborator on this research project, I am eager to work with Tobias to explore how Franz Fanon's work continues to shape scholarly critique and political struggle around race, power, and liberation in the U.S. In addition to systematically reading and analyzing Fanon's body of work, our project will examine Lewis Gordon's *Fear of Black Consciousness* as an example of the enduring relevance of Fanon's insights and philosophy. We will argue that Fanon's intellectual legacy extends beyond postcolonial and decolonial thought; and rather, that it forms an essential foundation for a broader philosophical critical theory project emerging from the Global South. Here, the Global South is not merely a geopolitical designation but a critical framework that accounts for histories of dispossession, structures of domination, and strategies of resistance.

Fanon's work has long been central to my teaching and scholarship. His writings are a cornerstone of my sociology and race and ethnic studies courses, as well as the Enduring Questions curriculum. It was through the Enduring Questions Program, of which Tobias was a member, that my interest in systematically reading Fanon with students and tracing his influence on contemporary scholarship and political activism first took shape. This project builds on that foundation and will offer me the chance to deepen my engagement with Fanon's work in class and in future research.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

3 hours per week

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

We will both be reading. Tobias will do most of the writing, and Ibtesam will engage with it by editing. Together, they will discuss in person and over zoom.

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

We will write a book review and seek publication in philosophy journals. Tobias will also present the research at the CURI Fall Showcase and be prepared to present outside of that setting as well.

**Total budget for the project?** 0

**How will the budget be used?**

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**Faculty Name:** Maie, Takashi

**Student Collaborator:** Ellis, Brooke

**Project Title:** \*Waterfall-climbing behavior of Jamaican stream gobies (*Sicydium* sp.)

**Full description of the project:** Introduction: (more info here)

\*Based on the report in FishBase (<https://fishbase.mnhn.fr/>), Jamaica hosts several native freshwater species in its rivers and streams, many of which are diadromous - a life history trait that involves species migration between freshwater and the ocean at different stages of their life cycle (McDowall, 2001). This trait is common among island ecosystems where freshwater habitats are relatively small and often connected to the sea. Of the many migratory species identified in Jamaica, there are several gobioid species with amphidromous life cycles that occur predominantly in its rivers and streams (e.g., *Sicydium* sp.). In general, larvae of amphidromous fishes hatch upstream and then immediately get swept into the ocean. After spending several months drifting with ocean currents (marine postlarval stage), feeding and growing, they recruit to freshwaters and start migrating into rivers and streams (e.g., Bell et al., 1995). These recruits (post larval-juvenile stage) continue to migrate upstream and develop into adults while competing for resources and eventual spawning. This life history trait is especially advantageous in places where catastrophic flooding events are frequent due to hurricanes and heavy rains, typical for oceanic islands in tropics (e.g., Devick et al., 1994). One of the remarkable abilities that these fishes exhibit to sustain generations of species in such challenging environments is the ability to resist strong water flow and overcome geographical barriers, such as dams and waterfalls upon returning to freshwaters and migrating upstream.

Belonging to the genus *Sicydium*, *Sicydium plumieri* (Bloch 1786) and *Sicydium punctatum* Perugia (1896) are two waterfall-climbing gobies (e.g., sicydiine gobiids) found in Jamaica. As part of the West Atlantic region, these amphidromous gobies are widely distributed across the Greater and Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean region (e.g., De Lucena et al., 2013). Like other gobies, members of the genus *Sicydium* have pelvic fins fused across the midline to form a ventral adhesive disc (e.g., pelvic sucker: Maie et al., 2007, Schoenfuss et al., 2011; Maie et al., 2012). This pelvic sucker allows gobies to generate suction to attach to the substrate of fast flowing rivers and streams and even enables these gobies to climb sizable waterfalls (Maie et al., 2007, 2012).

Because these stream gobies are not yet well-documented in Jamaica, the proposed study aims to (1) explore coastal streams near Discovery Bay for *S. plumieri* and *S. punctatum* along with other migratory species that live in the same regions for identification, while also understanding their in-stream distributions, and further to (2) conduct performance tests of *Sicydium* species for waterfall-climbing behavior at the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory (DBML). By executing these two above-described research objectives, this study contributes to understanding of how waterfall-climbing fishes perform climbing behaviors and what factors might facilitate their functional performance and thus fitness of species (Maie, 2024). This study also helps illuminate how the diversity of this novel locomotor behavior evolves to survive in challenging environments.

**Materials & Methods:**

\*Fish will be captured in their native streams (e.g., Dunn's River, Little River, etc.) while snorkeling with rounded dip nets and then transferred to the DBML where the fish will be kept in aerated stream water at ambient temperature (18-23 oC) in a 10 gallon holding tank. Rocks from the same streams and rivers that have ample algae growing on them will be placed in the holding tank through the data collection period (Experiment 1 - Adhesion; Experiment 2 - Climbing). In addition, the water will be replaced regularly with new stream water (once a day).

Experimental studies will be conducted on two species (*Sicydium plumieri* and *S. punctatum*), and therefore, these two species will be distinguished based on their morphological characters (e.g.,

unicuspid upper teeth & barred individuals with a sixth dark vertical bar on the caudal peduncle in *S. plumieri*; tricuspid upper teeth & five prominent dark vertical bars with a sixth on the caudal peduncle interrupted and often missing and the caudal peduncle light or white in color, *S. punctatum*: Brockmann, 1965; tooth morphology of *Sicydium* from Dominican Republic from Watson, 2000; “Figure 2” from Monti et al., 2018).

#### Experiment 1 (Adhesion)

##### Objective 1.1.: Suction pressure and force analysis.

To collect data for this experiment, we will construct an artificial waterfall apparatus, consisting of a climbing chute (Plexiglas plate coated with fine sand) positioned at a 60° angle inside a holding tank (see right top for a schematics of the experimental setup). A submersible fountain pump will be placed in the tank to continuously supply water down the climbing chute, simulating a small artificial waterfall. A pressure transducer connected to a data acquisition interface will be placed on the climbing chute at a location where the climbing goby is sufficiently outside the water from the holding tank at the base of the apparatus. When the fish positions itself on the transducer, suction pressures generated by the pelvic sucker will be recorded (see right below for the pressure profiles from *S. punctatum* from Dominica: Maie et al., 2012). For each individual fish ( $N = 20/\text{species}$ ), 20-30 pressure data, which include at least five maximum values to determine peak performance, will be recorded. Suction pressure ( $\Delta P$ : pressure differential) will be calculated by taking the difference between the atmospheric pressure and the suction pressure generated by the fish ( $\Delta P = P_{\text{atm}} - P_{\text{suction}}$ ).

##### Objective 1.2.: Endurance analysis.

Since the suction disc's function is controlled by the muscles of the pelvic structures and fin rays, fatigability of the suction will be expected due to muscle fatigue. Using the same experimental setup for force analysis, we will assess pressure differentials generated by the pelvic sucker while the fish remains motionless on the transducer. During such sustained attachment to the climbing surface, the pressure differentials for adhesion would gradually decline, indicating fatigue in the pelvic muscles that control the pelvic sucker (e.g., Christy and Maie, 2019; Maie, 2022). Fatigability will be characterized using a decay equation and quantified as the time required for pelvic muscle-generated suction to reach the minimum pressure differential change (i.e., fatigue time). From each individual fish, 5-10 fatigue curves will be collected. These measurements will provide valuable insights into the kinematics and performance of waterfall climbing behavior in *Sicydium* species, contributing to our understanding of their unique locomotor adaptations.

#### Experiment 2 (Climbing)

##### Objective 2.1.: Climbing kinematics and performance analysis.

Individuals from each species with a wide range of body size will be used ( $N = 20/\text{species}$ ). After collection, fish will be kept in aerated stream water at ambient temperature (18-23°C) until transport to a filming setup. Constructing a climbing chute with a sheet of transparent Plexiglas (no coating with fine sand) and a circulating water flow (with a fountain pump), each fish will be filmed from the ventral side with a high-speed camera (Edgertronic, 500Hz). Using a custom MatLab program, each video will be digitized for calculating kinematic and performance variables (e.g., climbing speed, tailbeat frequency, and tail-beat amplitude) for characterizing their climbing behaviors (e.g., powerburst climbing in *S. punctatum* from Dominica: Schoenfuss et al., 2011).

##### Objective 2.2: Scaling pattern of kinematic and performance variables.

Since post-larval and juvenile individuals are the ones that migrate most actively, kinematic and performance variables that contribute to the success of climbing (e.g., overcoming a tall waterfall, such as the 55m-high Dunn's River Fall) may differ across age or size groups. The waterfall-climbing ability may provide fitness advantages to these younger fish (over adults) by providing a means to reach breeding habitats and evade non-climbing predators such as eleotrids (e.g., Blob et al., 2010). For this reason, scaling analysis will be performed on these kinematic and performance variables with respect to body

mass of the fish for determining whether these variables show whether these climbing gobiids experience scaling effects and, if any, how these effects manifest (i.e., allometry).

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** \*Jamaica's freshwater habitats host numerous native species, many with diadromous life cycles, migrating between freshwater and the ocean. Among these are *Sicydium* gobies, renowned for their extraordinary waterfall-climbing ability. With fused pelvic fins forming a suction disc, these fish cling to rocks, resist strong currents, and scale steep waterfalls. This study investigates their unique adaptations through field and laboratory research. *S. plumieri* and *S. punctatum* will be collected from native streams, followed by controlled experiments at the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory, University of the West Indies. In the first experiment, an artificial waterfall setup will be used to measure suction pressure to evaluate adhesion strength and endurance. The second experiment will use high-speed cameras to capture climbing behaviors, analyzing performance metrics such as speed, tailbeat frequency, and amplitude. Additionally, the effect of body size on adhesion and climbing will be assessed, as larger individuals may face greater challenges. The findings will provide insights into not only the biomechanical adaptations enabling these gobies to thrive in challenging environments. They will also help us better understand evolutionary patterns of locomotor diversification and adaptation among fishes and contribute to conservation efforts by highlighting the ecological role of migratory fish in Jamaica's freshwater ecosystems. This study underscores the importance of maintaining freshwater and marine habitat connectivity to preserve biodiversity.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

\*6 hr/wk during regular semester 12 hr/wk during fieldwork in Jamaica.

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

\*The undergraduate student collaborating with me on this project is Brooke Ellis, who is well trained in marine ecology. She has extensive experience in snorkeling, freediving, and SCUBA diving, and is CPR certified. This fall, Brooke will study abroad at Curtin University in Australia, where she will deepen her expertise in fisheries science, fish anatomy, growth and mortality, marine ecology, and gain additional research and networking opportunities. Brooke is planning on pursuing a career in Marine Biology, and brings specialized interests that will serve this excursion well. Brooke is avidly interested in how island ecosystems influence environmental and evolutionary adaptations, specifically amongst different species of fish. She has also expressed interest in connecting with stakeholders, and presenting research discoveries and findings upon completion of the expedition. Specifically, she hopes to connect with local universities, members from the community, including local fishermen, government agencies, and members of the Ecosystem Management Branch of the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA).

Brooke's expertise in species identification, specimen collection and handling, water testing, and sampling, coupled with her prior research on the morphological diversity of pupfish (*Cyprinodon*) in isolated environments, makes her uniquely qualified to serve as a research fellow for this project. Her expertise will be invaluable in supporting the collection, holding, and transfer processes throughout the expedition.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

\*As a faculty collaborator, I will provide mentorship, guidance, and expertise to my student research fellow, Brooke Ellis, throughout the project. With over two decades of experience researching waterfall-climbing gobies in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean regions, my work has focused on their functional performance and ecological adaptations, particularly in overcoming predation and the challenges of migratory locomotion. My previous studies have examined musculoskeletal jaw mechanics in piscivorous predators, adhesive mechanisms for waterfall climbing,

and the scaling of climbing structures. Through these projects, I have developed extensive skills in anatomical dissection, imaging, morphometrics, biomechanical modeling, Matlab coding, and field data collection. I will offer insights into relevant research methods, experimental design, and data analysis, particularly in aquatic biology, biomechanics, and ecology. Drawing on my fieldwork experience in native goby habitats, I will assist in planning and coordinating field data collection in Jamaica, ensuring ethical and effective research practices. Additionally, I will provide hands-on supervision during laboratory experiments, guiding the student in accurate data collection, troubleshooting, and problem-solving. Throughout the project, I will mentor the student in critically analyzing results, developing research skills, and preparing for presentations and publications. My interest in this project aligns with my research focus on freshwater ecosystems, species adaptation, and biomechanics. It complements my academic career by advancing the understanding of fish locomotion and ecological adaptation, contributing to biodiversity and conservation knowledge. Additionally, this collaboration offers opportunities for future interdisciplinary studies, fosters a stronger partnership with the University of the West Indies, and enhances my role in mentoring undergraduate research.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

\*The faculty member (Takashi Maie) will provide close mentorship to the student research fellow, with regular meetings scheduled for 6 hours per week during the academic semester and 12 hours per week during the fieldwork in Jamaica.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

\*The dissemination of the research findings will occur through multiple academic platforms. The student investigator will present the results at the Minnesota Academy of Science Annual Meeting (Winchell Undergraduate Research Symposium), scheduled for April 2026. This event provides valuable opportunities to share the study's insights with a broader scientific community, receive constructive feedback, and engage in discussions with peers and professionals. Additionally, the findings will be showcased at the Honor's Day Convocation and the CURI Fall Showcase at the home institution (St. Olaf College), allowing for recognition and celebration of the student's academic contributions. Further dissemination through publications (e.g., Journal of Zoology, Journal of Experimental Biology) may also be pursued to maximize the impact of the research.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

\*Airfare and Transportation, Lodging, and Meal Plan for Brooke Ellis:

Airfare: \$750 (International flight: MSP to BMJ - Montego Bay Int'l Airport)

Lodging:

January 2026: \$726 (\$66/night × 11 nights)

or March 2026: \$504 (\$72/night × 7 nights)

Meal Plan:

January 2026: \$720 (\$60/day × 12 days)

or March 2026: \$480 (\$60/day × 8 days)

Facility Use:

January 2026: \$432 (\$36/day × 12 days as a research assistant)

or March 2026: \$288 (\$36/day × 8 days)

Total Estimated Costs:

January 2026: \$2,628

or March 2026: \$2,022

A funding request of \$2,000 will be submitted to cover the majority of the anticipated expenses.





**Faculty Name:** Benson, Jess

**Student Collaborator:** Williams, Hayden

**Project Title:** Gay Community-Related Social Media Use and Body Dissatisfaction: The Influence of Virtual Intra-Community Interactions on Body Image in Sexual Minority Men

**Full description of the project:** Social media use has previously been linked to body dissatisfaction in heterosexual populations, however, there is limited evidence as to whether these findings generalize to sexual minority men, who have been found to experience heightened vulnerability to eating disorders, body dysmorphia, and body dissatisfaction. Sexual minority men have also been found to spend more time on social media apps than their heterosexual peers. Thus, investigating the role of social media use on body dissatisfaction in this population is of significant interest given their increased engagement on social media and susceptibility to appearance-related stressors.

As sexual minorities, gay and bisexual men often turn to virtual communities in order to express their identity, connect with others in their community, or find sexual partners. Thus, digital communities, such as those on social media or dating apps, are particularly important for sexual minority men, providing them with discreet ways to navigate their marginalized identity. Despite this, intra-community digital spaces can also contribute to many adverse mental health outcomes in sexual minority men. Intra-minority stress theory posits that sexual minority men experience unique stressors due to pressures to compete for status-based sexual and social rewards with others in their community. Therefore in conjunction with stressors that arise from their position as a marginalized group, gay and bisexual men may experience additional stressors emanating from pressures within their own community, increasing their vulnerability to adverse mental health conditions. Given that an increasing amount of intra-community interactions now take place on social media and dating apps, the propensity for sexual minority male users to make upward status-based visual comparisons while engaging with content pertaining to their own community has heightened. These comparisons, facilitated through the processes of self-objectification and appearance-ideal internalization, may cause sexual minority men to feel heightened pressure within their community to keep up with unobtainable body standards.

In this project, we seek to find whether gay-community related social media use is associated with increased body dissatisfaction in sexual minority men using a correlational research design. Grounded in social comparison theory, intra-minority stress theory, and minority stress theory, we hope to discern the role of intra-minority stress in explaining the relationship between gay-community related social media use and body dissatisfaction and whether dating app use serves as a moderator for the association between these two variables. We predict that gay community-related social media use will be positively associated with body dissatisfaction. We predict that this relationship will be moderated by dating app use, such that the association between gay community-related social media use and body dissatisfaction will be stronger with increased dating app use. Additionally, we hypothesize that higher levels of gay-community social media use will be associated with higher levels of intra-minority stress which will in turn be associated with higher levels of body dissatisfaction. Lastly, we predict that dating app usage will be positively associated with intra-minority stress. To date, no other study has looked specifically at gay community-related social media use as a construct and its relationship with body dissatisfaction in sexual minority men. Additionally, we hope to expand on previous methodologies by utilizing more sensitive scales to capture more descriptive data. In doing so, our study will address a critical gap in the literature on an important issue within the gay community.

**Participants**

We aim to recruit approximately 200 individuals who self-identify as sexual minority men to test our hypotheses. Given that sexual minority men constitute a hard-to-reach population, traditional sampling methods are unlikely to produce a large and diverse enough sample size to provide adequate data for the

study. Thus, we intend on utilizing several social media platforms and gay-specific dating apps in order to recruit an adequate sample of sexual minority men.

#### Method

Participants will be able to access the online research survey via a link appearing on social media and dating app advertisements, which will include a brief description of the study. Prior to beginning the survey, participants will be asked to provide their informed consent to take part in the study. Participants will then be asked to fill out the Gay Community-Related Social Media Scale (GCRSMS) which will ask them a series of questions related to their intra-community social media and dating app use. From there, participants will be asked to complete the Gay Community Stressor Scale (GCSS; Pachankis, 2015) and the New Somatomorphic Matrix- Male (NSM-Male; Talbot et al., 2018), followed by a brief survey asking for their demographics. Upon completion of the study, participants will be debriefed and compensated for their time. The total duration of the study is approximately 25 minutes per participant.

#### Measures and Timeline

Please see emailed attached for description of measures and timeline

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** For this project, we are interested in investigating the role of gay-community related social media usage on body dissatisfaction in sexual minority men. Previous research has linked social media usage to body dissatisfaction in heterosexual adolescents and adults, however, there is a lack of literature explicitly examining the implications of social media usage on body dissatisfaction in sexual minority men, despite this population experiencing eating disorders, body dysmorphia and body dissatisfaction at higher rates. Grounded in social comparison theory, intra-minority stress theory, and minority stress theory, we aim to use a correlational research design to test whether gay-community related social media use is associated with increased body dissatisfaction. We also hope to discern the role of intra-minority stress in the relationship between gay community-related social media use and body dissatisfaction and whether dating app use moderates the association between these two variables. Additionally, we seek to expand on previous methodologies by utilizing more sensitive scales to capture descriptive data. In doing so, we hope to address a critical gap in the literature on an important issue within the gay community.

#### When do you plan to pursue your project?

Summer 2025, Fall term 2025, J-term 2026

#### How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?

I will work 10 hours per week in the summer, 7 hours per week during the fall semester, and 8 hours per week during J-Term.

#### A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.

This project aligns greatly with my future academic and career goals. After graduating from St. Olaf, I plan to obtain a PhD in clinical psychology where I hope to focus my research on LGBTQ+ mental health disparities, particularly as they relate to social media and digital spaces. I am especially interested in discerning the role of intra-minority stress on the onset of appearance-related stressors such as body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and appearance dissatisfaction in LGBTQ+ populations. As a prospective clinician, I am committed to working with members of the LGBTQ+ community to navigate these identity, appearance, and self-image challenges, using my research as a guiding force to providing effective solutions that target specific intra-community phenomena. Thus, this project is directly related to the research that I aim to do in my years as a doctoral student and during my career as a clinical psychologist. In this way, carrying out this project will be a foundational first step in honing my interests and guiding the direction of my future research.

Due to the nature of the project topic, as well as the fact that sexual minority men constitute a vulnerable population in research, this project could not be carried out in a traditional classroom setting. Given that sexual minority men are also a traditionally hard-to-reach population, funding is crucial in order to recruit an adequate sample size using non-traditional sampling methods. Thus, pursuing this project through a Magnus the Good Collaborative Fellowship

will give me the opportunity to expand the scope of the project as well as extend my learning of social psychology, gender, and sexuality theory beyond the classroom and into a real-world setting. By working collaboratively with Dr. Jess Benson, I hope to grow my knowledge of social psychology theory and gain valuable insights into the process of carrying out psychological research. I am excited to work with her to achieve my future career goals and obtain meaningful research experiences that will provide me with excellent preparation for graduate school and beyond. Although the entire research project will be carried out collaboratively, I plan on taking the lead on recruiting participants by advertising the study online across key social media platforms. Additionally, I plan to work with Dr. Benson to co-create the survey materials and analyze our data. I also plan to hold myself responsible for writing up study results in preparation for publication and submitting one or more proposals for conference presentations, in the form of a brief talk or poster presentation. Throughout the research process, I will monitor our progress and make sure that we are on track to accomplish our weekly and monthly goals. In this way, I am committed to ensuring that this project is carried out thoughtfully, efficiently, and is completed in a way that is satisfying to both of us.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

I am a social psychologist in the Department of Psychology at St. Olaf and an affiliate faculty member in the Department of Race, Ethnicity, Gender and Sexuality Studies (REGSS). My research focuses on social cognition, racial identity, stigma, and intergroup bias.

I am particularly interested in pursuing this research with Hayden as it focuses on the impact of social media and intra-community stigmatization on sexual minority men. Our proposed research is novel in that it examines how stereotyping within a minoritized community in the context of social media can explain discrepancies between actual and ideal body image. This relationship has not been previously tested in prior research, and particularly among men who identify as sexual minorities. This research has the potential to advance theory on sexual minority mental health and contribute to a growing body of literature on the effects of social media on self-image concerns.

This research fits in with my current scholarship examining the communication of stereotypes in social media, as well as with my previous research on intersectional identity, internalized oppression, and intergroup and intragroup stigmatization. This work also fits with my long-term goals of conducting high-quality research with undergraduate students and providing ongoing mentorship throughout the academic term.

As a collaborator on this project, I plan to contribute my knowledge from my research on social identity, stereotypes, and stigmatization. I also expect to work collaboratively with Hayden to recruit and compensate participants, program the experiment(s) online, and conduct statistical analyses on our data. I also anticipate co-writing a draft of a manuscript with Hayden to submit in a peer-reviewed journal, as well as disseminating our results in national and regional conferences.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

We plan to meet for 1 hour every week during the summer and school year.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The results of our project will be shared with the public in several ways. If our results are significant, we plan on submitting our study to be published in the Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health. Additionally, we plan on attending conferences to present our research. Specifically, we hope to attend the 2026 SPSSI (Society of the Psychological Study of Social Issues) Conference and the 2026 APA Conference. Finally, we plan to present this research on Honors Day at St. Olaf.

## **Total budget for the project? 2000**

### **How will the budget be used?**

We plan to use the requested budget (\$2000) to support participant recruitment via targeted social media advertising (\$1,000) and participant compensation (\$1,000) via gift-cards.

Specific Details and Rationale:

Social Media advertising (\$1000): Facebook is a cost-effective option that allows advertisers to set price limits that align with their budget so that they do not overspend. Thus, we anticipate setting aside \$500.00 for recruiting participants via Facebook.

Previous literature has indicated that Grindr is also a cost-effective option for accessing a diverse sample of sexual minority men. Similar to Facebook, Grindr allows advertisers to set price limits on how much they wish to spend per ad campaign. Thus, we anticipate setting aside \$500.00 for recruiting participants via Grindr.

Participant payment (\$1000): Previous studies administering mental health surveys through Facebook ads have found the cost per participant to be around \$2.01, while those advertised on Grindr have found the cost per participant to be \$5.73 for a 30-minute HIV testing survey. Given that our study will take approximately 25 minutes to complete, we plan to compensate participants with a \$5 gift card for their time (\$5.00 X 200 participants = \$1,000).

**Faculty Name:** Davila, Jaime

**Student Collaborator:** Clift, Emma

**Project Title:** Faster detection of microsatellite instability in cancer transcriptomics leveraging pattern matching and statistical learning

**Full description of the project:** Endometrial and colorectal cancers are frequently caused by high microsatellite instability (MSI-H). MSI-H samples contain an excess amount of insertions and deletions (indels) in mononucleotide repeats, regions of the genome where the same nucleotide repeats itself. Diagnosing MSI-H has received increased attention in the clinical realm since the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has given full approval to immunotherapy for treating MSI-H solid tumors. The detection of MSI-H in DNA sequencing is commonplace, and existing bioinformatic approaches require mapping the sequencing reads to the human reference genome, which is a computationally intensive task that takes hours. It is increasingly recognized that MSI-H can be detected in RNA sequencing, and we have recently developed Celero (<https://github.com/jdavila/celero>), a fast method for the detection of MSI-H. Our method works by using smaller subsequences of length  $k$  from our transcriptomics data called  $k$ -mers. We leverage KMC3, a  $k$ -mer processing tool, to identify target  $k$ -mers originating from one base pair insertions or deletions around mononucleotide repeats. Such target  $k$ -mers are then mapped to the reference genome to find indels, and used by a logistic regression model to predict microsatellite instability status. Our method's median processing time is less than 2 minutes, which compares favorably to approaches requiring mapping, which takes over 3 hours. Our method has a specificity/sensitivity of 86%.

In the current project, we would like to improve our previous method by leveraging two classical ideas, one from pattern matching in computer science, and the second one from statistical learning. The use of our first idea will result in a method with a smaller memory footprint. For processing a typical transcriptomics dataset, our method uses over 25 GB of memory due to the use of KMC3, which computes and stores in memory the set of all  $k$ -mers from a transcriptomics dataset. A more efficient approach is to leverage the classical Rabin/Karp algorithm for pattern detection. This method uses a rolling hash approach to identify positions that match a pattern, and does it in expected linear time. Our approach will store our set of target  $k$ -mers in memory using a hashing function operating with less than 10 Mb of memory. We plan to implement this step using C, given the speed of the resulting compiled code.

Our second idea will result in a method with a higher accuracy. In our current implementation of our method, we engineered two features which measure the density of the insertion/deletions, which are then used in a simple logistic regression resulting in a specificity/sensitivity of 86%. Instead of designing features for our method, we plan to use statistical learning techniques like LASSO regression or Random Forests to automatically select  $k$ -mers from our training dataset that distinguish between samples with and without MSI-H.

During the fall 2025 semester, Emma will create scripts and programs that implement the two main improvements to our MSI-H detection method. This will be an iterative process where small scripts or code will be created and tested using different datasets. We intend to meet weekly with Emma working about 5 hours per week. The project will conclude in spring 2026 by uploading a new version of the tool and an analysis describing the results. We plan to write a short conference paper describing this project and its results, for submission to an international bioinformatics conference like ISBRA or ICCABS.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Endometrial and colorectal cancers are frequently caused by high microsatellite instability (MSI-H), a condition that results in an excess amount of insertions

and deletions (indels) in repetitive regions of the genome. MSI-H can be detected from DNA or RNA sequencing, and existing bioinformatic approaches require mapping the sequencing data to the human reference genome, a computationally intensive task that takes hours. Through this project, we will create a tool that detects MSI-H in RNA sequencing by detecting the presence in sequencing data of small motifs of length  $k$  called  $k$ -mers, and that can be detected using the Karp/Rabin algorithm, a commonly used pattern matching technique. Finally, we intend to use statistical learning approaches to determine which  $k$ -mers are enriched in MSI-H samples to create a fast and accurate method for detecting MSI-H in cancer transcriptomics data.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Fall term 2025, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

5

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

As a computer science major, I have always been interested in applying computer science to solve problems across disciplines. Since beginning research my sophomore year of college, I have had the privilege of researching microsatellite instability, in the field of bioinformatics. Using computational tools to handle and manipulate large amounts of data to investigate problems in bioinformatics has sparked my interest in graduate school and research. My expected contribution to this project includes tasks to improve our method for detecting microsatellite instability in tumor-only RNA-sequencing samples. I plan to use  $k$ -mers, exploring feature selection for the prediction of microsatellite status. Additionally, I plan on making our method more time-efficient by using hashing/Rabin-Karp to count  $k$ -mers. The project fits into my interests in the intersections of computer science, machine learning, data science, and biology. This is reflected in the research program I will be participating in this summer, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science for the Understanding, Prediction, and Prevention of Disease, where I will be working on the project, Multiplexed quantitative ChIP-seq for the profiling of epigenetic signatures in circulating nucleosomes in human plasma. It also aligns with my goal of pursuing graduate school and further research in a similar field.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

I conduct research in the area of computational cancer genomics, and I am very interested in designing new approaches to extract biological insights from freely available cancer genomics datasets. In particular, I am very interested in creating new approaches for the analysis of transcriptomics datasets, which are routinely deposited in large genomics databases like SRA and GEO. The implementation of the method that we describe will make it possible for researchers with modest computational resources to process such freely available datasets. This project combines my interest in Computer Science, Biology, and Statistics/Data Science, and blends concepts from the three disciplines, and brings them together to solve an interdisciplinary problem. My primary role in this project would be to provide advice to Emma on how to create programs that implement the ideas that we described in the project description, and to discuss how to test these approaches and test them using available RNA sequencing datasets in the public domain. During the last year and a half, Emma has acquired expertise in the combination of these disciplines working with me on the creation of initial versions of Celero, and I look forward to collaborating with her in creating an advanced implementation of this method

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

1 hr

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

We plan to send the results of the project to an international bioinformatics conference. Throughout this process, we plan to present this work in a poster as well as write a paper.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

The budget will be used to pay for Emma's attendance to an international bioinformatics conference to present the results of this project. Prof. Jaime Davila will plan to cover his costs using IPAT funds. We will use ISBRA 2023 (<https://mangul-lab-usc.github.io/ISBRA23/registration>) as a template for estimating the costs:

Flight: \$1,000

Hotel (3 nights): \$400

Conference registration fee: \$600



**Faculty Name:** Braun, Noah

**Student Collaborator:** Grace, Anna

**Project Title:** Impact of Upzoning on Housing Prices and Neighborhood Equity

**Full description of the project:** Project overview: This project builds off of Anna Grace's term paper in Professor Braun's "Economics of Public Policy" course, studying the impact of Minneapolis's 2040 Comprehensive Plan on housing prices. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan eliminated single family zoning in the city of Minneapolis, often referred to as upzoning. This allowed for new high-density construction in neighborhoods that were previously restricted to only single-family homes. For her initial project, Anna gathered data on median housing prices from Zillow and hand coded information on changes in zoning laws from the Minneapolis Municipal Code. She used a difference-in-difference approach to evaluate the effect of upzoning on home sales in neighborhoods that experienced upzoning, relative to those that already allowed for multi-family units. Anna also studied how this law impacted predominantly Black and predominantly white neighborhoods in Minneapolis differently.

Building off of this initial work, we will have two primary data tasks. The first is to utilize GIS software to convert maps of neighborhood zoning boundaries into GIS shape files, which will allow us to more accurately identify which houses and new developments were previously zoned for single-family construction only. The second will be to web scrape data on the universe of home sales in the city of Minneapolis, dating back to 2018. This data will contain information on the sale price and physical characteristics of the property, as well as prior sale prices, prior assessment values, and the names of all home buyers.

Using this data, we will be able to do the following analysis. First, we can assess whether houses in upzoned neighborhoods have experienced a change in sale prices, relative to an expected sale price based on the home's previous sale prices and assessment values. Using a difference-in-difference approach, we will assess if housing prices in upzoned neighborhoods saw relatively larger or smaller changes in sale prices relative to those in neighborhoods that already allowed for multi-family construction.

We will then test to see if there were differential effects from this law in neighborhoods with different racial compositions. We will do this both by using data from the American Community Survey on the initial demographic characteristics of neighborhoods, and also by using a prediction model to predict the race of new home buyers.

We expect to complete data collection, cleaning, and initial analysis by the end of the Fall semester and in time to submit to a conference in the Spring semester. The Spring semester will be spent doing additional data analysis and turning our results into a working paper for future submission.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Abstract: The City of Minneapolis's 2040 Comprehensive Plan ended single family zoning and opened up the opportunity for the construction of high-density housing options. Using newly digitized data on the neighborhoods exposed to upzoning and the universe of home sales, we test to see the impact of new high-density housing construction on home prices. Using data on new home buyers, we observe if new housing construction has changed the demographic composition of neighborhoods. We also test for differential changes in home values in neighborhoods with different initial demographic compositions of home owners.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Fall term 2025, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

8 hours per week

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

I am someone who is very curious, and especially curious when it comes to economic and political policy. Specifically, I am very interested in urban policy and housing economics, and how these factors intersect with racial and socioeconomic inequality. Zoning laws are particularly fascinating because they vary greatly from place to place and often have historically rooted, lasting impacts on communities. These laws shape the accessibility and affordability of housing. Growing up in the Twin Cities, I've witnessed firsthand how zoning laws have impacted neighborhoods, both before and after the implementation of the Minneapolis 2040 plan. This personal experience has furthered my interest in better understanding and contributing to research about the implications of zoning policy.

I plan to contribute to this research project in a variety of ways, such as collecting and cleaning necessary data, assisting with the analysis of the data, and helping to develop the economic models that will measure the effects of upzoning on housing prices. I will also aid in the creation of visualizations that help illustrate important trends and findings.

This project is a natural extension of both my academic and professional interests. I am particularly passionate about public policy and social impact, which I believe are deeply interconnected. Through my internships with the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, I have gained valuable insights into community engagement and how policy impacts different communities in various ways. This summer, I will be working in the community engagement office at the Federal Reserve, focusing on data analytics, particularly with data regarding Indigenous communities in collaboration with the Center for Indian Country Development - another crucial area of policy. Additionally, I have developed a strong problem-solving mindset through my entrepreneurial ventures, which have focused on issues such as housing and the environment. One such project emerged from a study abroad experience I had in New Zealand, where my team and I developed a business for internship housing solutions, which we presented at the Ole Cup last year.

This research project also aligns perfectly with my academic trajectory. I've always been fascinated by how policy reforms, such as changes to zoning laws, can reshape communities and drive equity. By contributing to this research, I hope to deepen my expertise in policy analysis and statistical methods while gaining hands-on experience in an area that I am passionate about. Eventually, I hope to attend graduate school in either economics or public policy.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

This project fits into my research agenda on urban policy and neighborhood segregation. My other projects in this area study how local elections impact cross-city migration and partisan segregation in North Carolina, as well as how neighborhood racial and wealth composition affect support for education spending. This also fits into my overarching research focus on how public policy can be used to create a more equitable economy. I am hopeful that this project will turn into a published paper in an urban economics or public policy journal.

I have experience with both parts of the data collection process: GIS map creation and web-scraping. My main contributions will be writing the code to collect the relevant data and teaching Anna how to do this process in the future. From there, I will both supervise Anna's data analysis work and help her build on her already strong coding skills. Assuming this project progresses as planned, I will also take a lead role on writing the working paper.

I'm also excited to have another opportunity to collaborate with an undergraduate researcher, and build off of my experience supervising a CURI project this upcoming summer. I believe Anna has a bright future in economics, either by pursuing a graduate degree or continuing her work with the Federal Reserve. I am excited to help her continue to grow and develop as an economics researcher.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

1-3 hours per week

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The goal of this project is to develop it into an economics paper for publication. There are two economics conferences, the Midwest Economic Association Conference and the Eastern Economics Association Conference, that we believe would be appropriate venues to present this project, receive feedback, and allow Anna to attend an economics conference before graduation. Both conferences have submission deadlines in November/December and take place in the Spring semester. We have admittedly not decided which conference we would rather attend, as it will likely depend on which conference fits better with our Spring semester academic schedules.

**Total budget for the project? 1700**

**How will the budget be used?**

Estimated \$400 round-trip cost for conference travel to either the Midwest Economic Association Conference (location TBA) or the Eastern Economic Association Conference (Baltimore, MD)

Estimated \$450 cost of staying at conference hotel (\$150 for 3 nights)

Individual cost of travel: \$850, multiplied by two for both Anna and Professor Braun to travel.

**Faculty Name:** Maie, Takashi

**Student Collaborator:** Roth, Evgenia

**Project Title:** Waterfall-climbing behavior of Jamaican stream gobies (*Sicydium* sp.)

**Full description of the project:** Same project description as the application filled out by Brooke Ellis and Takashi Maie

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Jamaica's freshwater habitats host numerous native species, many with diadromous life cycles, migrating between freshwater and the ocean. Among these are *Sicydium* gobies, renowned for their extraordinary waterfall-climbing ability. With fused pelvic fins forming a suction disc, these fish cling to rocks, resist strong currents, and scale steep waterfalls. This study investigates their unique adaptations through field and laboratory research. *S. plumieri* and *S. punctatum* will be collected from native streams, followed by controlled experiments at the Discovery Bay Marine Laboratory, University of the West Indies. In the first experiment, an artificial waterfall setup will be used to measure suction pressure to evaluate adhesion strength and endurance. The second experiment will use high-speed cameras to capture climbing behaviors, analyzing performance metrics such as speed, tailbeat frequency, and amplitude. Additionally, the effect of body size on adhesion and climbing will be assessed, as larger individuals may face greater challenges. The findings will provide insights into not only the biomechanical adaptations enabling these gobies to thrive in challenging environments. They will also help us better understand evolutionary patterns of locomotor diversification and adaptation among fishes and contribute to conservation efforts by highlighting the ecological role of migratory fish in Jamaica's freshwater ecosystems. This study underscores the importance of maintaining freshwater and marine habitat connectivity to preserve biodiversity.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

J-term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

\*6 hr/wk during regular semester (e.g., equivalent to 0.5 credit hrs for BIO 297). 12 hr/wk during fieldwork in Jamaica.

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

My name is Evgenia Roth, and I am planning on pursuing my PhD in marine biology. Specifically, I want to study conservation ecology, symbioses physiology, and coral genetics on tropical coral reefs. I have previously worked in Dr. Maie's fish physiology research lab gathering locomotion data about the banded kōkopu (*Galaxias fasciatus*), a waterfall climbing goby from New Zealand. I would love to combine the work I have done using MATLAB for digitization with participating in field collections for this new species. Additionally, I conducted research on a coral reef in St. Ann, Jamaica for a biology study abroad class. While abroad, I worked with Dr. Maie to find and catch a climbing goby.

I am hoping to take my experiences conducting original research in marine and freshwater environments with me into graduate school. I believe that assisting Dr. Maie with studying a new species of waterfall climbing goby would be an invaluable experience, providing me with the opportunity to experience graduate-level field research.

In this project, I would be assisting with specimen collection and transfers, videography, and locomotion digitization upon return to campus.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

As a faculty collaborator, Takashi Maie will provide mentorship, guidance, and expertise to his student research fellow, Evgenia Roth, throughout the project. With over two decades of experience researching waterfall-climbing gobies in the Indo-Pacific and Caribbean regions, his work has focused on their functional performance and ecological adaptations, particularly in overcoming predation and the challenges of migratory locomotion. His

previous studies have examined musculoskeletal jaw mechanics in piscivorous predators, adhesive mechanisms for waterfall climbing, and the scaling of climbing structures. Through these projects, he has developed extensive skills in anatomical dissection, imaging, morphometrics, biomechanical modeling, Matlab coding, and field data collection. Takashi will offer insights into relevant research methods, experimental design, and data analysis, particularly in aquatic biology, biomechanics, and ecology. Drawing on my fieldwork experience in native goby habitats, he will assist in planning and coordinating field data collection in Jamaica, ensuring ethical and effective research practices. Additionally, he will provide hands-on supervision during laboratory experiments, guiding the student in accurate data collection, troubleshooting, and problem-solving. Throughout the project, he will mentor the student in critically analyzing results, developing research skills, and preparing for presentations and publications. His interest in this project aligns with my research focus on freshwater ecosystems, species adaptation, and biomechanics. It complements his academic career by advancing the understanding of fish locomotion and ecological adaptation, contributing to biodiversity and conservation knowledge. Additionally, this collaboration offers opportunities for future interdisciplinary studies, fosters a stronger partnership with the University of the West Indies, and enhances his role in mentoring undergraduate research.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

\*The faculty member (Takashi Maie) will provide close mentorship to the student research fellow, with regular meetings scheduled for 6 hours per week during the academic semester and 12 hours per week during the fieldwork in Jamaica.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The dissemination of the research findings will occur through multiple academic platforms. The student investigator will present the results at the Minnesota Academy of Science Annual Meeting (Winchell Undergraduate Research Symposium), scheduled for April 2026. This event provides valuable opportunities to share the study's insights with a broader scientific community, receive constructive feedback, and engage in discussions with peers and professionals. Additionally, the findings will be showcased at the Honor's Day Convocation and the CURI Fall Showcase at the home institution (St. Olaf College), allowing for recognition and celebration of the student's academic contributions. Further dissemination through publications (e.g., Journal of Zoology, Journal of Experimental Biology) may also be pursued to maximize the impact of the research.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

Airfare and Transportation, Lodging, and Meal Plan for Evgenia Roth:

Airfare: \$750 (International flight: MSP to BMJ - Montego Bay Int'l Airport)

Lodging:

January 2026: \$726 (\$66/night × 11 nights)

or March 2026: \$504 (\$72/night × 7 nights)

Meal Plan:

January 2026: \$720 (\$60/day × 12 days)

or March 2026: \$480 (\$60/day × 8 days)

Facility Use:

January 2026: \$432 (\$36/day × 12 days as a research assistant)

or March 2026: \$288 (\$36/day × 8 days)

Total Estimated Costs:

January 2026: \$2,628

or March 2026: \$2,022

A funding request of \$2,000 will be submitted to cover the majority of the anticipated expenses.



**Faculty Name:** Al Atiyat, Ibtesam

**Student Collaborator:** Goodman, Tobias

**Project Title:** A Fanonian Book Review of "Fear of Black Consciousness" by Lewis Gordon

**Full description of the project:** In this project, Ibtesam Al Atiyat and Tobias Goodman will review Fear of Black Consciousness, by Lewis Gordon, our most recent Belugum Lecturer here at St. Olaf. We will frame the review in light of Fanonian philosophy, specifically his phenomenology of race, to see where Gordon answers for, and departs from the writings by the great postcolonial theorist, Frantz Fanon. Ibtesam and I will embark on this project this summer, reading Fear of Black Consciousness along with Fanon's great texts: The Wretched of the Earth, Black Skin, White Masks, and A Dying Colonialism.

Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks specifically will be of utmost importance for the analysis of Fear of Black Consciousness. In both texts appears a phenomenology of race. A critical, side-by-side comparison will be of importance in our analysis because in the conclusion of such an analysis, as is in Fanon's case, lies a philosophy of decolonization. Where Black Skin, White Masks, and The Wretched of the Earth are often read in opposition, we will read them in succession, as scholars such as Homi Bhabha argue should be done. It can be said then, where we find differences in the logical steps by Fanon vs. by Gordon, we can find differences in their conclusions. Gordon might have a different understanding of colonialism than Fanon, and from that, a different theory of liberation. A critical analysis of differences in these philosophies is important for understanding race today. From those different understandings, different forms of political conclusions come, may it be decolonial praxis, or antiracist protest.

Today in this country, a critical and accurate understanding of race remains of pressing importance, and is specifically important in the field of Philosophy. From an accurate understanding of race, a philosophy of liberation will be realized.

Our end goal is to publish a critical book review in a journal, and be prepared to present our research at the CURI Fall Showcase and beyond.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Ibtesam Al Atiyat and Tobias Goodman write a critical comparison of philosophies of race and liberation between the originator Frantz Fanon, and the contemporary philosopher, Lewis Gordon, who brings Fanonian thought into a modern day America. In this movement, philosophical differences present themselves. With a critical analysis of these philosophies, the pair of researchers write a book review of Fear of Black Consciousness, by Lewis Gordon

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

15

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

I am interested in Franz Fanon's work, and aim to learn more about it. In my recent interactions with Lewis Gordon here on campus, I am curious about how Fanon is being conceived of today by leading philosophers of race. There are differences that I intuit, and am eager to study them deeply. This research fits into my academic trajectory towards grad school after I earn my bachelors degree in Philosophy. A goal of mine is to receive a Ph.D. in philosophy, and a special interest of mine is in decolonial philosophy and critical theory.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

As a faculty collaborator on this research project, I am eager to work with Tobias to explore how Franz Fanon's work continues to shape scholarly critique and political struggle around race, power, and liberation in the U.S. In addition to systematically reading and analyzing Fanon's body of work, our project will examine Lewis Gordon's *Fear of Black Consciousness* as an example of the enduring relevance of Fanon's insights and philosophy. We will argue that Fanon's intellectual legacy extends beyond postcolonial and decolonial thought; and rather, that it forms an essential foundation for a broader philosophical critical theory project emerging from the Global South. Here, the Global South is not merely a geopolitical designation but a critical framework that accounts for histories of dispossession, structures of domination, and strategies of resistance.

Fanon's work has long been central to my teaching and scholarship. His writings are a cornerstone of my sociology and race and ethnic studies courses, as well as the Enduring Questions curriculum. It was through the Enduring Questions Program, of which Tobias was a member, that my interest in systematically reading Fanon with students and tracing his influence on contemporary scholarship and political activism first took shape. This project builds on that foundation and will offer me the chance to deepen my engagement with Fanon's work in class and in future research.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

3 hours per week

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

We will both be reading. Tobias will do most of the writing, and Ibtesam will engage with it by editing. Together, they will discuss in person and over zoom.

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

We will write a book review and seek publication in philosophy journals. Tobias will also present the research at the CURI Fall Showcase and be prepared to present outside of that setting as well.

**Total budget for the project?** 0

**How will the budget be used?**

-



**Faculty Name:** Braun, Noah

**Student Collaborator:** Grace, Anna

**Project Title:** Impact of Upzoning on Housing Prices and Neighborhood Equity

**Full description of the project:** Project overview: This project builds off of Anna Grace's term paper in Professor Braun's "Economics of Public Policy" course, studying the impact of Minneapolis's 2040 Comprehensive Plan on housing prices. The 2040 Comprehensive Plan eliminated single family zoning in the city of Minneapolis, often referred to as upzoning. This allowed for new high-density construction in neighborhoods that were previously restricted to only single-family homes. For her initial project, Anna gathered data on median housing prices from Zillow and hand coded information on changes in zoning laws from the Minneapolis Municipal Code. She used a difference-in-difference approach to evaluate the effect of upzoning on home sales in neighborhoods that experienced upzoning, relative to those that already allowed for multi-family units. Anna also studied how this law impacted predominantly Black and predominantly white neighborhoods in Minneapolis differently.

Building off of this initial work, we will have two primary data tasks. The first is to utilize GIS software to convert maps of neighborhood zoning boundaries into GIS shape files, which will allow us to more accurately identify which houses and new developments were previously zoned for single-family construction only. The second will be to web scrape data on the universe of home sales in the city of Minneapolis, dating back to 2018. This data will contain information on the sale price and physical characteristics of the property, as well as prior sale prices, prior assessment values, and the names of all home buyers.

Using this data, we will be able to do the following analysis. First, we can assess whether houses in upzoned neighborhoods have experienced a change in sale prices, relative to an expected sale price based on the home's previous sale prices and assessment values. Using a difference-in-difference approach, we will assess if housing prices in upzoned neighborhoods saw relatively larger or smaller changes in sale prices relative to those in neighborhoods that already allowed for multi-family construction.

We will then test to see if there were differential effects from this law in neighborhoods with different racial compositions. We will do this both by using data from the American Community Survey on the initial demographic characteristics of neighborhoods, and also by using a prediction model to predict the race of new home buyers.

We expect to complete data collection, cleaning, and initial analysis by the end of the Fall semester and in time to submit to a conference in the Spring semester. The Spring semester will be spent doing additional data analysis and turning our results into a working paper for future submission.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** Abstract: The City of Minneapolis's 2040 Comprehensive Plan ended single family zoning and opened up the opportunity for the construction of high-density housing options. Using newly digitized data on the neighborhoods exposed to upzoning and the universe of home sales, we test to see the impact of new high-density housing construction on home prices. Using data on new home buyers, we observe if new housing construction has changed the demographic composition of neighborhoods. We also test for differential changes in home values in neighborhoods with different initial demographic compositions of home owners.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Fall term 2025, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

8 hours per week

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

I am someone who is very curious, and especially curious when it comes to economic and political policy. Specifically, I am very interested in urban policy and housing economics, and how these factors intersect with racial and socioeconomic inequality. Zoning laws are particularly fascinating because they vary greatly from place to place and often have historically rooted, lasting impacts on communities. These laws shape the accessibility and affordability of housing. Growing up in the Twin Cities, I've witnessed firsthand how zoning laws have impacted neighborhoods, both before and after the implementation of the Minneapolis 2040 plan. This personal experience has furthered my interest in better understanding and contributing to research about the implications of zoning policy.

I plan to contribute to this research project in a variety of ways, such as collecting and cleaning necessary data, assisting with the analysis of the data, and helping to develop the economic models that will measure the effects of upzoning on housing prices. I will also aid in the creation of visualizations that help illustrate important trends and findings.

This project is a natural extension of both my academic and professional interests. I am particularly passionate about public policy and social impact, which I believe are deeply interconnected. Through my internships with the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, I have gained valuable insights into community engagement and how policy impacts different communities in various ways. This summer, I will be working in the community engagement office at the Federal Reserve, focusing on data analytics, particularly with data regarding Indigenous communities in collaboration with the Center for Indian Country Development - another crucial area of policy. Additionally, I have developed a strong problem-solving mindset through my entrepreneurial ventures, which have focused on issues such as housing and the environment. One such project emerged from a study abroad experience I had in New Zealand, where my team and I developed a business for internship housing solutions, which we presented at the Ole Cup last year.

This research project also aligns perfectly with my academic trajectory. I've always been fascinated by how policy reforms, such as changes to zoning laws, can reshape communities and drive equity. By contributing to this research, I hope to deepen my expertise in policy analysis and statistical methods while gaining hands-on experience in an area that I am passionate about. Eventually, I hope to attend graduate school in either economics or public policy.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

This project fits into my research agenda on urban policy and neighborhood segregation. My other projects in this area study how local elections impact cross-city migration and partisan segregation in North Carolina, as well as how neighborhood racial and wealth composition affect support for education spending. This also fits into my overarching research focus on how public policy can be used to create a more equitable economy. I am hopeful that this project will turn into a published paper in an urban economics or public policy journal.

I have experience with both parts of the data collection process: GIS map creation and web-scraping. My main contributions will be writing the code to collect the relevant data and teaching Anna how to do this process in the future. From there, I will both supervise Anna's data analysis work and help her build on her already strong coding skills. Assuming this project progresses as planned, I will also take a lead role on writing the working paper.

I'm also excited to have another opportunity to collaborate with an undergraduate researcher, and build off of my experience supervising a CURI project this upcoming summer. I believe Anna has a bright future in economics, either by pursuing a graduate degree or continuing her work with the Federal Reserve. I am excited to help her continue to grow and develop as an economics researcher.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

1-3 hours per week

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The goal of this project is to develop it into an economics paper for publication. There are two economics conferences, the Midwest Economic Association Conference and the Eastern Economics Association Conference, that we believe would be appropriate venues to present this project, receive feedback, and allow Anna to attend an economics conference before graduation. Both conferences have submission deadlines in November/December and take place in the Spring semester. We have admittedly not decided which conference we would rather attend, as it will likely depend on which conference fits better with our Spring semester academic schedules.

**Total budget for the project? 1700**

**How will the budget be used?**

Estimated \$400 round-trip cost for conference travel to either the Midwest Economic Association Conference (location TBA) or the Eastern Economic Association Conference (Baltimore, MD)

Estimated \$450 cost of staying at conference hotel (\$150 for 3 nights)

Individual cost of travel: \$850, multiplied by two for both Anna and Professor Braun to travel.

**Faculty Name:** Kheshgi, Rehanna

**Student Collaborator:** Vireaksouphea, Kolbot

**Project Title:** Exploring Intergenerational Musical Connections with Immigrant Communities in Minnesota

**Full description of the project:** This project is focused on bringing together Kolbot Vireaksouphea's and Rehanna Kheshgi's musical knowledge and experience working with immigrant communities in Minnesota around themes of intergenerational connection. Regular conversations between Kolbot and Kheshgi throughout the project period will provide opportunities for each to bring their own research, reflections on experiences with community partners, and musical creations into conversation, benefitting both project participants. Kheshgi's mentorship and experience conducting community-based work in music will be valuable to Kolbot as he is just starting to formally explore themes of intergenerational connection through music. Kolbot's experience as a musician and someone who is part of an immigrant community in Minnesota will benefit Kheshgi as she learns from his firsthand knowledge of the challenges and affordances of intergenerational relationships. We seek to explore and document similarities and differences between Cambodian and Somali immigrant and refugee experiences in Minnesota through the arts in order to support community initiatives related to preserving and reinvigorating cultural heritage in diaspora across generations.

Kolbot's vision for the Magnus project is to explore intergenerational connections within Cambodian musical traditions, focusing on Minnesota's immigrant and refugee communities. His part of the project seeks to understand why past generations of Cambodian musicians stopped making music, how these experiences shaped their artistic identities, and what this means for younger artists. The main activity will involve working directly with Cambodian musicians—elders and youth—through interviews, performances, and storytelling sessions to uncover their musical journeys' emotional and historical depth. Kolbot will collaborate with Kheshgi and other researchers to blend academic studies with practical experience, fostering intergenerational exchange and mentorship. The goal is to revitalize Cambodian music by using these stories to inspire new compositions and offer young generations a chance to reconnect with their heritage. Ultimately, Kolbot's part of the project aims to amplify marginalized voices, encourage a cultural renaissance, and inspire the next generation of Cambodian artists in Minnesota to rediscover and advance their musical traditions.

Kheshgi's goal for the Magnus project is to draw on the knowledge of local Somali parents and elders in order to create culturally relevant, media-rich, open-access resources for Somali youth, thereby recognizing their value and importance in multiple ways, including but not limited to financial compensation. During the project period, working with Surad Academy Charter School interim director and Ole alum Najax Siciid ('23), Kheshgi will host a series of monthly meetings at the school in Faribault with Somali parents/elders of Surad students to learn about their perspectives on Somali culture and arts. Some primary questions will be: What do parents and elders want Somali youth to learn about Somali arts, culture, and music? What (content) and how (method) do they want their children to learn about their own culture? How should this information be framed and presented (context/interpretation)? Kheshgi will gather materials generated from discussions with parents and elders, interactions with teachers and students at Surad Academy (which primarily serves Somali families), and local Somali artists, to create resources that could potentially be used by Surad Academy teachers and beyond. She will then solicit feedback from participants and external experts, and integrate suggestions before finalizing and sharing materials on an online, open-access platform, pending permission from contributors.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** This project is focused on bringing together Kolbot Vireaksouphea's and Rehanna Kheshgi's musical knowledge and experience working with immigrant communities in Minnesota around themes of intergenerational connection. Through working directly with

Cambodian musicians—elders and youth—through interviews, performances, and storytelling sessions to uncover their musical journeys' emotional and historical depth, Kolbot seeks to understand why past generations of Cambodian musicians stopped making music, how these experiences shaped their artistic identities, and what this means for younger artists. He will create and perform new musical compositions based on interactions with Cambodian project partners. Kheshgi will host a series of monthly meetings with Somali parents and elders of students at Surad Academy Charter School in Faribault to learn about their perspectives on Somali culture and arts, in order to create culturally relevant, media-rich, open-access resources for Somali youth. Working together as a team, Kolbot's and Kheshgi's intentional reflections on their goals, methods, and progress will provide a generative space for growth that will sustain and nourish the dynamic core of this collaborative project.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025, Fall term 2025, Spring term 2026

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

Summer 2025: 8-10 hours/week; Fall 2025 and Spring 2026: 3-4 hours/week

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**

As a musician and part of a Cambodian immigrant community in Minnesota, Kolbot is passionate about documenting and preserving the musical heritage of his community. The Magnus project presents an extraordinary opportunity to connect with older and younger generations of Cambodian musicians, discover their individual and collective histories, and understand the reasons for the abandonment of music activity among the majority of former musicians. This project aims to record these stories along with their emotional and historical context, using them as a basis for the composition of new music that draws on historical and contemporary styles. Kolbot's background education in music and his work experience within the Cambodian community prepare him to act as a bridge between different generations. He looks forward to contributing to the project through direct interaction with Cambodian artists, conducting interviews, organizing performances, and participating in storytelling workshops. These encounters will give him essential information and stories to incorporate into his musical work, thus increasing the depth of his artistic performance. This project also aligns with his academic trajectory, merging his passion for music and cultural preservation and his aspiration to become an entrepreneur. In advocating for mentorship and facilitating intergenerational dialogue, he envisions the Magnus project as a vehicle for developing his community involvement, research skills, and creative collaboration abilities, which will be highly significant for his academic and professional growth. By doing so, he hopes to contribute towards reviving Cambodian musical heritage and inspiring future generations of artists to relearn their affinity with and reinterpret their cultural heritage.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

Rehanna Kheshgi's interest in the project is based on her ongoing work with Somali families and students in Faribault, MN. This project builds on community engagement work she has been carrying out for the past five years with Somali partners in Faribault and will be connected to the ACE course she will teach in Fall 2025, "Music 347: Somali Community Engagement through Music." Kheshgi's goal is to bolster Somali students' confidence and pride in Somali cultural heritage and arts, therefore contributing to their overall wellbeing. Scholarship affirms the importance of culturally relevant learning materials to increase student self-confidence and resilience. Kheshgi's research will explore how, specifically for Somali youth, experiencing generational trauma from the extended impact of the 1990s civil war and communication challenges with elders in the diasporic context of Minnesota is impacting growth into their own identity as Somali-Americans in Minnesota. For Somali parents and elders, Kheshgi seeks to recognize the embodied knowledge they possess about their own cultural heritage that their children and others would benefit from learning about. Scholarship also affirms the effectiveness of intergenerational collaboration for addressing pressing social challenges, including rising rates of youth loneliness, addiction, and self-harm. The arts and humanities are particularly effective tools for addressing these complex challenges. Working with Kolbot on a project that shares themes of intergenerational collaboration in MN-based immigrant communities will benefit

Kheshgi's research immensely as his lived experience and community connections provide a unique and valuable perspective on these pressing issues.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

In-person meetings for one hour, every other week, beginning in early Fall 2025 and continuing throughout the fall and spring semesters of the academic year, with a break during J-Term. Communication over email during summer 2025 and the academic year, amounting to around 1 hour per week.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

While the primary activities related to Kolbot's work with Cambodian elders and youth, and Kheshgi's work with Somali elders and youth, will be carried out independently, our bi-weekly meetings will provide a generative space for reflection and growth that will sustain and nourish the dynamic core of this collaborative project.

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

The results of our project will include musical materials created during the project period and discussion of our methods and collaborative processes working with two immigrant communities in Minnesota. In addition to sharing project results at the CURI Fall Showcase, we would like to submit a collaborative presentation to be shared as part of the Inclusive Excellence Summit or a similar campus-wide event, and potentially facilitate an interactive session with students on campus hosted at the Taylor Center. We also plan to explore the potential for facilitating an interaction near the end of the project period at Faribault Middle School and/or High School. Kheshgi is connected to the music departments at both schools through their choir directors and has begun exploring potential collaborations.

Digital Platform: A website or digital archive where the music, interviews, and project materials can be accessed by the public for educational and cultural purposes, with permission from contributors.

Public Performances: Live performances featuring the music created during the project, both on campus and in the community.

Musical Compositions: New musical works created through the collaboration, potentially blending traditional Cambodian/Somali music with contemporary influences.

Documented Interviews: A collection of interviews with Cambodian musicians, both elders and youth, documenting their personal stories, struggles, and resilience.

Cultural Insights: A preliminary community-informed understanding of how the experiences of past generations shaped their artistic identities and influenced modern musicians.

Short Documentary: A short documentary (10-20 minutes) that highlights the personal stories of Cambodian musicians in Minnesota, showcasing their musical journeys, challenges, and the intergenerational connections within the community. The documentary will feature interviews, performances, and insights into the process of creating new music based on traditional Cambodian sounds.

**Total budget for the project? 2000**

**How will the budget be used?**

\$1000 - Honoraria for Musicians & Other Project Participants (\$400 for Kolbot's interviewees and collaborators; \$150 stipend for Najax Siciid, current Surad Academy Interim Director and Ole Alum; \$200 for stipend payments of \$100 each for two Somali parents who agree to take on leadership roles in the project, working closely with Kheshgi; \$250 for Somali musician(s) to collaborate on creating musical materials based on parent/elder discussions in the community)

\$450 - Travel & Transportation (Travel expenses for in-person interviews, performances, and community outreach in Minnesota, including visits to Surad Academy in Faribault for Kheshgi and her fall ACE course students - campus vans and/or personal vehicle mileage)

\$200 - Hospitality (Funds for refreshments at community gatherings with Somali parents and elders in Faribault)

\$150 - Recording Equipment and Materials (Funds for microphones, audio recorders, or software to capture music and interviews.)

\$100 - Documentation and Editing (Purchase of software, etc.)

\$100 - Marketing Materials, Website, and Social Media

**Faculty Name:** Pillatzki-Warzeha, Sara

**Student Collaborator:** Barrett, Faith

**Project Title:** A Space for All Bodies, A Place for all Stories: Relational Performance Ethnography in Fast Forward Motions, A Hmong-American play at The Jungle Theatre

**Full description of the project:** What does it mean to see yourself in spaces that have historically been inaccessible to you due to racial or cultural differences? How can Indigenous Relationality as a performance practice act as a site of healing and ethical creation across a spectrum of marginalized identities? How would we understand and practice theatrical production differently through the prism of Indigenous relationality? Within the field of theatre, research that focuses on intersectional/intercultural performance from the perspective of BIPOC/marginalized voices is highly desired due in part to the small number of scholars doing this labor. Dr. Sara Pillatzki-Warzeha (Dakota/German descent) conducts research centered on translating Indigenous relationality as a model of performance practice that can be accessed by Indigenous communities and others as a cultural ethical safeguard in intercultural collaborative spaces. This research posits that an Indigenous relational performance model not only serves Indigenous communities, but it transcends Indigenous spaces to benefit artists from many marginalized or diverse backgrounds. Over the course of the past two years, Faith Barrett ('27) and Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha (Department of Theater) have been in conversation about the challenge of being from marginalized identities within the institution of theatre. Now, in Summer 2025, Barrett and Pillatzki-Warzeha will collaborate as scholar-practitioners on the Hmong-American written play Fast Forward Motions at the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis, MN. Pillatzki-Warzeha will direct the play and put Indigenous relationality into practice within an intercultural performance space. Barrett will be invited into the rehearsal/performance process of Fast Forward Motions to document the experience of being in a room built on the principles of Indigenous relationality and chronicle their journey of belonging in a theatre space primarily inhabited by Asian-American women artists. Together, Pillatzki-Warzeha and Barrett will record their parallel journeys ethnographically to produce a co-authored article about identity, ethics, and "seeing yourself" in the field of theatre.

**Abstract that can be used for announcements and other public uses:** What does it mean to see yourself in spaces that have historically been inaccessible to you due to racial or cultural differences? How can Indigenous Relationality as a performance practice act as a site of healing and ethical creation across marginalized identities? In this project, Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha and Faith Barrett take on the role of collaborative scholar-practitioners on the Hmong-American written play Fast Forward Motions being produced at the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis, MN in May and June of 2025. Pillatzki-Warzeha, the director of the play, puts Indigenous relationality into practice within an intercultural performance space made up of primarily Asian-American women artists, a process that Barrett will witness, contribute to, and document. Together, Pillatzki-Warzeha and Barrett will document their parallel journeys ethnographically to produce a co-authored article about identity, ethics, and "seeing yourself" in the field of theatre.

**When do you plan to pursue your project?**

Summer 2025

**How many hours per week is the (first) student expected to work?**

Barrett will attend rehearsals and performances in late May/early June (approximately 40 hours over 2-3 weeks). She will also meet with Pillatzki-Warzeha daily before/after rehearsals (approximately 2.5 hours/week) and weekly for 1-2 hours/week in June to

**A statement from the (first) student collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic trajectory.**



As a sophomore Theater and Political Science major at St. Olaf, I have been fortunate to experience learning both in and outside the classroom, ranging from acting in theater productions here on campus to the work study jobs I hold. All of these experiences, particularly this year, have presented me with a question that I hadn't reflected on much before: how is my identity as an Asian American affecting my feeling of understanding and belonging in the spaces I call home? When Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha mentioned this project to me, a theater production facilitated mainly by Asian-American and female artists, I found myself drawn to it on both an academic and personal level. From an academic standpoint, I have been on stage as an actor for the majority of my time in theater, and this project would give me the opportunity to participate in another aspect of the art form that I haven't had much experience in. This work under Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha would be valuable to my theater major education, providing me with hands-on experience in the world of directing and helping develop my research and analytical skills in theater. This project would not only benefit my academic learning, but this experience in a primarily Asian American women's space would allow me to explore my questions of belonging and understanding of my own identity in theater. In this collaborative project, I would be attending rehearsals and performances in addition to meeting with Dr. Pillatzki-Warzeha with questions, observations, and reflections from what I experience in the rehearsal room. From these insights and analysis, we would collaborate on an article about identity and belonging in theater. This would further my analysis of the impacts of my identity and feeling of belonging in spaces that I am involved in, both in theater and political science. The knowledge and insights that I gain from this project will benefit me in whichever field I pursue in the future.

**A statement from the (first) faculty collaborator about their interest in and expected contribution to the project and how the project fits into their other interests and academic career.**

The most fulfilling part of my career as an educator and researcher is illuminating theatrical forms and stories that are not always seen in the mainstream American theatre. Over the course of the last two years, Faith and I have had many conversations about their desire to feel a deeper sense of belonging and connection within the American theatrical landscape as an Asian American actress. When I was invited to direct at an all Asian-American-female-identifying cast, telling an Asian immigrant story and written by a Hmong playwright, I immediately started considering how I could collaborate with Faith to provide her with a meaningful creative and scholarly experience that not only celebrated her identities, but also was in conversation with my research in Indigenous relationality as an ethical mode of creative practice within intercultural theatrical collaborations. The proposed project aligns perfectly with my research, creative, and teaching goals. I will act as mentor to the student, Faith Barrett, guiding her on scholar-practitioner practices in the professional creative space, meet with her daily during rehearsals to talk through observations, questions, and processes, and write collaboratively with her to compile our observations into an article that we will submit to the online theatre magazine HowlRound. I will also do final editing and submission of the article.

**How many hours per week will the (first) faculty member and student team be in contact with one another for collaboration and mentoring?**

I will be in direct contact with the student for approximately 55 hours total, or 10.5 hours/week over 5 weeks. I would ask that any faculty stipend cover approximately half of that time - or about 25 hours.

**If you haven't already, please specify which collaborator is working on what pieces of the project**

**A statement of how the results of the project will be shared with the public. This may include papers, posters, plays, talks at high schools, and the CURI Fall Showcase.**

Pillatzki-Warzeha and Barrett will record their parallel journeys ethnographically to produce a co-authored article that will be submitted to the HowlRound Theatre Commons, an online platform for theatre makers and scholars focused on diverse practitioners.

**Total budget for the project?** 460

**How will the budget be used?**

In addition to the stipend for the student's time, I am asking for a travel budget for the student to travel between their home in Maple Plain, MN to the Jungle Theatre in Minneapolis, a round trip of 42 miles. Reimbursing at the MN rate of .67/mile, and including up to twelve trips into Minneapolis, we are seeking \$340 for travel to and from the Jungle Theatre, as well as \$120 for parking (\$10/day in uptown in Minneapolis, MN).