

Radow College of Humanities and Social Sciences
2022-2023 RCHSS Scholarship Support Funding Recipients
Project Summaries

Joshua Azriel, Professor of Journalism and Emerging Media

Title: Enduring Jewish Communities Around the World

Summary: Organizational Communication theory's Functionalism and Interpretative approaches can predict that religious survival is based on how belief and traditions are communicated from one generation to the next. This project tests the functionalism and interpretive forms of communication as applied to the Jewish communities' abilities to endure through religious practice. This project will apply the research to compare these communities to see how they have survived. This research combines communication theory and religion as applied to Judaism. The goal is to understand how religious communities survive with overwhelming odds in locations that places Jews as a very small minority with the added elements of anti-Semitism, violent wars, or pandemics.

Awarded: \$4,750.00

Jonathan Gentry, Assistant Professor of History

Title: The Hans Rosbaud Story: Making Music in Dark Times

Summary: What happens to art in an age of cultural reaction, censorship, and fascist dictators? In the 1930s, modernist music was under attack all around the globe, most notoriously in Nazi Germany. Yet, it was not entirely repressed, thanks to figures like Hans Rosbaud (1895-1962), an iconoclastic music director who survived—even thrived—in Nazi Germany. Rosbaud's extraordinary but unsung career provides an opportunity to reexamine the repression of art music in the middle of the 20th century. Even while working within the Nazi dictatorship, he managed to resist its directives and somehow promote Jewish, foreign, and avant-garde music. This project aim is to begin work on the first book-length biography of Rosbaud.

Awarded: \$3,583.00

Misty Grayer, Assistant Professor of Public Administration, **and Alicia Barnes**, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Title: Neutral Competence or Coercion: Examining Teacher Reactions to Public Discourse on Critical Race Theory

Summary: In September 2020, former President Donald Trump issued executive order 13950, entitled "Combating Race and Sex Stereotypes," which limited the content of diversity and inclusion training programs for federal employees and contractors. Although current President Joe Biden later withdrew EO 13950, the executive order underscores an increasingly polarized view of diversity-related topics in the public discourse, which a particular focus on concepts such as "critical race theory" and "white privilege." This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on (1) street-level bureaucracy theory, which focuses on the use discretion of front-line, public service professionals who interact daily with citizen-clients with limited supervision; (2) the politics-administration dichotomy, which focuses on the relationship between elected officials and non-elected bureaucrats and public servants; and (3) neo-institutionalism, such as institutional logics, which help explain the implementation of

policies within organizations based on shared norms and expectations of appropriateness. While each of these theories could be considered separately, taken together, they uniquely shed light on how teachers might cope with the CRT debate in the context of a politically charged environment in which they must contend with individual identities, personal norms of professionalism, and conflicting practices and behaviors that prescribe legitimacy in the educational system.

Awarded: \$7,500.00

Paul Dover, Professor of History

Title: Information: A Human History

Summary: This book project will examine the many physical tools and mental practices that humans have enjoined for representing and exploiting their information. While technological change will obviously feature prominently in this story, this will not be a history of technology, or rather it will focus on technologies of the mind as much as material technologies. The book will be framed both by common, enduring themes of information history and by close examination of revolutionary episodes of informational change. Among the themes to which I will regularly return are the need for information taxonomies, the mediating role of material substrates for information, the enduring yet quixotic efforts to encompass all information and achieve universal knowledge, and the waxing abstraction of information over the centuries. The highlighted episodes of revolutionary change will include the momentous caesura of spoken language, the emergence of writing systems, the invention of paper, the introduction of the codex as an information receptacle, the pervasive influence of the printing press, the shock of simultaneity associated with telegraph and telephone, the advent of the microprocessor, and the broad transformations wrought by the Internet and the World Wide Web. The history of information is thus like all history: change along a continuum.

Awarded: \$5,000.00

Lauren MacIvor Thompson, Assistant Professor of History and Interdisciplinary Studies

Title: Battle for Birth Control: Mary Dennett, Margaret Sanger, and the Rivalry that Shaped a Movement

Summary: The book examines the conflicts and medical politics of the early birth control movement, centering the reform work of former suffragist Mary Ware Dennett. In 1915, she founded the first birth control organization in the United States, six years before Margaret Sanger would establish the American Birth Control League. Unlike Sanger, Dennett fundamentally rejected the relationship between eugenics and birth control and sought instead to legalize birth control via the rights of free speech and free expression. Although her work in the early birth control movement has been relegated to the historical sidelines, my book illustrates that it was Dennett's approach to birth control reform that pushed Sanger in new directions and forced the movement as a whole toward strategies that continue to profoundly affect today's reproductive law and policy. The project thus reinterprets the standard histories of birth control (and relatedly, abortion) in the United States and challenges the general understanding that Margaret Sanger was the sole leader of the movement.

Awarded: \$5,000.00

Gail Markle, Professor of Sociology

Title: Factors that Influence the Sociopolitical Liberalization of Young Adults

Summary: The relationship between education and sociopolitical orientation has been documented for quite some time. The proportion of college educated individuals expressing a liberal or mostly liberal sociopolitical orientation has increased over the past twenty years. The "liberalization thesis"¹ states that exposure to higher education leads individuals to develop more liberal attitudes toward civil liberties and diversity. Another stream of research examines the role of family socialization in the sociopolitical liberalization of young adults. My proposed project will integrate these two streams of prior research by interviewing college-educated young adults who currently identify as liberal, but who were raised in conservative families, asking them to describe and explain the circumstances and reasoning for their sociopolitical conversion.

Awarded: \$4,985.00

Tom Vizcarrondo, Assistant Professor of Communication

Title: The Impact of Tone and Content on Political Endorsement Effectiveness

Summary: Traditionally, political endorsements have featured one political figure endorsing a candidate within the same political party during a general election. However, recently, political elites such as Donald Trump and Alexandria Ocasio Cortez have challenged this tradition by endorsing candidates running in their respective party's primary election. Are these endorsements effective, and if so, in what ways? Previous research has examined the effectiveness of endorsements, but generally, such studies have focused on measuring the effectiveness of the source, or the endorser. This study goes beyond examining the influential power of the endorser and instead seeks to identify if and how the endorsement message itself influences voters' attitude. This study will test the effect of political endorsement messages on the general public during a competitive partisan primary. This topic is important because it examines a unique aspect of political communication: partisan political endorsements. However, rather than examining the influence of the endorser, this study looks at the endorsement messages to understand how these messages influence voters' attitudes. This project will specifically look at the impact that the tone and content of an endorsement can have on voters.

Awarded: \$5,000.00

¹ Hyman, Herbert, and Paul Sheatsley. 1956. "Attitudes Toward Desegregation." *Scientific American* 195: 35-39; Stouffer, Samuel. [1955] 1992. *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.