



UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2021

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.SM

**Natalie Armbruster**

- Majors: Political Science and Arabic
- Minor: Hesburgh Program in Public Service
- Glynn Family Honors Program
- Advisor: Madhav Joshi

Competing Pathways to Peace: Analyzing the Implications of the Astana and Geneva Processes on the Future of Syria

Ten years after the inception of the Syrian Civil War, the West and Russia have proposed competing peace plans: the Geneva and Astana Processes, respectively. Using the Peace Accords Matrix through the Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, my thesis analyzes the implications of the proposed peace plans and predicts how the proposed peace process would potentially affect Syria and the myriad of regional and international actors involved. I chose this topic because it combines my interests in compassion and pragmatic policy decisions.

My thesis represents the culmination of my last four years. During this time, Notre Dame has generously enabled me to travel to Germany and Jordan to study Arabic and international law; to work at a think tank in Washington, D.C., researching the Syrian Civil War; and to serve refugee survivors of domestic violence at the International Rescue Committee.

While the COVID-19 pandemic ended my time in Jordan prematurely, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to live with a Syrian family and to be fully immersed in both the Arabic language and Jordanian culture.

Traveled to Amman, Jordan, with funding from the Glynn Family Honors Program.

**Patrick Brady**

- Majors: Russian, Economics, and Political Science
- Minor: Middle Eastern Studies
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Michael Desch

Future of U.S. Naval Grand Strategy in the Persian Gulf

My thesis proposes a new maritime strategy for the U.S. in the Persian Gulf by evaluating developments in naval technology, Middle Eastern geopolitics, and American energy production. It looks to the future of these three rapidly evolving domains, laying out a framework for the U.S. Navy to efficiently and effectively maintain sea power in the gulf.

I saw this thesis as an opportunity to synthesize what I had learned through the Notre Dame International Security Center and my Middle Eastern Studies minor — a chance to channel my passion for geopolitics, grand strategy, and the Arabic and Persian languages into a single project. This topic also allowed me to better understand and appreciate the weapon systems, ideas, and people with whom I will be working as a naval officer after graduation.



Patrick Brady

- Majors: Russian, Economics, and Political Science
- Minor: Middle Eastern Studies
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Zachary Stangebye

Macroeconomics of Russian Hybrid Warfare

In this project, I studied the impact of Russian hybrid warfare efforts against former Soviet-bloc states by analyzing various macroeconomic indicators during incidents of hybrid warfare. Specifically, I examine cases in which cyber, political, cultural, and financial tactics were used to augment conventional military action by Russia, evaluating the effectiveness of these hybrid tactics in damaging the target nation's economy.

While I have always wanted to study international relations through an economic lens, I developed a special interest in Ukrainian and Russian geopolitics while studying at a Russian language school in Kiev two summers ago. Additionally, hybrid and asymmetric tactics have become especially prevalent today, both in regards to contemporary Russia and the overall future of warfare.

**Liam Karr**

- Majors: Arabic, Political Science, and History
- Certificate in International Security Studies
- Advisor: Michael Hoffman

Come Together: The Effects of Exclusion, Its Sources, and Regime Structure on Islamist Parties' Acceptance of Pluralism

I analyzed the history of Islamist parties in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia to assess how their experiences of inclusion/exclusion prompted or hindered their acceptance of pluralism. I find that exclusion — specifically from society not the state — is the best promoter of growth in the long-term ideological pluralism shown by Islamists.

I chose this topic because I'm extremely passionate about organic democracy in the Middle East. I had done previous work on the prospects for Islamic-inspired democracy and wanted to analyze which situations are more likely to bring such hopes to fruition.

**Anastasia Reisinger**

- Major: International Economics (Arabic)
- Supplementary Major: Peace Studies
- Advisor: Forrest Spence

The Impact of American Military Aid on the Arab Spring

Throughout the period of the Arab Spring, the United States was actively engaged with political actors in the majority of the affected countries through provisions of foreign aid, diplomatic mediation, and indirect support. Given this context, we must ask: How well did the resources spent on aid in this period achieve the United States' overarching policy goal of democratization?

This topic represents the intersection of the three fields that have defined my undergraduate academics — economics, Middle Eastern studies, and peace studies. It allows me to take an intersectional approach to a topic about which I am personally passionate, and the results could potentially be consequential to national foreign policy.