

SUMMER RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM 2020

Undergraduate research is a signature experience at Xavier that allows students to work one-on-one with faculty mentors on cutting-edge research projects. Whereas a student learns history or biology in their coursework, undergraduate research shows them what it means to be a historian or biologist. The Summer Research Symposium celebrates the work of summer research students and mentors through oral presentations.

TWO THEOLOGY MAJORS PARTICIPATED IN THE SYMPOSIUM:

Jonathan Hesford (Dr. Marcus Mescher, Theology)

Moral Injury:
Connections to
Clerical Sexual
Abuse

JONATHAN HESFORD, THEOLOGY
AUGUST 26 2020



Exploring Moral Injury in Relation to Clerical Sexual Abuse

A pressing issue in the theological community is how to respond to the clerical sexual abuse crisis that represents one of the worst failures of Church integrity and mission. A responsibility exists to lift up victim's voices and experiences as well as to study the extent of the community of faithful's pain. In a partnership between theologians, psychologists, and ministry professionals at Xavier, a team has assembled to study the depths of the impact of clerical sex abuse on all aspects of the Church. Moral injury is a relatively new psychological concept that could be widespread throughout the Church community. The team of researchers aim to create the first tool to measure moral injury specifically for victims of clerical sexual abuse. A first step in this research was a literature review of the concept of moral injury and potential connections from existing research, which almost exclusively involves combat and veterans, to a Church context. Through a literature review of some seventy articles, key ideas and conceptions of moral injury were determined. Other areas studied included the link of moral injury to other mental health constructs, the psychological pathology of moral injury, common symptoms, moral injury research in civilian context, and links between moral injury risk and Church structure. Common practices of scale development and existing moral injury measurements were analyzed. This research will aid the Taking Responsibility team in developing and refining their own measurement.

Response to Mental and Spiritual Health Crisis due to Increased Screen Time

Elizabeth Greenop

Response to Spiritual and Mental Health Crisis due to Increased Screen Time

This study examines the relationship between screen time, mental health, and spiritual health. I spent the summer researching the implications of social media use, allostatic load, and how these relate to mental and spiritual health. After gathering previous research on this topic, I applied to Xavier's campus. With online and hybrid classes on the rise this semester, it is important for students to know how increased screen time—both through social media and zoom classes—how to help their mental and spiritual health as they get settled into a new normal. As a Jesuit university, I found it important to also explore the different ways that the core values can help students reflect on how they use their screen time, how to improve their spiritual health, and their mental health as well.

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- The College of Arts and Science Gift Fund
- The Bohner Project Gifts
- The Chemistry Department
- The College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office