

## **Participant Abstracts**

### **EMU Academic and Creative Excellence Festival 2023**

Listings are in alphabetical order by the last name of the presenter. In the case of group projects, the entry is alphabetized under the name of the student who submitted the entry.

#### **Oral Presentations**

##### ***Environmental Education Along the Shenandoah Rail Trail***

Rebekah Amstutz with Zach Bauman, Gabe Nafziger, Reese Hooper

Faculty Mentor: Doug Graber Neufeld, Jim Yoder

This project looks at the possibilities for environmental education along the corridor of the future Shenandoah Rail Trail. We tell the story of this beautiful stretch of the valley through a story map that outlines the environmental history, natural features, and plant and animal species of interest. Our goal is to provide the Shenandoah Rail Trail partnership with ideas for environmental education along the corridor.

##### ***Assessing Student Perspectives on Sustainability Practices at Eastern Mennonite University***

Iris Anderson

Faculty Mentor: Jenni Holsinger

Eastern Mennonite University acknowledges a commitment to sustainability as a core value and way of embodying Christian biblical values. This commitment can be seen reflected in various campus initiatives, however little is known about whether EMU students embrace this value. Through this research I use a convergent mixed methods design to explore student experiences with and attitudes towards sustainability as well as student satisfaction with EMU's sustainability practices. In this study, an online survey and in-depth interviews were used to understand EMU student experiences and perspectives on sustainability. Findings are presented about the extent to which students approve of what EMU is doing to uphold sustainability as a value and implications are discussed.

##### ***Promethean Orbital Delivery***

Seth Andreas with Ross Kauffman

Faculty Mentor: Mark Sawin

This is a virtual reality game called Promethean Orbital Delivery being developed by myself and Ross Kauffman. This game involves delivering packages from a space station to various locations on Earth. The player will strategize to deliver packages in the most efficient way possible, while learning about physics and geography. A corporate overlord watches your every move to make sure you are doing your best work. The game is developed in the Unity game engine, with scripting in C# and using blender for modeling game assets.

### ***Youth Gang Violence in Three Different National Contexts***

Moe Arakawa with Elham Khairi, Olivia Hazelton, Jessica Chisolm

Faculty Mentor: Paula Ditzel Facci

Our presentation focuses on gang violence in three different national contexts: El Salvador, the United States, and Egypt. Drawing on Human Needs Theory and Social Identity Theory (Demmers, 2016), it explores how violent structures push youth to become involved in gangs. Often, youths are searching for ways to fulfill their unmet needs when they join a gang (Hartney, 2022). Our research will highlight the active organizations working towards gang member rehabilitation and their methods used. Furthermore, we will explore what effective action can be taken to mitigate this problem.

### ***Earth's the right place for love: How reading Robert Frost informs a Christian view of nature***

Sarah Bascom

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel

Considered America's poet, Robert Frost has charmed readers for almost a century. Using colloquial language to describe the New England landscape, Frost created poetry that readers find approachable and familiar. However, from under this palatable form, deep questions arise about nature, man, and the divine. Today, reading Frost can lead Christians to a deeper recognition of the link between nature and divinity. This realization can lead to behavioral changes which benefit the world in which we live. This project explores the themes by considering Christian responses to ecological issues from Willis Jenkin's book "Ecologies of Grace," and by analyzing Frost's poems "Mending Wall," "For Once, Then, Something," "The Most of It," and "Birches."

### ***Truthseekers: Using JFK's Assassination to Analyze Conspiracy Theories***

Ani Beitzel

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel, Mary Sprunger

Conspiracy theories have existed for thousands of years and continue to exist today. The question is why do they develop and stay? Why are some more popular than others and why do some lay dormant through years only to gain popularity after a specific event? Through this presentation, those themes will be explored by studying the JFK Assassination and the conspiracy theories behind it.

### ***Bystanders to Civil War: Mennonite Influence in El Salvador and Nicaragua during the 1980s***

Ariel Bonilla

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel, Mary Sprunger

This study focuses on the Mennonite presence and influence in El Salvador and compares it with the Mennonite influence in Nicaragua during the 1980s amid the civil conflict both countries experienced. During this time, El Salvador and Nicaragua experienced an era of civil chaos where societal stability, peace, and intergroup collaboration (government-rebel group relations) were extremely rare. For these countries, during this period, the state of normalcy was violence,

massacres, economic uncertainty, and societal distrust. However, despite the similarities of their civil conflicts, the Mennonite influence was more predominant in Nicaragua than in El Salvador. This research looks at the conditions and reasons for this peculiarity. For this research, Mennonite presence is defined as the existence of Mennonite churches and civic organizations, such as the Mennonite Central Committee, on both countries. On the other hand, Mennonite influence is defined as the effect and impact the Mennonite presence had on the civil societies of these countries. For this concept of Mennonite Influence, five variables are considered and studied--fostering peace, intergroup reconciliation, prevention of violence, and agricultural sustainability.

### ***State of Exception: Plan Territorial Control in El Salvador***

Ariel Bonilla

Faculty Mentor: Ji Eun Kim

This policy memo examines Salvadoran president Nayib Bukele's government security policy, Plan Control Territorial (Plan Territorial Control). Contrary to the previous governmental security approaches and policies, Plan Control Territorial takes a strict and oppressive “mano dura” (Iron Fist) approach that consists of seven phases: preparation, opportunity, modernization, incursion, and extraction. With an Us versus Them narrative, this security policy centers on the extinction of gangs and other transnational crime groups and the prevention of their proliferation. Despite the statistical success of this policy, with an abrupt decline in homicides since its enactment, Plan Control Territorial has faced several critiques from the political opposition of the territory and national and international Human Rights organizations. This research addresses the implications of this security policy, analyzing the influence of Gangs in politics, the relationship between traditional parties and Gang groups, and the sudden success of Plan Control Territorial. The central question of this memo is: Is the success of Plan Control Territorial due to the “omnipresent” and popular figure of Bukele? Or is the success of this security policy due to the new zero-tolerance Salvadoran Mano Dura approach? This study finds mixed results, which suggest that the oppressive mano dura and zero tolerance approach combined with the populist figure of Bukele shaped the success of this new security policy. Implications of this memo address the sustainability problems of Plan Territorial Control.

### ***Super-Mileage Car Project***

Benjamin Bontrager-Singer with Lleyton Stutzman, Riley Gonzales, Noah Swartentruber, Jacob Hess, Caleb Hostetler, Ethan Klassen, Adam Stoltzfus, Guadalupe Tenorio, Micaiah Landis

Faculty Mentor: Esther Tian

The EMU Super-Mileage Car team has been working hard for the last four years to build a car to compete in the Shell Eco-Marathon Competition. The Shell Eco-Marathon (SEM) is an international competition among high school and college student teams to design, fabricate, and race an energy-efficient vehicle. As of 2018, the competition has grown to include over 5,000 students from over 700 universities in 52 countries. Eastern Mennonite University will compete in the April at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The car will have to pass a rigorous set of

inspections and travel 10 miles while maintaining an average speed of at least 15 miles per hour. Awards are given based on highest fuel-efficiency.

The team of 10 students has been working hard to finish the second iteration of the vehicle which has improved aerodynamics, reduced weight, and more robust systems. Through this work the team has had the opportunity to learn hands on skills such as welding, fabrication, and circuitry as well as teamwork and collaboration skills.

The presentation will detail the construction process, testing, competition results, and learning in preparing for and attending the Shell Eco-Marathon. This will include details about the Telemetry System that was developed in house, the electronic fuel injection system, the chassis, and the carbon fiber body.

### ***Sharing Traumatic Experiences in Huckleberry Finn: How Connections Create Compassion***

Ella Brubaker

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn has remained a controversial book since its publication. It has been banned, censored, and criticized for various reasons, such as its excessive use of obscenity. Much discourse on the novel has focused on the question of race. Some literary critics, such as Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua and Stacy Margolis, support the idea that Twain combats racist ideologies and encourages accountability. Other scholars argue the opposite, believing that it perpetuates racism. Criticism of the characterization of Jim is common, as well. Some writers, such as Leo Marx, argue that Jim acts as a passive example of racial stereotypes, especially in the later part of the novel. However, voices advocating for more holistic and positive interpretations of his character remain. Other critics have examined the relationship between Huck and Jim or focused on Huck's changing perceptions of society throughout the book.

While critics discuss race, characterization, and social impact, limited research has examined the role of trauma in the novel. To explore the impact of trauma, this presentation builds on Elmore and Girardi's research on the abuse that the characters Huck and Jim face. It examines how experiencing traumatic events shapes the interactions and perspectives of different characters and provides further insight into Huck and Jim's experiences of trauma. This project's main goal is to understand how sharing experiences of trauma acts as a starting point for compassion and leads to further personal and societal change. Engagement with previous literary criticism and interpretations of Huck and Jim from scholars such as Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua and Forrest Robinson will help accomplish this goal. While remaining controversial, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn cannot be ignored. The novel provides valuable insight into addressing trauma in literary characters and is a relevant exemplar for societal healing today.

### ***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn: Present-Day Realities***

Tiffany Carey

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

For the ACE festival, I will be joining the controversial discussion on the banning of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. As an African-American woman who has endured racism multiple times, a student who read *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* in high school, and a future English teacher, I would love to teach this book in my classroom. How you teach your content, especially books like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, is crucial. Giving the students historical background information during the writing of this book, making the classroom a safe space where students can express their feelings, teaching students how to discuss properly on topics that might make them uncomfortable, and recognizing the importance of keeping these books in schools are all very important.

To achieve this goal, I will be discussing the historical use of the N-word, comparisons from Black authors vs white authors about use of the N-word, Jim and Huck's relationship, and teachers' presence while reading this book. I will also compare Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* with *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Research sources will include scholarly articles like "Racism and Huckleberry Finn: Censorship, Dialogue, and Change" by Allen Webb-Carey; "Wrestling with the 'N' Word." Teaching *Huckleberry Finn*: Why and How to Present the Controversial Classic in the High School Classroom" by John Nogowski; and "Debating Huck Finn" by Barbara Jackson. With the right teaching and approach, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* can successfully be read in school without causing controversy.

### ***Habitual***

Jessica Chisolm

Faculty Mentor: David Brennan

One of the most interesting aspects of humans is how we are attracted to a variety of things based on our needs and wants, whether or not those things are good. My senior thesis is a collection of poetry exploring the ultimately harmful things people are drawn to over and over again. Temptations are different for everyone which is why I've interviewed people to get a wider perspective on what bad habits people gravitate towards. For this collection, the poetry forms will reflect the variety in people's stories and emotions. Some pieces lean more towards narrative prose while some will stick to a more traditional poetry format. Altogether, the collection paints a picture of inevitable human behavior, vices, and their impacts.

At least three of the pieces in the collection are visual poems to portray the complexity of emotion in them. They are mixed media collages including symbols significant to the poem's speaker. This allows me to use skills I've learned as an art minor while also using what I've learned in my writing classes. I hope for this collection to make people slightly uneasy with themselves and others, while also offering acknowledgement that everyone has bad habits.

### ***Extremism Caused By Structural Violence: A Case Study Analysis on Afghanistan, The Democratic Republic of Congo, and the United States***

Katie Corbit with Onyx Myanda, Selena Sherzad, Zua Companhia

Faculty Mentor: Paula Ditzel Facci

The research team studied the structural violence that has caused forms of extremism in three focused regions. This particular study defines extremism as a nondemocratic approach of projecting values and practices in a violent manner in order to achieve ideological goals, we will explore different components of extremism in the forms of colonization, religion, politics, and nationalism. The study first explores the blended violence of political and religious extremism in the Democratic Republic of Congo stemming from Belgian colonization. Then it will focus on religious extremism from the Taliban's power in Afghanistan. Finally, the study analyzes Christian nationalist extremism in the United States. It discusses in detail how these violent structures and their extremist natures influence the contexts at hand through this series by narrating stories and manifesting an analysis. Approaching this analysis with a sense of moral imagination, the researchers accept that the findings of their research may be complex in nature and have a depth of violence that requires extensive efforts to establish peace. The focus of this analysis is to provide awareness and suggests applications of peacebuilding in regard to structural violence that causes forms of extremism within the context of Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the United States.

***The Impact of Patriarchal Beliefs Leading to Gender Inequality: The Case Study of the USA, Nigeria and Germany***

Anna Dovbyk with Stella Dior Kayenga, Philip Quoqui

Faculty Mentor: Paula Ditzel Facci

This research will investigate patriarchal beliefs leading to gender inequality in three different contexts: the USA, Nigeria, and Germany. Research has found that the fight for gender equality is still very present. The World Economic Forum estimates that "It may still be some time before gender equality is achieved. It will be around 200 years." (The World Economic Forum, 2022). Therefore, we would look at the negative impact of the patriarchal system in those three above-mentioned countries, in order to create a theory of change that would be useful to fast the process of true freedom regarding gender based beliefs which are affected by the patriarchal system.

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***Student Learning Documentation in a High School Biology Classroom***

Morgan Evans

Faculty Mentor: Kathy Evans

The following embodies a documentation of student learning during a unit of study at the high school level taught within a student teaching experience. This unit's topic in which student learning was documented was cell biology. Being a student teacher allows a preservice teacher to deeply immerse themselves into the teaching profession with the guidance of an active teacher. During student teaching is when theory starts to merge with practice and become one. Documentation of student learning helps educators determine with data if their teaching was effective or not. Building on educational theories such as restorative justice, Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, and Howard Gardner's theories of multiple intelligences, the goal of this project was to incorporate these ideas into practice as a student teacher and determine if instructional practices were effective or not for student's learning.

### ***Identity and Expectations in Invisible Man***

Amanda Gilbert

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

Identity, understanding who we are and whom we hope/aspire to become, is central to knowing how we act in the world. This presentation will discuss identity formation in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Through describing how the main character realizes his own identity in relation to others' perceptions of him, this presentation will explore how people's thoughts and actions can shift depending upon their perceived roles in society. Through comparing others' expectations of the main character to his own expectations for himself, I will explore how the power others can exercise influences the success of others. By comparing *Invisible Man*'s initial interactions with people in power to his later shift, this paper will explore how realizing one's sense of autonomy can have profound implications.

This paper will also describe how outside influences can impact motivation and career path through exploring the journey of *Invisible Man*. Through analyzing how the people in power in *Invisible Man* influence the main character's speech patterns, actions, and overall path in life, this presentation will discuss how the theme of invisibility in *Invisible Man* is still relevant today. Individuals in power positions are still able to influence others' identity through interacting in a way that dehumanizes them or treats them as if they are invisible. Finally, this paper will call all people to discover the strength in knowing who they are and empowering others to honor the dignity of others everywhere.

### ***Expanding the conversation of abortion to include queer identities: proposing abortion as gender affirming healthcare***

Indigo Gott

Faculty Mentor: Debbi DiGennaro

Abortion is a topic that has been highly present in many political arguments for decades, but has been pushed to the center of political discourse in the months since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by the supreme court in June of 2022. Both sides of the issue have a number of popular reasons for their stance, all of them centering around the experience of cisgendered, heterosexual

women. What is often overlooked is those who have the ability to become pregnant, but aren't women. If the legislation is supposed to apply to everyone with a uterus, shouldn't the wording include everyone with a uterus? Can abortion be used as gender affirming healthcare? Could including genderqueer folks in the conversation strengthen conservative arguments? This presentation will review legislation and literature as well as explore ways that amplifying queer experiences in the conversations around abortion has the potential to appeal to both liberal and conservative ideologies.

### ***Beloved: The Hidden Truths Behind the Experience of Enslaved Motherhood***

Aliyyah Haggard

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

A classic work of literature, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* explores the destructive legacy of slavery by displaying the notions of fear and horror through supernatural events. By following main themes of devaluing identities, community solidarity, linguistic powers and limits, and family, Morrison depicts the daily occurrences of Sethe, a Black woman living as a slave in Kentucky prior to the Civil War, up to her time as a free woman living in 1873 Cincinnati, Ohio. *Beloved* provides a detailed and vital portrayal of enslaved motherhood that highlights the hardships, trauma, and pain within that distinctive experience. This paper aims to analyze the ways *Beloved* captures the struggles of enslaved motherhood, explore how trauma affects the idea of mothering, and reflect on the novel's connections to love, race, psychology, history, and community.

Through existing analyses, scholars Nancy Jesser and Barbara Schapiro discuss the ways in which love, home, and family are intertwined through the harsh environments surrounding Morrison's characters, and the ways slavery impacts the experience of what it means to exist. Additionally, in reference to the novel's themes of history, psychology, and race, scholars Florian Bast, Emma Parker, and Alex Zamalin explain how *Beloved* challenges the construction of race and gender and highlights the significance of history and hysteria. Furthermore, they also note how *Beloved* emphasizes the importance of continuing in the fight for racial justice.

### ***Huckleberry Finn and Satire Literacy***

Grace Harder

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

While its reputation has been contentious since the time it was first published, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is an important piece of literature that should continue to be taught in schools. The subject matter of *Huckleberry Finn* covers a crucial era in American history that should not, or truly cannot, be overlooked. However, its teaching needs to be accompanied by sufficient education on its historical context and its intent as satire, particularly because the lens through which we choose to read a work of literature is so powerful. Literature like *Huckleberry Finn* that emerged during the existence of American slavery or shortly after its abolition animates our modern-day understanding of the cultural role played by slavery, providing insight into the horrific reality of the institution and the racism it employed to justify its existence.

Twain's satirical criticism targets a number of different aspects of Southern society, most notably slavery and racial stereotypes, Christianity, and social conformity. However, Twain's choice to



write this novel as a work of satire makes it perhaps difficult to interpret if one does not understand the purpose behind it. Students today need to be adequately equipped to identify satire and understand its ability to point out the absurdity of normalized aspects of society and culture. Concerns over the offensive racial language and stereotypes of the book ignore their very purpose in the story. The satirical exaggerations used in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* are meant to shock, to outrage, and to be uncomfortable to read, and that's the point. Using the analyses of Robert Tally Jr., Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua, and Forrest Robinson, this paper will discuss the book's use of stereotypes, the need for education in satire literacy, and the importance of continuing the legacy of teaching *Huckleberry Finn* in schools.

### ***Analyzing Gentrification Potential of the Shenandoah Rail Trail***

Grace Harder with Clay Kauffman, Lindsey White

Faculty Mentor: Doug Graber Neufeld, Jim Yoder

This oral presentation will outline our capstone research on the potential for gentrification through the implementation of the Shenandoah Rail Trail (SRT). The SRT will span the distance between Broadway north to Front Royal, providing nearly 50 miles worth of public bike and pedestrian path. This project holds ecological restoration and public environmental education potential, and may also increase property values along the trail. Increased property values can have an adverse effect on lower income residents and other marginalized groups, and should be addressed in the planning of the SRT. Using GIS analysis of the demographics of the towns adjacent to the trail and the review of existing literature on other rail trail projects, this project will provide data to the Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, with whom the ENVIS Capstone class is working in conjunction.

### ***Liv's OCD Doodles: Spreading OCD Awareness through Public Art and Storytelling***

Olivia Hazelton

Faculty Mentor: Mark Sawin, Paula Detzil Facci

OCD is a highly stigmatized and misunderstood disorder, resulting in high rates of misdiagnosis and improper treatment (Glazier et al., 2019). People with OCD are ten times more likely to die by suicide or demonstrate suicidal behavior in their lifetime than the general population (Albert et al., 2019). Despite the seriousness of the disorder, media representations are often inaccurate, harmful, and overly simplistic (Werner, 2021). This project utilizes art and storytelling as a peacebuilding and social change method to share information and actual lived-experiences of OCD. Through cartoons made by the presenter, artwork from others who live with OCD, and interactive audience participation, this presentation's purpose is to create a greater level of understanding about OCD.

### ***Mapping geographical attachment***

Veronica Horst

Faculty Mentor: Mark Sawin

As a way to learn more about sense of place and place attachment, I interviewed ten people of various ages, gender identities, and ethnicities about their relationships with geographical spaces throughout their lives. In addition to interviews, I completed supplemental online research into place attachment and other aspects of environmental psychology that relate to our relationships with geographical space. I was able to connect with professors who are well versed in environmental psychology and related topics to have conversations about how and why humans develop emotional attachments to places as well as how linguistics plays a role in our relationships with our environment.

After completing all of the interviews, I compiled information about each individual and their geographical attachments into an interactive online map. This map is embedded in a website that I created to display the findings of my research and discuss what I have learned throughout this process. The map will allow people to see a web of places that are connected to each person, and they will be able to click on each place to read about the emotions attached to it as well as pieces of the person's story.

### ***Mennonite Women Leaders across Three Generations***

Colin Hunsberger

Faculty Mentor: Mary Sprunger

There is still a stigma in the Mennonite church which does not explicitly bar women from leadership roles but does make it more difficult to participate. Women are not treated equally in the Mennonite church in cases such as in leadership and are instead encouraged to other roles that are more "feminine". Some may argue that this is not the case yet many Mennonite churches do not have female pastors nor any history of them. Without significant changes in the Church, this gap will never be addressed or resolved. Women have had to fight for the better part of a century to have the same leadership opportunities as men. Some factors that have helped women's advancement include education and the changing attitude of women in American society. To show this I have interviewed 3 women who have held leadership positions from different generations in order to get a generational lens on the topic and observe how it has changed over time.

### ***Harmonic Radar Tracking of Queensland Fruit Fly***

Anika Hurst with Allison O'Brien

Faculty Mentor: Matthew Siderhurst

Tephritid fruit flies, such as the Queensland fruit fly (Qfly), *Bactrocera tryoni*, are major horticultural pests worldwide and pose invasion risks due primarily to international trade. Determining movement parameters for fruit flies is critical to effective surveillance and control strategies, from setting quarantine boundaries after incursions to development of agent-based models for management. In this study, harmonic radar (HR) was used to track male Qflies in papaya fields using two experimental protocols.

### ***Documentation of Student Learning: Fourth Grade Long Division Unit***

Jordan Jones

Faculty Mentor: Barbara Wheatley

I completed my first student teaching placement at the beginning of this semester with a fourth grade class. During my time there, I started and ended a long division unit with the students. I completed a documentation of student learning project for this unit by comprising data from the class. I collected different activities throughout this lesson while also preparing and executing a pre/post assessment that the students took. Throughout the three weeks of this unit the students completed exit tickets, individual work, and group activities to learn the steps and process of long division. Through these different activities I was able to assess each student and how well they knew the material and correctly differentiate for each students needs.

### ***Exploring Social Media for Non-Profits: The Shenandoah Rail Trail Project***

Jaden Jones with Braydon Collier, Micah Buckwalter

Faculty Mentor: Doug Graber Neufeld, Jim Yoder

This project focuses on navigating the world of non-profit social media engagement through trend analysis and a series of mock posts related to the proposed Shenandoah Rail Trail

### ***The 2's and the 3's: The Progression of Teaching Compound Meter***

Amanda Kibler

Faculty Mentor: Paul Yoder

As a part of my student teaching experience, I taught a unit on musical compound meter. This involves taking the beat and dividing it into three rather than dividing it into two. Throughout this project, students have had the opportunity to learn a brand new way of counting, new pieces of music, receive individual performance feedback, teach the class their understanding, and perform for an audience. As a result of this experience, middle school students can now articulate the difference between simple and compound meters, write in the counts for rhythms in compound meter, and play music in both simple and compound meters.

### ***Driving Strategy Optimization for Super Mileage Car: A Mathematical Approach***

Ethan Klassen with Ben Bontrager-Singer

Faculty Mentor: Esther Tian

The Super-Mileage Car (SMC) has been built to create a high-efficiency internal combustion vehicle to compete in the Shell Eco-Marathon competition. Thus far the focus of the SMC Club has been ensuring the vehicle is ready for competition. This means that simplicity, reliability, and functionality have taken priority over vehicle performance.

The primary objective of this project is to increase the fuel efficiency of the SMC to improve its performance at the Shell Eco-Marathon competition. There is significant room for improvement of the existing systems and driving strategy. In 2021 the baseline vehicle efficiency at a constant speed was 115 MPG, and with a pulse and glide strategy, the efficiency was improved to over 200 MPG. By optimizing the driving strategy based on a mathematical model of the vehicle,

improvements in fuel efficiency will be made. This includes telling the driver when to accelerate, how long to accelerate, and how fast to drive the vehicle as well as incorporating a real-time data feedback system in order to ensure that the driver can follow the strategy with precision.

***Behind the violence: How militarism impacts society and culture in Iran, Rwanda, and the United States***

Philip Krabill with Felix Kayiranga, Mahboube Hosseinzadeh

Faculty Mentor: Paula Ditzel Facci

This project investigates the nature and impacts of militarism. In each of our home contexts (Iran, Rwanda, and the United States), militarism has impacted society, economy and culture. The results, however, impact each place in drastically different ways. Drawing from existing academic literature and personal experiences and observations, we will present our findings and analysis in regards to these three contexts. In the Iranian context, the project will explore the impact of United States neo-colonialism on the country and the legacy it left with the Iranian military. In the Rwandan context, the project will explain the role of military personnel who participated in the mass killing of the population, using power intended to protect people instead for violence against them. The United Statesian context teaches that even when the military is not active on home soil, militarism still has a heavy influence on economy, culture, and various domestic systems of oppression.

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***Love thy non-Christian Neighbor?: Mediating conflicting calls to exclusivism and pluralism in the Christian tradition***

Philip Krabill

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel, Mary Sprunger

In this day and age, questions of interfaith engagement are unavoidable. Christians now more than ever have questions about how to interact with those different from them. With a few exceptions, the regions of the world are becoming religiously diverse. Interfaith engagement is perhaps the most pressing issue of our time. Religious prejudice intersects with the spheres of colonialism and racism, exacerbating those forces and manifesting more focused prejudices such as antisemitism and islamophobia. Furthermore, religion is closely tied to many individuals' personal identities; therefore, interfaith engagement is working to create peace and understanding among people with core identities that, due to the systems present in our world, seem irreconcilable. If it is possible to forge community, cooperation, and deep understanding across these groups, a whole world of possibilities will open up.

Over the course of Christian history, theologians have asserted a variety of responses to this question. As it often does, theology has frequently turned to action, as exclusivist and pluralist thinkers have formed coalitions that support their positions. This paper serves as a glimpse into the history of Christian theological thought on interfaith interaction and how Christianity has appeared to become more pluralist with time.

***A Glimpse into South African Apartheid: Precursors, Conditions, Ongoing Legacy, and Recommendations***

Philip Krabill

Faculty Mentor: Ji Eun Kim

Racial oppression has a centuries-long history in South Africa. From the moment European settlers became aware of the land, there has been a disregard for the human rights of black South Africans. Even so, the Apartheid era of the mid- and late twentieth century marks a particularly bleak point in the history of the nation, as discrimination against black South Africans was legislated in a completely new way. Apartheid in South Africa was an era that operated under a series of policies aimed at moving black South Africans out of cities and into small portions of the nation's land. For black South Africans that remained in cities out of necessity, Apartheid legislation controlled nearly every aspect of their lives. In the face of black resistance, the South African government resorted to forced displacement, incarceration, forced labor, and even the massacre of thousands of black South Africans. However, just as racial oppression began long before Apartheid, social and economic injustice stand to persist long after the official end of Apartheid in 1994.

The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission had ambitious goals for its brief four-year lifespan. In that time, it collected countless testimonies, conducted thorough investigations, and made thoughtful recommendations for social, economic, and political reforms. Almost thirty years later, the answers to these questions still evade us. In one of the most economically unequal countries in the world, much of the disparity between the richest and poorest citizens can be traced back to the era of Apartheid. Reparations and other neglected recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission appear to be the most effective method to alleviate extreme poverty and minimize economic inequality left in Apartheid's wake.

***The Ongoing Pursuit of Justice for the Mayan Genocide: Recommendations and Recourse***

Meredith Lehman

Faculty Mentor: Ji Eun Kim

The indigenous Mayan populations of Guatemala have been subject to systemic oppression and violence since the onset of Spanish colonization in Central America. Over five hundred years of stigma and isolation have culminated in a narrative of exclusion and racism that permeates the country's socio-political structure. This reality has been exemplified by the Mayan Genocide, an atrocity in which the state of Guatemala used pervasive racist ideologies to fuel a thirty-six-year civil war that culminated in a calculated effort to wipe out indigenous Mayan populations. Though external entities such as the Historical Clarification Commission have clearly established that the state of Guatemala committed acts of genocide, there is still a lack of acknowledgement within the Guatemalan government. Reconciliatory efforts have been lacking as the pursuit of justice continues to be an uphill battle for indigenous Guatemalans. This presentation outlines a

brief history of oppression toward Mayan indigenous groups in Guatemala and a summary of the atrocities to which they were subject throughout the civil war period. This is followed by policy recommendations aimed toward achieving justice for the Mayan indigenous people of Guatemala.

### ***Teaching Uncle Tom's Cabin and Other Controversial Books in the High School English Curriculum***

Erika Lopez

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

Whether to teach Uncle Tom's Cabin has been debated in schools for years. Although written to shed light on the injustices of slavery, the novel is frequently criticized for its offensive language and stereotypical portrayal of Black characters. Jocelyn Chadwick-Joshua discusses how readers may misunderstand Stowe's harmful stereotypes as positive portrayals of enslaved individuals. Given these critiques, the book has been banned from curricula and school libraries all over the United States.

Author ReLeah Cossett Lent, however, argues books, particularly those subject to censorship, must be kept available for students to read and discuss. Reading Uncle Tom's Cabin historically – from the context of Stowe's time – and through a critical lens enables students to understand the intended purpose of the novel and to come up with their own critiques of Stowe's work. Using Lent's work as a foundation for my argument alongside Marilyn Maxwell's and Marlene Berman's recommendations for effective classroom discussion, this presentation uses Uncle Tom's Cabin to address the harms of book banning and censorship, the importance of discussing controversial books in the classroom, and strategies for holding these crucial conversations effectively. Banning the novel from the classroom would deprive students opportunities to think critically and discuss meaningfully an important historic and literary text.

### ***The Living Legacy of the 2009 Honduran Coup***

Alexa Lorenzana

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel, Mary Sprunger

For my presentation, I will focus on the coup that occurred in Honduras back in 2009 and figure out what the different perspectives were on what actually happened. My goal for the presentation is to give a brief history of the political situation in Honduras starting in around the 1970s up until 2009. I will also give insight into the two main perspectives of the coup, those who supported it and those who were against it, and detail why these ideas about the events went down differ. I have collected a variety of sources about the coup. Some of them come from non-Honduran sources like the New York Times and Democracy Now! to help understand the basic information about the coup as well as to get an understanding of some of the international reactions to the coup. I have also interviewed some people who lived in Honduras during the coup, many of whom still live in Honduras today. Along with the non-Honduran news sources and interviews, I have found US government documents and documents from the Organization of American States (OAS) that talk about the events of the coup. Some of my key findings include the different stories that are told about the coup, one side claiming it was not a coup and was a

completely legal situation while the other side sees it as an overstep in power by the government. Another important finding is understanding how people in different social demographics in Honduras were affected by the coup and therefore held different views on what happened. In conclusion, my paper will show that there is not a fully official story or understanding of the coup and that since the coup, Honduras has struggled to unify politically and socially as a nation.

***Sleep and memory recall: How proper sleep hygiene can enhance memory***

Rocky Lowe with Rodney Stoltzfus, Seth Weaver

Faculty Mentor: Kate Clark

Sleep is necessary for both the development and maintenance of a healthy functioning brain. Without sufficient rest both prior to and after acquisition of new information, the brain is unable to properly file data for memory recall. The human sleep/wake cycle is affected by our circadian rhythm partnered with natural light. To maintain the brain at the highest functioning level, the brain must have time during sleep to heal and file away memories. Brain waves that occur during both REM and nonREM sleep cycles are essential for brain health. Without effective sleep, brain tissue is damaged and unable to function at peak performance levels. This presentation will examine proper sleep hygiene methods that can be utilized to aid a person in obtaining the proper amount of rest, as well as methods for memory enhancement. The importance of sleep in order to improve memory acquisition, consolidation, and recall will be discussed. Strategies to promote general brain health, and proper sleep hygiene techniques to enhance memory will be explored.

***EMU Fitness Center Capacity Tracker***

Jansen Miller

Faculty Mentor: Mark Sawin, Stefano Colafranceschi

I created a web application that shows the current crowd level of the EMU fitness center. Students, faculty, and staff are able to visit the web application to see if the fitness center is busy. The project came about as a result of students complaining about the fitness center being too busy when they go. With the use of my web application, students can see if there are too many people for them to go work out. The project has three parts. The first is the backend. The Python code controls how the web application works. It will pull the data from the scanner at the fitness center check-in. The second is the front end. This is the code that controls how the web application looks. I used a combination of HTML<, CSS, and Javascript. The third part is the server that deploys and hosts the web app.

***Eden 404 poetry collection***

Chris Murray

Faculty Mentor: David Brennan

Eden 404, a collection of 26 poems, explores themes of connection and disconnection in a world that feels increasingly isolated and digital. I believe that many people have experienced this

sense of disconnection, particularly over the course of the pandemic and post-pandemic (if we can call out current reality “post” anything.)

Many of the poems are reflections of my personal experience, but they also focus on common behaviors and problems that I have observed in other online users and communities. Some problems are internet specific, but most of them are merely reflections of real-life issues that are expressed more visibly in anonymous spaces. Sometimes the answer is to unplug, but usually what we need to work towards is a deeper understanding of ourselves, our world, and how we influence our communities and environment.

### ***Seeking Sanctity***

Cristal Narciso

Faculty Mentor: Debbi DiGennaro

This presentation will be a book response on *The Best We Could Do* by Thi Bui (2018). The presentation will include a summary of the book and my analysis of it, based on the presenter's experience as a person who grew up as a first generation Mexican- American in California. I wanted to highlight the similarities and differences between cultural backgrounds and experience for immigrant families coming to the United States, adapting, and hoping for the best.

The goal of this project is to expand awareness about the diverse reasons for immigrating, connect the push and pull factors, and compare the story from EMU's common read text to the story of the presenter's own family. The presentation will explore some of the cultural gaps between generations, access to education, and other influences that impact interactions between first and second generations.

### ***Restoring Dialogues and Diplomacy with China: Recommendations from the Faith Community***

Angelo Olayvar

Faculty Mentor: Ji Eun Kim

The single crucial determining factor in sustained global peace is the relationship between the United States and China. The issuance of the National Security Strategy by the Trump Administration in 2017 highlighted the return of great power competition. The document specified China as the United States' greatest competitor, challenging American power and influence and the global order it currently leads. The release of the 2022 National Security Strategy by the Biden Administration further affirmed the status of China as the greatest threat to American security and interests. This portrayal of China threatens global peace and stability, and it currently escalates military tensions in the Asia-Pacific region between the United States, its allies, and China. The tension coming from the issue of Taiwan and the disputed islands in the East China Sea and the South China Sea also adds to the deterioration of peace and stability in the region. This escalating tension between the United States and China strengthens the desire of Washington to increase its spending on its military assets in the Asia-Pacific Region. This impending allocation of resources will cause the United States to miss the opportunity to fundamentally advance peace in the region, de-escalate tension, foster cooperation between



China and the United States, and invest in infrastructure and human capital at home. The faith community of the United States advocates for an investment in dialogue and diplomatic mechanisms instead of a militaristic approach in order to preserve global peace and security and the existential threats of climate change to humanity.

***Cervical cancer prevention and awareness***

MeLeah Porter with Olivia Galbraith, Claire Landis, Elizabeth Willis

Faculty Mentor: Kate Clark

Human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted infection, is the leading cause of cervical cancer. Studies have shown that prevention of HPV with the HPV vaccine, one of the most common being Gardasil, significantly decreases the risk of cervical cancer in those that contract HPV. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 13% of Americans have HPV at any given time, and each year an additional 4% are infected (2023). HPV causes nearly 34,000 cases of cervical cancer yearly (CDC, 2022). This presentation aims to discuss the importance of screening methods for early detection of cervical cancer. Data collected from the Eastern Mennonite University student body will be compared to peer-reviewed research studies about cervical cancer awareness. The different prevention methods such as lifestyle choices, the use of condoms, different HPV vaccines, and the Papanicolaou test will be discussed.

***Breaking The Silence On Gender Based Violence***

Wimarshana Ranasinghe with Mary Moll, Kory Schaeffer, Ishtiaq Khan

Faculty Mentor: Paula Ditzel Facci

Our group is investigating structural and cultural violence in which state and political powers silence victims of human rights and gender based violence. We look at honor killings in Pakistan, where women who marry outside of their caste or religion are silenced via murder in order to preserve structural power dynamics. We also investigate the state sponsored persecution of women and executions of protestors in Iran who are advocating for their freedom of expression. Finally, we will investigate the struggle of transgender persons in the United States as they experience silencing through widespread legislation and cultural practices. To highlight ties between these expressions of violence we investigate the history of imperialism and colonialism that laid the groundwork for current concepts of gender and family, and of which the current power structures are rooted. For the purpose of this project we define silencing as preventing people who experience oppression from self-advocating; preventing members of society from openly discussing an injustice; and purposefully and consistently ignoring requests for visibility and acceptance from oppressed identities.

***Intimate Partner Violence: It Can Happen To Anyone***

Katelyn Sellars with Olivia Beiler, Shana Smith, Allison Southfield

Faculty Mentor: Beth Good

One in three women have experienced some sort of physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, psychological or financial abuse from an intimate partner. Pregnant women who experience intimate partner violence are three times more likely to experience perinatal death, opposed to pregnant women who do not experience abuse. Pregnancy increases the risk for intimate partner violence by three times. Our goal is to expand knowledge of the prevalence and effects of intimate partner violence on pregnant women and suggest how to apply this knowledge in nursing practice. For this project secondary data, interviews and surveys were analyzed as well as information gathered through partnership with a local domestic abuse shelter.

***Not-So-Sinful Human Nature: The Paradox of Dante as revealed by William Blake***

Sophia Sherrill

Faculty Mentor: Kevin Seidel, Mary Sprunger

Dante's *Inferno*, part one of the *Divine Comedy*, tells the story of Dante traveling through every layer of Hell, encountering increasingly heinous sins along the way. A prevalent theme throughout Dante's work is just punishment; believing that pain and torment are deserved because the sin committed was so great. The sinners range from mythological and biblical beings to those Dante knew in his hometown of Florence. William Blake in his illustrations of Dante's *Inferno* adds a sympathetic tone to the horrible visions of Dante. Blake himself resonated with Dante's harsh criticism of the upper classes, and yet his art does not shy away from showing the pain of the damned souls. The hypothesis that this paper offers is that Blake added humanity into his depictions of Hell so that he may contradict what Virgil impresses upon Dante: these souls do not deserve sympathy as they have committed great sins and wholly deserve their punishment. Dante's work as compared to Blake's paintings presents wildly different tones as one is far more sympathetic than the other. The paradox of Dante is the inescapable damnation from simply experiencing human nature and Blake's illustrations show how horrifically tragic a world that operates this way would be.

***AgroBot: Automated Growing Machine***

Ethan Spicher with Caleb Hostetler, Ethan Ball, Conrad Nyce

Faculty Mentor: Esther Tian

This Senior Engineering Capstone project focuses on creating a machine model that plants, irrigates, and monitors plants from seed to harvest. The application of this machine is within the large scale greenhouse industry with a focus on creating a more efficient, cheaper and sustainable way to grow produce year round.

***Absalom! Absalom!: The Myth of the Old South***

Isaac Spicher

Faculty Mentor: Martha Eads

William Faulkner's novel *Absalom! Absalom!* explores the life of Thomas Sutpen, a man of humble origins who rises to power and wealth in the antebellum U.S. South, only to suffer a tragic downfall. Critics recognize the novel as an allegory of the fall of the old South in the

aftermath of the American Civil War. Like many recounts of the old South itself, *Absalom!* *Absalom!* is told unreliably by multiple narrators, and many critics consider it a commentary on the reconstructive nature of historical truth. Faulkner confirmed that he intends for each reader to come away from reading *Absalom!* *Absalom!* with a truth unique to themselves, a mythology of their own mind. This presentation will claim that, through Thomas Sutpen, Faulkner illustrates the old South as a mythical time and place which never existed in a factual sense but only in the hearts and minds of those who kept it alive.

To justify this claim, the presentation will compare Sutpen's tragic flaws, and by proxy those of the U.S. South, to those ancient Greco-Roman stories which first immortalized the idea of hamartia, the fatal missing of the mark. Thomas Sutpen bears striking similarities to many tragic figures from classical mythology, including Oedipus, Agamemnon, and Prometheus. Like Oedipus, Sutpen is driven by a relentless pursuit of self-knowledge, which ultimately leads to his downfall. Like Agamemnon, he is undone by his own hubris. Like Prometheus, he is a figure who challenges the gods and seeks to transcend mortal existence, only to suffer the terrible consequences of his ambition. Aside from these and other classical stories, the presentation will pull from modern Faulkner scholars such as Eric Casero, Richard Forrer, and Ilse Duso Lind to give historical and literary color to the novel's text.

### ***Reimagining Art in the Age of AI***

Will Stutzman

Faculty Mentor: David Berry

Chat GPT rapidly received attention throughout the beginning of this year. As the AI has gained popularity, deep questions of ethics have risen in parallel. These ethical paradoxes are crucial for society to struggle with, but specifically, there are some sizeable considerations for artists. AI can generate entire songs in mere moments, while the user's stream of consciousness is realized almost instantaneously. As an aspiring songwriter, I have collaborated with AI to create my own art. But is it really my own? In my presentation, I will discuss a journey through moral boundaries; join me and question the basic foundations of what we consider to be art, what we consider to be "good," and other dilemmas that surface when creatives embrace artificial intelligence.

### ***Measuring Student Perspectives of EMU's Response to COVID-19 Pandemic***

Camelie Vazquez

Faculty Mentor: Jenni Holsinger

The goal of this research study is to examine Eastern Mennonite University's response to COVID-19 with a focus on the resources provided to students by the school. The purpose of this mixed-methods study will be to measure student's perceptions of and experience with the resources provided by EMU during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically during the 2020-2021 school year. I looked at categories of resources that include mental health resources, testing resources, and information given. These results provided feedback to help the University

evaluate its approach to the pandemic and help faculty, staff, and administrators prepare in case of an emergency response in the future.

***Influence of social integration on the awareness of sexual violence resources on campus.***

Leah Walker

Faculty Mentor: Jenni Holsinger

Teens and Young adults/college students are at a stage where they are at the most risk for being victims of sexual violence (Lichty and Cowen 2021). In a New Zealand study on residual rape myths by Madeline Hayward and colleagues they stated that college campuses are especial breeding ground for this kind of violence. Resources like Title IX and EMUs Counseling services are available to respond to cases of sexual assault. Using survey data as well as interview data, this study aims to answer the question “How does one’s level of social integration influence the awareness of sexual violence resources on campus?” I hypothesize that students who have more consistent or reliable social networks will be more informed about these resources.

***Documentation of Student Learning: Fifth Grade Language Arts Poetry Unit***

Caitlin Weaver

Faculty Mentor: Ron Shultz

This Documentation of Student Learning Project reflects a Poetry Unit in a Fifth Grade Language Arts classroom over the course of two weeks. This unit followed SOLs 5.4 The student will expand vocabulary when reading and 5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, literary nonfiction, and poetry. Throughout the unit, students identified and produced their own examples of figurative language, identified themes, differentiated between free verse and rhyme, differentiated between first and third person point of view in poetry, and drew conclusions and made inferences with support from poetry texts. This unit encouraged student collaboration and higher-level thinking, allowing them to create their own poems and participate in a Poetry Slam at the end of the two weeks! This presentation contains all that went into completing this project. The content ranges from analyzing demographic information and establishing unit objectives to reflecting on student performance after the unit as well as my own strengths and areas for growth as an educator.

***Toward Wholeness: How Chaplains Integrate the Sacred Work of Healing***

Carrie Wenger

Faculty Mentor: Nancy Heisey

Chaplains in clinical settings are facing unique ministry challenges. As they are more integrated into the medical system, they must shape their work in ways that harmonize and complement the interdisciplinary team. Additionally, they carry the responsibility of spiritually supporting people across a wide spectrum of beliefs and faiths. How can chaplains bring theological

integrity to their role amidst systemic healthcare practices and when companioning people on various spiritual journeys? How do they contribute to the health of each individual and integrate their assessments into the plan of care? Questions related to the theology that grounds and guides chaplains, the chaplain's role on an interdisciplinary team, and the professional chaplain's integration with the healthcare system are vitally relevant parts of the growth of the profession of chaplaincy.

The primary lens I will bring to my work will be that of a theology of wholeness. I will engage scholarly work and biblical studies to create the framework for this theology. Then I will bring this lens to several different disciplines including perspectives from medicine, social work, grief theory, and family systems theory. In each area, I will be looking for indicators of wholeness and interventions that serve the telos of wholeness.

To address both the goal of theological integrity and the realities that accompany interdisciplinary work in a hospital setting, I will propose the use of an appropriate spiritual assessment tool. After experimentation with various spiritual assessment tools at Sentara Rockingham Memorial Hospital where I work as a part-time chaplain, my analysis will be used to develop proposals for improvement of the tools. In short, I will be aiming to discover and/or craft a tool that is theologically grounded, practical, relevant, and translatable.

### ***Sparkling Springs Community Pedestrian Footbridge***

Luke Wheeler with Logan Jones, Caleb Oesch

Faculty Mentor: Esther Tian

The sparkling springs community is home to a historic footbridge that is in dire need of rejuvenation. This group of seniors, with the help of JZ Engineering, assisted the community in redesigning a new footbridge that will resemble the existing historic bridge while creating a safe and useful replacement.

### ***After Parousia: A selection from "Dark", short stories by Joseph Whetzel***

Joseph Whetzel

Faculty Mentor: Chad Gusler

For my ace festival entry, I will be reading a selection from my senior thesis, "*Dark*," a small collection of short stories based in speculative fiction and pulling from my roots and passion as a horror writer. The selection I have chosen to read is called "*Good Girls*," and tells the story of a young woman serving in the Church as a witchslayer, an aimable attack dog used to cull infestations of witches and stop them from bringing spirits into the world without risking the lives of church officials. "*Good Girls*" deals with themes of abandonment, entrapment, and loss, inspired by my own critical perspectives of certain religious institutions.

### ***The Importance of the Castrato: History's Influence on the Modern Queer Vocalist***

Tyler Williams

Faculty Mentor: David Berry

Male castration procedures were popular during an age where women were banned from singing in the church and were heavily limited from performing on stage. Because of this, castrated men and young boys were needed to fill the vacancy of women's roles in music. The castrato was a perfect candidate for these positions, especially on the stage, due to physical and chemical changes caused by castration during youth. Thus, composers were compelled to write operas for the castrato voice; they felt it gave more options for the vocalist to demonstrate their abilities. *Orfeo ed Euridice* (1762), written by Christoph Gluck, is a notable opera that shows the castrato voice in a male role. *Orfeo ed Euridice* is based on the Greek mythological story of Orpheus, the son of a muse. The most famous aria from this opera is what emphasized the importance of understanding voice types in the context of music history. While the castrato practice is outdated, learning about their mark on music history is incredibly important for many vocalists today.

### ***Learning to Learn with Middle Schoolers***

Carrie Yoder

Faculty Mentor: Paul Yoder

This project is a documentation of student learning during my middle school placement. The main unit I taught during this placement was World War I. I taught the main causes of the war as well as the global outcomes. I focused on differentiation and teaching within a diverse school community during this placement. As my first middle school placement experience, I learned how to support students through sentence frames, visuals, and repeated instructions. This placement strengthened my call to teach and especially strengthened my call to teach middle schoolers. This project highlights the importance of differentiation in lesson plans and understanding a student as a whole person. In my DOSL I explain the variety of instructional strategies I used to differentiate my lessons as well as how my relationships with students shaped my role as a teacher.

### ***Unira's Ladder to Freedom***

Brynn Yoder

Faculty Mentor: Kirsten Beachy

Story Synopsis: *Unira's Ladder to Freedom* follows Unira, a confused girl who has been torn from her home tribe, who is thrown into a prison. She believes the abilities that got her sent her are a curse, but along the way she learns this may not be the case.