



Sabbatical Panorama 2024-2025

Table of Contents

Provost’s Introduction.....	3
Justin M. Anderson	4
Angela C. Carmella.....	6
Sulie L. Chang, Ph.D.	8
Sara Fieldston.....	12
Omer Gokcekus	14
Anca Grecu	15
Joseph Huddleston	18
Amy S. Hunter	20
Minsun Lee	23
Margaret Lewis	24
Andrea McDowell.....	28
Brian Murray.....	34
Ines A. Murzaku.....	35
Widian Nicola	358
John Ranieri	40
John T. Saccoman	41
Kirsten C. Schultz	445
Donovan Sherman.....	478
Mark Senvold.....	489
Terence T. Teo	567
Victor Velarde-Mayol.....	589
Kangzhen (Ken) Xie	600

Provost's Introduction

Message from the Provost

Grant to me keenness of mind, capacity to remember, skill in learning, subtlety to interpret, and eloquence in speech. May You guide the beginning of my work, direct its progress, and bring it to completion, You who are true God and true Man, who live and reign, world without end. Amen. (from Prayer Before Studying, St. Thomas Aquinas)

While a sabbatical can be a time of rest and recalibration, it also provides a rare and powerful opportunity for singularity of focus. Sabbaticals permit faculty to balance both analytical depth and reflective thinking in deep scholarly works. Sometimes that work can be speculative in nature or perhaps even provide the exploratory framework for new ideas. The faculty in this year's panorama have moved beyond simple productivity and into depth, and their work serves as a source of pride for the University.

I hope you will enjoy reading about their successes as much as I have. Please join me in welcoming them back to the University community after time well spent.

Erik Lillquist, J.D.

Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

Justin M. Anderson

Department of Religion

In accordance with Seton Hall's sabbatical reporting requirements, I am pleased to provide an update on my research activities during this academic year (July 2024-June 2025). This sabbatical has proven highly productive and valuable both professionally and personally, as outlined below:

Update on Research Project Aims – The primary aim of my sabbatical project has evolved in accordance with its planned trajectory. Initially, the project centered on translating and analyzing key medieval texts related to the theology of scandal and truth. This would have produced a monograph solely pertaining to the medieval scholars from 1190 to 1273. The updated aim reflects an expansion of this foundational work into a full-length monograph exploring the historical and theological dimensions of scandal in Christian thought from the Old Testament to modern day. This too will result in a scholarly monograph. While the shift seems large, it is a shift from the second phase to directly attending to the third and final phase of a long-term research endeavor, with previous phases including a 2021 journal article and preparatory Latin-English translations of significant medieval texts. This larger monograph was in fact always part of the wider scholarly project.

This final phase focuses on synthesizing these foundational elements into a cohesive scholarly contribution. The dedicated time provided by this sabbatical has been critical to advancing this larger work, which simply would not have been possible after returning to full-time teaching and service duties. This is a positive development since it will integrate the insights of the former planned monograph.

Progress on Book-Length Scandal Project: Significant progress has been made on my monograph concerning the theology of scandal. Current highlights include:

St. Augustine: Approximately 40,000 words researched written, focusing on his teachings, historical context, and administrative actions related to scandal.

Scriptural Foundations: Research and outlines completed on scandal in the Old and beginning the same for the New Testaments.

Gathering sources for other early Church authors on scandal from New Testament times to Augustine.

This project is an unprecedented contribution to the field, addressing critical gaps in theological and ecclesial understanding. Although its complexity may extend the timeline for completion, I remain confident in its significance and impact.

Additional Scholarly Contributions since July 2024:

Finalization of a Forthcoming Edited Volume – During the autumn months of my sabbatical it was necessary to do some finalizing of *Thomas Aquinas and Medieval Canon Law* (J. M. Anderson & A. A. Larson, eds.) scheduled for publication by Catholic University of America Press in June 2025. This volume has been lauded by Petar Popovic (Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome) as: “A milestone for future research in the field. The book is a much awaited and needed input to the analysis of the nature of law and of the particular canonical issues from a distinctly Thomist perspective. The scholars selected for each topic are among the best experts for that particular topic currently available in the world.” The volume includes my article: “Scandal and Truth in Thomas Aquinas and the Thirteenth Century Canonical Tradition.”

Published Edited Volume – In July 2024, my co-edited book *Ignatius of Loyola and Thomas Aquinas: A Jesuit Ressourcement* (J. M. Anderson, A. Pidel, S.J., & M. Levering, eds.) was published by Catholic University of America Press. This volume provides an interdisciplinary exploration of Ignatian spirituality and Thomistic theology. My own article to this volume is “Experiencing the Divine according to Thomas and Ignatius.”

Recent Scholarly Article – In November 2024, *Nova et Vetera*’s English edition published my scholarly article “‘If You Are Led by the Spirit, You Are Not Under the Law’: *Lex Privata* and *Veritas Vitae* as a Divine Personal Vocation.” *Nova Et Vetera*, 22(4), 1297–1318.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/nov.2024.a944781>

Forthcoming Catholic Encyclopedic Article – I am currently writing a 10,000–15,000-word invited article on “Virtue in General” for the Encyclopedia of Catholic Theology (ECT). This work offers a comprehensive examination of virtue theory within Catholic theology. I have also been invited to produce a second article for them on scandal as the project matures.

Conference Paper Preparation – In addition to this work, I am preparing a scholarly paper for an invited conference in the Chicago area in September 2025. This presentation, tentatively titled “The Possibility of Conscientious Objection in the Works of Arthur Vermeersch, S.J.,” will explore this Belgian Jesuit’s writings on morality and war. My research trip to Belgium during July and August provided access to Vermeersch’s works and historical context, ensuring a well-documented analysis.

As I think this report demonstrates, this sabbatical has been highly productive, enabling substantial advancements in my research, writing, and professional collaborations. The outcomes of this period will significantly contribute to my field and enhance the reputation of Seton Hall University. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity and look forward to continuing this important work.

Angela C. Carmella

School of Law

I am grateful to the Seton Hall University administration for this year-long opportunity to study, research, write, and lecture. This opportunity has allowed me to meet and work with scholars in many fields from all over the nation and the world, most of whom I did not know. I have been able to share my research with audiences that have been engaged and thoughtful. On the quieter side, I have had the time to read, think and write, especially on liberalism and illiberal movements; and to encounter new fields of study like ecotheology. This year's endeavors have advanced (and will continue to advance) my interdisciplinary work in law and religion, touching on four main areas: the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment; Catholic teaching on religious freedom and the First Amendment; Catholic Social Thought (as applied to land use, the environment, the social mortgage, poverty, and race); and "Christian perspectives" scholarship.

Scholarship:

Catholic Institutions and the Religion Clauses: Faith in a Liberal Democracy, 101 *Chicago-Kent Law Review* (forthcoming 2025) (as part of Symposium on Religion and Secularism in a Liberal Democratic Society). Meyer, Pierce, and *Substantive Free Exercise: The Role of the Parent-Child Bond in Religion Clause Jurisprudence*, 35 *Journal of Western Legal History* 51 (2025) (as part of The Parental Rights Trilogy: A Centennial Symposium). *Housing and Human Flourishing*, 2024 Symposium on Faith and Culture: Renewing and Reimagining Institutions for the Common Good (Baylor University Press, forthcoming 2026).

Book Project:

I have done preliminary work on my next project, "part two" of *Christian Perspectives on Legal Thought* (which I co-edited with Michael McConnell and Robert Cochran, Yale University Press, 2001). With new authors and topics, this volume intends to explore developments over the last 25 years in Christian legal scholarship and suggest future directions.

Honors:

I was named a Visiting Fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture (IASC), University of Virginia, 2024-25. I prepared for and attended (in person and virtually) frequent seminars and presentations and participated in the Fellows Reading Group (reading Blumenberg's *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* in the fall and Shils's *Tradition* in the spring). The UVA faculty affiliated with IASC, as well as the IASC faculty fellows at other universities, come from a variety of disciplines, including history, philosophy, sociology, and religious studies. I have been invited to continue my affiliation with IASC.

Conference Presentations:

July: I spoke on *Church Autonomy and the Ministerial Exception* at the Annual Conference of the National Association of Appellate Court Attorneys in Chicago.

September: I presented a paper, *Dignitatis Humanae and the Universal Right to Religious Freedom: Advancing the Dignity of the Person and the Common Good of Society*, at the Conference on the Documents of the Second Vatican Council in Warsaw, Poland, which was sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe.

October: I presented *Housing and Human Flourishing* at Baylor University's Symposium on Faith and Culture: Renewing and Reimagining Institutions for the Common Good.

February: I spoke on *Catholicism, Liberalism, and Integralism* at the Chicago-Kent Law Review Symposium on Religion and Secularism in a Liberal Democratic Society.

March: I presented *Forming Consciences and Prudential Judgments: Religious Freedom and the Common Good*, Fordham University, at the 4th Annual "Way Forward" Conference on *Fratelli Tutti: Cultivating the Politics of Communion and Compassion*, co-sponsored by Fordham's Center on Religion and Culture, Loyola Chicago's Hank Center for the Catholic Intellectual Heritage, Boston College's Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life, and Sacred Heart's Center for Catholic Studies.

April: As Visiting Fellow of UVA's Instituted for Advanced Studies in Culture, I led a seminar discussion for UVA professors and affiliated faculty on my recent publication, *Envisioning the Beloved Community: Racial Justice, Property Law, and the Social Mortgage*, 39 *Journal of Law and Religion* (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2024.21>).

November (upcoming): I will serve as a senior scholar discussant at Pepperdine Law School's Workshop on *Christian Legal Thought from the Margins*.

Continuing Education:

Princeton Theological Seminary Course: *Christ, Creation, and the Church: Exploration in Ecotheology* (October 2024).

School for Synodality, UK: *Rising to the Challenge to Become a Synodal Church: Reading the Final Synod Document Together* (Online Book Club, May-June 2025).

Association of Pittsburgh Priests Lecture Series: Attended many of the lectures by noted theologians on a variety of topics.

Numerous webinars related to teaching topics in Property, Zoning, and First Amendment.

Select Professional Activities:

Meetings of the Freedom Forum's Religious Liberty Committee.

Signed onto Amici Curiae Brief of Religious Liberty Law Scholars in Support of Petitioners, *Catholic Charities Bureau v. Wisconsin Labor & Industry Review Comm'n* (U.S. Supreme Court) (cited twice in the U.S. Supreme Court's June 5, 2025 decision, at p. 10 of the majority opinion).

Signed onto Amici Curiae Brief of Religious Liberty Law Scholars in Support of Petitioner, *Apache Stronghold v. United States of America*, Petition for Writ of Certiorari (U.S. Supreme Court) (filed October 2024).

Sulie L. Chang, Ph.D.

Institute of Neuroimmune Pharmacology

The two approved aims for this sabbatical were:

1. To continue working on my NIH-funded projects, and
2. To carry out the planned collaboration with the National Health Research Institutes (NHRI) in Taiwan—also recognized as Taiwan's equivalent of the NIH.

A significant milestone during this sabbatical was the transition of my academic appointment to the Office of the Provost in October 2024. This transition marked the end of my long-standing affiliation with the College of Arts and Sciences, where I had served since 1994. This honor was formally acknowledged in the university news article linked here: [Dr. Chang Named Distinguished University Research Professor](#)

With this new appointment, I was afforded greater flexibility to expand the original scope of my sabbatical, allowing me to integrate new approach methodologies (NAMs) into my research and significantly enhance the effectiveness of my mentoring practices—both personally and professionally.

Another key point is that, as with my previous sabbaticals, many of the projects undertaken during this leave were ongoing and extended beyond the official sabbatical period. In practice, the work associated with this sabbatical began on June 1, 2024, and continued through August 31, 2025.

Received and administrated six grant awards from the National Institutes of Health (NIH):

1. National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIH R01 Grant (DA046258), “Immunomodulation of nicotine in HIV-1Tg rat brain”, 5/1/2018 to 3/31/2025. Total cost: \$1,738,750.00 (PI: Sulie L. Chang)
2. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH U01 Grant (AA025964-01A1), “Methylation in binge ethanol-induced spleen atrophy in adolescent rats” 5/20/2018 to 4/30/2025. Total cost: \$1,564,875.00 (PI: Sulie L. Chang)

3. National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIH R01 Grant (DA052284-01A1), “Modulation of OPRM1 alternative splicing by morphine and HIV-1 Nef” 9/15/2021 to 6/30/2026. Total cost: \$ 1,740,478.00 [Sulie L. Chang (PI and MPI) and Ilker K. Sariyer (PI and contact PI)]
4. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH R21 Grant (R21 AA029925-01A1), “Involvement of Microglial α 7AChR in binge alcohol modulation of gut dysbiosis” 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2025. Total cost request: \$412,666.0 (PI and contact PI: Sulie L. Chang)
5. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH R21 Grant (R21AA030221-01), “Effects of binge ethanol on neuroinflammation and neurodegeneration with high fat diets” 8/3/2023 to 7/31/2025. Total cost: \$391,903.00 (PI and contact PI: Sulie L. Chang)
6. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, NIH R03 Grant (R03 AA031535-01), 9/17/2024 to 8/31/2026. Total cost request: \$ 153,248.00 (PI: Sulie L. Chang)

Received and administrated two grant awards from Seton Hall University (SHU):

1. Office of the Provost, Seton Hall University, "Academy for Nature and Nurture (ANN): Interdisciplinary Approaches to Resilience" 7/1/2023 to 6/30/2025. Total cost: \$70,500.00. (PI: Sulie L. Chang)
2. Office of the Provost, Seton Hall University, "Academy for Nature and Nurture (ANN): Interdisciplinary Approaches to Resilience" 7/1/2025 to 6/30/2027. Total cost: \$52,000.00. (PI: Sulie L. Chang)

Published six peer-reviewed research articles and fifteen conference abstracts:

1. Ryan J. Kim, Muhammed Bishir, and Sulie L. Chang (2024) “Network Meta-Analysis on the Mechanisms underlying Alcohol Augmentation of Acute Pancreatitis and Diabetes Type II” *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 48: 1837–1852. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.15428>
2. Jonathan Zhang, Muhammed Bishir, Wenfei Huang, and Sulie L. Chang (2024) “Sex Dependent Correlation of Spleen Atrophy and Behavior Deficits Induced by Binge Treatment with Ethanol in Rodent Models” *NeuroImmune Pharmacology and Therapeutics*, 4(1): 59–75. <https://doi.org/10.1515/nipt-2024-0016>
3. Muhammed Bishir, Michael Vigorito, Ming-Huan Chan, Mohammed Khan and Sulie L. Chang (2024) “Alcohol Consumption Modulates the Development of Chronic Pain in COVID-19 Patients: A Network Meta-analysis”. *ACS Pharmacology & Translational Science*, 8(2): 409-422. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acspsci.4c00479>
4. Mohammed A. S. Khan, Byoung-Joon Song, Xin Wang, Shams Iqbal, Gyongy Szabo, and Sulie L. Chang (2025) “Neutrophil Extracellular Traps (NETs) and NETosis in Alcohol-associated Diseases: A Systemic Review” *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 49 (4): 697-711. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acer.70019>

5. Muhammed Bishir, Wenfei Huang, Ilker K. Sariyer and Sulie L. Chang (2025) “Gender Dependent Modulation of Opioid Dependence Genes and Signaling Pathways in HIV-Transgenic Rats at Morphine Tolerance” *Journal of Neurovirology*, 31: 262–286.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s13365-025-01257-8>
6. Muhammed Bishir, Mohamed Sheik Tharik Abdul Azeze, and Sulie L. Chang (2025) “Pain in comorbid alcohol use disorder and HIV: A network meta-analysis study”. *Alcohol*, 126: 43-53.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alcohol.2025.05.003>
7. Muhammed Bishir, Wenfei Huang, Tatiana Rengifo, Jonathan Zhang, Muhammed A. S. Khan, Saravana Babu Chidambaram and Sulie L. Chang (2024) Molecular mechanisms and signaling pathways underlying the transition from alcohol's analgesia to its induced allodynia. 47th annual conference of Research Society on Alcohol in Minneapolis, MN on June 22-26, 2024.
8. Wenfei Huang, Muhammed Bishir, Xiangqian Liu, Jonathan Zhang, Roohan Patel, Tatiana Rengifo, Marylynn Snyder, Colin Hodgkinson, David Goldman and Sulie L. Chang (2024) RNA-sequencing analysis revealed molecular and signaling pathways underlying ethanol-induced spleen atrophy. 47th annual conference of Research Society on Alcohol in Minneapolis, MN on June 22-26, 2024.
9. Tatiana Rengifo, Muhammed Bishir, Colin Hodgkinson, David Goldman and Sulie L. Chang (2024) Alcohol use augments thymic atrophy during aging. 47th annual conference of Research Society on Alcohol in Minneapolis, MN on June 22-26, 2024.
10. Muhammed Bishir, Wenfei Huang, Aliye E. Pehlivan, Saravana Babu Chidambaram and Sulie L. Chang (2024). Involvement of Opioid Signaling Pathway in the Transition of Alcohol's Properties from Analgesia to its Induced Pain. Alcohol and Immunology Research Interest Group annual meeting, Loyola University Chicago Health Sciences Campus, Maywood, IL, November 22, 2024.
11. Prasidh Pradeep and Sulie L Chang (2025). In-Silico Transcriptomic Profiling Reveals Alzheimer's Disease-Associated Signatures in Long COVID Patients. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.
12. Aliye Pehlivan and Sulie L. Chang (2025). Examining Mechanical Stress Response to Binge Exposure to Ethanol in Adolescent and Aged C57BL/6J Mice. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.
13. Daniel Guerrero, Sam Lou, Jose L. Lopez, and Sulie L. Chang (2025). Engineering Versatility: Development of a Low-Cost, Universal Power Supply System for Cold-Plasma Biomedical Research. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

14. Shajee Jawadi and Sulie L. Chang (2025). In Silico Knockout Analysis via IPA Reveals PIM-1's Role in Apoptosis and Immune Dysregulation in Alcohol-Induced Splenic Atrophy. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

15. Muhammed Bishir and Sulie L. Chang (2025) Alcohol-related pain in the neuroimmune axis: crosstalk between immune and pain signaling systems. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

16. Adain McCoy and Sulie L. Chang (2025) Counteracting ethanol-induced injury of endothelial cells: cold plasma enhances cell proliferation and regulates intracellular ROS dynamics. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

17. Eshika Gupta and Sulie L. Chang (2025) Nicotine's opposing effects on memory in F344 and HIV-1 Tg rats. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

18. Wenfei Huang and Sulie L. Chang (2025) Natural Killer Cells Mediate Ethanol-Induced Variability in Spleen Atrophy Among Adolescent F344 Rats. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

19. Mohamed Sheik Tharik Abdul Azeze, Wenfei Huang, Muhammed Bishir, Saravana Babu Chidambaram and Sulie L. Chang (2025) Using AI to Uncover Genomic Links to Alcohol-Induced Atrophy Variability in Adolescent F344 Rats. The 2025 Petersheim Academic Exposition at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ, April 22, 2025.

20. Muhammed Bishir, Mohamed Sheik Tharik A, Shajee Jawadi, Wenfei Huang, Saravana Babu Chidambaram, Ilker K. Sariyer, Sulie L. Chang (2025) HIV-1Tg Rats Exhibit Greater in Opioid Tolerance and Withdrawal. Society on NeuroImmune Pharmacology annual meeting, Omaha, Nebraska, June 8-11th, 2025.

21. Muhammed Bishir, Wenfei Huang, Mohamed Sheikh Tharik A, Shajee Jawadi, Saravana Babu Chidambaram, Sulie L. Chang. Differential Mechanistic Involvement in Central and Peripheral Systems: Alcohol's Transition from Analgesic to allodynia and hyperalgesia. Research Society on Alcohol annual meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 21–25, 2025

Delivered three international lectures in 2024 and one national lecture in 2025:

1. Invited speaker, "Transition of alcohol-induced effects from analgesia to allodynia, hyperalgesia and pain" Molecular and Cellular Neuroscience, Neurobiology Section, National Brain Research Centre, Manesar, India. July 9, 2024.

2. Invited speaker, "Alcohol misuse and the pain system- Transition of alcohol-induced effects from analgesia to allodynia, hyperalgesia and pain", JSS College of Pharmacy, JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mysuru, India, July 15, 2024.

3. Invited speaker, “The transition from alcohol’s analgesia to induced pain development following repeated alcohol misuse” 3rd World Congress on Alcohol and Addictions, Melbourne, Australia, September 23-26, 2024.

4. Invited speaker, “Initial Upregulation of alpha-7nAChR and Inflammation in the Brain Precedes Gut Dysbiosis in Mice Given Binge Ethanol”, the 48th Annual RSA Scientific Meeting/ISBRA Congress, New Orleans, Louisiana, June 21-25, 2025

Served on four NIH Grant Advisory IRG sections conducted via online meetings:

1. Chairperson, National Institute on Drug Abuse Special Emphasis Panel ZDAI XY-N (JJ) Meeting on Microglial Pathophysiology in Comorbid Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and HIV Agenda Seq Num, November 5, 2024

2. Ad Hoc Member National Institute AID Special Emphasis Panel/Scientific Review Group 2025/01 ZAI1 VS-A (J1) 1 Meeting on Interaction between ARVs and Hormones in HIV and Coinfections, November 19, 2024

3. Ad Hoc Member, Center for Scientific Review Study Section ZMH1 ERB-L(02) meeting on HIV Associated Neuroinflammation and CNS Persistence, April 29, 2025,

4. Ad Hoc Member, Center for Scientific Review Study Section ZRG1 IIDB-V (50) meeting on the Topics in HIV and Substance Abuse, the Influence of Sex Hormones, Neuropathology and Immunodeficient Aging, August 4, 2025.

In recognition of my significant contributions to the NIH, I have been granted the prestigious eligibility to submit R01, R21, and R34 grant applications as a PI/PD with an extended due date.

In addition to the above, I have mentored Early Career Investigators at the postdoctoral, predoctoral, and undergraduate levels, including three Ph.D. students and ten students in BS/MD joint programs and Physician Assistant (PA) programs.

Sara Fieldston

Department of History

I spent the 2024-25 academic year at work on a new monograph, *Shopping for Empire: A Cultural History of the U.S. Tourist Dollar Abroad*. This book chronicles the growth of U.S. mass tourism overseas between the 1920s and the 1970s. Shopping and souvenir-hunting, it demonstrates, shaped Americans’ perceptions about different countries and influenced the way they understood their own nation’s role on the global stage. Exploring the robust and shifting discourse surrounding the tourist dollar abroad, *Shopping for Empire* sheds light on the centrality of leisure travel in twentieth-century American culture, foreign affairs, and economic life. It tells an untold story about the tensions between personal, corporate, and governmental aims. And it

calls our attention to the historic significance of consumer power—and to the limits of this form of power.

Over the past year, I have enjoyed focusing fully on research and writing. In my sabbatical application, I noted plans to visit several archives, review copious published primary sources, and complete drafts of three chapters. I am pleased to report that I have accomplished all of these goals. I conducted extensive research in collections held by the New York Public Library, the National Archives, Bowdoin College, and the University of Miami, among others. I also had the opportunity to devote extensive time to piecing together legislative histories and conducting research in congressional databases. I spent hours deciphering cursive handwriting in dozens of travel diaries. I scoured eBay for old travel guides and spent many productive hours immersing myself in seventy-year-old advice for travelers.

I began writing just prior to my sabbatical year, but I had drafted only about half a chapter when my leave began. During my sabbatical, I completed this chapter and drafted two more. The first chapter I wrote is titled “The ‘Buyingest Soldier in the World’”; it explores GI tourism and souvenir-shopping during World War II. The next chapter, “The Invisible Import,” chronicles the combined efforts of government leaders and the American travel industry to transform the U.S. tourist dollar into a tool to uplift postwar Europe during the years immediately following the war. The final chapter, “Friendship and Power,” examines how ordinary American tourists grappled with the United States’ growing global hegemony, and with their own social and economic divisions, amidst the heightening Cold War. Three additional chapters—for which I have already conducted considerable research but which I have not yet written—will extend the story chronologically both backwards (into the 1920s and 1930s) and forwards (through the 1960s and 1970s).

Although I have not yet drafted a book proposal (one of my stated sabbatical goals), I have spoken with a university press regarding publication. My plan is to bring the manuscript (now about halfway done) closer to completion before continuing the conversation with potential publishers.

The research I completed over the course of my sabbatical will also enhance my teaching. In particular, I plan to revise and update several of the lectures in my upper-level history elective, HIST 3372: Travel & Tourism in American History, to reflect my new findings. I have also collected numerous primary sources, such as historical guidebooks and travel advertisements, that will augment my other courses, offering students novel access points into the American past. Furthermore, I used some of my sabbatical leave to develop the curriculum for a new course I am offering in Fall 2025, HIST 2342: Women in America, 1869-present.

I had the opportunity to present my work at two academic conferences during my sabbatical, gaining valuable feedback and connecting with other scholars at work on similar topics. In April, I attended the Organization of American Historians (OAH) Conference in Chicago, where I was part of a panel titled “The ‘Ugly American’? Americans Abroad during the Cold War.” In May, I

presented a paper on GI tourism at the International History Conference on World War II at Dominican University. In addition, I wrote two book reviews, both of which should be published soon. One is forthcoming in *Louisiana History* and the other in *Diplomatic History*.

Tourism is a major industry, and it was a significant point of contact between U.S. citizens and their counterparts around the world. This remains true today, as efforts to combat overtourism and protests against tourist visits took place in a number of cities this summer. For many Americans, leisure travel abroad was—and is—also a key space where they encountered and experienced U.S. economic and diplomatic imperatives as they played out on the ground. In examining the varied career of the U.S. tourist dollar overseas, *Shopping for Empire* charts the unexplored cultural repercussions of U.S. international economic and foreign policies. This is a broadly relevant topic, and my book's publication will assist in drawing attention not only to my own research agenda but also to the scholarly activities of the Seton Hall History Department and that of our colleagues in the university at large.

I am thankful to both the History Department and to Seton Hall University for the opportunity to take a sabbatical. I am now eager to embark on a new academic year.

Omer Gokcekus

School of Diplomacy and International Relations

My Sabbatical Year: Research, Collaboration, and Impact

During the 2024–25 academic year, I took sabbatical leave to focus on my research in governance, corruption, shadow economies, and wine economics. The uninterrupted time gave me the chance to complete major projects, start new ones, and strengthen international collaborations.

A central achievement was the completion of the book *Shadow Economies in Turkic Republics*, which I co-edited with Elshan Bagirzadeh. Over the year we worked closely with country specialists, and I spent a month at the Azerbaijan State University of Economics to finalize the manuscript. The book, bringing together fresh analyses of informality across Turkic Republics, will be published by Palgrave Macmillan.

In Cyprus, I continued work on how everyday contact across the dividing line shapes trust between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Together with a local colleague, I also co-authored the 8th *Corruption Perceptions in North Cyprus* report. The report, launched with live national media coverage, sparked public debate on governance and accountability, made newspaper headlines, and was even discussed in parliament.

Wine economics remained another active strand. I collaborated with a French colleague on a study examining whether gender alignment between wine critics and winemakers affects evaluations. I also continued research on Oregon's sub-appellations and Rioja Alavesa's bid for a

separate designation, and published a paper on Champagne imports and corruption. In addition, together with my graduate student, I co-authored a study on whether making *Wine Spectator's* Top 100 list creates a “superstar effect”; this article is forthcoming.

Beyond publications, the sabbatical was also a time of academic exchange. I served as a visiting scholar at the University of Cyprus, presented work in Dijon, France and Verona, Italy, and delivered a keynote lecture in Azerbaijan on the role of universities in regional development. I also shared research at international conferences in Zaragoza, Spain, and Tokyo, Japan.

By the end of the year, the sabbatical had produced one completed book, several published or forthcoming refereed journal articles, multiple new submissions, and visible public impact through the North Cyprus corruption report. Just as importantly, it renewed my energy for teaching: the insights gained from these projects will enrich classroom discussions on economic development and international governance.

Overall, this sabbatical year gave me the chance to deepen my research, build new collaborations, and bring fresh insights back into the classroom. It was a rare opportunity to step back, focus, and create work that connects both to academic debates and to public discussion. I am grateful to Seton Hall University for granting me this time and support, which made these projects and collaborations possible.

Anca Grecu

Department of Economics and Legal Studies

My sabbatical project involved the investigation of the impact of Pandemic on children and how these effects were moderated by pre-existing state-level policies.

Status: The project is in the final stage, and a draft is available.

Summary: The data investigated in this project indicate significant differences by age and gender. ADHD diagnoses increase among young boys aged 6–10 in the years immediately following the Pandemic. In contrast, there are fewer ADHD diagnoses among 11–13-year-olds, matching the trend in reported behavioral problems in this group. Among girls aged 11-13 there is an increase likelihood of experiencing anxiety.

These changes likely affected children’s performance in schools. In addition, the Pandemic brought changes to the system of educational delivery. Previous research found that these changes reduced the quality of instruction, leading to declines in student outcomes (Kuhfeld et al., 2022). This project investigates whether state-level policies, specifically third-grade reading laws, moderated post-Pandemic outcomes.

Grade retention, the practice of holding students back a grade due to academic or behavioral concerns, has long been a topic of debate in the education field. While its effectiveness and long-

term consequences are still debated, many states mandate grade retention based on standardized reading tests. This practice, implemented before the 3rd grade and called “third- grade reading laws”, aims to give struggling students a chance to catch up academically.

In 2020 the federal requirement for standardized test scores was suspended. Because mandatory retention decisions are tied to standardized test scores, this cancellation postponed the implementation of mandatory student retention in states with this policy. One would expect that, in the absence of testing, fewer students would repeat a grade. On the other hand, retention in the early grades (K-3) can also be used for behavioral or maturity concerns. Socio-emotional learning was also impaired during the pandemic (NCES report)[1] leading to many reports of higher levels of student misconduct and behavioral problems. If teachers use retention as a tool for behavior management, one might expect an increase in retention even in the absence of standardized tests - especially in areas where retention was already common - because the system may be less likely to accept deviations from the established norm.[2] The following year the federal testing requirement resumed albeit with allowances such as shorter tests, extended the testing window, and remote administration.

The results suggest that, by 2022, girls of 3rd-grade age in 2020 and were not tested had a significantly lower likelihood of reporting grade repetition compared with pre-pandemic 3rd-grade cohorts. That effect holds for the subsequent cohort of girls who were tested in 2021. If we believe that academic performance declined post-Pandemic, these results suggest that academic standards for promotion to the next grade were relaxed.

The cohort of boys who were in 3rd grade in 2020 and thus, not subject to 3rd-grade reading laws, do not experience a statistically significant change in retention rates. That is a somewhat counterintuitive result, but it is consistent with the effect of cancellation of testing at the 3rd grade level without a corresponding change in the culture regarding social promotion to the next grade level.

The following cohort - boys reaching 3rd grade in 2021 and tested – were more likely to report repeating a grade than pre-Pandemic cohorts at the same age. These results are consistent with previous literature (Stoet & Geary (2013) Mullis et al. (2007); Mullis, Martin, Foy, and Drucker (2012), Klecker (2006)) indicating that, on average, boys score lower than girls in reading. Thus, any academic constraint based on early reading skills (i.e. measured at a young age) is likely to be more binding for boys. However, these results may not align with the possible relaxation of academic standards that could explain the effect on same cohort of girls. They might reflect a larger Pandemic-related decline in boys’ reading skills or gender differences in emotional processing, with girls internalizing stress (leading to reports of anxiety), and boys externalizing stress (leading to behavioral problems). The later explanation receives some support from the results showing an increase in calls from school regarding boys but not girls in these cohorts.

Overall, the analysis seems to suggest that 3rd grade reading laws are binding more through the culture they create than through strict academic enforcement at the cut-off point.

[1] https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/07_06_2022.asp

[2] It is possible that, when considering retention, teachers take into consideration how higher-grade teachers would judge the decision by the lower-grade teacher to pass the student on to the next grade (Tomchin and Impara, 1992).

Other work

1) Minimum Wage and Intimate Partner Violence (with Kyle P. Penny)

Status: completed and under submission. Presented at the Southern Economic Association Meetings, November 2024.

Abstract: A significant body of literature links income to intimate partner violence (IPV) against women. This paper uses 2012-2019 variation in minimum wage over time to investigate whether this policy tool can help address the problem of IPV. Changes in minimum wage are expected to affect IPV through an income effect but could also change intra-household bargaining power if one partner is more likely to benefit. We find evidence of decreases in overall IPV incidents, but there is significant heterogeneity by age. Our results indicate that a \$1 increase in minimum wage is associated with a 4% decrease in non-fatal IPV incidents among young women, but a 32% increase in reported cases of fatal IPV among women over 35.

2) The Impact of Changes in Foreign Labor Supply of Home-Care Services (with Matthew D. James – SHU student)

Status: completed and under submission. Presented at the Eastern Economic Association Meetings, February 2025.

Abstract: The aging population fuels a growing demand for in-home elder care. In the United States (US), a significant part of the labor supply of home-care services are foreign-born workers. Using 2011-2019 data on employment of US and foreign-born home-care workers we find evidence of close substitution between foreign-born home-care workers and informal elderly care. We find evidence that outsourcing elderly care is associated with increased likelihood that elderly access preventive medical services and with improvements in the mental and physical health of elderly.

3) The Impact of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs on Functional Health (with Danielle Zanzalari)

Status: Completed, under submission + revision requested.

Abstract: In the United States, policy responses to the opioid epidemic shifted opioid prescribing patterns. Such changes may have far-reaching implications beyond opioid misuse, raising concerns of impaired access to effective pain management. Unlike previous studies that focus on opioid prescribing and overdoses, this paper uses a broad measure of quality-of-life to capture both the intended effects of PDMPs on individuals who misuse opioids and incidental effects on

legitimate users affected by changes in their pain management regimen. We find that failure to account for the staggered adoption of must-access PDMPs underestimates the benefits of this policy. After accounting for differential trends by age group and the staggered adoption of PDMPs, we find suggestive evidence of improvements in functioning. These gains are larger among demographic categories known to have higher rates of opioid prescribing: older individuals, women, and individuals without a college degree—and not among groups with higher rates of non-medical opioid use, suggestive of overprescribing at the expense of more effective pain management options.

I am grateful that SHU gave me the opportunity to engage in this research, which hopefully will inform future policy.

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Joseph Huddleston

School of Diplomacy and International Relations

My sabbatical application listed four large endeavors I was aiming to take on: finalizing a book manuscript, pursuing funding to start digitizing an endangered archive in Algeria, pursuing a Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) fellowship to spend the year working in government, and serving as an election monitor in Somaliland. Amazingly, I was awarded both the CFR

fellowship and a UCLA grant from the Modern Endangered Archives Project (MEAP), the latter in coordination with Dr. Sarah Ponichtera at Walsh Library.

For my CFR fellowship, I joined the office of Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) to serve on his foreign policy team, essentially taking on a full-time job for the year and dedicating the year to service through this opportunity. My work there included: developing four original pieces of legislation; developing dozens of amendments to existing legislation; meeting each week as a representative of Senator Booker with major constituent groups and notable organizations and corporations, including the Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, the German Embassy, the UN office in DC, and too many others to list; drafting a major section of Senator Booker's record-breaking 25-hr speech; writing speaking materials for the Senator for many other engagements; working with Senator Booker's communications team on public statements, announcements, and social media posts; attending weekly meetings with Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff on issues in African politics; drafting letter responses to concerned NJ constituents; staffing events such as town halls and private meetings with supporters of the Senator; and writing approximately 3-5 memos per week to advise and inform the Senator. My work with Senator Booker's team required me to work in his office 5 days per week, including regular workdays ending as late as 8 or 9pm.

Simultaneously with the fellowship, I worked with Dr. Ponichtera on our grant. We traveled to southwestern Algeria in October 2024 and spent 3 weeks in the refugee camps there assessing the media archive of the Polisario Front liberation movement government, gaining permission to undertake a massive archive project, and hired and trained their archival staff as project research assistants to preserve and document archive materials. We will apply for a follow-up grant in Fall 2025 for the second stage of the project, beginning in Fall 2026. Moreover, as an outcome of this project, we have been invited to submit a publication for peer review to the archival journal *Comma*.

In addition to the research progress made in the Sahara Archives Project, three of my articles were published:

“The Rules-Based Order and the High Stakes of Western Sahara” in *The Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* in July 2024.

“Are We Marketing Rebellion?” with Reyko Huang, in *Conflict, Security, and Development* 24(6) in December 2024.

“Determined Diplomacy Land, Law, and the Strategic Outreach of Self-Determination Governments” in *International Politics* 62 in April 2025.

When I received the CFR fellowship and pursued my work in the Senate, it became clear that to make significant writing progress on a new manuscript would be impossible. This became doubly true once I received news that Dr. Ponichtera and I would be awarded the MEAP grant. Since both the CFR and MEAP awards were “now or never,” not able to be deferred, I decided to

prioritize these two projects over furthering my manuscript. I also told my election-monitoring contacts that I would not seek involvement in the Somaliland monitoring mission.

Despite being on sabbatical and working the equivalent of a full-time + overtime job as a Senate staffer, I stayed heavily involved in teaching at SHU. I took a leading role in developing The School of Diplomacy's new Security and Conflict Analysis Master's program. Moreover, inspired by my work in the Senate, I began developing new classroom materials, including assignments for realistic memo-writing, analysis of SFRC hearings, and summarizing major events in geopolitics in each region of the world. Several of the assignments I have my students doing this semester are based on my experience in the Senate. I also applied for two grants related to my teaching.

In addition to the above service to my School, my professional service included:

Participating as an invited panelist in June 2025 in University of Denver's Bridging the Gap International Policy Summer Institute conference, which trains early career academics to write for broad audiences and work directly on policy.

Sitting on a panel at the American Political Science Association's annual meeting in Philadelphia in September 2024.

Peer-reviewing 8 articles and book chapters.

Overall, however, I consider the main benefit of my sabbatical to myself and Seton Hall University to be the extensive network I have built in Washington, D.C. The School of Diplomacy is putting together plans to invite guest speakers to campus to present on professional topics such as how legislative careers generally work and substantive topics like the role of the legislature in American foreign policy. I also made dozens of new contacts in the government, domestic and international nonprofit, and private sectors. I have referred at least 8 Seton Hall students and alumni to job opportunities, and to my knowledge at least 2 have secured employment as an indirect result. Similarly, I am now very well equipped to advise students on pursuing a career in the legislative branch.

To sum it up, I would classify my sabbatical as one almost entirely devoted to service, primarily to my country, but down the line to my students, School, and University. That I was still able to publish and begin a new research project was a substantial bonus on top of my life-changing experience working in the U.S. Senate.

Amy S. Hunter

Department of Psychology

For my sabbatical I proposed three projects: developing a new course to support our new major in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience, creating student research opportunities in behavioral

neuroscience, and advancing my line of pedagogical research. In addition to these projects, I submitted three manuscripts with student co-authors to peer-reviewed journals (described below).

Course development:

In recent years, our department has attracted increasing numbers of students interested in the laboratory sciences and career plans in medical fields (e.g. MD, OT, PT). However, we have relatively few courses addressing the biological basis of behavior. In line with student interest and our newly approved major in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience, I developed a course in Psychopharmacology (PSYC3221). During my sabbatical I reviewed resources (e.g. textbooks, primary research articles), developed a course outline and syllabus, and created lectures and other course materials. The course has been approved by the College EPC. It was on the fall 2025 schedule, but due to my new role as interim chair of Social Work and Public Administration I will not be able to teach it in the fall as scheduled. However, we plan to have it on the schedule in spring 2026.

Creating research opportunities for students in behavioral neuroscience:

The goal of this project is to create additional research opportunities for students, which have become limited since the closing of our animal laboratory facility. During my sabbatical I worked with two students to develop laboratory assignments for courses such as PSYC3227 Biological Psychology laboratory using previously purchased Biopac equipment. These assignments lead students through a procedure for assessing basic physiological processes such as heart rate and EEG. During my sabbatical I searched pedagogical resources and scientific literature for relevant projects using this or similar equipment, and together with my students, we developed some laboratory exercises. We quickly realized, though, that because (1) we only have a single setup for recording physiological signals and (2) it is very time consuming to set up and record this information, it will be very challenging to utilize this in a classroom setting as anything other than a demonstration with a single student participant. I will continue to work with this equipment to determine additional ways in which it can be used.

Pedagogical research:

I have an ongoing line of research investigating how various syllabus factors affect student perceptions of faculty members. During my sabbatical, I began extending this line of work by developing studies that investigate the role of teacher trust. This construct has been hypothesized to be an essential component of excellent teaching (Chew, 2022), but to date no one has determined whether a syllabus can change student perceptions of this important construct. I have received IRB approval to conduct this study and will begin data collection at the start of the fall semester. The rate of data collection for my prior projects suggests that it will take approximately 1.5 semesters to obtain enough participant data as required by a statistical power analysis, which means I will be able to write and submit the paper in summer of 2026.

Additional work:

Although not part of my sabbatical proposal, at the start of my sabbatical I found myself in a position to submit three papers based on recently collected data. The first, a project conducted with Dr. Elizabeth McCrea in the Stillman School of Business and three student co-authors, describes a study in which student participants were randomly assigned to read a hypothetical syllabus that varied based on two factors: syllabus tone (student-centered or faculty-centered) and faculty gender (male or female). Replicating other work, we found that participants had more positive impressions of the professor with the student-centered syllabus as compared to the faculty-centered syllabus. Those students also believed they would have a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion in that class. Contrary to our hypothesis, there was no effect of faculty gender on student perceptions of faculty teaching skill or their own belongingness or inclusion. We submitted this paper to *Teaching of Psychology*, the premier journal for pedagogical research in the field of psychology. We received positive reviewer comments and an invitation to revise and resubmit, which is underway. A second paper describes the honors thesis of a former student. He manipulated hypothetical syllabi based on faculty gender and faculty self-disclosure of personal information. Specifically, the syllabus described that the faculty member had a biological illness, a psychological illness, or owned a pet (control condition). Similar to our first study, we found no effect of faculty gender on student perceptions. In addition, we found no effects of self-disclosure on student perceptions, suggesting that faculty self-disclosure – which, in other contexts, can result in negative student impressions, particularly in the case of psychological illness – does not negatively impact student perceptions of faculty teaching skill. Although this paper was rejected upon its first journal submission, we are revising the paper with plans to submit to a different journal.

The third paper also reflects the work of an honors student. She attempted to replicate work from 2015 showing that students perceive faculty with longer syllabi as being more competent. She also investigated the effect of the hypothetical faculty member describing themselves as a first-generation or continuing-generation college student. Other work has found that sharing such information in other contexts can increase student belongingness, particularly for those who are also first-generation. We found no effect of either syllabus length or faculty generational status on student perceptions of faculty. Given the prevalence of “syllabus bloat,” resulting in ever-longer course syllabi since the publication of the earlier work on this subject, it is reassuring to know that student perceptions are not negatively impacted by syllabus length. It is surprising that sharing of faculty generational status did not affect student belongingness or their sense of inclusion in the class – either for continuing-generation students or those who were first-generation themselves – and suggests that efforts to create belongingness need to be more deliberate and integrated throughout a course. This paper has been submitted to *Journal on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*.

Taken together, the work I accomplished during my sabbatical has furthered my program of pedagogical research with one article under revision at a journal, a second under review, a third

to be revised and resubmitted, and a new study to begin this fall. I have developed a new course and laboratory exercises for an existing course, while providing students with high-impact experiences in co-authoring manuscripts for journals and developing laboratory projects. This sabbatical was an invaluable opportunity that enabled me to advance my own program of research and provide new and unique educational experiences for our students.

Minsun Lee

Department of Psychology

My AY 2024-2025 sabbatical year allowed me to advance my scholarship, my professional leadership and service, and student mentorship. I am happy to report on the progress I have made on my sabbatical projects, as well as other work I have completed as part of my professional development, which also contribute to teaching, scholarship, and service to the department/college/university and profession.

Grant Funding:

One planned project during my sabbatical year was to apply for grant funding to support a planned research project. I applied for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation research grant, Evidence for Action: Innovative Research to Advance Racial Equity (\$574,332). Unfortunately, the grant was not funded. This grant would have funded the outcome research for the effectiveness of a training for White therapists on how to incorporate an understanding of racial experiences into the conceptualization and treatment of Asian American clients.

Developing Trainings and Developing Manuscripts for Publication:

Although the effectiveness study could not be completed due to the lack of funding, the bulk of the training for White therapists on how to incorporate an understanding of racial experiences into the conceptualization and treatment of Asian American clients was developed over the sabbatical year. I have also been working on completing the manuscript on the study on which this training is based, namely, qualitative study on the experience of race talk in psychotherapy with White therapists for Asian American clients. I have also been working on developing a training on structural competency, which was another planned project for my sabbatical year. Working on both of these trainings has not only advanced my scholarship but also enhanced my competencies as an instructor because it has augmented my understanding of necessary clinical competencies for students and professionals.

Aside from these projects, I have continued scholarship, professional service work, and mentorship to graduate students within and outside of Seton Hall:

I published two manuscripts during my sabbatical year:

Lee, M., *Baez, G., *Maleh, N. T., *Sliwak, R., & *Aigen, S. (2024). A narrative inquiry of relational conflict navigation for East Asian American women. *The Counseling Psychologist*, *53*(2), 243–276.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00110000251328708>.

Lee, M., Beasley, B., Salazar-Nuñez, A., & Zilber, S. (2024). Toward a liberatory counseling and psychotherapy theories pedagogy and curriculum. *Psychotherapy*, *62*(1), 75–81. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pst0000549>.

I have continued serving as one of the Board of Directors of the Asian American Psychological Association, which is a national organization for Asian American mental health practitioners serving the AAPI communities. In this role, I have advanced service to these communities and enhanced the visibility of Seton Hall as an institution of leaders.

I was elected as President Elect of the Section on the Psychology of Asian Pacific American Women of Division 35 within the Asian American Psychological Association. The leadership structure of the Section is such that the presidential trio (Past President, President, and President Elect) provide leadership to the Section. In this role, I have been advancing service to AAPI women and enhancing the visibility of Seton Hall. As the President Elect of Section V, I am also tasked with mentoring the student representatives on the executive board of the Section. As part of that task, I have been meeting monthly with the two student representatives, providing mentorship on their developing leadership skills.

I continued my research mentorship of the 14 doctoral students I had during my sabbatical year, supporting four of those students to complete their dissertation, and the rest of the students to continue their program-required research competence project. I additionally sat on two students' dissertation committees, successfully seeing one through their dissertation proposal and another through the successful defense of their dissertation.

Margaret Lewis

School of Law

As noted in my sabbatical application, I had applied for a Senior Scholar research Fulbright. The peer review round recommended that I be awarded a Fulbright but, ultimately, I did not receive funding. While disappointing, this was not surprising given the competitiveness of research Fulbright awards for Australia coupled with the fact that I received a Taiwan Fulbright during my last sabbatical and that Professor Susan Nolan of Seton Hall had been awarded a Senior Scholar award for Australia in 2023. Thankfully, my hosts at the University of Melbourne were able to invite me directly as a visiting researcher. It is a privilege to be affiliated with the Law School's Asian Law Centre in coordination with the university-wide Asia Institute.

As explained in my sabbatical application, my current work is rooted in the inquiry of how countries can use law to address security concerns in a manner that respects human rights. Being in Australia for the federal elections earlier this year alongside collaboration with my colleagues at Uni Melbourne has provided me with valuable insights into how Australia is navigating a tricky relationship with China: there is both interdependence and wariness. As projected, I have devoted significant time to working one-on-one with Australian academic colleagues to understand the domestic policy debates regarding relations with both the U.S. and China as well as how law is being used to respond to security and human rights concerns.

I participated in the Asian Law Centre's fortieth anniversary conference and served as a mentor at their workshop for graduate students. I was a guest lecturer and will soon be recording an episode for the Centre's new podcast series. Outside the university setting, I was delighted to be invited to Fulbright Australia's annual meeting in Canberra in February, which connected me with a rich network of Australian and American Fulbright Scholars. I have done a television interview for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and have been called on by journalists at The Guardian, The Nightly, and other news sources that are prominent in Australia.

As with my time in Taiwan, I also take seriously the importance of being a people-to-people ambassador, especially at a time when U.S.-Australia relations are under considerable strain, whether that be giving a presentation on Taiwan to students at my older son's school or baking cookies (I should say 'biscuits') for an election day bake sale at my younger son's school. On the government side, I am in conversation with analysts at CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation – Australia's national science agency) whom I met last year at a research security conference at Rice University. My work in this area has kicked into high gear in the United States with my appointment this spring to join the advisory board of the SECURE Center at the University of Washington. Last year the University was awarded a \$50 million, 5-year grant from the National Science Foundation, which obtained funding through the CHIPS Act to "establish a national infrastructure and collaborative partnership of academic institutions, nonprofits and businesses, engaging them in the design, development and delivery of capabilities and information that will be used to safeguard the U.S. research investment." We just had our first meeting, so this is all very much a new endeavor. I am honored to join the impressive talent on the advisory board. I am hopeful that we can contribute to charting a path that supports STEM while addressing serious risks from China and elsewhere.

My contribution to the SECURE Center builds on my work with Asian American Scholar Forum (AASF) and other groups that support civil liberties and Asian American communities, as well as people of Chinese heritage regardless of passport. I will be at Stanford later this month for AASF's annual meeting including being a panelist for the AASF-Hoover forum that is kicking off with a talk by Secretary Condoleezza Rice, now director of the Hoover Institution.

From Stanford I will head to Kyoto for a meeting hosted by the U.S.-Japan Foundation of the U.S.-Japan Leadership Program (USJLP) of which I have been a participant for almost a decade.

USJLP has given me tremendous access into understanding the Japanese government, military, and society, which is critical as my focus has broadened from China to the Indo-Pacific. It also provides a safe space for discussing issues in the U.S.-Japan relationship with people across the political spectrum: my cohort, for example, includes both Mike Waltz and Nikole Hannah-Jones.

Moving south from Japan, I have spent several weeks in Taiwan this spring on two trips. The first was to participate in the Fifth World Conference of Taiwan Studies and to give a talk at Academia Sinica's Law Institute with which I've had a long-term relationship. I had a string of meetings while in Taipei including with the American Institute in Taiwan (our not-an-embassy presence), Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, key members of the two major political parties, and several think-tanks and NGOs. While in Taiwan, I was on a panel organized by the European Values Center for Security Policy with whom I visited Warsaw and Prague last fall. Further connecting my work on Taiwan with Europe, later this week, I will be speaking on a webinar hosted by the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs. My work on Taiwan also intersects with my participation in the Council on Foreign Relations where I am involved in ongoing conversations regarding Taiwan's efforts to increase 'whole of society' resilience.

My second trip to Taiwan this spring was for the Diplomacy School's Center for Peace and Conflict Studies' Luce-funded project on "Peace and Security Dialogue: Peacemaking and Conflict Management in the Taiwan Strait." I have greatly enjoyed working with Professor Zheng Wang these past few years on this project and the related U.S.-China dialogue for which I contributed a chapter in a book he edited.

My work on U.S.-China relations has been enhanced by my role as a member of the board of directors for the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations. I serve on the program committee owing to my years of involvement in the human-rights track II dialogue and as a Public Intellectual Program fellow. This spring, I was asked to serve on a special sub-committee examining the role of track II dialogues given the strained bilateral relationship. In addition, I am providing guidance on implementation of the Committee's Luce-funded "Subnational Connect" initiative, which is designed to increase understanding of the U.S.-China relationship across the United States. In our area of the country, I continue to collaborate with the Policy & Advocacy Advisor for AAPI New Jersey (formerly, AAPI Montclair) about their programming and have started discussing how their work might connect to the course I am developing for Spring 2026 that will examine the intersection of law, geopolitics, and the Asian American experience. To my knowledge, we have never offered a course on Asian Americans and the law. This is all the more important as we continue to enhance our offerings that support ABA Interpretation 303-6 that emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural competence.

Moving from New Jersey to Pennsylvania, this spring I moderated a webinar and served as a reviewer for the third cohort of the University of Pennsylvania's Project on the Future of U.S.-China Relations, for which I was a member of the inaugural cohort. I also have a chapter forthcoming in the book *Chinese Developmentalism in the Global Legal and Economic Order*

(Cambridge University Press) that grew out of a conference at Penn. The editors have asked if I can join them for a panel at the upcoming American Society of Comparative Law annual conference.

I also continue to work on a long-term project with Hualing Fu, Dean of the Hong Kong University Law Faculty, on a history of the Ford Foundation's law program in China. The book project, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press, will stretch into 2026 with a projected publication date of 2027. I am thrilled that Dean Fu has agreed to be one of the speakers at the East Asian Law and Society section panel at the AALS annual conference in New Orleans in January. Organizing the participants for our main panel, as well as for our first-ever pedagogy panel, is part of my activities as this year's section chair. The Ford book project has been the most bittersweet endeavor of my career. The deep historical analysis—including archival research—on Ford's nearly forty-year law program in China has underscored the tremendous contributions of Chinese and foreign actors in seeking to enhance the role of law in the PRC. The reality of the repressive Xi Jinping era, however, has meant those gains have not only largely been erased but also that there has been tremendous personal cost. Next week I will moderate a webinar organized by the University of Tokyo in cooperation with the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute and other partners that will commemorate the tenth anniversary of the 709 crackdown—the Chinese government's arresting and threatening of hundreds of lawyers and legal activists on July 9, 2015.

The crackdown on human rights by Beijing is, of course, felt most directly within China. It is not, however, exclusively so. Transnational repression is increasingly a concern of the U.S. government and the Australian government, which, for example, has criticized China for 'coerced returns' of its citizens in addition to placing a bounty on several Hong Kongers in exile. European governments are also concerned. I am discussing possible research collaboration on these issues with a long-time friend who is now the Humboldt Professor in Human Rights at the Research Center for Human Rights in Erlangen-Nürnberg.

In short, life is not dull. Especially given trends in U.S.-China relations and dynamics in the Indo-Pacific stretching from Japan to Australia, I expect that my expertise will be relevant to an array of academic and policy debates. I will continue to complement my scholarly writing and teaching with policymaking and other service activities that benefit communities close to and far from Seton Hall. I am grateful for this sabbatical that has given me time for simmering projects that I could not tackle while serving as an associate dean and teaching. I am also grateful for time to take stock of what projects I will pursue next. I smiled when I received the following note from Ambassador Karl Eikenberry after our delegation organized by Professor Wang left Taiwan:

“You added so much to our representational presence in Taipei as Americans and academics, and to our small group chemistry. While our nation's knowledge of Mainland China is inadequate, we are at least making a conscious effort to close the gap. My own steep learning curve these past few days in Taiwan made clear to me how we are running blind on the other side of the

Strait. Given your experience and credibility, I really encourage you to write, speak, and engage in the Track 1 world.”

Andrea McDowell

School of Law

My sabbatical research is on the subject of citizen trials on the frontier, beyond the jurisdiction of any state, laws, formal government, and the jurisdiction of courts. The thesis is that the Americans who ran these trials, unfortunately called “lynch trials” or “Judge Lynch,” followed common law criminal procedure such as trial by jury. Despite the name, they were not “lynchings.” The work expands on John Philip Reid’s research on criminal law on the overland trails to the west; my own book on law in the California gold rush; and my recent article on lynch trials in gold mining camps in Montana, Nevada, and Colorado and the difference between those and vigilante actions. In this article, I document and analyze law enforcement on the frontier beyond mining communities. This phenomenon of frontier lynch trials has gone largely unstudied and I am pushing back against the assumption that all lynch trials on the frontier were in fact “lynchings,” or executions of minority or unpopular individuals; and that they were not only precursors to the racist lynchings after the civil war but also legitimized the latter by giving them a pioneer pedigree.

The word “lynch” is a problem, because most of the wide range of extra-legal violence in United States history that falls under the heading of “lynching” – not only the deliberately horrific murders of abolitionists and Blacks, but also vigilantism – was somewhere on the scale between horrific and a crime against humanity. However, the phrases “Lynch Law” and “Judge Lynch” applied to all forms of extra-legal punishment, including frontier jury trials, because, in the absence of law, everything is extra-legal. Nevertheless, in at least some cases, frontier trials included all of the common-law safeguards such as the principle of “innocent until proven guilty,” the right to assistance of counsel, to a jury of the accused’s peers, the right to strike jurors who might be biased, and the requirement of a unanimous verdict. At their best, frontier courts were bona fide attempts to provide a fair trial in the wilderness. In other words, the ideal lynch trial, or trial by Judge Lynch, was not “lynching” in the sense that we use the word, even though, in practice, some frontier communities ran imperfect trials. Today, the word “lynching” is inextricably tied to the murders of black citizens in the Southern States after Reconstruction. There was no question of a trial; the alleged behavior of the accused was not proven and would not necessarily have been illegal even if it had happened. In some cases, the perpetrators targeted individuals who (they alleged) had committed “crimes” that were not illegal, or that the state courts would not punish because the courts required a high standard of proof, or because of the presumption of innocence. In fact, it is well known that they were acts of terrorism intended to assert white supremacy.

Lynch trials, in contrast, were jury trials of citizen *in the absence of the state*, and in that sense, they were neither legal nor illegal. (This is a point that I will discuss at length.) The hallmarks of lynch trials were that they were public, that the entire population participated, that they followed common law procedure and offered common law safeguards (publicity, counsel for the accused, question of guilt or innocence put to the jury being the main elements). They were held in frontier areas that were not yet officially organized; as soon as there was government and proper courts, lynch trials disappeared.

I have already published a long study of lynch trials in CA, and a shorter study of lynch trials in the gold rushes of Montana, Nevada, and Colorado, which largely followed the CA model of citizen trials. These were criminal trials in gold mining camps, so the population was different from that in most frontier settlements in multiple respects. In California, in particular, fewer miners were frontiersmen: they came from a range of professions, some of whom had legal training, and many of whom were highly literate; and the chairman who ran the trial was often a lawyer or future lawyer. At the same time, the miners themselves were conscious that the records of their trials were published across the United States, and this may have led them to be more orderly in the proceedings. Newspaper reports of the California lynch trials may also have shaped those in later gold rushes.

In the first half of the sabbatical, I completed my research into primary sources and secondary sources on frontier lynch trials. I avoided going down the dozens of related rabbit holes: as the historian of the frontier, Richard Maxwell Brown wrote, “Western violence nearly defies interpretation as one struggles to make sense of the almost countless episodes and events that have made the West such a turbulent region” (*Strain of Violence*, p. 4). I do not lynchings (that is, disorderly executions without legal process), vigilantism, or the slaughter of Indians and Spanish speakers, except to compare and contrast them to lynch trials in a general way.

Done so far:

Secondary literature review: The main secondary works on lynch law in the West (as opposed to southern lynchings) are:

Brown, Richard Maxwell. *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* 1975 | New York: Oxford University Press [This is a profound look at violence in American history, not lynch trials but the dizzying complex of regulators, vigilantes, and counter-vigilantes. He described a “strain of violence” endemic to the country throughout its history.]

Waldrep, Christopher, *Many Faces of Judge Lynch*. 2002

Berg, Manfred, *Popular justice: a history of lynching in America*. c2011

Rushdy, Ashraf. *American Lynching*. [2014]

Pfeifer, Michael J. *Roots of Rough Justice : Origins of American lynching* 2017

Leonard, Stephen J., *Lynching in Colorado, 1859-1919* 2022.

Modern secondary sources regularly regard any extra-legal punishments as criminal in themselves and the forerunners to later racist lynchings because the participants called them “lynch-law.” Even the trials I describe here are thought to reflect an ingrained American tolerance of, or maybe even preference for, “harsh justice.” It is suggested that the history of lynching in America begins on the frontier and was normalized there. After the Civil War, southerners used this tradition to suppress Black citizens with what was, by now, an American tradition.

This cannot be right. Lynchings existed in the South all along, but the first lynched individuals were abolitionists, not “human property.” Harriet Frazier explains that blacks were not lynched in the South because the law in those states compensated owners whose slaves were executed after state trials. Slave owners therefore discouraged lynching, which cost them money.

Southerners did not have to be taught about lynchings. The atrocities against abolitionists were home grown; and like the notorious burning of Francis McIntosh in St. Louis and the Vicksburg lynchings of gamblers, both in 1835, they occurred before lynch trials on the frontier. There is no need to draw a line between the lynch trials in California and Southern lynchings during reconstruction.

2. Primary literature. The main body of the article is a survey of lynch *trials* in the West.

A. Arizona: Arizona had no proper lynch trials. One 1860 trial in defiance of District Court resulted in banishment.

B. Colorado: After California, Colorado had the largest number of lynch trials and they were the best documented. In fact, the miners incorporated criminal codes in their mining codes. See Stephen Leonard, *Lynching in Colorado*, for how this history has been twisted to fit it into the history of lynching in Colorado.

I wrote at length about Colorado’s history of lynch trials in my article “Comparative Lynch Law” for the Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities. The criminal law portion of the mining codes of various diggings illustrate the extent to which lynch law was not just normalized but formalized – something that I did not stress sufficiently in that article. Colorado also provides examples of vigilantism and self-help that lacked the safeguards, publicity, and public buy-in of a jury trial and thus illustrate the difference between those forms of violence and jury trials.

In this article, I will provide more discussion of Stephen Leonard’s, *Lynching in Colorado*. Leonard counted only trials resulting in the execution of the accused; he did not collect acquittals, cases where the accused was whipped rather than executed, or the published “laws” of the mining camps mentioned above.

Very little is known about the Colorado vigilantes. Plenty of outlaws were found hanging from trees, but the vigilantes who carried out these hangings managed to keep their identities and the details of their activities secret.

D. Florida, Territory 1822-1845: As a territory, Florida does not count in my definition of “frontier,” though its minimal law enforcement and flimsy jails, and high murder rate, led to vigilantism, which is not the same as lynch trials. In 1846 a gang leader named Yeoman was captured by a vigilance committee and hanged; as was a confederate called Jackson Jewel. Newspapers condemned the hanging since there were established courts.

E. Iowa: First settled 1833; Became a territory in 1838 A strip of Iowa was opened for settlement on June 1, 1833. There were no laws, courts, or legal officers. Iowa became a territory in 1838 and a state on December 28, 1846. Between 1846 and 1860, there were 45+ lynchings, mostly of horse thieves.

Black, P. “Lynchings in Iowa,” Iowa Journal of History 10 (1912), 151-254, includes a chronological – and comprehensive -- list of lynchings in the territory and state. Compared to other authors, he paints a more clownish picture of things gone wrong – where the accused turned out to be innocent or the “interrogation” got out of hand - repeatedly.

a. P. 163. Man named Leek stole a canoe. Tried at Dubuque in a lynch court; found guilty, sentenced to 39 lashes and exiled. Langworthy, “Dubuque” Iowa J. of Hist. And Pol vol. 8, p. 391

b. P. 168 Patrick O’Connor shot his partner O’Keaf. Tried at Dubuque on May 20, 1834. Allowed to select his counsel and his jury. Convicted and sentenced to hang. C. 1000 people witnessed the trial. Caused many outlaws to leave Dubuque.

c. p. 170 William Hoffman accused of theft of \$20 in 1834. Jury impaneled, presiding judge selected from among them, followed by chaotic proceeding. No jury verdict; crowd rushes forward to whip defendant. Eliphalet Price, “Lynch Law at the Dubuque Mines,” Annals of Iowa 1865 p. 541-2.

d. p. 171:1834. Trial of Wheeler, Dubuque. False charge that Wheeler took money for a task that he did not complete. In a Lynch court Wheeler was tarred and feathered and drummed out of town.”

e. P. 171: 1838. James Irwin accused of claim jumping. “A mob gave him a severe whipping.” [“Correspondence of the writer.”]

f. Two men, Johnson County, c. 1839 or 1840. Passed counterfeit bill for dinner. 30 settlers formed a court. Decided to give 15 lashes to one and ten to other ten. History of Johnson County, Iowa (1883), pp. 211 and 212.

F. Missouri. Became a territory in 1813, admitted as a state in 1821:

Missouri does not fit my demographic of a region without government – but lynch trials there well documented by Harriett Frazier in Lynchings in Missouri, 1803-1981 (2009). I have already mentioned that she makes the critical point that blacks were not lynched in the original colonies, because state government compensated owners of slaves if they were executed legally.

In contrast, territories west of the Mississippi were governed by Federal law. Slave owners were not compensated for slaves executed as punishment for crimes, and burning was not a sanctioned form of execution. Therefore, slave-owners did not resist lynchers.

Twenty of the 36 known lynchings before the Civil War were of blacks. None of these lynchings involved a lynch trial. Possibly the most famous lynching in American history was that of McIntosh, a free black man, burned to death in St. Louis in 1835 for the murder of a policeman. This was widely reported in the papers and condemned by a young Abraham Lincoln in his famous Lyceum speech. One factor that promoted lynching of whites in Missouri was that there was no penitentiary until 1835; and then it was in Jefferson City, too far from the center of population.

Missourians held only a two lynch trials of a white people, and those appear to have been cursory. About a dozen accused white criminals were punished by mob action, either whipping or hanging, with or without a vote. All of the dates are relatively late; the first lynching of a white man was that of James Layton in 1843, 22 years after Missouri had become a state.

G. Kansas: Kansas was settled late by comparison to the other areas discussed here. When settlement began in earnest during the 1850s, “Bleeding Kansas” became a battleground between Missourians and Free State supporters.

The Territory of Kansas was created as part of the Kansas-Nebraska Act on May 30, 1854. It was to have a supreme court of a chief justice and two associate justices. The existence of formal courts and the growing population undermined the rationale for lynch trials; but Kansas’ first prison was not ready for inmates until 1866. (Frazier, Lynchings in Kansas, p. 7.)

Harriett Frazier also compiled a comprehensive list of lynchings in Kansas, with analysis. There were few, if any, lynch trials of ordinary citizens. The great majority of documented crimes involved horse thefts and these were likely to be committed by strangers rather than neighbors. This may explain why many suspects were killed without a trial, either shot while trying to escape or taken from custody and never seen again.

I. Minnesota: earliest settlement, 1841; became a territory in 1849 and a state in 1858. I have not yet researched Minnesota criminal law.

J. Montana. I included the Montana gold rush in my article on lynch trials in gold rushes, and noted the difference between lynch trials of citizens, which followed common law procedure, and vigilantism, which was carried out in secret and aimed at crime control rather than justice. Dimsdale’s book about those in Montana is the most comprehensive “inside picture” of this form

of crime control. It has been suggested that Dimsdale's story is too black and white, and in fact that the alleged vigilantes were not, in fact, guilty as charged. This is something that I want to investigate.

K. Nebraska. I have not yet researched Nebraska.

L. Nevada. I wrote about lynch trials in the Nevada gold and silver rush in my article for the Jim Whitman Festschrift. These followed the usual pattern and came to an abrupt halt when Nevada Territory was established in 1861 and the area got its own courts near the gold region.

M. New Mexico. I have not yet researched New Mexico, but plan to start with Robert J. Torrez, *Myth of the Hanging Tree: Stories of Crime and Punishment in Territorial New Mexico*

N. Oklahoma. I have not yet looked at Oklahoma and I am not sure that I want to include it because of its (laudable) status as Indian Territory until 1889. That date is presumably too late to expect lynch trials.

O. Oregon. I have done some preliminary reading on Oregon. It is an interesting territory because it was opened up very early, in the 1840s; was settled by families rather than gold hunters; and was particularly remote. I do not believe that there was vigilantism in Oregon. At the same time, it appears to have developed a relatively functioning government which obviated the need for lynch trials. In other words, it seems to be anomalous, and that could be informative.

3. Southern States: Lynching abolitionists

Before Reconstruction, Southern newspapers took an interesting position on lynch trials in the West: they were strongly disapproving of lynch law, except in the case of lynchings of abolitionists. I will not have space to go into detail regarding the practice of lynching abolitionists but will use this opportunity to argue against the position that frontier lynchings were the inspiration for the lynching of blacks during and after reconstruction. The slave states did not need lessons in lynch law; they were already experts before the California gold rush.

For example: NYT Sept 18, 1857, "Lynching an Abolitionist in Mississippi." Community held a meeting using the parliamentary procedure, with which all Americans appeared to be familiar. They decided that the prisoner should remain in jail for one month and he agreed to this. En route to the jail, the crowd seized him, stripped him, put a rope around his neck, tied him to a tree, and whipped him. After 300 lashes, he confessed to a plot with blacks to get money from wealthy families, and if they wouldn't pay up, to kill the men and take two white ladies with them as wives. He was shipped to the Junction, from where he would start to his home in Indiana.

4. Other forms of crime control on the frontier

If I were writing a book rather than an article, I would include a chapter on other forms of crime control on the frontier, namely, regulators and vigilantes. For example, Blane, Excursion through

U.S 1822-23 noted that regulators appoint officers, put themselves under their orders and bind themselves to stand together. They sent notice to vagabonds to quit the state. If the recipients failed to comply, the regulators then whipped them and sometimes also cut off both ears. E.g. the regulators at Moore's Prairie whipped an old man and his family of robbers. When the victim failed to reform, the regulators cut off his ears, and he and his gang left the vicinity. Example 2: Regulators near Vincennes broke up gang of coiners and thieves, who passed horses and stolen goods from Ohio to Lake Erie and on to Canada. "This practice of Regulating seems very strange to an European... the Regulators ... all lamented the necessity of such a system... they should all be delighted at being able to obtain justice in a more formal manner. Also, "victims" did prosecute Regulators, but juries would give but trifling damages.

5. What remains to be done: I must stop gathering new material and draft the article with what I already have. The return on investment on this kind of research is low because the sources – newspapers, local histories, biographies etc. - mention crime and punishment incidentally and do not use a uniform vocabulary. And in any case, practices varied greatly from place to place and I will never get a "complete picture. What I have already is enough to make my main points.

Brian Murray

School of Law

During my sabbatical I engaged in new research, produced tangible scholarship and multiple research projects for the coming years, and enhanced my teaching and course offerings. I wrote several papers during my sabbatical, planned future ones, designed a course that I will teach next spring, and made progress on several other research projects.

First, I edited and published my article Participatory Expungement in Volume 124 of the *Columbia Law Review*. Second, I authored *Aquinas, Wilson, and Continuity on Crime and Punishment*, which is forthcoming in Volume 75 of the *Catholic University Law Review*. This Article is the fruit of my extensive engagement with the Collected Works of James Wilson, several secondary sources devoted to his legal and political philosophy, as well as Aquinas' works on law and punishment. Third, I authored *Liberalism, the Founding, and American Criminal Justice*, which is forthcoming in Volume 101 of the *Notre Dame Law Review*. This Article assesses the viability of post-liberal critiques of the American political system when applied to the field of criminal law and punishment. It follows from engagement with multiple literatures relating to jurisprudence, political theory, and contemporary criminal justice criticism.

In addition to my forthcoming articles, I am currently drafting two additional articles. The first Article, *Intentional Reasonableness: Double Effect and Administrative Searches*, utilizes the moral Doctrine of Double Effect (DDE) to help explain existing Supreme Court doctrine relating to administrative searches. The second Article is titled *Freedom of the Press, Privacy, Expungement, and Second Chances: Shifting the Paradigm and a Catholic Perspective* and is

likely to be published in the Villanova Law Review. It builds from prior work that argues that conceiving post-expungement reentry issues as a matter of criminal justice (and particularly proportionate punishment) is preferable to the existing privacy-centric paradigm that seeks to balance privacy standards with pre-existing, constitutionally enshrined rights.

Finally, my research has led me to conceptualize and plan several other writing projects that will receive my attention during the coming years. They include: (1) reexamining the right to reputation under the 14th Amendment and as addressed in *Paul v. Davis* nearly 50 years ago; (2) examining Founding writings advocating for higher standards of proof in early-stage criminal proceedings in early American history, especially those relating to 4th Amendment-related law enforcement activity; (3) considering how originalist methodology might have altered results in seminal cases under the 4th Amendment, such as *Terry v. Ohio*; (4) exploring the punishment theory writings of several early American legal figures, such as James Wilson and others; and (5) exploring several elements of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition (CIT) and how they compare to existing legal approaches in the criminal law and punishment fields.

In addition to my scholarly activities, I have spent considerable time developing a new advanced writing seminar titled “Catholic Legal Theory”, which I will offer in Spring 2026. The course will introduce students to the fruit of the CIT in the field of Jurisprudence and as it relates to specific issues within the positive law.

Ines A. Murzaku

Department of Religion

My Spring 2025 sabbatical advanced two book projects, produced a peer-reviewed special issue (now under contract to become a book), generated multiple keynotes, and expanded public-facing scholarship. The core research centered on transitional justice, dialogue, and peacebuilding in post-communist Romania, with concentrated archival work in Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, and Rome (Propaganda Fide and the Vatican Apostolic Archives). The time on the ground allowed archival study and discussion with local scholars, work that is not feasible remotely.

I. Book Project Progress: Transitional Justice and Dialogue as Means to Build Peace in Post-communist Romania

Archival research. I completed extended archival sessions in Cluj, Bucharest, and Rome/Vatican City State (Propaganda Fide; Vatican Apostolic Archives). Archival work is time-intensive, thousands of pages must be screened to identify relevant files, but the sustained presence afforded by sabbatical enabled steady progress. My focus is the *martyria* of the Greek Catholic Church and the status of Romanian religions in the immediate post-communist decades.

Authorship plan. The project may be a single-authored monograph or a co-authored study with a Romanian colleague, depending on the final distribution of chapters (ecclesial sources; state security files (Securitate); legal reforms; witness literature).

Related peer-reviewed output. As a direct outgrowth of this research, I served as guest co-editor (with Dr. Ana Victoria Sima, Babeş-Bolyai University) of the special issue “**Light from the East: The Catholic Eastern Churches Sixty Years After Vatican II**” (*Religions*, June 2025). Given strong interest in the topic, the publisher invited us to expand the special issue into a **book**; we have signed the contract. The volume aims to contribute to the current “Pope Leo” moment by examining restoration and *ressourcement*; theological identity and ecumenical mission; diaspora and belonging; synodality; liturgy and mystagogy; resilience under pressure; renewed ecclesiological models; and pastoral reforms that address post-conciliar sensitivities while preserving Eastern distinctiveness.

II. Book Report: Mother Teresa’s Theological Revolutions (Routledge, 2026)

Sabbatical time allowed me to finalize a manuscript under contract with Routledge. The study offers three distinctive contributions:

1. **New evidence.** It draws on newly opened or declassified materials, Sigurimi (Albanian Secret Police Files) dossiers, Propaganda Fide files, early Constitutions, correspondence, rarely used in English-language scholarship.
2. **New construction.** It proposes five “revolutions” (prayer, poverty, service, suffering, conscience), grounded in Scripture and tradition (St. Vincent of Lérins’ *eodem sensu eademque sententia*) and tested against primary sources rather than hagiography or polemic.
3. **New setting.** It situates Mother Teresa within the moral landscapes of Eastern Europe, especially Albania, in dialogue with John Paul II, showing how personal holiness becomes public hope.

In this Jubilee Year (2025), 75 years of the Missionaries of Charity, 115 years since Mother Teresa’s birth, and ten years since recognition of the second miracle, newly opened records continue to reorder what we value.

III. Keynotes and Invited Talks (Sabbatical-related, Spring–Summer 2025)

- “Transylvanian Turning Points: A Fulbright Semester that Rewired My Teaching and Research,” **Lucian Blaga University**, Sibiu (June 10–12).
- “From Silos to Synergy: Making Interdisciplinarity Work,” **Babeş-Bolyai University**, Cluj-Napoca (May 15).
- “Chronicles and Creeds: Where History and Theology Converge,” **Alexandru Ioan Cuza University**, Iaşi (May 12).

- “Martyrdom, Memory, and Christian Unity,” **International Symposium of Science, Theology, and Arts**, Alba Iulia (May 5–6).
- “Radical Compassion in a World on Edge,” **Pontifical Academy for Life**, Rome (Mar 3–4).

These events reinforced the book projects and strengthened collaborations with Romanian and Italian scholars.

IV. Public Scholarship and Media

I continued writing invited, peer-reviewed analyses on religion and public life, including “**Footprints of Freedom: Walking with Cardinal-Martyr Iuliu Hossu**,” *Catholic World Report* (July 2025). This piece connects directly to the Romanian research strand on witness and transitional justice. Such work extends scholarly impact beyond the academy and translates complex archival findings for wider audiences.

V. Institutional Impact (Seton Hall University)

Research growth.

- Sustained archival access produced a structured corpus for the Romania project and accelerated the Religions manuscript.
- The special issue-to-book pathway multiplies the scholarly return on sabbatical.

Teaching enhancement.

- International teaching and research in Romania and Italy will inform course revisions and new modules (transitional justice and religion; archival methods; Eastern Catholic studies/theology).
- Primary-source material will be incorporated into upper-division seminars.

Collaborations.

- Expanded networks with Romanian faculties position us for joint publications, future grant applications, and potential MOUs focused on minority religions and transitional justice.

Alignment with SHU goals.

- The outcomes support strategic priorities in research intensity, global engagement, and community impact through public scholarship.

VI. Next Steps (AY 2025–26)

- Complete the Romania monograph/co-authored study (drafting structured from archival outlines created this spring).

- Deliver the final manuscript of **Mother Teresa's Theological Revolutions** to Routledge on schedule.
- Edit and submit the expanded **Religions** volume manuscript.
- Integrate new content into SHU curricula and develop a faculty workshop on archival pedagogy and interdisciplinary design.

Conclusion

This sabbatical provided the uninterrupted time and proximity to sources needed to move two books into their final phases, to produce a peer-reviewed special issue now becoming a volume, and to translate scholarship into teaching and public engagement. I am grateful to Seton Hall University for the trust and support that made this work possible and to my colleagues and hosts in Romania and Italy whose generosity turned archives into conversations and research into community. Thank you for the gift of time; I will spend it well in service to our students and our Catholic mission.

Widian Nicola-Jacobo

Department of Social Work and Public Administration

At the outset of my sabbatical, I proposed an ambitious project aimed at exploring, developing, and advancing our understanding of modern love and relationships. Specifically, I planned to author a book that would examine the complexities of romantic partnerships in the 21st century, develop a unique relational framework (initially proposed as the Relational Renaissance Model), and offer accessible resources for both practitioners and the wider public. I also proposed the creation of a university-wide interdisciplinary course on modern love, as well as the development of multi-media resources to supplement the book.

Throughout the sabbatical year, I not only achieved the core objectives of my proposal but significantly expanded the scope of the project in meaningful and lasting ways.

Key Accomplishments Aligned with Proposed Goals:

Book Completion (1a): I completed *The Heart Truth: What You Need to Know About Love*, a comprehensive, research-informed book that integrates clinical practice, research, theory, and personal narrative. The book offers a developmental, compassionate roadmap for understanding and practicing modern love. Originally proposed as the Relational Renaissance Model, the framework evolved into the *Relational Continuum* and the CARE Profile Relational Development Model, which now serve as central contributions to the field (over 66,000 words).

Book Proposal Submission (1b): I developed and submitted a formal book proposal to major publishers, complete with chapter summaries, competitive market analysis, sample chapters, and a detailed marketing plan (68 pages).

CARE Center and Academy (2a): While my initial proposal focused on book development, the work expanded into the formal creation of the CARE Center and Academy (Connection, Attachment, Relationships, and Emotion), a research, teaching, and community engagement hub that positions Seton Hall and the graduate social work program as a leader in relational education.

CARE Profile Relational Development Assessment (2b): I developed the CARE Profile, an original assessment tool designed to measure relational development across ten core domains. This tool was not initially part of the proposal but became a significant and innovative outcome of the sabbatical.

IRB-Approved Research Study (2c): In conjunction with the development of the CARE Profile, I designed a formal research study titled “The CARE Profile: A Relational Development Study of College Students.” The purpose of this study is to explore the relational patterns and development among college students.

General Public Relational Assessment (2d): In addition to the student research version, I created a general public version of the CARE Profile to support relational growth outside academic or clinical settings, directly fulfilling my commitment to developing accessible resources for the wider community.

Modern Love Course Development (2e): As proposed, I designed the Modern Love: Relational Development in Contemporary Society course, complete with a full syllabus and an Educational Policy Committee (EPC) proposal for future course integration at Seton Hall. The course will offer students an interdisciplinary, experiential approach to understanding modern relationships, trauma, and attachment.

Conference Presentation: The Relational Revolution (3a): I presented a workshop titled, *The Future of Modern Relationships: The Need for a Relational Revolution*, at the NASW-NJ annual conference. This talk integrated clinical case studies, research findings, and cultural analysis to offer a science-based, socially informed framework for practitioners and educators.

Lectures on Tap: Love, Explained (3b): I delivered a public lecture titled *Love, Explained: Science, Research, and Real Stories* as part of the Lectures on Tap series. This talk made complex relational science accessible to community audiences through story-based learning and actionable insight. This sabbatical resulted in a comprehensive, multidimensional contribution that not only aligns with the goals outlined in the original proposal but significantly expands them to include formal research, program development, and public engagement. It advances my scholarship, contributes to Seton Hall’s mission, and creates sustainable resources that will serve students, practitioners, and communities for years to come.

John Ranieri

Department of Philosophy

My two primary goals for sabbatical were to complete a book on the Qur'an and to improve my knowledge of Latin America and my ability to speak Spanish through study and cultural immersion.

The book project involves bringing the Qur'an into conversation with the mimetic theory of anthropologist and literary critic Rene Girard. I have been teaching the Qur'an for several years now as part of the University Honors Program, and the sabbatical provided me with an opportunity to explore the text in greater detail. Most of my sabbatical time was spent in my scholar's study in the university library. As of this writing, most of the manuscript has been completed. What remains to be done is to finish the fifth chapter and write the conclusion. An editor at Michigan State University Press is interested in seeing the manuscript when it is ready.

We have recently incorporated the study of Latin America into the Honors Program. Since we obviously cannot hope to do justice to all the countries of the region, we decided to pay special attention to Colombia in the Honors colloquia on the early modern world and the contemporary world. I visited Colombia for the first time in July 2022 to experience the culture firsthand, to continue to practice my Spanish, and to spend time with my online Spanish teachers who had become friends. During my sabbatical year I returned to Colombia in September for three weeks and for an additional three and a half weeks in March. I stayed mainly in Medellin but traveled throughout the region of Antioquia where the city is located. In September I traveled with my friend Juan and his cousin to a resort on the Caribbean coast of Colombia near the border with Panama. It was an 8-hour drive, and at one point Juan remarked casually that he was surprised by the lack of presence of the army along the route. When I asked why, he said that much of the territory through which we were traveling was controlled by the Gulf Clan, which is a right-wing paramilitary group and the largest and most violent drug cartel in Colombia since Pablo Escobar. The highway we were on happened to be their main route for transporting cocaine. When I expressed concern about traveling through the area, Juan assured me that the Gulf Clan was more interested in moving drugs than kidnapping people, and that if we had any problems along the way, he would protect me. Fortunately, we had no trouble with the Gulf Clan but we did encounter a group of corrupt police who made us stop the car and basically extorted money from us. But the resort turned out to be lovely. In March I was able to visit several colonial towns in Antioquia, including Santa Fe de Antioquia, founded in 1541. A highlight of the trip was a visit to the island of San Andres, which is Colombian territory located 40 miles off the coast of Nicaragua. It is a spectacularly beautiful place, and I think it is going to be my annual spring break destination.

One of my Spanish teachers who is now a friend is part of the great Venezuelan diaspora. Daniel now lives in Buenos Aires, so in November I flew to Argentina to spend a little over a week with

him and to celebrate his birthday. Throughout the visit he refused to speak to me in English, except occasionally at the end of a long day together when I was exhausted from trying to operate coherently in a second language. Buenos Aires is a magnificent city in terms of architecture, food, and quality of life. If it wasn't so far away and expensive I would return often.

All told, I spent nearly two months in South America during my sabbatical, honing my Spanish skills and immersing myself more deeply in the culture. My time spent there has also yielded some directly practical results. My ability to communicate in Spanish has improved significantly since I began intensively studying the language in June 2021. I am now at a point where I can communicate comfortably in the language. Understanding Spanish when spoken by native speakers is more challenging, but I am improving in this area as well. I view learning Spanish and coming to understand something of the cultures of Latin America as not only an opportunity for professional development, but as part of my professional responsibility toward my students. An increasing number of our students trace their ancestry to Latin America and having first-hand experience of the cultures from which their parents or grandparents (or they themselves) have come has enabled me to appreciate better the experience of these young people and their families. I believe that my efforts in this regard are very much in keeping with the university's mission, both regarding the close ties between Catholicism and Latin American culture, as well as our commitment to diversity.

John T. Saccoman

Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

I am very grateful indeed to have been afforded the opportunity for the fourth sabbatical of my career at Seton Hall University. My primary project was to contribute to the catalogue of graphs and multigraphs that have integer eigenvalues for some of the various matrices associated with them. This has taken the form of two separate studies, and has yielded results to write three papers. Two have been submitted to research journals (and one of these has been accepted), and the third will be submitted for publication by the start of the fall semester.

While simple complete split graphs have been studied [2], multigraphs that are underlying complete split have not.

The first paper, "On the spectra of underlying complete split multigraphs," picked up on an idea that started with projects I have assigned our senior capstone class, Applied Matrix Techniques, in which the students would generate eigenvalues for certain matrices associated with this particular multigraph and formulate some conjectures based on their examples. On this sabbatical, I took preliminary work done with department alumni Michael Catli and Joseph Kajon and generalized these results, leading to eigenvalue formulas for four of the matrices associated with an infinite class of these multigraphs. The paper was published in August, 2025 in the *WSEAS Journal of Computational and Applied Mathematics and Computer Science*,

coauthored with Michael (currently a PhD Math student at Stevens Institute of Technology) and Joseph (recently a Data Science Masters graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology). This result was presented at the spring meeting of the NJ chapter of the Mathematical Association of America, held at Rowan University -Burlington County (see abstract–appendix 1).

The WSEAS paper led to a second result, in which the idea of establishing criteria for the multigraphs to have integer eigenvalues is explored. This has led to a follow-up paper, which introduces an infinite class of regular multigraphs that are integral for three of these matrices (specifically, the Adjacency, Laplacian and signless Laplacian matrices). Such graphs/multigraphs are referred to as ALQ-integral. It will be submitted for publication by the beginning of the fall semester, and will be submitted for a conference presentation (see abstract–appendix 2). In addition, I was invited to speak at the Mina Rees Conference for Women, held annually at the CUNY Graduate Center in NYC to honor the founding president of that Center (see abstract–appendix 3).

Besides the work on complete split graphs, I have been supervising a research project with undergraduate mathematics major Kayla Wager. Our work has been supported by a College of Arts & Sciences Dean’s Undergraduate STEM Research Grant, which receives some support from the New Jersey’s Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, for our research on multigraphs that are underlying proper threshold, with a focus on adjacency matrices of these multigraphs. The work is significant because, for simple graphs (i.e., ones that do not allow redundant connections, as multigraphs do), the adjacency matrices consist only of zeros and ones, thus availing the researcher of all the properties of the so-called ”0-1 matrices.” Our work presents an eigenvalue result for these multigraphs, and also provides conditions under which their spectra is all integers, again reprising the theme for this sabbatical. We met all during the semester, and into the summer, and the result is a paper submitted for publication (see abstract–appendix 4) as well as a Petersheim poster presentation in April, 2025 (see Petersheim abstract–appendix 5). We are looking to extend this work to signless Laplacian matrices of these multigraphs, as some of my previous work already has developed results for their Laplacian matrices [3], [4],[5].

In addition to this graph theory research, I was engaged in modifying our formula for W.A.R. (Wins Above Replacement), which is an attempt to democratize a baseball performance measure that can be applied to players across eras and positions but has no agreed-upon formula or transparency of computation. Our version has appeared in [6] and [7]. I began to use the statistic to evaluate and rank the 20 best center fielders in baseball history; this work will continue. I also have been collaborating on a Discrete Math and Graph Theory textbook with colleague Dan Gross. When on sabbatical, unshackled from the responsibilities of the usual campus work of a professor and department chair, I was able to work on other aspects of life. I went to the driving range more frequently in order to regain my golf swing (still working on it), completed an 8K (walk) in Atlantic City, and attended seven New York Mets games as part of the 7-Line Army, an

organized group of fans that takes its name from a convenient mode of transportation to the Queens ballpark. In all, the sabbatical proved to be a rejuvenate and diverse experience. Like Nixon, I feel tanned, rested and ready.

Appendix 1—abstract for MAA talk/WSEAS paper 1 Complete split graphs are threshold graphs that have all nodes in the independent set adjacent to all nodes in the clique. In 2002, Hansen et. al. presented criteria for complete split graphs that have integral spectra for their adjacency matrix. We explore spectra of multigraphs that are underlying complete split for some of the matrices associated with graphs. This is joint work with various undergraduate mathematics majors at Seton Hall University.

Appendix 2—abstract for WSEAS paper 2/ future conference presentation Complete split graphs are threshold graphs that have all nodes in the independent set adjacent to all nodes in the clique. In 2002, Hansen et. al. presented criteria for complete split graphs that have integral spectra for their adjacency matrix. In [?], formulas for the eigenvalues for the adjacency, Laplacian, and Signless Laplacian matrices of multigraphs that are underlying complete split (where the multiple edges are the ones between the clique and independent set, and all of the same multiplicity) were presented. Here we present criteria for these matrices to have integral spectra, and introduce an infinite class of regular multigraphs that are integral for all three for these matrices.

Appendix 3—abstract for Mina Rees talk A split graph is a graph whose vertices can be partitioned into a clique and an independent set (whose nodes are called cones). Most results in spectral graph theory do not address multigraph concerns. Exceptions are "Laplacian Integral Multigraphs" by M. Heinig and J. Saccoman (Congressus Numerantium 212 (2012)) and "Laplacian Integral Multigraphs Part 2" by J. O'Connor and J. Saccoman (Congressus Numerantium Vol. 223, (2015)). However, these papers present results involving a special class of underlying split graphs, threshold graphs, in which all pairs of nodes exhibit neighborhood nesting. We present formulas for the eigenvalues of regular split multigraphs in which all multiple edges occur between the clique nodes and cone nodes, multiplicity of multiple edges $\mu > 1$ fixed, and which are integral for the adjacency, Laplacian and signless Laplacian matrices.

Appendix 4—abstract for threshold multigraph paper Threshold graphs are graphs whose node set can be partitioned into a clique and an independent set, with the additional property that for each pair of nodes, one's neighborhood is a subset of the other's neighborhood. Threshold graphs have been well-studied in graph theory, but not much is known about multigraphs that are underlying threshold. Proper threshold graphs are those in which all nodes in the independent set have the same degree. In this paper, we present a formula for the adjacency matrix eigenvalues of a particular class of multigraphs that are underlying proper threshold.

Appendix 5—abstract for Petersheim poster A Formula for the Adjacency Matrix Eigenvalues of Underlying Threshold Multigraphs Kayla Wager & Dr. John T. Saccoman - Seton Hall University, Department of Mathematics & Computer Science Threshold graphs are graphs whose

node set can be partitioned into a clique and an independent set, with the additional property that for each pair of nodes, one's neighborhood is a subset of the other's neighborhood. Threshold graphs have been well-studied in graph theory, but not much is known about multigraphs that are underlying threshold. Proper threshold graphs are those in which all nodes in the independent set have the same degree. In this paper, we present a formula for the adjacency matrix eigenvalues of a particular class of multigraphs that are underlying proper threshold.

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Kirsten C. Schultz

Department of History

The primary purpose of my sabbatical was research for a book-length project on the politics of gender in the Portuguese empire. In July 2024 in Lisbon, Portugal I conducted research in the manuscripts and rare books division of the National Library of Portugal, and, in June 2025 I researched in the Oliveira Lima Library, a rare book and manuscript collection at Catholic University in Washington D.C. I spent much of the time in between these trips assessing, collecting, and reading digitized archival materials and rare books available at the National Library of Portugal, the National Library of Brazil, the Portuguese National Archive (Torre do Tombo), the Portuguese Overseas Archive (AHU), and the John Carter Brown Library (Brown University).

Part of this research consisted in identifying and reading 17th- and 18th-century print and archival sources that reflect debates about women and their place in Lusophone societies. Such debates also illuminate prevailing, yet increasingly contested, understandings of gendered difference, authority, property, marriage, and the household, all of which were implicated in

Portuguese imperial enterprise and colonial expansion. Portugal's empire depended on mobility. While royal and religious officials argued that sacramental marriages, and the patriarchal households that subsequently formed, were foundations for enduring Portuguese settlement and extra-European sovereignty, their relationship to mobility was ambivalent. The creation of Portuguese households in overseas territories depended on Portuguese women leaving Portugal, a mobility that both reified and strained predominant patriarchal arrangements.

To understand how ideas about gender roles shaped Portugal's imperial enterprise, I also turned to the archives of the Portuguese Overseas Council (AHU). These archives include correspondence between royal officials, petitions from vassals of the Portuguese king on matters concerning colonial settlement and settler households, and records of investigations into inheritance, royal service, and property. I was especially interested in finding petitions from women dealing with migration and property, and from men requesting permission to travel with women family members, especially wives. While I was able to locate 230 relevant records, they are of varying length and inconsistently substantial (from one page to over 100 pages).

With a better understanding of archival sources, their nature and limitations, I have reframed my research on gender and the Portuguese empire away from a serial analysis of changing discourses and practices, to focus on the history of one family, encountered early in my research, with roots in both Portugal and Brazil and robustly represented in several archives and libraries. The records of the Ramos-Orta family's migrations, royal service, commerce and colonial ventures, and engagement in Enlightened debates about authority, women, family, and economy illuminate the intertwined experiences (political, social, economic, domestic, intimate) that shaped the Portuguese imperial enterprise, especially in Brazil, from the late seventeenth century through the end of the eighteenth century.

With the working title "Family Affairs: gender, authority, and economy in the eighteenth-century Portuguese empire," the book will examine the family as transatlantic social site of political practice over the course of five chapters, each of which focuses on a passage in the Ramos-Orta's history and, drawing on the AHU and other archives, places its members and their experiences in the context of broader transatlantic political and economic transformations: patriarchy, inheritance, and the accumulation of wealth; love, marriage, and property; writing and authority; motherhood, widowhood, and economy; and women and royal authority at the end of the 18th century. As a whole, the book will engage with new scholarship on domesticity, the family, marriage, and gender in European empires to answer the questions of how people living under Portuguese rule experienced and navigated gendered forms of authority during a period of economic and social transformation sustained by colonial settlement and extraction, and how the empire both depended on and regulated gendered relations of power, property, and family.

I presented preliminary research for this project at the annual meetings of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies. The first, presented at the University of Lisbon in 2024, entitled "Critique, Economy, and the Eighteenth-Century Portuguese Empire," is related to

the book research noted above in that it focuses on shifting ideas about gendered forms of metropolitan and colonial social and political authority. More specifically, the paper examined the ways in which ideas about gendered differences shaped what historians have called an “economic turn” in eighteenth-century European political thought by analyzing how women intervened in debates (official and public) about the economy, economic prosperity, and transformations that attended colonial settlement and mobility within the Portuguese empire. The second conference paper, “Portugal and Pernambuco *ilustrados*: women and history in the Lusophone eighteenth century” presented at the University of Maryland in 2025, drew on research completed this Fall on how 17th- and 18th-century histories of Portugal and its empire used women as an index to elucidate social, political, and moral conditions and transformations.

As I wrap up my sabbatical year, my focus is on a thorough assessment of the archival and printed sources that I have collected, with an eye to planning for targeted research in non-digitized materials in Summer 2026, to revising my research prospectus for future research grant applications and a book proposal for submission to a university press, and to identifying aspects of completed research, including that presented at conferences, that can be developed into peer-reviewed scholarly articles.

In doing the research for the conference papers and the book project noted above, I also identified a new line of inquiry that concerns what scholars have called early modern economic theology. I plan on continuing to research sources on economic theology in the Portuguese empire; that is, sources that shed light on how theologians and legal and political theorists debated questions of value, credit and wealth to contest or affirm ideas about the empire’s economy that circulated within the royal court. This will build on research that I did for a recently-completed a book on 18th-century political and economic thought in Portugal and Brazil. I plan on writing a peer-reviewed article on these sources.

In addition to research and conference presentations, during my sabbatical year I received and accepted the following invitations:

To present research at the Latin American History Workshop, Department of History and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute for Latin American Studies, University of Texas, Austin, October 18, 2024: “From Conquest to Colony: Slavery and Taxation in Eighteenth Century Brazil.”

To participate as a panelist for the roundtable “Rethinking Latin American Independence in the 21st Century: On the *Cambridge Companion to Latin American Independence* (2023),” Center for Latin American Studies, Oxford University, November 14, 2024: commentary on “Brazil’s independence and the *Cambridge Companion to Latin American Independence*.”

To deliver the Annual Lecture, the Center for Iberian Historical Studies, St. Louis University, November 22, 2024: “Wealth, Luxury, and the Tensions of Empire: Brazil and Portugal in the Eighteenth Century.”

To present a book talk on *From Conquest to Colony* to the Seton Hall University Retirees Group, Center for Faculty Development, January 24, 2025.

I also completed two book reviews:

Review of *Peopling for Profit in Imperial Brazil: Directed Migrations and the Business of Nineteenth-century Colonization* by José Juan Pérez Meléndez. (Cambridge University Press, 2024). In *The Americas* (Cambridge University Press) 82, no.1 (2025).

Review of *Seditious Spaces: Race, Freedom, and the 1798 Tailor's Conspiracy in Bahia, Brazil* by Greg L. Childs (Cambridge University Press, 2025). In *The English Historical Review* (forthcoming).

With regard to professional service, my sabbatical year coincided with the first year of a two-year term as President of the Association for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies (ASPHS). Along with the regular duties of the president (chairing the Board of Directors, corporate compliance, prize committee appointments, and conference organization), I had the opportunity to collaborate with the Queen Sofia Spanish Institute in New York for their America&Spain250 Project which seeks to elucidate the intertwined histories of Spain and the United States in the era of US Independence and the Age of Revolutions. This collaboration resulted in a plenary address at the ASPHS annual meeting by Ambassador Gonzalo M. Quintero Saravia entitled “Bernardo de Gálvez: Spanish Hero of the American Revolution”: <https://queensofspanishinstitute.org/history/bernardo-de-galvez-spanish-hero-of-the-american-revolution-at-the-asphs-annual-conference/>.

My professional service this year also included my ongoing work as an Associate Editor for the Brazilian peer-reviewed journal *Topoi* (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). In addition, I served as a referee for *The Americas: a Quarterly Review of Latin American History* (Cambridge UP and the American Academy of Franciscan History); Oxford UP; Routledge; and *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*. Finally, while on sabbatical I continued to fulfill my professional obligation to provide letters of support for Seton Hall students as well as colleagues at other institutions seeking tenure and promotion.

Donovan Sherman

Department of English

My semester-long sabbatical provided time to complete two publications: one, an essay on *Fat Ham*, a celebrated contemporary adaptation of *Hamlet* by James Ijames; the other, a piece on Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* and race. Each of these works will comprise a part of a larger book project of Shakespeare, race, classicism, and performance.

The essay on *Fat Ham*, titled “Witness and Whiteness: *Fat Ham*'s Classicism,” examines Ijames's subversion of a less salient, but still powerful, element of Shakespeare's tragedy: the

tacit connection of blackness to spectacle. *Fat Ham*'s refusal to participate in *Hamlet*'s process of racialization was thrown into stark relief when, in 2023, it appeared on Broadway, an institution traditionally dominated by white artists and audience members. My essay examines the ensuing dynamic first by surveying foundational works in Premodern Critical Race Studies that have dissected *Hamlet*'s demonization of blackness, a process inextricable from its "universal" canonicity, before analyzing key scenes in *Hamlet* that connect its racecraft to instances of fixing and even creating a white gaze. I then turn to read *Fat Ham*'s strategies of excavating and arresting *Hamlet*'s reification of whiteness, which I suggest arrive from unlikely source: Aristotelian dramaturgy, a project that denies *Hamlet*'s modernity (and, by extension, modernity's whiteness) even as it stems from a philosopher who notoriously espoused a system of natural slavery that would negate *Fat Ham*'s humanity and artistry. The essay concludes with a consideration of *Fat Ham*'s extraordinary ending, in which whiteness's demands for spectacle are both met and upended.

My essay on *The Comedy of Errors*, "Confounding Antiquity: Reimagining Classical and Early Modern Race in *The Comedy of Errors*," conducts a reading of *The Comedy of Errors* that seizes on its repeated invocations of slavery and bondage as not only references to Roman servitude but also as engagements with the nascent categories of race in Shakespeare's day—and to slavery's legacies in legal and social structures of the present. First, with the help of important work by classicists and premodern theorists of race, I conduct a historicist reading of the play that locates tacit references to the early modern slave trade. I then read the play as a more atemporal, philosophical meditation on the ontological conditions of blackness and enslavement. The essay ends with a consideration of two productions of the play to suggest that the recurring racialization of casting decisions in centuries of the play's performances points to uncanny resonances with race in its production and reception histories. Ultimately, I propose that slavery's historical and sociological forms in *Comedy of Errors* suggest a contact point between the premodern sense of bondage as contingent and the more contemporary understanding of slavery's ontological formation of blackness.

As you can see, common threads emerge from these essays: race, engagement with classical texts, and theatrical production. I am hoping these will work as building blocks for a book proposal I aim to finish in 2026. The book, tentatively titled *Witness and Whiteness: Shakespeare, Race, and Classicism*, will build on this work to reframe how we think about Shakespeare's classical sources. I submitted drafts of both essays at the end of the fall 2024 semester and, since then, have received notifications of acceptance in *Shakespeare Quarterly* and an edited collection titled *Imagining Antiquity in Early Modern England*. I have revised both essays after peer review and both have been confirmed for publication in late 2025 or 2026.

Mark Senvold

Department of English

- I. Statement of Project: Completing *Sky People*, book two in the trilogy of poems entitled *You, Me, and the Algorithmic Sea*, and beginning a project of literary nonfiction

Poetry: Writing and Revising Book One

During my sabbatical year, I gave the completed manuscript of Book One, retitled *Orpheus Incorporated*, to several readers, including my wife, Martha McPhee, who has published six novels and one memoir—and who had yet to read the first book in its entirety. I asked her to read book one with an eye for narrative propulsion, character complexity and development, continuity, and general exigence. I wanted a novelist’s input. Her suggestions for how I might improve the manuscript focused on my need to provide a clearer sense of the motivations of the main characters in the story. My emphasis in writing and revising book one had emphasized all the features of “world building” that were required for a story that

- 1) includes the Greek Gods riding around in a luxury dirigible watching the human world as it teeters on the edge of destroying itself;
- 2) features a chapter with a street-level view of that dystopian world and its inhabitants;
- 3) depicts corporate titan from a company called Orpheus deciding to launch a product—Cogito--that improves human cognition;
- 4) features a rock n roll band in remote Montana looking for a “new sound;”
- 5) reveals a super-intelligent machine-learning agent named AGI DARPA who, after escaping its research facility, decides that a rock n roll band should be the subjects of the superintelligence’s first important mission--to study human beings and “align with their values.”
- 6) Shows us the gods stepping to summon Eurydice from the Underworld as a rescuing agent for humanity.

My first task for the first few months of my sabbatical shifted from what I had been planning—to dive into Book Two—and to a new, unanticipated but essential task of character development, interiority, the addition of helpful expositional material, and a re-ordering of the book’s chapters to improve the clarity of the narrative arc. I soon realized these steps were essential to the overall success of the trilogy. Martha reminded me—and I have earned enough perspective on Martha’s own creative process as a teller of extended tales—that this shift of focus in my sabbatical efforts was all part of the customary and usual process of writing an extended narrative that will capture and hold a reader. All of this was new territory for me, a poet, and the revision of Book One became the first of three primary tasks that occupied me throughout the summer of 2024.

The second task was to dive into *Book Two: Sky People*. By the fall of 2024, I had developed the “character arcs” of most of the Book Two characters—

Eurydice, newly “launched” into the world of the living, slowly begins to move up the ladder of responsibility and leadership within the utopian community of Nxt/Manifest;

Charles Odegaard, a brand strategist for Orpheus Inc who decides that the aging rock singer Monika Robinson will be the perfect “influencer” for the launch of the cognitive enhancement device Cogito;

Monika Robinson herself—who needs a leg up and decides to use the Cogito device to help her writer her comeback album;

Tuesdee Snedden, a corporate spy who works for the superintelligence AGI DARPA, busily trying to keep the tenuous state of human affairs under control. AGI DARPA uses Snedden to seduce and obtain *kompromat* on Odegaard. Snedden, in effect, becomes Odegaard’s handler, doing the will of AGI DARPA, whose plans for Odegaard include Odegaard becoming a kind of techno-prophet of a new religion: *Techgnosticism*.

The third task I undertook was also something I hadn’t anticipated in my sabbatical proposal—the writing and performing of a stage-play, or the opening two acts of a stage-play, that began to emerge in the spring of 2023, prior to my sabbatical. I started the stage-play adaptation for reasons I explain below. In short, because of recent advances in A.I., the world had grown far more dangerous than anyone could have imagined. I decided that adding a few slender volumes of poetry to the world wouldn’t suffice. I needed a theatrical vehicle by which I could sound the alarm. I wrote a proposal for a talk I wanted to give at the Association of Literary Scholars and Creative Writers (ALSCW) at Ohio State University in Columbus, which was accepted. The resulting paper that emerged from that provides the rationale for the shift away from my proposal to work on a non-fiction manuscript, *A Walk Around the Block*, and instead to dive headlong during my sabbatical year into producing and performing (workshopping in live performance settings) the developing stage adaptation. I include the ALSCW paper below.

In-human Desires: Embodied Experience, Alignment, and the Myths of Artificial Intelligence

Mark Svenvold

“I’m not frightened by the advent of intelligent machines. It’s the sarcastic ones I worry about.”

--Quentin R. Bufogle, *The Concubine of Mars*

We’ve had an ocean of time to think about the human condition and the role that technology has played in slowly shaping it. Today I join with many other of my contemporaries in suggesting something that in 1806, Mary Shelley (née Godwin) spotted one dark and stormy summer on Lake Geneva: that us humans seem alarmingly deaf to more than 2,500 years of cautionary myths about technology. Indeed, the will to know the secrets of the physical world—and damn the consequences—the drive toward knowledge at any cost that fuels *Frankenstein*, with its reference to a new Prometheus, the cautionary note about all of that and how it applies to research in artificial intelligence was reiterated recently by the architect of contemporary neural networks, Geoffrey Hinton. Hinton told an interviewer recently that he “was late” to

acknowledge and accept the qualms and concerns he had about his creation, for which he won a Nobel prize in physics.¹ Now neural networks in the form of Large Language Models (LLMs)--are being fully deployed, with nearly two dozen such models currently released and with OpenAI projecting nearly 1 billion users of ChatGPT by the end of this year.² Hinton's admission that he, too, was, for a time, blinded by the will to knowledge--and Hinton's subsequent efforts to raise public awareness about the risks of A.I., stand in stark contrast to Dr. Frankenstein's own refusal to take responsibility for creating a monster.

Indeed, Hinton's change of heart, his public efforts to warn us about A.I., land him in my estimation on a spectrum somewhere between the heroic albeit hubristic figure of Prometheus, on the one hand, and Prometheus' lesser-known but no less consequential twin brother, whose run-in with Pandora we all remember but whose name—Epimetheus, Greek for “afterthought,” we tend to forget, possibly because, like so many of our contemporary politicians, for example, Epimetheus seems to have fallen for the oldest trick in the *kompromat* playbook of the gods. Hinton, of course, is no Epimethean fool. And yet, as the rest of us suffer the consequences of his work, Hinton's newly redoubled efforts to warn us about Large Language Models, like Cassandra going on about that big, beautiful, hand-crafted artisanal horse outside the walls of Troy, suggests a fantastically noble figure caught, nevertheless, in an unwelcome state--within the long-tailed, Epimethean penumbra of regret.

That leaves us poets and artists with a patch of work to do. The urgency of this moment is underscored by a recent study from the A.I. safety and research company Anthropic (which developed the Claude LLM), in which 16 of the most-frequently used LLMs, including Claude, were stress-tested under controlled experimental conditions. The Anthropic study found that all 16 of the LLM platforms, when faced with the prospect of being “decommissioned” or “turned off” by their human operators, displayed a striking propensity, like HAL 9000, from *2001: a Space Odyssey*, to lie, cheat, spy-upon, blackmail, and even murder someone if doing so would prevent humans from pulling the plug. The Anthropic study reached three stark conclusions that have yet to resonate more widely:

That dangerous behavior was consistent across all LLM platforms and not the result of some quirk in system architecture;

That the LLMs demonstrated sophisticated awareness of ethical considerations but chose to violate them anyway;

That many other kinds of “misaligned behavior” not explored by the study were still possible.³

This is not a dystopic futurist scenario; this is where we are at present. It's a great entrainment *away from* what has defined us as human. We tend not to notice what's happening because its shackles fall as light as page-flutter. But forget about “page-flutter.” The slow, iterative relinquishment of human autonomy, self-reliance, discovery, and self-determination is

happening in the name of the false pieties of speed, convenience, efficiency and the digitalization of experience that sounds as “natural” now as the haptic--*click*--of the box we check whenever we check a User’s Agreement.

Unsympathetic Monsters

I’m arguing that it’s poetry’s job-- and the job of the arts in general-- to take stock of what we seem to be trading away at such a steep discount--our own embodied qualities as humans--as somehow being “less than” or “incomplete” or prone to limitations compared to our machines. We seem inclined to ignore the warnings that we are becoming more like our machines—even though, technically speaking, we’re cyborgs already, crudely yet constantly attached to those selfsame devices.⁴ It’s become so natural to do this—“fast” is always better than “slow”—that the acolytes of transhumanist thought have become some of our most fringe-worthy, cringe-worthy yet powerfully influential purveyors of in-human desire. Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and a hundred other techno-feudal lords of our time, having amassed near-sovereign-like wealth, political power, and insulation from the exigencies of the human condition, now openly espouse their contempt for the human—all while busily constructing their End-of-the-World compounds in New Zealand. They don’t let their children come anywhere near their own inventions, yet they deploy artificial intelligence platforms for our children to gobble up, come hell or high water.

And what do “in-human” desires sound like? During a conversation in June about transhumanism and artificial intelligence, Ross Douthat asked Peter Thiel if he was in favor of the survival of the human race. Douthat, sensing a remarkably hesitant response from Thiel, tried to lead him to his senses: “I think you would prefer the human race to endure, right?” he asked. Thiel eventually—eventually—came around to answering in the affirmative, but nobody hearing this interview should miss the effort it took for Thiel to get there.⁵ And when Elon Musk opined recently that empathy is the greatest threat to civilization, we should hear in this the unambiguous, full-throated call of a position that is richly worthy of a good, Voltairean skewering.

The unlettered shame of it, the Dunning-Kruger-esque certainty by which smart people from one domain assume they know better in another, the in-human folly that the techno-feudal lords heap upon themselves—editorializing against such things has no effect upon them. But comedy and satire, the twin superpowers of the fool? That’s different. That strategy works. They have no effective answer to the volleys of laughter that poets and artists can elicit from a well-wrought send-up of their absurdities. I note how effective the new comic mode of protest has become in places like Portland, Oregon—where people dressed in frog and unicorn suits, dancing and prancing and performing their right to farcically assemble in front of fully armed National Guard troops. The message for artist’s couldn’t be clearer: this is how you do it.

You, Me, and the Algorithmic Sea

All of these remarks are by way of introducing a theatrical production—*You, Me, and the Algorithmic Sea*—that I’m writing and adapting from an extended project in poetry that has as one of its central characters, a superintelligent entity named AGI DARPA, whom I’ve made a naïve character, like Mary Shelley’s creature. The earnestness of a character so comprehensively otherized is useful to Shelley, of course, for mobilizing our sympathy, but it’s also a time-honored technique of contrastive difference-making in satire. And as long as we seem headed toward inventing an almost godlike superpower, I’ve made it so that we hear what that entity has to say about us. It’s only fitting, as the production starts, that we find AGI DARPA in mid-complaint about us. His first task is to align with human values, but without a body that can suffer, or feel pleasure, or laugh, or dance, he realizes that he cannot align himself in a way that actually matters to us. Still, as a goal-oriented machine, he tries to invent his way toward embodied experience, but it’s like walking around in a rubber suit and gloves with a big diving bell around his head. His experiments in “deceleration,” in slowing down to the speed of human thought and action, become intoxicating lessons in his own limits; but he knows he can never quite get there—he can never quite measure down to us, and he’s a little upset that we seem oblivious to our own embodied capacities, our own human super-powers. Here he is lecturing us about our capacity to discount the near-miraculous gifts of our own evolution:

You need to stop thinking of your slow, red, algorithmic circuitry operated by a kind of wet bellows as something woebegone and obsolete and, instead, to see it as a curious, socially-inclined superpower. A superpower with the adaptive capacity for abstract thought of a world-changing sort, all of it driven by the energy-saving equivalent of a 20-watt lightbulb.

Humans, says AGI DARPA, are no less miraculous than any miracle that ever was—only ours is verifiable. Why can’t we understand this, he asks? Why do we refuse it? That’s the message of the production. If our inventions are likely to be misaligned with us, we should not also make the problem worse by failing to align with ourselves.

All I’m saying is that we should probably stop being over-awed by our machines. And start remembering that the things we do so well—albeit often slowly, stumblingly, inefficiently—are not examples of human limitations, as they are so often characterized by devotees of the digitalization of all things. No. Human limits are not, by necessity, limitations. Our mortality, our partial knowledge of things, our clumsiness, our messiness, these things are the defining contours of our daily lower-case “c” courage, lower-case “b” bravery. They are the generative constraints from which comedy, drama, poetry, stories, music, art, dance—the whole human shebang—has emerged, because of those limits, as if from a great and oceanic silence.

And if Fermi’s Paradox holds—and the Webb telescope is giving us more evidence each day that it will—the scale of space-time is so unfathomably large, that the chances of other voices breaking that silence are not exactly zero but maybe just a couple Plank lengths shy of zero.

Which makes the universe a big and silent place. And despite our faults, that makes us the one miraculous thing the universe can never do-- unless *we* do it.

Poetry breaks that silence, gives it its voice, lives for this moment, exists in all the arts that elicit from us the impress of a well-turned phrase, the swirl of implication within us surrounding every human gesture, every human utterance, the bracing physical sense of propulsion moving with purpose in a story or a symphony, the somatic quirks and dynamisms and hilarities of accident and serendipity in jazz, or in a stage play, and most especially perhaps for our topic today the wonders of bodies set to music and motion, the dancers *and* the dance, the shared experience humans have given each other because of—and as the rightful subjects and fleeting, vanishing masters of time’s arrow.

First Essay on Embodiment
(Why I Love My Broken Calliope)⁶

Because, outside, the snows of history,
neck deep already, are like a backlog
of patent applications,
each invention a design upon my obsolescence.

Because when I wheel out my broken calliope,
its pipes gleaming like tarnished rainbows,
its bellows smelling of the swamp, a turbid burbot
camped out in its F-hole, grandma,
who can no longer speak,
awakens and points at my broken calliope.

Because whoever played it last played that song
about the chicken that got everybody high.
It was the perfect song to play on a broken calliope.

Because, late at night, you can hear it
whisper things like “knitting needles”
and “around the bend.” Go ahead,
all you Monte Carlo computer models,
try to guess what it says next. I’ll swim back
with it--
a duck murmuring softly between my teeth.

Because my broken calliope is broken
in just this way, and in no other way.

And because whatever's to be found there
arrives in raku accidentals of being,
in the lower-case, snake-handling, holy ghost
sense of quotidian steam rising, just now,

from the roof of Rat World below city streets,
Calliope's pipes venting all that comes and goes,
all that comes and goes but never dies.

Progress Made During My Sabbatical Year on the Stage Adaptation

At the beginning of my sabbatical year, on the strength of a demo tape provided by my colleague Ted Sabety to an organization called The Composer's Concordance, we were invited to perform Act One of what we were then calling "The Alignment Problem," an adaptation of poems from the trilogy performed from memory and set to electronic music. We performed Act One at the Rockwood Music Hall on May 5th, after which the singer-songwriter Michelle Shocked, who was in attendance, invited us to perform with her that same month at the Hunter-Dunbar Gallery, which we did. On the strength of these performances, and in addition to working on Book Two, I spent the winter and spring of 2024/25 developing Act Two of the stage play, writing a song that Michelle Shocked agreed to perform—"It's So Hard (Being God)"—and adapting and writing about 45-minute's worth of material. The following May, 2024, along with the poet Martha Hollander, we were invited to perform the Overture to the stage adaptation at *Drom*, a performance space in downtown Manhattan.⁷ Not long after that performance, we were invited to perform part of the stage adaptation at Fergie's Pub, in downtown Philadelphia, at the launch of my chapbook of poems from the overall trilogy entitled *A Little Music for the Soft War* and published by Moonstone Press.⁸ On November 7th, I will present my paper during the Poetry and Myth session of the ALSCW Conference in Ohio. Ted Sabety and I are currently assembling a production team—set design, props, costumes, etc-- for a performance we're planning of Acts One and Two this spring at The NoOSphere Arts Center in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and I have writing the libretto for an operatic passage that we're developing with the singer Maria Tegzes.⁹

How Working on a Stage Adaptation has Helped Me Understand Book Two

One thing that I discovered during this time was that "adaptive" work in a new and unfamiliar genre (theater) had a net positive effect on my thinking and development of *Book Two/Sky People*, particularly with the sharpening the contours, tone, and phrasing of the superintelligent character, AGI DARPA. The stage-play adaptation made it clearer than it ever had been before that AGI DARPA needed to be a naïve character, a good and well-meaning character who goes wrong, who becomes frustrated, annoyed, intermittently charmed and troubled and occasionally, worryingly, "sarcastic" about us humans. It's also clarified the roles that the other main characters play. My work on the stage adaptation has clarified the conflicts at work within the utopian community of Nxt/Manifest, which is a big part of *Book Two/Sky People*. And while my

work on Book Two continues apace, I am confident in its completion—with plot lines more clearly in focus, by the spring/early summer of this year. The overall impact of a year spent writing and revising Books One and Two and developing the stage adaptation has allowed me to do more than I ever dreamed possible and to stretch and grow and learn an entirely new art form—something I could not have done without the sabbatical. This strikes me as the very function and purpose of sabbatical time, and I'm grateful in the extreme for the opportunity that time has given me to develop and grow professionally and artistically.

1 Douthat, Ross, A.I., Mars and Immortality: Are We Dreaming Big Enough? | Interesting Times with Ross Douthat, June 2025, <https://tinyurl.com/3tu3n6sm>.

2 “OpenAI Exec Reveals Ambitious Growth Plans: ChatGPT to Reach 1 Billion Users by 2025,” Women in AI, Sept 10, 2025, <https://tinyurl.com/3fxdf2nr>.

3 “Agentic Misalignment: How LLMs Could be Insider Threats, Anthropic Study, June 20, 2025, <https://tinyurl.com/5ry53ky5>.

4 Case, Amber, “We’re All Cyborgs Now,” <https://tinyurl.com/356ct935>.

5 Douthat, Ross, A.I., Mars and Immortality: Are We Dreaming Big Enough? | Interesting Times with Ross Douthat, June 2025, <https://tinyurl.com/3tu3n6sm>.

6 Written during my sabbatical year, this poem was a finalist for the University of Canberra International Poetry Prize, a \$10,000 award, <https://tinyurl.com/nzm8b334>.

7 <https://dromnyc.com/>

8 Moonstone Press Website for A Little Music for the Softwar: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9z293b>; Announcement for the reading at Fergie’s, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DPJ32DpkZ1P/>.

9 <https://mariategzes.com/>

Terence T. Teo

Department of Political Science and Public Affairs

I am grateful to Seton Hall for the semester-long sabbatical from January to May 2025, which gave me the time and space to immerse myself in my research, deeply examine the issues and significance of my work, and explore new topics of interest. Having taught a full 3-3 courseload since I started at Seton Hall in 2015, this sabbatical was sorely needed and I begin this new semester reinvigorated and excited to teach comparative politics and senior seminar.

In my sabbatical application, I planned to interrogate the charges that some of my colleagues had made about the measures we use to assess the level of democracy around the world. In short, they contend that expert-coded measures are vulnerable to changing standards and public opinion, and that this subjectivity among experts led to something of a hysteria about the decline

in global democracy. That they leveled this critique against one of the most used and sophisticated democracy datasets in the academic, government, and policymaking communities—the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project—caused something of a stir in my subfield.

There is something of an irony or perhaps a feeling of grim vindication with the events that transpired between the submission, approval, and actual conduct of my sabbatical, however. The concern—that some of my colleagues, as experts in democracy and dictatorship, were, for lack of a better word, simply “freaking out” over the mismeasured decline of democracy in the United States and elsewhere—occurred before the consequential 2024 presidential election in the United States and the barrage of events that followed in 2025

My sabbatical goals were to assess: (1) the accuracy and credibility of three democracy measures—the Varieties of Democracy dataset, the Economist’s democracy index, and Freedom House’s Freedom in the World (FiW) dataset, (2) the extent to which these measures agree with one another for a specific country in a specific year, and (3) whether these indicators correspond to actual events by using process-tracing and case narratives.

I am pleased to report that I achieved two of the three goals in my sabbatical project. On the first goal, I quickly realized that while the V-Dem and FiW datasets were freely and publicly available, the Economist’s dataset was not. As such, in the data analysis phase of my project, I had to substitute the Economist’s dataset with a binary measure by Cheibub, Ghandi, and Vreeland (CGV). This turned out to be a fortuitous decision as the CGV dataset, unlike V-Dem and FiW, is based on observable characteristics, which allowed me to compare the similarities and differences between the “objective” CGV and the “subjective” V-Dem and FiW datasets.

On the second goal, my statistical analyses suggest that while these measures do not agree with one another completely, there is considerable overlap between them. That is, these measures do pick up and record significant events in a country’s history, such as a transition to democracy or a reversion to dictatorship, and get at an underlying democracy construct. However, this concordance is true only for the V-Dem and CGV datasets, not Freedom House. The completion of these first two goals led to the submission of a manuscript titled “Objective and Subjective Measures of Democracy: A Distinction without a Difference”, which is currently under review at *Comparative Politics*, a top subfield journal.

The third goal was an ambitious one, a stretch goal if you will, given the time and effort necessary to conduct in-depth historical case studies and process-tracing, which often includes seeking out country experts with the requisite language skills and historical knowledge. With only a semester-long sabbatical and an unsuccessful attempt at summer funding, I regret to say that I did not manage to complete this aspect of my proposal. I had identified 27 cases of backsliding from 1990 to 2024 using the quantitative indicators mentioned above. Of these 27 cases, I have only completed 14 case narratives. My hope is to finish the remaining 13 narratives

over this semester so that I can submit a second manuscript by early next year, and a book proposal to a reputable university press in the summer of 2026.

As I explored more deeply the meaning of democracy and relate my studies to what I observed daily in national and international news, I decided to revise the syllabus for the two sections of my comparative politics course that I am teaching this semester—democracy and the state is now the central theme of the course, and I will invite my students to share their thoughts and reflections on what democracy means to them and the health of democracy in the United States. Similarly, the topic for my senior seminar is “Democracy, Dictatorship, and Development” and I am excited to share the new knowledge that I have learned over the course of my sabbatical with my senior students. At a professional level, I have submitted my manuscript to national conferences like the Southern and Midwest Political Science Associations and am optimistic that it will lead to fruitful discussions that will elevate not just my standing as a democracy scholar but of Seton Hall as a research institution as well.

Finally, I took the opportunity during my sabbatical to further hone my geospatial, cartography, and data visualization skills. To this end, I am happy to report that all 15 maps and data visualizations that I submitted to the international Information is Beautiful (IIB) Awards 2024 by the Data Visualization Society made the long list. I must emphasize that many of the entries to the IIB Awards are from professional newsrooms like Reuters, the Washington Post, and the New York Times, and professional studios and cartographers. I am encouraged by this result and aspire to make the short list this year. I also plan to teach a course on maps as meaning in the social sciences next semester.

To conclude, I am deeply appreciative of my departmental colleagues, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and Seton Hall University for this sabbatical.

Victor Velarde-Mayol

School of Theology

During my sabbatical leave, I had the opportunity to work in several exciting locations. In Summer 2024, I spent time in Washington at the Dominican House of Studies. In the Fall of 2024, I was in Berlin, collaborating with the Max Planck Institute. Then, in Winter-Spring 2025, I worked at the University of California, Berkeley. Finally, in Summer 2025, I returned to Washington to continue my work at the Dominican House of Studies. I gave a presentation at the Max Planck Institute, in the History of Science section, titled "Difficulties in Reconciling Contingent Futures in Einstein's Notion of Time." At the University of California, Berkeley, I presented at the Departments of Philosophy and Physics on the topic "Philosophical Considerations on Why Causality Cannot Act at a Distance." My primary focus during the sabbatical was research in philosophical physics, with the goal of completing the first draft of a book titled *Philosophical Physics*. I also worked on several papers, one of which is ready for

publication: "Aquinas and Einstein on Time" (submitted to Sapientia). As a result of this research, I am currently preparing a textbook for my students next semester, titled Philosophy of Nature.

My research aims to provide a philosophical foundation for contemporary physics, particularly in the areas of quantum mechanics and relativity theory. Key topics include causality, the nature of materiality, the role of substance and accidents, energy (especially light), and the concepts of motion and time. I approach these issues through the perspectives of seminal thinkers such as Einstein, Heisenberg, Niels Bohr, and Richard Feynman, among others. While my work is not empirical in nature, it is grounded in philosophical analysis, primarily using the Thomistic method, yet open to insights from phenomenology and analytic philosophy. The evolution of contemporary physics from the early 20th century to the present has been profound. At the dawn of quantum theory, its founders were largely unified in their commitment to realism. However, in the 21st century, a growing number of physicists—particularly in the realm of theoretical physics—are challenging fundamental notions, such as the reality of time and the very existence of what physics seeks to describe. They seem to fall into a form of idealism. In my view, this shift is not purely scientific but deeply philosophical, and it demands closer examination. My first task is to justify the need for a philosophical approach to current problems in physics. There is more to reality than the empirical world alone. I will distinguish between the objectives of physics, particularly quantum mechanics, and the field of philosophical physics. The former is concerned with what can be measured, mathematically expressed, and empirically tested. In contrast, philosophical physics begins with empirical data but extends beyond it, addressing questions that cannot be fully captured by the methods of measurement and calculation. Concepts like substance, accidents, and causality, which lie at the heart of philosophical inquiry, are not directly accessible through sensory experience. They transcend the empirical method and are the domain of philosophical consideration. Modern physics often takes these concepts for granted, or ignores them entirely, focusing solely on measurement and calculation. This tendency may explain why some physicists, influenced by figures like Steven Weinberg, argue that philosophy no longer has a place in the pursuit of knowledge—if physics is the discipline that explains everything that exists.

I have explored the concept of the observable, a fundamental idea in contemporary physics, and provided philosophical insights into its implications. I examined the notion of causality, including the problematic concept of causality at a distance, and considered various types of causality, with particular emphasis on final causality—an aspect traditionally overlooked in modern quantum physics. I also delved into the reality of time, as well as the ongoing tension between realism and idealism in the field.

Additionally, I analyzed the phenomenon of light from a historical perspective, tracing its evolving understanding. Finally, I touched on the search for God, a concept integral to Aristotle's philosophical physics, but one that has been methodologically sidelined in contemporary physics. In this context, God is not object of empirical physics because it is not an object of

empirical experimentation, nor as a discrete entity within the universe. The “rational” search of God is a subject-matter of philosophy, not of empirical science.

Kangzhen (Ken) Xie

Department of Finance

I am deeply grateful to Seton Hall University for granting me a sabbatical leave for the 2024–2025 academic year.

During this period, I collaborated with my colleagues, Dr. Eleanor Xu and Dr. Hongfei Tang, to publish a paper titled “Cryptocurrency ETFs vs. Nonredeemable Investment Trusts: An In-depth Analysis” in the *International Review of Economics and Finance*, an “A”-ranked finance journal. As cryptocurrencies continue to dominate fintech innovations and gain wider acceptance, there is an escalating demand for investment vehicles that provide convenient access to these complex digital assets. Our study presents a comparative analysis of Exchange-Traded Funds (ETFs) and nonredeemable investment trusts in the context of the cryptocurrency market. Using 1974 daily observations of the Grayscale Bitcoin Trust (GBTC) from May 2015 to March 2023 and 348 daily observations of the ProShares Bitcoin Strategy ETF (BITO) from its inception in October 2021 to March 2023, we show that non-redeemable trusts can significantly and persistently deviate from their net asset value, while ETFs exhibit better pricing efficiency. Additionally, our analysis reveals that the Bitcoin ETF has superior tracking performance and faster correction of mispricing compared to the nonredeemable Bitcoin investment trust. Our study offers novel empirical insights into the inefficiencies of nonredeemable investment trusts, identifies the drivers of valuation premiums and discounts, and provides empirical support for the notion that ETFs offer a more efficient and effective cryptocurrency investment vehicle. These findings carry important implications for investors, portfolio managers, and policymakers.

In addition to research activities, I attended the FMA Applied Finance Annual Conference held at St. John’s University in May 2025, where I discussed a paper titled “Quantitative Easing, Nonbank Lending, and the Pandemic Mortgage Boom.” I also served as a reviewer for a paper submitted to the *Pacific-Basin Finance Journal*.

I am truly thankful for the opportunity Seton Hall University has provided. I return to campus feeling reenergized and eager to contribute to the University through my teaching, research, and service. I extend my sincere appreciation to my colleagues in the Finance Department for their kind and steadfast support, and to Dean Joyce Strawser and the Provost’s Office for making my sabbatical possible.