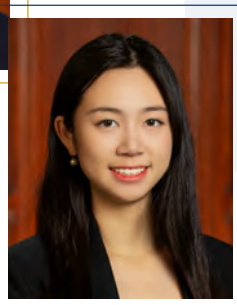
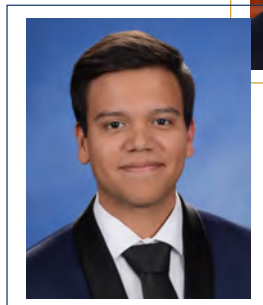
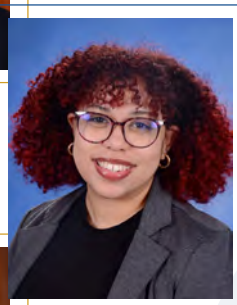
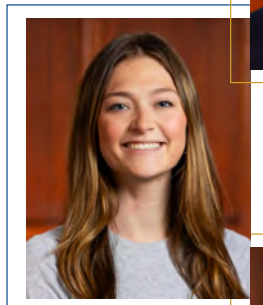
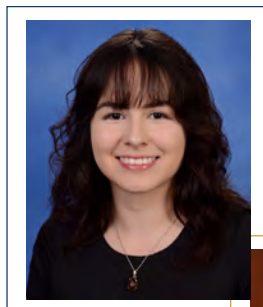




UNIVERSITY OF
NOTRE DAME

ARTS & LETTERS



2025

SENIOR THESIS PROJECTS

Study everything. Do anything.SM

**Liam Gibson**

Hometown: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

- Majors: History and Russian
- Advisor: Sean Griffin

The Right to God: Blessed Vladislav Bukovinsky and Catholicism in Exile

I examine the evolution of Catholic worship in Karaganda, Kazakhstan, during the Soviet period. I explore how changing religious policy, international affairs, and localism impacted Catholic practice in the “third zone,” the vast region of the Soviet Union where Catholic worship was relegated to the underground. I follow the life of Blessed Vladislav Bukovinsky, a Polish priest, to demonstrate how these forces impacted individual believers. My thesis culminates in the legal registration of the Catholic community in Karaganda in 1977.

I traveled to Karaganda last summer to access the State Archive of Karaganda Oblast and the archives of Credo, the newspaper of the Catholic Church in Kazakhstan.



**Ella Griffith**

Hometown: Pensacola, Florida

- Majors: German and Neuroscience and Behavior (College of Science)
- Advisor: Tobias Boes

An Evening of German Art Song and Aria: Undergraduate Thesis Vocal Recital

On March 28, 2025, in LaBar Recital Hall, I performed a one-hour classical voice recital. The recital performance — along with translating the German texts, researching the repertoire, and writing in-depth program notes — formally counted as an undergraduate senior thesis in the Department of German, Slavic, and Eurasian Studies.

The recital featured operatic arias by German composers Beethoven, Weber, and Strauss II and art songs (lieder) by Mozart and Schubert. Professor Deborah Mayer guided my vocal preparation for the recital, and Dror Baitel collaborated with me on the recital. I am especially grateful to my thesis advisor, Tobias Boes, and to Berthold Hoeckner of the Department of Music. Sing like a champion today!

Received funding from the Franco Family Institute for Liberal Arts and the Public Good's Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program

**Jack Lennon**

Hometown: Grand Rapids, Michigan

- Major: Russian
- Minor: History
- Notre Dame International Security Center Fellow
- Advisors: Sean Griffin and Ian Johnson

The Spectre of Primakov

My project examines transformations and continuity in post-Cold War Russian foreign policy. Russian Federation officials including President Vladimir Putin and foreign minister Sergei Lavrov have frequently invoked the creation of a “multipolar world” as a goal of Russian foreign policy, but the concept originates with former foreign minister and prime minister of the Russian Federation Yevgeny Primakov. My project traces general trends in Russian foreign policy under Putin to Primakov’s ideas and places scholars and columnists such as Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, and Charles Krauthammer in dialogue with Russian political scientists, philosophers, and officials.



**Jack Lennon**

Hometown: Grand Rapids, Michigan

- Major: Russian
- Minor: History
- Notre Dame International Security Center Fellow
- Advisors: Sean Griffin and Ian Johnson

The Birth of a New Cold War?

My thesis primarily examines U.S.-Soviet and U.S.-Russian relations during the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. While diplomatic fallout would define U.S.-Russian relations in Kosovo, Russian soldiers served under a U.S. commander in NATO peace enforcement operations in Bosnia and operated alongside NATO's mission in Kosovo. My thesis emphasizes the delicacy of the U.S.-Russian relationship at a time when the nations were redefining their relationship and engaged in debates over Europe's post-Cold War security architecture.



**Benjamin Martin**

Hometown: Lake Charles, Louisiana

- Majors: French and Political Science
- Minors: Russian and Art History
- Advisor: Jaimie Bleck

From Grammar to Geopolitics: Language and Cultural Programming as an Instrument of Soft Power in Côte d'Ivoire

This study examines how international language and cultural programming institutions shape student perceptions of identity, politics, and cross-cultural ties in Côte d'Ivoire. Comparing China's Confucius Institute and Germany's Goethe-Institut in Abidjan, it explores language as a soft power tool to bolster comprehensive diplomacy. Using interviews, archival research, and spatial analysis, this ethnographic research highlights the ties to Chinese and German economic motivation within the country. By analyzing the institutions' respective language and culture pedagogy, this thesis reveals how these programs are instruments for norm diffusion, contributing to discussions on sociolinguistic diplomacy and foreign cultural engagement in postcolonial West Africa.



**Matthew McCollum**

Hometown: Hammonton, New Jersey

- Major: International Economics
(Concentration in German)
- Minor: Data Science
- Advisor: Rüdiger Bachmann

Effects of ECB Monetary Shocks on the German Yield Curve

This study analyzes the impact of European Central Bank monetary policy shocks on the German sovereign bond using the EA-MPD dataset and Jorda's Local Projections methodology. It decomposes the yield curve into level, slope, and curvature components. Results show that monetary tightening increases yields, initially flattens the curve, and later steepens it, while curvature decreases. These findings highlight the varying impacts of short-term rates across different maturities and emphasize the importance of the yield curve in understanding monetary policy transmission and its market effects.

