

**March 28, 2026**



**JMU ARTS AND LETTERS**

**UNDERGRADUATE  
RESEARCH  
CONFERENCE**

**JMU**  
College of Arts  
and Letters

Sponsored by the College of Arts and Letters at James Madison University, this conference features more than 70 students presenting outstanding examples of undergraduate scholarship in the humanities, social sciences, and communication fields.

# **REGISTRATION**

**Opens at 8:30 a.m., Taylor 307**

Continental breakfast, Taylor 306

# **SESSION #1**

**9:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.**

**1a: Cinematic Articulations of Feminist Thought: Critical Interventions from Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies**

**Taylor 302**

**Moderator: Tiajuana L. Tillman**

Real Women Have Curves (2002)

*Martha Cappendyck, Health Sciences, James Madison University*

*Xitlalli Mena, Social Work and Medical Spanish, James Madison University*

Mona Lisa Smile (2003)

*Brent Dramstad, Political Science, James Madison University*

*Tess Schlichting, Health Sciences, James Madison University*

Don't Worry Darling (2022)

*Jewel Eppes, Sociology, James Madison University*

*Natalya Rodriguez-Johnson, Dance, James Madison University*

**1b: Undergraduate Research Labs in Psychology, Communication Studies, and Anthropology**

**Taylor 305**

**Moderator: Traci Zimmerman**

Saving Lives Through Interdisciplinary Research: Exploring the Research and Impact of Terror Management Lab

*Sulayman Haq, Brielle Lampf, Lilly Alexander, and Kendall Cole, Psychology, James Madison University*

Understanding Perceptions of the Microbiome Through Pile Sort Analysis

*Eva Snyder, Anthropology, James Madison University*

## **1c: Power and Society in Global Empires: Exploring the History of Empires through Women, Labor, and Social Control**

**Taylor 400**

**Moderator: Alberto Urquidez**

Policing Virtue: How the Qing Code Shaped Women's Lives and Social Expectations

*Amelia Corbin, Psychology, Bridgewater College*

Women in Samurai Households from the Late Muromachi to Edo Periods of Japan: An Examination of Social Structure, Politics, and Economics

*Brandy Sweigart, Psychology and Professional Writing, Bridgewater College*

The "Obedient" Shepherd: Civilian Discontent in Sargon II's Neo-Assyria

*Madison DeSarno, History, James Madison University*

Black Gold: How the Exploitation of Obsidian Shaped the Aztec Empire

*Summer Grace Garcia, History and Spanish, Bridgewater College*

## **1d: Media Representations and Identity in American Culture**

**Taylor 402**

**Moderator: Lori Britt**

Spectacle at the Dock: Melodramatic Frames in the Alabama Riverboat Brawl

*Treya Gunn, Communication Studies, James Madison University*

"Music Has Meaning Too": A Rhetorical Analysis of Kendrick Lamar's Superbowl Halftime Performance

*Alexandra Robins, Communication Studies, James Madison University*

Hard to Face, Harder to Heal: A Rhetorical Analysis of "Hard 2 Face Reality"

*Jenna DeRoss, Communication Studies, James Madison University*

# SESSION #2

**10:15 a.m.-11:15 a.m.**

## **2a: Dictators, Zines, and Instagram: WGSS as an Interdisciplinary Field Taylor 302**

**Moderator: Mary Thompson**

Women Against the Argentine Military Dictatorship and the Transformation of Women

*Katherine 'Katie' Butler, International Affairs, Honors, Spanish, LAXC, James Madison University*

Feminist Instagram: JMU Feminist

*Camille Martin, Sociology, James Madison University*

There's Nothing Scariest Than a CPC

*Ivy Ridenhour, English, Honors, Theater, James Madison University*

*Jonah Chancio, English, Creative Writing, WGSS, James Madison University*

## **2b: Religion, Psychology, and Gender Oppression in Africa Taylor 304**

**Moderator: Amina Saidou**

The Mental Health of Women in South Sudan

*Skylar Curran, Psychology and Political Science, James Madison University*

Interpreting the Qur'an: Gender, Power, and the Marginalization of Women

*Josephine Smith, Psychology, James Madison University*

## **2c: Evolving Insights into Power, Language, and Leadership Taylor 305**

**Moderator: John Scherpereel**

Past to Present: Digitizing Archival Documents With AI

*Gianna Baorto, International Affairs, James Madison University*

*Ben Katz, Political Science, James Madison University*

*Maxwell Powers, Political Science, James Madison University*

## The Fate of Collective and Collegial Governance in the European Union

*Carter Dixon, Information Technology, James Madison University*

*Ava Galyen, International Affairs, James Madison University*

*Ben Katz, Political Science, James Madison University*

## Analyzing and Publicizing EU Values

*Noah Eckert, International Affairs, James Madison University*

*Meghana Kancharla, Finance, James Madison University*

## Darts, Pats, and the Evolution of JMU's Campus Culture, 1991-2025

*Summer Johnson, Political Science, James Madison University*

*Henry Nuutinen, International Affairs, James Madison University*

## **2d: IRIS**

### **Taylor 400**

**Moderator: Jacob Dinman**

#### Of Nothing

*Madeleine Magnant, Psychology, James Madison University*

#### Hanover Times

*Dorian Crawford, Computer Information Systems and Computer Science, James Madison University*

#### Title TBA

*Sirena Alvarez, Graphic Design, James Madison University*

## **2e: Case Studies of Justice**

### **Taylor 402**

**Moderator: Robin Leiter-White**

#### "Sit Up Straight When I Talk to You": A Rhetorical Analysis of Alivea Goncalves' Impact Statement at Bryan Kohberger's Sentencing

*Ella Crangle, Communication Studies, James Madison University*

#### Unfit to Hang, Unfit to Rule: How the Insanity Became a Legal Defense

*Matthew Epstein, History and Computer Science, James Madison University*

#### Coping Mechanisms of Individuals on Death Row

*Natalia Bozyn, Justice Studies and Psychology, James Madison University*

#### Black Hampton Roads Community Fighting for Racial Integration in Schools, 1956-1959

*Angel Humphrey, Psychology, Bridgewater College*

# SESSION #3

**11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

## **3a: The Blame Game: Linguistic, Political, and Social Issues in an Unstable Arab World**

**Taylor 302**

**Moderator: Aram Shahin**

The Ideology, Rhetoric, and Influences of Muammar Qaddafi

*Jackson Rada, International Affairs, James Madison University*

A Comparative Study of Alzheimer's Across Regions: The United States of America and the Arab World

*Dima Salih, Biology and Modern Foreign Languages, James Madison University*

The Arabic Language and Social Cognition: A Meta-Analysis

*Hana Mahyoub, Psychology, James Madison University*

The Language of the Islamic State: Terminology and Rhetoric in the Self-Definition of ISIS

*Trent Goddard, History, James Madison University*

A Study of Modernity in the UAE: Islam, the Western Parallel, and Predictions for the Future

*Maximilian Bellamente, International Business and Arabic, James Madison University*

## **3b: Poetry, Prose, and Q&As with Word is Born Writers Society**

**Taylor 305**

**Moderators: Dorian Crawford and Madeleine Magnant**

Across Firmament

*Jaida Hewitt, Marketing, James Madison University*

Baker-Miller Pink

*Jozie Bognar, English and Music Industry, James Madison University*

The Fall of Ophelia Hughes

*Madeleine Magnant, Psychology, James Madison University*

A Prayer

*Camille DiPatri, English, James Madison University*

With/in

*Andrew Eddy, Psychology, James Madison University*

### **3c: Religion, Politics, and Rebellion through Music, Literature, and Publishing**

**Taylor 400**

**Moderator: Alberto Urquidez**

Cultural and Religious Interactions Between Qur'an Production in India and England during the 19th and 20th Centuries

*Charlie Filiatrault, English, James Madison University*

Printing Nasser: The Periodical as a Political Tool in Late Modern Egypt, 1954-1967

*Meklit Abebe, International Studies, Montgomery College/The Library of Congress*

Mysticism, Rebellion, and Reconceptualizing the Sacred in Beat Literature

*Grace Puma, Media Arts & Design and Philosophy, James Madison University*

### **3d: Identity Across Borders: The Impact of Policy and Rhetoric on Geography, the Environment, and Space**

**Taylor 402**

**Moderator: Tiajuana L. Tillman**

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing in Liberia

*Bubuney Havi, Public Administration, James Madison University*

Variation on American Public Opinion Regarding Immigration Policy

*Sophia Evans, Political Science and Spanish, James Madison University*

Improving Study Space Availability at James Madison University

*Olivia Brown, Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, James Madison University*

### **3e: Poster Session**

**Taylor 404**

**Moderator: Robin Leiter-White**

Nobody Understands My Pain: How Chronic Pain and Access to Care Shape Wellbeing and Meaning in Life

*Sulayman Haq, Brielle Lampf, and Evanlyn Hess, Psychology, James Madison University*

*Sophia Bates, Department of Communication, George Mason University*

Saving Lives by Creating Purpose: Utilizing an Existential Approach to Design More Meaningful Airline Safety Messages

*Payton Stavalone, Kendall Cole, and Lily Alexander, Psychology, James Madison University*

## SCOUT: Spatiotemporal Correlation & Open-Source Unified Threat Detection

*Abigail Brinson, William Ponczak, Aurora Gardner, Alexander Hardie*

*Political Science and International Affairs, Computer Science, Statistics, and Math, James Madison University*

## Use-wear Analysis of 16th Century Iron Artifacts

*Anna Leo, Anthropology, James Madison University*

*Jonah Friedman, Anthropology, James Madison University*

## Welcome Tilly Norwood: Forecasting Hollywood's Artificial Intelligence Policy Futures

*Sam Rooker, Intelligence Analysis, James Madison University*

## Mapping Disability: A Critical Analysis of Accessibility on JMU's Campus

*Erin Zarro, Anthropology, James Madison University*

## Pipeline Politics: A Comparative Analysis of Environmental Justice Movements in the United States and Canada

*Grace Treml, International Affairs, James Madison University*

## Spatializing Power: Architecture and Political Meaning

*Naomi Minwalla, Political Science and Spanish, James Madison University*

## Juvenile Transfer: Unconstitutional, Ineffective, and Discriminatory

*Caroline Woodson, Political Science, James Madison University*

# LUNCH

**12:30 p.m.**

Taylor 405

## Welcome

*Traci Zimmerman, Dean, College of Arts and Letters*

## Next Steps With Your Research

*Sara Curling, Hannah Hall, and Lydia Kidd, JMURJ*

## Best Presentation & Best Poster Awards



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