College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Faculty Research Colloquium

October 16, 2020

Via Zoom

Presentations begin at 3:00pm.

**Kristin Hedges** (Anthropology) ‘Addy’-ing it all up: ethnographic analysis of students’ perspectives on ‘study drugs’ as their key to success in college.

As tuition and living costs have risen over the past decades, more students are simultaneously working while in school to meet these financial strains. Student narratives discuss the stress of meeting multiple responsibilities within limited hours. Non-prescription stimulants have become a normalized tool for meeting high demands among college students. Studies show substantial changes in students using ‘study drugs’ as a performance enhancer to improve test scores, paper grades, and overall GPA. The average rate of illicit prescription stimulant use among US college students is around 15% (Benson et al 2015). Stimulant medication has been the second most common illicit drug used among college students (Johnson et al 2016). The purpose of this study is to understand substance use behavior patterns on a United States mid-western college campus from the student perspective. Data was collected by student researchers trained in ethnographic and drug research methods. Qualitative data includes 33 open-ended interviews, observation notes from 25 different student researchers, 2 focus group discussions. Using the lens of critical medical anthropology, ethnographic findings demonstrate that pharmaceuticalization plays a large role in influencing the perception of NPS. Findings demonstrate that perception of substances combined with motivation for success in college led to a normalization of NPS for performance enhancement.

**Imran Mazid** (Advertising and Public Relations Program, School of Communications) Political Public Relations Messages on Facebook: A Study of Social Media Virality, Social Presence Strategies, and the 2018 U.S. Senate Elections

Scholars investigated the use of social presence strategies in various research contexts. However, we have limited knowledge about the use of social presence strategies in political campaigns. This study addressed this gap by investigating the relationships between social presence strategies, campaign message strategies, and virality. Facebook data of Democratic and Republican Senate candidates were downloaded for this study. Content analysis of 1,500 posts revealed the significant predictors of virality on Facebook. The results of Negative Binomial regression analyses revealed that social presence strategies, political personalization posts, and messages that focus on competence are strong determinants of virality. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

**Peter Zhang** (Communications Studies) "The Energic Economy of Cyberspacetime

As social media, virtual reality, the Internet of things, artificial intelligence, mobile computing, cloud computing, virtual collaboration platforms, and other new technologies become an integral part of our life, more and more of us are facing a practical issue: insufficiency of psychic energy. Approaching the cyberneticization of the human condition from the perspective of psychic energy makes for a sorely needed critical intervention. This paper reveals the vampiric nature of cyberspacetime, looks into vitalistic philosophy and spiritual exercises for coping strategies, and calls for homo ludens to rise above apparatuses of capture and conserve psychic energy for negentropic endeavors, mental events, and re-singularization.

Future colloquia are scheduled for:

Friday, Nov 20

Thursday, Jan 21

Thursday, Feb 18

Thursday, March 18

If you would like to give a presentation at one of the five remaining colloquia, please send an email to stavesm@gvsu.edu with preferred dates and a tentative title for your presentation.