

Spring 2026

# Honors Thesis Conference

Sponsored by the  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Honors Program

April 7-9, 2026

***EKU***  
HONORS

# TUESDAY, APRIL 7<sup>TH</sup>

<p>10:00-10:30 am</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"See Something, Say Something": The Effect of Bystanders and Public Posting on Campus Crime Reporting"</b>  <i>Makiah Hollinden, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Cassie Whitt, Mentor</i>  <i>Adrian Zaragoza, Discussant</i></p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"Invasive Honeysuckle: using NAIP Imagery to Detect Change in Abundance in an Urban Forest."</b>  <i>Avery Krahwinkel, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Kelly Watson, Mentor</i></p>	
<p>10:30-11:00 am</p>	<p><b>"Me or We in Criminal Behavior"</b>  <i>Adrian Zaragoza, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Jonathan Gore, Mentor</i>  <i>Makiah Hollinden, Discussant</i></p>		
<p>1:00-1:30 pm</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"PFAS Drinking Water Contamination in Madison County, KY: Association with Reproductive Health Outcomes"</b>  <i>Jessica Stone, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Ashlee Kirby, Mentor</i>  <i>Jodie Caithamer, Discussant</i></p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"Getting Her Off: Looking at the Abundance of Women Authors in the Romance Genre Compared to Other Genres"</b>  <i>Helena Panek, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Alison Buck, Mentor</i>  <i>Karlee Crowe, Discussant</i></p>	<p>Powell 212  <b>"Two Sides of the Same Cycle: Understanding the Experiences of Domestic Violence Survivors and Perpetrators"</b>  <i>Avery Blevins, Presenter</i>  <i>Prof. Gina Sandlin, Mentor</i>  <i>Katlyn Waltz, Discussant</i></p>
<p>1:30-2:00 pm</p>	<p><b>"Musculoskeletal Risk Among Radiology Professionals: Ergo, the Importance of Ergonomics"</b>  <i>Jodie Caithamer, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Ashlee Kirby, Mentor</i>  <i>Jessica Stone, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"From Crops to Kilowatts: The Growing Energy Potential of Modern Agriculture"</b>  <i>Karlee Crowe, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Mike McDermott, Mentor</i>  <i>Helena Panek, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"More Than Just Hyper: The Mislabeling and Overmedicating of ADHD in Children Ages 5-10"</b>  <i>Katlyn Waltz, Presenter</i>  <i>Prof. Gina Sandlin, Mentor</i>  <i>Avery Blevins, Discussant</i></p>
<p>3:00-3:30 pm</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"Heroes or Villains: Journalism in Movies and the Public's Opinion"</b>  <i>Emily Kessler, Presenter</i>  <i>Prof. Thomas Southerland, Mentor</i>  <i>Kassidy Burke, Discussant</i></p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"Click Here for Counsel: Can AI Uphold the Scales of Justice?"</b>  <i>Brianna Garcia-Perez, Presenter</i>  <i>Prof. Thomas Parker, Mentor</i>  <i>Addison Caravona, Discussant</i></p>	<p>Powell 212  <b>"Eastern Kentucky Drowning Due to Water and Lack of Government Help"</b>  <i>Lynsey Joseph, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Robert Weise, Mentor</i>  <i>Samuel Dutton, Discussant</i></p>
<p>3:30-4:00 pm</p>	<p><b>"Cancer Risk Perceptions and Nicotine Use Behaviors among Eastern Kentucky University Students"</b>  <i>Kassidy Burke, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Kendall Simpson, Mentor</i>  <i>Emily Kessler, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"All Harm, All Fouls: Trafficking at Large Sporting Events"</b>  <i>Addison Caravona, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Patrick Litanga, Mentor</i>  <i>Brianna Garcia-Perez, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"Evaluating Interventions for Work Related Musculoskeletal Pain Among Acute Care Nurses: A Scoping Review"</b>  <i>Samuel Dutton, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Renee Causey-Upton, Mentor</i>  <i>Lynsey Joseph, Discussant</i></p>

# WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8<sup>TH</sup>

<p>10:00-10:30 am</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"Media on Trial: The Effects of Media Coverage on Legal Proceedings in High-Profile Cases"</b>  <i>Julia Luxon</i>, Presenter            Dr. Ginny Whitehouse, Mentor            Gavin Cantrell, Discussant</p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"Beyond the Game: The Real Impact of CTE "</b>  <i>Leah Rennels</i>, Presenter            Dr. Michael Lane, Mentor            Taylor Moore, Discussant</p>	
<p>10:30-11:00 am</p>	<p><b>"Why Did Pikeville Blow Up that Mountain?"</b>  <i>Gavin Cantrell</i>, Presenter            Dr. Matthew Howell, Mentor            Julia Luxon, Discussant</p>	<p><b>"The Role of Suffering in the Development of Character: A Psychological, Theological, and Philosophical Analysis"</b>  <i>Taylor Moore</i>, Presenter            Dr. Mike Austin, Mentor            Leah Rennels, Discussant</p>	
<p>1:00-1:30 pm</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"Coping and Coloring: Mental Health in Rural Communities"</b>  <i>Abigail Lee Alexander</i>, Presenter            Prof. Nicole Lavy-Joy, LCSW, Mentor            Leilani Scarambone, Discussant</p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"Autoimmune Skin Disorders: Exploring Pathogenesis, Symptoms, and Emerging Treatment Modalities"</b>  <i>Addie Payton</i>, Presenter            Dr. Oliver Oakley, Mentor            Kylie Farler, Discussant</p>	
<p>1:30-2:00 pm</p>	<p><b>"Hand-made VS AI, a 2D Animator's Perspective"</b>  <i>Leilani Scarambone</i>, Presenter            Prof. Charlie Cambell, Mentor            Abigail Lee Alexander, Discussant</p>	<p><b>"Preserving Fashion History: Conservation and Storage Solutions for Eastern Kentucky University's Historic Costume Collection"</b>  <i>Kylie Farler</i>, Presenter            Dr. Angela Dial, Mentor</p>	
<p>3:00-3:30 pm</p>	<p>Powell 220  <b>"Legalizing Sex Work: Transforming Hidden Jobs into Professions"</b>  <i>Sakura Wilder-Hamilton</i>, Presenter            Dr. Carl Root, Mentor            Jaylyn Gray, Discussant</p>	<p>Powell 224  <b>"How Can Speech-Language Pathologists Assist in Traumatic Brain Injury Recovery?"</b>  <i>Laynie Wollam</i>, Presenter            Dr. Maria Bane, Mentor            Kira Kent, Discussant</p>	<p>Powell 212  <b>"Arete - The Balance of Nature: A Study and Creation of Greek Tragedy from the Modern World"</b>  <i>Grace Merrill</i>, Presenter            Dr. Rick Mott, Mentor            Katie Hendrix, Discussant</p>
<p>3:30-4:00 pm</p>	<p><b>"Inked in History: The Rise of Commercial Tattooing in Central Kentucky"</b>  <i>Jaylyn Gray</i>, Presenter            Dr. Carl Root, Mentor            Sakura Wilder-Hamilton, Discussant</p>	<p><b>"Inbreeding and the Fall of the Spanish Habsburg Dynasty"</b>  <i>Kira Kent</i>, Presenter            Dr. David Coleman, Mentor            Laynie Wollam, Discussant</p>	<p><b>"Unlocking Access: Investigating the Implementation of European Accessibility Standards in European Museums"</b>  <i>Katie Hendrix</i>, Presenter            Dr. Julie Duckart, Mentor            Grace Merrill, Discussant</p>

# THURSDAY, APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup>

<p>10:00-10:30 am</p>	<p><u>Powell 220</u>  <b>"Unbottling the Truth: A Study of Alcohol Rehabilitation Access and Outcomes in Kentucky"</b>  <i>Kendall Pierce, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Molly McKinney, Mentor</i>  <i>Eden Potter, Discussant</i></p>	<p><u>Powell 224</u>  <b>"Preserving Italian Culture: A Look at Sustainable Tourism in Italy"</b>  <i>Rachael Fritz, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Erik Liddell, Mentor</i>  <i>JuLeah (JP) Edie, Discussant</i></p>
<p>10:30-11:00 am</p>	<p><b>"Posture and Pain: How Study Habits Affect Muscle and Joint Pain in College Students"</b>  <i>Eden Potter, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Autumn Whitson, Mentor</i>  <i>Kendall Pierce, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"Laser Micromachining: Using Visible Light and Diffractive Optics to Modify Macroscopic Material Properties"</b>  <i>JuLeah (JP) Edie, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Thomas Jarvis, Mentor</i>  <i>Rachael Fritz, Discussant</i></p>
<p>1:00-1:30 pm</p>	<p><u>Powell 220</u>  <b>"Invisible Fallout: Economic Health, Environmental Injustice, and the Social Legacy of the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Kentucky"</b>  <i>Isabella Bailey-Sims, Presenter</i>  <i>Laurel Schwartz, Mentor</i>  <i>Abby Wheatley, Discussant</i></p>	<p><u>Powell 224</u>  <b>"Gender Differences in Autism Diagnosis: The Need for Female-Specific Diagnostic Criteria"</b>  <i>Leslieann Mahl, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Shirley O'Brien, Mentor</i></p>
<p>1:30-2:00 PM</p>	<p><b>"A+ for Attitude: How Social Emotional Learning Impacts Academic Achievement in Private Schools"</b>  <i>Abby Wheatley, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Olivia Williams, Mentor</i>  <i>Isabella Bailey-Sims, Discussant</i></p>	
<p>3:00-3:30pm</p>	<p><u>Powell 220</u>  <b>"Neurodivergence in Children's Literature: A Tool for Raising Young Readers' Awareness to Lived Experiences Beyond the Neurotypical"</b>  <i>Taylor Mellett, Presenter</i>  <i>Dr. Emily Zuccaro, Mentor</i>  <i>Kailyn Howard, Discussant</i></p>	<p><u>Powell 224</u>  <b>"Prehospital Systems of Care for Pediatric Cardiac Arrest: A Review of Barriers and Opportunities"</b>  <i>Blake Parman, Presenter</i>  <i>Holly Buchenroth, MS, NRP, Mentor</i>  <i>Madison Cassity, Discussant</i></p>
<p>3:30-4:00PM</p>	<p><b>"Faith Based Coping in Crisis: How Religious Beliefs Shape Trauma, Resilience, and Recovery Across Contexts"</b>  <i>Kailyn Howard, Presenter</i>  <i>Kevin Rahimzadeh, Mentor</i>  <i>Taylor Mellett, Discussant</i></p>	<p><b>"Sirens, Safety, and Superheroes': A Children's Guide to Handling An Emergency Crisis"</b>  <i>Madison Cassity, Presenter</i>  <i>Holly Buchenroth, MS, NRP, Mentor</i>  <i>Blake Parman, Discussant</i></p>

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