# The Role of Campus Religious Ministries in the Formation of Young Adults: Psychological, Social, and Organizational Factors

## Project Details

### Team meetings

Tuesdays 1:25PM-2:40PM, Soc/Psych 268

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## Team Members

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### Undergraduate students

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Public policy

Samantha Heino

Biology and Evolutionary Anthropology

Gerardo Parraga

Economics

## Course Description

"The Role of Campus Religious Ministries in the Formation of Young Adults" is a multidisciplinary project whose aim is to identify the impact of campus ministry on the lives of college students. As part of the Bass Connections program, the project brings together Duke students with researchers from multiple fields to conduct real research on contemporary questions. Students will take part and gain skills in several aspects of the research project: theoretical development, methodological design, administration, and analysis. The course might best be described as an applied research methods course.

Research about religion among college students is well-established. However, significantly less research has asked what role campus ministries play in student religious formation, social network development, attitude change, and psychological health. This project aims to fill that gap by conducting a panel study of Catholic students at multiple universities. Motivated by members of the Duke Catholic Center and professors in the social sciences, team members will work towards providing practical knowledge for campus ministers and college administrators as well as theoretical and empirical knowledge that furthers research agendas in several disciplines.

The spring is organized around two major presentations: to campus ministers on February 21st and at EHDx on April 19th. In both presentations, we will be showcasing our work and our data. As such, our time will be spent refocusing on research questions and beginning to answer them using the data we collected in the fall and will collect in January. You will revisit the literatures you investigated in the fall, gain a moderate level of proficiency in the R programming language, and combine theory with data to contribute to existing research.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to...

...summarize research articles by identifying the research questions, theories, findings, and implications.

...integrate new empirical data and theories into existing knowledge by updating a summary document of all you have read over the semester.

...recode data in R.

...conduct statistical tests in R, including t-tests, Chi-squared tests, and linear regression.

...create visualizations in R.

...integrate data analysis and existing research by giving a 15-minute presentation on a topic of your choice that is addressed by the project data.

## Course Format

The Spring 2017 schedule is organized around two main events. First, we are holding a conference at Duke on February 21st with campus ministers from across the country. During this conference, students will give a presentation on their area of interest using our first two waves of data. The second event is the EHDx presentation on April 19th. The team will give a short, quick presentation about the project, how it got started, our findings so far, and where it has left to go.

With these two events in mind, class sessions will be organized around three main goals: discuss existing research, learn about the R programming language, and prepare for presentations. Classes will start with each student briefly (1-3 minutes) discussing an article they read that week. The rest of each class session will focus on the topic of the day.

## Project overview

### Project goals

"The Role of Catholic Campus Ministries in the Formation of Young Adults" has several project goals associated with a) Bass Connections program goals, b) Catholic campus ministries program evaluation, and c) individual research agendas.

Bass Connections aims to, "[apply] classroom learning to pressing global problems, to create a distinctive new model for education."[1](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/content/about-bass-connections) Through this project, you will contrtibute to academic research on how various college experiences, including religious participation in campus ministries, contribute to individual development. The project aims to explain the predictors of student social engagement, mental health, and academic success.

The Duke Catholic Center (DCC), "serve[s] and support[s] the spiritual development of countless students during critical transitional times in their lives," and, "fosters the formation of future Catholic leaders and promotes the integration of [students'] spiritual, intellectual, and social lives."[2](http://catholic.duke.edu/about/) While the DCC collects its own data on its members, they are limited by their ability to reach non-participants. Fr. Michael Martin has reached out to a number of other Catholic campus ministers who are similarly interested in the effectiveness of their programs. The project aims to help the DCC and other Catholic ministries generally understand how to successfully recruit and engage students and foster their spiritual growth.

Finally, this class is designed to allow each of you to investigate original research questions that you are interested in. The outcome of that research is up to you. You may be able to use the data or your experiences to write term papers, captstone/thesis papers, or original research papers. You will need to make arrangements with your professors or departments if you would like to use your research on this project for other requirements. This syllabus will be a helpful reference point to discuss those arrangements, and we are happy to discuss the project with an adviser if requested.

These goals will be achieved primarily through a panel survey in which students are survey repeatedly in order to track change over time and identify possible causal mechanisms. Duke Catholic students were surveyed in September 2016.

### Where we are now

As of January 1st, 2017, we have made substantial progress towards a full-scale administration of the survey. In the summer of 2016, we designed our first survey that was piloted at Duke in September 2016. The survey was administered to Freshmen only. We then spent the Fall 2016 semester improving the survey by a) strengthening the theoretical grounding of our research questions, b) pretesting survey questions to improve respondent comprehension and survey validity, and c) revising and reordering survey questions to avoid priming issues.

### Where we are going

We will be administering the revised survey in mid-to-late January to *all* Catholic students at Duke. This will allow us to observe change over time among Freshmen who responded in September and compare across years at one time point.

Our next goal will be to collect data from a new cohort of freshmen students at multiple universities. This will require a substantial amount of preparation. On February 21st, we will host a meeting here at Duke with leaders from several campus ministries from around the country. We will present our findings so far and discuss with them how to successfully collect data on their campuses.

We will also be taking part in the EHDx Talks on April 19. The Education and Human Development (EHD) section of the Bass Connections project holds an annual event where teams present their work in 5 short minutes. This presentation is concise and focused. Our work this semester will prepare us for this challenge.

## Required software and services

There are several pieces of software that are either required for the project, all of which are freely available to you. LIkewise, all readings for the course are free, though some you will have to retrieve yourself (see "Readings" and "Adobe Digital Editions" below).

### Box

Box is a file syncing service freely available to you through Duke. We will use a shared Box folder to store our project documents. If you have not already accessed your box account, you can do so [here](https://box.duke.edu/). There is also a desktop sync client, which you can download [here](https://www.box.com/resources/downloads).

Once you download and login to Box Sync, you may have to manually indicate which folders you would like to sync to the desktop. To do so, login to the [web client](https://box.duke.edu/) and find the folder you want to sync. Click the "..." button to the right of the folder, select "Properties," and then, "Sync to Computer."

### Mendeley

[Mendeley](https://www.mendeley.com/) is a citation management program that we will be using to keep track of the academic articles that we need to reference. Similar programs include Zotero, EndNote, and ReadCube. While all of those programs have essentially the same functionality, we can share citations as a group if we are all invested in one of them. For that reason, we recommend that you use Mendeley for this project. Once you provide your account name, we will invite you to the project group. If you are already invested in another citation management program, we can discuss how to integrate Mendeley into you workflow without interrupting it.

### Qualtrics

[Qualtrics](duke.qualtrics.com) is an online survey-design, distribution, and analysis service that Duke gives you access to. We will be using it for our survey and, in fact, the pre-college survey is already in the Qualtrics system. You can login at <duke.qualtrics.com>. Later in the semester, you will receive training on how to use Qualtrics, and there are already instructional videos in the "Instructional Videos" folder in Box.

## Deliverables

### Weekly article summary

Many weeks (see schedule) you will be expected to read one article from your area of interest and summarize it. This is to keep expanding your knowledge of your subject area, which will help us frame our findings in the larger literature.

* By **Friday night** each week you should deposit the article you will be reading into the designated Box folder. This is so that I can also read the article ahead of time and give you feedback on what you might read next.
* Add the article's citation to our team's Mendeley folder.
* Beyond the notes that you normally take, you should also complete the "Article Summary Form" found in Box and deposit the completed form into the appropriate folder. This will provide a quick reference for the other team members should they be interested in the article.

### Weekly R code

Many weeks (see schedule) you will be expected to share the R code you have been working on with me. This is so that I can check to see what you are doing ahead of time and give you feedback on your work.

* By **Sunday night** each week you should deposit your R code (with a '.r' extension, such as 'week1.r') into the appropriate folder in Box.
* I will look over your code on Monday and send you feedback.
* If you would like feedback earlier than Monday, deposit the .r file earlier in the week and let me know I should take a look at it.

### Campus Minister Conference presentations

On February 21st, each student will give a presentation to visiting campus ministers about their subject area. Currently, 30 minutes have been alotted to each presentation. You should aim for a 15-minute presentation, as there will almost certainly be questions.

Presentations should discuss existing research on your topic, our research questions going into the project, and results from our surveys. By this point in the class, you will be equipped to conduct basic summaries of data and produce basic figures in R.

### EHDx talk and poster

At the end of the spring semester, one or more students will be presenting at EHDx, and all students will be helping present our poster after the presentations. The presentation is a concise, 5-minute overview of the project, while the poster is an academic poster consisting of standard sections (abstract, background, methods, findings, and discussion). We will discuss the talk and poster more in class throughout the semester.

## Schedule

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| Date | In-Class Topic | Deliverable Due |
| Jan 17 | Semester overview |  |
| Jan 24 | R basics | **List of research questions**  Article review |
| Jan 31 | Manipulating data | Article review  R code |
| Feb 07 | Visualizing descriptive data | Article review  R code |
| Feb 14 | Prep for campus ministers meeting | **Campus Ministers Meeting slides**  R code |
| Feb 21 | Campus Ministers Meeting |  |
| Feb 28 | χ2 and t-test | Article review  R code |
| Mar 07 | Estimating regression models | **Decide on EHDx presenter**  Article review  R code |
| Mar 14 | Spring Break | Article review  R code |
| Mar 21 | Visualizing regression models | Article review  R code |
| Mar 28 | Answering research questions with data I | **Draft of EHDx slides**  Article review |
| Apr 04 | Answering research questions with data II | Article review |
| Apr 11 | Refining visualizations | **EHDx poster** |
| Apr 18 | Practice EHDx presentation |  |
| Apr 25 | Wrap-up |  |