

HONORS COLLEGE PORTFOLIO



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Danielle Ruiz is a senior at Florida International University who is majoring in Public Relations. She is a marketing and public relations coordinator with four years of experience in social media and advertising campaigns. She has worked on integrated campaigns for the campus life department at Florida International University, Metro Life Church and Aiko Luxury Linens. Danielle founded Flourishing by Faith, a faith-based lifestyle blog that has allowed her to use her social media expertise to engage millennials at a personal level. Danielle specializes in rolling out campaigns and product launches from conception to completion. She is bilingual in English and Spanish and proficient in Microsoft Office, Adobe, Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator, and Salesforce. She is currently finishing up her degree at FIU while working on her blog and hopes to pursue new opportunities in public relations and advertising.

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CONTEMPRARY SELF-PORTRAITURE

The Evolution of Selfies

A Research Paper by Danielle Ruiz

for Dr. Regina Bailey

“A selfie is a smaller branch of self-portraiture—quick and less considered. A self-portrait considers the interiority of the artist; it’s a moment of self reflection, to pause and to look at yourself” (Dawson 1). A selfie is a photograph taken by oneself using a smart phone or a digital camera and it is usually uploaded to a social media outlet. How did a self-portrait evolve into what society knows today as a “selfie”? This essay will explain the origination and development of self-portraiture, the influence that technology and social media have had on self-portraiture, and the evolution of self-portraiture.

Self-portraits can be traced as far as the Amarna Period (c. 1365 BC) of Ancient Egypt. Pharaoh Akhenaten’s chief sculptor Bek carved a sculpture of himself and his wife Taheret known as A Stela. This sculpture is recognized as the first self-portrait in history. Phidias, a Greek Sculptor, would leave a self-portrait of himself as his signature when he designed statues for the Parthenon. A self-portrait, as a projection of one’s self, began as Jean Fouquet painted the earliest identified self-portrait in Western Art (c.1450). Fouquet painted himself as he desired others to see him. This inspired artists such as Albrecht Durer and Parmigianino to create detailed exploration of their own images. Durer and Parmigianino used the canvas to reflect on their self-appearance. Artists like Rembrandt and Van Gogh portrayed ones inner psyche taking the representation of one’s self to a deeper level. These paintings display the complex personality, the strong emotions, and a reflection of the circumstances in the painter’s life. “In Rembrandt’s portraits...it is more than nature, it is a kind of revelation” (Van Gogh 1).

Also, Frida Kahlo used facial expressions to portray her inner self in her paintings. Kahlo is one of the greatest examples of using self-portraiture as a self-study, because she used herself as the main subject struggling to make amends with personal afflictions. Gustave Courbet used the element of fantasy in creating his self-portraits. Although Courbet used fictitious scenes to describe his emotions, the images of himself are realistic interpretations. Picasso created a different type of image known as a narrative self-portrait. In this form of interpretation, the self acts as a character and has no resemblance to the artist's physical appearance. Picasso once said, "Whether he likes it or not, man is the instrument of nature; it forces on him its character and appearance" (Wood, 268).

Regardless of their interpretation, all of the mentioned artists displayed a reflection of their own selves with the goal of exhibiting their emotions and their circumstances through their portraits. "The self portrait is more than just a quick snapshot in the mirror. It is also a form of self-examination that is still evolving today" (Davis 50). Lee Friedlander redefined how artists perceived self-portraiture by taking visually complex images of self. Friedlander's photos were composed of shadows, reflections, and people randomly placed to distract from the main subject, a concept known as photo bombing. However, Friedlander's unusual photographic techniques inspired other photographers, such as Cindy Sherman, to go beyond narrative self-portraiture. For every self-portrait, there is a staged image. Sherman introduced the illustrative image beginning from a fictive idea rather than an optical observation.

Contemporary cultural trends reinforce self-portraiture, in photography. The Polaroid Camera encouraged individuals to take intimate photos and allowed them to view the photo instantly. With the Polaroid, there was not a need to have the film developed. "Technological advances mean that where we once had to remain very still due to long exposure times - creating a more formal image - now we can be captured quickly and informally" (Self Portraits and Social Media: The Rise of the Selfie 1). Flip phones, the first mobile device that was designed to conveniently be carried everywhere, had the capability to be turned and immediately a photo would be taken that had the capacity be shared among friend and family members through a text message. In addition, Web Cameras allowed photos to be taken from a computer. MacBooks revolutionized web cams by introducing the application Photo booth, which allows selfies to have photo effects that can even be having the Eiffel Tower as a backdrop.

The self-shot photo known as the "selfie" was introduced in 2005 when MySpace was the largest social network in the world. Selfies can be defined as a photo that is taken of yourself that is planned to be uploaded to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or any other social networking site. In 2009, Facebook overtakes MySpace and encourages high quality profile pictures. Apple released a revolutionary tool, which increased the selfie popularity virally by introducing the front facing camera on the iPhone 4 in 2010. With the capability of using the front facing camera, users have the complete control over framing his or her selfie. The evolution of the selfie indicates that consumers are moving towards imagery are the primary form of self-expression. The selfie shows other people how an individual would like to be seen. A person will only share a photo he or she thinks is "phenomenal" after various takes and effects.

One's angle, lighting, and pose matter when taking a selfie. To put this in the simplest form, the selfie is the self-portrait of the digital age.

Alongside launching the front facing camera for the iPhone 4, Instagram was launched in 2010. This application enables people to share their photos, apply filters, and add hash tags. Hash tags were introduced to social media through Instagram by using #selfie, allowing more than 23 million people to upload and share their photos (Guardian 1). The growth of these social media platforms has shaped the way in which self-portraiture is used by being a conventional element rather than a representation of the self. Snap Chat changed the way in which selfies are seen by creating an application in which nonchalant selfies are taken

only to be viewed for 10 seconds. While painters and photographers strived to produce a high quality piece of art, with Snap Chat spontaneous and casual portraits are produced. Snap Chat transformed self-portraiture by using this as a conventional element. Selfies no longer represent the psyche or the essence of a person rather the represent a person's emotions and state of being through facial expression shown in pictures. Snap chat is a 10 second photo and video messaging application allowing self-portraits to be sent virtually to anyone giving selfies a new meaning.

Throughout history, selfies evolved from being a representation of one's self to being a method where an individual can communicate with friends via Snap Chat. The essence of self-portraiture still remains today as one allows a person to see themselves as they themselves would like to be seen. Essentially, one is seen as he or she would allow others to perceive them.

Self-Portraiture began with the Greek sculptor Phidias and ended with the various social media outlets that have revolutionized and given selfies a new meaning.

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RESEARCH REFLECTION

This paper opened my eyes to the history behind self-portraiture. Society calls these photos "selfies." The first selfie was painted by Jean Fouquet. I became interested in art history due to the honors seminar I took with Dr. Regina Bailey. If Dr. Bailey did not elaborate on her love for art and the unique role she has at the Wolfsonian, I would not have stepped out of my comfort zone to research on the history of self-portraiture, and its evolution into today's society. I learned how to conduct research correctly. It is not just about spending hours research what others have found in the past and writing about it. Research is about taking history and one's findings to create new information for others to learn and enjoy.

. I do not consider having attained the title of researcher. However, I daily continue to develop the skills needed to be one. I constantly read new sources and want to craft writing pieces that give a different perspective to my findings. Research is very important to my career, especially when working on an integrated campaign. A thorough research will allow me to develop specific, measurable outcomes such as sales volume, market share, profits, or return on investment. Crafting communication objectives by looking at the right analysis will allow me to approach promotion from a communication perspective and view advertising in particular as that of communicating information or a sales message about a product or

service.

I project these skills by using market analysis to increase advertising and promotional efforts. Research will help me develop the right plan for a firm to understand the market, the opportunities it offers, the competition and various segments or target markets the company may wish to pursue. When working with a specific client, I will be able to assist in the allocation of promotional dollars so long as the marginal revenues created by these expenditures exceeded the incremental costs. This will allow me to develop the right marketing strategy by analyzing the competition its products or services in the marketplace.



A NEW WAY OF TEACHING

A RESEARCH PAPER HIGHLIGHTING
INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND CONNECTIVITY BY DANIELLE
RUIZ FOR DR. REGINA BAILEY

Throughout the United States, local school districts and statewide education boards have been grappling with what to teach in the classrooms. One of the most divisive issues is the theory of evolution and propositions to teach the concept of intelligent design, the idea that certain components of life are too complex to have been created by chance and that a “designer” had to have had a hand in the creation of life (Gunn, 2004). The freedom of speech is the ability to express one’s beliefs and ideas without repercussions. Primarily, advocates of intelligent design challenge the teaching of evolution in public schools because they state that the theory of evolution is just that, simply mere theory. Some critics argue that intelligent design is just an attempt to include religious teachings in schools. Because Intelligent Design allows students to express their freedom of speech and it is a legitimate approach to life, intelligent design should be taught along Evolution in high school classrooms.

If students are required to learn and to be assessed on the theory of evolution, then intelligent design is another legitimate approach to life that can also be taught as an alternative. The first amendment states that everyone is guaranteed the freedom of religion, the freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press (Bill of Rights, 1). An example of restricting one’s rights is the Dover Dispute. In 2004, there was an attempt to implement an equal amount of time to teach both intelligent design and evolution in the Pennsylvania school districts. Teachers inserted a disclaimer in the Biology textbook stating the purpose of teaching evolution alongside intelligent design. Michael J. Behe, a biochemistry professor at Leigh University, served as a witness on behalf of the school board giving his testimony of how life was developed through intelligent design bringing supporting evidence which was evident in all types of life. Two members of the school board stated that, they believed the Bible’s account to be literally true which led the defendant’s case to be rejected. Granted people are entitled to their beliefs, but because one-third of the school board upholds certain beliefs should not mean that the proposition should be denied. Intelligent design is a legitimate scientific approach and it should have an equal standing with other scientific approaches such as the theory of evolution. Democritus believed that life could begin with out any intelligent guidance while; Plato believed that a mind was required to explain life.

Most school districts around the country teach only a one-sided version of evolution, which present the “facts” that support the theory. Evolution should be taught as a scientific theory alongside intelligent design opening students up to critical consciousness.

In Cobb County, Georgia, a local school board ordered stickers to be printed and placed into ninth grade science books stating information about evolution. Because the school board told students that the theory of evolution could be taken with an open mind, parents argued that the school board wanted to expose religion in high school classrooms. How can this be an attempt? It is a disclaimer. Science has always been about free speech and open discussion. Since this is about the freedom of speech and about guaranteeing rights stated in the constitution, why does society and its governing officials need to silence intelligent design?

An essential part of education is to expose students to different schools of thought. In 2002, the State Board of Education reviewed the state science standards in Ohio. A policy was approved to take an open-minded approach on evolution and to implement a way to “teach the controversy” approach to questioning evolution without imposing a religious viewpoint in high school classrooms. However, in the wake of the Dover, Pennsylvania court decision and the threat of a similar law suit in Ohio, in 2006 the board revoked its earlier policy and reinstated evolution as the only scientific approach (Rudoren, 2006, A14).

Regardless of repeated setbacks made by numerous court decisions and school boards, intelligent design belongs alongside evolution in high school classrooms. Intelligent design is not stating a specific religion because it does not specifically support that God is the author of life, and therefore intelligent design does not violate the first amendment of imposing and teaching religion in public schools. The ultimate purpose is to help students to think critically about the origins of life by implementing intelligent design and evolution in high school classrooms.

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INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND CONNECTIVITY REFLECTION

The interdisciplinary method allowed me to examine the nature and importance of the most fundamental sources and concepts of knowledge to combine multiple disciplines. I learned how to apply perception, memory, reason, emotions, and evidence when finding solutions to stated problems. Understanding how to engage in conversation from a philosophic perspective allowed me to reason critically. This learning outcome enabled me to apply the knowledge gained in honors to public relations as a way to bring a new perspective when collaborating with colleagues from different disciplines.



The understanding of using interdisciplinary to solve problems is beneficial, because it allows an individual to construct a premise and apply it to the conclusion in the pursuit of a common goal. As speaker pro tempore of the FIU Student Government, I work together with environmental engineering majors to create solar powered study tables for our students. This collaboration gave me the opportunity to learn and understand engineers and to work together towards solving the emergent problem. Therefore, the experience of working with individuals from different disciplines will be beneficial when creating solutions to integrated campaigns within public relations.

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narity and connectivity is to push my understanding of common ideas deeper to collaboratively generate an answer with individuals of multiple disciplines. “A New Way of Teaching” allowed me to confront divergence of opinion with critical reflection and dialogue, rather than suppression or force. This assignment taught me to disconnect my preconceived beliefs from my writing. I was able to separate knowledge from belief to find a solution that would benefit the common good. Ultimately, I have to accept all opinion, even ones that are contrary to my own.







MY TIME AS HONORS COLLEGE SENATOR AND SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE
OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

One of the greatest leadership opportunities I have had has been to serve as a part of the Student Government Association as the Honors College Senator and Speaker Pro Tempore of the Senate. It is important to add value to the people around you. When you influence your thoughts, you change the way you think. Leadership allows an individual to be significant and it made up of skills, traits, situations, and influence.

My role within SGA allowed me to create a platform to enhance the experience for over 54,000 students to advocate for issues such as college affordability, student spacing, and sustainability.

FIU has allowed me to seek opportunities to call myself a student leader, which have given me the possibility to truly understand students by being able to interact one-on-one with them and address their concerns. My goal as senator was to encourage students to continue to grow and operate in their leadership qualities and skills as well as, giving back and creating a legacy that would encourage others to do the



same and make a difference in their community, their university, and ultimately, the world.

In Spring 2015, I sat on the University Wide Budget Committee and had the responsibility of making budget allocations amounting \$15,000,000 of student funds on programs that would enhance the affinity of the services and activities our students received. It was my job to prioritize the funding of programs that serve to improve the well-being of our students. That year, I was able to allocate \$500,000 to establish a FIU student space in Washington D.C and work on a strategic plan that provided students with major specific opportunities in our nation's capital.

In addition, this opportunity allowed me to become involved with pro-Israel advocacy. I was able to increase public engagement by creating strong and enduring relationships with diverse and influential campus leaders. These relationships allowed me to create different initiatives like partnering with the Black Student Union to create an event called "Hand in Hand." Being a Student Government leader allowed me to grasp a deeper understanding of the political, cultural, and religious factors that affect Israel and the Middle East today.

Leadership involves having a vision and strategy that will inspire, energize, and empower people (by building effective coalitions) to achieve a common goal. Leaders know themselves, hone their skills, understand the context, have a clear vision, and develop a strategy.



I am a leader and so are the 54,000 students that attend my university. The key is to create an atmosphere of trust where people can feel encouraged to become involved in the decision making process that will affect them.

"Leadership is about the decisions you make, and the actions that you take each day. The world is waiting. Leadership is a choice- and it starts with you". (Alyse Nelson) The lessons I've learned have given my interpretation of leadership a new perspective. Leadership is not a title one given to a specific person that has shown enough merit; it is a process by which one influences others to achieve a common goal.



Flourishing by Faith

A FAITH BASED LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS PLATFORM

HOW IT *all*
CAME TO BE

FASHIONED *for*
GREATNESS

BATTLE READY.

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him. They will be like a
tree planted by the water that sends out its roots
by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green. It has no worries in
a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”

Jeremiah 17:7-8

WRITTEN BY | DANIELLE RUIZ

I love what Jeremiah writes in verse 7 of chapter 17. He starts with saying “But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.” Trust means you are willing to go wherever God goes and because of that, you are able to see beyond the temporary and into the eternal. Trusting is less about the knowing and more about the going. It is in the unknown that God will make Himself known. When there is trial and difficulty that is the place where you and I grow the most. Our actions dictate who we become, which is why we must live intentional and consistent lives on average days. God is always preparing and, He is preparing you for something. Have you ever felt like you are in a different season yet, you are going through the same challenges, the same battles and it is as if you are repeatedly walking into a moment you overcame? I know I have! Seasons are progressive but can also be repetitive. Every repetitive nature of life provides us an opportunity to remember and recall what this is actually about. Remember, You and I are right where we are supposed to be. God wants to meet us right where we are and; our challenge will be to fight the temptations to go through the motions rather than live to maximize the moments. Because you must understand that, the enemy can't keep God from making it rain but He can keep you from receiving it. You can live in the moment and you can enjoy the moment because; the One who holds tomorrow also holds you.»

What is stopping you from reaching your goals? What is holding you back from taking that trip, starting that business, publishing that book, losing that weight, writing that song, filming that tutorial.....?(and the list can go on forever.....)I believe it is not because we lack motivation to start something or, because we have lost the drive to complete it. We find ourselves in the middle. The middle is the longest place we spend time in. It is the area where we think about quitting and where God is raising us up to have the courage to push past the excuses that are holding us back and navigate to the new shore that is waiting for us.

If you take one stroke past the middle, you are closer to your ending than you are to your beginning. Sometimes, we are so focused on what hasn't happened that we neglect what God has already done.

Don't go back to the familiar and assume Jesus will come back there instead. Unless you allow him to change you, nothing will change in your situation.

Whenever you start in faith, it always feels like nothing because what you see is a direct contradiction of what you sense. Don't bring your belief down to the level of your experience. Lift your experience up to the level of your belief. Just because you can't see it doesn't mean He didn't speak it. You start seeing it when you start by seeking Him. What is happening right now is only adding to the greatness ahead. If it were not hard, it wouldn't be worth fighting for. It has to do more with your perception rather than the reality of your season because, God is always with you. It is astonishing how fickle our faith can become when we forsake the reality that God can do



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Having patience has been challenging for me to cultivate but it is essential to have on this journey. Growth in any area usually takes time and by being content in the waiting as you focus on who Jesus is and what He has done for you, you will begin to see the harvest manifested in your life.

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"For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

2 Peter 1:5-8

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APPRECIATION OF THE CREATIVE ARTS REFLECTION

I started my blogging journey in 2016 while studying public relations at Florida International University. At the time, I knew nothing about being a blogger and the constant upkeep my site would require. I was being prepared in the classroom to share my story across various mediums.

What kept me going was the promise God gave me at Flourish in Dallas. I recognized the need to awaken the purpose inside of others through faith. I wasn't ready for the challenges and countless hours of content creating and planning. However, I took the exciting opportunity of starting my own blog as a way of stepping out of my comfort zone and live a life that was bigger than me.

Flourishing by Faith is more than pretty pictures and encouraging words; it's a lifestyle. When you flourish by faith, you step beyond your own capacity and you allow God to reveal the things He placed within you that you never knew were there. My life flourishes by faith by being known by love through every word and deed, serving my city through Metro Life Church and being a voice of hope through the blog.

Life doesn't change in perfection, it changes in the risk. I mean this with all of my heart. If I didn't flourish by faith, it wouldn't feel right to share my discoveries of the journey with you. I want you to know God, know yourself and know me through every post.









GLOBAL LEARNING REFLECTION

The summer of my sophomore year, I had the opportunity to go on a service trip with my church to Nicaragua. I had no idea the type of work that we would do and the people we would meet. I learned that Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America. Because of this, most constituents live below poverty level and resort to selling trash or joining a violent gang. Most people live in homes made of recycled materials and have a difficult time receiving the basic necessities one needs to survive. This experience was eye opening for me. I did not know that people in Nicaragua lived like this. A lot of these conditions are due to the system of government and the policies that are enacted. Through this trip, I saw my vulnerability come out and also a passion to serve others. I wanted to come back and do more for these people outside of my service trip. I wanted to do more for the people in my city, my community, and in my university. I was no longer going to take a passive approach with student and community engagement, which is why I decided to take an active role in the honors college and within student government. I have learned that I can accomplish more if I am willing to fight for a cause. I also learned, that I am not in this alone. There are people who have a common goal like you and want to achieve something greater for the common good as a group. You can accomplish more when you are working together rather than being divided. My exposure to foreign cultures allowed me to appreciate often overlooked opportunities like education, which many cannot receive. This appreciation gave me the fire to do more as I look towards the future knowing, that the best is yet to come.

