

# Senior Seminar Students Research Their Passions

by Christine Nappi

Delving into research and uncovering the answer to thought-provoking questions is no easy feat—that’s something all Senior Seminar students can relate to. However, students Cort Koss and Molly Prior think differently. This past semester, the two have been able to study topics that excite them and explore their passions further.

Molly Prior, a journalism student, is researching how the women’s magazine *Cosmopolitan* frames sex for women. She currently runs a blog where she discusses topics that may be considered too “taboo” for women and plans to focus on women’s lifestyle writing after she graduates.

“I decided to research this topic because I have always been interested in sex and feminism ideology,” Prior said. “This is the type of field I’d want to get into: women’s lifestyle writing. *Cosmopolitan* embodies that, and it has always been highly controversial as to whether it has a positive or negative impact on women.”

Although Prior has always been a fan of *Cosmopolitan*, researching this topic has been challenging and she has come across varying perspectives. She mentions that one of the biggest challenges she faced so far is that her topic is a bit ‘subjective,’ given that audiences of *Cosmopolitan* have different opinions on whether or not it impacts women positively or negatively.

Despite this challenge, she has found that the magazine’s content is

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‘sex progressive’ for women, however, the images in the magazine may not be. She has also found that with time, people are viewing the magazine as more progressive for women.

“When people get ‘upset’ with *Cosmo*, it tends to be more of the racy pictures that they’re referring to over reading the actual content,” Prior said.

Through taking Senior Seminar and developing a comprehensive thesis, Prior is thankful to be able to research something

she’s passionate about. While personally fulfilling, she also hopes her research and findings help others spark important conversations about topics that may not be considered mainstream.

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Cort Koss, a sports media production student, is researching how news outlets are similar in their coverage of global, violent conflicts, despite operating in different spheres of influence. Particularly, Koss is examining the conflict frames used by Al-Jazeera and CNN in their televised broadcasts. He believes that western news outlets often fail to adequately cover important global topics, thus causing a disservice to the public for leaving them ill-informed.

Koss has always been interested in this topic, and after a semester of Media Theory and Research, he saw the possibility of exploring this passion come to fruition.



“Throughout [Media Theory & Research], we hashed out a practical way for me to utilize my belief that western news outlets constantly misinterpret, misrepresent, or outright omit many global issues due to inherent biases and global power dynamics,” Koss said.

To uncover the answer to his research question, Koss has analyzed content from three different programs: Al-Jazeera’s Newshour, CNN’s Anderson Cooper 360, and CNN’s Fared Zakaria GPS. As Koss describes, these programs only touch the surface of the global news coverage across the world, but he finds them to effectively reflect the thinking of different areas of the world.

“Although these programs do not encapsulate the vast array of news coverage across the world, they do offer reputable and popular news programs representing ideologies of different geographical locations,” Koss said. “I hope this to be a great jumping-off point for my future research in this area.”

Koss is thankful to be able to delve into this area of interest further, and credits the Communication Department for giving him endless opportunities to explore his passions and helping him grow as a professional.

“Throughout my two years in the Communication Department at Manhattan College, I have encountered numerous professors that have changed my life forever,” Koss said. “And without their help, I would have never been able to create and execute a professional-level academic study.” ★