

# SIUE Student Researchers Present at Spanish Saint Louis Symposium

by Megan Weiser  
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EDWARDSVILLE - Four Southern Illinois University Edwardsville undergraduates have taken the same research theme and explored it in different mediums to produce original scholarly contributions. The students presented their research projects highlighting the representation of Latina/o in film on Saturday, April 6, at the Spanish Saint Louis Symposium hosted by Saint Louis University.

The students all conducted their research via SIUE's unique Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) program, under the direction of Carolina Rocha, PhD, professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature.

"I encouraged each of the students to conceive their projects according to their passions, so each presentation was wonderfully unique," Rocha said. "I am grateful they decided to make room in their busy schedules to present at the Spanish Saint Louis Symposium, as it's an extremely valuable experience. Their participation speaks of their commitment and dedication to learning outside the classroom."

Junior Ethan Hill, of Edwardsville, is majoring in international business, Spanish and French language and literature. He studied Latinx representation in the television show "Blue Bloods." Senior Spanish education major Rachel Liefer, of Red Bud, examined the representation of a Latino high school math teacher who inspired Latino students in East Los Angeles.

"My research into Latinx representation in "Blue Bloods" and its implications in society has inspired me to make a career switch," Hill explained. "I originally wanted to go into business after graduation, but this experience gave me a new perspective on what professors do. I now plan to pursue graduate school for Spanish with the hopes of one day making my professor dream a reality."

Fellow student researchers Miranda Foley, of Washington, and Jennifer Gaytán, of Mexico City, Mexico, are both seniors double majoring in nursing and Spanish. Foley titled her research: "Necessary Representation in Healthcare: The Inclusion of Latinxs in the series "Grey's Anatomy." The title of Gaytan's project was "The Political Advancement of Undocumented Mexican Immigration's Social Image and Discourse in U.S. Cinema."

"I have a passion for my Hispanic heritage and a love for helping others," Gaytán said. "I've always been interested in the health sciences. After seeing the lack of representation of Spanish speaking, Hispanic healthcare providers, I was motivated to major in both nursing and Spanish."

"My URCA experience has put me in a position to connect and build bonds with other motivated and educated students interested in research," she added.

“My double major will allow me to communicate and care for a prominent population,” Foley noted. “My research demonstrates the importance of Latinx representation in both the media and the healthcare system. The opportunity to conduct research with Dr. Rocha has enhanced my abilities and comfort level with research and academic writing.”

For more information on SIUE’s URCA program, visit [siue.edu/URCA](http://siue.edu/URCA).

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville provides students with a high quality, affordable education that prepares them for successful careers and lives of purpose to shape a changing world. Built on the foundation of a broad-based liberal education, and enhanced by hands-on research and real-world experiences, the academic preparation SIUE students receive equips them to thrive in the global marketplace and make our communities better places to live. Situated on 2,660 acres of beautiful woodland atop the bluffs overlooking the natural beauty of the Mississippi River’s rich bottomland and only a short drive from downtown St. Louis, the SIUE campus is home to a diverse student body of more than 13,000.