



King's alumna wins international gold medal for undergraduate honours thesis

September 16, 2019

London, ON. - Congratulations to King's alumna Madelaine Coelho '19, Honours BA in Sociology and Political Science, who has been named the Global Winner in the Social Sciences: Sociology and Social Policy category of the 2019 Global Undergraduate Awards. She is one of four winners in Canada for this exclusive international award.

3,437 papers from 338 institutions in 50 countries were submitted as part of the 2019 Global Undergraduate Awards, but only 25 were awarded Global Winner status. Coelho's is the top paper in her category. This is the first time a paper written by a King's student has achieved Global Winner status. King's had five alumni receive Highly Commended for their essays this year in the competition. Only 10% of the submissions earn Highly Commended.

Coelho received the award for her paper "Rape Myths in Digital Spaces: An Analysis of High-Profile Sexual Assault Cases on Twitter." She wrote the paper for her Senior Honours Thesis in Sociology (SOC 4490E), with Dr. Jordan Fairbairn, Assistant Professor, Sociology and Criminology, as her supervisor.

"Working under the supervision of Dr. Jordan Fairbairn, I was given the unique opportunity to explore my research interests while learning how to transition my data into a high-calibre piece of work," Coelho says.

In the paper, Coelho explored how rape myths permeate in online spaces such as Twitter. Through looking at the Steubenville High School rape case (2012) and the Stanford Rape case against Brock Turner, she investigated how users discussed and mitigated rape myths on Twitter over this four-year period. Her findings revealed a communitive resistance towards rape myths relevant to these cases, as well as a general critique of pertinent institutions that perpetuate rape culture.

"King's University College is delighted by this wonderful news. An accomplishment like this speaks volumes to the high quality of the students and their mentors, as well as the excellent support they receive from their programs," says Dr. Sauro Camiletti, Vice-Principal and Academic Dean.

Dr. Fairbairn calls the news "a well-deserved honour for Madelaine. She put a tremendous amount of work into her Honours Thesis and the result is an original and rigorous piece of

research that makes a timely contribution to scholarship around sexual violence, digital media, and social change.”

Coelho is currently enrolled in the Masters of Arts (MA) in the Sociology program at the University of Toronto.

Coelho's paper, along with four other King's alumni, also [received Highly Commended status in the Global Undergraduate Awards](#). Congratulations to Sarah Menzies '19, Nicole Szklarczyk '19, Christopher Anthony '19, and Mackenzie Mountford '19.

Global Winners are those whose submission is selected as the best in their category. Global Winners are recognized with a Gold Medal and Certificate of Recognition, publication of their winning submission on the Undergraduate Library, a free ticket and fully-funded travel to attend the UA Global Summit. The Summit takes place in Dublin, Ireland on November 11-13, 2019.

For more information on the Global winners of the 2019 Undergraduate Awards, please visit <https://undergraduateawards.com/news/ua-global-winners-2019>

King's is a public Catholic University College which provides general and honors degree programs in the liberal arts, social sciences, management, and a master's degree in social work. It is positioned in the top rank of institutions of higher learning in Canada for the high quality of its teaching faculty and student experience. Institutionally autonomous, King's is academically-affiliated with Western University, and King's graduates receive a Western University degree. King's is open to students of all faith backgrounds, with its community centred on the values of social justice, equality, and the education of the whole person.

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