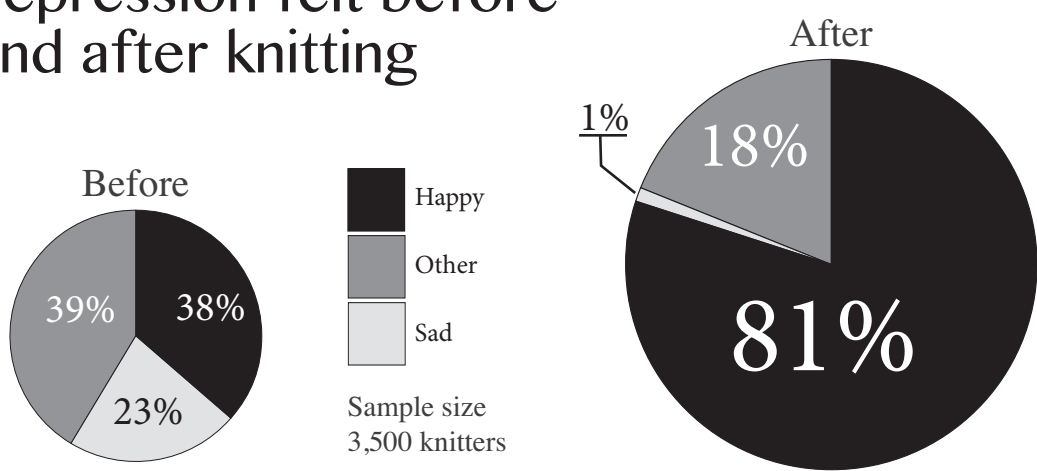


How knitters with depression felt before and after knitting



Source: British Journal of Occupational Therapy, February 2013

Not every issue involves politics



Sarah Muir

For a political science major, I have an unusually low tolerance for political things. Don't ask me to comment about the latest political controversy because my answer likely will be, "I don't care."

While this might seem like an odd position to take, it's one a lot more people should consider. Americans, and I'll argue college students especially, tend to overpoliticize issues. While it's easy to put topics into boxes labeled "liberal" or "conservative," it is very lazy and should be discouraged.

Overpoliticization happens when issues not inherently political become divided along party lines. The best example of this is the movie "American Sniper." The movie basically is a biographical film that is no different in purpose than "Unbroken." "Unbroken" and "American Sniper" are fairly similar — both are films about men in wars and how the wars affected them. Neither film tells the protagonist's complete life story. Unlike "Unbroken," though, "American Sniper" has been made into a political battleground between liberals and conservatives. Just because the movie featured recent instead of historical events, it has been turned into a political fight.

It's one thing to talk about the themes within a movie being liberal or conservative, but it's a whole different problem when people are for or against a movie before they've even seen it or thought about it from a film analysis perspective instead of a political identification framework.

An article published by Marginal Revolution during October 2014 points out the many ways events quickly are turned into political narratives by both parties. Anything can be turned into a reason why conservatives or liberals are ruining this country. The events in Ferguson, Missouri, were turned political when the real problems are with the American criminal justice system. The 2012 Benghazi attack was turned into a political fighting point when it was a security issue. Even the Ebola outbreak was spun into a political narrative when it really was a public health issue.

I suppose this all would just be annoying if there were no consequences to politicization but research tells us it can cause real problems. The recent issues about vaccination are in danger of becoming politicized and doing so only would increase the number of people who don't vaccinate their children, according to a Feb. 5 Science Of Us article.

Currently, the anti-vaccine movement does not fit into any one particular party, but if the political parties spin the right story it could become one. Once the issue is divided along party lines, more people will have strong opinions about it and act accordingly, meaning even more people would stop vaccinating their kids that otherwise would have vaccinated them. This is the worst-case scenario for public health.

Of course it is incredibly easy to think about these things along party lines. Why think through a complex issue yourself when party elites can tell you how you should think and act?

Sarah Muir is a sophomore political science major from Lee's Summit, Mo.

Knitting can help with relaxation



UmmeKulsoom Arif

Last weekend, I spent the better part of two completely sober hours staring intently at a white turtleneck sweater. Okay, it was off-white, with a few coffee stains on the front. And it probably was mechanically knitted, which was a disappointment.

I decided to learn how to knit two years ago and was encouraged by my mother — who had taken up knitting again after I started college — to look up as many how-to videos as I could to teach myself. At the end, it turned into something that not only helped ease my anxiety but put me on the road to recovery from self-harming. With my mind focused on the repetitive nature of moving a single strand of yarn in a pattern, I never had the opportunity to think about the many small stresses in my life — I could forget those stresses ever existed.

Until, of course, I ended up so into knitting that I forgot I had an assignment due.

When it came to easing my self-harm, I kept my hands busy in creation, not destruction. And it was through learning how to knit that I acknowledged my self-harm habit.

There's a beauty in knowing my hands can create something with just a ball of yarn and two pointy sticks. I get excited when I see one of my

roommates using one of the many knitted potholders I made and proud when someone compliments a scarf I'm wearing because my mother made it for me and no one else has a scarf exactly like it. Every hand-knitted project is unique and has mistakes that give it character. My mother's scarves come with the knowledge that she sat down for days to make something for me and no one else. Once I manage to finish a scarf, it'll come with the pride that I made the article I'm wearing. By hand. No one else will make this exact same item.

A lot of people think knitting and crocheting are old peoples' hobbies, designed for their grandmothers to help ward off arthritis of the hands. They imagine an old woman sitting in a rocking chair, knitting an afghan or crocheting a pair of booties for a small child. Very few people think of a student sitting in Barnett or Baldwin Hall with needles and yarn at the ready, talking to others doing the same activity as them. But that's turning out to be false.

More and more, I see people with crochet or knitting needles sitting in the buildings and talking while they move their fingers with blinding, practiced speed. It's easy to get tips from them instead of complaining quietly and hoping the Internet will provide solutions, and interacting with a knitting community is another mood-booster. There was a time, just a year or so ago, when I would have been ashamed to bring my needles to campus for fear of being made fun of. Nowadays, I keep yarn in my purse without an ounce of embarrassment, always ready to work on that scarf.

UmmeKulsoom Arif is a junior creative writing and justice systems major from St. Louis, Mo.

Be aware of how actions affect others



Conor Gearin

Sometimes it takes a fire drill to get us to remember to cook safely and cleanly, but our respect for the people who clean up after us ought to be enough.

I was eating breakfast this semester in a residence hall lounge when the housekeeper came by to clean the kitchen. She found someone had spilled food onto the bottom of the oven and it had cooked into a rock-like mess.

We chatted briefly about how many students have little experience cooking and often do not bother to do basic things such as cover the top of their food in the microwave or clean up after the

food overheats and blasts everywhere. She did not have hard-and-fast statistics to back up these claims, only the experience of cleaning up countless mistakes.

This got me thinking about how occasionally, I have found myself outside my residence hall on a chilly night well past midnight after a student's mistake while cooking caused the fire alarm to take up its painful, unchanging song.

But I do not want to use this column to shame those who have made such mistakes — especially since such events might truly have been accidents. I am sure those students did not intend to set off a fire alarm with their midnight snacks.

Instead, I hope to reflect on the times I forgot to consider the wide-ranging consequences of small choices.

It would be nice if I thought about the rippling effects of every action I took — if I reminded myself how to bike safely on a sidewalk full of pedestrians before setting off, or reflected about what problems I might cause by not taking my clothes out of the communal dryer on time. In fact, it would be nice to think I even considered the consequences of actions that seem to

only impact me, such as staying up too late for no good reason.

But I often do not think about these things. I just look in wonder and shame at the aftermath.

Small actions can have wide-ranging consequences, some of which we can predict, but many we cannot. I can predict squeezing the plastic salad tongs too hard in the dining hall and breaking them will make food-gathering more challenging for everyone using the salad bar after me. However, I cannot predict how much this might frustrate someone who already has a day full of uncorrected mistakes in her or his path.

To consider the idea in a more positive sense, I do not know who might notice me being nice and responsive in class and try to participate more fully in her or his classes as a result. Of course, I cannot be nice and responsive without adequate sleep, which requires going to bed on time, and so on.

Literature is full of depictions of unexpected consequences and connections. In the novel "All the Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr, a late-night Paris radio

broadcast of old French educational science programs unintentionally reaches orphans growing up in Nazi Germany hundreds of miles away listening with a homemade receiver. The children became aware of wonderful realities beyond the Nazi propaganda and oppression of their home.

Rather than obsessing about every small decision, I instead would like to get myself to think more clearly about which actions can impact people strongly and which cannot.

Another recent morning, the housekeeper told me that I should put my coffee grounds in the trash rather than rinsing down the sink, which has no garbage disposal unit. I nearly had backed up the drain the day before.

Failing to use the kitchen properly can inconvenience hundreds of people. But it should only take one person to convince us that being considerate is worth it.

Conor Gearin is a senior biology and English major from St. Louis, Mo.

AROUND THE QUAD

How can people in the residence halls be more conscientious?

Just pick up your laundry on time. We feel guilty moving it.

Elizabeth Denn
Senior



The thing that bugs me the most is the noise level. People ignore the quiet hours.

Zachary Stahl
Freshman



Some of the doors can't open quietly, and there's not much to do about that.

Elizabeth Rounkles
Junior



Just respect the other people and their stuff.

Ivan Morrell
Freshman

