During the fall semester of 2023, I was required to create and disseminate a senior thesis to represent the culmination of my four years at LMU for the University Honors Program. After lengthy reflection, I chose to expand on my previous research from Dr. Elizabeth Drummond’s Fall 2022 Honors Historical Analysis & Perspective course centered around European colonization and its influence in other areas. This class was eye-opening not only because of the content but because halfway through our semester, we visited the library’s special archives to look at postcards detailing historical experiences of colonization in Britain. This was astonishing because it allowed me to see how tangible artifacts could be used as primary sources to tell a culture’s history. This changed my perspective on how the library could be used, especially because my only interactions with the library’s resources were with the peer-reviewed papers I used for my psychology major. This interest was emphasized when Dr. Drummond's final assignment expected students to create an interactive way to share a previously discussed topic within the class while using primary and secondary sources. Being born and raised in Hawai‘i and also being Native Hawaiian I have always been interested in the process of colonization that overtook Hawai‘i in the 1770s. Therefore I chose to explore this history within my project and to use the special archives to help me do so. I made an appointment and scoured postcards from Hawai‘i dating back to the earliest record held to the most recent. I was able to use these postcards in my final presentation for the class and even in my dissemination to the Spring 2023 Undergraduate Research Symposium where I presented my project. These two opportunities fueled my inspiration and motivation to take the information I uncovered from the library and its resources and turn it into the basis of my Honors Senior Thesis with Dr. Drummond as my mentor.
Over the next two semesters, I used postcards, primary and secondary sources from the library database, and the expert advice of my professors and library team members to create my senior thesis project. While there were no explicit instructions for my senior thesis I chose to create a literature review that focused on the intersection between psychology and history, specifically historical trauma and how it correlated to rates of homelessness, rates of substance abuse, and overall feelings of disempowerment. Using keywords I used the online database to find articles that would inform my research. Many of these were available through the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and Pubmed which I knew were credible sources. I also searched terms on Google Scholar and if the paper had a free PDF available through LMU’s library I employed that paper instead. This online search engine proved very useful because many of the primary sources I used for my thesis were anecdotal pieces. However, I wanted to make sure that the history of the people in these anecdotal stories was accurate and aligned with my previous research. Therefore, being able to condense my search in the library’s database to peer-reviewed sources helped tremendously. Using sources I reviewed from the library’s online database to inform my interpretations I made another appointment with the special archives. Being well-informed with the data from my online research, I was then able to explain how the luaus and hula dancers, two examples of cultural traditions pictured in the postcards, were hiding the insidious acts that the tourism industry conducted that caused Hawaiians a loss of land and culture. I was also able to see, with the help of Dr. Drummond and professionals from the archive, how dates on the postcards played a part in the interpretation. In my paper, I put photos of the postcards I had taken as well as other analyses I had made while looking at these sources. Additionally, I was also able to submit this project during the Spring 2024 semester and present
my findings during the 2024 Undergraduate Research Symposium, a feat I wouldn’t have been able to accomplish without all of the support and resources from the library and Dr. Drummond.