

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** Discursive Struggles Among College Drinkers and Non-Drinkers

**STUDENT:** Caleb J. Green

**DEGREE:** Master of Arts

**COLLEGE:** College of Communication, Information, and Media

**DATE:** July 2014

**PAGES:** 79

Alcohol is a significant part of life for college students. Whether they choose to imbibe in or abstain from, college students find that the substance has a profound effect on the construction of their social lives. This study analyzed focus group interviews of drinkers and non-drinkers using Baxter's (2011) Relational Dialectics Theory to examine the struggle between different ways of speaking about alcohol in a college setting. Findings revealed that both groups use various discursive moves to both limit and expand the overall discourse of college drinking and non-drinking, negotiating alcohol's importance in college life and adulthood.

*Keywords:* college students, alcohol, abstinence, interpersonal communication, relational dialectics theory, discursive struggle