

November 17, 2021



A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF UTAH

## A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

As we head into the annual National Communication Association conference in Seattle this week, it's a good time to reflect on our extraordinary presence at what continues to rank as one of the top annual research and teaching conferences in the world. The Department will be represented across more than 90 research and teaching presentations, panels, and award ceremonies and within at least a dozen pre-conference and conference IDEA, leadership, innovation, and teaching sessions. At least 35 faculty and students from our Department will be part of the week. Absolutely amazing!

The University of Utah NCA Reception—hosted by our Department—will be on Friday, Nov. 19 from 7-9 pm at the Cinque Terre Ristorante just a few blocks from the conference hotel. We'd love to see as many of you there as possible. Please remember that most places in Seattle, including the conference hotel, are requiring indoor masking and proof of vaccination or a recent negative test. If you want to work ahead of the game, you can upload your proof of vaccination or negative test results to the NCA site here.

Cheers for now, and here's to a wonderful NCA ahead and to a successful march toward the end of the semester thereafter.

## Professor Rachel Griffin to be honored with National Communication Presidential Citation for Service

At the National Communication Association (NCA) convention (November 18th–November 21st, 2021) in Seattle, WA, Dr. Rachel Alicia Griffin will be honored with a NCA Presidential Citation for her 2019–2021 term as Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Council Chair.



## Department Alum Palak Jayswal featured on "Exploration Encouraged"

Communication alum Palak Jayswal was featured on "Exploration Encouraged," a feature installation from the Career & Professional Development Center. She talks about her journey into radio and her time with *The Daily Utah Chronicle*.





# CRASH COURSE

Persuasion and Political Communication with Benjamin Lyons

We cover a lot of ground in this course - from normative theory about the role of journalists in our democracy, to empirical research on the effects of advertising up and down the ballot. We discuss media fragmentation, algorithms, misinformation, Nate Silver, and clickbait as an economic model. We read about the effects of broadband on voting, the reasons we see so much hostility on social media, and the role of political memes in our discourse. We talk about women who organized secret political groups in Texas, the role of Breitbart in the media ecosystem, and how Russian Facebook ads targeted swing voters in 2016. We dive into the history of American political media to see that today's news landscape looks surprisingly similar to 1790's.

We read cutting edge research and mix in plenty of podcasts and news articles. Students choose a topic they are passionate about and lead the class in a discussion or activity related to that set of readings. Students also monitor a news source of their choice over the course of the semester, learn about its backstory, and analyze its coverage decisions in light of our readings.



We are studying a quickly moving target. The way people communicate about politics, and the downstream effects - are changing rapidly. Just between 2016 and 2020, for instance, we saw the rise of entirely new social platforms, new trends in how politicians stoke anger among their constituents, new demands for regulations on online ads, and new approaches to combatting misinformation, to name just a few.

Take away a deeper understanding of how our current woes in media and politics are rooted in historical and structural trends. I also hope they gain a better grasp of how the media, campaigns, and the public are increasingly interlinked. Finally, I hope students feel more empowered in navigating the news environment and making it work for their needs.



# Us Upfront

Cameron Vakilian

If I didn't work in education, I would be:

in Musical Theatre!

On a perfect weekend, you can find me:

having a chill game night with friends

Quote I live by:

"We're all born naked and the rest is drag" - *RuPaul*

Most memorable college class I took:

COMM 5490 - Communication and Social Justice

If I were a student now, I would:

pursue a learning abroad opportunity. I regret not doing that!

Fictional character I'm most like:

Ryan Evans from *High School Musical*

Last book I finished:

*Contagious* by Jonah Berger

Last movie I saw:

*Cruella*

If I'm at a concert, it's:

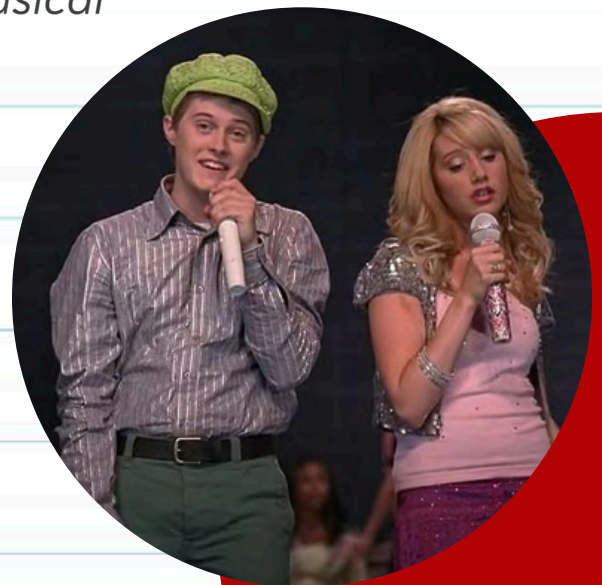
Celine Dion

Song that pump me up:

"Defying Gravity" from *Wicked*

I hope that my students:

Get involved! It's the ticket to success



Virtual  
**GOING GLOBAL  
CAREER PANEL**

**NOVEMBER 17  
4:30-6:30 P.M.**

**TODAY!**



## Dean Search Town Hall Meetings

November 18th - CTIHB 101 from 3:30-5  
November 22nd - CTIHB 109 from 3:30-5  
November 29th - CTIHB 109 from 3:30-5  
December 1st - CTIHB 109 from 3:30-5



FALL 2021 TANNER TALK:  
Nnedi Okorafor  
NOVEMBER 18, 2021 at 12:00PM (VIRTUAL  
EVENT)



University of Utah will host author Nnedi Okorafor in a virtual conversation with Director Erika George and Assistant Professor of English Andrew Shephard.

## LINGUISTICS COLLOQUIUM TALKS

**Dr. Claire  
Moore-Cantwell**  
UCLA



Lexical idiosyncrasy and experience:  
A grammatical-lexical model

**THURSDAY | NOV. 18TH | 3:30-4:30PM**  
**JOIN AT 3:15 TO SOCIALIZE**

Contact [linguistics@utah.edu](mailto:linguistics@utah.edu) for meeting link



Philosophy Colloquium Speaker Series:  
Environmental Interference  
With Karen Kovaka from Virginia Tech  
November 19, 2021 | 2:30 - 4:30pm | CTIHB 109