

January 20, 2023

COMMUNITY

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

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Ahead of News Literacy Week, which runs January 23-27, I had the chance to meet with Dr. Mark Rapaport, the CEO of the new (as of 2021) Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI). While our conversation centered around the University's Grand Challenge to end stigma—a massive national effort being led by Dr. Rapaport—we also discussed the very real and important need of Communication scholars to join in research, praxis and dialogue around mental health. Next week, we'll circulate an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in Healing Out Loud, a short film contest aimed at opening more space for conversations around and acknowledgement of mental health and well-being. I hope you'll take a look at the opportunity and, if you're comfortable, share it with your students as they head into the semester alongside us. And as HMHI and Dr. Rapaport share more opportunities for our engagement, I hope we'll take up the call.

-Cheers, Avery

Dr. Suhi Choi Named 2022-2023 Utah Presidential Leadership Fellow



The Department of Communication is pleased to announce that Dr. Suhi Choi has been selected as a 2022-2023 Mellon funded Utah Presidential Leadership Fellow. The UPL Fellowship seeks to transform the expectations that surround leaders, leadership, and leadership development across higher education with a specific focus on the challenges associated with leading for equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Cameron Vakilian Selected as Director of Advising, Outreach, and Experiential Learning

Cameron Vakilian has accepted the position of director of advising, outreach, and experiential learning for the University of Utah's College of Humanities. In this new role, Vakilian will provide support to the advising community across the college's departments and programs and will support and innovate the college's effort to attract new students to the humanities and connect them with world-class learning opportunities.



Using data to tell LGBTQ+ stories in Uganda

Caleb Okereke will be presenting at an event with the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford as part of the Global Journalism Seminars series. The virtual seminar focuses on using data to tell LGBTQ+ stories in Uganda, and Okereke will speak more broadly about telling such stories from all across Africa. Tune in on February 1, 2023, at 6:00 AM MST to watch! This event will also be recorded.



NiemanLab Predictions for Journalism 2023 featuring Jacob Nelson



“People will continue to pursue careers in journalism despite (or maybe even because of) its ongoing challenges. Many will begin those pursuits in university classrooms. My hope is that journalism educators meet this demand by doing what we wish more journalists did within their newsrooms: Reflecting honestly and openly about how we’ve been doing our jobs and making meaningful changes to better serve the public.” Continue reading here.

Utah ‘Dreamers’ urge Romney to back a pathway to citizenship for immigrants

“There’s a huge focus on how much we can contribute and what we do for the economy and the career paths we take or education. But none of that matters,” former Communication undergraduate student Andrea Jimenez Flores said. “The only thing that actually matters is that we’re human beings and because we’re human beings, we’re deserving, and we should be allowed to be safe in our homes, and we should be allowed to not fear having our families be separated and not fear that our livelihoods will be taken away.” Continue reading here.



CONGRATULATIONS STELLAR STAFF AWARD

Awarded by the College of Humanities



Jessica Finch



Travis Ciaramella

ACADEMIC ADVISOR

This position advises a diverse population of students regarding their academic planning and progress in the Department of Communication by utilizing professional advising and guidance skills.

Know someone who would be interested?

[FIND THE APPLICATION HERE](#)

CRASH COURSE

A COMM 5650 On Difficulty: Games, Art, Communication
with Nathan Wainstein

On Difficulty: Games, Art, Communication examines difficulty as a shared feature of games, literature, and art, teasing out its experiential details and specifying how it either changes or remains the same when we move from one aesthetic form to another. Although difficulty has always been a central topic in game design—games inherently involve challenge—it has become a hot-button issue in recent years with the popularity of ultra-tough video games like *Super Meat Boy* and *Elden Ring*. But difficulty also has a long history in theories of art, with multiple traditions asserting that the “best” artworks are difficult, that the experience of art should be uncomfortable, or that failure is inherent to art as such. How might such theories illuminate questions of difficulty in games? And conversely, how might the way that game designers and theorists conceptualize difficulty change how we understand challenging novels, poems, or paintings?

This course gives students the chance to reflect rigorously on difficulty (a basic part of experiencing art that’s rarely analyzed in itself), to share and commiserate about their own experiences of frustration or defeat, and to place video games into a meaningful relation with modernist art and theory. Students will begin thinking critically about difficulty as an aesthetic feature and reflect on the fine details of their own experience reading or playing a work.

This course is committed to making modernist literature and ultra-tough games more accessible by taking seriously our negative experiences of frustration or failure and working through them collaboratively.



Us Upfront

Grace Rogers



On a perfect weekend, you can find me

getting coffee, boba, or hotpot with my friends!
Or laying in bed watching Netflix...

Most memorable college class I took

Media and Cultural Differences

Last book I finished

The Memory Police by Yoko Ogawa

Last movie I saw

Everything Everywhere All at Once, directed by Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert

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

The Lumineers

Song that pumps me up:

Don't Lose Sight by Lawrence
or Paradise by George Ezra

I hope that my students

feel empowered to explore their
passions and make a difference
in the world around them!

