

COMMUNITY

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION



Opening Message

Director of Undergraduate Studies, Travis Ciaramella

As we reach the end of the calendar year and the conclusion of the fall semester, we take this opportunity to reflect on our collective achievements and extend our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated faculty, staff, and students. This semester has been marked by exceptional hard work and commitment, evident in the engaging courses, innovative research, projects, and the supportive community we have cultivated.

We have seen a significant increase in enrollment and course demand for the upcoming spring semester. This growth is a testament to the quality of education we provide and the vibrant academic environment we have built together. We want to extend a special thank you to our wonderful advising team, who has worked tirelessly this term, and even more so the past few weeks, to ensure our students are getting into the courses they need to graduate. It is exciting to see our department thrive, and we look forward to continuing to support our students in their academic journeys.

As we approach the holiday break, we encourage everyone to take time for rest and rejuvenation. This well-deserved pause allows us to reflect on our accomplishments and recharge for the exciting challenges ahead in the new year. Thank you once again for your dedication and hard work. Wishing you all a joyful and restful holiday season. We look forward to reconvening in the spring with renewed energy and enthusiasm.



DEPARTMENT NEWS

CELEBRATING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

This year we have nearly twenty Department members attending the National Communication Association Conference. We are proud to have such strong Department representation at NCA this year. Many of our attendees are presenting their papers, research ideas, and are paneling discussions. Among those at the conference, we have several award winners including graduate students Kinny Torre, Damon Darling, and Yiqing Ran who had Top Student Papers in their respective emphases.



Additionally, our Faculty members, including Assistant Professor Leandra Hernandez and Distinguished Professor Kent Ono, have received recognition for their significant contributions to the field. Members of the Department will be presenting a total of twenty times throughout the conference about subject matters such as social justice, feminist rhetoric, LGBTQ+ well-being, health communication, and forensics.



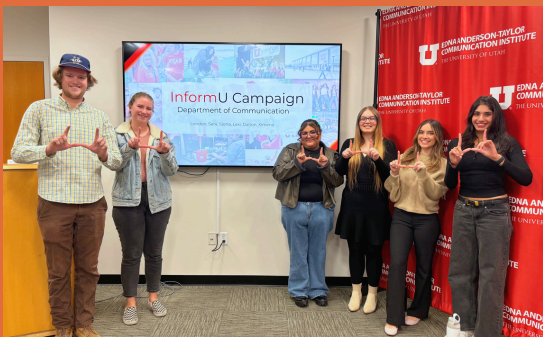
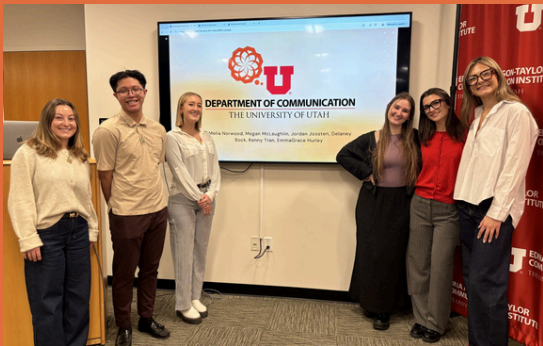
Marcie Young Cancio
Clinical Associate Professor

Faculty Member Spotlight

We are excited to announce that Amplify Utah—a non-profit newsroom founded by Clinical Associate Professor Marcie Young Cancio—was recently named a Press Forward grant recipient. Amplify Utah joins 204 other small news outlets in receiving a share of \$20 million to close persistent coverage gaps, thanks to funding from Press Forward, the nationwide movement to strengthen communities by reinvigorating local news.

Amplify Utah was recognized for its work empowering emerging journalists through providing resources, opportunities, and mentorship needed to make a meaningful impact. They join an inaugural, historic cohort of local newsrooms across the country that are filling critical information gaps and working in service of our communities.

[READ MORE](#)



AbsolUTE Communication

For the first time ever, the Department of Communication was featured as a client in the Advertising Agency-style capstone course COMM 3630: Absolute Communication. Twelve students have been working tirelessly this semester developing ideas, working with members of the Department, and surveying their peers. Each team created a campaign with the goal of boosting student engagement. What they came up with was fantastic! From tabling events for undecided students to much-needed website updates these fresh perspectives are such an asset to our Department. We look forward to implementing ideas from the WhyComm and InformU Campaigns over the next year.

Special thanks to Adjunct Professor Kevin Bischoff for running this course and giving students a foundation for future success.

New One-U RAI Faculty Fellow Assistant Professor Isabelle Freiling

In its first push to attract and retain top talent in translational AI, the University of Utah One-U Responsible Artificial Intelligence Initiative (RAI) has named seven faculty fellows and one distinguished visitor including our very own Dr. Freiling. Her publications identify the challenges that algorithms pose in understanding online information environments, such as social media, where researchers don't know who sees what. She is advancing understanding of how this lack of access to data hinders theory building. We are so proud of Dr. Freiling and applaud her determination and willingness to keep accomplishing more.

[READ MORE](#)



COMM 3720 – APPLIED COMMUNICATION RESEARCH CRASH COURSE



Course Description

If there's one thing all professional communicators share in common, it's their need to solve real-world problems through targeted, strategic messaging. In an age of information overload sending the right messages through the right channels to the right people at precisely the right time can be a complex process! How do businesses, non-profits, health organizations, governments, politicians, and educational institutions know how to prepare the perfect messaging campaigns—and then track them to see if they're achieving the results they need? Research!

In this class, students learn how to use a diverse range of applied research methods—methods that seek to solve problems and seize opportunities—in order to create calculated, creative, and strategic communications and campaigns. Preparing them to excel in professions such as public relations, marketing, brand management, politics, and corporate communications, students learn how to ask focused research questions, plan out focused research studies, and analyze data to make informed decisions.

Meet the Instructor



Dr. Curtis Newbold
Clinical Associate Professor

My goal for this course is to provide students with a breadth of experience and exposure to research methods that they can use throughout their lives. I hope that students will discover the joy of using applied research in order to make more informed, creative, strategic, and ethical decisions about the messages they're sending out into the world.

Course Objectives

As a survey course in applied research, students are exposed to a diverse range of methods and practices they can expect to use throughout their careers:

- Literature reviews
- Semiotic and rhetorical analysis
- Participant observation
- Interviewing
- Content analysis
- Surveys
- Focus Groups
- Usability Testing
- Data visualization

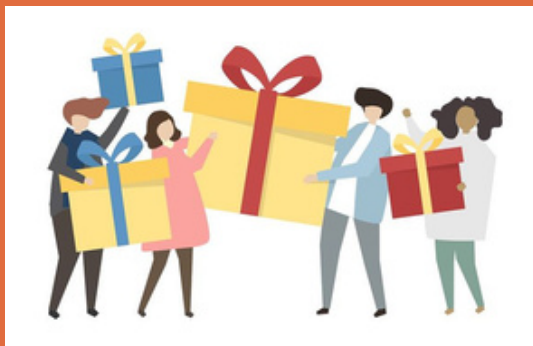
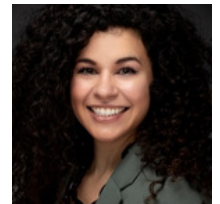
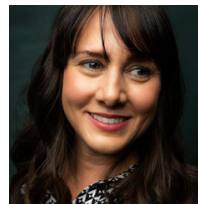
Ultimately students assemble their own research brief for a real-world problem they're interested in solving.

Departmental Happenings

Graduate Student Achievements: Damon Darling was awarded the WSCA Top Student Paper in Environmental Humanities for his paper drawing parallels between queerness and the poppy pejorative. Caitlin Walrath submitted her paper titled, "Gamer Cultural Tariffs" to ICA, we wish her the best of luck!

Faculty Achievements: Associate Instructor Dawn Wright was named a 2024 Healthcare Hero for her work at Select Health. Clinical Associate Professor Natasha Seegert successfully hosted her second BRAVE conversation event. Assistant Professor Leandra Hernandez had a publication come out with Oxford University Press.

Follow @uofucomm on Instagram for more!



A message for **Everyone**

As we approach the Holiday season, no matter what you celebrate, the Department of Communication would like to wish you a restful period spent with those you love.

We look forward to seeing you in January with a brand-new issue of CommUnity, catching up on everything we missed.

Upcoming Events

November 28–December 1st

Thanksgiving break

December 3rd

Tabling Tuesdays. Discover campus resources and meet with your career coach at the CTIHB Lobby from noon to 2pm!

December 5th

Last day of classes! Grab a treat in CTIHB from 10am to noon!

December 14th–January 5th

Winter break!