

COMMUNITY

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION



Opening Message

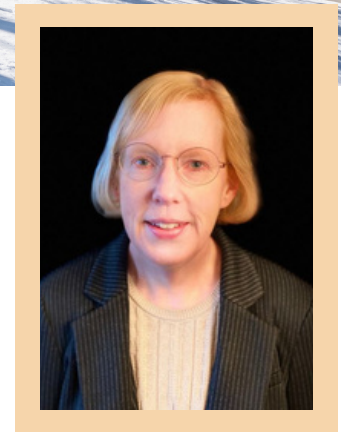
Professor Kimberly Kaphingst

We are in rapidly changing times and managing uncertainty can be challenging. But there are steps that you can take to navigate uncertainty with resilience. Research suggests starting by focusing on what you can control. You can break down big challenges into smaller, manageable steps, and take one step at a time.

When things feel overwhelming, it can help to pause and breathe, giving yourself space to reflect and slow down. Also, be sure to practice self-care, whether that's through exercise, mindfulness, or taking time to relax.

Maintaining healthy habits can help keep you clear and focused. Also, please reach out for support when needed, from your friends, your family, or our resources on campus. You can find more about support at the university at: <https://studentsuccess.utah.edu/resources/student-support/> and support from our academic advisors in the Department of Communication by emailing comm-advisor@utah.edu.

Practicing self-care, maintaining healthy habits, and reaching out for support can help you navigate uncertainty with the strength of our community.



DEPARTMENT NEWS

REFLECTING ON OUR SUCCESSES

Celebrating Undergraduate Research

This year marks the 25th anniversary of Research Day on the Hill—an annual opportunity for undergraduate researchers to show off their hard work at the Utah State Capitol. Two students represented the College of Humanities, including our very own Jasmine Aguilar who presented her project, “Atrapadxs en un Hoyo: Reproductive Justice and Environmental Health of Latina Mothers and Children in Salt Lake City Utah.”



-Credit: College of Humanities



Dr. Ben Lyons

Assistant Professor

Faculty Member Spotlight

Dr. Ben Lyons, a distinguished researcher and faculty member at the University of Utah, is currently leading groundbreaking work in the field of media literacy and misinformation. His first solo book is under contract with Oxford University Press, and it delves into the consumption and sharing of misinformation among older adults. His work provides the first in-depth, comprehensive treatment of this topic, dispelling myths about cognitive decline and digital illiteracy as primary drivers of misinformation spread.

Dr. Lyons’ research serves as a critical step toward reshaping how misinformation is understood and addressed. By sharing his findings, he aims to inspire informed discussions, influence policy, and ultimately contribute to a more media-literate society.

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Community Connection

A once-bare 30-foot wall in the Languages and Communication building has transformed into a vibrant showcase of student talent, thanks in part to the efforts of Roger Tuttle, an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Communication. Over the past few months, Tuttle and the Department of Communication have worked closely with Davis High School to create the Community Connection project—a visual celebration of student artistry that brings together emerging photographers from both the high school and university levels. The new display, which includes printed works and a digital slideshow, aims to foster a stronger sense of community within Utah’s artistic landscape while giving students the recognition they deserve. Tuttle’s passion for the project shines through as he emphasizes the importance of celebrating the students’ work and the energy photography brings to the space.

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AI and Misinformation

A Speaker Series Talk by Dr. Freiling

Dr. Isabelle Freiling delivered an insightful talk on misinformation, social media, and artificial intelligence as part of the Edna Anderson-Taylor Communication Institute Speaker Series. During her talk, Dr. Freiling explored the dynamics of misinformation, touching on its accuracy, creation, dissemination, and methods of intervention.

This fascinating talk deepened our understanding of a topic we often encounter but may not fully grasp. Be sure to watch for future Speaker Series events from the Communication Institute to continue learning about a wide range of thought-provoking topics!

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CRASH COURSE

Course Description

This special-projects class coincides with the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, during which 120,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly evacuated from the West Coast and incarcerated in camps across the country. One camp was Topaz, near Delta, Utah. It held more than 8,000 people behind barbed wire. This course aims to amplify their voices, share their stories, and educate the public about this chapter in U.S. history.

Students in Glen Feighery's COMM 5800 are working with those in Craig Wirth's COMM 4560 Documentary Production to research, write, and create a film about Topaz. The class is planning a trip to the Topaz Museum in Delta and to the campsite, which remains remote and desolate. Most importantly, students are meeting with members of the Japanese American community, who have generously allowed students to film interviews with them. One person was born at Topaz; others are descendants of people who were held in the camps or who served in the Army during the war.



The Importance

The interviewees described heartbreak and hardship as family members were taken from California and confined in the Utah desert. These interviews have been powerful. Our students are honored to be entrusted with these stories and to present them with sensitivity and respect. This course aims to amplify their voices, share their stories, and educate the public about this chapter in U.S. history.

Students in the two separate courses are working collaboratively. People enrolled in COMM 4560 Documentary Production are embracing the challenge of crafting a historical narrative. Students in COMM 5800 Documenting Topaz have a tangible outlet for their research. This is not the first time two courses in our department have worked in tandem, and our experience might suggest additional ways that faculty could combine research-based classes with skills classes.

Course Objectives

This course combines several methods of learning, and students will learn to:

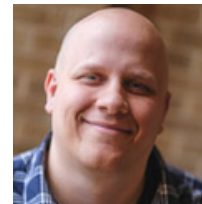
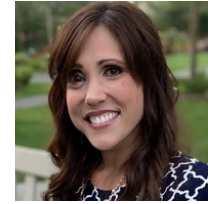
- Set up and conduct long-form interviews off campus. One student asks questions while others handle the camera, lighting, and sound, replicating the professional settings.
- Conduct historical research. Those not involved in interviews are writing the documentary script and collecting assets—old photos, newspapers, and documents—to illustrate the topics emerging from the interviews.
- Present a complex topic to a public audience.

Departmental Happenings

Dr. Natasha Seegert is spearheading a new professional Conflict Resolution and Mediation certificate with Amy Draper for those who may be interested in becoming a court-rostered mediator. [Click here](#) for more information.

Dr. Jakob Jensen and Graduate Student Yi Liao have published several articles together including, *"Infodemics and health information overload."*

Dr. Andy King also published two articles recently, including *"Colorectal Cancer Racial Equity Post Volume, Content, and Exposure: Observational Study Using Twitter Data."*



Master's Program in Korea

Have you ever thought about studying abroad? Imagine earning a Master's Degree in Communication while living in South Korea! The University of Utah Asia Campus offers a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the vibrant global hub of Songdo, Incheon, and explore all that South Korea has to offer—just a short distance from the bustling city of Seoul.

Upcoming Events

March 3rd

John R. Park Debate Society Third Annual Showcase.
All are welcome 6:00 pm -7:30 pm in LNCO 1110.

March 6th & March 11th

UAC Graduate Program info Sessions, March 6th at 4 pm and March 11th at 6:30 pm via Zoom. View the page below for more information!

March 9th – March 16th

Spring Break!

GET YOUR MASTER'S DEGREE IN KOREA

TAKE THE NEXT STEP!

The University of Utah Asia Campus offers a dynamic and comprehensive Communication Master's Degree program designed to equip students with practical knowledge in strategic communication. This U.S.-degree program, taught in South Korea and conducted entirely in English, is tailored to meet the diverse needs of current and future practitioners.

INFO SESSIONS

March 6th, 4:00 pm MST
or
March 11th, 6:30 pm MST



<https://utah.zoom.us/j/4308287262>

The Department of Communication's nationally ranked graduate program is distinguished by its vibrant, prolific, nationally and internationally recognized faculty, as well as a flexible but theoretically and methodologically grounded graduate curriculum.



LOCATED IN SOUTH KOREA

- ✓ Songdo, Incheon
- ✓ An Emerging Global Hub
- ✓ Beautiful and Modern City
- ✓ Seoul a Short Distance Away

WHY CHOOSE US?

- ✓ Graduate Assistantships Available
- ✓ Collaboration between US and Asia Campuses
- ✓ Close-Knit Community

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- ✉ jun.heo@utah.edu
- 🌐 <https://asiacampus.utah.edu/masters-of-communication/>