

Journalism Evolves to Meet Consumer Needs

Sarah Goldy-Brown

A pencil, notepad, and printing press will no longer cut it. Journalism has far advanced since the times of the daily newspaper and continues to do so as technology changes. Smartphones, social media, digital-native news trends, and consumer habits have drastically changed the field of journalism.

With the emergence of new mediums over the past 10 years, consumers now, more than ever, act as gatekeepers, deciding which news stories go viral and which never make it into someone's Facebook feed. According to a [study](#) conducted by Journalism.org, 82% of Americans access their news on a desktop or laptop and 54% access news on a mobile device. The transition from paper to cyber creates a space for users to engage with the news they read about and watch. Half of social network users share or repost news stories, images or videos and 46% discuss news issues (Journalism.org). Not only do consumers digest news, but one in ten social networking users post news videos that they have captured themselves. News now exists as an interactive form of two-way communication rather than as one-way information dissemination.

As consumer habits change, the journalism industry has started to change as well. Newspapers and television stations no longer target separate audiences; they now compete head-to-head on the internet for the attention and favor of media consumers. Newspapers have created online editions, Twitter handles, Facebook pages, and even Instagram accounts.

The popularity of online news has also created space for the emergence of digital-native news sites. Sites like BuzzFeed, Mashable, and Yahoo News have all grown their reach, staff size, and content to fulfill the perceived desires of the consumer. Madeline Shappell, a junior journalism major, commends these online sites for providing easily digestible content that also entertains the public. "On BuzzFeed, you can scroll down through the headlines and it has a brief description, so if you're really curious you can click on it and keep on reading. This definitely appeals to the consumer's short attention span."

Although many praise these sites, they have received some critique. Dr. Arke, professor of communication, questions whether these sites disseminate information that people want or that they need, and the validity of their content. A study by the Pew Research Center also explores whether these sites can sustain themselves financially to compete with the larger news corporations or if they will have to return to smaller staff sizes in the coming years.

A news station's online presence in general also raises some concerns. A user's ability to spread news content through their personal social media channels can potentially create many problems.



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The viral nature of Twitter also creates this necessity for journalists to break the story first, which further perpetuates the problem. “There is a demand for news to come faster and faster and I think there’s a danger that we aren’t getting all the facts straight before we post them online,” said Shappell. Arke also asks, “What happens when a mistake is made or erroneous information is posted? How many people who saw the original post will also catch the correction?”

Journalists must find a balance between speedily informing the public and providing the public with well-researched and supported information. A Harvard Neiman Report suggests that adherence to long standing journalistic values can counter these potential problems. “Accuracy, proportionality and fairness, as time-honored journalistic values, are well worth adoption by those conversing through social networks,” says Geneva Overholser, Neiman Foundation for Journalism.

Journalists must hone their research skills and their ability to ask questions and construct a fluid and engaging story. However, with the emergence of new media, journalists now need a vaster set of skills to compete in the evolving market. Dr. Arke states that, “the ability to work with a variety of A/V formats, both hardware and software, is key to gaining employment in the current marketplace.” Reporters can no longer go into the field with just a notebook and pen; they need to utilize smartphones and other media technology to create visual and audio stories.

To provide its students with the adequate skills and experience to compete in the journalism industry, the Department of Communication has developed new and revised classes, including Media Law and Ethics, Alternative Approaches to Journalism, Topics in Media Production, Topics in Journalistic Writing, and Media Management. The Department has also renamed the “Broadcasting” major to “Media, Culture and Technology,” to better reflect the changing industry.

As students have the opportunity to take new classes and to spend time in the new television studio, slated to open in January 2015, they can expect to gain even more hands-on experience that will give them an invaluable advantage as they head into the evolving journalism and media fields. 



“Hard Out Here” Research Heads “Out There”: Senior Represents Messiah at ECA Conference

Emily Carter

In April, senior public relations major Dan Row presented his poster, “Finding the Words Anyway: An Analysis of Lily Allen’s ‘Hard Out Here’ through the Lens of Kramarae’s Muted Group Theory,” at the Eastern Communication Association’s (ECA) regional conference (undergraduate category) in Providence, R.I.

Row, who participated in the undergraduate category, focused his research on British Pop Star Lily Allen, and her single, “Hard Out Here.”

According to Row, the British pop star’s single “talks about the difficulties of being a woman in this society and especially how the mass media has this terrible double standard against women. Throughout the song, Allen uses derogatory language, traditionally meant to offend women. She doesn’t do this to offend, however. She is trying to ‘reclaim’ the word by making it a term of empowerment, thereby taking away the negative power it has.”

After further analysis of the song, Row applied Cheris Kramarae’s Muted Group Theory, which he learned about in Dr. Kate Simcox’s Communication Theory class. “This theory says that language is unfair for certain people because it was made by people in power. In this case, it means that men have created lots of terms to put women in their place,” said Row.

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Row then examined other cases where people tried to reclaim profanity that was originally created with a similar intent. “The biggest example I found was the N-word,” he said. “It was originally used by white slave-owners to demean African Americans, and can still be done so. However, some sections of the African American community have tried to reclaim the word and can use it as a kind of sign of solidarity.”


He concluded that the attempts of Allen and other feminists who have tried to reclaim derogatory language have been largely unsuccessful. “Even if you try to change a word’s intention, the meaning behind it is there and... there is no way to differentiate between a positive or negative meaning,” he noted. “While it is a step in the right direction, I would argue that it is the wrong step. A more viable solution would be finding positive terms of empowerment that don’t have a meaning so tied up in negative and ultimately subjugation.”

For Row, conducting this research and preparing for the conference provided learning well beyond the classroom. “First of all, I know more about the process of preparing a paper for this kind of submission as well as about the topic itself. I’ve found that this is something I’m really interested in and something I hope to study further in grad school,” he said. “This falls under the category of ‘critical theory’—those theories that deal with power dynamics and struggles—and because of this, I know it’s something that I really find important and something I’d like to study more in the future.”

Dr. Simcox served as Dan’s mentor throughout the project. She commented, “Dan is a creative thinker and superb writer, and he really excels at making theoretical connections. He loves learning about a wide variety of popular culture topics and exploring the themes of oppression, power, and resistance, so this paper is a great representative of those interests.”

Row also presented his Senior Honors Project, “Pokememes and Power: The Rhetoric of Activist Fandom,” at Messiah on April 15. In his research, Row examined the use of internet memes as a form of visual persuasive rhetoric and how fandoms may point to a shifting power paradigm in our technology savvy society. Following the presentation, his advisor, Dr. Nance McCown, remarked, “I’m so proud of Dan. He nailed his senior honors research presentation

with great research craftsmanship, fabulous insights, intriguing findings, and a highly engaging presentation...an advisor’s dream!”

After graduation, Row plans to continue work on academic projects, with hopes of eventually attending graduate school. 

New COMMunity Faculty to Begin Fall 2014

Emily Carter

The Department of Communication will welcome two new faculty members for Fall 2014. Coming to Messiah from Malone College in Ohio, Dr. David Dixon will teach journalism and media, culture and technology courses. Professor Krista Imbesi, who has served as lecturer and adjunct instructor at Messiah for the past two years, will teach film production and oversee the film and television studios slated to open in January 2015. Both Messiah alums, these new faculty members share a vision for our COMMunity, and we look forward to welcoming them in a few short months.

David Dixon

Ph.D. in Mass
Communication, Indiana
University
M.A. in Communication,
Wheaton College
B.A. in Communication,
Messiah College



- Interests include political effects of religious media; missionary media, especially in Africa; visual storytelling; media law and ethics.
- Additional interest in African studies, especially church history and media.
- Student media adviser for over 15 years.
- Regular panelist at National College Media Convention.
- President of Advisers of Christian College Media.
- Hobbies: Photography, road biking, hiking, camping.

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Krista Imbesi

M.F.A. in Media Arts,
University at Buffalo
B.A. in Communication
(film concentration),
Messiah College



- Mark Diamond Research Grant recipient
- Thesis film, “Where We Belong” won Jury Prize at DIY Film Festival
- Co-founder of C&K Cinematography
- Lecturer and Adjunct Instructor at Messiah since 2012
- Developed the Non-Western course, “Global Indigenous Media”
- Spending Summer 2014 in Uganda, working with “Solidarity Uganda” on documentary about illegal land grabbing
- Interesting fact: Bungee jumped over the Nile River

other providers of services involved in the treatment and care of individuals of all ages with autism and their families, and is funded by the Bureau of Autism Services, PA Department of Public Welfare,” she said.

Craig, whose position is housed at Penn State College of Medicine in Hershey, Pa., noted, “I love that I am contributing to the greater good by working for an organization that makes a real difference in the lives of people with autism in Pennsylvania.” Inspired by her brother, Calvin, who has autism and an intellectual disability, Craig has spent the entirety of her career thus far in the disability services field.

“One of my primary responsibilities is managing ASERT’s statewide resource website www.PAautism.org, so I spend a lot of time at my computer creating, editing, and updating content on the website,” she said. She also enjoys traveling to various Pennsylvania destinations for presentations, conferences, and trainings.

Because ASERT is a statewide collaboration, Craig uses online communication and conference calls to interface with coworkers. “Technology is great for things like video conference calls, go-to-meeting presentations, and email, but I think it makes it a bit more challenging to keep everyone ‘in the loop’ on all of the nuances of what ASERT is doing when we are



Alum Finds Her Niche in Disability Services

Emily Carter

When Carla (Briggs ’07) Craig began her college career, she had no idea what she wanted to study. So she purposefully took courses in various disciplines, explaining, “I found that I really enjoyed my communication classes, and I was really drawn to the field. I also loved that communication was a major that didn’t require me to further my education in order to establish a respectable career path, and also that it left me with many options for different types of careers.”

Since graduating from Messiah with a B.A. in communication (public relations and advertising concentration) and minor in psychology, Craig has succeeded in establishing a successful career, working as Communication Manager for the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative, ASERT.

“ASERT is a partnership of medical centers, centers of autism research and services, universities and


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all in different physical locations,” she added.

While at Messiah, Craig interned at a marketing and public relations agency, as well as The Arc of Dauphin County, a small, non-profit organization. Speaking of The Arc, she explained, “It’s an organization that provides services and supports to individuals with intellectual disabilities. I loved every second of this internship, and it cemented in my mind that non-profit work was something I wanted to pursue.”

Fortunately for Craig, a full-time communication position opened up at The Arc, and she began her first job. “I was the only communication person on staff, so it was a great opportunity to do a little bit of everything and grow my skills in a lot of different areas,” she said.

A member of Lambda Pi Eta (Communication Honor Society) and former communication department work study student, Craig acknowledged, “Messiah gave me lots of great tools that prepared me for my career: An excellent foundation of knowledge in communication theory and practice, real-world experience through my internships and PR Campaign class, a network of supportive colleagues in the area that I can draw on for advice and expertise. And lots of great classes that gave me a taste of different PR specialties.” She encourages current students to attend networking events, contact area professionals, seek internships, and volunteer with local organizations.

In her spare time, Craig enjoys running with her Sheltie named Calli, knitting, making jewelry, reading, playing soccer, collecting and playing board games, and singing in her church choir. 

SPLICE Film Festival Celebrates Student Work

Emily Carter

On April 27, Parmer Cinema buzzed with excitement as students, faculty, and friends gathered in to attend SPLICE, the Messiah College Student Film Festival. The event, hosted by senior communication major Billy Martel and junior film and media arts/digital media major Lindsay Corriveau, featured seven films, a scrumptious red carpet reception, and prestigious filmmaker awards.



Professors Fabrizio Cilento, Nathan Skulstad, and Krista Imbesi comprised the festival committee. Imbesi explained, “The Splice Film Festival is a showcase of Messiah student work from the past year. Students submit films to us, and we have a committee who meets to watch them together and discuss which ones to include in the festival.”

Imbesi, who worked with students to create a hosting video to introduce the films, added, “Over the past two years we have redesigned the film festival into more of a formal event. The film and digital media programs are growing exponentially here at Messiah, and the quality of work submitted is at a higher level than in the past. I am blown away by the quality of the work we’ve received from students in recent years and I’m looking forward to seeing the film and digital media programs grow even more in the future.” Corriveau added, “It was great to see everyone’s hard work pay off.”

Senior film and media arts student Mitch McClure received awards for Best Directing and Best Film (Audience Choice) for his film, “Downward.” McClure served as director, director of photography, and editor for the project. He noted, “Downward is a sci-fi/action/drama short film about a widow who lost her husband to war and has to enlist the help of a bioengineered super-soldier to help her find his body. The film deals with the brutality of war and the value of forgiveness.”

Messiah graduate Gwendolyn Collier took home the award for Best Screenplay for her film, “Fighting Through the Static,” which she produced as part of her senior project last year. According to Collier, “Fighting Through the Static” is “a short film designed to

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communicate what life for a young man with Asperger Syndrome can be like.” Billy Martel directed the film, while senior film and media arts student Serena Dixon took on the role of editor. Collier explained that she was mostly involved in the structural aspects of production. “I wrote and story boarded the screenplay, contacted Billy about handling the direction and equipment, reserved all the spaces we would need for shooting and was present to oversee the filming, often acting as boom mic operator since we were short staffed.”

The Best Cinematography award went to Derick Esch, a senior film and media arts major, for his film, “Beyond the Margins.” “In this short documentary, people living with disability in Ghana, West Africa find hope and strength to overcome the daily physical challenges and discrimination they face from their families and community. With the support of World Vision and other non-governmental organizations, the Ghanaian people find mutual acceptance and understanding, regardless of ability,” said Esch.

“This was my first involvement of any kind working on a documentary film, much less directing, shooting, and editing the whole project,” Esch added. “World Vision and the Collaboratory at Messiah College offered me a great opportunity to experiment with this new genre, and hopefully the film will continue to have success at film festivals in the future and impact the way people view persons living with disability.”

Senior film and media arts major Sarah Stevenson received the award for Best Editing for her film, “The Sleeping Mask.” Stevenson says, “I did not have a plan when I started filming ‘The Sleeping Mask.’ I just had certain images in my head and went with my gut feelings about what to shoot. For me, the exciting thing about avant-garde editing is that you don’t know what kind of story you will end up with. I find that I create much more depth in post-production than in pre-production, so organizing the images in the editing process is very exciting. The way in which I interpret the film is probably different than how others do, but that’s perfectly okay.”

Department’s [Vimeo](#) site to view trailers and full-length SPLICE entries. 



SPLICE
The Messiah College Student Film Festival

Sunday, April 27, 2014
Hosted by Billy Martel & Lindsey Corriveau

THE ENCHANTED TRAMP: A SILENT FILM REMAKE
Directed by Mark Young, Anthony Watkins, Sarah Trice
G – General Audiences

NAME
Directed by Scott Orris
G – General Audiences

FIGHTING THROUGH THE STATIC
Directed by William Martel
Parental Guidance – Some material may not be suitable for children

THE SLEEPING MASK
Directed by Sarah Stevenson
Parental Guidance – Some material may not be suitable for children

BEYOND THE MARGINS
Directed by Derick Esch
G – General Audiences

WAITING
Directed by Heidi Sheppard, Mackenzie Alexander, David Wingert
G – General Audiences

DOWNWARD
Directed by Mitch McClure
Parental Guidance – Some material may not be suitable for children

Co-sponsored by:
The Department of Communication and
The Office of Admissions



From Blogging to Breakup Coach: Alumni Career Combines Comm and Counseling

Erin Zakin




Actor Will Smith brought an interesting twist to the concept of relationship counseling in his role as a “date doctor” in the movie “Hitch.” But alum Akirah Wyatt Robinson ('07) has followed an equally interesting—and unusual—career path that has landed her squarely on the other side of that counseling continuum. As a “breakup coach,” she combines her education and experiences in communication, sociology, and counseling to help women find healing from broken relationships.

At Messiah, Akirah earned a B.A. in communication (with a concentration in public relations and advertising), along with a double minor in Sociology and Counseling. She chose communication because “it’s a very broad, general degree, and you can relate it to a lot of things.” After graduation and a period of job-searching, Akirah began pursuing a degree and licensure in social work at the University of Pittsburgh. Her undergraduate communication courses made her very comfortable writing and communicating with others, both of which are very important in the social work field. Describing the

impetus for her social work interest, Akira said, “If communication, sociology, and counseling had a baby, it would be social work.”

How does one start a career as a “breakup coach”? For Akirah, it began with a passion for writing that started while she was attending Messiah. She started a [blog](#) that she would post to frequently for the sake of practicing writing. As her writing developed, she found herself drawn to writing about relationships, in part because of a past difficult relationship. As she continued to blog post-graduation, many women sought Akirah’s relationship advice through emails, leading her to further pursue her passion for helping women heal from broken relationships. Now, as a breakup coach, she brings together her communication, counseling, and social work knowledge and experience to provide coaching services to women in need. She explained, “I help women heal from heartache, and I teach women how to participate in healthy relationships.”

Over time, Akirah’s work has garnered name recognition. One of her original blog posts, “[Why I Told 150 Guests That My Husband Does Not Complete Me](#),” went viral overnight, and has now been featured on Huffington Post and in *Glamour* magazine. Akirah has been given access to Huffington Post and continues to submit articles. Earlier this month, the Australian morning news program *Sunrise* featured Akirah’s blogs and role as a [breakup coach](#), gaining further attention and exposure for her work.

Although she is one of only a few breakup coaches, she sticks to her passions, noting, “If I was not willing to throw myself into it, those opportunities would be worth nothing.” 

akirah  robinson
BECAUSE IT'S NOT JUST A BREAKUP. IT'S A WAKE UP.

Congratulations and Blessings, COMMunity Seniors!



*On Tuesday, April 29, department seniors and faculty gathered to celebrate at our Senior Picnic. Although the weather did not cooperate, everyone enjoyed the indoor hospitality of Climenhaga Homestead, complete with great food and a senior slideshow. Each senior also received a copy of Krista Tippett's *Speaking of Faith*, signed by all department faculty. To celebrate our COMMunity seniors and view the slideshow, please visit our [website](#).*

Lambda Pi Eta Inaugurates Annual Service Project



On Reading Day (May 7), Professor Mary Holloway and three members of Messiah's chapter of Lambda Pi Eta, the National Communication Honor Society, served for several hours at the Brethren Housing Association in Harrisburg. Compiling packets for an upcoming event and painting a home for people in need of transitional housing, LPE members Huy Ngyuen, Brittney Radford and Susan Ryder participated in the chapter's first annual service project.