Research is an integral part of faculty and student activities at Boston University. Researchers at COM use the most advanced theory and methods to examine communication phenomena. Addressing theoretical and applied problems through a range of quantitative and qualitative perspectives, faculty and students engage in the most cutting-edge developments in communication research that provide an extraordinarily fertile ground for innovation and science.

The CRC was established in 1959 and reorganized in 1994. The CRC pioneered the use of television as a research tool, conducting systematic analyses on the effects of television on children and measuring political opinions and voting intentions. This early beginning led the CRC to develop a specialty in survey research methodology.

Today, the CRC has 40 research fellows specializing in advertising, critical cultural studies, health communication, human-computer interaction, international communication, journalism studies, media entertainment, political communication, and public relations.

The CRC has recently updated several research tools such as the iMotions biometric research platform, which allows faculty and students to examine physiological responses to games and other media. Other recent additions include a virtual reality system that aids faculty and students in investigating issues related to psychological presence, empathy, and immersive storytelling.

In 2009, the CRC established the Communication Research Colloquium Series consisting of monthly research presentations that highlight current and original research of faculty in COM. This forum provides an intellectual exchange of ideas and perspectives and features several methodological traditions. It fosters discussions among faculty and students about a variety of research topics in communication.

In 2011, the Dr. Melvin L. DeFleur Distinguished Lecture Series was established. Each year two distinguished scholars from outside the university are invited to share their outstanding scholarship, expertise, and experience with the BU community. In recognition of the pioneering and inspirational contributions of Dr. Melvin L. DeFleur to the field of mass communication research and his service as a venerable and inexhaustible member of the CRC, the faculty members named this series in his honor.
As the Spring 2022 semester winds down, CRC fellows are closing out their coursework as well as trying to wrap up data collection efforts among our student population. As a major research institution, we are committed to involving undergraduate and graduate students in scholarly research so that they may understand the importance of generating new knowledge at Boston University. We are fortunate at COM to have our communication research participation pool that is managed by an online system called SONA. This software allows researchers to post available research opportunities for students who can learn about the various studies and decide whether they want to sign up. To encourage participation in research, faculty can either require their students to earn a certain amount of research credits as part of their grade or offer extra credit to their students for participating. If you are interested in learning more about getting involved with SONA, the CRC’s Lab and Research Manager, Lindsy Goldberg (lindsy@bu.edu), will be happy to chat with you.

In order to conduct research involving human subjects at COM, proposed studies must be approved by either BU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) or one of COM’s two internal review boards: the COM Research Review Board or the COM SONA Research Review Board. A description of when to use each of the review boards is available on the CRC’s website here. I would like to thank the faculty, staff, and grad students who have volunteered their time over the last academic year by serving on these internal review boards: James Cummings, Michael Elasmar, Lindsy Goldberg, Lee Hair, Alexis Shore, Briana Trifiro, Chris Wells, and Denis Wu. These reviewers enable CRC fellows to collect research more quickly than the cumbersome and lengthy yet necessary IRB process, while still abiding by the necessary standards. To maintain this research opportunity at the CRC, please consider volunteering for one of our review boards this fall.

While often the envy of our non-academic friends who think we “get the summer off,” many of us work just as hard — if not harder — during the summer. To be sure, the summer months may have fewer demands, allowing fellows more time for reflection, data analysis, and writing. At the same time, some fellows do teach during the summer months, and many of our fellows travel so they can share their research and see what others are working on. For instance, several fellows are planning to attend the International Communication Association annual conference which is being held in Paris, France from the 25-30th of May. You can see a list of fellows’ planned research presentations in this newsletter.

As we plan for the future of the CRC, two activities are on the horizon. First, all faculty and grad student fellows will be receiving our annual Awareness, Attitudes, and Usage Survey so that we may monitor what is going well with the CRC and where we need to improve. Please do take a few minutes to complete the survey so that we can be sure the CRC is meeting your needs. If you have not received an email with the survey link, please contact me (mamazeen@bu.edu). Secondly, the CRC is planning to resume its monthly omnibus surveys with Ipsos in order to give fellows opportunities to survey US residents on timely topics of significance related to their research. This will foster opportunities for fellows to engage in newsworthy topics, enabling them to offer thought leadership while elevating public understanding on important issues. Results from our pilot survey are available here. Going forward, survey data will be made available on the CRC website (using your Kerberos password) for all CRC fellows. Please contact me if you are interested in participating in a future wave of our survey.

To all affiliated with the CRC, I hope that the summer months offer you many sunny days with time to revitalize and refocus.
The Communication Research Colloquium Series at Boston University was established in October 2009. This series consists of monthly research presentations that highlight current and original research of faculty in the College of Communication. This forum provides an intellectual exchange of ideas and perspectives, features scholarship in several methodological traditions, and fosters discussions among faculty and students about a variety of research topics in the field of communication.

Latina Voices: Examining the Experiences and Coping Mechanisms of Latinas in Public Relations

Rosalynn Vasquez, Ph.D., MBA
March 2022

Despite being one of the fastest-growing and highly influential segments of the U.S. population, Latinos have been largely underrepresented in the public relations field. In response to the scarcity of research examining the role and influence of Latinas in public relations, this new study contributes a unique perspective by providing new, rich insights into the experiences and challenges Latinas face in the public relations industry. Through 24 in-depth interviews with Latinas working in mid-management and senior-executive level roles in the U.S., this study reveals the challenges to career advancement and coping mechanisms used to address issues such as inclusion, intersectionality, isolation, language, pay equity, and pigeonholing. Findings also provide recommendations and a timely call for greater cultural inclusion and diversity in public relations.
Recent accounts of the impending metaverse anticipate the application of and reliance on a variety of communication technologies for a range of mediated interpersonal scenarios, spanning formal workplace exchanges, commercial services, and casual hangouts. As such, “social presence” is becoming a broad design goal for firms creating such technologies. To effectively design for this user experience, a rich conceptual understanding of social presence and the technological factors contributing to it will be critical. However, this is no easy task: in recent years, what exactly is meant by “social presence” has come to vary widely across different communication scenarios and corresponding empirical literatures. This talk will review recent research examining what exactly researchers are measuring when they study the concept. As will be discussed, the findings provide for a refined theoretical definition of “social presence” and, in turn, can better guide industry designers seeking to create specific types of social user experience.


Dr. Jim Cummings
Assistant Professor, Emerging Media Studies
April 2022

Recent accounts of the impending metaverse anticipate the application of and reliance on a variety of communication technologies for a range of mediated interpersonal scenarios, spanning formal workplace exchanges, commercial services, and casual hangouts. As such, “social presence” is becoming a broad design goal for firms creating such technologies. To effectively design for this user experience, a rich conceptual understanding of social presence and the technological factors contributing to it will be critical. However, this is no easy task: in recent years, what exactly is meant by “social presence” has come to vary widely across different communication scenarios and corresponding empirical literatures. This talk will review recent research examining what exactly researchers are measuring when they study the concept. As will be discussed, the findings provide for a refined theoretical definition of “social presence” and, in turn, can better guide industry designers seeking to create specific types of social user experience.

Propagandizing Global Crisis: How China State Media Portray the International Pandemic

King-wa FUs
Professor at the Journalism & Media Studies Centre, The University of Hong Kong
May 2022

King-wa FU is a Professor at the Journalism and Media Studies Centre, The University of Hong Kong. His research interests include China’s information governance, media and political participation, and computational social sciences. He was a visiting Associate Professor at the MIT Media Lab and Fulbright-RGC Hong Kong Senior Research Scholar in 2016-2017, China-US Scholar 2021-2022, Visiting Research at the Boston University Center for the Study of Asia. He was an journalist at the Hong Kong Economic Journal before turning to academia.

How does authoritarian propaganda tell the people about global crisis? This study identifies a political communication strategy, namely “propagandizing of relative gratification”, through which Chinese state media highlight a global crisis to preempt the people’s downward comparison to a relatively stable domestic situation. The study investigates how state media in China and Hong Kong communicate the COVID-19 catastrophic event in 2020. The research is based on semantic analysis of Chinese social media posts using word-embedding’s semantic similarity and instrumental variable approach. The result reveals that the claims on China’s success over COVID-19 is systematically conveyed in state media compared to the Western narratives of the pandemic, creating an ideological gap among the global public discourse. The findings contribute to the theorization of political communication in authoritarian media systems.
"Breaking all the rules: The racial grammar of cancel culture in American news media"

Dr. Meredith Clark
Associate Professor in the School of Journalism & the Department of Communication Studies at Northeastern University.

So-called 'cancel culture' has emerged as a 21st-century moral panic that threatens to silence disempowered people who use social and digital media to amplify Black vernacular practice in pursuit of material consequences. In this talk, Dr. Meredith D. Clark dissects the disproportionate influence mainstream and partisan news media has had in separating digital accountability practice from its roots in Black culture and communities. Attendees will be challenged to consider the pervasive nature of coded racial language in their lives and work and to interrogate their roles in dismantling white dominance in our collective reality.
The 72nd Annual ICA Conference theme One World, One Network? invites reimagining communication scholarship on globalization and networks. The use of the interrobang glyph - a superposition of the exclamation and question punctuation marks - seeks to simultaneously celebrate and problematize the “one-ness” in the theme.

**CRC FELLOW PRESENTATIONS**


CRC FELLOW PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)


CRC FELLOW PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)


LOOKING AHEAD

Training for Faculty and Students

For information on receiving training on Brandwatch, our social media listening tool, please reach out to our Customer Success Manager, Sarah Overcash. You can book time directly on her calendar here.

Interested in conducting biometric research?

The CRC is exploring a variety of new ways to train our fellows and students on biometric research tools and software. If you are interested in conducting a specific project, email lindsyg@bu.edu to set up training. More structured opportunities will hopefully be available soon.

Event Partnerships with Career Services

The CRC is working with the Office of Career Services to host an event focused on applied research careers in October 2022. Information will be shared via email and on COM Sharepoint.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall 2022 CRC Colloquium Speakers

- September 2022: TBD
- October 2022: TBD
- November 2022: Dr. Charlotte Howell

Fall 2022 DeFleur Distinguished Lecture:

- TBD


**PAPERS (CONTINUED)**


**BOOKS**


**BOOK CHAPTERS**


**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**


Su, C.C., Liu, J. Emerging xenophobic nationalism: “Trump blaming China for the pandemic” on Twitter and Weibo, the 9th European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA 2022).


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS (CONTINUED)


INVITED TALKS

Amazeen, M.A. (2022, January 20). *Introduction to research program on misinformation and media literacy.* The Institute of Museum and Library Services. [Remote talk].


MEDIA APPEARANCES

February 4, 2022: Grid "The metaverse is everything you hate about the internet, strapped to your face." [https://www.grid.news/story/technology/2022/02/04/the-metaverse-is-everything-you-hate-about-the-internet-strapped-to-your-face/]

February 4, 2022: Reuters "Fact Check - How can readers identify science misinformation?" [https://www.reuters.com/article/factcheck-science-misinformation/fact-check-how-can-readers-identify-science-misinformation-idUSL1N2UE1TB]

March 6, 2022: El Mercurio "Ukraine: The first great war of the hyperconnected era." [https://digital.elmercurio.com/2022/03/06/A/TG4388D5]
AWARDS

2022 Page/Johnson Legacy Scholar Grant for Sustainability Communication

Virginia Harrison (Clemson University) & Rosalynn Vasquez (Boston University)

2022 Boston University Computer and Data Sciences Faculty Fellowship

Dr. Chris Chao Su
CRC STAFF

LINDSY GOLDBERG, M.A.
Lab & Research Manager

Research Interests: College radio, audience engagement in public media, psychophysiological responses to popular music, media economics

JENNA VIGRE
Social Media Specialist

Research Interests: Environmental communication, psychological and social impacts of advertisements