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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, rebuilt, and relaunched 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.
December wraps up another busy semester for the CRC. Our Colloquium Series, which originated in 2009, consists of monthly research presentations that highlight current and original research of CRC fellows. Our Fall Colloquium Speakers were EMS PhD Candidate Alexis Shore (September), Dr. Deborah Jaramillo (October), and Dr. Joan Donovan (November). If you are interested in presenting your research as part of our Colloquium Series this Spring, please sign up here.

Every semester, the CRC also invites a distinguished scholar from outside the university to share their outstanding scholarship, expertise, and experience with the BU community. Our Fall 2023 DeFleur Distinguished Lecturer was Dr. Kjerstin Thorson (Michigan State University) who spoke about news exposure in a datafied media world.

In promoting a culture of research and collaboration, our fellows met monthly as part of our Work-In-Progress meetings. Special guests this semester included representatives from BU’s Institutional Review Board and representatives from the offices of BU’s Federal and Foundation Relations. Moreover, our PhD fellow Briana Trifiro launched a Lunch & Learn series enabling doctoral students the opportunity to talk with faculty and Emerging Media Studies PhD alumni about their academic research and careers.

One of the unique technologies available in the CRC is our biometric tools which include devices for measuring heart rate, sweat levels in the skin, as well as facial and eye movements. For the first time ever, the CRC hosted an onsite workshop led by an iMotions Product Specialist. Attendees received hands-on training in our iMotions software, designing biometric studies, interpreting data, and drawing actionable conclusions. If you are interested in learning more about biometrics, a quick primer is available here.

Given the University’s commitment to involving students in research, the CRC continued to facilitate fellows’ efforts to recruit students as research participants via our SONA research participant management system. The SONA system gives both graduate and undergraduate students an opportunity to become involved with various research activities across COM while earning course credit for doing so. This semester, 13 research opportunities were available to students from 24 different COM courses. I hope you will consider including your courses in the Spring semester. To enroll your courses, please fill out this form. For more information about how our SONA program works, please visit our website or email comsona@bu.edu.

I am incredibly grateful for the commitment and hard work of our staff this fall. Amanda King joined us in September as our Lab and Research Manager and has been quickly getting up to speed on CRC technologies and activities. I look forward to working with them in the Spring semester and beyond. I would also like to thank our wonderful graduate assistants who helped to keep the Center running. Zain Bali (MCR) was our SONA administrator doing the behind-the-scenes work on our research participant management system. Snigdha Bhowmik (FTV) was our Communications Assistant writing about and promoting our activities. And Xinyue “Tracy” Cui (FTV) was our Events Assistant capturing our activities for posterity and making them available on our website. Thanks to you all!

To our CRC community of fellows, I wish you all a joyous and restful holiday season and look forward to the many new and exciting activities we are planning for 2024!
NEW CRC FELLOWS - FACULTY

The CRC would like to extend a warm welcome to our two new faculty fellows.

Dr. AnneMarie McClaine
Assistant Professor, Media Science

AnneMarie K. McClain is an assistant professor of media science in the Department of Mass Communication, Advertising, and Public Relations. Dr. McClain researches children’s media, representation, and identity socialization. She has a particular focus on understanding how media – and conversations around media – can be used to promote positive outcomes for children and families, especially marginalized children and families.

Recent studies have examined how U.S. Black families use media to socialize their children around identity, including after racism experiences. Her work has been published in Research in Human Development, the Journal of Children and Media, and the International Journal of Communication.

Dr. Joan Donovan
Assistant Professor, Journalism & Emerging Media Studies

Joan Donovan, PhD, is an assistant professor of journalism and emerging media studies at Boston University. Dr. Donovan leads the field in examining internet and technology studies, online extremism, media manipulation, and disinformation campaigns. She is the founder of The Critical Internet Studies Institute, a nonprofit based in Boston that advocates for a public interest internet.

Dr. Donovan’s research explores how media manipulation is a means to control public conversation, derail democracy, and disrupt society. She conducts research, develops methods, and facilitates workshops for journalists, policy makers, technologists, and civil society organizations on how to detect, document, and debunk media manipulation campaigns.
NEW CRC FELLOWS - STUDENTS

And an equally warm welcome to our three new PhD students; it has been a pleasure to get to know you all.

James Crissman
Ph.D Student, Emerging Media Studies

His research interests include visual communications, information accessibility and governance, misinformation, and algorithmic injustice.

Lilian Naa Korkoi Tackie
Ph.D Student, Emerging Media Studies

Her research interests include misinformation and disinformation in emerging media, fact-checking using A.I. and machine learning.

Jiaxin ‘Jessy’ Wang
Ph.D Student, Emerging Media Studies

Their research interests include media psychology and mental health, human-computer interaction, and the cognitive effects of emerging media.
Join us in celebrating the success of two of our students and their exhaustive research efforts. Congratulations fellows!

EMMA LONGO
UNDERGRADUATE, MEDIA SCIENCE

Winner of the Institute for Global Sustainability 2023 Undergraduate Award

Emma Longo was granted Boston University’s 2023 IGS Undergraduate Award for her work on “How Fossil Fuel Companies Use Native Advertisements to Promote Climate Denialism in U.S. Media”. Her research efforts focused on the use of native advertisements – advertisements masquerading as news articles – by fossil fuel companies, to sway public perception on the realities of climate change. Emma’s work helps researchers everywhere gain a better understanding of how fossil fuel companies, and complicit news outlets, are contributing to climate misinformation.

In addition to her IGS 2023 undergraduate award, Emma Longo’s paper was submitted, and accepted, by the Communication Science, Health, Environment, and Risk Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) for presentation at the 2023 conference this last August.
STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

SEJIN PAIK
PH.D CANDIDATE, EMERGING MEDIA STUDIES

Boston University’s December COMTalk Panelist - How AI Is Changing the Media Industry

As a panelist for COMTalk’s deep dive into Artificial Intelligence and a recent interviewee for the same, Ph.D Candidate Sejin Paik is fast becoming a cornerstone in the explosive studies of AI, algorithms, and newsroom ethics. Sejin comes to Boston University after having worked on the launch team of Google News, the AI-aggregated news app, released in 2018. Seeing how news was collated by artificial intelligence inspired her to pursue a Ph.D in Emerging Media Studies, where her paper “Journalism Ethics for the Algorithmic Era” was published in 2023 in Digital Journalism.

Sejin’s interview, “When Robots Deliver the News”, was published on November 27th, 2023 and the accompanying COMTalk panel was hosted on December 6th, 2023.
FALL 2023 COM RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM SERIES

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.

Platforms as Rulemakers for Interpersonal Communication: The Case of the Screenshot Feature
Alexis Shore
Ph.D Candidate, Emerging Media Studies
September 2023

It is no longer possible to discuss privacy management from a purely interpersonal perspective. Rather, platforms—through design, established norms, and perceived trust—play a critical role in subsequent privacy management decisions and perceptions.

This talk will apply an extended version of communication privacy management theory (CPM) to study screenshot collection and sharing of private digital messages.

COMMUNICATION RESEARCH CENTER COLLOQUIUM SERIES

PLATEFORMS AS RULEMAKERS FOR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
The Case of the Screenshot Feature

ALEXIS SHORE
Emerging Media Studies Ph.D Candidate
Boston University

SEPTEMBER 28, 2023
3:30 - 4:30 PM
COM 209
**The Mourning Show: The Televisuality of an Industry Death Ritual**

**Dr. Deborah Jaramillo**  
Assistant Professor, Film & Television Studies  
October 2023

An examination of the oft criticized ‘In Memoriam’ segment of the Academy Awards and Emmy ceremonies and how it functions as an industry mourning ritual.

Using a combination of Television Studies and Death Studies, Dr. Jaramillo will position ‘In Memoriam’ as representative of the individualistic shift in death practices and as a refreshingly uncomfortable reminder of our mortality.

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**Netwar: Warfare on the Web**

**Dr. Joan Donovan**  
Assistant Professor, Journalism & Emerging Media Studies  
November 2023

While the term ‘netwar’ is rarely encountered, it’s something we have all experienced or witnessed. Whether it’s a distant relative on Facebook spreading news from a disreputable source to the violent dissidents of the January 6th riot, organized and mobilized via the internet, netwar is ubiquitous. From cyber warfare tactics that disrupt critical infrastructure to information warfare campaigns designed to shape public opinion, the evolving landscape of net war challenges traditional notions of conflict. This lecture will expose and elucidate the notion of netwar and how we can better prepare ourselves in this interconnected landscape.
Digital platform companies have inserted themselves into all the nooks and crannies of our civic lives. Our interests and actions online are increasingly quantified for use in tracking and algorithmic prediction—our civic lives are “datafied.”

The concepts we use to analyze the role of news content in our everyday lives have not yet been sufficiently updated to account for datafication across digital platforms. News is disappearing from the everyday life of many people at the same moment that more news and news-like content is being produced than perhaps ever before. It is hard work to be informed even when it feels like news is everywhere.

This presentation explores paths forward to ask new kinds of questions about news exposure in a datafied media world.
OTHER FALL EVENTS: COM CRC - LUNCH & LEARN

LUNCH & LEARN

This fall semester, Ph.D candidate Briana Trifiro of the Division of Emerging Media Studies collaborated with Communication Research Center Director, Dr. Michelle Amazeen to launch a monthly Lunch & Learn.

The Lunch & Learn series was conceptualized as an hour long forum: a space for CRC fellows to foster connections both within the program, with students and faculty, and externally, with alumni. All of this is - of course - over a piping hot slice of pizza.

October saw the first Lunch & Learn, where students and faculty mingled, shared their areas of interest, research foci, and good conversation.

For the November Lunch & Learn, we hosted a panel of EMS alumnae: Dr. Sarah Krongard, Dr. Brittany Anderson, and Dr. Sarah Parker Ward. All three graduates are enjoying successful careers outside academia and graciously joined us for Q&A. The focal point was to highlight a post-doctoral career outside academia and they offered helpful advice for navigating the job market following graduation.

We look forward to future Lunch & Learns in Spring 2024!


PUBLICATIONS (CONTINUED)


BOOKS


BOOK CHAPTERS


INVITED TALKS

Amazeen, M. A. (2023, December 5). Navigating Content Confusion in the Media [Presentation]. Boston Academy, Boston, MA.


Amazeen, M. A. (2023, November 6). The Considerations & Global Consequences of Generative AI. [Panel participant]. Boston University Global Programs, Boston, MA.


Katz, J. (2023, May 26). Imagining AI’s future, facing AI’s realities: Issues and proposed solutions from a Western perspective [Keynote address]. 73rd ICA Annual Conference’s Beijing Regional Hub meeting, Peking University and Renmin University of China, Beijing, China.


Katz, J. (2023, September 14). Dilemmas of artificial intelligence in society: Views from the USA & Europe [Speaker]. China and the World Global Lecture Series. Fudan University, Shanghai, China.


Trifiro, B., Shaughnessy, B., Conro, K., & Stewart, K. (2023, August 8). “I think there’s been a glitch”: A content analytic approach to understanding Twitter discourse surrounding Ticketmaster’s mishandling of ticket sales for The Eras Tour [Manuscript presented]. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC.


MEDIA APPEARANCES


Amazeen, M. (2023, December 5). Leading news outlets are doing the fossil fuel’s industry greenwashing. The Intercept. https://theintercept.com/2023/12/05/fossil-fuel-industry-media-company-advertising/


AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Awards received at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Conference (AEJMC), 2023

TOP FACULTY PAPER AWARD, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY
ALEXIS SHORE, PH.D STUDENT, EMERGING MEDIA STUDIES
DR. KELSEY PRENA, EMERGING MEDIA STUDIES

TOP FACULTY PAPER AWARD (2ND PLACE), POLITICAL COMMUNICATION DIVISION
DR. CHRIS SU, EMERGING MEDIA STUDIES

TOP THREE RESEARCH PAPER AWARD, ROBERT L. STEPHENSON COMPETITION, INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION DIVISION
DR. H. DENIS WU, ADVERTISING & PUBLIC RELATIONS
AWARDS & RECOGNITION

FACULTY STEERING COMMITTEE, CENTER FOR EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY & RESEARCH, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, 2023 - PRESENT

DR. TRACI HONG, MEDIA SCIENCE

CORE INITIATIVE DIRECTOR, TRUST AND PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNICATION, CENTER FOR EMERGING INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY & RESEARCH, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, 2023 - PRESENT

DR. TRACI HONG, MEDIA SCIENCE

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT AWARD, INSTITUTE FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY, BOSTON UNIVERSITY, OCTOBER 2023

EMMA LONGO, MEDIA SCIENCE

OXFORD INTERNET INSTITUTE’S SUMMER DOCTORAL PROGRAM, OXFORD UNIVERSITY, JULY 2023

ALEX ROCHEFORT, PH.D STUDENT
To my Fall 2023 graduate assistants, I am so thankful for all your hard work and for the opportunity to have met and gotten to know each of you. I couldn’t have asked for a better team~

Zain Bali
SONA Administrator

Snigdha Bhowmik
Communications Assistant

Xinyue ‘Tracy’ Cui
Events & Videography Assistant

Amanda King
Lab & Research Manager

Honorary CRC Staff Member
Sean Mao
Resident Poet