SC&I Senior’s Road to Documentary Filmmaking

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School of Communication and Information
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Those of us at the School of Communication and Information — faculty, students and staff — were stunned and saddened when we heard the news in early January of the massacre of the journalists and political cartoonists who worked at Charlie Hebdo, the French publication. At the time, many of us reflected on the meaning of freedoms that often can be taken for granted — freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion and freedom to assemble peaceably. These are the freedoms that form the foundation of the disciplines we study, teach, practice and support at SC&I. We may not all be masters of satire, but we did feel deeply about the loss of the Charlie Hebdo satirists.

The editors, journalists and cartoonists who worked at Charlie died defending the right to publish satirical writing and drawings. They had been warned before that their work was offensive to some; however, they endured in the spirit of their editor Stéphane “Charb” Charbonnier, a cartoonist in his own right.

In 2012, Charb told Le Monde, “I would rather die standing than live on my knees.” Whether we agree with Charb’s point of view or not, he certainly had the right of expression in the tradition of French (and American) journalists and political cartoonists. His death and that of his colleagues, innocent civilians and police officers brings to mind so many questions.

How many of us would put our lives on the line for our beliefs and core values? Luckily, we’re not called upon very often to make this decision in everyday life. Nevertheless, I believe we would and do make sacrifices, stand in the cold to protest and speak out about violations of the values that we hold dear.

Are images more dangerous and subversive than words? The Charlie cartoons seemed to anger the subjects of their satire more than any satirical writing. Certainly books without illustrations have provoked some and been censored in the past, but the visually explicit is often the subject of more outrage and censorship. North Korean officials called the 2014 film, “The Interview,” an “act of war.”

In our country, the book with photos of Madonna (“Sex”), published in 1992, was galvanizing even for those who are traditionally defenders of freedom of speech. Some librarians, who are usually dedicated believers in intellectual freedom, kept the book “under the desk” or behind closed doors or never ordered it at all in actions that could be considered self-censorship. It was the book’s images that were objectionable, they said, despite the fact that there was great public demand for the book.

Even the recent revelations of racist speech and song by University of Oklahoma fraternity brothers bring these issues to mind. What are the limits of civility in writing, in creating images and photographs, in humor and in self-expression? What are the boundaries of good taste and provocation? These issues and many others are among those that are safe to study in the School of Communication and Information. We may not always have the answers, but those of us who teach sometimes hear from alumni that the ability to have these discussions during classes has helped them make difficult decisions in the workplace when questions of ethics arise.

As we carry on and as some leave after graduating from Rutgers, I hope we can continue to embrace the difficult questions and have open discussions on the issues confronted by journalists, those in the media, communication and public relations professionals, library and information leaders, and workers in all the career paths followed by our students. These issues concern those who study here and live in communities beyond the campus gates, and they will endure in the tumultuous world in which we find ourselves. Being able to think through the issues, understand the stakeholders and consider the implications of our decisions will serve us well into the future.

Congratulations to all of our graduating students!

Claire McInerney
Todd Wolfson Publishes First Book

Journalism and Media Studies Professor Todd Wolfson examines modern social movements in his new book, “Digital Rebellion: The Birth of the Cyber Left,” published in November 2014 by The University of Illinois Press. “The term ‘Cyber Left’ refers to the impact new media and communication technologies have had on modern social movements,” explained Wolfson. His book traces the development of these movements and the changes brought by their embrace of new communication technologies. “Some of the logic of how activism should happen has led to problems with how it is able to sustain itself,” said Wolfson.

Dunbar-Hester Explores FM Radio Activism


“The term ‘Cyber Left’ refers to the impact new media and communications technologies have had on the modern social movements.”
Roi Estlein Wins Top Awards From NCA

Roi Estlein, SC&I’14, won three top awards from the National Communication Association for his doctoral dissertation on the communication processes in families: the Gerald R. Miller Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award, the Family Communication Division’s Outstanding Dissertation Award, and the Interpersonal Communication Division Outstanding Dissertation Award.

Faculty and Students Recognized at NCA Convention

SC&I faculty and graduate students received awards, honors and recognition at the National Communication Association (NCA) 100th Annual Convention held Nov. 21-23 in Chicago. Several professors also took on key roles leading committees, organizing panel discussions and sharing their scholarship.

The Applied Communication Division of NCA awarded Department of Communication Chair Laurie Lewis the Distinguished Edited Book Award for her co-edited book, “Volunteering and Communication: Studies from Multiple Contexts.” Communication Professor Craig Scott received top paper awards for two papers. Professors Keith Hampton and Vikki Katz organized a pre-conference workshop, “Communication in City and Community,” and were joined by Professors Jeffrey Lane and Phil Napoli.

New NSF-Funded Research Seeks to Design and Evaluate New Search Engines

Library and Information Science Distinguished Professor Nick Belkin and Professor Chirag Shah are conducting research to improve information seeking on the Web. They recently received a $499,425, three-year grant from the National Science Foundation for their project, “III: Small: Characterizing and Evaluating Whole Session Interactive Information Retrieval.” “The goal of this research will lead to the development of systems that will be able to predict how best to support the individual person in addressing their information problem,” said Shah.
Women in Computing to Receive Enhanced Support

Women continue to be underrepresented in computing and information technology fields. Library and Information Science (LIS) Professors Rebecca Reynolds and Sharon Stoerger have worked to develop ways to enhance support for undergraduate women focusing on computing within the Information Technology and Informatics major. As a result of their efforts, the LIS Department joined the National Center for Women & Information Technology as an Academic Alliance Member, and students launched a new group, Women in IT.

“Technology design is a political act, and the technologies we are using today must evolve to comprise a greater multiplicity of perspectives and ideas for innovation, to transform our society in a positive direction,” said Reynolds.
Pew Report Identifies Link Between Social Media Use and Stress

In “Social Media and the Cost of Caring,” a recently released Pew Research Center report, Communication Professor Keith Hampton and PhD students Weixu Lu and Inyoung Shin found that the use of social media was shown to either raise or lower your stress levels, depending on the events shared.

“While awareness is an important part of empathy and being able to provide support, it comes with a cost,” said Hampton. “It’s not the technology that’s responsible for higher stress. It’s the cost of caring.” The report is based on a national, random digital dial sample of 1,801 American adults conducted in the fall of 2013.

Todd Wolfson Receives NCA’s First Scholar-Activist Award

Professor of Journalism and Media Studies Todd Wolfson is the first recipient of the National Communication Association’s (NCA) Scholar-Activist Award. The Critical and Cultural Studies Division of the NCA chose Wolfson based on his nomination and for his “outstanding record of scholarship and seamless applications of his research and social justice-minded activism.”

David Greenberg Examines the New Republic’s Demise

In a December Slate article, Journalism and Media Studies Professor David Greenberg discussed the real reason behind New Republic’s transition from venerable magazine to “vertically integrated digital media company” and how this will impact public discourse in America. Greenberg wrote, “The New Republic was hurt by something more specific — the polarization of a media environment that leaves little room for a strain of liberal thought that not only attacks the right and the far left, but also prods and questions liberalism itself.”

“While awareness is an important part of empathy and being able to provide support, it comes with a cost.”
More Than 100 Guest Speakers Visit SC&I

SC&I welcomed 115 guest speakers in fall 2014, further instilling our commitment to provide students with advice and experiences from industry leaders in various fields. The wide range of renowned organizations represented included Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson, People magazine, Merck & Co., The New York Times, CBS News, Atlantic Records, New York Public Library, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Amazon Web Services.

Students heard from leaders who are part of the Network of Executive Women, such as Barbara Mroczynski of Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP; Lauren Paris of Quaker Food & Snacks (PepsiCo); Barbara Lyons of HBC/GM; and Trish Cucinelli of My Web Grocery. Professor Wayne Beach, who wrote the film “When Cancer Calls...,” also visited SC&I last semester.

Hearing the accomplishments and daily challenges of these seasoned professionals enhances the classroom experience and gives students a tangible picture of specific career possibilities.

SC&I, Dodge Poetry Festival Collaborate to Preserve Poetry

Library and Information Science Professor Nina Wacholder and a team of Rutgers students are collaborating with the Dodge Poetry Festival to preserve the original works presented during the biennial event and provide library-quality metadata for inclusion in a searchable poetry database.

Wacholder is drawing on the skills she teaches in two MLIS courses: Organizing Information and Digital Libraries. She works with a team of Rutgers students to log the poems read at the festival and add appropriate metadata for inclusion in a searchable poetry database. The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation provides funding for this project.

Aram Sinnreich Addresses Issue of Net Neutrality

Following President Obama’s support of net neutrality, the principle that all Internet traffic should be treated equally, The Bergen County Record asked Journalism and Media Studies Professor Aram Sinnreich to address the issue. “Without net neutrality … the public sphere will return to what it was in the mass media age — a winner-take-all game in which dissident and minority voices, and new and challenging ideas will be effectively silenced.”
JMS Program a Hit With High School Students

Almost 800 high school students took over Busch Campus Center last October as part of the Garden State Scholastic Press Association’s 35th Annual Fall Conference. Students swarmed the Journalism and Media Studies Department table, eagerly accepting program information from Chair Jack Bratich, who said, “while their interests were wide-ranging, they’re all committed to making a difference in public discourse.”

SC&I Faculty Lead Byrne Seminars

Rutgers’ Byrne Program explores “Global Citizenry in the Digital Age,” examining the plethora of advancements in the technological arena and how they affect every facet of our personal and professional lives.

SC&I faculty have long been a part of the seminars. A sample of those teaching this year include: “Social Networking and You,” taught by Professors Marya Doerfel and Matthew Weber; Professor John Pavlik’s “Media in the Digital Age”; and Livingston Campus Dean Lea Stewart’s “Journey Through Living History.”

Byrne Seminars continue to provide first-year students the opportunity to experience original research taught by world-renowned faculty who volunteer for this rewarding educational endeavor.
SC&I Announces Expanded LIS Curriculum Options and Opportunities

An exciting and important change takes place at SC&I this fall. The Department of Library and Information Science (LIS) is expanding options and opportunities for professional graduate study as we transition from the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) to the Master of Information (MI) degree. The transition makes the multiple interdisciplinary pathways our curriculum offers more visible to potential students and employers.

SC&I is proud of the 60 years it has offered an American Library Association (ALA)-accredited LIS program, and remains committed to maintaining the LIS curriculum.

“Our commitment to our ALA accreditation and LIS curriculum will never waver, and our new name will only serve to strengthen our LIS department,” said Acting Dean Claire McInerney. The program is ranked #6 by U.S. News and World Report and #2 for school library media.

The transition reflects a growing trend among iSchools to diversify program development and curricular design to meet the workforce demands and challenges driven by technological development and a realization that information skills are needed in today's world. SC&I is a long-time member of the iSchool consortium, and the new master’s degree name reflects the affiliation.

The broader degree name acknowledges the program’s readiness to address the ever-growing information needs of society and prepare prospective students for the dynamic range of opportunities in the information professions. Students can leverage the degree for careers involving the application, management and use of information, knowledge and technology to solve problems in a quickly changing, interconnected world.

“Graduates with an MLIS degree have taken positions as information managers, university administrators, website designers and researchers,” said LIS Department Chair Ross Todd. “An MLIS can lead to many career paths. The new name will demonstrate the wealth of opportunities available to those with a SC&I information degree, whether the degree is an LIS specialization or general ‘I’ degree.”

“Graduates with [the] degree have taken positions as information managers, university administrators, website designers and researchers.”
SC&I STUDENTS
Rising Stars

Flip Wilson Scholarship Opens New Horizons for SC&I Senior

Christopher Etienne’s life is monumentally inspiring — and not just because he received SC&I’s Flip Wilson Memorial Scholarship Award. Once a boy who loved to read, Etienne ran away from home at 15. Later, he ended up in prison, where he earned a GED.

Today, he is a successful senior majoring in journalism and media studies and serves as editor-in-chief of the Rutgers chapter of the National Association of Black Journalists. He also mentors at-risk youth and works with inmates who are trying to further their education. After Rutgers, Etienne hopes to go to graduate school and ultimately become a documentary filmmaker.

Original article by Lisa Marie Segarra appeared in Rutgers Today, Nov. 21, 2014.

Etienne was recently accepted into the Africana studies honors program, for which he is writing a thesis focused on the history of public education.

PhD Student Awarded Dissertation Grant

Fourth-year PhD candidate Marie Haverfield was recently awarded a $3,000 dissertation grant from the Family Process Institute. Haverfield worked with her adviser, Communication Professor Jen Theiss, in submitting her grant for her dissertation, “Features of Parent-Child Interaction as Predictors of Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral Markers of Resilience in Children of Alcoholics and Children of Non-Alcoholic Parents.”

“This grant allowed me to cover the costs of recruiting families, particularly high-risk families who required a substantial incentive for them to be willing to come forward and participate,” said Haverfield. “The grant also allowed me to cover expenses for traveling to other areas to recruit and rent space to house off-site data collection. I recruited families from New Jersey, as well as California and Texas.” Haverfield successfully defended her dissertation in February and will graduate in May.

Original article by Lisa Marie Segarra appeared in Rutgers Today, Nov. 21, 2014.
Alumni

SC&I Alumna Credits MCIS Degree for her Career Success

Pamela Pruitt (SC&I’12) had extensive professional experience in the communications field before coming to the MCIS program at Rutgers in 2010. Now a doctoral student at the University of Pennsylvania, she credits Rutgers for choosing the right career path. “It all happened at Rutgers. The pivot of my life and my career happened there.”

Pruitt, now the director of multicultural affairs at Rider University, encourages students to see the many opportunities available at Rutgers. “This is a place where they can be who they want to be, grow into someone they want to become and make a contribution to society.”

In a video interview (bit.ly/116uGE1), Pruitt talks about starting college later in life and working with children in Trenton, N.J. There, she became familiar with Rutgers and SC&I.

JMS Alum to Co-Write New “Ghostbusters” Movie

After receiving critical acclaim for writing the 2013 hit movie “The Heat,” alumna Katie Dippold (SC&I’02) has been tapped to co-write director Paul Feig’s new, all-female “Ghostbusters” movie.

The Guardian Publishes Alum’s Photos of Ebola Epidemic

Marcus DiPaola (SC&I’14) traveled to Liberia during the height of the Ebola epidemic, capturing images that were later published in The Guardian. Despite the challenges he faced, he noted that the rewards were great. DiPaola, whose career is off to a great start, works as a reporter for NurPhoto, a contributor for Xinhua News Agency and as a U.S. correspondent for CNC World. He also files footage with Getty Images on a freelance basis.

Alum Wins ALISE Dissertation Award


Children’s Author Ai-Ling Louie Releases New Book

Alumna and children’s author Ai-Ling Louie (SC&I’91) celebrates her latest book, “Astronaut Kalpana Chawla, Reaching for the Stars,” part of a series profiling South Asian Americans. Louie recognizes SC&I’s impact on her career, commenting, “The atmosphere was so inspiring — it made me sure I was going into the right thing in libraries and children’s literature.”
Hosted by SC&I

Students, Donors and Faculty Connect at the Zimmerli

Scholarship donors mingled with faculty and students at the 2014 Scholarship Awards Reception, held Nov. 6 at the Zimmerli Art Museum. Donors heard from students about the significant impact these scholarships have had on individual success. The evening’s speakers included Rutgers President Emeritus Richard McCormick and Emmy-winning Harry Cicma (SC&I ’04), WNBC sports anchor.

Norwegian Academic Discusses Responsibilities in Advancing Health Research

Ole Petter Ottersen, physician and president of the University of Oslo, visited SC&I in October to present “Global Health Issues: The Role of the University.” Ottersen explored the opportunities and challenges of universities in advancing health decision-making and political policy.

JMS Third Annual Tailgate Reunion Is Fun for All

Journalism and Media Studies (JMS) alumni gathered last September for the third annual tailgate reunion at the Rutgers/Tulane football game. The brainchild of Department Chair Jack Bratich and Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies Steven Miller, the annual BBQ has become a great tradition.

“Get Your Geek On” Preps Students for Internships

Last October, current and potential Information Technology and Informatics (ITI) students participated in the program’s Career Day event, gaining tangible career advice and job-seeking tips from leading professionals from Microsoft, Amazon Web Services and Infogistics. “We want to provide experiential learning opportunities for our students so they can get solid internships,” said Professor Sharon Stoerger, who organized the event and is director of the ITI Program.

When the First Year at Rutgers Is Not the Freshman Year

About one-third of SC&I’s undergraduate majors are transfer students, many from New Jersey community colleges. SC&I hosted a meeting with community college colleagues on Jan. 14 to discuss how better to serve students who transfer. The high-energy meeting left everyone better informed and with a renewed commitment to enable transfer students to succeed.
Support Grows for the Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair

SC&I’s campaign to create a new endowed chair is picking up steam after *The New York Times* ran an article about our effort in September 2014. The Gloria Steinem Endowed Chair in Media, Culture and Feminist Studies will be a collaboration between the Rutgers Institute for Women’s Leadership, SC&I and the Department of Women’s and Gender Studies.

Hear Gloria Steinem talk about the chair and the importance of studying “the female half of human history.” [bit.ly/1zd6pqB](http://bit.ly/1zd6pqB)

New Communication Specializations Help Students Identify Career Direction

Launched in fall 2014, SC&I’s new communication specializations offer studies in Health and Wellness Communication, Leadership in Organizations and Community, Relationship and Family Communication, and Strategic Public Communication and Public Relations. These concentrations are designed to provide students with tangible skills in a specific area, making them more marketable to potential employers.

“In creating specializations, we are trying to get students to mindfully package their course selections,” said Professor Brian Householder, who also is director of undergraduate studies in communication. “If you can identify certain goals, these are courses that cluster together naturally and have career links to them.”

Householder also recommends combining specializations, where students can be primed for further career opportunities. “PR and health or leadership and relationships — these are natural combinations that go together, yet don’t necessarily increase course load because they’re so closely related. This way they can build more expertise in their degree area.”

“If you can identify certain goals, these are courses that cluster together naturally and have career links to them.”
Philanthropic Giving

Jerome and Mary Aumente Bequest to Establish New JMS Scholarship

SC&I is pleased to announce a bequest donation from retired Professor Emeritus Jerome Aumente, former faculty member in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, and his wife Mary. Aumente discusses their gift here and outlines how it will be used at SC&I.

In the ever-changing media landscape, quality journalism will continue to play a crucial role in providing reliable news and information. The bequest that my wife, Mary, and I envision (The Jerome and Mary Aumente Journalism Scholarship Fund) will provide research stipends and scholarship support to students in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies (JMS). The fund will enable students to develop projects examining the theory and practice of journalism in local, regional or global settings. With the guidance of faculty, the students will learn to bring fresh approaches to how journalism can be improved in the digital age of newer media and rapid change.

The gift will continue to support the spirit of public service, imagination and hands-on involvement that students have brought to SC&I from its earliest days, beginning when the Journalism Resources Institute (JRI) and the Journalism Department transitioned to New Brunswick from Livingston College.

At JRI, students undertook research and applied work as we established media centers in New Jersey and later in Europe; developed local environmental documentation programs; assisted municipalities in creating public access channels via cable television; and had early access to Internet news websites in cooperation with Dow Jones. Students worked ably in researching materials and assisting in JRI’s continuing education programs, workshops and seminars for professional journalists here and overseas in coverage of health, the courts, education, government and politics. Grants from foundations, government, the corporate sector and the journalism profession enabled us to provide undergraduate and graduate students with internship stipends, salaried part-time jobs and assistance with research costs.

I was always grateful to Rutgers University for providing me, as a faculty member, with the nurturing environment to found and direct the JRI and the Journalism Department, and to play a role in designing and helping create the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies when we crossed the Raritan River from Livingston College to College Avenue.

We will work with the JMS faculty and SC&I to devise an approach to the future distribution of research stipends and scholarships from our bequest to facilitate the above goals and also encourage students from other units within SC&I who share these common interests to participate.

Periodically, I still hear from former students who worked with us in the past and who cite their experience as an important factor in shaping their later career and life goals. We welcome ideas and suggestions for this venture and hope our bequest can help leverage other contributions from foundations, government, corporations and the journalism community who might wish to help these efforts to shape and strengthen journalism’s theory, practice, standards and ethical responsibility in this whirlwind century of change. Some might even say journalism’s very survival is at stake in this very challenging time.

By Jerome Aumente

“I was always grateful to Rutgers University.”
Your Gift to SC&I Makes an Impact!

- **$100** Supports a student intern’s travel expenses.
- **$500** Contributes to the cost of a student’s books and fees for one semester.
- **$1,000** Supports a doctoral student’s research funding.
- **$1,500** Covers tuition and fees for one undergraduate course.
- **$3,000** Provides travel, room and board expenses for a student studying abroad.

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