



VilasVoice

Fall 2013 | For Alumni and Friends of the Department of Communication Arts

Producing Tomorrow's Producers

Twenty-six years — and plenty of tv series, movies and scripts — later, Jill Soloway (B.A.'87) still remembers the profound influence of her semester in the capstone production course, Comm Arts 659. "It was a revelation to me. It made me want to be an artist. It made me look at film through the lens of art. And it made me look at myself through the lens of creating art," the *Six Feet Under* writer and *Afternoon Delight* writer/director says.

"The students who take it are dying to make films. They're willing to work long hours outside of class for the experience. It's really like getting thrown into deep water."

Helmed by Professor J.J. Murphy, the course emphasizes the collaborative aspect of filmmaking. Murphy leads students through the production process as they create 30-minute films, from casting to cutting to the premieres. The scripts are written by students in Murphy's screenwriting course. Divided into two groups of seven or eight, the students are assigned positions based upon their strengths and interests in the field. Throughout the semester, they learn their individual roles such as director, cinematographer,



Comm Arts 659 crew shooting a scene for "Absent"

and editor, as well as how to work as a crew. "The philosophy of the class is to learn by doing," Murphy says. "The students who take it are dying to make films. They're willing to work long hours outside of class for the experience. It's really like getting thrown into deep water."

The experiences gained during those long hours have stuck with alumni like accomplished filmmaker and producer Soloway, who calls Murphy "one of those seminal people in my life who made me want to try harder," and editor Andrew Dickler (B.A.'90). "The

most memorable learning experiences are the ones that take place outside of the lecture hall. This class, a challenging hands-on workshop ... it's just that," says Dickler, editor of *Family Tree*, Christopher Guest's new show for HBO. Current student Kaitlyn Boss concurs. Boss, a senior who is creating films for Teach for America in the Mississippi Delta, calls the class "the most meaningful and challenging course that I have taken at UW."

Read more from our interviews with Soloway, Dickler, Boss, and other students at: commarts.wisc.edu.

VilasVoice

is the alumni newsletter of the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, 821 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.

Email:
info@commarts.wisc.edu
Website:
commarts.wisc.edu/

Chair of the Department of Communication Arts
Professor Michael Xenos

Newsletter Editor
Mary Rossa (B.S.'86, M.A.'90)

Contributing Writers
Taylor Miller
Aly Pavela
Tom Ziemer (B.S.'07)

Donor Contact
Jennifer Karlson (B.S.'02)
UW Foundation
608–262–7225
jennifer.karlson@supportuw.org

Online Giving
commarts.wisc.edu/giving/

Design
Earl Madden (MFA'82)
Production Editor
Jennifer Klaila (B.A.'00)
University Marketing

This newsletter was printed through gift funds administered by the UW Foundation.

© 2013 Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System
The University of Wisconsin is an equal-opportunity and affirmative-action educator and employer. We promote excellence through diversity in all programs.

Front page banner photos:
All by iStock Photo, except third from left by University Communications.

Chair's Voice

A Year of Challenge and Change

Change is a constant challenge in the communications field. We've had a lot of it lately and are looking forward to more.

First of all, Department leadership has changed. Professor Michele Hilmes stepped down as Department chair in August and is in England on a Fulbright research fellowship. "I'm already putting together a syllabus for a course on British television when I return," she says. "Why do Americans love *Downton Abbey* so much? Stay tuned."

Professor Vance Kepley (M.A.'76, Ph.D.'78) has stepped in as acting chair this fall, while keeping his post as director of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research. This is quite an administrative juggling act, but if anyone has the ability to handle it with ease and grace, it is Kepley, who is in his third term as chair.

Then, in January, chair-elect Professor Michael Xenos will return from a fall sabbatical to take up his new post. Xenos, whose work on political communication has attracted international attention, is looking forward to leading the Department in productive new directions, including online instruction and curricular innovations. "I look forward to being able to serve the Department in a capacity that puts me in

touch with all of the creative and productive people we have in Communication Arts."

Our alumni board of directors, Communication Arts Partners (CAPs), has changed as well. Our new CAPs chair, alumnus Scott Broetzmann (B.A.'82), launched a revised strategic work plan for the Department, working with Department leadership, CAPs members, and the UW Foundation. Alumni expertise

and leadership are increasingly important in addressing the constant challenges of innovation and change.

To serve our students' changing needs, we have embarked on major technology upgrades and renovations. We're updating equipment and software in the Hamel Family Digital Lab, and have equipped and upgraded research labs to serve our expanded digital instruction needs. Both the Mirisch Seminar Room and our large lecture space, Vilas 4070, require high-quality digital projection systems to handle today's video display formats, and we are working hard to make this happen.

Your contributions make a difference. Please keep in touch, and continue to support us as we change and meet new challenges. Together we are setting Communication Arts on a secure path into the future.



Michael Trevis

Professor Michael Xenos

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your gifts, regardless of size, are essential to sustaining excellence in Communication Arts.

INTERNSHIPS: Each year we supervise more than 80 internships, in the Midwest and from coast to coast. Help us build up funds to make this wonderful experience available to students across a range of income levels.

TECHNOLOGY: Your gifts are essential in helping us keep up with the constant demands of evolving technology. Only a small part of the

funding for digital innovations comes from the University. The rest comes from you, our donors.

FACULTY AND STAFF: To maintain our cutting-edge teaching and research, we need talented and innovative faculty and staff. Department funds allow us to recruit the best job candidates, supplement faculty research, and reward excellence.

Giving Matters

Your Gifts Help Launch Careers

Four years after landing in Hollywood to pursue a writing and performing career, Eric Wielochowski (B.A.'09) is a seasoned member of the production staff at *Conan*, with experience on the first season of a new clip show.

But his path into television production began the same way so many others have: with an unpaid internship. Wielochowski's summer stint at *The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien* in 2009 gave him the experience and connections to launch his career.

Still, subsidizing three months in Hollywood — on top of the cost of college — is no simple task. Luckily for Wielochowski, generous donations from Communication Arts alumni and friends allowed the Department to award him a scholarship to ease the financial burden.

"The scholarship saved my life," he says. "It was like, here you go — just go and be you, do what you do best and don't worry about anything else. It allowed my sole focus to be on turning that internship into a job. Without it, I wouldn't be where I am today."

The Communication Arts internship program began in spring 1984, providing thousands of undergraduates with the chance to earn academic credit for their experience in the field.

Wielochowski's general production internship afforded him the opportunity to explore a variety of roles — from picking up supplies for props to distributing scripts — before settling into a position on the show's web team. A few months after returning to Madison, Wielochowski got a call: The show, which had since rebooted on TBS, had an opening in the audience department.

From there, he quickly moved to the cue card department and then on to the script department, while making a handful of on-air appearances along the way. He spent this summer across the lot producing segments for *Deon Cole's Black Box*, a new show on TBS from O'Brien's production



Eric Wielochowski tries out a different spot on the set of *Conan*

company. He has since returned to *Conan* and will be working on another O'Brien/TBS production, *The Pete Holmes Show*, starting in October.

All the while, Wielochowski has remained connected to his alma mater. He routinely reads résumés and cover letters from Communication Arts students and offers them tips for landing Hollywood internships. He says the sight of interns' faces lighting up during their first taping of *Conan* each semester reminds him why he got into the business.

"Many people like me enter college lost, and I feel like I found myself in the Communication Arts Department," he says. "Right now, I sit here doing something that has never felt like a day of work. I'm just having fun. That's something I'm going to be indebted to and grateful to the Communication Arts Department for the rest of my life. There's nothing I can do to pay them back for that, to have that feeling every morning."

Giving Options

BY MAIL

Send a check made payable to the UW Foundation (indicate "Department of Communication Arts Annual Fund" or your choice of a specific fund) to

University of Wisconsin Foundation
U.S. Bank Lockbox
Box 78807
Milwaukee, WI 53278-0807

ONLINE GIVING

Make a gift online through the UW Foundation at: commarts.wisc.edu/giving/.

PLANNED GIVING

If you are considering a planned gift, such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds, real estate, or bequests, please contact Jennifer Karlson at the UW Foundation at Jennifer.Karlson@supportuw.org or 608-262-7225.

Thank you for your support!

RESEARCH CENTRAL

CBS, ABC, and Huffington Post are among the media outlets highlighting research conducted through the Center for Communication Research (CCR). CCR projects cover a wide range of topics that are relevant to our everyday lives. Here are brief summaries of some of the projects:

ADVANTAGE SESAME STREET

Watching *Sesame Street* gives children a 12 percentile-point learning advantage over non-viewers. To measure the educational impact of the international versions of the program, Professors Louise Mares (M.A.'90, Ph.D.'94) and Zhongdang Pan (Ph.D.'90) examined the results of 24 studies with more than 10,000 children in 15 countries. Their findings indicate watching *Sesame Street* had a positive effect on children's learning. This was true for all three types of outcomes: cognitive (e.g., literacy and numeracy), learning about the world (e.g., culture, health, safety), and socio-emotional (e.g., attitudes toward out-groups).



3 SIGNS HE'S A LIAR

How can you tell if someone is lying? Is he or she babbling, using third person pronouns, and expletives? These three verbal cues indicate that someone isn't being truthful, according to a study on deception. Lead researcher Professor Lyn Van Swol notes liars tend to use more words, the Pinocchio Effect, when trying to convince their partner. The use of "he" and "they" helps to disassociate themselves from their lie, and profanity suggests diminishing self-control or an attempt to intimidate.

LOW S-E?

Boost your self-esteem by reviewing your Facebook profile for five minutes. Professor Catalina Toma, who led the Facebook study, told ABC News, "We had people look at their own profiles for five minutes and found that they experienced a boost in self-esteem in a deep, unconscious level." On the

downside, this group didn't appear motivated to perform well on the subsequent tests. Toma notes, "Your motivation to perform well might be reduced because you already feel really good."

CIVIC NETWORK

Do Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube encourage young people to get more involved in their communities and in politics? Does the use of social media reinforce or counteract inequalities in political and civic engagement? How can educators, parents, and civic organizations facilitate involvement among young social media users? These are just a few of the questions Professor Michael Xenos and his fellow investigators in the United Kingdom and Australia hope to answer in a Spencer Foundation-funded project.



Want to know more?
Visit the CCR website, ccr.commarks.wisc.edu.

Alumni Profile

Alumnus Presents Global Grub Guide

From appeltaart in Amsterdam to craft beer in Colorado, Eat Your World (eatyourworld.com) is an online guide to food and drinks around the globe created by Scott Rosen (B.A.'98) and his wife, Laura. Operating under the principle that what you eat should strictly depend on your geographical location, EYW highlights foods and drinks native to particular regions. And, yes, cheese curds and brats are featured.

We recently caught up with Scott to ask him about the site's origin, his favorite foods and his Madison memories.

VV: Where did the idea behind EYW come from?

SR: My wife and I had the idea while traveling around Colombia in late 2009. We were both feeling a bit burned out from what we were doing, me with photography, Laura with freelance travel writing. We realized how obsessively we were already tracking down and photographing the local dishes of whatever city we were in, so we ran with that idea, and bought the domain name on the spot!

VV: What is the weirdest food you've ever tried?

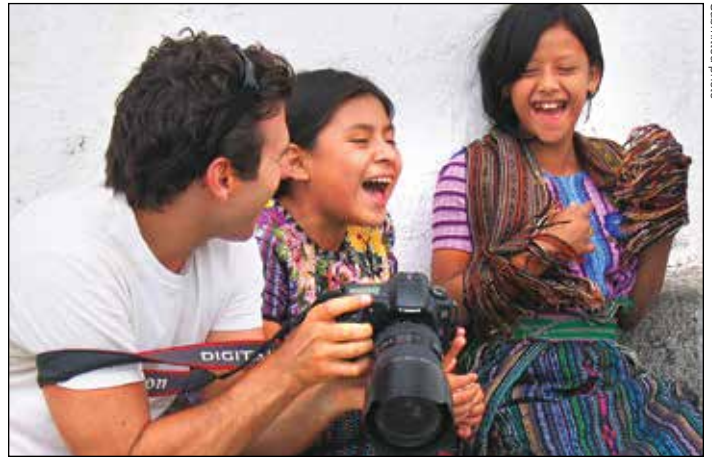
SR: Escamoles (ant larvae) — an Aztec delicacy from Mexico City — were pretty strange. Kind of like corn kernels or pine nuts, with a poppy texture and a nutty taste. The restaurant was high end, which is not always typical for us, and the preparation was exceptional. Once you get past what you are eating, they taste pretty delicious.

VV: What's the best food you've had?

SR: We need to go back to San Sebastian, Spain, to cover that city for the website. We went there on our honeymoon (pre-website) and the food was as good as it gets. But I tend to enjoy everywhere we go, and always find a few dishes or drinks that just blow me away. BBQ shrimp in New Orleans, sticky toffee pudding in London, and chole bhature in Delhi are a few of my recent favorites.

VV: What is your favorite restaurant in Madison?

SR: About five years ago I took Laura to Madison (also pre-EYW). First stop was State Street Brats. What is more delicious and traditional to Madison than a brat, beer, and darts? We were actually there to do a story about local brews for a beer magazine. That was a fun trip.



Scott Rosen in Guatemala

VV: What is the most memorable class you took at UW–Madison?

SR: I always remember my Intro to Primates course and never hesitate to tell someone that a monkey is not an ape and a gorilla is not a monkey. Seriously, though, I enjoyed all my film classes and loved my major in Radio, TV, and Film. It let me take so many types of fascinating courses. I was one of those people who went to every class all four years.

Involvement with Slow Food UW Inspires Career

Amy Verhey (B.A.'13) has two passions: communications and food.

Which made her majors — Communication Arts and Journalism — and extracurricular activities — student branding manager for Chipotle, public relations and social media advisor at Nostrano, and café and membership director at Slow Food UW — obvious fits.

Verhey, who works on agricultural accounts at public relations giant Edelman in Chicago, says her time with Slow Food UW was particularly influential. She began as a volunteer for the Slow Food UW Café in 2011, and her role eventually grew to involve outreach, social media and web communications, and membership.

Slow Food UW, established in 2009 as the first university chapter of Slow Food USA, strives to find alternatives to the modern industrial agricultural system by opposing the mass production of inexpensive crops, processed food and chemical use in food production.

"The experiences I was able to walk away with from Slow Food specifically not only shaped my social and actual UW experience, but are still shaping what I do right now," Verhey says.



From the Dean's Desk

As the new dean of UW–Madison's College of Letters & Science, I am delighted to introduce myself and share with you some of the many reasons I am honored and excited to serve the College.

As an economist, I have devoted my scholarly career to studying the ways in which human beings respond to the world's complexity. We are increasingly interconnected through technology and economic growth. I believe our students must graduate as engaged global citizens in order to successfully navigate through work and life.

The Department of Communication Arts is critical in this effort. UW–Madison has a proud tradition of leadership in the communication field.

It was the first university in the United States to offer an advanced degree in communication. Today, more than 11,000 Communication Arts alumni are sharing the Wisconsin Idea around the globe, using their communication skills to improve their workplaces, their communities, and the world.

As alumni, you have many reasons to be proud and to continue your support of the Department of Communication Arts. Perhaps the most valuable skill a liberal arts graduate can bring to our knowledge-based economy is the passion to keep learning. The Department of Communication Arts fosters curiosity and creativity in unique and innovative ways, strengthening campus and the community at large and



University Communications

preparing students to become active and involved members of society.

Please stay in touch with your alma mater. I welcome your feedback and appreciate all that you do for the University.

Thank you and *On, Wisconsin!*

John Karl Scholz
Dean and Professor of Economics
dean@ls.wisc.edu

“FORWARD UNDER 40”

Forward with Schweitzer

If you have a screenplay burning a hole in your desk drawer, Adam Schweitzer (B.A.'99) is a good person to know. Schweitzer, a partner at International Creative Management (ICM)



Courtesy of ICM Partners

Partners, one of the world's largest talent and literary agencies, helps guide the careers of actors, writers and other talent in film, television, publishing, music and theater.

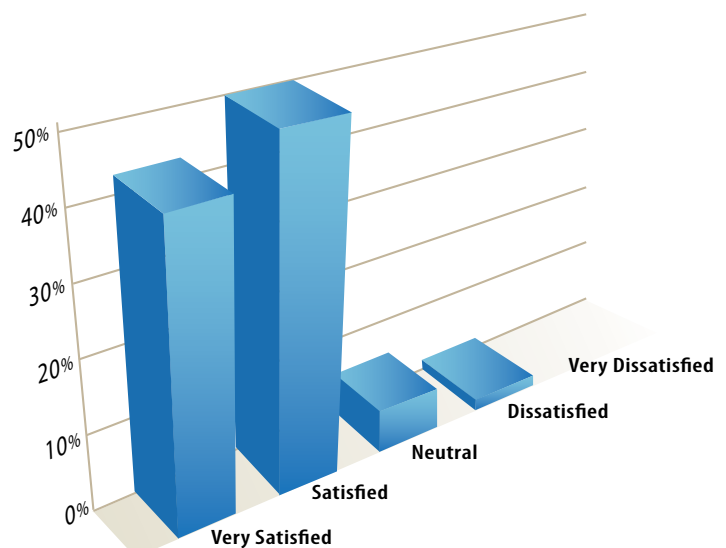
A 2013 Wisconsin Alumni Association “Forward Under 40” honoree, Schweitzer found focus while studying Communication Arts. “UW–Madison gave me my first real introduction to the world of film,” he says. “The film theory classes I took helped train my eye and brain, both to watch and understand films in a way I had never thought of before.” The production courses, he adds, “were my introduction into how movies are made from start to finish.” Comm Arts congratulates Adam on his award.

— WAA Staff

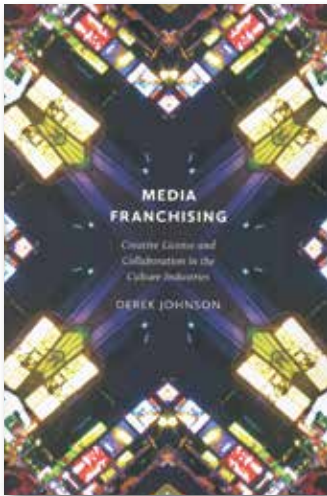
Quality Instruction in Comm Arts

More than 600 alumni responded to the undergraduate email survey last March. Ninety-three percent of you indicated that you were very satisfied/satisfied with the quality of instruction.

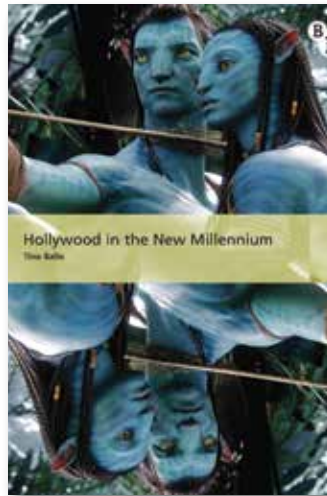
Go to commarts.wisc.edu for more results.



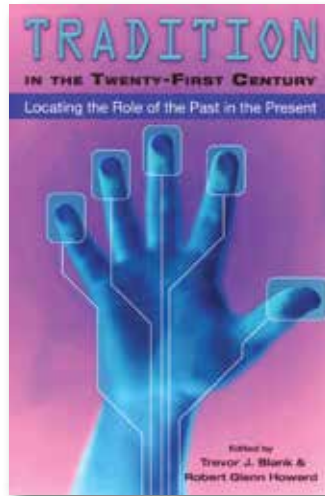
Professor's Voices



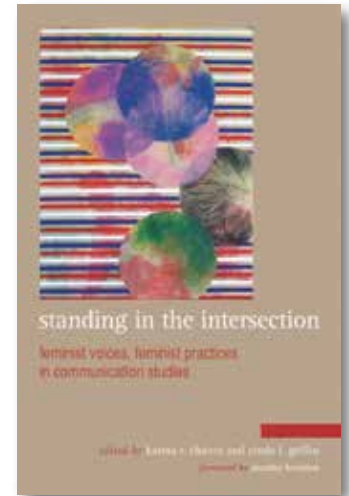
Derek Johnson
Media Franchising



Tino Balio
Hollywood in the New Millennium



Robert Glenn Howard
Tradition in the Twenty-First Century (edited with Trevor J. Blank)



Karma R. Chávez
Standing in the Intersection (edited with Cindy L. Griffin)

Class News & Notes

Roxanne Beverstein (B.A.'75) is a partner at InfoQ, an online publishing company which serves the enterprise software development community.

Jeff Cesario (B.A.'75), an Emmy Award-winning writer, has written and produced for *Dennis Miller Live*, *Talk Show with Spike Feresten*, and *The Marriage Ref*. Cesario was most recently the executive producer and writer for *Brand X with Russell Brand* on FX. He continues to do standup comedy.

Brett Tarnutzer (B.A.'91) works for the Federal Communications Commission. He is leading the team charged with designing the new incentive auctions to repurpose broadcast TV spectrum for new flexible broadband use.

Carolynne Bernard Thomas (B.A.'00) is a partner and the co-head of the strategic communication practice at CRA, Inc., a consulting firm. She joined the Comm Arts advisory board this year.

Jill Wade Tyson (B.A.'01) is an attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Jillian Arnold Ackerman (B.A.'04) is the director of photography, media manager, and camera operator for NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab. Jillian shot the 2012 Mars landing of Curiosity.

Kelly Kahl (B.S.'89), executive vice president with CBS Primetime Television, received a WAA Badger of the Year award, Los Angeles Chapter. Kahl (third from the right) is pictured with former CBS interns and fellow Comm Arts alums (left to right) Mallory Mason (B.A.'08), Alexis Krinsky (B.A.'08), Alexa Sunby (B.A.'12), Emily Coleman (BBA'12), and Dan Brower (B.A.'11). All are now working in the L.A. entertainment industry.



STAY CONNECTED!



Follow @uwcommarts on
Twitter.



Like the UW–Madison
Department of Communication
Arts on Facebook.



Join the University of
Wisconsin–Madison
Communication Arts Group
on LinkedIn.

We want to hear from you!

Send us your update: commarts.wisc.edu/alumni/send_update/

Please update your contact information in the Alumni Directory at uwalumni.com/directory or call (888) WIS-ALUM (947-2586) or email changes to AlumniChanges@uwalumni.com.



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Department of Communication Arts
University of Wisconsin–Madison
821 University Avenue
Madison, WI 53706

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Madison, WI
Permit No. 658

