

THE ROAR

VOL.

23

Issue 1

Fall 2023 - Spring 2024

TCNJ's Department of
Communication,
Journalism, and Film: A
National Leader in student-
faculty engagement

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NATIONAL STUDENT NEWS

TCNJ Students “Far and Away” National Undergraduate Leaders in Health Communication Conference Presentations



L-R: Roman Fabbriatore, Shannon Allen, Chandler Storcella, Jessica Munyan, John C. Pollock

According to the world-renowned organizer of the nation's most prestigious health communication conference, Professor Nancy Harrington, TCNJ students are far and away the nation's leaders in undergraduate paper presentations. She offered this opinion when three TCNJ undergraduates (two majoring in communication studies, another in public health) and one master of public health graduate student presented co-authored papers on April 5 in Lexington, Kentucky, at the biannual Kentucky Health Communication Conference (KCHC 2024), the nation's oldest health communication conference in the U.S.

Commenting on TCNJ student presentations, Harrington, who has organized the University of Kentucky conferences almost since their founding in the late 90s, said: "Since 2006, when students from TCNJ first began presenting their research at the Kentucky Conference on Health Communication, a biennial conference that attracts national and international participants, they have been far and away the leaders in undergraduate participation. In fact, TCNJ students have presented more refereed papers and posters than have undergraduates from any other college or university. KCHC 2024 is the first conference for which we have two other colleges bringing a significant number of undergraduate students. I like to think that TCNJ has paved the way."

NATIONAL STUDENT NEWS

TCNJ Students “Far and Away” National Undergraduate Leaders in Health Communication Conference Presentations

All three co-authored undergraduate papers and the single graduate paper were written in classes in Communication Research Methods and International Communication taught by social scientist John C. Pollock, professor of communication studies and public health, founder of the health communication specializations in both departments, who said: “I am especially proud of this year’s TCNJ representatives, co-authoring papers on such diverse topics as nationwide multicity coverage of abortion access (Roman Fabbriatore ’25), birth control access (Shannon Allen ’25), and opioid misuse (Chandler Storcella ’25), as well as on cross-national coverage of water pollution (MPH student Jessica Munyan).” Each media sociology paper was written using “community structure theory,” developed by Pollock over several decades at TCNJ, comparing community-level (city or country) demographics with variations in coverage of critical issues in major city or national newspapers. Over his nearly 32 years of teaching at TCNJ, Pollock has co-authored almost 200 papers with over 500 student co-authors, papers presented at state, national, or international conferences, co-authoring additional articles or chapters, and even a book with 28 student co-authors.

Student presenter comments were appreciative. According to Chandler Storcella ’25, “As one of the few undergraduate students participating in the nation’s top health communication conference, it was an exceptional experience, gaining insight into cutting-edge research.” For Roman Fabbriatore ’25, “The Kentucky conference opened my eyes to the wide array of health communication frameworks addressing health concerns globally. Research presented by dozens of academic institutions convinced me that the field can effectively engage diverse audiences to better influence health outcomes.” For Shannon Allen ’25, “Attending KCHC was one of my most memorable and rewarding undergraduate experiences. The exposure to such rigorous research and brilliant scholars allowed me to gain more appreciation for the health communication field.” For Jessica Munyan, MPH candidate, “The opportunity to present at KCHC 2024 was an honor, and I really enjoyed learning about others’ incredible ground-breaking research throughout the country.”

NATIONAL STUDENT NEWS

TCNJ Students “Far and Away” National Undergraduate Leaders in Health Communication Conference Presentations

According to Susan Ryan, chair of the Department of Communication Studies, “We continue to be impressed by the exemplary work in Dr. Pollock’s classes leading to student presentations at national conferences. This accomplishment reflects well on the students and on the health communication specialization that has long been a major department strength.”

According to Carole Kenner, dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, “The School of Nursing and Health Sciences and the Department of Public Health are delighted that students representing health communication concentrations have become exemplars for other students nationwide.”

Barbaranne DiMarco Endows Travel Grants for Health Comm and Other Students

Garrett DiMarco Student Travel Scholars:
A prominent alumna of The College of New Jersey has made it possible for excellent students to present refereed papers at national and international professional health communication conferences. When her son Garrett, a TCNJ alumnus who enjoyed presenting health communication conference papers, died unexpectedly at age 30, Barbaranne Yanus DiMarco endowed at least two student travel funds to help undergraduates attend conferences. Three students who received those funds-- Roman Fabbriatore, Shannon Allen, and Chandler Storcella--presented papers at the recent Kentucky Conference on Health Communication, the nation's oldest health communication conference, on April 6. Thank you, Barbara!



BARBARANNE YANUS DIMARCO

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Susan Ryan, Professor and Dept. Chair, Presents Paper at National Conference

Susan Ryan presented a paper at the annual conference of the University Film and Video Association (UFVA) which took place in Cleveland, OH from July 30th-August 2nd, 2024. Her paper, "Ethical Challenges in Community Documentary" drew upon her experiences of teaching a community documentary class that made short films about Puerto Rican visual artists and musicians from Trenton. She also served as moderator for the same panel, "Ethics and Impact: Advocacy and Non-Fiction Filmmaking."



Dr. Susan Ryan is in the right corner of the image.

Dr. Yachao "Bruce" Li: New Editor for the Atlantic Journal of Communication

Join us in celebrating this honor – our very own Dr. Yachao Li has become the new Editor of the Atlantic Journal of Communication!

Dr. Li is the second person to edit the Atlantic Journal of Communication, following in the footsteps of the founding editor, Dr. Gary Radford of Fairleigh Dickinson University.



#TCNJCOM

Congratulations to Dr. Yachao Li for being appointed as the new editor of the *Atlantic Journal of Communication*!



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FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Yifeng Hu Receives ASIANetwork-Mellon Foundation Award for AAPI Voices and Stories: Community-based Digital Storytelling, 2024

Yifeng Hu, associate professor of communication studies, is the inaugural recipient of the ASIANetwork-Mellon Foundation Award for AAPI Voices and Stories: Community-based Digital Storytelling. The award provides \$500,000 in funding over three years and will support oral history and community conservation projects designed to capture and preserve the experiences of Asian American and Pacific Islander individuals and communities.



YIFENG HU, COMMUNICATION STUDIES. PHOTO:
PETER MURPHY

Hu will head to the University of Central Arkansas in Conway, Arkansas – one of two inaugural sites for the first year of the three-year nationwide project – for seven weeks this summer for a collaborative Chinese heritage project. Working alongside community members, students, and faculty from the University of Central Arkansas, Hu will begin to document the stories of members of the Chinese population in the state and Mississippi Delta region. This group has had roots there for more than 150 years.

“One store there has existed for almost 80 years,” Hu says. “Many of the community members are very old, and it’s urgent to document their voices and stories.”

The work will include conducting, recording, and transcribing interviews, as well as creating a digital repository of stories and other historical artifacts to preserve this community’s past. Once she completes her work on the project in Arkansas, Hu hopes to be able to lead a similar project in New Jersey communities with an overarching goal to advocate that Asians are not “perpetual foreigners.”

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Yifeng Hu Receives ASIANetwork-Mellon Foundation Award for AAPI Voices and Stories: Community-based Digital Storytelling, 2024



PING FONG GROCERY IN HUGHES, ARKANSAS, CIRCA 1947. PHOTO: PING FONG, JR

In December 2021, Hu testified during a press conference and rally at the New Jersey State House in Trenton, urging lawmakers to pass a bill that would include the stories of Asian American Pacific Islanders in K-12 education standards.

“Not only is it imperative to make the young generation more aware of AAPI struggles, but it is equally crucial to celebrate AAPI contributions in the U.S. society,” she says.

“They’ve been here as long as anyone else and have made contributions,” Hu says. “When we talk about Asian-American histories, it’s really American stories.”

Hu has been involved with AAPI advocacy at TCNJ and in the state of New Jersey for years. In spring 2022, she and eight students spearheaded TCNJ’s first Asian American Pacific Islander advocacy campaign, raising awareness about AAPI history and contributions, promoting representation and visibility, and combating hate and stereotypes through interactive activities on campus. Since then, she has continued and expanded this work, bringing award-winning author Dr. Erika Lee to speak and organizing performances of *Illegal: A New Musical* on campus. She also co-chairs the newly formed TCNJ Asian and Asian American Pacific Islander Coalition.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. D'Angelo Discusses Conspiracy Theories in TCNJ Magazine

In nearby Kendall Hall, communication studies professor Paul D'Angelo takes a different approach, providing students with a framework for navigating the intersection of politics, traditional journalism, and social media in a class titled "News in Our Lives Today."

In trying to determine where a report falls on the continuum from truth to lies and propaganda, look for intent, D'Angelo tells students. Does the author attempt to verify information with named sources? Appear willing to debunk false information? Or is he or she out to "construct a worldview impervious to validation?"

"In the best of circumstances, mainstream news is where conspiracy theories should go to die," D'Angelo tells the class. But that doesn't always happen, "because people who believe conspiracies are apt to blame the mainstream media for undermining their conspiratorial thoughts. So now 'the media' becomes part of the populist rant."

What's a conspiracy theory? According to D'Angelo, it's an "explanation of an event or set of issues that challenges established accounts, and instead refers to the machinations of powerful actors or secret societies" as those responsible, almost always implicating mainstream media as a player.



In interviews and in class, both he and D'Angelo acknowledged personal antipathy to many prevailing conspiracy theories, but say they attempt to strike a balance. For one thing, says D'Angelo, "the line between when misinformation becomes disinformation is not always that clear. It's hard to know."

Historically, false and often bizarre narratives aren't a new development in America or elsewhere, say both professors. But things started getting out of this world in 1947, when a rancher discovered some strange wreckage in the desert near Roswell, New Mexico. Whole industries of entertainment and political intrigue followed, none of it to cash in on the official explanation: a crashed weather balloon.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. D'Angelo Discusses Conspiracy Theories in TCNJ Magazine

Today, online, you can buy a create-your-own-conspiracy-theory set of refrigerator magnets, complete with a tin foil hat. Still, public derision of woo-woo apparently does little to curb the bottomless appetite for it. So who believes this stuff? D'Angelo, treading carefully, says that studies show it's people with relatively lower "news literacy" scores, "and yeah, it does tend to thrive more on the right, obviously, than the left."

The problem, of course, is that the embrace can turn dangerous. Take Pizzagate, the narrative that posited Hillary Clinton and a cabal of loyalists were sexually abusing children in the basement of Comet Ping Pong, a Washington, D.C., pizzeria. Never mind that the business didn't have a basement. A North Carolina man took the story to heart and used a military-style assault rifle to shoot through the lock of a closet in the restaurant; he was later sentenced to four years in prison.

More broadly, there's the threat some theories pose to democratic norms, such as former President Donald Trump's "big lie" about a stolen election, which fed into the January 6, 2021 assault on the Capitol. That one's "a bit tricky to talk about," D'Angelo says. The Trump team's purported facts about the outcome of the 2020 election have been thoroughly debunked by democratic institutions, such as the court system on state and federal levels, he notes. "But when discussing and dissecting those facts in class, some students may feel as though I am professing from my own ideological perspective."

In those cases, D'Angelo says he leans heavily on findings of scientific organizations and legitimate institutions. "I want students to be able to think for themselves, but do so by taking into account and debating what others have found out through rigorous inquiry."

What should probably make all of us uncomfortable is disinformation and "deep fake" imagery, already proliferating, and now getting a rocket-fuel boost from artificial intelligence. Shortly after the debut of Open AI's ChatGPT app in late 2022, more than 1,000 leading tech scientists, policy experts, and executives signed a statement warning AI carried a potential "extinction" threat that should be made "a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war." PEN America, a free-expression advocacy organization, warned in particular that "generative" AI, or systems that create their own text, audio, and image content, "has the potential to supercharge tools of deception and repression."

"This tool is going to be the most powerful tool for spreading misinformation that has ever been on the internet," Gordon Crovitz, a co-chief executive of NewsGuard, a company that tracks online misinformation, told the New York Times in early 2023.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. D'Angelo Discusses Conspiracy Theories in TCNJ Magazine

There ought to be room for legitimate questioning.” D’Angelo notes that, in order to become widespread, conspiracy theories must go public, which exposes them to critical scrutiny. “Along the lines of dealing with bullies,” that scrutiny, he believes, must be increasingly “strident” to counter the threat posed by disinformation.

At the moment, “I think our culture is cornered by conspiracy theories, and one way to get through that is to attack with a certain stridency that still adheres to journalistic principles of verification,” D’Angelo says.

“An institutional response to an intractable set of irrational propositions is a good thing,” he says. “It’s something that matters, a bulwark for democracy. If we consider, rightly so, conspiracy theories to be a drain on democracy, institutional responses are necessary.”

Still, “journalism has its work cut out for it,” and requires a citizenry armed with “news literacy and analytical tools to be effective,” says D’Angelo.

Among his students who felt better equipped after the fall term was Joe Arocho, a third-year communication studies major. Arocho says he’d begun D’Angelo’s class fairly credulous, willing to accept as true just about any assertion he came across on social media.

“I wasn’t big into news,” he says, often tuning it out as just so much noise. But the class, he says, made him realize that “you have to go back to legacy sources” to verify dubious reports on social media, and gave him a framework for doing so. For example: After seeing videos claiming that pro-Palestinian protestors had “removed” an American flag from a pole at Harvard, Arocho says he dug deeper, and found a report in the Harvard Crimson refuting the claim; the protestors had instead cheered as the flag was lowered in the afternoon “consistent with daily routine.” “If I feel like, ‘Is the journalist giving me an opinion here?’” Arocho says, “I have to go back and fact-check that.”

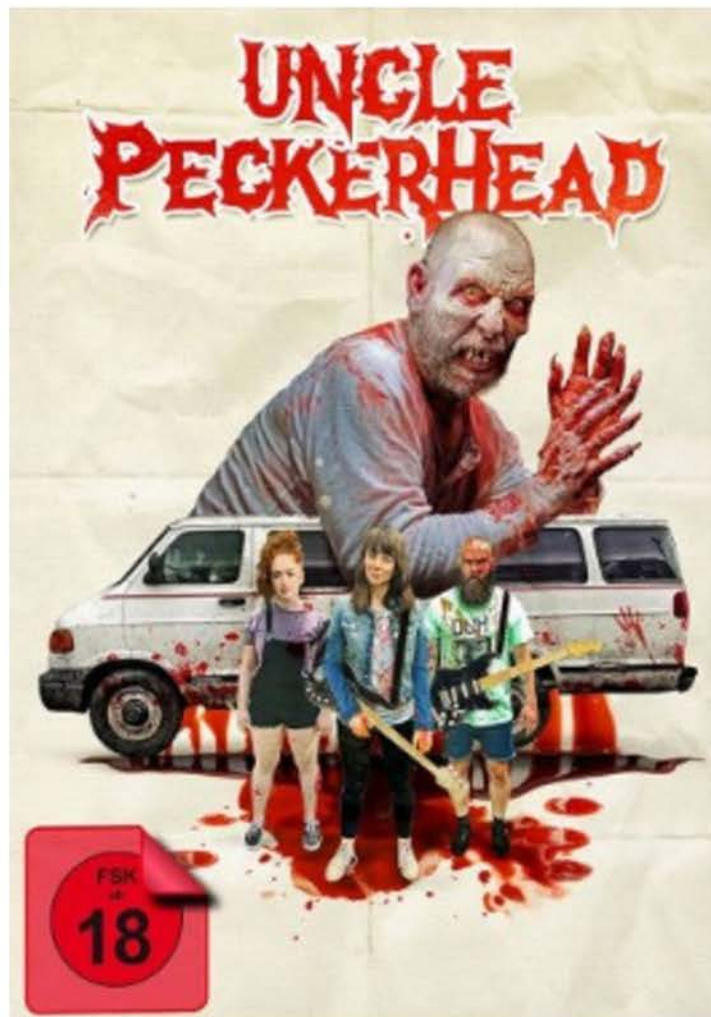
FACULTY NEWS

Professor Matt Lawrence's Feature Film, *Uncle Peckerhead*, Continues to Receive Acclaim From Fans of the Horror Film

According to an article in "The Collider" on the 15 most under-rated horror films of the 2020s, "There's a lot to love about Uncle Peckerhead, from the punk rock horror movie's stellar usage of practical effects and gore to its stand-out comedic performance from David Littleton as Uncle Peckerhead himself."

Another website for aficionados of horror, The Stranger, also recently commented that "It's a fun and splattery blood-filled comedy horror movie." Fans of Professor Lawrence, and the horror genre, should stay tuned for his next feature which will be coming soon in a limited theatrical release and on cable in early 2025.

At the 2020 Calgary Underground Film Festival, Professor Lawrence won the Best Narrative Feature award for his contribution to the film.



Poster for the film Uncle Peckerhead.

FACULTY NEWS

Dr. Kelli Smith – WelCOMe to #TCNJCOM!

WELCOME NEW COM FACULTY MEMBER, DR. KELLI JEAN SMITH

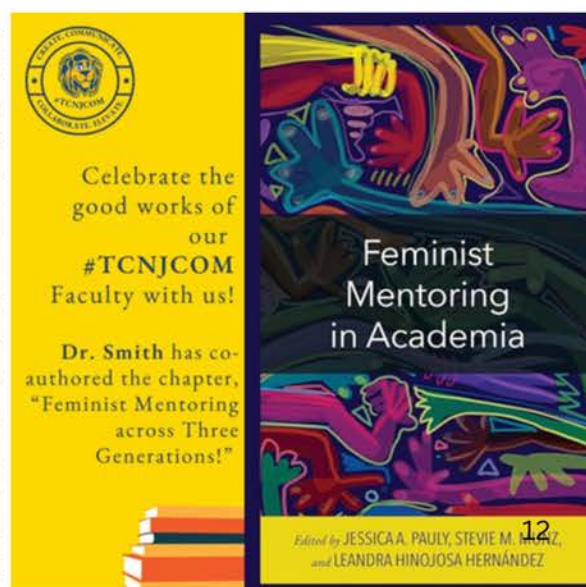
Kelli earned her PhD in Communication from Michigan State University. Her area of expertise is interpersonal communication, and she has published several journal articles and book chapters and has co-authored a book. Her area of expertise is interpersonal communication. She has co-authored a book, *Applied Communication and Practice* (Cognella Press, 2017) and published book chapters and peer-reviewed articles in *Communication Teacher* and *Communication Monographs*, among others. She teaches courses in communication theory, organizations and leadership, introductory public relations, and small group communication. She is originally from Hawaii and enjoys reading and spending time with her husband and four parrots.

This semester Dr. Smith is teaching COM 103, Introduction to Communication Theory, COM 261 Introduction to Public Relations, and COM 441 Organizations and Leadership.



Dr. Smith – New Publication to Celebrate

Kelli Smith, visiting assistant professor of Communication Studies, has co-authored a chapter published in the book "Feminist Mentoring in Academia". The chapter, entitled "Feminist Mentoring across Three Generations," explores feminist co-mentoring, an approach that integrates emotional mentoring into the traditional mentoring model. The authors represent three academic generations of faculty in a Communication Department and share their experiences with co-mentoring. The chapter then moves from individual reflection to best practices for co-mentoring such as egalitarian relationships, cooperation, and interconnected spheres of work and home.



FACULTY NEWS

TCNJ Launches New Department of Communication, Journalism, and Film (CJF)

The School of the Arts and Communication has launched the Department of Communication, Journalism, and Film (CJF), which combines the Journalism and Professional Writing and Communication Studies programs. Students enrolled in the BA in Communication Studies can choose from multiple specializations, including digital filmmaking and television, emerging communication technologies, health communication, interpersonal and strategic communication, and mass media and social media. Through the BA in Journalism and Professional Writing program, students study news and feature writing and editing, media ethics and law, and broadcast and multimedia journalism. Students can also minor in Communication Studies, Journalism, Professional Writing, and Broadcast and Multimedia Journalism. This fall, the college will unveil a new cross-disciplinary, five-course minor in Social Media combining courses in communication, marketing and journalism.



“I am happy that each course of study is now visible in the name of our largest department,” said Dr. Pamela Barnett, dean of the School of the Arts and Communication. “Our faculty have been envisioning how to collaborate, by sharing curriculum, resources and programming across these three programs. It will be exciting to see what interdisciplinary possibilities emerge when we bring these colleagues together.” The new department brings together a distinguished faculty of researchers, filmmakers, consultants and experienced journalists. Students will continue to benefit from strong faculty mentorships, which have yielded opportunities to co-author papers, present at conferences, collaborate on film productions, and land internships, and graduate school

and job placements.

FACULTY NEWS

TCNJ Launches New Department of Communication, Journalism, and Film (CJF)

“We see this as an exciting union and our community will grow as will the opportunities to study, do research, collaborate, and share resources, including our esteemed faculty and state-of-the-art facilities,” explained Professor of Communication Studies Susan Ryan, who will lead the department as chair.

The department will house the college’s film and television studio, radio station and journalism room. Students will gain hands-on experience through their coursework and student media organizations, including Lions Television, WTSR 91.3, The Signal and HerCampus.com.

“Communication Studies and Journalism have a long history of working together,” said Professor Kathleen Webber, who will coordinate the Journalism and Professional Writing program. “We believe that it will provide new opportunities for our curricula, student media organizations, and for joint events.”

Recently, the college was awarded funding from the state’s Equipment Leasing Fund (ELF) to support health education. As part of the grant, the television studio is upgrading its equipment to include new 4K cameras, switcher, record decks, routing and play decks.

“It’s pretty much a new TV control system, complete with a new green screen and floor, which will allow immersive scenery and the ability to create realistic sets. Our studio will be set up to give students the same kind of conditions if they were to go out to work in a network or studio,” explained Kevin Potucek, assistant director and coordinator of media facilities. “We also plan to create environments that relate to the health industry, including demos for health and panel discussions.

The grant is also supporting the purchase of virtual reality equipment, which will be used in communication studies courses, including Emerging Communication Technologies; New Media and Health Communication; and Special Topics: Student-Faculty Advanced Research: Virtual Reality for Social, Cultural, and Health Impact.

“The VR equipment will support students in studying the social, behavioral, and psychological dimensions of the design, use, and effect of virtual reality,” explained Associate Professor of Communication Studies Yifeng Hu. “Students will also acquire professional insights of developing user-facing strategies and gain perspectives on how to use immersive technologies such as VR to offer creative and innovative solutions to critical problems such as social justice, health disparities, and cultural competency.”

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

WTSR & Lions TV – Nominated for 2023–2024

Intercollegiate Broadcast System Awards

~~Congratulate WTSR and Lion's TV members on their list of~~
nominations for the 2023 – 2024 award season!



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

TCNJ COM Alumni Collaborations: Gail Shulman and Aaron Watson Wilson

Imagine running into an old friend from TCNJ at the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony in Washington DC? That's what happened to Gail Schulman '16 and Aaron Watson '18 when they crossed paths as media professionals recently at the prestigious honors ceremony on December 4th.

Gail and Aaron first began working together in the Digital Filmmaking and Television specialization (formerly Radio/TV/Film) in the Communication Studies Department at TCNJ. Their first class project together was a documentary on a local theater group. As student producers, they honed their skills in telling visually compelling stories. Both went on to numerous internships, including a shared internship in the New York Times photo department.

Even after graduating, their connection continues. They often see each other at major events even though they work for different organizations, Gail as a photographer at Paramount CBS and Aaron as a video producer at the White House. Who knows where they will run into each other again?



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

COM and Public Health Students at COSA 2024

Communication, Journalism, and Film students showcased their work, their projects, and their creativity at TCNJ's Celebration of Student Achievement (COSA) on Tuesday, April 30, 2024.



L-R: Chandler Storcella, Health Communication student in Public Health; Dr. Carole Kenner, Dean, School of Nursing, Health, and Kinesiology; Dr. John C. Pollock, Communication, Journalism, and Film; Public Health

Emerging Communication Technologies Students at COSA

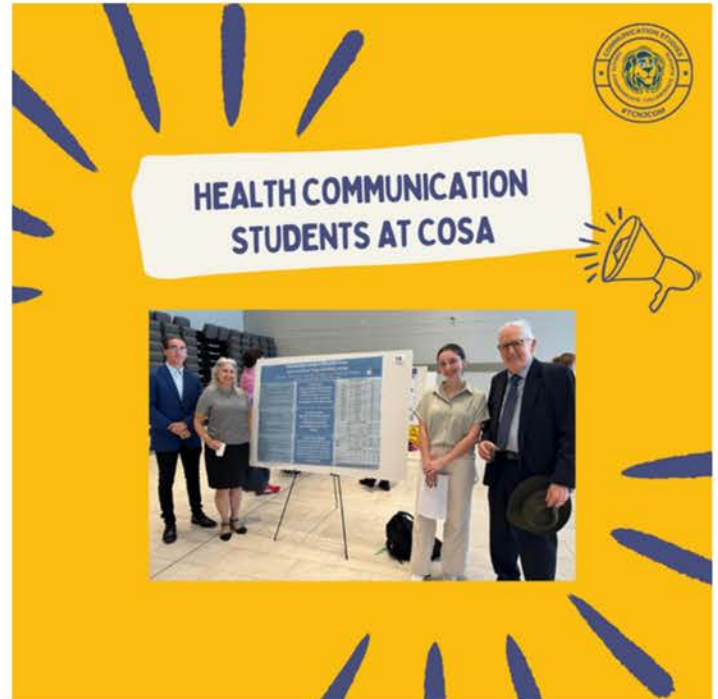
Danielle Lluberes, Theresa Leighton, Anthony Berloco, and Bryce Maher presented their work at the 2024 Celebration of Student Achievement here at TCNJ. College-wide, our students shared projects, research findings, films, and more. Join us in congratulating them for outstanding works.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Health Communication Students at COSA

Alyssa Hemsey, Isabella Percontino, Gianni Reddy, Maria Ibanez, Shannon Allen, Megan Maffei, Leah Macaulay, Chandler Storcella, Samantha Barryman, and Roman Fabbriatore presented their work at the 2024 Celebration of Student Achievement here at TCNJ. College-wide, our students shared projects, research findings, films, and more. Join us in congratulating them for outstanding works.



Interpersonal & Strategic Communication Students at COSA

Ana Taborda-Tobon and Liam Ojeda presented their work at the 2024 Celebration of Student Achievement here at TCNJ. College-wide, our students shared projects, research findings, films, and more. Join us in congratulating them for outstanding works.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Mass Media and Social Media Students at COSA

Olivia Chiarella, Isabella Percontino, Kayla Woods, Caroline Dowd, Michael Parlier, Alice Pavlov, Janae Soto, Siobhan Kelly, and Madison Anidjar presented their work at the 2024 Celebration of Student Achievement here at TCNJ. College-wide, our students shared projects, research findings, films, and more. Join us in congratulating them for outstanding works.



Lambda Pi Eta Introduction

This past weekend we welcomed our new inductees into Lambda Pi Eta, the national communication student honor society, part of the National Communication Association! We are so proud of all of them and their hard work. Congratulations to everyone who was inducted!



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

COM 2023 COM Department Award Recipients

Please join us in congratulating our 2023 Communication Studies Department Award winners!

John C. Pollock Communication Award

Nicole Woods

Leadership & Advocacy Award

Anabella Trucco

M. Wasser Internship Award

Vincent Dante

Rachel Dambrot

Hannah Cooke

Promise of Achievement Award

Ann-Kerry Donaus

Maya McKelvey

Alyssa Borrero

Roman Fabbriatore

Mark Schell

Community Engagement Award

Rachel Castria

Nicholas Textores

Kelly Jung

Emerging Communications

Technologies Award

Skylar Bachman



L-R: Yachao Li, Yifeng Hu, Paul D'Angelo, Susan Ryan, John C. Pollock

Digital Filmmaking & Television Award

Cassandra Malnick

Health & Wellness Award

Vincent Dante

Mass Media & Social Media Award

Christopher Hunt

Faculty Award

Elizabeth Richardson

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

COM 2024 COM Department Award Recipients

Please join us in congratulating our 2024 Communication Studies Department Award winners!

Promise of Achievement Award

Nicholas Degruccio

Alyssa Hemsey

Natalie Roesch

Olivia Chiarella

Paige Perez

Lamda Pi Eta Award

Michael Parlier

Emerging Communication Technologies Award

Callie Gallagher

Digital Filmmaking & Television Award

William Allen

Health Communication Award

Katherine Rodriguez

Interpersonal & Strategic

Communication Award

Ana Taborda-Tobon

Mass Media & Social Media Award

Madison Anidjar

Community Engagement Award

Stephanie Afemeku

Aaron Rippin

Dylan Nguyen

Leadership & Advocacy Award

Alyssa Borrero

Ann-Kerry Donaus

M. Wasser Internship Award

Emily Dougherty

Sandy Sleiman

Isabella Cantalice

John C. Pollock Communication Award

Roman Fabbriatore

Faculty Award

Mark Schell

Jillian Comstock

Faculty & Staff

Dr. Paul D'Angelo | Dr. Yifeng Hu |
Professor Lorna Johnson-Frizell |
Professor Matt Lawrence | Dr. Yachao
Li | Dr. John Pollock | Ms. Kay
Potucek, Program Assistant | Dr.
Susan Ryan, Chair



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Comm Students Graduating and Aspiring



Fulfilling graduation May, 2024, with one of our top joint Comm Studies/Public Health students, Katherine "Kat" Rodriguez, who won the Health Communication Award and is enrolled at Columbia University to study for a MPH degree.

L-R: Katherine "Kat" Rodriguez, John C. Pollock



Roman Fabbriatore, winner of the John C. Pollock Health Communication Award, applicant for Fulbright Scholarship to help South Africans combat gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS.

L-R: Roman Fabbriatore, John C. Pollock

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Comm Students Graduating and Aspiring

Dr. Yifeng Hu stands with our Comm students for their awards.



Dr. Yifeng Hu stands with Ann-Kerry Donaus, recipient of the Leadership and Advocacy Award, subsequently working as a Community Programs Advocate at HOPES Community Action Partnership, Inc.

L-R: Dr. Yifeng Hu, Ann-Kerry Donaus



Dr. Yifeng Hu stands with Callie Gallagher, recipient of the Emerging Communication Technologies Award. Callie is an avid reader and writer who is working on her first novel.

L-R: Dr. Yifeng Hu, Callie Gallagher

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Ryan Maurer – TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship

Congratulations to Ryan Maurer for being selected for online publication!

His essay, “Disney’s Use of Media Convergence in the Streaming World,” was published in the “TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship.”

Ryan wrote the essay in ~~Dr. D’Angelo’s~~ COM 172, Introduction to Media Communication. The course explores the seven legacy media industries of books, magazines, newspapers, radio, recorded music, television, and motion pictures.

The class surveys their shared histories and specifically focuses on ways that media companies navigate the contemporary “convergence” environment, in which digital platforms (e.g., social media and websites) and devices (e.g., smart TVs and phones) play a major role.

Ryan’s article is about the Walt Disney Company, one of the largest of all media companies, with a long history in the pre-convergence era and deep investments in the convergence age.

#TCNJCOM

CONGRATULATIONS!

#TCNJCOM Student
Ryan Maurer’s paper
will be published in
the forthcoming
TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship!

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Recognizing Radio, TV, and Film Student, Mike Trampe!

Here is what Mike has to say about his recent work:

“As a communication student with a specialization in the Radio, Television and Film area, I intend to pursue a career in film and TV, with a focus on acting. During my time at TCNJ, I have used time outside of classes to go to New York and get background jobs as well as audition for smaller parts in productions. I have been lucky enough to work on shows such as Fallout, The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live, Elsbeth, Severance, and a few others. I have also had the pleasure of working on a few movie sets and have even worked on some independent sets. Over the summer I worked for a day on an independent film titled If That Mockingbird Don't Sing, which will be released at a film festival next month. While working on this set I met actor David Krumholtz and in the short time that I met and worked with him, I was really inspired. One thing that David had said was about enjoying your work and working with other “nerds,” and people that have a passion to create good work and are just the best people to be around on sets. He was really down to earth and very genuine and I will always remember that experience.

I've been very fortunate to have worked on and gained the experience I have on these sets. I've met some really cool people along the way, and I can definitely say it's helped me so much with networking.”

I've been very fortunate to have worked on and gained the experience I have on these sets. I've met some really cool people along the way, and I can definitely say it's helped me so much with networking.”

We are so proud of him and all of his accomplishments!

We wish him continued success in the future. Congratulations and keep up the good work, Mike!



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Internship Spotlight - Bella Trucco '23, Interpersonal/Strategic Communication Student

Name: Bella Trucco
Major: Communication Studies
Specialization: Interpersonal/Strategic
Graduation Year: 2023
On-Campus Involvement: The College Union Board (CUB), Anti Violence Initiatives (AVI), Her Campus TCNJ, TCNJ Asian American Pacific Islander Advocacy Campaign, Leadershape.

What drew you into Communication Studies?

I was originally drawn into Communication Studies because of how the major balances creativity and practicality, and encouraged me to deep-dive into a wide range of topics I genuinely found interesting. For example, I was able to explore the business side of communication studies: such as marketing, public relations, media research & production, and copywriting. However, I gained a strong foundation of knowledge in the psychological side of what makes effective communication so important: such as conflict management, leadership development, and interpersonal/intercultural communication.

In this program, I had the freedom and independence to develop a well-rounded skill set and figure out what deeply interested me, so I could dive fully into just that. I also enjoy the flexibility of the course load, as it grants me the time in my schedule to add on two minors to my degree, and to fully immerse myself in my on-campus student involvements.



Describe your internship and your role:

I work with the Physical Sales and Marketing Department of Alternative Distribution Alliance Worldwide, Warner Music Group's distribution company for independent labels and artists. As an intern, some of my daily tasks include tracking street-sale dates and presale dates of vinyl records and CDs, developing reports analyzing sales data for record labels, and attending meetings with my team!

What is one skill that you improved upon while at your internship?

During my time in this role, I have improved upon my Microsoft Excel abilities, creative problem solving, time management, and workplace confidence!

DEPARTMENT NEWS

New Opportunity: Graduate Certificate in Health & Risk Communication

Complete half Health and Risk Communication Graduate Certificate before graduation!



TCNJ School of the Arts and Communication

Interested in graduate-level studies, but not quite ready to commit to a master's program yet?

Earn a Health and Risk Communication Graduate Certificate NOW!

Only FOUR graduate courses needed!

Take up to two graduate-level courses as an undergraduate and be halfway to your certificate!

Can be completed fully online OR in person

The certificate courses can be applied toward the MPH at TCNJ at a later time.

Scan Here For More Information!



Join the TCNJ COM Student Advisory Board!

Students in the COM major are welcome to self-nominate to serve on this active advisory board.

COM SAB members represent our department at admission events, such as Lions Day and Accepted Students Day, and join us in planning events to keep current COM students involved and connected.

COM SAB members also converse with prospective students, current students – often acting as a peer mentor – and give important feedback to the department, helping us to improve our student-oriented offerings and just plain old keep in touch with what's going on today.



JOIN THE TCNJ COM STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD



COM LEARN WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

SCAN QR TO JOIN!

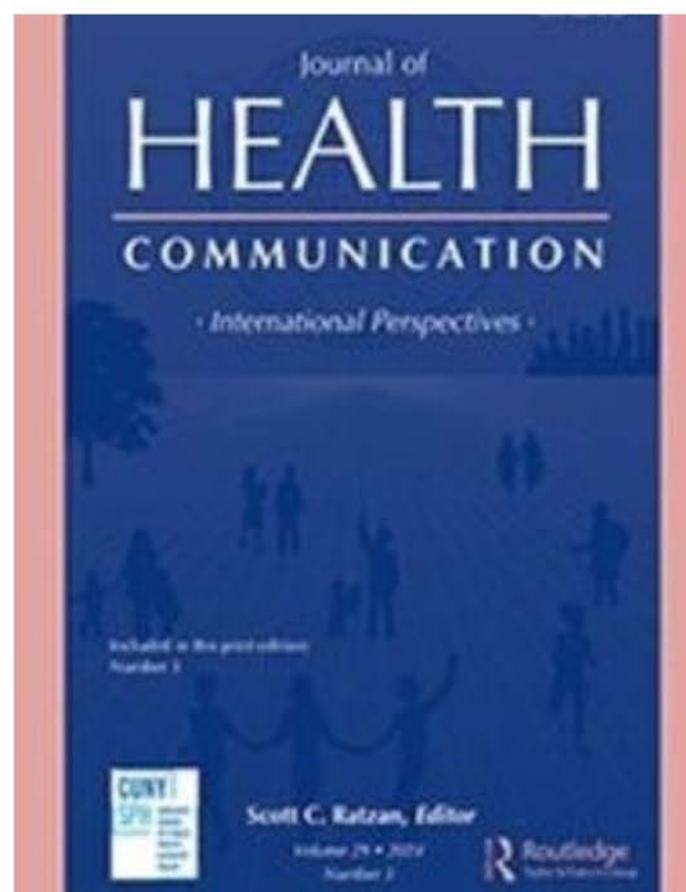
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DEPARTMENT NEWS

New Health Comm Publication with TCNJ Alumni

Pollock, J.C., Crowley, M., Govindarajan, S., Lewis, A., Marta, A., Purandare, R., & Sparano, J.N. (2024, March 10). US nationwide multi-city media coverage of COVID-19 responses: Community structure theory, belief system, and a "violated way of life". *Journal of Health Communication*, 29(4):256-264. DOI: 10.1080/10810730.2024.2324845 Dr. John Pollock is grateful for the opportunity to co-author with so many of our talented undergraduates, who have gone on to a variety of graduate programs or occupational positions. Miranda Crowley earned a MPA from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse U., the top-ranked master's in public affairs/public administration program in the US. Abigail Lewis earned a MPH from Columbia's Mailman School of Public Health. Alexis "Lexi" Marta (now Petry) earned a MSPH from Johns Hopkins. Radhika Purandare went to Sweden as a Fulbright Scholar for a year, then earned a MPH from Columbia. Suchir Govindarajan is the Special Assistant to the Secretary and a Policy Analyst at the New Jersey Office of the Secretary of Higher Education. James Sparano is an accomplished landscaper.

We have been blessed to enjoy the contributions of so many committed students in our joint Public Health/Communication Studies health communication endeavors!



DEPARTMENT NEWS

New MUSE Research Published: Drs. Pollock, D'Angelo & Shaw, with Alumnae

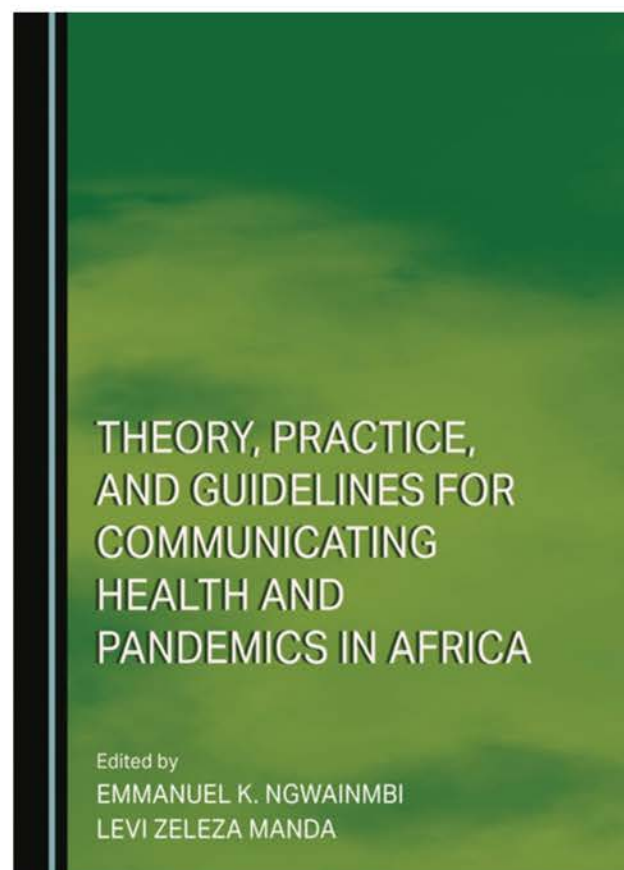
Celebrate with us the publication of work from colleagues in the School of Arts and Communication.

The communication chapter discusses results from their 2008 MUSE project.

African Newspaper Coverage of AIDS and Community Structure Theory: Comparing New Models of Press-State Relations with Structural Factors in Sub-Saharan Anglophone Africa

John C. Pollock, Paul D'Angelo, Amanda Burd, Kristen Kiernicki Lavery, Janna R. Kimosh, Donna Shaw, The College of New Jersey.

Prof. John Pollock (Communication Studies) asked professors Paul D'Angelo (Communication Studies) and Donna Shaw (Journalism) to join him and three undergraduates – Amanda Burd, Kristen Kiernicki (now Lavery), and Janna Raudenbush (now Kimosh) – for a 2008 summer MUSE research project on health communication. Prof. D'Angelo published one set of results in 2013. Prof. Pollock presented his results at conferences in Mexico City, Singapore, and at Oxford University, finally publishing his final draft as a book chapter in summer, 2023



The new chapter systematically compared AIDS coverage from 2001 to 2003 and 2005 to 2007 in six major English-language newspapers in six sub-Saharan African countries (633 articles) displaying high and low prevalence of AIDS after placing these countries in the context of three new media system models. The three models were an effort to adapt Hallin & Mancini's three Global North models of media and politics, primarily in Western Europe, to circumstances in the Global South, in this case sub-Saharan Anglophone Africa.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

New MUSE Research Published: Drs. Pollock, D'Angelo & Shaw, with Alumnae

After we (Pollock and D'Angelo) created three original developing country models called "Contained Democratic," "Instrumental Democratic," and "Repressive Autocratic," we compared these "media system" explanatory factors with national-level "structural" factors (such as Gross Domestic Product, literacy rate, life expectancy at birth, infant mortality rate, AIDS prevalence, etc.) to explore the explanatory power of both media system and structural levels of analysis linked to two outcomes: level of reported "progress" in fighting AIDS and level of media emphasis on "government" as opposed to "society") activity fighting AIDS.

One of the results was surprising: In countries with high AIDS levels, the higher the level of (media system factor) government press control in a country, the "greater" the reported progress in fighting AIDS. That is, governments with high levels of press control reported higher levels of success fighting AIDS precisely in countries with the highest AIDS levels! Level of reported progress fighting AIDS had little to do with measured progress fighting that disease, but rather with the ability of governments to direct the press to project a "reputation" for fighting AIDS.

2013 article: D'Angelo, P., Pollock, J.C., Kiernicki, K., & Shaw, D. (2013). Framing of AIDS in Africa: Press-state relations, HIV/AIDS news, and journalistic advocacy in four sub-Saharan Anglophone newspapers. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 33(2), 100-125.

2023 chapter: Pollock, J.C., D'Angelo, P., Burd, A., Kiernicki Lavery, K., Kimosh, J.R., and Shaw, D. (2023). African newspaper coverage of AIDS and community structure theory: Comparing new models of press-state relations and structural factors in sub-Saharan anglophone Africa. In E.K. Ngwainmbi & L.Z Manda (eds.), *Theory, practice, and guidelines for communicating health and pandemics in Africa* (pp. 79-123). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Dr. Yachao “Bruce” Li Shares Insights on Interpersonal and Health Communication in a Recent Interview with MastersinCommunications.com.

Dr. Yachao Li, Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies and the Department of Public Health at The College of New Jersey, recently engaged in an illuminating interview with MastersinCommunications.com. In the interview, Dr. Li shed light on his journey into the realm of interpersonal and health communication, citing a personal passion for addressing the heteronormative biases inherent in traditional communication theories. He emphasized the importance of inclusive research and advocacy for marginalized communities, particularly within the LGBTQ+ population.

A central focus of Dr. Li’s research is the exploration of communication experiences unique to sexual and gender minorities, including coming-out processes and relationship disclosure decisions. His “Theory of Coming Out Message Production” offers valuable insights into the factors influencing individuals’ decisions to disclose their sexual orientation.

Furthermore, Dr. Li’s research extends beyond interpersonal dynamics to examine the impact of broader societal factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, on LGBTQ+ individuals and communities. His findings highlight the complex intersections between external stressors, internalized stigma, and mental health outcomes within the queer population.



As Chair of the National Communication Association Caucus on LGBTQ Concerns, Dr. Li is dedicated to promoting inclusivity and equity within academic and professional spaces. He advocates for queer-inclusive pedagogy, collaborative research initiatives, and community engagement efforts aimed at translating research findings into tangible societal benefits.

Reflecting on his own academic journey, Dr. Li offers invaluable advice for aspiring scholars interested in interpersonal and health communication. He underscores the significance of selecting graduate programs that align with one’s research interests and provide opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

4-2-24 ArtsComm Book Reading and Reception Event Featuring Drs. Hu & Pollock

Sending a shout out to all our School of Arts and Communication professors for their book publication accomplishments, with special kudos to our COM faculty members, Dr. Yifeng Hu and Dr. John Pollock. Dean Barnett moderated a discussion with our celebrated faculty who are recently published authors, complete with a small reception on April 2, 2024. Congratulations, one and all! We celebrate your accomplishments with you! Professors with Recent Publications:

- Professor of Art and Art History Lois Fichner-Rathus, "Culture and Values: A Global View of the Humanities"
- Professor of Art and Art History Deborah Hutton, "The History of Art: A Global View, Prehistory to Present"
- Associate Professor of Communication Studies Yifeng Hu, "Communicated Stereotypes at Work"
- Professor of Music, Design and Creative Technology Teresa M. Nakra, "Constructing Music: Musical Explorations in Creative Coding"
- Professor of Communication Studies John C. Pollock, "COVID-19 in International Communication: Global Pandemic Responses"



L-R: John C. Pollock, Lois Fincher-Rathus, Pamela Barentt, Teresa M. Nakra, Deborah Hutton, Yifeng Hu

DEPARTMENT NEWS

Celebrate Dr. Pollock's Latest Book

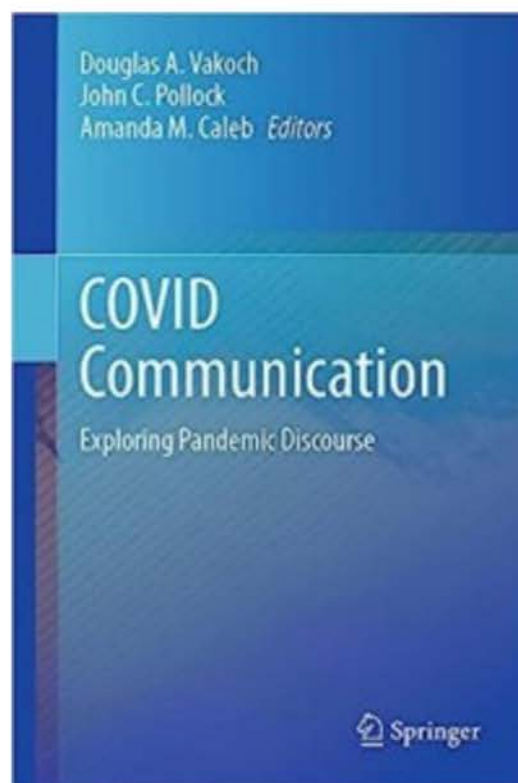
Announcing Dr. John Pollock's newest publication, "COVID Communication."

"Is our resistance to COVID-19 a 'fight' or a 'game of chess'? A 'football game' or a 'nightmare'? Do we need a 'battle plan' or a 'map'? 'COVID Communication: Exploring Pandemic Discourse' calls for more attention to the metaphorical choices we make, pointing to the dangers of framing disease response as aggression.

This new book calls attention to the potential of metaphors to enable more community-oriented approaches to disease response. When we see healing as a journey rather than as a war, perhaps we are less likely to frame other countries as our enemies and more likely to accept that recovery (both at individual and societal scales) will be slow, meandering, and require cooperative action. Metaphors structure thought, so we ought to metaphorize with attention and intention."

What's it all about?

Can our language choices affect the way we react to the threat of disease? My most recent co-edited book addresses that question. "COVID Communication" (Springer, 2023) focuses on how we understand COVID-19—medically, socially, and rhetorically. Given the expectation that other flu pandemics will occur, it stresses the importance of examining how the public response is shaped in the face of global health emergencies.



It considers questions such as how can pandemic language both limit and expand our understanding of disease as biomedical, social, and experiential? In what ways can health communication be improved through the study and application of rhetoric and the health humanities? COVID Communication fills a gap in the pandemic literature by promoting interdisciplinary analysis of communication methods, realized through a health humanities approach. It centers human experience and culture within conversations about the biological reality of a pandemic.

MEET THE EDITORS

Meet the Editors of the ROAR



Shannon Allen, 2025

Shannon is a Communication, Journalism, and Film major, specializing in Health Communication, with a minor in Public Health. She is enrolled in the 4+1 Master's in Public Health program at TCNJ. On campus, she is a member of the Lambda Pi Eta Communication Honor Society and is the Vice President of Academic Affairs for the Delta Phi Epsilon sorority.



Christopher DeSantis, 2025

Christopher is a Communication, Journalism, and Film major specializing in Health Communication with a minor in Fine Art. On campus, he is a member of the Public Health Communication Club who creates banners for their social media and is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Thank you to Dr. John C. Pollock, faculty advisor to "The ROAR," for the opportunity to edit this newsletter. We are excited to see future editions of the ROAR!