

New Executive Board Plans Big Time in Beantown

By Brad Yates ESIG Head



After an exciting AEJMC conference in Chicago in August, the Entertainment Studies Interest Group looks to build upon its

successes and make AEJMC 2009 in Boston even better.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as Head of ESIG this year. The planning is underway, and the officers are dedicated to organizing a stimulating program that will challenge and inspire you.

Thanks to Immediate Past Head John Chapin for his leadership last year, and thanks to all of the officers and members who contributed to making the previous year a success. The new officers have been busy collecting panel proposals, sending out paper calls for the Midwinter and national conferences, and recruiting paper judges for the review process in April.

My goals for this year include a) increasing teaching sessions at the national conference; b) implementing the redefined leadership positions proposed by John to create a more active and equitable executive council that contributes in significant ways to the planning and programming of the Midwinter and national conferences; c) continuing to improve our electronic presence to provide our membership with a Web site that offers links to the latest research and

teaching resources related to entertainment studies; and d) building membership by continuing to serve as the only outlet for research in entertainment studies.

I encourage each of you to get involved as much as you can with ESIG by volunteering to serve as a paper judge (we need all we can get), moderator, or discussant, and/or by submitting papers to both the Midwinter and national conferences.

Thanks to everyone who submitted a joint panel proposal. All of the divisions and interest groups will decide which panels make the cut on Dec. 5 in Louisville, KY. Vice Head Tony Ferri and I will attend the Winter Meeting and do our

best to program top-notch panels like the “Image of the Gay Journalist in Popular Culture” and “Produced in Boston, Teaching Around the World,” which would feature producers of “Frontline” and staff members from the world renowned public television station WGBH.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have suggestions to improve ESIG in any way. Our collective ideas are much better than mine and the executive officers’ alone.

I look forward to serving you this year and working with an outstanding group of officers. We are going to work toward a Big Time in Beantown. ★

ESIG’s Popularity Grows

By Danny Shipka Vice Head-Elect

It is an exciting time to be involved in Entertainment Studies as the study of entertainment continues to grow dramatically. This growth trend was in full evidence at this year’s AEJMC conference in Chicago. With more submissions than in any previous year, Chicago turned out a very diverse set of top-notch research. Ranging from film, television, comics, music, as well as entertainments effects on social issues such as teenage pregnancy and rape, this year’s submissions highlighted the breadth of research being done in the field.

Entertainment Studies “Best

of” panel showcased some of this diversity. Included in the panel were papers on the effects of gender and entertainment messages on unplanned teen pregnancy prevention, a look at the history of offensive language on prime-time television, para-social relationships in celebrity culture, sports commentators and their credibility, and a look at the typography in “Buffy, The Vampire Slayer.” All of this points to the widening of a field that is quickly gaining acceptance and popularity in academia.

The 2008 conference organiz-

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Entertaining Ideas is published three times a year by the Entertainment Studies Interest Group of AEJMC. The newsletter is intended to provide readers with timely information concerning entertainment studies research, theory and teaching.

Article submissions may be sent to **Entertaining Ideas**, in care of Editor Heather Paige Preston at prestonhp@appstate.edu.

Paper Call & Program Thanks

By Tony Ferri Vice Head


I want to thank those of you who sent program proposals. We have an interesting array of subjects that reflects the diversity of our group.

Soon you will receive the call for papers for ESIG. I encourage you to submit your research papers when you receive the call, and let your colleagues know about it!

This is a transformational year for politics where technology has driven culture much in the way that Joshua Meyrowitz and Mar-

shall McLuhan predicted even before the Internet. I hope we will also see a transformational year for ESIG in which we receive more papers and even better quality. I hope that with this growth will come a change from an interest group to a Division. It might not be this year, but our area has the characteristics of a true scholar discipline and should move toward such a growth in structure.

I look forward to seeing you all at the conference in Boston. ★



More information about the annual conference will be published at aejmc.org in January 2009.

Popularity Growth from page 1

ers saw submissions increase by 41 percent over the previous year. This put ESIG in the top 10 most popular submission categories at AEJMC.

One of the reasons for this popularity could be the increasing amounts of content within media. With the rise and popularity of new entertainment technologies, a greater understanding of their effects and processes on audiences is important. Social scientists are paying more attention to the vast amount of entertainment in the market place and using it as a viable area of study.

In addition, ESIG Head Brad Yates (West Georgia) believes that the increased interest in Entertainment Studies may not be due solely to better acceptance or interest but in technology.

“I would venture to guess that the diversity of the paper submis-

sions has some connection to an increased awareness of ESIG and the electronic submission process,” Yates said.

“Scholars who typically do research that does not fit neatly into the parameters of other divisions and interest groups find ESIG provides a viable option for them to share their work.”

Yates also cited the ease of electronic paper submission.

“It’s easy to send a paper in just after the final edit is made. There is no more copying and postmarks to worry about.”

With a category as inclusive as research on Bob Dylan, “Ugly Betty,” masculinity in Seventeen magazine, Lily Allen, Animal Crossing and Facebook, Entertainment Studies should continue to be a popular category for social scientists around the globe. ★

The Online v. Classroom Debate in Bad Economic Times

By Kevin Williams Teaching Standards Chair

At the time of writing this article, the government yesterday recognized what so many of us have known for weeks: we are in a recession. No doubt your area department heads and deans have already met with the higher ups to discuss what is coming around the corner like a mugger threatening our pocket books. Budgets will tighten, and cuts will be proposed. We will be forced to examine the same question we have been asking since we started in this field: how do we do more with less?

Remember, however, why you chose this job. It certainly wasn't for the money but for the students.

Our field is growing, and as the economy worsens, more people will return to school. Many will be non-traditional students hoping

for a way to better themselves so they can avoid the next economic downturn. Many will look for an inexpensive route to getting a quality education.

We should view this as an opportunity. If your school is like mine, then online and distance education is growing and the possibility for generating revenue with this division has great potential.

For example, while our department is struggling with our budget, the university's distance education division gave everyone who teaches online a Christmas present this year. At times it seems as though they are dripping with money.

Teaching online not only generates money but also helps to reduce classroom costs and maximize spending dollars. It may help

to loosen the financial noose snug against our necks. As faculty, our concern should be to offer online education at the same high standard found in face-to-face classes.

Will all classes be able to transfer to an online forum? No. Many won't. But some of our freshmen and sophomore level classes may.

While we don't want to take the route of the diploma mills we see advertised on television, we also don't want an opportunity for growth to pass us by. Perhaps the current economic decline will spur us to redefine how we teach.

The question is: are we prepared to change with the times while maintaining our high quality of education? ★

Reviewers Needed

ESIG is looking for reviewers for manuscripts submitted for the 2009 AEJMC Conference to be held Aug. 5-8 in Boston.

Contact Kelly Poniatowski at poniatowskik@duq.edu if you are interested in serving as a reviewer. Please include your name and contact information (phone and email).

Those who are submitting a manuscript may not judge in the division entered.

If you are interested in reviewing submissions to ESIG for the 2009 AEJMC conference, please respond by Jan. 5, 2009. ★

2009 AEJMC Regional Meetings

Midwinter Meeting _____

When: March 6-8, 2009

Where: University of Oklahoma, Norman, OK

Convention Details: <http://www.ou.edu/gaylord>

Calls: Papers/panel proposals

Information: Contact Elanie Steyn (Elanie@ou.edu) or Homero Gil de Zuniga (hgz@mail.utexas.edu)

Southeast Colloquium _____

When: March 19-21, 2009

Where: University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS

Calls/Convention Details: <http://southeastcolloquium.wordpress.com>

Calls: Papers/panel proposals

Information: Contact Kathleen Wickham (kwickham@olemiss.edu) or Nancy Dupont (ndupont@olemiss.edu)

Headed to Oklahoma for Midwinter 2009? Don't Forget to Enjoy Some Local Culture While You Work

By Heather Paige Preston Editor

Looking for the perfect place to try out a new research idea?

Then head west, young academics, to the 2009 AEJMC Midwinter Conference in Norman, Okla., where 12 divisions, interest groups and commissions will meet to engage in presentations and extended discussions during the informally structured annual midwinter meeting.

The 2009 Midwinter Conference is scheduled March 6 through 8 at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication on the campus of the University of Oklahoma.

Just remember that, no matter how informal the gathering, all work and no play makes the gleam go out of anyone's eye. So take some time while you're in the Sooner state and see what Norman and the University of Oklahoma have to offer. ★

Architecture & Arts

The University of Oklahoma campus is home to a number of historic buildings and museums. Stroll the campus grounds on your own, or schedule a tour at least two weeks in advance by contacting the *Visitor Center* at (800) 234-6868.

View some of history's treasures on campus at the *Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art* and the *Sam Nobel Oklahoma Museum of Natural History*.

Area art galleries include the *Jacobson House Native Art Center* and the *The Firehouse Art Center*.

Shopping & Dining

A trip across the street from the campus' North Oval will deposit you at *Campus Corner*, a collection of retail stores, restaurants and bars that have served

students and Norman citizens since 1917.

Continue your retail therapy at *Sooner Mall*, *Brookhaven Village*, *Carriage Plaza* or the *Downtown Norman Antique District*.

Entertainment

Music and theater buffs can catch a performance at the *Catlett Music Center*, *Rupel J. Jones Theatre*, or *Sooner Theatre*.

Conference attendees who feel lucky visit *Riverwind*. Oklahoma's largest casino is home to 2,200 electronic games, 55 blackjack tables, the Racer's off-track betting parlor, and the Showplace theatre.

More information about on- and off-campus sights (and sites) to see can be found at:

<http://www.ou.edu/discover>

<http://www.visitnorman.com>

Happy Holidays
&
Best Wishes for 2009
From ~ The Officers of ESIG