

Mid-Winter Success; ESIG Officers Busy in 2007-2008

By John Chapin ESIG Head



Greetings from the trenches! I wanted to let you know what we have been working on over the past few months.

I have been most fortunate to work with a competent group of officers with an incredible work-ethic, putting me in the middle of a whirlwind of productivity.

Kelly Shultz-Poniatowski (Graduate Student Liaison) and I just returned from the mid-winter convention in Pittsburgh (see Kelly's summary in this issue).

Our sessions were well attended and enthusiastically received. The mid-winter is geared more toward graduate students, so Kelly was a natural choice to spearhead our efforts by coordinating the research competition and generating panel discussions specifically for students. I was most pleased that

we were able to program multiple teaching panels, something our interest group status impedes during the summer convention.

Kelly also just created an ESIG social networking group on Facebook. The online platform is a great place for our grad students and general membership to meet to collaborate on papers and panels. Any registered Facebook member can join the group by searching for "ESIG." While online you might also want to join the AEJMC Facebook group.

David Pierson (PF&R Chair) and Kevin Williams (Teaching Chair) spent the fall semester soliciting and refining panel proposals that Brad Yates (Vice-Head) and I took to the planning meeting in December in St. Louis. Brad and Tony Ferri (Vice-Head Elect) continue to recruit members to represent ESIG on co-sponsored panels created by other divisions

and interest groups.

Our busiest officer is Danny Shipka (Research Chair). Coordinating the research competition for the summer convention is a daunting task. At press time, he's still recruiting readers for the paper competition (dshipka@lsu.edu).

In addition to the Facebook group, our electronic presence continues to grow. Heather Paige Preston (Newsletter Editor) is redesigning an expanded newsletter online. Howard Fisher expanded the role of Secretary this year by creating a log of listserv activity for our Web page and Carole Bell (Webmaster and listserv coordinator) continues to keep ESIG updated and informed.

Many of these positions will be open for the 2008-2009 school year. Consider attending the business meeting at the convention and joining us.

See you in Chicago. ★

Mid-Winter Conference in Pittsburgh Recap

By Kelly Shultz-Poniatowski Graduate Student Liaison

Despite the snow and cold in Pittsburgh March 1, the AEJMC Mid-winter Conference was a success.

ESIG sponsored two paper sessions and two teaching and research panels. The 2008 program included a paper session on entertainment, politics and law. Papers covered topics including entertain-

ment and violent video games, analysis of political talk radio and a case study of political marketing to the YouTube Generation. The second session included several competitive papers in entertainment studies. Topics ranged from digitization and the Internet to parasocial interaction in text messages.

The teaching panel geared toward graduate students, "How do I juggle it all? Completing the dissertation when life takes a-hold," featured three graduate students and was moderated by Marie Hardin of Penn State. Topics discussed during the roundtable included picking a committee, choosing a method and topic based on life-

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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.

ESIG Call For Conference Papers

The **Entertainment Studies Interest Group** invites faculty and graduate students to electronically submit papers for the 2008 AEJMC National Conference that will be held August 6-9, 2008, in Chicago, Illinois.

Papers that deal with any aspect of mediated entertainment, including (but not limited to) narrative film, experimental cinema, fictional books, fictional television, game shows, new media, popular magazines, sports, and tabloid/celebrity journalism may be submitted. All methods (qualitative, quantitative, historical, critical) of inquiry are encouraged. Papers may not exceed 25 pages, excluding tables, figures, and references. Authors are not required to be a member of ESIG to submit a paper.

All entries should follow the AEJMC uniform paper competition, which is published in the AEJMC newsletter and available on the AEJMC Web site at <http://www.aejmc.org>. All submissions will undergo a blind review process by a panel of independent readers. Authors will be notified whether their paper has been accepted and will have access to reviewers' comments. Papers are accepted on the understanding they have not been previously published

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style, moving away from campus before completing the dissertation, and tactics for finishing the work.

The research panel, "Perceptions of Race and Violence in Entertainment Media," discussed how black film audience's perceptions of racial stereotypes change

by any scholarly journal or trade organization.

Although all papers compete on an equal footing, the top-ranked student paper(s) sent to ESIG will receive special recognition and first author(s) will be awarded free conference registration. Students who wish to be eligible for this award must indicate when submitting electronically that the paper was written exclusively by one or more students. Only students are eligible for this prize; papers with any faculty co-author(s) are not. The top-ranked faculty paper will be recognized. Authors are not required to be a member of ESIG to submit a paper. The same author(s) can submit more than one paper to ESIG.

Specific Guidelines

- Deadline is April 1, 2008
- Papers may not exceed 25 pages, excluding tables, figures, and references.
- APA or MLA are acceptable styles for references
- At least one author of an accepted faculty paper must attend the convention to present the paper. If student authors cannot be present, they must make arrangements for the paper to be presented. ★

when they consider white viewers, how medical personnel perceive TV depictions of emergency rooms and third-person perceptions of media violence, and attitudes about violence from the perspective of local domestic violence center staff. ★

The State of Entertainment Studies Research

By Anthony Ferri Vice-Head Elect

The research papers presented on ESIG panels have been varied in subject and high in quality. The latter is thanks to the reviewers who work hard to accept only quality research. The variety of subjects presented in the papers demonstrates either a wide interest in our group or perhaps something else. I think that we may be missing something and I think what is missing is the sense of building toward a discipline.

A discipline is characterized by its overall basic assumptions about the major variables and constructs studied regardless of methodology. A discipline has a known set of concepts. We work with “entertainment” and yet we don’t have a definition; it is often assumed that the readers agree on some common referent. Thomas Kuhn’s *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970) suggests there is an organization of knowledge and is related to the researchers’ social structure. Finally, there is some agreement on theory, methods and problems. The result is a paradigm.

It is interesting to consider the etymology of the word “entertainment.” One root comes from the Latin *inter + tenere* or ‘to hold,’ or focus attention.¹ Another root comes from the French word “*muser*” denoting idle attention to light matters. The word includes symbolic representations of referents varying according to people and the entertainment media, events, or objects in which they are engaged.

Scholars have defined entertainment as the condition in which “the individual who deliberately and voluntarily controls entertain-

ment: entertainment is not determined by the product. As a human activity, it includes various physiological, cognitive, affective, and behavioral components.”²

More recent research on brain imaging has yielded empirical evidence demonstrating that there is a functional segregation of brain structures underlying physiologic and verbal ratings along emotional dimensions of valence and arousal. In other words, the physical site of pleasure, a part of entertainment, can be mapped.

As scholars interested in entertainment studies, we need to develop more theory. I think we are in the early stage of a discipline. I challenge the members of the group to start advancing the basic tenets of what is an “entertainment” study. This can be done through any method or form of entertainment. The questions to be addressed are: What is the basic construct known as entertainment? Is it a complex of cognitive, affective and behavioral compo-

nents? How can these components be studied? Why is important to study entertainment?

I am not saying that we should seek only papers that build theory. Inductively-based papers are effective in generating theoretical questions. Nor am I saying that we must develop an empirical model. All methods are important in order to triangulate our observations about entertainment. What I am saying, or asking, is that we give more consideration to the construct of entertainment and the development of a discipline. This will help us move from an interest group to a Division. More importantly, it will lead to even a higher quality of scholarship. ★

¹ Shusterman, R. (2003). Entertainment: A question for aesthetics, *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 43: 289-307

² Vorder, P., Steen, F. F., & Chan, E. (2006). Motivation. In J. Bryant and P. Vorderer (eds.), *Psychology of entertainment* (pp.3-17). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers., p. 4

A Taste of ESIG Programs in Chicago

AEJMC 2008 Conference

Chicago, Illinois ▪ August 6-9

Wednesday, August 6

1:30-3 p.m. PF&R Panel

Teaching Visual Communications with Second Life

Sponsor: Visual Communication Division
Co-sponsor: ESIG

Panelists with experience in teaching with the avatar-based networked program Second Life will discuss the pros and cons of

using the online tool for teaching a large-lecture visual communications class. To make the experience Second Life-like, the moderator, panelists, and discussant will be logged into Second Life on individual computers in the hotel’s lobby. Audience members will view the discussion on a networked computer connected to a projector in a separate room. Afterwards, participants will join the audience to answer questions.

Taste of Chicago continued on page 4

Thursday, August 7**8:15-9:45 a.m. PF&F Panel**

From Publick Occurrences to HBO: Examining American Indians as a part of the American Mass Media culture in the 21st Century to teach Students about Multicultural Connections and Diversity

Sponsor: Minorities & Communication Division

Co-sponsor: ESIG

American Indians have been a part of the mass media on the North American continent since the very first newspaper was printed in 1690. However, in the 21st century it is not uncommon to still find American Indian cultures used as a part of the daily American mass media experience. Still in existence and still affecting the lives of both Native and non-Native children are the culturally insensitive images of American Indian cultures. The panel examines culturally insensitive American Indian stereotypes still found in the contemporary American mass media and in America's public school curriculum, and works toward a more balanced resolution to ending these practices and working toward a more accurate portrayal of American Indians in the 21st Century.

Thursday, August 7**11:45-1:15 p.m. PF&R Panel**

The Image of the War Correspondent in Popular Culture

Sponsor: ESIG

Co-sponsor: Magazine Division

The undisputed journalist hero is the war correspondent. During the 1940s, the war correspondent became a national folk hero. Popular actors couldn't wait to play the glamorous overseas war reporter

who would save the day, his loved one and his country in less than a couple of hours. Sometimes a variation on the oldest stereotype in newspaper films — the crime reporter — the war correspondent was the perfect movie hero whose daily work included patriotism, danger, violence and drama. With Iraq in daily headlines and no end to the conflict in sight, this topic seems more timely than ever.

Thursday, August 7**1:30-3 p.m. Scholar-to-Scholar Research Panel**

Sponsor: AEJMC

Six refereed research papers from ESIG's pool of paper submissions will be presented.

Friday, August 8**8:15-9:45 a.m. Poster Session**

Sponsor: Advertising Division

Co-Sponsors: Critical and Cultural Studies Division, ESIG, Public Relations Division

Fourteen refereed research papers from ESIG's pool of paper submissions will be presented.

Friday, August 8**1:45-3:15 p.m. PF&R Panel**

Sizing Up The Second City: Managing an Entertainment Organization in the Entertainment Age

Sponsor: Media Management & Economics Division

Co-sponsor: ESIG

Billing itself as "The World's Greatest Comedy Theatre," The Second City is known around the globe for its improvisational stage shows and recordings. Many well-known comedians have graced its

stage, including John Candy, Dan Aykryod, Steven Colbert and Tina Fey. The panel will address what it takes to put together this highly regarded production. It will also look at some academic research related to the entertainment field. The panel can be molded slightly to accommodate the cosponsoring group, but is limited to one representative educator from each group.

Friday, August 8**5:15-6:45 p.m. Research Panel**

Best of ESIG

Sponsor: ESIG

The top five refereed research papers will be presented. The top student and top faculty papers will be recognized.

Friday, August 8**7-8:30 p.m. Business Meeting**

Entertainment Studies Interest Group Business Meeting

Sponsor: ESIG

Saturday, August 9**10-11:30 a.m. Panel**

Entertainment or Advertainment?: Increased Product Placement and Integration in Entertainment Media or Product Placement in Entertainment Media: Freedom to Advertise versus Responsibility to Audiences

Sponsor: ESIG

Co-sponsor: Mass Communication & Society Division ★