

## In this Issue...

Come join CT&M in Toronto this August for an event-packed schedule. As Research Chair Glenn Leshner writes, CT&M programming this year includes more research presentations than ever. We

also are co-sponsoring a pre-conference workshop Tuesday afternoon with the Science Communication Interest Group; CT&M panelists on this workshop dealing with Internet-based research methods include Chip Eveland (The Ohio State U.) and Shyam Sundar (Penn State).

With the Newspaper Division, CT&M is sponsoring a PF&R session on how polls are used—and often misused. This Thursday morning session will feature prominent academics and pollsters, including Gary Langer (ABC News), Doug Schwartz (Quinnipiac Poll), Pamela Luecke (Washington and Lee), and Philip Meyer (UNC). This topic is particularly timely given the prevalence of polls in our current U.S. presidential election campaign.

Our division also carries out its teaching and professional freedom and responsibility missions outside AEJMC's annual conference. Teaching Standards Chair Michael McDevitt reports on some small—and not so small—teaching techniques that can be effectively integrated into various classes this autumn. PF&R Chair Matthew Nisbet recounts a session on communication research and public scholarship that CT&M co-sponsored at the ICA conference in May.

In this issue, CT&M continues to highlight graduate student scholarship. Three students from Indiana University and Cornell University discuss a vast array of micro- and macro-level research projects that address current issues.

Our division's activities reflect a great diversity in members' intellectual dialogue. Come join us in August to continue these conversations! □

By  
**Patricia Moy**  
Division Head  
University of Washington

## CT&M Panel at ICA Explores Mass Communication Research and Public Scholarship

Mass communication theory and

research continue to offer valuable contributions to public life, informing policymaking and producing powerful tools for applied contexts. Yet the public impact of the field is still considered to lag behind other related social science disciplines. Part of the problem is that communication researchers are rarely trained or encouraged to engage in public scholarship. A second problem is the false perception that mass communication research has proven to be of limited value to policymakers.

To address these issues, CT&M organized a panel at the annual International Communication Association (ICA) conference in May. The panel resonated with the conference theme of "Communication in the Public Interest." Participants included CT&M head and University of Washington associate professor Patricia Moy, CT&M vice-head and Cornell University associate professor Dietram Scheufele, University of Washington doctoral student Sue Lockett John, UC-Santa Barbara professor Dale Kunkel, and National Cancer Institute health communication chief Gary Kreps as commentator.

Moy opened the panel presentations by

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By  
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**Immediate Past Division Head:**  
William "Chip" Eveland, The Ohio State University

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arguing that connections between research and public scholarship are either underemphasized or virtually ignored in traditional graduate curricula. To address this deficit, the Department of Communication at the University of Washington recently developed a core graduate seminar that helps students understand the potential links between communication research and the general public, as well as government, markets, civil society, and the media. Moy and associate professor of communication John Gastil initially taught the course, *Communication 502: Communication Scholarship and Public Life*, in Spring 2003. The seminar explored the idea of public scholarship, as well as highlighted instances of communication scholars whose work has influenced economic, political, and social institutions. Case studies included the contributions of Robert Putnam, Joanne Cantor, and Deborah Tannen. Key readings focused on the histories of the field of communication, scholarly and popular works on public intellectuals, and examples of specific research programs aimed at addressing public problems. Moy emphasized that students benefited by their increased awareness of the options available in and outside academia, a better understanding of the connections between public scholarship and the university expectations of service and research, and a heightened sense of urgency for thinking early about building their research agendas.

Lockett, in her presentation, argued that various scholars have discussed the importance of moving scholarship beyond the academy, yet the communication field still lacks tools for evaluating pub-

lic scholarship. Lockett reviewed existing literature, and along with several student colleagues, adapted an evaluative tool to assess public scholarship. The model focused on five interdependent elements that scholars have acknowledged as crucial in conceptualizing and evaluating public scholarship including 1) the topic of study, 2) purpose, 3) study design, 4) venue of presentation, and 5) contribution. Each element was identified with two dimensions, one more commonly associated with public scholarship and another more closely attuned to traditional academic standards. Linked to each element presented in the model, Lockett placed exemplars at various positions on the grid. Scholarly examples included Robert Entman's work on framing; James Fishkin's work on deliberative publics; and William Gamson's work on media activism.

Whereas Moy and Lockett presented frameworks for teaching and evaluating public scholarship, Kunkel focused on his personal experience translating research on media and violence into public policy. A veteran public scholar, Kunkel worked as a Congressional Science Fellow in the mid-1980s, helping to draft the first version of the Children's Television Act of 1990. He currently directs the UC-Santa Barbara Washington Center, and has conducted numerous studies in the area of media violence and sexual content, and delivered invited testimony on children's media policy before Congress or the Federal Communications Commission on nine occasions.

Kunkel emphasized that making an impact as a public scholar is a gradual, snowballing effort, with points of entrée at one level of decision making accumulating over time to greater access and impact

on the policy process. Effective public scholars, according to Kunkel, have to anticipate the policy agenda and the information needs of decision makers, maintaining and building relations with people setting the policy agenda. Many times researchers are not very good at packaging their research findings in ways that are either useful or understandable to decision makers. Kunkel related his experience with the National Television Violence Study, a mammoth project that involved a three-year content analysis of 10,000 programs, with results and conclusions filling three books. After completion, at a briefing at the White House, Administration officials complained that the project's three page executive summary was too long, and that a one-page summary absent qualifiers would be most valuable for their policy needs. In order to advance public scholarship in the field, Kunkel suggested that communication research as a discipline needs to pursue efforts to be included in the AAAS Science Fellows program. Inclusion would help create networks of public scholars in communication who understand the workings of the Federal government. Kunkel pointed to the forthcoming National Research Council rankings and the ICA office in Washington, D.C., as positive developments towards improving the public impact of the field.

Scheufele also outlined his own public scholarship efforts, except in contrast to Kunkel, his focus was at the community level. The Cornell researcher noted that many communities seek public input on community decision-making, but are confronted with a citizenry that is

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chronically unaware and uninformed about issues. Contributing to this problem is that media coverage intended to inform the community often only serves to potentially widen existing gaps in public affairs knowledge. As a way to help resolve this paradox, Scheufele suggested that locally based survey projects can help sponsor community discussion and deliberation about social issues. He reviewed several survey projects he has conducted over the past four years in the Tompkins County region surrounding Cornell University. These survey projects have been carried out in collaboration with the local daily newspaper the Ithaca Journal, and have focused on community issues such as the development of "big box" department stores and the fluoridation of drinking water as well as national debates over civil liberties protections and gay marriage.

Front page newspaper coverage heralding the launch of the projects followed by subsequent coverage of the survey results, according to Scheufele, helped local policymakers tailor policy decisions toward both vocal minorities and silent

majorities of citizens. The projects have also served to catalyze discussion about issues that people otherwise tend to be uninformed about. Such projects, Scheufele warned, also provoked public criticism. Most complaints stemmed from a fundamental misunderstanding among some citizens about the representative nature of probability sampling, a related lack of trust in survey data, allegations of biased question wording, and rumblings about the motivations of the Ithaca Journal as a co-sponsor of the projects.

As commentator, Gary Kreps closed out the session by arguing that it is imperative that communication researchers pay more attention to public scholarship, a step he characterized as critical for the survival of the discipline. Combining both academic and government experience, Kreps has served as chief of the Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) since 1999. Prior to joining NCI, he was the Founding Dean of the School of Communication at Hofstra University, and before that, Executive Director of the Greenspun School of Communication at the University

of Nevada, Las Vegas. Kreps described most research as "incredibly incestuous" with many academics easily conversing with other specialists using field-specific jargon, but lacking the ability to translate their research into public relevancy. Kreps described himself as objecting to the idea that theory and practice are separate and incompatible. He suggested that the best research is methodologically and theoretically sound, but also applicable to the real world. In order for the field to increase its credibility, he insisted that it is necessary for researchers to go beyond peer review and transfer their research to the real world.

The CT&M sponsored ICA panel on public scholarship is just the second of four provocative PF&R panels programmed for 2003-2004. Last November, CT&M sponsored a panel on public engagement with survey research at the annual meetings of the Midwest Association for Public Opinion Research in Chicago. Coming up in August at the AEJMC meetings in Toronto, CT&M is co-sponsoring PF&R panels on the "Use and Abuse of Polls in News Reporting," and "Women Redefining Leadership." □

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## Teaching Opportunities During the Presidential Campaign

In and out of Florida, voting officials might be a bit nervous as they prepare for Election Day 2004. Instructors of communication methods, however, can look forward to some seasonal teaching opportunities this fall. The assignment of research activities in conjunction with an ongoing election campaign should help students to appreciate the relevance of social science methods. Here are some suggestions for research activities

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By  
**Michael McDevitt**  
Teaching Standards Chair  
University of Colorado

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that could be adapted for individual or team-based activities, and for undergraduate or graduate courses.

**Agenda-Setting.** This theoretical framework would seem to preclude student research confined to one semester given the logistics of

conducting content analysis that is linked with opinion salience of respondents. However, there can be numerous worthwhile projects based on media agenda-setting. While the methodology would be confined to content analysis, students would acquire skills in content coding tailored to different types of media, and they would gain experience in applying appro-

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priate statistical models for documenting influences from one domain to the other. For example, students could develop theoretical models and coding schemes to track the issue-priority relationships among various media domains, such as connections between elite newspapers and local news outlets, and between elite newspapers and online chat rooms.

**Experiments.** Students don't need a multi-modal media laboratory to conduct meaningful experiments in political communication during a campaign. I recall my first experience as a subject in an experiment: I was in my first research methods class as a doctoral student at Stanford. This was about 10 years ago. Steve Chaffee had asked a combined class of undergraduate and graduate students to read a descriptive scenario involving the

First Lady. Unbeknownst to me and the other students was that half of us read a passage that referred to her as "Hillary Clinton" and the other half read a passage about "Hillary Rodham Clinton." After we read the scenario, he then asked us to evaluate Ms. Clinton on various dimensions of leadership, credibility, etc. Even with the relatively small sample size—I think there were about 60 students—Steve was able to report statistically significant differences. The big differences from such a subtle manipulation stuck in my mind after a decade of taking other classes and teaching my own courses. After demonstrating the power of such manipulations, instructors can invite students to pursue their own inventive designs in small-scale experiments that use news stories or candidate ads from the campaign.

**Field Experiments.** Studies

that rely on undergraduate respondents are routinely disparaged for lacking external validity, but during an election campaign there are good reasons for taking advantage of access to this subject pool. Prior research shows that many young adults are disinterested in politics and in political news. This offers a rationale for preliminary studies that might generate insight into processes of re-engagement.

Student researchers can take advantage of a simple but effective strategy for increasing situational political involvement during a campaign. For example, based on a quasi-experimental design, some students would be exposed to peer-based discussion about the campaign.

Such discussion, coupled with anticipated future discussion among peers and media use, should induce increased cognitive effort and opinion crystallization during a campaign. □

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## More Research at Toronto Convention

**O**n May 14, we sent the preliminary program for CT&M to the AEJMC headquarters in South Carolina and it is one of the most research-oriented programs we have ever had. There are a total of seven refereed paper sessions, one refereed poster session that we co-sponsored with the Mass Communication & Society and Communication Technology & Policy divisions, and the refereed scholar-to-scholar session. Even our co-sponsored Teaching and PF&R panels have a strong research focus.

This strong research focus is a function of two developments. First, at the Midwinter Meetings in Palo Alto last year, Patricia Moy and I decided to spend more programming chips on research ses-

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By  
**Glenn Leshner**  
Research/Program Chair  
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sions than we had done in previous years. Chip Eveland outlined the rationale behind this approach in his newsletter column last year. Second, we received many excellent papers, including a large number of student papers, making my job as program chair especially hard since I had to reject good papers. But it allowed us to schedule many refereed research sessions without compromising the quality of the presentations.

All in all, we had 87 submissions and accepted 60 papers for an acceptance rate of about 69 per-

cent. This acceptance rate is unusually high for AEJMC, but Patricia and I were able to dramatically increase our space allocation through shrewd dealing at the winter meeting. The extra co-sponsored poster session greatly enhanced our ability to extend the number of papers we could accept. The acceptance rate was somewhat lower for student papers (63%) than it was for faculty submissions (72%). This does not mean, however, that students did not submit excellent work. In fact, the standardized ratings for the top student papers, for the most part, did not differ significantly from those of the top faculty papers. With very few exceptions, all papers were

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blind-reviewed by three reviewers and decisions about acceptance or rejection were made based on scores that were standardized across papers and reviewers.

Our opening refereed research session on Wednesday, Aug. 4 from 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. is devoted to the issue of "Media & health risks." It is moderated by Bradley Gorham of Syracuse University. The discussant is Erica Weintraub Austin of Washington State U.

The second research session of the conference focuses on "Media, social participation, and citizenship" and is moderated by Cynthia-Lou Coleman of Portland State U. The discussant is Chip Eveland of The Ohio State U. This session is scheduled for Wednesday, Aug. 4, from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

The third research panel, which is scheduled Wednesday, Aug. 4, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., is on "Media and political deliberation." It is moderated by Cindy Christen of Colorado State U. The discussant is Dietram Scheufele of Cornell U.

Thursday, Aug. 5, we begin the day with another research session, "Framing of war and international issues," which will be moderated by Chris Beaudoin, Indiana U. The discussant is our newly-elected AEJMC vice president, Wayne Wanta, University of Missouri-Columbia. The panel is scheduled for 8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.

As we do each year, we will showcase the "Best of CT&M." It is scheduled in a prime slot on Thursday, Aug. 5, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. This session gives the authors of the top-three faculty papers and the Chaffee & McLeod Award winner for top-student paper the chance to present their work to all CT&M members. We intention-

ally scheduled only four papers to give ample time for questions from the floor. I will moderate this session myself and Patricia Moy, U. of Washington, will discuss the papers.

On Saturday, Aug. 7, we have two more sessions. The first session, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., is titled "Theoretical and methodological issues." Pamela Kalbfleisch of U. of North Dakota will be moderating. The discussant is Sri Kalyanaraman from the U. of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

The second Saturday session is scheduled for 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. It is titled "New media, use, and dependency." The moderator is Samuel D. Bradley from Indiana University. Tien-Tsung Lee from Washington State U. will be the discussant.

In addition to these refereed research sessions, we have two poster and scholar-to-scholar sessions. We have six papers in the scholar-to-scholar session on Friday, Aug. 6, 11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Tom Johnson of Southern Illinois U. will be the discussant for those papers. AEJMC limited each division to only six papers at the scholar-to-scholar sessions this year because the room could not accommodate more.

Later Friday, 3:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m., we will co-sponsor a poster session with Mass Comm & Society and Comm Tech & Policy. We have 25 excellent papers in that session.

Please plan on attending as many of these excellent panels as you can! □



## Top CT&M Papers for 2004

### Top Three Faculty Papers:

#### **"Increasing perceived similarity of exemplars: Effects on message evaluation"**

Julie Andsager, Victoria Bemker, Hong-Lim Choi, and Vitalis Torwel  
*University of Iowa*

#### **"Laughing all the way: The relationship between television entertainment talk show viewing and political engagement among young adults"**

Nojin Kwak, Xiaoru Wang, and Lauren Guggenheim  
*University of Michigan*

#### **"Exploring the forms of self-censorship: An experimental investigation of the effect of the climate of opinion on strategies of opinion expression avoidance"**

Andrew Hayes  
*The Ohio State University*

### Chaffee & McLeod Top Student Paper:

#### **"Neural network simulations support heuristic processing model of cultivation effects"**

Samuel D. Bradley  
*Indiana University-Bloomington*

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## Anti-American Sentiment in the Muslim World

Scholars and policymakers agree that the strong anti-Americanism endemic to the Muslim world should be of central concern to American foreign policy and national security. However, there is strong disagreement about the root causes of anti-Americanism. Some researchers have examined cultural, religious, and value divisions as the primary source of negative perceptions of the United States. Others have identified U.S. foreign policy and actions as the main factor shaping discontent, and still others have emphasized internal Muslim state politics, comparatively lower levels of economic and social development, and the failure to establish civil society and democracy as the key contributors to anti-American opinion.

A fourth school of thought believes that negative perceptions of the U.S. are fundamentally an issue of communication: whether it is ineffective information campaigns by the U.S. government, a "perception gap" partially created by the foreign news media, the many depictions of the U.S. available through entertainment media, or the growth of a modern Arab public sphere made possible by new broadcast and Internet technologies. This focus on the information environment has led to the launch of U.S.-sponsored Arabic language radio and satellite TV news channels that are part of a

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By  
**Erik C. Nisbet**  
Cornell University

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larger public diplomacy initiative aimed at changing perceptions of the U.S. via the mass media.

However, despite the importance of the issue, systematic analysis evaluating these competing explanations has been scant. My ongoing research program addresses the question of anti-Americanism in a global context, examining political communication processes from a comparative perspective. The first part of this research program appears as a recent article in the March 2004 issue of the Harvard International Journal of Press Politics entitled "Public Diplomacy, Television News, and Muslim Opinion." In this article my co-authors and I employ the 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World, a dataset consisting of surveys gathered from nine Muslim countries. In the paper, we review past research about the content of the news media in the Muslim world, and then test the association between exposure and attention to different news channels and perceptions of the United States. Our findings demonstrate a positive main association between increased attention to news coverage of the U.S. and negative perceptions of the United States.

Furthermore, the type of TV network to which individuals turn for their news, such as Al Jazeera or CNN for example, has either amplifying or buffering effects on the main effects of attention to news coverage.

Over the next year, my research will focus on examining influences on anti-Americanism across levels of analysis. First, taking advantage of the increased availability of international survey data, I plan to combine several cross-national studies conducted over the last three years. This research will examine factors associated with Anti-Americanism at the social level (i.e. aggregate measures of literacy, media infrastructure, press freedom, political/civil liberties, and cultural heritage) and at the individual-level (i.e. demographics, forms of media use, schema, values, and interpersonal networks). A second stage of research is planned this summer involving a national survey with an oversample of U.S. Muslims of Middle Eastern descent. The goal is to examine the association within the domestic information environment between differing types of media use, individual predispositions, and perceptions of the U.S., its leadership, and its policies. I hope to report back on the progress of this research via future conferences and publications. □

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## Simulating Social Reality Estimates and Television's Bias in an Artificial Neural Network

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By  
**Samuel Bradley**  
Doctoral Student  
Indiana University-Bloomington

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My research involves emotion, attention, and memory for mediated messages. One of the tools that I use in these areas is formal cognitive models of communication process-

es. These models combine theory

from communication science, knowledge of brain architecture from cognitive neuroscience, and modeling techniques from artificial

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intelligence. By formalizing communication theories and data with neural networks, we have the opportunity to observe whether simulated cognition behaves the way our theories predict. The latest project—to be presented at a CT&M session in Toronto— involves building neural networks (within a computer) that learn a social reality. The neural networks simply attempt to pair events with outcomes. That is, like you and I, the network observes some event and then observes what happens as a result. The question is what happens when different networks receive more or less input from TV.

We know a lot about how heavy television viewing affects answers to social reality estimates on survey instruments—the so-

called cultivation effect. Recent cognitive work in this area has illuminated some boundaries of these effects. Particularly interesting has been the work of L.J. Shrum that has shown both that priming television habits and instructing people to make good decisions changes this effect. For the cognitive modeler, the task is to build a formal model that makes biased social reality estimates yet revises its predictions with priming or systematic processing.

Work by Shrum, Michael Shapiro, and others suggests that source memory plays an important role in social reality construction. In a study presented at ICA in New Orleans, we found that people with good memory for past TV information answered social reality questions about crime much more

indicative of the real world regardless of how much TV they watched. Returning to the neural networks, I posited that if networks learned events and outcomes with source data available but were later tested without mention of source, "heavy TV" models would appear biased. Indeed they did. When prompted to make outcome predictions using only personal observations and interpersonal sources, however, the effect disappeared just as it does with human participants. Thus, a general-purpose-learner neural network behaved as humans do. This formal model of an existing theory is one example of how I am trying move beyond measuring relationships between variables, and offer formal models that attempt to more precisely describe processes and outcomes. □

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## **"Can You Hear Me Now?"**

### **Radio Talk Shows and Political Participation in Uganda**

In recent years, political radio talk shows have become a central feature of public life in Uganda. As in several other African countries where the privatization movement of the 1990s broke decades of state monopoly and control over broadcasting, the Ugandan political talk show explosion has led to unprecedented levels of public debate conducted over the airwaves.

Political elites turn to the talk shows to articulate their policy agendas and vie for public support, while citizens rely on these programs to learn about public affairs, engage in public discourse, exert upward influence on the political system, demand accountability from official power, or simply let off steam.

The advent of these political talk shows is perhaps the most sig-

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By  
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nificant recent development in political communication in Uganda and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, where radio remains the only true mass medium.

With this in mind, my dissertation, which I recently completed, explores the promise and perils of Ugandan radio talk shows as arenas of political competition and civic participation within the context of the country's shaky democratization process.

Based mainly on content analysis, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, my findings temper grandiose assessments of political talk shows as vehicles for

reinvigorating the democratization process. While these programs do facilitate citizen political learning, public contestation and civic participation, they are an imperfect public sphere.

Although talk shows have "decentralized" the national political debate, they appear to privilege the "expertise" of political elites and professional experts in the same way that news media treat legitimated sources. Moreover, talk show callers and contributors appear to be a "vocal minority" that is already efficacious, knowledgeable, and engaged.

In addition, while inclusiveness, interactivity, spontaneity, and less structure explain much of the popularity and promise of talk radio, these features also appear to

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erode the quality of the discourse and to allow more distortion and misinformation.

Finally, while talk radio enables organized groups and ordinary citizens to challenge the government, it appears to have limited influence on public policy. Absent broader political freedoms and civil liberties, talk radio shows may, at best, foster the illusion of competition and influence. They may confer legitimacy upon the political system and maintain political stability rather than enhance democratic reform.

Despite the imperfections, the new opportunities that talk radio have opened up for public

contestation and civic participation constitute a significant change in Uganda's political and media landscapes, and promises democratic opportunity.

In the future, I intend to conduct a national survey in Uganda to further explore the characteristics of talk radio listeners and non-listeners and further understand the effects of talk radio on public opinion. I also plan to carry out a cross-sectional comparison of the talk show agenda and the public agenda in an attempt to establish whether these programs reflect the broad concerns of the public, or whether they simply pander to political conflicts among the elite. □

## **CT&M Conference Panels at a Glance**

**August 3, 1 - 5 p.m.:** Pre-Convention: Teaching panel co-sponsored with SCIG, Teaching Research Methods in a Digital Age

**August 5, 11:45 - 1:15 p.m.:** PF&R panels co-sponsored with Newspaper Division, Use and Abuse of Polls

**August 5, 3:15 - 4:45 p.m.:** PF&R panel co-sponsored with MAC and CSW, Women Redefining Leadership

**August 6, 5 - 6:30 p.m.:** Teaching panel co-sponsored with ICIG & GEIG, Collaborative Research: Seven Habits for Success in Academic and Professional Careers