



Communicating Science, Health, Environment, Risk

A DIVISION OF AEJMC

Summer 2022 Newsletter

ComSHER - Communicating Science, Health,
Environment & Risk Division

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass
Communication

August 2, 2022

A Return to In-person Conferencing

By: Sara K. Yeo, University of Utah & Timothy Fung, Hong Kong Baptist University

Our dedicated team of ComSHER officers have been hard at work planning for our first in-person conference since the start of the pandemic in 2020. Timothy and I are immensely grateful to be supported by a diligent team and we look forward to safely reconnecting with colleagues in Detroit in August. We have an exciting program lined up!

This year, our division received 195 submissions and our co-research chairs, Jessica Willoughby (Washington State University) and Ashley Anderson (Colorado State University) have programmed panels on digital media and information seeking, misinformation, science literacy, and COVID-19. We also have two teaching and two professional freedom and responsibility (PF&R) panels at this year's conference. The PF&R panels revolve around some of the professional challenges related to COVID-19 that we face, and the teaching panels focus on new media and addressing sensitive topics in the classroom.

In addition to these exciting panels, we are jointly hosting a social event during the conference. We have teamed up with the Graduate Student Interest Group (GSIG) for this event, which is co-sponsored by Michigan State University, the University of Texas at Austin, and the University of Florida's STEM Translational Communication Center. We hope to see you there!

Although we are excited to return in-person, we recognize that returning to an in-person conference may be concerning for some in our community. AEJMC will be requiring masks in all conference locations and expects attendees to be vaccinated and boosted, if possible. The organization will be providing some personal protective equipment (masks, hand sanitizer, disposable gloves) and a limited supply of COVID-19 self-tests. For more information about health and safety at the 2022 Annual Conference in Detroit, please visit [the conference website](#).

ComSHER's Media Team, led by Rosalynn Vasquez (Boston University), has also been hard at work. Media Team members have increased our presence on social media and CJ Calabrese (University of Pennsylvania) has been leading the transition of our division's website and online community to a centralized AEJMC site.

A big thank you, too, to our division's Graduate Student Committee, led by Deborah Danuser (University of Pittsburgh), has organized multiple events throughout the course of the year for our graduate student members and we look forward to the activities that the committee has lined up for the Annual Conference and the coming year.

In short, we have a wonderful slate of panels planned for the conference and the coming year and we are excited to be back in person this August in Detroit! ✨

From the Research Co-Chairs: Another Great Year for ComSHER and Top Paper Winners

By: Jessica Willoughby, Washington State University & Ashley Anderson, Colorado State University

We'd like to start by thanking everyone for their participation in the research competition this year. Whether you submitted work, reviewed submissions, and/or volunteered to serve as a moderator or discussant, we greatly value your contributions to ComSHER.

We again received a large number of submissions! We had 195 submissions with 88 accepted for presentation at AEJMC 2022. Two scholars reviewed each submission, and the submissions with the highest standardized scores will be presented at this year's conference. We look forward to hearing more about all the great work in Detroit.

Congratulations to our top paper winners! Below are the presentations scheduled for our top paper session.

First Place (tied):

How Partisan News Associates with Support for Climate Policies through Risk and Efficacy Perceptions
Soobin Choi, University of Michigan
P. Sol Hart, University of Michigan

Time Perspective, Temporal Distance, and Narrative's Roles in Curbing E-cigarette Use
Sixiao Liu, University of Pennsylvania

Second Place:

Aversion and Control: An Experiment Examining How Social Correction Works
Xizhu Xiao, Qingdao University
Porismita Borah, Washington State
Danielle Ka Lai Lee, Washington State
Yan Su, Peking University
Sojung Kim, George Mason University

Thurd Place (tied):

"I Know News Will Find Me": A moderated mediation model of news-finds-me perception, information avoidance, need for cognition, and misperceptions about COVID-19

Yan Su, Peking University
Lianshan Zhang, Shanghai Jiaotong University
Shaohai Jiang, National University of Singapore

Communicating health literacy about pharmaceutical medication on social media: "it works for me, but may not for you"

Erin Willis, Univ. of Colorado Boulder
Kate Friedel, Univ. of Colorado Boulder
Mark Heisten, Univ. of Colorado Boulder
Melissa Pickett, Univ. of Colorado Boulder

First place student paper:

Exploring the Survival of Conspiracy Theories on Social Media: A Computational Approach
Calvin Cheng, University of Oxford

We also have two additional student award winners who will be presenting in other sessions:

Second place student paper:

Information Literacy and Media Literacy: The Skills Needed to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19
Shawn Domgaard and Hae Yeon Seo, Washington State

Third place student paper:

News Media Coverage on End-of-Life Issues and Conversations in Singapore
Felicia Ng, Singapore Management University
Melvin Tan, Singapore Management University
Jennifer Li, Singapore Management University
Tay Terence, Singapore Management University ♦

From the Teaching Chair: Two Insightful Teaching Panels Co-hosted by ComSHER at the 2022 Conference

By: Kang Namkoong, University of Maryland

We are delighted to announce two excellent teaching panels that cover timely topics for the 2022 AEJMC conference. ComSHER leads or co-sponsors these sessions with the Commission on the Status of Women and the Media Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship Division. We look forward to meeting you and having constructive discussions in the panel sessions.

Panel 1: Teaching with New Media

Date/Time: Thursday, August 4, 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

Sponsors: *Media Management, Economics & Entrepreneurship (MMEE) and Communication Science Health Environment and Risk (ComSHER) Divisions*

As Covid-19 creates the need for alternative teaching modalities, instructors with experience in applying digital media within the classroom are becoming more in-demand. This teaching panel will bring together instructors with experience in digital and multimedia to demonstrate how they've applied these technologies within their classrooms in new and exciting ways.

Presiding/Moderating: Andrea Hall, Middle Tennessee State

Panelists: Lauren Furey, Cal Poly Pomona

Nataliya Roman, North Florida

Kevin Ripka, Iowa

Andrea Hall, Middle Tennessee State

Panel 2: Addressing Sensitive and Controversial Topics in Class

Date/Time: Friday, August 5, 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Sponsors: *Communication Science Health Environment and Risk (ComSHER) Division and the Commission on the Status of Women*

In higher education, it is inevitable to discuss sensitive and controversial topics in class, which could produce unexpected and unintended outcomes. Although the instructors and students may not intentionally use the stigmatizing language in the classrooms, it could marginalize some students who identified themselves as the targeted population. Furthermore, if the discussion on the sensitive topics were poorly managed, the stigmatization and prejudice could spill over to those who have different opinions on the topic as well as those who belong to the stigmatized group. This panel will showcase collective efforts in deliberating how to discuss sensitive and controversial issues in class without the stigmatization and discrimination.

Presiding/Moderating: Kang Namkoong, University of Maryland

Panelists: Emilia Askari, University of Michigan

Sharon E. Baldinelli, University of Nebraska Lincoln

Cynthia-Lou Coleman, Portland State University

Avery E. Holton, University of Utah

Bimbisar Irom, Washington State University

Glen Nowak, University of Georgia ♦

From the PF&R Chair: Two Interesting PF&R Panels Co-hosted by ComSHER at the 2022 Conference

By: Sojung Kim, George Mason University

We are delighted to announce two interesting and insightful PF&R panels that cover timely topics for AEJMC 2022. ComSHER co-sponsors the sessions with the Public Relations and Communication Theory and Methodology Divisions. Below is the line-up for two excellent sessions during the conference. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Panel 1: Professors pinch-hitting as university communicators, public health strategists and citizen scientists: Navigating the classroom and politics at universities in states without mask or vaccine mandates

Date/Time: Wednesday, August 3, 12:30 to 2:00 p.m.

Sponsors: *Communication Science Health Environment and Risk (ComSHER) Division and the Public Relations Division*

Panelists will contribute their voices on how they navigate the complex role of educator, role model, public health communicator, and individual responsible for keeping their students safe –while also teaching across modalities and navigating their own COVID-19 vulnerability (and that of their family). This panel is intended to capture how faculty have struggled, but also how they’ve found ways to thrive in this complex role.

Presiding/Moderating: Erica Ciszek (University of Texas)

Panelists: Sean Upshaw (University of Texas)
Sara Yeo (University of Utah)
Candi Carter Olson (Utah State University)
Meta G. Carstarphen (University of Oklahoma)
Tim Coombs (Texas A&M)

Panel 2: Denial and Deathbed Pleas for the COVID-19 Vaccine: Seeking New Theoretical and Practical Ways to Address Information Misinterpretations and Manipulations

Date/Time: Thursday, August 4, 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Sponsors: *Communication Science Health Environment and Risk (ComSHER) Division and the Communication Theory and Methodology Division*

This panel provides perspectives from researchers and practitioners, who can offer theoretical insights from professional experience and draw connections to approaches in academic research, with a keen eye toward health inequities. Based in regions of the country whether there was strong resistance to public health measures, our panelists offer a diverse array of insights along with their interdisciplinary perspectives from journalism across platforms (daily newspapers, TV, social media, and long-form magazines) to advertising and public relations professionals.

Presiding/Moderating: María E. Len-Ríos, U. of Minnesota

Panelists: Rachel Young, U. of Iowa
Amanda Hinnant, U. of Missouri
Ingrid Bachmann, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile
Aleszu Bajak, Senior Data Reporter, USA Today ♦

Updates from *Science Communication: Linking Theory and Practice*

By: Susanna Priest, Editor-in-Chief

Greetings to all ComSHER members, whether you are in Detroit or joining us via cyberspace.

Our biggest news is pretty big! Our Impact Factor has risen this year to 7.441, making us the *second* ranked journal out *all* 94 ranked communication journals. This is incredible news, and someone pointed out, good for the journal and good for all of us. I thank each and every one of you for your constructive advice, contributions, and reviews. You are what made this possible. In particular, I thank Cindy Coleman (now retired as associate editor), Marilee Long (now moving on to an administrative position), and Jessica Myrick (on leave from her associate editorship), as well as all of the patient board members and ad hoc reviewers who have participated over the years. I also thank Ted Greenhalgh who is filling a managing editor role, trying his best to help us keep up with a growing number of submissions. I know I must sound like we're getting an academy award, but this is actually better – a truly collective accomplishment we can all take pride in.

I would also like to remind everyone that we are now taking submissions for a special issue on *Communicating Complexity* in honor of the life and work of the late Sharon Dunwoody. The deadline for submissions is September 15, 2022. Please be certain to begin the title of your submission with the words DUNWOODY ISSUE so your intent is called to our attention. The issue will should appear in either the December 2022 or February 2023 issue.

On another note, I will be leaving the editorship at the end of December, by mutual agreement between Sage Publishing and myself. Since I am retired from teaching, I have no access to tangible institutional support. While the journal does generate some revenue, it is not really enough to staff the processing of the 300 submissions a year we are receiving. (Our acceptance rate for research papers is still hovering around 15% or even a bit lower, but 100% of the submissions still get our careful attention.) Sage is on track to name a new editor soon. I expect it to be someone who has been deeply involved in the journal, although ultimately it is the publisher's decision since *Science Communication* is not an AEJMC journal. I'll make sure to post the news as soon as Sage makes their announcement. ♦

Remembering Sharon Dunwoody and Call for Special Issue of *Science Communication*

By: Robert J. Griffin, Marquette University

Sharon Dunwoody, professor emerita at the University of Wisconsin Madison, was known to many as a kind, gentle, generous, and humorous person. All of those qualities helped make her a superb teacher, mentor, and colleague. I considered Sharon a personal friend, and I was fortunate to work with her on one research project or another over most of the past 30 years. What always struck me was the way Sharon could talk about research in such a casual tone that ideas just flowed back and forth with ease in her conversations. Another longtime colleague, Deborah Blum, summed it up well in the [memoriam](#)

[published on Feb. 7, 2022](#): “Sharon was so kind, so soft-spoken, so generous in her manner that it was sometimes easy for people to forget that she was an internationally known star in the field of science communication, a researcher whose studies of communicating uncertainty and scientific ethics were among the best in the world.”

She was a fundamental force in the establishment of science communication scholarship at AEJMC and worldwide, and will be remembered fondly.

To honor her legacy, the journal *Science Communication* welcomes submissions for a special issue “Communicating Complexity: In Honor of Sharon Dunwoody.” Sharon often described her specialty as “explaining complicated stuff in writing.” She published widely on various aspects of mass communication. Much of her research explored how scientists view and use their interactions with media in their scientific work and, more recently, concerned how people use information to inform their judgments about health and environmental risks.

Articles accepted for this special issue of *Science Communication* will build on Sharon’s academic work and contributions. The deadline for submissions is September 15, 2022. More information and topical suggestions are [available here](#). ✦