

spig news

Spring 2018: *The official newsletter of the AEJMC Small Programs Interest Group*



Jonathan Drake/Reuters

At a church in Pompano Beach, Florida, students mourn Feb. 15 during a community prayer vigil for victims of the shooting at nearby Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

Trauma can affect reporters' bodies, brains – even souls

By Michael Longinow
Biola University

Trauma is more real than we faculty admit. It always has been. But the young people sitting in front of us now are a generation that talks about it more, gets medicated for it, pays counselors to help them cope with it.

I'm working on a journal article on trauma based on a paper that got accepted through SPIG, and like all good research, it's breeding

more research.

It's making me think through what trauma looks and feels like in the life of a journalist deployed with combat troops, or in reporters who respond to police scanners and get to the scene of a shooting or crash or storm center before the cops or EMTs do. And there are feelings. There are effects on reporters' bodies, their brains, and — if you will — their souls.

See **TRAUMA** on page 3



head notes

Consider a SPIG leadership role; the 'perfect' time is right now

It's not quite 9 a.m. on Monday, and so far I've held an online advising session with a student studying abroad, connected a new business seeking interns with our Career Center, responded to numerous emails, and glared at a stack of papers needing to be graded. Sound familiar? Probably so.

As faculty teaching in small programs, and often small universities, we balance the proverbial laundry list of daily administrative tasks in conjunction with our teaching and research.

As I approach the end of my term as SPIG Head, and the conclusion of rotation through the SPIG offices of secretary, second-vice head, and first-vice head, I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to the many folks who have placed SPIG on their laundry list of items to balance. From submitting panels, reviewing papers, de-

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head notes

Consider serving this year

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signing newsletters, proofreading copy, and navigating conference programming, SPIG members balance the many tasks of keeping our interest group thriving with the occasional “Sorry to be a nag, but ...”

To be candid, I had lofty goals as SPIG Head at the start of the academic year. My intent was to spend Friday mornings devoted to all things SPIG. (Seriously, you can laugh here.) But life had other plans in a cascade of highs and lows.

Early into the semester, my family received the news that my sister has a serious debilitating illness. An all-time low.

Followed by my acceptance as a Key Center Faculty Fellow, an opportunity for my department to have community-engaged courses leading to a community-engaged scholar distinction for students. A nice perk with a grant attached.

Then, the understanding that a second shoulder surgery would be needed sooner rather than later.

Just a few more things to balance.

My point in candidly relaying some life moments from this academic year isn't to garner sympathy, but to say that perfect timing

between life and work doesn't often exist.

Perusing past newsletters, this is the time of the year that the SPIG Head implores, begs, pleads for members to take up the gauntlet, or rather the challenge of balancing another task on your laundry list. If you value what SPIG offers, I encourage you to please consider serving in some capacity.

SPIG provides solid continuity for those interested in rotating through offices. Here's a quick rundown of the top four offices:

Head: Coordinate with SPIG officers and the editor of Teaching Journalism and Mass Communication, offer guidance and be a sounding board, complete and submit the annual report to AEJMC.

First-Vice Head: Execute the conference programming for SPIG, communicate with membership for the call for panel proposals, complete AEJMC programming by deadline.

Second-Vice Head: Assist the First-Vice Head with programming beginning with the call for panel proposals through learning how to navigate AEJMC's online conference programming.

Secretary: A one-time commitment to record the meeting minutes at the annual conference and

provide them in a narrative form for the fall newsletter. It's a great way to become acquainted with the group.

Other offices within SPIG for your consideration:

Research Committee, Teaching Committee/Teacher of the Year Competition, PF&R Committee, Newsletter, Webmaster, Membership, Social Media, GIFT Liaison, Hot Topics Liaison, and Special Promotions. Please note that all of these offices serve as co-chair or co-editor.

Commissions:

The Commission on Status of Women and the Commission on the Status for Minorities are both elected positions within SPIG.

All offices, self-nominated and elected, are confirmed at the SPIG Business Session. If you'd like to have more information or you're interested in volunteering as an officer, please contact **Sonya DiPalma**, sdipalma@unca.edu, **Carrie Sipes**, CASipes@ship.edu, or **Liz Atwood** at atwood@hood.edu.

As another academic year winds down, and we gear up to meet again in Washington, D.C., I hope you consider serving in some capacity.

spig officers

Head: Sonya DiPalma

First Vice Head: Carrie Sipes

Second Vice Head: Elizabeth Atwood

Secretary: Rosemarie Alexander

Research Committee Co-Chairs: Jackie Incollingo, Dave Madsen

Teaching Committee/Teacher of the Year: Cindy Simoneau

PF&R Committee Co-Chairs: Michael Longinow, Katherine Orloff

Newsletter Editor: Doug Mendenhall

Commission on Status of Women: Sandra Combs

Web site: Mitzi Lewis

Journal editor: Catherine Strong

Listserv: Brian Steffen

Membership: Michael Ray Smith

Social Media Co-Chairs: Jodie Gil, Kim Fox

GIFT Liaisons: Adam Maksl, Jim Sernoe

Hot Topics Liaison: John Jenks

Commission on the Status of Minorities: Lona Cobb

Special Promotions: Kay Colley

cover story

Good reporters know trauma

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Then there are the effects on survivors at the scene. We saw it (again) in Florida.

They're in trauma.

They've just rushed out of a school in terror, wondering if those gunshots they heard will start again.

Or it's parents who broke every speed limit getting to that school only to find yellow tape across the road and lots of helmeted cops keeping them from their children.

Reporting students, I'm learning, need more than that one ethics chapter in the reporting textbook. Fact is, we as faculty need more than that, too.

Maybe we should get more involved in that deadly shooter training our schools do.

Maybe we should get to a gun range and put our hands on a handgun or rifle (maybe an AR-15) and learn about the sounds, smells, textures and feelings that come with real understanding of guns, the impact of bullets on those paper targets on the range.

Do we need to see the blood, too? I don't know. I'm still thinking that through — for me and for my students.

I'm coming to yes, but the how

is another matter.

My experience as a reporter showed me that the more I knew about cops, medical personnel, politicians — anyone — the better my questions became.

Trauma is that experience every first responder knows about that becomes an unspoken layer behind every interview they give about a shooting, a crash, a suicide.

When a reporter knows what questions to ask, and when to ask them, based on a familiarity with that layer, the questions get better.

To know trauma is to be an insider of sorts. It keeps reporters (and our intern students) from asking the kinds of stupid questions that make cops and firefighters and medical personnel cringe — inwardly or right out loud. It can ruin an interview and stifle a story.

But now that I've done the research, the hard part is figuring out ways to craft course elements (maybe an entire topics course) that take students into trauma in ways they can learn from and grow through. Anybody can throw someone in a pool. It's getting them to swim to the other side that takes work; harder still is getting them to want to jump in again sometime soon.

Want to look deeper?

Michael Longinow's research began after a workshop at School of Journalism at the University of Missouri sponsored by the Dart Center and the Reynolds Institute. It was led by Katherine Reed, of Missouri's faculty, and drew on research she'd done through the Dart Center.

In that workshop, participants from universities across the U.S. heard from brain science specialists, the father of a girl killed by a violent offender, and from each other. The workshop gave practical tips on teaching, but also helped faculty think through “what it means to bear witness” to trauma.

The [Dart Center](#) at the University of Columbia in New York is a national resource center for journalists providing ongoing research and insights into how trauma affects journalists, audiences, and the journalism that serves democracy but also faces scrutiny in an age when overload of traumatic stories (now facing accusation of “fake news”) are turning Americans away from news and the journalism that needs telling.

milestones

SPIG Head **Sonya DiPalma** has been selected as a 2017-18 Key Center Faculty Fellow at UNC Asheville. This program uses community-based pedagogy and research to enhance student learning and to develop more democratic, reciprocal campus-community partnerships. Fellows receive a grant to support their work and participate in professional development opportunities. DiPalma's project, Environmental



DiPalma

communications planning in the fall



Mendenhall

journalism since 2008.

with implementation of the plan in the spring semester.

Doug Mendenhall has been awarded tenure and the rank of associate professor at Abilene Christian University, where he has taught

aejmc in d.c.

Pre-conference offers faculty development opportunities

Compiled by Carrie Sipes
First-Vice Head, Shippensburg State

Following the style of the past several years, the Small Programs Interest Group will offer a four-part pre-conference workshop in Washington D.C. this summer.

This year's topics focus on ways to enhance student and faculty development.

The 2018 conference begins on Monday, Aug. 6, so SPIG's pre-conference workshop will be Sunday afternoon, Aug. 5.

Parts one and two of the afternoon's slate will provide strategies for embedding career development in communication curriculum and using linked courses to teach students to communicate about science.

Parts three and four are intended to help faculty develop strategies for attracting talented candidates and for transitioning into a leadership role.

1. Embedding career development within communication curriculum

Panel Description: The Septem-



ber 2017 edition of AEJMC News contains a summary of the AEJMC Town Hall/Focus Group results acknowledging members' greatest needs (p. 3). Among them was the need that faculty, students and professional partners have to thrive in an ever-evolving marketplace.

This panel will explore the many ways in which faculty are integrating career exploration and job-search discussions within their courses and within their program's overall curriculum. This integration may occur in collaboration with the university's Career Center or exist on its own. Either way, this interweaving of career development within the academic curriculum is designed to help students position themselves successfully in a marketplace they will soon encounter.

Participants in this session can expect to leave with examples of how faculty have effectively embedded career conversations, career-focused activities, and job-search tactics into their Journalism & Mass Communication

courses or program's curriculum.

2. Linked courses: Science and journalism

Description: It's a special skill, teaching students to communicate about science in ways the general public can understand and even find interesting.

Several SPIG members are doing that, often with environmental themes.

3. Recruiting faculty: Strategies for attracting talented candidates

Description: In this interactive session, panelists will share experiences from varying perspectives, including both university employer and faculty candidate. Audience members will collaborate with the panelists to begin crafting an argument that faculty members can use collectively to showcase the uniqueness of our disciplines and market realities in future faculty searches.

4. The department chair: Transitioning into a leadership role

Description: Have you considered a leadership role in your department or are you curious about the transition to department leadership? This panel addresses the role of the department chair, how to successfully move from faculty member to chair and lessons on leadership.

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SPIG contributing to 6 panels, each addressing a 'hot topic'

Compiled by Carrie Sipes
First-Vice Head, Shippensburg State

Here are the panels that have been accepted as part of the program for the 2018 AEJMC Conference in Washington, D.C.

The conference runs Aug. 6-9. A specific schedule for panels and other events is still in the works.

1. Hot Topics

Co-sponsor: CCJA

Description: To keep the topic "hot," it is unveiled each summer as close as possible to the conference, with an eye on current events. Panelists are then gathered who can ably discuss the topic.

2. Fighting fair: Teaching critical thinking and media fairness in a climate of rage and rants

Co-sponsor: CCJA

Description: In a time when student protests and climates of attack rhetoric are part of university life, this panel will offer suggestions from media and public relations educators on how to guide students into critical thinking, use of reasoned dialogue, and an insistence on fairness of approach even when passions are strong and the stakes of a given debate seem enormous. The panel will deal with approaches to coverage of stories but also of how to navigate opinion about such national issues as federal immigration policy and protests by professional athletes. The panel also will address issues of civility and respect in small classes

where students may be particularly reluctant to speak because of the loss of anonymity.

3. Book 'em? Exploring alternatives to textbooks in the digital age

Co-sponsor: CCJA

Description: This session will bring ideas to get students interacting with significant ideas, current controversies or trends related to media or journalism courses when textbooks in a given course are outdated, badly written or so expensive that students can't afford them (or won't pay for them). The panel also will discuss legal and ethical dilemmas of supplementing textbooks with Web resources. Finally, panelists will offer creative approaches to getting students to read without resorting to coercion.

4. The university student-run public relations agency: Opportunities and challenges for academic programs large and small

Co-sponsor: PRDV

Description: The university student-run communications agency is a business that operates within a higher education institution. The agency allows students to build conceptual knowledge and practical skills while developing advertising, marketing, or public relations campaigns for real world clients. As a result, students are graduated with the knowledge

and the hands-on skills desired by employers in these fields. This panel will focus on opportunities and challenges presented by the student-run agency, and how an agency offers outstanding teaching and learning opportunities for programs both large and small.

5. Communication and media relations training in risk and crises

Co-sponsor: COM SHER

Description: This panel will discuss all aspects of communication and media relations training for STEM and PR professionals. In an increasingly mediated society, the need to communicate effectively with diverse audiences, including lay publics, journalists, and information officers, is critical. Drawing on their expertise and experiences, panelists will focus on risk and crisis communication.

6. Diversity outcomes beyond the numbers - Expanding the landscape

Co-sponsor: MACD

Description: How can Journalism and Mass Communication units be evaluated for diversity beyond just the numbers? How do we systematically look at student, faculty and curricular achievements? This panel is especially designed for smaller programs that may struggle to meet the diversity expectations of the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

in the classroom

Curriculum works to build in more skills at beginning, end

By **Sally Renaud**
Eastern Illinois University

As the journalism world has been evolving, faculty members in the department of journalism at Eastern Illinois University have been reviewing curriculum to ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they will need to succeed in the industry, or in whatever field they choose.

The department's faculty added a multimedia requirement more than 10 years ago, for example, and recently it changed its core requirements to reflect a broader-based skill set.

One class required for many decades has been a one-hour practicum that requires students to work at a student medium for an entire semester. Its purpose was to ensure students not only practiced their craft but also learned to work with editors and producers to learn how news is reported and presented for a specific medium: daily newspaper or daily 30-minute live newscast, city radio station or 240-page yearbook.

The faculty generally has been satisfied over the years with the professional development of the students.

Through the course of their four years, students grow as young people both academically and professionally. Their coursework takes them from the fundamentals to more advanced work. Their student media experiences take them from general assignment reporters to editors or anchors.

Extra-circularly, their internships and trips to workshops and conventions give them exposure to state and national peers and



Sally Renaud

professionals.

Clearly, our students accumulated skills in classes and with their work at our daily student media, broadcast, digital and print. But in recent years it had become obvious that many students are struggling with some basic protocols, some polish that helps them succeed academically and then acquire their first jobs.

In senior exit interviews and in evaluations by media professionals it became evident that students needed help with understanding academic expectations, with résumé writing and the interview process, with preparing for the job market, for example.

After much negotiation, the faculty voted to add two classes, one on each side of the existing Practicum, to form a Professional Development Sequence required of all students.

One class is for incoming stu-

dents and one is for students nearing graduation, both providing professional development training in the academic arena and in career development.

The first class, Journalism Forum, is designed to orient students to the major, to the faculty and to expectations, including the department's Student Code of Conduct.

The course is designed to enhance the transition, integration and retention of new, newly declared and prospective journalism majors by providing them with an introduction to peers and faculty affiliated with the department, timely access to information necessary for productive planning, strategies for academic success, and an opportunity to chart a course through the major that prepares them for success in the future.

During the 16-week class we introduce them to us and to our passions, and to the world of journalism, in part by exposing them to the Poynter Institute, the Pew Research Center, the Society of Professional Journalists, various job and internship sites and our alumni.

The final class, Journalism Capstone, is an eight-week class during their final semester designed to help students navigate the changing media landscape and present themselves and their skills professionally and appropriately to the industry and to academia.

Students prepare for job searches, craft a Journalism Philosophy Statement that reflects

See **SKILLS** on page 7

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Last call to get in TOY submissions

Applications are being accepted for SPIG's Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year.

The award, named for a former SPIG president and long-time group proponent, honors a SPIG member who demonstrates excellence in teaching and advising.

Deadline for submissions is April 23; those interested can be nominated or can apply. Only SPIG members are eligible, but the current SPIG head, vice head and past winners are not eligible.

Applicants should submit the following materials:

- One letter of recommendation from a former student with the names, email addresses and phone numbers of two other possible former student references.
- One letter of recommendation from a colleague or former colleague with the names, email

addresses and phone numbers of two other possible references.

- Evidence of teaching and advising excellence including:
 - A 500-word statement of your teaching philosophy;
 - Two course syllabi;
 - Two examples of class assignment, such as a project, test or exercise;
 - Two formal teaching evaluations by students, as professionally administered by the applicant's institution under conditions of student anonymity representing two courses;
 - A curriculum vitae (no more than eight pages).
- These nomination packets must be emailed to Teaching Committee Chair Cindy Simoneau at simoneauc1@southernct.edu
- A winner will be chosen by May 7 and honored in August.

AEJMC helping make child care available in D.C.

Book now for child care during the 2018 AEJMC conference in Washington, D.C. Provided through Kiddie Corp, the services will be provided at the Marriott Marquis, located a block and a half from the conference hotel, which is the Downtown Renaissance.

Care is available for children from age 2 to 12. Accommodations are not currently available for children with special needs.

Rates are \$10 per hour for a minimum of four hours from Monday to Thursday of the conference. Care will be available from 7 a.m. to 7:15 p.m. for the first three days, then 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. Thursday.

A sign-up form is available at <https://form.jotform.com/KiddieCorp/aejmckids>

A block of rooms at the [Marriott Marquis](#) is available for parents who prefer to stay at the same place their children are being cared for. The Marquis rate is \$209 plus taxes and fees.

Slots are expected to fill quickly.

Skills classes act as bookends

Continued from page 1

their beliefs and understanding about journalism, and complete an electronic portfolio they will show prospective employers.

The course ends with a public presentation of portfolios and research to faculty and undergrads.

By adding a course to the beginning and end of the students' collegiate career, courses that complement the existing Practicum course, the faculty hope students will feel more confident through their years in the department and in the job hunt. They will

understand what is expected of them in the classrooms and in the newsrooms and forge bonds with faculty, classmates and alumni. We hope this three-course sequence will aid in academic success and retention.

We are not alone in this venture. Several departments, most successfully English, have offered forums, and we have borrowed from those templates. And capstone courses are nothing new. We just had to decide what kind would help our students the most.

We will assess the classes in three ways: through traditional

grades on assignments, through comments addressed during senior exit interviews and through a brief assessment instrument that will join the other assessment data collected from our required courses. The Assessment Committee is working on these instruments, which will include a pre-and-post test.

The first Forum group will be in fall 2018, and, although it will not be required for them, spring 2019 seniors may take a piloted version of the Capstone during their last semester on campus.

book review

Study pulls 'Jesus newspaper' into modern media storms

By Lona Cobb

Winston-Salem State University

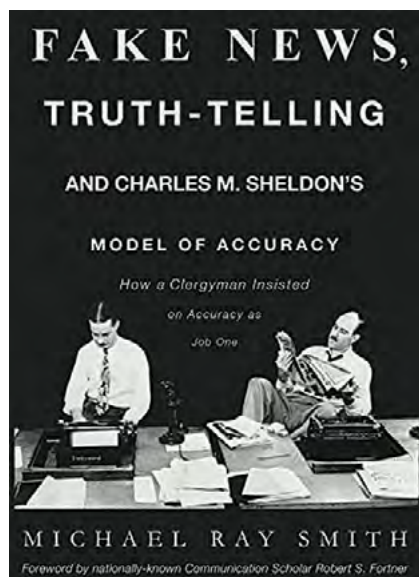
Considering the current adverse realities faced by the press, I can't think of a more opportune time for Michael Ray Smith's book, *Fake News, Truth-Telling and Charles M. Sheldon's Model of Accuracy*.

Smith's engaging research ferrets out an obscure journalism history fact about preacher-turned newspaper man, the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon, a minister in the Congregational churches, who in 1900 used the principle "What would Jesus do?" as a model of "... accuracy, accuracy, accuracy" in his news writing and editing.

Sheldon used his model for an experiment (i.e., a test for mainstream newspapers at the time) referred to as "The Jesus Newspaper." In March 1900, *The Topeka*



Lona Cobb



Daily publisher gave Sheldon pages of that paper to edit for a week "according to the standards the Jesus Christ would probably use."

The experiment might be considered as a success by today's standards. For the week, circulation saw an upsurge from 11,000 to more than 360,000.

The newspapers included Sheldon's articles and editorials – six editorials are included in the book

– based on Sheldon's Christian based experiences. However, for understandable reasons, journalists and other clergy were very critical of the "The Jesus Newspaper experiment." In his approach to news writing Sheldon used his Christian ideals and abandoned impartiality.

Smith writes that the basis for Sheldon's model would be useful for today's journalists. Although controversial, the Rev. Sheldon made a mark that revolutionized newspaper policies of his day.

Smith's research draws from historical record to show the skills and insights of a brief journalism period with insights that are still relevant today. Think about how Sheldon and his model would approach Facebook "news" and "wild" reports from other social media.

Early on in the book, Smith asks a question, "Was the Rev. Charles M. Sheldon ahead of his time?"

It's a good question. and an answer might be in this book.

[Fake News on Amazon.](#)

"The First Great Awakening coincided with some of the strongest developments of independent government in the American colonies – and the rise of a free press. The aftermath of the Second Great Awakening coincided roughly with Charles Sheldon's thinking and writing about how a newspaper might operate if Jesus were the focus of its newgathering."

Excerpt from *Fake News, Truth Telling and Chrles M. Sheldon's Model of Accuracy*.