



REVIEWS:

Podcast Review: Weekly News Podcasts

Reviewed by Kim Fox, *The American University in Cairo*

FANTI: <https://maximumfun.org/podcasts/fanti/>

CBS News Weekend Roundup: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/weekend-roundup/id74837238>

Skimm This: <https://www.theskimm.com/skimm-this>

On any given week there is a wealth of news and information that is published in print and digital media. It can be overwhelming to keep up with the news cycle or even digest nuggets of information. Add to that the level of disinformation and misinformation that leaks into the news feed. The good news is that my consumption of audio podcasts is high and a majority of the podcasts in my weekly listening rotation are news podcasts. My favs are my favs because of the length of the podcast and the ability to present a variety of news stories in a reasonable amount of time.

Let me introduce you to three weekly podcasts that are engaging for both faculty and family, as well as students and staff. First up: FANTI, whose tagline is: “For all of those complex and complicated conversations about the gray areas in our lives.” Journalists Tre’veell Anderson and Jarrett Hill pick apart the news and current events of the week in a conversational and humorous way. They provide diverse perspectives on topics including the fan part and the anti part, hence the name of the show: FANTI. New episodes drop on Thursdays.

The CBS News Weekend Roundup is a quick-ish way to get caught up on what you missed in a given

week. Host Allison Keyes covers all of the major news in the U.S. and globally in her 40-minute news podcast. The fact that it’s a CBS audio product adds some layers of trust and respect because they’ve been in this news business for some time. Keyes doesn’t just rip and read, she takes the time to share the news while also providing in-depth analysis through interviews with people and CBS correspondents who are on the ground in the news stories that are covered. Her delivery is straightforward and that could be of interest to listeners who appreciate that predictable approach. Check your podcast player on Fridays for new episodes.

Skimm comes from the longtime email newsletter, The Skimm, that targets a younger demographic. The daily email newsletter briefly addresses several topics and includes pics, links and is organized topically like the “Top Story” and “What people are watching closely...” Their weekly podcast has the same energy as their newsletter and in about 30 minutes, you’ll be well versed in the news of the week. It’s the punchiness that will keep students interested in news events that they might otherwise ignore. Alex Carr’s conversational delivery usually frames the news as: why does this matter? Making Skimm This relatable for all audiences. Catch new episodes on Thursdays.

Whether your students need to prep for a weekly news quiz or you, the educator, needs to get caught up on the news after a busy week, these three news podcasts will have you ready to chat it up at the water cooler as if you’re an old school news hound with a daily news beat.

Academics Face Increased Mental Health Issues

Reviewed by Catherine Strong, *Massey University*

Teresa Housel, editor, *Mental Health Among Higher Education Faculty, Administrators, and Graduate Students*. Lexington Books (2021). ISBN: 978-1793630247

Despite the long cumbersome title, this book takes a unique deep dive into the problem of how universities support faculty and staff with mental health issues.

The short answer is they do not do it well.

College educators know well the amount of stress the job brings, and during the COVID pandemic that stress has magnified. This book brought together twelve pertinent research papers to provide a view of the shortcomings ... but with some solutions too.

The book's preface acknowledges that many academics with mental illness and distress have successful careers, but that the stigma "is real and silencing." This is echoed by several chapter authors who feel there isn't enough research about academics with mental health issues.

One chapter found that education media continue the prevailing stereotype that those in higher education with mental health problems were white male students, primarily veterans with PTSD. The authors' content analysis of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, with 300,000 readers, tallied only 14 percent of articles on mental health referred to faculty or other staff, with the bulk about students. They contend this media silence ignores the triggers faculty may face in the classroom, as well as being a barrier for help that could be available to staff.

This chapter concluded that faculty with psychological disabilities are under-acknowledged, partly because "for faculty, the stigma is unique and especially invidious due to the intellectual demands of the

position" (pg. 177).

Another chapter indicated universities ignore that their mental health support should take into account the culture of the individuals involved. Analysing policies and documents in 49 government-funded universities in the culturally-diverse Australia and New Zealand, the authors found "virtually no evidence" that there existed culturally sensitive help for their staff. The only use of the word culture, in fact, was in relation to the university culture.

The book, however, is not all pessimism, as there are some excellent positive segments.

One paper examined colleges that allow, in fact encourage, emotional support animals on campus and in classrooms. Using an institute in Montana and another in Utah the study developed useful policy-templates for university use. These allow support pets, but at the same time acknowledge wariness of "fake service animals."

A particularly positive part of this book is the appendix that provides classroom resources on mental health issues to use in communication courses. There are several easily-developed, useful exercises for use by educators.

The book lacks a high readability factor for the general public because it is written as a series of academic research papers, but the value of this is that it provides a myriad of research resources and a review of existing literature for academics interested in this field.

Public Relations Management

Reviewed by Lindsay M. McCluskey
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Patricia K. Swann, *Cases in Public Relations Management: The Rise of Social Media and Activism*, Third Edition (2020). Routledge. ISBN: 978-1-138-08887-0

Cases in Public Relations Management is an excellent resource for faculty and students alike because—unlike some case studies books—this text does not only examine best practices. It covers a wide range of case studies and features the good, the bad, and the ugly, encouraging readers to think critically and engage with the material.

The book, which has previous editions released in 2010 and 2014, covers the following diverse topic areas: ethics and the law, corporate social responsibility, activism, media relations, conflict management, consumer relations, entertainment and leisure, community relations, cultural and other considerations, and financial communications and investor relations. Each chapter begins by introducing and explaining the overall topic before covering the specific cases and then concludes with relevant discussion questions and a “dig deeper” scenario that encourages faculty and students to do just that.

This textbook provides a brief overview that defines public relations and its relatives—advertising, marketing, journalism, and integrated marketing communication. The introduction and appendices also discuss the value of public relations to organizations, highlight the public relations process (ROPE/RACE), identify and define relevant theories, detail the four models of public relations, and cover the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Member Code of Ethics.

There are 38 total case studies, 18 of which are new additions since the last edition, with three to five

cases included in each chapter. Brands and organizations such as Apple, the ALS Association, Domino’s Pizza, Starbucks, Wells Fargo, the NFL, United Airlines, and Snapchat are among those featured. Some of the cases shared in this edition are now more than ten years old, so this may be viewed as a drawback and it may benefit readers to replace those cases with newer examples in a future edition. Furthermore, I would suggest adding a standalone chapter with cases from the healthcare public relations sector given its popularity and now its increased relevance in the COVID era. Additionally, new cases across sectors with an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion should be considered for the next edition.

I used *Cases in Public Relations Management* as a primary resource for a practically-oriented graduate course called Strategic Communication Management and Case Studies (an online abbreviated and accelerated version as well as an in-person standard semester version) this year, supplementing the book with news, industry, and academic resources (e.g., readings, webinars, videos, etc.) that aligned with the case topic areas, including those related to current events.

Furthermore, there are a variety of online optional supplemental materials for students and faculty available through the publisher’s website. I have found it to be a versatile and accessible offering as the students in this particular course have different backgrounds and levels of familiarity with public relations at the outset.