Notes from the Chair
By: Michelle A. Holling, Ph.D.

Amidst final exams and papers and the grading that follows, there is the holiday season filled with sweet treats to energize us. Best wishes to students as we move into final exam week and appreciation to faculty and staff for all they do to help students be successful. During this holiday season, I hope that we take time for ourselves to rejuvenate and give time to others to (re)connect, commune, and communicate.

To the dynamic duo – Tony Chahal and Kara Estorga. My deep appreciation for all the work, skills, diligence, and commitment you brought to your roles as interns for the department. Your ideas and creativity enhanced all you did for the department. Thank you!

Looking ahead to the spring 2019 semester, I’ll miss having the dynamic duo in the department but, alas they need to move on to other experiences that help them grow in other professional and academic ways. Much success to them!

For this final fall 2018 issue, Kara and Tony did a fabulous job conceiving of, interviewing, and writing up stories that highlight unique work completed (or in process) by faculty and students. There’s something to learn from each story in this issue given the array of topics covered.

If you have a story idea or would like to contribute a story to a future issue, I’d welcome hearing from you. Until next semester….happy holidays.

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When asked why all students need to know more about gig companies, Dr. Dolber states they are transforming the nature of work for the future. That is, “As wages remain stagnant, more and more people are taking on ‘gig work’ to supplement their incomes.” The industry is growing, and Dr. Dolber predicts: “that by 2020, 50 percent of all workers in the U.S. would rely on 1099 work for at least a portion of their income.”

The business models used by large gig companies are forming a larger trend throughout the labor market says Dr. Dolber - adding, - “This is particularly true in the media industries where digital technologies allow for user-generated content and lessen the need for paid professionals.”

The coming decades will see expansion of new digital technologies and artificial intelligence which will create enormous shifts in labor predicts Dr. Dolber, referencing examples of Uber using data generated by its drivers to move towards developing driverless cars, and social media encouraging user-generated content, further reducing the need for paid professionals.”

The gig economy has shortcomings , proposes Dr. Dolber. Gig economy involves temporary work where workers are categorized as 1099 sub-contractors, but because of isolated work environments, workers are not organized, and may be exploited says Dr. Dolber.

The gig economy has relevance to students says Dr. Dolber. For example, during his first year at CSUSM, he caught a Lyft from a media studies student driving for the company. Students rely on Uber or Lyft as a possible avenue for income, and many also use it for transport. Students need to know gig economy workers lack legal rights, minimum wage and right to form unions, and workplace safety protections traditional employees might have, says Dr. Dolber.

He explains while gig work may seem lucrative and flexible it is neither. The expenses of gas, car payments, maintenance, and insurance bring the hourly rate to $9 per hour -- while working 60 to 80 hours per week.

Dr. Dolber is optimistic about the future. In addition to his funded study he is co-editing a volume of essays tentatively titled: “The Gig Economy: Workers and Media in the Age of Convergence.” He suggests students research the gig economy, and talk to an Uber/Lyft driver next time they ride. “This is an exciting time to be involved in the emerging field of app-based services relative to society and economy,” says Dr. Dolber, and suggests students find out more regarding movements happening throughout the U.S. and globally challenging the Uber/Lyft model. He adds: “Through those kinds of conversations we build the social bonds that we need to change our world for the better.” Well done Dr. Dolber!
Dr. Rivera Excited about Mentoring!
By: Tony Chahal

The Department of Communication congratulates the selection of Dr. Rivera for the position of Faculty Fellow for the Faculty Mentoring Program (FMP). Established in 1993 and run through the CSUSM Faculty Center, the FMP is a program that serves students who are the first in their family to attend college, or who are facing economic hardships while attending CSUSM. The program matches these students with a faculty mentor, who provide both social and instrumental support to help students reach their goals. Dr. Rivera is excited to bring her ideas and experience to the position, some of which include leadership, life skills, and community engagement.

Social estrangement is a real problem among students at CSUSM; especially for those who don’t have experience in a college setting. Nevertheless, the FMP is committed to helping students complete their college education regardless of their societal position.

Dr. Rivera states that one goal in the FMP is to help students be prepared for life after graduation, and to see themselves as leaders.

Inclusion is a priority for Dr. Rivera: “Whatever they do, I want students to know that their voice matters, and that they can make a difference in the world.” She says some students will move on to graduate school and some may enter the workforce, but having believing in themselves as leaders, as well as being autonomous and self-determined, are integral to helping FMP students be prepared for the future.

Mentors can provide valuable information, emotional support, and encouragement towards graduation and entering the job market, she adds.

In her role as FMP Faculty Fellow, Dr. Rivera will build upon a university culture that promotes positive participation.

One of her goals is to encourage faculty members to assume mentoring roles, and to be more involved in the local community. “My ideas include helping to empower faculty to see themselves as mentors,” she says. Students are guided and supported by experience and professionalism, and Dr. Rivera’s intention is to connect the right protégé with the right faculty member.

She mentions that one opportunity for community connection will be encouraging FMP members to participate in the “Cesar-Chavez Day of Service” in spring, 2019.

If one does not qualify for the FMP do not lose heart. There are different mentoring programs across campus—from CHABSS’s Career Network or first year programs among others, and mentoring does not have to be formal, says Dr. Rivera. She asserts that she – as well as all faculty-- mentor many students without written agreements. “The COMM and MDIA faculty love to work with students-- so just ask us!” she joyfully adds.

Asked about future plans for the FMP and Dr. Rivera is optimistic and excited to help grow the program. More students and faculty need to know about the success of the program, she states. This year has the largest class in the history of the program, with about 220 student protégés and 126 faculty mentors.

“Start looking for a mentor by going to your professors' office hours and getting to know them,” Dr. Rivera suggests. “After a few tries, you'll get more comfortable, and you'll find you've got a mentor!” The Faculty Mentoring Program is in good hands.

Welcome Dr. Rivera!
To Intern, or not to intern . . .: An interview with Maxwell Hammond, Internships from a student perspective
By: Kara Estorga

Maxwell Hammond is a communication major in his senior year at CSUSM and set to graduate in fall 2018. During the course of his academic career, he secured four internships within various career fields, with his most recent internship being the Social Fabric Initiative (SFI) through the University of San Diego Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice.

During his time at Social Fabric Initiative (SFI), he acted as a Team Lead, overseeing two different groups of high school students; organized and directed student volunteers in their development of social media platforms, which were designed to bring awareness to human sex-trafficking; and helped develop a podcast examining the criminal justice system and the need for reformation concerning formally detained youth.

In the following interview, Max talks about his experience with the internship process, the internship class (COMM/MDIA 495), and the experience gained.

1. What was the process of securing an internship like?

It was a time consuming process. I started looking and applying early. For my specific summer internship with the Social Fabric Initiative (SFI), I began applying and interviewing two months prior to the end of the 2017 spring semester. I had to submit a resume, interview, and provide a letter of intent.

2. Did you use the CSUSM internship database for placement?

No, I did not utilize the CSU Internship database . . . I used Google. However, using the database is definitely a lot easier and more reliable. Internship postings can be vague and it can be challenging to ensure that your internship is going to be value-added. There are a lot of horror stories out there of interns just making coffee or running errands, but the database definitely helps do a lot of the vetting for you.

3. You’re currently enrolled in the COMM/MDIA 495 Internship course, how has that course helped to enrich your internship experience?

It definitely enriched my understanding of the experience. At the time, I wasn’t aware about what I was going through. Taking this course has allowed me to put a name to the experiences and processes. It has allowed me to understand it and react in a way to really optimize my goals.

4. Do you have any examples of how the course has worked in conjunction with your internship to prepare you for a career after graduation?

One of the most valuable activities we’ve done during this course was a salary workshop. It highlights the importance of pay analysis. It shows you how to look at your pay and compare it against your peers. This activity translated into salary negotiation and being able to assert your value as an employee in your company. It helps you to recognize if you’re being underpaid and strategize how to move toward an increase.

5. Do you recommend that students take internship as an undergrad?

I highly recommend that students take an internship during their undergrad if they can. Even better if you can take a few! I think that it’s important to explore a wide variety of career paths because you learn a lot about things that way. Sometimes the best experience is learning what you don’t like about a job.

6. What are some valuable takeaways you’ve gained from your internship experience?

I have an idea, go for it. Don’t be afraid to speak up about that idea and find places where you can be proactive and find opportunities to make a change. Take on aspects of the job that you might not necessarily be comfortable with or knowledgeable in. That’s the best way to learn. Take chances. Don’t be afraid to take a chance on something just because you don’t know what the outcome will be. The beauty of internships lies inherently in what you gain from the experience. Internships are huge networking opportunities.

Internships are a soft-risk. “It’s better to know, than to not know if you don’t like something because not liking something and knowing that is half the battle.”
Rhetoric, Performance, and Gender Fluidity in the Classroom

By: Kara Estorga

Dr. Spieldenner is currently an Assistant Professor of Communication at CSUSM who specializes in issues of culture and the body within the areas of HIV, the LGBTQ community, and public discourse.

Struck by the interest of his most recent publication, I decided to interview Dr. Spieldenner about his research. His most recent publication entitled, “Object Lessons: Using Trans Porn in Class to Explore Gender Fluidity,” catalogues his experience teaching when at Hofstra University and taking the classroom into uncharted territory with Erotic Bodies: Rhetoric and Performance, a course he developed.

The object of the course is to provide students with knowledge about gender identity, sexuality, and sexwork; increase students’ critical thinking about the fluidity of gender and sexuality; and demonstrate the students’ capacity to be more attentive to trans issues in conversation.

When I asked Dr. Spieldenner about his inspiration for the course he cites the need for exploration and discovery. He asserts that there is no better time than college to explore gender and sexuality, and if he can create a space within the classroom for students to feel safe and comfortable to talk about themselves, then the class would be worth it.

Dr. Spieldenner begins his article with a discussion about gender fluidity in the university classroom and juxtaposes it to the idea of pornography as a facet of underground and mainstream culture.

Historically, pornography exists within mainstream culture as something shameful. Dr. Spieldenner refers to this association as negative emotions or behaviors or topics that are colored with shame, grief, and depression. The porn industry is one of the highest grossing industries in entertainment and, coincidentally, one of the most controversial.

People within the porn industry are seen as immoral and often scrutinized by the working-class for their choice of employment, as asserted in his publication.

Dr. Spieldenner explains how pornography reveals sexual norms and social customs. For example, early instances of trans porn within the industry were initially used as a comedic trope and held many negative associations. This sordid introduction helped to create and sustain the present-day stereotype of trans people as untrustworthy, which promotes transphobia.

During the duration of the course, he encouraged students to participate and discuss the importance of naming (gender) and understand how language reveals values about sexuality and gender.
Dr. Spieldenner acknowledges that the material presented within the course can be challenging for both students and instructor yet, he believes by engaging in such difficult discussions about gender and sexuality, he can help to create a space for trans desire and understanding.

Dr. Spieldenner hopes to develop the course in the department in the future.

**Time to Talk about Violence says Dr. Holling**

By: Tony Chahal

Dr. Holling was invited to speak at the University of Alabama Huntsville (UAH) as part of their Distinguished Speaker Series on September 20th, 2018. She is in good company. Former speakers in the series include former Director of Intelligence James Clapper, former Director of the CIA Michael Hayden, and renowned literary theorist and public intellectual Dr. Stanley Fish.

Initially, Dr. Holling was apprehensive, “I was a little nervous because so much of my scholarship is focused on violence,” she said. But her worry was put to rest by Associate Professor of Communication at UAH, Dr. Eletra S. Gilchrist, who insisted that dialogue was necessary when considering the current political and social climate.

In the day before the talk at UAH Dr. Holling taught a graduate class on intercultural communication, had meetings with faculty, and prepped for the lecture. The speech was formulated around questions such as: “when does violence beckon our attention, and for whom,” says Dr. Holling, and she addresses these questions by unpacking different types of violence, and from her past published research projects.

Rhetorical violence is communicated through language, and is beyond -- and in addition -- to actual physical acts of violence, and causes psychological, emotional, or intellectual harm, says Dr. Holling.

In her recent scholarship she noticed a common theme, in that, even in the midst of apologizing for instances of racism, public figures continued to perpetuate violence rhetorically, while side-stepping the actual subject. Comments such as “I didn’t intend to say that” illustrated the denial of racism and instead focused on simple misspeak or intention.

The groundwork of the lecture: “Perpetuating Violence in Acts of (Rhetorical) Violence” stems from Dr. Hollings’ past essays about racist violations, microaggressions in the academy, and news discourse about gendered violence in Juárez.

In one particular article Dr. Holling co-authored with Dr. Dreama Moon and Alexandra Jackson Nevis, titled “Racist Violations and Racializing Apologia in a post-Racism Era,” in which examples of twenty-four white public figures who made racist comments apologized without addressing the actual racism, were analyzed.

One example of the twenty-four public figures is the example of musician John Mayer masking an apology and perpetuating rhetorical violence. In a Playboy magazine interview singer John Mayer used the n-word, stated his dislike of black women, and incredulously, separated his racist self from his penis: “My dick is sort of like a white supremacist David Duke,” he said. After the ensuing furor he apologized, but instead of addressing his racism, he pompously diverted to pontificating the N-word: “It was arrogant of me to think I could intellectualize using it, because I realize there's no intellectualizing a word that is so emotionally charged," he said.

Rhetorical violence commits a double layer of violence to the victim, explains Dr. Holling. Having examined a decade’s worth of news reports of the hundreds of women who have been raped, tortured, and murdered around the Mexican...
When you first enrolled in Comm 454 what were your expectations for the class?

When I first enrolled in COMM 454 I was expecting to learn how white people communicated with each other. Initially, I did not know that this class would be about the notion of whiteness and white supremacy. For the first few class meetings I felt as though the conversations we discussed and the participation was pretty surface level. Therefore, my expectations for the class started off low.

How has your impression changed over the course of the semester?

Over time, my impression of this course shifted majorly. As someone who identifies as a person of color, I did not think I had to learn much about whiteness and how people of color are affected by this ideology but throughout this course, I was proven wrong and I gained more insight on how this concept is subliminally implemented into our everyday lives for everybody. I remember from the first few class meetings walking out at the end being frustrated with my white peers but as time progressed and the quality of our conversations became more real the level of understanding of this concept became more apparent.

What are your key takeaways from this class?

Some key takeaways from this class is how far empathy and trust can go which is essential in creating a healthy human bond. Also, listening and being brave enough to be vulnerable with other human beings who are all trying to live their best life!

Has this course and its related material impacted or challenged you in any way?

This course was a definite struggle for me. I had to open my eyes to a world that desired the inferiority of the people and communities that I grew up in. I had to come face to face with the ideals that are institutionally implemented for the purpose of destroying and wiping out people who are not white. It took openness and love to prevail on top of the frustration and anger that white hegemony seeks out to validate their assumptions on people of color.

In what ways is the content you've learned relevant to (understanding) the cultural landscape that we live in?

Being in COMM 454, it helped navigate where this notion of whiteness stems from and why certain communities are separated by race. As many of my white peers are learning the culture of people of color I too am learning the white culture.
If students have been wondering why they haven’t seen much of Dr. Cecilia “Lia” Uy-Tioco this semester, it’s because she’s been busy working on a book project. Together with Dr. Jason Cabañes from De La Salle University in the Philippines, she is co-editing a book titled *Mobile Media and Asian Social Intimacies* to be published by Springer in 2019. The book is a collection of studies from various scholars that explore the role of mobile media in a variety of intimate relationships, such as dating, romance, family, community, and fan groups in countries such as China, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines. It is part of the book series, *Mobile Communication in Asia: Local Insights, Global Implications*, that is edited by Dr. Sun Sun Lim, one of the leading mobile media scholars in the world.

According to Dr. Uy-Tioco, this book is timely because of the increasing ways mobile media technologies have become part of our everyday life and relationships. She notes that Asia has some of the most advanced consumers of technology as well as some of the least technologically developed. And yet, the use of mobile media, especially the mobile phone, is flourishing. Dr. Uy-Tioco also says that she and Dr. Cabañes aim to develop a theory on “Asian social intimacy.” She notes, “it might seem paradoxical that we put intimacy and the social together, but it’s not. Intimacy is often primarily thought of as about relations of closeness between two people, but it is also embedded in social realities. And in Asia the social dimension is more pronounced—arranged marriage, filial piety, extended kinship, community, and imagined communities in the postcolony.”

As part of the book, Dr. Uy-Tioco is also co-writing a chapter with Dr. Earvin Cabalquinto from Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. Their chapter “Transnational ‘sandwich’ generation: Filipino migrants, mobile media, and global care chains” studies how transnational Filipino migrants use mobile media to fulfill their obligations and duties to care for aging parents in the homeland from afar. This stems from Dr. Uy-Tioco’s interest in the ways that transnational migrants use technology. She is curious to discover how they maintain relationships between the homeland (the Philippines) and the new homeland and land of settlement (America).

Dr. Uy-Tioco applied for and received the Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities (RSCA) grant at CSUSM which gave her a reduced teaching workload so that she may be able to dedicate more time to work on her book. Dr. Uy-Tioco is grateful for this grant because “editing book chapters take so much time and we didn’t expect we would need more time to edit scholars from Asia whose primary language is not English.” But Dr. Uy-Tioco says that the experience has been rewarding because she and Dr. Cabañes are “shepherding the exciting and innovative work of emerging scholars from or work on East/Southeast Asian countries to an international audience.”

So, stay tuned Cougars, and watch out for Dr. Uy-Tioco’s book in 2019!
The Student Poster Showcase Experience: Christina Givens
By: Kara Estorga

1. What is the poster showcase and why did you decide to participate in it?

My participation in the student showcase stems mainly from my desire to pursue graduate studies. Research and academic presentations are a major component for becoming a competitive candidate for master's and doctoral programs. Poster showcases like the one here at CSUSM, offers undergraduates the opportunity to learn how to create and organize an academic research presentation in a non-competitive environment.

2. What were the requirements for participation?

Students electively signed up to participate. The event was designed by CSUSM’s Council for Undergraduate Research (CUGR) initiative to support the growing student research and creative activity projects at CSUSM. Students are required to present their original research in either a poster or digital format. Each poster format had its own specific guidelines.

3. What was your topic?

My research is an academic analysis of the Hulu series *The Handmaid's Tale* using a rhetorical criticism perspective.

4. What made you pursue research on this topic?

The popularity of the series combined with its affiliation to modern feminism inspired me to take a deeper look at the show's ideologies. For example, the show's stylistic images, like the red robes worn by the handmaids on the series, have appeared in political protests concerning women's rights across the United States. My goal is to better understand how the show persuades its audience towards political agency.

5. Why is it important? (impact)

When a text inspires its empirical audience to take action of any sort, I believe it’s important to examine the ideologies that text is advocating. The application of the series' symbolism in our cultural milieu is an important note to the persuasive power of the show, and I question whether or not it's a progressive and positive impact or furthers hegemonic constructs.

6. Given the opportunity, would you participate in the future? Why or why not?

I would participate in the poster showcase again. My research and public speaking skills are only going to improve through practice and I'll use as many opportunities as I can get.

Final note: Unavailable for comment was Jonathan Chavez, who also presented his research entitled “Freewheelin’” at the Student Poster Showcase. The Department congratulates him on his accomplishment.
Presentations at the Whiteness Forum
By: Tony Chahal

Despite the pouring rain, the Department of Communication Whiteness Forum welcomed approximately 150 attendees. Fifteen groups each showcased poster presentations of examples of white supremacy in the United States. Students spend the semester identifying an issue in which white supremacy manifests and conducting research to understand the nature of the issue then present their findings. The well-attended Forum suggests that the problem of white supremacy continues to be of grave concern, said Dr. Moon.

Student research projects examined an array of topics in which white supremacy is evident. One group examined racism and evangelical Christian churches. The presentation highlighted the absence of people of color in evangelical churches, and how predominantly white, patriarchal congregations believe they alone are the chosen people, and see themselves as the moral police. “The notion of blindly following the male head of a family is directly associated with followers of President Trump,” stated a presenter. Another group member pointed to a picture of “The Last Supper” painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, which portrays Jesus and his disciples as white people. “This just further illustrates how evangelical Christian organizations are removed from people of color,” she added.

A different group displayed “new slavery” in big letters across their board, and included pictures of banks, and images of firefighters. “White supremacy is responsible for new slavery in the growing private prison industry,” said the presenter. Private prisons are full of minorities and people from poorer neighborhoods, and are funded by well-known financial institutions such as Bank of America and Barclays, he said. That is, corporate business models are based on growth and profit, so naturally encourage more incarceration. Inmates earn twelve cents per hour manufacturing goods for corporate and government entities such as Starbucks, Walmart, Mary Kay, and Wendy’s, says said. “Forty percent of firefighters are prisoners that work the front lines of fires, enduring risky and dangerous conditions that official firefighters do not have to,” he added.

The NFL perpetuates white supremacy according to another group. Their presentation board proclaimed: “3 False Narratives of the NFL Protests” and displayed pictures of NFL owners, and a kneeling Colin Kaepernick. The NFL players work in a meritocracy; they earn their position based on talent, but not so in the back office, asserts the group. “Most players are African American, but not in the administration, coaching, or ownership,” they said. The group also pointed out that the NFL continues to perpetuate the myth that San Francisco 49ers ex-quarterback Colin Kaepernick is unpatriotic and anti-armed forces, when in fact he is against oppression and underrepresentation.

The portrayal of African Americans and Native Indians as savages and being uncivilized is still widely accepted in U.S. culture, said one group. “Just look at the difference” they exclaimed, pointing to two newspaper reports, one with African Americans and the other with Caucasians. One article’s title exclaimed African Americans as “thugs” and “gang members,” followed by mugshots, while the other read “college students in trouble,” showing them in impeccable suits and ties. They pointed to a picture of the butter brand “Land O’Lakes” with the image of a Native American woman kneeling, and also to an image of the Washington Redskins mascot, “why this racism is still allowed to go on?” they asked.

The Department thanks the students, faculty, and staff who attended this year’s event, and appreciates their hard work. When asked how students can be involved in the volatile issue of whiteness, Dr. Moon is adamant, “Only by critically analyzing how white supremacy continues to separate our society, we can work together to eliminate the effects of racism, and be able to move forward to the realization of our founding principles of equality, justice, and freedom for all.” Thank you for your courage Dr. Moon.
BOOST YOUR EXPERIENCE!

Become an Intern for the Department of Communication for Spring 2019

The Department invites applications from students to apply for an internship in the department. Intern Position Description:

• Gain hands on experience conceiving, developing, and maintaining social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube);
• Receive training on and maintain department website;
• Create, distribute, and circulate flyers for (new) courses offered and/or sponsored events by the department, as needed;
• Assist in producing department newsletter (e.g., creating content, conducting interviews, etc.);
• Lend assistance to faculty on a variety of projects and/or department based student organizations, as needed;
• Provide front office support

Experience Gained: A portfolio of materials; working in a professional setting; strengthen written skills; develop relationships with faculty, staff and students; interviewing; event planning, etc.

Desired Qualifications:

• Junior or senior status and COMM or MDIA major
• Ability to work independently
• Conscientious & self-motivated
• Strong written and oral communication skills
• Knowledge of MS Office and social media
• Interest in working for faculty

Applications now accepted until position filled. Submit a resume and cover letter to Dr. Holling, Department Chair, at mholling@csusm.edu. Cover letter should address relevant skills, knowledge, and/or personal qualities that well position students for an internship. Start date is January 22, 2019.

Internship is completed for academic credit. Enrollment in COMM 495 or MDIA 495. Minimum of 120 hours per semester (average 10 hrs p/wk). For information about COMM 495 & MDIA 495, visit https://www.csusm.edu/communication/internships.html. Also, additional information about internship opportunities generally may be found at the Office of Internships https://www.csusm.edu/internships/students/index.html.