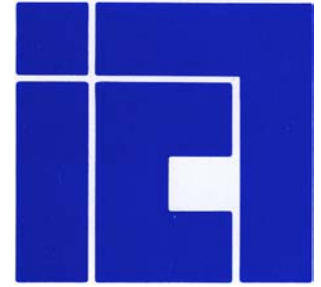


NEW: Journalism Studies Interest Group at ICA



International Communication Association creates
a section devoted to the study of journalism

A group of 100 active scholars concerned with the study of journalism has formed a Journalism Studies Interest Group at the International Communication Association's (ICA) annual conference in New Orleans this May. The initiators of the group reflect a wide range of scholars affiliated with academic institutions around the world who devote a great deal of research to journalism studies. The Interest Group will have program hours on its own allotted for the next ICA conference in New York, 26-30 May 2005.

Journalism studies: Growing in importance

Given the number of scholars engaging in the development of theory and research on journalism is growing, journalism is becoming an increasingly autonomous field of study. Universities and colleges, especially outside the USA, have responded to this trend with the formation of independent schools of journalism. The scientific community has created two new international journals in the field—*Journalism* and *Journalism Studies*—along with other journals devoted to the inquiry of journalism at the national level. These changes in professional organization reflect changes in journalism itself: Journalism has come to rival interpersonal communication as a primary source of social co-orientation. In a normative sense, it is regarded as an essential part in the processes of democracy and social change. That journalism has become crucial to such concerns is indicated by our use of concepts such as *public* and *civic journalism*, *development(al) journalism*, and *peace journalism*.

An interdisciplinary field

Journalism studies cuts across traditional academic boundaries. This is especially apparent by the rise of online communication, which to blurs the boundaries between mass communication and interpersonal communication. The study of journalism incorporates important issues with regard to technology (convergence and multimedia journalism), mass (media) communication, political communication, intercultural communication, health communication, popular communication (popular journalism), and gender studies (woman journalists). The new group emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of the field.

Academic dialogue needed

Certainly journalism is presently studied across the field; however, the individuals behind these different research endeavors often have no forum to communicate with one another. The first task for the Interest

Group is, therefore, to create a platform with journalism's study as its foundation—from which scholars employing different kinds of theoretical and methodological approaches can engage in a dialogue. It will be a clearinghouse for the wide range of scholarship on journalism. Another important aim is to facilitate empirical research and bring more coherence to research paradigms. In so doing, the interest group would further support the professionalization of journalism studies and journalism education.

Promote theory, research and education

The overall purpose of the Interest Group is to promote journalism theory and research, and professional education in journalism—as well as to provide a critical perspective on its specific functions, structures, and practices. The group invites a wide array of theoretical, epistemological, and methodological approaches, all united around an interest in journalism and sharing the aim of enhancing existing understandings of how journalism works across temporal and geographic contexts. Central to the mission of the Interest Group are questions we recognize intuitively but whose answers have become increasingly vague within both the academy and the profession: What is news? What is journalism? Who are the people responsible for making decisions about what is news—and how do their backgrounds, education, attitudes, and beliefs influence these decisions?

Information:

Thomas Hanitzsch, Ilmenau University of Technology
[thomas.hanitzsch@tu-ilmenau.de]

John Newhagen, University of Maryland
[newhagen@umd.edu]

Mark Deuze, University of Amsterdam
[m.j.p.deuze@uva.nl]

mailing-list: jsig@tu-ilmenau.de

Please see [www.icahdq.org] for membership information.