



Rhetoric Continues to Shape America and our Future

by Donovan Bisbee, doctoral student



John Murphy. (Photo by Della Perrone.)

“Rhetoric,” as Professor **John Murphy** explains to a classroom packed with over 120 undergraduate students, “is a problem-solving device. Persuasion works to bring us together, to solve problems, to allow us to do what

we cannot do alone.” Murphy begins each semester of his popular, *Strategies of Persuasion* course by discussing the power of language to shape political reality. Over the semester, Murphy helps students understand how persuasive strategies operate through language by studying famous or exemplary cases, such as Reagan’s Challenger Address, where students learn how presidents reassure a nation in the midst of tragedy. And, from Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream,” they learn about the power of language to move a vast and segmented audience.

For Murphy, teaching a speech means being able to explain it to a broad audience and help them see how it works, which can influence his own scholarship. He is understandably skeptical of any supposed divide between research and teaching, explaining that the best teachers he had were “tremendous scholars as well.” Murphy’s record attests to his work as an excellent teacher and scholar.

Murphy studies American political rhetoric, and he is interested in “how political language helps us make policy choices.” For much of his career, Murphy has examined political language through the presidency with an interest

in figuring out what makes really good speeches work. The presidency and political language are central aspects of his forthcoming (January 2019) book, *John F. Kennedy and the Liberal Persuasion*. Murphy describes the project as an exploration of the political language of liberalism in the United States. It examines famous JFK speeches to understand what the tradition of American liberalism is, how it works, and why JFK was so good at using it as



John F. Kennedy official portrait by Aaron A. Shikler, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

a pillar of his public argument. This analysis helps readers discover patterns such as Kennedy’s reliance on the reciprocity argument (the “Golden Rule”). Murphy explains, “JFK was always trying to stand in other people’s shoes and see the world through their eyes,” and he asked his audience to do the same.

Turning his attention to a sequel project, Murphy realized that JFK’s language about civil rights places special emphasis on mobility and breaking down barriers. In *Protean Texts of Civil Rights: Baldwin, Hamer, and*

King, Murphy asks how three iconic figures (James Baldwin, Fannie Lou Hamer, Martin Luther King, Jr) of the Civil Rights era worked to “mobilize” America. This project was awarded an Illinois Program for Research in the Humanities Faculty Fellowship.

In the classroom this fall, Professor Murphy will offer a new course, “12 Speeches that Made America.” Through famous speeches, Murphy and his students will explore the background assumptions of American citizenship. Murphy wants his students to see how “these assumptions are the grounds that politicians use to justify policy, the warrants that allow us to make sense of what’s going on, and they often go unexamined. The idea of a special mission for America,” Murphy points out, “can be traced to John Winthrop’s famous 1630 Sermon, ‘A Model of Christian Charity.’” This language, Murphy explains, “is a deep background assumption that politicians of all parties draw on to argue that we should act differently or that America has a special responsibility to the world as a ‘shining city on a hill’ with a special mission.” Political language has influenced countless policy decisions.

Professor Murphy’s goal for both his forthcoming book, future projects, and new course this fall, is that students and readers will have the chance to think more deeply about how we define ourselves and our nation through language. ■

headlines...

GREETINGS FROM LINCOLN HALL



John Caughlin. (Photo by Della Perrone.)

It has been another busy year for the Department of Communication. This newsletter provides you with a condensed version of the department's activities and endeavors. One of the most enjoyable aspects of working in our department is the excellence that is found in every facet of the program. The high quality that pervades every aspect of the department means that there is no way a newsletter can cover all the remarkable people, events,

and accomplishments.

Our newsletter can provide only a fraction of all that has happened this year and hopefully you will find our 2017-18 news worthy of your attention. Our bittersweet news this year is the retirement June 30 of Dr. Barbara Hall, one of our academic advisors. Barbara has been with the department since 1988 when she was hired as its very first professional advisor. Since that time, over 6,000 students have earned BA's from our department. For the majority of them, she was there from their first contact with the department through graduation and beyond. To say she will be missed, does not begin to capture the sentiment. Her farewell column appears in the pages that follow.

Classroom Success

The core of our department remains the vibrant teaching and learning that happens in our classrooms. We have an outstanding group of faculty and graduate teaching assistants, and our

students are talented and hard-working. It is not surprising that our students continue to have great successes.

Many of those students graduated this year between August 2017 and May 2018: we had 244 earn BA degrees, 9 earn MA's, 14 earn Master of Science degrees from our online program in health communication, and there were 5 new Doctors of Philosophy, with several scheduled to finish during this current summer. Many of these new alumni won prestigious honors during their time on campus, including 7 who earned the university honor of Bronze tablet (top 3% of the graduating class campuswide), which is a record high for our department. Additionally, 62 were inducted into Lambda Pi Eta (the National Communication Association's official honors society), 25 earned Latin honors (cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude) from the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, and 25 earned departmental distinction.

Fall 2018

Speaking of...Communication


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The instructional side of the classroom also had great successes this year. One marker of that success comes from the evaluations that students provide at the end of each semester. We continue to have highly regarded teachers, including many considered among the very best on campus. Since 2013, we have had an average of over 28% of our faculty and 30% of our teaching assistants score in the top 10% of student evaluation ratings. Also, this year, one of our graduate teaching assistants, Bryan Abendschein, won both the College of LAS and campus-level awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching. There are thousands of teaching assistants on campus, and only 6 win this award. It is a stellar accomplishment.

Success beyond the Classroom

The Communication major has always been one that blends academic rigor with practical knowledge. In recent years, there has been increased focus on opportunities for students to apply their communication knowledge and skills beyond the classroom. One example is our career internship program, which continues to thrive. This summer, more than 50 communication majors are earning course credit working through our departmental internship program. This is typical of our students' participation in internships during the academic

year, as well. Our career internship director, Kathleen Ditewig-Morris does a tremendous job helping students extend what they learn in our classes while they gain professional work experiences. If you would like to find out more about our career internship program—such as how your organization can work with our interns—let me know. Kate is always looking for new opportunities for our students.

Another concrete marker of success beyond the classroom is what happens in the months and years after graduation. All reports tell us that our Communication majors do well. In the most recent data from students who graduated in the 2016-2017 school year, 81% had secured employment within a few months of graduation, and another 11% had gone to graduate school, professional school, or some type of volunteer/service work. To put this in context, that 81% employment rate shortly after graduation was the highest of any major reported in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. (For more details, consult the full report—especially page 6—at this URL: uofi.app.box.com/s/vz2iivw4ckgf1naef6ka26nivvlwekzg).

The Communication major has always been one that blends academic rigor with practical knowledge and skills. Our students and alumni not only succeed—they make a difference: in the workplace; in their

families; in their communities; and in every endeavor that involves human interaction.

I hope this newsletter helps you remember a positive experience or faculty member who made a difference during your time at Illinois. We have had a terrific community for a long time, and that continues. Indeed, a recent review of our department by experts from other universities concluded that our “department clearly achieves its goal of being one of the top 10 departments in the field of communication in the country.”

Please notice that the face on the back of the newsletter has changed as we have a new gift officer, Joseph Baldwin. If you have questions about supporting the department priorities, feel free to reach out to me or Joseph. You can always give online at communication.illinois.edu by clicking on the “Give!” button.

If you have any questions or comments about the department or our newsletter, please free to contact me (caughlin@illinois.edu). I wish all of you a great year! ■

— **John Caughlin**
Department head

Wenzel Fund helps Student Realize Potential in Sierra Leone



Hannah Jarman, Wenzel Award recipient, is pictured here with men from the Sierra Leone YMCA in their woodshop.

Hannah Jarman (BA, '17) traveled to Sierra Leone as part of a project to build a partnership between the Sierra Leone and University of Illinois YMCAs. Today, the YMCA has made strides in reaching its goal of sustainable job sourcing as young men are being empowered through careers and the selling of furniture has begun. She was able to do this with the help of the Joe Wenzel Fund, which provides assistance to students in their endeavors beyond the classroom.

In June 2017, Hannah had the privilege of meeting both Francis, the Regional Director of the Kenema YMCA, and Christian, the National General Secretary of the Sierra Leone YMCA, along with others, while representing the University of Illinois YMCA in Sierra Leone. The team hoped to learn more about cultural norms to help jumpstart a sustainable business project in Kenema. The long-term goal was to create a sustainable funding stream for the YMCA while also empowering youth in the region through job opportunities.

During the ten-day trip, the team learned the power of cross-cultural communication and the power in building relationships. Being foreign, it was important to understand the fundamentals of culture and business before providing recommendations for the YMCA that could have been ill-informed and culturally ignorant. Hours were spent in the YMCA's Kenema woodworking shop to observe the existing structures before acting upon them.

Today, Hannah has finished her first year with Teach for America, where she has been teaching middle school Social Science in Tulsa, OK. As she plans lessons for 6th and 7th grade World Geography classes, she remembers the power of both communication and relationship building in creating a global context for students who have never left this country. "I hope to share a small piece of the infinite knowledge I obtained from this trip to Sierra Leone which broadened my cultural perspective," Hannah reflects. Hannah credits the Wenzel Award with allowing her to experience another culture in a very real way, which she has been able to apply in her own classrooms. ■

Second Annual Health Communication Online (HCB3) Attracts 646 Virtually



The second annual Health Communication Barriers, Breakthroughs and Best Practices (HCB3) online conference was held February 28, March 1, and 2. Although the content was all on-line, three keynote addresses were also streamed live from Lincoln Hall. This year, 646 academics, students and healthcare professionals from all over the world registered for the free conference. Keynote speakers included Communication Professor Richard L. Street, Jr., Texas A&M University, Dr. Kim Nazi from the Department of Veterans' Affairs, and Professor Sheena Bull of the University of Colorado, School of Public Health. Their lunchtime presentations were attended by a live local audience of faculty and both graduate and undergraduate students while the talks were live-streamed and recorded. In addition, 23 scholars and practitioners submitted recorded presentations in a variety of formats. The focus of the conference this year was electronic health records.

An innovation this year is that the conference presentations were used in undergraduate health communication courses taught by Professors Brian Quick and John Lammers. The conference, which is free to all registrants, is supported by the Health Communication Online Master of Science (HCOM) Program. In 2019, the conference will be held February 25-March 2. It will feature the first Dale Brashers Memorial Lecture in Health Communication in honor of the late Professor Brashers, who founded the HCOM Program. In addition to improved participation for registrants, the 2019 conference will offer an awards session for best submissions, and a special online session for HCOM current students, graduates, and prospective students. You can learn more about the conference at conferences.illinois.edu/hcb3. ■

In the Classroom: Courses Improved to Meet New General Education Requirement, U.S. Minority Culture



The Morrill College Land Grant Act of 1862, under which the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign was founded, sought to promote “liberal and practical education” and included both specialized education in the agricultural and mechanical arts and general education in other “scientific and classical studies.” Specialized and General Education are complementary educational aims that generate the basic framework for undergraduate education at the University of Illinois which has adhered to these aims and standards since its founding.

Over the years, lists of approved courses to meet the various general education categories have expanded with efforts to keep content current, while still maintaining a connection to the past. These categories are also designed to cover what any student should know, or know about, once they earn a degree from the University of Illinois. Although the U.S. Minority Cultures category is the newest addition to the framework, it has been an option for students as an alternative to the nonwestern culture requirement for many years.

Beginning this fall, however, students will be required to take a course meeting this category requirement, in addition to the other culture requirements (western and nonwestern). The U.S. Minority Cultures category provides deepened understanding

and appreciation of significant aspects of the cultural tradition of a socially-significant, non-dominant population of the United States. Courses that focus on a racial minority should appropriately and substantially address the experiences, conditions, and perspectives of that population. Courses can also focus on socially-significant, non-racial minority identities (for example, sexuality, gender, religion, and disability) or broadly on diversity, inequality, or discrimination. Courses approved for these requirements undergo a stringent vetting process, not only at the college (LAS) level, but also through a campus committee on general education.

CMN 277 (Intro to Mediated Communication), formerly SPCOM 177 (The Arts of Public Discourse) has seen some dramatic changes to its content in the years since it was taught by Professor David Swanson in Foellinger Auditorium in the 1980s. It began as a historical look at public discourse from early times to how it shaped political life up to and including contemporary times.

With the number and rubric change in 2004 came the name change for the new, more modern, CMN 277, Intro to Mediated Communication, recognizing that the growth of media and its influence on rhetoric was now very much a part of the history of the courses’ original content.

And now, in 2018 it has also been improved and approved to be part of the U.S. minority culture general education category. Professor Travis Dixon now teaches the course that not only looks at the place of mediated communication in society, but also helps students understand how the media shape perceptions of people of color and other stigmatized groups (e.g., African Americans; Muslims). Most people take it for granted that the media play an important role in their lives, but few of them thoroughly understand how the media developed and the way in which it currently influences their social perceptions.

Also approved to be part of the U.S. Minority culture category is a new course, CMN 250, Social Movement Communication, taught by Professor David Cisneros.

Professor Cisneros' course focuses on the communication of 20th and 21st century social movements. Social movements are collective groups that mobilize to promote or resist social change, and they are some of the most influential political groups in democratic society.

These courses are designed for all students, not just majors in Communication. They reinforce the department's commitment to providing students with relevant course material to their own lives, as well as the culture and society around them. ■



BITTERSWEET FAREWELL

Editor's Note

To the thousands and thousands of students past and present who have come through our department, you have given my life purpose, each and every day. That said, as you read this, I will have retired July 1. It was a hard decision, but one I have been contemplating for a couple of years.

30 years is a career anywhere and I have been fortunate to have mine at the University of Illinois. I am still able to say it is a great place to work and wonderful place to get an education.

I have had 7 different offices (6 in Lincoln Hall including those before renovation, and now afterwards), and the small one

during the three years we were out of Lincoln Hall in the Oregon Street house.

I have also been fortunate to work with 6 department heads (Delia, Swanson, Wilson, Brashers, Tewksbury, Caughlin) who have allowed me to do what I was good at in addition to advising: like planning our department events (including graduation), class scheduling, and editing this annual newsletter.

I have said, time and time again, I was absent the day they passed out ambition, as I have been content to do what I do for our department never looking for another job on or off campus.

I am grateful to all of you and to my department colleagues



Professor Will Barley snaps a photo of Barbara at her reception, May 2 with alumni, Alex Hillmer-McGee (BA, '12) and Ryan Croke (BA, '05; MA, '07).

for helping to make this, my work home for the past 30 years. I hope you will keep in touch with the department (and me c/o the department) as what you do will always be of interest to me (and the department). ■

— Barbara I. Hall

PROFESSOR CARA FINNEGAN NAMED UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR



Last fall, Professor Cara Finnegan was one of six faculty members from across campus named as University Scholar. She has been in the department since 1999 and is currently serving as Associate Head.

This prestigious award is based on recipients' demonstrated excellence in research, teaching and service. Professor Finnegan studies photography as rhetoric, examining its role in popular understanding of public issues. By treating photography as a subject for rigorous critical and historical analysis, she was instrumental in the explosive growth of visual rhetoric as an area of study. Both of her sole-authored books have won major awards from the National Communication Association, and she is active in public engagement.

She joins Professors Leanne Knobloch (2015)

and the late Dale Brashers (2004) who were also honored with this prestigious designation. Scholar awards are not made for a specific project or proposal; rather, they represent recognition of the recipient's excellence and the University's commitment to foster outstanding people and their work. Therefore, the awards are made through nominations, not by application. We are proud of these faculty and their contributions to our department, discipline, and campus community. ■

Request for Company Swag

As a way to show our students where our major and degree can take them, literally, send us your Company Swag! We would like something small like a pen, or mug or coaster that we can use in a display or photograph (please provide your company's permission) to help promote our department to potential majors and encourage our existing majors. We thought this would be a fun way to showcase our alums after graduation.

Once we receive something from you, we will make sure your name and degree year are attached to the item. Thank you for your help with this project.

Just send to the department:

Department of Communication
c/o Barbara Hall
University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign
702 S Wright St, Suite 3001
Urbana, IL 61801 ■



CAREER FIRST: THEN THE DEGREE (BRANDON LLOYD DID IT HIS WAY)



A proud day for the Lloyd family as pictured here, with his parents James and Shirley, along with his sons, Elvis and Brevin at Memorial Stadium. Even Red Grange is sporting the blue regalia in the background! Congratulations Brandon!

For most of our students, earning the college degree is the step to be taken or threshold to be crossed prior to entering the work world. A question we hear from day one from our incoming freshmen and their parents is, “What job can I get with this major/degree?”

For new graduate of the Class of 2018, Brandon Lloyd, this was not the typical path. He began his college and football career at Illinois in 1999. After his junior season in 2002, the wide receiver declared his eligibility for the NFL Draft. Of the seven children in the Lloyd family, he was the only one who started a career without finishing college. Brandon recalls, “The only time I saw my mom cry was when I told her I wasn’t going back to school. She just thought that was the end of everything.”

Brandon went on to have a successful NFL career from 2002-2014. For most (you would think), retiring from the NFL would be a career from which you might rest on your laurels, watch investments grow, find some place to coach, etc. But not Brandon. He was determined to fulfill his parents’ dream and finish his Illinois degree.

It can be a slow process when you are not used to being a student again, and cannot be full time, in residence. But Brandon Lloyd finished his degree and participated in May ceremonies this past spring, as part of the Class of 2018, 16 years after leaving Illinois to pursue his NFL dream. ■

Welcome ...

Charee Thompson



Charee Thompson joins the faculty this fall from the University of Ohio. She holds degrees from Arizona State and the University of Texas. Her areas of research and teaching encompass interpersonal and family communication with a focus on individual and relational development, parallel to health and well-being issues in relationships.

Kelli Halfman



Kelli Halfman joined the undergraduate advising office, with Neil Baer in June. She has degrees in communication (both BA and MA) from Eastern Illinois University, along with experience working with admissions and recruitment. We look forward to having these new colleagues among us! ■

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Our alumni convocation speaker this year, **JD Miller** (BA, '97; MA, '98; and PhD, '02) is currently the chief revenue officer for Motus, LLC in Chicago. In his time away from work, however, JD founded and has been active with Circle of Friends since 2011 and continues as its President of the Board of Directors. This non-profit organization provides Chicago's homeless with more than a handout. It works to give them hope for a more permanent change in their lives.

Circle of Friends has focused on gathering a community of homeless folks, volunteers, and partners - who come together for a regular meal that has no sign-in requirements or other "asks" of its members. Clothes are distributed, doctors' visits happen, and relationships are built - including those new friends who can now be trusted to help improve the lives of local homeless.

Circle of Friends has assisted many in their struggle to change their life status to one that includes affordable housing, medical care and skills training that leads to employment. Like so many of you, JD is an example of someone who has gone on to make a difference in the lives of others, regardless of his professional work life. We were pleased that he could join us for our Department Convocation ceremony, May 13. ■



Pictured here with Department Head, John Caughlin are alumna and LAS Advisor Pamela Greer, recipient of the LAS and Campus Awards for Excellence in Academic Advising; Bryan Abendschein, recipient of the LAS and Campus Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching by a Teaching Assistant; and Leah Lines, recipient of a teaching excellence award by an undergraduate teaching Intern in LAS 102 (Transfer Advantage). ■



Panelists at this year's Robert L. Husband Leadership in Communication Symposium (October 9, 2017) were Paul M. Lisnek (BA, '80; MA '80; PhD, '86; JD, '83), Tiasha Stevenson, (BA, '04), and J Lemman (BA, '06), all pictured here with Bob. ■

Second Annual Lincoln Hall Debate Series

*Lincoln-Douglas Debate Memorial in
Quincy, Illinois by Lorado Taft.*



Reading Day is a day at the end of the semester set aside to prepare for final exams or perhaps catch up on some much-needed sleep. For CMN 112 (Oral and Written Communication II) students, this spring's Reading Day offered the opportunity to attend the Second Annual Lincoln Hall Debate Series, while earning a few extra credit points. Well over 150 students attended the debate competition, in which three teams, comprised of 2 students each, competed for educational prize funds, provided through the generous support of an anonymous alumni donor who wants to foster interest in debate.

Across the academic year freshmen students from many different majors work on their writing and public speaking skills in the

two-course sequence (CMN 111 and 112). CMN 112 culminates in a 37 minute, public forum debate. Students form groups of four, and then teams of two to debate a public policy of their choosing. Groups also decide who will compete in semifinal rounds judged by CMN 112 instructors. The three top-ranked teams then repeat their debate on Reading Day in front of a large audience comprised of their CMN 112 classmates. This year's competing groups debated Conflict Minerals (third place-\$100), Pharmaceutical Regulations (second place-\$400) and Lowering the Drinking Age (first place-\$1000).

Each debate had its moments of tension, especially during crossfire when debaters asked each other questions to clarify and rebut arguments. The crowded lecture hall became quiet with anticipation, since all audience members themselves had recently been in the "hot seat" of crossfire during their in-class debates. And many were in attendance to cheer on their classmates.

The instructor judges admit ranking the three debates was difficult as each debate demonstrated the argumentation and presentation skills learned in the course and the three teams were indeed competitive. We look forward to the 2019 Lincoln Hall Debate Series. ■



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INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

You can make a gift to the department online, by phone or by connecting with our advancement officer, Joseph Baldwin who joined the LAS Advancement Office in April. Most recently, he worked in the Development office in the School of Music and was also the Development Director for Three Spinners, a local nonprofit that provides scholarships, housing, and emergency support to immigrant and refugee families in Illinois. He is the music director of the Baroque Artists of Champaign-Urbana and previously served as a faculty member in the music department at Smith College. He holds a BA from Northwestern University, an MA from the University of Michigan, and has completed coursework toward a doctorate at the University of Illinois. You can reach out to him by calling (217) 300-5967 or emailing him at jbbaldw2@illinois.edu. He very much looks forward to getting to know the thousands of wonderful Communication alumni!

Ensure continued excellence in teaching, research, and public engagement by supporting the Department of Communication with a gift! ■

You can designate your gift to:

- Communication Annual Fund, which supports an array of activities
- Robert L. Husband Leadership in Communication Fund
- Joseph Wenzel Undergraduate Support Fund
- Thomas Conley History of Rhetoric Award
- Ruth Anne Clark Student Scholar Award Fund
- Dale Brashers Memorial Fund

You can also boost your gift:

- See if your company is listed as one that has a matching gift program (some even double or triple your gift)

GIVE ONLINE

Visit our website at communication.illinois.edu and click on the **Give!** button at the top to make your gift.



Got Internships?

Communication students are eager for real-world experience. We offer our students course credit for interning with organizations that put them to work in a supervised learning setting.

Employers who partner with us report that they benefit from our students' communication skills and gain from evaluating the on-the-job performance of potential employees. Communication interns are eager to apply what they have learned to the work world.

If you have internships to offer or would like more information, please contact Kate Ditewig-Morris via email:

comm-internships@illinois.edu ■