

**Lifespan and Digital Communication Graduate Program**  
**Dept. of Communication & Theatre Arts**  
**Old Dominion University**

The Lifespan and Digital Communication Graduate Program features faculty members with a variety of research interests and methodological training. Below are summaries of some current projects they are working on. For more information about specific faculty members, please refer to the faculty listing on our department website:  
[http://www.odu.edu/al/comm/facstaff\\_comm.html](http://www.odu.edu/al/comm/facstaff_comm.html).

**2011-2012 Graduate Faculty**

**Bob Arnett, Associate Professor of Communication**  
**Ph.D., University of Southern Mississippi**

My research has focused on film. My early work focused on screenwriters (emphasis on narrative), but my more recent work deconstructs films from a critical perspective shaped by cultural factors. For example, James Bond being “remixed” as a superhero and the role of place/non-place in Michael Mann films. Other current projects include an analysis, written with Burt St. John, of how the National Association of Manufacturers used promotional films to promote industry as a person and adapting my Michael Mann work for book on Mann’s films.

**Tim Anderson, Assistant Professor of Communication**  
**Ph.D., Northwestern University**

Dr. Anderson's research specializes in researching how new media practices and technologies transform, affect and negotiate those institutions and practices that make music popular. He has also been a regular contributor to the online journal *Flow* and in 2006 accepted a position to be come a charter member of the [MediaCommons](#) editorial board.

Dr. Anderson's current research is on how the American music industry has had to re-articulate the vision of musicians, audiences and its products in the wake of recent social and technological changes such as the rise of file sharing, the ubiquity of broadband networks and the rise of online social networking platforms as part of our daily lives. Specifically he is currently working on his book project, a presentation on stereo demonstration albums in March in Ottawa, Canada at Carleton College, and has begun work on a chapter on "modes of recording" for an edited volume led by Steve Waksma of Smith.

**E. James Baesler, Associate Professor of Communication**  
**Ph.D., University of Arizona**

Professor Baesler (PhD 1990, University of Arizona) has been publishing research on prayer as a form of religious/spiritual communication for over a decade in several religious and communication journals. He is currently guest editing a special issue on prayer for the *Journal of Communication and Religion*. On-going projects include an: (1) \$80k grant proposal on Praying from Character Strengths: Growing the Tree of Love which uses qualitative and quantitative methods, (2) A comprehensive review of the prayer literature from psychology, sociology, communication, and medicine, with implications for interdisciplinary research in communication, (3) Nonverbal Prayer: The Prayerful Face, Body, and Voice, a content analysis of student perceptions of prayer, and (4) Assessing Peace: Developing a measure for Peace Education--this research uses quantitative and qualitative measures to assess the impact of instruction in peace courses in terms of intra, inter, group, and global contexts of peace.

**Gary Beck, Assistant Professor of Communication**  
**Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin**

Dr. Beck's research agenda blends interpersonal, lifespan, family, and professional communication. Specifically he is interested in how communication is utilized in romantic and family relationships to help manage life stressors (i.e., job loss, serious health concerns, relational infidelities). His research program addressing this interest focuses on communication behaviors that contribute to interpersonal resilience, using primarily quantitative but also qualitative research methods.

Current Projects:

1. Beck, G. (in progress, 2012). Longitudinal Effects of Resilience Promoting Relational Communication on Management of Involuntary Unemployment.
2. Socha, T. J., Beck, G., and MA LSDC 2011 class. (in progress 2012). *Experiencing Positive Communication in Everyday Life: An Exploratory Study of Communication Optimization using Experiential Sampling Methodology*. A paper to be submitted to the National Communication Association meeting, Orlando, Fl.
3. Beck, G. (in progress, summer 2012). Relational Turbulence, Forgiveness and Resilient Communication in Romantic Relationships.

**Yi-Fan Chen, Assistant Professor of Communication  
Ph.D., Rutgers University**

Yi-Fan Chen's research interest is to understand how the interplay between technologies and social processes affects interpersonal relationships, mass communication patterns, and the creation of cultural meaning. Her current research has mainly focused on the impact of communication/media technologies in everyday life. Mobile location information exchanging, mobile device sharing and mobile youth culture are her three current projects.

**Gary Edgerton, Eminent Scholar, Professor of Communication & Chair  
Ph.D., University of Massachusetts**

Gary Edgerton is eminent scholar and professor of Communication and Theatre Arts. He has published ten books and more than seventy-five essays on a wide assortment of media and culture topics in a variety of books, scholarly journals, and encyclopedias. His primary research and teaching specializations are media history, theory, and criticism; comparative media and contemporary culture; media literacy; and the documentary tradition. His latest books are *Mad Men: Dream Come True TV* (I.B. Tauris/Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), *Westerns: The Essential Journal of Popular Film and Television Collection* (Routledge, 2012 with Michael T. Marsden), and *The Sopranos. TV Milestones Series* (Wayne State University Press, forthcoming in 2012 or early 2013). He is also Co-Executive Editor of the *Journal of Popular Film and Television*.

**Katherine Hammond, Assistant Professor of Theatre Arts, Director of Theatre  
MFA, University of Georgia**

Katherine Hammond is currently the Director of Theatre at Old Dominion University where she teaches script and performance analysis, acting, stage and production management, documentary production and editing. Her work has run the gamut from academic to commercial. As an actor, she worked in regional theatre for ten years, performing in 39 states and three countries. As a digital media artist, Ms. Hammond's specialties include sensor, multi-media, live performance. Her work has appeared at several festivals including the Wilmington Fringe Festival and the New Orleans International Fringe Festival in 2010.

While she works mainly as a director, her work also includes documentary filmmaking, digital editing and media design for live performance. In both 2008 and 2009, she was awarded a Meritorious Achievement Award from the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF) for Excellence in Directing. In 2011, she was a member of a creative team that was invited to KCACTF IV Regional Festival. Her work there received the Kennedy Center National Merit Award for her media direction for aDreamPlay. In 2012, her work was again invited to the KCACTF Region IV festival.

Professionally, she has worked as a Production Manager on such television events as the Academy Awards, the Emmy's, AFI Salutes, The Weird Al Show and The Rosie O'Donnell HBO Special. She also was Project Coordinator at 20th Century Fox's Photo Archives working on such series as Biography and album covers for Varese Sarabande. Ms. Hammond holds an MFA in Theatre & Dramatic Media from the University of Georgia.

**Fran Hassencahl, Associate Professor of Communication  
Ph.D., Case-Western Reserve University**

Fran Hassencahl is the department's resident rhetorician.

When I first stood in the Agora in Athens, Greece in 2004, I heard the voices of Aristotle, Isocrates, and Plato whispering in my ear that Critical Theory presents a variety of methodologies to formulate and evaluate messages across a variety of political, social, and historical contexts. They later told me in 2009 that they, constrained by the culture of their times, had not addressed gender and race. My experience in the formulation of messages was developed by a brief stint working in advertising in New York City, many years of coaching policy and parliamentary debate, and participating in the Faculty Senate. In the next paragraphs, you will see that I employ a variety of methodologies in my research, which evaluates political messages. Currently I focus upon political messages regarding the Middle East. I analyze both written and spoken rhetoric: novels, newspapers and speeches as well as visual rhetoric in the form of political cartoons and films.

I use a variety of critical methods and during the past two years published five papers using Classical Rhetoric, Framing Theory, Metaphor, and Post Colonial Theory. Currently I am working on an examination of three films depicting landmine victims from the perspective of a Postcolonial sub theory, Spivak's The Subaltern. Spivak, as a feminist, adds a perspective that many male postcolonial scholars have not noticed. This paper is scheduled for presentation in North Cyprus in April 2012.

I like to collaborate with others and Bill Hart from Norfolk State University and I coauthored two convention papers in 2011 utilizing Fantasy Theme/Symbolic Convergence Theory (Bormann and the folks from the University of Minnesota). I am currently collecting data for a Fantasy theme analysis of the radio program, *Big John and Sparkie*, carried by ABC Radio in the 1950's. A second project with Amanda Wroten, ODU adjunct faculty, uses Framing Theory to examine the television program, *American Muslim*. We plan to present this paper at the Midwestern American/Popular Conference in 2013.

On a personal note, I enjoy the company of my two cats and my son who is a graduate student at ODU and reading *The Economist* and a variety of local, national, and international newspapers.

**Jinsun Lee, Assistant Professor of Communication  
Ph.D., Rutgers University**

Jinsun Lee is Assistant Professor at the Communication and Theatre Arts Department. She has been teaching Public Journalism in the Digital Age, Transnational Media Systems, Citizen Journalism and New Media, and some News Writing courses. Her research has explored how new media technologies affect civic action and politics at the local, national, and global level. Her doctoral dissertation "Net Power in Action: Internet Activism in the Contentious Politics of South Korea" (2009) delineates how individual citizens who don't have the membership of political parties or organizations have used the Internet for collective action and political reform, reshaping the entire political culture and everyday life. Her studies also include the pedagogical impact of Wikipedia in enhancing college students' intercultural understanding, cross-national civic networks prompted by social media, and mobile media use in the election campaigns. She uses a variety of methodologies, but has specialties in the grounded theory, discourse analysis, framing analysis, and in-depth/focus group interviews.

**Stephen Pullen, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts  
MFA, University of Southern California**

Stephen Pullen's creative scholarship centers on narrative feature screenwriting and film/TV production. Currently, he is working on a children's television series entitled *Charlie & Bronson Adventures*. This educational program is targeted at elementary school-aged children and focuses on history and science using live action narrative, animation, special effects and music to tell story, teach lessons and engage young audiences. He is also closely involved in Science Alliance Live! with ODU colleagues, Jenifer Alonzo, Amy Adcock, Fred Dobbs and Victoria Hill. This endeavor, initially funded by the ODU Research Foundation, seeks to attract and engage children and their parents in scientific research and subject matter using live theater, interactive activities and online games. Professor Pullen led a faculty/student film crew in producing a 21-minute documentary regarding the production of Science Alliance Live! This documentary will be instrumental in promoting Science Alliance Live! as it seeks funding, specifically through a Pathways grant from the National Science Foundation.

Professor Pullen is also in the process of writing a dramatic feature film script entitled *Fragmented*, which tells the story of a widower father and his young daughter as they navigate the grief and loss resulting from the death of the child's mother and two siblings in a tragic car accident.

**Avi Santo, Assistant Professor of Communication  
Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin**

My work explores the significance of licensing, merchandizing, franchising, and brand management strategies to US media industry creative and business practices pre and post-conglomeration. My forthcoming monograph, *Selling the Silver Bullet: Cross-Media IP Management, 1933-2008* (the University of Texas Press, 2012) situates developments in the field of character licensing and merchandizing within broader shifts in the business of entertainment. The project engages with contemporary debates about convergence culture while reframing these practices historically and refracting them through the lens of production studies' emphases on studying contested work cultures. In addition, I am currently co-editing a collection of essays called *Intermediaries: Management of Culture and Cultures of Management* (NYU Press, 2012) that seeks to interrogate managerial labor and identity within the media industries. In addition to exploring what managers *do*, the project rethinks traditional boundaries between managerial and creative labor by focusing on the managerial acumen of "creative" as much as on the cultural labor of business-minded managers. This means considering management not just in terms of a traditional managerial class within the entertainment industry, but also considering the field of cultural production and consumption as one implicitly constituted through the practices and identities of management.

I am currently collecting materials for two new book-length projects. The first, tentatively titled *From Fandom to Brandom*, investigates how digital labor within the creative economy is recognized, evaluated and rewarded. Based on interviews, reviews, and industrial analysis, I argue for the emergence of the "professional fan," who has successfully monetized his/her "fannish" persona by cultivating a brand following amongst other fans. My analysis focuses on how members of this emerging "gray economy" understand their identities as "fans who possess their own fans," all the while operating at the margins of, but also increasingly valuable to, the media industries. The second project focuses on the International Licensing Industry Merchandiser's Association (LIMA)'s developing mission to "professionalize" the licensing field through online programs like "Licensing University," which I argue not only teach job skills, but an occupational ethos intended to position members as cultural stewards and translators "chaperoning" character brands like Spider-Man and Hello Kitty across market boundaries. Through interviews, industry trade press analysis and ethnographic fieldwork, I look to assess how licensors enrolled in LIMA's programs come to understand the purpose/significance of their work and how they rationalize the risks and rewards of emerging digital and global IP extension opportunities, including how to structure TOS agreements for digital downloads and MMPOG's and how to manage online viral campaigns reliant on brand communities circulating IP.

I am also the co-creator of *MediaCommons: A Digital Scholarly Network* with Dr. Kathleen Fitzpatrick, envisioned as a born-digital scholarly press and networked community engaged in re-conceptualizing online scholarly processes and practices. MediaCommons has been funded by the MacArthur Foundation, NEH, and Mellon Foundation. In partnership with NYU Press, we are currently developing a preliminary set of protocols for conducting open online peer-to-peer (P2P) review.

**Thomas Socha, Professor of Communication, University Professor, and Graduate Program Director  
Ph.D., University of Iowa**

My contributions to communication scholarship are in the social scientific study of family communication, parent-child communication, children's communication and early lifespan communication development, as well as positive communication that includes humor. My methodological approach to communication research is quantitative and qualitative including conversation analysis and discourse analysis. My work for the past five years features development of new conceptual/theoretical foundations for the study of parent-child-societal communication as well as the development of positive communication theory and research.

Current Projects:

1. Pitts, M. J., & Socha, T. J. (Eds). (in press, 2012). *Positive communication in health and wellness*. New York: Peter Lang
2. Socha, T. J., & Pitts, M. J. (Eds.), (in development). *The positive sides of the field of Communication Studies*. [New York; Peter Lang].
3. Socha, T. J., Beck, G., and MA LSDC 2011 class. (in progress 2012). *Experiencing Positive Communication in Everyday Life: An Exploratory Study of Communication Optimization using Experiential Sampling Methodology*. A paper to be submitted to the National Communication Association meeting, Orlando, FL.

**Burton St. John, Associate Professor of Communication  
Ph.D., St. Louis University**

Burton Saint John is interested in Public Relations and Journalism as forms of institutional persuasion, with a special focus on PR history, journalism and civic engagement, and the presence of propaganda in both fields. He is also interested in the challenges of science communication and related ethics concerns.

Current projects:

- 1) Finishing galleys on *News With a View: Essays on the Eclipse of Objectivity in Modern Journalism* (McFarland Press, Spring/Summer 2012).
- 2) Development of new PR textbook -- *Public Relations Strategies in Action: A Casebook* (Cengage, projected 2014 release)
- 3) Interdisciplinary Seed Fund project for completion this summer:  
*Virginia Legislators' Knowledge, Awareness and Perceived Risks Concerning Sea Level Rise*

**Konrad Winters, Associate Professor of Theatre Arts  
MS, MFA, Illinois State University**

Konrad Winters is a Production Designer and Director of Film and Video Studies at Old Dominion University. He has designed and constructed over 100 theatrical productions in both academic and commercial venues. Konrad Winters' professional credits include Producing Director of the Houston Shaw Festival, Scenic and/or Lighting designs for: *Magic 2000* at the Virginia International Waterfront Festival, The Virginia Ballet Theatre, Contemporary Ballet Theatre of Williamsburg, Virginia, High Frequency Wavelengths Dance Company, (New York City, NY), The San Jacinto Ballet (Houston, Texas), The Houston Shaw Festival, and the Opera and Theatre divisions of the Virginia Governor's School of the Arts.