



World Affairs Forum 2019:

Modern Journalism: The Role of News Media in a Changing World

As confidence in news media declines and any story a person doesn't like is often labeled "fake news," JWAC believes it is time for a public discussion of the media landscape.

National surveys indicate that trust in news media credibility continues to decline and fewer people are accessing news. When they do, it's often from the echo chambers of social media, perpetuating their pre-existing biases. Key politicians call journalists the "enemy of the people" and many of their constituents embrace the sentiment -with very real consequences for our nation and the world. We hope to consider a number of issues, including media ownership, the thinning line between news and opinion, and tools to help consumers become more media literate.

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Schedule

Friday, March 29

Session I:

2:00-3:00pm | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Whipped into a Frenzy: Anti-Media Violence in American History and the Perilous Course Ahead"
-with **Dr. David Noon**

Donald Trump — whose image owed much to tabloid and credulous media attention in the 1980s — has cultivated a uniquely hostile relationship with the mainstream press in the four years since launching his campaign for the presidency. His rhetorical denunciations of "fake media" and journalists as "enemies of the people" have been accompanied by quite real dangers endured by reporters and staff who have been targeted for violence at rallies, through the mail, and in their offices. Anti-press violence has an extensive history in the United States, one that long predates the 2017 inauguration of Donald Trump. What should we know about that past, and how does the relationship between presidents, violence, and popular culture help us to make sense of our troubling contemporary media environment?

Session II:

3:15-4:15pm | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Disinformation, Misinformation, and "Fake News": Understanding and Responding to the Challenge of False Information in the Digital Age"

-with **Geysha Gonzalez, MA**

Recent events have revealed that both state and non-state actors are capable of carrying out malign information operations against democratic countries. Targeted disinformation campaigns can interfere not only in elections but our entire political discourse, often seeking to damage the foundations of democratic societies. This session will focus on defining and unpacking the problem and offering democratic solutions for civil society, governments, and platforms to address this challenge.

Session III:

4:30-5:30 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"NO GOING BACK—News Media's Painful Pursuit of Digital Native consumers"

-with **Brian O'Donoghue, MA**

Traditional news media filled a well-understood role, holding officials accountable and, by and large, functioning as gatekeepers against misinformation. The breakdown of revenue models supporting newsgathering leaves a generation self-defined by social media exposed to manipulation by increasingly partisan channels and other special interests. A discussion weighing opportunities opened by the low cost of entry in today's digital media circus against disturbing lessons from the classroom.

Session IV:

7:00-8:15 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Gloom and Doom: The Media's Role in Public Disengagement on Climate Change"

-with **Elizabeth Arnold**

It's really bad. It's really really, bad. -Repetition of a narrow narrative that focuses exclusively on the impacts of climate change leaves the public with an overall sense of powerlessness. Arnold addresses this problem after studying five years of national media coverage of climate change in the Arctic, and argues for journalism that provides a more representative view of the challenges posed by a warming climate -reporting that includes responses and innovation, adaptation and resilience.

Saturday, March 30

Session V:

10:00-11:00 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Deflecting Digital Disinformation: The Inoculating Influence of Procedural News Knowledge"

-with **Dr. Erik Bucy**

This talk reviews the importance of mainstream media knowledge and its use as a bulwark against, and inoculating influence on, the digital disinformation that is polluting the world's media systems. Most media literacy efforts promise too much and deliver too little. Focusing on this teachable resource can give educators and policy makers a useful tool in combating the rising tide of fake news and propaganda that is choking and confusing democratic discourse.

Session VI:

11:15-12:15 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Trolls, Sockpuppets, and Bots, Oh My! How Political Campaigns Have Dealt with Fake News and Propaganda Efforts"

-with **Dr. Jessica Baldwin-Philippi**

In the aftermath of the 2016 election, pundits' and journalists' debriefings of why Trump won and why Clinton lost have taken on a variety of topics, from claims about Clinton's campaign being too data driven and not message-focused, to *post hoc* revisions of Trump's digital prowess. The most enduring and continually returned-to retrospective has been the story of Russia-sponsored propaganda efforts led by sock puppets and bot armies. While propaganda efforts and cyber security remain necessary areas of focus, they are, in many ways, an extension of practices that digital campaigns have been dealing with for years. This talk will discuss the longer histories of trolling, sock puppets, and bots in campaign communication and internet culture, that can contextualize 2016, as well as our current political moment looking ahead to 2020.

Session VII:

1:00-2:00 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Balance in a Bonkers World. The Imperative for a Solutions-Based Approach to Environmental Reporting"

-with **Taflin Laylin**

The media is desperately in need of a reboot, especially where environmental reporting is concerned. Every day the science becomes more clear: our planet — and all of its inhabitants — face extreme peril. Humanity's continued existence is no longer guaranteed, and yet our global

attention is consistently hijacked by shallow, inflammatory discourse. With 10 years of covering environmental news behind her, Tafline Laylin argues that journalists have a duty to present solutions to the myriad challenges we have created. Beyond bombastic headlines about the latest natural disaster, which often paralyze the reader's ability to act, we need to outline the path to constructive, regenerative change — and get back to balance in this bonkers world.

Session VIII:

2:15-3:15 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

"Ownership, Competition and Quality Journalism: Where are we? How did we get here? What can we do?"

-with **Dr. Stephen Lacy**

More than a dozen studies during the past three decades have found that circulation, audience, and profit are positively related to the quality of an outlet's journalism, as defined by professional standards and consumer demand. Many factors go into shaping journalism quality, but key in this process are the resources invested in a newsroom. These resources depend on the strategies pursued by the journalism organization and the market factors (competition and demand) that interact with those strategies. This presentation will examine how ownership, market forces and quality helped to shape current conditions in journalism and how they might influence the future of journalism.

-Reference material: www.jwac.org/Lacy.pdf

Session IX:

3:30-4:30 | UAS Egan Lecture Hall

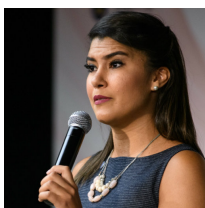
Panel Discussion led by **Dr. Stephen Lacy**

-with all eight of our guest speakers again taking questions from the audience.

Speakers



Dr. David Noon: Received his doctorate in American Studies from the University of Minnesota and has been teaching at the University of Alaska Southeast since 2002. His research has largely focused on historical memory and political culture, and he is currently working on a book about images and fantasies surrounding presidential violence in American culture since the era of Andrew Jackson.



Geysa Gonzalez, MA: Deputy director for the Eurasia Center at the Atlantic Council, where she oversees programming and strategy. She's also the founder of DisinfoPortal.org, an online guide tracking efforts to counter disinformation. Prior to joining the Council, Ms. Gonzalez spent two years at Freedom House, a human rights and democracy watchdog, where she worked on issues related to digital and physical security for human rights defenders. She also contributed to Freedom House's flagship report, *Freedom in the World*, and wrote several pieces on the rise of modern

dictatorships and international sporting events. Her previous experiences include work as a parliamentary assistant for the British Parliament and on Capitol Hill. Ms. Gonzalez holds a master's degree in history of international relations from the London School of Economics, where she focused on transatlantic relations during the Cold War in the 1960s and 1980s. She earned her bachelor's in international affairs with a focus on European politics from Marquette University and spent a year at King's College London.



Prof. Brian Patrick O'Donoghue, MA: Journalist, past president of the Alaska Press Club, and a professor and past department chair with the UAF College of Liberal Arts Department of Communication and Journalism. He was recently a Fulbright-Nehru Scholar in residence at Symbiosis Institute of Media and Communication in Pune, India. His career spans print, broadcast and mobile journalism. Among his more notable assignments: The Fairbanks Four, Alaska Oil Spill, leading UAF Journalism's Iraq embed with the 1/25th Stryker Brigade, pipeline construction out on the frozen

Arctic Ocean, reporting on NYC police drug crackdowns and tenement squatters on the Lower East Side, and iDog, a pioneering online site providing 24-7 coverage of the '97 & '98 Iditarod. In 2016, O'Donoghue received the Alaska Press Club's highest honor, the First Amendment Award, for "dogged persistence in pursuit of the truth" over years of reporting that helped overturn wrongful convictions against the so-called Fairbanks Four.



Prof. Elizabeth Arnold: Former National Public Radio (NPR) Political Correspondent, current Chairman and Professor of Journalism at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and the producer of *arcticprofiles.com*. For twenty years she was a familiar voice on *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*, and a regular presence on *PBS Washington Week*, covering Congress, the White House, and the American West. Arnold has received numerous awards, including a DuPont Columbia Silver Baton and the Dirksen Award for Distinguished Reporting of Congress. Over

the last decade, she has reported on the ecological and human impacts of climate change from some of the most remote areas of the Arctic. She most recently completed a fellowship at Harvard's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy where she researched the role of the press in effectively communicating climate change, specifically in the Arctic. She is currently expanding the paper into a book for Columbia University Press.



Dr. Erik Bucy: Marshall and Sharleen Formby Regents Professor of Strategic Communication in the College of Media and Communication at Texas Tech University, where he teaches and conducts research on topics related to misinformation, misperceptions, and digital media. Over the past two years he has held research fellowships in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics and Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford.



Dr. Jessica Baldwin-Philippi: Assistant Professor in Fordham University's Communication and Media Studies department. Her work is fundamentally concerned with how engagement with new technologies can restructure forms of political participation and ideas about citizenship. A specialist in the study of digital campaigning, Baldwin-Philippi's book, *Using Technology, Building Democracy: Digital Campaigning and the Construction of Citizenship* (Oxford UP, 2015) investigates the

digital strategies and tactics that electoral campaigns adopted in a post-Obama, social media era. She is currently working on a book about data-driven campaigning.



Tafline Laylin: Freelance journalist and editor best known for her coverage of green design and environmental issues in the Middle East and North Africa. Published in *NBC News*, *The Guardian*, *The Atlantic*, *OZY* and several other international publications, her stories are designed to dispel harmful stereotypes and inspire readers to act. Based in Washington State, she is currently researching truly restorative design solutions to the planet's mounting ecological challenges.



Dr. Stephen Lacy: Former president of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, and Professor Emeritus in the Michigan State University College of Communication Arts and Sciences. Prior to earning his Ph.D., Lacy worked in suburban Texas newspapers and as a professional photographer. He has written or co-written more than 100 refereed journal articles, more than 60 refereed conference papers, ten book chapters, and four books. He co-edited two other books and is former co-editor of the *Journal of Media Economics*. He is known

internationally for his work in media management and economics and content analysis methodology.