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MED and APPE plan to do more

**Sandra L. Borden
division head**

About 20 MED members attended the division's first mid-year meeting held in conjunction with the annual gathering of the Association for Practical and Professional Ethics.

The division programmed two invited panels at the meeting Feb. 26-28 in Cincinnati. MED members organized and/or participated in four other invited and competitive sessions.

Things went so well that members voted at the business meeting to approach APPE about partnering up again in 2005.

APPE has, in fact, welcomed us to join them again next year. Watch the newsletter and Web site for more details about dates and deadlines.

I am pleased to announce that APPE has, in fact, welcomed us to join them again next year. Watch the newsletter and Web site for more details about dates and deadlines. You also will receive the call for papers and preliminary program from APPE when they become available.

Meanwhile, mark Oct. 15 on your calendar. That is APPE's deadline for refereed papers and panels.

The division held its first mid-year meeting in 2003 in conjunction with that year's Ethics Across the Professions colloquium at the University of South Florida. Jay Black, who organized the colloquium, also organized the meeting. Members decided in Kansas City to try to do another mid-year meeting this year with APPE.

One suggestion members made

Visit media literacy sites before Toronto

Wendy Barger
PF&R Chair

For many of us, the classes we teach in media ethics, media and society, media criticism, etc., are concurrently courses in media literacy. We work with our students to be both critical consumers and enlightened practitioners. But the idea of media literacy is more than an academic undertaking; it is a burgeoning social movement represented by scholars, educators, activists, and other interested citizens. They have joined forces to make impressive strides at raising awareness and spurring action on how we can best live in a society characterized by a ubiquitous mass media.

In 1998, Christ and Potter wrote that media literacy has been treated as a public policy issue, a critical culture issue, a set of pedagogical tools, and a topic of scholarly inquiry from physiological, cognitive and anthro-pological traditions.[1] Each of those perspectives views media literacy through a different lens, but there does seem to be agreement on a few fundamental assumptions: media are constructed and construct reality; media have commercial, ideological and political implications; form and content are related; and meanings are negotiated.[2]

While there is some common understanding about the role media play, media literacy advocates have undertaken a range of initiatives and have even challenged one another's approaches. In fact, some media literacy schlars claim that the movement has split into two recognizable camps. The first – what I tend to call "protectionist" – approach is characterized by a commitment to helping media audiences learn to deconstruct media texts, leading to awareness (or wariness) and critical media consumption. The second approach – critical/cultural studies – integrates within the critique not only media messages but issues of media production and reception as well. In addition, critical media literacy activists embrace the ideal of democratizing the media, providing audiences the tools to produce media messages of their own. From that perspective media literacy is both critique and action.

Whatever the perspective, those interested in media literacy have at hand an abundance of resources, many of which are available via the Internet. To start the exploration and gear up not only for this summer's special paper session on media literacy but a panel featuring Canadian experts, I recommend the following Web resources:

• Media Literacy Online Project – Hosted by the University or Oregon, this site features the biannual online journal, the Media Literacy Review, as well as links to dozens of other media literacy sites.

Panels abound for ethics division at convention

**Kris Bunton
vice chair/program head**

This year, the Media Ethics Division received more convention panel proposals than ever before, as did the Council of Divisions overall. MED wanted to select a slate of panels that addressed ethical issues in multiple media arenas – including news, advertising, public relations and online media. Also, we wanted to address international issues, given the 2004 convention's setting in Toronto.

Couple those concerns with the sheer number of panels proposed, throw in AEJMC's intricate rules about scheduling and sponsoring sessions, and you'll understand that we had to make some tough decisions about what would actually appear on the program. I hope you'll agree that the programming slate we compiled for Toronto addresses a diversity of worthwhile topics. Here it is:

Wednesday, Aug. 4:

• **10 to 11:30 a.m.,** "Ethics and the Journalism Educator: What Students Need to Know in the Age of the Bottom Line." Barbara Zang of Worcester State College is organizing the panel, which the Council of Affiliates is co-sponsoring.

• **1:30 to 3 p.m.,** "Public Relations and the Problem of Positioning Companies in Foreign Nations: Conflicting Loyalties?" Karen Slattery and Daradirek "Gee" Ekachai of Marquette University are organizing this panel, which

Ethical Briefing

Send items for this column to:
Genelle Belmas, newsletter editor
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Mentoring program still taking names for convention meetings

MED members who could meet with a graduate student or a junior faculty member for an informal mentoring conversation during the AEJMC convention in Toronto should e-mail Kris Bunton, MED vice head/program head.

Send your name, institution, e-mail address and a line or two about any particular expertise you could offer to colleagues to kebunton@stthomas.edu.

Graduate students or junior faculty members who'd like to meet with an MED mentor in Toronto – perhaps to talk about teaching ethics or to ask questions about conducting scholarship in the field – should also e-mail Bunton. Send her your name, institution, e-mail address and a line or two about your particular concerns.

MED sponsors workshop and teaching "boot-camp" in Toronto

The Media Ethics Division is sponsoring a workshop on "The Impact of Infotainment on Media Ethics and Democracy" during this year's annual meeting. This year's workshop is scheduled from 1:45 to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 7. The workshop addresses the blending of media information and entertainment by examining coverage of news and celebrity personalities and the financial forces driving modern-day media coverage. In addition, discussion will center on ways that the media might better inform and engage the public.

A noon to 1:30 p.m. luncheon precedes the workshop. Both the luncheon and workshop are designed for all AEJMC members across the divisions.

A "Teaching Media Ethics Boot-camp" is scheduled for 4:45 to 6:30 p.m. This boot-camp is geared for new teachers of media ethics and those considering teaching in this area.

The fee for the MED luncheon, keynoter, workshop and boot-camp is $75 ($40 for graduate students). Past MED programs have filled up quickly, and you are urged to sign up early. For additional details visit www.aejmc.org or e-mail Bill Babcock at wbabcock@csulb.edu.

http://jcomm.uoregon.edu/~tbivins/aejmc_ethics/home.html

Panels aplenty for MED at convention

the Public Relations Division is co-sponsoring.

• **3:15 to 4:45 p.m.,** MED research paper presentations.

• **5 to 6:30 p.m.,** MED research paper presentations.

Thursday, Aug. 5:

• **11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.,** "Online Journalism Ethics: New Bottles for Old Wine?" Jane Singer of the University of Iowa is organizing this panel, for which the Communication Technology and Policy Division is lead sponsor.

• **3:15 to 4:45 p.m.,** "A Nationwide Endeavor: Tackling Media Literacy in Canada." Wendy Barger of the University of St. Thomas is organizing this panel, which the Cultural and Critical Studies Division is co-sponsoring.

• **5 to 6:30 p.m.,** MED research paper presentations.

• **8:30 to 10 p.m.,** MED members meeting.

• **10:15 to 11:45 p.m.,** MED executive committee meeting.

Friday, Aug. 6:

• **8:15 to 9:45 a.m.,** "Religious Perspectives in Public Policy News Coverage: No-No? or 21st Century Necessity?" Ed Lambeth of the University of Missouri is organizing this panel, for which the Religion and Media Interest Group is lead sponsor.

• **11:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m.,** Scholar-to-scholar poster session, including MED research presentations.

• **1:30 to 3 p.m.,** a mini-plenary session on news media coverage of the war in Iraq. Erik Ugland of Marquette University is representing MED in organizing this program, which is also sponsored by the International and Newspaper divisions and the Religion and Media Interest Group.

• **6:45 to 8:15 p.m.,** "A Conflict of Laws: American Media Coverage of Canadian Crimes." Jack Breslin of Iona College is organizing this panel, which is being co-sponsored by AEJMC's Law Division.

Saturday, Aug. 7:

• **8:15 to 9:45 a.m.,** "The Offense on Ad Offensiveness: Incorporating Cultural Values, Ethics and Norms in Strategic Communications." Tim Christy of the University of St. Thomas is organizing this panel, which the Community College Journalism Association is co-sponsoring.

• **10 to 11:30 a.m.,** "Ethics Courses: What's Their Real Value?" Lee Anne Peck of the University of Northern Colorado is organizing this panel, for which the Public Relations Division is lead sponsor.

• **1 p.m. to 9 p.m.,** "The 21st Annual Media Ethics Workshop: Democracy and Media Accountability." Bill Babcock of California State University-Long Beach and Ginny Whitehouse of Whitworth College are organizing this year's workshop.

MED and APPE agree to extend partnership

in Cincinnati was to program more collaborative sessions with APPE participants from other fields.

We are tentatively planning to solicit interdisciplinary submissions in APPE's call for papers, perhaps around a broad theme such as ethics codes. Additionally, MED's presence at the meeting will have more visibility in APPE's program and promotional materials.

As I've said before, I think this partnership could be extremely useful for MED members to have an influence outside our specialty and to enter into collaborations with people who study ethics in other disciplines and professions.

And, of course, we retain the mid-year meeting's original goal of increasing the quality and quantity of research within the MED division.

My thanks to the panel organizers, panel participants, paper presenters, moderators and others who helped make this year's event a success worth repeating.

A classroom exercise in values and lying

Lee Anne Peck
University of Northern Colorado

A year ago, I was in Lugano, Switzerland, teaching international communication courses to students at a small American liberal arts college. Indirectly, Hana Al-Farouqi, one of my students from Jordan, and her senior research project, are at the roots of the following communication ethics teaching exercise.

Background: I had Al-Farouqi in my communication ethics class before I had her the next semester in my capstone research course. In the ethics course, she became fascinated by Sissela Bok's book *Lying*, So when Al-Farouqi came to my research course the next semester, she chose a research project that included Bok's three-step "Test of Publicity" — and her interest in the U.S. soap opera "The Bold and The Beautiful."

I had mentioned to my students a study done by two former graduate students at Brigham Young, EmmaLee Haight and Suzanna Crage, who were advised by Professor Sherry Baker. The BYU students conducted a content analysis called "Lying for Power: The Ethics of Lying Behavior in Soap Operas." Al-Farouqi wanted to do something similar to the BYU students' project.

We decided Hana would look at "The Bold and The Beautiful" soap opera because it was available in Switzerland and she watched it regularly. She wanted to look at the program in the context of what this soap opera was telling the rest of world about U.S. values; she also wanted to look at the lies told on the soap opera and see if any of them were justified using Bok's "Test of Publicity."

"The Bold and The Beautiful": The soap opera, set in the world of fashion in Beverly Hills, premiered in the United States in 1987; it focuses on two families who are rivals in the fashion business. According to the www.soapcity.com Web site, it is the most watched television series in the world with more than 300 million viewers in almost 100 countries. The program is only 20 minutes long without commercials.

Because Al-Farouqi had lived for a brief time in the United States but was from the Middle East, she believed that non-U.S. citizens might have a distorted view of American culture and its values by watching this soap. When "The B & B" began airing in Jordan a few years ago, it was banned after a few episodes, she said, because of the "undesired values" that were presented. The show was feared, she said, because there was "a fear of the influence and detrimental effects of Western culture the show would have on Arabic tradition."

When Al-Farouqi did her analysis, she watched the program for two weeks (in French). She discovered that there were an average of 4.2 lies per 20-minute episode — and none of them were justified. The other students in the class became fascinated and engaged with Al-Farouqi's research.

Teaching suggestions: Can be used for in-class group projects; set aside 20-30 minutes per week or per class or can be a term project.

Preparation suggestions
• Discuss class values (both personal and professional); consider conducting, anonymously, the Rokeach values survey with students at the beginning of the course.
• Do background research on the program 'The Bold and The Beautiful" at http://www.cbs.com/daytime/bb and at http://www.soapcity.com. Look at the line-up of characters and synopses of recent programs.
• Collect relevant journal articles about soap operas (many appear in the *Journal of Communication*).
• Create a coding sheet.
• Practice coding while familiarizing students with the story line and character via videotapes of the program.
• Read Sissela Bok's *Lying*, especially Chapter 7.

The research
• Code at least two weeks of videotaped programs.
• Insert results into statistics program such as SPSS.
• Do basic statistics; get percentages.

The discussion
What values do the students believe this U.S. program is showing the residents in the almost 100 countries where the program airs? (What values are portrayed to a global audience?) Are the lies justified? Use Bok's three steps:
• Consult your own conscience about the "rightness" of an action.
• Seek expert advice (from living or dead philosophers) for alternatives to the act creating the ethical problem.
• How will the action affect others? (Conduct the discussion hypothetically.)

Use your imagination! This can be a fun yet useful way for discussing values (national, global, and cultural). The characters and their roles and behaviors, the lifestyles (the clothes, the homes, the cars) and the plots are all fodder for discussion in an ethics course.

You might end the project — however you construct it — with a reflection paper. Perhaps your institution enrolls international students who would be willing to speak to this topic. Think: What other television programs could be used for a similar exercise? A colleague suggests "The Apprentice" with Donald Trump; plenty of ethical dilemmas pop up in that program.

Information from this article was originally presented in February during a teaching panel at the Association for Professional and Practical Ethics' 13th annual meeting in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Check out these sites on media literacy before Toronto

http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/HomePage
• Media Awareness Network (MNet) – A Canadian organization with an extensive collection of media education and literacy resources in both English and French. MNet is geared primarily toward young people, but the largest percentage of visitors to the site are college professors. http://www.media-awareness.ca
• Alliance for a Media Literate America (AMLA) – Formerly known as the Partnership for Media Education, this coalition was founded by four early leaders in the U.S. media literacy movement. http://www.nmec.org
• Action Coalition of Media Education (ACME) – This organization is a breakout group from the Alliance for a Media Literate America. Founded in 2002, ACME links media educators and reformers, health advocates, independent media makers and community organizers. ACME prides itself on being free of corporate media funding. http://www.acmecoalition.org
• MediaWatch – A Canadian non-profit feminist organization that seeks to transform the media environment into one where women are realistically portrayed and equitably represented. http://www.mediawatch.ca
• SIMILE (Studies in Media and Information Literacy Education) – A quarterly, peer-reviewed journal that seeks to provide a venue for scholarly articles that bridge the subject areas of information and media literacy. http://www.utpjournals.com/jour.ihtml?lp=simile/simile.html
• Media-L Listserv – A service of Project Look Sharp, the listserv provides a forum for those interested in media literacy to share ideas. Sign up at: http://www.ithaca.edu/looksharp/resources/media-l.html

NOTES
1. Christ, W.G. and Potter, J. (1998). Media literacy, media education and the academy. *Journal of Communication*, 48(1): 5-15.
2. Aufderheide, P. (1992). A report of the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy: Strategies for media literacy. Available at http://interact.uoregon.edu/MediaLit/mlr/readings/articles/aspen.html (Retrieved Feb. 23, 2004).

Media withholds info for social responsibility

William A. Mulligan
California State University, Long Beach

A national survey of news organizations suggests that approximately 40 percent suppressed Osama bin Laden statements in response to a White House request. Thirty-three of the 80 responding organizations indicated that they complied with the October 2001 request.

Twenty-one of 80 American news organizations responding to a national survey said they withheld information on the Osama bin Laden videotapes after Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States "because it was the socially responsible thing to do." This exploratory study on censorship in the United States after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks was designed to assess the extent and validity of the withholding of information by the newspapers and television stations that came in response to White House requests after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The White House requested that news organizations withhold airing or publishing information from Osama bin Laden videotapes. All news organizations in the Bacon's media directories were invited to participate in the survey.

Of the 21 news organizations that decided to withhold the bin Laden videotape information for social responsibility reasons, 12 news organizations were newspapers and seven were television stations and two were unidentified mediums. The remaining 59 respondents did not indicate they withheld information for social responsibility reasons.

"Growing numbers of intellectuals have become skeptical about the older liberal verities such as individualism, the free market place of ideas, and the strong emphasis on media freedom," John Merrill writes in "Global Journalism" (2004). "For them, the public or civic journalists among them, social responsibility and the community must take precedence over freedom."

One television station executive wrote that the White House request contributed to the station's decision:

"The debate over whether to air the Osama tape raged for days – including whether to air a still photo from the tape in our coverage. I believe the debate would be different today [without] … the feeling of impending doom."

In addition, the nationwide survey of all daily newspapers and television stations with news programs, 30 percent or 25 of the 80 news organizations respondents said they were "very willing" to comply with the White House's request to withhold this information regarding bin Laden.

This study was conducted by the author beginning October 2001, and responses were received until the beginning of the war in Iraq in March 2003. Every daily newspaper and television station with a news program (2,890) was contacted.

Thirty-six of 80 respondents said that *the requests constitute censorship. Censorship is the withholding of information that might be useful to an enemy. The U.S. government has seldom exercised censorship. During the Civil War, the Army stopped the publication of three newspapers, including the Journal of Commerce, for several days, but President Abraham Lincoln ordered lifting of the ban even though the papers were critical of his administration. The Post Office withheld the delivery of Socialist newspapers during the early part of the 20th Century in an effort to limit criticism of U.S. involvement in war.*

Respondents were asked about the motivation behind the White House request. Sixty-three out of 81, or 78 percent, said it was because coverage may contain coded messages, and only 57 percent said this was justified. Forty-eight percent said it was because the coverage contained anti-American sentiment, but only 16 percent said that this was justified.

William A. Mulligan is a professor of journalism and former chair of the Department of Journalism at California State University, Long Beach. Statistician James Neal contributed to this study.