

COMMunity Buzz

The monthly newsletter of the
Department of Communication Studies



Volume 10, No. 4

A message from the Communication Studies Chair

Almost twelve months ago, communication studies faculty members were engaged in melancholy conversations about the spring 2020 semester, mulling over how we wished that our graduating students could experience the excitement of a traditional commencement ceremony. At the time, no one would have predicted that we would be having the same sentiments about our 2021 graduating class. Yet, here we are: navigating remote learning, social distancing, and quarantine protocols as part of our lived experience. Though the global pandemic has changed many aspects of who we are and how we learn, it has not dampened the commitment of the faculty to our students and our campus community.

The department has developed resources to improve the advising experience for our students. Students declaring the major now have significantly more detailed information on the communication studies major, accessible on [our website](#).

Faculty have also been working hard to create and implement rigorous new upper-division classes that will be offered in the fall 2021 semester, primarily focused on journalism and issues related to diversity, inclusion, and equity. Look for classes like COMM 320: Contemporary Print Journalism, COMM 337: Writing for Magazines, COMM 384: Media and the Marginalized, and a special section of COMM 494 called Critical Whiteness. These courses will expand our offerings while maintaining our unwavering commitment to the liberal arts.

Students, alumni, and our campus community can also stay better informed of department happenings on our social media, where we have started to feature the people, experiences, and events that make the COMM major one of the most popular in the College of Arts and Sciences. Follow us (@usdcomm) on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to stay in the know!

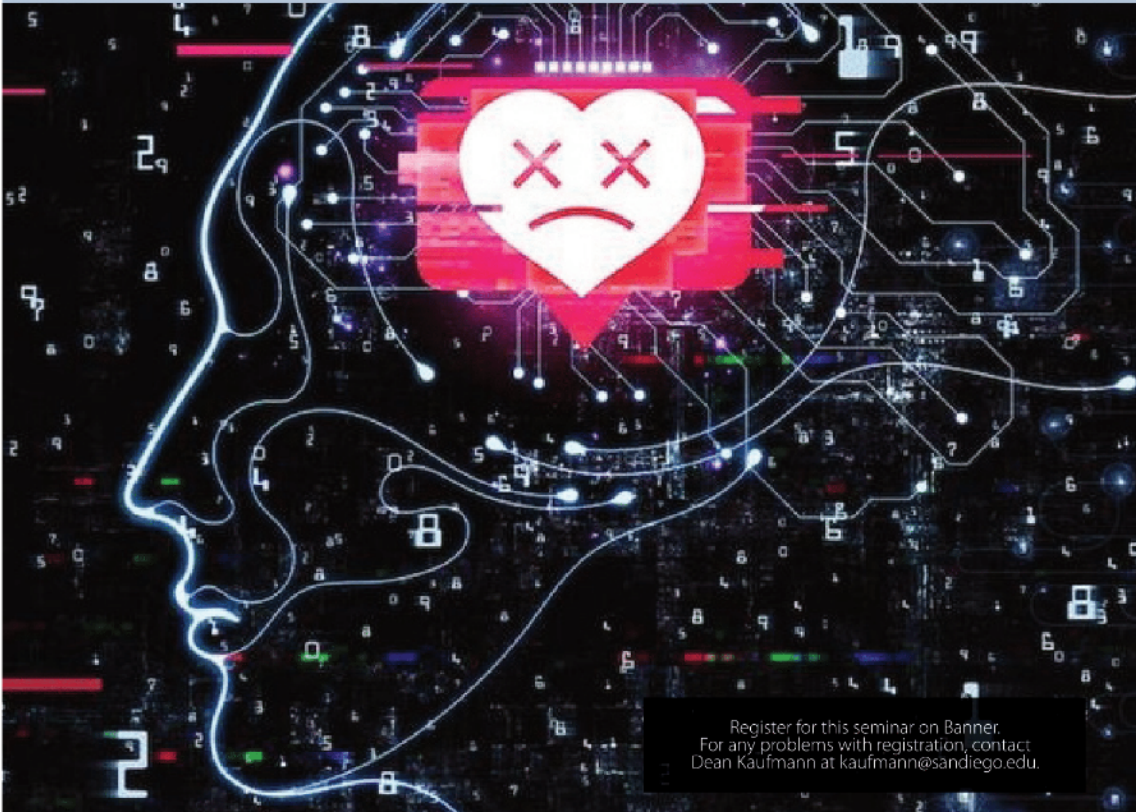
Know that in these continued difficult times, the communication studies faculty are here for you—our students, alumni, and campus community. We'll get through this stronger together. Have a Zoomtastic spring semester!

- Dr. Bond

Spring 2021 course offerings

Humanities Center pop-up course

HUMANITIES CENTER SEMINAR



Register for this seminar on Banner.
For any problems with registration, contact
Dean Kaufmann at kaufmann@sandiego.edu.

The docudrama *The Social Dilemma* (Netflix, 2020) has generated much discussion about the enormous impact social media companies like Facebook are having on an individual, national, and global scale. Focusing on technology companies' quest to increase profits by maximizing consumer engagement above all other considerations, the film holds social media companies accountable for a host of problems ranging from foreign interference in elections to increasing teen suicide rates.

Should we listen to the filmmakers and interviewees, many of whom created the very technologies *The Social Dilemma* critiques? How effective is the film, both as a media product and a call to action?

Our discussions of the film and its reception will be informed by concepts in media studies and film theory, and readings on broader issues raised in the film such as privacy, mental health, polarization, and corporate social responsibility.



The Social Dilemma, Deconstructed

Spring 2021 Seminar (HUMC 394)

Instructors: Susannah Stern, PhD
Communication Studies
susannahstern@sandiego.edu

Hannah Holtzman, PhD
Humanities Center
hholtzman@sandiego.edu

Dates: Tuesdays at 2:30-4:30 p.m.
March 16 – April 27

Location: Classes will be held online only.

Details: One (1) unit of credit
Pass/fail only
No prerequisites
Six class sessions and two Humanities Center presentations

This course, taught by Dr. Stern, examines the film "The Social Dilemma." You will examine the film as a media text, as well as the issues it discusses, such as the consequences of big tech driving social media.

Faculty updates



Professor Kennedy is building an on-camera consulting business to help people with performance through Zoom, on social media platforms, and in live broadcasts. Here's her new [website](#).



Dr. Keeling went to Colorado for skiing and snowshoeing.

Dr. Stern is working on a project with the Urgent Challenges Collective at the Changemaker Hub focusing on youth homelessness in San Diego. She's also working with Communication Studies major Lily Yates on a research project examining news representations of college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. Any students interested in this project can reach out to susannahstern@sandiego.edu if they'd like to participate in the research in some way.



Dr. Pierson was recently featured in a San Diego Union-Tribune podcast. He spoke with the Union-Tribune about the cultural and historical context of films, and said that looking at the way people entertain themselves in a particular place or time in history is essential to understanding who they are as human beings.

Listen to the podcast [here](#).

USD alumna serves as Todd Gloria's Deputy Director of Communications

Chida Warren-Darby graduated from USD in 2019 with a degree in Communication Studies

Chida Warren-Darby thought she was over San Diego. That is, until she received a call from the incoming mayor of San Diego, Todd Gloria, asking if she would be interested in working with his administration. The University of San Diego alumna, who graduated in 2019 with a degree in Communication Studies, now serves as the Deputy Director of Communications for the mayor, who's a USD alumnus himself.

During her years at USD, Warren-Darby sometimes struggled with finding her community and facing institutional racism as a Black woman at school.

"It was really hard to get acclimated on campus," she said. "I avoided putting myself in situations that made me uncomfortable."

However, as time progressed, she saw that the climate on campus was slowly changing. She began to notice a desire to see change on campus.

"People were a lot more welcoming in wanting to know more about my perspective on campus," Warren-Darby said.

"Professors were receptive, and a lot of dialogue and conversations took place."

Her experiences at USD — both positive and negative — have impacted her viewpoint on the world and her professional journey.

"I'm more comfortable speaking out," Warren-Darby said. "My perspectives matter. That insight I have, being a Black woman, is very much welcomed and I use that to highlight issues in my community and communities of color in general."

Mayor Todd Gloria beat Barbara Bry in the 2020 mayoral race back in November, and Warren-Darby admired his inclusive mindset and thinking, which encouraged her to take the position in his office. Gloria is the first openly gay person of color to hold the mayor's office in San Diego. Although Warren-Darby wasn't originally planning to work in San Diego, the opportunity was one she couldn't pass up.

"It's not every day you get a call by the incoming mayor for a position in his incoming administration," she said. "I appreciated how



he conducted himself and his inclusive mindset toward citizens. I couldn't have thought of a better person to support politically in this capacity."

She's excited to see San Diego through a different lens working with an elected official.

"It's a beautiful process to see how policy works," Warren-Darby said. "There's a misconception that people say things and politicians don't really hear them, but they do."

Looking back, she laughs at how nervous and unsure she was about her future. Her advice to other USD students: be open to the opportunities that present

themselves, and don't put yourself in a box.

"I have to attribute the next steps to listening in God — not being scared to try different things, to learn, picking up new skill sets," she said. "You never know where those skill sets will take you. Don't be frustrated with the small steps."

There's one message her father always told her that she says she'll never forget: "It's not about how many people you reach, but about how many people you touch."

Now as the Deputy Director of Communications for Mayor Todd Gloria, Warren-Darby hopes to touch the lives of many San Diegans.

"It's not every day you get a call by the incoming mayor for a position in his incoming administration ... I couldn't have thought of a better person to support politically in this capacity."

-Chida Warren-Darby



USD and Communication Studies alumna Karissa Valencia ('13) was featured in a spotlight talk with the USD Alumni Association.

Valencia is the showrunner and executive producer of Netflix Animation's upcoming preschool series, Spirit Rangers. The series features three Native American siblings who use their ability to transform into spirit animals to protect their national park home.

You can watch her full spotlight [here](#).

Upcoming events and scholarship opportunities

Copley Library's Spring 2021 workshops

Get Research Ready

We're offering FREE workshops all semester to help you succeed.

Workshops will be held remotely and most require advance registration. Visit our website for details and to register. Follow @copleyatusd on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook for reminders!

sandiego.edu/library/services/workshops.php

An illustration of a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a white lab coat over a dark top. She is sitting at a desk with a laptop, looking at a document she is holding. The background shows a bookshelf with several books.

You can access the list of different workshops [here](#).

Humanities Center Spring Events featuring Communication Studies faculty

HUMANITIES CENTER **SPRING 2021 EVENTS**

**BAKED IN:
SYSTEMIC RACISM
AROUND AND
WITHIN US**

THIS SERIES OF TALKS BY USD PROFESSORS EXPLORES SOME OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AREAS IN WHICH RACISM HAS TAKEN HOLD.

Tuesdays at 4 p.m. PT | February 2- March 9

**COME TO THE TABLE:
RADICAL
HOSPITALITY AND
COMMUNITIES OF
BELONGING**

WE REFLECT ON HOW RADICAL HOSPITALITY TRANSCENDS THE TRADITIONAL LIMITATIONS OF WELCOME AS WE HOPE TO JOIN TOGETHER IN SOLIDARITY, JUSTICE AND EQUITY.

Wednesdays at 4 p.m. PT | March 10-April 21

***THERE'S MORE
LIVE SERIES***

STORYTELLERS SHARE MEANINGFUL EXPERIENCES OR CHALLENGES THEY'VE OVERCOME, PROVIDING INSIGHT INTO THE HUMAN CONDITION.

February 8, March 11 and April 15 at 4 p.m.

SURE Scholars benefits include:

- \$5,000 stipend
- Up to \$500 supply funds
- 50% reduced USD summer housing rate
- Academic & professional development workshops
- Membership in USD's [Research Scholars](#) program

Apply [here](#) by February 23 at 5 p.m. PST.

SURE Scholars application is now open!

The Summer Internship Award Application 2021 is open!

The Summer Internship Award supports eligible undergraduate USD students participating in meaningful summer internships, undergraduate research, or career-related community service.

The award is not a replacement for wages, but rather is intended to offset living, transportation or other expenses associated with participating in a summer internship. Students granted this award are eligible to receive up to \$3,000 that will be disbursed in three payments.

Apply [here](#).

Spring Career & Internship Fair



Tue 02/23/21 • 11:30am-2:00pm PST

A chance for students to network with employers about career opportunities. Multiple industries will be present so it is a great event for all majors to attend! [Registration link](#)

Check out our social media pages to stay up to date on the latest department updates.



Visit our website [here.](#)

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commstudies@sandiego.edu

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