



# TEXAS A&M Communication Department

Issue 1: November 2015

SCHOLARSHIP AND TEACHING THAT MATTERS

IN THIS ISSUE

## Welcome to the Communication Department

By: Dr. Kevin Barge, Department Chair

Welcome to the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University! It is an exciting time to be the Department Head as we continue to build on a tradition of excellence and innovation in research, teaching, and service to create a vibrant community of faculty, graduate students, and undergraduate students that are ready to make a change in the world.

Our undergraduate program has more than 1200 majors pursuing either a B.A. in Communication, a B.A. in Telecommunication, or a B.S. in Telecommunication. To help prepare our undergraduate students for the changing job market, we recently added four certificates for undergraduate students: 1) Communication and Global Media 2) Communication Leadership and Conflict 3) Health Communication, and 4) Strategic Communication. These innovative certificates enable undergraduate students to create a sharp focus in a selected area of study by integrating a rich understanding of communication theory and research.

Our graduate program is designed to develop excellent researchers and exemplary teachers that are equipped to take a communication perspective toward many of the perplexing social and political issues that confront our world. Our graduate program is organized around four areas of study: 1) Health Communication 2) Organizational Communication 3) Rhetoric and Public Affairs, and 4) Telecommunication and Media Studies. Our department has been recognized nationally and internationally for excellence in research and teaching.

I invite you to read more about what the Department of Communication offers our undergraduate and graduate students both in this newsletter and at our website, <http://comm.tamu.edu>. At Texas A&M, we aspire to achieve high-impact teaching and creating research that makes a difference.

Sincerely, Kevin Barge



## Gender and Citizenship Conference Feb. 18-21, 2016

The Gender and Citizenship brings together scholars from rhetoric and political science to consider performances and articulations of gender, sex, sexuality, nation, race/ethnicity, and citizenship across U.S. and global history. Find us at <https://genderandcitizenship2016.wordpress.com/>

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## Welcome to the Aggie Agora!

The Aggie Agora supports TAMU's efforts to strengthen democracy by enabling the TAMU community to be critical and engaged citizens. Find us at <http://www.aggieagora.org/>

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# Gender and Citizenship Conference

Feb 18-21, 2016



On June 25, 2013 Texas State Senator Wendy Davis embarked on an eleven-hour filibuster to block a bill that would drastically limit women's access to abortion and health care services in Texas. Famously wearing pink Mizuno sneakers, Davis's efforts were bolstered by the hundreds of women and men who descended on the state capital building that day. In fact, it was these women and men, not Davis, that prevented the vote that day as the roll call vote was disrupted as the result of the crowd's vociferous response to the silencing of another woman on the floor, Senator Leticia Van De Putte. As Davis put it to the crowd, "Today democracy was in action...You all were the voices we were speaking for from the floor."

This moment—what has come to be known as “the people’s filibuster”—is

poignant example of contemporary gender activism and political participation. As historian Molly Tambor explains, “Citizenship has many important social and political meanings: it gives status of equal membership in a state or nation; it determines the privileges and obligations of membership; it offers shared identity in diverse societies; and it sustains political freedom and self-government by providing a set of civic virtues and practices. But it also helps regulate the borders between men and women, insiders and outsiders, legitimate workers and illegal labor, and autonomous and dependent members of communities and families.” The concept of “citizenship,” in other words, raises questions of individual and collective political identity, inclusion and exclusion, regulation and discipline, community and nation, activism and

engagement, and responsibilities and rights.

The 2016 Gender and Citizenship conference takes up these themes and brings together scholars from rhetoric and political science to consider performances and articulations of gender, sex, sexuality, nation, race/ethnicity, and citizenship across U.S. and global history. Plenary presentations will consider a number of topics, emphasizing different forms of enactment of citizenship by elected officials, community members, and social movements to draw attention to issues particularly relevant to a gendered understanding of citizenship and to considering the larger political systems in which gender and citizenship take shape. See our website at <https://genderandcitizenship2016.wordpress.com/>



The Texas A&M Agora (Aggie Agora) is a new tradition at Texas A&M University, established by the College of Liberal Arts in 2015. Just as the word *agora* in ancient Greece referred to a “gathering place” or “assembly,” the Aggie Agora’s mission is to facilitate public discourse and civic engagement on the A&M

campus and throughout the state of Texas.

The Aggie Agora supports the University's Strengthening Democracy Initiative by organizing DebateWatch, AdWatch, FactCheck, and Campaign Finance Watch Workshops on the TAMU campus to enable critical engagement with the political process.

In addition, the Aggie Agora endeavors to enable Texans to practice a lifetime of engaged citizenship. It organizes Facilitation Training, Difficult Dialogues, and other events related to climate and

inclusion, helping organize community outreach and Lifelong Learning communities, including the Engaged Citizenship Community Workshop Series, Community Difficult Dialogues, and Engaged Citizenship Reading Groups.

For more information about the Aggie Agora, see our website at <http://www.aggieagora.org/> or contact Dr. Jennifer Mercieca at [Mercieca@tamu.edu](mailto:Mercieca@tamu.edu)

# WELCOME NEW SENIOR FACULTY



## Sandra Braman

John Paul Abbott Professor of Liberal Arts & Professor; ICA Fellow

*Ph.D., University of Minnesota*

Dr. Braman's research focuses on the macro-level effects of digital technology and their policy implications; the co-construction of law, society, and technology; global media and technology. Her research has been supported by grants from the US National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Soros Foundation, and the First Amendment Fund.

*"The range and sophistication of research interests here—and thus the opportunities for growth and stimulation through collaborations and other engagements with one's colleagues and students here—are very appealing."*



## Sherry Holladay

Professor

*Ph.D. Purdue University*

Dr. Holladay's research examines how organizations, including both corporations and activist groups, communicate strategically to accomplish their goals. Her specific research interests include crisis communication and corporate social responsibility

Dr. Holladay's research in corporate social responsibility (CSR) examines communication practices that contribute to perceptions of organizational legitimacy as well as those that pose risks to organizations and their reputations. To maintain credibility and to be seen as socially responsible, corporations must operate in ways that are consistent with societal expectations.



## Timothy Coombs

Professor

*Ph.D. Purdue University*

Dr. Coombs' primary research is in the area of crisis communication, which tries to understand how organizations can most effectively respond to crises. He created the Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) that's applied nature has helped improve the practice of public relations and earned him the 2002 Jackson, Jackson & Wagner Behavioral Science Prize from the Public Relations Society of America. Dr. Coombs has consulted with agencies specializing in crisis communication in the US, Norway, Denmark, and Belgium. He has delivered presentations about crisis communication around world.



## Leroy G. Dorsey

Professor; Associate Dean for Academic Initiatives & Graduate Instruction

*Ph.D., Indiana University*

Dr. Dorsey examines the symbols used by political figures to promote the legislative agendas, shape their identities as morally sound advocates, and transform their audiences into seemingly active agents poised to support particular agendas. Dr. Dorsey's specific research interests are in public presidential discourse, myth-making, and American pop culture.

*"There is an intellectual and creative energy in the department, in the college, at the upper administration, that is infectious and you want to be a part of it as it realizes itself."*



The Climate and Inclusion Committee of the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University is excited to invite undergraduate and graduate students interested in issues of diversity to submit papers for our 2016 "Communicating Diversity" conference. In the past five years, we have grown the conference from 18 speakers in 2012 (all Texas A&M students) to 35 speakers in 2014 (from six different universities across Texas).

In 2015 (April) we had 39 participants from 9 universities across Texas. This year, the 2016 conference is open to students from all universities and colleges (across the nation and beyond) and will take place over two days. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Aisha Durham, who will present on Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, on "Communication that Matters." Dr. Durham's presentation will explore how we make of the world and our place in it by using a shared language, which has the power to bridge or break communities. For a full description of Dr. Durham's research interests and for more information on the conference, visit our website at:

<http://communicatingdiversityconference.wordpress.com>