



## Welcome to Fall Semester! Department office opens

Welcome to Fall Semester. The office is open with administrative assistants here to help you in person. The office for the Department of Communication will be open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Just stand outside and call the number on the sign to give the administrative assistant time to mask up. Then you will be greeted by a knowledgeable and helpful staff member with a smile under that mask! Please stop by if we can help you.

Registration continues. We are here to help you with academic advising and registration overrides—whatever you need. Weber State University is offering classes in a variety of innovative and convenient formats during the COVID-19 pandemic. They include face-to-face, face-to-face hybrid, online, virtual, virtual-hybrid, and flex.

- **Face-to-Face:** Instruction in a classroom following strict health guidelines
- **Face-to-Face/Hybrid:** Instruction both in person and asynchronous online
- **Online:** Instruction asynchronous online
- **Virtual:** Instruction in synchronous format during scheduled time
- **Virtual/Hybrid classes:** Instruction uses both synchronous and asynchronous technology
- **Flex:** Format allows in-person, lab, studio, experiential or large class sizes within social distancing guidelines.

For more information about course schedules, see

[https://weber.edu/Registration/Student\\_Course\\_Schedule.html](https://weber.edu/Registration/Student_Course_Schedule.html).

If you need academic advisement, visit [www.weber.edu/communication](http://www.weber.edu/communication) to determine your advisor. The department chair, Dr. Sheree Josephson, can also help you. She can be reached at [sjosephson@weber.edu](mailto:sjosephson@weber.edu). If you need assistance registering for a class that requires a prerequisite that you are currently taking, the department's administrative assistants can help you. They can be reached at [sgardner1@weber.edu](mailto:sgardner1@weber.edu) and [slove@weber.edu](mailto:slove@weber.edu). You can also take a prerequisite and the class requiring that prerequisite at the same time, but the administrative assistants will need an approval email from the professor.

This is the September edition of the monthly email to majors. At least once a month during the regular school year, we will email you to let you know about meetings of student organizations, guest speakers, important deadlines, opportunities, student and faculty achievements—and more. If you have information you'd like us to distribute, please email department chair Sheree Josephson at [sjosephson@weber.edu](mailto:sjosephson@weber.edu).

## What's Happening

### August

- **Aug. 24:** Fall Semester begins

### September

- **Sept. 7:** Labor Day break

## Student News

### Signpost wins General Excellence Award for fourth year in row

The Signpost, Weber State University's student news organization, won the 2019 General Excellence Award in the Utah Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest, beating college newspapers from across Utah. It was the fourth time in a row and fifth time in six years that The Signpost has taken the top prize in its division. The award was bolstered by nine first-place wins in individual categories: Best Sports Photograph by Israel Campa, Best Education Story by Tori Waltz, Best Feature Story by Francisco Ruiz, Best General News Story by Ally Nelson, Best Feature Photograph by Joshua Wineholt, Best Front Page by Aubree Eckhardt and Monika Clarke, Best Lifestyle Page by Aubree Eckhardt, Monika Clarke and Delaney Nye, Best Community Event by Monika Clarke, and Best Advertising Idea for the Mary Mapes event, which had to be postponed because of the pandemic. The Signpost also won three finalist awards in the Region 9 Mark of Excellence awards, competing against college news organizations in Utah, Colorado and New Mexico. The staff won finalist for Best All-Around Non-Daily Newspaper and Best Affiliated Website, and graphic artists Monika Clark and Aubree Eckhardt were finalists in Photo Illustration for their work on the cover of a special edition commemorating 100 years of football at Weber State.

### New associate's degrees in Digital Media Production available in Fall Semester

The Department of Communication is now offering associate's degrees in Digital Media Production. Students have the choice between an Associate of Science, an Associate of Arts or an Associate of Applied Science. Students majoring in Digital Media or Film Studies are encouraged to contact their academic advisor to enroll. The degrees stack on the bachelor's degrees in DM or Film Studies with classes double-counting for both the associate's and bachelor's degrees. This provides a way for students to add a degree to their resume before the bachelor's degree is completed. Faculty who can help students add this degree to CatTracks include Andrea Baltazar at [andreabaltazar@weber.edu](mailto:andreabaltazar@weber.edu); Aimee Gillette at [aimeegillette@weber.edu](mailto:aimeegillette@weber.edu); Ash Soltani-Stone at [ashsoltanistone@weber.edu](mailto:ashsoltanistone@weber.edu) or Dr. Sheree Josephson at [sjosephson@weber.edu](mailto:sjosephson@weber.edu).

### MPC student gets paper accepted into national communication conference

Master of Professional Communication student Mitch Whitfield's paper "A Social Network Analysis of Right-Wing Radicalization on YouTube" was accepted to the National Communication Annual Convention in November 2020. He worked with Dr. Susan Hafen and Dr. Alex Lancaster on his project. His abstract is as follows: The study compared three communities (Intellectual Dark Web, Alt-lite & Alt-right) associated at dissimilar levels with right-wing ideology found on YouTube and visualized their relationship within each other and with four categories of radical ideology (Racism, Sexism, Religious Fanaticism & Anti-Authoritarianism) using Social Network Theory. Each community expressed differing characteristics related to right-wing ideology and was displayed using an open-source network analysis and visualization software package called Gephi. The study demonstrated that YouTube is a powerful platform for radical groups to circulate ideological concepts while validating the use of Social Network Theory in analyzing radical ideological communities.

## Alumni Achievements

### Multimedia Journalism graduate gets job at Goldman Sachs

Francisco Ruiz, a Multimedia Journalism graduate, has accepted a job offer with Goldman Sachs' Risk Division after his internship this summer. "I was one of the few liberal arts majors to attend Goldman's on-campus info session a while back," he said. "That's too bad. Goldman is 'major agnostic' and they have a great apprenticeship culture." At \$25-30 an hour, Ruiz was able to quit his other job to work full time at his Goldman internship. He said the schedule can be demanding, but the work is challenging and fulfilling. Ruiz also completed a Business Administration minor and invites Communication students to consider doing the same, even if they do not plan on going into business or finance. "The skills I learned in the Communication program helped me to succeed. Learning business fundamentals, such as accounting, will enhance your Comm skills," he said. "It will also open more opportunities for you."

### **Communication graduate accepted into American University's grad program**

Lola Amacher (Moli) was accepted to American University's master's of public administration program and will start this fall. She is a Communication graduate who was the Weber State University student body president.

### **Public Relations & Advertising graduate hired full time in WSU Career Services**

Kylie Harris, who graduated this spring with a bachelor's degree in Public Relations & Advertising has been hired full time in Career Services as its marketing and public relations specialist. She designed an infographic on internships that is online.

### **Civic Advocacy graduate lands dream job working with at-risk youth**

Recent Civic Advocacy graduate Alexa "Lexi" Sepulveda reports that she has landed her dream job as a diversion specialist with Volunteers of America Youth Services working with at-risk youth.

## **Announcements**

### **Three new faculty members hired in Communication Department**

Three new faculty members will begin teaching this Fall Semester in the Department of Communication. They include Dr. Aaron Atkins, Dr. Li Chen and Ms. Kayla Griffin.

#### **Dr. Aaron Atkins**

Dr. Aaron Atkins is a multimedia journalist and assistant professor of Digital Media. He earned his Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, his master's degree in Communication from Virginia Tech, and his bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He teaches courses in journalism, newswriting, and digital media production. His research interests include media effects and emerging journalism technology, specifically how audiences interact and engage with content on evolving platforms, such as virtual reality and social media.

#### **Dr. Li Chen**

Dr. Li Chen is an assistant professor of Social Media and Data Analytics. While completing two doctoral degrees in mass communications and media arts, she has been engaged in the exploration of research methods from qualitative to quantitative to computational data analytics. Her dissertation employed social network analysis and social media research methods to investigate the associations between celebrity culture, networked media, and social movements. Her teaching and research interests include applied data science, media and diversity, and popular communication. Before pursuing her doctoral degrees, she worked in the Chinese media industry for seven years as a broadcasting journalist, an editor, and a media relations practitioner. Obsessed with nature, she is in love with clouds, cats, and trees.

#### **Kayla Griffin**

Kayla Griffin is an instructor who earned a Master of Arts from Boise State University. She earned the Three-Minute Thesis Award in the competition at BSU. She will teach undergraduate classes in public speaking, interpersonal and small group communication, and intercultural communication. She volunteers as a coach and judge for the Weber State Speech Team. Her research interests encompass rhetorical theory, embodied rhetoric, protest and social movements and art as communication.

### **Students can enroll in two classes in one time slot**

Students will have the opportunity this fall to combine two courses into a single timeframe. COMM 3130, News Reporting and Writing, will meet on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m., and COMM 3780, Broadcast News Writing and Production, on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. The focus of COMM 3130 is to write journalistic pieces, while the focus of COMM 3780 is to produce broadcast news pieces. In this combined model, students will be able to report on a

single event or topic and both write and produce a news piece on it for publication and broadcast. Adding these multimedia packages to a portfolio will make students highly attractive to future employers. Students who have not yet taken COMM 2250, Essentials of Digital Media, should not take COMM 3780. Because of the time overlap, students may need an override to enroll. Those who are interested can email Dr. Jean Norman with their W number.

### **Students with high GPAs eligible to apply for Departmental Honors**

You are eligible to apply for Departmental Honors if you have an overall 3.5 GPA and a 3.7 GPA in the major and hope to present original research or a creative project at the undergraduate symposium or any professional forum. Achieving departmental honors will result in HONORS showing on your diploma and transcript, an invitation to Honors banquet, and eligibility to apply for an Honors scholarship for your textbooks. You need to apply for Department Honors at least one semester before graduation. Apply online through the Honors Student Portal. If you have questions, contact Dr. Susan Hafen at [shafen@weber.edu](mailto:shafen@weber.edu).

### **The Signpost accepting applications for Fall Semester**

The Signpost is still accepting applications for students interested in joining the staff of Weber State's student news organization this fall. Positions include news reporter, photographer, videographer or sports reporter. Scholarships are available. [The application can be found at signpost.mywebermedia.com](https://www.signpost.mywebermedia.com) under the About Us>Staff menu.

## **Faculty Accomplishments**

### **Faculty members earn tenure and promotion**

Three faculty members have earned tenure and promotion. Dr. Anne Bialowas has been promoted to Full Professor. Dr. Jean Norman and Dr. Hailey Gillen Hoke both earned tenure and promotion to Associate Professor.

### **Professor publishes interview with author Erik Larson**

Dr. Susan Hafen published an interview with author Erik Larson in the Spring/Summer 2020 edition of the journal Weber: The Contemporary West. Before the interview, Dr. Hafen read all of his books, including "Devil in the White City," which was a finalist for the National Book Award and stayed on the New York Times' bestseller list for more than five years. The conversation with Larson was titled "Ferretting Out the Mysteries of History—A Conversation with Erik Larson."

### **Public speaking instructor consultant for upcoming TEDx event**

Brent Warnock, an instructor in Communication, has been involved over the past year as a speech consultant for the upcoming TEDx event in Ogden. The event was Saturday at Peery's Egyptian Theater in Ogden.

### **Public relations professor interviewed for Instead podcast by MPC alum**

Dr. Nicola Corbin was recently interviewed by MPC Alum Wyatt Traughber for Utah State University's Instead podcast. Presented by USU's Office of Research, on the podcast Traughber interviews scholars to learn how Utah's researchers move the state forward as new challenges circle the world. Traughber's conversation with Dr. Corbin, titled "Extending Grace," draws on her research surrounding media representations and stereotypes of Black women and how Black college women negotiate these stereotypes. The conversation expands broadly—to Dr. Corbin's childhood in Guyana and experiences in America as an immigrant and a Black woman, racial stereotypes, and an analysis of the Minneapolis Police Department's public relations response to George Floyd's death. To listen to this conversation, read Traughber's post and listen here: <https://research.usu.edu/instead/blog-posts/nicola-corbin>.

### **Professor receives recognition for outstanding undergraduate research mentorship**

Dr. Anne Bialowas has been recognized for outstanding mentorship in undergraduate research in the College of Arts & Humanities. The award comes from the Office of Undergraduate Research at Weber State University.

## Get Involved

- **The Signpost:** Contact Dr. Jean Norman at [jeannorman@weber.edu](mailto:jeannorman@weber.edu).
- **Studio 76:** Contact Andrea Baltazar at [andreabaltazar@weber.edu](mailto:andreabaltazar@weber.edu).
- **KWCR Wildcat Radio:** Contact Dr. Nathan Rodriguez at [nathanrodriguez@weber.edu](mailto:nathanrodriguez@weber.edu).
- **WSU Debate:** Contact Ryan Wash at [ryanwash@weber.edu](mailto:ryanwash@weber.edu).
- **WSU Speech:** Contact Mark Galaviz at [markgalaviz@weber.edu](mailto:markgalaviz@weber.edu).
- **Ogden Peak Communications:** Contact Dr. Nicola Corbin at [nicolacorbin@weber.edu](mailto:nicolacorbin@weber.edu).
- **PRSSA:** Contact Leslie Howerton at [lesliehowerton@weber.edu](mailto:lesliehowerton@weber.edu).
- **Society of Professional Journalists:** Contact Dr. Jean Norman at [jeannorman@weber.edu](mailto:jeannorman@weber.edu).
- **Departmental Honors:** Contact Dr. Susan Hafen at [shafen@weber.edu](mailto:shafen@weber.edu).
- **Lambda Pi Eta:** Contact Dr. Hailey Gillen Hoke at [haileygillenhoke@weber.edu](mailto:haileygillenhoke@weber.edu).