Welcome to Spring Semester!

Welcome to Spring Semester even though it’s only January.

The Department of Communication office is open virtually through Zoom Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at https://weber.zoom.us/j/95611908967. You can also call us at 801-626-6426 or email communication@weber.edu Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Of course, you can also leave a message any time. We will get back to you.

Registration continues. We are here to help you with academic advising and registration overrides—whatever you need. Weber State University continues to offer 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.

If you need academic advisement, visit 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. 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 and lisaarner@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 January 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 that you’d like us to distribute, please email department chair Sheree Josephson at sjosephson@weber.edu.

**What’s Happening**

**January**
- Jan. 11: Spring Semester begins
- Jan. 18: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

**February**
- Feb. 15: Presidents Day
March
• March 8-12: Spring Break

Student News

Best speakers in Principles of Public Speaking classes named
The best student speakers in the Fall 2020 COMM 1020 HU Principles of Public Speaking are announced. Before COVID-19 restrictions, the best speakers in all 25 sections would have competed in a Selection Saturday event with the Top 5 speakers selected to present at a public event. The top speakers from all sections of this class would have been recognized for their achievements in their individual classes. Fall’s outstanding speakers include Brianda Ceja, Annika Daniels, Lindsie Hendrickson, Cole Larson, Anneke Lindhardt, Levi Nye, Leah Rasmussen, Joseph Richey, Jeff Starkey, Kambrea Tanner and Brett Wamsley.

Communication is No. 7 in the Top 10-degree programs at WSU
Communication is the seventh most-popular degree at Weber State University in terms of number of degrees awarded between 2016-2020 with 630. This fact was reported in the university’s annual report. Nursing is the most popular degree at WSU.

Announcements

Students encouraged to compete with Weber State’s Speech Team
Interested in learning a new skill that would put you above the competition for careers, scholarships and applications for graduate school? Want to travel (in a post-COVID world eventually, online for now), speak about your passionate ideas, and possibly win trophies on the way? We have the solution: the Weber State Speech Team. We offer 1-credit courses that build your debate, public speaking and persuasive skills. University-level competition looks amazing on a resume and helps students get into top programs in law school, master’s programs, and others. You can compete for up to four years, so joining wherever you are on your academic journey is encouraged. Also, depending on grades and participation, there are opportunities for scholarships. For more information, email Coach Mark Galaviz at markgalaviz@weber.edu.

Administrative assistant hired for Master of Professional Communication program
Lisa Arner has been hired as the administrative assistant for the Master of Professional Communication program. Arner graduated in 2019 with a degree in that program. She is a planning commissioner for North Ogden City. She also has worked as an events representative for Castlight Medical, as a business administration coordinator for BDM International and as an engineering tech for Fluor Daniel NW/ICF Kaiser Hanford. She will also assist with tasks in the Communication Department overall.

Signpost accepting applications for editor-in-chief for 2021-2022 academic year
The Signpost is accepting applications for editor-in-chief for the 2021-2022 school year. To apply, email Dr. Jean Norman, jeannorman@weber.edu. And watch for applications for other editor positions to open in February.

Learn how to tell stories using 360-degree virtual reality technology
This spring take your digital media and storytelling skills into the virtual realm with COMM 4500 – Special Topics in 360-degree Virtual Reality Storytelling. Dr. Aaron Atkins, a specialist in creating 360-degree video content, is introducing an experimental 360VR course for Spring 2021. You’ll learn the ins and outs of 360VR and explore numerous genres including documentary, social, environmental, drama, horror, comedy experiences, as well as education and training simulations. You will be introduced to 360 camera and audio technology, learn how to produce professional-quality 360 videos specific for Oculus and other top-tier head-mounted displays, then put
together a production team and create your own virtual experience. At the end of the course, you will have the opportunity to submit your project to a juried VR festival. Regardless of department or major, if you have your foundational digital audio/video production, scriptwriting, and Adobe-oriented editing courses covered, sign up. Check with your academic advisor about counting this class toward the Communication major.

**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; Aimee Gillette at aimeegillette@weber.edu; Ash Soltani-Stone at ashsoltanistone@weber.edu or Dr. Sheree Josephson at sjosephson@weber.edu.

**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.

**Faculty Accomplishments**

**MPC director appointed Weber State’s Graduate Council chair**
Dr. Sarah Steimel, director of the Master of Professional Communication program, has been appointed Graduate Council chair for a three-year term beginning in Fall 2021. The Graduate Council serves as the administrative body within Academic Affairs that promotes, supports and reviews graduate education at Weber State University. As the chair of the Graduate Council, Dr. Steimel will guide the Graduate Council as it works collaboratively with university administration, colleges and academic departments to ensure consistency and excellence in all graduate degree programs.

**Public relations professor has two book chapters in press**
Dr. Nathan Rodriguez, assistant professor of Public Relations and Strategic Communication, has two publications now in press. The first, "#FamilyTravelHacks: humor and political commentary in hashtag hijacking" appears in “Twitter, The Public Sphere, and the Chaos of Online Deliberation,” G. Bouvier & J.E. Rosenbaum, eds., and is published by Palgrave Macmillan. The second, "Quantifying and commodifying authenticity: the rise of micro- and nano-influencers," appears in “Innovations and Implications of Persuasive Narrative,” S. Dunn & G. Nisbett eds., and is published by Peter Lang.

**Signpost adviser co-authors paper in Journalism & Mass Communication Editor**
Dr. Jean Norman is a co-author of a paper titled “Keeping the lights on and the wolves outside: College student media advisers in communities of practice” in Journalism & Mass Communication Educator. The article can be read at https://journals.sagepub.com/eprint/ZQRP6946QEBAPBDINUVS/full. Dr. Norman teaches many of the journalism classes and is the faculty adviser to The Signpost.
Film Studies director interviewed by NPR station about book
Ashkan Soltani-Stone was interviewed by KJZZ in Phoenix, a National Public Radio station, about his new book “Rez Metal” on Dec. 23. Soltani-Stone is the director of the new Film Studies program. To listen to the interview, click https://kjzz.org/content/1645632/rez-metal-behind-popularity-heavy-metal-navajo-nation.

Alumni Achievements

MPC graduate recognized by SLC PRSA for work in advocating against racism
For Jasen Lee, a 2017 graduate of the Master of Professional Communication program, has been recognized by the Public Relations Society of Salt Lake City for his work in advocating against racism and injustice, and for diversity, inclusion understanding.

MPC student hired as sports information coordinator for Dixie State University
Corie Sue Holmes, a graduate in the Master of Professional Communication program, has been hired as the sports information coordinator for Dixie State University Athletics. Holmes describes the role as a perfect fit for her interests and talents and said the MPC degree "open[s] up opportunities for advancement and is the stepping stone I need to reach the goals I have set for myself in my career.”

Get Involved

- **The Signpost:** Contact Dr. Jean Norman at jeannorman@weber.edu.
- **Studio 76:** Contact Andrea Baltazar at andreabaltazar@weber.edu.
- **KWCR Wildcat Radio:** Contact Dr. Nathan Rodriguez at nathanrodriguez@weber.edu.
- **WSU Debate:** Contact Sam Allen at samallen2@weber.edu
- **WSU Speech:** Contact Mark Galaviz at markgalaviz@weber.edu.
- **Ogden Peak Communications:** Contact Dr. Nicola Corbin at nicolacorbin@weber.edu.
- **PRSSA:** Contact Leslie Howerton at lesliehowerton@weber.edu.
- **Society of Professional Journalists:** Contact Dr. Jean Norman at jeannorman@weber.edu.
- **Departmental Honors:** Contact Dr. Susan Hafen at shafen@weber.edu.
- **Lambda Pi Eta:** Contact Dr. Hailey Gillen Hoke at haileygillenhoke@weber.edu.