Without a doubt, two of the most important international events in 2020 were the COVID-19 pandemic and the US general election. JMC professors Jacob Groshek and Raluca Cozma, together with colleague Ahmed Al-Rawi from Simon Fraser University in Canada, serve as guest editors of a special issue of the *Journalism and Media* journal that aims to examine the role of media in the election. Titled "Political Miscommunication and Electoral Campaigns in the Hybrid Media System: The 2020 US Election," the special issue invites research papers that explore the different political implications and dimensions of the US election. The editors hope to receive contributions focusing on different political contexts and hybrid systems, especially cross-national comparisons and viewpoints from the Global South.

Special topics of interest include but are not limited to the following:
- The use of political bots, conspiracy theories, and deep fakes in disinformation campaigns.
- Social media use of state-run trolls and political parties or their affiliates.
- Mobile apps use in the US election (i.e., Telegram, WhatsApp, Discord, etc.).
- The polarized politicization of media debates and credibility.
- Computational analyses of social media users and content.
- Audience surveys on perception of US candidates.

The submission deadline is **July 31**. All accepted papers will be open source and publicly available for free. More information on how to submit contributions is available at [https://www.mdpi.com/journal/journalmedia/special_issues/us_election#info](https://www.mdpi.com/journal/journalmedia/special_issues/us_election#info).
Dr. Nikhil Moro is no stranger to the mass communication field, hailing from India with a master's degree in journalism and communication, completed at the University of Mysore, India. Moro’s Ph.D. is in communication law, earned from the School of Communication at Ohio State University. “Media law excites me, particularly for its evolving authority in the buzz-word environment of machine learning, artificial intelligence, artificial consciousness, and so on. I am also interested in international challenges within the jurisprudence of libel, privacy, and copyright,” Dr. Moro said.

Dr. Moro is advancing his research agenda by working on several conference and journal papers, as well as a book manuscript. He also plans to bring a prominent journal in media law to K-State.

Dr. Moro will be teaching MC725: International Communications in the fall. “The class compares media systems in India and the United States, focusing on institutional, regulatory, and social frameworks within which operate, particularly, the Indian and U.S. newspaper and motion-picture industries, Dr. Moro explained. “International accessibility of internet content means students would do well to be aware of diverse expectations of quality, ethics, and law, and, additionally, India, it turns out, represents an increasingly influential market of creative content. And did I mention it, students get to watch some cool “Bollywood” cinema in the class,” he added.

He has taught MC745: Mass Communication Law in the prior term. “I feel grateful enough to serve on thesis and dissertation committees and offer mentorships to students who seek me out.” When not engaged in teaching, research, and betterment of the K-State community, Dr. Moro can be found swimming, hiking, and sparking conversations on provocative issues. He is also a vegetarian and strong opponent of animal cruelty.
Sophia Hernandez, online master's student.

Hailing from Garden City, KS, Sophia earned her bachelor’s degree from Fort Hays State University and works as a digital media specialist in the Communications Department at the City of Garden City, where she helps manage all channels of communication. “After researching multiple programs, I felt that Kansas State was the best place to continue my academic career in communications. I was impressed with the graduate faculty and knew that when a person learns from the best, they can become the best.”

What can you tell us about your capstone practicum project?

“My practicum is about how academia informs best practices in strategic communication. The City of Garden City is working toward a data-driven or measurement-driven system of operations. So, each department has been asked to come up with goals and measurements. Almost immediately, I thought of what I’ve learned in every strategic communication course. Every strategic comm plan is built the same way: situation analysis, target audience, goals (strategy and tactics), timeline, and measurement. At its foundation, my final project is a practical strategic communications plan for the Communications Department at the City of Garden City. Still, the literature review will focus on the academic side of things.”

What are your long-term plans?

“I have an interest in both public relations and public service and management. Before working in the Communications Department, I worked in the Administration Department as the City Manager Intern. After that experience, my long-term goal has become City Management, and public relations is a perfect stepping stone for that career path. After completing my M.S. in Mass Communications, I hope to apply to a public management program to earn an MPA and further align myself for a career in public management.”

Any hobbies?

“I danced for 19 years of my life! I started with studio classes and recitals, and I danced for my high school and college teams. Now that I don’t do that, I spend my free time painting canvases and longboarding when the weather is nice.”

ONLINE COURSE DEMYSTIFIES THEORY AND PRACTICE OF BRAND MANAGEMENT

JMC National Advisory Council member Alan Boyer will teach MC 760: Issues, Risk and Reputation via Global Campus in the fall. This is the first of what will hopefully be several graduate offerings taught by Boyer, who is a lecturer, business coach, and a higher education marketing consultant who drives innovation and revenue to help make great companies, organizations and schools better.

Using case study analyses, videos, online discussions, readings, sample crisis plans and presentations, this course prepares journalists, managers, administrators, entrepreneurs, scientists, community advocates and other professionals with theories and practical tools to plan for, to respond to, and to recover from reputation threats. Many entities face sudden and unexpected events that may threaten their operation, brand image, and relationship with stakeholders, including, but not limited to, employees and customers. MC 760 introduces graduate students to the communication and reputation management techniques used to anticipate and mitigate threats to companies, brands, schools, communities and organizations.

Boyer is working with the A.Q. Miller School to launch two online graduate certificates in health communication and digital media for educators.
Congratulations to second-year master’s students Dat Tran and Barikisu Issaka on being admitted with funding to competitive doctoral programs for Fall 2021. Dat has accepted to join the program in Media and Public Affairs at Louisiana State University as a research assistant, where he will continue to pursue his research agenda on political and international communication. Barikisu will focus on strategic communication research with a specialization in the use of new media in health communication campaigns as a teaching assistant in the doctoral program in Information and Media at Michigan State University.

FALL 2021 GRADUATE COURSE OPTIONS

On campus:

MC725 | International Communications - Nikhil Moro
MC 765 | Communication Theory - Nancy Muturi
MC 780 | Research Methods In Mass Communication - Raluca Cozma

Online:

MC 760 | Issues, Risk and Reputation - Alan Boyer
MC 782 | Strategic Communication Management - Jacob Groshek
MC 820 | Digital Media Audiences and Analytics - Jacob Groshek

A new online offering during Summer 2021:

MC740 | Recent Issues in Strategic Communications - Anan Wan