Student Collaborative Work In and Outside of the Classroom

Featured Programs and Events

Diplomatic Communication  
Film and Video Festival  
Model Simulations

Family Communication * Film Studies * Intercultural & International Communication * Mass Media & Media Productions * New Media Technology * Professional Communication * Research Methods * Verbal and Non-verbal Communication * Computer Mediated Communication * Applied Research
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Diplomatic Communication
Students Attend
United Nations Seminar

This past November, some students taking the Communication Department’s Comm395: Diplomatic Communication class joined student’s from the Political Science Department’s United Nations Seminar and Model United Nations I courses at the United Nations in New York for a series of lecture sponsored by the ODU Model United Nations Society and the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI).

On the first day of our United Nations Seminar we are always fortunate to receive a tour of the United Nations and the gifts that the UN has received from various member nations. The Seminar consisted of a four day Lecture Series of speakers from various United Nations divisions and agencies.

Dr. Jean Gazarian, Senior Fellow, with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), began our lecture series, he informed students about the General Assembly establishment of its annual Agenda. Later during the same day, we received a lecture on Post-War Iraq by Mr. Hamid Abdeljaber from UN Radio, followed by a briefing on Counter Terrorism from Mr. Axel Wennmann.

Students in Coimm395 learn what it means to be a member of the diplomatic corps from the standpoint of learning diplomatic protocol, how to write issues briefs and press releases, as well as navigate the art of diplomatic language during various stages of diplomatic negotiations. Students also have an opportunity to meet with various international civil servants working for both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGO).

As is the case each year we try to get representatives from a variety of UN divisions and agencies to talk on a diverse selection of topics that are current and important issues facing the diplomats of the today’s United Nations.
Old Dominion University Film and Video Festival – Comments from Students

Some comments have been edited for publication:

BY MIKE CASSIDY

Laurel Harris and Michael Santorelli, ODU alumni, established Dogmatic Inc. in 1999. Tom Kettells another ODU alumnus joined Dogmatic in 2001. Harris, Santorelli, and Kettells discussed how they became what they are today. They also showed many samples of their work and some of the many corporations they worked for. Harris is the animation specialist of the group, and some of her work included Flash animations, the Dogmatic name and logo. She chose Dogmatic as their company name because she has an affinity for dogs. Dogmatic Inc. is a creative service corporation, meaning they do all of the editing, animation, effects, etc. for their customers TV promotions, TV spots, documentaries, etc. Dogmatic Inc. has studios in NY and LA and services many big name corporations, organizations and groups (ex. Pepsi, The Rolling Stones, Coach, etc.) Dogmatic Inc. made an exclusive documentary and several TV spots and promotions with the Rolling Stones. Pepsi’s Super Bowl advertisements and other TV spots were one of many accomplishments of Dogmatic Inc. Konrad Winters hosted this event and has taught both Santorelli and Kettells in his film classes before they graduated from ODU.

BY DANA POBLETE

On Friday, March 26th, a showcase of student films wrapped up the 7th Annual ODU Film Festival. Konrad Winters, an Associate Professor of Communication and Theatre Arts and the Director of the Film and Video Studies minor, hosted the event. He presented fifteen student films, produced by students from his video and documentary classes. Some of the memorable pieces included a documentary of the Norfolk State University drum line and a mockumentary about ODU’s unfinished Mag-Lev.

The documentary was very well-done, and although I’m not interested in drumlines, the filmmaker was very thorough and obviously put a lot of time into completing the project. The mockumentary was hilarious. It received a thunderous applause. There were also a few adaptations of poems. One of my favorites was a short film based on the poem She Should’ve Called 911. It was a very powerful and stunning piece about abuse. I also favored a Shakespeare sonnet called 147, because it was mine. I felt honored to have one of my films shown, but I also really enjoyed seeing other students’ work. A lot of it was very impressive. There was a great turnout; I was happy to see so many people supporting student films. I saw some other films during the festival, such as Gimme Shelter and American Splendor, but I truly think that the student film presentation is always the best part about the ODU Film Festival.

BY EMILY FLOOD

For this year’s 2004 Film Festival I decided to go to the playing of Bowling for Columbine; this event was held on Monday, March 22nd, 12:00 PM in the Webb Center. The main reason why I particularly picked this one film was based on Dr. Hart’s Intercultural Communication class I took last semester. Dr. Hart showed a very small clip of this movie, which is a documentary by Michael Moore. I enjoyed the class and the particular clip, so therefore I knew I had to at least somewhat enjoy this event.

I had mixed reviews on this movie. I really liked it and hated it all at the same time. I thought it was extremely educating in the fact that it teaches society in the way we really are. We are violent, discriminating extremists, and it hurts to hear that has Michael Moore displays in this hard-hitting documentary. I had no idea on some of these facts and stats of how violent we actually are. What really hit home was the fact that countries like the U.K. have something like 127 people in which they are killed every year by guns, Australia has
something like 63, Germany roughly 300, and the U.S. 11,120 some odd people are killed every year by guns, unbelievable! And the media totally plays into this as well; they scare us by making the world seem like a bad and horrible place to live, which it most certainly can be. However, this is not always the case, there is an awful lot of good in the world as well; we the people just need to focus on that. For that reason is why I have to had in the fact of why I did not like or agree with this film. It just displays that, that Americans are horrible people and how the rest of the world hates us. I could seriously go on about this all day, but I won’t.

Overall, Dr. Hart and the film had some really good points. I agree with the film to a certain extent, but I also think it could be turned around for others to see the issues on gun control. I enjoyed it, made me think, and that is what it is all about, right?

BY WILLIAM FOXWELL

The first film festival event that I attended was Gimme Shelter, a 1970 documentary film about the Rolling Stones Free concert at Altamont Speedway in 1969. This film was presented by Jason Rowland and was introduced as an example of how public shows can go terribly wrong and turn from blissful event to a catastrophe in no time at all. The actual film’s content focused on the hundreds of thousands of people that showed up for the free show and the Hells Angels attempts at playing security guards. When all is said and done this documentary film shows how quickly the combination of alcohol, psychedelic drugs, testosterone, loud music and very limited law enforcement can turn a pleasurable situation into utter and complete chaos.

From viewing this film it is clear to see the energy of the crowd and the ability for one person to incite a situation that can quickly become violent or even deadly. There is a certain brotherhood between the Hells Angels that is evident to anyone observing them. This leads to tension between certain groups in the crowd and more small groups begin to form. It appears that the cohesion of the biker group relies on their beliefs of brotherhood and looking out for their kind. Much like a group of females would go out to a bar in a large group in order to protect one another from undesired attention, the crowd begins to group together to protect themselves against the undesired violent attention of the Hells Angels.

This documentary also shows how boys will be boys and girls will be girls in the fact that it illustrates key differences between the sexes. As fights begin to erupt you can see girls at the front of the stage still singing and dancing to the music of the stones even though they are aware of the danger behind them. The men are nowhere to be seen. They are all further back in the crowd engaged in some type of physical activity such as fighting or defending friends or associated groups. It is not until the Rolling Stones stop the music that the girls actually give their attention to the situation mounting behind them. I suppose that this illustrates that when a fight breaks out men want to be involved in some way while a woman’s instinct is to avoid it as long as it presents them no direct physical danger.

Overall this documentary was very informative and educational. It gives a great look into the past as well as points out several problems that even t coordinators can learn from in the future. Gimme Shelter is a classic documentary film that should be viewed from an educational viewpoint in order to avoid such disasters in the future as well as living record of the history of our youth.

BY JEROME GEHRIG

On March 21, 2004, Through the Looking Glass: Reality According to The Simpsons, The Flintstones, and Prime Time Animation was presented by Andy Freeman at Regent University. Prof. Freeman intended to show how adult animation comments on and influences society. When shows like the Flintstones are shown on prime time television, originally ABC in 1961, but later the other major stations, they turned out to entertain and make money with original programming. But the creators wanted to make you think about society. They did this with the popular situational comedy recipe that many shows had during the early 50’s and 60’s.

They used animation to reference popular culture, and through the style and situations they put the characters through, it made the viewer question about the situations in their own world. It is easy to block out horrific news stories, but if The Simpsons make you laugh first, then you will listen to the message and question it later. This kind of thought process, along with a load of laughs, is what made prime time animation so popular.
Virginia’s Model League of Arab States @ ODU

By Andrew Vincent

At Old Dominion University the Model League of Arabs (MLAS) has two components on-campus: an academic class, and student volunteers running a High School Conference and attending regional and national conferences.

On March 6 of this year, in the Webb University Student Center, the 11th Annual Model League of Arab States High School Conference. The conference is a part of a program sponsored by the National Council on U.S.-Arab States (NCUSAR), the National U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce and the League of Arab States Information Center and Old Dominion University.

Dr. Fran Hassencahl, director of the ODU MLAS, along with student volunteers organized and put together a great League of Arab States simulation for the following high schools who were in attendance for the event: Grafton, Heritage, Kecoughtan, Kellam, Salem, Tabb, Warwick, and Woodside High Schools.

This conference simulates the five committees of the League: the Economic Affairs, Palestinian Affairs, Political Affairs, Socio-cultural Affairs, and Security Affairs. In this simulation students assume the role of Arab diplomats, debating and discussing issues in an effort to trying to address the day-to-day problems before the League and its citizens.

It is hoped that through role-playing League diplomats; students would gain a better understanding of the Arab world and its role in regional and international affairs.

Most students don’t know about the Model United Nations Society, even fewer know of the Model League of Arabs States.

The Model United Nations Society (MUN) has been a part of the Old Dominion campus for 27 years, and hosts one of the largest High School Model United Nations conferences on the East Coast. The MUN supports at least three other model programs and competes in College competitions around the country and the world.

One of the largest model programs outside the Model United Nations is the Model League of Arab States (MAL), a student organization sponsored by the Department of Communication and Theater Arts.

The MAL competition team attended their regional competition, held at Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, from March 19-21. The team received several top delegate awards and an honorable mention for its overall performance.
Tamara Alfonso, Andrew Vincent, Chris Grandi, Ashley Modi, Mo Khatib, Chris Pearson, Linda Roberts, and Claire Wulf.

ODU competed against and placed above several of the top debate schools in the Southeast such as Clemson University, Berry College, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Jacksonville State University, and host, Converse College.

Due to the team’s success, they were given a special invitation to compete at the National Conference in Washington, DC. The National competition is going to be held from March 31 till April 3 at the Watergate Hotel. Schools normally have to qualify for the National competition, and then they are generally placed on a two-year waiting list. ODU was given a very prestigious honor.

Members of the competition team have been working almost unceasingly since returning from South Carolina raising funds to be able to attend the National competition.

The MAL has been supported by the Student Senate, the Office of International Programs, the Graduate Program in International Studies, and the Dean of Arts and Letters.

The National competition will place Old Dominion in competition with other regional qualifiers such as the University of Utah, Northeastern University, University of North Texas, the United States Air Force Academy, Brigham Young University, the University of California-Berkley, as well George Mason and the Virginia Military Institute.

And we are truly proud of our students accomplishments both in organizing and running a regional conference and conference participation at the national level.
Kofi Annan,
United Nations Secretary-General

The United Nations @ Old Dominion University

Model United Nations Society

Model United Nations Development Projects
- Russia
- South Korea
- Germany
- Albania

United Nations Day Celebrations
- UN Foundation with ODU
- International Day of Peace
- World AIDS Day

UN Lecture Series
- Great Decisions Lecture Series
- United Nations Seminar

United Nations Reference Library
- Law of the Sea Journals
- Treaties
- General Assembly Reports, and Other International Documents

Interagency Partnerships
- Center for Regional and Global Studies
- Joint Forces Staff College
- World Affairs Council of Greater Hampton Roads

United Nations Related Classes
- Diplomatic Communication
- Great Decisions
- Model United Nations I & II
- UN Seminar

Location of First Albanian Model for Youth United Nations (AYMUN) Conference --- Saranda, Albania

We took four students to train a group of seven Albanians in how to coordinate and run a United Nations simulation for over forty students.

It was approximately a seven-day conference and educational tour of Albania our students trained and drilled Albania students in the tenants and the importation of democracy, sharing, and equality under the law; the adjustment and responses to such new concepts of government were truly eye opening and challenged them and our students in running a United Nations Simulation in Albania. It was truly a wonderful experience for both Albania and American students.
The Debate and Forensics Team has brought home dozens of awards from a host of competitions held nationwide, from Louisiana to New Hampshire.

The team has ranged from six to twelve members who participate in the tournament against students from such well-known universities as Rice, University of Texas-Austin, Xavier, Louisiana State University and Louisiana Tech.

Sandra Washington, director of the ODU Debate and Forensics team has stated that throughout the team’s competitions we they have made a good showing throughout the years and intend to continue to do so.

Speech Chorus was in Demand on and off campus

By James Lidington

It's been a busy year for the Old Dominion University Speech Chorus, the on-campus and community performance arm of the forensics team.

The 20-member group, which performs dramatic interpretations of literature not originally written for the stage, gave eight shows this year in addition to competing in several forensics tournaments.

The chorus recently performed a program titled "Warning: No Whiners Need Apply!" in honor of Women's History Month, which included readings of a prose piece by storyteller J. California Cooper and poet Lucille Clifton's "Homage to My Hips." Before that, the students participated in the university's Martin Luther King Jr. Day observance.

For Black History Month, the chorus performed a program based on the spiritual song "We Are the Rainbow People," which included a reading of the song's lyrics and Langston Hughes' poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." It was performed off campus at a local church and at the Norfolk Naval Base.

On April 11, the chorus performed at a screening of the Academy Award-winning film "No Man's Land" as part of the university Film and Video Festival.

As members of the forensics team, the students also compete at tournaments in such categories as Lincoln-Douglas debate, prose, poetry and after-dinner speech.

And, between the performances and the tournaments, are the practices, although practice time is scarce due to the students' class and work schedules.

"The total forensics program shows that intellectual pursuits are as exacting as athletic pursuits," said Sandra Joe-Washington, a senior lecturer in the Department of Communication and Theatre Arts and director of the forensics program.

"The students have to keep up the quality, and that takes a lot of energy and discipline. They are every bit as energetic about their pursuits as athletes."

Funding for the forensics program has been a perennial problem, according to Joe-Washington, who said that it has not had a budget increase in six years. In addition to receiving more consistent financial support, she would like to see students get academic credit for their efforts.

Joe-Washington noted that Dana Burnett, vice president for student services, recently allocated funds to help send five students to a national competition in Rome, Ga., April 18. Previously, members of the forensics team had a good showing at a prestigious competition in February at George Mason University, where eight students qualified for the national competition.
The following descriptions were gleaned from syllabi and paper guidelines for the course offered on Children and Communication by Dr. Thomas Socha, Associate Professor and University Professor, Department of Communication and Theatre Arts.

Comm427 is a course that provides a survey of communication processes in childhood. In particular, the course focuses on how children learn to communicate; the contemporary communication environments of children including interactions in family relationships, friendships, as well as media; and challenges concerning childhood communication and its affects on later communication development (e.g., aggression, violence, etc.).

One of the assignments in the class is to interact for 20 minutes with a person who is currently a caregiver for a child or children (e.g., parent, grandparent, nursery school teacher, preschool teacher, elementary school teacher, child social worker, pediatrician, etc.). The goal of the paper is to learn as much as you can about the “communication world of the caregiver”.

Students in the course have open conversations with caregivers with the overall objective to find out as much as they can about the “good” face-to-face interactions and media viewing experiences she or he has had with his/her children or charges as well as the not so good and how she/he seeks to manage these experiences.

Another assignment has a goal where the student is to interact for 20 minutes with a child, learn as much as you can about his or her “communication world,” and describe what you find in a paper.

This course is a unique opportunity where students in this course have the chance not only to meet and talk with professional caregivers of children but the also have the benefit of meeting with the children in residence at ODU Lions Club Child Study Center. The Center allows education instructors, graduate students in education and other educational personnel and professional caregiver the opportunity to observe and study the behavior of children interacting with one another as well as assessing their responses to specific pedagogy.

From written assignments rooted in discussions with caregivers and children to meetings and interactions with children in the classroom and at play Old Dominion University’s Lions Club Children Study Center.

The students in this course are fortunate in that they are able to put their skills to the test during classroom discussions, meeting and learning from child caregivers as well as through their in person interactions with children at our child study center.
Photographs of Communication Students that have won Awards in 2003 (Photo by College Photographer)

Photographs of Communication Students that have won Awards in 2004 (Photo by College Photographer)