

2019-2020 Assistant Professor Excellence Speaker Series

From #BlackLivesMatter to #Ayotzinapa: Rethinking Domestic and Foreign Protest News Coverage on Social Media

Dr. Summer Harlow
Valenti School of Communication

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

12:15 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

M.D. Anderson Library

Room 306

(Light lunch will be served.)

Research suggests news media negatively portray protests that challenge the status quo – a pattern known as the protest paradigm. Such de-legitimizing coverage has been shown to turn the public against protesters and their causes. Most research, however, neglects the external and internal factors that influence journalists' coverage, especially in this digital era. In Professor Summer Harlow's talk she will answer research questions examining how social media users' sharing of protest news amplifies certain narratives that marginalize some protests and legitimize others. Using a quantitative analysis of "big" data based on social media sharing of news coverage of protests throughout the U.S. and Latin America, as well as qualitative interviews with journalists and activists, Professor Harlow will reconsider the applicability of the paradigm in a digital media landscape, and connect the paradigm to a broader critique of media, protest, and power, suggesting a hierarchy of social struggle with practical and theoretical implications.

SPEAKER BIO: Summer Harlow (PhD., The University of Texas at Austin) is an Assistant Professor of Journalism in the Valenti School of Communication at the University of Houston. She researches the intersections of emerging media technologies, activism, journalism, and alternative media, with an emphasis on Latin America and marginalized groups. She is the author of *Liberation Technology in El Salvador: Re-appropriating Social Media Among Alternative Media Projects* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), and has published more than 30 articles in top peer-reviewed journals. In 2018, she was named Outstanding Junior Woman Scholar by the Kopenhaver Center for the Advancement of Women in Communication.

The Assistant Professor Excellence Lecture Series (APeX) is intended to showcase the breadth and depth of groundbreaking research, scholarship, and creative activity being undertaken by UH early career faculty across disciplines, as well as to offer opportunities for cross-disciplinary networking.



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