Seth Gitner, Syracuse University, is crowned the next head of the Visual Communication Division by outgoing head Byung Lee of Elon University. Several division members capture the moment on their mobile phone cameras.
Communication key for busy year in VisCom Division

Here’s a question: Would you prefer to be contacted via email or via Facebook?

Personally, I prefer Facebook for corresponding with the division. Along with being a great way to pass along links and articles that pertain to visual communication, it’s a handy way to keep up with each other in general.

At present, the VisCom Facebook group had more than 320 members. During the past few months we’ve seen links on the group about Rob Heller from the University of Tennessee and his photo show that was 20 years in the making, and about the U.S. Forest Service’s attempt to stamp photography and videography on "their" land without a permit. There have also been links to conferences, calls for panel proposals, links to funny things about being a professor, and more.

It’s not that I do not like email — I love email. I send tons of it. As a matter of fact, if you send me an email you’re pretty much guaranteed a quick response. Almost too quick.

For many, the VisCom listserv has been hard to use. I have gotten many requests from members to send out emails via the listserv for them, because they can’t figure out how to utilize it. As we neared last year’s convention, I sent several emails — too many by some standards, because many people asked to be removed from the listserv. I sent them information about how to do it themselves.

Communication will be key as we move forward with planning the 2015 Annual Convention in San Francisco, for which we have many VisCom-specific events planned. We are looking to set up an all-day pre-convention session about creative. In addition, Wes Pope from the University of Oregon is planning a VisCom happy hour at a hot spot near the convention hotel. This will be a place where we can socialize and get to know each other outside of the sessions.

Another University of Oregon faculty member, Nicole Smith Dahmen, is planning our luncheon. I am sure that the San Francisco event will have plenty for all to see, hear, and do. I look forward to seeing you all there.
**VISCOM IDEA EXCHANGE**

VisCom Idea Exchange is a place for brief ideas and notes. Send your article to mjhaught@memphis.edu.

**Better grading for weekly assignments**

Want an alternative to spending hours writing comments (that you suspect many students never even read) on assignments? I’ve used a combo of pass/fail grades and in-person meetings that students have responded to with great enthusiasm. It works like this: Provide written instructions for what students should do, and a deadline. Schedule in-person meetings with each student in your office (allow about 15-20 minutes per meeting). The student shows the completed work, and you ask a few questions about it. Student brings up any problems or questions. At the end of the meeting, I grade it using a Google form.

An added twist to my method is that my “pass/fail” is actually pass/fail plus bonus. If the student has done extra work, or knocks my socks off with the assigned work, he/she is eligible for an extra point. This gives a great incentive to those who are really into the course material and want to go further. My actual scoring is 0 (fail), 1 (pass), or 2 (pass with bonus). If the student misses the meeting, it’s an automatic fail. Students who only pass all assignments get a B– for the course.

**Mindy McAdams, University of Florida**
mmcadams@jou.ufl.edu

**A tip from the archives**

*WWII prevented the American Association of Teachers of Journalism (AATJ, a group which became part of AEJ) from holding its annual meeting, so a newsletter, Journalism Bulletin, was published quarterly to keep members in touch. Here is a “VisCom Idea Exchange” from the archives:*

**PHOTOGRAPHY TRICKS: Overcome Shortages**

Wartime Difficulties in teaching photography have been largely overcome by using ingenuity, explains Vivian Sorelle, West Virginia, who sent a letter stuffed with ideas to overcome shortages of materials. She got good results with out-dated 1941 and 1942 film by increasing exposure and development over time indicated by manufacturer. “When our 2 1/4 x 3 1/4 film ran out, we cut down some 4 x 5 film (gift of a publisher whose photographer had gone to war) by making an “envelope” of pasteboard, open on two sides. By using a razor blade, following the hard edge of the cardboard, we cut fast film to required size even in the dark.”

*Journalism Bulletin, Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1944 via Stanton Paddock, Concordia University*
A common course taught by our VisCom members is Visual Communication. It’s typically geared toward student in journalism, public relations, advertising, mass communication, digital media and the like, and it often serves as a requirement for many programs in which we teach. I asked VisCom members to share their ideas about how they teach Visual Communication, and I received a range of approaches and some incredibly innovative teaching ideas.

Broadly speaking, our members tend to approach Visual Communication from two perspectives.

The first perspective is media literacy/semiotics in the vein of Paul Lester (Visual Communication: Images with Messages), Michael O’Shaughnessy and Jane Stadler (Media and Society), Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright (Practices of Looking), and Steven Akron (The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens). In comparing numerous syllabi, it’s interesting to see how Lester’s seminal book, Visual Communication (first published a decade ago), still continues to be a vivid and relevant resource for us today; even if we don’t assign the book’s individual chapters, many of us use Lester’s table of contents to structure our syllabi. General topics from this perspective include the physiology of seeing; theoretical approaches to perception (e.g., Gestalt, Peirce’s symbolic types, semiotics); ethical issues having to do with persuasive and stereotypical messages; and the examination of different visual communication components, including typography, graphic design, infographics, cartoons, photographic images, film and TV images, computer generated images, and web-based communication.

The focus of this approach to visual communication is on the analysis of visual content. As one VisCom member, Michael O’Donnell (St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota) said, “I provide structures for analyzing what [my students] see in the media. It is a semiotic approach, although we touch on Gestalt and other theories as well.” O’Donnell and others try to bring in the most contemporary cultural imagery available, including YouTube videos, comic books, and the most recent Super Bowl commercials (see his impressive online syllabus here). In her classes, Mary Bock (University of Texas, Austin) spends a great deal of time helping her students identify visual stereotypes, examine representations that injure (referring to Paul Lester’s 2003 book, Images that Injure), and defend themselves against hyper-consumerist and political propaganda.

A second perspective to the visual communication course involves a heavy focus on production and project critique as a way to cement theoretical concepts. Instructors of this approach take their students through graphic design project work (often using Kim Golombisky and Rebecca Hagen’s White Space Is Not Your Enemy) and often toward video and audio storytelling (relying on texts such as K. Tim Wulfemeyer’s Beginning Radio and TV Newswriting). Tara M. Mortensen (University of South Carolina) integrates both InDesign and video/audio throughout her visual communication course, dedicating almost a third of her students’ coursework to InDesign projects,
Understanding, skills drive classes

a smaller chunk to video/audio and about half of her class to exams on theoretical concepts. Matt Haught (University of Memphis) also focuses on production and student project critique, covering a range of important visual communication strategies and tools. “We try to make this class as inclusive as we can so that students leave knowing about good type, color, layout, and photo processing, as well as some basic skills for infographics, branding, and multimedia. We cover software skills in InDesign, Photoshop, Illustrator, and Premiere,” he said. In her design-centric visual communication course, Nicole Dahmen (University of Oregon) gives her students a healthy understanding of visual communication as content. “My approach to teaching design is far more than simply making things ‘pretty’ or just teaching software,” she said. “Rather, it is this: the intersection of aesthetics and innovation should be meticulously crafted to enhance communication for the intended message, audience, and medium.”

Even for those courses that are more media literacy based, it was interesting to see how so many of us incorporate applied projects to help students articulate a theoretical concept. Here are a few noteworthy examples:

- In his Visual Rhetoric class, Brian Carroll (Berry College, Mt. Berry, GA) sends his students out on “Safari” expeditions with digital cameras and asks them to create photographs that relate to theoretical concepts talked about in class. His students share their images in class, and compare their own creations with our dominant visual culture. For example, his students photograph an artifact that defines themselves (Safari 1); photograph an odd, unexpected artifact of visual culture (Safari 2); create a photo that experiments with light as metaphor (Safari 3); create an image that represents a “broken dream” (Safari 4); and digitally capture the “most exotic, interesting, unusual, or mysterious piece of visual rhetoric as it is displayed on or as part of someone’s motor vehicle” (Safari 5). For more “Safaris,” see Carroll’s syllabus.

- David Zemmels (Loyola University, New Orleans) asks students to bring in an “iconic” picture of themselves, and then create (using Photoshop) a “symbolic” self-portrait image using different techniques and tool sets as discussed in class (he divides his course between lecture time and lab time; the labs are where students apply theoretical concepts using Photoshop, video editing, HTML, and Wordpress).

- Matt Haught (University of Memphis) and his colleagues require students to create visuals for social media. Students have to pick a brand and create a Facebook cover photo, Facebook & Twitter profile photo, a visual Facebook and Twitter post (with created graphics, not just a photo), and a Pinterest Pin. Students learn some Photoshop skills about toning, cropping, and using layers, which gets them thinking about how their work will be presented in different outlets.

- Michael O’Donnell (St. Thomas University in St. Paul, Minnesota) asks students to explore typography by adapting a short historical essay about a typeface into a PPT project. In doing so, he asks them to question the limitations of the PPT format (see assignment here). O’Donnell also incorporates a hands-on advertising critique into his class. First he asks students take note of the many screens in students’ everyday lives; what is on them; and which screen would be the most difficult to give up. Then he asks students to storyboard an ad “that is not actually selling anything, but is instead answering truthfully the question of how we become happy.” This assignment helps students critique advertising as well as general consumer culture (see assignment here).

- Katherine Hepworth (University of Nevada-Reno) assigns a series of “Communication Challenges” that require students to combine a visual communication theory (on aesthetics, for example) with an online visual communication tool. In one such exercise she asks students to aesthetically articulate a famous quote through an animated gif.

Thank you to everyone who shared their course ideas and syllabi for this newsletter column.
Talking with Nadia Bush and Lathea Miskel

Three of the finalists in the logo competition for San Francisco 2015 came from one instructor: Nadia Bush, senior instructor at the University of South Alabama. We were impressed, and we asked Nadia to share some of her teaching experience with us. She did so enthusiastically, even getting one her students who tied for second place-- with another one of her students--to take part.

Bush has a professional background in public relations, and has been honored many times in the field and for her teaching. This includes being awarded University of South Alabama’s 50 Outstanding Faculty, an award to honor 50 faculty from across the 50-year history of the university, and Southern Public Relations Federation’s 2013 Educator of the Year.

Nadia is the faculty adviser for the university’s student chapters of the Public Relations Student Society of America, the Public Relations Council of Alabama, the Southern Public Relations Federation and the American Advertising Federation.

What classes do you generally teach?

Public relations, advertising and visual communication

In what class(es) did your students create the logos?

Branding and Visual Communication.

Two years ago, our advertising concentration decided to offer two tracks, Account Planning & Management and Visual Communication. This is the first time our department has offered this course and participated in the AEJMC logo competition.

This is the course description: The focus of this course examines the understanding of how to build, measure and manage a brand from visual conception. Emphasis is on the visual aspects of brand management from the creative power of visual branding through research and visual strategy development and theories. Advanced areas of digital and/or print media are used in creative development and execution of persuasive and effective messages.

What are the three most important principles you teach the students about designing logos?

Understand the brand
Keep it simple, easy and flexible
Make it significant to the audience

How do you keep your students motivated?

1. Determine their personal strengths and weaknesses
2. Provide them organization and the opportunity to control their progress
3. Identify and encourage their professional and life goals
4. Be honest and offer constant constructive criticism in the form of recognition and praise

How did the three students react to being finalists?

Excitement and shock

Are there any other competitions you dream of having your students take part in?

RSA Student Design Awards, Graphis New Talent, Communication Arts competitions

Lathea Miskel, one of the two second place winners, also gave us the student perspective on taking part in the AEJMC logo competition.
Here’s what she had to say:

How did you feel about winning the award?

Honestly, I didn’t know how to feel. In my family I’m not the one to win awards so when I received the email from Nadia, I was shocked and happy all at the same time.

What is something you learned in approaching designs and this design?

I think simplicity was something I learned and will always remember. Most big brands have the simplest logos, and that’s what I tried to do with the AEJMC competition. One thought I had was that in order for something to win a competition it had to be over the top, but my design for AEJMC was simple.

Any advice you offer to faculty in teaching design?

One of the things I really enjoyed about my past design teacher was she allowed us to be individuals. I think professors who have experienced more than students have, tend to think they know it all, and somehow force their ideas and beliefs on students. But I really like that there was input in the design, and not a complete overhaul.

Any advice you offer to students taking design?

Last semester I had the privilege of taking two design courses and one bit of advice I would give to students is to make sure you never, ever get behind. Once you do you’ll find yourself in the design lab 20 hours a week.

To enter the competition you must submit a link to an online photographic portfolio as well as a short letter explaining why an international reporting experience is important for your education. The portfolio should be well organized and show evidence of curiosity about other groups or cultures. The letter should not exceed 300 words.

The judging will be done by a jury of professional photojournalists including former White House Photographer and Washington Post staff photographer Susan Biddle as well as Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Dennis Chamberlin.

Deadline for submissions: February 1, 2015
Apply online at www.ieiMedia.com

In honor of the courageous men and women who risk their lives in order to report from the world’s most dangerous places ieiMedia has established the James Foley Memorial Scholarship in memory of the photojournalist who was tragically executed while covering the war in Syria.

This $5000 photojournalism scholarship covers tuition, program fees and meals for participation in our Urbino program, jointly sponsored by James Madison University and Iowa State University. The winner will work with two award-winning photojournalists in an experiential program that runs through the month of June 2015. The recipient is responsible for his/her own airfare.

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The University of South Alabama’s Lathea Miskel tied for second place with this logo for the 2015 San Francisco conference.
Submissions will open on November 1, 2014 for the annual AEJMC logo completion. Our 2016 destination is Minneapolis (August 4-7, 2016), and we hope you will encourage your students to take part. The deadline for submissions is March 31.

The winning student’s logo will appear on all the convention and promotional materials, and he/she will receive $100. Attached for reference is last year’s winning logo.

A logo entered in the contest should represent the diversity of AEJMC and also visually suggest “Minneapolis.” The logo should communicate immediately, effectively and be memorable.

Entries must:
1. Include the following type elements: AEJMC; August 2016; Minneapolis.
2. Feature AEJMC as an integral part of the logo. Be adaptable to multiple uses, i.e., program book cover, nametags and promotional material. The logo should not lose impact or legibility when substantially reduced.
3. Retain a sense of balance and internal integrity when typographical elements are removed.
4. Reflect the diversity of interests within AEJMC.
5. Be reproducible in solid tones using one color (black). No tints, no blends, no gradations are allowed.
6. DO NOT INCLUDE COPYRIGHTED ARTWORK. This means no clip art files of the Minneapolis, landmarks, etc. The student must create those elements if they are used.

For a logo entry to be eligible, it must be created in vector format. Furthermore, entrants are required to submit digital copies of each logo as both an EPS file (.eps) and as a JPEG file (.jpg). The JPEG version of the logo must be identical to the EPS version in terms of design, dimensions, proportion, etc.

The file names must bear the last name of the entrant (for example: SmithLogo1.eps and SmithLogo1.jpg). The EPS file format is required because it is a vector-based format that provides better reproduction. The EPS version must be a vector graphic with the type converted to outlines (this step is important!).

Entries must be the work of students enrolled in classes taught by AEJMC members. Each school may enter a maximum of 10 logos per design instructor. In order to be judged, logo entries must be submitted by a faculty sponsor (this step is also important!).

Faculty sponsors must also include a list of file names (such as: entrants.doc) with the entrants’ names, addresses, and email addresses, plus their own full contact information (office phone, email address, campus address, etc.) Winners should be notified before May 15, 2015.

Entries must be successfully submitted no later than March 31, 2015.

Please submit each logo entry’s EPS (.eps) and JPEG (.jpg) files to the competition email address for the AEJMC Logo Competition (which will be received by logo competition chair, Alia Yunis). The address is viscomlogo@gmail.com (File size limit for attachments is 25mb.)

Questions regarding the 2015 logo competition may be sent to Alia Yunis at alia.yunis@zu.ac.ae

Students unfamiliar with the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication can learn more at http://www.aejmc.org
Research is constantly evolving! In the late 1960s Anthropology and Communication researchers Sol Worth and John Adair had a problem in the preliminary stages of their research in northern Arizona. They wondered how they would select, teach, and learn about film and communications from a small group of Navajo Native Americans. Building on the photographic participatory research method of John Collier (Collier 1961), Worth and Adair sought to involve their participants as “co-researchers” in their ethnographic study amidst a changing cultural and academic climate.

Their innovative use of local participants, filming life in their community, and narrating what was seen through their lenses, was transforming. The details of their study Through Navajo Eyes, can be further examined in your leisure, but the implications of Worth and Adair’s work today, in this similar changing cultural and academic climate, can serve as an important research case study looking forward. They understood the value of embracing others’ perspectives and including it in their works’ translations. Their work reflected a commitment to participatory research while providing a more relevant translation and deeper level of understanding in the process.

Looking Forward through a Lens at Ferguson

Current trends in Visual Communication illustrate how fluid our vocation is. The content that is splashed across our television screens, in newspapers and magazines, and on websites is no longer just produced by professional journalists, videographers, graphic designers, and tempered by media gatekeepers. Much of today’s content is contributed by everyday folk, who have cameras, and pens, and the desires to share “their experiences” with others. This vision and commitment to collect more complete pictures is in part what Worth and Adair’s research brought forth.

Today, with a growing emphasis focused toward more participatory and collaborative models of research (McIntyre, 2008; Pinney and Peterson, 2003; Tait 2013; Wang, Morrel-Samuels, et al. 2004), we are challenged to examine where and how we go about including the voices of those often overlooked or disenfranchised. Whether it is in Ferguson, Missouri, following a police shooting where a police officer shot an unarmed African-American and people took to the streets not only in protest, but with cameras, social media, and their experiences, or in South Africa, following the passing of a beloved leader. Or in Joplin, Missouri, following a deadly tornado, their efforts have complimented our ability to view and truly see what’s happening in our world – they have given us another set of eyes (perspective) from which to see and understand and interpret our world. Perhaps, there are research opportunities in your community that are being overlooked?

Research provides us a vehicle “to formulate and solve problems, to ask and to answer questions,” and see and evaluate the effects of our work.
CREATIVE RESEARCH

Five present creative scholarship at AEJMC

For those who didn’t make it to the creative research/works session at AEJMC here is a list of the winners (not in any particular order). Links are included where available.

- “Looking at Laurie” David Staton, Oregon
- “Imported From China” Geri Zeldes, Michigan State
- “You Be The Photo Editor” John Freeman, Florida
- “Waiting For The Cars” Howard Goldbaum, Nevada-Reno
- “Internal Migration” Josh Meltzer, Western Kentucky

The acceptance rate for AEJMC this year was about 30%. Thanks to all who submitted and judged. As I’ve mentioned before, the best things about organizing this session is being able to be to see the amazing work in visual communication our members complete as they seek to grow as artists, researchers and teachers.

Some wonder, “What is creative research?” The word “research” is sort of a misnomer. So, to give the session a bit more focus, we’ve made an adjustment to the call by emphasizing that this session is designed to primarily feature personal creative work that would be listed under the “Creative Works” section of your vita.

Good luck with all your creative ventures this year.

See call for entries for 2015 Creative Projects Competition on page 11

RESEARCH
Continued from 9

Lester posits, “Visual Communication is to be educated about the many ways that information is produced and consumed in a modern media-rich society” (Lester, 2014, xi-xii).

Looking ahead, our VisComs research committee is excited about the opportunities, but is also reminded that, “All of us doing research, and our students working with us and being trained to become researchers on their own, are concerned about the kinds of questions and answers we provide. We have constantly before us the certainty that our colleagues will question and criticize our theories, hypotheses, methods, and conclusions” (Worth and Adair 1974, 5). The San Francisco conference will be a wonderful place for our division to evaluate many of the challenges facing our discipline. We are challenged to not only maintain our high ethical standards and quality research-oriented standards but to address the changing technology.

We look forward to learning and sharing with you, just as did Worth and Adair, to ensure our discussions include the problem solving, production and consumption involved in media that will help us to be successful in the future.

See you there!
**Deadline:** April 1

2015 Creative Projects Competition is an excellent opportunity to have your efforts recognized by peers in a juried forum. Winners will present their work at the national AEJMC convention in San Francisco, Aug. 5-9.

**What gets submitted and accepted?** The format is non-restrictive, but an entry must include a strong visual component that would tend to be listed as “Creative Works” on your vita or university rank documents. Accepted projects in the past have included historical studies, photojournalism exhibits of original work, books, explanations of summer grants or activities, creative DVD and documentaries as well as student-partnered work where the teacher was a participant as well.

Your submission should include a one-to-two page explanation of the work, stressing its significance to the study of visual journalism. Did you receive outside support? Does the project examine cutting-edge technology that will enhance your teaching abilities? How does this project fit in with your own interests and goals as a visual educator? Normally there are about 15 submissions and five are selected for 15-minute presentations.

Internet access is not guaranteed, therefore you must show your work via a CD, laptop, thumb drive, etc. A computer projector will be provided on-site.

Emailed links and PDFs are preferred (see email address below), but you can also submit via snail mail. Package four copies of it into four individual 9”x12” envelopes. Large and unusually shaped packages present handling issues. For example, instead of submitting an elaborate 11”x14” leather-bound portfolio of archival photographs, send 8.5”x11” inkjet or laser prints stapled together. Instead of tubes with large rolled posters announcing your film course’s festival, send 8.5”x11” versions.

Also, if submitting CDs, use cross-platform common programs.

In one larger package, send your four envelopes (three copies without any identification) to the creative projects chair (see below for mailing instructions). On the cover sheet of the fourth copy, include your name, title, complete contact information (email, phone numbers) and a 75-word abstract summarizing the project.

Submitted material will not be returned.

**Important:** You cannot enter creative projects in any other convention category, including “Best of the Web.” There is also a limit two submissions per person.

The competition is relatively competitive; the 2014 acceptance rate was 33%. Projects that score high tend to comprise high levels of individual creativity or tend to be innovative in some other way. The judging matrix includes:

- Relevance to the focus of the Vis Com Division
- Strength of the visual component
- Creativity of design
- Unique attributes of the project
- Contribution to the studio or teaching of visual communication
- Clarity of purpose and the written description.

The postmark deadline is April 1. Notification will be emailed to all applicants by May 10.

Send projects to:
VisCom Creative Projects Chair
Quint Randle, BYU
Department of Communications
322 BRMB
Provo, UT 84602-2501
Over the last three years, as I have been immersed in visual communication research, I have been concerned that my ability to keep up with technological advances in photojournalism and to produce creative work might be hampered by my focus on theory. When there are papers to be written, conferences to attend, and dissertations to be proposed, it’s challenging to stay abreast of developments in photography practice and to work on photo projects.

As a graduate student with an eye on a competitive job market, I know that an ambitious research agenda is important. Yet, I also feel a responsibility to the students I will be teaching to have up to date knowledge about the media skills that they will need to be competitive when they graduate. It’s a dilemma I suspect other graduate students in the division are familiar with.

Some of that unease was ameliorated at the AEJMC conference in Montreal. Speaking with colleagues about this issue helped me to realize that this is a balancing act common to those of us in the Visual Communication Division. Carving out time to dedicate to creative work and to staying current with industry trends is challenging no matter what stage one is at in their academic career. There was some comfort in recognizing that solidarity.

What was also helpful was the environment that the Visual Communication Division has fostered, where members’ research, pedagogy and creative interests are all addressed in the programing. I was inspired that alongside rigorous research, creative project competitions were made prominent, and that teaching panels about incorporating technological developments into the classroom were featured.

Mostly, I appreciated the candid discussion during the division business meeting that related to the difficult task of blending theory and practice. Members brainstormed about ways to have the value of creative work recognized by university departments. People shared insights gained from the teaching panels about Google Glass and programing. And exciting ideas were proposed for research and teaching panels at next year’s conference that promise to further synthesize theory, practice, and pedagogy.

This was the first year I was able to take the time to attend the AEJMC conference in its entirety and that I became involved in the Visual Communication Division. Graduate student budgets and time are tight, but I found that making the extra investment in the conference and being active in the division paid off for me this year in terms of bringing me closer to learning to balance my research, creative work, and teaching.

Jennifer Midbury is a graduate student liaison for the Visual Communication Division and a fourth year Ph.D. student in at Temple University’s Media and Communication program.
The AEJMC Midwinter Conference is an annual forum for the presentation of research and debate in areas relevant to the 10 AEJMC groups (divisions, interest groups and commissions) sponsoring the event. The conference provides a platform for presentations and extended discussions in a relaxed setting.

The upcoming conference is scheduled for March 6-7, 2015 at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication (University of Oklahoma) in Norman, Oklahoma.

Paper abstract submissions: Authors are invited to submit research paper abstracts of between 600 and 800 words (word count excludes author information and references). Abstracts should give a clear sense of relevant literature, research objectives, methodological approach, stage of research project (conceptual, data gathering, data interpreting), findings and conclusions.

Visual Communication Division submissions should be made by e-mail to the division’s midwinter chair, Matt Haught of the University of Memphis. Authors can submit any specific paper abstract to only one participating group — submitting the same paper abstract to several groups will result in disqualification and withdrawal from the review process. Do not submit full papers.

Authors of accepted papers will be notified by mid-January 2015. Papers presented at the midwinter conference are also eligible for presentation at the AEJMC national convention in August. Authors are encouraged to use the midwinter conference as an opportunity to get feedback on their research to improve and finalize it for submission to the national conference.

Authors of accepted abstracts must submit complete papers (not exceeding 30 pages) to the discussant of their conference session at least two weeks before the midwinter conference. The midwinter chair will send authors the names and contact details of the discussant for their session. At least one author of each accepted paper must register and attend the conference to present the paper. Failure to register by the deadline will result in authors’ names and papers being removed from the program. No onsite registration will be available.

Panel submissions: In addition, the organizers are also inviting panel proposals. These proposals should be sent to the midwinter chair of the particular division or group they wish to present the panel to. Panel submissions should include the panel title, a description of the session’s focus, the issues to be discussed, and a list of panelists (potential and confirmed), including affiliation. Panel proposals should not exceed two double-spaced pages.

Submission format: All submissions (for paper abstracts and panels) should include the name(s) of the author(s) or panel organizer(s) on the title page only. The title page should also include the author or lead author’s (or organizer’s) mailing address, telephone number and e-mail address. The title should be on the first page of the text and on running heads on each page of text. Authors should e-mail their abstracts or proposals as attachments (saved with the author’s last name as file name) in a standard word-processing format to VisCom midwinter chair Matt Haught. Authors must ensure that they remove any identifying information from their document (with the exception of the title page).

Deadline: All submissions should reach Matt Haught, VisCom midwinter chair, by noon, December 1, 2014.

Questions about the Midwinter conference and submissions should be sent to mjhaught@memphis.edu.

Details about conference registration, hotel accommodation and airport transportation are be available here.
TEACHING IDEA

Critical thinking intro to photojournalism project

EDITOR’S NOTE: This article was submitted to the VisCom Idea Exchange but exceeded the space limit. Instead, it appears here.

Gabriel B. Tait
Arkansas State University
gtait@astate.edu

For years photojournalism (photography) instructors have trained students on the basic concepts of composition, lighting, and visual storytelling. Many of their assignments have helped advance the young photojournalists in the practical and technical aspects of the craft, but (in many cases) have failed to develop their critical thinking and communication skills. This assignment seeks to foster the seeds of critical thinking within the photojournalism student.

During our first basic photojournalism class, I ask students two questions: “Why are you in this class?” and “What do you want to get out of this class?” Almost always the students express a desire to learn how to take “good” and “clear” photographs. I encourage and assure them that they will learn the skills to take “good” and “clear” photographs, but ask again “why are you in this class?” This stumps the students.

Now that I have their attention, I share my journey as a student (who started taken photographs at 11-years-old) and guide them in how to understand their story, and why they may be in this class. Below is an assignment breakdown.

Take away 1: Everyday Instructional Strategies
The Photographer in Me

Assignment time 45 minutes (not including archival research time).

This photograph is of my younger brother, Fred, and my Dad, outside of our house in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, circa 1987. We lived in this house on California Avenue until I went to university. I had a lot of great memories in this house. My Dad is wearing a black Peacoat and has a small Afro with a part cut into his hair. He has on a sweater vest and his shirt is open showing two gold chains. One of the chains has a gold comb charm. My Dad has always been a classy dresser who pays attention to his appearance. He was a barber for almost 50 years. My brother is giving thumbs up. This is similar to his personality now, nearly thirty years later. This photograph shows that I have always had an interest in showing personality portraits of people. One of my gifts in taking photographs has been getting inside of people’s life with my camera. In this class I want to focus on taking photographs that tell a story about peoples lives.

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At the beginning of the Photographer in You unit, I utilize a Think, Pair, and Share model of critical thinking. Students will complete this assignment on one 8x11 sheet of paper.

For this assignment students will need to select one of the first photographs they have taken (they can make a digital copy of the image and bring it to class). It does not matter how long ago they took the photograph (sometimes the longer the better). Once the students have acquired a copy of their photograph they will write and reflect on the details in the photographs... i.e., tell the story ... detail the situation.

First, I ask them to write details about the photograph (who is in the photo, when was the photo taken, where was the photo taken [city, state, location, home, work, business, etc.], what conditions was the photograph taken [e.g. time of day, weather conditions], what clothes are the people wearing [if there are people in the photograph], and any other details that will give them a concrete foundation of what is going on in the picture. They will then write: Photo by: __________ (adding their name) at the end of the paragraph. (The Photo by: exercise gives the students a sense of purpose and show ownership of the experience that their first photograph is important.)

After completing this step, I now ask each student to then reflect (to the best of their knowledge) on why they took the photograph and how this photograph may inspire them in this class. They should then write any memories the photograph brings to bear.

Once the student has completed these steps, they submit the assignment with a copy of their photograph.

During the next class, I show each photograph and ask the responsible students to give their presentations about the image. As the class listens to each presentation there is often a moment where the student realizes there are more concrete reasons that they are in the class than just to take “good” and “clear” photographs. The student suddenly sees something that is inside of them that gives them a reason for taking photograph and expressing their passions (if they like nature – they may often take a lot of photographs of the outdoors, or if they like photographing people – they shoot portraits of people).

This assignment is another way to unlock The Photographer in You and get the students thinking about the reasons they take the photographs they do and what they have to share.

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**CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

**Best of the Web/Best of Digital seeks entries**

**Submission deadline: April 1, 2015**

Full rules and submission instructions will be posted online by Dec. 31. As the name suggests, the contest is now open to both websites and apps.

There will be categories for individual, class and institution entries.

The Best of the Web/Best of Digital contest is jointly administered by the Communication Technology (CTEC) and Visual Communication (VISCOM) divisions of AEJMC. This year’s chairs are: VISCOM: Kim Komenich (kimenich@sjsu.edu) and Philip Loubere (Phil.Loubere@mtsu.edu).CTEC: Cindy Vincent (cvincent2@salemstate.edu).

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**TAIT**

Continued from 14

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This assignment is another way to unlock The Photographer in You and get the students thinking about the reasons they take the photographs they do and what they have to share!
The Visual Communication Division of AEJMC invites faculty and students to submit competitive papers devoted to theoretically based studies of visual communications and to issues concerning the professional practice of visual media production for presentation at the association’s annual conference. Visual is broadly defined and includes photography, film, television, web design, graphic design, illustration, and digital imaging, as well as other visual phenomena.

The division encourages submission of papers that address a broad spectrum of methodology and application, both qualitative and quantitative, on all types of visual media—advertising, broadcast, digital imaging, film, graphic design, multimedia and web design, photojournalism, propaganda images, visual images and culture, visual literacy, and visual aspects of political campaigns, etc. Research in media history, law, policy, effects, processes, uses and ethics regarding visuals are also welcome. All submissions will be blind refereed by a panel of independent readers. Student papers compete on equal footing with faculty papers. A $100 award will be given to the top student contribution. The top three faculty papers will be recognized in the AEJMC annual conference program.

Papers are accepted for peer review on the understanding that they are not already under review for other conventions and that they have been submitted to only one AEJMC group for evaluation. Papers accepted for the AEJMC Conference should not have been presented to another convention or published in scholarly or trade journals prior to presentation at the conference. Authors may submit more than one paper to the Visual Communication Division.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: All research papers must be uploaded through AEJMC’s ALL ACADEMIC web site. Make sure to upload through the link marked Visual Communication Division. All papers must be uploaded to the server no later than 11:59 p.m. (Central Daylight Time) Wednesday, April 1, 2015.

All papers must be type-written and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Format should be Microsoft Word or a PDF. The page limit is 30 pages, inclusive of all references, notes, tables, illustrations, and appendices. Manuscripts must conform to the APA reference style.

Upload an abstract separately of no more than 75 words. Completely fill out the online submission form with author(s) name, affiliation, mailing address, telephone number, and email address. The title should be printed on the first page of the text and on running heads on each subsequent page of text. Please make sure not to include author name(s) on title page or running heads and confirm that no identifying information is in the File Properties area of the MS Word or PDF file.

All authors will be advised whether their paper has been accepted and will receive a copy of the reviewers’ comments by mid May, 2015. At least one author of an accepted paper must attend the conference to present the paper. Failure to attend the conference will disqualify an author from the next year’s competition. For more information on submissions to the Visual Communication Division, contact Gabriel Tait, Arkansas State University.
Darren Sanefski, University of Mississippi, presents a seminar about infographic dos and don’ts as part of the Data Visualization pre-conference workshop at the 2015 AEJMC convention in Montréal.

Bonnie Layton, Indiana University, and Matthew Waite, University of Nebraska, shares tips for collecting and processing data as part of the Data Visualization pre-conference workshop.
Seth Gitner, Syracuse; Denise McGill, South Carolina, Adam Glenn, CUNY; Gavin Stern, Scripps Howard Foundation; and Wasim Ahmad, SUNY Stony Brook, discuss the teaching hospital model for education on a panel discussion at the August AEJMC convention in Montréal.

Top Faculty Paper winner Janis Teruggi Page receives her plaque from Seth Gitner.

MARY BOCK
TEXAS
Do you teach in an educational unit dominated by traditional academics, in which research and journal publication are the norm, but you yourself engage in creative work? Then you have likely encountered confusion among your colleagues as to the value of your work, especially when applying for tenure and promotion. Many of us can share stories of mischaracterizations of the worth of our creative endeavors when compared to research and publication.

To assist our colleagues who are in this situation, a proposal was made that the Viscom division have a statement on the value of creative work toward tenure and promotion. This statement could be included in a faculty member’s application. To write this statement, I have solicited and found some tenure guidelines from a number of institutions, along with a copy of a CONEE (Committee on News and Editorial Education) statement from several years ago, which express in various ways how creative work should be weighed and evaluated by promotion and tenure committees. I have compiled all these documents into a draft of such a statement for our division.

This is the initial draft:

**AEJMC VISUAL COMMUNICATION DIVISION statement on evaluating the creative work of visual communication and professional track faculty**

Tenure and promotion committees at academic institutions may at times face the task of evaluating a faculty member based on creative work rather than on more traditional academic research in published form. In visual communication areas, creative work will most often be in the areas of film, video and photography, and graphics, design and illustration in both print and digital platforms, including website and app design, interactive graphics and animation.

Work of this nature may have been done to tell stories, either documentary or fictional, to present journalism or information in a visual way, or for reasons other than purely academic pursuits; it may be professional, even commercial, i.e., done for paying clients or investors, it may be in the pursuit of technical experimentation in the given medium, or it may be purely artistic expression. And its distribution, unlike publication in established journals, may be through a variety of platforms and venues, making it more difficult to evaluate its audience reach and value to its field.

Nevertheless, our division would like to affirm the value of creative work to the advancement of education and to the enrichment of academic institutions, fully as important as academic research.

Creative work is a necessary pursuit by faculty in visual fields in order to remain knowledgeable, competent and current in their areas and to make them more effective teachers. This is especially true of faculty whose main credentials are derived from their professional experience, and whose value as teachers is due to their professional experience.

Creative work should be evaluated on such criteria as:

- contribution to the creator’s field. Does it present new ideas and approaches, and does it advance the field in ways that are of value to other members of the field?
- venue and audience reach. Analogous to a publication’s reputation, is it presented in a way that makes it accessible to its intended audience, and so that other members of the profession can review it and have the opportunity to both learn from and critique it?
- Does it provide a new experience and help those outside the field better understand the field’s value to communication?
Monograph chronicles work of Bill Rauhauser

Bill Rauhauser, an iconic Detroit photographer and educator, has been named the Kresge Foundation's 2014 Eminent Artist and had his work published in a monograph. The monograph celebrates contributions of Rauhauser, who devoted decades to capturing what he describes as a society in constant motion. Although he is best known in the Detroit area – the site of most of his street photography – he achieved national attention in 1955 as part of the famous “Family of Man” exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. His work also included in the recent “Another Look at Detroit: Parts 1 and 2” exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery and Marlborough Chelsea in New York. The 94-page monograph recounts Rauhauser’s work as a photographer and includes scores of his pictures, including a number of genres in addition to the street photography for which he is best known. The monograph also covers his role as an educator, notably his 30 years teaching in the photography department at the College for Creative Studies. A number of his now successful and prominent students – including Michelle Andonian, Peggy Day and Dave Jordano – offer testimonials to his influence in the book. Rauhauser also played prominent role in the building of the photography collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts, and is a collector and curator of note. A selection of his writings on the craft, history and philosophy of photography is included in the book. Like monographs celebrating previous Kresge Eminent Artists, the publication will be provided to the Library of Congress, the Library of Michigan and other institutions and organizations associated with the respective artists. Hard copies of the monographs are free and available by contacting the foundation. The monograph can be downloaded for free from Kresge.

STATEMENT
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■ Does it provide a unique intellectual, revelatory or emotional experience to its audience?
■ Does it present ideas or information in a stronger, clearer and/or more accessible way than could be expressed in text or in other traditional media?
■ Does it help the faculty member(s) who created it to improve their knowledge and expertise in their field, and aid them in being better teachers?

An excellent work of creative scholarship often takes more time and thought than traditional research and should be valued as much. If it meets any of the above criteria, then it is contributing to your institution’s educational advancement and reputation, and should count positively toward its creator’s tenure and promotion.

— This statement is endorsed by the members of the Visual Communication Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The statement in PDF form is posted, along with the source documents, here: MTSUJournalism.org/aejmc_vcom_statements.html.

Please read it and send any proposed revisions or other suggestions to: Phil.Loubere@mtsu.edu.