

**12th Annual Graduate Research Forum**  
**Sponsored by the Academic Research Committee & Office of Graduate Studies**  
**Tuesday, April 20, 2010, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Germany Lecture Hall, MCC**

**Welcome & Opening Remarks**

**Dr. David H. Magers, Chair, Academic Research Committee**

**Presentations**

**[Time Limit, 15 Minutes]**

**Dylan McLemore, Communication**

**Merle Ziegler, Ph.D., Introduction**

**Perceived Media Bias and Cable News Branding:  
The Effects of Diversification in the Marketplace of Information**

Research Director: Merle Ziegler, Ph.D.

Accusations of media bias have soared, particularly among conservatives, since the adoption of television as a medium of mass communication. Today, the majority of Americans perceive the media as inaccurate, unfair, and biased, with the charges coming from both sides of the ideological split. Underlying this phenomenon are the cable news networks. Operating in a profit-driven industry, CNN, MSNBC, and the Fox News Channel have differentiated along an ideological continuum, with each brand catering to distinct market segments. This study measured perceptions of bias among the three differentiated cable news networks. An experiment was conducted utilizing an unbiased news article and the cable network logos, serving as cues for potential perceptions of bias. Participants (N = 324) had distinct perceptions of each of the three cable news networks, which often differed among partisan groups. Conservatives, in particular, reported widespread bias in the media and engaged in selective exposure to avoid disconfirming sources. However, neither personal ideology nor perceptions of the cued networks affected perceptions of the experimental article, which was overwhelmingly perceived as unbiased. These findings are discussed in relation to biased assimilation and hostile media phenomenon. Directives for future research are presented.

**Taylor Polk, Law**

**Mark C. Modak-Truran, Ph.D., J.D., Introduction**

**The Impossibility of Religious Freedom for Native Americans on Public Land**

Research Director: Mark C. Modak-Truran, Ph.D., J.D.

In *The Impossibility of Religious Freedom*, Winnifred Fallers Sullivan highlights the impossibility of defining what constitutes religious beliefs in a pluralistic society. According to Sullivan, when defining what constitutes religion, courts in drawing definitional lines discriminate against some religious beliefs while protecting others because courts and judges influenced by their own religious views cannot define religious beliefs to include all beliefs in a pluralistic society in which people's religions are increasingly personal, are not documented in a sacred religious text, and essentially are on the "periphery...of normative religion." Drawing from Sullivan's thesis, the main thrust of this paper is to explain why the courts have narrowly interpreted "substantial burden" in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) and how this narrow interpretation—informed by a Westernized conception of property rights—discriminates against Native Americans, thus making protection impossible under RFRA for the tribes on public land.

**Charles Graves Sallis, English**

**Lee Harding, Ph.D., Introduction**

**Reverend Shegog's Verbal Witness: Articulating the Past through Imagination**

Research Director: Lee Harding, Ph.D.

The Easter Sermon that appears in the fourth section of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* has been called a racial jeremiad that mocks the speech patterns and behavior models of black Mississippians, merely to achieve effect and to allow for some kind of emotional satisfaction. This assessment is inaccurate. Indeed, the Easter Sermon is a lovingly rendered work of art.

**Intermission – 15 minutes**



# Mississippi College

A CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

***Emily Vines, Art***

***Stephen D. Cook, M.F.A., Introduction***

***Three Illustrators Who Blurred the Line Between Fine Art and Illustration***

Research Director: Stephanie Busbea, Ph.D.

Unfortunately, many in the realm of fine arts regard illustration as an inferior art form in comparison to the noble aspirations of painters, primarily due to illustration's commercial aspects. In fact, the debate of validating illustration as fine art has carried on among the art community for decades and still seems unresolved today. However, illustrators such as N.C. Wyeth, Jessie Wilcox Smith, and Beatrix Potter exhibited the same characteristics and artistic knowledge as fine artists. Each of these illustrators showed great consideration and even sentimental attachment to the subject matter they painted. They spent numerous years building their careers as artists and illustrators. Additionally, all had various levels of education in the arts and developed their own unique style and media preferences as any skilled artist would. Thus, each of these admirable illustrators proved themselves worthy of the label of fine artist.

***Kassi Rushing, Communication***

***Mignon Kucia, Introduction***

***Assessing the Progression of Suggested Methods in Measuring Public Relations***

Research Director: Mignon Kucia

Methods for measuring public relations were examined in a chronological review of literature from the 1960s through the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Summaries of the public relations measurement concepts and the evolution of that recommended methodology is presented and assessed. Measurement methods in the literature ranged from output measurements such as counting press clippings to experimental designs with numerous variations between the two, including both quantitative and qualitative variations. The categorization of measurement tools was reviewed as proposed by Lindenmann and Freitag. A final recommendation for effective public relations measurement criteria is presented by the author.

***Theresa H. Neyland, Law  
Introduction***

***Angela Mae Kupenda, J.D.,***

***Pardon Me, Mr. Obama: The Presidential Pardon Power and Immigration Amnesty***

Research Director: Angela Mae Kupenda, J.D

In a climate of rising tensions over the economy and healthcare, President Obama is also faced with the pressing issue of immigration reform. However, in a political climate that includes increasing numbers of hate and nativist groups who staunchly oppose allowing immigrants to enter the country at all, Congress may be stymied in efforts to produce a rational and workable immigration reform package. This paper addresses the growth of hate groups and their impact on the mainstream political process and whether President Obama can take action on part of his immigration reform proposals – bringing undocumented immigrants out of the shadows—without Congressional action by using expansive pardon powers of the office of the Executive.