Students Make a Political Impact with Fact Lab Class

Have you ever watched a political ad and wondered about the accuracy of the facts? Students in the pilot Fact Lab class in the department of media, film and journalism studies (MFJS) sought and shared the answer to that question as they analyzed and graded Colorado midterm election ads.

Fact Lab was launched in fall 2014. The interdisciplinary course focused on critical fact-checking of political messaging for the 2014 midterm elections, and covered topics such as messaging, civic and political issues, logic, rhetoric and image analysis. It was taught by Chuck Plunkett, politics editor for The Denver Post.

“What makes an ad so dangerous and powerful is that it’s difficult to discern if it’s true or not. Political messaging is not to be overlooked, and it’s a hefty responsibility to take a complex subject and provide a thorough analysis,” said Plunkett.

Molly Homburger, junior political science major, gained an appreciation for the work that goes into compiling ads. “We looked at the ads with a different perspective—the research, claims, visual effects, colors and wording,” she said. Read more...
Fun Facts about the Williams Carillon

The Williams Carillon, dedicated on October 24, 1999, contains 65 bronze bells, which qualifies it as a grand carillon. The largest of these bells weighs six tons. The total weight of the carillon is 64,900 pounds. The Williams Carillon was the 160th on North American soil and the second in Colorado. It was cast by the Royal Eijsbouts Bell Foundry at Asten, The Netherlands.

The carillon, located at the Ritchie Center, is played from a keyboard with wooden manual and pedal keys in a playing cabin located just below the bells. The playing action is entirely mechanical, allowing for musical expression through variation of touch. When school is in session, half-hour programs are performed Monday through Friday, 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

A landmark tower figured in the plans for the Ritchie Center from the beginning. When Carl Williams was first shown plans for the facility, he wanted his contribution to the project to be the tower. In addition to its stunning architecture, the tower also houses the carillon to provide music for major University events and community concerts.

Join us for the 16th Annual Holiday Carillon Recital by Carol Jickling Lens, DU Carillonneur and Lamont School of Music faculty, on December 14, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. More information...

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Alumnus Turns His Lens on Sexual Slavery in Award-winning Documentary

Grant Knisely fell in love with Nepal in 2001, when he traveled there as part of a service-learning project at the University of Denver. It was during that trip that Knisely made his first documentary film, "Project Nepal: A Time to Learn," which was about the DU students on the journey and their experiences volunteering with nongovernmental organizations in Kathmandu.

Encouraged by the student film awards he won for "Project: Nepal," Knisely (BA ’02, communication) made two more short documentaries in the years following graduation. But it wasn’t until he heard horrific tales of sexual slavery in Asia that he turned to filmmaking full time. He formed his own production company, Code Red Films, and returned to Nepal in 2013 to begin work on his first feature-length documentary, "Untouchable: Children of God," which tells the story of two Nepalese girls sold into sex slavery in India.

Read more...

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Puts Her Heart into Research, Teaching

Erin Willer studies the ways in which people communicate, particularly during times of stress. Her research has focused on social aggression among girls and women, and more recently on women’s reproductive challenges. After five years of teaching at DU, Willer considers this past year to be the most rewarding of her
“One goal I have in the classroom is to teach students to be more empathic and compassionate relational partners and citizens. One avenue toward reaching this goal has been to engage them in service learning,” said the assistant professor in the department of communication studies.

Earlier this year, undergraduate students in her Visual Narratives of Women’s Health course worked with Colorado Pregnancy and Newborn Loss Services (CPNL), a local non-profit organization that provides support to families suffering the loss of a baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or neonatal death. The students created videos with the purpose of persuading people to contribute to a crowdfunding campaign to raise money for scrapbooking supplies for CPNL families to create memory books in honor of their lost babies. The organization has raised $3,000 with the help of the student videos. Read More...

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Student Looks at the World through Various Lenses

Neda Kikhia, third year religious studies major, enjoys exploring the world, one course at a time.

“From the professors, to the course content, to the approach the department takes on studying religion, the department really pushes students to develop personally and intellectually in the way the students understand the world,” Kikhia said of the religious studies program.

In addition, Kikhia is majoring in communication studies. She attributes her broadened knowledge and worldview to a diverse liberal arts curriculum.

“Each time I take a new course, I’m exposed to a whole other way of looking at the world,” she said. “Common themes always arise, but the beauty with that is education and humanity as a whole overlap in many ways if you look at them from certain angles. Diverse knowledge and experiences gained in these classes better equip me to make more knowledgeable decisions and question how I perceive the world.” Read More...

FEATURED EVENTS

RECITAL: December 14, 2014, 3:00 p.m. — 16th Annual Holiday Carillon Recital
Join us for this annual performance by DU Carillonneur Carol Jickling Lens, who will play her holiday favorites including “Carol of the Bells.” A video camera in the playing cabin will capture how the instrument is played and project on a video screen below for all to watch. A reception follows the recital, and those who would like to climb the 95 steps may take a tour of the tower. This free concert is open air and will be played snow or shine on the Williams Carillon at the Ritchie Wellness Center.

FACULTY LECTURE: January 8, 2015, 4:30 p.m. — Rocky Road: Reading the Landscape of Colorado’s Interstate 70
There’s little glamour to Interstate 70 west of Denver, but a surprising amount of history. In this talk, William Philpott, associate professor of history, will trace how the highway helped trigger the explosion of outdoor recreation in Colorado’s high country in the decades after World War II — and how the promotional schemes, political controversies and environmental changes of those years reveal themselves in the twists and turns of I-70 today. This lecture
will be held in the Lindsay Auditorium, Sturm Hall room 281.