Welcome to the Fall 2012 CMS Newsletter! In this issue you’ll find our usual blend of features about CMS classes, profiles of alumni and news about CMS events. We have also continued the trend of asking our students to write more of the articles, which gives them additional journalism experience and often helps them to make some interesting and useful contacts.

We want to hear from you! Please let us know if you have ideas for features, and make sure you send us updates on your professional endeavors, as well as your whereabouts.

Julie Dobrow, CMS Director

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CMS hosted Marian Porges (J82), senior producer for News Standards and Practices at NBC News, just days after the 2012 Presidential Election (see page 17 for story).

Send us your news!

Changed jobs? Gone back to school? Moved? We want to hear from you. Email us at cms@tufts.edu.

Do you know someone who might be interested in receiving this newsletter? Feel free to pass it along.
Notes from the CMS Director

I’m writing these notes in the waning days of the fall semester, and what a busy semester it’s been! In addition to our usual flurry of events which you can read about in this issue, we’ve been working with one of our largest senior classes ever (close to 80 students), fielding requests for collaboration from many community organizations and other programs across Tufts, and had our largest ever applicant pool for our yearly Winternship program – we read close to 300 applications for 36 positions!

Speaking of the Winternship program, I am pleased to report that in addition to all of the students who applied (covering all years, all majors, and students from Arts and Sciences, Engineering, and the SMFA program), we will be having Winterns in Boston, New York, Washington D.C., and Los Angeles at many exciting sites in all media industries.

Some sites have hosted Winterns before, but we also have many new sites, including Filmmakers Collaborative in Boston, Grey Advertising and Conde Nast/Glamour Magazine in New York, ABC Disney’s ANT Farm in Los Angeles, and National Geographic Travel Books in Washington D.C. We have well over 30 alums who are generously giving their time and have opened up their organizations to this program and I want to thank each of them.

To see a full list of Winternship sites, click here.

We continue to try to practice what we teach, and are working on building up our social media presence. John Ciampa has been working hard on upgrading our website; check out some of his innovations at: http://ase.tufts.edu/cms/.

John’s also been building some CMS presence on Twitter. Follow him @TuftsArts.

Also, “like” Facebook page and get notices about upcoming events and activities.

And one of our work study students, Claudia Schwartz (F14) has been getting us ready to launch our blog. “Plugged In: The Communications and Media Studies Blog” will be up and running at the end of January, so please contribute!

On behalf of all of us at CMS, I hope that you and your families had a wonderful holiday season, and wish you all the best for 2013.

Julie Dobrow
CMS Director
Alumni Profile, Meg Siegal (J99)
By Shaye Martin (A12)

Shaye Martin (A12) did a CMS Winternship at Arnold Worldwide in Boston in January 2012. Meg Siegal (J99) was her mentor.

It is not every day that you meet an individual who has worked on an advertising campaign that has won 400 awards and contributed to decreasing the number of teen smokers by 60 percent over the past decade. We are privileged to call the well-accomplished and socially-conscious Meg Siegal (J99) one of our own. Today, Siegal serves as senior vice president of Creative for the Truth Campaign (the largest national anti-smoking campaign geared at young people, funded by the tobacco settlement) at Arnold Worldwide out of Boston. She is also the founder of the Research and Design Lab at Arnold.

Siegal majored in International Relations at Tufts, and developed the first multimedia arts minor, combining drama and computer programming, all the while competing in one of Tufts’ only Division I sport — sailing. She believes her liberal arts education provided her with one of the most important skills for the real world: “learning how to work with people.” She also delved into her academic studies, particularly Professor Martin Sherwin’s “very real, hands-on” project to develop a documentary film script based on historical documents. Essentially, she learned how to “create something out of theory.” Overall, Siegal believes her education has contributed greatly to her holistic and multifaceted approach to solving problems. During her senior year as an undergraduate, Siegal participated in her first media internship. By knowing HTML, she “got her foot into the door” of Tufts alum Mitch Rosenbaum’s (A95) small media office on Newbury Street in Boston. At hyper.media, she had the opportunity to work on the first website for the Tufts-bred alternative rock band Guster. With Rosenbaum’s help, Siegal fell into the advertising industry and quickly realized she never wanted to leave.

Recognizing the opportunities that she had as an intern, she remains a big proponent of internships, and dedicates herself to the Winternship program that allows Tufts students to participate in week-long January internships under her supervision at Arnold each year. Siegal is a firm believer in “learning by trying.” She hopes that individuals can use the critical thinking they learned at Tufts to “figure out what story needs to be told and how to do it.”

When asked about qualities she looks for in the perfect young hire, Siegal feels there are three key components. One, the person must be an entrepreneur, two, a critical thinker, and three, incredibly resourceful. “More than ever, it’s this generation that has to hustle,” Siegal said. With free online tools such as social media, she feels that anyone can be an entrepreneur and market his or herself. She aims to “set [young minds] off in a positive direction,” and believes in the power of mentorship. If you ask any Tufts student who has had the opportunity to work with Siegal about their experience, they will tell you she is an inspiration with an unmatched hunger for knowledge and positive, creative thinking. She truly is a lifelong learner who believes in doing work for the public good.

Approaching her work with a socially conscious lens, Siegal firmly believes that “balance can be struck between profit and social responsibility...and that this approach is critical for our world and success.” More than anything, Siegal epitomizes civic engagement in the workplace; she is someone who represents the socially conscious soul of Tufts — a Jumbo who can serve as a role model to all.

Editor’s note: Meg Siegal continues to inspire and mentor new legions of Tufts students through her ongoing participation in our internship and Winternship programs.
Alumni Profile, Matt Bai (A90)

By John Ciampa

Innumerable Jumbos both past and present have been “political” in some fashion, but few have been so deeply entrenched in American politics as Matt Bai (A90).

As the chief political correspondent for The New York Times Magazine and regular contributor to the paper’s “Political Times” column, Bai is at the forefront of contemporary political thought and analysis. His long and distinguished writing career has also included stints at both The Boston Globe and Newsweek, along with the publication of the book The Argument in 2007. In addition, he served as a panelist at Tufts in 2008 for the Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism, which featured Tom Brokaw as moderator.

Bai recently took some time to answer questions about his writing career and his views on the country’s political landscape.

**Could you briefly describe how you first entered into writing and journalism, along with any related experiences you had as a student at Tufts?**

I really did learn the basics of news at The Observer when I was at Tufts, alongside some lifelong friends and talented journalists like Neil Swidey ([A91], now staff writer for the Boston Globe Magazine] and Pete Chianca ([A90], editor in chief, Gatehouse Media New England, North Division]. We worked with all these developing chemicals back then [to produce the magazine], and one day some HazMat team came in and roped it off, and I’m pretty sure we’re all going to grow an extra head in our fifties. But I’ve always been grateful to the school for that experience. I learned how to ask questions and how tell a basic story, but more than any of that I learned how much fun it could be, and I never seriously wanted to do anything else for a living after that. I never laughed as much in my life as I did in Curtis Hall.

**How did your stint as a speechwriter for Audrey Hepburn and your subsequent work at The Boston Globe prepare you for what you do today?**

Those were very different experiences. Writing for Ms. Hepburn and others at UNICEF was a real privilege. People always ask me what Audrey Hepburn was like. In my limited exposure, she was a wonderful person. I was just a kid, and I hadn’t seen her movies and still haven’t, but I think she actually liked that. She was a genuine a celebrity as I’ve met.

But it’s important in your twenties to learn not just about the things you like doing, but also the things it turns out you don’t want to do. And really my work at UNICEF helped me realize that I wanted to be a storyteller in my own right, and not so much a speechwriter. And so that’s what ultimately led me to graduate school and the Globe. I can’t tell you how much I valued my time at the Globe and what I learned there about journalism and urban America. At that time, most papers were sending young reporters into distant suburban bureaus. But the Globe threw us right onto the city desk, and it was an adventure day and night.

Sherman Teichman [Executive Director of the Institute for Global Leadership at Tufts] helped me get that job. He introduced me to Matt Storin, who was then the Globe’s editor in chief, after I graduated from the Columbia School of Journalism. I had no business getting hired there, really — I had no real experience, other than the Observer and a
summer internship. I remember that Matt asked Sherman one question about me: "Is he tough?" I’ve always been grateful that Sherm said “yes.”

In your book The Argument, you attempt to frame the philosophical direction of the Democratic Party circa 2008. With a two-term president in the White House and the party’s continued control of the Senate, is the argument any different today?

Well, I really wrote about the lack of an argument, the need to modernize what it meant to be liberal or progressive. And no, I don’t think that’s really changed. In fact, you could argue that President Obama’s first four years were a struggle to figure out what that argument should be, in real time. Even today, as you and I are talking, a lot of Democrats in Washington are defining their entire existence by whether they can manage to keep 20th century entitlement programs exactly as they are. You could argue that’s a worthy goal, but what’s the economic plan for a 21st century economy? How do we invest more in our younger citizens, rather than transferring so much national wealth to our oldest? What’s the foreign policy framework that keeps us both safe and competitive? What difficult choices do we really need to make? I don’t think either party has managed to get very far toward answering these questions, and I think it’ll take a new generation of leadership to do it.

How would you frame an “argument” for the Republican Party? What do you see in the party’s future in the wake of the last election, amid calls that it had failed to reach a younger, more diverse votership?

I wouldn’t begin to frame that argument, but the good news for Republicans is that the younger voters who are just now beginning to hold the balance of power in elections aren’t really party loyalists. Just because they’re Democrats today doesn’t mean they’re Democrats in 10 years. They’re not joiners, they’re not going to become Masons or Elks. They move around every few years and change cell phone carriers every six months. They’re free agents. And so a candidate who can speak compellingly and inclusively about the future can get their attention, whether he’s a Democrat or a Republican or a Whig or whatever. Elections now are increasingly more about the messenger and the message than about party identification.

Lots of papers are struggling. What do you see as the biggest challenges facing the Times and your industry as a whole?

We face a lot of challenges, obviously. As an industry, our biggest challenge, if we’re honest about it, has probably been a cultural resistance to change, but I think that’s true in a lot of older industries I’ve written about — carmakers, steel mills, record companies, you name it. As big an institution as it is, the Times, I think, has been really creative and flexible over the past several years. And we’ve managed to successfully challenge this idea, which has been especially prevalent among younger readers, that all information and content ought to be free. That’s just silly. Free news is like free love — sounds like fun but doesn’t actually work for a society.

That said, my fear is that what works for the Times isn’t really applicable to anyone else in the industry, because we really do have this singular brand and we occupy a special place in a lot of readers’ lives. It’s not clear what the way forward is going to be for smaller newspapers and magazines. If you had told me 10 years ago that Newsweek would effectively go away, I’d have laughed at you. One thing I really do believe is that print editions will disappear faster than most of the people in our industry seem to think. I read everything digitally now — papers, books, magazines. If we’re still operating presses in 10 years, I will be shocked.

How do you balance the access you have to political operatives while remaining impartial in your reporting?

I pay them off. No, seriously, I don’t really need to schmooze anybody, and I’m no good at it anyway. I get the access I need because people in politics generally want their arguments to be understood at length and in context, and there are very few venues where you can do that these days. I do have some good friends who work in politics, but they’re my friends because they don’t expect any preferential treatment from me, and we don’t even talk about politics most of the time. We talk about our kids.
Do you consider yourself more of a reporter or analyst?

I’m a writer, first and foremost, and the reporting and analysis are both integral parts of that. I could happily live without politics, if it came to that, but I could never stop writing for long.

Speaking of which, I’m taking six months off next year to write my next book, which is about the first modern political scandal and how it changed American politics and journalism forever. It takes me back to my college days and a guy named Gary Hart, who may be the most important American politician whom today’s students know nothing about.

What advice do you have for aspiring journalists?

Actually listen. It’s the most undervalued skill in journalism. Too many reporters just go around collecting quotes and stringing them together, or else they’re offering their own precious insights every 20 seconds on blogs or Twitter. If you’re always scribbling in a notebook, or if you’re writing five items a day, you’re not taking the time to listen to anyone. People will tell you fascinating things that illuminate complexity, if only you can sometimes be still and hear what people are trying to tell you.

Also, I would advise them to remember what I tell my children whenever they get frustrated because they have to rebuild a Lego building or something: Life is in the rewrite.

Alumni Profile, Rosanna Xia (A11) and Nancy Shrodes (A11)

By Christina Failma (F14)

The senior year of your undergraduate academic career is typically teeming with finals, term papers, job applications, and self-preparation for the move into the ever-unpredictable real world. This was what senior year was like for friends Rosanna Xia (A11) and Nancy Shrodes (A11). “I knew by January of senior year where I was going, and Nancy had…,” Xia started.

“I had no idea,” Shrodes finished with a bright laugh. “I [spent my] second semester applying, applying, and then I got an internship for the summer. And then I started applying again for the real jobs. I literally got an offer on my flight back to L.A.”

Xia and Shrodes were both headed to Los Angeles at the same time with the same goals – making it in the real world. “I called up Rosie immediately and said, ‘So, have you figured out your living situation yet? ‘Cause, I got a job here,’” said Shrodes. Their uncanny ability to finish one another’s thoughts reflect not only the strength of their friendship, but the amount of time they spend together laughing, venting their frustrations, and helping one another through one of the most trying times in any young adult’s life.

The City of Angels

“I did an internship in L.A. the summer prior, and I just came out here after graduation,” said Xia. She started an intensive six-month training program at the Los Angeles Times, where she rotated among the various newspaper sections.
As an International Relations and Quantitative Economics major with a minor in Communications and Media Studies at Tufts University, Xia was quite familiar with the industry, but found her training taught her a lot about industry jargon and the whole process of putting a newspaper together.

When Shrodes first began her search for a meaningful career after finishing her Environmental Studies and Communications and Media Studies degree from Tufts, she had very specific criteria: “I wanted very much to be back in Southern California, working for an ocean-specific nonprofit,” she said. Through her experience at her first job, working for the Fund for the Public Interest, she was able to garner a strong skill set to prepare for her role as the volunteer and outreach coordinator at Heal the Bay, an environmental nonprofit organization based in Santa Monica. This organization’s goal is ensuring that coastal waters and watersheds are safe, healthy, and clean.

Tufts University

As working student-athletes, Xia and Shrodes found their academic experience prepared them for the real world in the best ways. At Tufts, Xia compared her research papers at Tufts to her current work in that she needs to be able to synthesize and read large amounts of information, to produce a comprehensive article that is enjoyable and logical for her readers. “I think that really gives you perspective and context when looking for story ideas and being able to flesh it out in a unique, smarter way, than the traditional format you’re taught as a straight news story or straight feature story,” added Xia. “I don’t freak out on deadline. When push comes to shove, I know I can do it.”

For Shrodes, time-management became an invaluable real-world skill, especially in a managerial role. “Tufts provided the opportunity to be able to work, be an athlete, and do well in school,” she said. “That helps when I’m working on so many different projects; knowing what is a priority and how much time I need to allocate to what I’m doing.” Her environmental studies program also provided her with the background to understand industry terms and policies discussed during hearings. “It’s not like I’m starting from square one. I’m learning a couple of new aspects, but I [possess] all that foundational knowledge.

#teamwin

“We have a joke that we developed when we first moved in. We call it #teamwin,” said Xia. When the girls experience an overlap in their job and have opportunities to collaborate, they find their shared experience not only reinforces their friendship, but also strengthens their capabilities as practitioners in their own careers. When Southern California was looking to ban plastic bags in grocery stores, Shrodes saw herself advocating for the bill to pass, whereas Xia was assigned to cover the story.

“My editor thought he had to send me a blog post explaining the context of this plastic bag ban was and he told me, ‘Here, read up and go get some stuff before deadline,’” Xia said. After receiving the assignment, her confidence grew, as she was familiar with the issue through Shrodes’ work. “I said, ‘Oh got this. I know every grievance aired on both sides of this issue.’” While driving around to find people to interview about the issue, she called Shrodes to seek out advice about where the best places to start were. “I called Nancy and she sent me a list of grocery stores that had not put the ban in place yet. [Nancy] said, ‘This would be a good place to go if you need [this],’” recalled Xia, also noting the call was their most memorable “#teamwin” moment.

“I can’t be a source in any of her stories because of that personal connection,” said Shrodes.

At the end of the day, though their jobs are their own; many of their experiences are together.

“The best Nancy-Rosanna moments are just being on the same page about everything,” said Xia.
Alumni Updates

Joshua Berlinger (A12) is an editorial intern at Business Insider, an online publication.

Anna Bick (A12) is an associate producer at Seftel Productions in New York.

Danielle Carbonneau (A12) is a media planner at Digitas in San Francisco.

Alyce Currier (A11) is a content strategist at Wistia, an internet video company based in Somerville that helps filmmakers collaborate online.

Tucker Delaney-Winn (A12) is a production assistant for the WGBH program Martha Speaks.

Jen Faucon (A90) is a regional business director at BBDO/Proximity in Singapore.

Rebekah Gilbert (A09) is an assistant media planner at Proove Accountable Media in New York.

Lisa Granshaw (A09) is a writer and producer at TODAY.com.

Alex Michaelson (A11) is a media manager representing the Kansai Music Conference (KMC), an international music industry conference located in Osaka, Japan.

Sarah Nadeau (A11) works in New York at ThinkBreatheLive, a post-production and graphics company, and as a freelance music video producer with Wartime Productions.

Lindsey Rosenbluth (A11) is a marketing coordinator at Harlem Village Academies, a network of charter schools in New York City.

Alec Schilling (A12) works with social media for Tatcha, a company based in San Francisco.

Nancy Shrodes (A11) is the volunteer manager and outreach coordinator at Heal the Bay, an environmental nonprofit working on water quality in Southern California.

Alex Stein (A12) is an analytics associate at WCG, an integrated advertising, marketing, and public relations firm.

David Sutherland's (A67) newest film, Kind Hearted Woman, will make its debut on PBS' Frontline in spring 2013.

Brian Wolly (A05) is a digital editor for Smithsonian.com.

Send us your news!

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Email us at cms@tufts.edu.
Tufts’ Imaginet takes First and Third at FutureM College Faceoff Challenge

By Kacey Taylor (A14)

Although the Jumbos may not have the top record in football, Tufts has proven it doesn’t mess around when it comes to the newest intercollegiate sport: competitive social media marketing.

Last October, Boston hosted FutureM, an annual conference that explores new and innovative ideas in the field of marketing. The conference attracted over 1000 speakers and consisted of debates, roundtables, demonstrations, and panels. Each year as a capstone to the event, FutureM holds a “College Faceoff.” This year’s faceoff pitted six universities against each other, challenging each to create a social media campaign for a non-profit organization. Tufts sent two teams to compete in the challenge, earning awards for first and third place.

Each team consisted of five members and was given a non-profit organization with a marketing challenge. The teams received a problem statement with information about their company, including a marketing focus, and for the next 20 minutes worked feverishly to develop plans. The teams were then allotted 30 minutes to meet with a representative from their non-profit organization, and an additional 30 minutes to create a PowerPoint presentation for marketing plans. In the final showdown, teams presented their plans to a panel of judges, company representatives, and competing teams.

The winning Tufts team worked with CityYear, an education-focused, non-profit organization that partners with public schools and teachers to help keep students enrolled in school and on track to succeed through tutoring, mentoring, and after school programs. The team centered its marketing campaign on a Twitter hashtag “#WhyIStayed,” highlighting the importance of staying in school and CityYear’s role in reducing school dropout rates. The hashtag was used in both traditional media forms, such as T-Shirts, and social media. The group even showed sample tweets from team members’ personal accounts.

Bella Oriella (A15) believes her team won because, “the other teams came up with broad ideas about how to improve their organization’s marketing strategies, and we stood out because we came up with and executed a creative campaign.” Most teams advised their organizations to increase engagement on Twitter, but did not provide any ideas for how. The Tufts CityYear team came up with specific questions for CityYear to pose on Twitter that would encourage its followers to engage, such as “Who was your favorite teacher and why?” As part of its first place prize, the team won $500 for CityYear to use to implement its campaign.

The second Tufts team took third place for its social media campaign for the Boston New Music Initiative. The campaign stood out because it incorporated less typical social media networks such as SoundCloud and Spotify, along with creative ideas that included a flash mob and a “music in the square” challenge. McCall Bliss (A15) said she learned how fast-paced the marketing industry is and how important presentation skills are when it comes to getting your audience’s attention. She explained, “in regards to social media, I think I realized how each platform has its own use. You can’t post the exact same thing on Facebook as you do on Twitter.” The team not only won third place but also was awarded “best presentation” for their use of Prezi, an interactive presentation tool designed to animate powerpoints.

Everyone who participated really enjoyed themselves. “It really mimicked the real world, according to the judges, and required quick and creative thinking. Also, I got a rush from presenting to the other teams and judges,” said Oriella. “I’m not usually a person who likes public speaking, but this was a lot of fun. I highly recommend the FutureM experience to CMS students.”

Editors note: Click here to visit Imaginet, the Tufts student-run marketing communications group.
An important component of the CMS program is our focus on experiential learning. This takes many forms, one of which is our vibrant internship program.

Our regular internship program, directed by CMS Associate Director Susan Eisenhauer (and supervised by Leslie Goldberg while Susan is on leave), runs both semesters and over the summer. Students work in a large variety of media organizations. Sixty students received academic credit for their internships this past year, and more than 30 did so last summer in internships across the country. Many students find the internship experience so important that they do more than one. We’ve asked a couple of students to talk about what their internship experiences have meant to them.

A Summer at the AGO

By Elliott Davis (A13)

Editor’s note: Elliott Davis is CMS minor and a student assistant in the CMS office. For this issue, we asked Elliott to reflect on his summer 2012 internship experience at the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office with mentor Brad Puffer (A95).

One thing is certain about my summer internship at the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office: it came out of nowhere and it came together very quickly.

Just weeks prior to last year’s winter break, CMS Associate Director Susan Eisenhauer put me in touch with active Tufts alumnus Brad Puffer (A95), the director of communications for Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley. Puffer, who had been working at the AGO for almost a year, was interested in starting an internship program in the press office, and given my interests in media and public affairs, Eisenhauer thought I could be a good fit. It turned out that Puffer thought so as well.

The internship offered me many hands-on office tasks, ranging from compiling news clips about cases on which the AG was working, to writing and editing press releases, to writing feature stories for the interoffice newsletter. During just my first day on the job, I had the opportunity to observe a trial at Suffolk Superior Court involving a breaking and entering case against one of the most notorious mob bosses in Boston. Being there felt like a scene out of The Departed or Goodfellas, and I was just a wide-eyed, inexperienced intern along for the ride. While I was not given major tasks involving the trial, being there and seeing it through was quite the learning experience for me. I got a chance to see how the press team frames ongoing cases through press releases and contact with the media. Puffer certainly threw me straight into the fire on my first day, and I’m thankful for that.

Working at the AG’s office often meant learning how to deal with hotly contested issues or issues that had political currency. For example, I took part in the preparation for a press conference about the office’s recommended fines for faulty storm responses by the utility company National Grid. The fines against National Grid amounted to millions of dollars because of inadequate preparation for and unacceptable responses to the surprise 2011 Halloween snowstorm and Tropical Storm Irene. There were significant power outages during both storms, and some Massachusetts residents were in the dark for over a week. Being involved in this press conference was a significant experience for me at the AGO because it was another example of how government agencies effectively communicate the work they do for the public.
The best thing about my internship was the fact that it was a great change of pace for me. The previous summer I was a new media intern at the New England Sports Network (NESN), where I had writing and editing opportunities, including a number of articles published on NESN’s website. Whereas at NESN I got my first real journalism experience, my AGO internship exposed me to the public relations side of media. At NESN I acted as a journalist – digging up stories and interviewing people for them. At Martha Coakley’s office, I had to deal with journalists, which I have to admit proved to be difficult at times! All jokes aside, my AGO internship showed me how an organization tries to monitor and shape its messages to the public, and this was an incredibly valuable experience.

Now that my internship is over, I consider myself very fortunate to have that experience under my belt. My internship at the press office was one of the most rewarding learning experiences I’ve had since I came to Tufts. It was much more hands-on than I expected, and I got the chance to work closely with Puffer and some other very intelligent and successful people. I value the connections I made, and hope to keep them for a long time.

Burke Intern Joshua Berlinger (A12)

Editor’s note: Josh Berlinger (A12) was selected as the 2012 David Burke Intern. Named in honor of David Burke (A57), former executive vice president of ABC News, president of CBS News, and chief of staff for Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and Governor Hugh Carey (D-NY), the Burke internship offers a promising student a paid opportunity to work in a top-tier media organization for a summer. Berlinger worked with John Davidow (A77) at WBUR in Boston.

Anyone who has spent time in Boston knows how brutal summer can be – 90 degrees and almost as humid as a steam room is a common day. We’ve all waited for the T, praying that it comes so its air conditioning can give you a reprieve from the scorching conditions. You look over, and at any time of day you’re bound to see someone exhausted from running around town, drenched in a combination of sweat and condensed humidity.

Last summer I was lucky enough to be that guy. I got to go to the top of one of the Seaport District’s tallest buildings to take photographs. I wrote scripts for the air, reported on my own stories, and assisted on others. I got to speak with Mayor Tom Menino – twice. I tracked down most of New England’s Olympians, and got sound from the scene of a bus crash.

I did all of this during the summer of 2012 as the David Burke intern for WBUR, Boston’s NPR affiliate. Although I had interned in newsrooms before, I came into WBUR relatively green – it was my first time working in broadcast news. But I filled a niche position as a “multiplatform” intern. I did most of my work with the web team, tasks involving photography, online editing, and some writing for the website, while still being allowed to gather and edit sound, conduct interviews, and write scripts for the radio.

On my first assignment, I was sent to gather sound while the mayor addressed an audience of mostly kids during Boston’s Harborfest celebration. While speaking to the mayor with a plethora of other reporters, the audio recorder stopped functioning (I later learned it was the memory card’s fault, not mine). While I had to resort to using my iPhone to capture sound and take notes, we were able to put together some scripts for the Web and even include some sound of the mayor speaking. The newscast unit did not hesitate to send me out again.
Being quick on your feet helps, but my experience taught me that there is no cookie-cutter method to reporting and telling a story. The patience and trust of the writers, editors, and producers were crucial in helping me learn from my mistakes; their supervision and critique taught me what it takes to produce quality work, and always left me thinking about ways in which I could have done something different.

Although the basics of great reporting have not changed, the news media industry is at a crossroads – the Internet has given way to a myriad of new models for news organizations while creating challenges for the older paradigms. The nine-person web team [which includes former Jumbos John Davidow (A77), Lisa Tobin (A08), and Ben Swasey (A09)] was in a constant battle to adapt while still balancing the site's priorities and goals: to create compelling original online content, use the site and social media as a tool to complement the station's on-air work, and to keep WBUR's organizational model dynamic and cutting-edge.

Journalists today need to be literate in multiple technologies, and producers need to understand how to use various mediums of communication to reach their audience. Tweets and videos can be just as crucial to reporting today as the AP Style Guide. My work with the web team has helped me to better understand how individuals and news outlets can best fit into this new era in journalism without compromising their core goals and values.

On my second-to-last day at WBUR, I was sent out to cover a bus crash at Kenmore Square. I couldn’t stop thinking about the rash of questions that every future Jumbo gets during their senior year of high school. I left the temperate climate of Los Angeles to spend four years on the hill, and every distant cousin, parent’s friend of a friend, and other seemingly distant adult who took the opportunity to engage me on the upcoming formative years of my life all had one question – “How are you going to deal with the cold?”

I’ll make sure to remind them about the muggy summers.

Josh Berlinger is currently working as an editorial assistant at Business Insider, an online publication headquartered in New York. Click here to read some of his work.

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CMS on the Web

Please take a moment to visit our multimedia website, which features photos, useful links, and audio and video files of many events.

CMS Staff Assistant John Ciampa is the site’s webmaster; send him your news and updates at john.ciampa@tufts.edu.

While you’re at it, check out our presence on the Tufts Arts and Sciences Twitter feed too!

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Practicing new media
By John Ciampa

Ask CMS instructor Patrick Johnson how he feels about “new media” and, instead of hearing him wax poetic about communication theory as the typical academic might, you’re likely to get a largely non-verbal response consisting of flashing Web pages and intermittent mouse clicks. Show, don’t tell.

Such sounds and images are the norm in the CMS class “New Media Practices: Participatory Culture in Communication, Entertainment, and Society,” whereby Johnson navigates today’s multimedia landscape with an almost effortless level of skill and aplomb.

The focus of the course, which meets in one of several multimedia screening rooms inside Tisch Library, is to examine and contemplate the impact, reach, and the increasing cultural significance of online mediums such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Craigslist, Reddit, Instagram, and Yelp, among others. Through the study of these and other mediums, in addition to learning more about the communicative power of these sites, students come to understand the extent to which the Web underscores cultural shifts through community engagement, fan culture, commerce, and even personal expression, according to Johnson. Appropriately, he encourages the class to question this very premise by noting it’s “all up for debate.”

Therein lies the tension of the course, something that Johnson likes to take full advantage of. With a teaching style that’s understated, yet affable and concise, Johnson takes an appropriate backseat to the many visuals and images that flavor the class and compel students to engage him in return.

During a class three weeks before the 2012 Presidential Election, for instance, Johnson – mouse in hand, of course – took his students on a brief travelogue of political communication via the Web, stopping for a moment in 2004 when the Internet spurred Democratic candidate Howard Dean’s popularity with younger voters before ultimately playing a hand in his electoral demise (along with television) via the infamous “Dean scream.” The class pondered: Could one sound bite or visual really decide a presidential race?

Many students were too young to remember the clip, but the reaction was telling — most still let out an uncomfortable laugh that was equal parts sympathetic and head-shaking. Just as others did in 2004, they understood that at that very moment Dean had lost the race.

Point taken, Professor Johnson.
From there, Johnson visited YouTube for a click-laden history of how candidates, super PACs, and even private citizens have grown increasingly savvy in their use of the online video giant’s ability to reach a large audience through levels of creativity that simply aren’t conducive to television. As with the Dean example, Johnson shed further light on the Web’s destructive power as he introduced the class to former Republican U.S. Senator George Allen of Virginia, whose unscrupulous use of the derogatory term “macaca” contributed to his unsuccessful bid for re-election in 2006. Johnson also highlighted more recent use of online video in both the 2008 and 2012 presidential elections, where candidates employed online video as jumping-off points for other websites, fundraising efforts, election platforms, and even to mobilize volunteerism for their campaigns.

Pausing for a moment, Johnson stepped away from his computer screen and asked his students: “What kind of impact does all of this material have on the political process?”

“It adds a layer of superficiality,” said Carolyn Pruitt (A13).

“Does it cheapen the presidency?” Johnson responded.

A vigorous discussion ensues. There are no clear answers, no conclusions. But throughout the discourse ideas are heard and then responded to, with phrases such as “politics as performance,” “expanding political memory,” and “instant dissemination” trailing across the screening room as quasi-theories for thought.

In addition to measuring new media’s impact on politics, Johnson also uses the course to explore issues related to self-expression and online communities (Facebook), blogging, video production and distribution (Vimeo), mashups and remixes (YouTube), journalism, advertising and commerce, and even storytelling. Each area of study is enhanced and fleshed out through Johnson’s use of both digital and print readings, which provide depth, history, and a much-needed context to all the bells and whistles that are a byproduct of the steady dose of Web pages and video clips. It’s a strong balance, keeping the class in touch with the future of media while still understanding the importance of its past.

That this broad-based approach rubs off on Johnson’s students is no accident. For his presentation, Evan Winter (A13) researched the modern incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan and how the organization is using video and the Web as recruitment tools for a younger audience. Elsewhere, Yuri Chang (A13) brought classmates inside the Global Poverty Project, illustrating how rapidly the organization has grown since it increased its Web presence beginning in 2009.

“They’re really good at wooing high-profile celebrities and philanthropists to join their campaign,” said Chang.

Kacey Taylor (A13) finds Johnson’s vast take on media not only eye-opening, but essential in a practical sense to her understanding of where media is headed. “New Media Practices taught me to look at media on a wider scale,” she said. “I used to think of new media as simply social networks such as Facebook and Twitter, but this class showed how changes in the media landscape have had will continue to have political and economic implications.”

Like any meaningful course worth its tuition, Johnson’s class gives students something they will almost certainly continue to use long after the last paper is submitted. Electronically, of course.
Inside Marranos

By Madeline Hall (A13)

In introducing his film Marranos at its November 27th premiere in Tisch Library on the Tufts University campus, director and writer Howard Woolf (who, in his day job serves as the Associate Director of the Experimental College and director of the Tufts FilmWorks program), provided little prologue to the eager audience, preferring instead to begin the screening with a brief disclaimer before the lights went down: “This isn’t a Spanish Inquisition soap opera.” The qualification merited chuckles, but the film soon revealed elements resembling the drama associated with soap operas. Charged with marital disagreements, forbidden love and life, and even betrayal, Marranos at first glance does seem to reference the narrative arcs of many a daytime soap. Friends become foes as a function of tyrannical oversight, lovers struggle to reconcile their desire with familial duty, and insults are flung as a result of hatred for another’s essential identity.

However, the realities of the lives portrayed in Marranos cannot be reduced to mere fiction or fantasy. The film tells the story of Rafael, a converted Jew in 15th century Spain, as he attempts the dangerous task of directly serving the Catholic Church while protecting his family’s secret pursuit of its traditional Jewish lifestyle. Referred to as conversos in Spanish, anusim in Hebrew, and crypto-Jews in academia, Rafael and his family represent the extraordinary number of Jews during the Spanish Inquisition who heeded the call to convert to Catholicism in an attempt to circumvent the only other option provided: death.

Much of the film’s ideological struggle derives from the assertion that Rafael makes after encountering a forgotten acquaintance disgusted by his conversion: “Better a marrano than a martyr.” Marrano is the pejorative term for converso, acquiring its negative connotations during the Inquisition to decry Jews who made the choice to convert. Struggling with the guilt of outwardly turning his back on a faith that has guided him and his ancestors for centuries, Rafael must justify the choice to convert rather than die for his Jewishness. He does so by attempting to continue observing Jewish tradition, holding Shabbat and praying in secrecy.

This historic struggle is not unfamiliar to Woolf, whose personal history includes references to the choices of conversos. The narrative of the conversos has been part of his ancestral conception for most of his life, with a father whose Sephardic roots can be traced through England, a country often emigrated to by refuge-seeking conversos. Moreover, Woolf’s instruction in Hebrew school as a boy included much historical study of the Inquisition and the plight of the conversos.

“It’s not like either of those things are sort of major features of my psychic landscape, though!” he joked, referring to the suspected causes of the dream that inspired the creation of Marranos. While in graduate school, Woolf had a dream
that resembled what he described as the barebones version of what the film would become, wherein he watched his *converso* family taken away by Catholic soldiers. The resonance of the dream, as well as its recurring presence in his sleeping subconscious, compelled him to incorporate it into his artistic creations. Heeding the call to bring his dream into artistic reality, Woolf posited, “I think people who are creative always make these contracts with themselves, ‘Someday I’m going to have to do something with that,’ and I always felt that way. If I was ever going to do one thing, it was going to be something with this.”

In its next stages of life, Woolf envisions taking the film into the realm of online viewing, hoping to find outlets for digitally streaming the movie on websites like Netflix. “That is the future, so why not embrace it?” he explained, citing digital streaming as one of the optimal avenues for independent films like *Marranos* to reach larger audiences. “I think one of the great things about it is that you can find your community that way,” he said, referring to the specialization of audience that the advent of online streaming has awarded film.

He also intends to partner with local synagogues and community centers to further expand the film’s audience. With practical concerns of the film’s future in mind, the message of *Marranos* and its resonance with persecuted peoples from around the world will be its true motivators of interest. As Woolf admitted, “That’s how I see it finding its audience – that it is a film that I think does speak to people today.”

Woolf’s considerations for community are not focused solely on the world outside our campus, though; he credits the contributions of the greater Tufts population – present students, faculty, and alumni alike – for also facilitating the creation of the film to an important degree. Reverently, Woolf reflected, “The film in many ways couldn’t have happened without Tufts,” referring to the seemingly endless number of individuals associated with the university who lent assistance in both traditional and unconventional ways. From the talented Tufts alumni who contributed as actors to the friends-of-a-friend who graciously lent their home for filming, Woolf benefitted from the sprawling Tufts community and its associated connections.

Don Schechter (A01, G03), a Tufts alumnus himself, helped in no small part in the production of the film; indeed, as co-producer of *Marranos* and founder of the Charles River Media Group, Schecter was indispensible in the process. In describing the serendipitous manner in which *Marranos* eventually came to fruition, Woolf explained, “One thing led to another, and we made a few short films and a longer documentary that didn’t end up getting made, and I had the idea that this film could actually be made.” The two had worked on projects before, during Schechter’s undergraduate career as well as in his post-graduate life, but the success of this final product rivals their previous collaborations. (Schechter also teaches the “Making Movies” class at Tufts, and has done the film work for many projects including the biography films of PT Barnum Award winners).

It seemed that on the night of the premiere, the collective work of all that had come before the film’s completion had culminated in the excitement of the audience in the dimmed room. Woolf surveyed the crowd, a smile in the corner of his mouth, and his hands clasped before him. He saw life in the room, gathered to celebrate and honor his artistic testament to the struggle of humans in their own challenging lives. Indeed, his choice to create “Marranos” cannot be divorced from the same choice of *conversos*, the choice of the characters of the film, and the choice of those who have perpetually fought persecution.

“I choose life,” Rafael says; Woolf’s efforts brought that life to the screen, triumphant and resilient in its beauty.

*Editor’s note: You can view the trailer for Marranos by clicking here.*
The news about the news
By Christina Failma (F14)

At 9:30 am, Marian Porges (J82), senior producer of News Standards and Practices at NBC News, walks into NBC studios in New York City having already started her day hours before even getting into her office. “I’m either awakened by a phone call from the office or I have about half a dozen emails waiting for me…so I’m already working from the moment I wake up.”

Porges’ day typically ends around 7:30 p.m., but she never rules out the possibility of needing to answer urgent phone calls or emails. “It’s a 24-hour business we’re in,” said Porges. “Sometimes, it’s hard to remember to give yourself a break. What it does to you personally; you have to really love it.”

Growing up in the industry

While many little girls are playing with Barbie dolls at the age of five, Porges was already a regular in the ABC newsroom where she’d accompany her father, ABC Vice-President Walter Porges, to work. “I just sort of knew that I wanted to [be in the journalism industry], and decided I wanted to be a film editor back in the day when you had to actually slice film,” she reminisced fondly.

Porges’ ambition brought her to Tufts, where she majored in political science at the request of her father. “It was recommended to me by a number of people, including my dad, that if you go into journalism, you should go get a good education. Learn history, learn how to write, do all that sort of stuff and a lot of the other stuff is on the job training.”

While a freshman, she secured a summer position at ABC News as a desk assistant, where she was charged with ripping wire copy and delivering it to news correspondents. She continued to work at ABC News each summer while she was completing her undergraduate degree. Porges even took a semester off from school to dedicate more time to her burgeoning journalism career. “It was a political year, and it was the year the Iranian officers were taken, and we developed an evening program that turned into Nightline.

“I thought I was highly regarded and respected, so I think it made it sort of easy because I was treated very respectfully just by who I was,” said Porges. Her hard work and perseverance paid off. After graduating from Tufts, she continued at ABC News as a desk assistant, production associate, associate producer, and then as a producer.

After several years at ABC, Porges moved on to NBC News where she worked as a producer and as an integral part of the special events team, which was responsible for all political and breaking news coverage.
During the memorable 2000 Presidential Election, Porges found herself on the road for more than 10 weeks. “I started election night in Nashville at Al Gore’s headquarters coordinating all the news coverage from there. After three days, I went to Florida where I stayed for another four weeks.” Of course, as we know now, there was no quick resolution to this story, and Porges ended up in Florida longer than she anticipated as she waited for the official ballot re-count that would determine the President of the United States. “Every day, we kind of felt that we were re-writing the law of the land, and it was really just an amazing time to be involved in it.”

Today, Porges’ role as a senior producer of News Standards and Practices puts her in charge of pre-screening NBC’s news programming before it airs, reading scripts and dealing with ethical- and standards-oriented issues that arise. “My day really could be dealing with particular issues, could be dealing with how we’re going to report something, how we’re going to edit this piece of video that someone claims that is a video taken by the Taliban. And we have to make sure we do our due diligence in authenticating it. Doing as much reporting before we go on the air with information is very important to make sure the information we’re reporting [has been] confirmed from more than one source that it’s accurate.”

**The 24-hour News Cycle**

“I think it’s one of the hardest times because we’re asking people to do too many things,” Porges said of the evolving news industry due to the introduction of digital technology. “This is what they’re teaching people in school – how to shoot, how to edit, how to be their own correspondent, how to produce their own stuff. So that’s great because you’re getting a lot of different skills, but what happens is you’re doing a whole lot of things sort of okay as opposed to doing one thing really well.”

The 24-hour news cycle and introduction of digital technology into the industry requires journalists to be more versatile, but it is also providing more job opportunities than ever before. “The rules of the game of communications have changed a little bit,” explained Porges. “That’s hard, but that also means it’s easier in that there is so much content that is needed because you have so many websites, cable networks, and local stations.”

Entering the journalism industry today seems daunting with the amount of technical skills required, but Porges asserted that having a strong background in writing is what will make you successful in the long run. “I would recommend to anyone getting into the field now to go [work at] a local station. At a local station, you don’t have the resources, you don’t have as many people, and you have to do a whole lot of things. And that’s going to make you a stronger journalist.”

Despite the changing times, Porges stressed that future journalists need to “make sure you read a lot and write a lot, because one of the things we lack a great deal of is great writers.”

*Editor’s note: Marian Porges has received multiple Emmy nominations, one Emmy Award and many other awards for her work. In June 2012 she received a PT Barnum Award from Tufts for lifetime achievement in media and entertainment. Porges returned to her alma mater this fall to reflect on news coverage several days after the presidential election. To hear some excerpts from her talk at Tufts, click [here](#):*

*John Ciampa also wrote about Porges’ visit with Fletcher students for the Fletcher School’s website.*