



Communications and Media Studies

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Welcome to the Spring 2011 edition of the CMS Newsletter! We have had an incredibly busy semester, filled with large on-campus events, innovative new classes, and terrific student senior projects. And our alums, worldwide, are involved with a variety of exciting endeavors. As always, we've tried to profile a number of alums in different fields. We're very proud of our students, current and past, and we encourage you to be in touch with us. Please keep us updated and send us your [news](#).

We offer you a small sampling of the work our seniors have done this year, with an emphasis on the ways in which both classroom academics and internships have shaped students' experiences. In this issue, you'll hear more directly from our students, because they are absolutely the best representation of what CMS is all about.

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Moved? We want to hear from you.
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Do you know someone who might be
interested in receiving this newsletter?
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And please remember to visit our
[website!](#)

CMS Newsletter



Volume 3, Issue 2

Spring 2011

CMS News

Academic update

In recognition of the fact that “journalism” no longer means only print or broadcast, and that practicing journalists today need to know how to be the so-called “complete journalist,” this spring CMS introduced a new course, Multimedia Journalism for the 21st Century. Taught by Anthony Everett (A84), a former *Tufts Daily* editor who has been an award winning broadcast journalist and host of WCVB-TV Boston’s *Chronicle* television newsmagazine, this new course focused on teaching students how to write for print, broadcast, and web audiences, how to shoot and edit video and do podcasts and learn other multimedia skills. Of equal importance, Everett worked with students to recognize which platform lent itself best to different kinds of stories.

Another curricular innovation this year has been the new Film Studies curriculum, which divided film studies into criticism/theory and production tracks. According to CMS Director Julie Dobrow, this division was an important step both for the purposes of better reflecting the growing disciplines of Film Studies, and also practically for better advising students and serving their academic interests.

Tufts Innovates! Grant

Julie Dobrow, Director of Communications & Media Studies, and Colin Orians, Director of Environmental Studies, received a Tufts Innovates! Grant to design and teach a new course in Environmental Communication. The course will launch in the Spring 2012 semester.

Orians and Dobrow believe that environmental and media literacy are two critical civic skills for the 21st century. “This was the driving force behind our teaming up,” said Dobrow. “Poor literacy skills in environmental communication have allowed anti-science groups and individuals to ignore and often counter established facts by getting their message into the media mainstream,” added Orians. “They are winning the battle for the hearts and minds of the general public.”

Orians, whose training is in biology, and Dobrow, whose background is in media studies, are excited to bring their respective disciplinary perspectives together in an interdisciplinary course that melds natural and social science. The course will focus on training students to filter and process the information they get about environmental issues, understanding which information appears in the press and popular culture and why, and learning to use the tools of multimedia to communicate about critical environmental issues effectively, themselves.

The development of this course goes hand-in-hand with Orians’ and Dobrow’s collaborative effort to create an Environmental Communication Track within the Environmental Studies major. “We have lots of ideas about directions in which we might go,” said Dobrow. “Environmental communication is an important focus in both of our fields.” Orians agreed and stated, “When we look at the critical environmental issues facing humanity and our planet, there are few things that matter more than effective communication of current knowledge.”

Producing Films for Social Change

In our seventh year of offering a class characterized by so many of the students who have taken it as “transformational,” this fall’s Producing Films for Social Change course yielded extremely strong films on provocative issues. Taught by instructor Dacia Kornechuk, this class offers students an opportunity to learn in 13 short weeks how to conceptualize, pitch, write, shoot, and edit a short film on a social topic. Since its inception, the course has been offered in partnership with the Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service.

This fall’s films included *Bursting the Bubble*, a film about race on campus; *Insecure Communities*, which focused on immigration and deportation issues; *From Farm to Table*, about the push to bring locally grown produce into different markets; *Stand Up, Fight Back*, which profiled the efforts of an organization dedicated to assisting inner city residents with their rights in foreclosure battles; and *Between the Curbs*, a film about biking in Boston. *Between the Curbs* recently won the Ivy Film Festival’s award for Best Documentary Film.

P.T. Barnum Awards

CMS, the Department of Drama and Dance, the Office of Alumni Relations, the Los Angeles Tufts Alliance, and TEAM cosponsored the 7th Annual P.T. Barnum Awards for Excellence in Entertainment on June 6 at 7 p.m. at the Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles. This year’s honorees included Actor, Director, and Comedian Hank Azaria (A88); David Rone (A84), President of Time Warner Cable Sports; and Television/Stage Writers and Producers Prudence Fraser Sternin (J77) and Robert Sternin (A77). A special posthumous award was given to honor film director Gary Winick (A83), who passed away earlier this year.

CMS Events

Couric, Tisch visit Tufts for Murrow Forum

By Jill Slutzker (F12)

On April 11, 2011 students, faculty, and members of the Tufts community packed into the Fletcher School's ASEAN auditorium to hear from *CBS Evening News* anchor Katie Couric in the Sixth Annual Edward R. Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism, entitled *Watching the News: Broadcasting, Webcasting, and Forecasting*. Cosponsored by CMS, The Edward R. Murrow Center for the Study and Advancement of Public Diplomacy, and The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, the Murrow Forum brings together distinguished panelists to reflect on the legacy of renowned journalist Edward R. Murrow and discuss issues in contemporary journalism.

Jonathan Tisch (A76), Co-Chairman of the Board of Loews Corporation and Tufts trustee, engaged Couric in a light-hearted and honest discussion of her 30-year journalism career and the state of journalism in today's social media and technology-driven world.

"I have had such a front row seat to history and have had the honor of interviewing so many people and also taking the American people through so many traumatic and uplifting world events," Couric said.

After graduating from the University of Virginia in 1979, Couric began her career in broadcast journalism as an ABC News desk assistant in Washington D.C., saying she finagled her way up to the newsroom by telling the security guard she needed to speak to the executive producer. "It was hard getting my foot in the door," said Couric, advising students in the audience to be tenacious in their own career pursuits.

During her 15 years at NBC's *Today Show* prior to joining CBS, Couric interviewed world leaders and public figures from Yasser Arafat to former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca. Couric recounted her experiences covering stories from Captain "Sully" Sullenberger's heroic landing of flight 1549 on the Hudson River to the McCain-Palin campaign, the BP oil spill, the Iraq War, and the recent Egyptian revolution.

When Tisch asked Couric about the personal risks of her job she said, "It's so important to try to go and be on the scene because a firsthand perspective and being an eyewitness to history is really irreplaceable in terms of what you're observing." However, Couric said, she assesses the risks of covering a story on a case by case basis and takes her responsibility as a journalist very seriously.

Tisch and Couric discussed the changing landscape of the media with the advent of Facebook, Twitter, and internet news, and the importance of journalists' integrity as the pressure for instant news increases.

"I've tried to embrace new media," said Couric, whose Twitter account, [@katiecouric](#), has 175,000 followers. "Many people in traditional media have been intimidated by it or threatened by it, but this [social media and technology] is not only the future it is the present."

Tisch pointed out that Edward R. Murrow's news reports from London in World War II would take days or weeks to reach the American public, while today Couric's reports from around the world are instantaneous.

As the hour closed, Tisch and Couric turned to Couric's new book, *The Best Advice I Ever Got*, which features essays from 114 people ranging from Queen Rania of Jordan, to singer Sheryl Crow, author Salman Rushdie, baseball player Alex Rodriguez, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and former Olympian and current student at Tufts' Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Michelle Kwan. Couric said her inspiration for the book came in part from searching for advice to impart to college seniors at commencement speeches. All proceeds from the book go to Scholarship America, which has awarded \$2.5 billion to 1.7 million students since 1958.

Couric left CBS on June 4. And while Tisch previously speculated she might be taking a role on the hit television show *Glee* ("I'll be replacing Sue Sylvester," was Couric's response), Couric is, in fact, planning to host a daytime talk show on ABC in 2012.



Above: Katie Couric at the 2011 Murrow Forum

Editor's note: Click [here](#) to watch a video of the 2011 Murrow Forum.

Events (cont.)

Cosby and Poussaint honored at Eliot-Pearson Awards

By Jill Slutzker (F12)

The fifth Eliot-Pearson Awards for Excellence in Children's Media event was held on February 25, 2011, honoring the contributions of Dr. Bill Cosby and Dr. Alvin Poussaint to the field of children's media. Cosponsored by CMS and the Eliot-Pearson Department of Child Development, the award honors commitment to innovation, diversity, non-violence, and developmentally appropriate children's media.

A longtime advocate for responsible children's programming and stereotype-free media that promotes empathy, peaceful conflict resolution, and cooperation, Poussaint has authored over 100 articles on the intersection of children, media, race, gender, the changing roles of family, and issues of social justice.



Dr. William H. Cosby at the 2011 Eliot-Pearson Awards



Dr. Alvin Poussaint takes the podium at Distler Auditorium

Receiving his award, Poussaint discussed the uncertain effects of the increasing exposure of young children to television. "Right now we are having an explosion of children watching media. We don't know what the future outcome of all of this will be."

Poussaint, who has served as an advisor to the Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood, added that "Children learn best by doing. Children who watch the most media do less well in school, and children who watch the least media do better." He advised the audience to pay attention to these effects, because children as young as 4 months old are now exposed to hours of television a day.

Cosby took to the podium after Poussaint to accept the Eliot-Pearson Award honoring his career of over four decades promoting media as a vehicle for education, empathy, equity, friendship, and family. Cosby called to the

stage a young Tufts graduate who was born in Haiti and moved at age 12 to the United States, where he underwent two operations to remove a tumor, lost his vision, and then enrolled in school for the first time. He is now working with the organization Partners in Health, promoting health in developing countries. Cosby called the student an example of courage and achievement in the face of adversity.

Cosby described how after delivering a monologue at the University of Massachusetts early in his career, he was approached by the Dean of the School of Education, Dwight Allen, about taking his work in a new direction and incorporating education. "With the suggestion from Dwight Allen, there was the chance to put my information out but with a spin that had to do with highlighting more my interest in education and getting children and the family to be more involved...this is why I am, at age 73, who I am."



Poussaint and Cosby: Friends, collaborators, and now joint honorees sharing the Tufts spotlight

Click [here](#) for the Eliot-Pearson Awards video.

Other CMS Events: Spring 2011

How to Land a Media Job: Tips for Seniors

February 7

Five veteran media professionals whose jobs involve hiring offered specific advice and techniques for resumes, cover letters, networking, and interviewing in their branch of media. Sponsored by CMS and Career Services.

Panelists included: **Pete Chianca (A90)** Editor-in-Chief, Gatehouse Media, New England (North Division); **John Davidow (A77)** Executive Editor, New Media, former News Director/Managing Editor, WBUR Radio; **Jane O'Neil**, Vice President, Staffing Supervisor, Arnold Worldwide; **Josh Seftel (A90)** Producer/Director and President, Seftel Productions (Film, TV, and Web Production Company); and **Susan Sloane (J75)** Managing Editor, WCVB-TV's *Chronicle*.

Beyond Entourage: How to Break into the Entertainment Industry

February 16

Featuring Drama Department Ph.D. candidates **Fiona Coffey** and **Megan Stahl**.

Fiona Coffey was an Agent at the William Morris Agency and the Harry Walker Agency. She has worked with actors, directors, and playwrights for Broadway and regional theater, and has negotiated book deals for Bono, Bill Clinton, Al Gore, and Martin Sheen. Megan Stahl (A04) was an Assistant Agent in the William Morris Agency, where she worked with established talent such as Angela Lansbury and Jerry Herman, as well as emerging artists like Adam Bock and Liz Meriwether.

A Film Unfinished

March 3

CMS welcomed filmmaker-in-residence **Yael Hersonski** to campus for a screening of her acclaimed documentary, *Film Unfinished*, which critically examined a 1942 Nazi propaganda film about the Warsaw Ghetto.

Images of the Holocaust on Stage and Screen

March 7

Yael Hersonski joined a panel alongside Tufts University professors **Barbara Grossman**, **Joel Rosenberg**, and **Jonathan Wilson** to examine and discuss portrayals of the Holocaust in both the performance and film mediums.

From Medford to Madison Avenue

March 16

Discussion with Advertising Executive **Belle Frank (J76)**, Executive Vice President of Young & Rubicam in New York City. Sponsored by CMS and Imaginet.

CMS Senior Celebration and Poster Session

May 5

CMS' annual celebration presented 75 certificates and 20 awards to graduating seniors, and included a viewing of senior projects and accompanying posters.

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Alumni News

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

Ben Broderick (A09) is at Mick Artist Management in New York City, assisting in the promotion of national music acts such as Ray LaMontagne, John Mayer, and Natalie Merchant.

Melissa Burke (A11) will start as the Experimental College Program Assistant in August.

Michael Cerundolo (A09) is an account executive at Small Army in Boston.

Emily Chapper (A09) was recently accepted into the Media and Communications graduate program at the London School of Economics.

Emily Chasan (A04) is Senior Editor of *CFO Journal* at *The Wall Street Journal*, writing about accounting and capital markets.

Peter Chianca (A90) is Editor-in-Chief of Gatehouse Media north of Boston.

Erin Connolly (A05) is a news anchor and reporter at YNN in Albany, New York.

Nicholas Dynan (A11) is a web producer at Global Post.

Dan Fowler (A03) is the media relations and public affairs officer for the American Sociological Association.

Rebecca Goldberg (A11) is interning at Schachter Entertainment in Los Angeles.

Michael Goldsmith (A11) is a publicity assistant in the children's department at Harper Collins in New York.

Heather Hauswirth (A07) is working on the Assignment Desk at Bloomberg News in New York.

Michael Kinsella (A07) is working as an administrative assistant to the Vice President/News Director at WFLD in Chicago, with responsibilities that include field producing, production assistant work, and reporting. Click [here](#) to view some of his work.

Lisa Lax (J86) and **Nancy Stern (J86)** premiered their documentary, [Unmatched](#) (about the rivalry and friendship of Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova), last fall on ESPN as part of its 30 for 30 film series. Their latest venture, [RISE](#), premiered February 17, 2011 at the Best Buy Theater in NYC. The film celebrates American figure skating while commemorating the 50th anniversary of the 1961 U.S. World Figure Skating Team that perished in a plane crash on its way to the World Championships in Prague.

Alison Mehlsak (A09) is an Assistant Account Executive in the Cause Branding practice at Cone in Boston.

Brad Puffer (A95) is Director of Communications for Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley.

Michael Robb (A02) is the Program Manager for the Early Learning Environment at the Fred Rogers Center.

Amy Rosenbaum (A10) has been accepted into the Columbia Publishing Course at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism.

Sally Rubin (A99) completed her first feature documentary, [Deep Down](#), featured on the Emmy-award winning PBS series *Independent Lens*. The film is about mountaintop removal coal mining in Appalachia.

Jillian Russo (A09) is a production assistant in the research department for *The Dr. OZ Show*.

Gio Russonello (A10) is an editor/researcher for the Investigative Reporting Workshop at American University.

Ben Samuels (A09) is an actor, writer, and director based in New York City. His latest film is a horror feature called [Asylum](#).

Mark Scholnick (A02) is the Director for Program Planning and Acquisitions at E! Entertainment Television.

Stephanie Sherrin (A08) earned a Master's degree at The London School of Economics in media, and is now producing feature films in Los Angeles. Her film, *Conception*, was screened at the Boston International Film Festival on April 17.

Matt Singerman (A88) is Head of Programming at Reelz Channel.

Meredith Turits (A09) is the Assistant Online Editor at *Glamour* magazine in New York City.

Sarah Ullman (A10) is an assistant to Mark Vahradian, President of Production at di Bonaventura Pictures in Los Angeles.

Dan Weiller (A81) is the Managing Director for PLA/Communications in Albany.

Danielle Weisberg (A08) is an associate producer on MSNBC's *The Last Word* with Lawrence O'Donnell.

Caleb Zimmerman (A11) is interning at the Miami office of the advertising agency Crispin Porter + Bogusky (CP&B).

Alumni spotlights

Profile of Jonathan Rosen (A04)

By **Natalie Royal (G13)**

Currently working as a freelance journalist in Rwanda, Jonathan Rosen (A04) has been using the skills acquired from the CMS program to travel around Africa, reporting on a wide array of topics including politics, economics, travel, sports and culture, as well as book reviews.

His love of writing about Africa began the summer after graduation with a three-month volunteer program at a Kenyan high school, where he taught English and geography and was the school's unofficial cross-country coach. Once home, he documented his time in Kenya in a series of articles for an online running publication.

Parlaying his love of travel, he began his master's degree at the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. Part way through the program, he took a semester off to write for a travel magazine in Zanzibar, Tanzania, a job that he secured through the help of Tufts African History Professor Jeanne Marie Penvenne. He returned to school, finishing his degree while writing on the side to prepare himself for full-time freelancing after graduation.

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Rosen at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, Rwanda, covering the nation's 2010 presidential election

Rosen moved back to Africa last March, this time to the country of Rwanda, where he began to write regularly for GlobalPost through a connection he made through CMS. He has written stories from various African countries and has been published in the U.S., Europe, and Africa by publications such as *USA Today*, *World Politics Review*, the *Boston Globe*, the *Washington Diplomat*, and the BBC's *Focus on Africa* magazine. Some of the most notable stories dealt with Rwanda's 2010 presidential election, efforts to reform the mining trade in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and lighter pieces on hiking a volcano in The Congo and an article on Rwanda's fledgling national cycling team.

Impact of CMS

While Rosen was initially unsure that he wanted to pursue journalism, the CMS program piqued his interest and exposed him to different sides of the communications field. The CMS senior project and internship both stood out as prominent landmarks in his academic career.

His senior project, entitled *Media Hero: The Press and the Making of Charles Lindbergh*, "was a valuable experience – a large scale research paper that required months of planning and organization and discipline I haven't come across in any project since." This project gave him the chance to write more journalistically, something that he wouldn't have had the option to do if it was a standard academic thesis. His project is quite relevant to what his current work entails in Rwanda, but in hindsight, he would have greatly benefited from "choosing a topic related to contemporary events rather than history, but on the whole it was still worth the work (including the spring break spent in my bedroom at home cramming to get it finished)."

Rosen's CMS internship was spent as a "runner" for NBC at the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. Although this was not the most glamorous internship, it did allow him to get a glimpse behind the scenes at a top network covering a major political event, especially one that introduced the world to then-Illinois senatorial candidate Barack Obama. Through this experience Rosen gained an interest in the news profession, as well as a dislike for television production. He found he was more interested in dealing with the actual event, not the organizing of the show. "I've found print journalism to be more intellectually satisfying – though, unfortunately, more of a financial struggle," he said.

Advice for new grads

As this is a difficult time to be thrown into the real world, advice for recent graduates is always welcome. Rosen's best advice for new graduates is, "It's tough to go from being a college senior at a prestigious university to being thrust into the bottom of the food chain, the professional work force. Be patient." It's really about the opportunity to gain a valuable experience, which will lead to something better even if that means taking a lackluster job. "Going with the flow" has enhanced Rosen's career with some rewarding experiences that he would not have had if he was stressed out about "figuring it out" when he was still young. He's almost 29, and admits that he still hasn't fully figured it out.

For all those future freelancers, the media world is a tough business, he said, but recent cutbacks in staff positions have really opened up a lot of room for freelancers, especially in the new world of online publications. "Don't be afraid to write a story – about whatever, from wherever – and shop it around. And don't be afraid to get rejected. Connections are important," Rosen added. "Writing talent, of course, is too. But don't underestimate perseverance."

Profile of Aliza Kassim (A06)

By Jill Slutzker (F12)

CNN's Aliza Kassim (A06) has covered breaking news from the recent Ivory Coast civil war to clashes in Kashmir and the plight of Afghan refugees. An International Relations and Peace and Justice Studies dual major and CMS minor, Kassim discovered her niche in news through her experience internationally. "I fell in love with Peace and Justice Studies," she says, "and I always knew I loved writing." At Tufts, Kassim was a reporter for the *Tufts Daily*. However, Kassim says she always viewed writing as more of a hobby than a career.

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Before coming to Tufts, Kassim spent four months in Kabul, Afghanistan as the assistant to Afghan Foreign Minister and recent presidential candidate Dr. Abdullah Abdullah.

Originally from Pakistan, Kassim returned to Karachi in the summer before her senior year to intern as part of her CMS minor for the *News International Newspaper*. There she researched conditions in Pakistan's Central Women's Prison, speaking to women accused of adultery facing little chance of release or fair trial due to strict Sharia trial laws. After graduation Kassim moved to Tajikistan to work with FOCUS Humanitarian Assistance in an impoverished area plagued by mudslides, floods, avalanches, and earthquakes.

"I thought I would one day work for the UN and solve the world's problems," says Kassim. "But I was burned out at age 22...Every country I went to there were so many more problems. That is when the journalism thought kicked in."

After leaving Tajikistan Kassim returned to Pakistan and began working as a writer and anchor for *Dawn News*, Pakistan's first English language news channel. As a reporter Kassim was able to combine her passion for international issues and writing. "I was still working for the causes I cared about, but at the same time I was getting the message out to a larger audience," she said.

Women's rights and issues relating to Pakistan, where Kassim grew up, are particularly close to her heart, although she speaks passionately about a number of social justice and political issues she covers in her stories. She currently works with the Atlanta chapter of Developments in Literacy, an NGO working to increase literacy in Pakistan's underdeveloped areas.

At CNN Kassim has predominately focused on television coverage, which she says is her favorite news medium. "It is the only medium where most of your audience can understand what you are trying to portray. Unless you are extremely gifted, words alone can be a bit confusing." Kassim also loves making documentaries because she is able to tell a story from start to finish, whereas with television news "there is a new story every minute." Kassim said that with such quick news turnover and the pressure to break the next big story, media responsibility is increasingly important, although often overlooked.

For future international journalists and activists, Kassim offers the following advice. "If you are going to enter the journalism world you need to make sure you have enough ammo to know exactly what you want to do. No matter how social media savvy you are, you still need to know "stuff" — political histories, background, etc. It makes a big difference."

"For international work," she said, "realize you need to have patience." Kassim quickly became frustrated with the suffering and problems she encountered in her work abroad, but discovered that a career in journalism, with a platform to expose larger audiences to issues she cared about, was the best way she could take action. Certainly at CNN, Kassim has found a platform for her passion.



Bombed-out vehicles like the one pictured above, were everyday sights for Kassim in the Ivory Coast.

Did you know that any donation you make to Tufts can be designated for CMS? We need your help to continue offering a high quality and up-to-date program for our students. Donations to help us offer new classes, continue to offer high profile events like the annual Murrow Forum on Issues in Journalism, and support for student projects would be most appreciated.

A series of successes

Jeff Greenstein's (A84) ascent up and into the Hollywood hills, and how he's managed to stay there

By John Ciampa

“Off-beat” is how Jeff Greenstein (A84) describes his undergraduate years at Tufts, but given his wildly-successful career in television, his timing has since been impeccable, moving from one culture-shifting series to the next.

Beginning with HBO's groundbreaking show *Dream On* in the late '80s, Greenstein's career climb has led the writer/producer from peak to peak, despite the ever-present pitfalls that claim so many in the industry. His winning streak continued in the '90s with the blockbuster hit *Friends*, followed by *Will and Grace*, and later, *Desperate Housewives* and *Parenthood*. In between, even the relative commercial failure of *Partners*, FOX's mid-'90s sitcom that was cancelled after one season, provided a creative highpoint that Greenstein still talks about.

But before delving too deeply into his story, we need to take a look back – way back – to even before the days when the struggling writer was knocking around the streets of Los Angeles with his friend and fellow CMS alumni board member Jeff Strauss (A84).

Back on the Hill the pair made a good team. They started the Arts Haus on Sawyer Avenue with “the idea of putting people together from different proximities and seeing what happened,” as Greenstein explains it. This mishmash yielded a fruitful crop of collegiate influences from which the pair drew, setting the foundation for their creative pursuits out West.

Initially, though, things didn't pan out in Los Angeles. Greenstein recalls working numerous odd jobs before his first break, including a stint at an insurance company transcribing loss returns. “I had plenty of debt, a car that burned oil and no real prospects,” he recalled. “While waiting for my career as a director to begin, I tried screenwriting. I tried to lure Jeff into joining me, but we weren't very good at first.”

Strauss, meanwhile, was working at ABC in the comedy department, and coming across his desk were scripts for the hit show *Moonlighting*, an early example of the “dramedy” style of writing he and Greenstein would soon perfect. Greenstein recounts a conversation they had during this period. “He called me one day and said ‘Hey, these (scripts) are shorter!’” So they began submitting tighter drafts for sample episodes of *Family Ties* and *Night Court*, among others.

“Jeff was meeting people over the phone and that started moving things forward for us,” said Greenstein. They soon began freelancing, and jointly penned single episodes for *Mr. Belvedere* and *Charles in Charge*. It may have been prototypical '80s comedy fare, but the experience was an important one in that it would soon lead to their first big break.



Jeff and Jeff: Greenstein (left) and Strauss at the 2009 P.T. Barnum Awards in Los Angeles, where the former was honored with a glass Jumbo

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“Around the fall of ’89 we were starting to get discouraged,” said Greenstein. “Then we heard of this new show in the works for HBO. At first we hesitated, wondering whether it would be the kind of thing that would put us out of the mainstream.”

Debuting on cable in the summer of 1990, HBO’s *Dream On* garnered enough attention and critical acclaim to keep both Greenstein and Strauss well within the safeguards of the mainstream, but the show’s decidedly edgier material also did something unexpected, pushing them creatively as writers and conceptualists, as did the series’ producers, David Crane and Marta Kauffman, who actively supported the show’s growing reputation of having what was then dubbed as a “cable edge” and an “off-network” slant.

“We were encouraged to approach adult material, drug use, anything that would mark the show as something you wouldn’t see on ABC or the other networks,” said Greenstein. “The best thing for a young writer is to throw away formulas.”

Crane and Kauffman would soon leave the show, leaving Strauss and Greenstein behind to produce it. The series continued to be successful for another three seasons. During this period, Greenstein admits to becoming a “cable snob,” with no intention of returning to network television. That is until his old bosses called.

Crane and Kauffman had an idea for a series tentatively titled “Six of One.” They wanted the show to be fast-moving, with simultaneous plotlines and an ensemble cast that had no single actor standing out from the rest in terms of screen time and visibility. Accordingly, they sought emerging writers who had fresh perspective and an insight on what it was like to be a young professional in their twenties looking to make it in the big city – something Greenstein and Strauss clearly identified with. The resulting *Friends* would become one of the most popular shows in television history, racking up countless awards while catapulting the careers of several cast members. The show’s energy was infectious, and it moved with a buoyancy that perfectly captured the restlessness and growth of Generation Xers, influencing everything from hairstyles to various catch phrases that would subsume themselves into ‘90s pop nomenclature.

“We wondered ‘Will anybody watch it?’” Greenstein said. “We had never worked on a multi-camera show, it was intricately plotted and hyper-caffeinated – everything moved at a very fast pace. We had our doubts, and of course, it took off like a rocket ship.”

Within a year Greenstein and Strauss became supervising producers for the show and gained enough confidence and experience to break out on their own for *Partners*, which debuted on FOX in September 1995. But despite positive reviews and a slow-building, loyal audience, the show was dropped after one season. Greenstein said the experience nearly killed him, because of the difficulty and investment involved in creating an original series. In hindsight, Greenstein admits that it was the right show for the wrong network.

“The irony is that when the show was cancelled it was getting a 14 (percent) share, but what can you do? We left it all on the field; ultimately the network didn’t think the audience was growing fast enough.”

The cancellation of *Partners* ended Greenstein’s and Strauss’ collaborative run, something Greenstein admits was difficult at the time, but also important in terms of further establishing his own career. In doing so, he adhered to a simple philosophy that has guided him since: “I’ve never chased anything but nice people and good work,” he said. As the ‘90s drew to a close, both of those targets would find him in the form of a phone call from Jeff Burrows and the promise of a new show.

Burrows, the legendary television director that had worked on such landmark shows as *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, *Cheers*, and *Taxi*, first met Greenstein behind the set of *Friends*, but was now heading up a new show that continued in a similar vein with a highly-talented, ensemble cast with great chemistry that was capable of delivering quick-turning dialogue and well-timed barbs.

Greenstein signed on as a consulting producer and occasional writer to the fledgling *Will & Grace* for its seventh episode, and stayed there for another six years and 150 shows. Over that period, *Will & Grace* amassed more than a dozen Emmy Awards, and vaulted into the top ten highest rated television shows as the centerpiece of NBC’s venerable Thursday night lineup. A staple of the show became its ever-revolving cast of celebrity guest stars, including Matt

Damon, Gene Wilder, Glenn Close, Madonna, and Cher. “It got so crazy that people began calling us to go on the show,” said Greenstein.

Beyond its commercial success, *Will & Grace*, became a touchstone for many viewers in its handling of sensitive topics such as sexuality and assisted reproduction. With two lead characters who were gay, it also paved the way for several gay-themed television shows that achieved wider acceptance soon after.

“After seeing the episode where Will came out, a 19-year-old man came up to me and told me it gave him the courage to do the same to his parents,” said Greenstein.

The success and cultural import of *Will & Grace* brought Greenstein’s career to another satisfying peak. Less than a year later, in 2006, Greenstein joined the production cast for yet another television blockbuster, *Desperate Housewives*, where he remains as an executive producer and director. During his tenure, the show has garnered more than a half-dozen Emmys. He also remains an active writer, penning several episodes over the past year of ABC’s engaging drama *Parenthood*. Through all his accomplishments, Greenstein remains fiercely committed to his craft, yet humble about his success, with a keen eye toward his Tufts roots and his involvement with CMS.

“Writing is what I’ll always do,” said Greenstein. “But directing’s been fun. My hope is to continue to find nice people and interesting work. I’m trying to leave all my doors open and see what happens next; I’ve been uncommonly blessed.

“I’ve been involved with CMS since its inception. The advantage of the program is that it’s not a film school like USC. It takes a broader approach; it’s sort of a pre-fabricated template for students to find their way through all walks of communication – that’s what makes it exciting and unique.”

A runaway American dream

Nearly 30 years into her career, there’s no stopping Gina Sanders (J81)

By John Ciampa

In the opening sequence of the British New Wave film classic, *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, actor Tom Courtenay’s brief voiceover reminds us of the distance runner’s often solitary and steadfast existence.

“All I know is you’ve got to run, run without knowing why through fields and woods, and the winning post’s no end, even though barmy crowds might be cheering themselves daft. That’s what the loneliness of the long distance runner feels like.”

Charting one’s own course, immune to the clamor of the rest of the world, and doing it over the long haul is a feeling Gina Sanders (J81), publisher extraordinaire and CEO of the Fairchild Fashion Group, understands perfectly. Sanders’ collegiate roadwork often pushed 100 miles per week when she was a member of the Tufts track team. Uncertain of her career path at that point, extending her physical limits seemed enough to satisfy Sanders’ goals. That and a passage or two of English literature.



Gina Sanders (J81)

“I was an English major and into Joyce,” she recalled. “I had planned on going to graduate school for teaching; I didn’t have a commercial bone in my body.”

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Three decades later, the winding roads and footpaths have transmuted into superhighways, and her directive now steers with razor-sharp focus. The 23-year veteran of the publishing giant Conde Nast now strides with an impressive list of accomplishments in tow, including being named the company's Publisher of the Year in 2005. Prior to that, she was publisher for the high-profile magazines *Details* and *Gourmet*, bringing in Editor-in-chief Ruth Reichl during her stint at the latter. It's a track record that stands all the more impressive considering how much of her career course is left to go.

"I didn't have a clear view of what I wanted to be," she said, "but the business side of magazines – coupled with my competitiveness as a runner – addressed many of my interests at the same time."

That drive and determination have also led her to innovate and take risks, with little regard for fear or failure, despite the uncertainty of what lay ahead. In 2003, for instance, Sanders came up with an idea for a new magazine that would cater to the emerging and increasingly elevated tastes of teens. *Teen Vogue* pushed the limits of magazine sophistication for young adults – a demographic that historically gravitated toward more traditional and mainstream tastes, from teen-idol worship to lightweight gossip. But here was a publication that displayed the gloss and pizzazz of adult spreads, with influential cover models, and a keen eye on fashion and weighty issues like nutrition and skin care. In essence, it didn't talk down to teens. Nearly a decade later, the launching of *Teen Vogue* stands as a professional highpoint for Sanders.

"What I liked most about it was that it put me in an entrepreneurial mode," she said. "I liked the risk of that, and of knowing there's always the chance you could fall. Launching a magazine is like being on a horse."

Sanders successfully saddled that horse for five years, dismounting momentarily before kick-starting another venture when she became the vice president and publisher of *Lucky* magazine in 2008. At *Lucky*, a Conde Nast publication focused primarily on shopping, Sanders sought to expand the publication's multimedia reach to keep up with the ever-emerging digital side of the print industry. Though widely successful even at the time (doubling its circulation of roughly 500,000 from its 2000 launch to decade's end), Sanders still felt there was something missing when she came aboard.

Enter "Lucky at Your Service," the world's first digital shopping platform.

Here's how it works: You're looking for a pair of shoes, but ordering online just won't do. You'd like to get those shoes into your hands, feel them and try them on. With the *Lucky* app, you can punch in the shoe you want in the size you need on your iPhone, and in a matter of minutes you're supplied with a list of local retailers that have exactly what you're looking for in stock. In sum, *Lucky's* moniker for the app as a "digital shopping concierge" seems wholly appropriate. For Sanders, its success brought her to another personal and professional plateau.

"That's exactly where I wanted to be at the time. My dream was to run a business."

Sanders began the current decade with a new appointment as president and CEO of the Fairchild Fashion Group. Here, her responsibilities are vast. She oversees *Women's Wear Daily* and *Footwear News* in addition to a bevy of other outlets, including Style.com and Menswear – a division of WWD.com, the multiplatform home of *Women's Wear Daily*. Just this year, Sanders' efforts landed her with yet another honor when she was presented with a Matrix Award, recognizing her as a female leader in the world of communications. At present, she's heading down yet another road, an online publishing venture that's still being kept under wraps, though Sanders describes it as something akin to "pop-up publishing."

Throughout all this success, however, Sanders maintains her sense of ambition coupled with a deepened philosophical approach – one that she's eager to convey to CMS students and recent graduates.

"They are the future, and they should jump in feet first with great confidence," she said. "But they should do more than just approach their professions from a business standpoint – they should consider what they do in a broader cultural context, which I think is exactly what the CMS program is for."

Student News

(Editor's note: In the spirit of this student-centric edition of the CMS Newsletter, we asked 2011 graduate Rosanna Xia to encapsulate her time at Tufts through the lens of being a CMS minor. Xia's varied undergraduate career led her toward a deep exploration of media and, ultimately, an editorial position at the Los Angeles Times. We hope you enjoy her personal reflection.)

There are some things I do every morning, regardless of when I wake up and what I have to do for the day: Browse the *Wall Street Journal*. Read the *New York Times* news alerts in my inbox to make sure it's all old news. Scroll through *AdAge* and the *Mashable* Twitter accounts. Check if *10,000words.net* has a new blog post. Read follow-up commentary to the previous night's Celtics game. And (as of four months ago), check the weather in L.A.

It's unbelievable how my studies and interests have led me full-circle. I grew up wanting to be a writer for "that gray paper thing dad reads every morning" (direct quote from my first-grade journal). Now, after four years of figuring out what to study and trying different internships, I'm heading to L.A. to do just that.

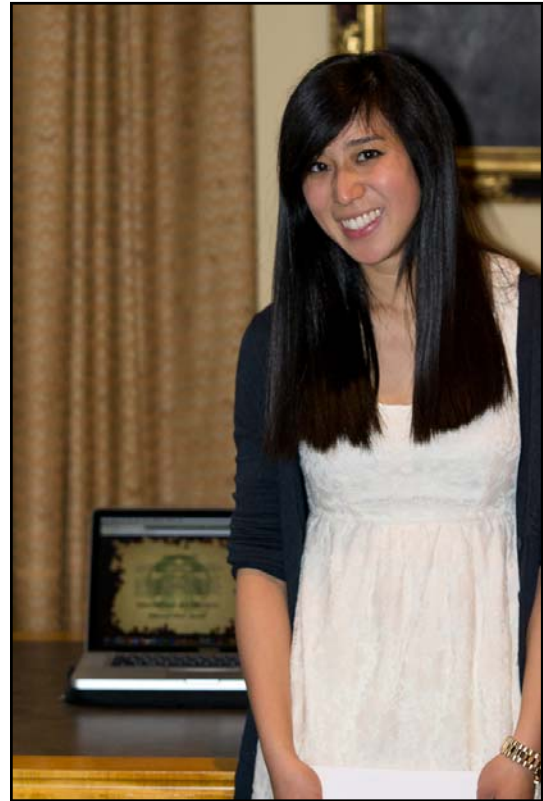
I opted out of studying journalism and came to Tufts. Rather than learning *how* to report, I thought it would be more meaningful to learn in-depth about *what* I would report about. Writing, photography, reading the news, observing my surroundings—these were not things I ever considered learning; they were hobbies that got better as I practiced more, found more complex subjects to focus on, and took classes that gave me a multi-dimensional perspective to what I read and created.

I eventually figured out how to tie IR, economics, and media together. While abroad, I had time to practice photography and admired the differences in advertisement design on the streets and in the Metro. I interned at a venture capital firm in Beijing and found that corporate writing and foreign investor relations came more naturally than research and financial modeling. Coming back to Tufts, I joined the CMS email list and actively sought out media opportunities in Boston that would complement my IR/econ studies.

I applied to the Dow Jones News Fund program with high goals but low hopes (the application asked for journalism majors and recommendations from newspaper supervisors. Major disadvantage). However, the current events test was fun (news nerd). And the grammar test? One great thing about taking eight semesters of a language for IR is that I will never forget the difference between a direct object and an indirect object. Thanks to French class, I have to differentiate the two when assigning gender agreements to the conjugated verb. The *who/whom* question, then, was no big deal.

In every media position I've been in, my most-needed skills were the same ones necessary for every economics model I approached, for every paper I wrote. IR and countless economic assignments made me a problem-solver, and now I've finally found a "problem" that I enjoy solving: communications and how media changes rapidly. I sound cynical when I say this (maybe because after four years of economics, I still don't get that excited when I evaluate z-scores and first-order-conditions), but it really is much easier to become better at something if you're genuinely interested in it. In my case, it meant learning and experimenting with multimedia for my CMS project and doing nerdy things like noticing how newspapers write headlines differently for the print and online versions of their articles.

The takeaway point? I love studying media. You need to be on your feet, engaged, ahead of the curve, and willing to try new things. And, for me, it's all about the eclectic people I have worked with, worked for, had to call, interview, survey, kill time with, and get to know. This is communications. With each experience, I learn new ways to effectively work with a different personality. No matter what industry, being able to communicate what you want to say is a necessary skill; a skill that I want to continue working on. I'm going into the print industry with full optimism, recognizing that the fundamental ways we tell stories, the skills we need to be good observers, writers, and editors have not changed. I've never had formal training, so I'm starting from scratch—going to an unexplored place for new experiences and fresh perspectives. West Coast here I come.



CMS graduate Rosanna Xia at this spring's Senior Celebration in Ballou Hall

– Rosanna Xia (A11)

Student News (cont.)

(Editor's note: The following is a sprinkling of highlights chronicling, in their own words, the work of CMS graduates on their Senior Projects. In many respects, the CMS Senior Project is a culmination of a student's work within the CMS minor. Topics vary widely and cover a fascinating array of subjects. These projects constitute some of the best work not only by CMS students, but of all Jumbos.)

Marketing Jumbo: A Marketing Plan for the Tufts Athletic Department

By Melissa Burke and Amanda Roberts

The idea for this project stemmed from our participation as four-year varsity athletes during our time at Tufts. We both felt that the Athletic department could do a better job of marketing itself to the rest of campus. Because the department is strapped for both time and funds, we wanted to help by taking on the task of creating a more effective marketing plan as our senior project. The final product is a plan that is divided into four different types of marketing initiatives: human resources, outreach, promotion, and events. A highlight of the project was being able to present the project to the Athletic Board of Overseers in April. Their support was overwhelmingly positive, and as a result we are continuing to work with several members of the board and the Athletic department in tandem in order to ensure that the project carries on after we graduate.



Amanda Roberts (left) and Melissa Burke

This project has been an amazing growing experience for both of us, and the project developed into something greater than either of us initially imagined it could be. This experience taught us that hard work and dedication can truly make a difference, and we hope that our project will help increase Jumbo spirit in the years to come!



“Ex Machina”

By Rebecca Goldberg

Ex Machina is a project bible and pitch for an original television adaptation of the preexisting Wildstorm Comics series of the same name.

In order to fully conceive this series, my project consists of several varied components, including treatments designed for two different networks (AMC and Syfy), outlines for the pilot and first season, character breakdowns, suggested talent, a business plan, and marketing artwork. The depth and relevance of this particular property and approach reignited my passion for the television industry. After thinking so much on this project, I would love to one day get to the point in my career where I can make this series a reality.

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“Just the Latest Crisis”: Soft News, Sensationalism, and Infotainment in Local Television News

By Rachel Lefsky

My research project, "Just the Latest Crisis": Soft News, Sensationalism, and Infotainment in Local Television News, looks at the problem of "infotainment" or "soft news" - the blending of information and entertainment, and the focus on softer, less politically relevant stories and events in the news. I conducted a content analysis of local television news broadcasts, focusing on the content and quality of the news, in terms of which sorts of stories, ideas, and issues were presented and how they were presented. I found an overwhelming amount of dramatic, sensational stories about crime, celebrity, and human interest topics, and a lack of solid, in-depth discussion of politics and public affairs. See the full report for more details (and a section on coverage of Charlie Sheen...) As my friends would probably confirm, I spent a good amount of time this year complaining about my project, but in the end I'm extremely proud of how complex (and long) the finished product is – definitely the most substantial project of my college career. This project started as a purely academic interest, but through this experience, I have really strengthened my research and writing skills, tied together different ideas from a variety of my CMS and Political Science courses, and developed a greater understanding of and interest in the changing media environment and the role of the news in an informed, educated, and engaged society.



“Player Two” Magazine: Play, Seriously

By Mitch Geller

I'm hesitant to call my CMS senior project, *Player Two* magazine, a video game magazine, even though that's technically what it is. But it isn't a video game magazine like you've ever seen before. It considers and reconsiders how and why we play video games. *Player Two* isn't a primary source for news or reviews, but rather a second look at video games as an important part of the media and cultural landscape. Working on this project – a 24-page magazine that I wrote, edited, and laid out, as well as a new media rollout – was intense and challenging, but ultimately worth it if for no other reason than to be able to tell people that playing video game was my homework.

The Death of Disconnection: College Life in the Age of Connectivity

By Sarah Korones

After observing cell phones and computers practically everywhere on campus, I began to wonder just how much college students need the devices to keep in touch. For my project, I researched the extent and impact of what appeared to be constant communication through cell phones, email, and Facebook on the average college student. After sending out a survey asking students about their digital habits, I concluded that this generation of students seems to have a love-hate relationship with communications technologies-- we at once need them to exist socially but also resent their constant pull. I really enjoyed working on this project. It was the one school assignment that I was actually a little sad to have finished.



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Film Criticism, Film Cynicism

By Brianna Beehler

My project, *Film Criticism, Film Cynicism*, is a study of the impact of blogging on the field of film criticism. In exploring different interpretations of what it means to be a “critic,” I suggest that the growing community of bloggers is a positive influence, adding an additional voice in the sphere of film criticism today. Central questions include: What makes someone a critic? What happens when anyone can be a critic? And what are the consequences for filmmakers and audience members? I have explored these questions in a research paper that focuses on two films that came out in 2010: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 1* and *The King’s Speech*. For me, this senior project was a rewarding way of engaging in the debate on the future of film criticism and in becoming a savvy film blog navigator.



Above: The 2011 Senior project winners

Front row (left to right): Isabel Hirsch, Rebecca Goldberg, Brianna Beehler, Georgia Ranes, Erica Petersen, Romy Oltuski, Rosanna Xia, Sarah Korones, Meredith Reynolds, Rachel Lefsky

Back row: Christopher Latina, Jason Moloney, Harrison Stamell, Royi Gavrielov, Ben Phelps, Philip Dear, Marcos Sastre

Missing from photo: Cat Scott, Alex Michaelson, William Ramsdell

Internships

The CMS internship program continues to be enormously popular, providing important skills through experiential learning and professional contacts to students who want to complement their course work and pursue a career in the communications field.

This past year, 71 students received academic credit for internships in a wide variety of fields, including television, film, radio, the recording industry, advertising, public relations, marketing communications, newspapers, magazines, book publishing, photography, new media, and social media. This summer, students are interning in many cities, including Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Denver, Baltimore, and London. Among the internship sites are WGBH *Frontline*, Nickelodeon, Walden Media, Jim Henson Productions, Verve Music Group, New England Sports Network (NESN), KMGH-TV, Radio One, Clear Channel, the *New York Observer*, *Forbes*, T.D. Garden, RF Binder, Rodale, Participant Media, and Universal Pictures/London.

This year CMS once again sponsored its highly successful “winternship” program. In a competitive process, we selected 27 Tufts students who then interned in January with media alumni at 20 companies in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

Our internship and “winternship” programs rely heavily on Tufts alumni working in media fields. We would love to hear from you if you have an opportunity to share with our students. Please email us at cms@tufts.edu.

CMS Internship Experience – Cat Scott

By Jill Slutzker (F12)

As many students were recovering from the holidays and enjoying their last vacation days before the spring semester, senior Cat Scott was getting a hands-on experience in the world of magazine publishing in New York City with *All You Magazine*. Scott was one of 27 students to participate in the CMS Winternship program, a one-week January internship program that places students in advertising, publishing, radio, news, television, and other media posts in Boston, New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco.

Scott, an English and French major and CMS minor, worked closely with *All You* publisher and Tufts alum Diane Oshin (J77). “It was such a team atmosphere,” said Scott. “I was included in a lot of projects. I would do marketing one day, sales the next day.”

Having been a writer at the *Tufts Daily* for three years, Scott was “interested in getting into the other side of print journalism and seeing what it was like.” Scott conducted several informational interviews with *All You* staff to learn about the different aspects of the magazine, from writing features to selling advertising space.

Working with the marketing team, Scott said, was her favorite project during her winternship. “I’d never really thought about marketing before and never thought I was good at it, but everyone was really open.”

Geared towards a female readership and advice for *real* women, *All You Magazine* was the perfect fit for Scott. “I wanted to see how the print world was reaching out to women,” said Scott, founder of the Tufts chapter of Strong Women Strong Girls, a mentorship program between female Tufts students and elementary school girls in Medford. The executive board of *All You* is entirely female. Scott was able to discuss her CMS senior project, a screenplay that featured a strong female lead, with Oshin and other *All You* staff. She plans to have it read by actors this summer.

“I felt really lucky getting this winternship,” said Scott. “I wish there were more winternships so that everyone could do one.” For students planning to do a winternship in the future, Scott advises them to take initiative. “If there is a particular thing you are interested in, no matter where you are, ask your supervisor if there is someone you can talk to. Be open and curious. You can learn from everything you are doing.”

Through her winternship, courses, and senior project Scott said, “CMS has helped me explore all these different aspects of media.” She said her favorite class, Media Literacy with Professor Julie Dobrow, “opened up my mind to different forms of media and how to look at them.”

Scott recently received a call from Oshin, who was so impressed with Scott’s winternship performance that she offered her a job at *All You Magazine* after graduation. Scott had to turn down the offer, though, since she will be attending law school at Northeastern University, where she plans to focus on intellectual property law. She credits her winternship experience and her CMS minor with moving her in that direction.

CMS on the Web

Please take a moment to visit our [multimedia website](#), which features photo galleries, 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.

Are you our Facebook friend?

We’ve consolidated our Facebook information since the last issue, so if you haven’t been there in a while, or have yet to join up with us, please take a moment to check us out!

The CMS Facebook group is the place to go if you want to connect with alumni, discuss internships and classes with other students, and make sure you don’t miss exciting events. Check out the photos of internships, networking nights, recent speakers, and award recipients by clicking [here](#).

Through the past, darkly

CMS Filmmaker-in-Residence Yael Hersonski exhumes and recasts disturbing WWII footage in *A Film Unfinished*

By John Ciampa

Amid the click-clack din of a busy Somerville café, one filled with the edgy, unfocused restlessness of urbanites on-the-go, Yael Hersonski took on a concentrative look that stood in stark contrast with those around her as she began to describe the genesis of her harrowing documentary, *A Film Unfinished*.

The film revisits a large stock of mysteriously vague footage shot by Nazi film crews in the Warsaw Ghetto during the spring of 1943, and then contextualizes that footage to paint a disturbing portrait of Nazi propaganda during the height of the Holocaust. Hersonski, who spent eight weeks visiting Tufts and CMS this spring to teach a mini-course on film editing, took a careful, methodical approach to constructing *A Film Unfinished*. First discovered by Russian forces after the war, some of the original, silent footage that serves as the basis for the film sat largely ignored in a vault for years before Swedish (and German-born) filmmaker Erwin Leiser used portions of it (among many other sources) for his post-war documentary, *Mein Kampf*. According to Hersonski, Leiser’s labeling of this bit of footage as “propaganda” led to the ideological basis for *A Film Unfinished*. “He only uses a few minutes of the footage, but he was the first, and as far as I know, the last one to mention they were propaganda images,” she said.

Curious to learn more about the source of this footage, Hersonski set out to find the remaining outtakes, which she had learned were discovered in, of all places, a U.S. Air Force film vault in Ohio in 1998, likely obtained by American troops immediately following the war. Hersonski said the discovered reels were sent to Washington D.C. in hopes of finding out more about their purpose, but little headway was made and the material’s impetus remained a mystery.

“I wanted to try and revise my own view on the story told through these images,” she said. “It was always my belief that the footage was used only as an illustrative tool in a way that missed the point. These images were always in the background of the story, but I felt that they captured something horrifying — the meaning of people being documented before vanishing from this world.”

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The footage itself reveals a myriad of unsettling contrasts, namely, the juxtaposing of Jewish prisoners living in squalor inside the Warsaw Ghetto with other images of Jews moving through their daily lives in comfort and relative luxury. Other excerpts showing able-bodied, well-clothed, and healthy Jews moving ambivalently past others who are dying in the streets emotionally deepen the divide. It's a striking contrast, and one that arguably points toward a deeper and more deceptive motive on behalf of the Nazi propaganda machine.



Hersonski at the New York City premiere of *A Film Unfinished*

“What fascinated me about the footage was that there really were rich Jews inside the ghetto, along with those who walked by others dying around them; it was not something that didn't exist.” she said. “What didn't exist was how this relationship was portrayed in the footage; we don't have any clue about what they were thinking when they were just walking by. Did they not care, or were they too frightened to react to what they saw in front of their captors?”

“These kinds of images make for a fascinating document, but we always need to keep in mind that we need more information to really understand what we're seeing.”

Hersonski's point is reinforced through the powerful and effective use of a number of Holocaust survivors featured periodically during *A Film Unfinished*. Gathered to watch the original footage inside a small theater, the participants respond to the ghetto footage with a mixture of intense pain and real confusion, not only as to why the scenes were shot, but also how they were sequenced and arranged in a particular way. One of the film's more disturbing moments involves a scene shot in a large bathtub where a number of Jews — mostly women — are rounded up and forced to

bathe together in an uncomfortably jarring manner. Stripped of all dignity, the fear in their eyes during this scene is palpable: More than just their bodies, it's as if their souls are unwillingly made bare.

Elsewhere, a reenactment of a 1960s interview of one of the original films' cameramen reveals, through original testimony, that a sense of fear was also pervasively felt by the filmmakers themselves, as if they knew the orders they were acting under had sinister intentions. Hersonski believes this proves beyond doubt the original film was intended to ultimately become a polished, full-bore production for wider release after Germany had won the war.

“I think he was terrified by the fact that he did it,” she said of the cameraman. “There's something haunting here, you have images that he actually shot and won't go away. And he tried to make them go away by actually breaking into the film vault after the war to take the reels and destroy them.”

Critically-acclaimed and nominated for the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival (where it won for film editing), *A Film Unfinished* continued to receive accolades even as Hersonski was spending time on the Hill teaching CMS minors. With its controversial R rating, the documentary is reaching a more limited and older audience than Hersonski had hoped for. Still, its ambitious retelling and continued historic relevance should make it a necessary primer for those wanting to learn more about the Holocaust for years to come.

