

Call for Papers and Participation - Workshop

Activism and Communication Scholarship in Canada

April 30th, 2015. University of Toronto (9:30 am – 5:00 pm)

The objective of this workshop is to bring together Canadian communication scholars at all levels of the tiered academic system to critically explore the ways in which they negotiate their role as educators and researchers with a commitment to various forms of activism within and beyond their campuses (e.g. direct policy intervention, NGO support, involvement in university unions, organizing activist-oriented pedagogical projects). Given the rapid expansion of communication programs in the country, the growth of new media as potential outlets for public intellectualism, intensifying administration expectations that scholars will demonstrate ‘public/community engagement’, the growing number of communication scholars advancing critiques related to precarious academic labour, and the implications of increasingly corporatized and managerial universities, this workshop will address both the challenges and opportunities afforded by activist endeavours.

Presentations will focus on the following key areas:

- Different practices that constitute activism for communication scholars.
- Conditions under which communication scholars engage in activist endeavours inside and outside the university/classroom.
- Challenges facing contingent/precarious/emerging communication scholars striving to engage in both on and off campus activism.
- Impact of new media and technology on the capacity of communication scholars to undertake activist endeavours.
- Issues related to communication scholars’ intellectual and pedagogical freedom (e.g. in terms of employment, promotion, and funding; co-option by administrations for public/community engagement)
- Challenges of balancing activism with family, personal, and other professional obligations; gender implications.

Workshop format:

9:30 - 9:45: Welcome and coffee
9:45 – 11:15: Session #1: Definitions of Communication Activism
11:30 – 1:00: Session #2: Practices and Methods for Communication Activism
1:00 – 2:00: Lunch

2:00 – 3:30: Session #3: Outcomes, Impacts, and Challenges for Communication Activism

3:45 – 5:00: Presentation from James L. Turk followed by a panel about next steps.

Turk is the former Executive Director of CAUT (Canadian Association of University Teachers) and currently distinguished visiting professor in the Faculty of Communication & Design's School of Journalism at Ryerson University.

Refreshments and snacks will be provided. Funding is provided by the Canadian Communication Association, with in-kind support from the University of Toronto and Western University.

We ask that you write an abstract (approximately 300 words, designed to fit one of the three proposed Sessions), along with a short biography that includes your interests and work in the area of communication activism. Please send your abstract and bio to both workshop organizers.

If you are interested in attending the workshop but not presenting a paper or participating in a panel, please send just your bio to both organizers as space will be limited:

- Sandra Smeltzer (Western University): ssmeltze@uwo.ca
- Leslie Regan Shade (University of Toronto): leslie.shade@utoronto.ca

Deadline for submissions: March 10th, 2015