



University of Missouri



**MU Department of Communication
Faculty and Research Spotlight
July 2018**



Haley Horstman

University of Missouri researcher
Dr. Haley Horstman helps families
make sense of their worlds.

Horstman researches the ways in which people communicate and make sense of their experiences in the context of family diversity and difficulty. Some of her often-studied subjects include adoptive families, foster families and married couples struggling with miscarriage, as well as mother-daughter and parent-child relationships. Amongst her several grant-funded projects, Horstman is studying communication in open adoptive families as well as the perceptions of doulas—women trained to assist other women during childbirth—in American births. In addition, she has worked on several community grants as a consultant on family communication issues in public health interventions.

Complementing her research, Horstman co-founded and co-directs MU's Institute of Family Diversity and Communication. This interdisciplinary working group examines modern families and the issues they face.

Horstman's publications have appeared in top-ranked peer-reviewed journals such as *Communication Monographs*, the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* and *Journal of Family Communication*. For her high-quality research and teaching, Horstman has been presented with numerous recognitions. These include Top Paper and Top Panel awards, Outstanding Graduate Student Research and Teaching awards and the Phyllis Japp Scholar Award.

Dr. Haley Horstman is an assistant professor of interpersonal and family communication in the College of Arts and Science.



Julius Matthew Riles

University of Missouri researcher Dr. Julius Matthew Riles examines how media use influences one's attitude toward others.

Riles studies the ways in which people's use of media impacts their social relationships. Among other topics, he has investigated how media depictions of mental health conditions such as obsessive-compulsive disorder and bipolar disorder influence social perceptions toward people with mental health conditions. He also examines how people come to form bonds and attachments with figures encountered in the media environment. Currently, he is looking at how images can be made more positive to enhance inclusivity or diversity in social interactions.

In addition to his own research, Riles also co-directs the University of Missouri's Media & Diversity Center. Many groups remain underrepresented in the news and entertainment industries. The center was created to broaden the discussion surrounding research and practices related to diversity in the media. Under Riles' co-leadership, researchers with expertise in diverse fields – including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, mental health, disability and religion – come together to address important issues.

Riles has received several awards for teaching, research and service. These include the University of Illinois' highly selective Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and the Ruth S. & Charles H. Bowman Award for Most Outstanding Graduate Student.

Dr. Julius Riles is an assistant professor of communication in the College of Arts and Science.



Remedy for Disaster

The University of Missouri's Disaster and Community Crisis Center (DCC) helps youth, families and professionals cope with crises.

Disasters and crises can negatively affect children, families and communities. However, many people are resilient and can recover with support and resources. The DCC works to develop products that can help foster this resilience. MU researchers working at the interdisciplinary center have expertise in mental and behavioral health, social work, public health, communication, mass media, social media and journalism. Together, they focus on enhancing preparedness, recovery and resilience in children, families, schools and communities with offerings ranging from educational videos for children to materials for journalists covering disasters.

The DCC is has been funded through the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

(SAMHSA). With SAMHSA funding, the center has developed resources and products that address behavioral and mental health issues, resilience and coping skills. In addition to national and international work, DCC has partnered to improve disaster public mental-health planning and services in Missouri working with the Missouri Department of Mental Health's Office of Disaster Services, the Missouri Center for Education Safety, the Ozark Center in Joplin, Missouri, and more.

The DCC is directed by Dr. Brian Houston, Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Communication in the College of Arts and Science and a Core Faculty member of the MU Master of Public Health Program.

Lissa Behm-Morawitz

Dr. Elizabeth “Lissa” Behm-Morawitz investigates the relationships between media and human behavior.

Behm-Morawitz studies how gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality influence stereotypes, self-concept and health. Much of her work examines cultural representation in interactive media contexts, such as video games, where the user can create and interact with virtual representations. Her work, which provides important insights into the effects of media culture, has been published in journals such as *Media Psychology*, *Computers in Human Behavior* and *Human Communication Research*.

As an educator, Behm-Morawitz teaches undergraduate courses in mass communication, mass media and other subjects. She also teaches graduate courses related to persuasion, content analysis and new communication technologies.

Behm-Morawitz also co-directs the University of Missouri’s Media and Diversity Center, which launched in 2017. While African-American representation in the news and entertainment industries has improved markedly over the last few decades, other groups such as Hispanics and Asian-Americans remain underrepresented. Additionally, many media representations, such as depictions of mental illness, remain stereotypical. At the Center, researchers with expertise in diverse fields – including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, mental health, disability and religion – examine issues of diversity in media.

Dr. Lissa Behm-Morawitz is Assistant Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in the University of Missouri Office of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor of Communication in the College of Arts and Science.



Mitchell S. McKinney

University of Missouri leader
Dr. Mitchell S. McKinney is an
expert in political communication.

Examining topics such as presidential debates, political campaigns, civic engagement and presidential rhetoric, McKinney has co-written or edited 8 books. His writing has also appeared in scholarly publications such as the *Journal of Communication* and *American Behavioral Scientist* and in major media outlets including *The New York Times*.

McKinney also has practical political experience, having served as a staff member in the U.S. Senate and at the White House. He has served as a consultant to C-SPAN and the U.S. Commission on Presidential Debates, advising the Commission on how debates might be structured in order to better educate voters. Additionally, he acted as an adviser for the South Korean government, working with election officials in Seoul to plan that nation's first televised presidential debates.

At MU, McKinney teaches courses in political communication and presidential rhetoric. He has been recognized for his educational skills with honors including the William T. Kemper Award for Excellence in Teaching. In the Office of the Provost, McKinney serves as Faculty Fellow for Academic Personnel, with duties related to academic integrity and grievance resolutions.

Dr. Mitchell S. McKinney is a professor of communication in the College of Arts and Science and director of MU's Political Communication Institute. He also holds a courtesy appointment in the School of Journalism.





Depicting Diversity

The Media and Diversity Center (MDC) works toward accurate, nuanced media depictions of diverse populations.

Stories portrayed via broadcasting, publishing and the internet inform people's perceptions of the world and themselves. While African-American representations in the news and entertainment industries have improved over the last few decades, other groups such as Hispanics or Asian-Americans remain underrepresented. In addition, many media representations remain stereotypical, such as depictions of mental illness. The aim of the MDC is to broaden the discussion surrounding research and practices related to diversity in the media.

The MDC considers diversity broadly, including not just categories of gender, race, ethnicity and sexuality, but also topics such as mental health, disability and religion. Center professionals conduct research on the diversity of representations in traditional and digital media—as well

as the effects of media on cognition, emotion, identity and behavior.

The center also trains future social scientists to examine issues of diversity in media. Graduate and undergraduate research associates at the MDC receive methodological and theoretical training for conducting research. And through its website, the MDC also provides online links to additional sources of information about media and diversity. The MDC also engages in community outreach to teach media literacy skills to help improve people's ability to effectively understand and participate with the media environment.

The MDC is directed by Drs. Lissa Behm-Morawitz and Julius Riles, both communication faculty members in the College of Arts and Science.

Debbie Dougherty

University of Missouri researcher Dr. Debbie Dougherty is an expert on organizational communication.

Dougherty's scholarship explores the relationship between power and organizing, particularly as related to gender, emotions and social class. She is most widely recognized for her research on sexual harassment and has published on this topic in national and international journals. Additionally, Dougherty conducts research on emotions, especially emotional intelligence; her findings have been widely used by scholars across disciplines and around the world.

In recent years, Dougherty has begun a systematic exploration of the relationship between organizational communication and social class. Her book titled "The Reluctant Farmer: Exploring Work, Social Class and the Production of Food" provides theoretical and practical ground for understanding how Western society produces, communicates about and sustains social class. That work is extended in her latest study, which explores the experience of unwilling unemployment.

At MU, Dougherty teaches classes in organizational communication and research methodology. She currently sits on the editorial board for eight scholarly journals and has received numerous awards for her research and community projects, including the Article of the Year award from *Management Communication Quarterly*.

Dr. Debbie Dougherty is a professor of organizational communication in the College of Arts and Science, with a courtesy appointment in the School of Journalism.



Brian Houston

University of Missouri researcher Dr. Brian Houston shines a light on how people communicate during disaster—and how to improve response and resilience.

Houston's research is focused on disasters and crises. He examines communication at all phases of disasters, as well as investigating the mental health effects and political consequences of community crises. His studies have been supported by agencies such as the National Institute of Mental Health, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Much of Houston's work takes place at the intersection of disasters, communication, media, public health and mental health. Among other projects, Houston has examined the impact of media coverage of natural and human-caused disasters on children and adults, the role of new media during crises and the capacity for using information communication technologies to increase community resilience.

In addition to his research, Houston serves as director of MU's Disaster and Community Crisis Center. This interdisciplinary center works to enhance preparedness, recovery and resilience among families and communities affected by disasters and crises. Houston also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses related to disaster and crisis communication.

Dr. Brian Houston is associate professor and chair of communication in the College of Arts and Science. He is also a faculty member in the Master of Public Health program.





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