~A Letter from MSC Director Galina Sinekopova~

Happy 2013! Here in the MSC program we hope your new year is filled with peace, happiness and academic success. We definitely had a great beginning to our 2012-2013 academic year.

Steve Stewart is back with us as a Director for the basic courses of the department. We are all looking forward to working with Steve and are sure our GSAs will thrive under his guidance.

New faces have joined the GSA cohort: Arielle Reed, Melissa Dotty, and Tim Smith. Let us wish all GSAs and graduate students in our program a successful quarter and new discoveries in their academic journey.

Second, we are pleased to introduce Nicole Riddnour as our new Peer Advisor. Nicole is helping our current and potential students choose the right classes to plan their future in the program. She can be reached at n.townsend@eagles.ewu.edu or (509) 359- 6414.

Included in this newsletter is the list of classes our students can take in spring. Do not forget we are an interdisciplinary program and our students are encouraged to look outside the department for classes that can satisfy the program requirements.

Finally, we are delighted to let you know we expect a high level of participation of our graduate students in the upcoming NWCA conference.

You can find additional information about upcoming MSC events on our Facebook page; you can search for “EWU Masters Communication” on Facebook and add us as a friend! Please share your stories with us. Communicate! Do not forget, “you cannot but communicate.”

Best wishes,
Dr. Galina Sinekopova
MSC Director

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Meet the new MSC graduate assistants

**Tim Smith**

One of the three new GSA’s to join the department this year, Tim Smith comes with a colorful background in the U.S. Marines and selling cars for a dealership in Spokane. Smith is no stranger to the Communications department, having earned his B.A. in Communication in 2005 from EWU. Smith is knee-deep in an exciting thesis which examines the influence of texting on teen-parent relationships; Does text messaging lower or inhibit a teenagers ability to interact with their parents face to face? Smith is intrigued to explore new terrain in inter-personal relationships brought on by ever-more-popular technology. “My research interest is to find the correlation between all of the digital mediums, their overuse and misuse, and our decline in peer to peer human communication ability. We are surrounded by so many mediums,” he said. Smith intends to graduate in May, 2013. As a teacher in the MSC program, Smith says relating to the students is a hell of a good time. “In my class, you will become a better speaker,” he said. “I love the interaction with the students. Having been in retail for about 10 years, I have learned how to interact with people from all walks of life. Also, the things I have learned to do better are organization and time management.”

At 6’3”, Smith also has an electric athletic life outside his work at the university. He began his first months at the office this year on crutches from a major sky-diving injury he suffered in September. In addition to regular sky-diving (an ongoing skill he learned in the Marines), Smith often competes at basketball in Spokane. “I am an avid outdoorsman, like to have fun with my family and I love skydiving. I earned my license this last summer and am one of less than 38,000 licensed United States skydivers!” he said. Smith is also a loving father to his two children and their vicious family wolf, Cocoa Bean. “She is a desert fox Australian Shepherd…and is most likely in a gang of some kind,” he said.

**Melissa Doty enters her first year as a GSA**

Melissa Doty is in her first quarter with the MSC program and is also learning the ropes as a graduate student assistant. Doty came straight to the MSC program from her undergraduate years, having graduated in 2012 with her B.A. in Communication studies. Doty says teaching has so far been an enjoyable experience. Still in the embryonic stages of articulating her thesis, Doty is currently considering writing about teenage prostitution in Bolivia through the theory lens of Positive Deviance Approach.

Doty has a strong interest in fighting oppressive structures and a colorful history of traveling to Spanish-speaking countries to help. “I’m plagued and blessed with an insatiable case of wanderlust. I’ve danced the tango in Argentina, swam in Lake Titicaca, attended high school in Bolivia, and helped deliver a baby in rural Mexico.

I spend my free time sipping fair-trade espresso, reading about intercultural and gender issues, and planning travels that I will never be able to afford.”
Ridnour Fills Peer Advisor Role

Each year, the department of Communications assigns the role of peer advisor to one of the graduate student assistants. For the 2012-2013 school year, GSA Nicole Ridnour of Hermiston, OR is the peer advisor. In this role, Ridnour assists department head Galina Sinekopova to communicate graduate school news to other graduate students and represents the department at on-campus venues at EWU.

As a second-year graduate student set to graduate in June 2013, this is also Ridnour’s second year teaching CMST 200 for the department. All graduate student assistant’s get to teach a class of up to 28 students a quarter in Introduction to Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication.

As a teacher, Ridnour says she has learned to be more flexible and open-minded as she works with her students. “I have made it my mantra that the best way to reach my students is to help them find ways to relate the material to their personal lives and goals,” Ridnour said.

Ridnour was already familiar with the Communications department at EWU, as she graduated with her B.A. in Communication Studies in 2010. She worked for Progressive Insurance in the Spokane Valley for a year before returning to begin the MSC program at EWU in fall 2011.

“I have many career aspirations once I have completed this rewarding experience,” she said.

Ridnour is working on a thesis relating to health communication; she is studying the rates of health literacy among EWU students.

Her research asks the question, “How do we conceptualize and understand what it means to be healthy?” She hopes to form a better picture of health knowledge among EWU students using a survey as her methodology. In late fall quarter of 2012, she was already at the stage of passing out this survey to students.

Outside her life at the university, Ridnour is the loving mother of two-year-old Jackson. “My husband and I enjoy being active. We make as much time for the gym as possible and love going for bike rides with our son on weekends (weather permitting),” she said.

MSC courses for Spring Quarter 2013

Required MSC courses
- CMST 504 Communication Systems
- CMST 522 Research Design and Analysis 11
- Note: CMST 504 also fulfills the required course for the technology

Organizational Comm. Courses
- CMST 530. Required for this track.
- PADM 517. This is a 1 credit course.
- PSYC 545. Requires instructor permission.

Instructional Comm. Courses
- COIN 572
- EDUC 505
- EDUC 533
- PSYC 515
- PSYC 545. Requires instructor permission.

Technical Comm. Courses
- TECH 504. Counts as either the required course or an elective for this track.
- TECH 550
- CSCD 439
- CSCD 539
- ENGL 504

Cultural Comm. Courses
- CMST 440. Online.
- WMST 410

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Arielle Reed started as a graduate student assistant to the MSC program in Spring 2012. She is now in her second year and (most appropriately) is already sick of talking about her thesis. The following is an e-mail interview with Arielle.

**Undergraduate Degree was in?** Interactive Media Design, which is essentially a hybrid major of visual communication, marketing and business. It was wonderful for someone like me with broad interests because I could design the program to suit my own educational desires, rather than following a formula.

**Where?** I graduated from Alverno College in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 2010, an all-women's private Catholic institution. I also previously attended The Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. I believe that between these two very different environments I was able to benefit from a wide range of cultural and educational experiences.

**What were you doing before you returned to school for your Masters?** I took a year off in which I moved from Milwaukee to Seattle and worked as a freelance writer for Demand Media Studios while deciding where to pursue my masters. In that year I published more than 70 articles online, between three websites. I also participated in National Novel Writing Month, during which I wrote a 50,000+ word novel in 30 days, (a valuable experience for me, especially now faced with writing my thesis).

**Tell us about yourself.** While I got through my undergrad I worked up to five jobs at any given time. I worked in the music industry as a merchandise girl for 5 years, security guard for 4 years and a merchandise manager for 3 years. I baked at a deli for a summer, followed by two years in an Italian bakery. I worked electronics retail for Target for 2 years. All the while, I attended college full-time and maintained a 3.3 GPA, (students who complain to me about not having enough time for homework get no pity from me). Aside from that I read too much, watch too many movies and drink obscene amounts of coffee. I don't go out much, unless it is to a bookstore or the grocery store. I crochet, write fiction and am an at-home printmaker. After the aforementioned insanity I went through to get my bachelor's degree, I live a tame life, and I like it that way.

**You are now a college instructor. What is 1) a new idea you have learned in teaching 2) an aspect of teaching which you enjoy the most?** 1) Unfortunately, I learned that not all students are ready to be treated as adults. This has been surprising as well as challenging. 2) I most enjoy seeing creativity ooze out of my students after the first awkward weeks are over.

**Describe your personal teaching method.** I have tried to maintain my authority as a professor while also engaging the students as equals. I try to bring relevant information to the table and make charming comparisons to the world they live in. Not that it always works, but when it does… it's magic.

**What are your personal research interests? What is your thesis?** I am most interested in studying cultural artifacts, especially texts. I would rather not discuss my thesis. Being in this program is much like being a professional musician; you end up hearing your own music so many times that you hate it.