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- 2004: Guy Reel, "The Wicked World: The National Police Gazette, Richard K. Fox, and the Making of the Modern American Man, 1879-1906"; Director: Patrick S. Washburn, Ohio University
- 2005: Pete Smith, "'It's Your America': Gertrude Berg and American Broadcasting, 1929-1956"; Director: Arthur J. Kaul, University of Southern Mississippi
- 2006: Stacy Spaulding, "Lisa Sergio: How Mussolini's 'Golden Voice' of Propaganda Created an American Mass Communication Career"; Director: Maurine Beasley, University of Maryland
- 2007: Michael Stamm, "Mixed Media: Newspaper Ownership of Radio in American Politics and Culture, 1920-1952"; Director: Neil Harris, University of Chicago
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The AJHA Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize, established in 1997 and named in 2003, is awarded annually for the best doctoral dissertation on media history. Named in honor of the late Professor Margaret A. Blanchard of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill -- superb scholar and the source of guidance and inspiration for generations of doctoral students of journalism history -- the prize is accompanied by an honorarium of five hundred dollars. A two-hundred-dollar honorarium is awarded to each honorable mention.

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2010 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE

PRIZE WINNER

J. Duane Meeks, "From the Belly of the HUAC:
The Red Probes of Hollywood, 1947-1952"

Director: Maurine H. Beasley, University of Maryland

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDEES

Mario Castagnaro, "Embellishment, Fabrication, and Scandal:
Hoaxing and the American Press"

Director: Kathy M. Newman, Carnegie Mellon University

Raluca Cozma, "The Murrow Tradition:
What Was It, and Does It Still Live?"

Director: John Maxwell Hamilton, Louisiana State University

Leland K. Wood, "When the Locomotive Puffs:
Corporate Public Relations of the First Transcontinental Railroad Builders"

Director: Patrick S. Washburn, Ohio University

ABSTRACTS

J. Duane Meeks, "From the Belly of the HUAC: The Red Probes of Hollywood, 1947-1952"

The House Un-American Activities Committee conducted investigations of the movie industry in 1947 and 1951-1952. The goal was to determine the extent of communist infiltration in Hollywood and whether communist propaganda had made it into American movies. This spotlight led to the blacklisting of Hollywood professionals and contributed to the Committee's notoriety. Previous historical accounts concentrated on the practice of naming names, the scrutiny of movies for propaganda, and the intervention in union disputes. In a reevaluation of the Hollywood probes, this dissertation draws extensively on documents from HUAC archives, which Congress unsealed for scholars in 2001. This study addresses four areas in which the new evidence indicates significant, fresh findings. First, the Committee centered its investigatory methods on information obtained through a careful, on-going scrutiny of the communist press, rather than techniques such as surveillance, wiretaps, and other surreptitious activities. Second, two German communist refugees with extensive media and propaganda résumés played a crucial role in motivating the Committee to launch its first Hollywood probe. Third, the HUAC's practice of requiring witnesses to name names appeared to be

an on-going exercise of data triangulation. Finally, the Committee's overriding concern was exposing the activities and practices of communist front organizations, which the HUAC viewed as powerfully effective venues for communist propaganda. In summary, the newly available archival evidence indicates the HUAC operated in a less sinister manner than previously supposed, and thus, revises previous scholarship on the HUAC.

Mario Castagnaro, "Embellishment, Fabrication, and Scandal: Hoaxing and the American Press"

My dissertation, "Embellishment, Fabrication, and Scandal: Hoaxing and the American Press," examines literary and journalistic hoaxes in American culture from the 18th century to the present. Over the last 200 years, literature and journalism have frequently cross-pollinated and overlapped with each other, especially at the site of the hoax; in my dissertation I argue that literary hoaxes have had a significant (and heretofore unexplored) impact on the development of journalism. Beginning with Benjamin Franklin's satirical "news stories" in the 18th century and ending with James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* debacle on Oprah in 2006, my dissertation charts an alternative cultural history of American journalism and its audience. Hoaxes, I claim, are events consisting of both text and textual effect; hoaxes tend to begin as textual objects and attain the status of hoax only when they are disseminated and generate secondary and tertiary accounts. In these metadiscursive moments, hoaxes come to offer tacit or explicit critiques of their fields, authorities, or audiences; such critiques often develop independent of any initial authorial intent. I show that hoaxes initially played a significant role in helping American news institutions establish themselves and increase their circulations by providing sensational and compelling stories to their readers. Yet, by the late 19th century, American journalism was actively recasting itself as a professional institution. With this drive toward professionalism came a mounting need to expunge hoaxes and to visibly punish writers who fabricated news stories. Once cast as playful, satirical ruses, hoaxes came to be recast as more serious transgressions with potentially dangerous consequences. I argue that what we think of as "news" today has been shaped just as much by negative examples as by positive, definitional constructions, and hoaxes have played a key role in this process.

Raluca Cozma, "The Murrow Tradition: What Was It, and Does It Still Live?"

This dissertation explores the differences in the quality of radio foreign news and foreign correspondents between CBS during World War II and NPR during the Iraq War II. Triangulating quantitative and qualitative methods (content analysis, historical research, and in-depth interviews), this study proposes a model of quality foreign news to help determine what the Murrow tradition means. The model is then used to test if that celebrated tradition lives on in a non-commercial setting at NPR. The two-pronged model pulls together theories of mass communication and historical accounts to assess (1) the quality of the foreign correspondents at the two organizations, and (2) the quality of foreign correspondence during the two eras. The study is the first to measure what the Murrow tradition means in a systematic, longitudinal analysis. The newsroom analysis found that the new generation of foreign correspondents at NPR match or exceed the qualities of the Murrow Boys. The content analysis found that the foreign news at NPR scores higher across all quality journalism variables, suggesting that foreign news is not an endangered species as media critics contend. NPR correspondents further shared their insights and perspectives in the present and future of radio foreign correspondence.

Leland K. Wood, "When the Locomotive Puffs: Corporate Public Relations of the First Transcontinental Railroad Builders"

The dissertation documents public-relations practices of officers and managers in two companies: the Central Pacific Railroad with offices in Sacramento, California, and the Union Pacific Railroad with offices in New York City. It asserts that sophisticated and systematic corporate public relations were practiced during the construction of the first transcontinental railroad, fifty years before historians generally place the beginning of such practice. Documentation of the transcontinental railroad practices was gathered utilizing existing historical presentations and a review of four archives containing correspondence and documents from the period. Those leading the two enterprises were compelled to practice public relations in order to raise \$125 million needed to construct the 1,776-mile-long railroad by obtaining and keeping federal loan guarantees and by establishing and maintaining an image attractive to potential bond buyers. Also, relationships had to be established and maintained with members of Congress, the California state legislature, and federal regulators; with workers and potential workers; and with journalists. In addition, the companies' images among the general public also had to be established and maintained. The railroad leaders sometimes faced public-relations dilemmas in which the material produced to build relationships with one audience might damage relationships with another audience. The dissertation concludes that, despite the enormous challenges faced in the construction of the railroad, the companies' leaders persisted in their attention to public relations and developed practices that continue to be used.