



**PRESS RELEASE**

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**VANESSA FREIJE WINS BLANCHARD DISSERTATION PRIZE**

The American Journalism Historians Association has selected Vanessa Freije as the winner of the 2016 Margaret A. Blanchard Doctoral Dissertation Prize for her dissertation titled, “Journalists, Scandal, and the Unraveling of One-Party Rule in Mexico, 1960-1988.”

This study examined the role that press scandals played in Mexican politics and argues that while political corruption was commonplace, journalists determined which transgressions would become flashpoints for public protest. Freije will receive \$500 and a plaque during the 2016 AJHA national convention in St. Petersburg in October. Freije completed her dissertation at Duke University under the direction of Jocelyn Olcott.

Since 1997, AJHA grants the annual award to the best doctoral dissertation dealing with mass communication history completed during the prior calendar year. This is the second award Freije has received for her dissertation, as she also won the Latin American Studies Association Mexico Dissertation Prize. Freije understands the importance of her work and is grateful AJHA recognized her dissertation.

“Writing the dissertation can be a solitary endeavor, and it was incredibly gratifying to receive recognition for my work,” she said. “As a historian of Mexican journalism, I was particularly pleased to learn that my research resonated with scholars who look at journalism history in other geographical regions and contexts.”

Two scholars received honorable mention for their dissertations and will each receive a \$200 award at the fall conference:

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- Brian Shott for “Mediating America: Black and Irish Press and the Struggle for Citizenship, 1870-1914,” completed at the University of California, Santa Cruz (director David Brundage).
- James West for “Ebony Magazine, Lerone Bennett, Jr., and the Making and Selling of Modern Black History, 1958-1987,” completed at The University of Manchester (director Eithne Quinn).

All three scholars will discuss their work during a special session at the AJHA national convention.

Freije looks forward to sharing her dissertation with others.

“I have been very fortunate to engage with other scholars affiliated with AJHA,” Freije says.

“Exchanging ideas with other historians of journalism has been critical to my own development as a scholar.”

Founded in 1981, the American Journalism Historians Association seeks to advance education and research in mass communication history. Members work to raise historical standards and ensure that all scholars and students recognize the vast importance of media history and apply this knowledge to the advancement of society. For more information on AJHA, visit [ajhaonline.org](http://ajhaonline.org).

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