

Master of Science in Leadership for Creative Enterprises

Newsletter
Winter 2017





Technology, Innovation + MSLCE

The MSLCE program is always improving, as a result of responding to both students' needs and market trends. This fall quarter we launched a new class, Culture and Arts Analytics, taught by Ágnes Horvát. In this class students acquired the essential toolkit to interpret and mine Big Data resources for the creative sector. This is a key element of the making and distribution of creative goods and services in the digital age.

This emphasis on technology and innovation, which is a cornerstone of the MSLCE program, continued with our faculty talks: Networks Research by Leslie DeChurch and Education and Gaming by Mike Horn. It was also woven throughout our speaker series, featuring Chris Meador from Facebook, Adam Sachs formerly of podcast trailblazer Midroll Media, and Brigitte Whisnant from Havas Worldwide Chicago.

We also unveiled two new all-day workshops within the framework of the Professional Development class: Teamwork, taught by Gail Berger and Project Management, taught by Dan Heck. The former exposed students to the fundamentals of working effectively in team environments, which are skills essential for thrive in the creative economy. The latter gave students a blueprint for managing initiatives involving a wide array of actors and complex processes, two of the hallmarks of creative products.

Even though we are already in our third year, we are constantly innovating, striving to remain on the cutting edge of educating the next generation of leaders in the creative sector. Stay tuned for more updates in our spring quarter newsletter!

Pablo J. Boczkowski
Professor, School of Communication
Faculty Director, MSLCE

MEET THE MSLCE STAFF



Mandi Glowen
Assistant Director, EPICS



Kathryn E. Lawson
Associate Director



Michael Rooney
Program Assistant



Jonah Zeiger
Associate Director, EPICS

Contact Us!

creative@northwestern.edu
847.467.7117
<http://creative.northwestern.edu>

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ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES IN CREATIVE ENTERPRISES

For ten weeks, students in Pablo Boczkowski's class talked about lenses. They learned the tools to understand organizational processes on three different levels: power dynamics, networking, and company culture. The driving force behind this curriculum was to create a foundation for the rest of the MSLCE courses. Prof. Boczkowski's charm, dry humor, and passion for the program, along with his raw intellectualism, left students wanting more after every class. *By John Hounihan*

UNDERSTANDING THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Jacob Smith's course taught the history and current status of creative and cultural enterprises. Students learned how advertising, regulation, globalization, digitalization, and talent have affected media industries such as film and music. The seminar-style classes opened up the floor to fascinating discussions on the complexity of art and industry. Students from artistic backgrounds like opera, theatre, and visual arts found that their industries had much in common. Through in-class videos, students learned how the media regulation system came into place and how it differs between self-regulation and government involvement. *By Lauren Vernea*



ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT LAW + ETHICS

The world of media and entertainment may look fun and polished to those not working behind the scenes, but there are countless legal hurdles to overcome for these creative products to come to life and generate revenue. Rick Morris' course delved into the components that keep the entertainment industries running. Law permeates across all businesses and industries. Through case studies, the drafting of contracts, and a final project, students were exposed to a wide variety of material, from property acquisition, merchandising and talent contracts, to trademarking and intellectual property rights. *By Scotty Stieber*

CULTURE + ARTS ANALYTICS

Ágnes Horvát is a computer scientist who focuses on developing theories and methods for studying collective intelligence, crowdsourcing, and the creative industries. Many students went into her class without knowing what to expect, but they came out with the necessary skills needed to analyze big data in the creative industries. Students learned that within artistic fields like film, people use patterns gleaned from big data to make predictions about box office revenue before a movie's release or to determine the popularity of a certain topic on social media. *By Natalie Agbele*

PITCHING CREATIVE PROJECTS

"We are all creative, resourceful, and whole." Laverne McKinnon shared this sentiment as students completed their first day of her class. Students quickly learned that that this was no ordinary graduate course. McKinnon's innovative teaching style consistently encouraged students to search internally for answers, rather than from a lecture. Instead of PowerPoint slides, students were constantly on their feet, engaging with each other in meaningful activities designed to internalize core curricular concepts. *By Joe Giovannetti*



JOE GIOVANNETTI

Hometown: Arlington Heights, Ill.

Joe has known he wanted to pursue a career in theatre since high school. Not as a student, but as a teacher. Joe was the director of choral activities at Arlington Heights High School. "I taught choir and theatre at the high school level . . . I found what I loved about the job is the creation of concerts and musicals, so I wanted to do that at a higher level and make a career out of it." He is heading to the MSLCE program to get the skills he needs to pursue a career in theatre administration.

Areas of Interest: Music, TV/film, Fine arts

Favorite Musicals: *Guys and Dolls*, *Damn Yankees*, and *Anything Goes*

Dream Internship: Broadway Theatre



Favorite Album: *Hamilton* Soundtrack

Favorite Chicago

Landmark: The Art Institute

Dream Internship:

Steppenwolf Theatre



NATALIE AGBELE

Hometown: Delta State, Nigeria

After years studying economics and finance, Natalie realized that she did not want to professionally pursue either of those subjects for the rest of her life. "My dad is an accountant, so I thought I'd be one as well, but I don't want to do finance . . . I'm going into the creative industries." Natalie is unsure which creative industry she'd like to focus on, which is one of the reasons why MSLCE so appealed to her. "MSLCE covers everything related to the creative industries."

3 Words that Describe Me:

Determined, Patient, Resilient

Favorite Show: *The Underground*

Dream Internship: Publicist for a top marketing company

ROBIN ZHOU

Hometown: Shanghai, China

Robin wants to be "a media guy." He dreams of being an entrepreneur and owning a media and creative company where he can combine his interests in media and public policy. "There's no need to only focus on one field." Robin's parents work in public policy and he has always had a passion for media. He watches a lot of television and has even shot his own films. The Fudan University alum obtained his undergraduate degree in TV broadcasting and his graduate degree from the University of Southern California in international public policy and management.

Photos provided by students.

CLAIRE CONARD

Hometown: Grafton, Wisc.

Claire was hooked on theatre after her first performance in the musical *Annie* while in middle school. "I was always interested in being the center of attention." While she has been in many shows over the years, Claire's interests have now shifted from being on stage to being behind the scenes. She hopes to become an executive director for a theatre company. "To play such an important role in creating art would be a dream come true."

AVIELLE SURIA

Hometown: Bayamon, Puerto Rico

Avielle is not sure if she wants to work for a nonprofit or a software company, but she is certain of one thing: she wants to "think creatively in whatever career path [she ends] up pursuing." Suria currently works part-time as an administrative coordinator for the Center for Independent Futures, which helps adults with disabilities live independently. She values the impact that volunteers and donors have on people and she enjoys cultivating relationships. Recently, however, she learned about the role of a project manager and is now interested in putting her soft skills to good use as well.



Childhood Dream Job: Pet Shop Owner
Favorite Chicago Landmark: The Bean
Dream Location to Live: Tokyo or Singapore

REAVENS LEE

Hometown: Taiwan

Reavens' dream job is to own a design and media company that focuses on culinary art. "Food has always been my core spirit. I want to work with it creatively and make it my career." Reavens' first love was art. In junior high she enjoyed anime and began drawing and taking photographs. She went on to major in graphic design at Columbia College Chicago and later worked as a freelance graphic designer and as the art director for Athena Design Group.



Inspiring Thought: Life is tough, be tougher.
Favorite Movie: *Cinema Paradiso*
Dream Internship: Phoenix TV, Paramount Pictures, or Facebook



Favorite Films: *Love Letter*, *The Fifth Element*
Dream Location to Live: Japan
Dream Internship: BuzzFeed



ADAM SACHS
FORMER CEO
MIDROLL MEDIA

The podcast market has changed rapidly over the last few years, and Adam Sachs has been on the ground floor of that evolution. “A few years ago, when we wanted to make a new podcast we’d find one or two people to chit chat and banter and hopefully it’d be entertaining,” he said. “Because the barrier today for creating a podcast is so low, there is really a saturation of podcasts ... It has become a lot more difficult to create a podcast that stands out.” He would know. As the former CEO of a leading podcast network, Sachs has produced and monetized some of the world’s most popular podcasts, including *WTF with Marc Maron*, *The Bill Simmons Podcast*, and *Comedy Bang! Bang!* He discussed his career and the trajectory of the podcast industry.

BRIGETTE WHISNANT
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER
HAVAS WORLDWIDE CHICAGO

Whisnant oversees the content production work for a couple of well-known clients like AT&T and Verizon. She explained that different clients have different strategies, which means Whisnant is constantly challenged to think creatively about how to help generate “that piece of content or that idea or that experience.” Fortunately for her clients, Whisnant can draw on a long career of impressive experience. Whisnant has worked on campaigns like PlayStation, Taco Bell, and Apple, as well as award winning campaigns, including a series of online films for Amazon.com. “I never say ‘no’ to anything, so I missed a lot of weddings, a lot of parties,” she said. “I want to go wherever they want me to go and do whatever they want me to do because I want to learn the craft ... It’s a job that requires you to work when you have to work.”



CHRIS MEADOR
GLOBAL BRAND STRATEGY LEAD
FACEBOOK

Chris Meador’s professional path has brought him from theatre stages to the History Channel to Microsoft and, finally, to Facebook. Meador identified the running thread through all those jobs: the desire to connect. “While I love the art, what I love is the business and the process that makes the art, which is everything that’s built around it.” Meador’s decision to move from onstage to offstage in his professional aspirations has led him to a variety of different work experiences throughout his career. As a Northwestern undergrad, he interned at ad agencies, talent agencies, law firms. He’s realized that “so much of my career has been built not on what my paycheck is but on what am I missing, what am I not learning,” Meador said, “because if I’m not learning, I’m not growing, and then I’m not interested.”



THE JOFFREY BALLET

Nestled into the bustling streets of the Loop, the Joffrey's office space is tight and cozy. The world-renowned performances they are able to create are nothing short of majestic, and visiting their office space gave us a great sense of a dichotomy we talk about every day in our courses – the creative versus the industry. In a sector that is filled with flash and spectacle, we look to understand the day-to-day. We want to know how the sausage gets made. Our visit started with a conversation between us and Joffrey Executive Director Greg Cameron. His enthusiasm was contagious as he told us the Joffrey story and how his days look as a leader at the top level of an arts enterprise. *By John Hounihan*



MUSIC BOX FILMS

Music Box Films was founded in 2007. It prides itself in the distribution of foreign language, independent, and documentary films. Movie theaters, DVDs, and video on demand are their primary distribution channels. Music Box Films is owned by the Southport Music Box Corp., which also owns the Music Box Theatre, an icon in Chicago that opened in August 1929. Though the theater and film distributor are connected, they are not dependent upon each other. “If we know a film would do more on home entertainment, we do not focus much on theatrical distribution,” said Courtney Vlaming, who started working for Music Box Films as an intern but is now the home entertainment sales and marketing coordinator.

By Natalie Agbele

CHICAGO SHAKESPEARE THEATER

It was November of 1997 when the Chicago Shakespeare Theater's eight-employee staff met with City of Chicago officials at a Gold Coast pub and struck a monumental deal. After signing a 90-year lease with the city, the theatre prepared to make its risky move to a mostly uninhabited, bizarre Navy Pier. How did the Chicago Shakespeare Theater (CST) evolve from a one-man show into one of the most successful regional theatres in the country? MSLCE students sat down with the theatre's Executive Director Criss Henderson and Associate Producer Heather Schmucker to find out. Students also received a brief overview of the space and the company's productions, and got a behind-the-scenes look backstage, which included a peek into CST's wig room. *By Scotty Stieber*



TEAMWORK

Gail Berger, Assistant Professor of Instruction, McCormick School of Engineering

On Oct. 2, eager students arrived on campus for their first full-day professional seminar. None expected the diverse challenges that the day would bring. Gail Berger led the MSLCE cohort in a professional teamwork seminar. The workshop was designed to build the students' collaboration skills through a set of unique puzzles and activities. Berger began by passing out a single piece of paper to each student, each with one vague piece of information written on it. Her direction was simple: the group had forty-five minutes to answer two questions based on the information written on each piece of paper using only verbal communication. With that, Berger exited the room and left the group to their task. For the next forty-five minutes, the students, all of whom had met only the previous day, found themselves engrossed in a complicated word puzzle that would test the limits of their ability to strategize, communicate, and use reasoning skills. The tension in the air was often tangible: they had unexpectedly walked into their first leadership exam. Would they be able to work together to pass the test? When Berger returned, she was ecstatic to find that the answer was yes: the new MSLCE cohort had passed. *By Joe Giovannetti*



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Dan Heck, Project Management Professional

Project management is a field increasingly used in all kinds of businesses. As aspiring leaders, it is important to gain the necessary skills needed to manage projects and teams. "Every project has to attempt a scope, schedule, and resources," said Dan Heck, a certified project management professional who led the first project management workshop. During this workshop, students incorporated project management in building the Sydney Opera House Lego model. The day started with a session aimed at informing students of the key desirables for a well-designed project. Later on, we were divided into seven teams. While the first six teams were tasked with building the actual Lego model, the seventh team, the media team, was responsible for documenting the process through pictures, videos, and interviews. Although the task was undeniably fun and stressful, we all had a lot to learn. Upon completion we reflected on what we had done right and what we would do differently in the future. In a short period of time, students were able to take home the necessary ingredients needed to successfully complete a project.

By Natalie Agbele

EDUCATION + GAMING

**Michael Horn, Assistant Professor, Computer Science and Learning Sciences,
School of Education and Social Policy**

“How do people learn?” Michael Horn posed this question when he spoke with students about Green Home Games: a company that aims to raise awareness about environmental sustainability through gaming. Through his research, Horn has found that people learn by actively participating in a “community of practice.” In order to create this sense of community, he seeks to “recapture” the gaming experience by introducing innovative technology that encourages people to interact with the real world, an idea he explains as “tangible interaction.” *By Joe Giovannetti*

**NETWORKS RESEARCH**

Leslie DeChurch, Professor, Communication Studies

Creative minds typically house bold, novel, and elaborate ideas, but can brainstorming lead to the production of dull and unoriginal ideas, even in a group of creative people? Leslie DeChurch certainly believes so, and she has the research to back it up. DeChurch, who has a research background in leadership and team dynamics, teaches at Northwestern and also helps NASA teams work more efficiently in their mission to put humans on Mars. Her faculty talk gave MSLCE students a new perspective when it comes to sustaining healthy team relationships, particularly when it comes to communicating across different departments, personalities, and areas of interest. Innovate and create. First, groups should strive to innovate, then they can create. *By Joe Giovannetti*





FUN TIMES AT MSLCE

MSLCE kicked off the academic year with a Cubs game and capped it off with a holiday party with other School of Communication professional programs at the beautiful new Segal Visitors Center on campus. At the party we also said a final farewell to the winner 2016 cohort, who graduated at the end of the fall quarter. We wish them the best of luck!



MSLCE GIVES BACK

A group of MSLCE students, staff, faculty, and family joined a shift at Turkeypalooza, an initiative of Campus Kitchens at Northwestern, to help provide holiday meals to Evanston-area families in need.



A Look at the
GLOBAL ART MARKET
 with
Larissa Buchholz
 Assistant Professor
 School of Communication

Larissa Buchholz' research engages with the dynamics of cultural production and reception in an increasingly globally interdependent and interconnected world. Her forthcoming book *The Global Rules of Art. The Dual Emergence of a Cultural World Economy* examines global transformations in the contemporary visual arts and the different ways that artists become valued worldwide. The book begins with a puzzle: as globalization entails extraordinary cross-border flows and growing transnational valuation of cultural goods, will these dynamics lead to the extended dominance of cultural goods from a few Western countries, resulting in cultural homogeneity, or enable greater circulation and recognition of cultural creations from non-Western regions, and thereby produce increased cultural diversity?

Buchholz has learned that the study of culture, in fact, of anything, evolves incrementally. Rather than one "Aha!" moment, research involves a series of surprises, realizations of error, and small discoveries that assemble to create a comprehensive portrait of a complex system. For example, at the beginning of her study, her research found that despite globalization, the hierarchies among the most recognized artists seemed hardly to have changed over the past decades. Artists from non-Western countries continued to be highly marginalized. Thus, contemporary art seemed to remain a Western-dominated world. But her reproduction thesis, about which she had published, was put into question in 2007 when something remarkable happened: Chinese contemporary artists rose to the heights of the global art market, achieving multi-million dollar prices at major Western art auction houses, rivalling such Western market superstars as Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons.

Puzzled by that surprising development, Buchholz immediately plunged into an interview series with art dealers and auction house specialists to find out what happened. This series was a starting point for her to understand how much the auction market had become coupled to a financial logic of valuation, which contributed to the unique Chinese art boom. This logic contrasts to a more cultural expert driven logic of the construction of artistic value (and careers). Thus, Buchholz revised the approach to her study (resulting in the forthcoming book). She made it her goal to account for the heterogeneity of the global contemporary



Professor Larissa Buchholz. Photo provided by Larissa Buchholz.

art market in order to identify the diverse logics and processes through which artistic valuation operates globally. Buchholz explains, "I tell my students that they shouldn't be afraid of mis-takes. You as a researcher must be open to surprises and change your work accordingly - which often can lead into exciting new directions."

Buchholz's interest in global cultural issues stems not only from a long-standing engagement with the respective literature, but also from her personal background. Born in Dresden, Buchholz witnessed the fall of the Wall, giving her a deep appreciation for the ability to travel worldwide beyond the former "Iron Curtain." That background also led her to volunteer as an undergraduate at the House of World Cultures Berlin in 2001, when suddenly, just one day after she had arrived, September 11th happened. Instantly, she found herself in a hotbed of debates about different cultures and civilizations and their role for global conflict or peace. For her first book, this interest in global cultural issues narrowed to the art world more specifically after an experience working in an international art gallery. In that regard, she is quick to point out how important she thinks a global outlook is in today's professional world. "To work in the creative industries, having a sense of their cross-border dynamics is definitely useful."

Professor Buchholz will teach Cultural Nonprofits for the MSLCE program this spring.



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WINTER SPEAKER SERIES

January 12 Erica Daniels, Managing Director, Victory Gardens Theater

February 2 Jeffrey Jacobs, Co-Head of Television, Creative Artists Agency

March 2 Glendon Palmer, Senior Vice President, Development & Production, IM Global



*First Thursday of each month at 5:15pm in Frances Searle #1-441. Free + open to the public.
Scan the QR code or visit http://creative.northwestern.edu/speaker_series to register.*

LEARN MORE

Sign up for an online information session at <https://creative.northwestern.edu/admissions/information-sessions/>.

Interested in applying? The next deadline for fall 2017 admission is March 1, 2017.

Newsletter Editor: Jacob Nelson
Contributors: Jacob Nelson, Miya Williams, Kathryn E. Lawson
Unless otherwise stated, photos by Kathryn E. Lawson

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