Advice for Graduate School & Beyond, from Recent Graduates of the MA program

by Alecia Swasy

1. Get to know your professors early in the semester. Show that you’re interested and eager to do well. “Those relationships come in handy later,” says Ilene Davis, who graduated in December. For instance, it will be easier to ask them to serve on your thesis or project committee if they already know you.

2. Beef up your core skills through practical courses. “If you are passionate about photography, learn how to shoot and edit video and take a visual graphics course,” says Ben Poston, now data editor at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

3. But don’t hesitate to branch out and try new subjects. “Don’t feel as if you’re confined to the prescribed course of study in the sequence you choose,” says Dayne Logan. Theoretical courses can often bring about a deeper understanding of the field that directly impacts your professional work.

4. Network inside and outside the university. “Go to as many lectures and panels as you can and visit with the panelists afterwards,” says Jesse Bogan, GA reporter at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Serendipity awaits you, and these relationships can lead to internships and jobs. 5. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. At times, the amount of assigned reading makes you want to hide under your bed. “Professors are truly invested in their graduate students and want nothing more than for them to succeed. They won’t give you more than you can handle and are almost always willing to make extra time to help grad students,” Logan says. “We all felt like we were drowning most of the time, but it always gets done,” adds Davis. When in doubt, go see Martha Pickens, academic advisor to the on-campus master’s program. She will make you laugh and help you solve any problem. 6. Finally, don’t forget to have a life. Exercise, even if it’s a short walk around the quad. Spend time with your J-school buddies and others. “Befriend the bartender at Shakespeare’s,” Davis says.

Ben Poston

Ilene Davis

Jesse Bogan

Dayne Logan

Recent Mizzou Journalism graduate Joshua A. Bickel faced a lot of competition in the job market. “It’s hard to compete with people who’ve been doing this a lot longer than me.” But Bickel credits his Mizzou training for helping him land a job as a multimedia photojournalist at the Casper Star-Tribune in Wyoming. “I worked really hard in grad school. I think my teachers saw that and gave me good references and alerted me to opportunities… Slacking off in class isn’t going to score you points when you ask them for a reference.”

Like Bickel, other recent grads of the Master’s program have plenty of great advice for those just starting the program, as well as those who might have their eye on the future job market.
Yehia Awarded 1st Place for Excellence in Research

Submitted by Fritz Cropp, written by Fedor Zarkhin

Amir Yehia, a Master’s student at the Missouri School of Journalism, was awarded first place for Excellence in Research in English by the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators at its 16th International Conference, held at the American University of Beirut Oct. 28 to Oct. 31. The award was also given to coauthors Maria Garcia (PhD, 2011) and Fritz Cropp, associate professor at the University of Missouri. Yehia, Garcia and Cropp received the award for two research papers, both of which will be published in the refereed Journal of Middle East Media.

One paper compared Al-Jazeera’s and the BBC’s coverage of the British presence in Iraq, and the other examined how young people in the Middle East use social media. Yehia’s next project will be to do a comparative study of CNN’s and Al-Jazeera’s coverage of the Egyptian revolution, he said.

Yehia reported for newspapers and TV station in Baghdad, Iraq – his home city – after the war there began in 2003, until 2006. “It was very hard, very difficult,” Yehia said. “The journalists in Iraq were the more targeted people, everybody wanted to kill them; they were targeted by militias, the government, terrorists.” Yehia said many of his colleagues were injured or killed, and that his younger brother, also a journalist, was almost killed by a car bomb.

Despite the dangers of being a reporter in Iraq during the war, Yehia felt he had a duty to inform the public about the difficulties Iraqis faced. “It’s just something inside you, you need to show what’s going on inside [the country], you need to cover a lot of stories of people’s suffering,” Yehia said.

Since he was a child Yehia liked to read and write, which is what prompted him to study English literature at the University of Baghdad. Those interests transformed into wanting to help his country’s people by telling the stories of their challenges. “People suffering around you, nobody really supports them, so this is the best way to do it, by writing and showing the world about their need and their suffering,” Yehia said.

In 2007 Yehia received a Master’s degree in international political economy from Al-Yarmouk University in Arbid, Jordan, where he also worked as a journalist. After Yehia defends his Master’s thesis he hopes to enter a PhD program in the U.S., preferably at the University of Missouri. After that he plans to go back to Iraq to teach journalism ethics. “What I have learned here about the media and ethics, I think my friends there, my people, they need to learn that as well,” Yehia said.

He discussed potential benefits of using social media and social networks for communications in mass casualty situations.

News

Starting this semester, Anthony Adornato (Online MA student) became a part-time faculty member in the broadcast and digital journalism department at Syracuse University’s S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and an adjunct lecturer in the journalism department at Utica College (NY).

Save the date for the Black Law Student’s annual Lloyd Gaines Banquet. It will take place April 7th at 5:30 p.m. The event is a semi-formal event. The keynote speaker will be Deputy Chancellor Middleton. Tickets are $25 for students. The ticket includes open bar, dinner, dessert, entertainment and a good time. More information will be forthcoming.

LTC Andrew Kim (Online MA, 2011) presented research based on his thesis work at the University of Kansas Medical Center last December. His presentation covered strategic communication preparedness in three levels of government: federal, state and local institutions of health, public health and security and how these institutions are preparing to leverage new media systems as channels for strategic communication.

Rita McIntosh (Online MA, 2011) was proud to let us know that her first children’s book, The Legend of Cats and Mice, has been published and is available for purchase at the major book retailers, as well as Outskirts Press: http://outskirtspress.com/store.php.


Brian Thompson, (MA ’09) won first place in the Florida Press Club’s 2011 Excellence in Journalism Competition for commentary writing in class C, which is daily newspapers with less than 40,000 circulation. This is the third year in a row he has won an award in the commentary category, and the fourth time he’s earned a Press Club award for his column.

The Legend of Cats and Mice

Rita McIntosh
Illustrated by Pamela Towery

Mice, has been published and is available for purchase at the major book retailers, as well as Outskirts Press: http://outskirtspress.com/store.php.
The column is called Life in a Nutshell: [http://www.nutshellicity.com/](http://www.nutshellicity.com/). Thompson is a freelancer for The Record. He works at Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla., where he advises the online-only award-winning student newspaper, teaches opinion writing, and edits the college alumni magazine.

**Betty Houchin Winfield** sends her regards from Doha, Qatar, where she recently gave an invited lecture, "Going Public, the U.S. President’s State of the Union Address," at the Northwestern University Qatar campus. She also led a discussion on building a career in the journalism/communication fields while there. After Qatar, Winfield is headed back to Warsaw for the semester, where she’s a Fulbright Distinguished Chair at the American Studies Institute at the University of Warsaw.


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**Presentations**


Meet Manu Bhandari, a first year doctoral student. Manu also recently completed his master’s degree program at the Missouri School of Journalism.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself:  
A: I am from Nepal, a tiny South Asian country sandwiched between India and China. I was born in Kathmandu, the capital city. I grew up doing all the usual stuff that kids do: playing sports and games with friends and studying hard to get good grades in class. For high school, I went to India, where I also pursued my bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Delhi. I later graduated with a master’s degree in English from Pokhara University in Nepal. About halfway through my master’s degree, I began working at The Himalayan Times, a national daily in Nepal. I worked at the Times for about a year before coming to Mizzou to pursue my master’s degree in journalism.

Q: Why did you pick Mizzou for a master’s degree? And the PhD?  
A: My uncle, who teaches at Westminster University in Fulton, first introduced the school to me. Mizzou’s program looked very interesting. The availability of financial assistance played a very important role, too. I also learned about Mizzou’s reputation through several other people I met during the course of the application process. I decided to continue my PhD at Mizzou because I felt I could pursue my research interests here under expert faculty guidance and also because the school provides generous financial support. I am grateful to Dr. Esther Thorson and members of the administration committee for the opportunity to continue with my studies here.

Q: What’s your emphasis of study?  
A: I will be spending most of my time in the PRIME Lab, which is equipped to measure people’s physiological reactions upon exposure to mediated messages. Specifically, I want to look at how various online features affect the cognitive and emotional processing of content, ranging from text-only to multimedia. I am also interested in health communication.

Q: What do you hope to do after graduation?  
A: I want to continue my line of research as well as teach, hopefully with an equal load of both.

Q: Anything else interesting that you want to throw in?  
A: I worked as a tourist guide in Nepal on and off for five years. I love to travel.
SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, ANNOUNCEMENT, OR ITEM OF INTEREST

Deadline for submission for the March newsletter is Friday, February 24th. Late submissions will be included on a space-available basis, or in a following month.

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