Game of Thrones fans have something to look forward this holiday season: Old Dominion University’s Myles McNutt has published a book about the series that goes into extreme detail on beloved characters and the seven kingdoms of Westeros.

*Game of Thrones: A Guide to Westeros and Beyond, The Complete Series* is available at bookstores and online. The officially licensed book containing professional pictures and stills from the show was released Nov. 5.

McNutt, assistant professor in the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts, started writing about the HBO fantasy series on his blog “Cultural Learnings” in 2009, when the adaptation of George R.R. Martin’s novels was first announced. His reviews of the show gained in popularity over the show’s early seasons, and in 2015 he began writing the “Experts” reviews — for readers of Martin’s books — for pop-culture website “The A.V. Club,” garnering hundreds of thousands of readers through this year’s series finale.

Watching and writing about the show was a critical outlet for McNutt, but he also used his reviews to explore the show from a cultural studies perspective consistent with his research and teaching at ODU.

“Game of Thrones is a show that managed to become a cultural phenomenon at a time when audiences are increasingly segmented due to having so many different options,” he said. “Writing about the show was a chance to analyze the themes, character arcs and ideologies central to the series with an audience who desperately wanted to dissect and debate the show’s merits each week.”

It was this work that led to McNutt’s involvement with HBO and publisher Chronicle Books, which approached him to create a coffee table book covering the entire series in late 2016. Chronicle had previously published two books by writers and producers of the show, but they focused more on behind-the-scenes aspects. McNutt’s book focuses more on the story; it illustrates the big-picture ideas central to the series as well as diving into the characters and breaking down their journeys.

It was a difficult project given that it was being written while the show was still on the air. “Every week in the final season,” McNutt said, “something would happen that would force us to make various adjustments, as story arcs shifted and themes became more or less important.”

The book required this kind of careful consideration because it was being designed to appeal to a wide audience of fans, from die-hard to casual viewers, McNutt said.

“The book forced me to think outside of my normal train of thought and to try to make sense of what the show’s writers were trying to accomplish, and how a diverse viewership would engage with the narrative on different levels,” McNutt said.

With the book being translated into multiple languages and released across the globe, a similarly diverse readership no doubt awaits.
KUDOS!

DANIELLE JACKSON was promoted to Senior Lecturer.

ALISON LIETZENMAYER was promoted to Master Lecturer.

MYLES MCNUTT signed a contract with Routledge for his monograph *Television’s Spatial Capital: Location, Relocation, Dislocation*, forthcoming in 2021/2022.

INES PETROVIC won our first CommONLINE Adjunct Teaching Excellence Award.


NICK ARNOLD, an undergraduate Communication Major (Concentration in Cinema Production) will be presenting his work “‘Blasphemy’: Tupac, Radical Hip Hop and the Complications.” at the Beyond the Culture: Black Popular Culture and Social Justice conference in early February.

ALISON LIETZENMAYER won ODU’s 2019-2020 Faculty Innovator Grant (FIG) award for the proposal “Here When You Need It: Asynchronous ePortfolio Support.”

Please share accomplishments such as publications, awards, conference and festival acceptances, reviews, and other recognitions, and we will publish them in future bulletins: Submit content here.

A Special Thanks to Dr. Tom Socha

After ten years, Dr. Tom Socha has officially announced that he will be stepping away from his role as GPD for our LSDC MA program at the end of June 2020. Dr. Socha is the founding program director for our graduate degree, and his efforts, guidance, and vision cannot be overstated. Over these ten years, he has successfully established a strong foundation for the next GPD to build upon.

As a leading researcher of the communication dynamics of parent-child relationships as well as a prolific contributor to the literature on lifespan and family and founding editor of the *Journal of Family Communication*, Dr. Socha has developed a network of invested alumni who sing the program’s praises. Many of our graduate students have moved into successful professional positions and onto PhD programs as a result of the MA degree and several of them also actively teach courses for the department every semester.

Serving three full terms, Dr. Socha has graciously remained in the GPD position to ensure that there was continuity in the program as it was establishing its bonafides. “I certainly have lots to be thankful for since then-Department Chair Dr. Gary Edgerton appointed me to become the founding GPD of the MA-LSDC program back in the fall of 2010 (a year before we admitted our first class in 2011),” Socha recalls, “In particular, I am grateful for the privilege of working with the world’s most amazing graduate students and supportive ODU LSDC colleagues.”

In Fall 2020, Dr. Socha will begin his first year as the founding Director of the Lifespan Communication Research Center. Socha notes, “I will of course continue to teach in the LSDC program, the undergraduate COMM program, continue my duties as an ODU Mediator, and more. I am looking forward to seeing and supporting the continued high-quality, national accomplishments and development of the LSDC program for years to come.”

We are truly grateful to Dr. Socha for his work in fostering a culture where - and an opportunity for - graduate education to become integral to our department’s sense of purpose and identity. We thank you for your hard work, Tom, and wish the best of luck in the years to come!
Graduate Program Hosts
Dr. Julien Mirivel

In early February, the ODU Graduate Program in Lifespan & Digital Communication will welcome the 2020 LSDC Visiting Guest Communication Scholar, Dr. Julien Mirivel, Professor of Applied Communication and Interim Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Communication at the University of Arkansas, Littlerock.

On February 3, (7 pm – 9 pm, BAL 9024), Dr. Mirivel will give a talk based on his ground-breaking conceptual model and popular book *The Art of Positive Communication*, followed by questions and discussion. This event is free and open to the public. On February 4, (7:10 pm – 9:50 pm, BAL 1003), Julien will present on ”Methods Behind the Scenes,” a talk focused on his research methods used in three major projects including data collection for the national study about the communication professorate, recent research on peak communication, and his latest research with Heifer International. This event is open to graduate students and interested faculty. Office hours will also be held for graduate students to confer with Professor Mirivel about their research projects. Contact Dr. Thomas Socha (tsocha@odu.edu) for more information on Dr. Mirivel’s visit.

Excite the Dream Visiting Scholar
Dr. Natasha R. Howard

Through the Department of Academic Affairs, candidates of the Excited the Dream program will be visiting Colleges throughout campus in February. Dr. Natasha R. Howard will be touring our Department and giving a research talk on February 10th at 2-3pm in BAL 9024.

Dr. Howard earned her doctorate in Mass Communications & Media Studies, with a Graduate Certificate in Women’s Studies, from Howard University in 2012. Currently she is an Assistant Professor of Communication at the Community College of Baltimore County. She is a co-editor of the book, *Black Women and Popular Culture: The Conversation Continues* (2014). Dr. Howard has published and presented on her areas of specialization that include hip hop culture, media effects, and representations of the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality in mass media.
BROWN BAG WORKS-IN-PROGRESS
Lunch Series Coming Up January 30th

Our Brown Bag series continues, where our faculty present works in progress to their colleagues for the purposes of a) sharing their research, b) generating conversation, and c) building community.

Presenters at the Brown Bag series offer short informal 10-12-minute presentations of ongoing projects and then we open the floor up to questions. This is a great way to learn about what colleagues and professors in other parts of the department are doing.

We always look to pair a person on the COMM side with an artist on the DANCE/FILM/THEATRE side. All are welcome (and we also provide a virtual option), including grad students (and select undergrads if the presenter wants them there).

Our fourth Brown Bag will be in BAL 9024 at 12:30-1:30 PM. DR. BRENDAN O’HALLARN and DR. DANIELLE JACKSON will be presenting. Topics will be forthcoming.

ALISON LIETZENMAYER WINS ODU’S 2019-2020 FACULTY INNOVATOR GRANT

Master Lecturer Alison Lietzenmayer is part of a winning team for ODU’s 2019-2020 Faculty Innovator Grant. The project “Here When You Need It: Asynchronous ePortfolio Support and Feedback,” done in cooperation between Lietzenmayer, Megan Mize, Ph.D. and Elle Tyson, M.A., both with ODU’s Center for High Impact Practices, is a pilot designed to help establish best practices coordinating asynchronous efforts between CHIP’s ePortfolio Program and the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts.

The Faculty Innovator Grant (FIG) program encourages Old Dominion University faculty to explore innovative use of technology to improve student learning. In tracking and analyzing collaborative asynchronous technical support, feedback, and writing review of student ePortfolios during the course of the Fall 2020 semester, the team’s hope is that this project’s results can be shared with additional faculty in the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts and both in and outside of the College of Arts & Letters for other ePortfolio programs.
upcoming events

BROWN BAG
WORKS-IN-PROGRESS
LUNCH SERIES

09/24: Brittany Harris, MFA and Dr. Annemarie Navar-Gill (University Theatre 1002)

10/31: Priya Vashist, MFA and Dr. Ted Gournelos (BAL 9024)

11/26: Marilyn Marloff, MFA and Dr. Victoria Jennings (Diehn 1202)

01/30: Dr. Brendan O'Hallarn and Dr. Danielle Jackson (BAL 9024)

02/27: Jim Lyden, MFA and Dr. Fran Hassencahl (University Theatre 1002)

03/26: Dr. Carolina Conte and TBA (Diehn 1202)

04/23: Dr. Kyle Nicholas and Carla Harrell (BAL 9024)
Dr. Julien Mirivel

Campus Visit on Feb 3-4, 2020

The ODU Graduate Program in Lifespan & Digital Communication is proud to welcome our 2020 LSDC Visiting Guest Communication Scholar, Dr. Julien Mirivel, Professor of Applied Communication and Interim Dean, College of Social Sciences and Communication, University of Arkansas, Littlerock.

Monday 2/3, 7 pm – 9 pm  “The Art of Positive Communication”
BAL 9024, Free and Open to the Public

Professor Mirivel will discuss his ground-breaking conceptual model and popular book followed by questions and discussion.

Tuesday 2/4, 7:10 pm – 9:50 pm  “Methods Behind the Scenes”
BAL 1003, Open to graduate students and interested faculty

Professor Mirivel will present on a variety of research methods used in three major projects: (1) data collection for the national study about the communication professorate, (2) recent research on peak communication, and (3) his latest research with Heifer International.
February 20th - March 1st

FROM ODURep
AN ORIGINAL WORK BY
BRITTNEY S. HARRIS

ECHHOES
REDISCOVERING THE RAINBOW

IN THE GOODE THEATRE
FEB 20-MAR 1
ODUArtStix.com

Written and directed by Brittney S. Harris
Produced by ODURep

Drawing from Ntozake Shange’s For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When The Rainbow Is Enuf and Boal’s Rainbow of Desires technique, Brittney S. Harris weaves an interactive poetry/rap/movement tapestry into a rainbow of dialogue, between diverse narratives of both the actors and the audience.

Echoes allows audience members to become spect-actors in exploring the ways that race, sexuality, and gender realities create feelings of rejection, oppression, or invisibility for so many. Together, all will share pain, struggles, and celebration in this powerful performance event.

Free parking is available in Garage D, 1070 W. 45th St.