



Annual Newsletter of the RMCA

January, 2019

“Transitions, Transmissions, and Transgressions”

The 33rd

**Rocky Mountain Communication Association
Annual Conference**

**Pikes Peak Community College
Colorado Springs, CO
Saturday, April 13, 2019**

Keynote speaker:

Sherry Morreale, Ph.D.

University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

We live in a social and political climate that feels like an outgoing assault, either on our persons, our social media, our politics, our country from outside agents, or even what epistemologically or ontologically constitutes a “fact” or a “victim.” We are experiencing transitions in our personal, social, political, and national identities in a social media culture that is normalizing what has never been a norm and turning victims of transgression into transgressors and transgressors into victims. Should we even attempt to find normalcy in such a highly destabilized world or should we resist the creation of new social and cultural norms? How do these changes affect our interpersonal relations, family dynamics, professional environments, and public discussions? The RMCA 2019 Conference invites us to look at how communication as a social science and rhetorical tradition can help us to understand and cope with transitions, transmissions, and transgressions in an increasingly volatile and divisive time.

The 2019 RMCA Conference Call for Papers:

“Transitions, Transmissions, and Transgressions” is a wide-ranging conference theme. Papers may explore this theme from numerous intellectual and methodological perspectives. *Of course, submissions outside this theme are welcome as well and will be given full consideration.* Please adhere to the following guidelines when making your submission. The submission deadline is **Friday, February 22, 2019 at 12:59 PM MT**. Paper and panel submissions should be submitted to: <https://rmca.submittable.com/submit>

Completed Papers should be in the range of 2,500-7,000 words in length, excluding notes and references. Papers submitted to this category will automatically be considered for the following awards, as decided by the RMCA board:

Outstanding Four-Year Student Paper
(undergraduate)

Outstanding Two-Year Student Paper
(undergraduate)

Outstanding Graduate Paper

Panel and Performance Proposals should provide the names of each panel participant, indicate a clear and unified theme for the panel, and a brief abstract of each panel presentation (or a description of the performance).



A Welcome from Leah LeFebvre, 2019 Rocky Mountain Communication Association President

Looking Back at 2018 RMCA and Looking Forward to 2019

Our upcoming 2019 RMCA conference draws together the opportunity to engage and reminds us of the importance of community in our work as teachers and scholars. The RMCA 2018 Conference held at the Regis University campus in Denver, Colorado, presented an opportunity to foster and celebrate our future generation of scholars, practitioners, and citizens as well as provided moments to reflect and learn.

The 2018 theme focused on how to “*Make Communication Great Again*” and centralized on reclaiming the role of discourse in our personal and professional relationships, organizations, and the public. The theme focused on the interplay between contextual timeframes – past, present, and future – a transhistorical permanence represented through discourse. Presenters explored what we stand for and addressed representation and assumptions centralized on the prefiguration, configuration, or refiguration of communication.

The submissions explored this theme from numerous intellectual and methodological perspectives. Our reviewers applauded the submissions and depth of innovativeness, creativity, and rigor in a variety of research topics and methodologies. These submissions turned into professional presentations that generated lively and timely discussions. We had three noteworthy top paper recognitions. Lauren A. Smith, Red Rocks Community College received the Outstanding Two-Year Undergraduate Student Paper for – *Weird little white girl: A narrative exploration of sexual identities*. Natalie Scholander, Regis University, received the Outstanding Four-Year Undergraduate Student Paper for – ‘*The world’s catalog of ideas*’ – *A hobby of consumption*. Leah Horn, University of Colorado Denver received the Outstanding Graduate Student Paper for – *Aileen Wuornos: print news depictions of a “Lesbian serial killer.”* Additionally, we celebrated excellence in teaching and awarded Breelyn Bowe, University of Northern Colorado, the Outstanding Teaching Assistantship Award.

Her nominations from faculty noted her dedication to the discipline, engagement in the profession, and excellence in situations placed in her path as an instructor. We look forward to our award recipients’ futures.

An acclaimed scholar and educator, Dr. Tracey Owens Patton, University of Wyoming, presented a thought-provoking and powerful Keynote Presentation. In her presentation, she challenged us to contemplate the ways in which we, as communication scholars, are able to give voice to current and past issues, the ways in which communication can reclaim the role of discourse, and the risks that come about when someone exercises the power of speech. Dr. Patton presented her debut presentation at RMCA at the beginning of her career, and having her return as a full professor offered burgeoning students a glimpse at their potential and future.

Every RMCA offers the opportunity to engage with scholars and celebrate scholarship and teaching. Moreover, RMCA highlights our sense of community and comradery. The 2019 RMCA will celebrate the 33rd anniversary. I look forward to sharing in thoughtful discussions and enjoying the confluence ideas in a collegial environment for the new and seasoned. See you in April for RMCA Conference held in Colorado Springs, Colorado at Pikes Peak Community College.

ATTRACTIONS IN COLORADO SPRINGS:

Cheyenne Mountain Zoo/Will Rogers Shrine

Cave of the Winds

Garden of the Gods

Manitou Springs

The Colorado Springs Fine Art Center/Museum

Seven Falls



Dr. Sherry Morreale, 2019 Annual Conference Keynote Speaker

We are honored to have the acclaimed Dr. Sherry Morreale as our Keynote Speaker. Dr. Morreale is a Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. She earned her bachelors in Communication and Distributed Studies from the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, masters degree in Communication from University of Colorado at Denver and her doctorate in Speech Communication from the University of Denver.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. -- The Rocky Mountain Communication Association is pleased to welcome Sherry Morreale, Ph.D., Professor of Communication at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, and a founding member of RMCA, as its 2018 Keynote Speaker. "I'm really pleased that RMCA is going to meet in Colorado Springs for the first time in many years," she said. "I'm honored and excited to be the keynote speaker. It's fantastic!" Morreale has been with RMCA since before it was RMCA. "Originally [it] was the Colorado Communication Association," she said. "It was not as successful as we wanted; not enough attendance when limited to the state of Colorado. UCCS did host the conference once, then we tried meeting every two years." However, "when the idea was rejuvenated under RMCA, I was extremely pleased; I thought it was a great idea." Morreale currently serves on RMCA's Board of Governors, representing Graduate Students and Teaching Assistants.

Morreale will be speaking on "The Importance of Communication." "I am deeply committed to the discipline and to the region in which we live," she said. "There was no way I could refuse such a wonderful invitation. When you look at my line of research, you can see I'm committed to the discipline itself and to communication education."

Morreale's research often focuses on the Basic Communication Course, as well as how the communication discipline evolved. The inspiration for her keynote topic derives from her recent research that examines popular press and scholarly writing about the importance of communication and thereby communication education.

The keynote draws from "three research studies that I conducted in 2000, 2006, and 2018," Morreale said. "I engage in that kind of research in order to provide a foundation for those who want to advocate for the discipline. I think that is an important topic to explore wherever Communication college teachers and scholars are gathered together."

As an example, Morreale pointed to a recent study in which she and her research assistants carefully identified 1,100 national publications, all of which said that communication is important. They conducted a content analysis and identified themes in the writings addressing reasons why communication is important. Then they reduced their samples to 679 artifacts published over 10 years. "That's a lot of publications that say communication and communication education is important," Morreale said. This study was published in *Communication Education* (Morreale, Myers, Backlund, & Simonds, 2016).

Currently, Morreale has three projects on which she is working. The first is a study on the Basic Course. The Basic Course, which is often, but not always, Public Speaking, "is usually the first course students take," Morreale said. For this study, Morreale and two co-authors are examining surveys done every year on the Basic Course since 1956. They are seeking trends and trajectories in the Basic Course. "What did we learn from all those surveys?" Morreale said. "What were trends? Where does it stand and where might it go to make its finest contribution?"

Second, Morreale is working on a textbook for teaching public speaking online. This book will not be published in hard copy. Rather, "it will be fully digitized for teaching public speaking online," Morreale said. "I think that's a good idea because there are books available electronically, but they are books that have been converted to pdfs. That's not an online book. An online book is designed to take advantage of online access. It will make teaching public speaking online easy. It is the wave of the future."

Dr. Sherry Morreale 2019 Annual Conference Keynote Speaker (cont.)

“Not that face-to-face will go away, but many will be offering a degree online and public speaking should be in there, given that it is the most popular iteration of the Basic Course. This book will make that easy if someone already knows how to teach public speaking.”

Third, Morreale is focusing on a unique opportunity that arose at UCCS: “Here at UCCS we offer three Basic Courses: Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, and Oral Communication in the Workplace. We have gathered over 14 years of pre/post data in these three courses, assessing students’ improvement on the variables each course intended to impact, such as communication anxiety and self-esteem in the public speaking course.” The data will be collected to find out if instruction in these courses had a positive effect on student learning.

This latest study demonstrates Morreale’s research philosophy. “Choose [research topics] you think will make the most impact,” she said. “I don’t conduct these types of studies just for assessment reports and for accreditation purposes; rather we strive to use the data to enhance student learning in our basic courses.”

“It is not that I take pride in that work, it’s not self-serving,” she added. Morreale’s work does make an impact: her most recent study, “Study IX of the basic Communication course at two-and four-year US Colleges and Universities: A Re Examination of our Discipline’s ‘Front Porch’” in *Communication Education* is the most frequently cited article in her department at UCCS, according to the national citation service, Research Gate. “I value that that kind of research as important,” she said. “If you think about yourself, why do you do the work you do? It’s important. You could be a sociologist or a psychologist. But you’re not; you’re here. The Communication discipline is awesome.”

PIKES PEAK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Rocky Mountain Communication Association is meeting at Pikes Peak Community College this year. PPCC has about 19,000 students and three main campuses, and RMCA will be on the Rampart Range campus. According to the PPCC website, “Pikes Peak Community College was established in 1968 as El Paso Community College, a two-year college offering three associate degrees. . . . The Rampart Range campus was built in the north end of the city in 1998 . . . PPCC has become the largest post-secondary educational institution in Southern Colorado and offers the most widely accessible and affordable education in the region.”

Award Submissions

RMCA invites award submissions for:

**Lifetime Achievement,
Communication Excellence, and
Outstanding Teaching Assistant.**

Outstanding Teaching Assistant:

An award designed for graduate students who demonstrate excellence in the classroom and/or in research.

Communication Excellence:

An award represented to a faculty member or professional in recognition of his/her distinguished contributions to the Communication discipline.

Lifetime Achievement Award:

An award bestowed on rare occasions to a truly deserving and outstanding representative of our discipline.

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