

Media Psychology Fellow

Faculty/Staff Supervisor

Valerie Kretz, Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies

Description of Research Project

Media Psychology is the study of how people use media and how it impacts them. It is a social scientific field that relies on qualitative and quantitative research methods. Situated within this discipline, Dr. Kretz's work focuses on entertainment media, especially television and movies. Her primary interest is in the ways that entertainment media and relationships intersect. Examples of her published works include, "McDreamy is McDead: Viewer Responses to a Parasocial Breakup," "Does the Glass Slipper Fit? Disney Princess Films and Relationship Beliefs and Attitudes," and "Who Feels all the Feels? Individual Differences in Emotional Responses to and Enjoyment of Romantic Relationship Depictions."

Dr. Kretz has several ongoing projects at various stages of development. As examples, one project is focused on viewers' responses to television shows that incorporated COVID-19 storylines, and another project will examine how viewers react when television characters return to a show after a long absence. Dr. Kretz is also the Vice-Chair (Chair beginning in November 2021) of the Mass Communication Division of the National Communication Association. In that role she is involved with planning and executing a conference where research is presented.

Description of Student Opportunity

The student fellow will be required to contribute ideas and complete research related activities. This may involve information gathering, reading, writing, document creation, data preparation, and basic analyses.

Benefits to the Student

By working directly with a professor, the fellow will expand their undergraduate experience. They will learn about the process of social science – from conception to dissemination. The knowledge the student gains will be a helpful supplement to their social science classes, and the skills they develop will help them prepare for future employment or graduate school.

Benefits to the Supervising Faculty/ Staff Member

The supervising faculty member will receive support for her research goals. Having a student fellow will help her maintain continued progress on multiple projects.

Research Fellow Qualifications (major, skill set, technology, etc.)

The research fellow needs to have strong communication and computer skills. They should be organized and detail oriented. Any social science major is welcome, but an interest in entertainment media is a must.