

Call for Papers

Interfaces

Conference hosted by the Graduate Program in Communication
University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Interface *n. & v. --n.* **1** a surface forming a common boundary between regions. **2** a point where interaction occurs among systems, processes, subjects, etc. **3** an apparatus for connecting pieces of equipment so that they can be operated jointly *v. tr. & intr.* **1** Connect with (another piece of equipment etc.) by an interface.

Communication necessarily implies interfaces. With the advent and multiplication of various mediated forms of communication, it has become increasingly important to understand how interfaces shape all aspects of human communication. Many theorists have argued that the contemporary period is marked by the fragmentation and redefinition of identities and national boundaries.

In this context, what are the qualities of interfaces that allow for the dual possibilities of increased "connectedness" and, simultaneously, of increased "isolation"? This graduate student conference will consider this question as it affects any level and context of communication, whether between individuals, social groups, or cultures. How might the metaphor of "interfaces" help us to generate creative interpretations of everyday life in an increasingly fragmented world?

Students whose areas of research focus or border on communication are invited to submit short (1-3 page) proposals for individual papers (of 15-20 minutes each). Completed papers or thematic panel proposals (of 3-4 presenters each) are also welcome. Diverse methodologies and theoretical approaches are encouraged. All submissions will be subjected to a peer-review process. The following topics are suggested as starting points for considering panels or individual papers, but are not intended to be exclusive or mandatory.

- Media-mediated relationships (*from penpals to fandom to cyberchat to netsex*)
- The Rhetoric of Interfaces ("*A Bridge to the 21st Century...*")
- Borders and boundaries: political, personal, cultural, etc.
- The local-global nexus in/as neo-colonialism
- New communication technologies: possibilities and limitations
- Hybrid identities and postcoloniality
- Migrant/national subjectivities and the politics of displacement
- Disability, identity, and society
- Sub/Counter/Co-cultures
- The politics of racial representation
- Bodies and technologies, cosmetics and cyborgs
- Political union and/or dissolution
- Intercultural convergences and conflicts
- Sexualities, betwixt and between (*queer straights, straight queers, trans, bi*)
- Gendered languages in conflict/interaction

Send your proposal to: interfaces@comm.umass.edu

Department of Communication, Machmer Hall
University of Massachusetts
Amherst MA 01003-4815