

SIG War and Media Studies
Society for Cinema and Media Studies
Seattle 2019

Statement about Interest and Goals
as Co-Chair Candidate

Karen A. Ritzenhoff, Ph.D.
Central Connecticut State University

My interests in war and media studies span from World War I to the current representational modes of terrorism in screen media. I would even consider our recent co-edited book on *The Handmaid's Tale: Teaching Dystopia, Feminism, and Resistance Across Disciplines and Borders* (Lexington Press, 2019) as a contribution to war studies. I am very passionate about editing volumes that feature emerging scholars, graduate students, combined with more established voices in our international field. Currently, I am completing a collection with Clémentine Tholas (Sorbonne, France) and Janis L. Goldie (Huntington, Laurentian College, Canada) about *New Perspectives on the War Film* (forthcoming, Palgrave, 2019). Karen Randell (Nottingham Trent University, UK), Elena Caoduro (University of Bedfordshire, UK) and I are also collaborating on editing a volume about "TerrorScapes."

My goal as a Co-Chair of the special interest group would be to assist Stacy Takacs in keeping the forum of scholarly and creative exchanges alive and well. I am very curious to share new developments in our field, also those that go beyond the printed word. I would like to extend our call for contributions also to embrace creative activities such as the organization of film festivals (with a war related component), symposiums, conferences, lectures, as well as documentary and feature film work, production and other creative expressions that articulate our interest in war representations across media platforms. It would also be helpful to become more aware of how we all teach war related themes in our classes in terms of pedagogy.

I am fascinated by the challenge on how to teach the topic of terrorism and post 9/11 literature and media in class. In the fall 2019 I will co-teach an interdisciplinary honors course on "Trauma and Identity in Literature and on the Screen." We will look at adaptations from literature to film and television. We used to teach the same class entitled as "Post 9/11 Literature and Film" but found it to be a hotbed of political controversy in the classroom. I also teach undergraduate courses in Communication on "Visual Communication" where the entire class is directed towards studying representations of war in propaganda, as well as various media platforms and includes a 30 minute oral history project with a war veteran. The best projects are archived with the Library of Congress. Another course on "Global Visual Communication" was focused on studying social media platforms and "Digital Intimacies." I am very eager to allow our students to produce their own creative media content and provide alternative narratives to the mainstream messages about war and veterans they receive.

Bio:

Karen A. Ritzenhoff is a Professor of Communication at Central Connecticut State University. She is also Co-Chair of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program at CCSU and affiliated with the minor in cinema studies and the honors program. She teaches courses on Global Visual Communication, History of Film, Women and Film, Documentary Filmmaking and has taken students on many travel abroad trips to Europe (Italy, France and UK). Her research interests are in war and media studies, sex and sexuality, violence against women and border studies/migration; she is especially invested in studying the work of Stanley Kubrick, Michael Haneke, and Atom Egoyan. Ritzenhoff has been the founder and organizer of a "Women and Film Festival" that was held biannually at CCSU in conjunction with the New Britain Museum of American Art and featured exclusively international and American women directors. She has served as co-Chair of the Women's Caucus for several years and helped organize the "Grrrls Night Out." (This might be the last year where the event will be held).

I have been on sabbatical since fall 2018 and have started to be obsessed with oil, acrylic and water color painting as well as learning how to draw better. This has allowed me to paint the title images/book covers for our current editing projects. I live with my family (Husband and three almost adult kids) in rural Connecticut. I am always eager to figure out a work/life balance which I have still not mastered in 25 years of full time college teaching. I was born in Germany and came to the United States as a Fulbright Student thirty+ years ago. I never returned to my home country other than for short visits. But I love working with colleagues and friends internationally.