

UCSD to host Oct. 2-3 conference on media & communications in new global economy to honor communications Guru Herb Schiller

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UCSD TO HOST OCT. 2-3 CONFERENCE ON MEDIA & COMMUNICATION IN NEW GLOBAL ECONOMY TO HONOR COM. GURU HERB SCHILLER

Media and Communication in the New Global Economy will be the subject of a major conference Oct. 2-3 sponsored by the University of California, San Diego's Department of Communication. The conference, which will bring together leading scholars in communication and media studies, is being held as a tribute to Communication Department founder and world renowned scholar Herbert Schiller, considered by many to be one of the pioneers of communication studies.

Schiller, who has long been one of academia's most strident critics of the ever-expanding influence of media and information industries into the public sphere, established the UCSD Communication Department in 1970. Long ago, Schiller predicted that the drive toward a global information society would result in the triumph of market forces over all else, which could lead to political, social and economic instability. Schiller, who turns 80 this year, is the author of seven books including "The Mind Managers," "Who Knows: Information in the Age of the Fortune 500," and "Culture, Inc.: The Corporate Production of Public Expression, nearly all of which have foreign language translations.

"Herb is one of a few media critics willing to take on some of the most popular and cherished beliefs about the economic and social benefits of the Internet, telecommunications, and the entertainment industries," said Carol Padden, chair of the Department of Communication. "Given his many significant contributions to the field of communication as well as to our department and UCSD, it is fitting that we honor Herb, in his 80th year, with this conference."

The conference is free and will be held Oct. 2 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Oct. 3 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Members of the public and the UCSD community are invited to attend the proceedings, which will be held at the UCSD-based Institute of the Americas Copley Auditorium.

"At the heart of the economic restructuring of the last two decades is the transformation of the world's electronic information infrastructure into a network capable of flinging signals including voices, images, videos, and data to the far ends of the earth," said Ellen Seiter, a professor of communication at UCSD and one of the organizers of the conference. "We will examine how these changes have affected individuals and society at large, as well as how these transformations have altered the forms and structures of media production.

"Our panelists will also present new findings on how these changes in communication infrastructure have affected everything from production scheduling and product engineering to accounting, advertising, banking, and training, and will also discuss the drive behind these changes and how it has produced a worldwide shift in communication policy from public service policies to market-driven tenets."

Conference participants, according to Seiter, will present research papers on the social impacts of new media technologies as well as the political economy of the converging entertainment, computer, and telecommunications industries.

Participating scholars and their topics of discussion include:

^ Oscar Gandy, the Herbert I. Schiller Information and Society Professor at the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania and author of a recent book on race and communication. Gandy, who has published widely in the areas of privacy, information technology, and the performance of the press, will discuss Identity and Identification in Cyberspace.

^ Renowned scholar George Gerbner, holder of the Bell Atlantic Chair at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School and former dean of the school. Gerbner has taught at universities throughout the world, and his research has been supported by the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Mental Health, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Ford Foundation, and the Screen Actor's Guild. His talk, which will be delivered on Oct. 3 at 10 a.m. is entitled: Space to Act and Reason to Hope.

^ Vincent Mosco, a professor of communication, political economy, and sociology at Carleton University in Canada. Mosco, whose most recent book is "The Political Economy of Communication," is currently studying the spread of the Silicon Valley model around the world. He will discuss Post- Industrial Cities: Understanding the Global in the Local.

^ Eileen Meehan, an associate professor in media arts at the University of Arizona, traces how corporate relationships structure media markets and how corporate organization shapes artifacts and technologies. She has published research on the broadcast ratings industry, the integration of cable channels and cable systems operators, as well as media conglomeration and postmodernist style. Her talk will be on Divergent Convergence: A "New Age" in Technology?

^ Janet Wasco, a professor at the School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon, and the author of "Movies & Money in Hollywood in the Information Age," and co-editor of nine other volumes on the political economy of communication, will present a paper on Thinking About Convergence and Analyzing Disney.

^ Stuart Ewen, professor and chairman of the Department of Film & Media Studies at Hunter College, is the author of "PR: A Social History of Spin," "All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture," "Captains of Consciousness," and "Advertising and the Social RootsUCSD to host Oct. 2-3 conference on media & communications in new global economy to honor communications Guru Herb Schiller of Consumer Culture." Ewen's presentation will be on Pictures in Our Heads: Public Relations and the Cult of Image.

^ Kaarle Nordenstreng, professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of Tampere, Finland. Nordenstreng directed the first global survey of TV program flows in the early 1970s and served on UNESCO's international panel of experts promoting media research worldwide. In 1977, he co-edited, with Herbert Schiller, the classic text "Natural Sovereignty and International Communication." His talk is entitled What Should Media Do in Democracy?

^ Bram Dijkstra, professor of literature at UCSD, and author of the recent book, "Georgia O'Keefe and the Eros of Place." He will discuss Art as Politics: Managing Aesthetics in the Age of Global Marketing.

In addition to the listed participants, several of UCSD's top media and communication scholars will also participate in the discussions, including Dee Dee Halleck, Yuezhi Zhao (organizer), Ellen Seiter (organizer), Dan Hallin, Zeinabu Davis, Michael Schudson, Paula Chakravarty, and Robert Horwitz of the Communication Department, and Jane Rhodes, Ethnic Studies Department.

The conference, which will also include special tributes to Herb Schiller, is being funded by a grant from the UCSD Chancellor Associates. For more information on the conference schedule, please contact Ellen Seiter, (619) 534-2356 or eseiter@ucsd.edu

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