



JANUS



Another Vibrant Year for the Department of Journalism

Herman Wasserman, Department Chair



This has been another vibrant and busy year for the Department of Journalism. We have engaged in exciting activities in research, teaching, and engagement with communities and industry, participated in critical conversations, and fostered academic growth and collaboration.



Here's a snapshot of some of what we've been up to:



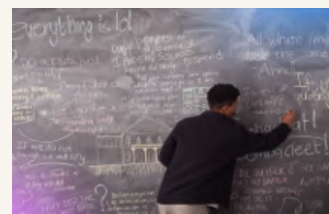
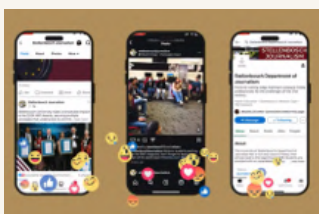
On the learning and teaching front, we launched a new short course on media and digital policy, addressing the evolving landscape of media governance. This online course leads to a professional certificate and is an ideal way for working professionals to enhance their knowledge and skills. Learn more on our webpage:

Professional Certificate in Media and Digital Policy.

Our BA Honours students premiered

their short documentaries, showcasing their remarkable storytelling skills. They also published two print publications: a newspaper and an annual magazine, alongside their regular news reports for the SMF online news website.

We engaged in several exciting research projects, continuing initiatives such as the South African leg of the Worlds of Journalism study, the international Information Disorder in the Global South project, and a range of innovative science communication activities hosted by the South African Research Chair in Science Communication. We also launched a new **Centre for Information Integrity** in Africa, which will coordinate research activities in this area. We are grateful for the generous funding received from Mr. Ton Vosloo to kickstart the Centre's work and address the



Screenshots from the department's new promotional video which was launched at our Homecoming Alumni event. Click [HERE](#) to view the full video.

challenges of information disorder in the coming years. Our staff participated in several international research visits, presented their work at international conferences, and hosted visiting academics, showcasing our work on global platforms and building international research networks.

A highlight of the year was hosting the annual South African Communication Association conference in September, themed *The Politics of the Present*. Nearly 160 colleagues from across the country, along with several international delegates, gathered to share the latest insights from their research in media, communications, journalism, and cultural studies.

One of the department's key objectives is staying connected

with our community of interest in industry and civil society. To this end, we hosted our annual World Press Freedom Day event in May, focusing on journalism's role in mitigating the environmental crisis.

2024 also marked 30 years of democracy in South Africa, and we held several discussions on this theme throughout the year. Highlights included a panel discussion on cartooning and democracy, featuring cartoonists Jonathan Shapiro (Zapiro), Brandon Reynolds, and Tanzanian cartoonist Gado. We were also honoured to host Ms. Shamila Batohi, the National Director of Public Prosecutions, for our second partnership lecture with Freedom Under Law. This lecture reflected on the rule of law, the media, and state capture.

We are grateful to the Millennium Trust for supporting these events and other activities.

Our alumni are an essential part of our community—or should I say family—with whom we aim to strengthen ties. In 2024, we welcomed alumni back for a festive reunion event during the Homecoming/Tuiskoms weekend. We plan to make this an annual celebration of the connections across generations of graduates.

We are grateful to our alumni for their continued support and engagement. Your contributions help us inspire the next generation of journalists and media professionals.

Stay connected by following us on social media, visiting our department website, and joining us at future events.

SciCom continues to advocate for science and social justice

Since joining the Department in 2023, SciCom has continued to work on new and existing projects that advance science communication research. By enhancing the understanding of science in society, SciCom has interlinked various communities through constructive, research-inspired engagement.

SciCom is committed to advancing science communication research. Our goal is to explore the connections between scientific efforts, societal dynamics, and evolving communication methods. By doing so, we aim to gain insights into how science engages with the public and influences societal progress.

These are some of the stories from 2024.

Imidibaniso Exchange

The Imidibaniso Exchange Workshop is an annual, in-person media and communications workshop for scientists that is held over one day. It provides a fun, interactive, and enriching

overview of best practices in creative communication that scientists can incorporate into their public engagement strategies for research projects. Since its inception, the Exchange has featured presentations from scientists, public speakers, authors, social media influencers, musicians, and performers. More than 60 scientists and scientific researchers have participated in the Exchange.



Evidence and Power Online Roundtable

SciCom continued its Evidence and Power Online Roundtable in collaboration with Bournemouth University. In the recent Roundtable held in October, the focus was on emancipatory health, specifically examining theories and practices related to health equity and the social determinants of health. Key discussion points



LEFT: Chelsea Holland (left), an independent researcher, (pictured here with Prof Mehita Iqani) was awarded a prize for the best presentation focused on science communication and social justice at the 2024 conference of the South African Communications Association. **RIGHT:** The second anthology flowing from the FicSci Writers Workshops is titled: *night_sky*

included how we utilise health data to determine the needs of the population, particularly in a country like South Africa, which faces an urgent need to address its healthcare backlog. The Roundtable also raised questions about how to ensure the mental well-being of society in an inclusive manner without compromising the health sector. Central to these discussions was the importance of ensuring that data effectively supports our health initiatives, especially in contexts where identity is crucial to allocating adequate resources. Additionally, the role of media and communications in amplifying health issues and promoting health justice within society was emphasized. The Roundtable continues its mission to stimulate insightful discussions on the complex relationship between science, communication, and society.

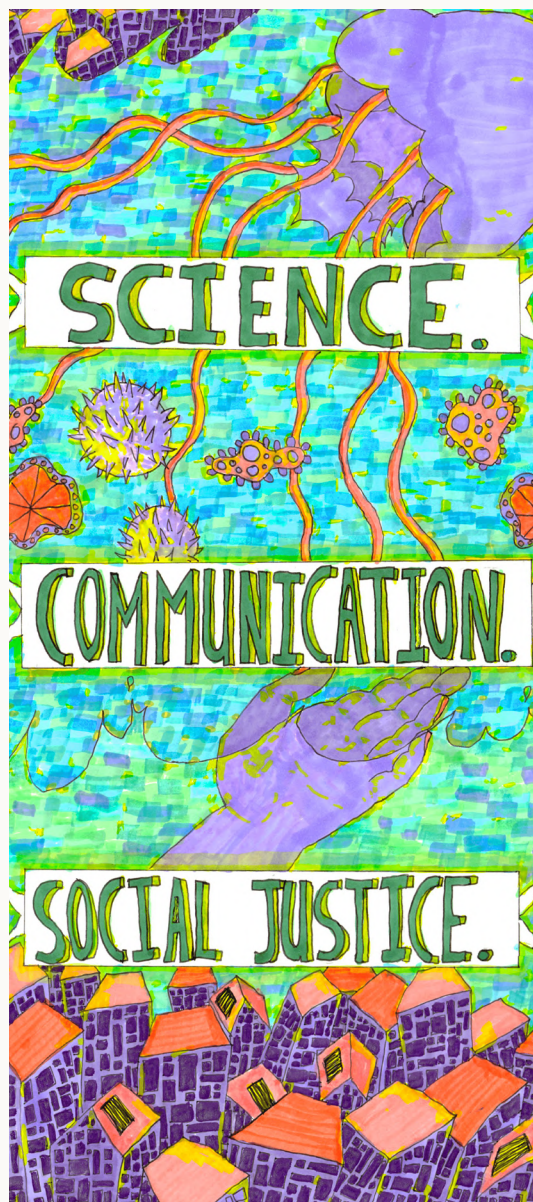
The Academic Citizen Podcast Season 7

The Academic Citizen has returned with a new season that focuses on the role of sound and its impact on knowledge production and dissemination. In November 2023, the podcast hosted Sound Matters, a virtual symposium in collaboration with the South African Research Chair in Science Communication and the South African Journal of Science.

Researchers interested in the relationship between sound and knowledge gathered to share their work, highlighting how sound serves as a meaningful medium for effectively communicating research when other mediums may fall short. Eight presentations from the symposium were selected and featured on the podcast, which can be heard [here](#).

Publications

SciCom has published five peer-reviewed articles covering a variety of topics. These include a special issue focused on the significance of science communication in social justice efforts, an exploration of the emotional engagement involved in citizen science aimed at mapping solitary bee diversity in



Creative artist Max Hodge's illustration that speaks to SciCom's broader commitment to advancing science communication for social justice.

Johannesburg, an examination of the lived experiences of individuals with mental illness, and an investigation into the pressing issue of sewage contamination in the Jukskei River in Johannesburg. All publications can be found [here](#).

FicSci Anthologies

Since the launch of the FicSci Writers Workshop in 2022, two anthologies have been published. The first anthology, titled *flow*, was released in 2023 and delves into the complexities of fluid mechanics ranging from hair and blood clotting. The second anthology, *night_sky*, focuses on cutting-edge research covering topics such as X-ray binary stars, extragalactic sources, and the Magellanic Clouds. Both anthologies include poems, essays, scripts, and illustrations that respond to prompts from leading scientists. You can find the anthologies available [here](#).

SciCom Illustration

Following the launch of Humusha in 2023, SciCom commissioned one creative, Max Hodge, to create an illustration that speaks to SciCom's broader commitment to advancing science communication for social justice. The illustration positions the Chair in different perspectives of trying to ensure that there is an interconnected relationship between science,

communication and justice and that society truly benefits from these in their daily lives.

SACOMM SciCom Prize

SciCom was pleased to announce the establishment of a new prize for the annual SACOMM conference. The prize, valued at R5000, is awarded for the best conference paper related to the theme, "science communication for social justice". After a rigorous selection process by the judging committee, the committee selected Chelsea Holland, an independent researcher who researches the slangbos in the Cape Winelands. The winner was announced at the SACOMM Conference on 11 September 2024 in Stellenbosch.

Media tour: Hons students get a taste of SA industry

While challenges posed by Covid, saw the BAHons Journalism media tour remain Western Cape-bound over the last couple of years, the class of 2024 was able to visit Gauteng during the June break.

The aim of this year's media tour was two-fold: Students were able to visit a variety of newsrooms and media-related institutions in Johannesburg to broaden their understanding of the current media landscape. Secondly, it afforded students the opportunity of a practical exploration of the South African economy.

In addition to visits to various media institutions, this year's class also visited the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, a Sibanye-Stillwater mine, Eskom's National Control Centre and Lethabo Power Station. The opportunity to go underground in an operational gold mine - to a level of 2km - and to walk to the rock face underground as the

miners do every day, was a unique experience and an opportunity for students to improve their understanding of mining conditions, labour issues, and the mining sector, in general.

Equally educational, was the opportunity to visit Eskom's National Control Centre, where the national system operator spent the morning having a frank, detailed and engaging conversation with our students, and showing them the control room itself.

Combined with a visit to the Lethabo Power Station, it was an opportunity to engage with the respective teams in those operational room(s) from where extremely dedicated engineers are doing their best to keep South Africa's power grid stable.

Our students returned from Johannesburg with a much better understanding of the various industries and organisations that keep the economic heart of South Africa beating, as well as of the interlinked way in which the economy operates.



The honours students visited Maropeng – The Cradle of Humankind - as part of their Gauteng tour.

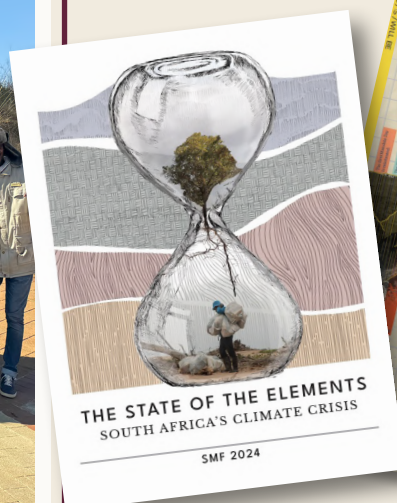
More 2024 Honours Highlights



Regular excursions are part of the students' academic year – such as this educational visit to the Homecoming Centre and District Six Museum in Cape Town.



One of the highlights of the students' academic calendar is the production of their own video documentaries under the guidance of Jurg Slabbert (former student). The students then screen their documentaries at the Neelsie Cinema.



*Beyond regular publications on their online publication, **SMF News**, the students also produced a SMF newspaper and SMF magazine in 2024.*

Highlights from 2024

As was the case for the previous forty-plus years at 26 Crozier Street, the year 2024 was filled with all kinds of fun and adventures – and some seriousness in between. Here are a few of these highlights – in visuals:



LEFT: Chair of our department Herman Wasserman presented his professorial inaugural lecture in July. He was also awarded an A-rating by the National Research Foundation (NRF) in 2024 – recognising him as a leader in his field internationally.

RIGHT: Some of the departmental staff who celebrated Herman Wasserman (in red robe) at his professorial inaugural lecture are (from left) Fumani Jwara, Mareneth Jordaan, Mehita Iqani, Gawie Botma, Noxolo Mbazini, Elizabeth Newman and Christel Antonites.



LEFT: The department co-hosted the annual conference of the South African Communications Association (Sacommm) in September with great success. The theme of the conference, conceptualised by Sacomm president Mehita Iqani, was "The Politics of the Present".

MIDDLE: The Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University (SU) back around 50 alumni for its first-ever Homecoming event in September 2024. Held during SU's annual Homecoming weekend, the gathering brought together graduates from various years, who returned to reconnect with their alma mater, reflect on their experiences, and celebrate the department's rich history.

RIGHT: The event was honoured by the presence of Deresh Ramjugernath, SU's Rector and Vice-Chancellor Designate, who engaged with both older and younger alumni.



Our honours students always help to market our programmes at the annual Stellenbosch University Open Day in March. Here we have 2024 students Ubaid Abrahams (left), Kara le Roux, Emma Hamman and Aurelia Mouton, talking to prospective students.



LEFT: Our annual graduation celebration is a highlight on the departmental calendar. Renowned radio host, Lester Kiewit (who is also our broadcast journalism lecturer), was the guest speaker at the function in March.

RIGHT: At our graduation function, several students from the BAHons Journalism class of 2023 were recognised for their academic achievements. From left at the back: Daniel Roodt, Tameenah Daniels, Jess Holing and in front Talia Kincaid, Hannah Theron and Joseph Bracken.

We also celebrated the graduation of some Master's candidates – pictured here with their supervisors. From left, Lizette Rabe with Carryn-Ann Nel, Ndlelantle Pinyana with Gawie Botma, and Nicolene Louw with Marenet Jordaan.



We would love to know what our alumni are up to. Whether you have a career highlight, a big life change or just want to share some memories from your time in and around our building, please keep in touch with the department. Send an email to journalism@sun.ac.za – any time of the year.

News and media

Read about the happenings in and around our Department.



Welcoming the 2025 MA and BAHonours Journalism Cohorts

The Department of Journalism at Stellenbosch University was thrilled to welcome a new cohort of...



Strengthening the Rule of Law: Challenges and Opportunities for the NPA

The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) remains committed to impartial justice and free from political influence...



SACOMM Conference Celebrates Media, Communications, and Journalism

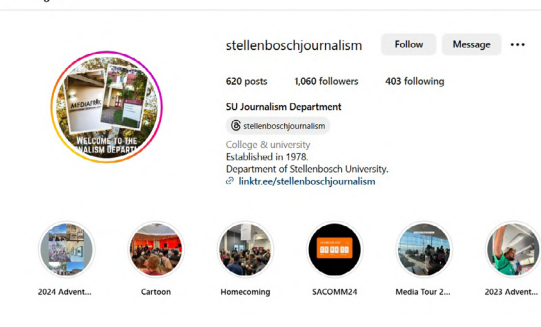


Stellenbosch University Department of Journalism Hosts First-of-its-Kind

LEFT: We regularly publish news articles on our website (<https://journalism.sun.ac.za/>). The website also contains links to all our student publications, and information about all our degree programmes.

BELOW: Our department is also very active on social media, such as Instagram and Facebook, and we also post on Threads, X and TikTok. These platforms are used to keep our alumni, students and other followers informed about our daily activities.

Instagram



Beyond our department, alumni can also attend regular Stellenbosch Alumni events across the world. If you want to make sure your contact information is updated for general university communication (and from the department), please send an email to alumni@sun.ac.za.