
Call for Conference Papers: “Celebrity news”, an oxymoron?

GENEVA UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SWITZERLAND

THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER AND FRIDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2010

Richard Dyer defined a star as "any person known for his/her performance in whatever field, but who attracts interest for what s/he is supposed to embody, rather than for having indubitable talents; such an interest is aroused, far more than by his/her particular skills, by what we know about his/her 'private life', which is scrutinised and reported at length." (Preface to the French edition of *Stars*, 2004 (1979), 9).

The Conference intends to focus on the specific variety of news related to this kind of "persons". In recent years, news of this kind has spread throughout Western media, and particularly in media aimed at the general public. The increasing amount of space devoted to it is now attracting attention and discussion not only from journalists and private individuals, but also from politicians and in some cases in academic circles. While news of this kind is often written by journalists, their role is now coming under increasing scrutiny within the profession; in the public sphere, debate focuses more particularly on questions of news-worthiness, legitimacy and factual accuracy.

In this context, the aim of the Conference is to study and discuss the spreading of celebrity news across the media and to consider the various issues at stake. Papers addressing (but not restricted to) the following questions are welcome:

- What are the contents of contemporary "celebrity news"? how is it reported (discourse, images, ...)? Under what headings? In which types of media? In which cultural space?
- What is the status of "celebrity news" within news in general? (legitimacy, relationship to other news, degree of accuracy...)
- What specific issues does celebrity news raise when it extends to politicians? In recent years, how has celebrity politics evolved?
- Which constraints does "celebrity news" impose on journalistic practices? Is this leading to changes in the profession?
- What issues (deontological, legal, of identity...) are raised by the recent growth of "celebrity news" in the media?
- What do studies in celebrity culture have to tell us about the news-worthiness of celebrity as such?
- ...

The Conference wishes to privilege an interdisciplinary approach to the subject, and therefore welcomes contributions from all fields and disciplines likely to offer insights and understanding.

The following are designated as “Areas of Interest”:

- * Celebrity news and 'celebrity culture'
- * Fieldwork and concrete analyses of celebrity news
- * Celebrity news and politics
- * Celebrity news and journalistic practices / identity

Confirmed Keynote speakers:

- Su Holmes, University of East Anglia, UK
- Kerry Ferris, University of North Illinois, USA
- Jamil Dakhli, University of Nancy 2 and CNRS, France
- Martin Conboy, University of Sheffield, UK

To apply, please send...:

- Your name
- Your title
- Your department
- Your institution
- An abstract of the paper to be presented (max: 250 words)
- Four key words
- A short list of references

To celebritynews@unige.ch

no later than June 25, 2010

Please note that we might be able to offer a few grants for foreign PhD students who could have problems to fund their travel expenses / accommodation in Switzerland. Details will follow after the reviewing process.

Organization Committee:

Annik Dubied, Professor

Valérie Gorin, SNSF Research Assistant

Magali Dubey, SNSF Research Assistant

Zedla Crottaz, SNSF Trainee

http://www.unige.ch/ses/socio/recherche-people/index_en.html

Department of Sociology

University of Geneva

Official language of the Conference:

English

Location:

University of Geneva, Uni-Mail Building, 40, Bd du Pont d'Arve, CH-1205 Geneva

(<http://www.unige.ch/visite/batiments/fr/mail.html>)

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Annik DUBIED

Professeure associée / *Associate Professor*

Professeure boursière FNS / *Research Professor*