Megan E. Cullinan

Curriculum vitae

Department of Communication
University of Montana
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Missoula, MT 59802

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EDUCATION

2020 **Ph. D. Communication Studies, University of Utah**
Dissertation: *Articulating Geoengineering as Good Science: Urgency, Optimism, and Ideology in the Anthropocene*
Committee: Sean Lawson (Chair), Robin Jensen, Rob Gehl, Glen Feighery, Brett Clark

2015 **M.A. in Communication Studies, University of Montana**
Thesis: "Blended Framework: Bill McKibben's Use of Melodrama and Comedy in Environmental Rhetoric."
Committee: Sara Hayden (Chair), Joel Iverson, Phil Condon

2012 **B.A. in Rhetoric and Media Studies, Willamette University**
Minor: Environmental Science

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

The University of Montana
2023-Present Assistant Professor of Rhetoric, Department of Communication
Merrimack College
2020-Present Lecturer, Communication & Media
The University of Utah
2016-2020 Teaching Fellow, Department of Communication
The University of Montana
2013-2015 Teaching Fellow, Department of Communication

AWARDS AND HONORS

2025 Helen and Winston Cox Educational Excellence Award for Tenure-track Junior Faculty in the School of Humanities and Sciences, University of Montana.
2024 Top Paper, Organizational Communication Division, Western States Communication Association, 2024.
2021 Top Paper, IECA, Conference on Communication and the Environment, 2021.
2020 Top Paper, Communication Theory Division, Western States Communication Association, 2020.

PUBLICATIONS

Rice, R. M. & **Cullinan, M. E.** (2025) "There are no natural disasters": An exploratory study of climate change paradox in emergency eanagement. *Communication Monographs*. https://doi.org/10.1080/03637751.2025.2539280

Jensen, R. E., Krall, M. A., **Cullinan, M. E.**, & Almuaili, G. (2025). Indirect audiences and conflicting narratives about oral contraception: Emergent coverage of 'the pill' in *The New York Times*, 1951-1965. *Public Understanding of Science*. https://doi.org/10.1177/09636625251336650

Cullinan, M.E., Zimdars, M., & Na, K. (2024). Their Truth is Out There: Scientific (Dis)trust and Alternative Epistemology in Online Health Groups. *Social Media & Society, 10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241269288

Na, K., Zimdars, M. & **Cullinan, M. E.** (2024). Understanding membership in alternative health social media groups and its association with vaccination: A cross-sectional survey. *JMIR Formative Research.*

Zimdars, M., **Cullinan, M. E.**, & Na, K. (2023). Alternative health groups on social-media, misinformation, and the (de)stabilization of ontological security. *New Media & Society.* https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448221146171

Rice, R. M., & **Cullinan M. E.** (2023). Risk, science and health collaborations during cascading and simultaneous disasters. In H. D. O'Hair & M. J. O'Hair (Eds.), *Communication and catastrophic events: Strategic risk and crisis management*. Wiley Blackwell.

Cullinan, M. E., Maison, K., Parks, M. M., Krall, M. A., Krebs, E., Mann, B., & Jensen, R. E. (2022). Seedlings in the Corporate Forest: Communicating Benevolent Sexism in Dow Chemical's First Internal Affirmative-Action Campaign. *Management Communication Quarterly*. https://doi.org/10.1177/08933189221115748

Cullinan, M. E. (2020). Articulating geoengineering: Identifying an understanding of geoengineering technology through the Crutzen +10 Special Issue Forum. *Science Communication*, *42*(3), 313–339. https://doi.org/10.1177/1075547020927034

Cullinan, M. E., Purtell, R., & Canary, H. E. (2020). Emerging professional identity in patient hand-off routines: A practical application of Performative Face Theory. *Health Communication*, 37 (5), 577-585. https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2020.1857518

Purtell, R., **Cullinan, M. E.**, & Canary, H. E. (2019). Facilitators and barriers to the use of a structured hand-off: A pediatric hospital exploratory case study. *Journal of Applied Communication*, 47 (4), 381-400. DOI: 10.1080/00909882.2019.1659991

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Cullinan, M. E., Parks, M. M., Krall, M. A., & Jensen, R. E. (Under Review). Union Carbide's "Hand in Things to Come": Narrative Formations of Toxification and Environmental Control

FUNDING

2021 Zampell Family Faculty Fellowship, Merrimack College, 2021-2022 ($3,847.00)
2019 National Geographic Early Career Grant, $3,300
Wasatch Experience Sustainability Training and Certificate, $500
2017 Scholarship for MediaShift's *Women's Hackathon,* $400

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

2024 National Science Foundation Grant, $146,515 (Co-PI). Rejected August 2025.

RECENT CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Competitively Selected Paper Presentations

*Top papers are identified with asterisks.

Cullinan, M.E. Climate Engineering as "Good Science": Conjuncture, Expertise, and Scientific Authority in the Policy Development of Emerging Technologies. Presented at the *Western States Communication Association Conference,* Environmental Communication Interest Group. Albuquerque, NM.

Cullinan, M.E., Zimdars, M., & Na, K. Their Truth is Out There: Scientific (Dis)trust and Alternative Epistemology in Online Health Groups. Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference,* Mass Media Communication Division, New Orleans, LA.

Na, K., Zimdars, M. & **Cullinan, M. E.** Understanding membership in alternative health social media groups and its association with vaccination: A cross-sectional survey. Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference,* Health Communication Division, New Orleans, LA.

Jensen, R. E., Krall, M. A., **Cullinan, M. E.**, & Almuaili, G. (2024) Indirect Audiences and Early Reproductive-Health News: Emergent Coverage of "the Pill" in the New York Times, 1951-1965. Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference*, Health Communication Division, New Orleans, LA.

Krall, M.A., Jensen, R. E., **Cullinan, M. E**, & Almuaili, G. (2024). Appeals to Science, Context, and the Future: Early *New York Times* Coverage of the Pill in the Light of Catholicism, Presented at the *Rhetoric Society of America Conference*, Religious Rhetorics Track. Denver, CO.

*Rice, R. M., & **Cullinan, M. E.** (2024) "How will Climate Change Change Organizing? An Exploratory Study of How Emergency Organizations Frame Climate Change," Presented

at the *Western States Communication Association Conference,* Organizational Communication Interest Group. Reno, NV.

Cullinan, M. E., Parks, M. M., Krall, M. A., & Jensen, R. E. (2022) "Union Carbide's "Hand in Things to Come": Shaping a Nonexpert Chemical Rhetoric through Mid-Nineteenth-Century Advertising," Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference*, Association for the Rhetoric of Science, Technology, and Medicine. New Orleans, LA.

Maison, K., **Cullinan, M. E.**, Parks, M. M., Krall, M. A., Krebs, E., Mann, B., & Jensen, R. E. (2021) "Know more in '74: Communicating benevolent sexism in Dow Chemical's first, internal affirmative-action campaign," Presented at the *National Communication Association Conference*, Organizational Communication Division. Seattle, WA.

*Parks, M. & **Cullinan, M. E**. (2021) "*Art-as-Pedagogy for Environmental Activism: The Rhetoric of Washed Ashore's Ocean Plastics Exhibition*," Conference On Communication and the Environment, Virtual, May 2021.

Cullinan, M. E. & Blevins, M. (2021) **"***Individual Action and Responsibility in the Anthropocene: Rhetorical Power of the Personal Climate Crisis*," Conference On Communication and the Environment, Virtual, May 2021.

***Cullinan, M.E.,** Gehl, R. W., & McKelvey, F. (2020). Actant articulation: Material relationships and political agency between the human and non-human world. Presented at the *Western States Communication Conference*, Communication Theory and Research Division. Denver, CO.

Cullinan, M.E., Purtell, R., & Canary, H. E. (2019). Professional identity in patient hand-off routines: A performative face theory analysis. Presented at the *National Communication Conference*, Health Communication Division. Baltimore, MD.

*Cullinan, M. E. (2019). Articulating geoengineering: Identifying an understanding of geoengineering technology through the *Crutzen +10 Special Issue* forum. Presented at the *Conference On Communication and Environment*. Vancouver, BC

Cullinan, M. E. (2019). #modestpainter Witnessing @Second_Millennium. *Conference On Communication and Environment*. Artwork Submission. Vancouver, BC

Cullinan, M. E. (2019). Defining 'local' and 'access': Trump's rhetorical construction of federal overreach in the designation of Bears Ears National Monument. *Western States Communication Conference.* Environmental Communication Division. Seattle, WA

TEACHING
The University of Montana

COMX 555: Seminar in Rhetorical Theory & Criticism, F2025

Rhetorical theory allows us to begin to understand how symbols function and rhetorical criticism is one of the processes through which we assess specific symbolic acts. In this course, we will explore issues and current trends in rhetorical criticism aided by the ideas of rhetorical theory. During this course, students will learn to analyze and interpret texts by applying the concepts, questions, and theoretical paradigms discussed in class and in the assigned readings.

COMX 591: Communication of Nature & Gender, (One Section) SP2024
Drawing on the work of theorists, historians, philosophers, environmental activists, writers, and filmmakers, students will consider how cultural depictions of nature and gender inform our own relationships with the more-than-human world. Where ecofeminism frequently links the exploitation and domination of women to that of the earth, queer theory opens up possibilities for new relationships with the environment that are at odds with what is "normal" or "dominant." Queer, which is used here to mean "to destabilize" or to put "off-center," becomes a playful move in relation to contemporary ecological destruction and opens up optimistic alternatives to current practices surrounding consumption, reproduction, and activism.

COMX 491: Rhetoric of Health & Medicine (SP2025)
This course introduces students to issues concerning health disparities, medical dissensus, public understanding of science, and the racialization of epidemics, as well as other issues related to health communication. Through the intersections of writing, research, and rhetoric, particular attention is given to the interdisciplinary theories and concepts shaping the health communication field in the twenty-first century.

COMX 491: Visual Rhetoric (SP2025)
This course centers on some of the major principles surrounding visual communication: physio-psychological bases of perception, cognition, semiotics, and the history that lead to the realization of visual images. Lectures, discussions, and analyses of visual artifacts include the ethical dimensions of visual image-making, as well as critical/cultural analysis of contemporary visual images across all media.

COMX 391: Science Communication (One Section: F2024)
This course explores the concept of science communication. Students will evaluate existing science communication efforts, review factors that influence science communication, and work to cultivate a range of skills to communicate complex science information to a variety of publics.

COMX 347: Rhetoric of Nature & Environmentalism, (Two Sections: F2023, F2024)
The purpose of this course is to better understand how participants in environmental communication struggle for control over discourse—the words, images, narratives, and arguments used to perceive the natural world, define human relationships with that world, and negotiate individual and societal decisions about environmental issues.

COMX 204: Introduction to Rhetorical Theory, (Three Sections: F2023, SP 2024, F2024)
This class provides students with a broad overview of rhetoric from its origins in Ancient Greece to the modern-day forums of social media. We will cover key concepts, definitions, and assumptions of the rhetoric in order to examine the relationship between language and power. By

exploring the role of rhetoric in cultural discourse, students will be able to critically analyze and identify rhetorical strategies used in various types of media.

Merrimack College, Fall 2020-Spring 2022
COM 5620: Communication and Leadership, S2022
The purpose of this course is to familiarize graduate students with key principles of leadership, as well as to demonstrate how communication informs both the theory and practice of guiding others toward common goals and ethical outcomes.

COM 5360: Writing for Strategic Communication, SP2022, F2022
This graduate level course is designed for those who wish to improve their writing skills in the multi-faceted disciplines found within strategic communication. In order to work in the communication field, employers agree that the skill of clear, concise, and interesting writing is the number one prerequisite. In this writing-intensive course, students practice different styles of strategic writing, peer evaluation, and editing.

COM 4900: Senior Seminar, SP2023
Prepares students for graduation by taking stock of what they have learned, carefully considering their strengths and interests, and preparing themselves to stand out in the job market or graduate school application process. By the end of this course, students will have created materials and cultivated skills to demonstrate the successful completion of a degree in Communication & Media Studies.

COM 4625: Health Communication, SP2021
Responds to increasing interest and demand for greater awareness and understanding of health communication: that is, the study of how communication about health is co-created, transmitted, received, constructed, and circulated in various contexts.

COM 3742C: Community & Nonprofit Organizing, SP2023
Develops students' understanding of organizational and strategic nonprofit communication in a variety of contexts. Through various course materials, students will ultimately be able to employ a communication perspective on nonprofit work and engage audience-specific strategic nonprofit communication skills.

COM 3360: Visual Communication, F2021, F2022
Centers on some of the major principles surrounding visual communication: physio-psychological bases of perception, cognition, semiotics, and the history that lead to the realization of visual images. Lectures, discussions, and analyses of visual artifacts include the ethical dimensions of visual image-making, as well as critical/cultural analysis of contemporary visual images across all media.

COM 3011: Special Topics, Science, Health, & Environmental Communication, SP2021
Provides students with an overview of how these topics tend to be communicated in contexts ranging from the mass media to public hearings to patient-provider interactions. I co-taught this course with another graduate student. We compiled a syllabus together, wrote exams, and designed discussions for a large-lecture course. We encouraged students to break down the

symbolic practices facilitating such communication and assess their associated consequences in terms of lay beliefs about issues such as climate change, pandemics, nanotechnology, and genetics. We placed our emphasis on understanding what research describes as best practices in terms of persuasively and accurately communicating about science, health, and the environment to various audiences.

COM 2801: Introduction to Communication, SP 2022, F2022, SP2023
This course provides an overview of contemporary communication theory and seeks to offer the background students will need to succeed in a communication studies major. This course introduces major theoretical approaches and situational contexts in communication research. The class will create a climate in which students will be able to systematically evaluate existing communication theories and begin to develop their own theoretical positions.

ESS 1050: Environmental Studies Gateway, F2020, F2021
This introduction to the ESS major asks students to approach environmental problems in a variety of ways. By exploring how different disciplines approach the question of sustainability, students become more capable of understanding the social narratives that lead to unsustainable behaviors, exploring the problems of living in an advanced, post-industrial society.

COMM 1020: Public Communication, F2020, SP2021, S2021, F2021
Covers theory and skills of speaking in various public settings. Examines fundamental principles from rhetorical and communication theory and applies them to oral presentations.

University of Utah, Fall 2016-Fall 2019
COMM 3405: Classical to Contemporary Rhetoric, S2018, S2019
Provides students with a broad overview of rhetoric from its origins in ancient Greece to the modern-day forums of social media. I designed this course to cover key concepts, definitions, and assumptions of rhetoric in order to examine the relationship between language and power and how these relationships manifest in our lives today. By exploring the role of rhetoric in cultural discourse, students will be able to critically analyze and identify rhetorical strategies used in various types of media.

COMM 3115: Communicating Science, Health, and the Environment, SP2018
Provides students with an overview of how these topics tend to be communicated in contexts ranging from the mass media to public hearings to patient-provider interactions. I co-taught this course with another graduate student. We compiled a syllabus together, wrote exams, and designed discussions for a large-lecture course. We encouraged students to break down the symbolic practices facilitating such communication and assess their associated consequences in terms of lay beliefs about issues such as climate change, pandemics, nanotechnology, and genetics. We placed our emphasis on understanding what research describes as best practices in terms of persuasively and accurately communicating about science, health, and the environment to various audiences.

COMM 3030: Communication and Social Responsibility, S2017, F2017, S2020
Centered on questions of “what does it mean to be socially responsible?” and “what does it mean to communicate in a socially responsible way?” I designed this course entirely on my own,

compiling a syllabus, designing assignments, and moderating discussions that explore the central questions above through a rhetorical lens and apply them to historical and contemporary moments of significant social, cultural, historical, and political interest, discussing the role of the "public" in a democracy and what it means to be an "engaged citizen" in the 21st century. My goal is to help students develop sophisticated positions on modern social issues and communicative practices that they can defend both in writing and in speech.

COMM 1610: Introduction to News Writing, F2019
This is a practical application course which teaches the basics to media writing for journalism and public relations or strategic communication careers. My students practice gathering information, verifying facts, and writing on deadline. They use a variety of sources, write clear, compelling leads, and tell stories--using quotations and description to bring narratives to life. In addition to teaching students to engage with public audiences, I require my students to create a final portfolio of their reporting work.

COMM 1500: Intro to Media Business & Ethics, Instructor of Record, SP2019, S2019, F2019
Provides an analysis of how people really pay for "free" media. I require students to understand basic business concepts in various media—and how they sometimes lead to ethically problematic practices. My students define their version of media ethics and apply it to a media case study, while learning technological, economic, historical, legal, and ethical foundations of media.

COMM 1020: Principles of Public Speaking, F2016, SP2107, F2017
Covers theory and skills of speaking in various public settings. Examines fundamental principles from rhetorical and communication theory and applies them to oral presentations.

SERVICE

Service to the Department

2025 Unit Standards Committee, University of Montana, (Oct. 2024-April 2025).
Scholarship Committee, University of Montana, (Dec. 2024-March 2025).
Co-Advisor for Lambda Phi Eta, University of Montana
Second Committee Member for Alexa Runnion, M.A. (2025), Department of Communication.
Second Committee Member for Sylvie Coston, M.A. (2025), Department of Communication.

2024 Interim Advisor for Lambda Phi Eta, University of Montana (Spring Semester).
Graduate Admissions Committee, University of Montana (February).
Third Committee Member for Sarah Attaway, M.A. (2024), Department of Psychology.
Second Committee Member for Emma Murdock, M.A. (2024), Department of Communication.
Second Committee Member for Mykel Greene, M.A. (2024), Department of Communication.
Second Committee Member for Alexa Runnion, M.A., Department of Communication.
Second Committee Member for Sylvie Coston, M.A., Department of Communication.

Service to the University

2025 WGSS Executive Committee, University of Montana.
Sustainable Campus Committee, University of Montana.
UMCUR Volunteer—Panel and Poster Session Evaluator, University of Montana

2024 WGSS Executive Committee, University of Montana.
Innovate HS Guest Lecturer (April 3), University of Montana.
Participant in Dr. Ratto Parks' Faculty Learning Community on AI in the Classroom, MUS Scholars, FS2024

2023 Meteor Learning Course Design Program, Merrimack College. Designed & Taught COM 3742C: Community & Nonprofit Organizing, Course Development for SP2023
Mack-A-Thon Marketing Department Mentorship Event. Merrimack University (April/May).
WGSS Executive Committee, University of Montana. Starting F2023

2022 Admissions Weekend Volunteer (Sept. 24, 2022). Merrimack College
Graduate Program Recruitment Volunteer (September 14, 2022). Communication & Media, Merrimack College
Application Review for Digital Media Hire (August 2022). Communication & Media, Merrimack College
Application Review for Strategic Communication Hire (May 2022). Communication & Media, Merrimack College
Wrote a Student Learning Objective Assessment for COM 1020: Public Communication. (March 2022). Communication & Media, Merrimack College

2021 Adjunct Hiring Committee, (August 2021). Communication and Media, Merrimack College
Wrote a Student Learning Objective Assessment for COM 4625: Health Communication. (March 2022). Communication & Media, Merrimack College

2019 Professional Seminar Panelist, (March 11, 2018). Department of Communication Studies, University of Montana

2018 Teaching Orientation Panelist (August 10-11, 2018). Department of Communication Studies, University of Utah
Recruitment Volunteer. Department of Communication Studies, University of Utah

Service to the Profession

2025 Chair/Program Planner for the Environmental Communication Division, Western States Communication Association.
Program Planner for the Rhetorical Theory & Criticism Division, Northwest Communication Association.
Article Reviewer for *Information, Communication and Society*.
Panel Chair, Environmental Communication division of *WSCA Conference* 2025

2024 Incoming Vice-Chair of the Environmental Communication Division, Western States Communication Association.
Paper Reviewer, Environmental Communication division of *Western States Communication Conference 2022.*
Article Reviewer, Northwest Journal of Communication.
Panel Respondent, Environmental Communication division of *NCA Conference* 2024

2021 Paper Reviewer, Environmental Communication division of *Western States Communication Conference 2022.*

2020 ORWAC Research Grant Reviewing Committee
Environmental Communication Division (ECD) Awards Nomination Committee

2019 ORWAC Research Grant Reviewing Committee
ORWAC Graduate Representative
Environmental Communication Division Graduate Representative:
EC Division Social Planner
Spotlight Session Volunteer, *National Communication Association 2019*
Paper Reviewer, Environmental Communication division of *Western States Communication Conference 2020*

2018 ORWAC Graduate Representative
Paper Reviewer, Environmental Communication division of *NCA Conference 2018*
Panel Chair, Environmental Communication division of *NCA Conference 2018*
Paper Reviewer, ORWAC division of *Western States Communication Conference 2019*

Related Experience

2024 -On Campus Guest Lecture for NRSM: 500 Conservation Social Science Research Methods, (October 9, 2024). W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation.
-On Campus Guest Lecture for HONR 394: Climate Justice, (November 13, 2024). Davidson Honors College.

-SEA Change Speed Mentoring Guest Panelist, Davidson Honors College, November 14, 2024.

2023 -Guest Panelist for COM 7410: Cross Cultural Communication's "Cross-Cultural Organizational Communication and Members of the Working Community" Panel, (March 16, 2023). College of Communication & the Arts, Seton Hall University.

2020 -On Campus Guest Lecture for COMM 5590: *Integrated Marketing Communication*, (January 22, 2020). Department of Communication Studies, University of Utah
-Discussion Leader for Wasatch Experience. (January 22, 2020). Global Change and Sustainability Center, University of Utah

2019 On Campus Guest Lecture for COMM 3405: *Rhetoric from Aristotle to Twitter*, (October 29, 2019). Department of Communication Studies, University of Utah