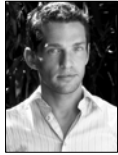


# Undergraduate Research Newsletter

Summer Edition (Issue 8), July 13, 2009

**July 15, 12:00 pm**  
**Samuelson Pavilion**



**Broderick Fox, Professor of Film and Media Studies**

*Amateur vs. Professional: Redefining Media Production in the Digital Age*

**Samuelson Pavilion, includes lunch!**

What are the historical, technological, and social barriers that progressively demarcated *amateur* and *professional* media content, form, and function over the past century? As a generation of unbelievably technically savvy students enters my classrooms—many of whom can engage in still photography and video production, access the Internet, and communicate in real-time via e-mail, text messaging, and social network sites all from the phone in their hip pocket—have we finally entered an era of digital democracy?

Remarkable new technologies and platforms increasing access to the means of production and distribution have certainly emerged over the past decade, but *amateur ideology* may still be the limiting agent in a digital revolution. How does each of us actively participate in self-regulation of our media production potential (not professional enough, not funny enough), of our imagination (not what the manual says is correct, not what the form's field asks), of our production possibilities (not cool, not popular) rather than defining the practices and purposes of digital age media production to our own design?

This presentation will not only unpack the corporatized, assimilationist templates through which we are currently invited to represent "self" but will also showcase instances of personal media production that are distinctly digital, political, and revolutionary in approach.



## Do you believe in Santa?

"If kids believe in Santa Claus and the properties that come with Santa Claus, like how a man can travel around the world in a day, then they may have trouble differentiating between impossible versus improbable events," explained Rachel Yoo ('11 Psychology). This is the premise of her research (developed with her mentor Professor Shtulman) which involves interviewing 50 children, ages 4-9, about how they justify the impossible. She was hoping that she would find a correlation between belief in Santa and ability to distinguish between the impossible and the improbable, but surprisingly every child she talked to believed in Santa. "I feel like modern kids are more realistic, but I guess that's not the case," she commented.

During the interviews, Yoo prompts the kids with statements like "I've heard that Santa travels around the world in a day," and then lets the kids explain why or why not this is true, asking them to expand their answers or explain as much as possible about why they believe the way they do. Interesting answers include a belief that eating pickle-flavored ice cream is impossible but creative answers for how one *could* walk through walls or on water. From the answers, Yoo will compare children for whether they can distinguish between the improbable and the impossible (this seems to improve with age) as well as considering the different ways that they explain these various phenomena. Some kids when pressed have no explanation for their beliefs, some use mostly magical reasons, and some give more realistic reasons. Yoo was impressed by "all the really creative answers," citing one child who explained that on Christmas Eve Santa splits in two and that's how he can deliver gifts all over the world. "I started the research thinking the kids didn't know anything, but they actually know a lot," she said.

## Weekend Ideas

More events at [departments.oxy.edu/urc/about/calendar.htm](http://departments.oxy.edu/urc/about/calendar.htm)

**July 16, 2009**  
**7:00 pm**

Free performance of *As You Like It*  
Garfield Park, South Pasadena  
Performed by Shakespeare by the Sea  
[www.shakespearebythesea.org/locations.html#sop](http://www.shakespearebythesea.org/locations.html#sop)

**July 17, 2009**

Harry Potter Movie  
Contact ResLife for details

**July 18, 2009**  
**9:00 pm**

Cinespia: Cemetery Screening of *The Bride of Frankenstein*  
Hollywood Forever Cemetery  
[www.cinespia.org](http://www.cinespia.org)

**July 19, 2009**

Switzer Falls Hike  
Contact ResLife for details



**Newsletter Editor: Miranda Stewart**