

The Communication and Diversity Forum  
College of Communication and Information Sciences  
University of Alabama

## Discerning Diverse Voices: Communication & Information Symposium on Diversity

**Theme: Under Observation: The Conditions of “Being Seen”**

**Wednesday, March 1st, 2023**

Location TBA, University of Alabama Campus, Tuscaloosa, AL

Hybrid format and Free Registration

Call for Papers, Posters and Panels Presentations

Keynote Speaker:

***Dr. Melissa Villa-Nicholas***

**Submission Deadline: January 9, 2023**

The University of Alabama’s College of Communication and Information Sciences is committed to promoting an environment that harbors and promotes meaningful diversity, equity, and inclusion. With such a vibrant mission to uphold, we are proud to host the 14<sup>th</sup> annual Discerning Diverse Voices Symposium. This symposium is highly interdisciplinary and seeks to attract a wide range of topics and methods used in researching diversity in our society. Proposals are encouraged from faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students, communication professionals, and community activists.

This year’s theme, *Under Observation: The Conditions of “Being Seen,”* invites participants to submit proposals that engage with the politics, mechanisms, and modalities of visibility/invisibility as they relate to diversity (broadly defined) in the modern information, communication and media landscapes. For instance, far too often diversity is reduced to what is immediately observable, missing the intricacies of identity and culture. Yet, as Foucault has warned, “visibility is a trap” that facilitates surveillance, control, and management of bodies. The organizers hope to generate conversation about the multiple ways we might understand visibility and invisibility as conditions that facilitate knowing, or “being seen,” that have potentials for both control and empowerment depending on the parameters, contexts, and purposes at play.

“Being seen,” as wordplay, nods to the limitations and problematics of relying on sight-based metaphors and understandings of diversity, while inviting critiques of what it might otherwise mean to be known, legible, interpreted, machine-readable, or parsed in information and communication contexts. Interdisciplinary interpretations of this theme are welcomed and encouraged. Possible research topics that fit with this theme might include, but are not limited to:

- Representational politics
- In/visibility in information and data structures
- Surveillance and privacy
- Platform affordances for in/visibility
- Hidden histories / untold stories
- Self-presentation and mediated identities
- Algorithmic culture and big data

Proposals that engage with the conference theme are encouraged and prioritized. However, we welcome research about diversity as it relates to communication and information in all its manifestations. As such, we also invite proposals that encompass the following areas:

- Organizations: leadership and management, recruitment and retention, mentoring, organizational culture, motivation and conflict in the workplace and community-based organizations.
- Knowledge: the educational, recreational, informational, political, medical and cultural needs of diverse populations.
- Mediated representations: communication and rhetorical strategies, communication effects, and historical and contemporary images of diverse populations.
- Cultural criticism and commentary (politics, social media, technology, and film)
- Intersectionality and identity (including, but not limited to studies of race, gender, LGBTQA+, social class, ability, and age)
- Social Justice/Movements (i.e. Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, We Need Diverse Books)
- Diversity and Representation in Popular Culture (reality television, sports, fashion, news, music)

### **Submission Guidelines**

\*Submissions for all categories should be approximately 500 words.

**Research Papers (hybrid):** Papers may include empirical studies, comprehensive literature reviews, or position papers. Completed papers should be able to be presented or summarized within approximately 10 minutes at the symposium (the exact time given will depend on the number of papers in the same session). Q&A will follow.

**Pre-Constituted Panel (hybrid):** Moderated sessions composed of researchers, professionals, and/or students). Panels include discussion about a specific topic among a selected group of panelists who share differing perspectives. Sessions are 55 minutes including Q&A.

**Posters (on-campus only):** Posters may include finished research or works-in-progress. Presenters must confirm plans to attend the symposium to engage poster session attendees with informal discussion of their research or creative activity. No formal presentation will be required of poster presenters.

Please submit to the [online submission portal only](#); emailed or late proposals will not be accepted for review. Presenters will be notified in early February and will be required to register for the symposium to be listed in the program.

For more information, contact the 2023 Symposium co-chairs, Dr. Miriam Sweeney ([mesweeney1@ua.edu](mailto:mesweeney1@ua.edu)) or Dr. Alyxandra Vesey ([amvesey@ua.edu](mailto:amvesey@ua.edu)).