

KATHRYN (KATIE) MONTALBANO

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**ACADEMIC
APPOINTMENTS**

University of Kentucky

Assistant Professor, Media Law and Ethics
Program Coordinator, Scripps Howard First Amendment Center
School of Journalism and Media
College of Communication and Information
August 2023–present

Appalachian State University

Assistant Professor, Media Law/Journalism
Department of Communication
August 2020–May 2023

Young Harris College

Assistant Professor, Communication Studies
August 2018–May 2020

Neumann University

Assistant Professor, Communication and Digital Media
August 2016–May 2018

EDUCATION

Columbia University

Ph.D., Communications (2016)
M.Phil., Communications (2014)
M.A., Communications (2011)

Dissertation: “Under the Eye of Providence: Surveilling
Religion in the United States”

Committee: Richard R. John (advisor), Todd Gitlin (chair),
Courtney Bender (religion), David Stark (sociology), Elizabeth
Blackmar (history)

Haverford College

B.A., English; Sociology (minor) (2009)

Thesis: “Ecstasis of Ekphrasis: Dialectically (De)framing Self in
John Banville’s *The Book of Evidence*”

Advisors: Debora Sherman (major); Mark Gould (minor)

**PEER-REVIEWED
PUBLICATIONS**

Book

Montalbano, K. (2018). *Government surveillance of religious expression: Mormons, Quakers, and Muslims in the United States*. New York: Routledge.

Journal Articles & Book Chapters

Montalbano, K. (2025). Reconstruction and the press: Debating defamation, 1870-1876. *Communication Law and Policy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2025.2496140>

Montalbano, K., & Hamm, B. (2025). The whole county is watching: The use of Kentucky's Open Records and Meetings Acts by local newspapers in rural communities. *Journal of Civic Information*, 7(2), 41-62. <https://doi.org/10.32473/joci.7.2.139607>

Montalbano, K. (2024). Navigating networks of suspect speech: The abolitionist mail controversy of 1835. *Communication Law and Policy*, 29(1-2), 62-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2024.2400077>

Montalbano, K., & Perreault, G. (2023). Resisting Protestant hegemony: Privileging coverage in religion reporting. *Journal of Religion, Media and Digital Culture*, 12(2-3), 272-292. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/21659214-bja10084>

Perreault, G., & Montalbano, K. (2023). Covering religion: Field insurgency in U.S. religion reporting. *Journalism*, 24(6), 1193-1210. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849211073220>

Montalbano, K. (2022). Reimagining Section 230 and content moderation: Regulating incivility on anonymous digital platforms. *Communication Law and Policy*, 27(3-4). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10811680.2022.2136442>

Montalbano, K. (2021). "Yakety yak: Don't talk back": An autopsy of anonymity gone awry. *Internet Histories*, 6(1-2), 191-205. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24701475.2021.2020470>

- Montalbano, K. (2021). Preventing yellow jack and yellow journalism: The tensions in Mississippi Valley news coverage of the 1878 yellow fever epidemic. *Journalism History*, 47(4), 372-391. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00947679.2021.1988273>
- Montalbano, K. (2019). The FBI and the AFSC: Surveilling United States religious expression in the Cold War era. In R. Heynen and E. van der Meulen (Eds.), *Making surveillance states: Transnational histories* (pp. 238-260) Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Montalbano, K. (2019). Islamophobia in reactionary news: Radicalizing Christianity in the United States. *Open Library of Humanities*, 5(1): 61, 1-49. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.473>
- Montalbano, K. (2018). Net neutrality, the Fairness Doctrine, and the NRB: The tension between United States religious expression and media regulation. *Media and Communication*, 6(1), 5-12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v6i1.1198>
- Montalbano, K. (2015). Misunderstanding the Mongols: Intercultural communication in three thirteenth-century Franciscan travel accounts. *Information & Culture: A Journal of History*, 50(4), 588-610. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7560/IC50406>

Book Review

- Montalbano, K. (June 2021). [Review of *The Routledge handbook of religion and journalism*, edited by Radde-Antweiler and X. Zeiler]. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*.

Manuscripts Under Review or In Development

- Smith, J., & Montalbano, K. (forthcoming). Gloves off: The tensions between NIL agreements and open records laws
- Montalbano, K., & Mari, W. (accepted). Dismantling DEI: The battle for free expression in U.S. higher education.

Wei, Z., & Montalbano, K. (under review). Policies and laws impacting religious expression in commercial spaces: A comparative study between the U.S. and China.

Montalbano, K. (monograph in development). *Safe harbors: U.S. speech protections from maritime law to the internet.*

AWARDS

ICA (2025) Promising Research Award, Communication History Division, “Safe Harbor Protections: Shielding Ships and Speech in the United States from Nineteenth-Century Maritime Law to Contemporary Internet Policy,” Denver, 12-16 June 2025.

Teacher Who Made a Difference Award (2025), University of Kentucky.

University of Kentucky, College of Communication and Information’s 2024 Summer Faculty Research Fellowship Program (US \$5,000).

AEJMC (2023) Law & Policy Teaching Ideas Competition, 3rd place, Washington, D.C., 7-10 August 2023.

Most Helpful Faculty and Staff Award (2021-2022), Appalachian State University.

AEJMC Faculty Paper (RMIG) Award (2021) with Perreault, G., “From Lifestyle Journalism to General News: Field Theory in the Hard News Turn of Religion Reporting,” 2nd place, Virtual, 4-7 August 2021.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND PANELS

American Religion is...Surveillance [panel], Shifting Paradigms of American Religion series [funded by the Henry Luce Foundation], Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life (IRCPL), Columbia University, 28 October 2025.

The Media History of Modern Labor [panel], History Division and Cultural & Critical Studies (CCSD) Division, AEJMC, San Francisco, 7-10 August 2025.

New York Times v. Sullivan in 2024: Its Impact of 60 Years on

Communication Law and Policy Free Speech in the U.S. and Abroad [panel], Division, AEJMC, Philadelphia, 8-11 August 2024.

Challenges, Changes, and the State of Media Law Pedagogy [workshop], Communication Law and Policy Division, AEJMC, Philadelphia, 8-11 August 2024

My First Year as a Full-Time Faculty Member: Experiences and Lessons from the First Year on the Job [panel], AEJMC, Philadelphia, 8-11 August 2024.

The Press, Print Media, and Power in Reconstruction-Era Politics [panel], American Political History Conference, Nashville, 6-8 June 2024.

New York Times v. Sullivan *60 Years Later: Remembering the Past, Imagining the Future* [panel], AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, 7-9 March, 2024.

Book talk [undergraduate course], “New Religious Movements,” Young Harris College, Young Harris, 20 February 2024.

University of Kentucky, School of Journalism and Media, “Safe Harbors and Suspect Speech: Ethical Limitations in U.S. Media Law and Policy,” 8 February 2023.

University of Missouri, Missouri School of Journalism, “Sacred Spaces, Suspect Speech, and Safe Harbors: Free Expression in U.S. Journalism and Media Policy,” 1 November 2022.

Dead and Dying Platforms [panel], Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), Philadelphia, 13-16 October 2021.

Appalachian State University, Department of Communication, “Covering Religion and the First Amendment,” 9 November 2019.

Young Harris College, Department of Communication, “The Rise and Fall of Journalistic Objectivity,” 16 February 2018.

Boston College, Department of Communication, “Government

Surveillance of Religious Expression in the United States: Mormons, Quakers, and Muslims,” 4 December 2017.

**PEER-REVIEWED
PRESENTATIONS**

“Safe Harbor Protections: Shielding Ships and Speech in the United States from Nineteenth-Century Maritime Law to Contemporary Internet Policy,” ICA, “Disrupting and Consolidating Communication Research,” Communication History Division, Denver, 12-16 June 2025.

“Policies and Laws Impacting Religious Expression: Compelled Speech in the U.S. and China” [co-author: Zhifang Wei], ICA, “Disrupting and Consolidating Communication Research,” Communication Law and Policy Division, Denver, 12-16 June 2025.

“The Kentucky Open Records and Open Meetings Acts: Defending Democracy and Transparency,” National FOI Summit ’24, National Freedom of Information Coalition, 14 November 2024.

“Reimagining and Rebuilding Community: The Actual Malice Communication Law and Policy Division, Standard in the Reconstruction Era Press,” AEJMC, Philadelphia, 8-11 August 2024.

“Religious-Political Discourse and News Coverage on X: Leftist Candidates and the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election,” *Religion and Politics in the 2024 Elections: A Comparative Global Framework* panel [organizer], AEJMC, Religion and Media Interest Group, Philadelphia, 8-11 August 2024.

“Reimagined Communities: Reconstructing Reputation through the Press,” *The Press, Print Media, and Power in Reconstruction-Era Politics* panel, American Political History Conference, Nashville, 6-8 June 2024.

“Religious-Political Discourse and News Coverage on X: Leftist Candidates and the 2024 U.S. Presidential Election,” AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, 7-9 March 2024.

“Taking Stock of *Sullivan* on Free Speech and Press in a Historical Context,” 60th anniversary of *New York Times v. Sullivan* panel, AEJMC Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, 7-9 March, 2024.

“Regulating Religious Expression: Transdisciplinary Teaching in Media Law and Policy,” AEJMC, Teaching Ideas Competition, Communication Law and Policy Division, Washington, D.C., 6 August 2023.

“Regulating U.S. Abolitionist Networks in the 1830s,” ICA, “Reclaiming Authenticity in Communication,” Communication Law and Policy Division, Toronto, 25-29 May 2023.

“Shielding Safe Spaces: Governmental and Public Perspectives on Section 230,” Media Law and Policy Scholars Conference (MLPSC), online, 13-14 January 2022.

“‘Yakety Yak, Don’t Talk Back’: Moderation on Anonymous Platforms,” AoIR, “Independence,” Philadelphia, 13–16 October 2021.

“From Lifestyle Journalism to General News: Field Theory in the Hard News Turn of Religion Reporting” [co-author: Gregory Perreault], AEJMC, “Turning the Page,” New Orleans, 4–7 August 2021.

“Section 230 and Digital Disinformation,” ICA, “Engaging the Essential Work of Care: Communication, Connectedness, and Social Justice,” Communication Law and Policy Division, Denver, 27–31 May 2021.

“Preventing Yellow Jack and Yellow Journalism: The Tension in Mississippi Valley News Coverage of the 1878 Yellow Fever Epidemic,” Symposium on the 19th Century Press, the Civil War, and Free Expression, online, 12–14 November 2020.

“Right-Wing Populism, Religion, and Reactionary News: Radicalizing United States Christianity,” ICA, “Communication Beyond Borders,” Pre-conference, “Global Populism: Its Roots in Media and Religion,”

Washington, D.C., 24 May 2019.

“Regulating Religion in the United States: Mormons, Quakers, and Muslims,” ICA, “Voices,” Pre-conference, “Global Media and Human Rights,” Prague, CZ, 23–24 May 2019.

“Surveilling Pacifists in Cold War America: The Quakers, the FBI, and the First Amendment,” ICA, “Interventions: Communication Research and Practice,” Communication History Division, San Diego, 25–29 May 2017.

“Considering Religious Networks and Media: A Methodological Challenge to Communication Studies,” ECREA, “Bridges and Boundaries: Theories, Concepts, and Sources in Communication History,” Venice, IT, 16–18 September 2015.

“Misunderstanding the Mongols: Intercultural Communication in Three Thirteenth-Century Franciscan Travel Accounts,” ICA, “Communication Across the Life Span,” Pre-conference, “Communications and the State: Toward a New International History,” San Juan, PR, 21–25 May 2015.

“Mediating Messages in Uncharted Territory: Conceptualizing Profession in 13th-Century Franciscan Travel Narratives,” Columbia University Religion Department—Graduate Student Conference, “Religion on the Move: Movement,

Migration, Missions and New Media across Religious Traditions,” New York, 26 April 2013.

“Defacement and Encoding in the Network Society: The Fusion of Evangelicalism and Catholicism in the American Public Sphere,” ISMRC, Eskişehir, TR, 8–12 July 2012.

“The Environmental Movement and American Religion in the Network Society: Reconfiguring Hierarchies to Exist within Heterarchical Organizational Structures,” AEJMC, Chicago, 9-12 August 2012.

**PUBLIC
ENGAGEMENT**

Mannering, M. (10 Dec. 2025). Billboard with blunt political message in Richmond sparks backlash. *LEX 18*. <https://www.lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/billboard-with-blunt-political-message-in-richmond-sparks-backlash>

Horn, A. (19 Nov. 2025). He went from KY political unknown to MAGA fame: He faces jail if he returns home. *Lexington Herald-Leader*. <https://www.kentucky.com/news/politics-government/article312922805.html>

American Religion is...Surveillance [panel]. (28 Oct. 2025). Shifting Paradigms of American Religion series [funded by the Henry Luce Foundation], Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life (IRCPL), Columbia University, 28 October 2025.

The Kentucky Kernel News Podcast, Kentucky Kernel, 9 October 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?20v=quFkMcYb1UU&t=1959s>

“Religion in Life,” AppTV, Season 15, Episode 5. March 2022. Appalachian State University. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtW4Hzgm7Io>

**TEACHING
EXPERIENCE**

University of Kentucky | 2023-present

Journalism Law and Ethics
Law, Media and Sports
Media Policy and Regulation
The First Amendment, Internet and Society
Media Research Methods

Appalachian State University | 2020-2023

Communication Law
Journalism Matters

Young Harris College | 2018-2020

Introduction to Media Communication
Public Speaking
Communication Theory
Critical Approaches in Communication Research Methods
Protest and Social Activism
Communication and Surveillance

Religion and Media
Senior Capstone
Manufacturing Objectivity: (De)constructing
Disinformation

Neumann University | 2016-2018

Communication Research Methods
Globalization, New Media, and the Internet
Introduction to Communication
Mass Media and Society
Senior Seminar

College of Mount Saint Vincent | 2013-2014

Introduction to Media Studies (Adjunct)
New Media and Society (Adjunct)

Columbia University | 2011-2013

Ethics of Journalism, (TA, Journalism School)
History of Journalism, (TA, Journalism School)
Organizing Innovation (TA, Department of Sociology)

**RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE**

Research assistant to Jonathan Zittrain, Professor of Law and
Computer Science, Berkman Center for Internet &
Society, Harvard University, for research on net neutrality
and Internet policy, June–August 2013.

Research assistant to Frederick A.O. Schwarz, Jr., Brennan Center
for Justice at NYU School of Law, for *Democracy in the
Dark: The Seduction of Government Secrecy* (2015),
February 2012–February 2013.

Research assistant to Richard R. John, Professor of History and
Communications, Columbia University, on late
eighteenth-century American communications,
antimonopoly, and the history of transatlantic
communication, January–April 2012, January–April 2013.

Research assistant to Richard R. John, Professor of History and
Communications, Columbia University, for *The American
Postal Network, 1792–1914* (2012), July–August 2011.

Paralegal (U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, post-
conviction and criminal appeals), The Law Office of Peter
Goldberger, August 2009–May 2010.

**UNIVERSITY
SERVICE**

University of Kentucky | 2023-present

CI Faculty Council, JAM Representative
CI Graduate Admissions Committee, JAM Representative
CI Research Advisory Council
Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) Advisor
Diversity Committee
Committee on Finance and Facilities

Dissertation committee: Ivy J. Brashear

Independent study/undergraduate research: Jemi Chew

Appalachian State University | 2020-2023

Chair, Diversity Committee
Curriculum Committee
Faculty Advisor, *Rotten Appal*
Assistant Chair Search Committee

Young Harris College | 2018-2020

Black History Month Committee
Academic Standards and Policies Committee
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committee
NCAA Faculty Athletics Coach (FAC)

Neumann University | 2016-2018

Providence Animal Shelter (Media, PA), Dog Trotter
Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee (LOAC)

**PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS**

Association for Education in Journalism and Mass
Communication (AEJMC)
International Communication Association (ICA)

**PROFESSIONAL
SERVICE**

Current Leadership:

AEJMC **Law and Policy Division** Research Chair (2025-present)
ICA **History Division** Secretary (2025-present)
AEJMC **Religion and Media Interest Group** (RMIG)
Communications Chair (2024-present)

Past Leadership:

AEJMC **Law and Policy Division** Newsletter Editor (2024-2025)

AEJMC Religion and Media Interest Group (RMIG) Head
(2022-2023)

AEJMC Religion and Media Interest Group (RMIG) Vice-Head
(2021-2022)

Reviewer:

Journalism History

Information, Communication & Society

AEJMC Tankard Book Award