



Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture

Paulette D. Kilmer

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Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture

Created and maintained by the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.
<http://www.ijpc.org>.

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By Paulette D. Kilmer
University of Toledo

The Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture (IJPC) provides more than 86,000 items about journalists, public relations practitioners, and media (film, television, radio, fiction, commercials, and cartoons) in an online archive. The IJPC, a project of the Norman Lear Center at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, was founded in 2000.

Director Joe Saltzman updates the resources and expands the database regularly. The logo and name are protected under copyright provisions, but the information is organized for educators, students, and researchers to use. He founded the *Image of the Journalist in Popular Culture Journal* with Matthew Ehrlich (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) and Sammye Johnson (Trinity University).

The home page invites visitors to join IJPC as associates for a \$50 annual fee, which entitles the members to nine videos about how media have portrayed journalists in pop culture. The database can also be accessed online without paying a fee. Videos focus on various aspects of journalism in the public imagination: the Washington press, the image of gay journalists, journalism ethics as an element in movie plots, and movies as well as television programs about real-life journalists. The IJPC also publishes books. The most recent, *Heroes and Scoundrels* by Saltzman and Ehrlich, was released in April 2015.

The mission statement declares that the IJPC's purpose is "to investigate and analyze, through research and publication, the conflicting images of the

journalist in film, television, radio, fiction, commercials, cartoons, comic books, video games, music, art and other aspects of popular culture demonstrating their impact on the American public's perception of newsgatherers."

The resources about print journalists encompass the field with files about metropolitan newspapers, country weeklies, magazines, editors, photojournalists, correspondents, columnists, publishers, and even newsboys. The broadcasting material covers networks, local stations, reporters, anchors, correspondents, producers, writers, technical personnel, news directors, station owners, network executives, and managers. Public relations resources span the world of publicists and press agents. One of the liveliest depositories contains a collection of nameless journalists who appear in television and Hollywood movies. The library also keeps fictional accounts and artwork featuring journalists.

The "What's Inside" column lists links to the IJPC Journal, Database, Resources, Student Research, and Class Materials as well as to information about the project, director, publication, and news. The "Headlines Page" (home page) design cleverly suggests a newspaper page in simple, crisp columns with information conveniently organized under hypertext links. The picture of Clark Kent reading the *Daily Planet* on a bus invites viewers to click on the image, which links to a cartoon about the twenty-first-century struggle for survival of Superman's newspaper—bridging fiction and reality in ways teachers could bring into the classroom. Newcomers to the site may click on "Introduction" to benefit from Saltzman's step-by-step instructions for accessing materials from the database. Browsers may also go directly to the database, but access is limited to associates.

Past issues of the journal also are available as PDFs. The "Publications" link includes Saltzman's fascinating photo essay on "Frank Capra and the Image of the Journalist in American Film." The stills in the first half feature the men, including Douglas Fairbanks, Clark Gable, Ralph Bellamy, and Bing Crosby, who played reporters or editors. The women in the press in the movies included Jean Arthur, Loretta Young, Barbara Stanwyck, and Angela Lansbury.

Primary sources range from newspaper and magazine articles, cartoons, television newscasts, and PR documents to movie clips and art that capture the image of the journalist at moments in time. Secondary materials such as bibliographies, essays, reviews, and books interpret the cultural values conveyed in images of professional men and women at work on the news. Full access requires membership, but many articles, photos, and other items that document public perceptions of journalists are free.

The website does not mention software requirements, and the site can be explored extensively with just Adobe. The site offers fresh approaches as well as materials, including lesson plans, to engage students in the classroom. Researchers who focus on biography, social history, media as narrative or myth, and film will find a treasure chest of materials on the IJPC website.