

**Sara Stifano, PhD**  
(Picklesimer)  
Assistant Professor in-Residence

Curriculum Vitae

University of Connecticut  
Department of Communication  
337 Mansfield Rd., Unit 1259  
Storrs, CT 06269

860.486.0438  
sara.stifano@uconn.edu

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**EDUCATION**

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**Ph.D., Communication.** Nonverbal Communication and Health. July, 2016  
University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT  
Dissertation: Know Your Feelings and Desires: Targeted  
Emotional Education as a Vehicle for Improving  
Safe Sex Health Messages

**M.A., Communication.** Communication. December, 2010  
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY  
Thesis: Gender Role Stereotypes in Advertising: A Test of the  
Match-Up Hypothesis on Advertising Effectiveness

**B.S., Communication.** Communication. December, 2007  
University of Louisville, Louisville, KY

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**AREAS OF TEACHING**

Nonverbal communication  
Interpersonal and group communication  
Gender and communication  
Quantitative research methods  
Writing intensive courses

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**RESEARCH INTERESTS**

Role of identity in influencing health behaviors  
Impact of emotion on decision-making  
Role of emotional education in improving health outcomes

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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### **University of Connecticut, Department of Communication**

#### Assistant Professor-in-Residence:

Research Methods in Communication  
Undergraduate Research Practicum  
Nonverbal Communication  
Interpersonal Communication  
    Advanced Interpersonal Communication  
Fundamentals of Digital Production  
Gender and Communication  
Principles of Public Speaking (course supervisor)  
Media Literacy & Criticism

### **Northeastern University, Communication Studies Department**

#### Postdoctoral Teaching Associate:

Interpersonal Communication Summer 2016, 2017, 2018  
Nonverbal Social Interaction Fall 2017 – Fall 2018  
Communication and Gender Summer 2016, Spring 2017 – Spring 2018  
Communication Research Methods Fall 2016, 2017, 2018  
Public Speaking Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

#### Online Course Development:

Interpersonal Communication Summer 2018

### **University of Connecticut, Department of Communication – Graduate Assistant**

#### Instructor-of-Record:

Interpersonal Communication Summer 2015  
Gender and Communication Spring 2015 – Fall 2015  
Small Group Communication Fall 2014 – Spring 2015; Spring 2016  
Research Methods in Communication Fall 2012 – Summer 2014  
    Honors Research Methods Spring 2015

#### Teaching Assistant:

The Process of Communication (Basic Course) Fall 2011 – Spring 2012

### **University of Louisville, Department of Communication – Graduate Assistant**

#### Instructor-of-Record:

Gender and Communication Fall 2010 – Spring 2011  
Introduction to Public Speaking Fall 2010 – Summer 2011  
    Honors Public Speaking Spring 2011

#### Teaching Assistant:

Introduction to Public Speaking Fall 2009 – Spring 2010

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## DIRECTED STUDENT LEARNING

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FastTrack Major Advisor: Bryan Ford (BA expected 2025).

Graduate Associate Advisor: Katrina Webber (PhD expected 2023).

Thomas, R. (2023). *The Ghostly Dynasty* [Undergraduate University Scholar project]. University of Connecticut.

Gates, M. (2021). *What the 123<sup>rd</sup> Congress will look like: Examining the gender gap in political ambition of college students* [Unpublished undergraduate honors thesis]. University of Connecticut.

Foley, E. (2019). Attachment style and relationship maintenance: An analysis of *Jersey Shore*. Poster presented at the Eastern Communication Association Undergraduate Scholars Conference, Providence, RI, April 2019.

Da Silva, L. (2018). Divergent facial expression and upper body language in winning and losing Hollywood actors at the Academy Awards. Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association Undergraduate Scholars Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. April 2018.

Whitley, J. (2018). The art of deceit: Identifying behaviors that elicit credibility in *Impractical Jokers*. Paper presented at the Eastern Communication Association Undergraduate Scholars Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. April 2018.

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## ACADEMIC PROJECTS

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LCC5: Working collectively to understand, promote, and evaluate inclusive teaching. Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Inclusive Excellence 3 grant. Project F: Faculty Development. Faculty advisor/consultant.

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## PUBLISHED RESEARCH

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Mudrick, M., Stifano, S. C., & **Stifano, S.** (2023). In-groups and out-groups: Using social identity theory to understand listener preferences for local sports talk radio. *Journal of Sports Media*, 18(1), 101-125. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsm.2023.a919643>

Webber, K., **Stifano, S.**, Davis, S., & Stifano, S. C. (2022). Considering social identity threat alongside the Health Belief Model to examine mask-wearing intentions of Black, Latinx, and Asian individuals in the U.S. during COVID-19. *Health Communication* 38(11), 2313-2325. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410236.2022.2067384>

Mello, S., **Stifano, S.**, Tan, A. S. L., Sanders-Jackson, A., & Bigman, C. A. (2020). Gendered conceptions of preconception health: A thematic analysis of men's and women's beliefs about responsibility for preconception health behavior. *Journal of Health Communication*, 25(5), 374-384. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.lib.uconn.edu/10.1080/10810730.2020.1775728>

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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- Wilson, K. J., Rourke, B. L., & **Stifano, S.** This should come with a warning: Exploring the impact of trigger warnings on fear and anxiety responses to TikTok content. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, National Harbor, MD, November 2023.
- Stifano, S. Assessing the reliability and validity of BuzzFeed quizzes (with a dash of astrology!) in an undergraduate quantitative research methods course in communication. Great Ideas for Teaching Students (G.I.F.T.S.) presentation at the National Communication Association Conference, National Harbor, MD, November 2023.
- Webber, K., **Stifano, S.**, Davis, S., & Stifano, S. C. Unmasking racism during COVID-19: Examining social identity threat and emotion within the Health Belief Model to understand mask-wearing intentions among Black, Latinx, and Asian individuals in the US. InCHIP Rapid Response Proposal to Address COVID-19. Funded April 15th, 2020. \$2000. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Seattle, WA, November 2021.
- Stifano, S. Paging pop culture: Health narratives in mediated entertainment contexts. Panel presentation at the National Communication Association Conference, Baltimore, MD, November 2019.
- Mello, S., **Stifano, S.**, Tan, A. S. L., Sanders-Jackson, A., & Bigman, C. A. (2019). Improving preconception health communication: Beliefs about gendered responsibility during the 'zero trimester.' Paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Washington, DC. May 2019.
- Mudrick, M., Stifano, S. C., & **Stifano, S.** In-groups and Out-groups: The impact of Social Identity Theory on local sports talk radio. Poster presentation at the North American Society for Sport Management Conference, New Orleans, LA, May 2019.
- Stifano, S. (2019) Creating a better future: Teaching for social justice. Panel presentation at the Eastern Communication Association Annual Convention, Providence, RI, April, 2019.
- Picklesimer, S.** & Stifano, S. C. (2017). Know your feelings and desires: Targeted emotional education as a vehicle for improving safe sex health messages. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX, November 2017.
- Picklesimer, S. (2017). Reproductive justice under the Trump presidency: Communication as resistance. Panel presentation at the National Communication Association Conference, Dallas, TX, November 2017.

**Picklesimer, S.** & Stifano, S. C. (2016). Too much is never enough: Excessive media use among college students, its correlates, and impact on quality of life. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Philadelphia, PA, November 2016.

Picklesimer, S. (2015). Examining the impact of valenced messages and normative expertise in emotional education safe sex interventions. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, San Juan, Puerto Rico, May 2015.

Picklesimer, S. (2014). It's just the way I was raised: The role of attachment in experiences of shame and guilt. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, Chicago, IL, November, 2014.

**Picklesimer, S.** & Hull, K. (2014). Warning! Explicit content: The persuasive effects of profanity on evaluations of message, source, and topic. Paper presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Seattle, WA, May, 2014.

Al-Abri, A., Borsai, A., & **Picklesimer, S.** (2014). Emotional influences on news processing: The effects of pride and shame on attention. Poster presented at the International Communication Association Conference, Seattle, WA, May, 2014.

Jalette, G., **Picklesimer, S.**, Stifano, S. C., Clark, M., Morales, K. (2013). TEEM-work: Fostering competition across universities through the creation of Targeted Emotional Education Modules. Panel presentation at the Northeast Media Literacy Conference, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, April, 2013.

Picklesimer, S. (2012). "There's no crying in baseball!": Gender differences in sports fans' emotional regulation. Paper presented at the Women and Society Conference, Marist College, Poughkeepsie, NY. October, 2012.

**Picklesimer, S.** & Sohn, S. (2011). Gender role stereotypes in advertising: A test of the match-up hypothesis on advertising effectiveness. Paper presented at the National Communication Association Conference, New Orleans, LA. November, 2011.

## AWARDS & HONORS

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### **Top Paper in Health Communication**

Award received for outstanding research in health communication. Health Communication Division, National Communication Association, 2021.

### **Top Paper in Health Communication**

Award received for outstanding research in health communication. Health Communication Division, National Communication Association, 2017.

### **UCONN Dean's Graduate Fellowship in Social Sciences**

Funding provided for outstanding graduate research. College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2014, 2015.

### **UCONN Department of Communication Graduate Fellowship Awards**

Funding provided for research presentations and attendance at international, national, and regional conferences. 2013-2015.

### **Department of Communication Outstanding Graduate Student Award**

Award received for demonstrated academic excellence. University of Louisville, 2010.

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## ACADEMIC SERVICE & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

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### UNIVERSITY

**University Student Learning & Assessment Committee** **Fall 2022 – present**  
University of Connecticut, Office of the Provost.

- Provide guidance to the Office of Academic Program Assessment pertaining to creation and maintenance of sustainable assessment process
- Develop templates to support the assessment process
- Plan and participate in the annual Assessment Institute  
Co-led a session on developing programmatic learning outcomes, May 2023

**Quantitative Competency Subcommittee** **Fall 2021 – present**  
*Co-chair, Fall 2022 - present*  
University of Connecticut, Common Curriculum Committee (CCC+).

- Attend bi-weekly meetings of full CCC+ committee to aid in the migration to the new Common Curriculum
- Review new and revised courses to ensure they met the criteria for the Q competency
- Communicate with members of the committee regarding courses reviewed

**Q Competency Revision Working Group** **Fall 2023 – Spring 2024**  
*Co-chair*  
University of Connecticut, Common Curriculum Committee (CCC+).

- Prepare a working definition of what constitutes *quantitative competency*, and explain the rationale underlying the definition
- Review and revise the existing criteria for determining whether a course should be labeled a Q course in light of the revised definition
- Prepare a set of Q-specific Student Learning Objectives for all Q courses at UConn in light of the revised definition
- Identify courses that no longer meet the Q criteria and recommend steps for revising those courses to meet the newly drafted criteria and SLOs

**Search Committee for Educational Technologist**

**Fall 2022**

University of Connecticut, Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

- Reviewed applications for the position
- Met regularly with committee members to discuss candidates and determine list of finalists
- Developed interview questions and participated in the interview process
- Debriefed with committee and selected leading candidate

**COLLEGE**

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee**

**Fall 2022 – Spring 2023**

University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS).

- Shared information and resources related to ensuring diversity, equity, and inclusion in CLAS
- Assisted with developing and implementing DEI-related initiatives in CLAS

**DEPARTMENT**

**Undergraduate Honors Advisor**

**Fall 2024 – present**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

**FastTrack Admissions Committee**

**Fall 2023 – present**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Review applications submitted twice per academic year
- Collaborate with committee members to assess quality of applicants and determine acceptance
- Advise students when they are accepted as FastTrack students

**In-Residence Faculty Merit Policy Committee**

**Fall 2021 – present**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Review current in-Residence faculty merit structure
- Consider possible changes for future academic years

**Undergraduate Studies Committee**

**Fall 2019 – present**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Assist with revising undergraduate curriculum
- Review applications for department scholarships
- Assist in guiding the direction and planning of the undergraduate program
- Review and provide feedback on syllabi for new undergraduate COMM courses
- Lead and assist with coordination of departmental events (Virtual COMMotion Pictures screening, Advanced Interpersonal Communication Poster Session)
- Attend UConn Bound Day and assist with recruitment of incoming students to the COMM major

**Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Task Force**

**Fall 2021 – Spring 2024**

*Chair, Fall 2021 - Spring 2022*

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Divided the task force into 4 Working Groups to develop initiatives and plans for assessing those initiatives
- Collected resources for undergraduate and graduate teaching to promote the inclusion of BIPOC scholars and scholars from marginalized and underrepresented groups
- Participated in the Undergraduate Program Working Group, which:
  - 1) adapted the Inclusive Syllabus Review for use in the Department of Communication as a self-assessment tool for instructors
  - 2) created a student feedback survey assessing course materials and instruction for diversity, representation, and accessibility
- Acted as point person for the Faculty Working Group, which:
  - 1) facilitated efforts to highlight the work of BIPOC scholars and students, as well as those from other marginalized and underrepresented groups on social media, in addition to work focusing on those experiences

**Communication Graduate Student Association**

**Fall 2021 – Spring 2024**

*Faculty Advisor*

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Attended meetings when requested by the Executive Board
- Provided information and advice to graduate student cohort regarding goals and planning
- Participated in and promoted CGSA events
- Facilitated connections between CGSA members and faculty committees interested in graduate student collaboration
- Communicated with the faculty about events and updates led and sponsored by the CGSA

**Speaker Series Committee**

**Fall 2019 – Spring 2024**

*Chair, Fall 2019 - Spring 2021*

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Lead the process of identifying and recruiting speakers from a variety of backgrounds, academic and professional, consistent with DEI initiatives (notably, 80% of the presentations in 2020-21 were led and delivered by women)
- Facilitated efforts to prioritize quality of speakers over quantity
- Scheduled and coordinated presentations in person and led efforts to reschedule and move all presentations to WebEx during COVID-19 pandemic

**GRADUATE STUDENT**

**Editorial Assistant: *Communication Studies*.**

**Fall 2015 – Spring 2018**

- Processed and reviewed incoming manuscripts
- Coordinated submissions and reviewer assignments with the Editor
- Prepared accepted manuscripts for production



- Corresponded with reviewers to ensure operation of regional journal

**President: Communication Graduate Student Association. Spring 2013 – Spring 2015**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Developed a weekly communication system to keep graduate students connected
- Helped design and manage organization's website and social media platforms
- Organized and facilitated diverse fundraising events
- Assisted graduate student cohort in academic and professional development
- Planned professional and social events for graduate students and faculty with emphasis on career and community development
- Lead and assisted selected graduate student orientation events

**Graduate Student Recruitment Fall 2013 – Spring 2016**

University of Connecticut, Department of Communication.

- Acted as point of contact for several prospective graduate students
- Met with individual prospective and incoming graduate students to improve their understanding of graduate program and university environment
- Lead informational sessions during graduate student campus visits

**Academic Advisor Summer 2012**

University of Connecticut, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS).

- Reviewed curriculum plans and course requirements for undergraduate students
- Provided incoming students with overview of course structure at the university
- Offered guidance to students in finding their academic interests
- Coordinated advising efforts with a team of 10+ fellow advisors

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## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**Critical Teaching Behaviors Book Club/Community of Practice Spring 2024**

University of Connecticut, Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning.

- Read and discussed *Critical Teaching Behaviors: Defining, Documenting, and Discussing Good Teaching*
- Attended weekly workshop focused on teaching and learning
- Shared ideas and resources with group members about effective teaching

**Assessment Book Club/Community of Practice Fall 2022 – Spring 2023**

University of Connecticut, Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (informally).

- Read and discussed *Assessing Student Learning: A Common Sense Guide*
- Shared information and resources for improving assessment in a variety of courses
- Attended guest presentations on assessment methods