

LAUREN ALEXANDRA SOWA

EDUCATION

- 2022 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** – Los Angeles, CA

Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
Ph.D. Communication

Committee: Drs Henry Jenkins (co-chair), Josh Kun (co-chair), and Larry Gross

Dissertation: These are *Their* Stories: Two Decades of Showrunner Production, Content and Context in *Law & Order: SVU*
- 2019 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** – Los Angeles, CA
Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
Master of Communication

Qualifying Exam Committee: Drs Henry Jenkins, Josh Kun, Larry Gross, Tara McPherson, and Sarah Banet-Weiser
- 2015 **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA** – Los Angeles, CA
Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
Master of Communication Management
- 2010 **NEW YORK UNIVERSITY** – New York, NY
Tisch School of the Arts
Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honors

Major: Theatre
Minor: Sociology

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

- 2022 - Present Visiting Assistant Professor of Communication
PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY – Malibu, CA
Seaver College, Communication Division

PUBLICATIONS

- Sowa, L. A. (2022). Beyond Benson: From *Law & Order: SVU* to Holland's *Grenslanders*, Female Masculinity in Crime Dramas Fall Victim to Feminized Tropes. *Communication, Culture, and Critique*. 15(3) 425-423. doi:10.1093/ccc/tcab063
- Sowa, L. A. (2022) Historical and Contemporary Representations of Youth and Teens in Media Fictions. *International Journal of Communication*.
- Sowa, L. A. (2021). Breaking Stereotypes or Stereotypical Breakdowns?: Analyzing Television Casting Breakdowns for Latina Characters. *International Journal of Communication*. 15: 3358-3378.

Publications in Preparation

(Forthcoming) Chapter 7: “I Like You Just the Way You Are”: Understand Fred Rogers (with Henry Jenkins). Chapter in: Henry Jenkins’ *Where the Wild Things Were: American Boyhood and Permissive Imagination 1948-1968*.

Sowa, L. A. (under review) *Bridgerton’s* unconscious racial stereotypes: A critical look at the tensions between period genre’s tropes and color-conscious casting.

Sowa, L. A. (under review) These are the showrunner’s stories: An analysis of *Law & Order: SVU’s* cultural authors.

Sowa, L. A. (in preparation) I’ll make a man out of you: A comparative analysis of female masculinity in Disney’s animated and live-action *Mulan*.

Sowa, L. A. (in preparation). From gendered products to gender politics: How beauty-vloggers turned UN Change Ambassadors engage intersectionality.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record

2023 (Fall) COM 180: Public Speaking and Rhetorical Analysis (Pepperdine University, Seaver College)
2023 (Spring) SART 305: History of Screen Arts (Pepperdine University, Seaver College)
2023 (Spring) COM 180: Public Speaking and Rhetorical Analysis (Pepperdine University, Seaver College)
2022 (Fall) COM 180: Public Speaking and Rhetorical Analysis (Pepperdine University, Seaver College)
2021 (Spring) GESM 131: Diversity in Hollywood (USC Dornsife)
2020 (Fall) COMM 204: Public Speaking (USC Annenberg)
2020 (Spring) COMM 204: Public Speaking (USC Annenberg)

Teaching Assistant (USC Annenberg)

2022 (Spring) COMM 620: Gendered Media Economics
2021 (Fall) COMM 540: Uses of Communication Research
2019 (Fall) COMM 313: Communication and Mass Media
2019 (Spring) COMM 300: Entertainment, Communication, and Society
2018 (Fall) COMM 206: Communication and Culture (*with sections*)
2018 (Spring) COMM 366: Designing Media and Communication Projects for Social Change
2017 (Fall) COMM 367: Community Engagement and Service Learning
2017 (Fall) COMM 540: Uses of Communication Research

PRESENTATIONS

Academic Conference Presentations

April 2023 Sowa, L. A. I’ll Make a Man Out of You: A Comparative Analysis of Female Masculinity in Disney’s Animated and Live-Action *Mulan*. Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference. Denver, CO. (Session Chair)

April 2022 Sowa, L. A. & Gomez, M. “Director John Chu’s Management of Representation: Audience Reactions to ‘Crazy Rich Asians’ and ‘In the Heights.’” Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference. Chicago, IL.

Nov 2021 Sowa, L. A. “Un/Bridgerton-ing Racial Divides: A Critical Look at *Bridgerton’s* Colorblind Casting.” National Communication Association Conference (Theatre, Film, and New Multi-Media Division). Seattle, WA.

Nov 2021 Sowa, L. A. “These are Their Stories: A Conjunctural Analysis of *Law & Order: SVU’s* Cultural Perspectives”

National Communication Association Conference. Seattle, WA.

- May 2019 Sowa, L. A. "Breaking stereotypes or stereotypical breakdowns?: Analyzing television casting breakdowns for Latina Characters." International Communication Association Conference (Ethnicity & Race Division), Washington DC.
- May 2019 Sowa, L. A. "From gendered products to gender politics: How beauty-vloggers turned UN change ambassadors engage intersectionality." International Communication Association Conference (Feminist Scholarship Division), Washington DC.
- May 2019 Sowa, L. A. "Do you hear the people rap?: Broadway's broadening of the public sphere through *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*." International Communication Association Conference (Visual Studies Division), Washington DC.
- May 2019 Sowa, L. A. "A dream is a wish your brain manifests into reality: A comparative analysis of Disney princess' autonomy and the Dream Big, Princess campaign." Pop Culture Conference. DePaul University, Chicago, IL.
- Sept 2018 Sowa, L. A. "Breaking down casting: A deeper look at the breakdown services descriptions for roles." USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism Research Seminar. Los Angeles, CA
- May 2018 Sowa, L. A. "Women in media: Investigating the representation of women in crime drama television." International Communication Association Conference (Visual Studies Division), Prague, Czech Republic.

Academic Conference Organizer

- May 2022 New Directions in Feminist Thought: (Conference Theme TBD). Virtual Conference hosted in collaboration with City University of London, Coventry University, London School of Economics, USC Annenberg and Annenberg Penn.
- Jan 2022 New Directions in Feminist Thought: Research in Times of Crisis and Change. Virtual Conference hosted in collaboration with City University of London, Coventry University, London School of Economics, USC Annenberg and Annenberg Penn.

Invited Guest Lectures

- Oct 2022 "Breaking Stereotypes or Stereotypical Breakdowns?: Analyzing Television Casting Breakdowns for Latina Characters" Pepperdine University, Seaver College, *COM 412: Intercultural Media Literacy*. Malibu, CA.
- Nov 2021 "Cultural Implications of *Law & Order: SVU*" USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 447: Youth & Media*. Los Angeles, CA.
- March 2021 "Intersectional Feminism and Beauty Vlogger Culture" USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 400: Studying Internet Culture*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Jan 2021 "Acting Techniques for Public Speaking." USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 204: Public Speaking*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Nov 2020 "Acting Techniques for Public Speaking." USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 673: Public Intellectuals*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Oct 2020 "Presentation Skills for Professional Healthcare Workers" USC Health Science Campus PhD Career Series. Los Angeles, CA.

- Oct 2020 “Intersectional Feminism and Beauty Vlogger Culture” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 400: Studying Internet Culture*. Los Angeles, CA.
- June 2020 “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 204: Public Speaking*. Los Angeles, CA.
- April 2020 “Presentation Skills for Working Professionals” USC Keck School of Medicine, *Masters in Public Health Capstone Seminar*. Los Angeles, CA.
- April 2020 “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 204: Public Speaking*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Oct 2019 “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 673: Public Intellectuals*. Los Angeles, CA.
- June 2017 “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 204: Public Speaking*. Los Angeles, CA.
- March 2017 “Acting Techniques for Public Speaking.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 204: Public Speaking*. Los Angeles, CA.
- Oct 2015 “Representation of Women in Media Entertainment: Gender Inequalities in Primetime Television.” USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, *COMM 395: Gender, Media and Communication*. Los Angeles, CA.

MEDIA & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- 2023 Interviewed as a TV and Pop Culture Specialist for *Los Angeles Times*: “Is it ever OK to date your friend’s ex? In ‘Love Is Blind,’ it’s a mess”
- 2023 - Present Co- Content Editor: *POP JUNCTIONS: Reflections of Entertainment, Pop Culture, Activism, Media Literacy, Fandom and More*. <http://henryjenkins.org>
- 2022 - Present Editorial Board Member: *POP JUNCTIONS: Reflections of Entertainment, Pop Culture, Activism, Media Literacy, Fandom and More*. <http://henryjenkins.org>
- 2022 Podcast Guest on *How Do You Like It So Far?* Episode 92: Disney Theme Parks with Rebecca Williams and Lauren Sowa
- 2022 Featured Storyteller for USC Annenberg’s #WeAreListening Social Media Campaign

SELECTED RELEVANT WORK EXPERIENCE

- June 2020 - Present **TALK THE TALK: LLC** – Los Angeles, CA & Remote
- Coaches students, academics, and working-professionals on presentations, pitches, interview, and interpersonal skills
 - Consults and edits cover letters for job applications and essays for college admissions
 - Facilitates and incorporates inclusivity and cultural awareness in media scripts, pitches, ads, and social media content.
- Nov 2018 – Feb 2022
- Nov 2008 - Feb 2013 **IHSA SPEECH TEAM JUDGE AND COACH** – Chicago, IL & Remote
- Trained and coached 50+ high school students in public speaking and presentational skills for regional and state competitions

- Speech Judge at Illinois High School Association Speech Invitational meets

Feb 2012 – Aug 2016

CASTING ASSISTANT - NANCY NAYOR CASTING – Los Angeles, CA

- Responsible for conducting industry research by providing casting with up-to-date information on developing projects, production companies, and casting data base
- Review incoming scripts and write coverage for potential new projects
- Communicate information from casting to managers and agents
- Create and edit contract/deal memos for cast talent

Jan 2012 – Jan 2015

PRODUCER @ ACT NOW - Los Angeles, CA

- Facilitate workshops and acting classes.
- Main liaison between the actor/clients and the casting director during networking workshops and class intensives.
- Responsible for maintaining a positive and productive class atmosphere.
- Mediate questions posed to the casting director by the clients.
- Uphold and execute Act Now workshop policies.
- Assess the performances of the actors/clients and guest casting directors by completing evaluation forms describing their abilities/effectiveness as a basis for future reference by the business owner.

Jan 2013 – June 2015

CONSULTING DIRECTOR OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS – TTT Inc.

– Wood Dale, IL

- Presented equipment concepts to optimize performance of customers' processes for energy savings
- Coordinated advertising venues such as tabletop shows, industry periodicals, and social media to maximize exposure with potential customers

1992 - 2019

ACTOR with SAG/AFTRA and AEA – Chicago, IL, New York, NY, and Los Angeles, CA

- Appeared in leading and supporting rolls on television in: *Teen Nick Halo Awards* on Nickelodeon, *Stevie TV* on VH1, *Missing Persons* on ABC, *Early Edition* on CBS, *What's on Your Plate?* on CBS,
- Lead roles in independent films: *DIVOS!* and *Desperation Boulevard*
- Acted in over 50 television and radio commercials for companies including: Disney, Kellogg's, Target, Sears, McDonald's, Good Humor, Reddi-Wip, Fisher-Price, Boeing, The Chicago Tribune
- Performed on stage in productions at: JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER, THE AUDITORIUM THEATER CHICAGO, DRURY LANE THEATER in Evergreen Park, THE SHOP in New York, THE NEW AMERICAN THEATER in Rockford, AMERICAN GIRL PLACE THEATER, and ARIE CROWN THEATER
- Nominated for a Jeff Award for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical

RESEARCH APPOINTMENTS

August 2021- June 2022

Annenberg Center for Collaborative Communication

USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism &
University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication

August 2021- June 2022

Research Assistant, **Henry Jenkins**

Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Southern California

Jan 2019 – May 2019

Research Assistant, **Cristina Mejia Visperas**

Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Southern California

Aug 2017 - Dec 2017	Critical Media Project Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism University of Southern California
July 2015 - Sept 2015	Hollywood, Health, & Society The Norman Lear Center for the Study of Entertainment, Media, & Society University of Southern California
Feb 2015- Nov 2015	Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media Los Angeles, California

AWARDS AND HONORS

Grants and Research Awards

2021	USC Graduate School Travel/ Research Award (\$1,000)
2020	USC Graduate School Advanced Fellowship Nominee
2018	Annenberg Doctoral Student Summer Research Fellowship (\$2,500)
2016-2021	Annenberg Graduate Fellowship

Scholarly Honors

2022	Top 3 Finalist – SCMS TV SIG Grad Student Essay Contest
2015	Communication Management Best Thesis Award, Annenberg USC
2014-2015	Lamda Pi Eta, National Communication Honor Society
2014-2015	Phi Kappa Phi, USC Honor Society
2007-2010	Order of Omega, Greek Leadership Honor Society, NYU
2010	BFA with Honors, NYU
2009	Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) Professional Acting Shakespeare Certificate, London UK

MEMBERSHIPS

2020 - Present	Member, Society for Cinema and Media Studies
2016 - Present	Member, National Communication Association
2016 - Present	Member, International Communication Association

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

May 2017- May 2020	ANNENBERG COMMUNICATION GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (ACGSA) - Los Angeles, CA <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Teaching Assistant and Research Assistant Representative▪ Responsible for working with the administration to assign TA and RA graduate assistantship assignments for the Annenberg Ph.D. students▪ Acts as a mediator between the administration and Ph.D. student body by advocating for the specialized teaching and research interests of each Ph.D. student▪ Participates in all ACGSA meetings, events, and programs designed to foster a supportive and thriving environment for the Annenberg Ph.D. students
Oct 2016- Dec 2016	CRITICAL MEDIA PROJECT GUEST TEACHER - Los Angeles, CA

- Taught a weekly media literacy class to 50 high school junior and seniors at Dorsey Community High School in South Los Angeles
- Facilitated and oversaw the creation of individual and group projects focused on breaking media stereotypes regarding identity and representation

Sept 2014- May 2015

DIRECTOR of ENTERTAINMENT – ANNENBERG GRADUATE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES – Los Angeles, CA

- Advocated for the Communication Management program
- Spearheaded 7 Intra-collegiate mixers and 2 formal events

Jan – April 2015

BUZZ ANCHOR – ANNENBERG TV NEWS – Los Angeles, CA

- Wrote and presented the current entertainment and campus beat aired live during the Buzz segment
- Filmed interviews and edited digital media on Adobe Premiere used in the live broadcast

Sep-Dec 2007

ACTOR TEACHER – PURPLE PANDAS GROUP – New York, NY

- Used theatre techniques to teach 30+ New York public school students about animals at the Bronx Zoo

REFERENCES

Available Upon Request