

Piotr M. Szpunar

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Academic Appointments

University at Albany, SUNY

Associate Professor, Department of Communication, 2023-

Affiliate Faculty, Informatics, 2022-

Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, 2016-2023

University of Pennsylvania

George Gerbner Postdoctoral Fellow, Annenberg School for Communication, 2014-2016

Education

2014 Dual Ph.D., Communication & Political Science, Annenberg School for Communication and the Department of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

2009 M.A., Communication, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania

2007 B.A., Political Science, *with Honours*, University of Waterloo

2002 Adv. Dip., Music (Composition), *with Honours*, Humber College

Publications

Monographs

Szpunar, P.M. (*Under Contract*). *Sites of the Futures*. NYU Press.

Szpunar, P.M. (2018). *Homegrown: Identity and difference in the American war on terror*. New York, NY: [NYU Press](#)

Semati, M. Szpunar, P.M. & Brookey, R.A. (Eds.) (2018). *ISIS beyond the spectacle: Communication media, networked publics, and terrorism*. New York, NY: [Routledge](#)

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Modjtahedi, G. & Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Soft news in soft war: Maximum pressure, Voice of America, and outrage media in Iran. *International Communication Gazette* 84(7-8): 613-632. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17480485221088395>

*Graduate Student Co-Author

Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Memory politics in the future tense: Exceptionalism, race, and insurrection in America. *Memory Studies* 14(6): 1272-1284.

Szpunar, P.M. (2021). The preemptive voice of enemy images: The before-and-after motif in media coverage of women homegrown terrorists. *Journalism*, 22(12): 3066-3082. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464884919894125>

Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Promnesic futures: Technology, climate, déjà vu. *Memory Studies*, 14(4): 747-761. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980211024318>

- Szpunar, P.M. (2020). The I's of the informant: Memoirs of surveillance society. *Surveillance & Society*, 18(4): 481-492
- Szpunar, P.M. (2020). Communication and (un)inspired terror: Toward a theory of phatic violence. *Communication Theory*, 30(3), 310-329. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtz009>
- Hong, S-H. & Szpunar, P.M. (2019). The futures of anticipatory reason: Contingency and speculation in the sting operation. *Security Dialogue*, 50(4), 314-330.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2018). A guileful ruse: ISIS, media, and tactics of appropriation. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 15(3), 232-251.
- Shrikanth, S., Szpunar, P.M. & Szpunar, K.K. (2018). Staying positive in a dystopian future: A novel dissociation between personal and collective cognition. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 147(8), 1200-1210.
- Semati, M. & Szpunar, P.M. (2018). ISIS beyond the spectacle: communication media, networked publics, terrorism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 35(1), 1-7.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2017). Premediating predisposition: Informants, entrapment and connectivity in counterterrorism. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 34(4), 371-385.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2016). From the other to the double: Identity in conflict and the Boston Marathon bombing. *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 9(4), 577-594.
- Szpunar, P.M. & Szpunar, K.K. (2016). Collective future thought: Concept, function and implications for collective memory studies. *Memory Studies*, 9(4), 376-389.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013). The horror at Fort Hood: Disseminating American exceptionalism. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2), 182-198.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Journalism ethics and Levinas' third: Interruption in a world of multiple others. *Social Semiotics*, 22(3), 275-294.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Collective memory and the stranger: Remembering and forgetting the 1918 Finnish civil war. *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 1201-1221.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Western journalism's 'other': The legacy of the Cold War in the study of media systems. *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 13(1), 3-20.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2011). Neither 'non-' nor 'becoming': American Polonia and the need to reformulate whiteness. *Cultural Studies*, 25(3), 360-382.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2010). Monuments, mundanity and memory: Altering 'place' and 'space' at the National War Memorial (Canada). *Memory Studies*, 3(4), 379-394.

Book Chapters

- Szpunar, P.M. & Szpunar, K.K. (forthcoming). Media and future thinking. In A. Erll & W. Hirst (Eds.), *Breaking down the silos: Memory between cognition, culture, and political momentum*. Oxford University Press.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). Archiving ISIS: *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah*, and the Clarion Project. In N. Maurantonio & D. Park (Eds.), *Communicating memory & history* (pp. 39-54). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013). The predicament of (journalism) ethics as seen in the about to die image: Levinas' subjunctive mood and the third. In N. Couldry, M.Madianou, & A. Pinchevski (Eds.), *Ethics of media* (pp. 120-135). London: Palgrave.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Media, modernity, and postmodernity. in M.M. Kraidy (Ed.), *Communication and power in the global era: Orders and borders* (pp. 113-115). New York, NY: Routledge.

Public Scholarship

Szpunar, P.M. (2019, August 19). The limits of the language of terror. [*From the Square*](#).

Szpunar, P.M. (2015, May 19). Killing Tsarnaev. [*Huffington Post*](#).

Szpunar, P.M. (2014, November 3). Let's reflect on the attacks in Canada, but hold off on legislation. [*Huffington Post*](#).

Works in Progress

Articles Under Review

Szpunar, P.M. Les lieux de future: Between tomorrow and to-come.

Szpunar, P.M. Media futures in anesthetic space: Noise, speculation, and Lowell's telescope.

Szpunar, P.M. The temporality of climate witnessing: Ice, simulation, image.

Monographs in Preparation

Szpunar, P.M. Violence as phatic communication. (*Working on Proposal, Research Stage*).

Articles in Preparation

Szpunar, P.M. Terrorism as disruption: Reconsidering terror as media event. (*Research Stage*).

Honors & Awards

- 2024 Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division, National Communication Association
- 2021 Top Journal Article Award, Philosophy of Communication Division, National Communication Association
- 2019 Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division, National Communication Association
- 2017 Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division, National Communication Association
- 2013 Democracy, Citizenship and Constitutionalism Graduate Fellowship, University of Pennsylvania
- 2013 Top Paper, International Communication Association, Popular Communication Division
- 2012 Dissertation Research Fellowship, Annenberg School for Communication
- 2012 Top Student Paper, International Communication Association, Popular Communication Division
- 2011 Top Paper, International Communication Association, Ethnicity and Race in Communication Division
- 2010 Top Student Paper, International Communication Association, Popular Communication Division
- 2007 Annenberg Fellowship, Annenberg School for Communication (*Through 2012*)
- 2004 Paul Berg Memorial Award, University of Waterloo

Grants

- 2024 James S. McDonnell Foundation, Collective Memory Research Group.
Project: *Futures in site* (\$4,000)
- 2022 James S. McDonnell Foundation, Collective Memory Research Group.
Project: Transnational Flashbulb Memory (\$31,065)
Co-PI with Magdalena Abel (University of Regensburg), Astrid Erll (Goethe University), and William Hirst (New School for Social Research)
- 2021 James S. McDonnell Foundation, Collective Memory Research Group.
Project: Collective Temporal Thought (\$25,000)
Co-PI with Adam Putman (Furman University), Karl Szpunar (Ryerson University), Meymune Topçu (New School for Social Research) and Jeremy Yamashiro (University of California, Santa Cruz)
- 2019 Faculty Research Award Program, FRAP-B, University at Albany.
Project: Communicating the Future: Place, Technology, and Collective Identity. (\$3,500)

Invited Lectures/Presentations

- Szpunar, P.M. (2024, May 17). Les lieux de futur: Between tomorrow and to-come. Collective Memory/Collective Future Thought California Meeting.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023, May 20). The memory politics of future thinking. McDonnell Collective Memory Conference. Washington University in St. Louis.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023, May 19). Sites of future: Media, place, imagination. McDonnell Collective Memory Conference. Washington University in St. Louis.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023, April 13). Memory politics on Mars. Conversations in Standish, University at Albany, SUNY.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019, November 7). Homegrown. Department of Political Science Speaker Series. University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019, April 8). Homegrown. University of Pennsylvania Bookstore, Philadelphia, PA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019, March 20). Homegrown. Department of Communication, Boston College. Boston, MA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019, March 19). Homegrown. Spring Colloquium Series. Department of Communication, University of New Hampshire. Durham, NH.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015, April 25). True believer [Play]: Post-performance discussion on identity, radicalization, and terrorism. Theater Lab, New York, NY.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015, April 9). Double take: Images of homegrown terrorists. The Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015, March 6). The problem of internet radicalization? New York University's Governance Lab, New York, NY.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014, November 7). Futurity and the problem of horizon. Stanford University's Colloquium on "The Contemporary," Stanford, CA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014, February 6). Digital media, identity and terror. Department of Communication Studies, Baruch College, CUNY.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014, February 6). Communicating memory: Media and collective memory. Department of Communication Studies, Baruch College, CUNY.

- Szpunar, P.M. (2014, January 30). Keeping watch: Homegrown terrorism, global media ethics and citizenship. School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013, October 29). Power, theory, technology (in Technology and Culture, MSP3421). Media Studies & Production, Temple University.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013, October 16). Semiotics, structuralism and postmodernism (in Introduction to Media Theory, MSP1011). Media Studies & Production, Temple University.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013, March 12). Panel discussion on cultural memory in and as creative practice, *Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts*, Philadelphia, PA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2011, August 3). Introduction to semiotics (in Critical Approaches to Popular Culture, COMM 123). College of Liberal and Professional Studies, University of Pennsylvania.

Conference Presentations

- Szpunar, P.M. (2024). Media futures in anesthetic space: Noise, speculation, and Lowell's telescope. Accepted for presentation at the National Communication Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, Nov. 21-24.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2024). Les lieux de futur: Between tomorrow and to-come. Accepted for presentation at the National Communication Association Conference, New Orleans, LA, Nov. 21-24.
- Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division**
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023). Between mind, media, and society: Visions for the interdisciplinary future of memory studies. Roundtable at the Memory Studies Association Conference, Newcastle, UK, July 7-9.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023). After the flood: memory, resilience, and circulation on New York's East River. International Communication Association, Toronto, Canada, May 25-29.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023). In the dust of another planet: Media, noise, and telescopic visions. International Communication Association, Toronto, Canada, May 25-29.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2023). The archival time of terrorism. Reimagining the Field of Media, War and Conflict in the Age of Information Disorder (ICA Preconference), Toronto, Canada, May 25.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Mediating hope: memory, circulation, storage. Utopian Studies Conference, University of Brighton, England, July 13-15. (*Virtual Conference*)
- Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Spectroscopic pasts and tele-scoping futures on the Red Planet. Mediating Scale, Institute of Communication Studies, Université Catholique de Lille, June 16-18. (*Virtual Conference*)
- Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Walled shores, waning futures. Reframing Water and Climate Resilience Symposium, University of Reading, Institute of Development Studies, and European Communication Research and Education Association, May 27. (*Virtual Conference*)
- Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Heavy media: the elements, time, and politics of *lieux de futur*. International Communication Association, May 26-30, Paris, France
- Szpunar, P.M. (2022). Future cultures: Media, politics, and speculative thinking on Mars. International Communication Association, May 26-30, Paris, France.

- Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Mars as frontier: Optical media and visions of colonization. Society for the Social Study of Science, October 6-9, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (*Virtual Conference*)
- Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Archives at the end of the world: Memory, media, and climate change futures at Svalbard. Memory Studies Association, July 5-9, Warsaw, Poland. (*Virtual Conference*)
- Modjtahedi, G. & Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Soft news in soft war: Maximum Pressure, Voice of America, and Regime Change in Iran. International Communication Association, May 27-31, Denver, Colorado (*Virtual Conference*).
- Szpunar, P.M. (2021). Terrorism at the end of the world. 9th International Conference on Conflict, Terrorism, and Society, April 13-14, Istanbul, Turkey (*Virtual Conference*).
- Szpunar, P.M. (2020). Future-oriented ecologies: The elemental archive and the world after climate crisis. Media Ecology Association, June 17-20. Garden City, NY (*Virtual Conference*).
- Szpunar, P.M. (2020). Mediating everyday spaces into war: antipathy, alliance, unseen bodies. *Media, War and Conflict* Journal Conference, May 21-22, Florence, Italy. (*Canceled due to COVID pandemic*)
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). The elemental archive: Lieux de futur and the limits of survival. National Communication Association, November 14-17, Baltimore, MD.
Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). Promnesiac futures: Place, class, and race in technological visions of tomorrow. National Communication Association, November 14-17, Baltimore, MD.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). Popular futures: promnesia, place, and technology. International Communication Association, May 24-28, Washington, D.C.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). The informant as a surveillance medium: Memoirs of the Cold War and the war on terror. The Long History of Modern Surveillance Pre-Conference at the International Communication Association, May 24, Washington, D.C.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2019). Lieux de futur: How the future reshapes the past. Memories of the Future International Conference, March 29-30, School of Advanced Study, City University of London.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2018). Violence in phatic culture: Theorizing “inspired” terror. International Communication Association, May 24-28, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2018). From Dabiq to Rumiyah: ISIS’s tactics of appropriation. International Communication Association, May 24-28, Prague, Czech Republic.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2017). Toward a theory of phatic violence: Communication and homegrown terror. National Communication Association, November 16-19, Dallas, TX.
Top Paper, Rhetoric and Communication Theory Division
- Szpunar, P.M. (2017). Mediated allegiance: ISIS, circulation, and networks of belonging. Association of Internet Researchers, October 18-21, Tartu, Estonia.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2017). The subjunctive attack. International Communication Association, May 25-29, San Diego, CA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2017). Archiving ISIS: *Dabiq*, *Rumiyah* and the Clarion Project. NYU Institute for Public Knowledge Symposium on the Periodical, Printed Matter, and the Digital, May 12, New York, NY.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2016). From opaque enemy to opaque community? National Communication Association, November 9-13, Philadelphia, PA.

- Szpunar, P.M. (2016). Internet radicalization: Fear in small numbers, counterterrorism and politics in data. International Communication Association, June 9-13, Fukuoka, Japan.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015). Laughing at the sky: Drones, secrecy and belonging in contemporary America. American Studies Association, October 8-11, Toronto, ON, Canada.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015). Tinker, tailor, soldier, traitor: Homegrown terrorism in popular culture. Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association, July 22-24, Reykjavik, Iceland.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015). ISIS's Americans: Representations of homegrown threat. International Association for Media and Communication Research, July 12-16, Montreal, QC, Canada.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015). "I can't imagine what went through his mind": Narratives of transformation in covering ISIS's Americans. International Communication Association, May 21-25, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2015). Popular articulations of the network in conflict: Circulating threats in the Red Scare and the war on terror. International Communication Association, May 21-25, San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014). The Terrorist next door: Digital media, cultural identity and citizen surveillance in the war on terror. Cultural Studies Association, May 29-31, Salt Lake City, UT.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014). Prislam reconsidered or, the American-ness of jihad: Race, mass incarceration, and informants in the war on terror. International Communication Association, May 22-26, Seattle, WA.
- Szpunar, P.M. & Szpunar, K.K. (2014). Collective memory and future thought. International Communication Association, May 22-26, Seattle, WA.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2014). Spies and suspects: the war on terror, the circulation of digital images and citizenship. "Image Not Available" Network Visuality and Its Limits Conference, May 9, American University of Paris.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013). Homeland: The homegrown terrorist, the enemy, "our" double. International Communication Association, June 17-21, London, England.
- Top Paper, Popular Communication Division**
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013). Homegrown terrorism and the politics of liminality. Canadian Communication Association, June 5-7, Victoria, BC, Canada.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2013). The enemy within. Media, War & Conflict, April 11-12, London, England.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Inspiring guerrilla warfare: Homegrown terrorism as a communication problematic. International Association of Communication and Media Research, July 15-20, Durban, South Africa.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Killing, detaining and stripping citizens(hip): Communication, sovereignty and homegrown terrorism. International Communication Association, May 24-28, Phoenix, AZ.
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Even Muslims are afraid of Islam: The Impossibility of communicating moderateness. International Communication Association, May 24-28, Phoenix, AZ.
- Top Student Paper, Popular Communication Division**
- Szpunar, P.M. (2012). Exhuming Nietzsche. New School for Social Research Interdisciplinary Memory Conference, April 16, New York, NY.

Szpunar, P.M. (2011). Neither “non-“ nor “becoming”: American Polonia and the need to reformulate whiteness. International Communication Association, May 26-30, Boston, MA.

Top Paper, Ethnicity and Race in Communication Division

Szpunar, P.M. (2011). The horror at Fort Hood: American exceptionalism, the military and collective identity. International Communication Association, May 26-30, Boston, MA.

Szpunar, P.M. (2010). Locating limits. National Communication Association, November, 14-17, San Francisco, CA.

Szpunar, P.M. (2010). Western journalism’s “other”: The legacy of the Cold War in the study of media systems. International Communication Association Conference, June 22-26, Singapore.

Szpunar, P.M. (2010). Ritual, power, and diaspora: What can the absence of a simple diagonal line through the letter ‘L’ tell us? International Communication Association, June 22-26, Singapore.

Szpunar, P.M. (2010). Vuoden 1918 taistelut taas tampereen kaduilla: Remembering and forgetting 1918 in Tampere, Finland.” International Communication Association, June 22-26, Singapore.

Top Student Paper, Popular Communication Division

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). A particular political parallelism. National Communication Association, November 12-15, Chicago, IL.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). A politician and his pastor. National Communication Association, November 12-15, Chicago, IL.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). Let me interrupt! Or ethics after ethical violence: Rethinking Levinas, ethics and news media. Penn Program for Democracy, Citizenship and Constitutionalism Graduate Workshop, September 24, Philadelphia, PA.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). Power, sources and parallelism: A point of tension between field theory and political economy in the study of media systems. International Association of Media and Communication Research, July 20-24, Mexico City, Mexico.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). Western journalism and the Cold War ‘other’: Implications for development.” Beyond East and West: Two Decades of Media Transformation After the Fall of Communism Conference, June 25-27, Budapest, Hungary.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). Relieving history: Altering “place” and “space” at the National War Memorial in Ottawa, Canada. International Communication Association, May 21-25, Chicago, IL.

Szpunar, P.M. (2009). A virtue(-based) ethics of interruption. International Communication Association, May 21-25, Chicago, IL.

Teaching Experience

University at Albany, SUNY

- COM 502 – Communication Theory and Practice (IP, OS)
- COM 640 – Risk and Crisis Communication in the Public Interest (OA)
- COM 385 – Communicating Terror: Political Violence and Media (IP, H, OA)
- COM 378 – Social Media & Memory (IP, H, OA)
- COM 381 – Risk and Crisis Communication (IP, OA)

IP – in person; H – hybrid (50/50); OS – Online Synchronous; OA – Online Asynchronous

University of Pennsylvania

- COMM 290 – Communicating Terror: Political Violence and Media
- COMM 291 – Collective Memory/Futures: Strategies, Technologies, and Politics
- COMM 339 – Critical Perspectives in Journalism
- PSCI 234 – Civil Rights/Civil Liberties (with Dr. Rogers Smith)
- PSCI 181 – Modern Political Theory (with Dr. Anne Norton)

Professional & Skills Development

University at Albany, SUNY—Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership

- 2018 Essential Preparation for Teaching Online
Course Design Academy
- 2017 Designing for Online Learning

University of Pennsylvania

- 2008 Annenberg Summer Institute for Methods and Statistics

Committee & Journal Involvement

University Service

- University Senate, 2019-2023
- University Life Council, 2018-2021
- Governance Council, 2021-2023
- Communication Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, 2023-
- Senate Forum Planning Committee on Indigenous Erasure and Agency, 2021
- Director of Communication Honors Program, 2017-2020, 2022-
- Graduate Admissions Committee, 2017-2019
- Wilkie Award Committee, 2017, 2021, 2022, 2024 (Chair)

Editorial Board

Memory, Mind & Media

Ad-hoc Reviewer

Communication Theory; Journal of Communication; Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism; Memory Studies; The International Journal of Press/Politics; Les Cahiers Mémoire et politique; International Journal of Communication; Critical Studies in Media Communication; Global Media and Communication; Television and New Media; Communication, Culture & Critique; Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies; History of Rhetoric; Memory & Cognition; International Communication Association (Pop. Comm., Philosophy, Theory & Critique, and Journalism Divisions); Memory Studies Association; Association for Internet Researchers

Professional Experience

Book Review Editor, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 2015-2016

Editorial Assistant, *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 2013-2016

Editorial Assistant, *Journalism: Theory, Practice and Criticism*, 2009-2010

Regulatory Analyst, Treasury Board Secretariat, Government of Canada, 2006

Student Regulatory Analyst, Privy Council Office, Government of Canada, 2004-2005