Gene Deerman is an assistant professor of sociology at Eastern Illinois University. Her current scholarly interests include examining right-wing activism, the political influence of conservative think tanks, and new projects in the area of rural sociology. Her work on social movements examines processes of identity and community among activists. Professor Deerman teaches an advanced course on social movements that examines the impact of political activism on the twentieth century.

The Civil Rights Movement, News Images, and the Awakening of the American Social Conscience

Civil Rights activists deliberately used the power of images to galvanize social conscience and support for the movement. This panel discussion begins with the news coverage of the murder of Emmett Till to explore questions of how the media shape our collective memory.

Speakers: Gene Deerman, Eugenia Jefferson, and Sally Turner

Eugenia Jefferson is a senior journalism major from Matteson, Illinois, where she attended Rich Central High School. At Eastern, she is the online production editor for The Daily Eastern News and a copy editor/designer for Minority Today. She was a design intern at The Star Newspapers in Chicago. She is past president of the National Association of Black Journalists, EIU Chapter; vice-president of the American Copy Editors Society, EIU Chapter; and a member of the Society of Collegiate Journalists.

Sally Turner teaches journalism and advises the yearbook staff at Eastern Illinois University. She received her bachelor’s degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and her Ph.D. from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. She works with the high school press as the executive director of the Illinois Journalism Education Association and the Eastern Illinois High School Press Association. She has worked in newspapers in Missouri and Colorado.

John M. Ryan is director of Student Publications and a professor of journalism at Eastern Illinois University. In addition to teaching opinion writing, media management, and reporting on the arts, as well as other writing and reporting courses, he oversees The Daily Eastern News, the Warbler, Minority Today, and the Vehicle. Before coming to Eastern, John was a staff writer for the Champaign News-Gazette and the State Journal-Register in Springfield, Illinois.

Martha Irvine is a Chicago-based national writer for the Associated Press. Since 2001, she has developed a beat that focuses on issues relevant to young adults and teens – from trends to social issues. Irvine began her journalism career in 1987, working at newspapers and magazines in Australia, New Zealand, Michigan, and Minnesota. In 1993, she joined the AP bureau in Portland, Oregon. Irvine received a 2001 Studs Terkel Award for her coverage of social issues in Chicago. In 2004, the American Association of Sunday and Feature Editors recognized her profile of a teen who was born with HIV. That same year she was a finalist for the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association “Journalist of the Year” award. She also won a 2007 Front Page Award from the Newswomen’s Club of New York for a feature about a dying mother’s quest to explain her inevitable demise to her young children.

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