Meet Khalil Islam-Zwhart, the newest addition to the Communications department staff. Khalil is serving as a lecturer and basic course director for the school year. A former EWU graduate himself, Khalil is months away from completing his PhD dissertation at WSU in Organizational and Intercultural Communication. For the ensuing school year, Khalil will be teaching several undergraduate communication classes per quarter, including CMST International Communication and CMST Interviewing.

“This year, I’m taking time to get to know my colleagues, determine my “place” among my peers, and determine how I can add to the department. I’m also looking at the CMST 200 curriculum and determining our current strengths and areas for growth,” he said. Khalil holds a 2003 MA in Public Administration from EWU and a 1996 BA in Liberal Studies from EWU. Total, the department’s newest employee has about 15 years of teaching and leadership experience in academia in eastern Washington. In his leisure time, Khalil said he enjoys spending time with his wife and two children, in addition to camping, writing and hiking excursions.

“Generally, I’m just enjoying the position and the students for whom I’m fortunate to work,” he said, reflecting on the school year.

Meet your Graduate Student Assistants

- Nolan Gruver
- Andra Ely
- Jeslyn Lemke
- Leslie Jones
- Nicole Ridnour
- Katie Smith

An Iraq war veteran in the Marine Corps Reserve, Gruver finished his time in the military in 2009 and is now months away from completing his Masters in Communication. Now in the second year of his degree, Gruver is knee-deep into a thesis featuring an auto-ethnography of his military experience.

“I specifically look at power and domination within society and institutions like the military and how that affects individuals and their self-perception when they return to American society,” Gruver said.

To supplement his thesis research, Gruver is also working as a member of Gonzaga’s Operation Homecoming Committee interviewing returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan.

With an eye on graduation in June 2012, Gruver has applied for a PhD to UW’s Communication Department, but is also considering work in the private sector as a public relations liaison or research analyst.

Gruver, who holds a 2010 B.A. in International Affairs from EWU, said the highlight of being a GSA this school year has been learning and socializing with the other GSAs.

“I believe that as graduate students, one of the best and most intelligent assets we have is one another,” he said.
Meet GSA Leslie Jones

A 2009 graduate of Grace College in Indiana, Jones comes to the MSC program with a background in both teaching and sports journalism. After experiencing her first quarter in the program, Jones is considering a thesis in sports media, with a focus on the perception of female sports broadcasters.

“I am currently researching public perceptions of female sportscasters in the United States and will soon be starting research focused on crisis communication within organizations, specifically sports departments,” Jones said.

Jones moved to Honduras in 2009 after her graduation, to teach language arts at an inner-city high school. For the next two years, Jones worked full-time with students during the tempestuous political crisis in Honduras. She built up a working knowledge of skillful teaching, at the same time getting to explore Honduras and the surrounding Caribbean.

In her free time, Jones enjoys soccer, snowboarding, visiting active volcanoes and volunteering for non-profits.

As for her eventual plans on graduating, Jones is interested in a career in sports broadcasting or sports public relations. Jones said her first quarter as a GSA teaching in America has been very rewarding.

“The students usually have good insight into the discussion materials we cover in class,” she said.

Meet GSA Andra Ely

A pre-school teacher for three years, Ely is now months away from receiving her Masters in Communications as a second-year student in the program. Largely because of her years in the classroom, which now include a quarter teaching college at EWU, Ely’s thesis is a quantitative study of the correlation between teaching skill and student success.

Her thesis is particularly focused on the impact of “immediacy” in the classroom.”The topic of instructor effectiveness and its relationship with student success has always intrigued me, especially due to my role as a teacher in various settings throughout the past three years,” Ely said.

Her first quarter teaching college has been rewarding, as well as a further lesson in how to teach well.

“Teaching is an absolute art,” Ely said. She added that a great day in the classroom comes with feeling she has inspired her students in some way.

After graduation this June, Ely hopes to land a teaching position in higher education. For a plan B, Ely says she is also interested in public relations or human resources. A 22-year-old originally from Walla Walla, Ely earned her 2010 B.A. in Spanish at EWU. Ely has added a personal touch to the department through her (almost weekly) provisions of cupcakes, fancy tea and the occasional artsy decoration in the GSA office or classroom. In her leisure time, Ely says she is a fan of “boot-camp fitness classes at OZ fit-

Andra Ely, GSA and second-year graduate student

S P E C I A L P O I N T S O F I N T E R E S T

Conference Dates & Deadlines

- North West Communication Association (NWCA) 2012 Conference. Location: Coeur d’Alene Resort in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho; Thursday, April 12 - Saturday, April 14, 2012. Deadline for submissions: 5 p.m. on February 1, 2012. For more information go to http://nwcomm.org/Conference.html

Meet GSA Jeslyn Lemke

A former journalist of four years, Lemke is now in her first year in the MSC program. After her first quarter of graduate school, Lemke is in the first stages of piecing together a thesis. She is considering a thesis relating to journalism and cultivation theory, with a particular emphasis on the impact of violence in journalism on the actual journalist.

“Most journalists are exposed to tragedy or violence of some sort. I think it will be interesting to study the impact of violence on journalists, in terms of cultivation theory,” she said.

Lemke graduated from EWU in 2007 with a B.A. in journalism. She reported for the next four years, beginning as a correspondent of the West Plains for the Spokesman-Review. She spent six months as a missionary journalist intern for the International Mission Board in the Ivory Coast. She worked the last two and a half years at the Whitman County Gazette on the Palouse and left her job last summer for her Masters.

After completing her Masters, Lemke is interested in pursuing a PhD to one day become a professor.

“My first quarter of teaching has been very, very beautiful, just in learning about students and interacting with them,” she said. “I’d like a shot at doing this long-term.”

In her free time, Lemke enjoys Friday night “garage bands” in Spokane, faith, trying new foreign food, fruit picking and most of all, spending time with close friends. A native of Cheney, Lemke said a convincing factor in returning for her Masters was to simply “come home.”

Meet GSA Nicole Ridnour

A 2010 graduate of EWU in Communications, Ridnour joined the work force for year before the realization sunk in; there was more to be had here. Ridnour, originally from Hermiston, quit her job as an auto-claims adjuster and began the MSC program this fall.

“I knew I was worth more than where I set myself up to be,” she said.

After her first quarter, Ridnour said she is considering a thesis in third-wave feminism, with a particular focus on mapping out the modern articulation of what this movement is today.

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Katie Smith, GSA and third-year graduate student

A 2003 graduate of Brigham Young University in Idaho, Smith is now wrapping up her third year in the MSC program. Smith is studying in the organizational and leadership track of the degree. Her thesis centers on a training game designed by Smith herself, which enables players to learn more about problem solving and leadership organization as they play it.

Smith has worked on her degree part-time for the past three years, spending the first two working at the EWU book store at the Spokane branch. She left the bookstore for the GSA position this school year. Smith said she enjoys watching her students experience an “aha” moment. With graduation coming in June, Smith says she is considering work in the private sector that allows for “diverse opportunities.” She has plans for travel as well. In her free time, Smith enjoys crafts and is a member of the LDS church.

GRE Testing and Locations

- The GRE revised General Test is given year-round at computer-based test centers in most locations around the world. Appointments are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Score reports are mailed to you and the score recipients you designate approximately 10 – 15 days after your test date. You can also view your scores online at My GRE approximately 10 – 15 days after your test date.
- You can take the GRE revised General Test (computer-based and paper-based) only once every 60 days, and no more than five times within any continuous rolling 12-month period. This applies even if you canceled your scores on a test taken previously. If you take only the paper-based GRE revised General Test, you may take it as often as it is offered.
- There is a GRE computer based test center located in Spokane, WA called Prometric Testing Center (509-467-8715) as well as at the University of Idaho in Moscow, ID. The GRE costs $160 on average with additional fees for changing test dates after signing up for a seat, canceling before a test, or changing testing locations. Testing availability varies from month to month, so be sure to plan ahead depending on when you hope to receive your scores. As stated above, expect scores to arrive no earlier than 10-15 business days after taking a test. For more information you can go to http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/register/centers_dates/.