

## The Havens Center

The A. Eugene Havens Center for the Study of Social Structure and Social Change was established within the University of Wisconsin - Madison Sociology Department in 1984 to promote critical perspectives in social science. The Center promotes research and theory within various critical traditions of social thought — particularly those traditions which seek to create a social order where human dignity and capacities for autonomy are respected and developed.

In its attempts to fulfill this mission, the Havens Center has organized varied events focused on international issues. The Center has organized conferences on the Cold War, the Quincentenary, and an evaluation of responses by “fair trade activists” to NAFTA. In addition, it has sponsored interdisciplinary faculty seminars on topics including the rise of NGOs, nationalism, and cultural studies.

The Havens Center Steering Committee members organizing the conference — Mary Layoun, Chair of Comparative Literature; JoEllen Fair, and Robert McChesney of Journalism; Allen Hunter, the Center’s Administrative Director; and Sousan Arafeh of the Communication Arts and Education Departments and the conference coordinator — have rich academic and practical expertise in issues of media and globalization.

JoEllen Fair has been a journalist, and currently teaches, researches and writes about African media and communications, and issues of race and gender.

Mary Layoun writes and teaches about Japanese and Middle Eastern literatures and mass culture. She is also active in international networks researching current transformations of intellectual property rights regimes.

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Robert McChesney writes and teaches about the history of telecommunications in the United States and has just completed the book *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*. He has also been a journalist and publisher and is on the Board of Directors of both the Cultural Environment Movement and *In These Times*.

Allen Hunter, in addition to administering the Havens Center, was instrumental in creating, and chairs the advisory board of, the Progressive Media Project which solicits, edits, and distributes op-eds to major daily newspapers around the United States. He is also a founder and co-director of MediaVision, a strategic communications non-profit organization currently in its development phase. He has researched and written about contemporary social movements of the left and right.

Sousan Arafah is a doctoral student who researches how telecommunications law and policy affect educational institutions. She currently chairs the City of Madison's Broadcast Telecommunications Regulatory Board and was a founder of the Canadian Association for Media Education.

In organizing and sponsoring this conference on Democratizing Global Communications, the Center and its steering committee hope to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue and activism toward democratizing communications. Toward this end, the committee is consulting with several other members of the UW faculty; Madison-based journalists such as John Nichols, an editor at the *Capital Times*; Professor Hamelink and associates to the People's Communication Charter; George Gerbner, former Dean of the Annenberg School of Communications and founder of the Cultural Environment Movement; and other scholars, communications workers, and activists.