Infusing Historical Consciousness into the News: Bringing the Lessons of the Past into Public

History does not repeat, but it does echo, at least for those willing to pause and listen. News organizations provide citizens the information they need to self-govern and make daily decisions; this is gospel to every news reporter and editor. Government officials, as well, rely on the news and opinion they find in newspapers, news websites, and newscasts to inform their decisions about public affairs. Yet critics lament the lack of depth in coverage about matters of grave public concern. That coverage could be deepened if journalists paid more attention to the historical antecedents of major topics of concern, including labor-capital relations, the revitalization of urban areas and gentrification’s displacement of the poor, the environment, immigration, energy policy, and international politics. The news industry would even benefit from examining the ways leaders of the past dealt with changes in the business models of journalism. These are among the aims of the “Infusing Historical Consciousness in Journalism” Working Group. Dr. Hart and Dr. Fuhlhage will present ideas shared at the 2020 American Journalism Historians Association panel on this topic as a way of starting the discussion about ways academics can work with journalists to inject historical context into reporting about issues in our communities.

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