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CMR Course Fosters Learning Experience in International Exchange

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Summary: UMM partners with Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences for student education in the globalization of mass communication.

MORRIS, Minnesota (April 14, 2016)— Barbara Burke, associate professor of communication, media, and rhetoric, has partnered with Liene Locmele, lecturer, in a joint instruction of the globalization of mass media. This joint instruction stems from an emerging relationship between two like-minded schools: our own University of Minnesota, Morris, and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences in Valmiera, Latvia. Taking place during this spring 2016 semester, the course offers a unique learning experience of international communication between students.

“I see one of the important goals of this course to be the facilitation of media literacy and critical thinking — how do we know what we know? How does media shape our knowledge about the world?” says Locmele.

Both courses study mass media and society, with a focus on globalization. This focus allows students to explore how culture is shaped by information imported and exported between nations across the world. Students from both classes are examining and discussing questions such as “to what extent does a culture influence other cultures?” and “how is our culture influenced by other cultures in an emerging era of globalization?”

“By student discussions, we add to the course the space for intercultural exchange that illuminates how we as media consumers are part and product of our media-culture environment,” Locmele adds.

For this partnership, the University of Minnesota, Morris and Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences share similar syllabi by design. Students have paired readings and writing assignments, scheduled Skype discussions, and comparative student journaling throughout the term. Additionally, both Burke and Locmele share similar interpretations and teaching styles.

“As globalization of media continues to be an issue of interest, internationalization of our learning experiences becomes increasingly important,” explains Burke. “Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences is much like UMM, a regional institution held in high regard as a mostly-undergraduate institution, the ‘green’ school for the region and a ‘young college’ founded in the 1990s.”

Contact with Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences began in 2013, when Burke received the [Fulbright Award](#). Since then, Burke and Locmele have spent the past year developing the course content and logistical arrangements. More information about Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences can be found on their [website](#).

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