Social justice means the equal and fair allocation of rights, privileges, resources, information, service, decision-making and opportunities, and representation in media and the arts for all people. Because there is no agreement on what constitutes equality and fairness across all aspects of social life, there is a clear need and opportunity for undergraduate students to critically analyze their role in scholarly research and community service that addresses these perceived and real inequities. Thus, the Social Research Social Justice Conference provides undergraduates a forum for sharing innovative, excellent research addressing some of the most challenging issues of social justice in both contemporary and historical contexts. Now in its thirteenth consecutive year, SRSJ provides important opportunities for students from campuses across the Lehigh Valley and beyond to come together in critical conversations about the social justice issues that matter to them most. We encourage collaborative exploration among students, faculty, and community members of the role of academic research and creative work in the creation of more just and humane societies.

We encourage students to submit proposals for research presentations dealing with all aspects of social life — institutions, communities, movements, identities, and the arts — and connected to issues of social justice. Presentations typically last 10-12 minutes and can be drawn from class papers or other research projects. The conference has an interdisciplinary focus, with panels converging student work from varying disciplines and areas, such as women and gender studies, history, political science, media and communication, sociology and anthropology, education, social work, religion, theater, art, African American studies, public health, nursing, environmental studies, business, international affairs, psychology and other pertinent fields that explore social justice.
**Deadline:** Students interested in presenting their work should submit a proposal by *February 5, 2016* to srsj@muhlenberg.edu

Your proposal should include:

- presentation title
- 200-350 word abstract (summary of the purpose of the research, the methods, results and conclusion). There must be a clear connection to social justice, regardless of your discipline.
- up to 5 keywords that describe your research
- your contact information and that of your faculty mentor

Please consult the Sample Abstract and Abstract Guidelines (listed below) for guidance on preparing your abstract.

Questions may be directed to Kate Ranieri at (484) 664-3484 or Amy Corbin at (484) 664-3740, both in the Department of Media and Communication at Muhlenberg College. You may also e-mail srsj@muhlenberg.edu
Sample Abstract

Media Misinformation: Harms Beyond Bad Journalism

**Presenter:** Alice Williams

**Institution:** Muhlenberg College  
**Email:** Phone:

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Kate Ranieri, Department of Media and Communication  
**Email:** Phone:

**Keywords:** fracking, hydraulic fracturing, public health, journalism, misinformation

**Abstract**

Hydraulic fracturing, a technique used to extract natural gas, has become synonymous with gas drilling. Fracking, the more common term for hydraulic fracturing, is a controversial issue in the news media that is often framed as a conflict between profit-driven petroleum industrialists and earth-loving environmentalists. The petroleum industry boasts of the economic advantages of hydraulic fracturing while environmentalists decry the contamination of air and water near drilling sites. The polarized media depictions make any meaningful public dialogue difficult because they don’t address the complexities of this industry nor the implications for the public interest. Through a content analysis of local news sources in Pennsylvania, I explore public discourse and legislative debate over hydraulic drilling along the Marcellus Shale region.

Hydraulic fracturing is a significant and social justice controversy because there are implications for the news media industry, journalism and public health, as the findings suggest. First, fracking, as a news media controversy, is significant because, like other hotly debated topics such as gun control, abortion and nuclear power, the issue is complex and includes multiple stakeholders. Second, the study is significant because these polarized
depictions illustrate a failure of the news broadcasting industry, generally, and journalism, specifically, to serve the educational and informational needs of Americans, as set forth by the ideals of federal guidelines. Third, this study, positioned at the intersections of journalism and public health, illustrates the need for journalism that not only promotes good health but also counters and challenges myths and misinformation and exposes the potentially harmful impact of “externalities” (an industry euphemism for pollution) of fracking on human, animal and environmental health.
Abstract Guidelines

**What is an Abstract?**
An abstract is a short statement about your research or project designed to give the reader a concise understanding of your research and findings. It gives a thorough overview of your paper or project.

**What is the Purpose of an Abstract?**
A well-prepared abstract allows a reader to quickly and accurately identify the basic content of your research or project. For the Social Research Social Justice conference, your abstract should enable the conference organizers to understand the key issues and disciplines your research engages with, in order to place your presentation on the most appropriate panel.

**What Should be in an Abstract?**
A model abstract should contain the following elements:

- a statement of the purpose of your study, including the connection to social justice
- the research methods/methodology used to arrive at your results and/or conclusions
- the results observed
- the conclusions drawn from your study and their significance

**How to Structure an Abstract**
The abstract should be 200-350 words.

PURPOSE: Explain the purpose of your study/paper. Ideally in 1-3 sentences, state the primary objectives and scope of the study or the reasons why the document was written. Also state the rationale for your research. Why did you do the research? Is the topic you are researching an ignored or newly discovered one? Why is it significant? Here you should include your hypothesis if appropriate.

METHODS: In terms of methodology (research methods), clearly state the techniques or approaches used in your study. For papers concerned with non-experimental work (such as those in the humanities, some social sciences, and the fine arts) describe your sources and your use/interpretation of the sources.

RESULTS: Describe your results as informatively and concisely as possible. Depending on your discipline, this may include data collected, effects observed, or original interpretation of texts and sources. Give special priority in your abstract to new and verified findings that
contradict previous theories. Mention any limits to the accuracy or reliability of your findings if appropriate.

CONCLUSION: Your conclusions should in essence describe the implications of the results: Why are the results of your study important to your field and how do they relate to the purpose of your investigation?

Adapted from https://www.honors.umass.edu/abstract-guidelines