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## UCT's highly rated professor of media studies honoured by Humboldt Foundation

**Internationally renowned professor of media studies and director of the Centre for Film and Media Studies at the University of Cape Town (UCT), Herman Wasserman, has been awarded the prestigious [Georg Forster Research Award](#) by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. The award, granted in recognition of a researcher's entire career achievements, includes a cash award and an invitation to undertake prolonged research in Germany.**

**The foundation seeks to strengthen the relationship between researchers in Germany and colleagues abroad, and Wasserman will be spending time at the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich (LMU) where he will be working with colleagues at the [Institute of Communication Studies and Media Research](#).**

**"I am very honoured to be recipient of this award and the recognition of my academic work it entails," said Wasserman. "I look forward to spending time at the LMU to interact with colleagues and deepen the relationship between our respective departments as part of our ongoing efforts to broaden our international networks."**

**The partnership will commence in 2018 and Wasserman will spend four months of his research leave at LMU, to be followed up by later visits in subsequent years.**

**"Since only up to six of these awards are made internationally, across different disciplines, I also see this as an acknowledgment of the importance of media studies in the current global moment," said Wasserman.**

**During his time in Munich, Wasserman plans to work on a book about media and conflict as well as contribute to the [Worlds of Journalism Study](#), which assesses the state of journalism around the world.**

**"Situations of conflict give us an entry point to ask broader questions of the media's role in society, how it can keep powerful interests to account but also how it can enable citizen-to-citizen conversations across difference, highlight marginalized voices and express the everyday needs and concerns of all citizens," he said.**

**Wasserman's interest in the role of the media in situation conflict builds on his extensive research into media ethics, as well as his ongoing involvement in comparative studies that investigate the South African media within a broader African and global context. He has been part of several international research networks, including a series on roundtables on global media ethics, an international project funded by the EU on media, conflict and democratisation ([www.mecodem.eu](http://www.mecodem.eu)), a NRF-funded project on China-Africa media relations and a study supported by the Academy of Finland on media in the BRICS countries. He is currently a project partner in a network funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council to investigate the role that development assistance impacted on journalism in Africa and Latin America.**

**Wasserman has published widely on these topics. His more than 70 peer-reviewed articles have been published in some of the top journals in the field, and he has several books to his name. This includes his monograph on tabloid journalism in South Africa (Indiana University Press) that has received wide international acclaim, including the designation 'Outstanding Academic Title' by the American Association of College & Research Libraries and the Rhodes University Vice-Chancellor's Book Award.**

**Later this month, his book (co-edited with Anthea Garman) *Media and citizenship in South Africa: Between Marginalisation and Participation*, coming out of a Mellon-funded project, will be published by the Human Sciences Research Council Press. A new monography, *Media, Geopolitics and Power: A View from the Global South* will be published by the University of Illinois Press in January.**

**"While we are fortunate to have a vibrant and vigilant media in South Africa that play an important role in uncovering government corruption, the challenge remains to seek ways in which the media's role can be envisaged not only as an adversarial watchdog, but also as a conduit for compassion and care among citizens and an agent for social justice in society," said Wasserman.**

**Wasserman also uses his expertise to facilitate the dissemination of African scholarship in his role as editor-in-chief of the journal *African Journalism Studies* and as a mentor for younger researchers through the International Communication Association's regional meetings, held last year in Nairobi and will again take place in Kampala in October this year. He is also a former head of the International Association for Media and Communication Research's International Communication Section, where he established a prize for best paper on African journalism.**

**"Media scholarship in and about Africa is still often marginalized in the international scholarly arena, either through under-representation or by being relegated to examples or case studies that support theories developed in the North" Wasserman said. "If we want to 'decolonise' media research, participation in international networks is important – we have to develop theory from the South that can impact on, and speak back to, Northern scholarship. This cannot be achieved through parochialism or isolationism. I am therefore grateful for the opportunity this award will give me to engage in conversations about African media in the international scholarly arena".**

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**Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department**

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