Dear Newhouse Student:

Welcome to the class of 2019! This letter has two important purposes. First, I want to alert you to a number of events in late August that you will want to attend as they are an important part of your orientation to Syracuse.

Second, the faculty members who will be teaching COM 107, the introductory course on Communications and Society that you are taking in the fall term, want you to undertake some summer reading, viewing, and listening that will prepare you to do well this fall.

First, the orientation activities:

- **Opening day is Thursday, August 27.** You will probably be moving into your residence on that day or the day before, and you’ll be attending the New Student Convocation and other University-wide events which are planned for opening day. You can find a complete listing in the *Syracuse Welcome 2015* guide at [http://readyset.syr.edu/orientation/welcome-guide.html](http://readyset.syr.edu/orientation/welcome-guide.html).

- **On Friday, August 28, from 9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.** you’ll be able to meet other Newhouse first-year students and your Newhouse peer adviser at a Newhouse Welcome Reception on the Newhouse patio. In addition to a faculty adviser, you have been assigned a peer adviser, a Newhouse student, who will help you get settled into your classes and the University. You can expect to hear from your peer adviser sometime in July.

- **On Friday, August 28, from 3:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.,** you should plan to attend the Dean’s Welcome Meeting for Newhouse students in the Schine Student Center, Goldstein Auditorium, where you will also be introduced to many of the Newhouse faculty.

- **Academic advising sessions will be held on Saturday, August 29.** If you submitted your course selections in June, you will be able to view your course schedule in *MySlice* in early August. Adjustments or corrections to your schedule can be made at the Saturday advising sessions. Dual students will have advising sessions in both
their colleges. Newhouse students who are dually enrolled in the School of Management will have their Newhouse advising session on Saturday, August 29, at 9:00 a.m. Students who are singly enrolled in Newhouse or dually enrolled in Newhouse and Information Studies will attend Newhouse advising sessions at 9:30 on Saturday, August 29. Students who are dually enrolled with the College of Arts and Sciences will be advised in Newhouse at 4 p.m. on Saturday.

- **On Sunday, August 30, at 3 p.m.,** the first meeting of your COM 100: First-Year Seminar will be held. You will be asked to meet regularly with your faculty adviser and a small group of Newhouse students from your COM 107 class throughout the semester in an advising group called COM 100: First-Year Seminar. You will be given more information about location when you arrive on campus.

- **Classes begin on Monday, August 31.**

Now to the second purpose of the letter. All incoming Newhouse students will take the introductory COM 107: Communications and Society course together in the fall semester. We hope this will help us build a strong sense of community from the very first day.

In order to teach all of you this fall in groups of moderate size, seven faculty members will teach a section of COM 107. Each section will be slightly different in tone and content, given the varying professional and scholarly interests of the instructors. However, each section will cover the same basic material and use the same books and assigned readings. Paper and project assignments will be the same across all sections, and all students will have the same number and type of exams. The faculty members who will be teaching COM 107 want you to undertake some summer reading, viewing, and listening that will prepare you to do well.

In order to succeed in this class, we ask you to spend part of your summer paying more attention to the world around you. (Apologies to those of you who are already voracious consumers of news.) We will be giving you regular current events quizzes in COM 107 as soon as you arrive.

Please regularly visit any good news website (such as the ones run by *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, CNN, et al.). You might also visit the websites of foreign news producers such as the BBC or *China Daily*, *Al Jazeera*, *Jerusalem Post*, or sites from a particular part of the world. Stretch yourself. Go to news sites curated by professional editors exercising professional news judgment. You should access these sites directly and not through secondary links and sources. Think about how contemporary news sites sustain themselves economically. Go where you have not previously gone in your web surfing. Many news outlets also have applications for smartphones; consider downloading a news app and incorporating it into your daily phone habits.

Listen on occasion to “Morning Edition,” “All Things Considered,” and “Weekend Edition” on your local National Public Radio station or online. Listen not only for content, but also for how sound is used to tell the story effectively. After all, audiences only *hear* NPR news stories, and usually one time through.

Follow events in the media industries by reading the Business section every Monday in *The New York Times* (or read it online). Pay particular attention to the media stories, of which there are many.
Notice how effectively your local news organizations cover your community and reflect its diversity in print, online and on air.

University students all over the world are familiar with social media—Twitter®, facebook®, being the most common in the United States. Their impact on societies has been revolutionary. In this year’s first-year class, we are fortunate to welcome students from nine different countries around the world with a variety of experiences in social media. If you use a different international media networking site, consider how it may be similar to or different from these U.S. examples. This unique information will be an asset to our class discussions and to your career development.

Read a variety of magazines, not just those from the mainstream media, but also those in the alternative press such as Wired, National Review, The Nation, The New Republic, or The Weekly Standard. Look online at sites such as romenesko.com, slate.com, huffingtonpost.com, salon.com, or drudgereport.com, and at the multimedia pieces on mediastorm.org. Compare and contrast how they are covering the key issues and events unfolding this summer.

We want you to get into the habit of knowing what is going on in the world around you. Incidentally, The New York Times and USA Today will be available free to you on campus. If you come to school in August not knowing a lot about the 2016 Elections—individuals as well as issues involved, our effort to confront ISIS in Iraq and Syria, the economic situation in Greece and its impact on the Eurozone, the drought in California, negotiations with Iran over a nuclear weapon, and troubled relationships between local communities in the U.S. and their police forces, then you are not paying enough attention to the news.

We eagerly await your arrival in August. Have a productive summer.

Sincerely,

Lorraine E. Branham
Dean