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Journalism Professor Brings Expertise to China

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Bob Dardenne, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Journalism and Media Studies, will travel across the globe to China as a featured speaker at the Fourth Annual International Convention of Asia Scholars, Aug. 20 to Aug. 24. He will discuss China's image in the U.S. press since the events of Sept. 11.

During his two-week visit, Dardenne will also lecture and consult at Shanghai International Studies University and other universities and organizations in the province.

Conference organizers invited Dardenne to speak and update the lecture he gave in China while serving as a Fulbright scholar during the 1999-2000 academic year. During that time, he taught at Shanghai International Studies University and spoke on a variety of news-related topics at universities throughout the country. One of his most popular lectures focused on China's image in the U.S. and British press.

Dardenne said that prior to Sept. 11, much of the U.S. newspaper coverage on China was negative, focusing on its human rights violations and exotic culture. But since that time, the press has focused more on China's growing economic power. However, he noted that no single "China portrayal" exists in the U.S. press as coverage is often related to regional and even local concerns.

That shift, Dardenne said, is partly due to China's admission to the World Trade Organization in 2002 as well as the Bush administration's downplaying of human rights issues and its reliance on China as a partner in trade, working with North Korea and fighting terrorism.

In his lecture, Dardenne will focus on news coverage of China in four major U.S. newspapers – St. Petersburg Times, New York Times, Chicago Tribune and Los Angeles Times. He will also note the coverage in alternative news sources, such as blogs, which are often more critical than mainstream publications of China's economic and other policies.

The conference, hosted by the Shanghai Academy for Social Sciences, is expected to draw more than 1,500 Asian Studies specialists from at least 45 countries.