

## **Bruce Austin: Award in Communication**

Mass Communications is an introductory survey of U.S. mass media, something about which all claim experiential acquaintance, most assert expertise and few can offer articulate explanation. Students are exposed to economic, social, technological and legal dimensions of mediated communication and write two papers, one of which argues a position.

Michael Dudley's paper dissects one subject of contemporary regulatory policy: the means by which cable television vendors deliver and the choices cable subscribers have for selecting television programming. He identifies two formats: the tiered (or bundled) packaging of channels we're all familiar with and that Springsteen skewered with his lyrics, "57 channels with nothing on." The second format is called an "a la carte" method of distribution and subscription. His paper thoughtfully and clearly integrates and analyzes matters of communications policy, communications technology – including emerging technological delivery systems – and communications economics, and, most significantly, what all of this means to media audiences and the kinds of communication content they have available to them.

Michael's writing is crisp and clear, his research is comprehensive and his presentation of evidence is compelling. His paper is among the best that have been written for the course since I began teaching it which was shortly after working with Gutenberg to convert a wine press to a printing press.