

Brandon Mendonca**PhD Final Oral Examination****Title: From Nature to Newsrooms: Canadian Farm Writing as a Professional Project****ABSTRACT**

This dissertation examines the relationship between farm journalism and professionalization in Canada between the late 1930s and late 1980s. Drawing on a combination of institutional records, personal papers, and oral interviews, I argue that farm journalists in both the print and broadcasting field constructed a fluid and collective identity as ‘farm writers’ that embraced scientific knowledge, proximity to farm life, and a specialized role in agricultural extension as a way of legitimizing their professional standing. While this process was shaped by journalism’s broader appeal to professional expertise, duty, and autonomy, farm writers developed an institutional discourse that reflected their own occupational challenges and influences. How and why farm writers engaged in professionalization was contingent upon shared experiences in agricultural news gathering and reporting that cut across communicative mediums. Through the power of competition, cooperation, organization, lobbying, prize culture, and international networking, I argue that farm writers engaged in an ongoing ‘project’ that continuously sought to build, maintain, and expand their professional boundaries. By examining the strategies farm writers employed to pursue professional status, this thesis contributes to our understanding of the emerging professions related to agriculture, the history of journalism, and the complexities of the postwar farm press.

Date: November 24, 2023
Time: 10:00am – 12:30pm
EST

Location: Hybrid

*Please email
histacademic@uoguelph.ca to
request the Zoom meeting link.*

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