

Spotlight Seminar

Media Communications Department, Webster University Geneva

2nd October 2019, 18:30 – 19:30

followed by a networking apéro

Igniting change: how to cover the climate crisis

The UN has called the climate crisis the “[defining issue of our time](#)” requiring “drastic action” to prevent devastating impacts in the future.¹ Young people inspired by the Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, have taken to the streets [demanding action](#) to achieve the 2050 objective of net zero carbon emissions.² And yet, as the Amazon rainforest burns in the latest [environmental catastrophe](#), the global response remains too little, too late.

Whilst President Trump continues to dismiss climate change as “fake news”,³ the media have been criticised for providing inadequate coverage and for being “complacent whilst the world burns”.⁴

How can the media help engage the public and inspire action on the most compelling issue of our time? Should journalists be hopeful and inspire? Or should they, as Greta Thunberg has said, “tell it like it is”?

For Ed Girardet, Editor of *Global Geneva*, telling it “like it is” is not enough. Nor is it necessarily based on credible information. For Girardet, whose magazine has been covering the climate crisis and engaging young people to write on the issue, it is important for people to understand the need for proper journalism if we are to face the challenges of today in a properly informed manner. Trusted reporting offering not only facts but context and insight, he maintains, is crucial if we are to engage effectively by properly understanding the issues at hand.

The presentation will be followed by a Q&A with the audience and a networking cocktail.

SPEAKER

Ed Girardet, Editor of Global Geneva magazine

MODERATOR

Sarah Grosso, Faculty, Researcher and Lead Professor of the MA in Communications Management, Media Communications Department, Webster University Geneva

BIO

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/climate-change/>

² <https://www.global-geneva.com/the-race-no-one-is-winning/>

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-climate-change-fake-science-tweet-a8819201.html>

Ed Girardet is editor and publisher of *Global Geneva* magazine, www.global-geneva.com a print and online publication focusing on International Geneva issues ranging from humanitarian response and conflict mediation to culture, world trade and climate change. He talks regularly on radio and television, including BBC and NPR, plus lectures at universities and other institutes in Europe and North America. He also acts as a media advisor for different organizations and undertakes journalism training both in Europe and developing countries.

Girardet first focused on general reporting in France and other parts of Europe, but soon specialised in humanitarian and war reporting. He has covered major crises in Africa, Asia, Europe and elsewhere since the late 1970s. As a journalist for *The Christian Science Monitor*, *US News and World Report* and PBS TV's *MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour*, he began covering Afghanistan three months prior to the Soviet invasion in December, 1979. He also produced a highly-acclaimed 94-part *African Journey* series travelling overland from Cairo to South Africa and reporting on a range of political, social, environmental and economic issues.

Girardet has worked on numerous TV current affairs and documentary programs for major European and North American broadcasters featuring such subjects as the war in Angola, lost tribes in Western New Guinea as well as environmental and cultural issues in Africa. He has won a number of awards including a nine-month *Journalism in Europe Fellowship* in Paris plus a year-long *Master of Studies in Law/Journalism (MSL/J)* at Yale Law School in the United States.

Girardet was co-founder of *Media Action International*, a Swiss media foundation that developed needs-based 'lifeline media' public outreach and journalism training initiatives in conflict and humanitarian crisis zones. He is editor of the *Essential Field Guides* and author or editor of half a dozen books, including *Somalia, Rwanda and Beyond; Populations in Danger (MSF); Killing the Cranes – A Reporter's Journey Through Three Decades of War in Afghanistan*. (revised edition 2012) French edition: *Il Parait Que Vous Voulez Me Tuer*. (Les Editions Arenes, Paris, 2014). Girardet was interim editor in 2013/2014 for *Le News*, an English-language Swiss newspaper.