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## Politics, Celebrity, and Mad Men in the Age of Eisenhower

David Haven Blake, Professor and Chair of the Department of English, College of New Jersey

Tuesday March 26, 2:00 pm

SML International Room

Dwight Eisenhower's presidential campaigns were saturated with stardom. Broadway stars performed at jam-packed Madison Square Garden rallies. Walt Disney and Irving Berlin collaborated on an animated campaign commercial and theme song. Working with Madison Avenue executives, actors and actresses gave press conferences and appeared on television shows extolling the benefits of an Eisenhower presidency. From John Steinbeck to Daniel Boorstin to Elia Kazan, critics complained that these endorsements risked turning the president into a commodity, but Ike's advisers welcomed such comparisons. As they described it, their job was to merchandise the man who was at once their client, their product, and their candidate.

Drawing on his current book project, a study of celebrity politics in the 1950s, David Haven Blake will discuss his research in presidential libraries, vintage television programming, and the papers of leading advertising agencies. The archive suggests that, for all their emphasis on glamour and spectacle, the ephemera of celebrity politics descends to us as a set of richly textured civic texts.

All are welcome to this talk, which is sponsored by Yale University Library's Standing Committee on Professional Awareness (SCOPA).

**External link:** [http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2013/03/politics\\_celebrity\\_and\\_mad\\_men.h...](http://www.library.yale.edu/librarynews/2013/03/politics_celebrity_and_mad_men.h...) [1]

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