

**Subject:** Kim Fox and the Spirit of SPIG

**Date:** Wednesday, July 9, 2025 at 6:09:37 AM Central Daylight Time

**From:** Ecaterina Stepaniuc

**To:** spig



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## THIS 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION HIGHLIGHTS AN OUTSTANDING SPIG MEMBER

# KIM FOX

**“These Are My People”:  
Kim Fox and the Spirit  
of SPIG**

**JULY 2025**

By Mitzi Lewis, PhD, Midwestern State Univ.



**Kim Fox**  
Global Pedagogy with a  
Local Heart

At first, Kim Fox wasn't sure she belonged in SPIG. "Do I have a small program?" Kim asked. "We have like, I think we have 16 full-time faculty in my department."

But she soon realized SPIG's appeal wasn't just about size—it was about focus. "It's more of the teaching, whereas the other AEJMC divisions and interest groups are more about the research."

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"These are my people," Kim realized. "They're talking about the things that I like to talk about, about the teaching."

She appreciates SPIG's emphasis on innovative pedagogical approaches rather than traditional rote learning. "Teaching in this old sort of way is not effective," she notes. "SPIG... having constant conversations about how to flip it and remix it. This is what we need to be doing."

What draws Kim most to SPIG is what she calls its "cozy" feeling. "It doesn't feel sort of industrial" like some groups "that maybe are too big, and you don't know people." She values SPIG's efforts to connect beyond the annual conference through informal Zoom gatherings where members "just catch up" or discuss current challenges like AI in the classroom .

## A Nine-Month Adventure Becomes a Career Abroad

When Kim Fox saw a job posting to teach radio at the American University in Cairo in 2008, she was excited about the idea of a 9-month adventure. Seventeen years later and still teaching in Cairo, she laughs about her international career move saying, "I don't have a sexy story. I saw a job posting. I applied for it. I interviewed remotely."



Photo courtesy of Kim Fox

Kim's transition from decades in U.S. radio along with teaching in the U.S. to teaching abroad initially puzzled her parents. "Who leaves a good paying job with full insurance to just like... I'm out of here?" she recalls them asking. Now, her family are "elated."

Kim embraces the expansive perspective that international experience brings. "My lens of what's going on is much, much broader," she explains. "I'm not thinking in this myopic US-based way because now I have friends in Australia or the UK, or in different parts of the world."

This global mindset has paid dividends for her students, who have won over 100 international awards since 2010.

**Her secret? "Students are inspired by other students." Fox uses previous award-winning work to motivate current students, creating a cycle of excellence.**

Additionally, Kim works to constantly engage her students, from phone-based quizzes to small group activities. "You're an entertainer every 20 minutes. You need to be doing something different," she explains. She encourages students and guides, rather than prescribes, their work. For example, when editing student scripts, she doesn't tell students exactly what to do but rather "what to think about" so they can make their own decisions.

Fox's passion for audio education extends beyond journalism students. She regularly helps educators in other disciplines incorporate audio elements into their courses, whether through oral histories in humanities classes or audio adaptations of research projects. "How does someone in the humanities incorporate audio into their course?" she asks, then works to provide answers and resources. "Working with educators who are curious about changing things up is always fun," she says, "to sort of plant an idea and see how that seed grows in their environment."

Kim's energy for new projects seems limitless. She founded PodFest Cairo, Egypt's first podcasting conference, in 2020, bringing nearly 100 podcasters together for Egypt's

inaugural celebration of the medium. She facilitates audio workshops internationally, from Beirut to Budapest to Bishkek. As executive producer of the award-winning "Ehky Ya Masr" (Tell Your Story Egypt) Podcast, she mentors young freelance producers, many of them former students. And just this month her award-winning "Birdland Refracted," created in partnership with Milio Boogie, was screened at Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C.

## Why SPIG Feels Like Home

Kim's connection to SPIG deepened through relationships and shared experiences. Her friendship with colleague Cathy Strong began at a Middle East conference in Kuwait in 2010, years before either was involved with SPIG. When they both discovered SPIG, they attended a meeting together. "You know how you show up in a meeting, and they're doing elections," Kim laughs. "The next thing you know, you've got a position."



Photo courtesy of Kim Fox

One of Kim's favorite SPIG experiences has been attending the Ginger Rudeseal Carter Miller Teacher of the Year award luncheons. There's "something about that award and recognition. It's just nice to see people get it, and they really appreciate it, and it just means a lot for us as well." She finds meaning not only in celebrating the recipients but also in participating behind the scenes, helping create social media coverage that extends the recognition beyond the event itself.

What Kim admires most about SPIG is the dedication of its members. **"People are true and dedicated to SPIG, and I love that,"** she reflects, thinking of long-serving members like Kim Pearson, Doug Mendenhall, Brian Steffen, Pam Parry, and Cathy Strong, to name a few. "People are really dedicated to this interest group and to the craft of teaching." This dedication provides a model of commitment that guides her own involvement.

### **Making SPIG Seen, Behind the Scenes**

When asked about her proudest SPIG accomplishment, Kim is clear: "Providing a consistent social media presence for SPIG." Her contribution has extended SPIG's reach far beyond its membership, showcasing the organization's work to new audiences worldwide. The numbers tell the story: when Kim began managing SPIG's social media presence in 2017, the SPIG journal Facebook page had 830 followers. Today, that number has grown to 4,272—a five-fold increase that demonstrates the impact of her consistent efforts.

Kim brings an important perspective to this work by recognizing the "invisible labor" that goes into running a social media account. "People don't realize how much labor goes into [social media]," she explains. This concept, familiar to scholars studying undervalued work particularly affecting women and people of color, also applies to social media management. "You can watch a few seconds, and you don't like it and you move on, but for the person who's doing that content, whether it's posting it or creating it," and all the steps involved, "...that's labor."

### **Looking Forward**

Kim's advice for SPIG members reflects the same collaborative spirit she brings to her work: "Get involved: participate in the listserv discussions; propose new ideas that are

relevant to SPIG. Write for the journal. **We are a welcoming group!**” And don’t forget that the journal is “a great resource for research and course prep materials.”

Kim embodies the SPIG spirit: dedication to teaching excellence, community building, collaboration, and innovation. Her message to the SPIG community is clear: dive in, contribute, and make use of the resources available. In a field constantly evolving, Kim shows how energy, adaptability, and genuine care for students—combined with active community engagement—remain powerful tools for the classroom, anywhere in the world.

Design by Kate Stepaniuc



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