
THURSDAY

Thursday Social Reception (6:30-9)

Start off the 2026 event with a no-host social at a local restaurant (TBA)

FRIDAY

Friday Registration Desk opens at 8:15am

Pick up registration materials, ask questions, and enjoy light refreshments provided by the Mercer University Department of Communication Studies & Theater

Session A — Friday, 9:00–9:50 AM

A1 - Interactive Workshop

Bridging Classical Rhetoric and Forensics: Impromptu Speaking and the Progymnasmata

Nathan H. Bedsole, Georgia College & State University

A2 - Panel

Be YOU! The Pedagogy of Personality Profiles: Instruments and Insights

Travice Baldwin Obas; Dana Pergrem, Georgia Highlands College; Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State

A3 - Panel

When Lyrics Turn Dark: Student Analyses of Pop Music and the Shadowed Sides of Communication

Ariel Andrews; Clarissa Mallory; Destinee Sims, Valdosta University

A4 — Paper Session - The Study of Teaching and Learning

- **Six Seasons and a Thesis: Teaching Group Communication via Community**
Amy Mendes, University of West Georgia
 - **The Effectiveness of Experiential Learning and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in a Television News Production Environment**
Travis Cronan, Augusta University
 - **Guiding Speech and Thought in the Age of Artificial Intelligence**
Kevin Cummings, Mercer University
 - **Respondent:** Anna Deeb, Brenau University
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Session B — Friday, 10:00–10:50 AM

B1 - Roundtable

Performing Double Consciousness at Fort Valley State University: A Roundtable Discussion on Developing “Now What A Time: A FVSU Ham and Egg Show Play”

Maisha S. Akbar, Fort Valley State University

B2 - Panel

Transparency on Trial: Navigating Reputation Risk in Financial and Tech Industries

Andre Nicholson, Kelsie Dodd, Alexia Lowe; Middle Georgia State University

B3 - GIFTS Short Presentation Sessions

- ***Starting a Speech Competition at Your Institution***
Anna Deeb, Breneau
- ***"Voice, Story, and Identity: Using Digital Storytelling to Teach the Power of Speech"***
Elizabeth Sheffield Hayes, Albany State
- ***Using campus recruiting materials as a way to apply concepts from the persuasion course***
Pamela Hayward, Augusta University
- ***The Medium is the Message in Today's Classroom***
Michael North, Middle Georgia State College and University
- ***From Concept to Creation: An Experiential Encounter with Theory***
Pauline Matthey, Georgia State University
- ***Teaching Tubi: Using Free Resources as an Effective Pedagogical Tool***
Davia Rose Lassiter — University of West Georgia
- **Moderator:** Jhazzmyn Joiner, Georgia State University

B4 — Paper Session - Fashion, Performance, and Popular Culture

- **The Nation Wears Prada: A Transnational Rhetorical and Ideological Critique of the 2025 Met Gala Through a Banal Nationalistic Framework.**
Jack McKinney — Georgia College and State University
- **Entitled Transgression as Status Work: A Grounded Theory of “Asshole Style” in Contemporary Political Performance**
Amy E. Mendes — University of West Georgia

- **Repackaged Liberation and the Rhetoric of Return in the Tradwife Movement**
Lucy Roach — University of Georgia
 - **Respondent:** David Nelson, Valdosta State University
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Session C — Friday, 11:00–11:50 AM

C1 - Panel

“Surviving Year 1 (and Beyond): Candid Insights From New Ph.D. Students”

Q. McElroy; Stephanie Schupska, UGA

C2 - Panel

How Many Academics Does It Take to Change a Light Bulb?: An Exploration of Popular Culture and the Different Roles It Plays

David R. Nelson, Benjamin Baker, Holly Buglewicz, Arrington Stoll, Valdosta State

C3 - Panel

Cultural Implications of Contemporary Media — Undergraduate Panel

Elizabeth Shiller, Colby Hernandez, Amaya Martin, Dylan Scott, Madison Vickers; Georgia Southwestern State University

C4 — Paper Session - Interrogations of Film and Media

- **“It is literally impossible to be a woman”: Female Monologues as Rhetorical Interludes in Mainstream Hollywood Films**
Jeevani Sammeta, Tiffany Whitney, Dalton State
- **Male Power Fantasies and the Fallacy of Individualism in New Hollywood Vigilante Films**
Riley Deyo — University of Georgia
- **An Underground Lineage: Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, and David Cronenberg’s Stereo**
Patrick S. Brennan — Middle Georgia State University
- **Respondent:** Christopher Thompson, Kennesaw State University

C5- Networking & College Fair (Part 1)

We expect to have representatives from Augusta University, Brenau University, Mercer University, Middle Georgia State University, and Valdosta University available, among others. Come meet, learn about opportunities, and network! *(If you would like to reserve space for your group, please email us!)*

12-1, Social lunch and Keynote address

Keynote speaker TBA

1-1:50 Business Meeting and Officer elections

Session D — Friday, 2:00–2:50 PM

D1 - Roundtable

Inside Institutions of Modernity: Strengthening Pathways for Teaching Faculty Success

Christopher Thompson, Kennesaw State University

D2 - Panel

Radical Love and Collective Care: Sister Circles as Sites of Resistance and Healing for Black Women

Aysha LaBon; Lauren Lane; Davia Rose Lassiter; Leaf Seeney, Georgia State University

D3 - Panel

Teaching Tomorrow's Communicators Today: Faculty Strategies for AI Integration

Kate Keib, Oglethorpe University

D4 — Paper Session - Digital Games and Interactive Worlds

- **Beyond the Visual in POV: a Silent Hill 2 Case Study**
Kathryn Volz, Mercer University
- **Regeneration Engine: Crafting Self-Selected Narratives in Digital Role-playing Games**
Maret McWhorter, Rajwol Champagain; Mercer University
- **Nostalgia and World of Warcraft: A Contested Space**
Hampton Stall, UGA
- **Crisis Communication and Ethical Partnerships in Esports: A Comparative Analysis of Riot Games' Responses to Controversial Deals with Saudi Arabia**
Author: Elaine Venter — Kennesaw State University
- **Moderator:** Paul Raptis, University of North Georgia

D5- Networking & College Fair (Part 2)

We expect to have representatives from Augusta University, Brenau University, Mercer University, Middle Georgia State University, and Valdosta University available, among others. Come meet, learn about opportunities, and network! *(If you would like to reserve space for your group, please email us!)*

Session E — Friday, 3:00–3:50 PM

E1 - Interactive Workshop

Academic Job Calls: Interpreting Call Criteria and Implementing Backwards Design Instruction

Lauren Lane, Georgia State University

E2 - Panel

Student Perspectives on Producing a Weekly Student-Produced Campus Podcast

Chad Whittle, Anna Grace Harkey, Presley Schneider, Rebecca Dunn, Kate Kandul, Devin McClain, Georgia College & State University

E3 - Panel

Human Communication Students Analyze the Influence of Mass Media Platforms

Andre Nicholson, Alaina Brown, Ethan Bulharowski, Patience Angel, Izabella Szilagyi; Middle Georgia College and State University

E4 - Paper Session - Voices, Narratives, and Representation

- **Exploring the Role of the Government in Promoting Inclusion and Diversity Among the Visually Impaired in Accra, Ghana: A Communication Study**
Abena Bosompem, Georgia State University
- **Strategic Communications by LGBTQ+ Advocacy Groups During the *Obergefell v. Hodges* Campaign**
Candace Robards, Middle Georgia State University
- **How Issa Rae Used *Insecure* to Reclaim Narrative Authority**
Jhazzy Joiner — Georgia State University
- **Respondent:** Sheree Keith, Middle Georgia State University

Session F — Friday, 4:00–4:50 PM

F1 - Roundtable

Altered Realities: When Truth Is Filtered Through Opaque Lenses

Kyle R. Fox, Coastal Georgia

F2 - Panel

Hedbanz of Hermeneutics: Game-Based Learning and Literary Theory in the English Classroom

Melissa Williams, Regina Oost, Breena Reeves, Abbi Adams, Isabella Argudin, Wesleyan

F3 - Panel

PR in the Age of Intelligence: Navigating AI, Authenticity, and Crisis Communication in a Changing Media Landscape

Tiffany McBride; Taylor Bryant; Kelly Williams, University of West Georgia

F4 — Paper Session - Digital Platforms, AI, and Mediated Experience

- **A Study on Immersive Media and Audience Interaction in China**
Jiaxin Tong — Georgia State University
 - **Agentic (In)visibility: How Women Navigate Perceived Threats and Digital Vulnerability on RedNote**
Ke Wang, Georgia State University
 - **Online Reviews and Their Perceived Impact on Restaurant Reputation**
Ben Libon, UGA
 - **Respondent:** Melissa Harrell, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
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5-5:50 Rest and Refresh

6-6:50 Film Festival Screening

7-8:00 Ticketed Dinner and Film Festival Awards

Best of Festival Award

Title	Student's Name	Institution	Genre
Under Lock and Key	Dawson Jolicoeur	Kennesaw State University	Narrative

Documentary Category

Award Type	Title	Student's Name	Institution
Best of Competition	Paul John Knowles - The Casnova Killer	Robert Johnson	Georgia College and State University
Award of Excellence	Hidden Allure	Carmen Hickman, Alexander Chavez-Ramos, Ryleigh Fox, Perry Westbrook, Rance Wingo	Piedmont University

Award of Excellence	Another Round	Della Goines, Erin Finnegan	Georgia College & State University
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Narrative Category

Award Type	Title	Student's Name	Institution
Best of Competition	Off-Script	Mikayla Williams	Kennesaw State University

Micro-work Category

Award Type	Title	Student's Name	Institution
Award of Excellence	My Lovely Coffee	Aaliyah Francis	Georgia Gwinnett College

SATURDAY

Saturday Registration Desk opens at 8:15am

Pick up registration materials, ask questions, and enjoy light refreshments provided by the Mercer University Department of Communication Studies & Theater

Session G — Saturday, 9:00–9:50 AM

G1 - Interactive Workshop

Media Bias

Cindy Montgomery, Kristin Bailey, Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State

G2 – Panel

Observational Mode: Theories, Applications, and Considerations in Cross-Cultural Documentary Production

Isabelle Loyd; Grace Kim, Kennesaw State

G3 - Panel

Experiential Learning and Professional Preparedness in the Student-Run Public Relations Firm

Caitlin Wills, Toluwani Oloke; University of North Georgia

G4 — Paper Session - Power, Politics, and the Governance of Bodies

- **Silencing Autonomy: The Sims' Position as a Gynecological Visual Semiotic Analysis**
Priscilla Cotton — Georgia State University
 - **Rhetorics of Greenlandic Freedom: About and Without Kalaallit Nunaat**
Nathan Bedsole, Mikkel Christensen, Georgia College and State University
 - **When Space Communicates: Contesting State Power and Queer Resistance in Daneshjoo Park, Tehran**
Ghazal Nematgorgani, Georgia State University
 - **Sacred Scapegoats: The Exploitation of Vestal Virgins in the Roman Republic**
Natalie Cowen — University of Georgia
 - **Respondent:** Nathan Bedsole, Georgia College & State University
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Session H — Saturday, 10:00–10:50 AM

H1 - Roundtable

The “Year of” Country Study Program: Making Global Connections in Your Communications Course

Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State University

H2 - Panel

Producing a Sporty Podcast

David W. Bulla, Rodrigo Burgos Avila, Nayla Reese; Augusta University

H3 - Panel

How to Teach Critical Thinking Skills to Students to Help Them Be Critical of Media in a Time of Deep Political Divisiveness

Soumitro Sen, Andre Nicholson, Cindy Montgomery; Middle Georgia State University

H4 — Paper Session - Journalism, News, and Media Institutions

- **A New Era for AMC**
Jiaxin Tong — Georgia State University
- **Assessing the Cultural Elements in Local Print Media Reportage of Meningitis in Northern Nigeria**
Samuel Edu, Georgia State University
- **Tipping the Scale: Examining News Reports of Black Men’s Support of Donald Trump**
Andre Nicholson, Middle Georgia State University

- **Choosing a Hill: Warnock, Ossoff, Healthcare, and the 2025 Government Shutdown**
Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College
 - **Moderator:** Mina Ivanova, Agnes Scott College
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Session I — Saturday, 11:00–11:50 AM

I1 - Panel

Collaboration in the Classroom: A Problem-Based Learning Project between Communication and Music Programs

Christian Norman, Melody Morrison, Sevyn Talbert, Jousef Al Sadawi, Alan Hill, Kaitlyn Scales, Middle Georgia State University

I2 - Panel

Contesting Control: Marginalized Voices and the Making of Digital Agency

Poulami Seal; Luyue Ye; Xuebei Hu; Ghazal Nematgorgani; Haram Fatima, Georgia State University

I3 - Panel

Affective and Algorithmic Cultures: Identity and Everyday Life in Platform Society

Xuebei Hu; Jiajun Ma; Jiaxin Tong; Luyue Ye; Ke Wang; Ziyi Zhang, Georgia State University

I4 — Paper Session - Health, Science, and Crisis Communication

- **Conflict De-escalation in the Hospital Setting: Improving Patient Outcomes with Verbal De-escalation Techniques versus Pharmaceutical Intervention**
Jacob Abney — Middle Georgia State University
 - **The Persuasiveness of the Flu Vaccination Campaign Video**
Jiaxin Tong, Georgia State University
 - **The Lack of a Lack: Anxiety, Conspiracy, and the Allure of Anti-Science**
Mina Ivanova, Agnes Scott
 - **Coping and Adapting to Natural Age-Related Cognitive Communication Changes**
Taiwo Oluyinka, Georgia State University
 - **Moderator:** Caitlin Wills, University of North Georgia
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12-12:30 - Closing Remarks and Awards Reception