



**MERCER UNIVERSITY
MACON, GEORGIA
THURSDAY 2/26 - SATURDAY 2/28**

Letter from the President



My friends and colleagues,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 Georgia Communication Association conference.

I've been attending GCA conferences since 2011 and have served in some leadership role or another since 2019. For years, I've seen what this organization can do. We connect students, instructors, and professionals to each other and to new ideas. We are a space for dialogue and a space for change. We strengthen communication pedagogy and add to the body of knowledge in two dozen disciplinary specialties. We support the broader work of our regional and national partner organizations, while offering what they cannot - a close-knit community close to home.

I must admit I need the GCA conference this year. Sometimes, the world feels overwhelming. The news is dark, the stories are grim, and I worry that things are all going wrong.

GCA shakes me out of that state. This organization, and all the passionate and committed people that will meet at the beautiful Macon campus of Mercer University this week to talk, share, learn, and connect... you remind me of what is possible. You remind me of what we can do. We are the people that our moment calls for.

We are storytellers, filmmakers, journalists, rhetoricians, analysts, critics, creators, and educators. We understand the complexity of meaning making. We know that true persuasion depends more on careful listening than on raised voices. We teach invention, connection, narrative, framing, composition, empathy, deliberation, identification, conflict resolution, argumentation, and negotiation. We help people find their voice and strategize how to use it. We reinforce the necessity of ethical actions and of free speech and free press to society.

As we connect this weekend, I am excited. I look forward to that feeling that comes after the conference - new ideas to try, new tactics learned, new fires lit. I hope you are excited, too.

Over the next few days, we'll hear selected works from the largest pool of submissions ever received for a GCA conference. Students and instructors will connect with programs at our Networking Fair. We'll honor outstanding achievement at our Friday Film Festival and Saturday Recognition ceremony. We'll laugh, share stories, and catch up.

It is my distinct hope that we'll all also get a great idea, feel a little more empowered, and head back to our communities around the state ready to try something new. I am excited.

Welcome to the 96th meeting of the Georgia Communication Association.

Best,

Steve Stuglin, PhD

Georgia Highlands College

President of GCA

5 THINGS TO DO IN DOWNTOWN MACON



SHUSTER'S CANDY AND CREAMERY

Locally-owned ice cream and candyshop offering up hand-dipped ice cream and an assortment of candy sure to satisfy your sweet tooth!

BRADDOCK'S CASK & TABLE

Savor authentic flavors and traditional dishes in a dining experience that engages all of your senses.



CAPRICORN STUDIOS

A museum and venue where the inspiration of the past facilitates creativity and collaboration for a new generation of artists.



THE TUBMAN MUSEUM

The Tubman African American Museum is the largest of its kind in the southeast dedicated to educating people about the Art, History and Culture of African Americans.



MCEACHERN ART CENTER

Visit the current works on exhibition as the center seeks to advance emerging artists and offer community a place to contemplate art with care.



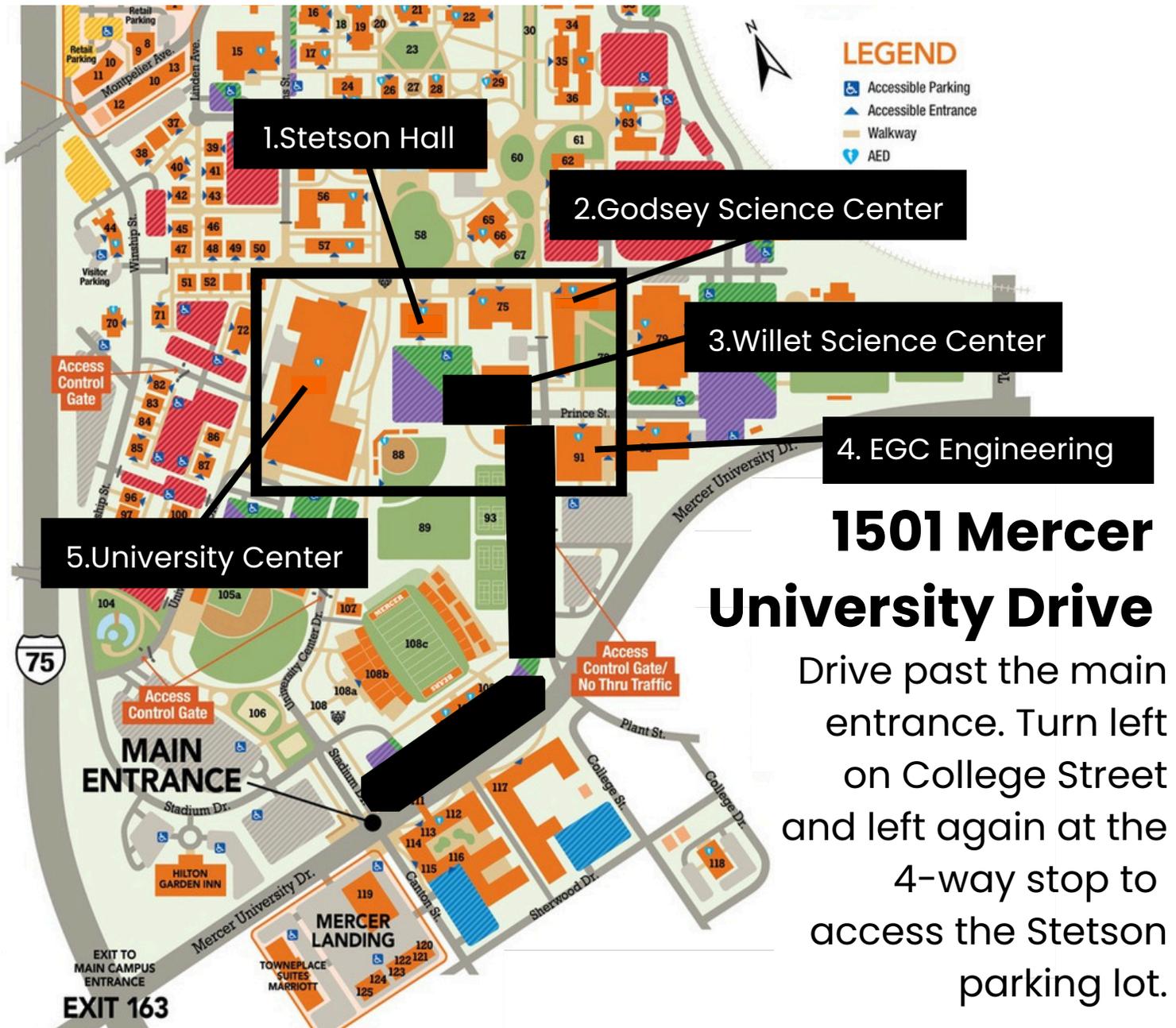
ENJOY YOUR TIME IN MACON!



1501 Mercer University Drive
Macon, GA 31207

Mercer University is one of America's oldest and most distinctive institutions of higher learning, offering rigorous programs that span the undergraduate liberal arts and sciences to doctoral-level degrees. While offering a breadth of programs found at much larger universities, Mercer maintains an intimate, student-focused culture more characteristic of smaller liberal arts colleges. Mercer's uniqueness is found in the way the University integrates five defining components of its mission: Liberal Learning, Professional Knowledge, Discovery, Service to Humankind and Community.

MERCER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MAP



Conference events will be held in:

1. Stetson Hall
2. Godsey Science Center
3. Willet Science Center, Auditorium
4. University Center, President's Dining Room

Keynote Speaker

Hon. Erica L. Woodford, Esq.



Bibb County Superior Court Clerk

The Honorable Erica L. Woodford serves as the Clerk of Superior Court of Bibb County, Georgia. Ms. Woodford is the first African American elected Clerk of Superior Court in Bibb County. She was elected in 2012 and was re-elected in 2016, 2020, and 2024. Prior to being elected as Clerk, Ms. Woodford served the Macon and Middle Georgia community for almost two decades; serving as a civil court judge and magistrate in Bibb County, operating a private law practice, and teaching at the university level.

Ms. Woodford has made significant improvements to the Office of the Bibb County Superior Court Clerk, including digitizing all land records from 1823 - present. Ms. Woodford is a founder of the Enslaved People Project, where close to 1000 deed transactions for the sale of enslaved African Americans has been digitized and available for public consumption. This project is the most meaningful and impactful work of her career.

Ms. Woodford is an adjunct professor at Mercer University Law School, a member of the State Bar of Georgia, State Bar of Georgia Committee on Professionalism, Constitutional Officers Association of Georgia, Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia (First Vice President), National Association of Court Management (DEI Committee), Georgia Association of Black Women Attorneys, Macon Bar Association and of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Ms. Woodford is a native of Macon, Georgia, the daughter of Lawsey and Bessie Woodford, and the mother of Ashley and Eric Woodford. She attended Mercer University undergraduate, and Samford University Law School.



Augusta University

Department of Communication

Career Paths

- TV news production, including anchoring and reporting
 - Public relations specialist/communication manager/social media specialist
 - Online journalist
 - Marketing specialist
- Publishing professional
- Sports media specialist
 - Multimedia storyteller
- Non-profit/NGO communication specialist
- Minister or church communication
 - Legal profession

Certificates

Media Production

Courses Offered:

- Audiovisual Media Production
- Digital Editing
- Visual Story Telling
- Advanced Media Writing
- Media Editing and Production

Public Relations

Courses Offered:

- Writing for COMM
- Public Relations Writing
- Public Relations Practices
- P.R. and Social Media Campaigns



Student Organizations

Media Production Club
Bell Ringer
Phoenix
JagNews

Social Media



Department



Admissions





OVERVIEW

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

6:30–9:00pm Welcome Back Social

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

8:15am	Registration Desk Open
9:00–9:50am	Sessions A1, A2, A3, A4
10:00–10:50am	Sessions B1, B2, B3, B4
11:00–11:50am	Sessions C1, C2, C3, Networking
12:00–12:45pm	Welcome, Social Lunch, Networking
12:45–1:15pm	Keynote Address
1:15–1:50	Business Meeting, Networking
2:00–2:50pm	Sessions D1, D2, D3, Networking
3:00–3:50pm	Sessions E1, E2, E3, E4
4:00–4:50pm	Sessions F1, F2, F3, F4
6:00–6:50pm	Film Festival Screening
7:00–8:00pm	Dinner, Film Festival Awards

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

8:15am	Registration Desk Open
9:00–9:50am	Sessions G1, G2, G3
10:00–10:50am	Sessions H1, H2, H3
11:00–11:50am	Sessions I1, I2, I3
12:00–12:30pm	Reception, Conference Awards

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26

6:30 PM – 9:00 PM: Welcome Back Social

Location: Ocmulgee Brewpub 484 2nd St, Macon, GA 31201

Start off the 2026 event with a no-host social at Ocmulgee Brewpub in downtown Macon. You are welcome to stop in for any part of or the whole time.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

8:15 AM

Registration Desk Open (Stetson Hall)

Pick up your conference badge and enjoy a light continental breakfast while you mingle with colleagues.

9:00 - 9:50 AM

Sessions A1, A2, A3, A4

A1 - Interactive Workshop - STN 151

Bridging Classical Rhetoric and Forensics: Impromptu Speaking and the Progymnasmata

Nathan H. Bedsole, Holland Tait, Madeline Johnson, Jack McKinney, and Halle Bergstrom; Georgia College & State University

A2 - Panel - STN 157

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

Q. McElroy; Stephanie Schupska, University of Georgia

A3 - Panel - STN 162

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

Ariel Andrews; Clarissa Mallory; Destinee Sims, Valdosta State University

A4 – Paper Session - The Study of Teaching and Learning - STN 158

Respondent: Anna Deeb, Brenau University

- *Six Seasons and a Thesis: Teaching Group Communication via Community*
 - Amy Mendes, University of West Georgia
 - *Guiding Speech and Thought in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*
 - Kevin Cummings, Mercer University
-

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Sessions B1, B2, B3, B4

B1 - Roundtable - STN 162

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 - STN 151

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

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Sessions B1, B2, B3, B4

B3 - GIFTS Short Presentation Sessions - STN 157

Moderator: Jhazzmyn Joiner, Georgia State University

- *Starting a Speech Competition at Your Institution*
 - Anna Deeb, Breneau University
- *Voice, Story, and Identity: Using Digital Storytelling to Teach the Power of Speech*
 - Elizabeth Sheffield Hayes, Albany State University
- *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 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

B4 – Paper Session - Fashion, Performance, and Popular Culture - STN 158

Respondent: David Nelson, Valdosta State University

- *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
-

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Sessions C1, C2, C3, C4

C1 - Panel - STN 158

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

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

C2 - Panel - STN 157

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, Holly Buglewicz, Arrington Stoll, Valdosta State University; Benjamin Baker, Columbus State University

C3 - Panel - STN 151

Cultural Implications of Contemporary Media – Undergraduate Panel

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Sessions C1, C2, C3, C4

C4 – Paper Session - Interrogations of Film and Media - EGC 209

Respondent: Christopher Thompson, Kennesaw State University

- *“It is literally impossible to be a woman”:* Female Monologues as Rhetorical Interludes in Mainstream Hollywood Films
 - Jeevani Sammeta, Tiffany Whitney, Dalton State University
- *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

11:30-12:15

Networking & College Fair (Part 1) - Outside President’s Dining Room

On your way into lunch, stop and chat with representatives from Augusta University, Brenau University, Mercer University, Middle Georgia State University, Oglethorpe University, University of Georgia, and Valdosta State University. Come meet, learn about opportunities, and network!

12:00-12:30

Social Lunch - University Center, President’s Dining Room

Please join us for a formal welcome to the event by GCA President Steve Stuglin and representatives of Mercer University, immediately after which you are welcome to enjoy an included lunch and socialize with friends and colleagues.

12:30-1:00

Keynote Speaker: Hon. Erica L. Woodford, Esq. - University Center, President’s Dining Room

As you continue your lunch, enjoy a keynote address from The Honorable Erica L. Woodford, Clerk of Superior Court of Bibb County. A respected leader in Georgia’s legal community, Ms. Woodford will share insights from her career in public service and her work advancing transparency, access and community engagement.

1:00 - 1:45

Business Meeting - University Center, President’s Dining Room

GCA Business Meetings are open to all attendees. Voting rights come with membership (paid at registration). We will proceed through an agenda and then entertain new business from the floor.

- Procedural - Approval of Minutes, Officer Reports
- Old Business - Strategic Goals
- New Business - GCA 2027, 2028
- Elections (VP Elect, Treasurer, Film Festival Director, Marketing Director, Second Public Institution Member at Large, and Third Public Institution Member at Large)

1:00 - 2:15

Networking & College Fair (Part 2) - Outside President’s Dining Room

Skip the business meeting or stop by on your way out after lunch. Come meet, learn about opportunities, and network with representatives from our partner institutions!

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

2:00 - 2:50 PM

Sessions D1, D2, D3, D4

D1 - Workshop - STN 162

Inside Institutions of Modernity: Strengthening Pathways for Teaching Faculty Success

Christopher Thompson, Kennesaw State University; Ian Peters, Brenau University

D2 - Panel - STN 151

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 - Roundtable - STN 157

Altered Realities: When Truth Is Filtered Through Opaque Lenses

Kyle R. Fox, Dejah Murphy, Jervon Owens, Charlie Whitlock, Loren Georgeson, Camryn Williams, Pharrel Walker, and C. Osi Ugwuzor; College of Coastal Georgia

D4 – Paper Session - Digital Games and Interactive Worlds - STN 158

Moderator: Paul Raptis, University of North Georgia

- *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, University of Georgia
 - *Crisis Communication and Ethical Partnerships in Esports: A Comparative Analysis of Riot Games' Responses to Controversial Deals with Saudi Arabia*
 - Elaine Venter, Kennesaw State University
-

3:00-3:50 PM

Sessions E1, E2, E3, E4

E1 - Panel - STN 157

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

Kate Keib, Oglethorpe University; Jess Hunt-Ralston, Georgia Institute of Technology

E2 - Panel - STN 162

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 and State University

E3 - Panel - STN 151

Human Communication Students Analyze the Influence of Mass Media Platforms

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

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

3:00–3:50 PM

Sessions E1, E2, E3, E4

E4 - Paper Session - Voices, Narratives, and Representation - STN 158

Respondent: Sheree Keith, Middle Georgia State University

- *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
-

4:00–4:50 PM

Sessions F1, F2, F3, F4

F1 - Interactive Workshop STN 157

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

Lauren Lane, Rasha Ramzy; Georgia State University

F2 - Panel - STN 151

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

Regina Oost, Abbi Adams, Isabella Argudin, Wesleyan College

F3 - Panel - STN 158

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 – Session - Impact of Digital Platforms - STN 162

Online Reviews and Their Perceived Impact on Restaurant Reputation

Ben Libon, University of Georgia

5:00–5:50 PM

Rest and Refresh

TELL STORIES. CREATE IMPACT.

The Bachelor of Science in Digital Media & Communication (DMCM) program at GHC combines print and media production and communication strategies to prepare students for meaningful careers in media, journalism, marketing, and communication.

- Hands-on learning through real-world projects and student media
- Professional readiness with portfolio-building experiences and internships
- Community partnerships that connect learning to local and global impact



**DIGITAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION
REAL PROJECTS. REAL IMPACT.**

DMCM.HIGHLANDS.EDU

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27

6:00-6:50 PM

Film Festival: Screening and Q&A with filmmakers - Willet Science Center, Auditorium

The Georgia Communication Association Film Festival showcases outstanding films and videos made by students at GCA member institutions in Georgia. We seek to highlight students' inspiring work that reflects their creative voices and unique talents.

Film Fest Director: Sangsun Choi, Kennesaw State University

7:00-8:00 PM

Ticketed Dinner and Film Festival Awards - University Center, President's Dining Room

Best of Festival Award

Under Lock and Key

Dawson Jolicoeur, Kennesaw State University

Best of Documentary

Paul John Knowles - The Casnova Killer

Robert Johnson, Georgia College and State University

Award of Excellence - Documentary

Hidden Allure

Carmen Hickman; Alexander Chavez-Ramos; Ryleigh Fox; Perry Westbrook; Rance Wingo, Piedmont University

Award of Excellence - Documentary

Another Round

Della Goines, Erin Finnegan, Georgia College & State University

Best of Narrative

Off-Script

Mikayla Williams, Kennesaw State University

Award of Excellence - Micro-Work

My Lovely Coffee

Aaliyah Francis, Georgia Gwinnett College

**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF
OUR WINNERS!**

CAPTURING CULTURE

Oglethorpe University celebrates culture every year at our Last Looks film festival. Capturing culture celebrates the diverse cultures on Oglethorpe's campus.

Follow us for more information!



Sponsored by Weltner Consulting Agency
Oglethorpe University's student-led Strategic Communication firm



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

8:15 AM

Registration Desk Open, Stetson Hall

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

9:00 - 9:50 AM

Sessions G1, G2, G3, G4

G1 - Interactive Workshop - STN 233

Media Bias

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

G2 - Panel - STN 162

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

Isabelle Loyd; Grace Kim, Kennesaw State University

G3 - Panel - STN 157

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 - STN 166

Respondent: Nathan Bedsole, Georgia College & State University

- *Silencing Autonomy: The Sims' Position as a Gynecological Visual Semiotic Analysis*
 - Priscilla Cotton; Georgia 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
-

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Sessions H1, H2, H3, H4

H1 - Panel - STN 157

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

H2 - Panel - STN 162

Contesting Control: Marginalized Voices and the Making of Digital Agency

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

H3 - Panel - STN 166

Producing a Sporty Podcast

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

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

10:00 - 10:50 AM

Sessions H1, H2, H3, H4

H4 – Paper Session - Changing landscapes in Media and Politics - STN 233

Moderator: Mina Ivanova, Agnes Scott College

- *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
 - *Choosing a Hill: Warnock, Ossoff, Healthcare, and the 2025 Government Shutdown*
 - Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College
 - *Rhetorics of Greenlandic Freedom: About and Without Kalaallit Nunaat*
 - Nathan Bedsole, Mikkel Christensen, Georgia College and State University
-

11:00 - 11:50 AM

Sessions I1, I2, I3, I4

I1 - Roundtable - STN 157

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

Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State University

I2 - Panel - STN 162

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

I3 - Panel - STN 166

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 - STN 233

Moderator: Caitlin Wills, University of North Georgia

- *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 Lack of a Lack: Anxiety, Conspiracy, and the Allure of Anti-Science*
 - Mina Ivanova, Agnes Scott College
 - *Coping and Adapting to Natural Age-Related Cognitive Communication Changes*
 - Taiwo Oluoyinka, Georgia State University
-

12:00-12:30pm

Closing Remarks and Awards - Willet Auditorium

Please join us for some brief closing remarks, dessert, and the announcement of the winners of our conference awards, announced by:

- Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College
- Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State University
- Katie Baxter, Georgia Highlands College

Top Presentations (Regular and Student)

Based on QR code survey feedback at the conference

Top Papers (Regular and Student)

Based on two rounds of review before the conference

Most Engaged Institution:

Awarded to the school/institution with the most submissions by undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty in all areas of the GCA Conference (excluding film festival entries), thereby demonstrating engagement in and passion for communication scholarship

Student Involvement Champion:

Awarded to the school/institution that brings the most students to participate in the GCA Conference and/or Film Festival, thereby encouraging robust representation from their institution and empowering students to participate actively in the conference and film festival.

Standing Ovation Award:

Awarded first in 2026 to Barbara Tucker, the Standing Ovation Award recognizes sustained service, leadership, and commitment to GCA over time. Nominated by any elected officer from a pool of all GCA members, past and present, not currently in elected office, a winner is selected by majority support of the executive board and announced at the Conference in even-numbered years.

12:30pm

Conference Adjourns

What Worked? What Didn't?

Use the QR code available at the conference to evaluate each presentation. The form asks for your rating in several areas and allows for comments. Rate every session you attend!

Help GCA planners to improve for next year by telling us what you think about the programming in 2026!

2026 GCA Evaluation of Presentations





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UNIVERSITY



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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
MAIC PROGRAM CONTACT:
commgrad@valdosta.edu

GCA Leadership 2025-2026

President: Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

Vice-President: Christian Norman, Middle Georgia State University

VP-elect: Katie Baxter, Georgia Highlands College

Secretary: Cameron Kunzelman, Mercer University

Treasurer: Rick Lindner, GA State University & Perimeter College

Administrative Director: Steve Stuglin, Georgia Highlands College

Marketing Director: Meredith Ginn, Kennesaw State University

Private Member at Large: Anna Deeb, Brenau University

Public Member at Large (1): David Nelson, Valdosta State U.

Public Member at Large (2): Q. McElroy, University of Georgia

Public Member at Large (3): Brian Kline, U. of North Georgia

Film Fest Director: Sansung Choi, Kennesaw State University
with support from Allen Dutch, Georgia Highlands College
and Matt Terrell, Kennesaw State University

Site Host: Cameron Kunzelman, Mercer University

Proceedings Editor: Nathan Bedsole, Georgia College & State U.



Master of Arts Strategic Communication

The Strategic Communication master's program equips students with advanced skills in strategic, digital, and crisis communication. Combining theory and real-world practice, the program prepares graduates to lead in diverse settings, emphasizing ethics, conflict and problem resolution, and effective communication strategies.

Career Paths

- Crisis communication specialist
- Communication consultant
- Marketing/Advertising manager
- Corporate social responsibility specialist
- Media planning director
- Research analyst
- PR/HR director
- Social/ Digital media strategist
- Political advisor

PROGRAM CORE

MSC 510 (3) Principles of Strategic Communication

MSC 511 (4) Digital Communication Strategies

MSC 530 (4) Strategic Communication Research Methods

MSC 620 (3) Strategic Communication Capstone Project

MSC 621 (3) Communication Theory

MSC 631 (4) Crisis Communication

Total credit requirements

21 required: 12 elective



Contact

Rylan Pugh
rylan.pugh@ec.edu

Thank You!



A conference like this is only possible through the volunteer labor of lots of people.

We are extremely grateful to Mercer University, the School of Communication Studies and Theatre, and student volunteers.

This conference was organized by Steve Stuglin, Christian Norman, Katie Baxter, and Cameron Kunzelman, with prodigious support from Rick Lindner, Anna Deeb, Meredith Ginn, David Nelson, Brian Kline, Q. McElroy, Sangsun Choi, Allen Dutch, Nathan Bedsole, and Matt Terrell.

We appreciate the support of our group of volunteer reviewers, respondents, moderators, and film festival judges.

Thank you to our esteemed keynote speaker, the Hon. Erica L. Woodford, Esq., who was very generous with her time!

Sponsorship supports our awards for scholarship and engagement, so we want to especially thank Program sponsors: Augusta University, Georgia Highlands College, Oglethorpe University, and Valdosta State University.

GCA is also sustained by your memberships and conference registrations!

We owe special thanks to our Patron Members, including

Paul Raptis	Christian Norman	Brian Kline
Mina Ivanova	Pamela Hayward	David Nelson

The event relies on every author, presenter, panelist, and attendee to come together to have something to talk about. Thank you for sharing your time, insights, lessons, best practices, feedback, and fellowship with us!

Save the Date!

February 18-20, 2027



GHC

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University System of Georgia

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