

Designing Graduate Programs for Accessibility, Student Success, & Progressive Attainment



MGA

Dr. Mary Wearn, Dean of the School of Arts & Letters

Dr. Benita Muth, Chair of English

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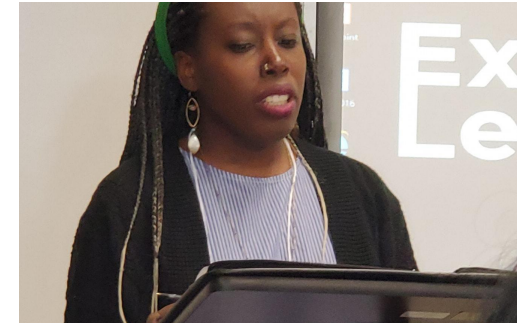
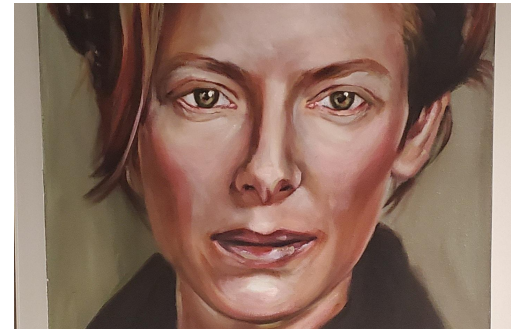
Dr. Michael North, Coordinator, Media & Communication



Middle Georgia State University

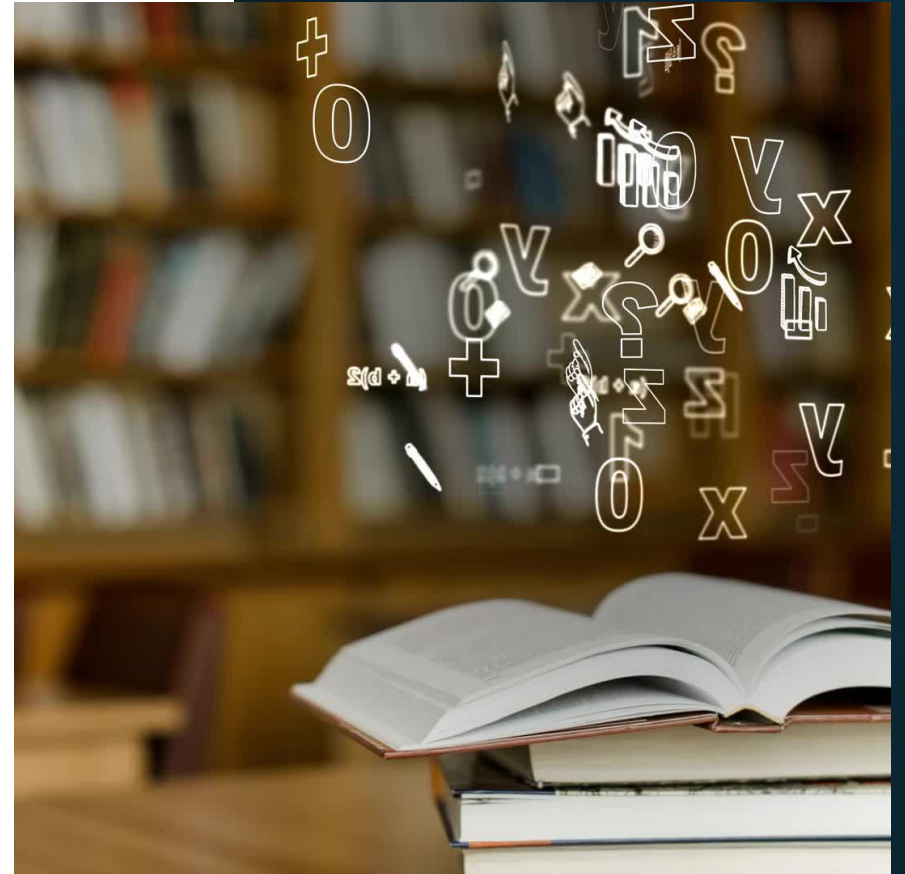
School of Arts & Letters (SoAL)

Strategic Imperative to Foster
Academic, Professional, and Social
Agility



SoAL Graduate Program Design Principles:

- **Access**
- **Student Success**
- **Progressive Attainment**



Access



PRICE
POINT



ADMISSION
S



MODE



SCHEDULE

Affordable Price Point



- \$301/Credit Hour in Tuition and Fees
- No Upcharge for Out-of-State

Flexible, Innovative Admissions



Rolling Access

No Specific Degree Requirements

Multiple points of access with GPA
Flexibility



Convenient Mode & Flexible Courses

- Fully online / asynchronous
- 8-week classes
- No prerequisite classes





Flexible Graduate Scheduling: The MATPW Model

| FALL | | SPRING | | SUMMER |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1 st Session | 2 nd Session | 1 st Session | 2 nd Session | Full Session |
| ITEC 5310 | ENGL 5106 | ITEC 5310/ ENGL 6200 | NMAC 5108 | ITEC 5320 |
| ENGL 5206 | Elective | ENGL 6200/ Elective | ENGL 5650 | COMM 5000 |

Student Success

A graphic consisting of a dark blue rounded rectangle with a light blue rounded rectangle inside it. The text "SUPPORT SYSTEMS" is centered in the light blue area.

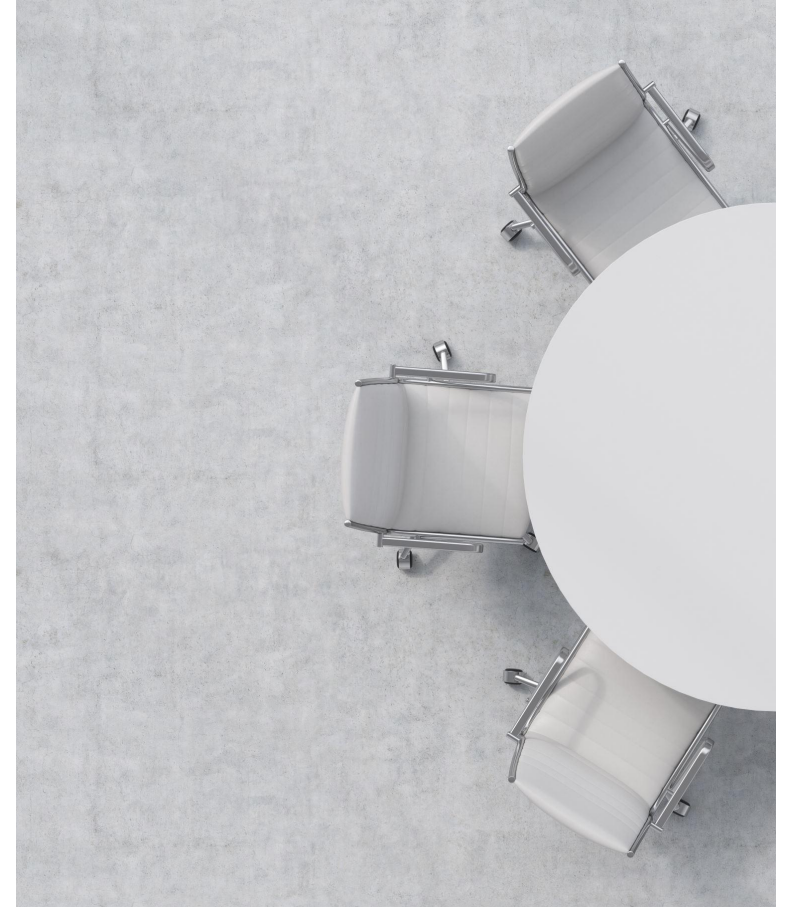
**SUPPORT
SYSTEMS**

A graphic consisting of a dark blue rounded rectangle with a light blue rounded rectangle inside it. The text "COMMUNITY" is centered in the light blue area.

**COMMUNIT
Y**

Support Systems for Online, Asynchronous Students

- Dedicated graduate writing center and IT tutors
- Dedicated graduate librarian
- Collaboration with Center for Career and Leadership Development
- Development of online internship opportunities



Fostering Online Student Community in Challenging Times

- Providing professionalization and professional development opportunities
- Teaching collaboration and project management strategies
- Understanding students' material and time resources



Progressive Educational Attainment

Interdisciplinary,
Overlapping
Curriculum

Modular,
Stackable
Certificates and
Master's
Degrees

Graduate Certificate s

Technical Writing and
Digital Communication

Teaching College
Writing

Creative Writing

Progressive Professional Attainment



Professional
Pivot

Market-Facing
, Evergreen
Programming

Futureproofed
Curriculum

Supporting Professional Pivots

- M.A. students seeking 18 ENGL credit hours in order to teach writing at the college level
- USG faculty and staff looking for credentials for skills that they already have or need for their current job or to move into a new field.
- Retirees, former military, high school teachers, stay-at-home parents and others looking to draw on their experiences for a new career path.



Market-Facing Evergreen Programming

- Programs developed in response to market needs – especially in the state of Georgia
- Stackable credentials to ensure student professional success





Public Relations: A Case Study

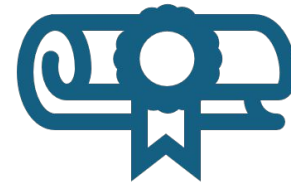
M.A. in Public Relations at MGA



Growth in the field 2020 to 2030 (*Bureau of Labor and Statistics*)

U.S. – Almost 9,000 new jobs for PR professionals each year

Georgia – About 200 new jobs for PR professionals each year



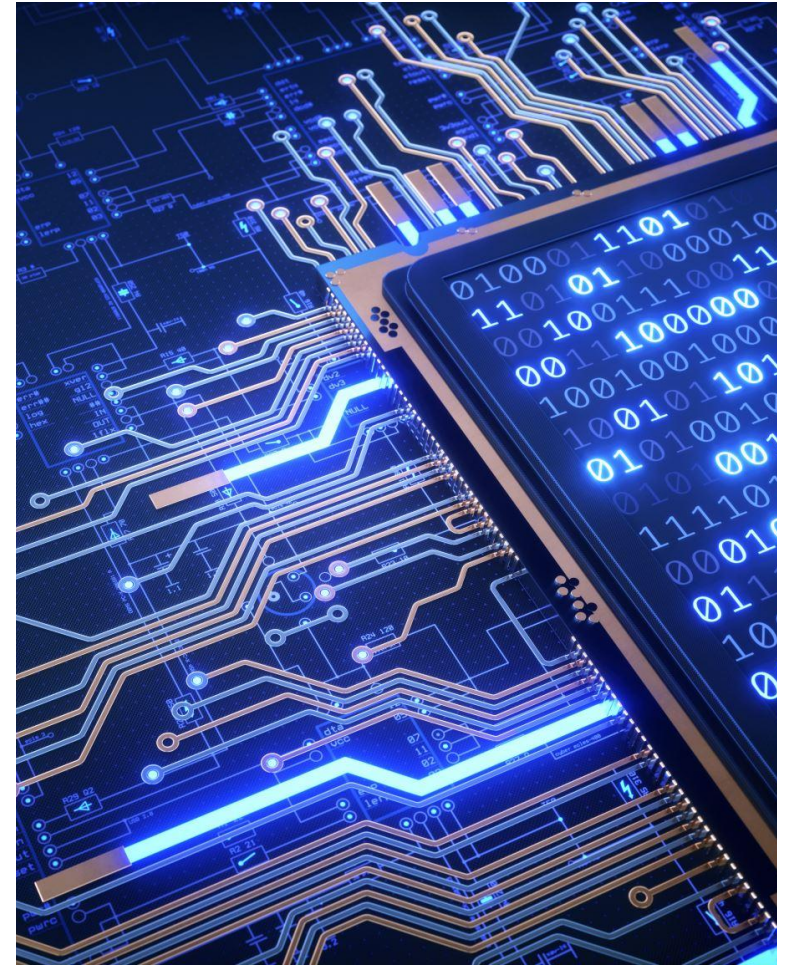
MGA addresses a need and prepares graduates for public relations today

No other free-standing graduate program in Georgia

Campaigns, PR Writing, Media Relations, Crisis Communication, Social Media

The Future

- Forecast – 85% of jobs in 2030 don't exist today (*Institute for the Future*)
 - Artificial Intelligence – machine learning that adapts and produces content
 - Internet of Things – communication facilitated among machines by machines
- Will master's degrees in public relations become obsolete?



Futureproofing MGA's master's degree in public relations

- Consultations with alumni, employers and community representatives
- Public Relations Practicum
- Graduate Certificate in Strategic Business Communication
- Skills – writing, content creation, marketing, promotion, and storytelling
- How to learn > What to learn (*Dell Technologies*)



I Have Just a Few Questions...

- What can I do with a degree in communication?
 - Better question: What can't I do with a degree in communication?
- What is public relations?
 - The maintenance of credibility
 - No license needed
 - No certification needed
 - No authorization needed
 - But a credential would be nice
- But why public relations?
 - Sharpen soft skills and it's an achievable professional pivot

Discussion and Questions

