**The Master of Arts in Professional Writing**

The Master of Arts in Professional Writing (MAPW) degree is an interdisciplinary professional graduate degree program that prepares candidates for a wide variety of writing‑related positions in academia, business, publishing, screenwriting and the literary arts. Course work in three concentrations--applied writing, composition and rhetoric, and creative writing--allows students to gain theoretical and practical knowledge in various fields of professional writing. As students become experienced in producing and analyzing the business, technical, journalistic, and creative texts in these three concentrations, they develop a sophisticated understanding of style, structure, and audience. MAPW students will become writing professionals who can move in many directions during their careers; they will become flexible writers who can tune into the writing conventions of a given genre, adapting their writing style to the requirements of various rhetorical contexts in today's print, electronic and multimodal environments.

**Alumni and Student Testimonies**

*Cheryl Stiles, 2003*

"Although I had previous success in publishing poetry, I began to think of myself as a *professional* writer when I enrolled in and completed the KSU program. My course work in MAPW gave me considerable experience in creating, coordinating, and sustaining writing groups. In the last three years I coordinated two yearlong KSU Library System Professional Writing Groups. Members of these two writing cohorts have since published in professional journals. I am especially proud of the fact that I can use my talents and expertise—honed in the MAPW program—in support of other writers."

*Walter Lawrence, 2005*

“I was attracted to the MAPW Program because of its immediate applicability. Not only were we given a wide skill set of writing techniques, but our natural abilities for words and story were also improved immensely. I endeavored after graduation to “earn back” the tuition and fees I paid for the degree through paid writing assignments. I did, and then some. It continues to this day. That portfolio includes thirty-four magazine and newspaper articles, three novels, and one short story anthology. In addition, four poems and three short stories were printed in notable literary publications. Today, I am promoting the two screenplays I've written (based on class assignments), one a feature film and the other a TV pilot.

*Melva Robertson, 2005*

“The MAPW program has been tremendously impactful and invaluable. The program expanded my abilities as a writer in several ways. As a technical writer, this program allowed me the ability to explore the more creative aspects of my writing and discover ways to incorporate the unique intricacies of rhetoric and creativity into my more applied writing style. Shortly after receiving my degree, I was hired as the Communications Manager for Morehouse School of Medicine. I am confident that my degree was a contributing factor to securing that position as my hiring employer later shared that hearing about my degree increased the team's level of confidence in my potential writing ability.  Currently, I am the Director of Communications for the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies at Emory University. I learned tools of effective speechwriting and strategies to find the client' "voice" as I worked on my MAPW capstone.I used excerpts from my capstone as writing samples when interviewing for my job and I utilize the lessons learned from the capstone experience daily as I manage writing in this capacity as well as oversee a team of writers."

*Jan Heidrich-Rice, 2006*

When I graduated in 2006, I had a solid portfolio of work to share. These included a successful grant proposal co-written with a classmate for Sheltering Arms (Child Learning Center in Atlanta), a feature piece with byline for *Quilt Magazine* about the Gee’s Bend Quilt Exhibit at the High Museum, and a book proposal with sample chapters for *Used Gifts: Tales Along the Journey of Organ and Tissue Donation*(my capstone project). When I began my post-MAPW job search, I shared my portfolio while interviewing for the Grants Manager opening at the Atlanta Legal Aid Society. I landed the job, and I was told later that my writing samples closed the deal for the Communications Director. I have built a livelihood focused on my applied writing skills."

*Cherie Miller, 2007*

“When I arrived at Kennesaw State University to enroll in the MAPW program, I'd already been published as a writer, but didn't have any credentials. The MAPW added that extra credibility as a professional that I needed. Since my graduation in 2007, I've published two books and co-wrote two books, which I consider a success. Prior to enrolling in the program, I had multiple magazine articles, a successful newspaper column in Chicago, etc. But my goal was to publish books. The MAPW program, with some wonderful professors, gave me the oomph to accomplish this life goal.”

*Patricia Henritze, 2009*

“When I entered the MAPW Program, I already had an MFA in Theater from another university.  I was interested in expanding my credentials and writing skills and I also used the MAPW to generate material. Much of what I wrote in my Creative Writing concentration was submitted to journals and contests, and while still in the program, I was a Poetry Finalist in the Georgia Writers’ Festival. My Capstone Project received Honorable Mention from the Association of Writers and Writing Programs Journal Award and won an Orlando Prize from A Room of Her Own Foundation. This was a great boost to my resume and confidence. Today, I use the skills learned in the MAPW in my teaching, corporate and creative endeavors. Also, I often teach in more than one department within a university. Adding the MAPW to my CV created twice the opportunities for me."

*Sally Kilpatrick, 2010*

“My MAPW courses definitely helped me take my writing to another level, and I wrote and workshopped the first two chapters of *The Happy Hour Choir,* my first of five published novels to date, in the "Chick Lit" class I took during my last semester in the program. In addition to everything I learned about the craft of writing fiction, technical courses helped me develop an online presence and gave me branding/blogging strategies, a crucial step toward becoming a successful published author in today’s world. Three professors in particular—Melanie Sumner, Jeffrey Stepakoff, and especially Tony Grooms—gave me invaluable insights that I still use today when crafting novels."

*Kathleen Brewin Lewis, 2011*

“I doubt I would have published much of anything if I had not completed the MAPW program at Kennesaw State. I had written for decades, on yellow notepads, and simply put my work into my desk drawers.  MAPW professors helped me develop into a multi-genre writer; they taught me how to produce.  And I've kept going since graduation. I've published two chapbooks of poetry and am about to complete a full collection. I've published five of the ten stories from my capstone project. I've placed book reviews and essays in various journals."

*Lisa Russell, 2012*

Dr. Laura McGrath not only taught me how to teach, but she was on my capstone. She worked with me to ensure that I had a quality thesis and project. She continues to encourage me in my writing and teaching. Dr. Mary Lou Odom was my professor for a directed study one summer. During that study we rebranded the writing center increased student traffic to almost 800 students the following fall semester. I use this achievement when I apply for positions in my institution. She continues to be my mentor when I work with writing issues and my students. She continues to support and encourage me. Dr. Linda Neimann's class was the catalyst to my writing creative nonfiction. I have completed 3 books writing creative nonfiction history of North Georgia. My publisher was so happy with my sales, they gave me a third contract with higher royalties and all the digital profits from eBooks. I speak all over North Georgia on a regular basis while teaching full-time."

*Molly Lathem, 2017*

“When I started my job at OnCourse Learning as a writer, I felt I had a better feel for grammar and punctuation than most, but my editor chopped up my submissions right and left. I knew I needed a better grasp of mechanical execution if I was going to move forward in my career. When I was accepted into the MAPW program, I was accepted in the Teacher’s Assistant program. In retrospect, I know that working in the Writing Center, under the lead of Mary Lou Odom in the Teacher’s Assistant program, and then eventually as a Graduate Writing Assistant, was the one thing that changed my trajectory in my profession for the better. I am now the Education Manager at my job, overseeing the educational side of over 4,000 online real estate education courses."

*Daniel Lumpkin, 2018*

“My entire experience at the MAPW program was incredible. The professors helped guide me through the fields and subjects that fascinated me as a writer, rather than guide me away from those areas and towards fields of study that are commonly pursued. I decided to do my capstone thesis on the work of death row and prison chaplains. It was a complicated task but both of my capstone advisers never tried push me in any other direction except towards my goal. By the time I was able to get into a prison and really do some journalistic heavy lifting, I was confident that what I was doing was not just interesting work, but important. "

*Estefany Palacio, 2018*

"I received great academic preparation for my current job as a copywriter. I felt encouraged by my peers and supported by my professors. Not only was I able to attend classes and learn about writing and its different theoretical approaches, but also I was able to participate in projects that challenged me as a writer and individual. Much of my classroom work informs my current work, as I was able to interact with different publishing technologies and approaches to content delivery. For example, as a student, I developed a digital magazine as a final project for my Technical Writing class. I also submitted an assignment, a book review, for publication, which can be found in *Kairos Journal*, and will soon be published as part of a collection thanks to the support from my mentor, Sergio Figueiredo."

*Kelsey Medlin Provow, 2018*

“While many aspects of the MAPW program have helped me grow as a writing professional, the community engagement and internship program with Dr. [Lara] Smith-Sitton had the greatest impact on my growth in the publishing industry. My career goal to gain experience in editing was supported in two ways by the program: interning with Dr. [Regina] Bradley as an editorial assistant during the development of her two books and leading a group of undergraduate editors in transcribing and editing of 30 essays for the book, *Green Card Youth Voices: Immigration Stories from an Atlanta High School.*Through this hands-on experience, I was able to implement the skills I acquired in my graduate level editing class and explore my own thesis on the effects of editing the works of authors of color through a white, privileged lens. "

*Laura McCarter, 2019*

"Getting my graduate degree from the MAPW Program at KSU was one of the smartest decisions I’ve ever made. The opportunities this program offers have set me up for a successful career doing what I love. It’s one of the few programs in Georgia that offers screenwriting classes, and my professors have been immensely helpful with preparing students for careers in the film industry, which I’m now working in full time. I was encouraged to participate in conferences while in the MAPW, and by doing so, I was chosen as a finalist in the 2019 Screencraft Pitch Competition, and I was invited to present my research on visual rhetoric and screenwriting at the 2018 Congress on Visual Culture in Rome, Italy, which was paid for by the English department and the Graduate Student Organization at KSU."

*Ed Gadrix, 2020*

“When I started the MAPW program at Kennesaw State, I had no idea where I was going, but I knew I wanted to write. I signed-up for beginning screenwriting with no knowledge of the craft. After the first course, I was “hooked.” I’ve taken every course offered in screenwriting, closed my law practice, and I’m now dedicated to being a screenwriter. Through the program, I’ve written one feature (almost 2-hours), one short film, and one TV pilot (1 hour). The feature won an award by the International Independent Film Awards in Los Angeles, the short film is a finalist in its competition, and is now under production in New York. I’m finishing the pilot and hope to submit it to buyers before the end of this year."