

# THE COMMUNICATOR

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF FLORIDA TECH'S SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

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## INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATION, U.S. ELECTION COVERAGE FOCUS OF TWO COM SUMMER COURSES

By Rolanda Hatcher-Gallop,  
*The Communicator*

The 2020 U.S. election season was one for the record books, and not just because it was in the middle of a pandemic.

Nearly two-thirds of the country's voting-eligible population voted, according to the Pew Research Center, making it the highest voter turnout since 1900. Several winners broke barriers, including Kamala Harris as the first woman and the first Black and Indian American to be vice president, and Joe Biden as only the second Catholic president in American history.

The elections also saw the public bombarded with all sorts of information on candidates and issues from every source imaginable and unimaginable; it still is not particularly easy to make sense of it all several months later.

Fortunately, two courses kicked off May 10 to shed light on the tangled web of political communication.

International Political Communication (COM 5210/3085) examines the interactive relationship between international political communication and global politics.

Under the instruction of Dzmity Yuran, Ph.D., assistant professor of communication, students will investigate how the effectiveness, successes or failures in international political communication affect global events. The 3-credit course meets at 5:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays.

Students were encouraged to take the class along with Journalism and the U.S. Elections (COM 5420/3085), a new course examining the journalism around U.S. elections, which meets at 5:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays.

"Anyone could take either of the classes for either graduate or undergraduate credit, hence the double CRN. Graduate students will just do a little more work (i.e., additional readings and presentations for the class, a longer paper)," Yuran explained.



"There are no prerequisites other than a curiosity."

Taught by Ted Petersen, Ph.D., associate professor and acting chair of the communication program, the journalism class aims to help students understand more fully the importance of a free press in a democracy and the imperative that journalists seek truth and report it.

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# SCHOOL OF ARTS AND COMMUNICATION FACULTY AND STAFF, SUMMER 2021

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**Keturah Mazo**, M.A.

**Anna Montoya**, M.A.

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**Brandon Smith**

**Ellen Stewart**

**Chelsea Stripling**

**Michael Tillema**

**Charles VanRiper**

**Jeffery Woliver**

### STAFF

**Amanda Culver**, Administrative Assistant III

## SAVE THE DATE

### SUMMER 2021 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

May 10 | First day of classes, first 6-week term

May 17 | First day of classes, 8-, 9- and 11-week terms

May 21 | Last day to register, add a class or drop a class without receiving a grade of W, 8-, 9- and 11-week terms

May 31 | Memorial Day (no classes)

July 5 | Independence Day, observed (no classes)

July 31 | Summer Commencement Exercises

Aug. 23 | Fall 2021 classes begin

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



### Meditation in the Gardens

The Joy and Gordon Patterson Botanical Garden will continue to host Meditation in the Gardens on Wednesdays through the summer. Sponsored by Evans Library, the 30-minute sessions begin at noon. Participants are to bring something to sit on and meet at the gazebo by the turtle pond. Masks and social distancing are required. ■

## THANK YOU

Special thanks to those who contributed to producing this issue of *The Communicator*. We owe you a debt of gratitude!

Amanda Culver, Natalie Dorfeld, Lauryn Harris, John Lavelle, Joseph Montelione and Y.J. Sohn. ■

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## RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES OF THE PAST, MOVING TOWARD A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D., is the interim head of the School of Arts and Communication. Photo: Y.J. Sohn, Ph.D.

"It is worth repeating—we are resilient."

Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D.,  
interim head of the School of Arts  
and Communication

The last issue of *The Communicator* was a powerful reflection on this difficult year in which we faced much change and heart-breaking loss. Yet, those stories, like so many others we've heard throughout the year, were full of the hope and resilience in the hearts of all of us in the School of Arts and Communication.

This issue illustrates that resilience as we respond to the challenges of the past, looking to the future with courses and programs that resonate with the times.

Consistent with Florida Tech's core values, our classes examine complex issues that help us recognize our human connectedness and instill a sense of global citizenship.

This summer, we're offering two special-topics courses in communication exploring international political communication, and journalism and the U.S. elections.

In the fall, we're continuing to offer popular humanities electives, including classes on contemporary philosophy and engineering codes of ethics as well as a special-topics class in modern African American studies. At a time when global politics, social unrest, risk communication, journalism and policies about science and technology are converging, these are particularly meaningful topics.

In the diversity of our disciplines, we study the human experience from historical and contemporary perspectives that benefit the decisions we make as a society. Our courses, activities and scholarship, recently forced onto virtual platforms, persist and thrive.

It is worth repeating—we are resilient.

Join us as we emerge from the turmoil of the last year, looking eagerly to a future in which the lessons learned energize and propel us to even greater accomplishments together. ■

*Heidi Hatfield Edwards*

CONNECT WITH US:



# FLORIDA TECH STUDENTS' DIGITAL STORIES FEATURED AT NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Ingrid Bradley for  
*The Communicator*



Teaching composition has its challenges, but in teaching today's digitally native students, meeting them where they learn best may mean taking a more multimodal approach.

This pedagogical approach was featured at the

2021 National Teachers of English's Conference on College Composition & Communication, where composition meets digital story making.

When COVID-19 emerged in March 2020, the Honors Scientific and Technical Communication class went online like everyone else. At the same time, I was exploring digital story making to convey

ideas and knowledge that may better suit the student who is digitally connected.

To keep the honors students motivated after the move to online functioning, their final assignment in the class was to write a two-page reflection on their COVID-19 online transition experience, then condense it to a one-minute video of themselves expressing their feelings.

This compilation of their videos was turned into a four-minute digital story which was submitted as an assignment for my doctoral class in technology and composition. Here, the teacher became part of the digital storytelling journey with the students. The digital story exploration was so successful that it was adopted as a presentation for the convention. Through this generative digital story-making experience, the teacher becomes the researcher of the student experience.

What I discovered is that today's student naturally composes multimodally, and providing these honors students with an audio-visual component to their practice got them

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# PATTERSON NAMED SGA PROFESSOR OF THE YEAR FOR COPLA



Congratulations to professor Gordon Patterson, Ph.D., the 2021 Student Government Association Professor of the Year for the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts.

Patterson, a history professor in the SAC and Florida Tech historian, has been a member of the university's faculty for 40 years.

Blake Wolanin, academics chair for the SGA, stated that "numerous students had great things to say" about Patterson throughout the association's voting process.

"Thank you for fostering student success and helping make FIT the best it can be," Wolanin stated. ■



# JOHN LAVELLE RETIRES AFTER 13 YEARS OF TEACHING IN THE SAC

By Rolanda Hatcher-Gallop, *The Communicator*

As the spring 2021 semester came to a close, so did the 13-year tenure of John Lavelle, Ph.D., a beloved faculty member in the School of Arts and Communication.

Lavelle, an associate professor of English, retired this month.

"Of course, I will miss many things, students, teaching and such, but I think I will miss my colleagues the most. I've made a lot of good friends here over the years, and this made leaving a bit difficult," Lavelle said.

An accomplished writer and novelist, Lavelle recently won the Contributions to Student Life award from Florida Tech's Student Life office for his service as the founding advisor of the university's student-run literary arts magazine, *The Kaleidoscope*.

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Lauryn Harris celebrates receiving her bachelor's degree in multiplatform journalism on May 1. She will be pursuing her master's degree in communication at Queens University of Charlotte in North Carolina in the fall.

## CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

### Fall 2020

#### B.S. Multiplatform Journalism

Stephen Pickrom

#### B.S. Strategic Communication

Thomas Handel

### Spring 2021

#### B.A. Humanities

Cheyenne Alexandra Scott

#### B.A. Humanities Pre-Law

Dania Saleh

Laura Williams

#### B.S. Multiplatform Journalism

Lauryn Harris

Christian Martinez

Sonja Michaels

John O'Brien

#### B.S. Strategic Communication

Elena Ciulli

## DIGITAL STORY MAKING

*Continued from page 4*

excited and inspired. This was particularly meaningful for them, given the shock of their disrupted personal and academic lives.

My generation was not raised multimodally, so the creation of this digital story was challenging.

Perhaps, when we ask students to compose entirely in text form, it is more challenging for them because they think multimodally. Multimodal composing encourages a refined approach to audience because there are more considerations beyond text. Appealing to the reader/viewer's eyes and ears demands a choreographed composition.

For instructors, it means that we must learn to create and assess these assignments. Sure, it may be easier to maintain the status quo of purely text-based products. However, I cannot think of any

assignment that brings forth more critical thinking than a digital story that is based on credible research, or at least a research paper that includes a multimodal component where it is more fitting to present information in that way.

Fortunately, there is a lot of vibrant on this subject.

Digital story making can enhance the classroom learning experience in many ways, and this can be done individually or as a group. When students collaborate on a digital story, they employ critical thinking and learn to work as a team to choreograph something meaningful. It is this choreography of visuals, sound and text that takes students and teachers on a journey that appeals to the senses.

Multimodal composition in the classroom is taking hold at institutions like Georgia Institute

of Technology where its writing center, the Communication Center, has an entirely multimodal focus.

Multimodal is where business and industry are heading. Digital reports are becoming more common, and exposing our students to this reality is emerging as important, if not critical, toward equipping them with tools for success.

Digital story making can find its way into literary analysis, research papers and scientific/engineering papers. Any place where text is better represented visually or aurally is where a digital story can reside. Digital story making can also be a point of entry into some vibrant academic inquiry.

The feedback from this sci tech com honors class digital story experience was all positive.

In the end, the students were challenged far more than any text-based assignment could have achieved. Yet, because multimodal was natural to them, students were able to use their innate digital talent to further their critical thinking expertise. Meeting students where they learn best may mean a learning curve for instructors to think multimodally.

Digital story making with the teacher as collaborator proved to be a vibrant learning experience for everyone.

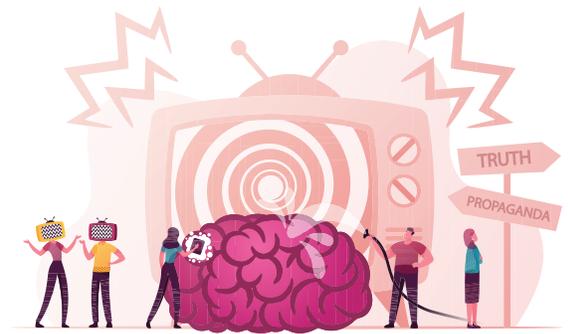
*Ingrid Bradley virtually graduated this month from Murray State University in Kentucky with her Doctorate of Arts degree in English Pedagogy with an emphasis on Scientific and Technical Writing.*

This issue of *The Communicator* highlights several courses offered by the School of Arts and Communication. Be sure to check the Florida Tech catalog at [catalog.fit.edu](http://catalog.fit.edu) for detailed information on academic programs, courses, credit hours, prerequisites, policies and procedures.

## SUMMER 2021: NEW HUM COURSE SPOTLIGHTS TELEVISION AND ITS INFLUENCE

A 3-credit course exploring television and popular TV shows? What better way to spend the summer!

Enroll in HUM 3281 Television and Pop Culture and learn how television has evolved from the 20th century to the present. From “I Love Lucy” to “Star Trek,” “The Simpsons” to “The Handmaid’s Tale,” television—in its dual forms of technology and an entertainment medium—has played a crucial role in our homes, our lives and our world. From



newscasts to sitcoms and commercials, television narratives tell us how to think, when to laugh, and what to buy.

This 8-week summer course, taught by Angela Tenga, Ph.D., associate professor of English, emphasizes the analysis of television series that shape and are shaped by U.S. culture. Go ahead, pick up the remote. ■

## FALL 2021: EXPLORE LAW THROUGH A PHILOSOPHICAL LENS



The concept of law and the source of legal authority are frequent topics among television pundits and on news shows these days. Want to learn more about law from a philosophical perspective? Enroll in HUM 3541 Philosophy of Law this fall.

Renée Nicole “Nikki” Souris Smith, Ph.D., assistant professor of Law & Society in the SAC, will teach the course, exploring the concepts of law, origins of legal authority and the relation of laws to morals. The class also will analyze contemporary philosophical debates concerning the fundamental nature of law. ■

## FALL 2021: MODERN AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

HUM 3485 is an introductory 3-credit course in the African American experience, constructed around the voices and perspectives of Black people living in the U.S. It is organized chronologically, with an emphasis on the ideas of African American social thought, political protest and efforts to create social change.

Half the course covers the historical foundations and background of the modern Black experience, from the struggle against slavery to the Harlem Renaissance. The second half of the course



focuses on the period from the Great Depression to the present.

Significant focus in this course will be placed on the elimination of racism, the realization of democratic rights and greater social fairness within a racially pluralistic society and the achievement of cultural integrity for African Americans. ■

## HUMANITIES COURSES

### FALL 2021: REGISTER NOW FOR FALL GUITAR AND PIANO CLASSES

Interested in learning how to play a musical instrument? There are a few more openings for the beginner group guitar and group piano classes offered this fall.

“The beginning sections are open to anyone without prior experience,” said Kevin Burke, Ph.D., associate professor of music and director of music programs.

Both beginner classes introduce the fundamentals of playing, with instruction on basic chords and musical theory. The guitar class, MUS 1201, requires students to bring their own guitars.

The piano class, MUS 1203, includes instruction on proper hand positions, scales and two-hand exercises.



More experienced players should enroll in the group intermediate piano class, MUS 1204, or the group intermediate guitar class, MUS 1202.

“The intermediate sections can be repeated for credit, so students can continue to progress,” Burke explained.

Seats are filling up fast for all sections. ■

### FALL 2021: STUDENTS OF ALL MAJORS PRACTICE, PERFORM IN UNIVERSITY BANDS

The Florida Tech university bands provide students the opportunity to participate in any of the three large ensembles offered at the university. Graduate students may audit ensembles at no extra cost.

The Wind Ensemble (MUS 2203) rehearses from 5:30–6:45 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays, with a final performance at the end of the semester.

The Big Band Jazz Ensemble (MUS 2005) rehearses Fridays at 4 p.m. and has multiple

performance opportunities, both on and off campus.

The Pep Band is a performing ensemble that prepares music for a number of university events, including home basketball games. Be prepared to learn the Florida Tech Fight Song.

Private music lessons are available, too. Check out [floridatech.edu/music](http://floridatech.edu/music) for more information. ■

### FALL 2021: HUM COURSE COVERS ENGINEERING ETHICS CODES



After a successful debut, the SAC will offer HUM 3571 Engineering Ethics this fall for the second time. Taught by Moti Mizrahi, Ph.D., associate professor of philosophy, the course assists students in developing

the capacity for ethical and professional conduct in engineering through an interactive study of moral theories and dilemmas in engineering practices. ■

### FALL 2021: EVOLUTION OF HIP HOP COURSE TAKES STUDENTS BEHIND THE MIC



Is Jay-Z, Eminem or Drake the greatest rapper of all time?

Who really penned the term “hip hop”?

It is one thing to listen to hip hop, but to really know it, you need a course like MUS 3282 Evolution of Hip Hop.

This 3-credit course, offered this fall, takes a multidisciplinary approach to studying rap and hip-hop culture. The class, taught by ethnomusicologist and musician Donald Harrell, traces the roots of hip hop and the factors that led to its advent and development, highlighting key figures in its evolution.

The class is an inclusive in-depth analysis of hip-hop culture and its historical, socio-economic, political, musicological, literary and philosophical implications.

“I took the class because I wanted a better understanding of the history of hip-hop culture and what past events led to where we are today,” explained Kafele Wimbley, a senior computer science major.

He said the class offers a unique experience into a musical movement influencing other areas of society.

“If you are not taking this course, you are missing out because Mr. Harrell grew up when hip hop emerged, so he has insight that you wouldn’t get in many places,” Wimbley said. ■

## FALL 2021: FUTURE PODCASTERS SHOULD TAKE COM 4301



Kevin Boodoosingh, a global strategic communication graduate student who has created and co-hosted podcasts, says COM 4301 provides the essentials to podcasting.

People are listening.

According to *Forbes Magazine*, an estimated 100 million people tuned into podcasts on a monthly basis in 2020. That number is expected to climb to 125 million in 2022.

If you like podcasts and think you might want to create one, COM 4301 Media Production—Audio will show you how.

The journalism class, taught this fall by associate professor Ted Petersen, Ph.D., focuses on learning how to tell stories with sound.

From NPR-style "headline news" to narrative podcasts, COM 4301 will encourage students to develop technical skills with audio recording and editing and to sharpen their storytelling techniques.

"The class taught me a tremendous amount of information, especially on the production side," said Kevin Boodoosingh, a global strategic communication graduate student. He took the class in 2018 as an undergraduate journalism student and went on to launch and co-host several podcasts with fellow student David Thompson.

"You learn how to edit audio for a conversation flow, add music appropriately and, most importantly, how to effectively record great audio (recording methods)." ■

## FALL 2021: COM 3231 SHARPENS SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WRITING SKILLS

In the early morning hours of May 9, SpaceX launched 60 Starlink internet satellites into orbit.

While the launch was an impressive sight, writing about the inner workings of the Falcon 9 rocket used in the liftoff could prove a daunting task for those unfamiliar with the topic.

That's where COM 3231 Writing About Science comes in.

The course, with its graduate counterpart, COM 5510 Covering Science and Technology,

introduces students to writing about science and technology to reach broad audiences through news and public information channels. Students work on semester-long projects with the goal of publication through traditional and social media outlets.

"This class is a step toward gaining the skills necessary to accurately and effectively interpret and share complex scientific and technical information," said Heidi Hatfield Edwards, Ph.D., the communication professor who teaches

both courses. She also is interim head of the School of Arts and Communication.

"These skills are critical to helping the public understand and make informed decisions about their health, the environment and the implications of technological advancements," she said.

COM 3231 includes writing about new research findings (popular science writing), controversies in science, the social implications of science and technology, science policy and ethical codes for practicing science writers. ■

## COM SUMMER COURSES

*Continued from page 1*

"Both of these courses may be of interest to students in light of the recent elections and political turmoil we are living through still," said Yuran, who has taught the political communication course for several semesters.

"I tailor the course every time to talk about current events to address students' interests. Last time I taught it, we talked a good deal about the 2016 elections," he said.

The class will examine some of the issues and perspectives that divided the 2020 electorate and will touch on the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine administration.

"We have talked about anti-vaxxers in the course before, but there are just so many more layers to it in the current climate," he said.

While COM 5210/3085 concentrates heavily on mass media and their role in political communication, the course situates political communication broadly to include the numerous forms of political expression, from propaganda and political advertising to entertainment and other seemingly unrelated media products, to political activism and public engagement.

Yuran added that the journalism course came out of a desire for an in-depth analysis of election coverage. Students also will learn about historical and contemporary cases.

"Ted and I will try to make sure there isn't too much overlap and that we do address some of the same topics from different angles," he said.

"Taking both classes at once will not just earn a lot of credits over six weeks but will allow for a deeper scoop on the topic." ■

## LAVELLE RETIREMENT

*Continued from page 4*

Ted Petersen, Ph.D., associate professor and acting chair of the communication program, stated that the magazine's editorial team often met late on Friday afternoons, and Lavelle rarely missed a meeting.

"I'll miss a lot about our retiring friend and colleague, but in my role as director of student media, I'll sincerely miss his advocacy for student freedom of expression and his desire to create space for creative voices at Florida Tech," Peterson said.

Natalie Dorfeld, Ph.D., associate professor of English, said she will miss her colleague's laughter, lunches and camaraderie.

"John-John is like my dysfunctional brother from another mother. We grew up in the same Rust Belt area, so we share many of the same viewpoints, along with a dark sense of humor," Dorfeld said.

As for Lavelle, he kicks off his retirement with a year to plan his next adventures, which will include his creative work.

"I want to take time to finish my travel book on my trip around France and edit a novel manuscript while also writing a few short stories," he said.

Then there are the plans to travel on his motorcycle, of course.

"This summer, it's the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Tail of the Dragon and several other trips, depending on the situation with the coronavirus," he said.

"I have not ruled out a trip to another continent to ride, but, again, we'll see." ■

# HUMANITIES

## FALL 2021 COURSE OPTIONS

As you plan for registration, here is a list of courses available next semester that meet the humanities requirements in the general education core:

### CHOOSE ONE

- » **HUM 2051 \***  
Civilization 1:  
Ancient through Medieval
- » **HUM 2053 \***  
Introduction to Asian  
Civilization
- » **HUM 2141 \***  
World Art History 1:  
Pre-History to Early  
Global Awareness
- » **HUM 2211 \***  
British Literature  
and Culture
- » **HUM 2212**  
British and American  
Literature 1
- » **HUM 2331 \***  
American History:  
Pre-Columbian to  
Civil War Era
- » **HUM 2551 \***  
Survey of Ancient and  
Medieval Philosophy

### CHOOSE ONE

- » **HUM 2052 \***  
Civilization 2: Renaissance  
through Modern
- » **HUM 2054**  
Introduction to Asian  
Civilization 2
- » **HUM 2142**  
World Art History 2: Early  
Modern to Post-Colonial
- » **HUM 2212**  
British and American  
Literature 1 *(cannot be repeated if  
selected from the previous requirement)*
- » **HUM 2213 \***  
British and American  
Literature 2
- » **HUM 2332**  
American History: From  
Reconstruction to the  
Present
- » **HUM 2552 \***  
Survey of Modern and  
Contemporary Philosophy

### CHOOSE ONE

- » **HUM 3278 \***  
Crime in Fiction
- » **MUS 3282 \***  
Evolution of Hip Hop
- » **HUM 3351 \***  
History of Science 1:  
Ancient & Medieval
- » **HUM 3385 \***  
Special Topic in History:  
American Civil War
- » **HUM 3401 \***  
Constitutional Law 1
- » **HUM 3410 \***  
Geopolitics and World  
Geography
- » **HUM 3485 \***  
Special Topic in Social  
Science: Modern African  
American Studies
- » **HUM 3541 \***  
Philosophy of Law
- » **HUM 3571 \***  
Engineering Ethics

\* Course is available in the fall 2021 semester.

For more information, email [aberdein@fit.edu](mailto:aberdein@fit.edu) or call 321-674-8368.

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