

Michael Young

Writing and Communication Program
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA

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Education

Ph.D. in English

Minor in Communication Arts and Sciences, Penn State University, 2024

Specializations

History of Rhetoric, Rhetorical Criticism, Writing Pedagogy

Dissertation

"Twentieth Century Sophistries: Popular Science, Human Manuals, and American Rhetorical History"

M.A. in English

Penn State University, 2018

B.A. in English

University of North Texas, 2016 and
Tarrant County College District, 2012–2013

Academic Appointments

Marion L. Brittain Postdoctoral Fellow (2025-present). Writing and Communication Program, Georgia Institute of Technology

Publications

"Towards a Rhetorical Theory of Charisma: Corinthians, Cults, and Demagogic Criticism." Forthcoming in *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* (open access article [available digitally](#)).

Manuscripts in Progress

"The Fraught History of Information Literacy in Rhetorical Pedagogy." Book chapter in *Rhetorical Education in the Neo-liberal University*, eds. Michael Bernard-Donals and Kyle Jensen.

Honors, Awards, and Fellowships

Summer Fellowship in American Literature and Culture, \$5,500. Center for American Literary Studies, 2023.

Humanities Institute Spring Fellowship, course release. Humanities Institute, 2023.

Research and Graduate Studies Office (RGSO) Dissertation Support Competition Award, course release. The College of the Liberal Arts, 2022.

Civil Rights Essay Competition Mentoring Award, \$250. The Center for Democratic Deliberation, 2021.

Kenneth Burke Prize for best graduate essay, \$500. The Center for Democratic Deliberation, 2019.

Superior Teaching and Research (STAR) Award, \$1900. The College of Liberal Arts, 2018.

McCourtney Family Distinguished Graduate Fellowship, The Graduate School at Penn State, 2016.

Phi Kappa Phi Graduate Fellowship, \$5,000. The Honors Society of Phi Kappa Phi, 2016.

Research Assistantships

Research Assistant to Kirt Wilson

2020-2022: Headnote writer and researcher for “Twentieth Century Rhetoric” section of the *Norton Anthology of Rhetoric and Writing* (forthcoming).

Research Assistant to Debra Hawhee

2020-2021: Editorial Assistant for *Rhetorica: A Journal for the History of Rhetoric*, University of California Press.

Program Administration

Program in Writing and Rhetoric, Program Assistant. Teacher Training and Curriculum Design. PSU English, 2023-2025.

Office for the first-year writing program at Penn State; administers 780 sections (which serve 18,600 students) annually.

In this role, I co-led orientation and the teaching practicum for new instructors (currently a cohort of 40). I supported these instructors by designing and modelling weekly lesson plans, co-writing the new curriculum, and overseeing the creation of our supplemental handbook of student writing.

Graduate Writing Center, Co-coordinator. Administration and Writing Consultation. 4 terms. The Graduate School at Penn State, 2018-2019.

As co-coordinator, I led open writing workshops; wrote administrative reports; redesigned the scheduling system; and provided 1,040 hours of one-on-one consultation with graduate student writers in all departments. I also provided customized seminars for individual programs, working with faculty in the Colleges of Nursing, Medicine, and Rural Sociology to introduce genres of academic writing to incoming cohorts.

Teaching (11 sections)

Science Writing Seminar. Office of Graduate Educational Equity Programs and McNair Scholars Program (2 sections).

Summer seminar on scientific writing, publishing, graduate school applications, and conference talks. I taught this course for Penn State's Summer Research Opportunity Program (an interdisciplinary recruitment program for prospective first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented graduate students). In addition to leading class meetings, I work one-on-one with each student in a series of consultations to develop their projects, which they ultimately present in our research symposium.

ENGL 15: Rhetoric and Composition. Program in Writing and Rhetoric (4 sections).

First-year composition course designed as an introduction to argumentation, academic writing, and multimodal composition.

ENGL 30H: Social Movements, Rhetoric, and Writing. Program in Writing and Rhetoric (1 section).

Honors first-year writing course in which students practice advanced writing, research, and reading skills through the study of rhetorical criticism. Readings survey 20C American social movements alongside major landmarks of oratory, activism, and protest. In structured activities and discussions, students rehearse the core analytical and argumentative moves that underwrite their major assignments: rhetorical analyses, historical profiles, redefinition papers, group presentations, and research guides.

ENGL 202C: Technical Communication. Program in Writing and Rhetoric (1 section).

Upper-level document design course that equips students in STEM fields to produce usable, efficient, and accessible workplace writing. Students write job application packets, instruction sets, and technical descriptions.

AMST 140: Religion in American Life and Thought. Penn State World Campus (3 sections).

Online course. Introduction to the cultural study of religion in North America. Students read primary sources in American Indian religions, New England puritanism, Jesuit missions, Black protest religion, reformed and orthodox Judaism, evangelical conservatism, and in the spirituality of civil rights movements. Through structured discussions and analytical writing assignments, students interpret the cultural, historical, political, and economic dimensions of religious life.

ENGL 137: Rhetoric and Civic Life. Schreyer Honors College (1 year-long section).

Year-long honors course in writing and public speaking, designed to cultivate civic leadership through democratic deliberation and the study of rhetoric. Students compose essays, deliver speeches, create videos and podcasts, design websites, and organize public deliberative discussions for the McCourtney Institute of Democracy's annual *Deliberation Nation* event.

Conference Presentations

"Charisma and the Demons of Popular Rhetorical Culture," in panel on *Weird Rhetorics: The Centrality of Strangeness in Political Rhetoric* with Angela Ray, Shira Chess, Belinda Stillion Southard, and Joshua Gunn. National Communication Association 111th Annual Convention. Denver, CO, 2025.

"On Charisma's Ambiguous Rhetorical Aspect," American Society for the History of Rhetoric (ASHR) Symposium at RSA. Denver, CO, 2024.

"How to Do Things with ESP: Mysticism and Pseudoscience in American Rhetorical Education," part of *Fringe Communication* panel with Jenny Rice and Heather Palmer, accepted to National Communication Association 107th Annual Convention. Seattle, WA, 2021 (Panel canceled due to Covid).

"Rhetoric and Fake News: Teaching Source Evaluation from a Rhetorical Perspective in First-Year Composition" 2020 College Conference on Composition and Communication. Milwaukee, WI, 2020. (Conference canceled due to Covid).

"Patty Hearst's Potassium: Bodies, Brainwashing, and Excessive Rhetorical Power" American Society for the History of Rhetoric (ASHR) Symposium. Portland, OR, 2020. (Conference canceled due to Covid).

Talks

"L. Ron Hubbard, Kenneth Burke, and the Homuncular Rhetorical Situation." Center for American Literary Studies, Penn State, Apr 2024.

"Writing Anthology Headnotes." Presentation for graduate seminar on anthology craft in rhetorical studies. Debra Hawhee, Penn State English, Feb 2023.

"Children of God: A Rhetorical History." Lecture for undergraduate history class in American religion. Kelly Kaelin, Department of History, University of Southern Indiana, Mar 2023.

"The Sophistic Gambit: Dale Carnegie at the Origin of Communication Studies." Humanities Institute, Penn State, Apr 2023.

"Patty Hearst's Potassium and the Pseudoscience of Mind Control." Humanities Institute, Penn State, Nov 2021.

Professional Development

"Accessible Syllabus Templates"

Workshop with Elizabeth J. Pyatt and Mary Ann Tobin.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Journal Club, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, April 2023.

“Universal Design for Learning”

Workshop with Jay Dolmage.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Journal Club, Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence, April 2023.

“Strategies to Access in the English Classroom”

Workshop with Marion Quirici.

Fisher Family, Robert and Marie Secor, and the John Moore Teaching Mentorship, Department of English, April 2023.

“Rhetorical Education with the World on Fire”

Workshop with Roxanne Mountford, Michael Steudeman, and Amy Wan.

Rhetoric Society of America Institute. State College, Pennsylvania, 2023.

ENGL 602, 202C: Supervised Experience in College Teaching.

Practicum for teachers of technical communication, Program in Writing and Rhetoric, 2022.

“Designing and Delivering Rhetorical Education”

Workshop with Krista Ratcliffe and Kyle Jensen.

Rhetoric Society of America Institute. College Park, Maryland, 2019.

“Medical Rhetoric in the Archives”

Seminar with Jordynn Jack and Robin E. Jensen.

Rhetoric Society of America Institute. College Park, Maryland, 2019.

“Rhetoric and Violence”

Workshop with Nathan Stormer.

Rhetoric Society of America Institute. Bloomington, Indiana, 2017.

Service

Rhetoric Society of America

Conference volunteer, RSA 2024, Denver, CO.

Arnold-Ebbitt Interdisciplinary Rhetoricians, RSA Graduate Student Chapter

President, 2018–2019. First-year MA board representative, 2016–2017.

English Department PSU

Peer Mentor, English Department Mentoring Program, 2017–2018.

Event Staff, Penn State Writing Day, 2018.

McNair Scholars Program PSU

Admissions Committee member, 2022.

Panelist, “Applying to Graduate School,” 2023.

Workshop leader, “The Statement of Purpose,” 2024.

References

Debra Hawhee

McCourtney Professor of Civic Deliberation

Professor of English, Communication Arts & Sciences, and Women's, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies, Penn State University

hawhee@psu.edu, (814) 308-4218

Kirt H. Wilson

Department Head of Communication Arts and Sciences

Associate Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences and African American Studies,
Penn State University

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Stuart A. Selber

Professor of English and Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric, Penn State University

selber@psu.edu, (814) 863-8032