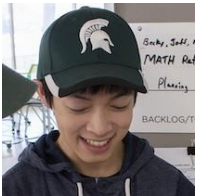
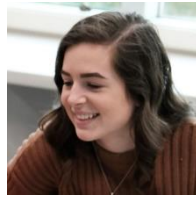
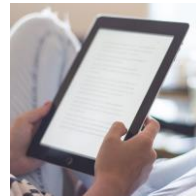




# Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures



# WRAC



# Welcome to WRAC

The department of Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures is the heart of and home for writing at Michigan State University. Across our initiatives, in the research and scholarship we pursue, and in the teaching and learning opportunities we offer, we emphasize curiosity, discovery, and the robust exchange of ideas along with attention to the importance of writing and communication—drawing across techniques and media, being attentive to audience and purpose, and sharing one’s ideas with the world.

Our researchers—students and faculty—are national leaders in digital writing, cultural rhetorics, composition studies, and professional writing and technical communication. Our teachers are committed, creative, and above average. Every single one of them.

Every year in our first-year writing courses, we work with new students to engage them in reflecting on learning and literacy, and in transitioning to college writing. Professional and Public Writing and Experience Architecture undergraduate majors develop websites and social media campaigns, wireframes and project plans, proposals and grants, write (a lot!), and intern at businesses and nonprofit organizations. Graduate students prepare to enter professional and/or academic fields through seminars, workshops, teaching, and consulting. Our award-winning faculty write and edit books, make films and soundscapes, work on grant-funded projects, and teach and mentor students at all levels. We value community-focused work and engage with partners within and outside the university.



# What WRAC Offers

The first-year writing experience for most MSU students, which supports students as they transition to university-level writing and prepares them for their ongoing development as writers across their coursework, in their majors, and beyond

An undergraduate major in Professional and Public Writing, which provides students strategies for and experience in writing, design, project management, and communication strategies for today's digital world.

An interdisciplinary undergraduate major in Experience Architecture, a user-experience degree that provides strengths in and strategies for physical and digital design and research—from designing wayfinding approaches in physical spaces to developing navigation aids for digital tools.

A graduate program in Rhetoric and Writing, offering an MA and a PhD rich with theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical experiences, to prepare graduate students to be activists and leaders in academic and beyond-academic careers.





In First-Year Writing, students find a space where they can learn not only to develop more effective approaches to writing, but to *learn through* writing. Students join a community of fellow writers where their ideas and experiences matter, and where they can discover their purposes and goals for higher education and beyond. The goal of FYW is to give students practice thinking and learning in ways that will continue to serve them in new situations, even after the class is finished.

—Julie Lindquist, Director of First-Year Writing

I am consistently awed by the creative problem-solving, commitment to social justice, and innovative ideas that students bring to our classrooms. Our students make me feel hopeful about the future and how they will transform the world into a kinder, more egalitarian place. It's an honor to help them figure out how to make that happen through assignments, feedback, and class discussions.

—Alex Hidalgo, Associate Professor



The WRAC undergraduate programs prepare students to become effective communicators and designers. Our students are lifelong learners who can reimagine systems via writing, rhetoric, research, usability, and accessibility, in an effort to compose and create experiences that transcend mediums.

—Casey McArdle, Director of Undergrad Programs



# Research Clusters

Disability and  
Access  
Social Justice  
Feminist  
Theory



Digital  
Rhetorics  
Cultural  
Rhetorics  
Decolonial  
Rhetorics



Multimodal  
Composing  
Visual Rhetorics  
Soundwriting



Experience  
Architecture  
Technical  
Communication  
Digital  
Publishing

Community  
Literacy  
Writing Center  
Studies  
Online  
Pedagogy

Critical  
Pedagogy  
Writing Program  
Administration  
Curriculum  
Design



# First-Year Writing

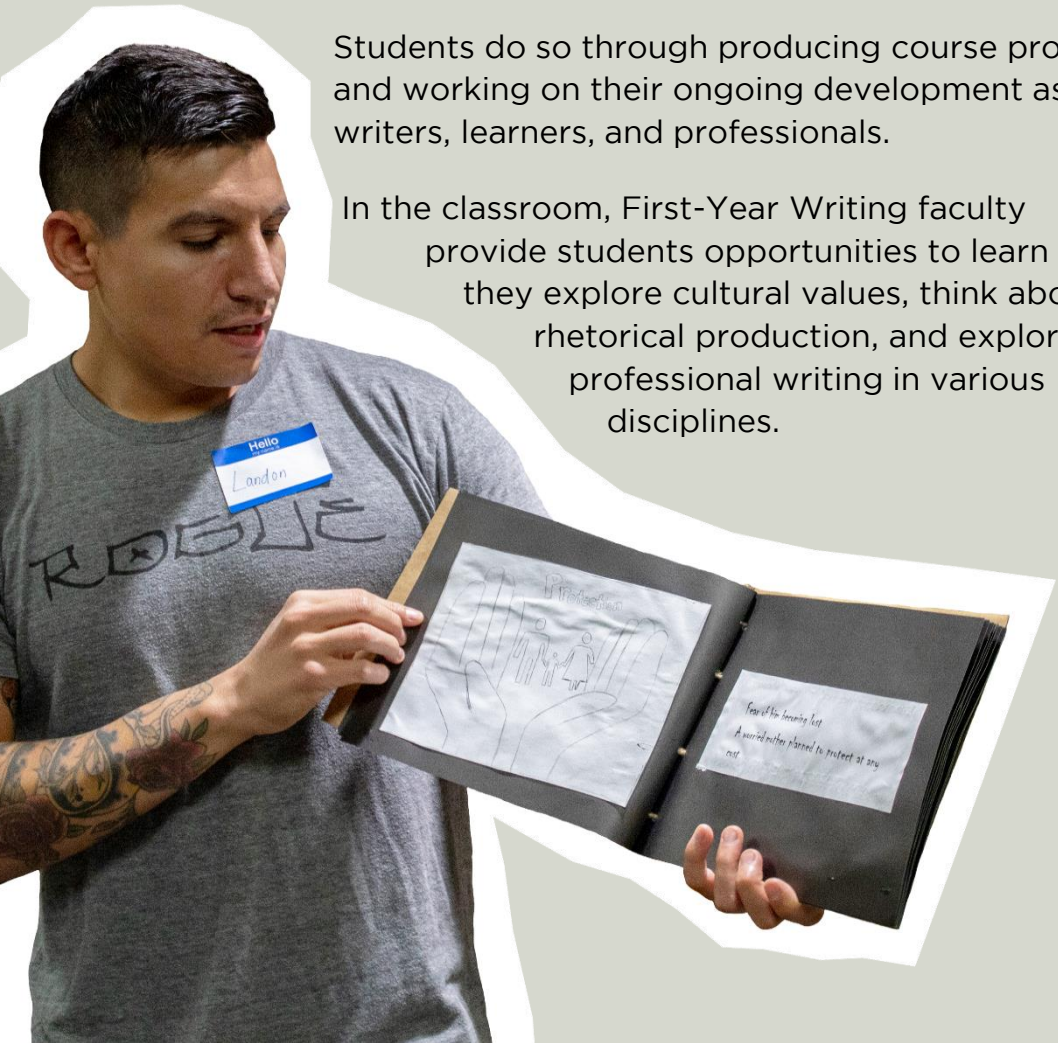
We work with over 6,500 MSU students annually in our First-Year Writing program, which supports students in their transitions to university-level writing and academic work and in their writing practices across classes and beyond.

Our story-based curriculum is based on inquiry and grounded in student experiences and lives. Our goal is to prepare students to approach diverse writing situations with confidence and to respond to future writing contexts.

First-Year Writing classes ask students to reflect on their values, analyze their relationships to larger communities, and situate their own learning goals.

Students do so through producing course projects and working on their ongoing development as writers, learners, and professionals.

In the classroom, First-Year Writing faculty provide students opportunities to learn as they explore cultural values, think about rhetorical production, and explore professional writing in various disciplines.



Our First-Year Writing students are valued for the diverse experiences and cultures they bring with them. Every semester, we celebrate students, their achievements, and their writing.

—*Cheryl Caesar, Associate Professor*



The FYW program provides multiple opportunities for students to share and celebrate their work:

The **David D. Anderson Award for the Best Essay in First-Year Writing at MSU** was established in honor of Professor Anderson's lifelong commitment to education and excellence as a scholar and a teacher. Student essays are nominated by professors based on excellence in writing. The recipient of the award receives a scholarship and is honored at the annual College of Arts & Letters spring convocation.

The **First-Year Writing Conference** is a celebration of student writing, where students in FYW courses share a wide range of multimodal projects. Attendees include FYW students, teachers, and other engaged members of the MSU community. As many as 700 students participate each semester, sharing stories and products based on their work in first-year writing.

Multimodal work created by students is recognized through the **Yoshimori Award**, which honors former graduate student Dorothy Yoshimori and recognizes exceptional student projects about American culture, broadly conceived.

# Professional and Public Writing

The Professional and Public Writing (P2W) major is designed to provide experiences, relationships, and resources that help students become more versatile, inventive, empathetic, and engaged writers. Students become more creative, imaginative, and expressive writers and designers able to work with a wide range of documents and in a variety of workplaces.

With the support of an excellent academic advisor, students select courses and experiences that tailor the major to their interests while preparing them for work beyond academia. P2W majors take courses in technical communication, web writing, document and digital design, nonprofit communications, rhetorical theory, and editing and publishing.



The Professional and Public Writing major meets students where they are by harnessing their passions as they become invaluable professionals and citizens. Our students are writers, creative thinkers, and community leaders interested in using their advanced skills in writing to advocate for people online and in print.

—Casey Miles, P2W Advisor

WRAC also regularly offer special topic courses on cutting-edge academic and professional topics, and students are encouraged to complete independent studies to explore their own research interests.



# Career Opportunities for P2W Graduates

P2W students typically complete at least two internships prior to graduation. P2W students intern on campus at spaces like The Cube, *Red Cedar Review*, *Sherlockian.net*, *The Current*, *agnes films*, and with various writing, editing, and communication units on campus. Beyond campus, P2W students intern at local nonprofits and businesses, including the Women's Center of Greater Lansing, Impact WBDM, *Fourth Genre*, and CREATE for STEM Institute.

Our alums work for companies like **Google**, **Amazon**, **Black Rifle Coffee Company**, the **World Bank**, **Wiley Education**, and a vast variety of other local, state, national, and international organizations. P2W alumni have launched and directed nonprofit organizations including the **Lawson Porter Scholarship Foundation** and **Young, Ambitious and Beautiful (YAB Detroit)**.

P2W majors pursue opportunities as:

- Content Strategist
- Copy Editor
- Editor
- Technical Writer
- Graphic Designer
- Video Producer
- Web Developer
- Digital Marketing Specialist
- Marketing Specialist
- Public Relations Specialist
- Social Media Manager
- Grant Coordinator

I direct our publishing nexus, The Cube (publishing - process - praxis), an experiential learning initiative that provides students paid internships in writing, editing, publishing, web development, community engagement, grant writing, and graphic design.

—Kate Birdsall, Associate Professor



# Experience Architecture

Our XA majors learn how to research, design, and develop experiences that transcend digital and physical spaces. By aiming for understanding a multitude of cultures, peoples, and perspectives, our alumni are out in the world building just solutions for the next generation.

—Liza Potts, Professor



The Bachelor of Arts degree in Experience Architecture (XA) is a cutting-edge, interdisciplinary undergraduate user experience major centered in the Arts and Humanities. Students studying XA gain advanced skills in researching how different users navigate physical and digital spaces; designing experiences across digital and physical environments; and assessing user experience design for accessibility, usability, and sustainability.

Students gain experience in researching, designing, coding, building, and testing web sites, apps, and physical spaces.

XA students are prepared for a number of careers or graduate programs where they can continue advocating for the needs of users and writing and designing in ways that center user experience.



# Career Opportunities for XA Graduates

The Experience Architecture program capitalizes on a vital need for people-centered experiences across converging technologies, services, and processes.

We believe that people deserve to engage with usable, accessible, and sustainable spaces. We position XA students to engage these spaces and to contribute to designing a world in which they would want to participate.

XA majors pursue opportunities as:

- Interaction Designers
- Content Strategists
- UX Designers
- Designers
- Application Developers
- Graphic Designers
- Information Architects
- Web Developers
- Accessibility Specialists
- Usability Specialists



# Spotlight on WRAC Alumni



## Becca Meyer

Freelance UX Designer

Majors: Experience Architecture,  
Environmental Studies and Sustainability  
2020 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- iOS Design Lab
- Silicon Valley Study Away Program
- Accessible Learning Conference Presenter
- MSU Writing Center Consultant

## Ashton Keys

Digital Product Manager, Rocket Companies

Major: Experience Architecture  
Minor: Entrepreneurship & Innovation  
2018 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- Software engineer at Target
- XA Club
- XA 2018 Student of the Year



## Brittney Urich

UX Designer, Amazon

Major: Professional Writing  
2015 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- MSU Writing Center Consultant
- Writer's Bloc member
- ing Magazine Editorial Board member





## Kai Mia Benson

Assistant Editor (consumer segment),  
Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation

Major: Professional Writing  
2020 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- MSU Writing center consultant
- Citizen Scholar
- *Offbeat* literary journal staff
- *Red Cedar Review* staff
- MSU Department of Religion copyeditor



## Anderson Day

Software engineer, Target

Major: Experience Architecture  
2019 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- Experience Architecture Club co-founder
- Ignite UX Michigan presenter (2019)
- Accessible Learning Conference presenter (2017, 2018)
- Web Development and Accessibility Intern for the College of Arts and Letters
- iOS Design Lab Swift Coach



## Nitish Pahwa

Copyeditor and Writer, Slate.com

Major: Professional Writing  
2017 Graduate

### Research Experiences

- *Ing Magazine* editorial staff
- *Offbeat* literary journal staff





# Graduate Programs

Our graduate programs prepare the next generation of leaders, thinkers, teachers, and innovators in the discipline of rhetoric and writing and in related fields both inside and outside of academia. Our goal is to build and maintain a visionary, innovative academic and professional space for knowledge-making and to serve as a model for a new vision of humanities scholars and professional practitioners.



Our graduate programs support students who are interested in transforming the world, the field, and their communities and workplaces for the better. We help students identify and reach their goals through coalition building, mentorship, innovative coursework, project work, and structural support, such as creating networking, professional development, and funding opportunities.

*—Ben Lauren, Director of Graduate Programs*

My favorite thing about the WRAC community is that we are a group who believes in making the spaces where we learn, work, and live better. We hope to prepare our students to be the same kind of transformative leaders in the world, wherever they go. We aim to make our knowledge and experience count for something by helping others.

*—Bill Hart-Davidson, Associate Dean of Graduate Education and WRAC Professor*



# Rhetoric and Writing MA

The Master of Arts degree in Rhetoric and Writing serves both as a professional degree in writing and a preparatory degree for doctoral work. Graduates of the program go on to career tracks in industry, nonprofits, and non-faculty roles in educational institutions; others pursue doctoral work in rhetoric, writing and composition studies, or professional writing and technical communication.

In the program, we engage students in humanities-anchored inquiry, inspired and informed by scholarship in rhetoric and writing and its constellated subfields. We nurture interdisciplinary inquiry to expand the boundaries of rhetoric and writing studies scholarship. We enact transformative, innovative, and experiential learning opportunities in the classroom, across the university, and in the community.

We push at the boundaries of the institution and field in how we enact diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice in our research, classrooms, and workplaces. We develop relationships and foster partnerships across and outside of the department and institution to support this vision.



# Rhetoric and Writing PhD

The Rhetoric and Writing doctoral program prepares the next generation of leaders in the discipline of Rhetoric and Writing across all areas of a higher-education career: research, teaching, outreach, and national and institutional service. We also prepare students for work beyond faculty positions—in a range of non-faculty careers in colleges and universities, and in a range of professional positions in industry and in nonprofit organizations. These goals guide our recruitment, our curriculum, our support packages, our mentoring philosophy, and the professional-development opportunities we offer. We ask a lot of both students and faculty, but our commitments also make the program an exciting place to be.



PhD students engage in foundations of rhetoric and writing studies scholarship, theory, and practice, and develop a specialized area of study through a concentration. The program concentrations include Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy, Cultural Rhetorics, and Digital Rhetoric and Professional Writing. Students may also develop a self-designed concentration; indeed, most students do work that crosses or combines official concentration areas. We encourage that creativity and embrace the innovations to our discipline that comes from it.

# Interdisciplinary Ties

We have strong interdisciplinary ties to other programs and research centers at Michigan State University.

Writing Center

Center for Gender  
in a Global Context

Digital Humanities

Cultural Heritage  
Informatics

Native American  
Institute

Chicano/Latina  
Studies

Eli and Edythe  
Broad Art Museum

Residential College  
in the Arts and  
Humanities

Writing,  
Information, and  
Digital Experience  
(WIDE)

American Indian  
and Indigenous  
Studies

MATRIX: Humane  
Arts, Letters, and  
Social Sciences  
Online

African and African  
American Studies

MSU Museum



I am honored to be collaborating with a group of Puerto Rican scholars and community organizations to develop the Archivo de Respuestas Emergencias de Puerto Rico (AREPR), an open-access digital repository documenting the lived experiences of Puerto Ricans in the wake of Hurricane María, the 2020 earthquakes, and COVID-19.

—Christina Boyles, Assistant Professor



## P2W Club

The P2W Club serves students of the Professional and Public Writing major. Students in the major run the club with the assistance of faculty mentors. The club has two purposes: to serve students socially, by creating opportunities for inter-major connectivity; and professionally, by providing opportunities for and events tailored to professional development.

## XA Club

The Experience Architecture Club is a student-run organization focused on building community within the major while making connections with industry via guest speakers and workshops. The club serves as an academic and social space for students to connect, network, and support one another through workshopping ideas and projects. The goal of the club is to build and maintain supportive connections between former, current, and future experience architects.

# Registered Student Organizations





# WRAP

Writing, Rhetoric, and Praxis (WRAP) is a student-led graduate organization in WRAC that works to engage rhetoric and writing students in various social and scholarly activities. WRAP is a space where graduate students can come together, work together, facilitate conversations with/between faculty and graduate students in the department, and engage in community-building.

There are several positions in WRAP that graduate students can occupy, many of which provide students with the opportunity to participate in faculty committees, departmental meetings, and university organizations and to represent and advocate for their departmental colleagues.

Offering multiple professional development opportunities, WRAP provides WRAC graduate students the ability to nurture and foster their academic community in ways that tend to the graduate student community and work toward the betterment of graduate student experiences.



# WRAC

[wrac.msu.edu](http://wrac.msu.edu)

