

October Heffner

Ph.D. Student
300 W Dean Keeton St.
University of Texas at Austin
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EDUCATION

Ph.D. Communication (Rhetoric, Language, and Politics), University of Texas at Austin, 2025-2029

Advisor: Dr. Michael Butterworth

M.A. Communication (Rhetorical Studies), Baylor University, 2023-2025

Thesis: "From Father to Feminist: The Eras of *Call Her Daddy* and The Rhetorical Implications." Advisor: Dr. Jeff Nagel

B.A. Communication, Politics (Magna Cum Laude), Lake Forest College, 2019-2023

Minor in Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

Thesis: "Analysis of Select Romantic Comedies from an Intersectional Feminist Lens."

Advisor: Dr. Elizabeth Benacka

Committee Members: Dr. Dave Park and Susan Long

PUBLICATIONS

Book Reviews

October Heffner (07 Feb 2024): Harris, Leslie J. *The Rhetoric of White Slavery and the Making of National Identity*, Women's Studies in Communication, DOI: 10.1080/07491409.2023.2297614

Electronic Publications

Haley Cox and October Heffner. "Laboring Over Labor in the WNBA." *Politics in Sports Media*. January 2026. <https://moody.utexas.edu/centers/sports-communication-media/fifth-annual-politics-sports-media-report>

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Moody Professional Development Grant, November 2025

Center for Sports Communication & Media Professional Grant, March 2025

NCA Student Caucus Travel Grant, November 2024

Baylor Communication Department Travel Grant, October 2024

Baylor Graduate School Travel Grant, August 2024

Moody Research Grant, LBJ Foundation, May 2024

Forget Me Not Grant, Alpha Phi Fraternity, January 2024

Senior Prize in Communication, Department of Communication, Lake Forest College, May 2023

Volunteer of the Month, USO Greatlakes Naval Station, April 2023

Coaches Award, Lake Forest College Football, January 2023

PRESENTATIONS

Conferences

“Sport-adjacent podcasting as an educational pipeline for women in sport,” Work in Progress Panel, International Association for Communication and Sports Summit, March, 2026 (Dublin, Ireland)

“From Father to Feminist: *Call Her Daddy* and The Rhetorical Function of Imperfect Feminism,” Paper Presentation in Mediating Feminism: Identity, Culture, and Contemporary Expression, National Communication Association Annual Convention, November 2025 (Denver, CO)

“Unromanticizing Romantic Comedies: The Harms of Patriarchy and Capitalism Represented in Early 2000’s Films,” Top Student Papers in the Theatre, Film, and New Multi-Media Division, National Communication Association Annual Convention, November 2024 (New Orleans, LA)

“Analyzing Romantic Comedies from an Intersectional Feminist Lens,” Poster Presentation, Northeastern Modern Languages Association Conference, March 2023, (Buffalo, NY)

Symposiums

"Portrayals of What is 'Normal' Through Power Dynamics and Dominant Narratives," Panel, Student Symposium, April 2023, (Lake Forest College)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE IN ATHLETICS

Grant Writer, Austin Outlaws, 2025-Current

Graduate Assistant, American Football Coaches Association, 2023-2024

Chief of Staff & Director of Football Operations, Lake Forest College, 2019-2023

Camp Program Director, Riding Instructor, Athlete, and Groom, John White Stables, 2011-2023

SERVICE

Panel Chair, IACS, 2026

Meeting Room Committee, AFCA, 2026

Reviewer IACS, 2025

Reviewer, NCA, 2025

Reviewer, NCA, 2024

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

National Communication Association, 2023-Present

Northeastern Modern Languages Association, 2023

National Coalition of Minority Football Coaches, 2023-Present

American Football Coaches Association, 2022-Present