



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY

NORMAN J. RADOW COLLEGE OF
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FOCUS ON FACULTY



MARCH 2023: FEATURING
Sara Doan, Ph.D. &
Elizabeth Gordon, Ph.D.



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**SARA
DOAN**

**Assistant Professor of
Technical Communications**

**Dept. of Technical
Communications &
Interactive Design**

Research and Science Build a Foundation of Trust That Leads to Better Living

Dr. Sara Doan grew up in a community that was deeply distrustful of science, so it may be somewhat surprising that she has taken the opposite track in her academic career. She has chosen to focus her scientific research on how data informs the design of infographics and other visuals, on-line and in social media primarily, but in other communications vehicles as well. How these tools communicate data-driven content, and how that data can quickly become misinformation and undermine the trust, and even the safety, of the public consuming the information is her expertise and her passion. Dr. Doan's study centers around health, medicine, and social justice. Thus, her personal experience has informed her understanding about how misinformation or purposefully misrepresented information can, in some cases, even lead to medical neglect. Taking that into consideration, the last several years living through the COVID pandemic and examining how political and medical leadership presented or misrepresented data on infection, transmission, impacted communities, and access to care has been a nearly inexhaustible source of study.

"Education is the thing that saved me from a harmful community, and that drives my work as an educator and as a researcher, so that I can help other people make informed choices," says Dr. Doan. The topic of data visualization is compelling, and Dr. Doan is currently at work on a book proposal on the topic. Her commitment to fact-based, trustworthy information communicated through clearly understood graphic communications tools is an essential part of reinforcing the trust we must have in public health information shared widely among all communities.



**ELIZABETH
GORDON**

**Ph.D., Professor of Public
Law/Conflict Resolution**

**School of Government &
International Affairs**

Dr. Gordon's Commitment To Mentoring Helps Students Through The Trials And Tribulations Of Political Science

Dr. Elizabeth Gordon has done impressive work with the mock trial team, the Mocking Owls, for many years, and is an exceptional mentor to legal studies students. As coach of the Mocking Owls, Dr. Gordon puts her students through their paces as they play the roles of witness and attorney in mock trial events. The team has participated for 12 consecutive years in the Owl Classic Invitational Mock Trial Tournament, held each October at Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, with teams from institutions throughout the Southeast participating. The Mocking Owls participate in five or six invitational tournaments during the competitive season leading up to the American Mock Trial Association's championship series. This is no small commitment on Dr. Gordon's part as she travels with the team to most of these competitions to offer coaching and feedback so the students can hone their skills and continuously improve. Dr. Gordon says, "Helping students bloom into confident competitors is a joy. Many of them find their niche at the university through this team, and they put in long hours debating theory and polishing their presentation."

The Mocking Owls experience is about more than developing trial skills. Participation in the group enables students to learn a lot about the law, but they also develop teamwork, leadership, critical thinking, and public speaking skills. Beyond that, because the students work, travel, socialize, and eat together, they become a close-knit group and develop long-lasting friendships. Team members who go on to law school often compete successfully in trial advocacy and moot court competitions at that level. Nearly all that go to law school report that their undergraduate mock trial experience gave them a big advantage over their classmates in classes on evidence and procedure. Many former members of the Mocking Owls, especially those who practice law in the Atlanta area, return year after year to help out as judges for the Owl Classic or for informal scrimmages between KSU and other institutions.

Dr. Gordon is a professor of Political Science who has been on the faculty at KSU for 25 years. She earned her Ph.D. in political science from UNC-Chapel Hill and is Associate Editor of the Journal of Political Science Education. Her teaching interests are the American legal system and judicial politics, gender politics, and constitutional law.

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