Department of Communication Arts presents second, third DebateWatch events

October 15, 2012

Georgia Southern University’s Department of Communication Arts continues its screenings of the 2012 presidential candidate debates on Tuesday, Oct. 16, and Monday, Oct. 22, in the Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology, Room 1005. The debates are scheduled for 9-10:30 p.m., but the events will begin at 8:30 p.m. with brief pre-debate presentations by Dr. Patrick Wheaton, a political communication scholar and former collegiate debate coach. Wheaton will also mediate discussions following the debates.

The second presidential debate of 2012 will take the form of a town hall meeting, during which attendees will ask the candidates questions related to foreign and domestic issues. Candidates will have two minutes each to respond, with an additional minute for the moderator to facilitate a discussion. The town hall participants will be undecided voters selected by the Gallup Organization.

“2012 marks the sixth time that the town hall format has been used in the presidential debates – it has been used in every presidential election since 1992,” Wheaton said. “Though challengers have typically outperformed incumbents in the first debate, as Mitt Romney seems to have done this year, we can likely expect that President Obama will perform better in the second debate, as incumbents typically do.”

The third and final debate event will follow the same format at the first debate, with a single moderator asking questions of the candidates. The general topic for the third debate is foreign affairs.

Georgia Southern’s airing and discussion of the presidential debate is presented in conjunction with DateWatch, a voter education event associated with the Commission on Presidential Debates and the National Communication Association. This year, the NCA is inviting debate viewers to tweet their reactions to the candidates’ responses using #NCADebates12. The University has participated in every DebateWatch presidential election event since 2000.

For more information about the event, contact Wheaton at pwheaton@georgiasouthern.edu.

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Georgia Southern University’s Department of Writing and Linguistics will hold its Pizza for Prose event on Wednesday, Oct. 17, from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. on campus at the amphitheater near the Newton Building. The annual event is held in conjunction with the National Day on Writing and offers a slice of pizza to participants who submit a brief writing. There is also an online component for those who cannot attend in person.

“This is an exciting opportunity for students – and faculty – to express themselves outside of the classroom setting,” said Emma Bolden, assistant professor in the Department of Writing in Linguistics who is helping to coordinate the event. “The online component offers participants the change to write in a different format and for a larger audience.

“Plus, there’s free pizza, which is always a good thing!”

Pizza for Prose is open to all University students and employees. During the event, participants can write on a topic of their choice or use one of the available writing prompts. Anyone who is unable to attend the event can still participate by using the hashtag #GSUWrites on Twitter on Oct. 17-19.

Established in 2009 by the National Council of Teachers of English, the National Day on Writing seeks to expand writing application while bringing to light the importance of written communication. Celebration participants are encouraged to used a variety of media for composition, including pen and paper, social media and text messaging.

More information on the National Day on Writing can be found through the Department of Writing and Linguistics or at ncte.org/dayonwriting, and Bolden can be contacted at emmabolden@georgiasouthern.edu for information on Pizza for Prose. Those interested are also encouraged to visit the Gallery of Writing at galleryofwriting.org to view archives from National Day on Writing events.

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