



# UWG Terminates Their Sociology Graduate Program- Many Students Are Left Wondering What This Means for Their Future

Abbie Klein  
News Editor

“If you want to serve, become an advocate, or effect change in your community, choose Sociology,” is the first sentence on a poster advertising Sociology on a bulletin board in the Pafford Social Science building at the University of West Georgia.

At the start of this semester, UWG made the tough decision to close their Graduate Sociology program. While still being offered on the undergraduate level through both major and minor programs, many students have felt discouraged at the news and worry about the future of sociology.

“Sociology is my minor,” said a UWG Honors student. “Sociology is an essential degree for people going into social work.”

Sociology is a program that prepares students for careers in fields like government, social services, human resources and non-profit organizations. It provides students with key skills to become service providers and advocates within their community. The employees in this field are imperative parts of our society, specifically in government programs that aim to help those in need.

“Kids in foster care need sociology, homeless people need sociology, people in poverty need sociology,” said the student. “Social services have saved countless lives. It’s what I want to do in the future, we need what sociology teaches us”.

UWG is not the first school to terminate their Sociology program. Social sciences and liberal arts programs have been experiencing declining enrollment since the mid 2000s. And schools across the nation have been forced to close programs due to budget cuts and failure to meet certain standards.

The pressure on these programs increased after President Donald Trump signed an executive order ending DEI programs. As a result of this, on Jan 24 Florida eliminated sociology from core curriculums in public universities on the terms of prohibiting DEI spending. On a less extreme level, the University System of Georgia established neutrality on political issues and banned DEI policies at the end of last year. The institution passed several regulations that curb DEI initiatives across the 26 public universities attached to the institution. This could potentially have a correlation with UWG’s termination of the Sociology graduate program due to the content taught in a sociology degree.

“We continuously monitor programs for strength and unfortunately, Sociology’s MA program did not meet University System of Georgia (USG) standards,” said Interim Dean of

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Clint Samples. “We made the decision after careful consideration, conversations with

faculty and reviewing data.”

Students are worried that with sociology now being such a controversial field of study the employment level in sociology related fields will decrease as well.

“Social workers are already underpaid and mistreated in [their] work environment. There’s already very few people willing to enter that field,” said the student.

While a large percentage of sociology majors make the decision to attend graduate school, many students are still able to be successful in their field with just a bachelor’s degree.

“At UWG we do have many students who enter careers directly from the bachelor’s degree program,” said the former Director of the Sociology Graduate program, Dr. Emily McKendry-Smith. “I would always tell a student to really think about what they want to do, look at job listings online and sort of evaluate do I need to go to graduate school or not.”

Sociology, like many other industries, carries the idea that better opportunities, such as higher salaries and more prestigious job titles, are more accessible with further education. However, for students who are interested in taking this route, there are a number of options available for a graduate education.

“For students who are interested in going to graduate schools I think what we are seeing is that sociology is sort of a foundational discipline for a number of other graduate degrees, like social work, public health and even some criminology programs are even housed in sociology,” said McKendry-Smith. “I think that the landscape of where they can go to graduate school is changing. They still have good opportunities to pursue graduate education, it’s just looking different than it did when I was in graduate school.”

Despite the landscape of graduate education changing for sociology students, McKendry-Smith reassured that she doesn’t believe sociology on an undergraduate level is at risk.

“It’s always hard to predict a little bit what’s going to happen in higher education, but sociology provides students with skills that are relevant to so many different fields that I think that at the undergraduate level I wouldn’t expect to see many changes, because even students who want to go to med school are encouraged to take sociology classes,” said McKendry-Smith. “I think the nature of graduate education that employers expect people to get are changing, but at the undergraduate level I would not expect that.”

Sociology is an extremely versatile degree that is rooted in teaching critical thinking and social analysis. This foundation can fortunately be

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### Master of Arts with a Major in Sociology

Sociology

School of Social Sciences

College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

This program has been deactivated, and is no longer accepting applications.

**Photo: Abbie Klein,**  
*The West Georgian*

utilized in several different fields when it comes to graduate education. Despite the discouragement students may currently feel, this is not the end of sociology.

“I do think that some of our students did feel discouraged, like students who are currently in our master’s program that we are teaching out,” said McKendry-Smith. “I, and the other sociology faculty are trying to work really close with them to make sure they get the support they need. We are very committed to making sure they still have everything they need even though the program is being deactivated.”

While the deactivation of this program came as quite a shock to many, UWG is doing its best to help students through this tough transition. McKendry-Smith noted that UWG is connected to several other schools that are still offering MAs in Sociology and can help students get in touch with those schools.

“If there’s anything I could say to students it’s come and talk to us, we can help you figure things out,” said McKendry-Smith.

## UWG Students Debate Abortion at Heated Campus Event

Breanna Tillie  
Editor-In-Chief

The students of the University of West Georgia allowed students a space to engage in discussion and debate about social issues in allowing Students for Life, an anti-abortion organization dedicated to educating students on abortion from a pro-life perspective, to host the Abortion is Violence event on March 4 featuring speaker Lydia Taylor Davis.

The organization gave students the opportunity to line up at the microphone and ask Davis, a pro-life influencer featured on several conservative media platforms, any questions or offer any disagreements they may have about the organization's pro-life position on the abortion issue.

"I came prepared because I don't like to talk about things that I'm not educated on," said Lance Paschal, the first student to approach the microphone and challenge Davis on the pro-life perspective. "I did a lot of research leading up to this and I had it planned for a while. I felt confident in how I was going to speak so I had no problem being the first to engage with her."

As more students approached the microphone, it became clear that the audience held just as many students on the pro-choice side of the issue as on the pro-life side of the issue.

"I believe anyone should come to these events," said Paschal, "but especially if you're passionate, you should want to be educated regardless of the side."



Photo by Breanna Tillie,  
*The West Georgian*

There was no shortage of passion in the room as students from both the pro-life and the pro-choice side of the issue would erupt in applause when it was agreed upon that a solid point had been made by either Davis or a challenger.

"I'm very passionate about politics in general," said Paschal. "But when it comes to issues like abortion that only involve women, I feel like they're often overlooked because of things like sexism in the United States and their underrepresentation in congress and government. I believe that real men stand up for people who can't stand up for themselves."

Students became so filled with emotion on the topic being discussed that many students began shouting arguments toward the speaker from their seats and had to be redirected

to get into line if they wanted to have a conversation.

"It's not only a passion of mine, but I feel like it's my job to come to things like this, educate people, and stand up for women that are being advocated against," said Paschal.

Despite all of the arguing, intense emotion, and occasional rude comments made by students on both sides of the issue, it is highly commendable that the students of UWG care enough about social issues to take strong positions and not hesitate to defend them.

"There's only one way to win a debate, and it's to have the facts on your side," said Paschal. "I feel like I had that today...The best thing to do is maintain debate manners and not get riled up."

## UWG Chess Club Hosts Bonfire Event

Kailie Bridges  
Copy Editor



Photo courtesy of UWG Chess Club

On Feb 5, the UWG Chess Club held a bonfire event at Center Pointe Suites that welcomed everyone to enjoy s'mores and snacks while playing various kinds of board games that were also held in collaboration with the UWG Mock Trial Club.

"It's been amazing! I've really improved because of the members. It's really fun, we play chess, we talk, it's a pretty chill environment," said Lega Tata, President of the Chess Club.

With the club being recently made, on Jan 18, 2024, the Chess Club is welcoming new members to their pact for anyone interested in strategy and puzzles with tournaments also being hosted once a month. The upcoming tournament will be on March 26 in Pafford 111.

"I got interested in chess over Christmas break in December," said Tata when asked about her motivation for the club. "I watched this show called the Queen's Gambit and got obsessed pretty quickly."

For more details on locations and upcoming events, be sure to check out @uwg\_chess on Instagram where you can stay up to date.

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## bluestone Student Leaders Compete in PRSSA Bateman Competition with Campaign to Unban Books

Cindy Martinez  
Feature Editor



The student leaders of bluestone, the University of West Georgia's student-run public relations firm, are making waves as they compete in the prestigious Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) Bateman Competition. This year, PRSSA has partnered with the Little Library Initiative, challenging students to create a compelling campaign advocating for the unbanning of books that have been restricted in schools and libraries across the nation.

As part of their campaign, bluestone students hosted an engaging event on Monday, Feb 24, in the UWG Campus Center Ballroom. The event, Bateman Book Swap and Trivia Night, invited students to bring an old book and swap it with someone else while participating in book-themed trivia. The night was filled with excitement, camaraderie, and a shared passion for literature and free expression.

To further engage attendees, bluestone students also organized a raffle with three exciting prizes. The first-place winner received a gift card from Longhorn Steakhouse, the

second-place winner took home a gift card for Carrollton Nutrition and the third winner was awarded a gift bag from a local boutique.

Beyond the event, bluestone's campaign has been making a tangible impact. So far, the team has gathered over 200 signatures on their petition to lift the bans on popular books, including *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *The Hate U Give*. Their efforts highlight the importance of access to diverse narratives and the fight against literary censorship.

Jakai Yancey, a member of the bluestone team, reflects on the campaign's impact and the importance of fighting for literary freedom.

"Bateman uses a competition that PRSSA has every year for students that are involved in public relations and go head to head with other students in public relations. This year our client we are working with is Every Library and we have to use PRSSA RPIE mode which is Research, planning, implantation and evaluation in our campaign. For the implantation period we planned the event Bateman Book Swap and

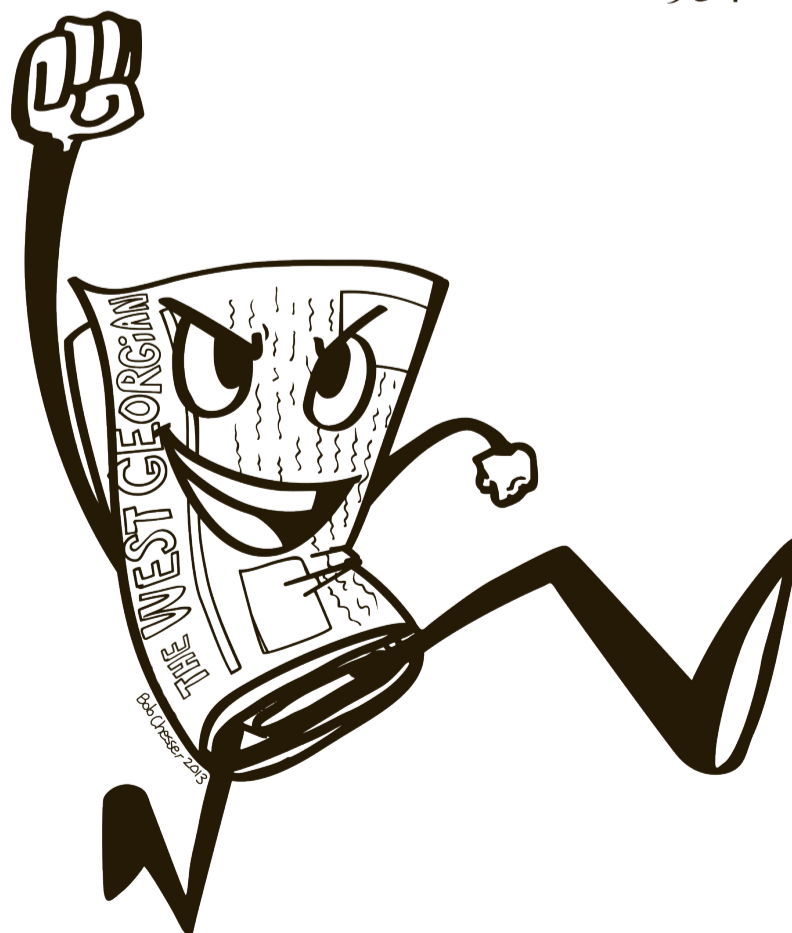
**Photo: Cindy Martinez,**

*The West Georgian* Trivia Night," said Yancey. "It was basically to educate on the banning of books and boost engagement for our campaign for signatures. At the event we played trivia and each student got to swap books with other students."

bluestone's participation in the PRSSA Bateman Competition demonstrates their commitment to social advocacy and their ability to craft meaningful, change-driven public relations campaigns. As the competition continues, the team remains dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of unrestricted access to literature and the role that books play in shaping perspectives and encouraging critical thought.

With strong community and university support, bluestone's efforts stand as a testament to the power of student-led initiatives in making a difference. Their collaboration with PRSSA and the Little Library Initiative showcases how young professionals can leverage their skills to create meaningful change, one book and signature at a time.

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## Arts and Entertainment

### Stephen King's *The Monkey*: Butchered in Cinematic Form

Arrianah Jones  
Contributing Writer

Without a story arc, character development or a clear direction, *The Monkey* is arguably one of the worst films of Feb 2025. It suffers from unnecessary side plots, a weak script, and an immense lack of humor—despite being a horror comedy. The film fails to capitalize on its potential, ultimately feeling like a disjointed mess that neither thrills, nor amuses, leaving much to be desired in terms of both narrative and character engagement.

The film, which is loosely based on Stephen King's short story *The Monkey*. Is directed by Osgood Perkins, follows twins, Hal and Bill—played by actors Christian Convery and Theo James. After finding a wind-up monkey in their absent father's belongings, a series of horrific "accidents" occur that tear their family apart, leading the boys to believe the toy is cursed.

Desperate to get rid of it, they throw the monkey down a well and go their separate ways. Twenty-five years later, having been estranged since childhood, the monkey reappears and begins a new killing spree, which forces the twins to confront one another, and the toy.

First and foremost, the movie lacked the basic story structure of rising action, climax and falling action. There was never a plan on how to destroy the monkey, seal away its magic, or exorcise whatever demon might be possessing it. Instead, after all the spilled blood, Hal simply concludes that the monkey can't be destroyed stating, "We accept that it's ours and hold on tight." The film offers an hour and forty minutes of relentless gore with no meaningful progression, ultimately making the movie repetitive and boring.

In addition to an incoherent main plot, the film also suffered from unnecessary side plots that only added to its confusion. One such subplot centers on a hostage situation involving Hal and his son Petey—played by Colin O'Brien—who he only sees once a year because he is terrified their association will get them both killed.

Bill hires a man named Ricky—played by Rohan Campbell—to track down the wind-up monkey and bring it to him. Shortly after returning it, Ricky asks for the toy back, claiming it reminds him of his father. When his request is denied, he locates Hal and Petey at a motel where they are

staying, and holds them at gunpoint during a drive to Bill's residence.

In the end, Ricky dies a gruesome death, with a swarm of wasps flying into his mouth after he accidentally shoots a hole through the windshield. The entire situation was totally unnecessary and added nothing to the plot. Distractions like these take away from any potential focus the primary conflict had, further undermining the film's narrative.

The movie's disjointed nature is also reflected in its lack of character development. Early on, it is clear that Hal and Bill despise each other, even stating they would not care if the other died. The origin of their hatred remains unclear, leaving the conflict undeveloped and unconvincing.

At the end of the film, the twins exchange shallow apologies after having a conversation about their mother's death, but their reconciliation is so painfully rushed that it fails to create any emotional impact, leaving the audience indifferent when Bill ultimately dies. With little build up or genuine connection, there is hardly any reason to care about his death—Hal doesn't even seem phased by it.

Lastly, the film fails to deliver any meaningful comedic relief, which leaves its horror-comedy premise completely flat. In one scene where Hal is leaving his deceased aunt's home, he encounters a group of cheerleaders outside who are celebrating about the recent tragedy. This bizarre moment, meant to provide levity, falls short and adds nothing to the overall tone of the film. If anything—it leaves viewers confused.

The film ends with the cheerleaders riding a school bus, their heads out of the window, cheering at the fourth wall. A semi-truck drives by instantly killing all of them, and then the credits roll. This failed execution of the comedic-relief tactic highlights the film's inability to effectively balance humor with its horror elements.

In the end *The Monkey* fails to live up to its horror-comedy classification, offering a disjointed narrative, weak character development, and an absence of meaningful humor. Instead of thrilling and amusing the audience, it leaves them uninterested in the characters, or the overall outcome.

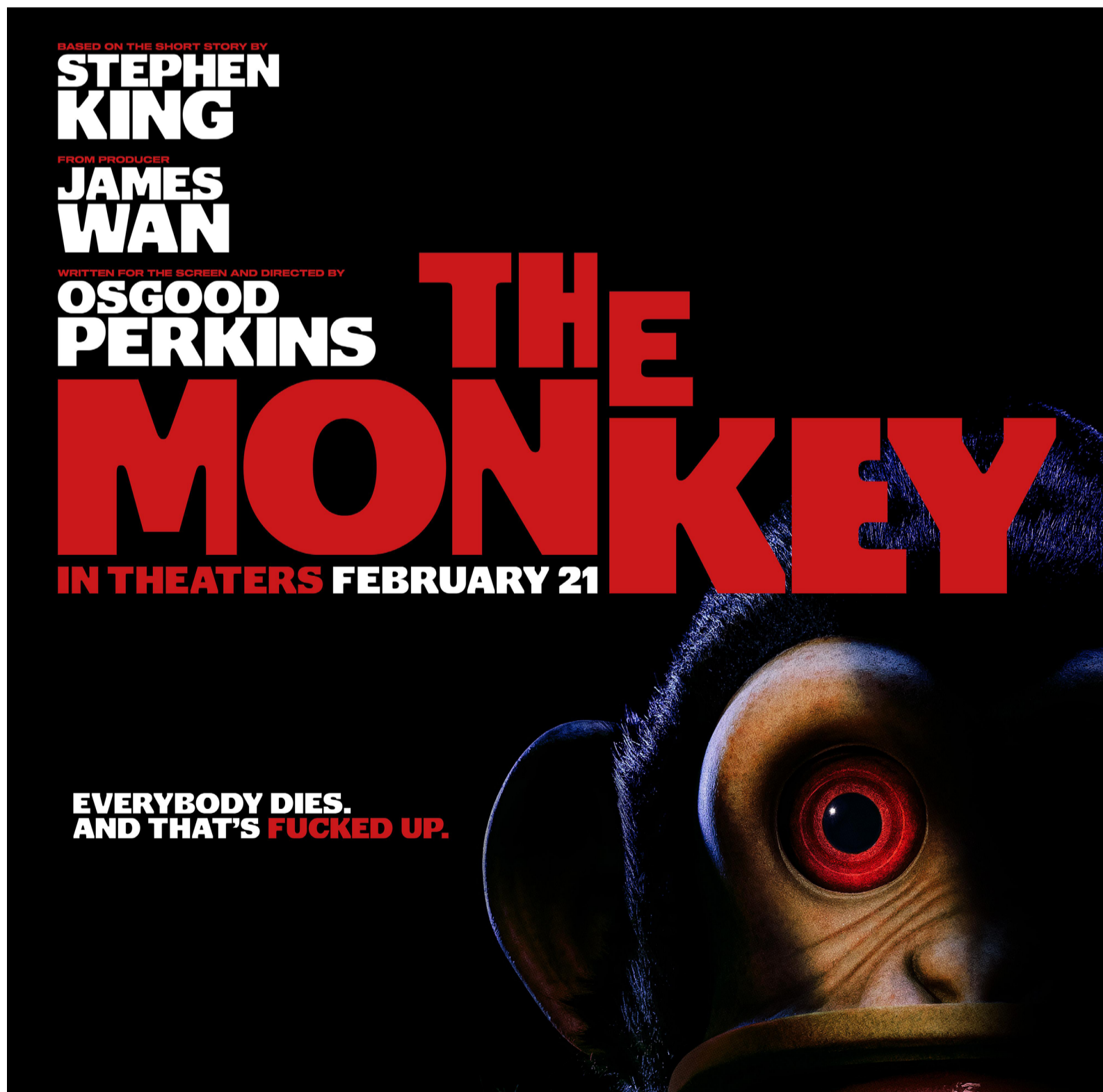


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