

Sam Plappert, M.A. B.A. English, 2008

By Madelyn Chambers

Associate Creative Director, Power

"Coming from a background where I had to talk in class often, think aloud, share complicated ideas and opinions, and read has really given me a leg up in the workforce when it comes to presenting complex concepts in an effective way."



Sam Plappert graduated from Western Kentucky University with a bachelor's degree in English in 2008. She obtained her master's degree in Rhetoric and Composition from Ohio University in 2011. Plappert is currently the Associate Creative Director for [Power](#), an ad agency of about 100 employees based in Louisville, Kentucky.

Plappert began her time at WKU as a Dance major. In the middle of her sophomore year, she decided to follow the encouragement of her English 100 professor and switch to the English program.

Plappert's professors in the Department of English had a profound influence on her future career. "Dr. Jane Fife taught me how to teach," said Plappert. "Dr. Sandy Hughes taught me how to read. Dr. James Flynn taught me how to travel. Dr. Wes Berry taught me how to stay local. Dr. Angela Jones helped me find work. Dr. Dale Rigby tried to teach me how to write." Although her career is atypical for an English major, Plappert finds that "not a week goes by that I don't draw on the concepts I learned in some of my literature classes." Southern Literature, Transcontinental Gothic Literature, Shakespeare in Film, and Advanced Composition were particularly influential in her creative career.

Plappert pursued her master's degree immediately after obtaining her bachelor's degree, then began working in marketing and editing positions. "I got a job in Cincinnati at [Proctor & Gamble](#) as an artwork editor. Meanwhile, I was meeting a lot of people socially who were working at agencies. They were all so creative and passionate and thoughtful about their work. They actually got paid to write stories and create them. So I started calling myself a copywriter until someone believed me." Plappert

began copywriting for Power in March 2013, and in April 2019, she became the Associate Creative Director.

At Power, Plappert leads a team of four art directors and two writers in creating advertising materials for clients. “On any given day, I’m directing video shoots, writing and reviewing web copy, meeting with clients to discuss strategy and branding, and pitching new ideas,” said Plappert. “It’s a fun job, even though it can feel high-pressure sometimes. When I was in college, I didn’t even know a job like this existed. But as soon as I stepped into the industry, I knew I wanted to creative direct. So I set a goal to be an ACD before I was 35.” Plappert’s hard work and determination helped her achieve this goal.

Plappert explored non-traditional career options for English majors, and she recommends that all English students do the same. “You’re graduating with an incredibly valuable skillset that can be applied in almost any industry,” said Plappert. “So start exploring early. Find communities that interest you as an individual—not as an English major. Get involved in those communities and carve out your own path there.” She also knows how important it was to build a portfolio while she was still a student. “When we recruit copywriters, we get a lot of English major applicants,” said Plappert. “But they haven’t been freelancing or working on a portfolio. If the stars align with timing and you have a good portfolio, it will be easy to find a job.”

