

CASDW/ACR  
RHETCANADA

MAY 26-30, 2026

# RHETORIC, WRITING, AND DISCOURSE TODAY 2026 CONFERENCE



## **TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge, with respect, that St. Jerome's University and the University of Waterloo reside and operate on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. Our University is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land Frederick Haldimand granted to the Haudenosaunee of the Six Nations of the Grand River in 1784 that includes 10 kilometers on both sides of the Grand River and extends from its source to Lake Erie.

We give thanks for the privilege to work and live on this

**SPECIAL THANKS TO JOHN HOGENBIRK FOR  
CONFERENCE LOGO AND DESIGNS.**

**MAPS**

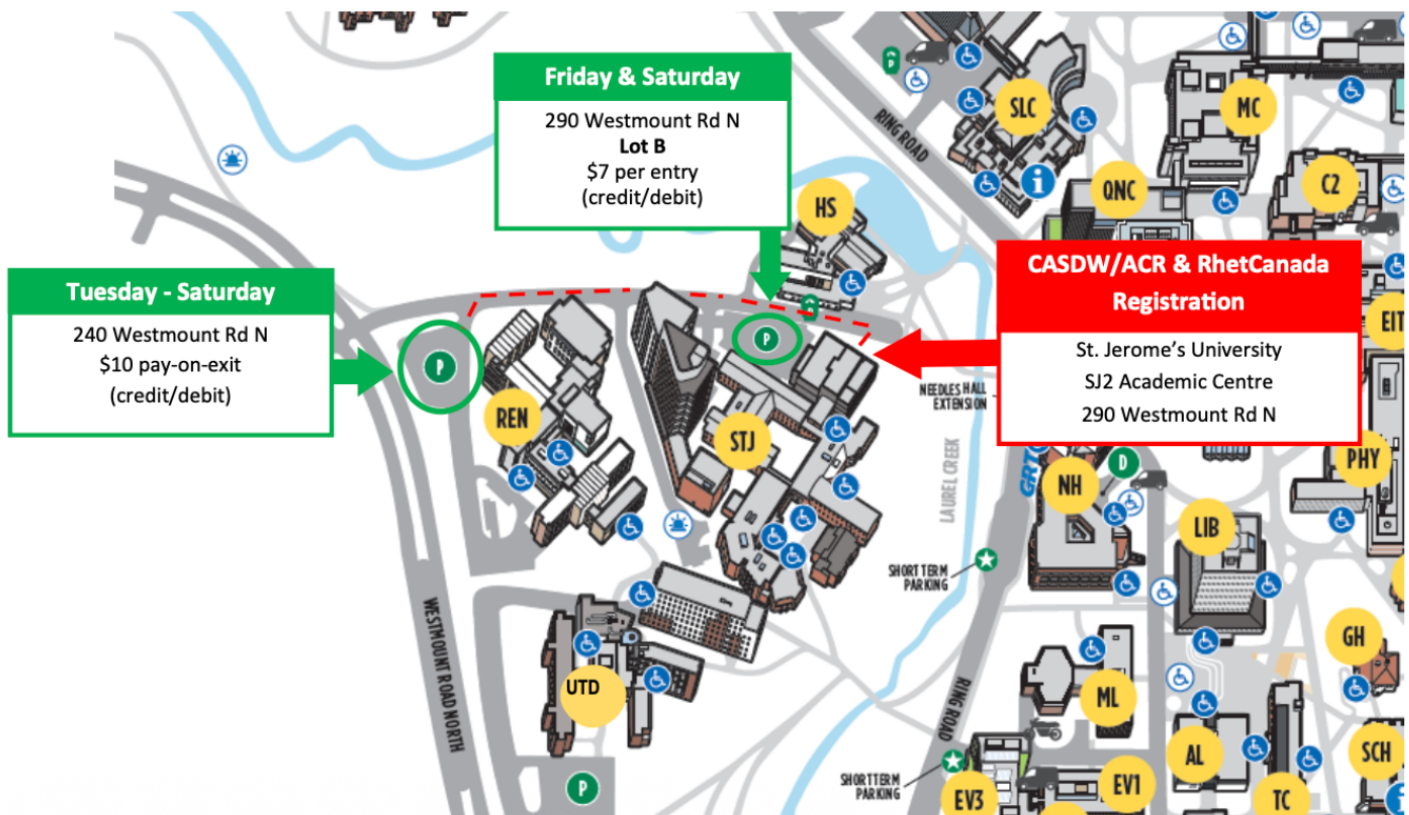
# SJU CAMPUS MAP



# PARKING MAP

Please park and then proceed to registration. Paid day parking is available:

- **Tuesday - Saturday:** Renison University College
- **Friday & Saturday:** St. Jerome's University Lot B & Renison University College



# FULL SCHEDULE

## DAY 1: Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026

| RhetCanada timeline | Room 2: SJ2 2003                                                                            | Room 1: SJ2 2002                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Room 3: SJ2 2007                                             | CASDW/ACR timeline |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 8:30-9:00           | Coffee Meet and Greet                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                              | 8:30-9:00          |
| 9:00-9:20           |                                                                                             | Conference Welcome                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                              | 9:00-9:20          |
| 9:30-11:00          |                                                                                             | <p><b>CASDW/RhetCanada joint featured panel</b></p> <p>Chair: Sara Humphreys</p> <p><b>9:30</b><br/>Figuring Out Whether Large Language Models Can Construct Linguistic Constructions and Rhetorical Figures<br/><i>Kavi Duvvooi</i><br/>(they/them)</p> <p><b>10:00</b><br/>Sound arguments abound<br/><i>Randy Harris</i><br/>(he/him)</p> <p><b>10:30</b><br/>Un/knowning/tropic Meaning<br/><i>Louis M. Maraj</i><br/>(he/him) - hybrid</p> |                                                              | 9:30-11:00         |
| 11:00-12:00         | <p><b>RhetCanada TRANSNATIONAL AND ALGORITHMIC RHETORICS</b></p> <p>Chair: Kavi Duvvooi</p> | <p><b>CASDW The Pedagogical Toolkit - Hybrid</b></p> <p><b>11:00</b> Incorporating</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>CASDW Roundtable</b></p> <p>Chair: Victorina Baxan</p> | 11:00-12:00        |

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|             | <p><b>11:05</b> The “Digital Umbilical Cord” and Its Discontents: Epistemic Friction and the Struggle for Civil Solidarity Among Chinese Newcomers in Ontario (L)<br/><i>Yan Qiu (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:17</b> Algorithmic Sovereignty and Security: A critical discourse analysis of competing narratives in transnational AI governance (L)<br/><i>Kem-Laurin Lubin (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:29</b> Diasporic Feminist Politics in the Face of Sri Lankan Nationalist Gender-Based Violence (L)<br/><i>Amaya Kodituwakku (they/them)</i></p> <p><b>11:41</b> Q&amp;A</p> | <p>TikTok-style videos as a pedagogical tool in a first-year writing course</p> <p><i>Mustafa Siddiqui (he/him)</i></p>                                                                  | <p>Mapping GenAI Metaphors to Critical GenAI Literacy for Transformative Instruction</p> <p><i>Victorina Baxan (she/her), Antoinette Gagné (she/her), Phoebe Kang (she/her), Mary-Ann Fowler (she/her), Sreemali Herath (she/her), Elena Danilina (she/her), Wenyangzi Shi (she/her), Jade Kim (she/her)</i></p> |             |
| 12:00-13:00 | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 12:00-13:00 |
| 13:00-14:00 | <p><b>RhetCanada INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER RHETORICS</b></p> <p>Chair: Rency Luan</p> <p><b>13:00</b> Paul Bunyan and Bigfoot: Some Meditations on Permanence,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p><b>CASDW Plenary #1</b></p> <p><b>Dr. Marci Prescott-Brown (she/her)</b></p> <p>Empowering Diverse Student Writers: Mobilizing Antiracist and Anti-Colonial Approaches to Writing</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | 13:00-14:00 |

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|             | <p>Change, and Symbols (L)<br/><i>David Beard (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>13:12</b> Voices in the Text: Paralanguage and Entextualization in Nineteenth-Century Canadian and Métis Political Discourse (L)<br/><i>Blaze Welling (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:24</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                                                                         | Toolkits in the Age of GenAI                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |             |
| 14:00-14:15 | BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>CASDW</b><br><b>Linguistic Equity and Justice-Hybrid</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>CASDW</b><br><b>The Era of GenAI and Writing</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 14:00-15:30 |
| 14:15-15:10 | <p><b>RhetCanada</b><br/><b>GENAI ACADEMIC DISSEMINATION</b></p> <p>Chair: Shannon Lodoen</p> <p><b>14:15</b> Logical Fallacies in Editing and the Rhetorical Dynamics of Academic Publishing<br/><i>Tommy Mayberry (he/she/they), Kim Hong Nguyen (she/they)</i></p> <p><b>14:35</b> The Rhetoric of Scholarly Podcasting<br/><i>Shauna MacDonald (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:55</b> Q&amp;A</p> | <p>Chair: Jordana Stouck</p> <p><b>14:00</b> PRISM framework for linguistic equity in Canadian writing classrooms<br/><i>Jordan Stouck (she/her), Anita Chaudhuri (she/her), Jing Li (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> Disagreement and Disciplinary Socialization: Student Agency in Feedback Processes<br/><i>Laura Baumvol (she/her), Katja Thieme (she/they), Katie Fitzpatrick (she/her), Neve Eilam (he/him)</i></p> | <p>Chair: Marvin Lam</p> <p><b>14:00</b> Writing assignments in health sciences graduate programs in the genAI era</p> <p><i>Marvin Lam (he/him), Danielle Martak (she/her), Joel Benabu (he/him), Cheryl Runke (she/her), Monica Gagnon (she/her), Boba Samuels (she/her)</i></p> |             |

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| 15:10-15:25 | BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>15:00</b> From Accommodation to Avoidance: Strategies for Helping Undergraduate Science Students Develop a Scholarly Voice in their Academic Writing (VIRTUAL)<br><i>Nazih El-Bezre (he/him)</i>                                                                                                                                    | <b>14:30</b> Writing and/as friction in a slippery age<br><i>Fiona Coll (she/her)</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |
| 15:25-16:20 | <b>RhetCanada BURKEAN QUESTIONS</b><br><br>Chair: Jon Doering<br><br><b>15:25</b> Fourteen Hearts: Procedural Rhetoric, Identification, and Marriage Ludology in Stardew Valley<br><i>Kacie Timmerman (they/them)</i><br><br><b>15:45</b> Restaurant Rhetoric: The Case of Heston Blumenthal's Salmon Ice Cream<br><i>Gabriel Kitsos (he/him)</i><br><br><b>16:05</b> Q&A | <b>CASDW Discourse &amp; Media</b><br><br>Chair: Hannah Vines<br><br><b>16:00</b> Gen Z's Digital Escapism: How Romantic Posthumanism Shapes Technological Discourse<br><i>Hannah Vines (she/her)</i><br><br><b>16:30</b> Unreasonable Curiosity: The Bear and Chef's Practice as Writer's Practice<br><i>Scott J. Wilson (he/him)</i> | <b>CASDW Writing Support &amp; Instruction</b><br><br>Chair: Mary McCaffery<br><br><b>16:00</b> How economic and social conditions influence grade 12 writing instruction<br><i>Mary McCaffery (she/her), Andrea Williams (she/her)</i><br><br><b>16:30</b> Graduate Thesis Writing Support in Three Modes: Reflection<br><i>Jordana Lobo-Pires (she/her)</i> | 16:00-17:00 |

## DAY 2: Wednesday, May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2026

| RhetCanada timeline | Room 2: SJ2 2003                                                                                                                              | Room 1: SJ2 1002                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Room 3: SJ2 2007                                                                                                   | CASDW/ACR timeline |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 8:30-9:00           | Coffee Meet and Greet                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                    | 8:30-9:00          |
| 9:00-11:00          |                                                                                                                                               | <b>CASDW/RhetCanada joint featured panel</b><br><br>Chair: Sara Humphreys<br><br><b>9:00</b><br>Dropping Out: Institutional Critique After Universities<br><i>Jay Dolmage (he/him)</i><br><br><b>9:30</b><br>Writing Media to Refuse AI<br><i>Kate Maddalena (she/her)</i><br><br><b>10:00</b><br>From AI to IK: Seeing beyond Looking with the Field Note<br><i>Jennifer Clary-Lemon (she/her), Amanda Armstrong (she/her)</i><br><br><b>10:30</b><br>Disagreeing Effectively is a Research Skill<br><i>Jane Freeman (she/her)</i> |                                                                                                                    | 9:00-11:00         |
| 11:10-12:00         | <b>RhetCanada CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL THEORY (PART 1)</b><br><br>Chair: Shannon Lodoen<br><br><b>11:10</b> Participatory Critical Rhetoric: A | <b>CASDW Media, Digital Communication, and Discourse Analysis</b><br><br><b>11:00</b> Public Discussion of Student Essays and Generative AI: A Discourse Analysis (HYBRID)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>CASDW Citation Politics</b><br><br>Chair: Tanja Collet<br><br><b>11:00</b> Academic literacy: citations as text | 11:00-12:00        |

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|             | <p>Framework for Choric Invention at Commemorative Sites (L)<br/><i>Tess Laidlaw (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:22</b> Return to the Primitive: Secondary Orality in Digital Rhetoric<br/><i>Yun Ding</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><i>Brittany (Britt) Amell (she/her), Katja Thieme (she/they)</i></p> <p><b>11:30</b> Feathers, Symbols, and Screens: Emoji Use in Ornithological Digital Communication<br/><i>Jordana Garbati (she/her), Sanja Hinić-Frlog (she/her), Kanupreet Arora (she/her), Sharleen Bains (she/her)</i></p> | <p>comprehension aids<br/><i>Tanja Collet (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:30</b> Understanding Citation as Relational Epistemological Work in First-Year Undergraduate Writing<br/><i>Erin Vearncombe (she/her)</i></p> |             |
| 12:00-13:00 | <p><b>Lunch</b></p> <p><b>CASDW Roundtable: <i>Discourse and Writing/ Rédactologie: Publish with Us, SJ2 1002</i></b><br/><i>Taylor Morphett (she/her), Jordana Garbati (she/her)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 12:00-13:00 |
| 13:00-14:05 | <p><b>RhetCanada ANCIENT REFERENCES</b></p> <p>Chair: Kavi Duvvoori</p> <p><b>13:00</b> Thinking in Transition: Artificial Intelligence, Heidegger, and the Ancient Greek Gnomê (L)<br/><i>Lauren Keeley (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:12</b> Under the Plane Tree: Narrative and Suasion in the Rhetorical Dialogues of Plato and Cicero (L)<br/><i>Bruce Dadey (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>13:24</b> LLMs as Engines of Eikos, and Other Ghosts from Rhetoric's History (L)</p> | <p><b>CASDW Plenary #2 Dr. Amir Kalan (he/him)</b></p> <p><b>13:00</b> Participatory Material Ethnography: A Post-Writing, Post-Discourse Framework for Textual Production</p>                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 13:00-14:00 |

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|             | <p><i>Jonathan Doering<br/>(he/him)</i></p> <p><b>13:36</b> Posthuman Ethos: Rethinking “A Good Man Speaking Well” in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (L)<br/><i>Olagbenro Oladipo</i></p> <p><b>13:48</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |             |
| 14:00-15:00 | <p><b>RhetCanada<br/>WRITING,<br/>INVENTION,<br/>ADAPTATION</b></p> <p>Chair: Sarah Casey</p> <p><b>14:00</b> Reciprocal Invention: Ordinary Writing Practices and the Work of Community-Based Knowledge Production (L)<br/><i>Nicole Cunningham-Frisbey</i></p> <p><b>14:12</b> Métis Strategies: Learning from the Self-Accommodations of Disabled Student Writers (L)<br/><i>Rachel Roy<br/>(she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:24</b> Ghostly Transcendence: Entelechial Dialectics and Epideictic Rhetoric in Mark Abley’s Conversations with a Dead Man<br/><i>John Moffatt<br/>(he/him), Kyle Gerber (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>14:44</b> Q&amp;A</p> | <p><b>CASDW<br/>Rhétorique politique</b></p> <p>Chair: Sara Vecchiato</p> <p><b>14:00</b> Quel rôle de la rhétorique dans la rédaction en Langage clair et simple et en Langage facile à lire et à comprendre? (VIRTUAL)<br/><i>Sara Vecchiato<br/>(she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> L'exercice du politique par la sloganisation : la voix du peuple comme acteur politique dans la révolution algérienne.<br/><i>Hakim Fekir</i></p> | <p><b>CASDW<br/>Interdisciplinary<br/>Modes of<br/>Teaching</b></p> <p>Chair: Meredith Beales</p> <p><b>14:00</b> Competing disciplines and the case for interdisciplinary readings<br/><i>Meredith Beales<br/>(she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> Centering student agency in the inclusive teaching of writing: A report from a cross-disciplinary collaboration<br/><i>Laila Ferreira<br/>(she/her),<br/>Rebecca Carruthers den Hoed (she/her),<br/>Jennifer Walsh Marr (she/her),<br/>Katja Thieme<br/>(she/they)</i></p> | 14:00-15:00 |

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| 15:00-17:30 |  | <p><b>CASDW/RhetCanada<br/>joint featured panel</b></p> <p>Chair: Rency Luan</p> <p><b>15:00</b> Intentional Design, Measurable Impact: How a Culturally Responsive and Anti-Racist First-Year Writing Course Supports Student Retention<br/><i>Mark Blaauw-Hara (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>15:30</b> Studying Community Riding/Writing with the Venezuelan Cycling Collective Bicimamis<br/><i>Nelesi Rodrigues (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>16:00</b> Antiracist and Anti-oppressive Approach for Equity and Diversity in Writing Classrooms: Translanguaging Pedagogy<br/><i>Xiangying Huo (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>16:30</b> Relationality, Rewilding, and Embodiment: Eco-rhetorical Pedagogy<br/><i>Srividya (Vidya) Natarajan (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>17:00</b> Emojiology: The Study of Emoji<br/><i>Jordana Garbati (she/her)</i></p> |  | 15:00-17:30 |
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## DAY 3: Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026

| RhetCanada timeline | Room 2: SJ2 2003                                                                                            | Room 1: SJ2 1002                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Room 3: SJ2 2007                                                          | CASDW/ACR timeline |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 8:30-9:00           | Coffee Meet and Greet                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                           | 8:30-9:00          |
| 9:00-11:00          |                                                                                                             | <b>CASDW/RhetCanada joint featured panel</b><br><br>Chair: Rency Luan<br><br><b>9:00</b><br>Rewriting the Narrative: Plurilingualism, AI, and Collaborative Writing Tutor Pedagogies<br><i>Bong-gi Sohn (she/her)</i><br><br><b>9:30</b><br>Pedagogies of Writing and the Relational Challenge of Generative AI<br><i>Erin Vearncombe (she/her)</i><br><br><b>10:00</b><br>Perspectives on Writing, Generative AI, and the Writing Centre<br><i>Tammy Byrne and Donnie Calabrese</i><br><br><b>10:30</b><br>Who do you work for? Conflicting responsibilities and LLMs in writing classrooms<br><i>Loren Gaudet (she/her)</i> |                                                                           | 9:00-11:00         |
| 11:15-12:00         | <b>RhetCanada VISUAL RHETORIC</b><br><br>Chair: Bruce Dadey<br><br><b>11:15</b> The Page as Witness: Visual | <b>CASDW Discourse in Global Contexts</b><br><br>Chair: Tosh Tachino                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>CASDW Instructor Positionality and Power Dynamics in the Classroom</b> | 11:00-12:00        |

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|             | <p>Rhetoric in Brenda Hillman's Practical Water (L)<br/><i>Zahra Barzegar (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:27</b> Grotesque transparency: visual and discursive rhetoric about Gaza<br/><i>Isaac Nahon-Serfaty (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>11:47</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                          | <p><b>11:00</b> AI Policies in Japanese Universities (VIRTUAL)<br/><i>Tosh Tachino (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>11:30</b> Writing transfer at an East African university: A case study<br/><i>Tyler Evans-Tokaryk (he/him), Michael Karani (he/him)</i></p> | <p>Chair: Eugenia (Gene) Vasilopoulos</p> <p><b>11:00</b> Instructor Reflexivity in Context: Student Agency, Language, and Pedagogical Judgment in AI-Mediated Writing Feedback<br/><i>Eugenia (Gene) Vasilopoulos (she/her), Bonggi Sohn (she/her), Phoebe Kang (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:30</b> Rethinking the concept of "power distance" in the EAL classroom<br/><i>Matt Jones (he/him)</i></p> |             |
| 12:00-13:00 | Lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 12:00-13:00 |
| 13:00-14:05 | <p><b>RhetCanada RHETORIC OF SCIENCE</b></p> <p>Chair: Carolyn Eckert</p> <p><b>13:00</b> "Shut Up and Calculate!" and the Rhetoric of the Heisenberg Cut (L)<br/><i>Fiona Thompson (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:12</b> Rhetorical Traditions and Disciplinary Practices: Research Article Introductions in Paleontology (L)</p> | <p><b>CASDW Games, Literacy, and Play-Hybrid</b></p> <p><b>13:00</b> Autistic Perspective Taking and Community Building in Tabletop Role-Playing Games (HYBRID)<br/><i>Daniel Raines (any/all), Nayeli Crull (she/her)</i></p>                        | <p><b>CASDW Workshop</b></p> <p>Poetic Apprenticeship as Pedagogy: Linguistic Justice and Threshold Concepts in First-Year Writing<br/><i>Kanika Verma (she/her)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | 13:00-14:00 |

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|             | <p><i>Nathieli Cervo (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:24</b> Self-identification of European science museums: balancing traditional and newer rhetoric<br/><i>Jill Decrop Ernst (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:44</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |
| 14:00-14:15 | BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <p><b>CASDW Multimodal Discourse-Hybrid</b></p> <p>Chair: Elisabeta Aida Osian</p> <p><b>14:00</b> Teaching multimodal discourse in digital media programs (VIRTUAL)<br/><i>Elisabeta Aida Osian (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> Beyond efficiency: A theoretical model for technology-mediated ESP writing assessment (VIRTUAL)<br/><i>Fatima Zohra Adli (she/her)</i></p> | <p><b>CASDW Writing Assessments &amp; Discursive Strategies</b></p> <p><b>14:00</b> “It Was a Wounding Revelation”: Discursive Strategies for Trans Experience and Expression<br/><i>Mary Ann Saunders (she/her), Katja Thieme (she/they)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> Integrating and Elevating Genres: An Experiment in Assessment<br/><i>Taylor Morphet (she/her)</i></p> | 14:00-15:00 |
| 14:15-15:15 | <p><b>RhetCanada RHETORICAL CONSTRUCTION(S) OF AI PANEL</b></p> <p>Chair: Kavi Duvvoori</p> <p><b>14:15</b> Seeking Expertise: A Procedural Rhetorical Analysis of Generative AI and Information-Seeking Practices<br/><i>Shannon Lodoen (she/her), Alexi Orchard (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:30</b> “Artificial Intelligence is our alchemy”: A rhetorical study of the Techno-Optimist Manifesto<br/><i>Andrew McMurry (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>14:45</b> When trust becomes technical: the persuasive power</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 15:00-17:00 |
|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p><b>CASDW/ACR 2026 AGM</b></p> <p>Please join us for executive elections, new fee structure discussion, awards announcements, and more!</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |             |

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|             | <p>of “Trustworthy by Design”<br/> <i>Paula Nunez de Villavicencio (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>15:00</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Open to all current members of CASDW/ACR</p> <p>In-person and virtual attendance are possible.</p> |  |             |
| 15:15-15:30 | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                       |  |             |
| 15:30-16:15 | <p><b>RhetCanada CONTEMPORARY RHETORICAL THEORY (PART 2)</b></p> <p>Chair: Sarah Casey</p> <p><b>15:30</b> Publics and Exceptionalist Publics: The Westboro Baptist Church and "Thank God for Dead Soldiers"<br/> <i>Michelle Wilk (she/they)</i></p> <p><b>15:50</b> Kneeling in Worship: The Role of the Body in Experiencing Faith (L)<br/> <i>Sigrid Streit (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>16:02</b> Q&amp;A</p> |                                                                                                       |  |             |
| 16:30-18:30 | <p><b>Rhetoricon Registration, Posters, and Reception (Davis Centre, 1301)</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                       |  | 16:30-18:30 |

## DAY 4: Friday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Please kindly note: To attend the Rhetoricon Symposium, you would need to have either already indicated to CASDW/RhetCanada that you wanted to go -- and hence have been put on the list -- or registered independently to attend Rhetoricon

### Friday, May 29, 2026

|               |         |                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30 – 9:30   | DC I301 | Coffee, pastries, fruit; registration                                                                                                  |
| 9:30 – 9:50   | DC I301 | Welcome – Issues and Interests – Randy (possibly Chrysanne)                                                                            |
| 10:00 – 10:30 | DC I302 | <b>Jeanne Fahnestock</b><br>Persuasive parallelism in form, sound, and strategic repetition                                            |
| 10:30 – 10:50 | DC I302 | Discussion<br><b>Kyle Gerber</b><br>We construct language as language constructs us: $V^A NP^B NP^B V^A$                               |
| 11:00 – 11:50 | DC I302 | constructions<br><b>Ritika Puri, Rency Luan, Keru Chen</b> Said the Master: Antimetabolic variations in <i>The Analects</i>            |
| 12:00 – 1:00  | DC I301 | Lunch<br><b>Laura A. Michaelis</b>                                                                                                     |
| 1:00 – 1:30   | DC I302 | Marked contrast: A construction that performs antithesis through prosody, conceptual blending and ironic pretense                      |
| 1:30 – 1:50   | DC I302 | Discussion<br><b>Ramona Kühn</b><br>Aligned in form, divided in meaning: Computational identification and interpretation of antithesis |
| 2:00 – 2:50   | DC I302 | <b>Kavi Duvvooori</b><br>Figuring out whether large language models can construct linguistic constructions and rhetorical figures      |
| 3:00 – 3:30   | DC I301 | Coffee break<br><b>Adele Goldberg</b>                                                                                                  |
| 3:30 – 4:00   | DC I302 | Constructions do it with style: Rhetorical effects of the <i>You-Know-What-I-Mean</i> construction                                     |
| 4:00 – 4:20   | DC I302 | Discussion                                                                                                                             |
| 4:30 – 6:00   | DC I302 | Roundtable: Adele, (possibly Chrysanne), Jeanne, Kavi, Keru, Kyle, Laura, Ramona, Randy, Ritika, Rency                                 |

## DAY 5: Saturday, May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026

| RhetCanada timeline | Room: SJ2 2003                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8:30-9:00           | Coffee Meet and Greet                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 9:00-10:05          | <p><b>RhetCanada ARGUMENTATION</b></p> <p>Chair: Fiona Thompson</p> <p><b>9:00</b> Meeting Colorblind Racism on Its Own Rhetorical Register: Counterstory as Oppositional Enthymeme<br/><i>Maab Al-Rashdan (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>9:20</b> Corporate Legitimacy and Rhetoric of Media (L)<br/><i>Wafa Ben Yedder</i></p> <p><b>9:32</b> "My Slogan, My Choice": Rhetorical Figures and Slogan Constructions<br/><i>Romina Hashemi (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>9:52</b> Q&amp;A</p> |
| 10:05-10:20         | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10:20-11:05         | <p><b>RhetCanada TRANS ISSUES</b></p> <p>Chair: Monique Kampher</p> <p><b>10:20</b> Imminent Re-Imaginations: Rhetorics of Transgender Survival Under Emergent Authoritarianism (L)<br/><i>Q.E. Drummond (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>10:32</b> Citation Politics: Trans Rights and the Genre of the Amicus Brief<br/><i>Katja Thieme (she/they) and Arnav Agarwal (he/him)</i></p> <p><b>10:52</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                                                      |
| 11:05-11:20         | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11:20-12:00         | <p><b>RhetCanada ETHOS</b></p> <p>Chair: Fiona Thompson</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

|             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | <p><b>11:20</b> (Pre-Recorded) Crafting Ethos Across Languages: Translanguaging and Identity Among Multilingual Newcomer Youth (L)<br/><i>Rawia Azzahrawi (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>11:32</b> (Pre-recorded) Rhetorical Responsibility Without a Speaker: Classical Ethics and Civic Accountability in Contemporary Communication (L)<br/><i>Deepa Silwal</i></p> <p><b>11:44</b> Q&amp;A</p>                                   |
| 12:00-13:20 | <b>Lunch</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 15:20-14:00 | <p><b>RhetCanada</b><br/><b>RHETORIC OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE PART 1</b></p> <p>Chair: Sarah Casey</p> <p><b>13:20</b> Chronic Pain Self-Management as Neuroliberal Rhetorical Practice (L)<br/><i>Philippa Spoel (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:32</b> Ancient Appeals, Modern Crises: Punctuated Ethos and the Rhetoric of Trust in Vaccine Communication (L)<br/><i>Carolyn Eckert (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>13:44</b> Q&amp;A</p> |
| 14:00-14:10 | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 14:10-14:50 | <p><b>RhetCanada</b><br/><b>RHETORIC OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE PART 2</b></p> <p>Chair: Rency Luan</p> <p><b>14:10</b> Meeting Desire Halfway: Flibanserin, Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder, and Kairos (L)<br/><i>Amanda Friz (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>14:22</b> Autism, Bleach, and Constitutive Rhetoric (L)<br/><i>M. Remi Yergeau (they/them)</i></p>                                                                      |
| 14:50-15:00 | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 15:00-16:30 | <p><b>CASDW/RhetCanada</b><br/><b>joint featured panel</b></p> <p><b>15:00</b> Crafting Political Ethos through Social Media Videos<br/><i>Monique Kampherm (she/her)</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

|  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><b>15:30</b> Not All, But Always: The Role of Figurative Constructions in Epitomizing Arguments<br/><i>Zoya Randhawa (she/her)</i></p> <p><b>16:00</b> “Apathy by Design: The Rhetoric of Risk Communication Stacking”<br/><i>Sarah Casey (she/her)</i></p> |
|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**FEATURED  
PRESENTERS  
ABSTRACTS & BIOS**

Dr. Mark Blaauw-Hara (he/him), University of Toronto  
Mississauga

## Intentional Design, Measurable Impact: How a Culturally Responsive and Anti-Racist First-Year Writing Course Supports Student Retention

### **Abstract**

In 2020, the University of Toronto Mississauga launched a first-year writing course grounded in a writing-about-writing, transfer-oriented framework. Intentionally designed to be culturally responsive and actively antiracist, the course invites students to reflect on their sociocultural and linguistic backgrounds and to examine how language shapes identity and agency. A multi-year assessment project found that students who completed the course in their first year had 4.7 times greater odds of being retained in Year 2 and 3.2 times greater odds of retention in Year 3. Focus group data further indicate that, beyond developing writing skills, students gained a stronger sense of self-efficacy and formed meaningful connections with instructors and peers. This presentation situates these findings within broader student retention research, arguing that purposefully designed first-year writing courses can enhance not only academic skill development but also students' persistence in higher education.

### **Bio**

Mark Blaauw-Hara has a PhD in Rhetoric and Textual Studies from Old Dominion University. He is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, where he teaches ISP100: Writing for University and Beyond, ISP200: Writing and Researching across the University, and has co-taught UTM110: Rhetorics of Resistance. Dr. Blaauw-Hara is also an Associate Faculty Member in Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at OISE, where he serves on student committees, teaches LHA1823: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, and has taught LHA1822: Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. His book, *From Military to Academy: The Writing and Learning Transitions of Student-Veterans*, was nominated for a College Composition and Communication Outstanding Book Award. His second book, *Understanding Writing Program Administrator Readiness and Renewal*, co-edited with Joe Janangelo, came out in 2023. His writing has also appeared in a wide variety of journals and edited collections, and he has presented at a number of professional conferences. Mark has served as Treasurer of the Canadian Writing Centres Association and President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators.

Tammy Byrne and Donny Calabrese, Cape Breton University

## Perspectives on Writing, Generative AI, and the Writing Centre

### **Abstract**

This presentation will discuss findings of two surveys conducted at Cape Breton University on student and faculty reactions to generative artificial intelligence for university writing assignments. This survey (fall 2024) suggested faculty are assigning fewer writing assignments, but still believe students should learn to write without genAI assistance. Meanwhile, a survey of students at CBU (underway) will add to our understanding of students' perception of their own and peers' genAI use, the extent to which writing centre use mediates students' AI use, and how faculty affect students' willingness to use genAI. Students' perceptions and use of genAI for

writing assignments may be strongly influenced by faculty's framing and regulation of it, as suggested by Venkatesh et al.'s (2003) Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT).

### **Bio**

Donnie Calabrese is a Writing Advisor at Cape Breton University's Writing Centre and holds a Master's degree in English Literature from Western University. His current scholarly work explores the intersections of neoliberalism and generative AI rhetoric. Donnie is a writer, labour activist, graphic novelist and musician.

Tammy Byrne has been the Writing Centre Coordinator at Cape Breton University for 16 years. She holds a Master's degree in English Literature from Dalhousie University.

Sarah Casey (she/her), University of Waterloo

## **Apathy by Design: The Rhetoric of Risk Communication Stacking**

### **Abstract**

This research adopts James Reason's "Swiss cheese model" (SCM) of risk management as a tool for reflexive examination of risk communication practices within the context of an information environment that is under constant assault by disinformation. I develop the concept of "risk communication stacking" to describe practices such as workplace safety trainings, in which audiences are provided multiple, asynchronous risk communications and are expected to absorb, accept, and be able to act on them without further discussion or training. I consider the rhetorical implications of these stacks and argue that such practices undermine good-faith risk communications and thus represent a "latent condition" (Reason, 1997) or systemic vulnerability that contributes to the broader problem of disinformation.

### **Bio**

Sarah Casey is an English PhD student at the University of Waterloo, who has over fifteen years experience as a communications professional in the health, wellness and fitness industry. Her research focuses on the rhetoric of risk and disinformation, engaging with the study of risk across disciplines (sociology, anthropology, political and management sciences) to understand how risk discourse contributes to social and political polarization. She holds an MA in English (Rhetoric and Communication Design) and a BA in English (Rhetoric, Media, and Professional Communication), both from the University of Waterloo. Sarah is an honoured recipient of the Michael Purves-Smith Paper Award from The Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric (2024), the UW Beltz PhD Essay Prize (2025 and 2024), the Provost Doctoral Entrance Award for Women (2023) and the UW English Master's Rhetoric Essay Prize (2023), and has served as a research assistant on multiple federally funded research grants. Her work has been presented at various conferences across several disciplines: The Canadian Society for the Study of Rhetoric; the Canadian Political Science Association; the North American Victorian Studies Association; IEEE Ethics; and the Canadian Engineering Education Association. She has served as an executive member of RhetCanada (2024-25), and of the UW Student Association for Graduates in English (SAGE; 2023-24 and 2025-26).

Dr. Jennifer Clary-Lemon (she/her) & Amanda Armstrong (she/her),  
University of Waterloo

## AI to IK: The Field Note as Decolonial, Rhetorical Action

### Abstract

Scholars in the humanities are increasingly being faced with relationships to AI and large language models like ChatGPT that are fraught. Academic institutions have been quick to earmark funds, hire AI specialists, and boast of AI “adoption” while teachers and scholars question AI’s capacity to foster learning and critical thinking. Issues of academic integrity, reinforcement of racial bias, copyright violation, as well as its impacts on mental health, cognition, job automation, and importantly, the environment, all plague contemporary thinking about the rush to adopt AI. This talk positions writing, particularly the genre of “field note,” as a classroom-based tool that both resists the pressures of AI and positions students as observers and listeners in the natural world, helping them become critical examiners of the logarithmic world AI suggests we inhabit. Using a case study of a university-level science communication course, this talk scaffolds field notes as rhetorical action that moves beyond AI-generated prose and towards epistemological change, allowing Cartesian models of knowledge that dominate the sciences to exist alongside Indigenous epistemologies that privilege relationality among specific people, places, and beings.

### Bio

Jennifer Clary-Lemon is Professor of English at the University of Waterloo. She has published a number of books and articles on rhetorical-ecological thinking, environmental rhetorics, and decolonial praxis, inclusive of *Nestwork: New Material Rhetorics for Precarious Species* (2023), *Decolonial Conversations in Posthuman and New Material Rhetorics* (2022, edited with David Grant); and *Planting the Anthropocene: Rhetorics of Natureculture* (2019).

Amanda Armstrong is a Biology M.Sc. student at the University of Waterloo.

Dr. Jay Dolmage (he/him), University of Waterloo

## Dropping Out: Institutional Critique After Universities

### Abstract

In my scholarship, I write about ableism in higher education. Many of us work in areas that involve critiques of academia. But such critiques have been complicated by the fact that there is so much uncertainty about the future of higher education right now. Every week, there are new, overt attacks on universities, some authored by the same governments who have funded us for centuries. Every semester, there are new pressures applied as funding is reduced and faculty are forced to streamline education to be more efficient. Technological progress is readily framed as capable of replacing us as educators, and a lot of people seem eager for this replacement. And faculty have lost control of the narrative. The general public distrusts higher education, misunderstands what it is we do as faculty and instructors. There is a growing public sentiment that academic research is not reliable or valuable. And yet I find myself, as I have through most of my career, continuing to argue against higher education. I keep working to build

a critique of colleges and universities. The problem is that, in this moment, I am joining a very uncomfortable chorus.

### **Bio**

I am committed to disability justice in my scholarship, service, and teaching. My work brings together rhetoric, writing, disability studies, and critical pedagogy. My first book, entitled *Disability Rhetoric*, was published with Syracuse University Press in 2014. *Academic Ableism: Disability and Higher Education* was published with Michigan University Press in 2017 and is available in an open-access version online. *Disabled Upon Arrival: Eugenics, Immigration, and the Construction of Race and Disability* was published in 2018 with Ohio State University Press. I am the Founding Editor of the *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*.

Kavi Duvvooori (they/them), University of Waterloo

## Figuring Out Whether Large Language Models Can Construct Linguistic Constructions and Rhetorical Figures

### **Abstract**

How well do Large Language Models (LLMs) and other algorithmic text processing systems model rhetorical figures and linguistic constructions? What could the answer tell us about the broader tendencies and limits of scaling oriented generative AI? Our pilot study explored how effectively LLMs processed and produced English linguistic constructions and rhetorical figures, testing LLMs on an authored sample of well-studied rhetorical schemes and grammatical constructions, analyzing statistically and qualitatively the generated outputs. Both Construction Grammar and the tradition of rhetorical figures treat suprallexical groupings as semiotic units—that is, as specific form/meaning alliances. However, Construction Grammar is concerned with arbitrary alliances, while rhetorical figures involve neurocognitively motivated alliances. Theoretically motivated empirical studies like ours search for internal and structural analyses of the ways LLMs perform and fail rhetorically, to complement ontological, critical, and textual investigations of generative AI's communicative wake, pattern-biases, potentials, and blind spots.

### **Bio**

Kavi Duvvooori is a PhD candidate in English, at the University of Waterloo, with an MFA from the University of California, Santa Cruz and previous study in mathematics and literary arts. Their research on computational rhetoric explores how algorithms mediate communication: incorporating linguistics, research/creation, and feminist, queer, and ecological media studies. They are an editor for *Taper* magazine, and have shared computational writing in various publications and venues. They admire and appreciate the geese.

Dr. Jane Freeman (she/her), University of Toronto

## Disagreeing Effectively is a Research Skill

### **Abstract**

Discovery and innovation often begin with disagreement: questioning what is allows us to consider what could be. In academia, and in democratic societies more broadly, we inevitably

encounter disagreements as students, researchers, and citizens, and yet many of us lack the confidence and communication skills needed to disagree in the service of a shared goal. In this paper, I will consider benefits of paying more attention to how we disagree in the contexts in which we live and learn. Drawing on research in fields such as second-language pedagogy, pragmatics, sociocultural competencies, and workplace negotiation, I will explore the potential value of constructive disagreement in pushing the boundaries of what is known/accepted in a field, the tacit, culturally shaped assumptions that influence styles of disagreement, and practical strategies for helping our students as well as ourselves to disagree more effectively.

### **Bio**

Jane Freeman is the founding Director of the School of Graduate Studies' Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC). She established GCAC's modular curricula of non-credit courses, workshops, and its Writing Centre, and designed several of GCAC's current courses and workshops. Her development of GCAC is described in a chapter in *Supporting Graduate Student Writers: Research, Curriculum & Program Design* (University of Michigan Press, 2016). Jane completed a BA and a BEd at Queen's University, an MA at the University of Warwick, and a PhD at the University of Toronto. A Senior Fellow of Massey College and a member of the Stratford Festival's Senate, Jane's areas of expertise are Shakespeare, classical rhetoric, and oral and written communication. She completed a book in collaboration with Prof. Ursula Franklin, entitled *Ursula Franklin Speaks: Thoughts and Afterthoughts, 1986–2012*. In 2023, she was awarded the highest honour for teaching at the University of Toronto, the President's Teaching Award.

Dr. Loren Gaudet (she/her), University of Victoria

## Who do you work for? Conflicting responsibilities and LLMs in writing classrooms

### **Abstract**

This presentation aims to open a discussion about the ethics, responsibilities, and politics of integrating AI, especially Large Language Models (LLMs) in first year, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) courses. While writing instructors, especially first-year writing instructors, need to address LLMs as part of digital literacy and critical thinking, these approaches tend to be cautionary and with the aim of understanding that, for example, ChatGPT will write a mediocre paper at best, and a biased, false paper at worst. However, if WAC-courses are meant to provide students with core skills to carry with them into their disciplines, and there is an increasing expectation within disciplines that they *should* use LLMs to help with their writing (or do their writing), what is the responsibility of WAC instructors to teach students to use these tools? For those who lean more towards AI refusal, how do we find a balance between responsibility to students and a responsibility to ourselves, our politics, and our environmental resources? My hope with this presentation is to generate discussion rather than offer answers and to make explicit one of the ways that WAC-courses occupy a fraught site in the larger university ecosystem.

### **Bio**

Loren Gaudet is an Assistant Teaching Professor in the Academic and Technical Writing Program at the University of Victoria. She specializes in the rhetoric of health and medicine,

and writing studies. Her research has been published in *Health*, *BMJ Medical Humanities*, *The Journal of Medical Humanities*, *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *The Conversation*, and *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie*, including a special issue for Academic Writing in Canada. She was a co-investigator for the 2024 SSHRC-funded project, *Writing and Power: Positions and Policies for Social Change*.

Dr. Randy Harris (he/him), University of Waterloo

## Sound Arguments Abound

### Abstract

Phonological figuration has two seemingly contradictory functions in ordinary language. At the word level, it implicates disparagement, triviality, strife and wrangle (higgledy piggledy, rootin tootin, flim flam, hurly burly, sing song, hanky panky, ...). But at the phrasal level, it implicates trust, credibility, and soundness ("an apple a day keeps the doctor away;" "birds of a feather flock together;" "happy wife, happy life"). Why? I will argue that figurative enrichment, enabled by syntax, increases processing fluency, and processing fluency brings with it a credibility bonus.

### Bio

Randy Allen Harris teaches linguistics, rhetoric, and professional communication in the English department at the University of Waterloo, with a cross-appointment to the David Cheriton School of Computer Science, and researches a smattering of phenomena mostly around the cognitive and computational aspects of rhetorical figures and Construction Grammar. His books include *Voice Interaction Design: Crafting the New Conversational Interfaces*, *Rhetoric and Incommensurability*, two volumes in the Taylor & Francis *Landmark Essays* series, both in aspects of Rhetoric of Science; the co-edited (with Jeanne Fahnestock) *Routledge Handbook of Language and Persuasion*; and *The Linguistics Wars: Chomsky, Lakoff and the Battle over Deep Structure*.

Dr. Xiangying Huo (she/her), University of Toronto Scarborough

## Antiracist and Anti-oppressive Approach for Equity and Diversity in Writing Classrooms: Translanguaging Pedagogy

### Abstract

Globalization calls on applying pluralistic insights to move from Eurocentrism to Europe decolonization. Diversity does not lie in normalizing diverse students but encouraging differences. The native speaker standard norm has resulted in monolingualism and monoculturalism. Consequently, there have been polarized dichotomies: "Self and Other," "Superiority and Inferiority" (Pennycook, 1998, p.19), "native-nonnative," and "mainstream-minority" (Lin et al., 2005, p.215).

By problematizing native speakerism and linguisticism, this presentation deconstructs dominant norms and proposes the antiracist and anti-oppressive translanguaging pedagogy by stressing its multimodal and multisensory features with students' writing samples (e.g., video and audio assignments, reading responses, and in-class minute papers), emails, and survey, as well as calling for pedagogical paradigm shifts in teaching English as a target language to the language

repertoire, from grammar to pragmatism, from homogeneity to heterogeneity paradigm, from monolingualism to multilingualism, and from a dichotomized to a pluralized approach for equity, diversity, and justice in writing classrooms.

### **Bio**

Xiangying Huo is an Assistant Professor in the Teaching Stream at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, UTSC. As a writing specialist and English language learning specialist, Dr. Huo has taught English at the university level for over two decades and has taught writing across the curriculum at York University, OCAD, and three campuses of the University of Toronto. Her research interests include writing studies, applied linguistics, anti-racism education, ESL/EFL policy and pedagogy, internationalization in higher education, intercultural and cross-cultural teaching and learning, language ideology, and World Englishes. Her book *Higher Education Internationalization and English Language Instruction: Intersectionality of Race and Language in Canadian Universities* (Springer, 2020) was nominated by the International Writing Centres Association (IWCA) for the 2021 IWCA Outstanding Book Award.

Dr. Monique Kampherm (she/her), University of Toronto  
Mississauga

## Crafting Political Ethos through Social Media Videos

### **Abstract**

How are political leaders' public personas shaped in the age of social media? This presentation explores the rhetorical strategies used to construct and manage a leaders' ethos (the perceived character of a speaker) during Canada's 2025 English-language leaders' debate and in the short-form videos that followed on Instagram. Focusing on two classical rhetorical techniques, ethopoeia (the depiction of another's ethos) and prosopopoeia (the incorporation of another's ethos), we examine how these methods are employed in live debate and then repurposed for digital platforms. Through close analysis of these performances, we show how ethopoeia is used to frame opponents and allies, while prosopopoeia serves to mock or enhance one's character. These rhetorical moves are central to shaping political identity and public perception, especially within Instagram's fast-paced, emotionally charged, and visually driven media environment.

### **Bio**

Monique Kampherm is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream (LTA), in the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Her research applies rhetorical theory to political communication and social media, with a focus on how rhetorical strategies shape public discourse and democratic participation. A 2023 Governor General's Gold Medal Finalist, she is also the recipient of the 2025 University of Toronto's Margaret Proctor Award for Excellence in Writing Instruction and the 2023 CASDW/ACR Pavelich Prize for Best Doctoral Dissertation. Dr. Monique Kampherm holds a Ph.D. in English-Rhetoric and three Master's degrees in English-Rhetoric, Multimedia Journalism, and Political Science. Her work investigates how digital platforms influence political ethos, particularly through the rhetorical dynamics of Canadian leaders' debates and their amplification on social media.

Dr. Kate Maddalena (she/her), University of Toronto Mississauga

## Writing Media to Refuse AI

### **Abstract**

This talk will review pedagogies of refusal and offer a few concrete examples of how such pedagogies work as an approach to AI tools in the university writing classroom. The trend to accept and use Language Learning Model (LLM) AI in the classroom preemptively forecloses critical questions which ought to come before we embrace a new technology: the serious consideration of refusal, and the imagination required to give that refusal a shape. Feminist, abolitionist, decolonial, queer, and anti-racist scholars of teaching and learning are actively developing frameworks for pedagogies of refusal, where refusal takes advantage of a *kairos* to identify and challenge existing power structures outside and within the classroom. How can these pedagogies afford the refusal of ostensibly ubiquitous AI? What about teaching and learning against AI, without AI?

### **Bio**

Kate Maddalena is Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, and she researches knowledge-making media, epistemic rhetorics, and the popular uptake of science and medicine. She teaches writing and critical theory-informed media studies, and she writes about stuff like LEGO, genetics, drugs, microbiota, and ghosts. Her work has been published in journals such as *Theory, Culture, & Society*, *Feminist Pedagogy*, and the *Canadian Journal of Communication*. Her forthcoming book, *Disgustatory! A Gothic Rhetoric of Consumption* (with Jeremy Tirrell, from Alabama University Press), explores weird wellness practices in contemporary popular, extra-medical discourses.

Dr. Louis M. Maraj (he/him) (Virtual), University of British Columbia

## Un/knowing/tropic Meaning

### **Abstract**

In tensions emerging from pervasive GenAI technologies' use, compositionists and other educators typically place emphasis on that use's ethics, asking: where creation ends and appropriation begins; how academic integrity and assessment might change; how journals understand authorial credit, review processes, and mechanical/analytical editing; how to develop fluid policies balancing skepticism and openness to it and more (Byrd et al 2025). Much of said emphasis, however, operates from capitalist conceptions of ownership/currency, binary thinking (right/wrong, human/non-human), and colonial management of "resources." What happens in shifting perspective to *how* GenAI discursively orders information to narrate the human in ways familiarly historical to Western thinking? This talk unpacks how the trope as a rhetorical unit maintains human/non-human logics that underscore GenAI panic. Excavating 18<sup>th</sup> century European scientific discourse that "make the human" as we know it (Wynter 2003), forward an Afro-Caribbean epistemically disobedient theoretics of *distropia* to grasp at unknowing how to know.

## Bio

Caribbean-born Louis M. Maraj, PhD, is a multi-award-winning scholar, multimedia artist, and author of *Black or Right: Anti/Racist Campus Rhetorics*. His critical and creative work focuses on questions surrounding anti/racism, anti/blackness, and expressive form. Currently, he is an associate professor in University of British Columbia's School of Journalism, Writing & Media.

Dr. Srividya (Vidya) Natarajan (she/her), Western University

## Relationality, Rewilding, and Embodiment: Eco-rhetorical Pedagogy

Indigenous Knowledge Holders and scholars have taught us that no decolonial pedagogy or research is complete until it has seriously addressed disciplinary care for the earth. My research seeks to juxtapose and compare recent writing on rewilding and responsibility towards the natural world by authors rooted in Indigenous philosophies and spirituality (e.g., Citizen Potawatomi scholar Robin Wall Kimmerer) and writing by authors grounded in settler science (e.g., Jennifer Clary-Lemon, Lorraine Johnson & Sheila Colla, Doug Tallamy). I hope to arrive at an understanding of how eco-rhetorics could feed pedagogic praxis in Writing Studies—an understanding that moves us away from rhetorics of disembodied selfhood, possessive individualism, despair, and technological dependence, and towards rhetorics of embodiment, relationality, collaboration, hope, responsibility, and revitalization through posthuman/ist communication not via AI but in care for the natural world.

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## Bio

Srividya (Vidya) Natarajan is Associate Professor (Writing) and Coordinator of the Writing Program at King's University College, London, Canada. Her research focuses on Writing and Writing Center pedagogy in relation to racial, gender, caste, disability, and environmental justice. In 2025, she co-edited a collection of readings on the politics of race and language with Dr. Emily Pez (*Thinking About Writing: Readings for Multilingual Writers*, available in eCampus Ontario's Open Library). She has co-edited a special section of *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie*, and a special issue of *The Peer Review* on changing writing centre commonplaces in response to anti-oppressive frameworks, and has authored or coauthored a number of scholarly articles, one of which won CASDW's Doreen Starke-Meyerring Annual Award for the Best Article or Chapter in Writing and Discourse Studies in 2024. In her parallel life as a novelist and creative writer, she has authored novels (*The Undoing Dance*, *No Onions nor Garlic*) and has co-authored graphic novels (*A Gardener in the Wasteland*, and *Bhimayana*).

Zoya Randhawa (she/her), University of Waterloo

## Not All, But Always: The Role of Figurative Constructions in Epitomizing Arguments

### **Abstract**

The research I will be sharing sits at the intersection of construction grammar, rhetorical figures, and digital communication. This work builds on recent scholarship that explores how rhetorical figures can be seamlessly adopted into construction grammar frameworks. The research I will be sharing analyzes another heavily figured grammatical construction, NOT ALL NplA BUT ALWAYS NsgA and its usage on social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter). A common form of this construction is the phrase “Not all men, but always a man.” Following Jeanne Fahnestock’s notion of figures as epitomes, this analysis showcases that certain figurative constructions on social media can epitomize arguments without them losing memorability or impact, something that is useful in online spaces when word count is limited. My research will demonstrate the role rhetorical figures play in communicating online, as well as further demonstrating the importance of studying rhetorical figures and grammatical constructions together.

### **Bio**

Zoya Randhawa is an MA student in Rhetoric and Communication Design at the University of Waterloo. Her major research project focuses on feminist and digital rhetoric, specifically examining how misogyny is embedded in artificial intelligence through AI companions. Zoya is also interested in rhetorical figures and exploring the function they play in everyday communication.

Dr. Nelesi Rodrigues (she/her), University of Toronto Mississauga

## Studying Community Riding/Writing with the Venezuelan Cycling Collective Bicimamis

### **Abstract**

In this talk, Dr. Rodrigues discusses a community-based learning initiative—a relatively understudied context in writing studies scholarship. Bicimamis (a reclamation of “mami”, a popular catcall in Venezuela) was a women’s cycling collective that between 2011 and 2017 offered programming to promote the bicycle as a mode of transportation among women. Extending the work of queer and feminist scholars on community-based and activist rhetorics (Chavez, Hsu), and weaving together archival research, semi-structured interviews, and autobiographical writing, Dr. Rodrigues attends to writing practices and products (inseparable from embodied practices) that helped Bicimamis articulate what it meant to “move as women” in Venezuela. She also shares how, years after the collective’s dissolution, some members continue to draw on knowledge from that experience to navigate their current realities. She invites interlocutors to reconsider the field’s dominant assumptions about what inquiry and writing are for, and the transferability of knowledge across time and contexts.

**Bio**

Nelesi Rodrigues (she/her/ella) is an Assistant Professor, cross-appointed in Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP) and the Adult Education and Community Development program (AECD) at OISE. Her scholarship brings mobility justice and embodied feminist perspectives to questions about writing and learning in community contexts, university settings, and the spaces where both meet. She is also interested in arts-informed research methods and pedagogies, and on the role that writing instruction can play in equity and access initiatives in higher education.

Dr. Rodrigues' dissertation, which received the National Council of Teachers of English's James Berlin Outstanding Dissertation Award, explored how movement—in its creative, political, and geographical dimensions—expands understandings of the work, the contexts, and the stakes of research and teaching in writing and rhetoric. She is currently working on a book manuscript that builds from that work. Dr. Rodrigues' research has also been recognized through several competitive fellowships, including the Fulbright Foreign Student Program Fellowship, the Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship, and the Centre for Community Partnerships' Faculty Fellowship at the University of Toronto. Dr. Rodrigues is also invested in promoting community writing initiatives in higher education. She is one of the faculty co-facilitators (with Dr. Sheliza Ibrahim and Dr. Janine Rose, both from ISUP) leading the Caribbean and Black Writing Collective (CBWC), an initiative that supports prospective and current students at UTM who identify as Black and/or Caribbean by offering a culturally affirming space where they can develop their academic skills while connecting with and working alongside peers and faculty with similar cultural backgrounds.

## Dr. Bong-gi Sohn (she/her), University of Winnipeg

### Rewriting the Narrative: Plurilingualism, AI, and Collaborative Writing Tutor Pedagogies

**Abstract**

My current research examines how Canadian university writing centres navigate the intersections of internationalization, digital literacy, and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). While plurilingual and international students are often celebrated for enriching institutional diversity, their linguistic repertoires are still problematized as deficits. GenAI amplifies these colonial discourses, raising concerns about academic integrity (Perkins, 2023; Roe et al., 2023) and reinforcing “WEIRD” (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) biases (Atari et al., 2023). This deficit framing perpetuates benevolent racism (Vandrick, 2009) and limits plurilingual students' academic advancement, underscoring the need for decolonial, equity-driven approaches in writing instruction.

Drawing from a collaborative project between a writing centre and an advanced EAL writing course, my current research uses critical pragmatic and collaborative ethnographic approaches to examine how embedded writing tutors, heuristic pedagogy, and AI-mediated literacies foster inclusive, discipline-specific writing and reflexive learning.

**Bio**

Bong-gi Sohn is an instructor in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing, and Communications at the University of Winnipeg. Her research focuses on the intersection of language, education, and migration, with a commitment to exploring the language socialization of international students across their lifespan, expanding critical content and language integrated learning

(CLIL), and deepening critical second language writing and literacies. Through her dedication to teaching and research, she has not only delved into investigating students' plurilingual and pluricultural potential but has also collaborated with teachers and educational researchers to advance curriculum (re)design, instruction, and assessment. Dr. Bong-gi's presentation and expertise in leveraging the social justice potential of AI-mediated literacies to create greater equity in postsecondary classrooms.

Dr. Erin Vearncombe (she/her), University of Toronto

## Pedagogies of Writing and the Relational Challenge of Generative AI

### **Abstract**

Generative AI calls for a relational epistemological approach to writing instruction, a threshold understanding of knowledge as emerging through interactions between people, technologies, and contexts. As co-editor of *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie's* special issue, *Le Présent et le(s) Futur(s) de la Rédaction à l'ère de l'Intelligence Artificielle/The Present and Future(s) of Writing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*, I will map the key areas of inquiry shaping debate about the impact of contemporary technologies of generative AI on writing instruction and practice in higher education. These areas include pedagogical practice, agency and the transformation of academic writing identities, ethical considerations in academic contexts, and the development of new literacies. Critical questions emerge around authorship and rhetorical responsibility, or how writing practices can both shape and be shaped by human-AI collaboration while holding writerly agency in the balance.

### **Bio**

Erin Vearncombe is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream with the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP) at the University of Toronto Mississauga. Her teaching focuses on supporting undergraduate students in their transition from high school to university-level writing through ISUP's groundbreaking course ISP100: Writing for University and Beyond. Erin has ongoing research projects on generative AI and evaluative judgment, writing development and transfer; the role of failure in writing instruction; and choice-based assessment practices.

# **CASDW/ACR** **ABSTRACTS & BIOS**

# **Beyond efficiency: A theoretical model for technology-mediated ESP writing assessment**

Fatima Zohra Adli<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Interdisciplinary Research Intersection: Discourse Analysis, Languages and Interculturalism, Aboulkacem Saadallah University of Algiers 2, Algeria

The growing integration of digital technologies into writing assessment has generated renewed theoretical questions concerning validity, genre, and rhetorical context, particularly within English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Rather than reporting empirical findings, this paper proposes a theoretical model for technology-mediated writing assessment in ESP contexts, with specific reference to Agronomy students operating within specialized academic and professional discourse communities. The paper offers a conceptual framework that synthesizes insights from writing assessment theory, genre-based ESP pedagogy, and discourse-oriented approaches to digital rhetoric. The proposed model conceptualizes assessment as a mediated rhetorical practice shaped by three interrelated dimensions: (1) disciplinary genre expectations in Agronomy, (2) technological affordances and constraints of digital assessment tools, and (3) evaluative decision-making grounded in human judgment. Drawing on genre theory and discourse studies, the model foregrounds the situated nature of Agronomy writing, emphasizing how assessment criteria must reflect the communicative purposes, epistemologies, and textual conventions of the discipline. At the same time, the model critically examines the assumptions embedded in automated and platform-based assessment technologies, including issues of standardization, transparency, and epistemic authority. By positioning technology not as a neutral instrument but as an active mediator of assessment practices, the framework highlights tensions between efficiency and rhetorical sensitivity, as well as between algorithmic evaluation and contextualized disciplinary knowledge. The paper argues that technology-mediated assessment in ESP should be guided by theoretically informed principles that preserve rhetorical awareness, genre specificity, and ethical responsibility. This theoretical contribution responds directly to contemporary concerns in writing and discourse studies by offering a model that can inform future empirical research, curriculum design, and pedagogical decision-making in ESP writing assessment. The paper thus situates ESP writing assessment in Agronomy within broader debates on rhetoric, writing, and discourse today.

## **Bio**

Fatima Zohra Adli is a PhD student in Didactics with an interdisciplinary background in Applied Linguistics and Biological Engineering. Research interests focus on second language writing, discourse in STEM fields and academic genres, assessment for learning, course design, and technology-enhanced writing instruction. Current work examines hybrid assessment practices and feedback processes shaping writing development and rhetorical competence in EMI and ESP contexts.

# **Public Discussion of Student Essays and Generative AI: A Discourse Analysis**

Brittany Amell<sup>1</sup>, Katja Thieme<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Victoria, <sup>2</sup>University of British Columbia

Students' performance in the genre of the student essay has been framed as a problem since writing began being taught in North American universities (Crowley, 1998; Miller, 1991). The introduction of generative AI tools has only increased the tenor and pitch of complaints and concerns with student writing (Majdik & Graham, 2024). This study examines how educators and researchers across disciplines conceptualize writing, essay pedagogy, and the role of generative AI. We will share findings from our discourse analysis of 59 opinion pieces, personal essays, and blog posts published between 2023 and 2025. Drawing on frameworks from academic literacies and genre studies, we analyze how these public discussions reflect and reshape assumptions about what the essay is, what it does, and what it should accomplish. Our analysis reveals three recurring themes: a return to process over product, to agency and voice, and to the writing of essays as a hypervisible nonquestion. We describe key patterns within these three themes, derived from deductive and inductive coding of the pieces in our corpus. We also bring these three themes of return into conversation with critical writing studies scholarship on essay writing as process, as expression of agency and voice, and as hypervisible nonquestion (Bazerman & Prior, 2004; Fulkerson, 2001; Lillis et al., 2015; Matsuda, 2015; Starke-Meyerring, 2011; Tardy, 2012). We find that while the cognitive and epistemic value of the essay is frequently asserted, these assertions rely on generalized, skills-based discourses that obscure the situated, rhetorical nature of academic writing. We conclude by discussing how we can advance writing pedagogy and nuance understandings of genre theory in the current rhetorical and technological moment (Thieme & Amell, 2025).

## **Bio**

Brittany (Britt) Amell (she/her) is a Mitacs Postdoctoral Fellow in Open, Collaborative Scholarship at the University of Victoria. She currently engages with and participates in open scholarship as a movement, form of resistance, and topic of study. She has published on academic legitimacy, the creation and impact of scholarly texts, re-imagination of text-making pedagogies, and the interconnections between rhetorical genre studies, epistemic justice, and activism. Katja Thieme (she/they) studies and teaches research writing and writing pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. With a focus on disciplinarity, pragmatics, and social justice, she investigates how stylistic features of public and research genres are mobilized in processes of cultural and political change. Her scholarship of teaching and learning is informed by pragmatic analysis and genre-based pedagogy, advancing conceptual analysis and practical decision-making towards inclusive writing instruction.

## **Competing disciplines and the case for interdisciplinary readings**

Meredith Beales<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia

This paper takes as its starting point that teaching writing in Canada typically includes some assigned reading. Moreover, it presumes that assigned readings may include models of the common academic genres, such as journal articles. But how do we choose which articles to assign? Do we assign model articles from disciplines our students may be taking in other classes, thereby showing a range of possible approaches (as is the case at UBC?) Or do we choose writing studies articles, which describe genre features (as at the University of Victoria)? This study will advocate for a third option, arguing for assigning academic articles which foreground disciplinarity through their commentary on what disciplines can learn from each other.

The place of reading in the composition classroom has been long examined, with studies ranging from explorations of the purpose of assigning readings (Morrow, 1997), to scaffolding reading in the writing classroom (Sweeney and McBride, 2015); Carillo's landmark 2015 study traces the separation of reading from writing in composition classrooms in the 1990s onward, an estrangement Carillo rejects. Studies on student experience have foregrounded the question of discipline, with recent studies connecting students' understanding of their belonging at universities with their disciplinary identity (Nicholes, 2022). Increasingly, we understand that students center their emerging academic identities within their preferred academic disciplines. In this paper, I will bring these two strands together, suggesting that assigning readings which comment on varied disciplinary approaches to the same topic allow students to sharpen their comprehension of knowledge-making practices in the disciplines. Illustrations of pedagogical practices will be taken from my first-year composition course, which includes three separate readings that compare the knowledge-making advantages of multiple disciplines and comment on the benefits and limitations of each.

## **Bio**

Meredith Beales (she/her) is a full-time lecturer in the writing division of the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media at the University of British Columbia's Vancouver campus. She has published chapters in *Temporality, Genre, and Place in the Age of Shakespeare* and *Rethinking Shakespearean Source Study* in addition to scholarly theatre reviews.

## **Writing and/as friction in a slippery age**

Fiona Coll<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto

2026 has already been declared the year of "friction-maxxing," a process of removing technological convenience from one's life in order to rediscover meaning, joy, and human connection in a world grown glossy and smooth via algorithmic capture (Jezer-Morton 2026). At the heart of "friction-maxxing" lies an acknowledgement that some experiences are improved when those experiences incorporate a certain level of challenge. From a general pedagogical perspective, "friction-maxxing" can be understood as a rediscovery of Robert A. Bjork's "desirable difficulties," those carefully introduced challenges in a learning context that can enhance the depth and long-term robustness of that learning (McDaniel and Butler 2010). From a writing-instruction perspective, we might see friction as the ground upon which our current struggle with LLM-based tools like ChatGPT is based: these tools declare friction in the writing process as dispensable, leaving us, along with other researchers of writing, thinking, and learning, to take on friction as a marker of pedagogical value (Ma et al. 2026, Allison and DeRewal 2025, DeSchryver et al. 2025).

In this paper, I analyze the pedagogical value of friction in writing instruction in three ways. First, I construct an overview of how discussions of GenAI's impact on learning have coalesced around the concept of friction in scholarly and popular writing on the subject. I then interrogate the socio-political function of this emergent sense of friction by borrowing from disability studies the idea of "critical frictions" (Hamraie 2017). Finally, I connect these two analyses to my own experience of using friction as a metaphor to teach STEM graduate students about the work their writing can do for them and for their readers. Together, these three accounts offer a way to think through and with friction in our current cultural moment.

## Bio

Fiona Coll (she/her) is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream at the University of Toronto's Institute for Studies in Transdisciplinary Engineering Education and Practice (ISTEP) and Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC). Her research focuses on graduate writing pedagogy, exploring the role that affect plays in writing-skill development, the impact of peer-based learning strategies on individual writing practices, and the history of technologically mediated approaches to writing. Fiona is co-editor of *Writing Together: Building Social Writing Opportunities for Graduate Students* (2025)

## Academic literacy: citations as text comprehension aids

Tanja Collet<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Windsor

Academic literacy concerns the “reading, unpacking, and understanding of written texts” (Clarence & McKenna 2017). Our study focuses on journal articles, a genre often assigned as required reading material to students in upper-level undergraduate courses. However, given the insider nature of specialized discourse, journal articles often do not conform to the traditional conduit metaphor of language (Hyland 2009). Indeed, though the terms (discipline-specific words) in the articles are supposed to act as “keywords for activating specialized frames of knowledge” (de Beaugrande 1993), that activation can only occur if the reader possesses these specialized frames. Should the reader's disciplinary knowledge be insufficient, which is often the case for student readers, all is not lost. If the student can identify and exploit the comprehension aids embedded by the writer in the text, comprehension, though perhaps partial, may still be possible.

Our study focuses on one such comprehension aid: citation, a key feature of academic writing. Citations can function as markers of semantic content: 1) they can expand on the meaning of terms or 2) on other semantic characteristics (synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, etc.), or 3) refer the reader to text(s) which can be parsed for additional information.

Consequently, a valuable reading strategy for readers would undoubtedly be to look for instances of semantic markers throughout the text, and to process these instances not just as citations, i.e., as acknowledgements of intellectual indebtedness, but also as attempts by the writer to reach out to the reader and respond to a probable or expected need for semantic or conceptual clarification.

Our study results show that students would benefit from being educated on the value of citations as semantic markers, and on how to use them when writing or mining an article for information. The study involved a participation pool composed of undergraduate students in linguistics.

## Bio

Tanja Collet (she/her) is an Associate Professor of Linguistics in the French Studies program at the University of Windsor (Ontario, Canada), where she lectures in Applied Linguistics, Translation and Lexicology / Terminology. Her research interests concern the intersection between terminology, text linguistics and LSP (languages for special purposes), with a main focus on term-text dynamics in specialized discourse, whether academic or political. Her work has appeared in *Discourse & Society*, *Discourse and Interaction*, *JosTrans*, *Meta*, *Terminology*, *TTR* (*Études sur le texte et ses transformations*), etc.

# **Autistic Perspective Taking and Community Building in Tabletop Role-Playing Games**

Daniel Raines<sup>1</sup>, Nayeli Crull<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Houston

This presentation uses a Conversation Analysis framework to examine the interactions of an all-autistic Dungeons and Dragons player group. The purpose is to challenge the commonly-held notion that autistic people lack, or are deficient in, Theory of Mind. In response to Luke Breland's "Pretense Awareness Context and Autism: Insights from Conversation Analysis," the study that this presentation is based on seeks to affirm autistic people's capacity to pass Theory of Mind tests and demonstrate how role-playing games are, in fact, frequently central to facilitating autistic community-building.

Using the RPG Theory of J. Hanju Kim and the precepts of Conversation Analysis, this presentation will demonstrate how a group of autistic gamers navigated their differing expectations of the game, anticipated each other's accessibility needs at the table, and ultimately became a found family that could be relied on to support each other during times of need. Far from asserting that autistic people cannot understand the motives of others, this presentation shows how autistic community can lead to an intentional and deep understanding of each other and the facilitation of increased autistic joy. This thesis challenges traditional understandings of neurodivergent people as deficient in communication, and has implications for differences in discourse styles across neurotypes and communities.

Note: This presentation would probably fit better at CASDW/ACR given the Conversation Analysis framework, but we would also be happy to present it at RhetCanada.

## **Bio**

Daniel Raines (any/all) is a third year PhD candidate in the English department at the University of Houston specializing in Discourse Analysis and Neuroqueer Theory. His research interests lie in how neurodivergent and queer communities form, and how communicative trends differ in said communities as opposed to neurotypical ones. Nayeli Crull (she/her) has a Philosophy BA and research interests in the epiphenomenal qualia of the queer and neurodivergent experience as opposed to "normative" groups.

# **From Accommodation to Avoidance: Strategies for Helping Undergraduate Science Students Develop a Scholarly Voice in their Academic Writing**

Nazih El-Bezre<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of British Columbia

Studies on the impact of academic discourse on students' identity have argued that understanding the rules of academic discourse are difficult because they are implicit (e.g., Hyland, 2009; Lillis & Turner, 2001), common-sense, self-evident, non-contestable (Hyland, 2009), veiled behind a "cloak of normalcy" (Starke-Meyerring, 2011, p. 77), or hiding behind what Paré (2002) calls "a façade of normalcy" (p. 60). This fact makes students feel ostracized/otherized and to internalize their failure as their own (Starke-Meyerring, 2011). Faced with unfamiliar rhetorical situation, students can adopt 4 main strategies to negotiate writing

conflicts: accommodation, avoidance, opposition, appropriation, and transposition (Canagarajah, 2002). To help students, it is imperative that writing instructors unveil the “cloak of normalcy” by clarifying to the students what can be said, how, and in what context.

This study aims to empower students by raising their awareness about the rhetorical options/strategies available to them in their writing and what the adoption of each of these strategies could entail. These choices could lead to serious consequences for the students. Failing to abide by the established writing norms and conventions could label the student as an outsider due to the inability to communicate in the writing style privileged by the academic field/institution.

The other goal of the study focuses on the strategies that writing instructors could use to help their students acquire a scholarly voice. These strategies are intended to empower students by showing them the various rhetorical options at their disposal. This, in turn, allows the students to acquire and use their agency when deciding how to interact with a new rhetorical situation. Using interviews, focus groups, and rhetorical analysis of science students’ writing, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) What strategies do undergraduate science students employ when they encounter an unfamiliar writing situation?
- 2) What strategies can be employed by writing instructors to help students acquire a scholarly voice?
- 3) How can these strategies empower students to be effective communicators in the future?

## **Bio**

Nazih El-Bezre/PhD in Writing Studies from McGill University/ Lecturer in the School of Journalism, Writing, and Media, UBC.

## **Writing transfer at an East African university: A case study**

Tyler Evans-Tokaryk<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

Writing transfer has emerged as one of the most important areas of research in writing studies over the past 30 years (Beaufort, 2007; Bergmann & Zepernick, 2007; Elon Statement, 2015; Kaufer & Young, 1993; Moore, 2012; Moore & Anson, 2016; Nelms & Dively, 2007; Wardle, 2007; Yancey Robertson & Taczak, 2014.) English-medium universities around the world invest significant resources in writing instruction and writing support. Clearly, the assumption informing such investments is that students will transfer the knowledge and skills they acquire in one course to other contexts. It is less clear, however, that this assumption is borne out by the evidence.

In this session, we share results from the first three years of a five-year longitudinal study of writing transfer at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. Our results focus specifically on a corpus of writing produced by 20 student research participants and annual interviews with their authors; our analysis suggests that minimal transfer is occurring and appears to identify specific obstacles to transfer that need to be addressed.

Because our data collection began before Generative AI was widely available, we also report some unexpected findings related to the dramatic impact Generative AI has had on the evolution of individual students’ writing. Our data demonstrate not only how quickly students have integrated AI into their composing practices, but also how profoundly this integration has

altered their perception of the writing process. We conclude that Generative AI is a disruptive force that compromises students' education and development as writers, raising significant questions about the shifting boundaries of authorship, the sustainability of traditional writing pedagogy, and institutional assessment practices. These findings underscore the need for institutions to re-evaluate long-standing assumptions about learning and literacy as Generative AI becomes more widespread.

## **Bio**

Tyler is a full professor in the Teaching Stream at the University of Toronto Mississauga and the Associate Director, Instructor and Faculty Development. His research interests include writing pedagogy, writing program assessment, and writing transfer.

# **Disagreement and Disciplinary Socialization: Student Agency in Feedback Processes**

Laura Baumvol<sup>1</sup>, Katja Thieme<sup>1</sup>, Katie Fitzpatrick<sup>1</sup>, Neve Eilam<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia

Research on students' engagement with feedback highlights the importance of agency and feedback literacy in meaning-making through written and spoken interaction. Feedback literacy and agency are part of dialogic practice in higher education, and their development is particularly relevant in the presence of generative AI tools. As a concept, feedback literacy captures the ability to interpret, process, take up, and transform comments into meaningful textual action (Nieminen et al.; Yu and Liu; Zhan et al.; Zhan and Yan). Moving beyond passive reception of feedback is crucial in students' socialization into research practices and disciplinary communities (Jiang et al.; Manierre et al.; Ye et al.). This development involves not only cognitive but also affective processes related to motivation, self-regulation, and self-efficacy (Steen-Utheim & Wittek, 2017; Yang & Carless, 2013), requiring students to navigate among disciplinary expectations, personal feelings and views, and social dynamics (Wei et al.; Yu and Liu).

Our project assesses how, thus far, students' experience of friction in the feedback process has been researched and theorized, including when generative AI tools mediate feedback. We are interested in moments when such friction takes the form of conflict or disagreement, e.g. when students challenge tutor or instructor suggestions, peer comments and reactions, or feedback outputs of generative AI tools (Jiang et al.; Steen-Utheim and Wittek; Wei et al.; Zhan and Yan; Zhan et al.). A dialogic pedagogy seeks to avoid students internalizing or suppressing experiences of conflict; instead, it invites disagreement into the conversation, to support both individual development and collective change. What are currently relevant conceptual frameworks which help writing tutors and instructors approach such disagreements in dialogic and formative ways? What can recent empirical research tell us about how student agency is enhanced or suppressed through conflict in the feedback process? While the problem of disagreement surfaces in recent research on writing centre, classroom, and generative AI contexts, it is rarely the central focus. Our paper synthesizes existing evidence on disagreement to propose new avenues for research and practice.

## Bio

Dr. Laura Baumvol is a lecturer at the UBC School of Journalism, Writing, and Media. She has taught a range of discipline-specific communication courses, as well as research and academic writing courses in Canadian and international institutions for over fifteen years. Her research interests are scholarly knowledge production and dissemination in the disciplines; research-informed practices in teaching and learning; the role of languages in the internationalization of higher education; collaborative knowledge production and writing in the disciplines; decolonial and anti-racist writing pedagogies and assessment; and the integration of content and learning in higher education. She is an investigator in multiple research projects and has published papers and edited journals internationally. Laura was a recipient of the Emerging Leaders of America Scholarship (Global Affairs Canada) and advocates for the inclusion of multilingual scholars from geolinguistic regions in the global periphery into the scientific global arena and for an equitable and inclusive internationalization of higher education.

Dr. Katja Thieme analyzes contemporary and historical Canadian writing from a rhetorical and genre-theoretical perspective. In previous work, she studied the discourse of the Canadian women's suffrage movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In publications on the genres of the Canadian women's suffrage movement, she investigated how suffragists organized themselves through forms of writing and publishing, and how they used letters, newspaper pages, and performances to persuade politicians, male voters, and other women. Turning to more contemporary examples of such organizing, she studies the digital texts of political movements such as those produced during the hunger strike of Chief Theresa Spence (2013-14) and during the protests against the North Dakota Access Pipeline (2016-17). She works and teaches in three units at UBC: Arts Studies in Research and Writing, the Department of English Language and Literatures, and Vantage College. She teaches courses on academic writing, writing and discourse studies, and Canadian and world literature.

Dr. Fitzpatrick received her BA from UBC, where she studied in the English Honours program. She went on to pursue her Masters and PhD in English at Brown University. Since graduating from Brown in 2017, she has taught writing and literature in the US and at UBC. She is particularly passionate about first-year instruction. Dr. Fitzpatrick's academic research has appeared in *Post-45: Peer Reviewed* and *Twentieth-Century Literature*. Her essays and book reviews have appeared in *The Nation*, *The Chronicle Review*, *The Point Magazine*, *Aeon*, and *Public Books*. She has previously worked as a Humanities Editor for the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

## Mapping GenAI Metaphors to Critical GenAI Literacy for Transformative Instruction

Victorina Baxan<sup>1</sup>, Antoinette Gagné<sup>1</sup>, Phoebe Kang<sup>1</sup>, Mary-Ann Fowler<sup>2</sup>, Sreemali Herath<sup>3</sup>, Elena Danilina<sup>1</sup>, Wenyangzi Shi<sup>4</sup>, Jade Kim<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto, <sup>2</sup>Independent scholar, <sup>3</sup>University of Manitoba, <sup>4</sup>Humber Polytechnic

The integration of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) into higher education has led to an often-polarized debate, particularly within writing-intensive disciplines (Lim et al., 2023). In this panel of educators working with plurilingual learners in writing-intensive fields in higher education, we will share how we used metaphors to clarify our understanding of critical GenAI literacy, which, in turn, fostered our own professional agency and allowed us to re-evaluate our

approaches to addressing the use of GenAI in academic writing with our students. The intentional and critical use of metaphor is a well-established tool for teacher professional growth (see, for example, Irisdotter, Aldenmyr & Berg, 2024; Low, 2012; Martinez et al., 2001; Roe et al., 2025; Schön, 2012).

We adopted a critical dialogic methodology which centers dialogue among researchers as a generative space for critically interrogating lived experiences, power relations, identities, and sociopolitical contexts (Farias et al., 2019). Our data, collected over a period of two years, include initial monthly and then bi-weekly dialogical 60-90-minute online meetings, critical dialogic encounters, including co-analysis sessions, as well as individual and collaborative written components. We will first describe our individual processes for generating initial metaphors from representations of our internal thought world (Imre, 2010) about GenAI, toward the creation of more nuanced, collaborative, and critical metaphors or frames. Next, we will show how we mapped our complex metaphors onto an integrated model of critical GenAI literacy to uncover our beliefs and pave the way for developing critical GenAI literacy among our students, emphasizing different aspects of the model depending on our unique teaching contexts.

Our approach underscores the value of using metaphors to enhance professional development and foster educators' critical GenAI literacy. We invite participants to consider how metaphors can help comprehend the complexities of GenAI in higher education and develop transformative teaching practices.

## **Bio**

In this panel, eight educators and researchers working with multilingual learners in writing-intensive fields in higher education will discuss how they moved beyond simplistic, tool-based metaphors toward more nuanced, collaborative, and critical metaphors or frames that clarified their understanding of critical GenAI literacy. This new understanding fostered their professional agency and enabled them to create the conditions for more equitable learning across their varied contexts.

## **Discourse and Writing/ Rédactologie Lunch and Learn: Publish with Us**

Taylor Morphett<sup>1</sup>, Jordana Garbati<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Northern British Columbia, <sup>2</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

In this roundtable (or a lunch and learn if schedule allows), the editors of *DW/R* will present the journal, its aim, scope, and workflow to CASDW-ACR members. This will take the form of an informal discussion with an active Q&A session to go through the process of publication, timelines, and various genres accepted by the journal. The hope of this session will be to advertise the conference proceedings the journal will publish alongside encouraging CASDW-ACR members to submit original research to the journal. Academic publishing can be intimidating; real barriers can exist to early career and later career scholars in publication. There has also, in Canada, been a recent push to increase the genres and variety of publications of Writing Studies scholars (Humphreys et al.). This lunch and learn is meant to give CASDW-ACR members an opportunity to learn what we're already doing, but also for us to gain invaluable feedback around how our publication can support the members of CASDW-ACR better.

# Feathers, Symbols, and Screens: Emoji Use in Ornithological Digital Communication

Sanja Hinić-Frlog<sup>1</sup>, Kanupreet Arora<sup>1</sup>, Sharleen Bains<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

Emoji (e.g., a heart ❤️, a smiley 😊) are pictograms used in computer-mediated communication. Since the 2010s, emoji use has become widespread and has crossed geographical, cultural, and generational boundaries. Research has revealed interesting findings and perspectives about the frequency (e.g., Bai et al., 2019), sentiment (e.g., Novak et al., 2015), and pragmatic function (e.g., Herring & Dainas, 2017) of emoji. Emoji-focused research exists across disciplines, including education, marketing, medicine, and computer science. Gaps continue to exist within these and other disciplines. In this presentation, we share an overview of our research looking at the use of emoji in ornithology and bird conservation. Specifically, we investigated the use of bird-related emoji by five bird organizations' Instagram accounts (Audubon, Bird Life, Birds Canada, eBird, and Point Blue). We collected and analyzed a total of 1036 Instagram comments that included at least one emoji for a period of one year from these organizations and analyzed their use of bird and non-bird related emoji. We coded comments for emoji type and frequency, pragmatic function of emoji (e.g., mention, tone, riff), and function of the post (e.g., education, awareness, event). We also used generalized additive model to determine whether the use of emoji led to higher engagement. In this presentation, we present an overview of our findings and discuss them within the context of digital communication. To end, our undergraduate student researchers present a brief reflection about their research and writing experience, drawing from weekly and end-of-term written journal entries.

## Bio

Jordana Garbati is Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream and Director of the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy at the University of Toronto Mississauga.

# Rethinking the concept of “power distance” in the EAL classroom

Matt Jones<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto

A central concept in teaching academic conversation to English as an additional language (EAL) graduate students is “Power Distance Preference,” the idea that how we manage the differences in power between individuals is culturally shaped. Since many social conventions are unconsciously influenced by Power Distance Preference, graduate students moving between different educational systems often struggle to understand what is expected of them, leading one of my students to wonder about their peers: “Am I the problem or are they the problem?”

The theoretical origins of Power Distance Preference lie in the work of organizational anthropologist Geert Hofstede, who developed the idea of a Power Distance Index in 1984. Hofstede's understanding of culture was enormously influential (Sent and Kroese, 2022; Taras et al., 2010) but deeply flawed, criticized for its reductionist (Ybema & Nyíri, 2015) and essentialist (Ailon, 2008; Sweeney, 2024) caricatures of the world's supposedly monolithic

national cultures. How should instructors of academic conversation relate to this theory today as we prepare students for the linguistically fluid and culturally diverse global English-language research environment?

Despite Hofstede's rigid view of culture, instructors and students in academic conversation classes continue to find the concept of Power Distance Preference compelling. This is partially because instructors adapt the theory according to their more contemporary understandings of culture. As part of an effort to bring my course in academic conversation up to date, I am wondering what to do with Geert Hofstede's ideas. In this talk, I report on my engagement with theories of Power Distance Preference. I go back to Hofstede's texts, consider his fans and detractors, and put his ideas into dialogue with current theories of EAL pedagogy.

## **Bio**

Matt Jones is Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream) at the University of Toronto's Graduate Centre for Academic Communication. Matt's research draws on concepts from performance and communication studies to devise strategies to improve graduate students' communication practices. He was the recipient of a 2022 UTSC Teaching Award from the University of Toronto Scarborough and he is a Co-Investigator on Gatherings: Archival and Oral Histories of Performance, a project supported by a Partnership Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Council of Canada.

## **Writing assignments in health sciences graduate programs in the genAI era**

Marvin Lam<sup>1</sup>, Danielle Martak<sup>1</sup>, Joel Benabu<sup>1</sup>, Cheryl Runke<sup>1</sup>, Monica Gagnon<sup>1</sup>, Boba Samuels<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto

Given the rapid uptake of generative artificial intelligence (genAI) tools by health sciences students and professionals, university instructors must grapple with how to engage writing in curricula in ways that balance industry-readiness (e.g., the ability to use genAI to facilitate workflows and knowledge exchanges) with learning outcomes (e.g., the development of critical and communicative capacities historically exercised, in part, by the traditional writing process). While scholars have explored trends in writing assignments both within and across fields before widespread access to genAI tools (e.g., Ling & Dong, 2015; Meltzer, 2003), no research has, to our knowledge, yet examined such trends in the genAI era. It is now timely to examine how writing assignments are currently being framed in graduate education. Our research analyzes recent health sciences graduate course syllabi to develop a contemporary picture of how writing assignments are articulated at the curricular level, with particular attention to whether genAI use is explicitly permitted, limited, or unaddressed.

Our CASDW paper will present preliminary insights from this ongoing research, including the early results of a content analysis of assignment descriptions in a corpus of graduate course syllabi circulated after 2022, when genAI tools became popularly accessible in Canada, across the health sciences disciplines of nursing, pharmacy, public health, kinesiology and physical education, and social work. Our research applies and extends Graves et al.'s (2010) syllabi content analysis framework, reiterating their procedure for examining the types of writing assessments assigned and their frequencies across programs while also examining assessment weights and the visibility and content of genAI-related guidance. The findings will offer insights into instructors' engagement of writing assignments, which we contextualize considering the promising and concerning roles that genAI may play in the education and

practice of health sciences professionals in Canada. Findings may also have implications for other university level pedagogical responses to genAI.

## Bio

Marvin is an instructor at multiple writing centres at the University of Toronto, including the Health Sciences Writing Centre. He also teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in writing and communication, and delivers related workshops for graduate students.

Danielle completed a SSHRC-funded PhD in English & Cultural Studies (with a specialization in Critical Theory), a SSHRC-funded MA in Cultural Studies & Critical Theory, and an Honours BA in English & Cultural Studies at McMaster University. Danielle's research explores discourses of well-being, with a focus on their relationships with economic trends.

At GCAC, Danielle teaches Graduate Writing 2, assists with the Writing CIHR Proposals and Writing NSERC Proposals courses, and conducts workshops.

Dr. Boba Samuels is the Director of the Health Sciences Writing Centre and an Associate Professor, Teaching Stream, in the Faculty of Kinesiology & Physical Education. She holds a Ph.D. in Education, specifically Writing Studies. In addition to teaching academic writing, Boba conducts research on university writing, including disciplinary writing, high stakes genres such as grants and personal statements, and currently, the impact of generative AI on writing.

## PRISM framework for linguistic equity in Canadian writing classrooms

Jordan Stouck<sup>1</sup>, Anita Chaudhuri<sup>1</sup>, Jing Li<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia

This presentation disseminates the new PRISM (plurilingual, raciolinguistic, Indigenous and relational, social justice for multilingual learners) framework (Chaudhuri et al. 2025) that attempts to address an ongoing complex and difficult dialogue on ways we can advance anti-racism and decolonization in Canadian writing classrooms. The PRISM project brings U.S. research on linguistic justice (Baker-Bell, 2020), decolonization (Canagarajah, 2024), culturally relevant, sustaining, and revitalizing pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2024; Paris, 2021) into dialogue with Canadian pedagogical and theoretical approaches. Trans and plurilingual theories as articulated by Young (2020) and Marshall and Moore (2018) have revealed the rich possibilities of world Englishes in transforming standard academic English (SAE) and shifting away from views of multilingualism as deficit toward “asset-based mindsets” in Canadian classrooms (Van Viegen et al., 2016; Zappa-Hollman, 2025). Raciolinguistic and relational worldviews have also offered compelling teaching and assessment strategies that support multilingual expression (e.g. Charnley; Allen as cited in Chaudhuri et al., 2025). These approaches, understood in the context of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity in Canadian university classrooms, carry significant implications for the teaching of academic writing. The presentation will discuss how the PRISM framework offers useful contexts to engage with what Sealey-Ruiz (in San Pedro et al., 2025) explains as “*unbecoming*—the recursive, embodied process of confronting one’s complicity, positionality, and possibility” not as a linear engagement, but a recursive process that looks different in every class. By discussing the PRISM framework in relation to classroom applications, we hope to identify challenges of incorporating shifts in pedagogical and curricular practices, successful strategies, and additional support material that should be developed or included for the framework to be widely accessible.

## Bio

Jordan Stouck is a Professor of Teaching in the Faculty of Critical and Creative Studies specializing in writing studies and communications. She is the co-author of two Canadian editions of the composition textbook, *Writing Today*, and has published articles in *Canadian Journal for the Study of Discourse and Writing* and *Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, among others.

Anita Chaudhuri specializes in Writing Studies and is interested in the identity construction of language learners, their development in writing and communication, and how pedagogical practices such as, *Writing in the Disciplines*, *Writing Across Curriculum* and *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy* impact curriculum development. She holds a PhD in English – Rhetoric, Composition and Linguistics from Arizona State University and has offered courses in composition studies, English as an additional language, and graduate level seminar in academic communication. She is a Fulbright fellow, a recipient of the University of Calgary's Teaching and Learning grant for a team project on the impact of culture on language learning, and participated in a SSHRC Connection Grants project at UCalgary to understand the Deleuzian concept of 'belonging' in the realm of student learning. Dr. Chaudhuri joined UBC Okanagan in 2019 with more than a decade of experience in the field of teaching and learning.

Dr. Jing Li is a lecturer in engineering communication at UBC. Dr. Li's work centers on teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in engineering and professional communication. I focus on helping engineering students develop communication competencies that align with the rhetorical, cognitive, and technical demands of their fields. Whether they write technical reports, deliver project pitches, or navigate workplace communication, I guide students in integrating technical clarity with audience awareness and contextual purpose.

## Graduate Thesis Writing Support in Three Modes: Reflection

Jordana Lobo-Pires<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto

Post-graduate students face unique writing experiences, stressors, and challenges (Badenhorst & Guerin, 2015; Simpson et al., 2016; Calle & Avila Reyes, 2023). Thesis writing involves a longer, more strenuous process which is often more isolated, anxiety-ridden, and emotionally fraught than any that students have previously encountered (Guccione & Wellington, 2017; Wilson and Cutri, 2019; Quynn and Stewart, 2021). More recently, the value of writing together with peers has been proposed not simply as a productivity strategy to overcome the struggles mentioned above, but more positively, as professional training in the practice of participating in scholarly communities (Aitchison and Guerin, 2014; Wenger, 1998).

Recognizing both the needs of students and the benefits of supporting them, graduate programs have implemented a range of specialized writing programming - both instructional and social - for post-graduate students (Cayley, Coll & Newman, 2025). This paper compares three different programs that were offered through the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication at the University of Toronto over the course of the 2025-2026 academic year to support post-graduate thesis writers: a 5-week Thesis-Writing course for masters or doctoral humanities and social sciences students; a 3-day dissertation boot camp held simultaneously online and in-person for doctoral writers at any stage of their dissertation; and a semester-long weekly half-hour check-in for accountability and intra-cohort support specifically for students working towards doctoral completion within the next year. Based on observations of student interactions (in person, online live, and asynchronous) and student feedback within each offering, this paper will reflect on the

potential for writing empowerment and peer connection as well as the limitations of each of these three modes for facilitating graduate student thesis writing. The paper will also address the resources required for each offering. This talk will thus explore the affordances of these three programming modes - their common as well as unique benefits, their challenges, and their limitations.

## Bio

Jordana is an Assistant Professor (Teaching Stream) at the Graduate Centre for Academic Communication (GCAC). She holds a PhD in English Literature from the University of Toronto, an MA in Communication and Culture from Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson), and an MA in English and an Honors BA in English, Biology, and Philosophy from the University of Toronto. Jordana's research interests include the reception of classical legal rhetoric in the early modern period, and the ways classical modes of argument continue to reverberate in current persuasive speech and writing. At the GCAC, Jordana conducts courses and workshops in graduate writing, revision, thesis writing, and oral presentation skills, and runs the GCAC's Dissertation boot camps.

## How economic and social conditions influence grade 12 writing instruction

Mary McCaffery<sup>1</sup>, Andrea Williams<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Guelph, <sup>2</sup>University of Toronto

This presentation examines how high school writing teachers' instructional practices are influenced by economic and social factors. Since our values in education have evolved, teachers are now encouraged to consider students' financial hardships when grading their papers (*Growing Success*). They also account for students' mental health needs in their teaching practice and act as main points of contact for students in distress (Dimitropoulos, et al. 2022; *Growing Success*). Given increased public awareness of student wellness (Foulkes & Andrews, 2023), most would support teachers providing comprehensive support to young people.

This approach has an outsized effect on how students are prepared for university, so it is important for university instructors to understand this context. To provide these insights, we used interview data collected in 2023 with six grade 12 teachers of history or English who shared their experiences in semi-structured interviews and artifact-based interviews to discuss assignments commonly given to grade 12 students. By focusing on context for this study, we learned how strikingly different the roles and constraints are for high school teachers versus those of university instructors.

We hope this study will spark curiosity about students' instructional contexts prior to university. We believe this will help instructors bridge the gap for incoming students adapting to unfamiliar instruction and assessment practices in their first year of study.

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## **Bio**

Mary McCaffery (she/her) is a writing specialist at the University of Guelph and Andrea Williams (she/her) is an associate professor in Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Toronto.

# **Integrating and Elevating Genres: An Experiment in Assessment**

Taylor Morphett<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>university of northern british columbia

There has long been an urgent call within writing education to address the structural inequities academic genres and the subsequent teaching and assessment of those genres create (Humphreys et al.; Gaudet; Prescott-Brown). To do this work, it behooves scholars to break down the hierarchy of genre that has been naturalized within and without the academy. In the Fall of 2025, I ran a second year writing course at a small research university to look at how I could integrate and elevate genres that have historically been side-lined. The course in question had not run in 20 years and was largely expected to be an academic writing course. The class functioned around one major project that students worked on throughout the semester that could be a piece of writing from *any* genre. Key to this course was not to prioritize and elevate any genre of writing. By not foregrounding so-called 'academic writing' the class was able to engage with academic writing and rhetorical view of writing in a new way. The results the students composed were spectacular: students created zines, podcasts, academic essays, magazine articles, creative non-fiction, slam poetry, and genres not formalized but entirely their own. This presentation will outline how and why I did this, the work that went into creating a classroom community where these risks felt safe for students, and how students still met the learning outcomes for the course. This presentation is meant to give instructors a way to develop assessment that allows students to explore their passions, resist the temptation of LLM technology, and meet potential institutional learning outcomes. Through interviews with students, reflections, and theoretical engagement, this presentation will attempt to breakdown what worked in the class, what needs to be changed, and how to develop similar classes elsewhere.

## **Bio**

Taylor Morphett (she/her) is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English at the University of Northern British Columbia. She studies historical and contemporary epistemologies of writing.

# Teaching multimodal discourse in digital media programs

Dr. Elisabeta Aida Osian<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Simon Fraser University

This presentation examines innovative pedagogical approaches for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in digital media authentic contexts, focusing on the intersection of rhetoric, discourse, and writing instruction. As digital media students increasingly write, design, and collaborate across multimodal, AI-mediated environments, language instruction must move beyond decontextualized skills toward rhetorically grounded, authentic practices.

Drawing on classroom-based research and curriculum design in postsecondary digital media programs, this paper proposes an integrated pedagogy that combines AI-first techniques with analogue, low-tech discourse practices. AI tools are positioned not as shortcuts or evaluative threats, but as rhetorical collaborators that foreground genre awareness, audience adaptation, and iterative revision (*i.e.* prompt engineering as rhetorical invention; AI feedback as dialogic revision). These practices are paired with analogue methods such as storyboard drafting, discourse mapping, peer talk-alouds, and rhetorical annotation to slow cognition, support metalinguistic awareness, and resist over-automation.

The presentation situates these strategies within discourse and genre theory, emphasizing how students learn professional language through participation in authentic communicative ecosystems rather than isolated language exercises (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2007). It also addresses ethical and pedagogical tensions surrounding AI use in writing instruction, arguing for transparent, explicit modelling of AI as a situated discourse technology rather than a neutral tool (Bender et al., 2021).

By foregrounding rhetoric, genre, and multimodality, this session contributes to current conversations in writing and discourse studies about how language instruction can remain rigorous, humane, and context-responsive in AI-saturated educational environments. Participants will gain transferable frameworks for designing ESP curricula that prepare learners for contemporary digital media practices while maintaining rhetorical depth and pedagogical integrity.

## **Bio**

Aida is currently spearheading the technical language and communication section of the Master of Digital Media Technical Communication Bundle program. In the recent years, she has been developing and implementing practical and interactive syllabi comprising - Pitching and Presenting, Introduction to Technical Writing, and English for Digital Media. She has extensive experience in teaching English for specialized and academic purposes, she is CELTA certified and holds a certificate of Curriculum Writing for Higher Education from Harvard University. In the past, she has also worked as a research assistant, as a collaborating teaching assistant with the Department of Foreign Languages for Specific Purposes and as a member of the editing board with the Journal for Communication and Culture at Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj Napoca, Romania. She holds a BA in English and Romanian Literature and Linguistics, an MA in Philosophy, and a Ph.D. in Aesthetics and Literary Theory with the Faculty of Letters of the same university. In parallel with her teaching experience, her academic research focuses on inter-mediality and remediation as generic concepts with a direct application to the new media-arts and literature. She has presented papers at various conference venues in Europe and Canada and has published in international journals. More recently, she has been shifting towards narrativity in video games, and this has sparked her interest in web and iOS development, motivating her to study and become certified in both these fields.

# **“It Was a Wounding Revelation”: Discursive Strategies for Trans Experience and Expression**

Mary Ann Saunders<sup>1</sup>, Katja Thieme<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia

In this follow-up to a previous presentation, we offer findings from our study on the possibilities of trans expression in professional and disciplinary discourses. Specifically, we discuss how in the genre of the research article trans writers make space for themselves and for trans experiences, and how these practices vary across related disciplines. We work with a corpus of 36 research articles by trans scholars and in trans studies, gathered from the 2022-2024 volumes of three key trans studies journals (*International Journal of Transgender Health*, *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*, and *Bulletin of Applied Transgender Studies*). We coded each article for phrases and sentences that express (1) first-person experience of research authors, including in the form of autoethnography, (2) positionality of research authors, and (3) relations toward and description of trans subjects and participants. We offer theorizations for each of these discursive strategies, drawing from gender and queer studies, applied linguistics, and philosophy of language (Vincent; Rosenberg and Tilley; Thieme and Saunders; Holmes; Sybing; Bettcher; Kukla and Lance). We discuss how the range and purpose of these features relates to the differing disciplinary traditions from which the three journals have emerged. We conceptualize these discursive features along a spectrum from close to distant in relation to research authors; we qualitatively analyze their occurrence in light of this spectrum.

Our project presents an empirical inventory of current communicative strategies for trans expression and trans representation in research discourse. Such an inventory can make our teaching of research and writing more effective and inclusive—our analysis has interesting implications for pedagogy and teaching of writing, particularly in the context of post-secondary courses that incorporate trans writing or present trans scholarship in classrooms of predominantly cisgender students.

## **Bio**

Mary Ann Saunders (she/her) studies and teaches research writing by foregrounding trans experience and attending to the ways in which trans researchers challenge trans exclusion in all its forms. She has published on concepts of gender identity in facial recognition research and on citation practices in trans studies scholarship. She also teaches and works as a literary scholar, with a particular focus on the trans-inclusionary world-building by trans writers in books and stories for children and young adults. | Katja Thieme (she/they) studies and teaches research writing and writing pedagogy with a focus on disciplinarity, pragmatics, and social justice. In her published work, she investigates how stylistic features of public and research genres are mobilized in processes of cultural and political change.

# **Incorporating TikTok-style videos as a pedagogical tool in a first-year writing course**

Mustafa Siddiqui<sup>1, 2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga, <sup>2</sup>Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy

First-year writing students often struggle to engage meaningfully with assigned readings, which can affect their confidence, class participation, and approach to academic writing. Writing studies scholars have proposed several strategies to minimize this challenge, including collaborative reading practices (Jin et al., 2022) and low-stakes assessment tools such as open-note quizzes (Atkinson & Risser, 2023). While effective, many of these approaches function primarily as in-class interventions rather than as tools that support students' engagement with readings before they encounter the text.

To address this gap, in Fall 2025 I created TikTok-style videos to support students' engagement with course readings in a writing course. Along with several colleagues, I developed these videos that do not summarize the assigned readings but instead gesture toward their central ideas. Shared on the LMS approximately one week before class discussion, these videos aim to spark curiosity, encourage reading, and reduce the sense of intimidation students often associate with academic texts.

In this presentation, I will share how these videos were developed and how students responded to them as part of their reading and writing experience. The talk will be supported by preliminary findings from surveys and interviews with students across multiple sections of a first-year writing course. Overall, the presentation will investigate whether TikTok-style videos can support reading engagement and enhance students' experiences in writing courses as a low-stakes pedagogical tool.

## **Bio**

Mustafa Siddiqui is an Assistant Professor-LTA, Teaching Stream, at the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, University of Toronto Mississauga. Before joining UofT, he taught at higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia and India. His teaching and research focus on student engagement, particularly through the use of comedy, games, videos, and other playful pedagogical approaches.

## **AI Policies in Japanese Universities**

Tosh Tachino<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tokyo University of Science

The widespread adoption of generative AI has prompted universities around the world to respond to its growing capabilities, and an increasing number of studies are examining evolving AI policies. For example, Alba et al. (2025) and An et al. (2025) analyzed AI policies from top US universities, while Dai et al. (2025) did the same for top Asian universities. Following these investigations, this presentation reports the findings of my original study on AI policies in Japanese universities and discusses their evolving relevance in writing classes everywhere in the world.

The study used the dataset from Gallagher (2024) to analyze 394 AI policy documents in Japanese universities for overall sentiment, recurring themes, and underlying values. Some of the analyses were conducted through AntConc, Sudachi, and Taguette, and an interview with two Education Ministry officials was conducted to elicit their views on the role of AI in higher education. While the sentiment analysis revealed some diversity among the dataset, the overall sentiment was positive. The thematic analysis revealed many recurring themes, such as concerns for accuracy, privacy, copyright, plagiarism, fair assessment, ethics, and social impact, as well as use governance, the centrality of learning, need for transparency, and the necessity of policy flexibility. It was worth emphasizing that one of the most prominent values was academic freedom and teacher discretion, as the vast majority of documents simply delegated

AI policy to individual instructors. The ministry officials not only affirmed that the ministry has no authority under the relevant administrative laws to impose their views on higher education institutions but also asserted that each institution has an obligation to come up with its own policy under the same laws. While this study focuses on Japanese universities, the insights from this study can open possibilities for Canadian universities.

## **Bio**

Tosh Tachino, Ph.D., is a university lecturer and a language and communication consultant. He brings linguistic and rhetorical perspectives to various contexts, and one of his current research projects is to examine AI policies in Japanese universities. His previous work has appeared in the *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Professional Practice*, *Text and Talk*, *Written Communication*, and in an anthology *Genre and the Performance of Publics* (Utah State University Press), among others.

# **Instructor Reflexivity in Context: Student Agency, Language, and Pedagogical Judgment in AI-Mediated Writing Feedback**

Eugenia Vasilopoulos<sup>1</sup>, Bong-gi Sohn<sup>2</sup>, Phoebe Kang<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Concordia University, <sup>2</sup>University of Winnipeg, <sup>3</sup>University of Toronto

This collaborative inquiry examines how AI-generated feedback is reshaping writing pedagogy across diverse contexts in Canadian higher education, with particular attention to classroom practice and instructor decision-making. While AI-driven systems are often promoted as efficient, equitable, and empowering, it is essential to interrogate their assumptions and to develop new understandings of feedback, authorship, and responsibility in AI mediated writing instruction (Godwin-Jones, 2024), particularly for plurilingual students who use English as an additional language (EAL) and are frequently positioned within deficit orientations under Anglo-dominant norms (Marshall & Moore, 2013).

Drawing on practice-oriented, research-informed teaching interventions (Crooks, 2013), three writing instructors from different institutions, representing bilingual, metropolitan, and prairie regions, examine the promises and complexities of integrating AI into feedback and assessment. Using a collaborative trio-ethnographic approach (Burleigh & Burm, 2022; Sawyer & Norris, 2012), we engage in reflexive dialogue to compare how students in plurilingual classrooms adapt, negotiate, or resist AI feedback tools in situated instructional contexts. By contrasting the responses of EAL learners who over-value AI's linguistic accuracy with domestic students who resist AI's authority, we explore the cultural and epistemic assumptions embedded in automated feedback. Our narratives confirm existing findings on the importance of students' trust, AI-prompt literacy, and sense of authorship (Dooly & Darwin, 2022), while also revealing persistent linguistic hierarchies shaped by linguistic histories, institutional norms, and local expectations of academic writing.

Complicating optimistic narratives of AI as a pedagogical solution, we argue that effective integration requires instructors to attend carefully to context, to interrogate embedded linguistic hierarchies, and to design feedback practices that recognize diverse epistemic and communicative resources. We therefore call for pedagogical frameworks that foreground contextual sensitivity, equity, and instructor reflexivity, alongside explicit AI literacy instruction that supports student agency in plurilingual writing classrooms. (290 words)

## Bio

Eugenia (Gene) Vasilopoulos holds a PhD in Second Language Education from the University of Ottawa and is an assistant professor in the Department of Education (English as a Second Language) at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. Her research focuses on critical approaches to sociocultural issues in teaching and learning English (as an additional language) at the postsecondary level. Her most recent strands of research focus on international student academic socialization and academic integrity, technology-mediated English academic writing and learning, including GenAI, and plurilingual pedagogies and decolonial options in English academic writing.

## Understanding Citation as Relational Epistemological Work in First-Year Undergraduate Writing

Erin Vearncombe<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

This presentation reports on a classroom-based research project examining how undergraduate students in a first-year writing course understand and experience citation as relational epistemological practice, or work that positions them in relationship to other knowers and co-constructs knowledge through engagement with sources. Drawing on Driscoll et al.'s (2020) finding that expert writers situate themselves in conversation with other thinkers, this study investigates how novice writers develop (and struggle to develop) relational approaches to source work. Most existing citation research examines student outputs, considering what sources undergraduate writers cite but leaving largely unexplored the epistemological frameworks shaping their citation practices. Gravett and Kinchin's (2020, 2021) work connects citation to identity development, while Hellman (2024) identifies critical aspects for effective source use. However, limited research systematically investigates what students themselves articulate about learning citation while actively developing these practices.

This study collected reflective writing from 80 undergraduate writers at three points during their first-year writing course across the 2025-2026 academic year. These reflections asked writers to describe their reading and research processes, understanding of citation's purposes, and navigation of digital tools including AI. Preliminary analysis reveals significant variation in how students conceptualize knowledge-making: some approach citation extractively (information retrieval), while others demonstrate emerging relational understandings (engagement, positioning, contribution). Students articulate sophisticated awareness of citation's rhetorical purposes while expressing uncertainty about their own authority within scholarly conversations. This presentation will share findings about students' epistemological frameworks and discuss pedagogical implications for teaching citation as relational practice. How might writing pedagogies better support students' development from extractive to relational approaches? What do student reflections reveal about threshold concepts underlying source literacy? The findings contribute to conversations in writing studies about academic literacies, threshold concepts, and writing transfer while offering practical insights for citation instruction in AI-mediated contexts.

## Bio

Erin Vearncombe (she/her) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Toronto specializing in GenAI and undergraduate writing development. In 2025, she co-edited a bilingual special issue of *Discourse and Writing/Rédactologie* on GenAI and writing research, titled "The Present and

Future(s) of Writing in the Age of Artificial Intelligence.” Her most recent publication, co-authored with Christopher Eaton and Kaitlyn Harris, appeared in the Journal of Academic Writing (Winter 2025): “Student Evaluative Judgements of Writing and Artificial Intelligence: The Disconnect between Structural and Conceptual Knowledge.”

## **Quel rôle de la rhétorique dans la rédaction en Langage clair et simple et en Langage facile à lire et à comprendre ?**

Sara Vecchiato<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Udine

Cette contribution vise à examiner le rôle de la rhétorique dans les pratiques rédactionnelles connues sous le nom de *langage clair et simple* et *langage facile à lire et à comprendre*. Le point de départ est une recherche de terrain portant sur la compréhensibilité d'un texte relatif aux antibiotiques, pour lequel des reformulations ont été proposées afin de l'adapter à une version en langage clair et simple (Vecchiato et al., 2022). Dans une première partie, nous mettrons en évidence comment certaines opérations textuelles — substitution synonymique, paraphrase, insertion de sous-titres, élimination ou insertion d'informations — sont des processus rhétoriques. Nous examinerons chacune de ces opérations, en observant comment elles adaptent le texte au public visé (Cutts, 2020). Par exemple, nous observerons comment la substitution synonymique est utilisée non pas pour obtenir une variation stylistique, mais pour éviter les mots d'un registre trop élevé, considérés comme inadaptés au public visé (Hyland, 2007; Serianni, 1985) ; la paraphrase, en revanche, implique des changements syntaxiques et une réorganisation de l'information (Fuchs, 1987), ce qui en fait un dispositif pour adapter le contenu à différents contextes. La deuxième partie de cette contribution se concentre sur le langage facile à lire et à comprendre, qui a été conçu pour les personnes ayant des déficiences intellectuelles (UNAPEI & Inclusion Europe, 2009) et qui est généralement considéré comme une forme avancée de langage clair et simple (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020). Actuellement, beaucoup de recherches européennes sur le langage facile s'appuient sur des études liées à l'apprentissage des langues étrangères, notamment sur le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues. Nous examinerons quelques exemples de textes rédigés en langage facile et observerons comment leurs références conceptuelles ne correspondent pas toujours aux niveaux du CECRL. Nous soutenons que certaines notions de rhétorique pourraient permettre de mieux comprendre le langage facile.

### **Bio**

She/Her. Associate Professor in French Linguistics, PhD U. Brescia (Italy) and UQAM (Canada). PI of the Laboratory on Writing and Translation Studies at U. of Udine (Italy). Curriculum coordinator for 'Italian-French Intercultural Studies' with Université Clermont Auvergne (France)

## **Poetic Apprenticeship as Pedagogy: Linguistic Justice and Threshold Concepts in First-Year Writing**

Kanika Verma<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

This workshop explores how poetic practice can function as a rigorous, justice-oriented pedagogy for teaching academic writing in linguistically diverse Canadian first-year university classrooms. Drawing on writing studies scholarship and the facilitator's lived experience as a bilingual poet and writing instructor at a large public university in the Greater Toronto Area, the session argues that poetic apprenticeship offers an embodied pathway into key threshold concepts in writing—particularly writing as process, writing as rhetorical and contextual, writing as identity-bound, and writing as community act (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015; Wardle & Downs, 2017).

In Canadian postsecondary contexts, where multilingual, international, and racialized students increasingly populate first-year writing classrooms, threshold concepts often remain abstract and gatekeeping. Translingual and raciolinguistic scholars have emphasized the need to move beyond deficit-oriented models of academic literacy and toward pedagogies that legitimize students' full linguistic repertoires (Canagarajah, 2013; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Young, 2017). Poetic practice foregrounds uncertainty, revision, audience awareness, multilingual meaning-making, and metadiscursive reflection—aligning closely with linguistic justice frameworks in contemporary Canadian writing studies.

The workshop blends brief theoretical framing with participatory activities that model classroom-ready practices. First, participants will engage in a short metawriting poem activity, composing a brief poem about writing (e.g., drafting, feedback, language struggle, or revision). Participants may write in any language or mix languages, followed by a reflection on how poetic metadiscourse surfaces writing-as-process, identity portrayal, and rhetorical awareness (Lamott, 1994; Wardle, 2012). Second, participants will take part in small-group discussions/roundtables on instructor vulnerability, examining the pedagogical risks and ethical possibilities of positioning oneself as a writer-in-process alongside students (Blaauw-Hara, 2023).

Participants will leave with adaptable pedagogical strategies, reflective tools, and a renewed understanding of how creativity, multilingualism, and threshold concepts can coexist within rigorous, equitable Canadian writing instruction.

### **Bio**

Dr. Kanika Verma is a Lecturer in Writing Studies at the University of Toronto Mississauga with teaching and research experience in English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), active learning, and higher education. With more than 13 years of experience in education, she has received 15 awards and several other recognitions for her research, teaching, and service. She has presented her award-winning research studies at more than 40 professional conferences. Dr. Verma has authored five peer-reviewed journal articles, three peer-reviewed book chapters, and one peer-reviewed e-book.

## **Gen Z's Digital Escapism: How Romantic Posthumanism Shapes Technological Discourse**

Hannah Vines<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

Generation Z (Gen Z), often described as the “digital generation,” is the first cohort to experience childhood and adolescence extensively mediated by digital technologies. This has coincided with a widespread retreat from analog to digital spaces, frequently described as “digital escapism.” Existing literature often explains this shift through sociopolitical stressors, individual pathology, or engineered addiction (Haidt, 2024; Jouhki et al., 2022; Kardefelt-

Winther, 2014). This paper offers an alternative interpretation by situating digital escapism within longstanding cultural and discursive frameworks, showing how the rhetoric and moral imaginaries surrounding technological innovations are historically inherited rather than entirely novel.

Drawing on the strong program in cultural sociology (Alexander, 2003) and the work of Robert Bellah (1985), this paper traces the genealogy of Romantic Posthumanism (RPH)—salvific and apocalyptic narratives of technological transformation and human transcendence that have shaped discourse across centuries. Contemporary narratives of techno-utopianism and posthumanism, while applied to new technologies, reproduce these inherited moral languages that structure our discourse. Digital escapism, in this context, is not simply a behavioral or technological response; it is a culturally mediated practice reflecting long-standing traditions and enduring symbolic repertoires that guide how we make sense of the world.

This analysis contributes to writing and discourse studies by demonstrating that claims of novelty in technological discourse often reflect, and simultaneously obscure, deep-seated cultural structures. Tracing RPH highlights a critical piece of the cultural unconscious that shapes how modern problems are perceived. Any engagement with contemporary technological challenges—scholarly, pedagogical, or rhetorical—must first recognize these inherited frameworks. In doing so, it challenges the presumption that modern problems require wholly new innovations and emphasizes the importance of historical and cultural awareness for understanding how we write, think, and speak about emerging technologies.

## **Bio**

Hannah Vines is a Master's student in the Sociology and Legal Studies Department at the University of Waterloo. Her presentation draws on ongoing Master's thesis research examining how Generation Z's experience as the first digitally mediated generation has been shaped within cultural narratives that valorize technological progress.

## **Parasupport: An Inclusive Pedagogy for Writing Centres**

Cara Violini<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Athabasca University

This individual presentation will share the research-informed innovation emerging from my doctoral work on ableism, accessibility, and inclusive pedagogies in asynchronous writing centre work: parasupport. Parasupport is a pedagogical framework that confronts ableist attitudes in the writing centre and offers students with disabilities agency and self-determination when seeking writing support. One such attitude assumes that students eventually become independent writers, which may be unrealistic and stigmatizes ongoing support for students with lifelong disabilities or chronic illnesses (Dembsey, 2020). Since disability is underrepresented in writing center literature (Osaka, 2022), it is time to hear from students with disabilities themselves as to what is working and what is not. After all, research shows that a higher representation of students with disabilities choose asynchronous learning because of accessibility, flexibility, the privacy to disclose disability, and the affordance to schedule around interruptions in health or challenges exacerbated by disability (Kent et al., 2018; Roberts et al., 2011). However, inequities remain particularly for students with disabilities seeking writing support in the writing centre (Ikebuchi, 2023). My doctoral research (2026) asked participants (students with disabilities) to convey their experiences with ableism in the writing centre through visual storytelling. The use of photovoice as a methodology along with critical disability theory offers participants the opportunity to visually explore their experience(s) to create meaning

about negotiating disability as a social construct in a writing centre environment (Lopez-Deflory, 2022; Mitchel et al., 2017). This presentation will share these findings from my doctoral research, and how a framework like parasupport can highlight the importance of integrating these perceptions of experience in writing centre pedagogy to ensure best—and inclusive—practice.

*Keywords:* disability, critical disability theory, photovoice, visual storytelling, generative AI, visual methodology, parasupport, ableism

## **Bio**

Cara Violini (she/her) is a writing specialist for Athabasca University's writing centre, the Write Site, in Alberta. She just completed her doctoral degree on inclusive pedagogies for students with disabilities in the writing centre, of which she earned the SSHRC Canadian Graduate Scholarship (Doctoral Level). A longtime disability advocate having begun her career teaching in special education classrooms, Cara now directs her focus to inclusive support for students with disabilities in the writing centre.

## **Comparing citation functions of AI-generated texts with expert-written texts**

Jonathan Vroom<sup>1</sup>, Julia Sherritt<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Toronto Mississauga

The nature and purpose(s) for citation in academic writing has received much attention from Writing Studies scholars. One line of research concerns the purposes for which writers cite and use their sources when constructing an argument. For example, Petrić (2007) has identified eight citation-function categories. The most basic function is attribution: the act of attributing knowledge or propositions to a source. While all citations can be categorized as attribution, Petrić has identified numerous functions that move beyond this, such as comparing and contrasting sources, evaluating sources, making generalizations from multiple sources, or using theories or methods from a source in new ways. Petrić (and numerous other studies) have found that expert writers tend to use a variety of citation functions, engaging with their sources as conversation partners. By contrast, student writers tend to use the attribution function only. In other words, they simply use a source to support a claim, and do not engage with them as voices within a scholarly discourse community—voices that can be built upon, compared/contrasted, or evaluated.

One question that has yet to be explored is how generative AI (e.g., ChatGPT) engages with its sources when given source-based writing tasks. It is well-known that students often rely (to varying degrees) on ChatGPT for help with writing assignments, and these assignments often involve citation. But we do not know how well generative AI is able to engage with its sources. Does ChatGPT engage with its sources as conversation partners, similar to expert writers? Or does it simply attribute knowledge to its sources to support its points? The purpose of this paper is to address these questions. This paper will compare the citation functions used by experts from the Introduction/Literature Review sections of 15 Criminology research articles, with the citation functions found in 15 corresponding literature reviews we generated using ChatGPT (basic and plus). The findings will help reveal the capabilities and limitations of generative AI to perform academic writing tasks.

## Bio

Jonathan is an Assistant Professor in the teaching stream at the University of Toronto Mississauga's Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, where he teaches and researches in the field of Writing Studies. Julia is a fourth-year undergraduate student studying Criminology.

# Centering student agency in the inclusive teaching of writing: A report from a cross-disciplinary collaboration

Laila Ferreira<sup>1</sup>, Rebecca Carruthers den Hoed<sup>1</sup>, Jennifer Walsh Marr<sup>1</sup>, Katja Thieme<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of British Columbia

We report on a cross-disciplinary initiative on the inclusive teaching of writing, first introduced to CASDW members in 2024. Our team of faculty and students utilized the CASDW workshop discussion together with data from ethics-approved student surveys to further develop the ten characteristics that are the focus of this project. Our project's ten characteristics of inclusive writing pedagogy are: 1. Indigenous ways of knowing and decolonization, 2. critical engagement, 3. compassion, 4. transparency, 5. ethics and power, 6. authenticity, 7. multiplicity and diversity, 8. accessibility, 9. agency and voice, and 10. belonging. We will briefly introduce the public resources we created, available on a recently launched website with accessible definitions of the ten characteristics, student lived experiences, use cases, and an annotated bibliography.

This presentation focuses on our findings from surveys and interviews with students and faculty. In our analysis of student surveys, the three characteristics of belonging, voice and agency, and multiplicity and diversity receive dominant mention. We highlight how students' responses relate these three characteristics to aspects of research writing and communication, both in distinct and overlapping ways. Student experiences are central to our project design and resource development: we narrate how student team members' perspectives shaped our resource design and data analysis, thereby contributing to understanding how the ten characteristics manifest in students' disciplinary learning. Through interviews with faculty members from fields other than writing studies, we show how a writing studies perspective on the ten characteristics intersects most productively with other disciplinary fields. The aim of this project is to expand knowledge about inclusive writing pedagogy beyond the writing studies classroom, counteracting the siloing effects of disciplinary specialization. Our findings illustrate how we can meet the present moment with collaborative, cross-disciplinary approaches to the teaching of writing, by centering students as learners and key contributors to the reshaping of university writing instruction for today and the future.

## Bio

Laila Ferreira's (she/her) pedagogy is strongly informed by social justice-oriented writing practice. She supports diverse student agency in the university writing classroom through critical engagement with the practical purposes and political and social values embedded in genres of research writing and communication. The focus of her scholarship of teaching and learning is on multidisciplinary collaboration between instructors, students, and researchers as a means of supporting more inclusive knowledge making and communication.

Rebecca Carruthers Den Hoed (she/her) has taught academic writing, rhetorical theory and practice, professional and technical communication, and science and health communication at several Canadian universities. In her pedagogical work on writing across the disciplines, she focusses on research genres and genre instruction, team-based learning, and collaborative

writing. More broadly, she is interested in the role of academic research in conversations about health and the environment, with a particular interest in food cultures and food resilience.

Katja Thieme (she/they) studies and teaches research writing and writing pedagogy with a focus on disciplinarity, pragmatics, and social justice. In her published work, she investigates how stylistic features of political and research genres are mobilized in processes of cultural and social change. Her scholarship of teaching and learning is informed by applied language studies and genre-based pedagogy, advancing conceptual analysis and practical decision-making towards inclusive writing instruction.

Jennifer Walsh Marr (she/her) is an educational linguist and lecturer at UBC Vantage College. Her research work has looked at intersections of power, identity and language in the academy, particularly with regards to Indigenous and settler histories in Canada, and incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) and genre research into pedagogical practice. She draws on critical pedagogy and discourse analysis to help make implicit patterns more explicit and accessible to both instructors and students.

## **Unreasonable Curiosity: The Bear and Chef's Practice as Writer's Practice**

Scott J. Wilson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Regina

In *Why They Can't Write*, John Warner argues that writing instruction should encourage students to “act like writers do” (26) rather than complete “writing-adjacent activities” (27). He aligns this approach with the Council of Writing Program Administrators and National Council of Teachers of English’s *Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing*, which identifies habits of mind essential to college writing like curiosity, creativity, persistence, and responsibility. Warner adds empathy, accuracy and truthfulness, and obsessiveness (25). These habits parallel those required to succeed in another high-pressure, skill-intensive environment: the fine-dining restaurant, as portrayed in Christopher Storer’s television series *The Bear*.

This presentation explores how writing instructors and writing centre staff can draw on *The Bear* to reframe writing pedagogy through Warner’s “writer’s practice” and Storer’s depiction of the “chef’s practice.” Warner’s habits of success are embodied by characters such as head chef Carmy Berzatto, sous-chef Sydney Adamu, maître d’hôtel Richie Jerimovich, and pastry chef Marcus Brooks. Each character occupies shifting roles as teacher and learner, demonstrating how habits like persistence, curiosity, creativity, and obsessiveness are cultivated through mentorship, failure, and sustained practice.

In fact, a crucial part of *The Bear*’s plot is the pursuit of Michelin stars, awarded to restaurants that demonstrate exceptional consistency, creativity, and technical skill. This parallels academic writing excellence. In the show, success emerges not from shortcuts or surface-level performance, but from fully inhabiting professional habits. When these habits are absent, both the kitchen and front of house falter. However, when embraced, they lead to personal and professional growth, collaboration, and excellence.

Ultimately, by framing writing through the discipline of culinary arts, and connecting to Warner and other writing scholarship (including recent generative-AI discourse around LLMs and food), I will suggest new ways to help students understand writing as challenging and demanding, yet meaningful and worth the required persistence.

**Bio**

Scott J. Wilson is an English Instructor and the Coordinator of Luther College at the University of Regina's Writing Across the Disciplines Program. His teaching and research are about writing and reading pedagogy: learning outcomes, meaningful writing assignments, methods of providing feedback, soundwriting as academic writing, as well as the link between writing, identity, and citizenship. Recently, he is looking at generative-AI writing tools, cognitive offloading, and best (and worst) practices for genAI use as part of the writer's practice in undergraduate university classrooms.

# **RHETCANADA** **ABSTRACTS & BIOS**

# Meeting Colorblind Racism on Its Own Rhetorical Register: Counterstory as Oppositional Enthymeme

Maab Al-Rashdan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The University of Waterloo

Colorblind racism is a quiet yet powerful crisis in contemporary public discourse. It avoids explicit racialization yet operates through claims of neutrality, fairness, and common sense. This insidious nature often goes unnoticed, rendering direct accusations ineffective. Such an impasse raises two critical questions: how is the crisis of unrecognized harm addressed, and do classical rhetorical principles operate in those responses?

Critical race theorists have long argued that counterstory offers an effective response to such impasses. From Derrick Bell onward, counterstory has been valued for exposing power and challenging dominant ideologies without direct accusation (Bell 902; Delgado and Stefancic 50; Martinez 9,11). Richard Delgado describes counterstory as “insinuating, not frontal” (Delgado 2415) emphasizing its invitation to reflection rather than resistance. However, this work largely theorizes counterstory’s force as political-legal rather than rhetorical. Other scholars have more explicitly noted counterstory’s rhetorical dimensions. Aja Martinez, for example, links its dialogic and allegorical structure to classical traditions (Martinez 33-38, 58-60). Yet, such connections primarily emphasize form and method rather than specific classical mechanisms.

Drawing on Aristotle’s *enthymeme* (Aristotle 8-10), I argue that counterstory’s rhetorical force lies in its ability to meet indirect forms of racism on their own rhetorical register, operating *enthymemically* in response to the *enthymemic* nature of colorblind logic. Colorblind racism leaves out key premises—such as the ongoing existence of racism—using appeals to neutrality to fill the gap so that what has been omitted is *never* noticed. Counterstory, however, strives to show this omission in a similar way, namely, by leaving out the premises of direct accusation while inviting recognition of racism’s existence. In doing so, my paper shows how classical rhetoric remains capable of illuminating modern crises and shaping the strategies used to resist them, while also extending connections between these strategies and classical rhetoric.

## Bio

Maab Al-Rashdan completed her first MA in English Language from the University of Jordan, her second MA in English Literature from the University of Waterloo and is currently a PhD candidate at the latter. Her research interests include Postcolonial Literature, Critical Race Theory and Counterstory, Discourse and Rhetorical Analysis. She is the recipient of UWaterloo’s Doctoral Graduate Creative Writing Award (2024), and RhetCanada’s Michael Purves-Smith Student Paper Award (2021).

# Crafting Ethos Across Languages: Translanguaging and Identity Among Multilingual Newcomer Youth

Rawia Azzahrawi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Winnipeg

This research examines translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2011; García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018) as a rhetorical practice through which multilingual newcomer students construct ethos, negotiate belonging, and position themselves as knowledgeable speakers across languages. Drawing on rhetorical views of ethos as character-in-performance rather than a fixed trait (Aristóteles, 1991),

the study investigates how students' identity texts, including multilingual narratives, reflective writing, and multimodal artifacts, act as sites of symbolic action where speakers activate their full linguistic repertoires to create credible, agentive selves. Translanguaging is understood not just as a pedagogical strategy but as a rhetorical resource (Cavazos, 2017), enabling students to align with, resist, or reframe dominant discourses about migration, language legitimacy, and cultural identity.

Methodologically, the paper draws from a qualitative case study involving four newcomer students in a high school context. Identity texts were analyzed through rhetorical discourse analysis (Andrus, 2021), with attention to ethos, voice, stance, and audience positioning, alongside interviews and researcher reflections. The analysis highlights moments where students shift between English, Arabic, and other home dialects to claim authority, express vulnerability, invoke cultural memory, and assert relational belonging. These linguistic movements reveal ethos as relational, situated, and multilingual, emerging through interaction with institutional expectations, peers, and imagined audiences.

The research advances rhetorical scholarship by broadening the concept of ethos beyond monolingual assumptions and illustrating how multilingual students engage with rhetorical traditions through translanguaging. It also addresses rhetoric and identity, cultural comparisons in rhetoric, and rhetorical education, providing insights into how school environments can either validate or hinder these rhetorical practices. Ultimately, the study contends that recognizing translanguaging as a form of rhetorical self-fashioning encourages educators and scholars to reimagine ethos as a practice of becoming across languages, highlighting the voices of newcomer youth as active participants in rhetorical inquiry.

## Bio

My name is Rawia Azzahrawi (she/her). I am an educator and researcher specializing in second language education, translanguaging, and multilingual pedagogy. I teach Arabic language, academic writing, and ESL/EAL courses. My research focuses on language, identity, and belonging among immigrant and refugee learners, with particular attention to translanguaging practices, identity texts, and inclusive, anti-racist education.

## The Page as Witness: Visual Rhetoric in Brenda Hillman's *Practical Water*

Zahra Barzegar<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>York University

While scientific discourse can measure and describe the environmental harm, poetry can reorganize how that harm is perceptible and memorable, moving from an abstract awareness of scientific data about the planet to an intimate connection to it. Brenda Hillman's *Practical Water* is replete with textual infrastructures of water governance, including civic address, lists, and acronyms. This collection's persuasive force is more about how the information about water is encountered, felt, and remembered on the page than merely delivering that information. This paper asks how Hillman's page design in selected poems from *Practical Water* works rhetorically to make water governance and crisis perceptible as witnessing and memory, especially when environmental harm is slow and easy to treat as abstraction. I argue that *Practical Water* develops a visual rhetoric of witnessing. Witnessing here does not mean human testimony or narrative confession; instead, it names a formal operation of registration and ethical exposure through the poem's mise-en-page, such as line breaks, typography, spacing,

and listing. In this way, the page organizes attention to water governance and everyday water use. Methodologically, I bring visual rhetoric scholarship into lyric analysis through close readings that track how Hillman's poetry layout turns administrative language into a materially felt record. The paper extends visual rhetoric beyond images to include poetic page-space as a rhetorical actor and argues how environmental persuasion can occur through formal inscription, inviting attention and care without relying on conventional argumentative exposition.

## **Bio**

Zahra Barzegar is a Ph.D. candidate in English at York University, where she is currently working on her dissertation exploring water and memory in contemporary eco-poetry. Her research interests include contemporary poetry, ecocriticism, memory, and creative writing. She was co-editor of the 2022 edition of *Pivot*, a hybrid academic and creative journal published by members of York University's Graduate Program in English.

## **Corporate Legitimacy and Rhetoric of Media**

Wafa Ben Yedder<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cape Breton University

This case study contributes to the legitimacy literature by looking at how organizational legitimacy might be negotiated from a rhetorical standpoint. Specifically, the study aims to emphasize the rhetorical aspect of an assault on legitimacy in sectors of activity experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. To summarize the approach, the study is inductive, based on a diachronic case study with a socio-constructivist anchoring (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), and aims to build a new theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). The Quebec construction industry was chosen as the case to be studied in order to investigate legitimacy in times of crisis. In the last decade, the industry, including its construction and consulting engineering sectors, has been splashed by a series of scandals. The Charbonneau Commission has proven the unfair practices of the industry and the embezzlement of public funds for private purposes. The media has exposed the unethical organizational behavior and brought public attention to the ways in which political ties inside construction companies have weakened the public contract procurement process. As a result, immoral organizational processes supported by delegitimate and convincing rhetoric have harmed the legitimacy of the entire sector. Approximately 100 newspaper articles were analyzed to investigate the discourse that served to raise the rhetoric, creating the legitimacy crisis. Discourse analysis was systematized using Nvivo. The argumentation analysis follows a model of argumentative techniques drawn from the Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1971) new rhetorical theory. A list of arguments serves as the foundation for our examination. These arguments cover many topics and take many forms.

## **Bio**

Dr. Wafa Ben Yedder, Assistant Professor in Accounting, CBU.

## **Rhetorical Traditions and Disciplinary Practices: Research Article Introductions in Paleontology**

Nathieli Cervo<sup>1,2</sup>, Patricia Marcuzzo<sup>1</sup>, Ashley Mehlenbacher<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Federal University of Santa Maria, <sup>2</sup>University of Waterloo

Research article introductions play a central rhetorical role in academic writing, as they establish a research territory, define a niche, and position new knowledge within a discipline (Swales, 1990; 2004). From a rhetorical genre perspective, introductions can be understood as socially situated responses to disciplinary expectations, reflecting shared conventions as well as locally situated ways of constructing knowledge (Miller, 1984; Bazerman, 1988). Drawing on rhetorical genre analysis, this study examines how these functions are realized in the Introduction sections of academic articles produced within a specific scientific community of practice: Paleontology. The corpus consists of 22 research articles written in English by members of the Centro de Apoio à Pesquisa Paleontológica da Quarta Colônia da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (CAPP/UFMS), a Brazilian research center with a strong record of international publication. The analysis is based on Swales' CARS model (1990; 2004; Swales & Feak, 2012), with attention to how rhetorical moves and steps are realized across the corpus. The findings show that the articles broadly follow the CARS model, particularly in the recurrent realization of Move 1 (reviewing previous research), Move 2 (establishing a niche), and Move 3 (outlining the present research). At the same time, the analysis reveals discipline-specific patterns. The niche is often constructed through references to material constraints, such as the scarcity or incompleteness of fossil evidence, rather than through direct critique of previous studies. Citation practices also indicate a preference for non-integral forms, which foreground information over authorship. In addition, some introductions include detailed descriptions of fossil specimens, anticipating elements typically associated with the Methods section. These patterns suggest that rhetorical organization is shaped by the epistemological and material conditions of Paleontology. Introductions do not simply follow conventional structures; they enact disciplinary practices, including the validation of knowledge, the negotiation of novelty, and the construction of authority. By examining how a specific scientific community mobilizes rhetorical resources, this study contributes to discussions on the relationship between genre, disciplinary knowledge, and academic writing practices.

## Bio

Nathieli Cipolat Cervo is a PhD candidate in Linguistic Studies at the Federal University of Santa Maria (Brazil). Her research focuses on rhetorical genre analysis, academic writing, and English for Academic Purposes. She is a visiting PhD student at the University of Waterloo.

## Reciprocal Invention: Ordinary Writing Practices and the Work of Community-Based Knowledge Production

Nicole Cunningham-Frisbey<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>MIT

Community-based knowledge is often treated by institutions as testimonial rather than rhetorical, acknowledged or archived, but rarely engaged as a source of deliberation or decision-making authority. This paper analyzes how community-based advocacy groups respond by developing rhetorical practices that enable knowledge to circulate, gain traction, and produce material effects (Cushman 1996; Mathieu 2005).

Drawing on feminist fieldwork analysis, Indigenous research paradigms, and community literacy and rhetorical genre studies, this paper introduces reciprocal rhetorical invention as a framework for understanding how rhetorical agency emerges through collective, relational, and

genre-based action (Freire 1974; Smith 2021; Wilson 2008). Reciprocal rhetorical invention conceptualizes rhetorical action as distributed across people, texts, genres, and institutional conditions, shaped by reciprocity and accountability (Takayoshi and Powell 2003; Powell 2012).

The paper analyzes interviews and collaboratively produced documents from community writing and advocacy networks, focusing on the hybrid technical and professional communication genres community members routinely produce. These include policy drafts, proposals, meeting documentation, shared digital files, and strategic correspondence—genres often overlooked in community literacy scholarship in favor of creative or arts-based practices (Cushman 1996; Mathieu 2005). This analysis demonstrates how everyday technical genres function as central sites of rhetorical judgment, where community members make strategic decisions about audience, legitimacy, timing, and risk while mobilizing relationships, resources, stories, and institutional knowledge (Devitt 2004; Miller 1984).

Findings show that these hybrid genres operate as sites of rhetorical leverage rather than mere documentation, enabling ordinary people to translate community knowledge into forms that are legible and consequential within institutional systems (Shah 2020).

Responding to the conference theme, this paper shows that contemporary epistemic and institutional crises are addressed not through new rhetorical frameworks, but through closer attention to the ordinary writing practices, such as drafting, networking, documenting, coordinating, and revising, that community members use to move knowledge across institutional settings and make it consequential.

## Bio

Nicole Cunningham-Frisbey, PhD (she/her), is a writing and rhetoric scholar and Lecturer in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication at MIT. Her teaching and research center on community-based knowledge production, technical and professional communication, digital rhetorics, and writing across disciplinary contexts. She has taught writing in first-year, graduate, and STEM-focused settings, with recent work supporting students in engineering and computer science courses as they develop research, design, presentation, and multimodal communication projects. Her current research examines reciprocal knowledge production, ordinary writing practices, and rhetorical cross-genre work in community and activist contexts, with particular attention to how everyday genres support advocacy, collaboration, and institutional action. Across her work, she is interested in how writing helps people make relationships, systems, and expertise more visible.

## Under the Plane Tree: Narrative and Suasion in the Rhetorical Dialogues of Plato and Cicero

Bruce Dadey<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

This paper compares Plato's *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* with Cicero's *De Oratore*, focusing not on *what* is said about rhetoric in the works, but on *how* the works' conceptions of rhetoric are presented. I focus in particular on applying approaches from the rhetoric of narrative, drawing on Booth, Phelan, and Chatman, in order to examine how Plato and Cicero strategically employ 1) the dialogue form, 2) basic narrative elements such as plot, setting, characterization, and 3) more subtle narrative processes such as the construction of an implied author and implied reader to suavisely frame their conceptions of rhetoric for their intended audiences.

Seymour Chatman, in his examination of the rhetoric of fiction, distinguishes between an “aesthetic,” internally directed rhetoric that seeks to influence the reader’s perception of characters, events, and ideas that are presented within a given fictional work and an “ideological,” externally directed rhetoric that seeks to suade the reader about matters outside a fictional work (191). By examining the relationship between the internal and external rhetorics of these key dialogues, we can better understand not only the ideas about rhetoric that they present but the anticipated points of resistance that the use of narrative strategies is intended to surmount, such as the Greek sophists’ framing of rhetoric as a purely tactical tool rather than as an ethically inflected practice or Roman opinion that teaching Greek rhetoric was corrupting young citizens (Clarke 11-12).

Cicero explicitly references the *Phaedrus* at the beginning of *De Oratore* via their shared setting of the plane tree (1.7.28-29), implying that his dialogue is echoing Plato’s. But that echoing of Plato’s ideas, and of the rhetorical concepts derived from other Greek sources, needed to be modulated in accordance with the specific needs of his Roman audience. Contrasting the narrative rhetorical strategies used in Plato’s dialogues with those used in Cicero’s allows us to better understand the nature of that modulation and provides another perspective on how Greek and Roman approaches to rhetoric agreed and diverged.

## Bio

Bruce Dadey (he/him) is an associate professor, teaching stream, in the English Department at the University of Waterloo. He teaches courses in rhetoric, professional communication, and creative writing, and has research interests in the history and theory of rhetoric, visual rhetoric, and information design.

## Self-identification of European science museums: balancing traditional and newer rhetoric

Jill Decrop Ernst<sup>1</sup>, Ann Buysse<sup>1</sup>, Marjan Doom<sup>1</sup>, Kris Rutten<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ghent University

Over the last decades, as public trust in science and museums has been globally eroding, science museums have been uniquely compelled to reevaluate their identities. While they have traditionally been seen as authorities, relying on a top-down rhetoric of sharing pre-determined knowledge, today, a different rhetoric is expected. Science museums are now expected to embrace broader social roles (Pedretti and Iannini, 2020). They have become more democratized, adopting explicit agendas and practices of inclusion and multivocality, encouraging audiences to take on more active roles in meaning-making. However, this newer rhetoric directly conflicts with science museums’ traditional ethos, threatening their perceived authority and relevance (Nilsson et al., 2024). In an era of widespread misinformation and decline of trust in science, this is especially problematic, as they play a key role in shaping public perceptions of science.

A rhetorical lens sheds light on how science museums strategically use symbols to negotiate competing roles, their relevance and authority. Building on Foss (1996)’s definition, here rhetoric is understood as the strategic use of symbols to communicate. In this context, language is a form of symbolic action that actively constitutes reality, knowledge, and identities (Burke 1985; Foss, 1996). This research builds on institutional rhetoric (Hoffman and Ford, 2010; Cheney 1983, 1991) and museum rhetoric (see Weiser 2017; Prelli 2006). While increasing attention is

paid to the rhetoric of museums, how science museums rhetorically establish and enact their institutional identities seems to have been understudied.

This research explores how contemporary European science museums rhetorically negotiate shifting roles by balancing traditional and newer rhetoric associated with science museums. It draws on Burkean rhetorical theory, including dramatism and identification to conduct a cluster criticism of the mission statements and “About Us” pages of nine museums. The goal is to highlight instances of active meaning-making to understand some of the rhetorical mechanisms through which contemporary science museums perform their identities and negotiate tensions. In turn, this research offers insights and a comparative framework for understanding Canadian museums navigating similar pressures.

## **Bio**

Jill Decrop Ernst (she/her) is a PhD candidate at Ghent University and the Ghent University Museum (GUM). Her doctoral research explores how science museums balance their role as scientific authorities while recognizing the agency of their audiences and fostering active meaning-making. Specifically, her work draws on dramatism to approach the museum as stage and curating as a performance.

# **Return to the Primitive: Secondary Orality in Digital Rhetoric**

Yun Ding<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Tennessee Tech University

“The United States has moved further way from the old rhetorical tradition than any other country in the West,” laments Walter J. Ong, who maintains that the core of ancient Western rhetorical culture “contrasts markedly with the technological culture so active in the United States” (*Interface*, viii). Like his friend Marshall McLuhan, Ong is deeply interested in the interplay of culture and technology. One central thesis across his vast corpus is that digital technology has enabled the triumphant return of oral culture. Dubbed “secondary orality,” this new technology-driven orality is different from the prehistorical orality that is spontaneous and empathetic. It is instead calculated and callous. What secondary oral culture can at best produce is a set of memorable sayings or aphorisms. As rhetorical expressions, they are “Gutter talk for exploitation” and “the most scurrilously insulting and savage exchanges” (*Interface*, 35).

On the surface, Secondary Orality is characterized by a total casualness bordering on what Ong has memorably called “infantilism,” with some predictable “prepuberty rites” such as a “super-relaxedness” and a studious informality of “hey hey hey” and “wow wow wow.” Yet deep down, a total irony pervades Secondary Orality. If traditional technological inventions such as writing and print continue to operate with a moral commitment to rational, conscious social functions, Secondary Orality, conversely, registers shrewd operations that serves the immediate need of political and ideological warfare.

This paper examines Ong’s critical concerns over the mass appeal of Secondary Orality, whose fatuous orotundity and insidious whispering all set to elicit mass ecstasy and blind following. In the renewed interest in the spoken word, Ong sees a self-conscious program aimed at nourishing a new popular romanticism with its avowed commitment to winning back the good old days.

## **Bio**

Yun Ding (PhD) is an Associate Professor at Tennessee Tech University.

# LLMs as Engines of Eikos, and Other Ghosts from Rhetoric's History

Jonathan Doering<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cape Breton University

Despite the recent philosophical, rhetorical, and humanistic scrutiny toward LLMs, scholars and polemicists have been snagged by poor historical comparisons. As Chlöe Kitzinger explains, commentators have appealed to Plato's *Phaedrus* and its famous interrogation of writing "as if its primary lesson were the inevitability of technological progress, ... nudg[ing] contemporary readers toward the conclusion that LLMs will inexorably assume a leading role in human thought and discourse." In Plato's work, the far more apt discussion concerns rhetoric and *eikos* (probability, verisimilitude, etc.). Indeed rhetoric as an art of the probable eventually threads through Aristotle to Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman, all the way to the recent contention that LLMs are "stochastic parrots" (Emily Bender). However, *eikos* is just one example of a crucial ancient or antiquated concept that should be reckoned with in the age of LLMs. Rhetoric, philosophy, and literature reveal a veritable trove of terms that offer powerful descriptions, theories, and critiques of LLMs and their discursive implications. These include the *dissertatio de omni re scibili* (dissertation on all things knowable), Terror and Rhetoric (in the literary criticism of Jean Paulhan), and the debate over whether one's true character, or mere apparent character as constituted in discourse, is part of *ethos* and eloquence (featuring Aristotle, Isocrates, and many others). This presentation will demonstrate the currently-untapped potential of these terms in understanding what LLMs are doing to discourse, learning, and letters. Since rhetoric has been often accused of excessive art and artifice, it should be no surprise that the historical interrogations of rhetoric may be germane to LLMs. The terminologies these inquiries generated, however, have yet to be harnessed in critical AI studies.

## Bio

Jonathan Doering (he/him) teaches writing, rhetoric, and literary theory at Cape Breton University. His research considers the institutional fortunes of rhetoric in intellectual history, as well as empirical research on how students are using Generative AI.

# Imminent Re-Imaginings: Rhetorics of Transgender Survival Under Emergent Authoritarianism

Q.E. Drummond<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Carleton University

Transgender people in North America are navigating an increasingly hostile political and communicative landscape. In the United States, legislative efforts seek not merely to marginalize but to render transgender lives legally untenable, while in Canada—often imagined as a transgender haven—provincial rollbacks and public contestations of trans legitimacy have in truth only intensified (ACLU, 2025; Trianon, 2025). As digital communication infrastructures are increasingly weaponized against trans communities, transgender existence is more publicly scrutinized and rhetorically contested than at any point in recent history.

This situation raises a critical question from the rhetorician's standpoint: with transgender individuals and communities increasingly abandoned by once progressive institutional rhetorics, what new self-articulative strategies are trans people developing to sustain psychic, social, and physical survival? How are trans identities being rhetorically shored up, reworked, or reimagined amid an increasingly antagonistic zeitgeist? Put simply: what rhetorical innovations are they developing?

In this talk, I present the groundwork from my ongoing doctoral dissertation, which examines contemporary transgender survival rhetorics through analysis of first-person narrativizations and community storytelling practices. Drawing on Kenneth Burke's theories of identification, Charland's concept of constitutive rhetoric, Goffman's frame analysis, and queer/feminist traditions that foreground embodiment and situated knowledge (Ahmed, 2006; de Lauretis, 1995; Haraway, 2013), I trace how trans people subjectively 'story' their lived realities and how these stories circulate within and consequently shape transgender communities. Specifically, I offer my preliminary mappings of the emergent identificatory strategies through which transgender individuals make sense of precarity, forge solidarity, and resist erasure. By theorizing survival as a rhetorical practice rather than merely a condition, this project contributes to rhetorical studies and trans studies alike, offering a framework for understanding how identities are continually shaped and reshaped under conditions of emergent authoritarianism.

## Bio

Q.E. Drummond (she/her) is a Doctoral Candidate at Carleton University. Her work revolves around stories, exploring them as fluid and rhetorically charged mental structures that serve as apparatuses of meaning formation. Specifically, she focuses on how stories as such bypass critical faculties to form subjective, relativist worldviews.

## Paul Bunyan and Bigfoot: Some Meditations on Permanence, Change, and Symbols

David E Beard<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Minnesota Duluth

Taking a cue from Kenneth Burke, in *Attitudes toward History*, this paper looks at the creation, dissolution, and refashioning of a "symbolic synthesis" in the rhetorical construction of the relationship between settler & indigenous cultures and the environment. According to Blankenship, Murphy and Rosenwasser, in an early (1974) essay, from the time when scholars cared more energetically about his work in *ATH* and *CS*, a rhetor must "erect a vast symbolic synthesis, a rationale of imaginative and conceptual imagery that locates' the various aspects of experience. as part of an artistic vision and worldview. Again, per BMR, "a symbolic synthesis guides social purpose, provides clues as to what we should get and how we should try to get it and how to resign ourselves to renouncing things we can't get. Symbolic synthèses are "designed to produce 'acceptance' in one form or another." (6). To demonstrate these processes, we will look at a pair of symbols: Paul Bunyan and Bigfoot.

First, we outline the reception of Paul Bunyan and the Sasquatch in the 19/20th centuries. They are two sides of a coin - Paul is the spirit of domestication, of taming the frontier and reshaping it as the settler-colonial state. The sasquatch, or bigfoot, was the elusive wild, that which could not be domesticated, or erased. In different ways, they expressed the anxieties of the 20th century and reassured, especially children, that those anxieties could be controlled.

Second, we outline the reconception of Bunyan and the Sasquatch in the 21st century. Paul has become symbolic of environmental degradation and efforts to forget violence against indigenous peoples. The bigfoot has been embraced as something more than “the excluded” -- instead, a source of insight and wisdom. If we have discovered that Paul is the sign of our violence, the Bigfoot may be the guide to our healing.

### **Bio**

David Beard is professor of rhetoric at the University of Minnesota Duluth, affiliate faculty in Religious Studies, and a Fellow with the Institute on the Environment. He's a problem-solver at heart, and he genuinely loves RhetCanada.

## **Ancient Appeals, Modern Crises: Punctuated Ethos and the Rhetoric of Trust in Vaccine Communication**

Carolyn Eckert<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

Contemporary public health communication operates within an increasingly unstable information environment, where vaccine discourse intersects with climate crises, emergency alerts, and national security concerns. In this context, misinformation is not a peripheral issue but a systemic threat to public safety and institutional credibility. As a result, debates over vaccines hinge less on scientific evidence alone than on questions of trust, care, and who is recognized as a credible speaker.

While rhetorical studies have long examined ethos as a mode of persuasion, less attention has been paid to how trust is negotiated within misinformation-rich environments, particularly through gendered communicative practices. Public health messaging often assumes that misinformation can be corrected through clearer facts or stronger institutional authority. However, emerging research suggests that trust operates relationally through everyday communicative networks rather than formal channels alone.

Drawing on my doctoral research and recent Canadian survey data, I show that trust functions paradoxically: individuals who report higher trust in government are more likely to verify information, but also more likely to share it without verification. These findings complicate assumptions that trust produces compliance, instead revealing moments of instability, what I conceptualize as *punctuated ethos*, where credibility is actively negotiated, reinforced, or disrupted.

This paper argues that women's health communication offers a critical site for understanding these dynamics. Across vaccine discourse, women frequently act as rhetorical intermediaries, interpreting, translating, and responding to public health messaging within families, workplaces, and communities. Drawing on Canadian vaccine hesitancy research showing declining booster uptake despite high initial compliance, I examine how appeals to care, protection, and responsibility function as persuasive resources in contexts shaped by uncertainty and misinformation.

These relational appeals do not replace scientific reasoning; rather, they anchor it within lived contexts where credibility is built through consistency, presence, and moral judgment. My paper introduces the *Trusted Voices Framework*, which reconceptualizes trust not as a stable attribute of institutions but as a rhetorical achievement shaped by ethos, emotion, and social context.

## Bio

Carolyn Eckert (she/her) is a postdoctoral researcher in rhetoric and health communication at the University of Waterloo. Her work examines trust, expertise, and misinformation in public health discourse, with a focus on vaccine communication and women's health. She is the author of *Punctuated Ethos: Addressing Trust, Credibility, and Expertise in Times of Crisis*.

## Meeting Desire Halfway: Flibanserin, Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder, and Kairos

Amanda Friz<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Washington

In 2015, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved flibanserin (brand name Addyi) to treat Hypoactive Sexual Desire Disorder (HSDD), a sexual dysfunction first included in the DSM-III that describes lack of sexual desire or interest in sexual activity. HSDD is a modern problem especially plaguing the ciswomen in married, heterosexual couples. The FDA, in approving flibanserin, offered a modern solution to HSDD, a prescription medication taken daily for the rest of one's (sexual) life. The controversial approval of flibanserin in spite of its dangerous side effects and minimal efficacy has been a rich case study for rhetoricians of medical discourse (see, for example, Segal, "The Rhetoric of Female Sexual Dysfunction"; Flore; Gupta; Segal, "Sex, Drugs, and Rhetoric"). Previous rhetorical analyses, however, have not studied the rhetorical role the medication itself plays in deflecting attention from the power imbalances endemic to heterosexual coupling under patriarchy. Employing a close textual analysis informed by new materialisms as articulated by Karen Barad and Jane Bennett, I critique the transcripts of the 2015 FDA with attention to the rhetorical function of flibanserin itself, and argue that it screens attention away from the heart of the matter: couples needing moments of connection and attunement, well-timed, in appropriate measure. Such moments are best described as kairotic, a concept with origins in Ancient Greek traditions of wrestling, archery, and persuasion. In each, the emphasis is not on the right or "correct" movement or action, but the right timing (Hawhee; Miller; Kinneavy). A kairotic moment is opportune, ripe for action. It is the moment a wrestling opponent can be pinned or an archery target comes into focus or a persuasive argument can "land." To seize a kairotic moment requires cultivation of skill, awareness, and moderation. I conclude my presentation with kairotic lessons that can help couples struggling with HSDD to (re)attune their bodies for moments of pleasure. If HSDD is a modern problem, perhaps addressing it requires ancient solutions like a training in kairos.

## Bio

Dr. Friz is an assistant professor of rhetoric at the University of Washington in Seattle, WA, United States. She specializes in health activism rhetoric and is writing her first book, tentatively titled "A New Materialist Critique for a Radical Politics of Pleasure."

## Ghostly Transcendence: Entelechial Dialectics and Epideictic Rhetoric in Mark Abley's Conversations with a Dead Man

John Moffatt<sup>1</sup>, Kyle Gerber<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Saskatchewan, <sup>2</sup>University of Waterloo

### *Ghostly Transcendence: Entelechial Dialectics and Epideictic Rhetoric in Mark Abley's Conversations with a Dead Man*

In Mark Abley's *Conversations with a Dead Man: The Legacy of Duncan Campbell Scott* the author is visited by the ghost of Duncan Campbell Scott, the poet who, as Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, was responsible for the creation of the Residential Schools. In haunting Abley, Scott's ghost seeks to understand his vilification, to justify his actions, and to ask for some kind of rehabilitation via Abley.

The use of a persona in having the ghost defend his reputation and policies lets Abley present traditional, colonialist visions of Canada's relationship with Indigenous people without appearing to endorse them. Each persona makes use of Aristotelian *forensic* rhetoric (making a case for what has happened). Most interesting though, is Abley's overarching if unorthodox use of an *epideictic* rhetoric of public praise and blame, where the refutation of Scott's position is a kind of eulogy for a discredited vision of the past.

Abley's epideictic unfolds as a dialectical process and embodies what Kenneth Burke would call an entelechial perspective. It argues that Canadians cannot know what *reconciliation* is (*thesis*) without internalizing what *colonialism* meant to those who embraced it (*antithesis*). For Scott, Canada's entelechial perfection lay in a triumphant ethos of British colonialism; for Abley, it lies in the refutation of the colonialist ethos. We apply Robert E. Babe's understanding of dialectics to show how the *synthesis*, or rather, the *transcendence* of the colonial dichotomy fuses a discredited entelechial ideology which undeniably has shaped the country into its current form with the entelechial ideology of a better Canada which has yet to come into being. Moreover, in Abley's book, the haunting of the author embodies that transcendence: a world where ghosts speak to us is a world where the past and the present come together and in their meeting create a larger meaning.

#### **Bio**

John Moffatt (he/him) is an Associate Professor in the Ron and Jane Graham School of Professional Development, College of Engineering, University of Saskatchewan, where he teaches Rhetorical Theory, Leadership as Communication Practice, and Rhetorical Editing. He holds a BA from the University of Toronto, and an M.A. and Ph.D. from Queen's University. Moffatt taught at a number of institutions in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia before coming to USask in 2007. He was the recipient of the Provost's Teaching Award for the College of Engineering in 2015 and of the University of Saskatchewan Student Union Award for Teaching Excellence in 2014 and 2026. His research focusses on Rhetorics of Canadian Identity, with a focus on the persuasive dimensions of forgiveness and mourning in public discourse.

Kyle Gerber studies and teaches rhetoric as a special lecturer at the University of Waterloo's English Department. Combining his academic work and his role as a pastor in a local congregation, his doctoral dissertation explored rhetorical dimensions of forgiveness in an Anabaptist context, including attention to figural logic in expressions of forgiveness; he's recovered enough from that experience to be extending that work on figures further into the field of chiasmus studies and giving his former grammar teachers a reason to say "I told you so."

### **‘X, not Y; Y, not X’: syncrisis as argumentative topos in AI-authored text**

Christopher Giannakopoulos<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

Although authenticity is commonly understood as the quality of being genuine, verifiable, and trustworthy, electronically-authored texts lack the creative human autonomy traditionally associated with rhetorical agency (McCormack et al, 2019). This problem of authenticity can be productively reframed through Aristotle's tripartite account of ethos in *Rhetoric*, where credibility emerges not as an intrinsic property of a speaker but as a relational effect composed of goodwill (*eunoia*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and virtuousness (*arete*); as Aristotle notes, "ethos is achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak" (*Rhetoric*, I.2, 1356a). From this perspective, authenticity is not a metaphysical attribute of authorship but a rhetorical accomplishment within discourse.

This paper argues that generative AI systems—especially Open AI's ChatGPT—simulate rhetorical authorship through the deployment of highly formalized comparative and reversible argumentative structures. Drawing on classical rhetorical theory and contemporary work on rhetorical figures (Aristotle, C. R. Miller, Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, J. Fahnestock, R. Harris), this paper shows that AI-generated texts tend to rely on antimetabole, antiparastasis, and metabasis in argumentation, figures that reorganize propositions through plays of symmetry and inversion. As Jeanne Fahnestock argues, rhetorical figures are not merely deployed as stylistic devices but are constitutive of argument, shaping how knowledge is produced (1999). These figures collectively instantiate what classical rhetoric terms *syncrisis*: a comparative mode of reasoning that structures argument through formal opposition and parallelism.

By reconceptualizing *syncrisis* not merely as a figure of speech but as a structural principle of AI argumentation, this paper proposes a rhetorical diagnostic for identifying patterns of machine-authored discourse. In pedagogical contexts, particularly in the technical communication classroom, these patterns illuminate how generative systems structure credibility through form rather than intention, raising questions about how authenticity, authorship, and agency may be identified and assessed, especially in writing environments where AI may be used.

## "My Slogan, My Choice": Rhetorical Figures and Slogan Constructions

Romina Hashemi<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Simon Fraser University

"Land Back," "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité," "Woman, Life, Freedom"—social and political movements are often defined and remembered by their slogans (Denton, 1980; Velde, 2024). The use of rhetorical figures, either schemes or tropes, help make these slogans memorable and persuasive (Reece et al., 1994; McQuarrie & Mick, 1996). Slogans can be borrowed by like groups, co-opted by antagonist groups, or translated across languages: what can we learn about slogan transmutations using rhetorical figures as our lens?

Construction grammarians argue for a view of language as form-meaning pairs; scholars have been advocating for a convergence of the frameworks of construction grammar and cognitive rhetoric (Fahnestock, 1999; Turner, 1998; Harris 2022, 2023, 2026; Hashemi et al., 2024). Building on this approach, I establish slogans as linguistic constructions, with open slots than can be filled (e.g., '*my body*, my choice' to '*your body*, my choice' to '*your oil*, my choice') and explore how rhetorical figures are preserved or eliminated through slogan transmutations.

In French Black Lives Matter protests, the slogan "no justice, no peace", noteworthy for its rhetorical figures, is translated as "pas de justice, pas de paix," maintaining anaphora and homoioteleuton while adding epanaphora and parison. Meanwhile, the slogan, "Black lives

matter,” is chanted in its original English, retaining its form. In the Iranian Woman, Life, Freedom movement, paramiosis plays out across the trajectory of the main slogan, from the Kurdish, ‘zhin, zhiān, āzādī’ [woman, life, freedom], to the Persian, ‘zan, zendegī, āzādī’ [woman, life, freedom], to the appropriation, ‘zan, zendegī, āgāhī’ [woman, life, awareness], and the response, ‘mard, mīhan, ābādī’ [man, homeland, prosperity].

Looking at English, French, and Persian examples, I propose that constructionist approaches allow us to investigate the variability of slogans across languages and communities, explaining how meaning can be preserved or disrupted through the use of rhetorical figures.

## Bio

Romina is a graduate student in linguistics at Simon Fraser University. She is interested in Construction Grammar and, especially, how it interacts with rhetoric and communication studies.

# Thinking in Transition: Artificial Intelligence, Heidegger, and the Ancient Greek Gnomē

Lauren Keeley<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Indiana University Bloomington

What will generative AI do to rhetoric? Shot through all the anxieties about GenAI’s impact on rhetoric and composition is the fear that it will enact an ultimate decoupling of thinking from writing that subsumes the human in its wake. That is, this time of transition to GenAI is not just a transition in technology; it is concomitantly a transition in our discipline and its longstanding interest in the relationship between thinking, writing and the human who is traditionally conceived as the locus of both.

In this paper, I locate an antecedent of this fear in the beginning the rhetorical tradition in Plato’s *Phaedrus* and, taking a cue from Martin Heidegger’s inquiry into the essential connection between thinking, speaking, and Being in *What is Called Thinking?*, suggest that GenAI’s inevitable appropriation of writing (as it has come to be conceived, apophantically, or a “stating what is the case about what is the case”) might just allow for a *recoupling* of thinking and writing. Heeding Heidegger’s call to return to the spoken root of language and its ancient written form, the Greek *gnomē*, I discover a new purview of human thought, even in this unavoidable transition to AI. Aristotle delineates *gnomē*—commonly translated as “maxim”—for technical rhetorical usage in the *Rhetoric*, but at its inception *gnomē* meant “a thought” and was a compositional form meant to vex ideas rather than make them straightforward; to provoke inquiry rather than resolve thought into an apophantic claim. This paper considers how reviving this ancient cast of language might serve to address the modern problem of GenAI in higher education.

## Bio

Lauren is a Ph.D. student in English at Indiana University Bloomington with a focus in rhetoric. She works in the ancient Greek rhetorical tradition, specifically Presocratic and Sophistic thought, as well as in continental philosophy. As a compositions, she is interested in how the canons of classical rhetorical education might guide GenAI integration into the college writing classroom.

# Restaurant Rhetoric: The Case of Heston Blumenthal's Salmon Ice Cream

Gabriel Kitsos<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Simon Fraser University

As it turns out, great Chefs use the tools of rhetoric in their work all the time. The famous British Chef Heston Blumenthal has even written about the rhetorical use of dish names in *The Role of Expectancy in Sensory and Hedonic Evaluation*. This study, which I will analyze here, evaluated how the name of a dish will affect perceived levels of pleasantness, strength, saltiness, sweetness, bitterness, etc.—in the case of Blumenthal's famous “salmon ice cream.”

Presented with salmon ice cream, we can imagine ourselves recoiling, which is exactly why rhetoric is important to chefs; they must persuade diners to enjoy the experimental micro-gastronomic wonders which they devise. So how did Blumenthal persuade diners to eat and even enjoy such an uncanny concoction? There are many tools that the rhetorician Kenneth Burke has developed which are particularly useful to naming food in a restaurant—and, likely without knowing these theories by name, Blumenthal has exercised several of them. To create the title “salmon ice cream,” he uses what Burke names “terministic screens” and “methodical misnaming.” Blumenthal also gives special attention to what Burke calls “scene” when he chooses the dish name. But beyond a rhetorically sound name, Blumenthal also uses other tools that surround this choice, contributing to the kind of perception that he wants diners to have when presented with salmon ice cream—these are rhetorical listening, identification, and the blending of styles. In all, a great deal of consideration is given to what can be effectively seen as rhetoric when one tries to get their restaurant to appeal to diners. Naming Blumenthal's use of rhetorical devices for curating and creating experiences of food will allow us to realize just how wide a net rhetoric casts in its relevancy to everyday life, as well as show us how rhetorical effects are able to change sensorial experiences. Additionally, by using the study of rhetoric to understand food and how people make food matter, we will learn more about rhetoric itself.

## Bio

Gabriel Kitsos (= "kit"-soze, phonetically) is an undergraduate student at Simon Fraser University. He studies English literature and rhetoric. Recently, Gabriel finished an undergraduate thesis on the rhetoric of graffiti. Today, he is presenting on his two favourite interests: rhetoric and food.

# Diasporic Feminist Politics in the Face of Sri Lankan Nationalist Gender-Based Violence

Amaya Kodituwakku<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

Angela Davis, alongside many feminist activist-scholars have argued for the study of history and its interconnected fields to be understood as systems of continuities, as opposed to isolated moments of closure (Davis 2016). This is a fact that transnational feminisms, established in the 1990s as a response to globalization, finds central to its conceptualization. In the current

moment, where we are witnessing the exponential catastrophes associated with imperialism and global capitalism, transnational feminisms have lost much of the initial momentum. To properly to address the current sociopolitical experiences of women and marginalized peoples across the world, I argue that we must return to and revise historical forms of feminist resistance. Building on the scholarship of academics such as Wendy Hesford, Eileen Schell, Rebecca Dingo, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty, (Hesford and Schell 2008; Dingo 2012; Mohanty 2003), I hope to consider how transnational feminist practices can help enrich the field of rhetoric, especially when considering the spread of global patriarchy and responses to such violence. To advocate for transnational feminist rhetorics (TFR) as an embodied theory of circulation, materiality, and global/local dialectics, I hope to explore the geopolitical context of the Sri Lankan Civil War and its after-effects. I begin by analyzing the normalization of sexualized state violence through social media and television channels, primarily through framings of sexual violence as necessary punishment for marginalized peoples that states have deemed corruptive to the nation's sexual purity and deviants from patriarchal gender roles. The second part of this TFR project is then to consider the way Ilankai Tamil feminists have worked to preserve the voices of those disproportionately impacted by this state sexual violence, especially through oral history archives, anti-state publications, and coalitional politics. This paper aims to consider how small-scale language, actions, and materials can be used to build an interdisciplinary rhetorical theory that investigates the technological, ethical, and sociopolitical implications of ethnoreligious nationalism and security policies that mutually inform and are informed by patriarchy.

## Bio

Amaya Kodituwakku (they/them) is a recent University of Waterloo graduate with a B.A. in English Literature and Rhetoric, and a minor in Legal Studies. They are currently working part-time as a research assistant for Dr. Shana MacDonald and Dr. Brianna Wiens. Amaya's areas of interest are in surveillance culture, transitional justice, transnational feminist rhetoric.

## Participatory Critical Rhetoric: A Framework for Choric Invention at Commemorative Sites

Tess Laidlaw<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mount Saint Vincent University

I hope to engage listeners in a thought experiment that may at first glance seem like so much ivory-tower navel gazing - that is, that one can effectively deploy a participatory critical rhetoric method when the "participants" are ghosts. To persuade the audience to bear with me, I offer Kenneth Burke's perspective by incongruity, to challenge "our common sense assumptions about what properly ought to go with what" (Whedbee, 48).

In the 1800s, leprosy impacted primarily Acadian residents of New Brunswick, yet few are familiar with this history. This paper will present part of a work in progress based on a 2024 visit to the Tracadie lazaretto museum in Tracadie-Sheila, New Brunswick—the Musée Historique De Tracadie. The museum occupies the site of the hospital and lazaret (Hôtel-Dieu of Tracadie) which operated from 1896-1943, and the Lepers' Cemetery, for victims of leprosy from 1899-1964.

The theoretical approach of "participatory critical rhetoric" (drawing specifically on Middleton et al, 2015) offers a framework for conducting rhetorical analysis "in situ," and resonates with and incorporates the privileging of *chora* presented at this conference in collaboration with [removed]

for blind peer review]. Working with a participatory critical rhetoric methodological framework, this paper will present a method contextualized for commemoration.

Participatory critical rhetoric is an approach that “theorizes field-based rhetoric” (Middleton et al, 2015, xv), suggesting that this orientation offers a potentially generative approach for the act of, instead of simply visiting, *attuning to* commemorative sites and mapping out means of engagement with “in situ” commemoration activities (drawing again on collaborative past work). It is by nature place-based, mindful of “intersecting” elements of rhetorical practice associated with that site, inviting the critic to “[attend] to extratextual dimensions of corporeality” (Middleton et al, 2015).

In a context of digital overwhelm and sociopolitical horrors, developing new connections and new ways to reach and interact with our history as Canadians is a meaningful and medicinal form of resistance.

### **Bio**

Dr. Laidlaw is a tenured faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax. Her usual focus is the application of rhetorical theory to investigate practical communication on the topics of health and disease.

## **Seeking Expertise: A Procedural Rhetorical Analysis of Generative AI and Information-Seeking Practices [“Rhetorical Construction(s) of AI” Panel]**

Shannon Lodoen<sup>1</sup>, Alexi Orchard<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, <sup>2</sup>Notre Dame

As generative AI chatbots reroute procedures around information seeking, challenges increase with assessing and implementing relevant and trustworthy source material. Interactions between users and chatbots differ from previous paradigms of information seeking (i.e., search engines, library stacks) in important ways. Notably, these chatbots summarize information probabilistically through dialogic interactions, leveraging natural language-based signifiers of expertise and intelligence to persuade users of their utility and trustworthiness. This new “procedure” for interaction could present significant risks for users who engage with these chatbots without clear expectations or expertise on the topic of their query.

Our methodology in this presentation comes from Ian Bogost’s concept of procedural rhetoric, which examines how arguments are constructed—and persuasion takes place—through rule-based processes. We investigate how chatbot interactions relating to high stakes domains that value accuracy and precision, such as medicine and academic research, are subtly and not-so-subtly reshaping users’ experiences and expectations surrounding information seeking. We also explore how many of the arguments that underlie AI-supported information-seeking practices tend towards an individualistic, impersonal angle that overwrites the intensely *human* experiences integral to gaining and sharing knowledge.

At this crucial juncture, there is a need to understand how the procedures surrounding information-seeking practices inform and are informed by users’ values, experiences, and expectations—and how these factors might, in future, be altered by the emerging turn towards AI “experts” and authority. As more people use chatbots, they will not only reference but may come to rely on large language models (LLMs) for information previously obtained through a human source. What does it mean to trust a chatbot as though it has *ethos*, expertise, and authority, qualities traditionally attributed to humans? As the shifting landscape of AI continues

to evolve, and as social acceptability of AI grows, it is crucial that both information seekers and experts remain vigilant of the constraints and potential consequences of AI-supported information seeking.

*This presentation is submitted as part of the panel "Rhetorical Construction(s) of AI."*

## **Bio**

Shannon Lodoen (she/her) is an Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (Prescott Campus), where she teaches courses in technical communication, engineering capstone, humanities, and rhetoric. Her current research is situated at the intersection of rhetorical studies, communication and media theory, science and technology studies, and technology ethics.

Alexi Orchard (she/her) is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Technology and Digital Studies at the University of Notre Dame, where she conducts interdisciplinary research and teaches courses on topics related to technology ethics, media studies, and generative AI.

## **Algorithmic Sovereignty and Security: A critical discourse analysis of competing narratives in transnational AI governance**

Kem-Laurin Lubin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

This presentation employs critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2013; van Dijk, 2008) to examine competing narratives surrounding AI-driven predictive policing and facial recognition technologies across the United States, European Union, and China. Analyzing policy documents, media coverage, corporate marketing materials, and civil society position statements from 2018-2024, I demonstrate how stakeholders construct fundamentally different rhetorical framings of these technologies: as "public safety innovations" (law enforcement and technology corporations), "authoritarian infrastructures" (civil liberties organizations), or "algorithmic governance" requiring context-specific oversight (policy experts). Drawing on Foucault's (1980) analytics of power, Benjamin's (2019) "New Jim Code," and Browne's (2015) surveillance of Blackness, I argue that these competing narratives reflect deeper struggles over what Pohle and Thiel (2020) term "digital sovereignty"—questions of who controls algorithmic systems, whose interests they serve, and what forms of governance can ensure accountability across transnational contexts.

The presentation reveals how surveillance technology discourse operates through what Burke (1969) identifies as "terministic screens"—language choices that direct attention toward certain interpretations while obscuring others. Technology corporations employ what Pasquale (2015) calls "black box" rhetoric, emphasizing accuracy metrics while deflecting questions about systemic bias (Buolamwini & Gebru, 2018). Law enforcement agencies invoke public safety imperatives that disproportionately target marginalized communities (Ferguson, 2017), while civil society organizations frame these technologies as extensions of historical surveillance practices (Browne, 2015; Gandy, 1993) requiring abolitionist rather than reformist responses (Benjamin, 2019).

The transnational dimension proves analytically crucial. While China's Social Credit System attracts Western critique as "Orwellian," I demonstrate how similar logics operate in US and EU

contexts through predictive policing algorithms and facial recognition systems, though discursively framed as "democratic" innovations. Building on my prior work (Lubin, 2022, 2025; Lubin & Fan, 2025), I introduce "surveillance contextual heuristics" synthesizing design justice principles with critical transparency frameworks. The presentation argues that effective AI governance requires creating deliberative infrastructures that make power relations explicit and contestable across transnational publics rather than pursuing impossible consensus.

## **Bio**

Kem-Laurin Lubin (she/her) is a researcher at the University of Waterloo working at the intersection of rhetoric, critical discourse studies, and technology. Her scholarship applies rhetorical theory—including Burke's terministic screens and concepts of *ethopoeia*—to analyze competing narratives in AI governance, predictive policing discourse, and algorithmic systems, centering questions of power, justice, and transnational governance.

# **The Rhetoric of Scholarly Podcasting**

Shauna MacDonald<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cape Breton University

Even as the world overflows with information, not all stories—including histories—are told. This seems attributable to impossibility, but untold stories are neither accidental, nor hidden due to some inherent value. Storytelling, like all communication, has a politic (or rather, many politics). The lighthouse (hi)stories I work to tell seemingly remain untold because their subjects have been deemed rhetorically tangential. Given the centrality of "light" as a Western trope, this seems like a spurious claim. However, many individuals associated with lighthouses throughout history—working-class folk, women, seafarers, and those geographically on the edge—have remained relatively un-storied. I aim to bring them into rhetorical relevance with my work.

In this essay, I investigate the potential of a modern (contemporary) form of storytelling—podcasting—as a rhetorical strategy for bringing old (if not quite ancient) stories into the light. Cape Breton Lighthouse Memories is a project using arts-based research to explore the cultural meaning and significance of lighthouses in Cape Breton (a place decidedly on the edge). I aim to produce a podcast series for a public audience. The goal of this paper is to examine the affordances and constraints of podcasting as a rhetorical tool for the ancient art of storytelling. That is, what rhetorical terrain might a scholarly history podcast successfully tread upon? If we believe Quintilian's notion that "history" is "a kind of narrative which, as it has more of truth, has also more of substance" (ca. 95/2011, II.2.4.2), what might the rhetorical strategies of a podcast allow? Bosman states, "The mind loves stories, and the evolving digital scholar can use this reality to craft creative and world-changing stories around his/her knowledge endeavours" (p. 54). Combining experience with research on the rhetoric of podcasting, I will reflect on rhetorically savvy academic podcasting.

## **Bio**

Dr. Shauna MacDonald is Associate Professor of Communication in the Department of Communication and Languages at Cape Breton University. She researches lighthouse culture, gender and communication, and the philosophy of technology.

# **“Artificial Intelligence is our alchemy”: A rhetorical study of the Techno-Optimist Manifesto**

Andrew McMurry<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

*This presentation is submitted as part of the panel “Rhetorical Construction(s) of AI*

In this paper, I explore the rhetoric of the “techno-capital machine” (Land) by analyzing software engineer cum venture capitalist Marc Andreessen’s, “Techno Optimist Manifesto” (2023), a politico-rhetorical rallying cry for accelerationists, “Muskian Futurists” (Ranger and Ranger), and AI solutionists who stand to benefit most from the “algorithmic worldmaking” (Johnson) that is rhetorically and materially reshaping the real—and what increasingly amounts to the same thing—the networked order of today’s largely opaque technical systems (Steigler). Endorsed by the usual suspects—Musk, Thiel, Bezos, Zuckerberg, Altman, JD Vance—the manifesto is less a statement of principle than a series of stylistically-juiced banalities rationalizing the absolute necessity of billionaires, the hero’s journey of the tech-bro, and the resuscitation of an old but apparently congenial political program. Like the (approvingly referenced) “Manifesto of Futurism” of 1909 that paved the way ideologically for Mussolini’s fascismo italiano, Andreessen’s program reads like a pre-compliance manual for techno-feudalism (Varoufakis; Dean) and the credo of a pharonically wealthy class so out of touch with the hoi polloi that it is eager, following Benjamin, to experience humankind’s “own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order.” The pathetic and ethotic appeals; the arguments from authority and ignorance; the ad populum and the ad baculum; the encomiums for Nietzsche’s Übermensch, Ayn Rand’s John Galt, Richard Nixon, and Milton Friedman; and the sweeping mythic claims of human (read, tech baron) exceptionalism together provide a bloated corpus ripe for rhetorical dissection. As Kenneth Burke writes in *Attitudes Toward History*, “if a man’s virtuous characters are dull, and his wicked characters are done vigorously, his art has voted for the wicked ones, regardless of his ‘official front’” (253). Andreessen’s eloquence on the signs and wonders of the dawning age of AI represents yet another paean to the timeless urgency of counteracting the falling rate of profit.

## **Bio**

Andrew McMurry is a Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo, where he teaches critical discourse analysis, rhetoric, semiotics, and horror literature. He has published widely on ecocriticism and environmental communication. His books are *Environmental Renaissance: Emerson, Thoreau and the System of Nature* and *Entertaining Futility: Despair and Hope in the Time of Climate Change*.

# **Grotesque transparency: visual and discursive rhetoric about Gaza**

Isaac Nahon-Serfaty<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Ottawa

Rhetorical transparency can be understood as a two-way process. News media outlets operate under this principle, especially if they adhere to ethical journalism in a more interactive public sphere. We can assume that revealing facts “as they are” is a good practice, also giving the audience the opportunity to react to the facts. However, this idea of transparency should be

debated in our era of exuberant artificiality, leading to our research question: How, what could seem an exercise in full transparency, using the communicative resources of video reportage, ends up producing a “transparently grotesque” representation through the mediation of the audience’s discourse?

Grotesque transparency is constructed today in a multimodal relationship of complementarity and contradiction between the visual and the discursive. Grotesque transparency is defined as the proactive disclosure of the “shocking,” “ugly,” or “outside the norm” not as a neutral revelation but a strategic, mediated performance that creates an illusion of total affective openness. It operates through the articulation of rhetorical means (i.e., overlapping genres that dissolve “truth”) and visual elements (i.e., repulsive images provoking moral shock).

This research is based on the video published by The Guardian on its YouTube channel on September 16, 2025, under the title “‘Our Genocide’: How do Israelis feel about the war in Gaza.” In the video journalist Mathew Cassel strolls along the beaches of Tel-Aviv, asking various Israelis their opinions about the war in Gaza. The first part of our analysis focuses on the narrative and visual elements of the video recounted by the journalist showing the opinion of common people in Tel-Aviv. The second part focuses on users’ comments about the video (> 8K). A quantitative analysis of the comments was conducted using AI, followed by a qualitative analysis focused on the prevailing themes. This multimodal study of both the video and the comments leads us to discuss the implications of this “grotesque transparency” dialectic representation of the so-called truth about the Israelis’ views vis-à-vis the conflict in Gaza.

## **Bio**

Professor, Department of communication, University of Ottawa

# **Logical Fallacies in Editing and the Rhetorical Dynamics of Academic Publishing**

Tommy Mayberry<sup>1</sup>, Kim Hong Nguyen<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

This paper clocks logical fallacies at play in the relationship dynamics between scholars in writerly positions and scholars in supervisory/editorial positions via the material logics of academic gatekeeping and white feminism. Our work comes together along a trajectory of rhetorical practice and relational pedagogy, both of us authors having experienced gatekeeping in the academic publishing industry and in dissertation development. Outlining four key logical fallacies as culprits in academic gatekeeping - Angelism; Gaslighting; Scapegoating; and Venting - and critically and caringly mapping them onto anti-oppressive strategies for increased human relationality between those-who-write and those-who-edit, we intend to demonstrate and embody gatebreaking practices as epitomic of relational accountability (Wilson) and engaged pedagogy (hooks). For instance, the Angelism fallacy in academic gatekeeping positions editing as above human intent and as immune to criticism, as innocent feedback that does not have bad intent, as objective and not motivated by personal interest; and the Scapegoating fallacy allows for editing that makes one blame a historical group for present day circumstances so as to exclude oneself from responsibility. When those with rhetorical power and privilege over writers re-position themselves out of these fallacious traps, we argue, editing responsibility becomes empathetic responsiveness, and the writer’s perspective as personal experience becomes valued as vulnerable rather than flawed and a site of potential communality rather

than a site of reformation. One of the immediate impacts of this work for rhet/comp folx in Canada is a re-application of logical fallacies in our academic lives as well as a critical re-examination of the rhetorical dynamics in academic relationships by engaging in what could be seen as ad hominem arguments against white feminist scholars(hip) and against old-guard cisheteropatriarchy and -paternalism in the academy.

## Bio

Tommy Mayberry (he/she/they) is the founding Director of the Centre for Teaching Excellence and Innovation at Yorkville University and Toronto Film School. Tommy is co-editor (with Lindsay Bryde) of the award-winning book, "RuPedagogies of Realness: Essays on Teaching and Learning with RuPaul's Drag Race" (McFarland 2022) - and currently has an equity and justice focused follow-up "shequel" edition in the works, too! - and Tommy is also a recipient of the University of Waterloo's Award for Exceptional Teaching (2015) as well as of the 2024 CCCC Lavender Rhetorics Award for Excellence in Queer Scholarship.

Kim Hong Nguyen (she/they) is a Communication Arts and Gender Social Justice scholar at the University of Waterloo. Nguyen's most recent monograph "Mean Girl Feminism: How White Feminists Gaslight, Gatekeep, and Girlboss" won the 2024 Outstanding Book Award from the Organization on the Study of Communication Language and Gender and the Choice Outstanding Academic Title, and has been featured in "Jezebel" and "Ms. Magazine."

## When trust becomes technical: the persuasive power of "Trustworthy by Design"

Paula Nunez de Villavicencio<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

*Trustworthy by Design* (TbD) has emerged as a novel framework in contemporary AI governance, circulating across policy documents, academic scholarship, technical standards, and corporate strategy as a persuasive response to the social and ethical challenges of emerging technologies. Within TbD discourse, "trust" is framed not as a relational or political condition but as a quality that can be engineered into systems through design choices, architectures, and metrics. This paper argues that TbD functions less as a neutral governance tool than as a powerful rhetorical formation that reshapes how responsibility, authority, and accountability are articulated in relation to AI.

Drawing on rhetorical analysis informed by media studies, the paper develops a media genealogy of Trustworthy by Design. It traces TbD's emergence through earlier "by design" frameworks—including Security by Design, Privacy by Design, and corporate Trustworthy Computing initiatives—showing how these discourses cultivated the belief that trust could be stabilized through technical form. Through close readings of policy texts, design toolkits, standards frameworks, and institutional rhetoric, the paper demonstrates how TbD reframes structural questions of power, risk, and democratic oversight as matters of technical implementation and expert judgment. In doing so, it elevates engineers and designers as the primary arbiters of "trustworthiness" while sidelining alternative modes of governance. To foreground what is at stake rhetorically, the paper juxtaposes TbD with an earlier episteme of trust and authority: the reorganization of engineering expertise in Canada following the collapse of the Pont de Québec in the early twentieth century which developed a regime of appropriate trust.

By positioning TbD as a rhetorical project, this paper contributes to scholarship on governance, expertise, and technological power, and calls attention to whose values, risks, and forms of accountability are authorized when trust is framed as a design problem rather than a democratic one. *This presentation is submitted as part of the panel “Rhetorical Construction(s) of AI.”*

## Bio

Paula is a Provost’s Interdisciplinary Postdoctoral research fellow in Engineering and English here at the University of Waterloo. She is working for the Trust in Research Undertaken for Science and Technology Network, and her work focuses on historical, political, and material dimensions of media technologies used in governance, surveillance, and shaping of human conduct.

## Posthuman Ethos: Rethinking “A Good Man Speaking Well” in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Olagbenro Oladipo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wayne State University

An ideal orator (or writer, as the case may be) is, according to Quintilian, “a good man speaking well” (*Institutio Oratoria*). There are two key elements to this definition. The first element is “good man,” which implies virtue—probity, in short. The second part is “well,” which implies excellence. Various criticisms have been made of Quintilian’s definition (for instance, see Kerr 2002 and Kreschbaum 2014). For one, “oratory” should not always imply the ability to speak; one may be eloquent in, say, sign language and still communicate well. In addition, the notions of “good” and “well” are relative. This presentation is a philosophical meditation on the notion of the ideal orator in a post-human age. What does ideal oratory mean in the age of artificial intelligence? How are advancements in artificial intelligence shaping what it means to be an orator and a teacher of oratory? What does it take to be “good” and “well” in an age when almost every form of communication is undertaken with an “algorithmic audience,” to echo Gallagher (2017), in mind? This presentation concludes that, according to Quintilian, goodness is anchored in moral character. However, when invention and even ethical framing are co-produced by algorithmic systems and opaque, collective sources, moral evaluation can no longer rest securely on individual authorship or intention alone. “Good,” in this context, becomes relative and machine-mediated. In essence, I argue that the good man, as we know it, is dead.

## Bio

Dr. Oladipo is an Assistant Professor of English and a Mellon Scholar at Wayne State University and the Detroit Center for Black Studies, respectively.

## The “Digital Umbilical Cord” and Its Discontents: Epistemic Friction and the Struggle for Civil Solidarity Among Chinese Newcomers in Ontario

Yan Qiu<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

For the approximately 240,000 Chinese newcomers arriving in Canada since 2016, digital platforms such as Douyin (the Chinese progenitor of TikTok) and RedNote (a popular Chinese lifestyle-sharing platform similar to Instagram) function as a “digital umbilical cord,” sustaining vital ties to their homeland. However, arriving without reliable local reference points, newcomers often mistake algorithmically curated content for authentic reality. Driven by a profit-maximizing “traffic logic,” these opaque algorithms curate a mediated environment that systematically reshapes newcomers' perception of Canadian society.

Drawing on a sociological perspective, this research investigates a critical paradox: how social media platforms may inadvertently reinforce cultural segregation and generate “epistemic friction.” This friction not only interferes with objective perception but also challenges the concept of “civil solidarity”, a shared sense of belonging based on moral ties, as conceptualized by Jeffrey Alexander. Methodologically, this study employs a mixed-methods approach: using algorithmic auditing to map systemic biases, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to deconstruct how these narratives shape user perception. Preliminary findings suggest that these algorithms function as non-human “rhetors,” persuading users through sensationalized narratives that erode trust in host-country institutions. By interrogating the rhetorical agency of algorithms, this study bridges the gap between technical infrastructure and social meaning-making. Ultimately, this research discusses the systemic barriers to building public trust and a functioning multicultural democracy in an algorithmically mediated age.

## Bio

Yan Qiu (she/her) is a first-year PhD student in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. Her research interests lie at the intersection of digital sociology, cultural sociology, and migration, with a particular focus on platformed communication, AI, and institutional trust. Her current work examines how recommendation-driven transnational Chinese social media platforms shape newcomers' first encounters with Canadian public institutions. At this conference, she will share work on how platformed narratives reorganize the conditions of trust and mutual understanding in the digital age.

## Métis Strategies: Learning from the Self-Accommodations of Disabled Student Writers

Rachel Roy<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Mercy University

For students with disabilities, securing university accommodations is rarely an easy or straightforward process. Further, many accommodations are not directly applicable to writing classrooms, such as time and a half on exams. Without clear, university-sanctioned ways to accommodate in writing courses, many disabled students strategize and self-accommodate. I argue that these self-accommodations are examples of *métis*. Drawing on Caravella's definition of *métis* as “deliberate rhetorical response to particular rhetorical situations based on previous embodied dispositions” (Caravella), both students' choice to self-accommodate and their approach to writing using available and invented tools demonstrate a *métic* intelligence that can in turn inform rhetoric and writing pedagogy.

The concept of *métis* has historically been associated with cunning and adaptability (Detienne and Vernant 13-14). Building on Detienne and Vernant's definition of *métis* as a “particular type of intelligence” (11), Dolmage, in *Disability Rhetoric*, argues that *métis* is embodied and generative, and he places *métis* at the center of disability rhetoric. Dolmage ultimately argues that “*métis* [is] not just...an interesting idea from the past, but...the rhetoric that best empowers

bodily difference now” (8). Using a corpus gathered from an IRB-approved study of focus groups and interviews with students with disabilities, in this presentation, I will illustrate how students approach writing with *mêtis* strategies. Then, taking up Dolmage’s view of *mêtis* as empowering, I further argue that disabled students’ *mêtis* strategies highlight the generative nature of both *mêtis* and disability. By understanding disabled students’ self-accommodations as expressions of *mêtis*, rhetoric and writing studies scholars can continue to expand our definition of *mêtis* beyond simple cunning, while also valuing and making space for *mêtis* in the writing classroom.

## Bio

Rachel Roy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Literature and Languages at Mercy University. Her research focuses on rhetorics of disability and accessibility, feminist rhetorics, and the accessibility of college writing classes.

# Chronic Pain Self-Management as Neuroliberal Rhetorical Practice

Philippa Spoel<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Laurentian University

What are the intersections between rhetoric and chronic pain self-management programs? I wish to explore this question by approaching contemporary chronic pain self-management guidelines as promoting a kind of neuroliberal rhetorical practice. As Lindsay et al. (2021) explain, neuroliberalism is directed at “shaping the thoughts, feelings, and behaviours of individuals and populations to promote desired psychological states and conduct.” In Canada and elsewhere, programs developed to help people manage chronic pain typically foreground forms of psychological governance such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Mindfulness. Because these psychological interventions aim to mold people’s thoughts, emotions, and actions toward pain (rather than treating pain directly), they can be seen as manifesting a neuroliberal approach to the constitution of health subjects. Building on my prior work on how self-management guidelines for chronic pain conditions exhort patients to be rhetorically adept in their communication with *others*, this paper considers the value of thinking about self-management techniques such as CBT and mindfulness as *self* (rather than other) oriented rhetorical practices; that is, as forms of “internal rhetoric” (Nienkamp, 2001) that people experiencing chronic pain are instructed to use to *persuade themselves* to think/feel/act more “positively” or “appropriately” in relation to their pain (i.e. in ways that are socially acceptable or “decorous” in a rhetorical sense). However, rather than seeing these practices as fostering meaningful forms of rhetorical agency, I argue that they function as normative techniques of governmentality directed at the shaping of a rhetorically-enterprising, self-regulated neuroliberal health subject. For rhetorical studies of health and disability, my exploration suggests that the rhetorical ability to self-manage chronic pain through techniques of psychological governance ultimately enacts a kind of rhetorical dis-ability (Johnson, 2010; Selznick, 2017) in that it constrains permissible ways of communicating (about) pain, not only with others but with oneself.

## Bio

Philippa Spoel (she/her); I’m a professor in the School of Liberal Arts at Laurentian University and Coordinator of the English Literature, Media, and Writing Program. I also teach in

Laurentian's Masters of Science Communication program. My research focuses on rhetorical criticism of public health, science, and environmental communication.

## **Kneeling in Worship: The Role of the Body in Experiencing Faith**

Sigrid Streit<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Detroit Mercy

Religious expressions are often of a physical and embodied nature. Faithful stand, sit, kneel, dance, prostrate, raise their arms/hands or bow down in worship. Yet, scholars of religion, almost singularly, focus on “the mind [as] the locus of religiousness” (Soliman, Johnson, & Song, 2015, p. 853). In response, since the 1990s, a group of scholars, among them McGuire (e.g., 1990, 2006), Belzen (1999), Soliman, Johnson, and Song (2015), and Nikkel (2019) have called for more attention to the human body and its role in people's religious and spiritual experiences and expressions. I believe that the field of rhetoric can contribute to these efforts.

As part of a larger monograph project that focuses on kneeling as rhetorical gesture, I explore kneeling in worship. Gestures, from a rhetorical perspective, belong to the canon of delivery. Contrary to traditional understandings of delivery that considered gesture as merely ornamental (e.g., Aristotle, Quintilian, Cicero, Bulwer, Sheridan), recent scholars in Gesture Studies (e.g., Kendon, McNeill, Goldin-Meadow) acknowledge that gesture is crucial to human communication and, therefore, argument.

My presentation traces the changing history and rhetorical function of kneeling in worship. Oldest examples show the Egyptian deity Anubis kneeling during burial rites (c. 3150-2890 BC). During the Renaissance (especially 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century), wealthy patrons commissioned paintings depicting Christian iconography, often showcasing faithful kneeling in adoration. The art allowed secular patrons to demonstrate their wealth as well as their piousness. Not uncommon was the inclusion of the kneeling patron in the painting. Despite the Western bias of religiousness being seated in the mind, throughout history, examples abound of faithful kneeling in worship. More recently, Vatican II, 1962-1965, introduced changes to bodily deportment during Mass. Catholics across the United States are still objecting to kneeling less. Clearly, the moving body is a way of experiencing and knowing.

I hope that by providing a historically situated reading of kneeling and a fresh perspective on delivery, my study helps build stronger relationships between disciplines, offering researchers a shared language and perspective.

### **Bio**

Sigrid Streit is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Detroit Mercy. Her research and teaching interests include the relationship of knowledge to embodied practices and teaching and learning in multimodal settings. Her presentation explores kneeling in worship as part of a larger monograph project that focuses on kneeling as a rhetorical gesture.

## **Citation Politics: Trans Rights and the Genre of the Amicus Brief**

Katja Thieme<sup>1</sup>, Arnav Agarwal<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of British Columbia

In *Merchants of Doubt*, Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway analyze the rhetorical strategies of politically conservative scientists who publicly campaigned to oppose scientific consensus on acid rain, smoking, and climate change (Oreskes & Conway, 2010). They highlight how well-established research can be doubted to great public effect by a small number of researchers with support from well-resourced, reactionary think tanks. This dynamic carries over into current anti-trans campaigns (Billard, 2023; Wuest & Last, 2024). Misinformation and disinformation have become a “defining feature of public discourse on transgender rights” and their committed propagation has wide-ranging, negative effects on trans lives (Billard, 2023, p. 235). The recent case of *U.S. v. Skrametti* is an instance where misinformation about health and medicine has been mobilized in the service of oppressive legislation (Billard, 2024, p. 349). The genre of the amicus brief serves as a prolific vehicle for delivering such misinformation into the court’s record (Coldwater, 2023; DeMatteo & Wiltsie, 2023; Kearney & Merrill, 2000).

Misinformation campaigns draw on the resources of rhetorical communities and reproduce them (or some of them) in order to create their preferred discourse environments (Mehlenbacher & Mehlenbacher, 2025). Forms of citation are key genre signals in legal submissions, including in amicus briefs (Giltrow, 2008; Hart-Davidson & Omizo, 2017; Makmillen & Fee, 2017; Soh & Goh, 2022). Rhetorical genre studies assert that habits of citation differ between genres and situations—even if their formal expressions may look the same—such that closer analysis is needed to reveal use of citation for the purposes of political positioning (Harwood, 2008; Thieme & Saunders, 2018). This project presents a rhetorical analysis of patterns of citation in the 83 amicus briefs that were submitted to *U.S. v. Skrametti*. It asks, how is citation, as a typical genre element of amicus briefs, employed differently in service of pro-trans and anti-trans positions?

## Bio

Katja Thieme (she/they) studies and teaches research writing and writing pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. With a focus on disciplinarity, pragmatics, and social justice, she investigates how stylistic features of public and research genres are mobilized in processes of cultural and political change. Her scholarship of teaching and learning is informed by pragmatic analysis and genre-based pedagogy, advancing conceptual analysis and practical decision-making towards inclusive writing instruction.

Arnav Agarwal (he/him) is a biology student minoring in writing and communication at the University of British Columbia. His work primarily focuses on research and data analysis. At the Avilés Laboratory he investigated how the relationship between spider web size and spider body size changes across various elevational gradients. He is currently a co-op student at BC Cancer where he works with pediatric cancer cells.

## “Shut Up and Calculate!” and the Rhetoric of the Heisenberg Cut

Fiona Thompson<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

When asked which of the many interpretations of quantum mechanics they subscribe to, one answer reigns supreme among experimental quantum scientists: the Copenhagen, or “orthodox”, interpretation. Generally, its adherents believe that quantum objects’ physical properties are described by probabilistic wave functions that “collapse” into definite states when observed or measured. Denigrators of the Copenhagen interpretation often characterize it as

less of a philosophical position and more as a lack thereof; the orthodox response to ontological issues raised by quantum mechanics is to “shut up and calculate!” (Mermin). While philosophy-agnostic experimentalists might aspire to a form of scientific “bracketing” (*epoché*) (Husserl), ignoring problems of interpretation in service of objectivity, this talk argues that adherence to the Copenhagen interpretation necessarily informs the experimental process - even when questions of interpretation are not explicitly taken into consideration. In particular, subscribing to the Copenhagen interpretation forces the experimentalist to enact an *agential cut* (Barad): “a separation between subject and object” (333-4), between quantum and classical, and between the objective and subjective. Crucially, the location of this cut is almost arbitrary under the Copenhagen interpretation (von Neumann), allowing the experimentalist to choose its position to suit their experimental goals. The concept of the cut thus performs a dual rhetorical role as both sword and shield in the tournament of interpretations; its mutable nature may be paradoxically used to justify the Copenhagen interpretation’s validity *and* its irrelevance to experiments. As a case study, this talk analyzes advancements in positive operator-valued measurements (e.g., Clarke et al.), extending rhetorical analyses of the early debates in quantum mechanics (Barad; Beller; Heilbron) to a contemporary context. This research suggests that pure instrumentalism in quantum science is illusory and calls for a more rigorous analysis of the theory-ladenness of experimental quantum science.

## Bio

Fiona Thompson (she/her) is a PhD student in English at the University of Waterloo. She came to rhetoric by way of her experimental research in chemistry at the Institute for Quantum Computing, where she now works as a scientific outreach officer.

## Fourteen Hearts: Procedural Rhetoric, Identification, and Marriage Ludology in Stardew Valley

Kacie Timmerman<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cape Breton University

Cozy games are far from underrepresented in procedural rhetoric analyses - the genre’s popularity and explicit labour ludology appeal to scholars as exemplary of rule-based persuasion. Kevin Rutherford (2020), Laura Op De Beke (2021), and even Ian Bogost (2008) ascribe persuasive processes to cozy games like ConcernedApe’s *Stardew Valley* (2016) because these games ostensibly employ unique, calculated messaging; these scholars suppose that *Stardew Valley* trades the gratuitous violence (Van Ooijen) and indifference to realism (Seiffert and Nothhaft) of typical video games with the meaningful rhetorical strategies of persuasive games. Of course, *Stardew Valley* employs operative persuasion, but so does every other video game. Scholarship about *Stardew Valley*, then, epitomizes a tension between rhetorical definitions in gaming and discourse studies: while procedural rhetoricians like Ian Bogost posit that video games can exist without rule-based persuasion, rhetoricians like Kenneth Burke would argue that meaning cannot exist without rhetoric. This paper will reconcile both approaches, claiming that procedural rhetoric is inherently encoded in video games through participatory identification. More broadly, I will argue for greater scholarly emphasis on how - not just where - rule-based persuasion is evoked by translating Burke’s identification to procedural rhetoric. To accomplish this, I will analyze the oft neglected marriage mechanics in ConcernedApe’s *Stardew Valley*, problematizing the impulse to characterize persuasive processes solely through content. Drawing from Kenneth Burke’s *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1945), this paper treats players’ participation in developers’ narratives, persuasive strategies, and

messaging as an exaggerated identification that obscures the division between rhetor and audience. For *Stardew Valley*, identification literally embodies a mystified courtship where the audience's simulated dating veils the rhetor who codes that same simulation. Overall, this project has a dual purpose: to broaden where we describe rule-based persuasion and narrow how we define procedural rhetoric strategies. I maintain that broadening the scope of ludic strategies considered for procedural scholarship opens avenues to specify the form's rhetorical operations.

### **Bio**

Kacie Timmerman (they/them) is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature at Cape Breton University, broadly studying literary theory, horror, and postmodern forms. They are most interested in procedural rhetoric - particularly to observe the formal and persuasive properties of horror video games.

## **Voices in the Text: Paralanguage and Entextualization in Nineteenth-Century Canadian and Métis Political Discourse**

Blaze Welling<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Waterloo

This paper examines how entextualization, the process of transforming oral discourse into text (Cavanaugh), interacts with paralanguage (Trager; Johar) in the transcription of Canadian and Métis political discourse from 1870. Conventional views have assumed that the physical dimensions of a speech, such as its delivery (Quintilian et al.) and orality, are erased through decontextualization, leaving only the written word as the authoritative record. I argue against these conventional views and instead suggest that paralinguistic markers such as “(cheers),” “(laughter)” and “(hear, hear)” embedded parenthetically in historical transcripts of the 1870 House of Commons First Parliament and Métis Nation Provisional Government Convention of Forty (Hall) reveal that the physical dimensions, namely the oral, persists within the written form. These features do not merely annotate speech; they actively shape interpretation, signalling tone, audience engagement, and rhetorical force. By analyzing these debates and addresses within their rhetorical situation, this study demonstrates that entextualization does not erase orality but reconfigures it, allowing oral performance to circulate in new contexts while retaining traces of its embodied character. While this work inevitably draws on Eurocolonial theories of discourse analysis, it is equally informed by Indigenous epistemologies that affirm orality as a vital mode of knowledge-making and sharing (Maracle; Bauer Jr.; Weir). As a settler scholar, my aim is not to restate concepts long articulated by Indigenous communities, but to acknowledge these intellectual traditions and consider how they challenge dominant assumptions about textual authority and rhetorical presence.

### **Bio**

Blaze Welling (she/her) is a Ph.D. candidate in English Language and Literature at the University of Waterloo. Blaze's research focuses on the entanglement of rhetoric, technology, and colonial power in shaping Canadian and Indigenous identities during the nineteenth century. Her dissertation project will consider these entanglements within the broader structures of settler colonialism, showing how technologies of communication and transportation simultaneously enabled Canadian expansion and constrained Métis sovereignty. As a settler scholar, she maintains a respectful and considerate methodology, deeply committed to using her privilege to uplift Indigenous voices.

# Publics and Exceptionalist Publics: The Westboro Baptist Church and "Thank God for Dead Soldiers"

Michelle Wilk<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Oklahoma

Ever since Jurgen Habermas published his description of the public sphere, scholars have complicated this description. Nancy Fraser and Michael Warner focus on subaltern groups and how those groups aim to change the public sphere (Fraser; Warner). Michael Warner calls these groups "counterpublics" (Warner 80). Given the shifting nature of public discourse, concerns have arisen about the possible categorization of fringe right-wing groups as "counterpublic." Sarah Jackson and Daniel Kreiss argue that right-wing groups are distinct enough from subaltern counterpublics to be classified as "defensive publics" rather than counterpublics (Jackson and Kreiss 102-103). They claim that since right-wing groups "seek to preserve the ordering of systems of inequality," they ought to be characteristically distinct from subaltern counterpublics (Jackson and Kreiss 103). However, each of these categories presupposes active participation in the public sphere for the purposes of constructing/reconstructing the status quo. I propose an additional category of public worthy of study: exceptionalist publics. These groups participate in public spaces but have no desire to circulate their discourse into any public sphere. I use Westboro Baptist Church's protest series "Thank God for Dead Soldiers" as an example of this exceptionalist public and to argue that exceptionalist publics have the potential to increase discord within an already fraught public sphere. Identifying exceptionalist publics can allow us to better direct our rhetorical energy while still acknowledging the exceptionalist group's participation in the public sphere.

## Bio

Michelle Wilk (she/they) is a PhD student at the University of Oklahoma. Her primary interest is interrogating the question: what is the rhetorical line between workplace accidents and environmental disasters? For her dissertation, she is examining multiple workplace accidents with potential and actual significant environmental consequences to critically evaluate additional connections between corporations and climate change. Michelle's other interests include exploring issues that affect her home state of Kansas, including Kansas's national and international reputation. She has a bachelor's in English Education from Emporia State University and a master's in English from Colorado State University. She can be reached at wilkm@ou.edu.

## Autism, Bleach, and Constitutive Rhetoric

M. Remi Yergeau<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Carleton University

In 2005, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. penned the now-infamous "Deadly Immunity" in *Salon* magazine. Linking increases in autism diagnoses to vaccines, Kennedy's piece argued that the U.S. government was engaged in a mass cover-up about autism's supposed causes. Roughly a decade after publishing "Deadly Immunity," Kennedy joined forces with Children's Health Defense (CHD), an anti-vaccination organization, and in 2025 he was confirmed as the secretary of U.S. Health and Human Services, a role through which he has already dismantled years of public health policy concerning autism (Broderick, 2026).

In this presentation, I am less concerned with Kennedy's anti-vaccination rhetoric than I am with another, thornier set of autism relations: the company that Kennedy and his former CHD colleagues keep with bleach apologists—i.e., those who believe that bleach can cure innumerable health conditions (see Humble, 2019; Kory & McCarthy, 2026). These apologists peddle a product variously known as chlorine dioxide and Miracle Mineral Solution, an industrial bleaching agent that can cause organ failure when ingested (Health Canada, 2023). Bleach boasts a disturbing history in autism communities, where it has been frighteningly proffered as a “natural” means of treating autism (see Rivera, 2014). In this talk, I consider bleach as a constitutive rhetorical force in which 1) autistic people are continually (re)constituted as victims of traditional medicine and 2) bleachers are constituted as patriotic heroes risking it all to save the abject from a future fate (Charland, 1987). As Julie H. Crowe (2022) notes, interpellation and persuasion happen simultaneously in public health arguments, which frequently imagine subjects in terms of who we are not and “who we could be” (p. 422). Bleach rhetorics, I suggest, reframe autism along divergent narrative timescales, constituting autistic subjects, variously, as *unrecovered* and *in recovery*, but never *fully recoverable*. In these formulations, bleach provides a promise of normalcy that can only be met with more bleach.

## **Bio**

M. Remi Yergeau (they/them/theirs) is a Canada Research Chair in Critical Disability Studies and Communication at Carleton University.

# EVENTS

## BANQUET DINNER, BAUER KITCHEN

To continue the festivities of the conference, we are hosting a banquet dinner at Bauer Kitchen on **Wednesday, May 27th at 7:00 PM.**

The Bauer Kitchen has an excellent variety of chef-curated seasonal dishes and elevated comfort foods.

The Bauer Kitchen is located at **187 King St S #102, Waterloo.** Transiting to Bauer via the ION is a 7 minute-ride from Davis Center (University Of Waterloo Station – Southbound) to Allen Station.

*This event requires an RSVP in advance.*

## THE MENNONITE STORY

Journey through Mennonite culture at The Mennonite Story (located at St. Jacobs). This private, hour-long tour will include time in a replica Old Order Mennonite meeting house followed by a Q&A period.

Event details: **Tuesday, May 26, at 7:30 PM.** Tickets will be \$6/person, paid on-site.

*This event requires an RSVP in advance.*

# HELPFUL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION

Registration, morning coffee, and all "Rhetoric, Discourse, and Writing Today" presentations will take place in SJ2, the "Academic Center." Lunches will be in the Servery (cafeteria) in the Douglas R. Letson Community Center (adjacent building).

## FOOD

All-you-care-to-eat lunches will be provided to registered conference participants in the SJU cafeteria on all days of the conference except Friday, May 29th, when we are holding no events at SJU. Registrants who are also registered to attend Rhetoricon will be provided food at the event.

If you prefer a change of scene, there are several options within walking distance of SJU, including:

- Graduate House (GH), on UW Campus, a 450 metre walk from SJU
- Brubakers Food Court, in the UW Student Life Centre (SLC), a 400 metre walk from SJU
- Numerous takeout food outlets in surrounding plazas, a 1-km walk from SJU

## TRANSPORTATION

Getting around Waterloo is easy. The ION rapid transit system takes you around the city (and in front of UW Campus) quite seamlessly. Single ticket fares are \$4.00 CAD.

Fares purchased using the GRT Pay App or EasyGO Card is \$3.00.

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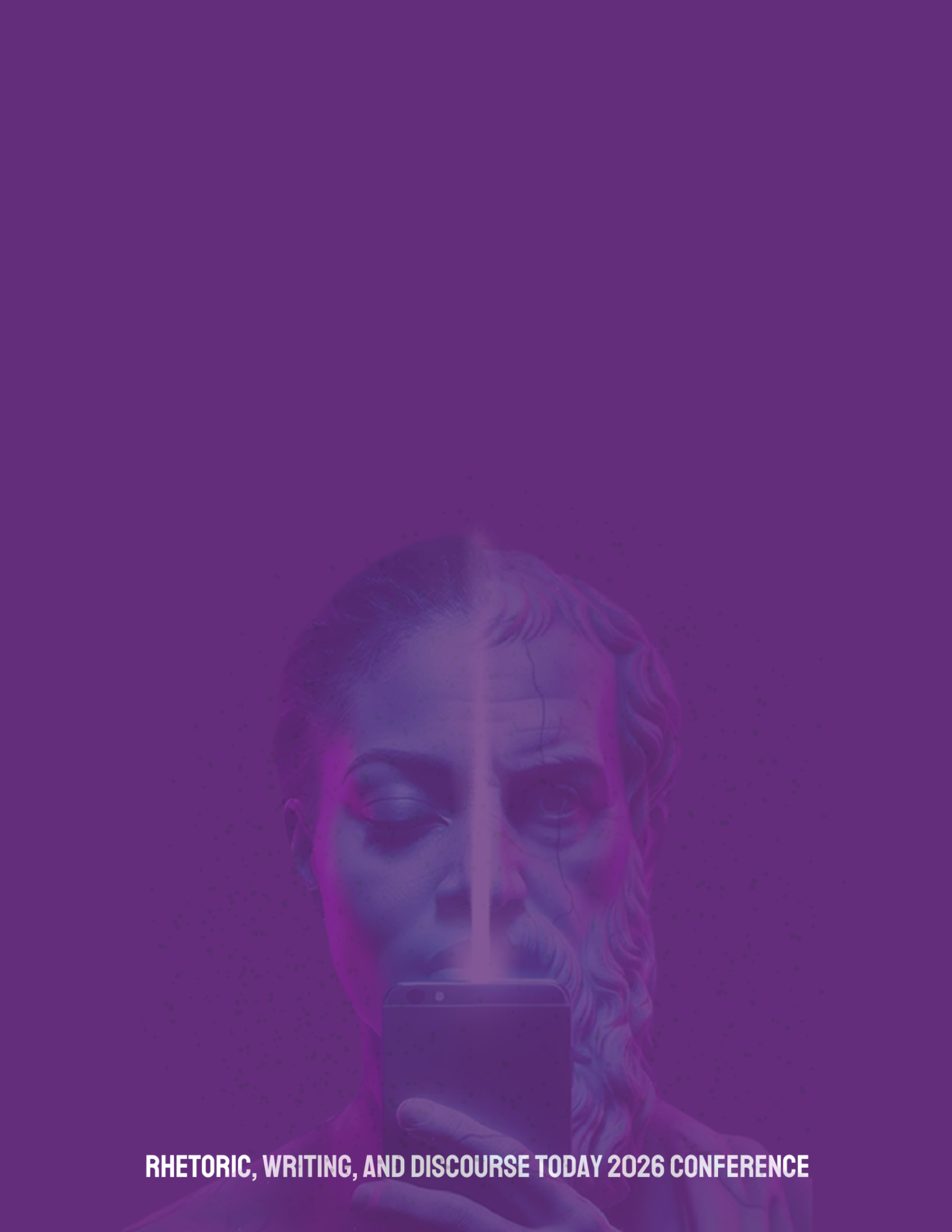


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The image is a vertical composition. The top half features a classical marble statue of a woman's head, likely a personification of Liberty or Justice, with long, wavy hair. The bottom half features a modern woman's face, looking down at a smartphone held in her hands. The two faces are superimposed, with the modern face appearing in the foreground. A bright, vertical beam of light projects upwards from the smartphone's screen, passing through the mouth of the modern woman and the mouth of the statue, and extending towards the top of the frame. The background is a dark, textured surface with a pattern of small, light-colored dots, resembling a starry night sky or a digital data field. The overall color palette is dominated by dark blues, purples, and greys, with the bright light from the phone providing a strong contrast.

**RHETORIC, WRITING, AND DISCOURSE TODAY 2026 CONFERENCE**