

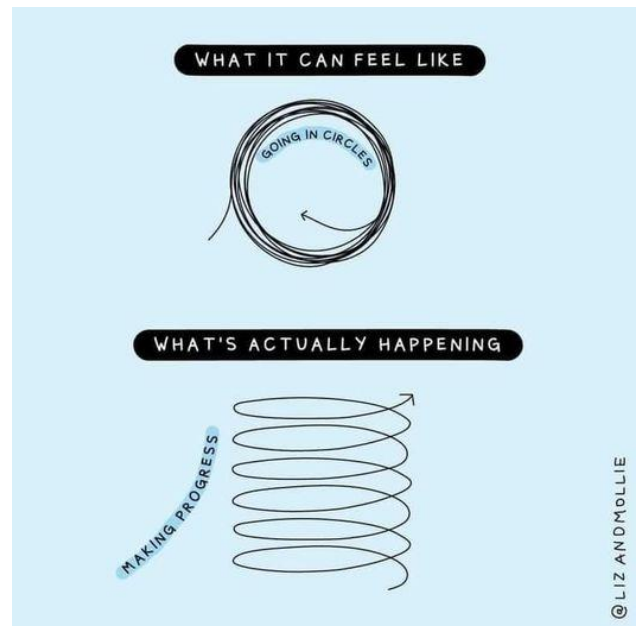
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## Writing 2: Writing in Circles

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:30-12:30  
on Zoom & by appt

Some office hours will also be held in  
person, outside. I'll let you know when!



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This will be the first in-person course I've taught since Winter 2020, and for many of you, this will be the first in-person, small course you've taken at UCSC. I'm really excited to be back in the classroom, and I'm also wondering how on earth this is going to work. Such are our lives during this pandemic and time of change; things are just as they were and completely not, and half the time, I feel like I'm just going in circles.

As a writing professor, my response is to step back and ask how we can understand and conceive what is happening through writing and language. With a little bit of patience, we can start to see that these circles are the recursive way that writing works, and that we're actually making progress, both in our writing and as humans.

Our class will begin by examining how metaphors frame our understandings of the pandemic. (Why are we "fighting" the pandemic, for example?) We'll then move into developing your academic research abilities, and hopefully, we'll reframe research as a joyful hike, rather than digging a deep ditch (metaphors again!). Finally, the last unit will draw on the idea of "holding two things at once," which is what we are all doing by proceeding with university work during a pandemic. You'll write two short pieces of creative nonfiction and then braid them together, holding their disparate truths in a single piece of writing.

Here are our core principles as a class:

- ⇒ Compassion: We all have a lot going on right now, and we need to be patient with ourselves and with each other.
- ⇒ Connection: We need to stay connected in the ways we can. Engage one of the many ways you can connect with course materials and with me: in-person, Zoom, Canvas Chat, email. I can't say this enough: if you're struggling, reach out. I may not have the solution, but I'll listen and we can figure something out.
- ⇒ Flexibility: Everyone is going to navigate this course a little differently, and that's okay. The key is keeping in touch.

## What Happens If...

- ➤ If you get Covid, focus on getting well. I have designed this class to include three distinct projects. While they build on each other to a degree, they can be completed out of order should you need to step out and be sick. We can decide if an incomplete is needed, etc.
- ➤ If I get Covid, I will do my best to teach the course remotely or asynchronously.
- ➤ If my son becomes sick with Covid, I will need to stay home to care for him, and our course will become remote during this period. Note that I have a child who is too young to be vaccinated (9 years old), and while all appropriate precautions are being taken, I am at higher risk for Covid exposure than someone who does not interact with an unvaccinated person.
- ➤ If there is a Covid exposure in our classroom, we will meet remotely on Zoom for 10 days.
- ➤ If you are exposed to Covid, you will need to quarantine for 10 days. During this time, I will make sure you can keep up and participate in class activities.
  
- ➤ If you are sick with something other than Covid, get tested and do not come to class.
- ➤ If I am sick with something other than Covid, I will teach the class remotely.
- ➤ If my son is sick with someone other than Covid, I will teach class remotely.
  
- ➤ If there is a strike, our class will be canceled or meet remotely, as I will not cross a picket line or ask others to do so.
  
- ➤ If there is a power outage ON campus, in-person class will be canceled and no remote class.
- ➤ If there is a power outage OFF campus, I will let you know about class plans via Canvas.
  
- ➤ If you are participating in meaningful protest, be in touch about making up missed work.
  
- ➤ If you are experiencing trauma (evacuation, death of a loved one, and...), we will find a way to make the class work for you. Be in touch.

*Given all these “ifs,” you should expect portions of this class to be held remotely, and it is crucial that you set-up your notifications (Canvas, email) so you are aware of last-minute changes in terms of how class will be held.*

## What You Will Learn

This course gives you the chance to reconnect with yourself as a writer, to think deeply about how language works, and to prepare for later courses at UCSC. There is no set of “academic essays” I can teach you to replicate later, as academic genres and expectations vary widely. This also isn’t a grammar course, as studies consistently show that the explicit teaching of grammar – such as worksheets, comma exercises, and the like – is ineffective (and super-boring).

Instead, this is a project-based course where each smaller activity and assignment prepares you to do the bigger projects. As I discuss in the coming pages, a big part of this class is coming to understand yourself as a writer, as this is what you will carry into your future writing. I also ask that you be open to writing in new ways and prepare to write, rewrite, and revise more than you have before. I’ll support you at each step, but you can’t succeed if you don’t *choose* to leave your comfort zone.

The objectives for this course, and all Writing 2 courses, are contained in the course outcomes for the UCSC Writing Program. I’ve added notes under each to clarify and expand. In Writing 2 you will:



1. *Compose in more than one genre by responding to rhetorical situations and genre conventions according to readers' expectations and writers' purposes.* You're not here to write five-paragraph essays and/or to just like you did in high school (or even like some college courses you've taken). Instead, you will write different kinds of papers and projects (not just the essay genre) that respond to different situations and topics.

2. *Ask questions and be guided by a strategic exploration of those questions in order to generate research topics and sustain meaningful inquiry.* Prior to college, student life is often about answering teachers' questions. Now you're shifting to developing and asking the questions that you're interested in, and how to ask meaningful questions that can be deeply researched ("inquiry") is something you'll learn through activities and discussions. Sometimes you'll answer the questions you pose, and sometimes those questions will just lead to new questions and/or be revised and rewritten as you research.

3. *Locate relevant source material, evaluate its credibility, and cite it appropriately.* You will learn how to use the library's databases and Google way better (as you won't have library access forever). This means deciding what material is relevant and credible (and we'll talk a lot about what these terms mean). Citation will be a little bit about "doing it right" (and avoiding plagiarism down the road), but will mostly be about how to be in conversation with the research you find.

4. *Analyze and synthesize ideas in source material to produce projects that interpret and evaluate their own ideas and assumptions, as well as those of other writers.* You'll learn to deeply analyze class texts and research materials and bring them into your own projects. This might mean summarizing the ideas of others, but because students are often already good at that, we'll focus on critiquing published work.

5. *Apply strategies when composing, revising, or evaluating their own work that enable them to follow conventions of professional English, such as arrangement, language use, mechanics, or documentation style.* This is a big one! This class is about reframing what you think you know about writing and resisting linguistic discrimination. So I'll be asking you to write and rewrite more than you ever have.

6. *Reflect critically on how to apply their processes for writing and analysis to writing projects in other contexts, within and outside the university.* I ask you to do this because lots of research shows that what you learn is much more likely to stay with you if you take the time to reflect on it.

## Our Work

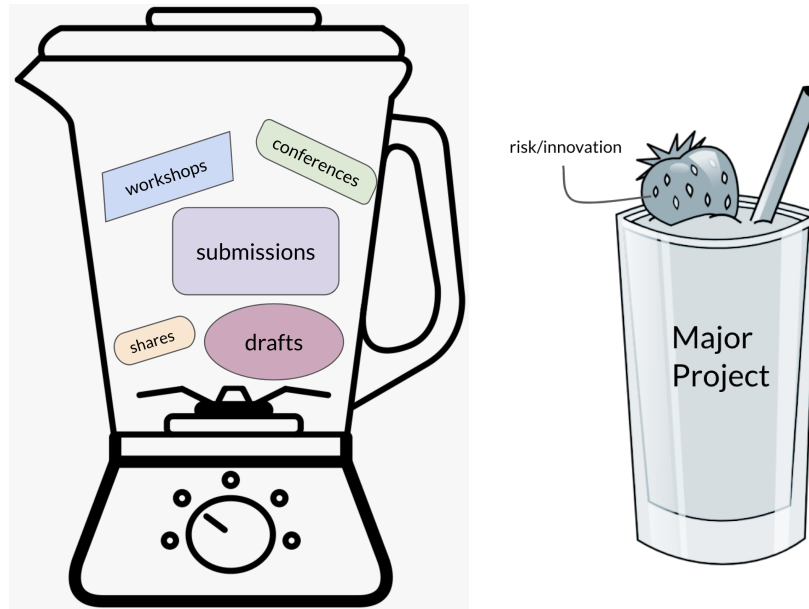
Here are the four major projects in our course:

1. **Rewriting the Pandemic:** This project asks you to write about the pandemic and then revise the underlying metaphor in your writing. By identifying and revising the metaphor, you'll develop a better sense of how arguments work.
2. **Annotated Bibliography:** This project dives deeply into academic research. Unlike annotated bibliographies you may have done in the past, this one asks you to make arguments and research relevant for your purposes. The project will cover the essential skills needed to write a research paper without making you write one, and we'll research with an understanding of ethical lapses in research (including the paywalling of academic research).
3. **Two Stories at Once:** This project requires you to develop two stories and braid them together. One focuses on a shared cultural experience and another is personal, and you will stitch them together. This project draws from principles of creative nonfiction and reflective storytelling, and this prepares you for the future writing you'll have to do about yourself (to explain why

you're qualified for jobs, to write a personal statement for further study, to write grant applications, and more).

4. **Metacognitive Project:** This is a final, reflective piece about your work in the course. I'll define it more clearly once I know you all better.

Each major project has a series of supporting assignments that “blend” together into the final project. Here's a metaphorical representation of how it works:



- Submissions prepare you to do the major projects. You'll receive feedback on each submission.
- Drafts are full versions of our four major projects.
- Workshops for each major project will occur in small groups.
- Conferences are required meetings with me where we discuss your writing.
- Shares are discussions on Canvas where you can see how other students are approaching our work.

## Grading

Traditional grading (such as assigning a B or C to a paper) tends to get in the way of student learning and discourage risk-taking and innovation. Traditional grading also perpetuates systemic biases, such as awarding lower grades to students of color. Equally important, traditional grading systems don't line up with what I know about the teaching and learning of writing (which is informed by a lot of scholarship), which is that becoming a better writer is about learning a process and getting out of your comfort zone, not mastering a product. So instead, this class uses contract grading.

**Contract grading stipulates a set of tasks to complete, and these are the tasks that will make you a better writer. If you satisfactorily complete the tasks, you earn a B in the course.** (By “satisfactorily complete,” I mean that you meet the expectations of each task, such as submitting 400 words if that is required, or providing meaningful feedback to a classmate and not just saying “good job”). For weaker writers, contract grading more clearly rewards all the work the course requires - and this is the work you need to do to improve as a writer, so the B is earned! For stronger writers, it pushes you to go further and really develop new skills, rather than leaning on previous knowledge.

As an instructor, contract grading lets me focus on honestly responding to your writing (without "justifying the grade") and building a relationship with you (which lower grades tend to crush). I've said for many years that grading is the worst part of teaching, but with contract grading, I don't feel that way anymore.



## THE LIST FOR A B GRADE

### Almost All Submissions (you may miss one)

*Submissions prepare you to do the major projects. You'll receive feedback on each submission.*

- Submission 1.1
- Submission 1.2
- Submission 1.3
- Submission 1.4
- Submission 2.1
- Submission 2.2
- Submission 2.3
- Submission 2.4
- Submission 3.1
- Submission 3.2
- Submission 3.3
- Submission 3.4
- Submission 4

### Almost All Shares/Discussions (you may miss one)

*Shares are discussions on Canvas where you can see how other students are approaching our work.*

- Share 1.1
- Share 1.2
- Share 1.3
- In Class - Share 2.1
- In Class - Share 3.1

### Drafts

*Drafts are full versions of our four major projects.*

- Rewriting the War
- Annotated Bibliography
- Two Stories at Once
- Metacognitive Assignment

### Final Assignments

- Rewriting the War
- Annotated Bibliography
- Two Stories at Once
- Metacognitive Assignment

### Workshops

- Rewriting the War
- Annotated Bibliography
- Two Stories at Once
- Metacognitive Assignment

### Conferences & Class

- Conference 1
- Conference 2
- Have no more than one *unexcused* absence



### IMPORTANT:

- You will receive a "complete" or "incomplete" for each item on The List.
- **To receive a "complete,"** your work must be submitted on time unless otherwise arranged *and* meet the expectations of the assignment (so if you needed to submit five sources you submitted five, etc.).
- **To keep track of your grade,** you can use the list above and/or track your grades in the Gradebook on Canvas. Everything in the Canvas Gradebook is on the List (and nothing else), so you can track your completes/incompletes there, though it won't calculate a grade for you.

- If you submit an assignment and receive an incomplete on a Submission, Draft, or Final, you may **resubmit within 48 hours of receiving the incomplete**. After that, the incomplete stands at my discretion.
- Workshops, Conferences, and Shares are time sensitive and **cannot be made up** unless arranged with me.

**If you don't meet the requirements on The List for a B grade**, your course grade will be a C+ or lower, and this includes receiving non-passing grades (C- or lower). (I suggest taking the course pass/no pass if you don't meet the List requirements.) My assessment for those who do not meet the requirements on The List will be based on my holistic appraisal of your writing in the course according to the Writing 2 course outcomes (see earlier in this syllabus), and whether I think you need to take the course again to be successful in future college writing. **That said**, I will automatically assign a D or F grade if you do not submit all Drafts and Final Assignments. (Cases of academic dishonesty will follow my plagiarism policy.) Further, any student who has more than four unexcused absences (20% of the course) will receive a D or F grade. To be clear, these are not the only ways to receive a non-passing grade in this course, but they are surefire ways!



#### To receive a grade higher than a B:

- You must meet all the criteria in The List for a B;
- You must arrange a meeting with me to discuss your plans to seek a grade higher than a B; and
- You must translate one of the two topics of your Annotated Bibliography into an engaging, researched project. Together we will determine its format and length, and it will be due at the time of the final.

I will assess your additional work and assign a B+, A-, or A. Note that grades above a B are reserved for superior work.

#### How We Meet, Submitting Your Work, and Canvas

This course meets twice a week, and work is due twice a week:

- **Monday at 11:59p, for class on Tuesday**
- **Wednesday at 11:59p, for class on Thursday**

I have assignments due the night before class so I can see what's been done before we meet. Please do not work more than a week ahead, as you'll want to get feedback on your work before moving on.



We'll do most everything on **Canvas**.

- To prepare for each class, open the Modules folder with the date of the class you are preparing for. Everything you need to read or complete is in that folder. You can also go to "Syllabus" for an overview if you like that kind of perspective.
- You can find documents for the class elsewhere on Canvas, such as under "Files" and "Assignments." But they'll just be in HUGE unorganized piles in those spaces, so I suggest you always navigate through Modules.
- For most things you submit, you are welcome to simply type in the text box and submit. I don't need your name, the class name, and all that - Canvas will tell me. For more formal assignments, you will need to upload a .doc or .pdf file.
- Despite my best efforts, sometimes I screw up on Canvas. Please ask questions and let me know if a link is broken or something isn't working! As a professor, there is nothing worse than



getting to class and realizing nobody did the reading because of a Canvas error and nobody told me. *Help a teacher out!*

## Our Writing Community

I find that most students have great ideas. But occasionally students get a little over-excited or are disrespectful, and this can be exacerbated in online contexts. If necessary, I'll refer to university policy on student conduct, but mostly, I'll contact you privately if an issue arises. Should you feel uncomfortable or unsafe in our course, please tell me immediately (during class or after). **There is NO room in this course for disparaging anyone in our class or engaging in hate speech.**

The majority of **plagiarism** happens because students are panicking. But if you're struggling with how to incorporate the ideas of others into your writing, or you're so stressed that you're considering taking someone's work and turning it in as your own, come talk to me and we'll figure it out. If I suspect that you have plagiarized, I'll begin with a private conversation with you. In many cases, we can figure out what went wrong and you can take another swing at it. In other cases, I will charge you with plagiarism and formally write you up, following UCSC's Academic Misconduct guidelines. I reserve the right to issue an F on the plagiarized assignment, and if I decide, an F in this course.



The most recent National Council of Education Statistics (NCES) report states that 19.4% of college students reported having a disability, and I am dedicated to creating accessible and inclusive environments for disabled people in my courses. I work to make this classroom as accessible as I can, but **I need your input about how you learn and how the class is working for you.** As someone with depression and anxiety, I know that sometimes you can identify a problem but not see a solution and that's okay - we can work together toward what works.

If you have a disability or think you have a disability and need accommodations to succeed in this course, I encourage you to contact the [Disability Resources Center \(DRC\)](#) and/or speak with me as soon as you can. (The DRC has moved and is located on the third floor of the Bay Street building, and at 831-459-2089, and at [drc@ucsc.edu](mailto:drc@ucsc.edu).) While I do not require that you have documentation from the DRC, I do recommend that you speak to them about what they can offer.

## Resources

- There are several [campus options for mental health support](#), and you are still paying for these with remote learning! Keep in mind that some are confidential and some are not. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has many great services, and try to get involved with an event or a group so you're in touch when you really need them.
- [The National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness](#) and [other sources](#) note that many (if not most) college students do not get enough to eat at some point in their college careers. There are many [food pantries on campus](#) if you are there, and feel free to talk to me as well.
- [Hate and bias incidents](#) can be reported to the Dean of Students. Again, keep in mind that most university staff are "mandated reporters," so ask about confidentiality up-front. (I'm also happy to talk more about this.)



- While our campus offers [early education/preschool](#), resources for students (and faculty/staff) with children or other dependents are lacking. Nursing mothers are welcome to bring their children to class.
- Go to the [Career Center](#) and take all their weird tests. And [get an internship](#).
- The [Lionel Cantu Queer Center](#) offers many resources.
- [The First Generation Initiative](#) seeks to create inclusive environments for first-generation students (of which there are many on our campus!). I am not a first-generation college student (my privilege in this respect is pretty large), but I'm happy to answer questions that seem "obvious" to other students.
- Our campus also has an [African American Resource and Cultural Center](#), an [American Indian Resource Center](#), an [Asian American/Pacific Islander Resource Center](#), and [El Centro: Chicano/Latino Resource Center](#).

Let's do this!

