



– NEWSLETTER FOR THE WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC) PROGRAM AT YORK COLLEGE –

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Welcome New WAC Fellows!

Sandra Moyano-Ariza

We have 6 WAC fellows for the academic year 2021-2022. In lieu of a physical introduction at York, here are their bios. Remember that they are available for consultation and can help you develop a successful WI syllabus or strategies for your class. If you're interested in working with a fellow, reach out to WAC Fellows Coordinator Matt Garley at mgarley@york.cuny.edu.



Sandra Moyano-Ariza is a doctoral candidate in English at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research works at the intersection of philosophy and digital technology, with a focus on dating apps and cultural representations of algorithmic love. She holds a BA in English and an MA in Comparative Literature from University of Barcelona, and an MA in Liberal Arts from The Graduate Center. She has taught at Queens College and Baruch College, CUNY.



Sai Ying Ng is a fifth-year PhD student with the Philosophy Department at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research is primarily focused on interpreting Plato's epistemology through the lens of 20th century philosophy of language, but she is also interested in broader questions at the intersection of philosophy of language, aesthetics, and ethics. Since graduating from Yale-NUS College in 2017 with a BA (Hons), she has been working on various projects that sees philosophy as pedagogy: We The People, a podcast on racial and social justice issues in the classroom, Socially Conscious Pedagogy

Focus Group with the CUNY GC Teaching and Learning Center, as well as Corrupt the Youth, a high school philosophy outreach program. She is also one of the Kripke Fellows at the Saul Kripke Center, and currently teaches at Queens College.



Brahim Rouabah is a PhD student in Political Science at the CUNY Grad Center and a teaching fellow in political science at Brooklyn College. His research focuses on issues related to decolonial theory, knowledge production, colonialism and the origins of capitalist property relations. His publications have appeared in various outlets including: the Review of African Political Economy, Middle East Law and Governance, The Frantz Fanon Foundation, Africa is a Country, Jadaliyyah and the HuffPost Maghreb among others.



Beth Sherman is a PhD candidate in English at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her research focuses on representations of female madness in popular Victorian fiction. She received an MFA in creative writing and an MA in English from Queens College, where she teaches in the English department. Her fiction, poetry and articles have appeared in numerous publications, including Dickens Studies Annual, James Joyce Quarterly, Newsday and The New York Times and is forthcoming in Modern Language Studies. She has also been nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net and has written five mystery novels.



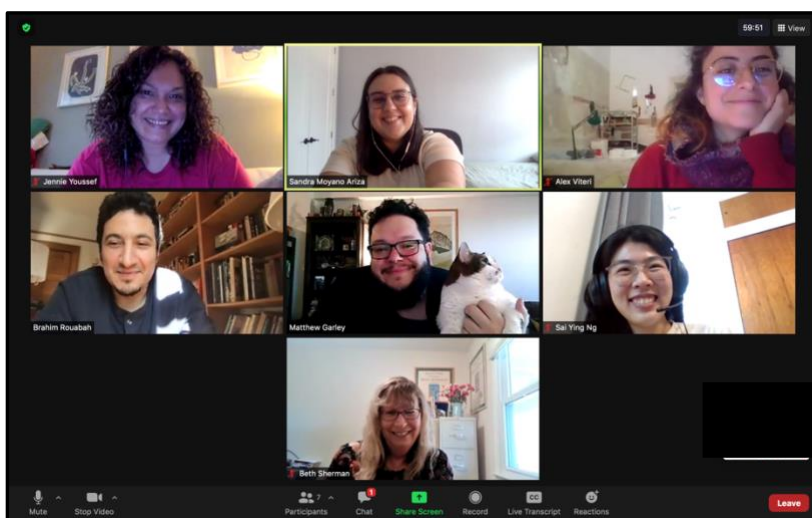
Alex Viteri is a South American performer and scholar based in Berlin. These days, working mostly at the threshold of the visual arts and performance. She is drawn to practices that consider aesthetic theories reflecting on nature and the environment, and is part of an ever-growing group of artists interested in considering sites, ecosystems, and nonhuman subjects as collaborators. Inspired by feminist decolonial activists and scholars, her academic research cares for Andean modes of knowledge and the sharing of brown affects. Alex is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in the Department of

Theatre & Performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Under this framework, she taught Theatre History at Hunter College 2019-2021.



Jennie Youssef is a Ph.D. candidate in Theatre and Performance at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Her interests include food, identity, and race in the early modern period, translation and adaptation, and new media. Her paper, “Zambra, Codes of Honor, and Moorish Dress: Transculturation in Calderón’s Love after Death,” received The Medieval and Renaissance Drama Society’s Alexandra Johnston Award in 2020 and will be published in the forthcoming issue of ROMARD. In 2017, she won the Renaissance Studies Graduate Student Essay Prize for “A Querelle of Queens: An Alternate Reading of

Antoine de Montchrestien’s *La Reine D’Escoce*.” Previous credits include: *Decadent Acts* at Dixon Place, *There Are No Camels in Beirut* (Reading), and *Radio COTE* with Co-Op Theatre East.



WAC Coordinator Matt Garley and WAC fellows in one of their biweekly Zoom meetings

How to Get the Most out of Online Writing Conferences

Beth Sherman

Before the pandemic, many professors who teach WAC courses met with their students in person to discuss how to improve their writing or address the many questions that arise while working on a college essay. But like so much else these days, writing conferences have shifted online. The WAC! newsletter asked four professors at York to discuss their experiences and strategies for holding online conferences. Here’s what they said.

Carly Gieseler, associate professor of Performing and Fine Arts, tries to be as flexible as possible when scheduling online writing conferences. “I offer time before and after class for questions and I set up random Zooms at different times and different days,” she notes.

Students are most likely to confer with Gieseler online when there is a writing assignment coming up. Previously, she would meet with students one-on-one during her office hours, while others waited on chairs in the hall. But these days, she prefers when five or six students join a communal Zoom meeting to discuss their writing.

“If there are general questions, everyone gets the benefit of that,” she says. “Sometimes you see all these lightbulbs go off. Everyone is dealing with how to pick a topic and how to structure their work.”

Marta Daly organizes her conferences a bit differently. Using Blackboard Collaborate, Daly, an assistant professor of Occupational Therapy, invites students who have questions about their writing into a different room after class, as opposed to using the common link the entire class has access to. With scheduled conferences, which tend to last between 15 and 30 minutes, she uses the waiting room on Zoom to ensure the privacy of students she is meeting with. “That way I can meet with people one on one. I know other people are logged in and I can send them notes in the waiting room.”

Daly makes sure to post the link to the conferences in several different places – on the course Blackboard site, in a series of emails to the class – so they know when she is available, and she writes about what they can expect to happen in the conference space. While concerns are similar to what they were when conferences were held face to face – summarizing and synthesizing information in research articles, the mechanics of grammar, learning the correct citation style – Daly says it is helpful to make sure students are reading her feedback before the conference begins. She also tells students to think of questions they have about their writing ahead of time, so the conference is more productive. Emailing her those questions in advance is encouraged. During the conference itself, she shares her screen with students and highlights each portion of the paper they want to discuss.

“We have a lot more opportunities to be available to students in an online setting,” Daly says. “But the most important message is to be present and let your students know you’re there for them, to create the same warm and inviting environment you did in the classroom.”

Deb Rowe, a doctoral lecturer in the English Department, says the majority of students who attend her on-line conferences do better on their papers because they are more invested in the process. During the virtual meetings, Rowe might ask students to identify their own thesis statements. Or suggest they read their papers aloud to her so they can recognize issues concerning grammar and flow in their work. Or discuss the best way to come up with effective search terms. Instead of writing copious notes in the margins of essays, Rowe prefers to give comments orally during conferences, which are held on Zoom, Blackboard Collaborate or Google Hangouts. “Students might look at the comments and not know what to do,” she notes. “Instead of waiting for me to point out their mistakes, I ask students to pick the top three things they could do to improve their paper.”

She adds that conferences are a great way to build relationships with her students at a time when online learning is often an isolating experience. “It sometimes turns into a discussion of why the student isn’t doing well in class. It can be therapeutic.”

Shereen Inayatulla, an associate professor in the English department, notes that in asynchronous classes, conferences are entirely optional. “The conference space has had to take on different modalities [during the pandemic],” she says. “It might happen over email, with a quick Q and A. I may have some follow-up questions making sure they understand the comments I’ve written on their papers. It becomes more of a dialogue.”

Indeed, Inayatulla maintains that the email format might even be preferable for some students. “Before, I might get a half-formed question in a [face-to-face] conference. Now, they have time to articulate their questions in an email. It gets them to think more deeply about their own writing.”

Rowe appreciates the flexibility online conferences afford. When classes were held in person, she used to have a “drop in whenever” policy but notes that 90% of the time, people did not take advantage of it. Now, students sometimes meet with her as late as eight o’clock at night on their phone or their computer, instead of getting in a car or a train and coming to York at an appointed hour.

Even though more classes (and conferences) will ultimately be held in person, Rowe is one professor who will stick with the online format. “The quality of the conferences is better than what I was able to get before,” she says. “It’s more convenient for students who are home or working or may only be on campus one day a week. I’ve had people jump out of the gym and start talking to me on the sidewalk.”

What York Students Are Saying about the CLC

Sandra Moyano-Ariza

The first week of October was “Tutor Appreciation Week,” and the CLC launched a virtual wall where York students shared their thoughts and appreciation for the tutors at the CLC. To honor the work of tutors and staff, this issue features some of their comments. Direct your students to the Collaborative Learning Center, where they can take advantage of the tutors’ guidelines in many subjects and improve their writing. The WAC program cannot recommend the CLC enough!

For more information on the CLC:

- CLC website: <https://www.york.cuny.edu/collaborative-learning-center>
- How to make an appointment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S6dbH9TW1F8>

<<They have been the light that guided me through the uncharted waters of college level English writing, teaching me how to properly cite sources and do in text citations. Let’s not forget the math tutors as well. They too are very knowledgeable and willing to sacrifice their personal time to help a student.>>

<<To the entire Collaborative Learning Center: what you do for the future generation is incredible and it is appreciated. You are the ones that make it possible for me to be at the line of graduation. Because of you I can see the light at the end of this tunnel!>>

<<To all the chem 106 and anatomy tutors who’ve helped me pass my prerequisites, I wouldn’t be in the nursing program without your help 😊 Thank you!>>

<<The tutors were there to explain to me how college works and how professors want certain things. If it wasn’t for them, I don’t think I could achieve A’s in any English or business classes I take.>>