

# The Rhetorical Situation

## Winter Events Worth Checking Out



**Friday, March 13 | 7-9:30 PM &  
Saturday, March 14 | 10-5:15**

**Writing for Living: A Conference in Honor  
of Helene Moglen [\[link\]](#) —w/ Brenda  
Sanfilippo, Discussant —Humanities Lecture Hall**

**Sunday, April 5 | 5 PM**

**The Deep Read: A Conversation with  
Margaret Atwood [\[link\]](#) —Quarry Amphitheater**

**Friday, April 24 | 1:30-3 PM**

**Building Mutual Mentoring Structures  
to Support All Faculty**

*Stephanie Kerschbaum—details TBA*

### Faculty Profile: Daniel Pearce



#### CAMPUS AFFILIATIONS/ FREQUENTLY TAUGHT CLASSES:

I'm part of the Kresge Core faculty (I'm also the Core Course Coordinator there), and the only course I've taught with the WP so far is Writing 2.

#### BEFORE COMING TO THE WRITING PROGRAM, I...

lived in New York, where I was in a graduate program in creative writing.

#### WHEN I AM NOT TEACHING, I AM ...

drumming, swimming in the San Francisco Bay, or spending time with my dog, Rudy.

#### FUN MOVIES:

*Noises Off, Hot Fuzz, Cold Comfort Farm.* Currently watching *The West Wing*.



The last time we surveyed you, 60% of your WP colleagues expressed an interest in mentoring or being mentored.

### Building Mutual Mentoring Structures to Support All Faculty Dr. Stephanie Kerschbaum

Friday, April 24—time & place TBA

ASL interpreting provided; scent-free event

Open to Writing Program faculty, others by request (to [avidali@ucsc.edu](mailto:avidali@ucsc.edu))



Stephanie is an Associate Professor at the University of Delaware and is incredibly supportive, thoughtful, and energetic.

Her knowledge about teaching writing to suggest some initial principles that will lay groundwork for UCSC WP faculty to design and build a sustainable mutual mentoring program that meets faculty needs (including those focused on teaching development as well as those around navigating marginalized identities and identifications), offers just-in-time support, and fosters community, collaboration, and connection across the program. Faculty in attendance will have the opportunity to imagine and discuss together how these principles might inform mentoring initiatives at UCSC.

## CONFERENCE CALENDAR: UPCOMING CFPS

(ACCESS THE COMPLETE CALENDAR [HERE](#))

### February

#### Modern Language Association Annual Convention [\[link\]](#)

Toronto, January 7-10, 2021

Proposal deadline: generally February-March

#### CATESOL Northern Regional Conference [\[link\]](#)

Concord, CA, May 9, 2020

Proposal deadline: February 29

### March

#### Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference

[\[link\]](#) Reno, NV, July 12-14, 2020

Proposal deadline: March 1



Road Trip Baby! CWPA at Circus Circus in Reno. The theme actually *is* road trip, and it's driving distance from Santa Cruz (about 5 hours). So throw together a proposal for the conference July 12-14 (or the workshops after); proposals due March 1.

#### New England CCCC Summer Conference: Critical Literacies in the 21st Century Classroom [\[link\]](#)

Boston, MA, July 9-10, 2020

Proposal deadline: March 1

#### Young Rhetoricians' Conference [\[link\]](#)

Monterey, CA, likely mid-late June 2020

Proposal deadline: March 15

### May

#### Association of Writers and Writing Programs [\[link\]](#)

San Antonio, TX, March 4-7, 2020

Proposal deadline: May 1

#### Conference on College Composition & Communication [\[link\]](#)

2020 Conference: Milwaukee, WI, March 25-28

2021 Conference: Spokane, WA, April 7-10

Proposal deadline for 2021: likely late April, early May

### Faculty Profile: Lara Ramos Galas



CAMPUS AFFILIATIONS:  
Cowell Core & WP;  
I've taught Writing 2  
before and am currently  
teaching Writing 1.

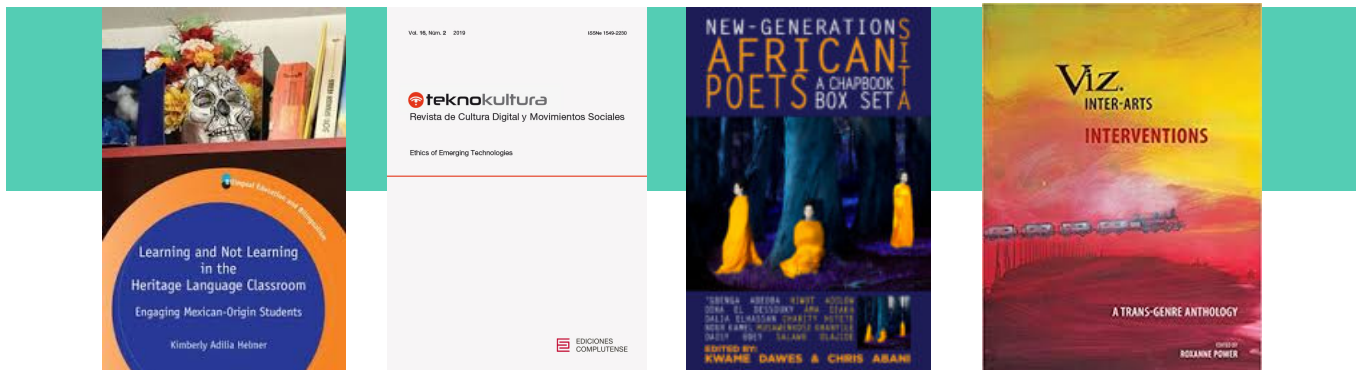
BEFORE COMING TO THE  
WRITING PROGRAM I...  
had the pleasure of  
working for the WP as a  
GSI and a GSR. I recently  
graduated from UCSC's  
Literature department with  
my PhD.

WHEN I AM NOT  
TEACHING... I am  
probably looking for  
delicious new recipes to  
try out and then  
(hopefully) enjoy with my  
partner and/or friends,  
reading and listening to  
books (currently *Circe*),  
bingeing a TV show, or  
going on a long walk  
through Neary Lagoon,  
Pogonip, or along the San  
Lorenzo River.

ALSO...If anyone you  
know is in need of a dog  
walker, feel free to reach  
out; I love  
meeting  
new pups!



## Faculty Accomplishments



### Congratulations to:

**Kim Helmer**, whose *Learning and Not Learning in the Heritage Language Classroom: Engaging Mexican-Origin Students*, published by Multilingual Matters, will be out in March 2020. This critical ethnography follows the same cohort of students through compulsory Spanish heritage language instruction with two Spanish-language teachers, one English dominant and the other Spanish dominant. The engagement and resistance of these students suggests pedagogical directions for engaging Spanish heritage language learners. [Available here](#), and for pre-order anywhere you buy books.

**Steve Coulter**, for publishing “Cyborgs in the Panopticon,” on the topic of smartphones in the classroom, in *Teknokultura: A Journal of Digital Culture and Social Movements*. *Are we becoming cyborg drones trapped in an online web of addiction and consumption, subtly surveilled, certainly manipulated, and perhaps even controlled by our prized panopticon appendages? Or will we use our technological connectivity to revolutionize the way we live on Earth and create a sustainable future? [Accessible here](#).*

**Dina El Dessouky**, whose work has been published in an innovative eleven-piece chapbook box set, *New-Generation African Poets*. [Available here](#), and you can also read some of Dina’s poetry in the Spring 2018 issue of *The Rhetorical Situation*.

**Roxi Power**, who has presented on inter-arts writing, editing, and teaching on a couple of different recent panels: a panel and performance (Mixology Cabaret) at the Associated Writing Program, 2019, Portland (with Ronaldo Wilson, Timothy Liu, Prageeta Sharma, Sam Truitt, & Michael Ruby; received NSF-PDG for conference travel); and invited by the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco, January 2020. If you haven’t already checked out her project, ask Roxi about it, or check it out [you know where](#).

## Quick Teaching Inspirations

Check out these links recommended by your WP colleagues:

### FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE HANDOUT/ACTIVITY

[This handout](#) based on Moll's "Funds of Knowledge" concept was useful to me in working on College 1 and the concept of self-efficacy, and might also be of interest to WP faculty.

–Elizabeth Abrams (via Yolanda Venegas)

### WPA-ANNOUNCEMENTS LISTSERV

A solid alternative to the high-volume WPA-L (which has also faced some other problems the last few years that caused many to sign-off). [The announcements](#) detail CFPs for conferences, edited collections, and the like, allowing followers to stay up-to-date on some parts of our discipline without discussion/replies (which are easily available on social media). Emails arrive in groups (about 5-15 emails at once) about once a week, and daily summaries and the like are available through an easy Google Group interface. Email volume ticks up during job-announcement-season.

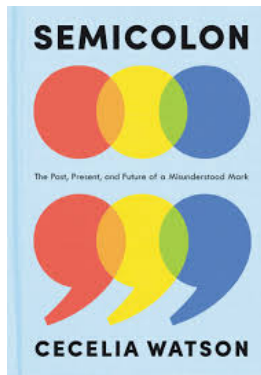
–Amy Vidali

## Professional Development Opportunities!

Heard of a conference you'd like to attend? Have an idea for a paper or research project you might present to other professionals in your field? Union-bargained-for Professional Development Funds are available to fund such activities! Funding is limited so grants are competitive, but most years we have extra funds that we roll over into the next year. You don't have to actually GIVE a paper to attend a conference: PDF monies are meant to support any travel or activity that enhances a Unit-18 lecturer's professional status and pedagogical knowledge. That includes conference registration fees, travel and lodging expenses, training at workshops, and in rare cases, library or equipment purchases not covered by regular university funds.

You can apply for up to two "small" grants (less than \$900) and one "large" grant (\$900 or more) per academic year. In the past, WP lecturers have been funded for attendance and/or participation at the 4Cs, MLA, the annual (and local!) Monterey "Young Rhetoricians Conference," the Conference for Writing Program Administrators, and more. [Details and the application form can be found here.](#) Note: even if you request reimbursement for an activity or conference late in the academic year, your PDF grant application must be filed by June 1. —Derede Arthur

## Book Reviews



### ***Semicolon: The Past, Present, and Future of a Misunderstood Mark, Cecilia Watson***

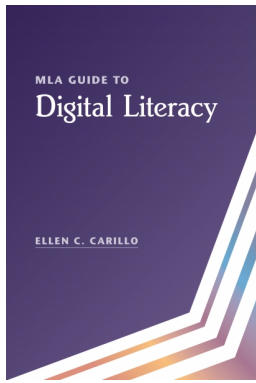
As a self-professed grammar and punctuation nerd, I was perhaps unusually excited to read an entire book about the history of the semicolon. My students rarely use semicolons, and authors from Orwell to Vonnegut have maligned them. I suspected Watson's book would describe a series of changing rules and, despite the cheerful cover, might be a bit dry. Instead, I discovered a thrilling, joyful, and emancipatory history that begins from the premise that "the diminutive semicolon can inspire great passion."

Watson's first chapter explores the semicolon's creation. According to Watson, the semicolon has a long and exciting history. First created in Venice in 1494, the semicolon was born just as punctuation was becoming increasingly codified. I was surprised to learn that its form followed function, as the semicolon actually did combine the pauses of a comma and a colon. Several hundred years later, the semicolon made its way to American schools, which were increasingly relying on grammar books to establish and propagate the rules of writing. In a surprising connection to the present, the grammarians used rules-based instruction to fight back against administrators and parents who thought it was more important to teach science than writing. Grammar books were used to make writing instruction more systematic and similar to the natural sciences.

My personal favorite chapter was the fourth chapter, "Loose Women and Liquor Laws: The Semicolon Wreaks Havoc in Boston." The chapter opens with a legal case involving alcohol sales that hinged on the presence of a semicolon in an obscure law. The case ultimately ascended to the Massachusetts Supreme Court, who "unanimously sided with the semicolon." The ruling restricted public alcohol sales after 11 p.m. and led to some very furious Bostonians. For the next six years, the so-called "Semicolon Law" wove its way through the legislature, courts, and public, where "friends and foes of the semicolon" argued before the law was finally amended to popular relief. The more disturbing fifth chapter explores similar issues of interpretation as a missing semicolon in a jury verdict leads to a man being sentenced to death.

Finally, Watson concludes by thinking about the implications of using semicolons--their perception as pretentious versus their impact in works like King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail." She reminds us of the ways that punctuation can be used to oppress and limit rather than free and expand. When we enforce rules, or in Watson's words, build grammatical fences, we divide and exclude people, refusing to engage with serious ideas because of a minor error. In Watson's telling, grammar rules are always contingent and changing, subject to the tastes and ideologies of the rule-makers at a given moment. Instead, Watson asks, "What if we thought less about rules and more about communication, and considered it our obligation to one another to try and figure out what is really being communicated?" The history of the semicolon is one of political and ethical choices and effects, but we often do not recognize them because we look at the tiny semicolon in isolation, as the product of a particular piece of writing or rule book or style guide. In excavating the longer history, Watson reminds us that the semicolon--like all punctuation--"can create music, paint a picture or conjure emotions." In place of a rigid system of rules, Cecilia Watson offers a dynamic and empowering story that encouraged me to think about how I teach grammar generally and the semicolon in particular.

–Brenda Sanfilippo



## ***MLA Guide to Digital Literacy,*** **Ellen C. Carillo (MLA, 2019; [link](#))**

It's become commonplace to say that acquiring digital literacy is crucial for students to be democratic participants, let alone for their academic, personal, and professional lives. Several recent Writing guides have added digital literacy to their guides as an addendum, but Carillo's book threads digital literacy throughout its entire approach to information literacy. Her book also goes beyond merely providing strategies for student researchers toward teaching students why such strategies are necessary for democratic citizenship and academic success. While it is marketed as a reference guide for students, its real strength lies in explaining the basic concepts and strategies of digital literacy.

Carillo hopes to move beyond a "checklist" approach to information literacy that has characterized much of the teaching of research in college Writing classrooms (The CRAAP test may not be crap in Carillo's mind, but it is surely inadequate in our current context). Instead Carillo's goal is to introduce students to frameworks and strategies to augment their digital literacy. Like many of us are beginning to realize, just because students have grown up as digital natives, that does not mean that they are effective consumers and producers in digital environments. Chapters focus on the infrastructure of digital ecologies, how information (and disinformation) circulates in those ecologies, and how students can best navigate a networked, multimodal world of information. This navigation focuses on effective searching, evaluating, and mapping strategies, alongside concepts of "rhetorical reading," "reading laterally" and "fact-checking by going upstream." And it explains complex psychological facts such as "confirmation bias" and "motivated reasoning" in ways that students can grasp.

While the book could be a good one-text solution to teaching digital literacy in the classroom (and it's only \$16), much of the material in the text can be found elsewhere, particularly in Mike Caulfield's excellent open source [Web Literacy for Student Fact Checkers](#). Additionally, many parts of the book are likely rather obvious to students (do they really need a definition of "click bait"?). And, although a chapter on "Customizing Your Online Experience" is a great idea, the chapter, like much of the book, often fails to excite or engage students with its flat prose, spare examples, and an overall lack of color or visual interest. Nevertheless, for those new to teaching digital literacy in Writing 2, it is worth a glance for its clear articulation and curation of the basic digital skills and frameworks necessary for navigating our often bewildering information ecosystem. A print copy is available [at McHenry Library](#). —Phil Longo

## Field Reports

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### **UC Merced DEI Teaching Symposium    October 2019    Merced, CA**

On Saturday, October 5th, 2019, UC Merced held a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Teaching Symposium sponsored by UC Merced's Karen Merritt Writing Program and Writing Studies Department. At the Teaching Symposium, Dr. Iris Ruiz gave a Keynote Lecture and Workshop on "Decolonizing Pedagogical Praxis within Composition and Literary Studies" that included practices from professional models developed from research-based Xicans Indigenous Epistemologies. At the core of Xicans Indigenous Epistemologies is Nahui Ollin--the central space representing the "four movements" within the Aztec Calendar that signifies the four cardinal directions (north, south, east, and west) and the four elements of life (earth, wind, fire, and water). Nahui Ollin, as a pedagogical framework, is seen as a culturally relevant and responsive to the lived experience of students and instructors, both past and present. UC Santa Cruz writing instructor Tiffany Wong also led a workshop at the Teaching Symposium titled "Cultural Creativity in Our Teaching Praxis." In the workshop, instructors explored what creativity means to them within different contexts of their lives and how different cultures (academic, societal, and personal) affect their abilities as instructors to take creative risks in their own teaching praxis.

–Tiffany Wong

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### **FemRhet (Feminisms and Rhetoric Conference)    November 2019    Harrisonburg, VA**

FemRhet is a smallish conference with a simultaneously more activist and kinder vibe than most conferences. It occurs every two years and is searching for a location for 2021. The 2019 theme was "DIY Activism," with panels ranging from theoretical engagements with activism ("Is the feminist gadfly an activist, or is she just doing what she is 'supposed to' do? Feminist Ethics and the Daily Grind of Activism") to reclamations of "feminine" activities ("Life after the Pussyhat: An Exploration of Intersectional Activism in the Digital Knitting Community"). Complementing the latter was a DIY craft table and sale that was a little too fun for all attendees. The lunch speaker fell flat though Mona Haydar fired up the awards dinner. I presented a piece on infertility rhetorics and the Netflix movie *Private Life*, and I heartily recommend this conference to those new to the field and those needing a break from mega-conferences like CCCC.

–Amy Vidali

## Which Body —Ingrid LaRiviere

I found one of your chest hairs  
between the pages of a book  
I hadn't opened since before our son  
was born and before I lost the self  
I made to replace the other self I lost.  
I almost blew a puff of breath  
to shoo away that dark wisp, then changed  
my mind. What life of ours made it?  
What combination of dinners  
and air breathed in and out  
in which house? Which body  
of yours made it, and where am I  
who loved that body, who felt it  
with fingertips, who laid with it close?

This newsletter is brought to you by the Pedagogical Development Committee (a.k.a. Amy, Brenda, Denise, Ingrid, Lisa, & Tiffany), with thanks to the many colleagues who contributed. Questions/requests/complaints? Ideas for our next newsletter? Contact Brenda at [bsanfil@ucsc.edu](mailto:bsanfil@ucsc.edu).