



*the*  
Rhetorical  
Situation

UCSC Writing Program Faculty Newsletter

WINTER 2021

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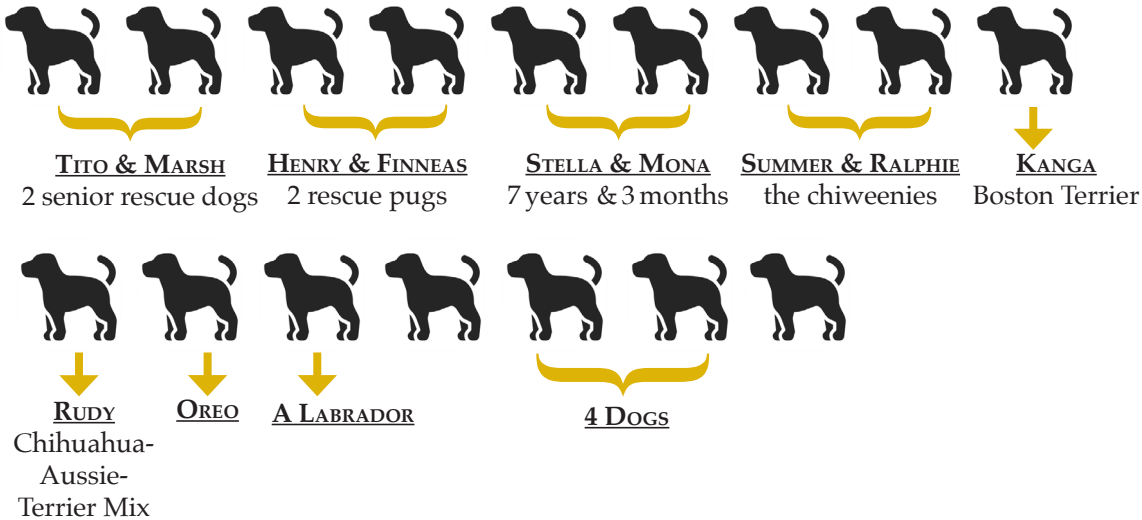
# fun faculty facts

SURVEY RESULTS \*

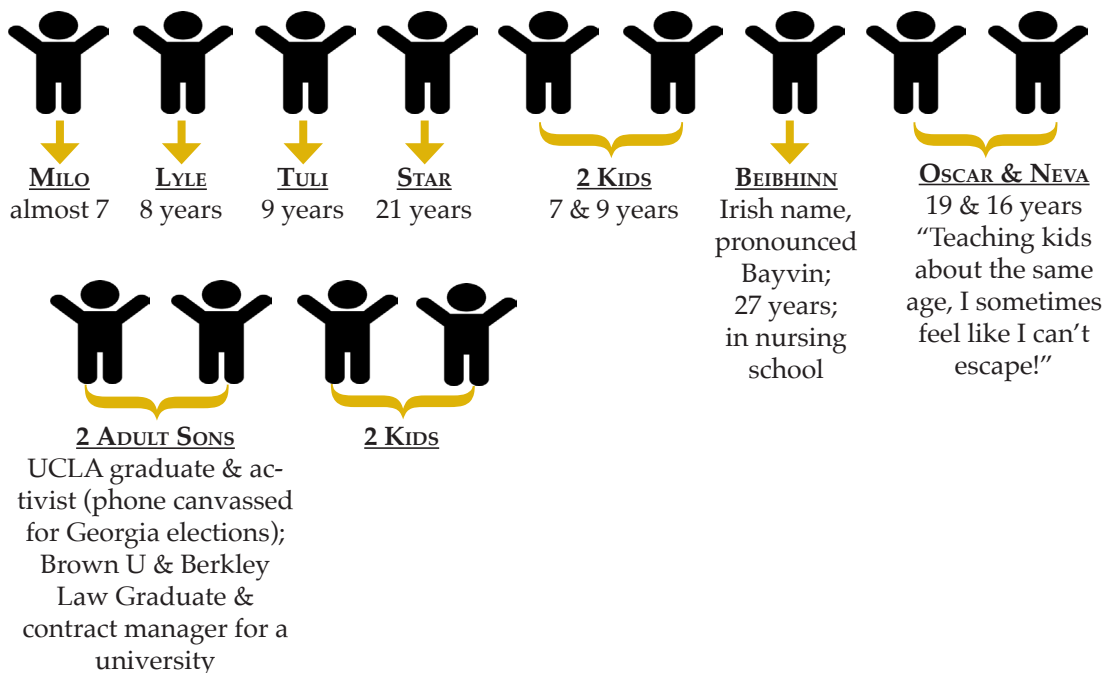
## SURVEY QUESTION:

DO YOU HAVE ANY DOGS, KIDS, PETS? IF SO, PLEASE ELABORATE.

### 14 Dogs



### 13 Kids



\*out of 18 respondents

8 Cats + 1 Pending



DARLA RUTH BADER-  
LOVEGOOD  
CHARLIE EVERST HILL  
SALTY PETUNIA  
3 years, 3 years, ~5 months

SCOUT & CALCIFER

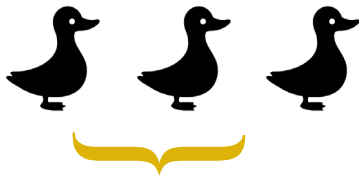
MEGACLYTE  
5 years

BURGER

HANK  
loves people  
but vaccu-  
um cleaners  
freak her out

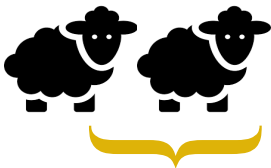
TBA

3 Ducks



They come when you call  
their names!

2 Sheep



They live with 4 dogs!

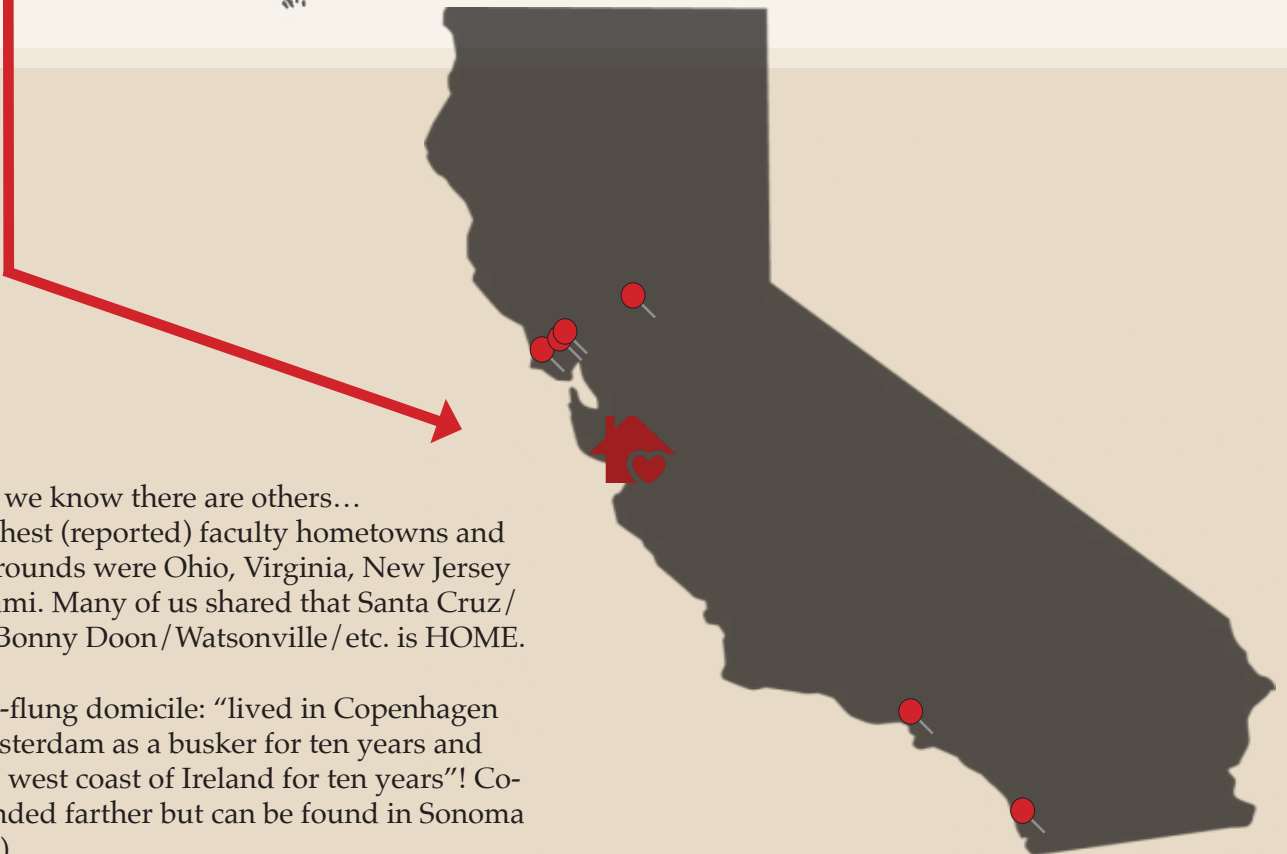
1 Turtle



↓  
WOLF  
26 years

## SURVEY QUESTION:

WHERE ARE YOU FROM? OR WHERE DO YOU CALL HOME?

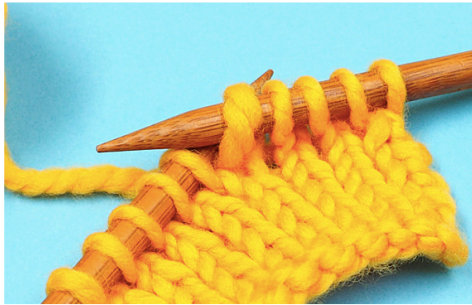


Though we know there are others...  
Our farthest (reported) faculty hometowns and home-grounds were Ohio, Virginia, New Jersey and Miami. Many of us shared that Santa Cruz/Felton/Bonny Doon/Watsonville/etc. is HOME.

Farthest-flung domicile: "lived in Copenhagen and Amsterdam as a busker for ten years and then the west coast of Ireland for ten years"! Cotati sounded farther but can be found in Sonoma County:)

# SURVEY QUESTION:

WHAT IS ONE PASSION OR TALENT YOU HAVE THAT YOUR COLLEAGUES MIGHT NOT GUESS OR KNOW ABOUT?



**SURVEY QUESTION:**  
WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO WORK?

ON CAMPUS (3)



AT HOME (3)



OUTDOORS (3)



AT A COFFEE SHOP (6)



**SURVEY QUESTION:**  
IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Many great superpowers to choose from, including controlling the weather, interdimensional travel, invisibility, immortality, and the no-less unthinkable-for-some 1000-meter elevation climb. But fully 30% of respondents want to fly:).



## SURVEY QUESTION:

PLEASE NAME ONE THING THAT HAS SURPRISED YOU ABOUT SOCIAL DISTANCING.

It's nice to be outside more often.

I like the anonymity of wearing a mask in public.

How many people don't practice social distancing.

The number of people who think they are being careful when they are not.

I didn't realize how much I love hugging people until I couldn't do it anymore.

The older I get the more introverted I become, so while I miss seeing folks it's not nearly as hard for me as it seems to be for others.

It hasn't really changed my life at all and simultaneously protected all 6 ft of my aura, or holographic body, from other people's energy....Consent is much more prevalent and at the forefront of much conversation. People have to agree to be touched with open, verbal consent. I'm into it.



*How much I miss hugs!*

I'm not as stir crazy as I expected.

That I wasn't too old to learn technology, lol.

The level of patience that everyone I encounter exhibits!

The amount of time I now have as we can't do so many activities.

How much more room there is to be anxious behind a mask, in good and bad ways.

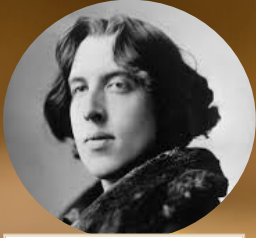
My students are actually more eager to show up on Zoom than to come to the classroom because they are so desperate for social contact.

I've been participating in some studies on the effects of COVID-19 and social distancing. I've been surprised that while many ask about loneliness, almost none ask about feeling crowded by the people you live with who are suddenly home more. Sometimes, I go sit in my car in the driveway and read so i can feel alone in a good way.

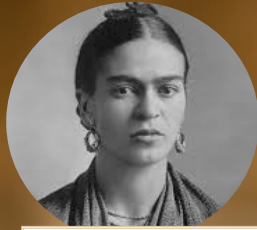


## SURVEY QUESTION:

IF YOU COULD HAVE DINNER WITH ONE PERSON, LIVING OR DECEASED, WHOM WOULD YOU CHOOSE?



OSCAR WILDE



FRIDA KAHLO



SHIRLEY CHISHOLM



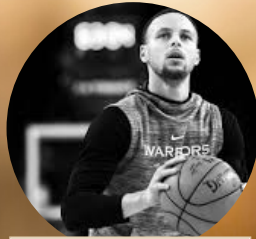
JAMES BALDWIN



COLIN KAEPERNICK



BERNIE SANDERS



STEPH CURRY



BILLIE JEAN KING



URSULA K LE GUIN



GANDHI



GALADRIEL

MY UNCLE BOBBY

MYSELF AS A CHILD

MY GRANDPA

MY MOM

MY FATHER



# Faculty quotes on

## WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID

Love it!

I've been able to share quite a few laughs with some of [my students], and got to know some of their pets (and let them have a glimpse of my own). Yet overall, it's overwhelming. I'm spending way more time with the zoom classes than with in-person classes, and it's starting to get to me (although I don't really think we'll be able to start teaching safely in person any time soon).

This puzzle: why hasn't my schedule for eating and bathroom breaks improved?

I've found it forces me to get much more explicit in everything I do, particularly in designing assignments, which has improved my teaching.

Working from home during COVID has been mixed. I appreciate the flexibility of teaching on Zoom, but I also feel very isolated.

Teaching with Zoom sucks! That said, I am grateful for its meagre benefits and that we are able to work with our students within Zoom's limits.

While it takes way more effort to get far less accomplished, I do feel like I've effectively pared down and focused my teaching.

Although I've had to cut back on meetings and a new committee I was hoping to join, I'm still glad to be able to take care of my loved ones during this difficult time. I wouldn't change my decision to be there for them or my students for the world.

I've done my best to figure out routines and a course design, and feel confident that I'm making it work for my classes as best I can, but it didn't work for my family to be doing all of this in our previous living arrangement. I would say the biggest challenge has been finding a different home-base to do our work from.

While I miss seeing colleagues and students in person, I am overwhelmed by the ways we are all showing up compassionately for one another and how we are able, even in mediated spaces, to offer support and care to each other.

I am now a willing member of the Church of Zoom. All hail remote meetings!

This year (seriously, almost a YEAR?), I realized how much time I used to spend on campus rushing around campus from class to class, circling parking lots, and arriving late and flustered everywhere. But now, rushing around on campus is one of the things I miss most.

So... it turns out my biggest problem is that when I'm working from home, I never leave home. I mean--never. On the up side, I'm really having a delightful time with my students, even over Zoom: they are present, eager, ready, and charmingly grateful for the interaction.

It's challenging to feel so distant and disconnected from my students.

Since I usually teach while standing up and walking around the classroom, all this sitting at the computer and Zooming has resulted in mega body aches. Last week a student made--almost shouted--disturbingly rude comments during class and they didn't realize they were not muted.

I am very overwhelmed with having a child at home while trying to work. I've also experienced multiple non-COVID-related traumas during our pandemic year. I'm doing a pretty good job with my teaching and students, but I'm drained.

I love being home with my new puppy! It's my COVID silver lining!

You can't blame yourself or these dependents for the chaos they create and the energy it sucks out of you because their minds and behavioral sensibilities are still developing, and you can't blame your partner because they are also just trying their best. The relative success of teaching, though, is unexpected, and one of the best things about it is being able to coordinate Writing Groups--which are extremely gratifying--with greater ease, even if you feel like at the end of a Writing Group week, you have to go lie down in a grassy prairie under the night sky for hours to realign your soul with your body. It sounds dramatic, but that's the only way I can describe it.

# spotlight on

## ASYNCHRONOUS TEACHING



[ TERRY TERHAAR ]



[ MADELINE LANE-MCKINLEY ]



[ TARA THOMAS ]

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We asked some of the instructors teaching fully asynchronous courses this fall to share some of their strategies. Here are their responses.

### WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT TEACHING IN THIS NEW FORMAT?



When developing an online course, EVERYTHING needs to be placed online, from the readings to the assignments to the discussions to the little things I point out in a classroom.

**Rule #1 for me--keep it simple!** All assignments are due on the same day of the week at the same time. Friday 5pm for everything but peer reviews which are due Sunday at 5pm.

**Rule #2 for me--keep it organized!**

Every single week is set forth as a module on the Canvas class homepage, and every single class is organized in the same fashion. It's incredibly easy once you get the hang of it.

**Rule #3 for me---insert my silly personality wherever possible.**

Online classes dehumanize everybody so I work hard to fight this characteristic.

**Rule #4 for me--require students to interact with me and each other.**

Once a week they must peer review another student's work on "Discussions." At least every 2 weeks, they must attend my office hours; better yet--attend weekly! It's a class requirement! So the class has 3 components: stuff they do by themselves, stuff when they interact with another student, and stuff (questions!!) when they interact with me.

**Rule #5 for me--have LOTS of office hours each week.**

I hold 9 hours of office hours, or 3 hours for each section, for a total of 9 hours per week. Why? If a student gets stuck during an online class, they stay stuck. Having multiple office hours at times suitable for students around the globe helps prevent this problem. I often talk to 40-50 students per week!

## HOW HAVE YOU ORGANIZED YOUR ASYNCHRONOUS COURSEWORK?



I think the biggest challenge is to be flexible but also really structured in designing asynchronous coursework. Over the spring quarter, I started developing this class based on weekly group meetings and tasks building toward a final group project. Students coordinate with each other and meet as a group and report to office hours every week. By the end of the quarter, the students create a publication project together and present their project to the other groups.

I usually include some form of group work in my classes, but during the pandemic I've really amplified that part of my teaching. All of the assignments and pretty much all of the activities in the class are incorporated into the final group project. Of course group work comes with typical problems that can be anticipated. But in general, the students want to be accountable to each other, which seems to keep them engaged. And based on my feedback from students, the group projects have been a nice way to get to know other students in the class in such a close, solidarity-building context.



By week 3 of the course, the students have already begun focusing on a research topic. The scaffolded nature of the course and the fact that they are poised to become “experts” on their research topic enables us to spend more time focused on writing skills. My approach has been to assign readings, mostly from *How Writing Works*, model skills and concepts in lectures, and finally to ask students to complete small assignments (worksheets, Discord discussions, blogposts) where they are asked to implement those skills in their writing.

## HOW DOES A TYPICAL WEEK UNFOLD WITHOUT A SYNCHRONOUS SCHEDULE?



My approach has been to maintain a consistent schedule to provide students with structure so that they are engaging with the course throughout the week. The students have lectures (PowerPoints with embedded video lectures, audio lectures, and instructional/educational videos) on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with major writing assignments due Sundays. Throughout the week, the students write blogposts that they share and discuss with their classmates on Twitter. They're also working in pairs for peer-reviews and a podcast assignment.

I also broke office hours up into two portions—scheduled appointments and drop-in hours. I found that students are more likely to attend office hours if they have signed up in advance; I have several pairs of partners who have begun attending together weekly.

Keeping the consistent schedule with lectures and small assignments (blogposts and other exercises related to the lectures) twice a week has enabled me to hold the students accountable for consistently engaging with their writing projects and gradually developing them. The twice-a-week schedule ensures that the students are genuinely completing the assignments in a scaffolded manner.





I imagine that asynchronous teaching could feel like herding cats, but I've found that the group system makes it really manageable. But it can be hard to coordinate schedules. I end up meeting students at odd hours and there are lots of 10-15 minute meetings scattered throughout the week. Because I like to wake up early anyway, I started scheduling my meetings with international students between 4-6AM. I have a few groups with students who work full-time or part-time jobs, so sometimes I have to meet with them after dinner time.

While this has required a lot of adaptation, so has everything in COVID times. Most of my teaching has been one-on-one or in small groups, and I've really enjoyed that aspect of it. And it's clear, the more I get to know my students and their learning conditions during the pandemic, that asynchronous courses are an important way to promote accessibility.

### WHICH TEACHING PLATFORMS HAVE YOU USED?



I'm relying quite heavily on social media to encourage their engagement. Students use Twitter to converse about their blogposts (all scaffolded to prepare them for the upcoming major assignments). I created a class Discord where students can ask questions they need clarification on. I encourage students to ask questions that may pertain to the whole class on Discord rather than email, so that my answers are available to everyone.

.....



Week by week I just use Canvas and Zoom, but my final assignment is a blog that the students create together. I think it's a good skill for any writer to learn, and it's a fun way to collaborate remotely.

.....



I would use only Canvas and Zoom. I feel strongly that students should not be forced to learn additional platforms, especially platforms that cost money. If every instructor required one new platform for their class, a student would need to learn 3 new platforms per quarter. I cannot learn 3 new ones per quarter, so I do not ask my students to do so. Additionally, the costs can add up. Students are taking additional jobs to survive, and I believe strongly that my classes should not cost them any additional money. It's a social justice issue.

# shared strategies for

COMPLETED BY FACULTY IN SMALL GROUPS DURING THE 12/8/20 FACULTY MEETING

## ASYNCHRONOUS TEACHING

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION, NOTES, & CAVEATS	DOWNSIDERS & UPSIDES
<b>Group work &amp; group projects</b>	Quarter-long teams (Madeline, Lisa)	<u>Downsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some groups struggle</li><li>• Tough participation and engagement</li><li>• Running individual meetings (lots of back-to-back meetings)</li><li>• Recordings (microaggressions, etc. recorded, but not surveilled)</li></ul> <u>Upsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student community and connection</li><li>• Specific roles in groups</li><li>• Can have a rotating “host” within the student groups</li></ul>
<b>Regular deadlines</b>	Weekly individual and peer review deadlines (Terry, Lisa)	<u>Downsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A lot of time in OH (9 hours per week, but same as in-person)</li></ul> <u>Upsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Straightforward for students</li><li>• Regular scoring schedule for instructor</li><li>• Same agenda every week, simplified structure and sequence</li><li>• No questions/confusions from students</li></ul>
<b>Discord, other online spaces</b>	Allowing students text threads and outside discussion modes (Anthony)	<u>Downsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Difficult to monitor</li></ul> <u>Upsides</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• More social communication</li><li>• Work and relationships are similar to in-classroom</li></ul>

Strategy	Description, Notes, & Caveats	Downsides & Upsides
<b>Shared Google Doc for group work</b>	Works especially well when paired with synchronous breakout rooms on Zoom, but also effective in pre-assigned or Canvas-based groups.	<p><u>Downsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes students don't share the work equitably</li> <li>• Harder to administrate asynchronously and go back and forth between shared doc and Zoom or Canvas when not on Zoom together</li> </ul> <p><u>Upsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymity can increase engagement</li> <li>• Students feel comfortable sharing authorship on the Google Doc</li> </ul>
<b>Crowdsourcing annotated bibliography</b>	Students in "research labs" don't write final projects, but they do create an annotated bibliography through discussion forums. It allows them to share research and then discuss the genre of research.	<p><u>Downsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students don't have deep collaboration (but they do get some of it)</li> <li>• Can be a bit complicated to set up on Canvas with using groups and discussions, but really not too bad</li> </ul> <p><u>Upsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can grade students individually, but can give comments in discussion to the group as a whole</li> <li>• Students see models of others' work, so they can get a better sense of what they're supposed to be doing if confused</li> </ul>
<b>Filling out a Google Doc with notes on a text for preparation for an analytical essay or other textual-based project</b>	Typically students would have their own notes and then be asked to collaborate on a Google Doc the whole class has access to. *Each group has a different task. (Brij)	<p><u>Downsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Everyone doesn't always participate.</li> <li>• It can be time consuming.</li> </ul> <p><u>Upsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gets students together in small groups and divvies up the work.</li> <li>• Engages the entire class in a pre-writing activity that should prove useful.</li> </ul>
<b>Creative Lectures through Different Media (YouTube)</b>		<p><u>Downsides</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can't get YouTube in China (there are workarounds)</li> </ul>

Strategy	Description, Notes, & Caveats	Downsides & Upsides
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**Hypothes.is**

Downsides

- Students can't submit it once and for all. Every time they open the assignment, it creates a notification for the instructor. This can make grading confusing.
- Students don't get notified when someone replies to their notifications, so the "community" aspect of this requires a lot more work on the instructor part than it would seem from the advertisement for the product.
- If you teach multiple sections, you have to upload two separate copies (separate names, can't just copy a course); otherwise, students will -- at best -- be working with students in other sections or -- at worst -- not be able to access the file at all.

Upsides

- Students do seem to read more closely, and their annotations seem to be of a higher quality.

**Use time estimates for assignments and let them know how long/short videos are**

Time has to be really flexible and really defined when everything is asynchronous

Downsides

- Don't yet fully know how long each takes
- Have to estimate

Upsides

- Just a good resource in general
- Great vehicle for having real discussions with students about workload and what they are really spending
- Lets you articulate function of time in assignments + meetings + works.



Strategy	Description, Notes, & Caveats	Downsides & Upsides
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**Cameras on/off**

Requirements to have cameras on and how much time.

Downsides

- Some students may have real barriers to having cameras on--tech, personal, and/or shared space issues

Upsides

- Defining the amount of time required with cameras on to get a particular participation grade can be helpful. Can use a rubric for this with language such as:
- “You kept your camera on consistently throughout the quarter or demonstrated that you were actively paying attention by volunteering often even when your camera was off. You were considerate of your classmates in conversation and in the chat.” (highest score examples)
- “You may not have stayed at your computer for the entire class time, failing to join breakout groups or respond when called upon.” (lower score example)

**Anonymous features (like Zoom polls)**

Interaction and anonymity

Upsides

- Everyone can communicate one-way (to instructor) and to each other (when shared)

# Faculty

## UC WRITING PROGRAM CONFERENCE

## PRESENTATIONS

Amy, Tanner, and Sarah presented on UCSC's Directed Self-Placement process on two panels for the UC Writing Program conference: "Making Space for Equity with Placement: Collaborative Writing Placement Programs at UC Davis, Irvine, Santa Barbara, and Santa Cruz."

Heather Shearer presented a poster entitled "What Can I Do For My Readers? One Simple Question For Opening Space In Writers' Hearts," which is still available on [Padlet](#), as are the other Poster Sessions.

Lindsey Knisely's presentation was entitled, "Building Self-Efficacy in Remote Learners."



# upcoming events

## FEBRUARY

### DESIGNING FOR CARE AND EMBRACING UNGRADING WITH JESSE STOMMAL

Location: Virtual  
Date: February 25, 2021  
Time: 2-3:15pm PST  
Free

## MARCH

### ASSOCIATION OF WRITERS & WRITING PROGRAMS

Location: Virtual  
Dates: March 3-7, 2021

### ROTHMAN AWARD CEREMONY

Location: Virtual  
Date: Friday, March 5, 2021  
Time: 2:00-3:00pm PST

## APRIL

### 2021 CCCC ANNUAL CONVENTION

Location: Virtual  
Dates: April 7-10, 2021

### WATSON MINI-CONFERENCE

*"Towards the Antiracist Conference: Reckoning with the Past, Reimagining the Present"*  
Location: Virtual  
Dates: April, 21-23, 2021

## OCTOBER

### CONFERENCE ON COMMUNITY WRITING™

*"Weaving Narratives For Social Justice Action In The Local, National, Global"*  
Location: Virtual  
Dates: October 21-23, 2021

## NOVEMBER

### 2021 NCTE ANNUAL CONVENTION

Location: Louisville or Virtual (tbd)  
Dates: November 18-21

# human resources

## HUMAN RESOURCES CONTACTS FOR WRITING PROGRAM FACULTY

- LSOE - Terri Rock (trock@ucsc.edu)
- Unit 18 - Henry Winters (hewinter@ucsc.edu)

## COVID LEAVE POLICIES

Information below abridged from: <https://apo.ucsc.edu/covid-19/covid-leave/lecturers.html>

### WHAT IS COVID LEAVE?

- **UC EPAL:** UC paid administrative leave up to 16 days, prorated based on their percentage of time (but not available for scheduled remote lectures/class sessions for criterion 3 above b/c instruction is an essential service). Effective March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.
- Paid Medical Leave (Extended eligibility during COVID-19 remote instruction): NSF who have an average of 66% or greater appointment for a full academic year (three quarters or two semesters) are eligible for Paid Medical Leave to use due to the NSF's own COVID-19-related illness or that of a family member. (Full time NSF see currently expired Unit-18 contract.)

### WHAT TRIGGERS LEAVE?

If a Lecturer is:

1. Unable to work due to their own COVID-19-related illness or that of a family member
2. Unable to work because it is not operationally feasible for them to work remotely; or
3. Unable to work because a COVID-19-related school or daycare closure requires the lecturer to be at home with a child or dependent, and it is not operationally feasible for them to work remotely or in conjunction with the childcare commitment.

### WHAT TO DO IF WE'RE UNABLE TO WORK?

1. If you need to take immediate leave or miss a series of classes due to COVID-19, contact Tanner (tritola@ucsc.edu) and Pam (pedwards@ucsc.edu) as soon as you can. From there, the WP will coordinate with Humanities HR to assist you.
2. For information on leave policy and eligibility, our direct contact in Humanities HR for Unit 18 lecturers is Henry Winters (hewinter@ucsc.edu).