

# WRITING NOTES

Writing Programs Newsletter • Spring 2021 • Department of English • Arizona State University

## In This Issue

Welcome to the Spring 2021 issue of *Writing Notes*! As usual, we've archived a **sampling of the superb teaching and learning** that's so typical of Writing Programs. And as usual, we've also showcased the **happenings that make every semester a unique adventure**.

In this issue, you'll find the familiar celebrations of the ASU Composition Conference, the Writers' Place Awards, CARE Committee work, and our new T.A. colleagues. You'll also learn about new endeavors, like the Tomorrow Talks events and the custom textbook.

Before you dive into the issue, please join us (below) in thanking Cheryl Price-McKell, as she closes her two years of service as Assistant Director of Writing Programs!

*The Editorial Team*

### A Special Thank-you and Good-bye to Cheryl Price-McKell

I met Cheryl Price-McKell at the RSA Institute at the University of Maryland the summer before I took over as Director of Writing Programs. **The warmth of her character left an immediate impression on me**, and I remember looking forward to hearing more about her ideas for our program. Over the last two years, she has proven to be an indispensable part of our leadership team. She is patient, encouraging, hardworking, and insightful. She has made a number of significant contributions that have improved the quality of our working conditions. Although we will miss her a great deal, we are excited to support her as she completes her dissertation and attains an academic position. Please join me in thanking her for her tremendous work. **- Writing Programs Director, Kyle Jensen**

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## Editorial Team

**Lead Editors: Eric D. Brown and Cheryl Price-McKell**

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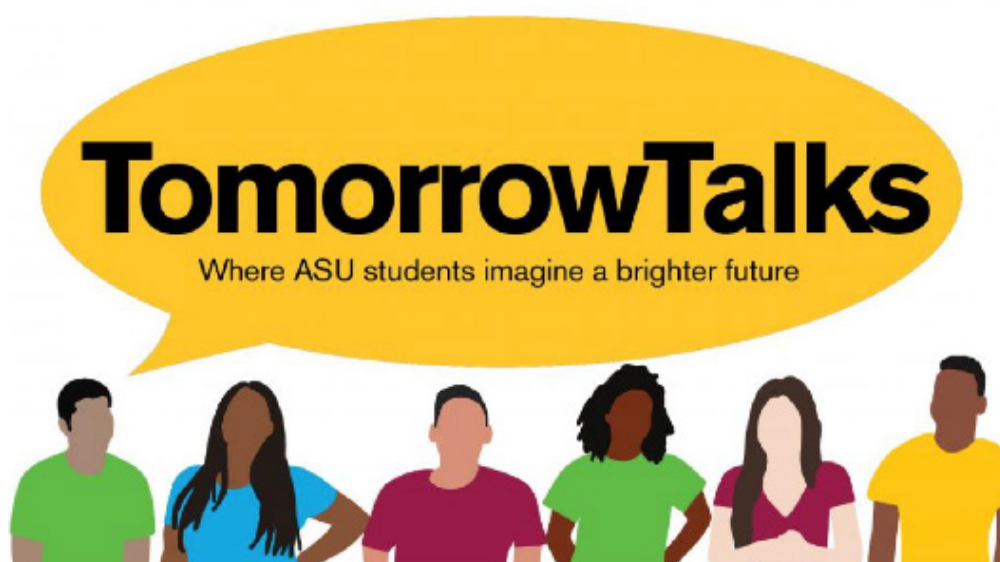
**Supervising Editor: Adelheid Thieme**

*(Below) President Micheal Crow introduces Melinda Gates and her book, *The Moment of Lift*, at the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences and ASU English's newly created Tomorrow Talks event series.*



# Tomorrow Talks

The Leaders of Today Meet the Changemakers of Tomorrow



A partnership between ASU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, ASU English, and ASU Writing Programs set the stage for three vibrant conversations between cutting-edge authors and the ASU students who will undoubtedly author their own innovative projects in the future. As Writing Programs teachers know and appreciate, our students share something with spotlighted authors **Melinda Gates**, **Michael Eric Dyson**, and **Ayanna Thompson**: the conviction to meet, head-on and with care, the pressing issues of the present and beyond. Below, we share highlights from each event. We hope your students will join us at the Tomorrow Talks of *tomorrow*!

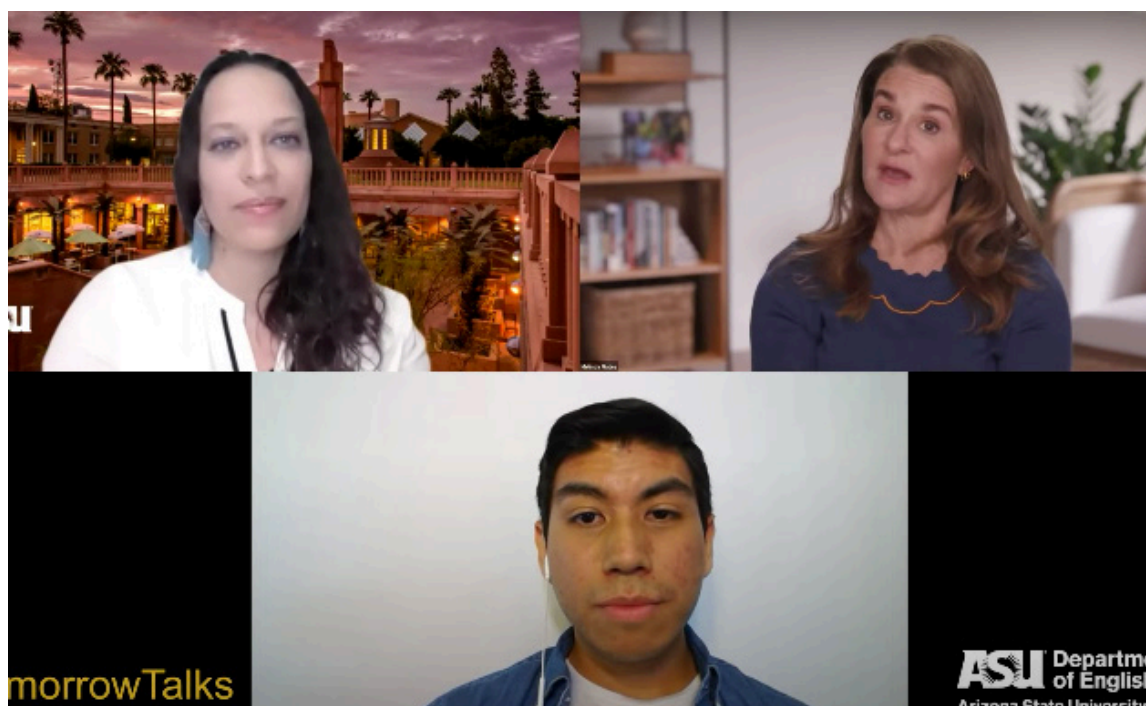
## Melinda Gates Helps ASU Student Rise through Listening with *A Moment of Lift*

On the evening of March 18th, over five hundred members of the ASU community gathered on Zoom to hear from Melinda Gates. As the co-founder of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, one of the world's largest philanthropic organizations, and the founder of Pivotal Ventures, Gates was a noteworthy guest for this virtual visit. ASU president Michael Crow even made a special appearance to welcome Gates, before he turned the screen over to Dean Jeffrey Cohen for a formal introduction. **Dr. Aviva Dove-Viebahn**, Assistant Professor of Film and Media Studies, then joined Gates for an hour-long discussion on Gates' book, *The Moment of Lift: How Empowering Women Changes the World*.

Gates shared what compelled her to pen her book: As she traversed the globe for the Foundation, she listened to women's individual struggles. In listening to these women's perspectives on advocacy initiatives, Gates grew convinced that **if the end goal is to strengthen a community or society, the women must be lifted and empowered first**. "I felt like if they are willing to share their lives and stories with me," Gates shared, "then I should be willing to take their issues to the global stage." Gates also pointed out that, while many of the women's stories of hardship may have been difficult to hear, she learned that listening to such stories is paramount in addressing oppression and inequity. She explained that "if we don't hear one another, we can't know how to help or to change." As an outsider, Gates had to *learn* about the changes women needed, rather than dictate the changes she envisioned from her own experience.

« **If they are willing to share their lives and stories with me, I should be willing to take their issues to the global stage.** »

After Gates shared some of her thoughts and experiences, ASU students asked questions—a favorite tradition of Tomorrow Talks. Students asked Gates about difficulties in hearing stories of oppression and what they could do to "lift" the women in their communities. They also expressed their desire to learn from her experience. For instance, **Raegan Dyste** asked if there was a "moment of lift" that continues to influence Gates on a personal level. Gates responded with a lesson she learned from former president Jimmy Carter about trusting the people she worked with, honoring their ideas and traditions, and inviting them to be part of the solution rather than simply the recipients of counsel. Weeks after the talk, Reagan still radiated excitement as she described feeling inspired by Gates' "gracious" answers and grateful for the opportunity to "engage so closely" with someone of Gates' caliber.



Speaking to all students, Gates closed her talk by telling them that "**You know more than you think you do**" and by pointing out that if they "**remember who you are, you are going to be a pretty great adult.**" She ended by inviting all students to pursue a life full of learning and listening, so they can better lift those around them.

(Left) Gates responds to ASU student Alexis Rodriguez's question, "In terms of empowering women within my Latino community, what advice would you offer to help overcome oppressive Latino cultural norms such as machismo or toxic machismo, referring to generalized sexism and misogyny, that in ways can prevent the empowerment of Latina women?"



# Tomorrow Talks (cont')

## Michael Eric Dyson Talks *A Long Time Coming*



(Above) Michael Eric Dyson answers ASU student Phoenix Nelson's question about capitalization and race.

Michael Eric Dyson was the focus of the first ever Tomorrow Talks event, which was held on Thursday, February 25th, on Zoom. **With a minister's flair and passion**, Dyson engaged listeners in thoughtful dialogue about his book, *A Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America*.

The event was hosted by Foundation Professor of English and Director of the Center for the Study of Race and Democracy at ASU, **Lois Brown**. After a warm welcome from **Dean Jeffrey Cohen**, who noted that Dyson's words had been "ringing in my ears since I read them," the talk began. Professor Dyson shared the exigency for his book: a profound sense of anger, grief, and frustration at the death of George Floyd. The dispiriting and disconcerting "casual disregard" for Black lives prompted him to say **"enough is enough."** The next half hour saw professors Dyson and Brown talk with elan, vigor, and precision about **the power of epistolary writing** to create narrative justice, views of race, and the sights/sites of Black death.

The night culminated with a flurry of incisive questions from ASU students **Phoenix Nelson, Shelby Permann, Lindsay Reineke, Jay Romero, Alaina Rowitsch, and Bailey Shaw**. **Questions ranged from issues of educational sensitivity for students of color, to the epistolary form, to the color-discrepant views of the American Dream.**

**As inspired by the Wu-Tang Clan, Jay-Z, and Tupac as he is by Foucault, Heidegger, and Du Bois**, Dyson simultaneously engaged and enlightened listeners. To learn more about *A Long Time Coming* will similarly challenge Writing Programs students as our upcoming Common Read, see the article below [Page 9].



## Ayanna Thompson Dives into *Blackface*

The final Tomorrow Talk of this inaugural season was ASU's director of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, **Ayanna Thompson**. Thompson is among the top scholars of Shakespeare in the world and is a member of the board of the Royal Shakespeare Company. She was also recently named a Regents Professor, the highest honor ASU bestows on faculty.

Thompson's Tomorrow Talk took place on Thursday, April 15th, and was facilitated by ASU's **Lisa Anderson**, Associate Professor of Women and Gender Studies and Deputy Director in the School of Social Transformation. The conversation focused on Thompson's most recent book, *Blackface: An Object Lesson*. In her book she explores the origins of blackface minstrelsy as a mode of vile mockery and insult for the purpose of entertainment, and the **prevalent ways this practice weaves through history and continues to influence, control, and constrain contemporary Black theatrical performance.**

Speaking on the exigence for *Blackface*, Thompson explained that she wrote it in **"a furor"** after the murder of George Floyd—another violent demonstration of assumed white ownership and control of Black bodies—and was surprised when the publisher eagerly accepted it and rushed it to print. Thompson pointed out that her goal was to push back against claims made by the many prominent actors and politicians called-out for blackface that it was an act of celebration or honor. She explained that "to be a black character on stage" has been considered "white property" since Shakespeare; and her hope is to highlight and challenge assumptions that "white people are allowed to cross racial lines in performance" due to knee-jerk proclamations of innocent motives.

By sharing examples of contemporary theater productions and character portrayals, Thompson demonstrated how dehumanizing traditions of blackface have not only inhibited representations of Blackness on screen, but have also raised questions on what it means to act "authentically Black." Black actors are "combating 400 years of white people literally owning Black performance." The effect, she argues, is that Black actors have been robbed of the chance to consider and develop what it means to authentically perform their own self on film.

As is tradition, Thompson's talk culminated in answering ASU student questions. Students **Bailey Shaw, Jay Romero, Madison Stallard, and Jenna Semon** asked Thompson thought-provoking questions on **how they can best push against blackface, how they can address racism in the classroom, and how to teach Shakespeare with greater responsibility and awareness.** Thompson enthusiastically offered answers that all focused on opening dialogues, naming and acknowledging oppressive and racist tropes and acts, and exploring how they have impacted racial epistemology in ways that have constructed "a heritage of racial categories" and oppressions.

(Left) Ayanna Thompson, next to the cover of her book, *Blackface*.



# The 2021 ASU Composition Conference

First-year PhD student **Hannah Benefiel** recounts her experiences at ASU's 2021 Composition Conference

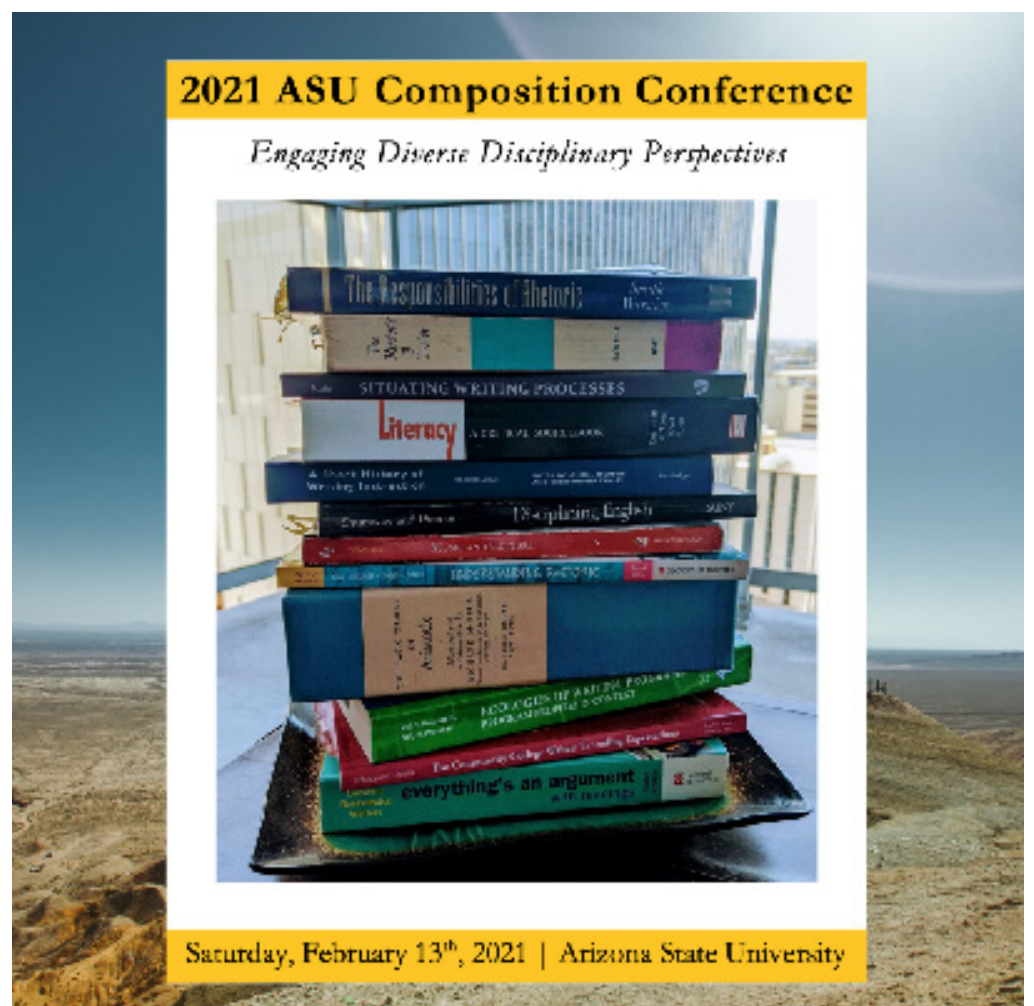
In the midst of what may be the most bizarre year for conferences to date, the 2021 ASU Composition Conference (ASUCC) fearlessly took place over Zoom on February 13, 2021. The digital format allowed for the conference to be more accessible and cost effective than the face-to-face alternative used in the 14 previous years.

**The conference welcomed presenters from coast to coast, a feat that could not be achieved in such a resounding manner without the Zoom format.** I found myself able to reconnect with one of my former professors from Ohio in her panel presentation, all while she sat comfortably in her living room 2,000 miles away. I'm certain many others experienced such warm reunions with far away friends, free from expensive flights or gas prices.

The summit of the day was the keynote address from Dr. Andrea Lunsford – whose accolades are too rich for me to list here. Dr. Lunsford discussed the gravity of listening. **She urged us to ask, "W-A-I-T: why am I talking?"** The importance of this kind of "deep, empathetic, rhetorical listening," according to Lunsford, is to find common ground to move towards a common cause. This sentiment answered the conference's mission to begin listening across disciplines and across differences.

I'd urge anyone who did not have the opportunity to attend to watch the recording [here](#).

Dr. Kyle Jensen, Writing Programs Director, addressed the conference with the statement: "Everyone is here to learn something and build relationships." Both facets proved to be true. **I learned about using meditation as a means to foster freewriting, anti-totalitarian practices, integrating Yellowdig in an online classroom, and facilitating business partnerships for students.** Furthermore, the questions asked about my presentation were so thoughtful and profound that I found myself learning something about my own work. In each session, the chat feature allowed for questions from individuals that might otherwise be too nervous to ask. Zoom leveled the gap between expert presenter and audience member. The ASU Composition Conference has a reputation of being particularly welcoming, and it was no different amid a pandemic. Conference organizers Adelheid Thieme, Savanna Conner, and Eric Brown harnessed the novel online circumstances to empower a productive, collaborative, infinitely welcoming space. - **Hannah Benefiel**



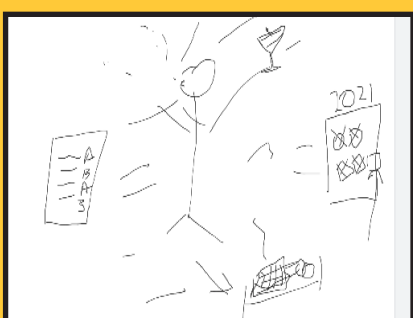
(Above) The front page of the conference program features an image of a stack of books, as well as the conference name, date, and theme.

**"I'm certain many others experienced such warm reunions with far away friends, free from expensive flights or gas prices."**

## Spotlight on the ASUCC "Lunch Menu" Event: Teaching Pictionary



In case you needed another reason to love ASUCC, check out these pics from our first ever "Lunch Menu" social. As we moved the conference online, we wanted to replicate some of the undersung glories of previous conferences: apple and cherry strudels and Starbucks coffee. (We know—we serenade the strudels often. But not enough.) **Or rather, we wanted to replicate, as much as possible, what happens when we gather around the food: community.**



So we created a number of break-out rooms for attendees to fraternize. The most popular, by far, was Teaching Pictionary. Volunteers were sent private chats with common teaching scenarios, like "running into a student at the grocery store" or "being Zoom-bombed by your pet." They then used Google Jamboard to draw the scenario while everyone else guessed the prompt. **We found ourselves, for the first time, muting ourselves because of our laughter.**

Check out some of our favorite artwork from the social. (Top Left) ASU Writing, Rhetorics and Literacies PhD alum **Sarah Snyder** (who always brings a party to the conference from her current institution, Arizona Western College) drew a scenario familiar to many of us: trying way too hard to convince our students that we're "cool." (Bottom Left) Writing Programs champion **Tonya Eick** depicts a more celebratory scene: that moment after you click "submit" on final grades.

# Learning to Listen with Dr. Andrea Lunsford

Dr. Andrea Lunsford prompted ASUCC 2021 attendees to wonder, "What does it mean to listen interdisciplinarily?"



(Above) Attendees of ASUCC 2021 greet Dr. Andrea Lunsford. Pictured left-to-right are (top row) Kyle Jensen, Savanna Conner, Eric Brown, and Andrea Lunsford; (middle row) Brad Ryner, Adelheid Thieme, and Amy Dallenbach; and (bottom row) Cheryl Price-McKell, Angela Christie, and Elizabeth Hamm.

We know, because we know what textbooks you assign, that you're fans of **Dr. Andrea Lunsford** (author of *Everything's an Argument*). At ASUCC 2021, we got to welcome Dr. Lunsford into our conversations in a new way: as keynote speaker. We also know that **Hannah Benefiel** (page 4) has advised you to check out her recorded address, "It's Time to Talk—and to Listen!" on [the conference website](#). We just want to gush a little more.

Dr. Lunsford delivered her talk to a Zoom room of over 70 attendees. To put that number in perspective: we can't even fit 70 attendees into RBHL 117, where we normally host the keynote speech. **Thus, while we all "travelled" to this year's ASUCC from desks around the nation, so many of us stopped first in Dr. Lunsford's home on the Northern California Coast.**

We don't laud Dr. Lunsford out of a sense of textbook loyalty or hero worship, though. We are grateful that she made her first stop ASU Writing Programs: her talk was tailored to the particular needs and strengths of writing teachers today. Relatedly, the first words we heard from Dr. Lunsford were "I think I'm unmuted now."

Before diving into her talk, Dr. Lunsford offered **"a word on how much I'm thinking about your students."** Those thoughts led Dr. Lunsford to develop deep appreciation for the "complexity" of *listening*. Inspired by wisdom on listening from Maya Angelou to "good old anonymous" to our own Dr. Krista Ratcliffe, Dr. Lunsford challenged us to **learn to listen**. She prompted us to inventory our listening habits. Do we listen cosmetically? Actively? Deeply?

As writing teachers, Dr. Lunsford asserted, we should be teaching "deep, empathetic, rhetorical listening." The stance of such listeners might be, Dr. Lunsford posed, listening "Without judgment or preconceived ideas, I'm listening to your words, and to what lies beyond those words. I'm trying to put myself in your shoes and to experience what you're experiencing. **I'm listening to learn**, and I will affirm what you have said." As teachers and people, Dr. Lunsford concluded, we should strive to listen for common ground. This practice, she insisted, must be approached with humility—in the spirit of both curiosity and self-aware *not knowing*.



Andrea Lunsford (avator above) has served writing teachers in a multitude of capacities. She is currently the Louise Hewlett Nixon Professor of English Emerita at Stanford University.

**"Without judgment or preconceived ideas, I'm listening to your words, and to what lies beyond those words. I'm trying to put myself in your shoes and to experience what you're experiencing. I'm listening to learn, and I will affirm what you have said."**



# The Writers' Place Awards

Continuing a Tradition of Celebrating Outstanding Student Writing

## ENG 101

1. **Jacqueline Morales**, "Literacy is communicating in a way that effectively conveys your message" (Instructor: **Christie Louie**)
2. **Jaylyne S Jarrett**, "Cardboard Box" (Instructor: **Seher Shah**)
3. **Iudith Nichescu**, "Class Division and Gender Bias in Snowpiercer" (Instructor: **Kerry Fine**)

## ENG 102

1. **Elena Sloboda**, "Proposed Amendment to the ESSA: Gifted Student Success Act" (Instructor: **Michael McVeigh**)
2. **Stephanie Albers**, "The Controversial History and Current Reception of the Word, 'Queer'" (Instructor: **Sarah Hynes**)
3. **Saba Aafrin**, "Evaluating My iRobot Roomba" (Instructor: **Valerie Finn**)

## WAC 101

1. **Jordan Parsell**, "Four Peaks" (Instructor: **Kathrine Keller**)
2. **Evan Barr**, "Plan for Success" (Instructor: **Lance Graham**)
3. **Hayley Hoenes**, "An Analysis of *We Are The Weather: Saving The Planet Starts At Breakfast*" (Instructor: **Sarah Hynes**)

## WAC 107

1. **Vy Minh Chu**, "What can we do to help with Climate Change?" (Instructor: **Sarah Hynes**)
2. **Ning Wei**, "What Jonathan Safran Foer Really Wants To Tell Us In *The We Are The Weather ?*" (Instructor: **Sarah Hynes**)
3. **Qi Zhou**, "Reduce meat consumption for climate change" (Instructor: **Sarah Hynes**)

## ENG 107

**Shrey Garg**, "The Play Station: The millennial version of the arcade games" (Instructor: **Avrajit Dey**)

## ENG 105

1. **Alex Pho**, "Rhythmic Algebra" (Instructor: **Corri Wells**)
2. **Peyton Osha**, "With Love, Comes Loss, Comes Love" (Instructor: **Nate Bump**)
3. **Nathan Harris**, "A Cowboy's Lessons in Love and Tennis" (Instructor: **Corri Wells**)

## ENG 108

1. **Shrey Garg**, "A Blog on the Honeybee" (Instructor: **Avrajit Dey**)
2. **Tejal Tripathi**, "Rhetorical Analysis: Jubilee- "Pro-Life vs Pro-Choice" (Instructor: **Daeun Shin**)

## ENG 215

1. **Sarah Bond**, "Inclusive Classroom Literature: Empowering Female Students" (Instructor: **Kristin Bennett**)
2. **Brisa Ramos**, "An Analysis on Immigration Detention Centers Impact on Immigrant Children's Mental Health" (Instructor: **Kristin Bennett**)

## ENG 217

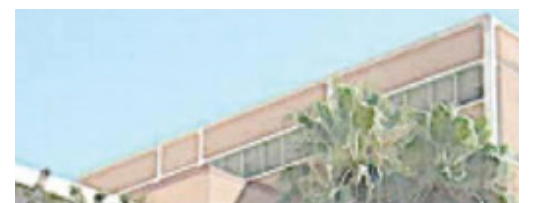
**Ashley O'Dell**, "Life of The Eldest Female Family Member" (Instructor: **David Moody**)

Every year, **Dana Tait** leads Writing Programs in recognizing excellent student writing through the Writers' Place Awards recognizes and awards student writing within the Writing Programs' 100-level and 200-level composition courses. All Writing Programs students are eligible to submit one paper from each of their writing courses during the fall and spring semesters. Peruse the titles of the winners below, and be sure to check the [Writers' Place website](#) to find the actual writing. Congratulations, too, to the teachers who mentored students through these winning works.

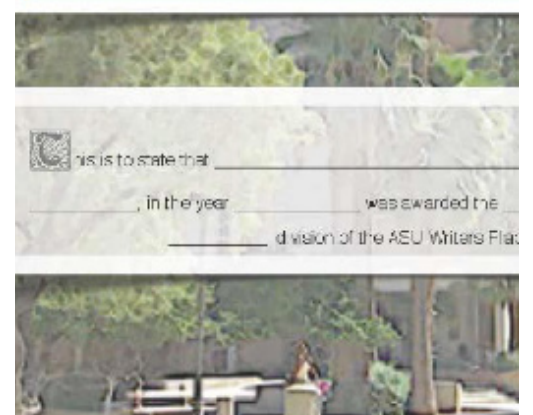
## THANKS

Join us in thanking those who take the time out of their busy schedules to judge the Writers' Place Awards!

Laura Cruser, Valerie Fazel, Elizabeth Hamm, Heather Hoyt, Sarah Hynes, Kathrine Keller, Jeremy Meyer, Sean Moxley-Kelly, Sam Ruckman, and Jennifer Waters



THE ASU WRITERS PLACE



(Above) Image of The Writers' Place award certificate given to winners

# Meet the New Teaching Assistants

You may have met these new colleagues on your screen. Say hello if you see them around Ross-Blakley Hall!



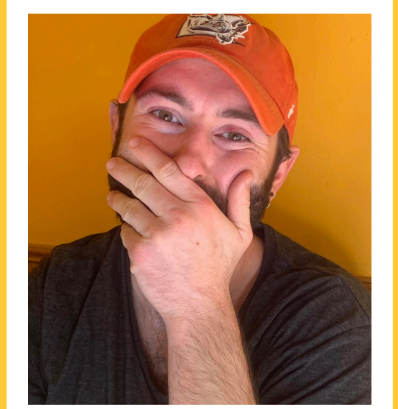
**Sandra Saco** is pursuing her PhD in English Education. She attended University of California, Los Angeles for her undergraduate studies where she obtained her B.A. in Chicana/o Studies and earned her M.A in English Education at Arizona State University. She formerly worked as a high school English teacher for seven years in the Phoenix area prior to starting her doctoral studies. She currently teaches ENG 101/102 as a Writing Programs instructor. Her focus has been on **the implementation of diverse Young Adult (YA) literature in the secondary classroom**. Her current research interests are exploring diverse Latinx YA literature and analyzing how students and educators unpack the Latinx diaspora.

**Winslow Schmelling** is pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing while acting as a TA with Writing Programs in her home state. She holds a BA in Modern Languages from Northern Arizona University and has been a teacher, a content marketer, a music venue manager and a professional pizza tosser. **Her creative work explores how the landscapes that hold us shape our ways of thinking**. As an instructor, she aims for her students to push the boundaries of their writing and to name, harness and orient composition skills they've learned through their unique studies, passions and communities.



**Christina D'Antoni** is an MFA candidate in fiction at ASU. She is also an Associate Editor at *Hayden's Ferry Review*. Previously, she worked at a non-profit in the education sector and volunteered at local literary arts organizations in Washington, D.C. **She is originally from New Orleans, Louisiana and is at work on a collection of short stories about the lives of people from the Gulf Coast post-Katrina**.

**Colin Bonini** is an MFA student from northern California. He studied English at Gonzaga University before beginning a semi-nomadic stint working in Alaska, Australia, and the Western US as a food processor, waiter, cook, ghostwriter, blogger, tutor, and freelance editor. **Since coming to ASU, he's been busy experimenting with his fiction, which varies in length, structure, and subject matter based on his mood/what he's reading**. He moves enthusiastically from one obsession to the next, but some of his lasting loves are climbing, surfing, rugby, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, road trips, Oxford commas, and and parentheticals. After finishing his MFA, he hopes to combine his joys for teaching, writing, and traveling by going abroad and putting his TEFL certification to use.



**T H A N K S**

Even a novel-length issue of *Writing Notes* couldn't recognize the immeasurable ways in which our colleagues galvanize us each semester. We invite you to reflect upon and extend thanks for those moments of support.

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# Acts of CARE

The CARE Committee's tenth year of bolstering our local community

## Adopt-a-Family

During the fall semester 2020, the CARE committee adopted 9 families (48 individuals) and contributed donations to provide each family with gift cards with which to buy their own gifts and gift cards for food. A local St. Vincent de Paul conference also contributed a food bag to each family.

Members of the Department of English contributed \$5040 in total. Families received both a gift and a food card, with amounts based on the number of family members in each case. The largest families had 7 members, while the smallest had 2. One other member of the department and her family adopted a separate family of 4.

In addition to the financial donations for presents and food, families received small bags filled with candy, puzzles, and toys provided by two CARE committee members. **Almost 50 English Department members contributed.**



(Top Left) Gifts loaded up to deliver to Adopt-a-Family recipients. (Bottom Left) Kristen LaRue-Sandler readies Adopt-a-Family gifts for delivery.

## Mild Cats

The Department also donated \$850 to support Mild Cats, an animal rescue organization that feeds, traps, spays, neuters, and releases the stray cats on all ASU campuses. Mild Cats traps and adopts out kittens whenever possible.

## Food Drive

In the Spring 2021 semester, the English Department held an extremely successful food drive (granola bars) for the Tempe Union High School District. Because there were 6 weeks left in the district school year, and because of your fabulous generosity, we could extend food to more schools than ever.

**Tina Norgren**, who runs this drive, made her first Costco run and spent \$1007.11. **She quit when she filled up one industrial-sized pallet (on wheels).** There was so much food that when she loaded up the passenger side of her SUV, the weight turned the seatbelt light on!

**"There was so much food that when she loaded up the passenger side of her SUV, the weight turned the seatbelt light on!"**

The four high schools that Tina normally delivers to (Corona, McClintock, Marcos de Niza, Tempe) were thrilled, and they had all the food they needed! But we had more money, so Tina went back Costco and bought a second round of food for the other three high schools (Desert Vista, Mountain Pointe, Compadre).

Tina was asked at one of the new schools, which had never received food from us before, if they could distribute food to students without lunch money and students who went to the nurse's office without lunch. In other words they were asking if food could go to students not specifically designated as homeless.

So this is a big deal. **Even if we could only help for a few weeks (and may be somewhat over the summer as some of the food will go home with students in May), you have made a lot of folks happy.**

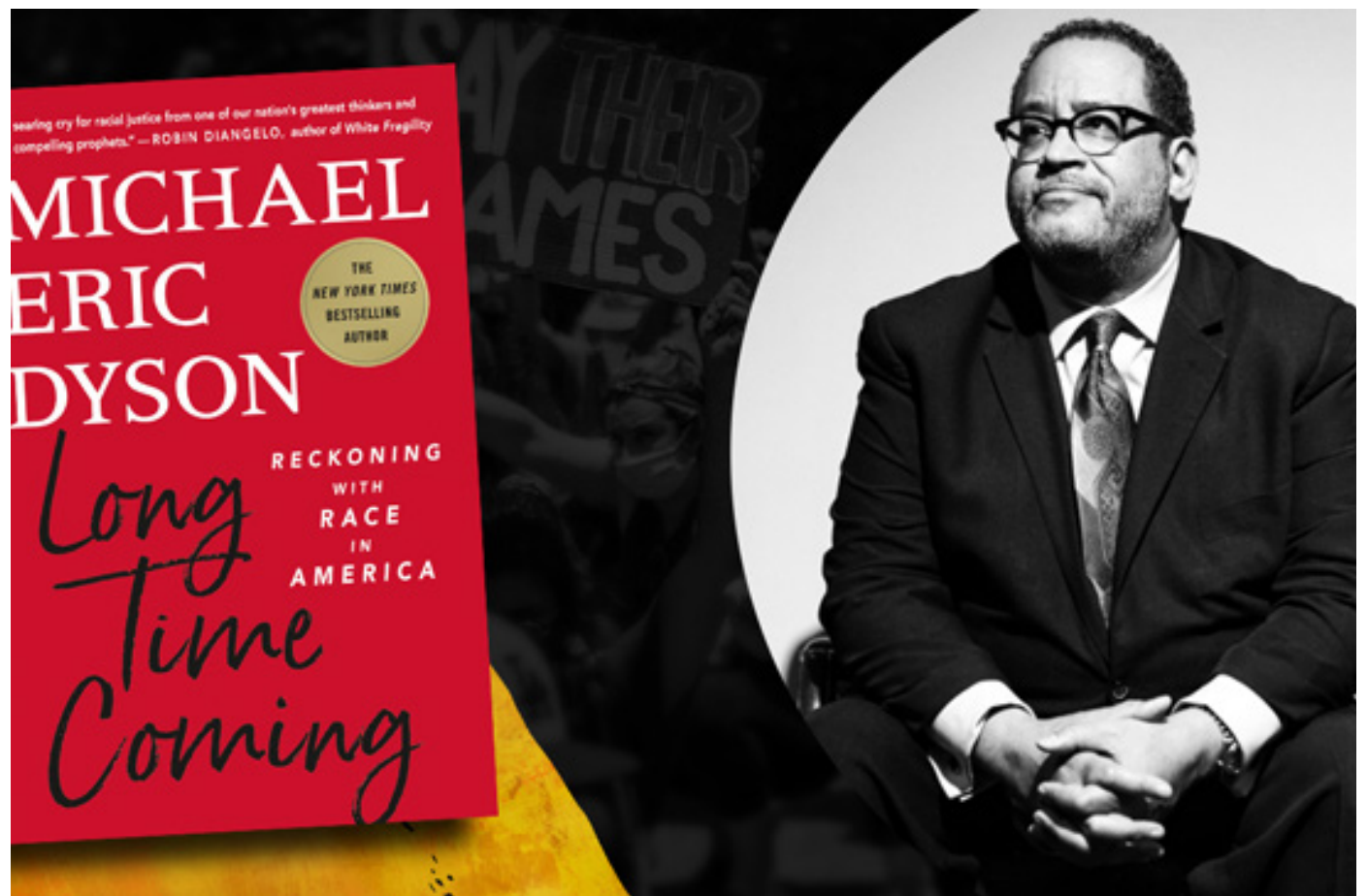
- Karen Dwyer



# Introducing the Fall 2021 Common Read

Get Excited to Share Michael Eric Dyson's Provocative *Long Time Coming* with Writing Programs Students

On March 19, Director Jensen announced Michael Eric Dyson's *Long Time Coming: Reckoning with Race in America* as Writing Programs' 2021/2022 Common Read. The selection of Dyson's book was the culmination of months of study and discussion. With the expressed support of the Writing Programs Committee, the process began with the vetting of twenty possibilities by Director Jensen and Dr. Christina Saidy. After pairing down the selection to several books that met Common Read criteria, members of the Writing Programs Committee—elected representatives of constituent teaching groups—read over the selections and made the final choice.



Michael Eric Dyson (above) is Distinguished University Professor of African American and Diaspora Studies in the College of Arts & Science, and of Ethics and Society, Divinity School, and Centennial Professor at Vanderbilt University. He is the author of seven New York Times bestsellers and considered an important contributing authority on issues of race and social justice.

**Criteria that determined the final selection of Dyson's book not only included its pressing contemporary subject matter but also its teachability and how well it would connect with first-year students.**ts in compelling ways that exploit the strength of each.

In *Long Time Coming*, Dyson examines systems and traditions that influence the violent aggression, suppression, and policing of Black bodies, individuals, and communities that has led to the loss of too many lives and countless opportunities. **Using the form of personal letters addressed to "martyrs,"** Dyson humanizes victims of violence and shines a light on the racially infused circumstances surrounding and influencing such violence. He does so by bending and blending genre constructs in compelling ways that exploit the strength of each.

Dyson's unique and compelling style of writing and organization **allow instructors the freedom and ability to incorporate his book into their curriculum as a whole if desired or to include specific chapters, sections, or rhetorical moves and strategies to examine on their own.** Instructor and student study guides that offer ideas on incorporating Dyson's book and supportive sources will also be shared over the next few months. Whatever way instructors choose to incorporate Dyson's book, it is sure to animate meaningful and important conversations within the class.

**As we reckon with the crisis unleashed by George Floyd's death, we must reckon with the white comfort that permitted White folk to ignore other deaths like his for centuries. Perhaps because of him, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and too many others to name, we will finally come to grips with white comfort and finally proclaim three words that are the very heartbeat of our country and culture, slowly, deliberately, and with appropriate emphasis: Black. Lives. Matter.**

— Michael Eric Dyson, *A Long Time Coming*

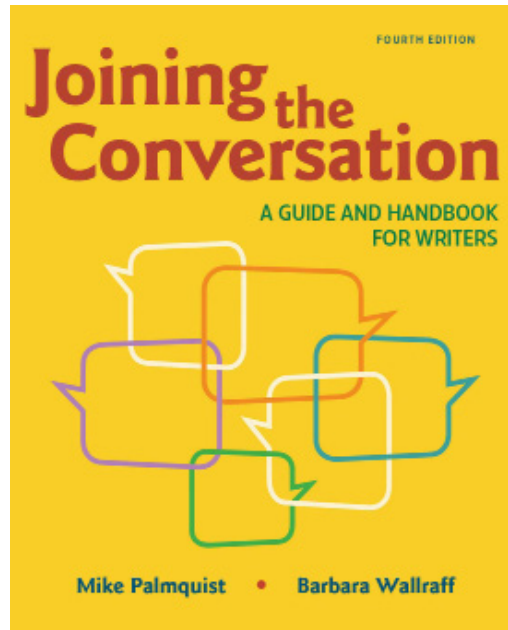


# Tailoring our Texts

Peer inside the upcoming Writing Programs' new common textbooks with custom content

As many of you know, this coming Fall, Writing Programs will roll out its first iteration of our custom textbook! The custom textbook will add materials created by Writing Programs instructors to two digitally delivered textbooks for first-year composition students: Lisa Ede's *The Academic Writer* and Mike Palmquist and Barbara Wallraff's *Joining the Conversation: Writing in College and Beyond*. A "living" text that will be augmented, revised, and tweaked every year, the custom textbook is an opportunity for Writing Programs teachers to share their **hard work and pedagogical sharpness** with other Writing Programs teachers and students.

The first round of content submissions just wrapped up. In total, Writing Programs teachers have contributed over 100 pages of content—lessons, activities, and prompts designed specifically with ASU Writing Programs students in mind. Created content ranges from tips for how to get started on a writing project to strategies for using sources to best practices for revision—and that's just the tip of the iceberg.



(Above left) the cover of *Joining the Conversation*; (Above right) the cover of *The Academic Writer*

**If you find yourself using your colleagues' custom content, don't be shy about stopping them in Ross-Blakley Hall and thanking them for sharing their expertise!**

While we are incredibly excited about (and grateful for) all the amazing work Writing Programs teachers have done to contribute to the textbook, we're also eager to share another feature that the flexibility of custom textbook affords: student "translated" outcomes. Anyone who has taught first-year writing is probably familiar with students' puzzlement about what the outcomes we list on our syllabi mean. As brilliant as our students are, most aren't career educators. That means that our students don't always speak the language of outcomes, or know the multi-layered purposes of outcomes statements. **In other words, despite our best efforts and transparency about the outcomes of our courses, students still have a hard time wrapping their heads around course outcomes.** So, Writing Programs has drafted "Student Translations" of each of our course outcomes, and these translations will be included in the custom textbooks. Below, find an example of a translated outcome.

**Writing Programs Outcome (Original):** Adopt an open stance toward competing perspectives when addressing a pressing social issue or relevant cultural phenomenon.

**Writing Programs Outcome (for Student Audiences):** When writers come across a perspective that is different from their own, they have a choice: they can reject it as untrue or try to understand it on its own terms (open stance). Understanding different perspectives on their own terms allows writers to identify both strengths and opportunities for development, which then allows them to build on that perspective's ideas and recommendations for action. When you choose to listen to and understand different perspectives about something important happening in the world (social issue or cultural phenomenon), your writing will improve.

## T H A N K S

**Join us in extending our gratitude towards the teachers who gave their energy to building content for the custom textbook!**

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