



CALLS FOR PAPERS CREATIVE WRITING PANELS

At the Table: Food Writing and Identity

Organizer: Sue Sinclair (University of New Brunswick)

Who we are is deeply tied up with what we eat — food can not only reflect but also constitute identities. It can soothe and it can disturb. It can be a way that people come together and a way that people notice differences. The questions of what we eat, where, when, how, and with whom are revelatory — even before we get to the politics of food production, distribution and preparation. Which foods do you eat or avoid eating? What do you bring (or not bring) to a queer potluck? What is “junk food” and who eats it? How do food and race intersect?

Add the element of writing and the questions ramify: how do we write about food? What counts as food literature? What foods are depicted in literature and how? And what are we to make of the preponderance of food metaphors for everything from sex to mental health?

This session welcomes to the table creative writers who are addressing food and identity and who may also be posing challenges to the category of food writing. The session is envisioned as combining short readings and a round table discussion, and participants will also be invited to share a food-writing prompt.



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Diasporic Tides: Contemporary “Nigerian” Writing in Canada

Organizers: Chigbo Arthur Anyaduba (University of Winnipeg), Uchechukwu Peter Umezurike (University of Alberta)

The proposed panel will bring together a group of writers and scholars who migrated to Canada from Nigeria or trace their ancestry to Nigeria. The panel will engage these writers in a conversation on how they are negotiating place, belonging, and identity as writers in Canada.

This panel will engage contemporary “Nigerian” writers in Canada to discuss their writings with a focus on thematic concerns, directions, divergences, and receptions of their works. The discussants will engage with the following questions: what are the relations of “Nigeria” and “Canada” in their writings? How do they represent (if at all) these two national categories (Nigeria and Canada) in their works? What challenges do they contend with as writers with these connections? Finally, how do these challenges shape their works? This panel is designed to call attention to the flourishing literatures being produced by “Nigerian” writers in Canada, many of whom recently migrated to the country from Nigeria or born by parents who migrated from Nigeria to Canada.



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The Pleasures of Inefficiency

Organizer: Jessica Smith (Brock University)

Proposals are invited that address the creative writing workshop and its relationship to play, exploration, and iterative process. In institutional contexts where students juggle competing deadlines, commitments, and demands on their attention — at times watching recorded lectures on triple-speed to save time — , how do writing instructors design assignments and adopt classroom practices that invite students to experience a different relationship to time and productivity? In *What It Is*, Lynda Barry writes about the two questions that “find everybody”: “Is this good? Does this suck?” Barry explains that the only way to resist these questions was “to be able to stand not knowing long enough to let something alive take shape.”

This panel will follow the demonstration model, with creative writing teachers sharing the structures, prompts, revision approaches, policies, and practices that help students stay in the uncertain zone of not knowing long enough to bring their work to life.



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Poetic Technique as Critical Method (Reading/Discussion Panel)

Organizer: Joel Katelnikoff (University of Alberta)

This panel will spotlight forms of critical writing that move beyond conventional essay writing techniques such as description, summary, and explanation. This panel will consider the possibilities for poetic methods of critical writing, which perform the textures, opacities, and uncertainties of the critical text itself, so that the text might be understood to be an object of study rather than a commentary.

The textured or opaque essay might be considered revolutionary, in the sense that it relinquishes its authority to present an audience with a singular and transparent message. Conversely, this type of writing might be thought to simply add to postmodern confusion, by not offering its audience a clear mandate. What unique opportunities (and what forms of resistance) might poetic technique offer to a critical writer, to a reader, to a university instructor, and to a student? What makes poetic technique an important aspect of critical practice, and how might we best share this with our students?

Panelists will perform excerpts from their own critical/creative work, followed by a discussion of how and why we might choose to bring poetic practices into our critical discourse and pedagogy.



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Undergraduate Creative Writers as Researchers: A Roundtable

Organizer: Glenn Clifton (Sheridan College)

For most humanities disciplines, it is clear how students at varying levels can be employed as research assistants who work with faculty to produce new knowledge and practice applying their skills in the process. This dimension of pedagogy is less prominent in Creative Writing, though many would argue that Creative Writing can also be understood as a humanities discipline, directed not only towards the creation of original work but also the cultivation of skills in critical thinking, creativity, and analysis.

This CFP seeks proposals for brief (10-15 minute) presentations about involving undergraduate Creative Writing students in research work or community engagement projects. Participants are invited to discuss research projects that have gone well (inside or outside the bounds of coursework), or to discuss the pedagogy of Creative Writing as applied beyond individual student assignments to community-building, research work, or collaborations with other disciplines. What exciting things are we doing to show our students the work their writing can do in the world? Show us what you've tried, or what you'd like to try.



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Unbuild The World: Creative Writing Pedagogy Roundtable

Organizers: Jenny Heijun Wills (University of Winnipeg), Sheniz Janmohamed, Sandy Pool (University of Winnipeg)

In a recent talk given at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts in San Francisco, gender theorist and professor Jack Halberstam delivered a manifesto in which he embraced the notion of “nothing.” In this manifesto, Halberstam argued that in a world where there are no alternatives to capitalism — when climate change is now irreversible, at a moment of deep anger about patriarchy, racial injustice and widespread recommitment to it, we need to think in terms of dismantling or unbuilding the world as a way to promote social change. Halberstam writes: “instead of investing in world-building, imagining, building towards in a capitalist system — what possibilities are open to us when we do the opposite? What happens when we focus on unbuilding, undoing, dismantling, unmaking unbecoming dereliction and destitution?” (Halberstam, 2019).

The proposed panel, “Unbuild The World: Creative Writing Pedagogy” will examine these ideas in the context of the creative writing classroom. How can we unmake the world of the creative writing classroom? How can we transcend the classroom with multi-modal tools? What can we find in the ruins of the established workshop system? Each speaker will discuss their engaged pedagogical practices and share insights into what it might mean to unbuild, decolonize, destroy and undo in their own teaching practice.