

Care Work Through Course Design: Shifting the Labor of Resilience

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Drawing on the disability justice paradigm of care work (Piepzna-Samarasinha), this article moves to shift the labor of resilience from students to our course design, noting how models of student resilience are often tied to ableist expectations of performance and coherence. The authors share their ongoing experiments in creating disability-centric, care-centered course designs, which are meant to offer students more flexibility while respecting the required labor asked of instructors.

Introduction

In effort to address student well-being in our writing classrooms in ways that honor our identity as disabled instructors, we consciously chose to jettison “the agenda we’re being asked to tend,” noting “who is expendable in its upkeep” (Patterson). We recognize that expectations of student resilience disproportionately impact disabled, queer, BIPOC, and otherwise marginalized students, rather than reckoning with how discrimination against disabled and other marginalized students is baked into academic policies and practices (Brueggemann; Dolmage; Hitt). As disabled scholars, we understand that this instantiation of resilience is not only undesirable and often impossible for our students to achieve but also impossible for disabled instructor bodyminds to model.

Drawing on disability scholars in writing studies and disability justice praxis—a framework created by disabled BIPOC and queer-identifying kin—we seek to shift the paradigm of resilience in the classroom, thus minimizing the expectations of resilience from students and instructors. Instead, we position the creation and implementation of resilient course documents as an act of what disability activist Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha has named “care work,” which focuses on “crip-created way[s] of accessing care” that center holistic and intersectionally aware well-being practices (47). Our work here centers “disabled ingenuity” (Hamraie) and crip community-building (Kafai; Piepzna-Samarasinha; Sins Invalid). In a classroom setting, crip community-building centers students’ needs and the lived expertise of marginalized students before considering institutional expectations, curriculum outcomes, and on-campus mandates (Cedillo; currie; Jackson). In other words, rather than

seeing disabled student experiences as a problem to solve (Hitt; Wood), we trust disabled ingenuity as a site of invention and transformative subversion, where we and students prioritize collective care and well-being.

While frameworks of resilience often ask students to shoulder the labor of a one-size-fits-all pedagogical approach that prioritizes a rigid classroom structure and practices, we propose placing the majority burden on course materials—including crafting more flexible and community-centered syllabi, assignment sheets, onboarding guides, and other documents—to do the heavy lifting of resilience instead. We see our work in creating resilient course materials as an act of creating community, sustaining connectivity, and promoting student well-being in accordance with dynamic community needs (currie) to defy the “bureaucratic calculus” that pushes disabled and marginalized students out of academic space (Hubrig 35). For this special issue, we focus on disability theory as it relates to our own course materials to demonstrate how resilient course materials can prioritize student wellness through care-driven, disability justice inspired pedagogical practice.

The Ableism of Student Resilience

In a pre-pandemic world, think pieces on student resilience often situated students as lacking the necessary willpower to succeed in college courses. Consider Peter Gray’s *Psychology Today* article, in which he argues students are “needier now” than in the past and often require “hand holding.” Gray points to students seeking mental health services on their university campuses as a sign of diminished resilience, gesturing to an invented academic past that favors unencumbered free-market capitalism over unprofitable, sustainable education. In this argument, Gray invents a false equivalency between rigor and mental instability and illness. As neurodivergent academics, we are already too familiar with the exact sort of student Gray decries: anxious, depressed, schizophrenic, autistic, and outspoken about the conditions by which optimal performance is evaluated and enforced. The deceptive mythology that students with insufficient output metrics (even when modified by accommodations or environmental support) lack core resilience is subjective, neoliberal, infantilizing, and simply untrue. Our students—especially those who identify as crip, mad, or otherwise disabled, who are so often called out and belittled by these conversations—are already asked to be uncompromisingly, unbearably, resilient as hell.

In our kaleidoscopic minds, resilience is constructed as an individual moral imperative that frames unsafe work environments, impossible deliverable timeframes, and constant affective labor within meritocratic discourse. Within this greater architecture, merit constructs coronavirus politics within localized institutional economies; through practices like grading and achieve-

ment norms, resilience retrofits a facade for the collective pandemic violence that disabled students refuse to tolerate. Put another way, resilience frameworks manipulate the meritocracy reward system to place the onus on individual students to mitigate institutional irresponsibility and harm.

Is it possible to reject structures that place the burden of resilience on our students? To do so would interrogate meritocratic norms and replace them with meaningful disruptions of care work, a core commitment from which disability justice derives its *modus operandi*.¹ Though instructors and students do not have to identify with critical disability community to use care work methods toward student well-being, the overall ethos of community-first care is a core commitment of disability justice activism. Relatedly, we believe that instructors are primarily responsible for demonstrating the humility of holistic academic practice: how to learn, and perhaps more importantly, how to unlearn that which is no longer helpful, such as old measurement systems of merit and deservingness.

We acknowledge the concern that this conversation may disproportionately impact, harm, or otherwise overrepresent disabled instructors who present institutions with unique opportunities for excessive exploitation due to their expertise in mobilizing for emergency remote teaching (or accommodated) circumstances. Disability theorist Travis Chi Wing Lau reflects candidly on this additional vector of harm potentiality:

accommodations are delimited to specific ‘reasonable’ accommodations (consider the ableism built into that qualifier) and require what Ellen Samuels has called ‘biocertification’ or verifiable ‘proof’ of one’s disability (i.e. a doctor’s referral or test results) and the degree to which it needs accommodation. In my own attempt to access faculty accommodations (if there are any even offered to faculty), I have had to provide letters of verification by spine specialists, chiropractors, physical therapists, and sometimes images of my x-rays or MRIs in order to prove that, in fact, I do need an ergonomic office space. (8-9)

Here, an accommodated teaching model becomes necessarily contingent on Travis’ ability to quickly and sacrificially adapt to ad-hoc policymaking done without his consent or negotiation: while before the COVID-19 pandemic it was the institution’s responsibility to appropriately accommodate Travis’ bodymind in order to teach (a dynamic that invests in biocertification in order to function as designed). Under emergency remote teaching protocols, core workplace accommodations are individualized and translated as a personal problem to overcome rather than parsed as exploitative working conditions. Accommodations often fail to productively interrogate the nature of

the need: in Travis' case, dozens of pages of medical paperwork are required to begin investigating solutions. This accommodation framework relies on Travis to self-fund and self-advocate for safe work conditions in wildly dissimilar private workspaces. Instead of proving he isn't faking it, Travis is now required to prove his ability to prove his resilient ability to teach in crisis conditions with insufficient accommodations. Disabled instructors like Travis have been carefully playing this game all along. Similarly, faculty disabilities have always been judged in a pejorative, collectivistic potpourri of performance reports and ableist evaluation standards, but a new discomfort emerges in the expectation to self-sustain resiliently. The classic accommodations framework cannot support disability-in-space because it prioritizes workers who can self-sacrifice the most (ergo maximizing productive output) in service of efficiency. In the end, the disabled professor faces the dual impossibilities of reasonable accommodation and reasonable expectation of output.

Because so much of our praxis manifests through the lens of disability justice, our pathways toward enacting care in our classroom spaces draw on theories from critical disability studies, including kairotic space and crip time. As theorized by Margaret Price, kairotic space describes “less formal, often unnoticed areas in academe where knowledge is produced and power is exchanged” (Yergeau et al.). Our classrooms—where students are often expected to spontaneously join classroom conversations and carefully adhere to a vague social contract that privileges nondisabled people—are kairotic spaces. Normative interpretations of concepts like kairotic spaces result in the misunderstanding that classrooms are neutral places of embodiment, and “their impact tends to be underestimated by those who move through them with relative ease” (Yergeau et al.). In considering classrooms kairotically, Price moves toward centering flexibility as access.

In thinking through kairotic spaces, teachers should question the structures that make it difficult for marginalized students to move easily through classroom space. To that end, crip time is useful as a concept that moves away from ableist models of student resilience. Crip time understands that time itself is not experienced as a normative (Samuels), and we join other composition studies and critical disability scholars in imagining how to continue crippling time in the writing classroom (Price; Wood). Bernice Olivas insightfully argues that we can best serve our students by taking our classes “out of normative time, to ignore linear time, and to allow a flexible understanding of time to shape [our] classroom[s]” (260). Through these senses of kairotic space and crip time, writing teachers can reorganize their classrooms by shifting the expectation of resilience from students to course documents.

What follows are a few ways to create such course documents and classroom spaces that ease the burden of resilience for students already struggling

with the expectation to perform in neuronormative ways. And while that is a burden that should rest with the institution, this consideration alone is not enough reason to fail to shield our students.

Experiments in Resilient Design

Below are four experiments that demonstrate kairotic space and crip time instructional design strategies and center community-first learning in first year composition classrooms. There are a few macro-conditions worth indicating: sarah was privileged at her institution to choose readings, activities, and assessment layouts that required no other inputs or approvals. Ada works in a more sanctioned environment with less overall autonomy. We recognize that our visions of care work and student justice are ultimately still trapped within ableist, sexist, racist and hegemonic environmental institutions, but—to borrow from education theorist Kevin Gannon—we maintain radical hope that our experiments demonstrate achievable, empathic design work requiring total abolitionist advocacy of such institutions. The ability to manifest change, like writing itself, is incremental and always-already ongoing in education. In that spirit, we humbly offer our experiments in implementing care in our classrooms by offering students more flexibility and offering ourselves more grace.

Experiment 1: sarah's Community-First Comp Syllabus

The syllabus is not a wayfinder. It is not a contract in legalese, a productivity olympiad, or a listicle of required metrics from which to invent objective grading practices. It is a core community manifesto. There are ways to create dialogue in a syllabus without implicitly recreating academic bureaucracy and its poisonous hierarchies, including the top-down assumption that the instructor knows what is best for everyone in the room in all instances, at all times, forevermore. Co-design practices in social work facilitation (e.g. from Peter Beresford, Kristen Clark, and Nev Jones) inspired my decision to rewrite instructional documents to better center community-first environments. This approach places much of the inherent burden of resilience back on document design, rather than relying on students.

One guiding question for this redesign is: How do we create safe spaces that can hold discomfort and discord with empathy and tolerance? One way into speaking with students in the spirit of co-design and crip-mad positivity is to harness unknowing and discordance as part of the course documentation writing process. For example, my first year writing syllabus is recreated in Appendix 1. During the piloting of this course, I shared a community version of the syllabus (with classroom server links and other privacy violations removed) with other experimental design enthusiasts. This shareware approach to course

materials modeled to my students that they were not the only ones required to follow community-first academic structures. This helped me honoring beloved community work.²

Relatedly, I intentionally placed accessibility considerations before evaluation metrics of any kind. This reinforces assurances made in-class that access is more important than outcomes. The order of a traditional syllabus mirrors and legitimizes the bureaucratic rendering of what is important in a course: Learning Outcomes, Grading, then everything else. So, following the logic of environment-over-outcomes, I organized grading mechanics after the weekly content breakdown. In short, I am reversing that implicit orientation in the rhetorical decision to frontload the community experience over explicit metrics. These organizational choices were a way to visibly question the hierarchies and meritocratic paradigms that most syllabi take as standard, for granted, or non-negotiable. The evaluation metrics (the tripartite structure, discussed below) rely strongly on students' ability to co-facilitate warmth and willingness to write with others, which (in my mind) reinforces the frontloading of the environment and the centrality of community with other bodyminds. When taken as a holistic manifesto, the syllabus and core course documents establish a fundamental resilience groundwork in the classroom and attempt to reorient the burden of resilience away from students.

In weeks 4, 8, and 11 there are wellness check-in surveys. These surveys investigate resilience work for students; they also allow me to engage, assess, and reposition course outcomes to align with my own needs and those of the classroom community. In this engagement and reassessment, I factor in our collective experiences of time spent on assignment design, completion, and grading. Using these wellness check-in surveys, we co-design solutions to difficulties at the individual, team, or collective levels by attending to the community experience of writing as a care work collective. Our redesigns include things like canceling activities (e.g. our writespaces), team read-around changes, shifting online, adding discussions of best practices, and attending to weekly housekeeping. I intentionally put them in randomized teams of six for the term, both to promote camaraderie and to create alternate avenues of support in the very real case that I am unavailable in their moment of crisis.

This suite of documents pre-designed for frequent changes, the wellness check-ins practice, and the creation of peer teams for collaboration and mutual aid helped us ensure that the course content was not being delivered in exchange for their mental wellness. Students were encouraged to use assessment activities to reflect on structural harm, counterstorying (Martinez), and the affectations of unfairness within academy architectures. These co-facilitated decompression spaces – individually (via journaling) and collectively (as a full class or within their team units) – created a dynamic that students described as “essential

to why my writing has exceeded my expectations” (A1) and “creat[ing] an environment of writing with the intention of it being read, not just marked” (A2). In addition, the documents, check-ins, and team format changed student dispositions toward writing, with one student candidly reflecting that “now I write what I feel I write to create, and to me, actual writing surpasses the need for a score.” (A3)

This course design started with a carefully crafted syllabus that could recognize need, reject student-oriented resilience and meritocracy, and respond to harm/disorder at multiple levels: structurally, individually, and by mutual aid. It then proceeded through multiple levels of supporting activities—like check-ins and writing teams— that actively take away the burden of resilience from students and place it squarely onto the collective work of the course and the documents themselves.

Experiment 2: Ada’s Crip Care Online Policies

While my (Ada’s) institution has more formal requirements that shape the syllabus than Sarah’s, I still labored to layer care work into the course documents, crafting course policies that shoulder resilience while allowing students and myself more flexibility (see Figure 1). I crafted these policies around what I’ve noted as spaces of tension, where students express anxieties around certain aspects of the course and where I also experienced anxiety around course requirements—and often the most labor. These policies include an Access Statement, a Late Work Policy, an Attendance Policy (inspired by Nicolas), and a Basic Needs Statement, but the tenor of these statements was intended to be genuine care.

The accessibility/inclusion statement—sincerely offering to make individual adjustments to the course to suit students’ learning needs—was an attempt at access advocacy in course materials (Osorio). I realize the offer to adjust the course may seem quite time intensive at first glance, especially for those teaching several sections of courses or those in precarious teaching positions. But many of the requests were truly minor tweaks that made the class more accessible for everyone—often while ultimately reducing my labor as an instructor. For example, one student, who was working through personal trauma, simply requested to create voice-only Flipgrid submissions. I subsequently made this option available to the whole course, and created options for students who wanted to do text-only submissions. Another asked if I could send an email at the beginning of each week with assignment reminders to help them manage ADHD, which I made a standard practice in all of my online classes. I began emailing each class at the beginning of each week with a short update and a glance of the week ahead, a practice that I’ve found ultimately saves labor because I received fewer emails asking me for that information. While a few

Ada's Course Policies

I'm on your team. *Please, please, please* utilize my office hours throughout the semester and feel free to email me (the fastest and best way to reach me) with questions or concerns. I'm here to help, and I want you to be successful in this class and beyond.

I want you to succeed at your academic goals, but—more importantly—I am concerned about your holistic well-being. If there's some reasonable measure I can take to make your life better, let's talk about how to do that, okay? That said, **here are my basic course policies:**

Accessibility/Disability Inclusion Statement: I am happy to work with you to change aspects of the course to best suit your learning needs. If some aspect of the course is inaccessible for you in any way, reach out and we'll work something out. While I cannot meet every request, I am happy to work with you to make alterations including changing assignments, projects, or other aspects of the course on an individualized basis. That's the deal even if you *do not* have ADA accommodations (that said, it's also my job to provide any ADA accommodations, too, and I do so gladly! More information on formal accommodations through SHSU are included below).

Assignments and "Late Work": Due dates for each assignment are listed in Blackboard. These deadlines are created to help you keep pace with the course, but if an extension would be helpful, please email me and request one. *A note:* If you turn in a paper after the deadline, you may receive minimal to no feedback from me, but may see me during office hours to discuss your work.

Attendance: As we have an online class, our "attendance" means completing the activities outlined in Blackboard each week. Part of our attendance requirements (and assignments) will mean complete Flip-grid assignments to facilitate asynchronous discussions. You will also be expected to complete each week's readings, outlined on the syllabus. If you need more flexibility with any of these assignments, I am happy to work with you. Please email me or see me during (virtual) office hours.

Basic Needs and Security Statement: Your personal well-being is important to me. If you find yourself struggling, reach out. Though I am only qualified to be an English teacher, we can work together to locate the resources you do need. Here are a few linked resources should you need them: [SHSU Food Pantry](#) +++ [SAAFE House](#)

Figure 1. Ada's Crip Care Course Policies (Hubrig)

students have requested more substantial adjustments, these were made in collaboration with the student; in the end, the adjustments created minimal extra labor from either one of us while still allowing students flexibility, while attempting to respect the mental and emotional labor of seeking access for these students (Konrad 180). I see this work as access pedagogy, a conscious effort to “defer to the lived expertise of the sick/disabled person to determine and communicate their own needs” (Rice-Evans 3).

Similarly, the late work policy was meant to absorb labor rather than create it. In the past, I attempted to eliminate due dates entirely, but I found removing any kind of due date actually made my course harder for some students, including many neurodivergent students who often explicitly requested more structure. Instead, I created flexible, soft due dates that offer students a clear sense of pacing for the course yet enough flexibility that we may operate on crip time, together. Students may request extensions—with no expectation that they offer a reason—and I am happy to offer extensions. I also emailed students after the fourth, eighth, and twelfth week (of a sixteen-week semester) to remind them that they may still turn in late work, and many do. They still completed the required labor and developed as writers, but with greater flexibility. To allow myself flexibility, I reserved the right to limit comments and feedback on work that was turned in after the due date. I communicated to the class that this was not because I don’t want to offer feedback, but because I have carefully structured the due dates to allow myself time to respond to each class, and the time I set aside to respond has passed. Students are still encouraged to see me during office hours (which were held virtually in response to the pandemic) to discuss their drafts. This practice allowed me the ability to offer flexibility to students without forcing me as the instructor to be more resilient and ignore my own needs and time, extending crip time to myself, too.

These policies, together, were meant to both offer students flexibility while mitigating the added labor on my part to provide that flexibility. This recognizes that my labor is also a limited resource and that I require a degree of flexibility to tend to my own disabled bodymind. These policies mostly opened spaces and possibilities, granting students more agency in shaping their learning.

Experiment 3: sarah’s Tripartite Classroom Assessment Layout

Appendix 1 (subheader “Assessment Structure”) outlines my grading methodology, which manifests mad positivity and attempts to problematize the valorization of the individual in academic space. Each element of the tripartite classroom assessment structure—journaling, peer review, and group presentations—has been done before, and readers may feel that some elements have been overdone. However, I hope that a neurodivergent translation of extant techniques revitalizes and reorients teaching toward more authentic

(read: unforced and/or unenforced) community jampaces. I spend a lot of time asking myself how to make old methods translate to new generations as authentic, empathetic, and welcoming. As a result of this and the accompanying desire to create safe, brave spaces for writing and inquiry, I experimented with a dependable course cycle of writespaces (journaling), workshops (peer review), and read-arounds (presentations), reimaged from a specifically mad-positive instructional lens.

Each tripartite element makes clear its intended social organization: writespaces are private journaling exercises, workshops are community agreements, and read-arounds are community engagements. While writespaces take place once or twice a week, peer review workshops and read-around presentations cycle approximately once a month after the first month of introduction to rhetorical orientation to writing. In a four-month term, students will have completed consistent cycles for a total of twelve writespaces, three workshops, and three read-arounds. This creates a comfortable cycle of writing work—a boon for students that require extra planning, extra notice, solid temporal structures, coherence, and/or crisis planning around temporary hiatuses. The writespaces were experimental safe spaces where students created asynchronous reflective analysis (using a combination of counterstorying, lived experience, and timely research) relevant to a prompt that encouraged self-selection of topic matter. They then submitted their investigations only to me for low-stakes completion points and an opportunity for skills feedback. One of my students managed to make every prompt relevant to *Skyrim* lore, and through the lens of his best-loved videogame he was able to tackle extremely controversial and rhetorically complex topics like racial counternarratives, African colonization, and superstructural oppression. On the other hand, writer's workshops and read-arounds required them to work either in their predefined course teams (of six students) or as a class collective. In all three instances, I tried to avoid narrating the ways that students orient themselves to the course, instead letting them create rhetorical resonance.

Students were asked three times during term to take their favorite writespace entries and undertake an asynchronous, guided peer review within their course teams. The use of teams provided an extra layer of draft safety, as we called it, because it took place in a social situation that mitigated a huge flashpoint of anxiety, particularly for psychosocially disabled students. Peer reviews were complemented with a review worksheet that integrated the peer reviewer's lived experiences at least as much as their uptake of class content.³ After a revisionary period, teams elected a team member to present at the all-class read-around, where I stressed the positive (or cheerleading) interactions with students' presented works. This mandated cheerleading works because the peer review provides enough mechanical and rhetorical feedback to make

another round of constructive critique unnecessary (especially in a high-pressure presentation space). Instead, we used read-arounds to reinforce some of the joys of community writing: pointing out and celebrating great metaphors or imagery, cheering on a brave classmate for finding the energy to share with us, or sharing stories of connection in contexts they may not have heard before. Read-arounds were a trauma-informed exercise design meant to promote self-assurance, create community safety, and provide first year students with an idea of their core writing strengths without always having to dilute them with criticism.

Instead of experiencing peer review and presentation days marked with fear, profound anxiety, and the occasional student breakdown, students looked forward to review and read-around days. I attribute this enjoyment to this tripartite assessment design, which created kairotic, mad-positive spaces to enjoy community and celebrate writing by offloading the burden of resilience onto the assessment layout and corresponding grade structure.

Indeed, students felt that “the community changed my approach to writing as I felt safe to write whatever was really on my mind without being judged by my peers. I also believe doing the writers workshop was beneficial as other students’ writing can open your mind to new perspectives and ideas” (A4). Another student contrasted this course with previous writing experiences: “previously I wrote the way teachers asked so that I would get the grade I desired, I strictly followed rubrics and writing guides to create writings that I believed that the teachers would like, even if they were bland and did not represent my actual feelings” (A5). Echoing a colleague, another student shared candidly that “I have throughout the term concluded that passion for what you’re writing about is directly correlated to the effectiveness and strength of the writing piece. Moreover, community learning has enabled me to educate myself about others writing styles and performances, which have benefited them throughout the term. This term, understanding and acknowledging my weaknesses as a writer has been a product of community interaction.” (A6)

Experiment 4: Ada’s asynchronous writing workshop

In another attempt to offer more flexibility, Ada introduced asynchronous writing workshops built around a work-in-progress draft. The work-in-progress assignment itself was built around objective goals and granted students flexibility in choosing to turn in something more akin to an outline, some visual representation of their ideas, a more formal completed draft, or other modes of composing that made sense for their writing process.

Following Ada’s assignment policy for class, students were given a soft due date to complete their work-in-progress, and Ada explained to the class that they would be able to give better feedback for their writing if the students were

able to meet that soft due date. From Ada's estimation, around 90% of students completed their work-in-progress draft by the soft due date.

For this online, asynchronous course, I carefully read each draft after the soft due date. Along with written feedback for each student, I created a short video overview of common features I observed in the essays. These captioned videos provided students a walk-through of revision strategies that elaborate on the written comments they received, often focusing on common struggles in the class, like confusion about how to incorporate research into their writing or suggestions to help with organization. In response to both the written feedback and the video, students responded with a Flipgrid video (or posted written comments) where they talked through the feedback and discussed how they would build on that feedback in the next draft. Importantly, students also watched and commented on each other's recorded videos, learning from one another's revision strategies.

Because these workshops were facilitated asynchronously, sometimes students who were working past the soft due date were completing their workshops weeks (or sometimes months) later than their peers—and this was okay. This process allowed us to hold writing workshops in crisp time, with the combination of the soft due date, the work-in-progress, and the asynchronous workshop creating space for students who benefited from added flexibility while still allowing the class to have a meaningful writing workshop experience. The structure was meant to prioritize their needs, rather than rigidity.

Envisioning Pathways Forward

With these experiments, we hope we have demonstrated our attempts at shifting resilience architectures onto the course documents and assignment activities themselves, rather than asking students to be resilient or creating extra labor for instructors. These experiments in community-building and flexibility prioritize care and student well-being; they reject calls for individualizing the incredible burden of promoting student resilience.

In offering these experiments, we wish to identify some of the limitations of our experiments into crisp-mad positive instruction. It is possible that the near-future moments create instructional conditions so removed from past and present teaching that the experiments presented here will have to undergo significant restructuring in the trauma of future-time. Teaching is an of-the-moment and culturally responsive activity; as culture and trauma change, so must our ethos and pedagogies.

sarah's experience—while making valuable use of lived mad experience in the academy—is of course warped and harmed by spending almost her entire professionalization in pandemic conditions. This unites her with early career academics of all kinds, and that connection cannot be clouded by the

nostalgia of some pre-violent or pre-trauma past. But it also works to dissociate her from discourse communities with more traditional techniques and ways of knowing, a group that often relies on intimate knowledge of the so-called normal conditions. (The loss of these is a common lament of more experienced instructors.) Ada's experiences are shaped by chronic illness and frequent hospitalizations—needing to create pockets to allow themselves the flexibility to tend to their bodymind's idiosyncratic needs, including need for isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the academic search for practices that can be reliably scaled for mass reproduction and universal applicability, resilience experiments only have so much scalability: these are not methods that can be taught en-masse at conferences, conventions, and paid professional development seminars. The ways these methods come alive are, rather, through remix and revitalization in local contexts and in specific temporalities and environments. As importantly, each specific group of students must be ready (or made ready) to share (or not share) their kaleidoscopic views with their writing communities. This is a gift and should be treated as such.

We understand many writing instructors are already overworked in higher education, even without our call to expend precious energy to try these experiments in accessibility and care. You are heard, seen, and loved, dear reader. The excess affective labor required of instructors, particularly disclosed and undisclosed disabled instructors, is reprehensible and core to a harm mechanic that relies on meritocratic mythology to create situations where the most abled 'deserve' academy space at the expense of everyone else trying to speak their visions of an unstable truth. We believe strongly in the abolition of bureaucratic paradigms and the neoliberal turn toward what is most profitable over what is most profound; and what is most profound is the inclusive rhetorical education of our allies and our present and future students (and instructor peers!) who may echo the same refrains in stronger, smarter ways. Though small acts of classroom resilience do not topple superstructures, we believe in planting the seed for the tree you'll never see. By continuously creating pathways where resilience is accounted for in instructional design, it is possible we help conjure a future where student and instructor energy is expended less on struggling against meritocratic machines and more on dismantling the machine altogether.

We offer these experiments in care, to borrow from Ada, as our own work-in-progress pedagogical drafts. We offer these experiments—which emerge from commitments to disability justice and care and are shaped by the concepts of kairotic space and crip time—to offer flexibility and kindness to our students and to ourselves. Resilient document design is born of a need to jettison the ableist violence of student resilience and the knowledge that it is our institutions that require further scrutiny, not our students (Anglesey and

McBride; Brewer et. al.; Gaeta; Hitt). We invite you to take what is helpful in your teaching contexts, kind humans, and leave the rest behind.

Appendix 1

ENGL109 – Introduction to Academic Writing*

Section: #LEC007 Winter 2022

Instructor: sarah currie (prefers decapitalized)

Meeting: Mondays & Wednesdays 10:00AM – 11:20AM EST

Location: Environment 3 Building, Room 3406 & ENGL 109 Discord server (link deactivated for community syllabus edition)

Office Hours: PAS 2213, Tuesdays 12:00PM—1:00PM EST

Contact: sarah.currie@uwaterloo.ca

* If you have this syllabus open on a computer, please play & modify! You can change the text size, orientation, or background colour; order of elements/sections; highlight sections especially relevant to your needs; adjust spacing or port to reader/conversion programs; and more. This is your master document for this course, and it should appear in the format that feels most intuitive for you. The “default” version is just a suggestion.

Quick Navigation

Use CTRL + LEFT CLICK to follow the links listed below directly to the corresponding syllabus element. You can change the order of these elements in Microsoft Word.

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- Course Calendar Description (p1)
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Course Calendar Description

The course will explore a variety of issues in academic writing such as style, argument, and the presentation of information. English 109 is designed to get you comfortable writing in an academic context. You will learn about

different forms of academic writing, as well as the processes that great writers engage in to create their best work. You will read texts to learn more about how they were written, and thus to improve your own writing. Because we value learning as a social activity, and thus recognize that writers and readers learn from one another, much of your work in English 109 will involve different kinds of collaboration with your peers.

Required Materials

- A notebook of your choice (physical notebook, Notion, Wordpress or other blogspace, Microsoft Notes notebook, etc.) with lined pages, 50+ pages. You will do in-class activities, take-home writing exercises and peer review with this notebook.
- We will be using all open-access digital texts in this class read: freely available on the internet).

Accessibility and Inclusion

I like to talk about access before we talk about grading and assessments because I think that sends a clear message about what is important to me. Part of this inclusivity policy is providing a lot of freedom as to how you choose to participate and contribute to our writing community.

My job is to walk alongside you on this learning pathway and ensure you have everything you need to do well in this course. I want to work with you as individuals and as a class community to make sure we can navigate that pathway in the most equitable way we can imagine as a team. There is no formal attendance policy. There is no formal lateness policy. I choose to respect and trust your self-knowing and boundaries, and I hope you gain that for me over time as well.

I do wellness check-ins during weeks 3, 7, and 11 to regroup and assess our needs as a collective in the ever-changing circumstances of pandemic academy.

I don't require medical validation for accommodations requested. I don't require you to be registered with AccessAbility Services to talk about your needs inside and outside the classroom. I am aware that needs fluctuate and change throughout the term, and I hope you'll keep me in your circle of conversations pertaining to your ever-changing situations. I can leverage my access at this institution to help you best if I'm in the loop about your unique situation.

Pandemic Planning & Living Syllabus

This term (W2022) is starting as a remote-pandemic term, and I imagine it will continue that way at the end of January. We will navigate this as a community and re-adjust our living, resilient syllabus as we move through term as best we can. By making plans to accommodate ourselves later, we may save ourselves a lot of stress in the long-term. The wellness check-ins are designed to give us space to re-design and re-format what elements appear when in accordance with our community needs.

Week-to-Week Breakdown

When we use co-designed frameworks, we create resilient, living documents that can accommodate our changing needs as we move through this term (though this version should act as a good approximation in the meantime).

TIME	TEXT	TALK & TAKE HOME
Week 1 (-) (5 Jan)	Monday syllabus & what on earth is academic writing? “ Genres/Types of Documents ” (2018) <i>NDSU Center for Writers</i> Wednesday Writespace 1: one truth & one lie rhetoric activity	Syllabus breakdown, designing Cozy Space, creating community agreements
Week 2 (10 Jan) (12 Jan)	Monday “ 2.2 Genres, Stories and Academic Writing ” (2020) “ 2.3 Academic Writing as a Genre ” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i> Writespace 2: our voices on the page Wednesday “ Writing Op-Eds That Make a Difference ” (2021) <i>Indivisible & Op-Ed Projects</i> “ What I Want Your Voice To Do ” (2018) Jessie Van Eerden	(Wednesday) Take home: Writespace 3: my take/your take op-eds
Week 3 (17 Jan) (19 Jan)	Monday “ 1.2 Holistic Academic Writing ” (2020) “ 1.8 Your Own Process ” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i> “ Rethinking Our Compulsion to Comparison ” Emily Beswick Wednesday Writing Workshop I: facilitated peer	(Wednesday) Take home: revising your peer-reviewed entry (Online) Wellness Check-in 1

<p>Week 4 (24 Jan) (26 Jan)</p>	<p>Monday “2.6 Common Sub-Genres of Academic Writing” “2.7 The Essay” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i> sarah’s Academic Thesis Crash Course</p> <p>Wednesday Read-Around: peer-edited favourite journal entry (group feedback & cheerleading)</p>	<p>(Wednesday) Take home: Writespace 4: conjuring an argument outline</p> <p>Read-Around Feedback dropbox</p>
<p>Week 5 (31 Jan) (2 Feb)</p>	<p>Monday “3.4 Knowing Your Audience” (2020) “3.5 Everything’s Persuasion” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i> “Book Review: Counterstory” (2021) Danielle Pappo Writespace 5: imagining the counterstory</p> <p>Wednesday sarah’s Academic Argument Crash Course Writespace 6: arguing your case</p>	
<p>Week 6 (7 Feb) (9 Feb)</p>	<p>“4.5 Quick Guide to Undergraduate Research” “4.6 Citational Practice” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i></p> <p>Pick 2 from this list + 1 other video of your choice: Video Essay: “The Philosophy of Rick and Morty” (2015) via <i>Wisecrack Show</i> Video Essay: “Superposition: the Genre of Life is Strange” (2017) via <i>Innuendo Studios (tw: suicide)</i> Video Essay: “Who is Responsible for Climate Change? Who Needs to Fix It?” (2020) via <i>Kurzgesagt: In a Nutshell</i></p>	<p>Take home: Writespace 7 & 8: arguing your case II & critical review (of self-selected video essay)</p>
<p>Week 7 (14 Feb) (16 Feb)</p>	<p>Monday Breakdown of big takeaways from first half of course Breakdown of video essays and “viral” arguments</p> <p>Wednesday Writing Workshop II: facilitated peer review of arguing your case I and arguing your case II entries</p>	<p>(Wednesday) Take home: revising one of the arguing your case entries</p>
<p>Reading Week (21 Feb) (23 Feb)</p>		<p>(Online) Wellness Check-in 2</p>

<p>Week 8 (28 Feb) (2 Mar)</p>	<p>Monday “5.7 Breaking Rules (With a Purpose)” (2020) “5.8 Voice” (2020) <i>Why Write? A Guide for Students in Canada</i> Take up & Writespace 9: imagining alt-realities with voice sarah’s Rhetoricity roundtable</p> <p>Wednesday Read-Around: your favourite journal entry from entries 4 – 10 (group feedback & cheerleading)</p>	<p>Read-Around feedback dropbox</p> <p>(Wednesday) Take home: Writespace 10: rhetoricity & audience appeal</p>
<p>Week 9 (7 Mar) (9 Mar)</p>	<p>Monday Beyond Academia: writing genres in STEM, Business, etc., co-op and professional writing</p> <p>Wednesday Writespace 11: drafting for business, co-operative education, internships and alt-academia</p>	<p>(Wednesday) Take home: finishing edited draft of business entry</p>
<p>Week 10 (14 Mar) (16 Mar)</p>	<p>Monday Beyond Academia: bias and access – who is being left out of our conversations?</p> <p>Wednesday ARTS190 FEEDBACK TRADE DAY – trading journal entry with Dr. Lamont’s ECE students</p>	<p>(Wednesday) Take home: Writespace 12: access and academic writing entry</p>
<p>Week 11 (21 Mar) (23 Mar)</p>	<p>Monday Writing Workshop III: revising best journal entries, self-facilitated peer review, workshoping best journal entries from this term Breakdown of big takeaways from second half of the course</p> <p>Wednesday ARTS190 FEEDBACK TRADE BACK DAY – trading back feedback with ECE students sarah’s community callback overview: writing acknowledgements</p>	<p>(Wednesday) Take home: Writespace 13: gratitude and community writing</p> <p>(Online) Wellness Check-in 3</p>
<p>Week 12 (28 Mar) (30 Mar)</p>	<p>Monday Writing Workshop IV: revising best journal entries, self-facilitated peer review, workshoping best journal entries from this term</p> <p>Wednesday Read-Around Final Symposium: café & clever writings (your best journal entry from this semester) (polished peer feedback & extra cheerleading)</p>	<p>(Online) Exit interview: writing crash course, key reflections</p> <p>(Online) SUBMIT BY 13 APRIL: 5 best journal entries (edited and polished) & 2 best peer feedback reviews (originals)</p>

Course Goals (Objectives)

I think it makes sense to tell you what I was trying to indoctrinate you with after you've read the syllabus outline. I have three clear expectations I hope you develop as a result from walking this academic writing pathway with me:

1. Learner is able to rhetorically assess, value, and critically comment on the validity and prescience of casual (non-academic) material and some academic (editorial or undergraduate) material.
2. Learner is able to use voice, diction, genre, and other rhetorical tools to present a reasonably compelling argument to a peer reader of similar academic background.
3. Learner is able to present short written works to an audience in a manner which demonstrates appropriate style, tone, and rhetoricity to academic situations.

Assessment Structure

The assessment layout of this course is a tripartite structure (three points, like a triangle): Writer's Journal, Writer's Workshops, and Read-Arounds. Laid out simply, the course unfolds like this:

WRITER'S JOURNAL (writespace exercises) [20%]

Your private practice, so be loud and experiment boldly. Complete 12 entries over 13 weeks (see weekly breakdown). You will have to submit these to the weekly dropbox, but I will not read them (proof of completion / this is otherwise your playground).

WRITER'S WORKSHOPS (community agreement) [20%]

Facilitated paired peer reviews in week 3 and 6, self-facilitated peer reviews in weeks 11 and 12. There will be dropbox submissions where you will submit your peer feedback, as well as a workshop feedback (just for me to see).

READ-AROUNDS (community engagement) [20%]

Facilitated full-class community feedback and cheerleading in weeks 4, 8 and 12. There will be dropbox submissions where you will submit your group feedback, as well as a read-around feedback (just for me to see).

"FINAL EXAM" WRITING PORTFOLIO [35%]

Your 'exam' submission for this course is a portfolio dropbox submission of your 5 best journal entries, your 3 best peer reviews, and 1 exit interview from this semester's produced work.

GRATITUDE & COMMUNITY CARE [5%]

The final 5% of this course is awarded by your community (not me!) – you will have the chance in your exit interview to name classmates who you felt improved, helped you improve, or contributed cheerleading that created a greater sense of community in the writing classroom.

Assignment Expectations

We will discuss and revise the expectations in line with how our syllabus morphs and changes throughout the term. I also think it's important to have your input on how these elements are evaluated, because we exist as a reciprocal writing community.

Below are ideas of expectations, which we can evaluate as a class in weeks 1 and 2.

WRITER'S JOURNAL: Entries should be 300-500 words. There are 12 entries, but we can make 2+ non-penalized. We can also agree to “write 8 of your choice” toward your Portfolio. Can be assessed primarily by completion, or by quality. Can be assessed weekly, or at half-terms.

WRITER'S WORKSHOPS: Peer review entries should be 200-300 words. This activity is very difficult to opt-out of, because it creates unfairness for others. We can talk about how to deliver the feedback, “deadlines” for feedback, and formats for delivery (including video calls or video recordings). Submission of your best reviews to me can also be video clips. Can be assessed at the end of term, or after the workshops.

READ-AROUNDS: Same general guidelines as WRITER'S WORKSHOPS. Submit reflection exercise component with what you have learned from other students. This can be accomplished as a large-group or in 3-4 “team” groups. If the class takes a “team” structure, feedback would be organized by teams about each other.

PORTFOLIO: 5 best entries and 3 best reviews, as well as the exit interview, is required (I need something to formally evaluate this term). How this is accomplished is up for discussion. The workshops and read-arounds are designed to help you submit the best portfolio possible and learn from your community, as well as myself, about how to be a rhetorically convincing academic writer in Canadian communities.

GRATITUDE & COMMUNITY CARE: How many classmates to name, who can be named, or team dynamics can all contribute to this component. Extenuating circumstances during term can also be applied to this component.

Notes

1. To historicize care work's complex and luminary relationship to disability justice, please see: *Care Work* (Piepzna-Samarasinha), *The Care We Dream Of* (Sharman), *Crip Kinship* (Khafai), and *Beyond Survival* (Dixon and Piepzna-Samarasinha).

2. All documentation, particularly the syllabus, assignment sheets, and classroom materials used to facilitate major activities, were created for this course as open-access shareware that you're free to modify for your own community-first classrooms.

3. I made the Workshop Worksheet and the Read-Around cheerleading sheet freeware for curious pedagogues during this course pilot as well: access via <https://tinyurl.com/5p5yvvs> (for Workshop Worksheet) and <https://tinyurl.com/bprjft67> (for Read-Around Cheerleading Sheet).

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