OUTLINE
Making the Grade: How to Reduce Inherent Bias in Evaluating Creative Writing

<u>Panelist Bios:</u>

Aldrena Corder is the owner of This Little Brown Girl, a company that promotes positive images of Black women and girls through art and design. Ms. Corder is also assistant professor of art and design and art department chair at Columbia College of South Carolina.

Andrew Escanuela is a second-year PhD student in the Department of English at the University of Colorado Boulder. He teaches a literature class exploring hybrid Chicanx cultural forms and the spatial and cultural conflicts underpinning histories of the Southwest borderlands.

Lauren Fath is the author of the lyric essay chapbook *A Landlocked State* (Quarterly West, 2020). Her work has appeared in *Fourth Genre*, *Post Road*, and *poemmemoirstory*, among others, and has received Pushcart Prize and Best of the Net nominations. She received a PhD in English and creative writing from the University of Missouri, an MFA in nonfiction from Oregon State University, and a bachelor's degree in journalism from Northwestern University. She is chair of the English department at New Mexico Highlands University.

Nicole Stellon O'Donnell's *You Are No Longer in Trouble*, a memoir-in-flash about being a teacher, a student, and a principal's daughter was the 2019 open reading selection for Marie Alexander Series. Her third book, *Everything Never Comes Your Way*, is forthcoming in 2021. Her writing has won fellowships from the Rasmuson Foundation and the Alaska Arts and Culture Foundation. A recipient of a Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching, she has taught creative writing to teens in public schools for almost 20 years.

Julie Marie Wade is the author of 12 collections of poetry, prose, and hybrid-forms. She began teaching freshman composition in 2001 as a Master's student at Western Washington University. Since then, she has taught continuously in a variety of contexts, including as a graduate teaching fellow in a PhD program, a Humanities teacher at a rural boarding school, an adjunct professor at a women's college, and since 2012, as a tenure-stream faculty member in the undergraduate and graduate creative writing programs at Florida International University in Miami.

<u>Format:</u>

- Lauren Fath (moderator) will provide context for the panel and how it came to be
- Individual panelists will introduce themselves
- Round-table, conversational Q&A format:
  - Moderator asks question and calls on first person to respond
  - Moderator asks whether anyone wishes to follow up on initial response
  - Moderator synthesizes panelist responses and moves on to next question

<u>Questions the Panel Will Address:</u>

- What institutional pressures do you feel in grading and assessing? How can we create classroom structures and guidelines/policies that subvert or support (perhaps inadvertently) these institutional pressures?
- How do the expectations of our students influence our grading?
- How do you balance inspiration with evaluation in your (creative writing) classroom, including specific strategies for counteracting personal bias in grading and for ensuring that grading doesn't actually inhibit learning and creative risk-taking?
- How can creative writing instructors take advice from the visual arts?
- How do a creative writing teacher's implicit biases impact their grading and assessment practices and how can they bring awareness to these?
- Do you think students notice your biases, and what do you do to be transparent in your grading and/or your response to manuscripts?
- How do the prevailing epistemic assumptions surrounding creative work (rigorous theory vs. "non"-rigorous creativity, STEM vs. arts) influence our grading?
- How does remote teaching/learning change expectations of and relationship to assessment?
- What practices do you currently have in place to avoid grading bias?