

**EVENT TITLE:
A DECADE OF PROFESSIONAL & CREATIVE
WRITING AT CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY (F142)**

**Date/Time:
10:35 a.m.-11:50 a.m. on Friday, March 10, 2023**

**Location:
Rooms 347-348, Summitt Building, Seattle Convention Center, Level 3**

EVENT DESCRIPTION:

How can writing programs provide undergraduate and graduate students with cutting edge, widely-applicable job skills and feed their creative writing aspirations? By what means can programs increase equity, inclusion and access to remote and campus students? Faculty and students from the CWU Professional & Creative Writing BA and MA programs share innovations in program design, course development, faculty support, and multimodal expertise that have enabled them to thrive in challenging times.

EVENT CATEGORY: Program Development

Event Organizer & Moderator

Katharine Whitcomb:

Katharine Whitcomb is director of the online Professional and Creative Writing MA program and co-founded/directed the nationally ranked online Professional and Creative Writing BA at Central Washington University. She's the author of six books, including the prize-winning collection, *The Daughter's Almanac: Poems* (University of Nebraska Press/The Backwaters Press); her new poetry collection, *Habitats*, will be published in September 2023 by Poetry Northwest Editions, in the Possession Sound Series.

Event Participants

Joshua Welsh:

Joshua Welsh earned his PhD in Rhetoric and Scientific and Technical Communication from the University of Minnesota in 2013. Since then, he has taught technical and professional writing courses in the English Department at Central Washington University. His current research involves looking for ways to improve our understanding of students' perspectives of online teaching and learning.

Maya Jewell Zeller:

Maya Jewell Zeller is the author of several books, most recently the forthcoming *out takes/ glove box*, chosen by Eduardo Corral for the 2022 New American Poetry Prize; and co-author of the textbook, *Advanced Poetry: Pathways Into Poetic Lineages* (forthcoming from Bloomsbury UK). Maya's memoir manuscript, "Raised by Ferns," was runner-up in last year's AWP Sue Silverman Prize for Creative Nonfiction. Maya serves as Associate Prof. at Central Washington University, where, with Josh Welsh, she coordinates the Professional and Creative Writing BA Programs.

Karla Yaritza Maravilla:

Karla Yaritza Maravilla is a CWU McNair fellow majoring in Eng. Lang. & Lit. and Prof. & Creative Writing, minoring in Latino/Latin American Studies. Her work appears in Poetry Northwest & her manuscript Casa de Negro House of Black was a semi-finalist in Notre Dame's Andrés Montoya Poetry Prize.

Ali A. Ünal:

Ali A. Ünal is a fiction writer from Turkey. He has an MFA from University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a PhD from University of Louisiana at Lafayette. His essays and short stories have appeared in both Turkey and the US. He teaches creative writing at the Central Washington University.

Opening Remarks:

Good morning and welcome to "A Decade of Professional & Creative Writing at Central Washington University. I'm Katharine Whitcomb (she/her/hers), the moderator of this panel.

Thank you for coming to this program development panel, during which we will share our experiences designing, delivering, teaching, learning, interacting, and growing within the Professional & Creative Writing B.A. and M.A. programs at Central Washington University.

Here's a little background to the development of our programs. In 2013 we launched the original face-to-face Professional & Creative Writing B.A. program, with the goal of serving our students' professional, artistic, and practical needs in writing. The program allows the student to take whatever combination of creative and/or professional writing classes they want, without the requirement of a track in Creative or Professional Writing. This undergraduate degree proved to be very popular, and in an effort to reach students remote to Ellensburg, (our main campus, 100 miles east of Seattle, over the Cascade Range) we expanded to include the option of a fully online

delivery. Within three years, our remote online student population grew from 7 to 130 students. And after much interest from our graduated students, Dr. Welsh and I developed a Professional & Creative Writing M.A. program, which is delivered fully online, except to our T.A.'s who participate in a hybrid learning format. Within the first year of introducing the Professional & Creative Writing M.A. program, the program was nationally ranked.

I will give short introductions of each of the participants, starting with myself.

The participants will take turns describing their roles within the unique writing programs at CWU (each approximately 8 minutes), giving details about the implementation, developments, and practices involved over the past ten years, including the student perspective, I'll then pose the four discussion questions to the panel for a more spontaneous exchange. The panel will end with a fifteen-minute audience Q & A.

Participant Initial Remarks:

Joshua Welsh :

I will talk about course design on the Professional side of the major and also our evolving multimodal pedagogical approaches.

- **Program Design:** Previously the program used a lot of Comm courses. I was brought in to help develop the professional writing offerings. We later hired Dr. Cynthia Pengilly to further develop the “professional” side of the major.
- **Course Design:** Professional Writing Faculty have developed a wide range of professional writing courses for the major, including redesigning Rhetoric for Professional Writers and Technical Writing and developing new courses such as Rhetoric and Visual Design, Research Methods for Workplace Writers, Grant Writing, and Accessible Information Design. Many of these courses have been developed to align with industry core competencies as established by the Society for Technical Communicators.
- **Multi-modal Approaches:** Faculty have worked to create rich asynchronous learning environments for our students, including novel ways to provide feedback and revision opportunities, use of student-question-driven video lectures, and embedded quizzes in video lectures. Other instructors have experiments with cutting-edge tools such as ChatGPT. We have found that this range of approaches provides students with a variety of learning opportunities as they work to improve as writers.

It's also important to note that our MA program grew from student demand. We designed a unique program in the region. Fully completable online, don't have to declare a track. In this way, it is similar to our BA program.

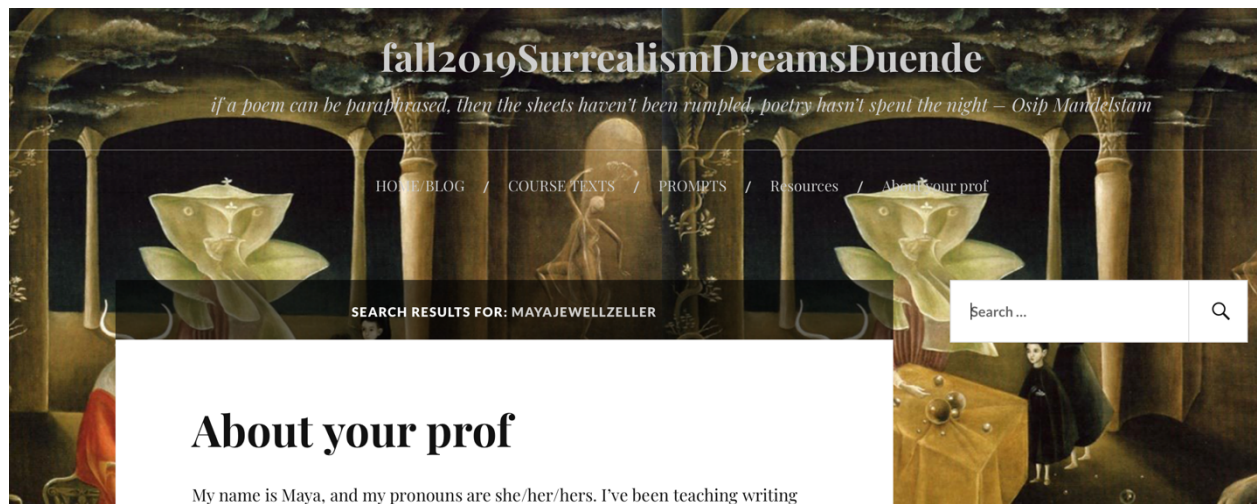
Maya Jewell Zeller :

Hello; I am Maya Jewell Zeller (she/her), Associate Professor of English and co-coordinator of the BA in Professional and Creative Writing at CWU. I serve or have served several roles in our programs, among them:

- Teaching: poetics, writing across genres, and publishing in our MA and BA programs, both face to face and online;
- Coordinating our visiting writers series (2019-2022);
- Facilitating student collaborations with folks in Art & Design, Dance, Theater, our museums and campus farms;
- Mentoring students in graduate applications, as well as professionalizing via conferences, residencies, and other formal affiliations and travel;
- Creating new courses and course matrixes in our general education track, that then pull in majors and minors into our English programs;
- Amping up our social media presence and general reach in the PNW, nation, and global scopes;
- & other pursuits, with which most of us who teach in these kinds of programs would be familiar.

For today's panel, however, the first innovation I will speak to specifically is my inclusion of BLOGS in writing pedagogy.

In both my online and hybrid face-to-face classes, students participate in a social constructivist approach that values their contribution to shared meaning-making. One of the multimodal approaches students value in my classes is our private blog, where students share early drafts of work, and celebrate one another's growth and risk-taking. These blogs are a space where students connect and create, and are a central tenet of inclusivity and community building for classes where some students are virtual and others are face-to-face.



[Image content: blog homepage for a lit course]

The second area of innovation/growth I will discuss is my role in our evolving Lion Rock Visiting Writers Series.

Begun by Katharine Whitcomb, this series has a long history of bringing to campus a diverse range of authors across genres, representative of our student demographic in myriad ways, including aesthetics. Prior to the pandemic, as is the case for many campus reading series, student interns already helped by working on PR, and, at events, reading author introductions. During the pandemic, the series shifted to an online (synchronous, Zoom) platform. This shift allowed us to pull in student participants from our online programs, and during my tenure as coordinator, I worked to recruit and mentor a diverse intern team of two interns from our online English majors and two from our campus English major, who as a team took turns taking on visiting writers with whom to liaise—including Paisley Rekdal, Dujie Tahat, Kristen Millares Young, Victoria Chang, and many others. In the past two years, these interns became a hybrid working group, sharing feedback with one another as they prepped author introductions and readings from their own original work as part of author events. This work helped with our programs' antiracist initiatives, lifting students as representative of our programs' inclusive demographics as the authors we brought to campus, virtually. The interns also organized and ran an outstanding hybrid student reading series.

Mentoring this group was one of my great personal joys and professional accomplishments during the pandemic, as we flexed to meet student needs for connection and intellectual community during a time of great isolation. This was also reflective of what our program always does for its online population—connect students across geographies. One of our panelists today, Karla Yaritza Maravilla, was

part of last year's stellar hybrid intern team. And another of our panelists, my colleague Ali Ünal, is now coordinating the series and ushering it into new spaces—more events are now fully hybrid in nature, synchronously broadcast as they are also occurring in-person.

I will be happy to talk more about my role in our innovative programs during our panelist questions, as well as during audience Q & A.

Karla Yaritza Maravilla :

My role as a student in the online Professional and Creative Writing program, while working in partnership with programs like McNair and LLAS, has ultimately prepared me for contemporary work environments in professional and technical writing and editing, creative publication and performance, research design and methods, and for advanced study in a graduate program.

I will talk about my participation in practicum courses, conferences, and relevant work experience through CWU made available through faculty mentorship and online/hybrid communication and student-led activities:

- Manastash Student Editor and Communications Advisor
- Lion Rock Visiting Writers' Series Intern
 - Helped bring various speakers to campus: Aimee Nezhukumatahil, Miah Jeffra, Kristen Millares Young, Chen Chen
 - connection with Kristen Millares Young, Subduction: a novel
- Symposium of University Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE) o "Synesthesia: A Manastash Reading" with Stephanie Davison, Gianna Starble, Zach Schloss, Caelyn White, and Emily Lyon.
 - Outstanding Presentation Award
- Southwest Popular American Culture Association conference (SWPACA) o "Curanderismo as Spiritual Healing in Alejandro Morales' 'The Rag Doll Plagues" - - "Dis/membered" -- connection with Wendy Barnes, Landscape with Bloodfeud
- Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program.
 - preparation in research design and methodologies
 - TAship in the McNair office

I will discuss the creative opportunities achieved through faculty mentorship and departmental and federal funding.

- “Sunburnt and Lonely.” VOOMPH: Poetry in Thirty Frames Per Second with Dayna Patterson, Katheryn Smith, Joanna Thomas, and Maya Jewell Zeller. Wenatchee Collapse Contemporary Art Gallery.
- “Caulked by the Linoleum Roses I read you The Song of Dimples,” Poetry Northwest.
- “La Casita Negra,” 2022 Andres Montoya Poetry Prize.
- Centrum Writers’ Conference
connection with Adrian Blevins
- LitFuse --multiple workshops with Kim Addonizio and WA state poet laureate Rena Priest
- GetLit! Festival forthcoming, featuring U.S poet laureate Ada Limon.

Ali A. Ünal :

Good morning, everyone.

My name is Ali Ünal. I’m a fiction writer, and I teach creative writing at Central Washington University for about six months now. Building on what Maya, Josh, and Karla said about our program, I will discuss the process of syllabus design and assignment building based on specific course outcomes.

While creating syllabi and designing assignments, I make sure that course outcomes inform the choices I make. The questions that guide me during my prep work are: How does this specific assignment help me achieve which course outcome, and how can I articulate that in the syllabus so that students know what they should expect to get out of the course as well as the assignments.

I will now give you two specific examples from the practicum course I taught last quarter—*Manastash*: Literary Journal Editing.

As Karla and Maya mentioned, our student journal *Manastash* is run by our students. In this practicum course, the professor, which is currently me, acts as a facilitator and an advisor while students develop an understanding of literary journal editing through practice—from reading the slush pile, to selecting pieces for publication, to editing and proofreading. One of the course outcomes, among others, is to “demonstrate knowledge of professional literary magazine editing processes by the end of the course.”

In order to meet this outcome, I have devised a set of assignments spread out throughout the first half of the quarter, collectively called *Journal Project*. Worth 40% of their final grade, students delivered a substantial report on the one issue of a nationally-distributed online or print magazine (like *Ploughshares*, *The Southern Review*, *Granta*, etc.) or online (like *Guernica*, *Quarterly West*, *Redivider*, etc.). Each week, they read all the pieces of one genre (fiction, poetry, nonfiction and artwork) and posted a short report around their findings: if the published pieces were selected around a theme, the length of the pieces, style and format differences or similarities. They also responded to the others' reports in an online discussion. By mid-quarter, I asked them to contact each genre editor separately to share their findings and start a dialogue concerning the magazine's editorial processes.

Through his assignment, they gained crucial experience on literary journal editing, editorial process, and professional correspondence, which satisfied the course outcome of "demonstrating knowledge of professional literary magazine editing processes by the end of the course."

The second half of the course required them to create a plan for the editorial process, to organize reading and editorial meetings, to select pieces for publication, to work with the authors of the selected pieces for editing, and to curate all the pieces around the theme.

Before they began this work, I created another assignment to satisfy another set of course outcomes: "Apply methods of professional correspondence in a literary magazine context" and "Apply principles for organizing creative work in a literary magazine." In partnership with the Lion Rock, we invited two editors to give the class a talk about managing, editing, and producing a literary magazine. The previous editor of *The Southern Review* and *The Paris Review*, Emily Nemens joined us virtually to speak about her experiences, and answered the students' questions while the previous editor of *Guernica*, Meakin Armstrong, discussed the unique relationship between editor and author as it related to revision and editing.

By the time the second half of the quarter came around, the students had completed a substantial literary journal project and listened to two prominent editors, an experience they then used to select, edit, and curate the next issue of *Manastash*. This quarter, in the second part of this practicum course, a new set of students are learning how to design and produce a literary journal.

The syllabus of this course lists all the assignments and weekly units by referring back to the course outcomes that each assignment and unit try to achieve. That way, students are aware at all times of the progress that they are making.

Thank you for listening to me.

Moderator Questions:

1. This panel will interest a wide range of faculty invested in increasing the reach of their programs through meeting the needs of their students more equitably and practically. Can you describe how our programs work toward achieving this?
2. CWU's successful innovations in flexible programming enables more choices for student skill development, inclusive course outcomes, and accessible multimodal delivery. Let's talk about some examples of these innovations.
3. There were many engaged pedagogical decisions that went into developing these unique, nationally ranked programs. Can you share some of these decisions that you make as an educator, or you have experienced?
4. An important part of the development of our programs was codifying inclusive, anti-racist outcomes for all of our writing workshops, committing these outcomes for future professors and students in future classes. Can you talk about your approaches or experience in writing workshops in keeping with these outcomes?