



– NEWSLETTER FOR THE WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM (WAC) PROGRAM AT YORK COLLEGE –

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Welcome New WAC Fellows!

Sandra Moyano-Ariza

We have 3 new and 2 returning WAC fellows for the academic year 2022-2023. In lieu of a physical introduction at York, here are their bios. Remember that they are available for consultation and can help you develop a successful WI syllabus or strategies for your class.



Rocío del Águila Gracey, from Perú, is a PhD candidate in the Latin American, Iberian, and Latino Cultures Program at The Graduate Center, CUNY. She has a Master's degree in Hispanic Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her areas of research are women's literature, gender studies, and the intercultural connections between contemporary cultural and literary production in Central America and the Andean area. In 2021, she won the Marielle Franco Award from the Gender and Sexualities section of the Latin American Studies Association (LASA). She has taught Spanish at Hunter College.



Agnieszka Anna Fieck is a PhD candidate in Art History at the CUNY Graduate Center. Her research focuses on colonial fantasies and representations of Perú in eighteenth-century French art and literature. She received an MA in art history from Hunter College and has taught at Baruch College, BMCC, CCNY, and the Council on International Exchange Education. Her work has been supported by research fellowships from the Social Sciences Research Council, Brown University, Harvard University, the Huntington Library, and the German Center for Art History.



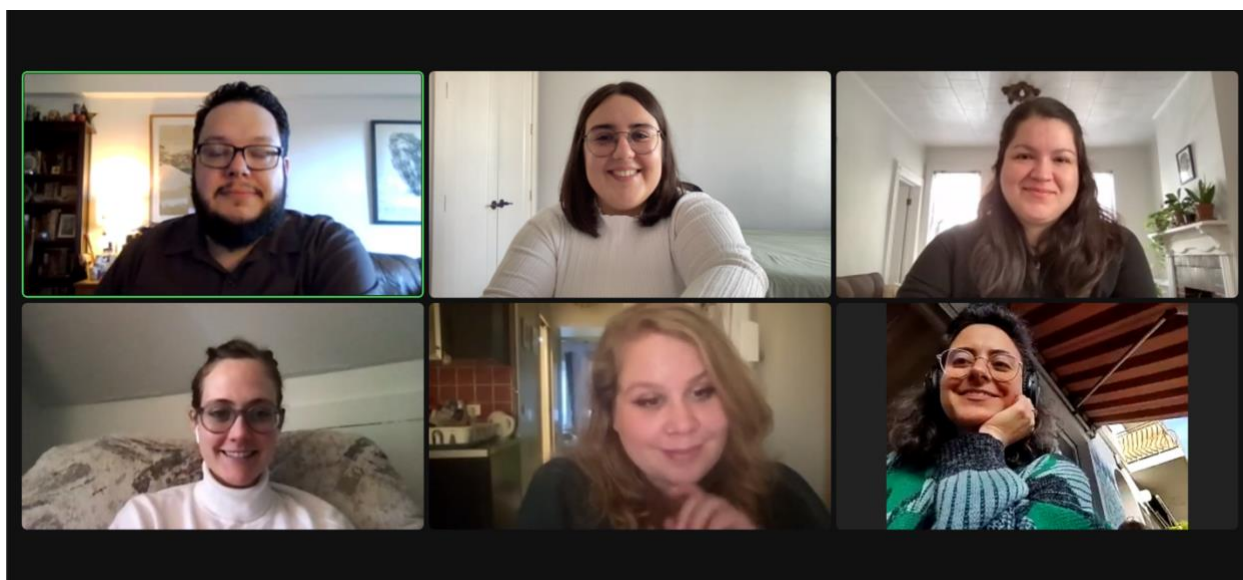
Lauren Grebe is a doctoral candidate in the Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences program at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Her research has focused on examining the theory of cognitive reserve in individuals with Frontotemporal Dementia and Primary Progressive Aphasia. She received her Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in Speech-Language Pathology from Molloy College and St. John's University, respectively. She has practiced as a speech language pathologist in acute and sub-acute rehabilitation working primarily with adult and geriatric populations. She has taught at Lehman College, CUNY.



Sandra Moyano-Ariza is a doctoral candidate in English at The Graduate Center, CUNY, and a third-year returning WAC fellow at York. Her research works at the intersection of philosophy and digital technology, with a focus on dating apps and cultural representations of algorithmic love. She holds a BA in English and an MA in Comparative Literature from University of Barcelona, and an MA in Liberal Arts from The Graduate Center. She has taught at Queens College and Baruch College, CUNY.



Alex Viteri is a South American performer and scholar based in Berlin. These days, working mostly at the threshold of the visual arts and performance. She is drawn to practices that consider aesthetic theories reflecting on nature and the environment and is part of an ever-growing group of artists interested in considering sites, ecosystems, and nonhuman subjects as collaborators. Inspired by feminist decolonial activists and scholars, her academic research cares for Andean modes of knowledge and the sharing of brown affects. Alex is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in the Department of Theatre & Performance at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Under this framework, she taught Theatre History at Hunter College 2019-2021.



WAC Coordinator Matt Garley and WAC fellows in one of their biweekly Zoom meetings

"Writing to Engage:" How to Build Middle-stage Writing Assignments for Your WI Courses

WAC Fellows

At the beginning of the semester, WAC coordinator Matt Garley assigned Mike Palmquist's "A Middle Way for WAC: Writing to Engage" to discuss in one of our WAC meetings. The essay notes the need to add 'middle stakes' to low and high stakes exercises, acknowledging a middle stage towards writing and critical thinking skills that students are expected to get through when moving from freshmen to sophomore and junior-level courses. Palmquist argues that between 'writing-to-learn' and 'writing in the disciplines,' 'writing to engage' exercises and activities explore deeper critical thinking skills, such as reflecting, applying, and analyzing concepts, arguments, or theories (12). Ideally, students acquire critical thinking skills as they deepen their knowledge about a specific discipline, preparing students to "build stronger connections among the concepts and processes they've already begun to understand ... [and] gain greater control over the information, ideas, arguments, frameworks, and processes that are central to the discipline" (Palmquist 16).

Typical 'writing to engage' activities might include applying frameworks to texts or media; reflections, critiques, and comparisons; or topic proposals and progress reports (Palmquist 13). In what follows, WAC fellows share what are 'middle stakes' assignments for them and share examples of 'writing-to-engage' exercises they used in their classrooms. If you're interested in working with a fellow, please do not hesitate to reach out to Matthew Garley at mgarley@york.cuny.edu.

Rocío del Águila Gracey. In the text *Teaching Writing, Teaching Media* (2008), by Peter Elbow, there are some examples of mid-stakes assignments, such as, "think pieces" that are considerate exploratory pieces that ask students to think through a topic on paper. They are not essays and don't have to be organized around a single point, but they are not just messy freewriting either. It is a piece of free-writing that can be open ("Write about what's interesting to you in this week's reading") or they could be about a specific reading (e.g., "Compare this concept from the reading to some experience from your lives," or "Write a short story that shows this concept in action," or "What was 'academic' and not

‘academic’ in that oral commentary?”). Another option is writing letters to different audiences, so students learn to improve their arguments as they need to write to different audiences the same topic in order to be aware of subtle issues like voice on the page or improve their argumentation. Finally, the use of poems it’s also a good assignment for a playful and engaging activity.

Agnieszka Anna Ficek. In my Art History II (Renaissance to Modernisms) class, I assign a middle-stakes writing assignment that asks students to compare Anne-Louis Girodet’s *Portrait of Jean-Baptiste Belley* (1797) to the Wedgwood Anti-Slavery Medallion. While designed to practice field-specific methods of inquiry (such as formal analysis), students use writing as a way of developing ideas that is central to WAC pedagogy. This exercise prompt leads students to make connections and find contrasts between eighteenth-century representation of Black subjects and further link these to contemporary issues such as the Black Lives Matter movement and the controversy caused by Colin Kaepernick’s decision to kneel during the national anthem in protest of police brutality against African Americans.

Lauren Grebe Here are two examples for Speech-Language Sciences:

1. After providing a clinical case with background information to a student, the student will create a treatment plan based on the lecture materials.
2. Based on the lecture, the student will prepare a brochure for the class about a clinical disorder, including characteristics, assessment plan, and treatment plan

Alex Viteri. I once hosted all the materials for a class at a CUNY academics commons website. The course [Theater History I](#) was based on [Open Access Resources](#) and was meant to be a writing-intensive class. I used to divide the class into breakout rooms and assign distinct materials from online theater archives. For example, we looked at various relatively recent productions of Aristophanes’ play *The Birds*. Then, each group was asked to introduce their version to the class. As a free-write, they could either reflect on how the adaptation relates to a particular contemporary event or imagine a different end for the play. Although, their favorite of these low-pressure assignments was making a meme to respond to one of the class topics.

Sandra Moyano-Ariza. In my general education College Writing courses, I usually make students study specific objects so that they can practice tracing the historical contexts traversing. A middle-stakes exercise was to write a two-pager on a digital artifact (Facebook, Apple Watch, smartphone, Netflix) describing in their own words the different aspects to the histories around it: economic, social, political, personal. After that, they’d have an idea of what kind of secondary sources they would need for their high-stakes final assignment.

Showcasing Resources on the WAC Website

Sandra Moyano-Ariza

Last year we told you about the WAC's website makeover, and this semester we want to highlight specific content that might be useful for your classes. If you're looking to expand on exercises about certain writing techniques or want to renew your lesson plans, take a look at the special mention for these two projects from WAC fellows:

Emilia Gambardella has created various [short videos on fundamental aspects of research and the writing process](#). This is an audiovisual counterpart to the Infosheets, also available on the York WAC website. Ideally these videos will serve as a guide for current and future students in moments when they need resources or helpful tips to guide them through their various writing assignments.

Alex Viteri produced a [handbook that gathers repositories of Open Access Journals](#) that receive undergraduate's submissions organized by York's schools and departments. The list gathers repositories of Open Access Journals that receive undergraduate's submissions organized according to York's schools and departments. You will also find a small guide on how to access OA data, thoughts on the advantages of using these resources in class and further resources for Open Access and Anti-racist Pedagogies.