

*The Department of English, Thistle Foundation and ODU Alumni Association present*  
**ODU 40th Annual Spring Conference on the Teaching of Writing**

**EVENTS**

**Monday, April 1, 2019**

8:30-9:00 Registration and Light Breakfast in Hampton/Newport News (1316)			
9:00-9:15 Welcome and Introduction: Michelle Heart (Dee) and Kevin DePew Hampton/NN (1316)			
9:15-10:15 Keynote: Heather Lindenman Hampton/NN (1316)			
10:30-11:45 Session A			
A.1 Hampton/NN (1316)	A.2 Executive (1310)	A.3 VA Rice (1307)	A.4 Potomac (1306)
Mary Beth Pennington, Laura Buchholz, and Megan McKittrick	Megan Mize and Elle Tyson	Teri Tucker and Cammie Vadersen	Amanda Gomez and Scott George
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch in Hampton/Newport News (1316) w/ special guests Floetic Movement			
1:15-2:00 Session B			
B.1 Hampton/NN	B.2 Executive	B.3 VA Rice	B.4 Potomac
Kevin Moberly	Megan Doney and Ariel Tobin	Citizen Panel	
2:15 – 3:00 Session C			
C.1 Hampton/NN	C.2 Executive	C.3 VA Rice	C.4 Potomac
Thom C. Addington, Alice Henton and Eric Earnhardt	Kristi Costello and Liam Costello	Amie Slevin	

**Tuesday, April 2, 2019**

8:30 – 9:00 Light Breakfast in Hampton/Newport News (1316)			
9:00-10:15 Session D			
D.1 Hampton/NN	D.2 Executive	D.3 VA Rice	D.4 Potomac
Marc Ouellette, Kevin Depew, and Elizabeth Vincelette	WaNelle Anderson, Leroy Hamilton and Annie Perkins	Delrose Adkinson and Nicole Jennings	Barry Clemson
10:30-10:45 Session E: Workshop with Heather Lindenman Hampton/Newport News (1316)			
Lunch 12:00-1:00 Hampton/Newport News (1316) w/ special guests Nu World Griots			
1:15-2:00 Session F			
F.1 Hampton/NN	F.2 Executive	F.3 VA Rice	F.4 Potomac
Deborah Christie and Myleah Kerns	Bill Camp and Kole Matheson	Mike Holt	
2:15-3:00 Session G: Wrap-Up Session with Kristi Costello and Jenn Sloggie Hampton/Newport News (1316)			

*Monday April 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*Difficult Conversations:*  
*Making Space for Diverse Ideas in the Writing Classroom*

**Keynote Address: 9:15-10:15**

**Hampton/Newport News (1316)**



**Keynote Speaker, Heather Lindenman, PhD.**

Heather Lindenman is Assistant Professor of English at Elon University, where she teaches classes in first-year writing, community writing, and literacy studies. Before pursuing her Ph.D., she taught high school in South Texas and Washington, DC. Her research focuses on the consequences of community-engaged writing projects, student writing for civic purposes, and writing transfer across contexts. Her work has appeared in *Composition Forum*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Reflections: A Journal of Community-Engaged Writing and Rhetoric*, and the *Community Literacy Journal*.

**ADDRESS: “Listening with Empathy, Writing for Change”**

How do teachers prompt and facilitate difficult conversations in the writing classroom? How do students learn to talk and listen across difference? In this address, Lindenman will present the case study of Writing for Change, a high school-university partnership that uses writing to promote conversation about difficult issues affecting students’ lives. She will present tactics the partnership uses to promote perspective-taking and empathic listening.

# Presentation Sessions

## Session A: 10:30-11:45

### A.1

**Hampton (1316)**

Mary Beth Pennington, Laura Buchholz, and Megan McKittrick

“Square Peg in a Round Hole: Difficult Conversations about Online Writing Instruction”

#### **Summary:**

Presenters will describe the difficult conversations among faculty as they adapt face-to-face course materials to online environments, while offering new ways of addressing these anxieties. Mary Beth Pennington addresses the anxiety of building virtual communities. Replicating the live dynamic of a face-to-face class is simply impossible online. Transforming our notions of “community” may help. Laura Buchholz tackles the following question: how can we utilize technologies without assuming our students’ literacy? She will address strategies for assignment design to reduce technology anxiety. Megan McKittrick will pose another important question: how necessary is a strict schedule? Detailed lesson plans are touchstones of face-to-face courses, but this presentation will explore the ways modular course design and semi-flexible deadlines can provide scaffolding while allowing students to work in bursts.

### A.2

**Executive (1310)**

Megan Mize and Elle Tyson

“Playing with Tech: Designing Multimodal Assignments”

#### **Summary:**

This workshop encourages participants to engage with multimedia tools and assignment design in a low-stress, playful setting. Modalities include “visual, audio, gestural, spatial, or linguistic means of creating meaning” (Selfe 195). Multimodal assignments encourage students to consider composition as more than textual, a skill which is increasingly important in digital spaces. The workshop consists of three 20-minute sections covering a selection of tools: GIF makers, mind mapping, and screen-casting software. For each section, participants will engage in an example assignment and discussion, demonstrating the potential of a particular tool. They will then consider how they might design their own assignment with that modality in mind. Facilitators will also offer further multimodal options and current technology tools for participants to explore beyond the constraints of the workshop.

**A.3****VA Rice (1307)**

Teri Tucker and Cammie Vadersen

“Culturally Responsive Teaching through Academic Conversations and Writing”

**Summary:**

By exploring academic conversations, this session will address how to teach students to analyze and discuss sensitive topics encountered in the English/Language Arts classroom and then transfer the discussion to reflective or analytical writing. By using academic conversations protocols, participants will engage in a hot topic discussion based upon a piece of text. From there, participants will discover how a conversation can translate into academic writing. Finally, the entire presentation will model handling sensitive material before, during, and after learning to promote an inclusive and culturally responsive classroom environment.

**A.4****Potomac (1306)**

Amanda Gomez and Scott George

Amanda Gomez: “The High School English Teacher Who Writes”

**Summary:**

In her article, “The Writing Teacher Who Writes: Creative Writing, Ancient Rhetoric, and Composition Instruction,” Mary Hedengren writes, “composition instructors hesitate to define themselves as writers, even within the genres they teach.” Yet, this experience must not be unique to college composition instructors. What about high school English teachers? Taxed and overburdened with responsibilities, many forgo writing for other tasks, which are often deemed as more important, such as grading or lesson planning. We do not often hear about, nor think about, their identity as writers. While teachers attend in-services about how to teach writing, they rarely attend professional development to improve their own writing. This presentation will explore how high school English teachers’ identities shape the classroom, as well as what teachers can do now to improve their own writing practices.

Scott George: “Behind the Lyrics: Analyzing Culture through Music”

**Summary:**

Music truly is the soundtrack of our lives. It is both a reflection of who we are as well as an influence upon how we think and feel. Throughout the past several decades, music has also inspired controversy and protest. Race, class, gender—each of these topics (and more) have been addressed through song. Whether it’s a reaction to the times (e.g., punk music in the 70s) or an empowering voice of hope (e.g., soul music and the civil rights movement), music has played an important part in shaping our culture. This session will focus on bringing music into the classroom for discussion, writing, and analysis. From research papers to poetry, music is an excellent tool for sparking student interest and effort.

## Session B: 1:15-2:00

### B.1

Hampton (1316)

Kevin Moberly

“Make Puppets not PowerPoints: Using Play to Foster Student Learning and Engagement”

#### Summary:

Games are powerful pedagogical tools. Incorporating games into the composition classroom can help students better understand the larger question of how knowledge is constructed and maintained through the types of writing that define their majors. Games and game-based learning strategies can also help students negotiate the oftentimes difficult transition to the discourses that characterize academic writing. This hands-on workshop will introduce participants to the principles of game-based learning and will provide concrete examples of how games and game-like activities can be incorporated into the classroom. In doing so, it will facilitate a discussion of how instructors can leverage a critical understanding of the potentials of play to build community, foster creativity, and improve student learning and engagement in their courses.

### B.2

Executive (1310)

Megan Doney and Ariel Tobin

Megan Doney: “Trigger Warnings, Trauma, and Teaching”

#### Summary:

Research and criticism of trigger warnings on college syllabi has focused exclusively on students’ reactions to said content. But what of the educator who may herself be struggling with trauma? In what context is it appropriate to disclose one’s own journey through trauma? Can such disclosures empower students, and reassure them that they are not alone in their journeys? How might assumptions about class and gender privilege be problematized through this approach? To what extent might it compel students into knowledge that they don’t wish to have? Drawing on current research in trauma theory and teacher self-disclosure, as well as on my own journey through the post-traumatic stress of surviving a school shooting, the presenter attempts to reexamine the assumptions embedded in the use of trigger warnings and reconsider the way we think, and talk, about safe spaces.

Ariel Tobin: “Dynamic Approaches to Inclusive Classrooms”

#### Summary:

Students arrive at a college or a university, much like their elementary and secondary counterparts, with a lot of baggage. Many are away from home for the first time, while others are commuting daily. All have pains and successes in their past that has made them who they are today. Many of these factors can hinder their learning. An inclusive classroom environment can help them open up so that they can make the most of their learning, especially in the composition and literature classroom. The presenter will highlight some very personal and dynamic approaches so that other educators may also learn how to turn such obstacles into ways to assist learning.

**B.3****VA Rice (1307)***Citizen* Panel: Teaching Claudia Rankine's *Citizen* in the Composition Classroom**Summary:**

As part of the NEA Big Read, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, Old Dominion University partnered with public libraries and key community partners throughout the Hampton Roads region to offer programming related to Claudia Rankine's lyric poem *Citizen* from February 21 through March 22, 2019. The book is being taught in 35 composition classes at Old Dominion University this semester, and this panel will include faculty members who took part in the Big Read. They will discuss how they incorporated the text into their writing classes and share resources related to the text and the conference theme.

## Session C: 2:15-3:00

### C.1

**Hampton (1316)**

Thom C. Addington, Alice Henton and Eric Earnhardt  
"Moving beyond Incorporation at Two-Year Institutions"

#### **Summary:**

Lola Olufemi's 2017 critique of Cambridge's English Literature program constitutes one recent iteration of a decades-long call to decolonize university curricula. Incorporation--using anti-racist or decolonial methodologies along with "diverse" literary texts in a piecemeal fashion--has gained some traction. Incorporation, however, effects little deep-structural change in the classroom; the disciplinary rudiments and their attendant dynamics of power remain fixed. This roundtable discussion approaches a number of questions in this context: What are the stakes of a composition course grounded in "diversity" in terms of content and approach? How does "diversity" in the American classroom move beyond race to include writers who identify as neurodivergent, as a migrant or immigrant writer, and/or who identify across the LGBTQ+ spectrum? How can anti-racist, decolonial, and/or activist pedagogies be utilized in the composition classroom in an accessible way to first and second year students?

### C.2

**Executive (1310)**

Kristi Costello and Liam Costello  
"Caring, Not Counseling and Establishing Safety, Not Comfort: Methods for Responding to Student Disclosure and Trauma."

#### **Summary:**

This 45-minute interactive workshop will provide strategies for compassionately and responsibly responding to student disclosure, both in writing and in conference, and methods for compassionately and responsibly incorporating difficult, potentially triggering materials into the classroom. The session will culminate in a group activity in which participants will be asked to consider, respond to, and discuss different scenarios.

### C.3

**VA Rice (1307)**

Amie Slevin  
"Adding their Voice: Assimilating Students into the Difficult and Controversial Issues in their Community"

#### **Summary:**

This writing strategy's objective is to teach students how to reflect on an ongoing issue that is related to their local community. Students conduct preliminary research on a controversial issue from the opinion or editorial section of a national newspaper. Next, they examine the rhetorical situation: author, audience, text/media, and context of the work. The students then outline the major argument type, evidence and appeals used, and determine which side of the argument they fall on. Participants will take away a unique strategy that allows students to examine an issue that they are exposed to and critically evaluate the evidence used to support their position. This writing strategy is open to secondary and college levels.

# *Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>*

## **Session D: 9:00-10:15**

### **D.1**

**Hampton (1316)**

Marc A. Ouellette, Elizabeth Vincelette, and Kevin DePew

Marc A. Ouellette: "Makes me want to write it down: Alternatives to Re-writing & Revising Assignments"

#### **Summary:**

The presenter discusses the several ways of working around the issue of re-writes. The most successful of these has been to grade on a range rather than a specific number. This and other strategies have multiple and simultaneous effects. First, it recognizes what the student can and cannot accomplish without instructional supports. Second, in scaffolding the task in this way, it places the emphasis on the application, the thinking, and the ability to link approaches, methods, and insights. The goal should be to help the student to improve as well as to achieve. Moreover, it lets the instructor scaffold formative and summative assessment while evaluating his/her own classroom practice by monitoring the frequency and scope of the instances for remedial action on a wider scale if and when necessary.

Elizabeth Vincelette: "Difficult Conversations: Why I Still Grade Class Participation."

#### **Summary:**

This presentation will address different ways instructors can facilitate class participation. Discussion occurs in structured and unstructured classroom conversations, with most instructors encouraging inclusive dialogue. However, in many classroom interactions, students experience a perception of anything but inclusivity. The key to fostering fairness and socially responsible teaching rests on establishing a classroom atmosphere founded on trust and social threat management. The presenter will address common discriminatory and privilege issues that complicate how instructors assess classroom participation. The presenter will discuss strategies for engendering inclusive classroom discussions that include extroverted and introverted students and provide specific activities that offer ways for anxious, uncomfortable, or (too often) overlooked students to participate.

Kevin DePew: "Beyond the Discussion Board: Online Writing Instruction as Sequenced Assignments"

#### **Summary**

According to most discussions and research about online writing instruction (OWI), Learning Management Systems' (LMSs') discussion boards have been the predominant pedagogical foundation for these mediated courses. These pedagogies strongly emphasize collaboration and assume that students both want to learn communally and possess effective strategies for it. As an alternative to discussion boards, this speaker will describe an OWI pedagogy based upon short, prompt-driven, sequenced written statements that build up to each assignment. These statements give students both opportunities to apply course concepts (e.g., genre, rhetorical situation) and to get preliminary feedback from the instructor, while still practicing on six of these statements. This work intensive pedagogy may address some students' concerns about OWI, so the speaker will raise questions with the audience about adapting its basic design to their workloads



## D.2

**Executive (1310)**

WaNelle Anderson, Leroy Hamilton, Annie Perkins  
"Using Literature to Explore Identity"

### **Summary:**

Many high school and college students grapple with identity. If they are members of outgroups especially, reading, writing, and speaking opportunities can be revelatory, instructive, and empowering. Thus, it is that Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, McCraney's *Choir Boy*, or Wilson's *Fences* can be lenses through which identity within the context of family and community can be explored. Oral and written assignments inspired by these texts can produce positive outcomes for students. Specifically, they can expand their knowledge base, develop critical thinking skills, encourage reflection, improve writing, and generate self-knowledge that leads to positive identity development. This workshop will invite audience participation in a charette.

## D.3

**VA Rice (1307)**

Delrose Adkinson & Dr. Nicole Jennings  
"Introspection and Anti-Racist Teaching"

### **Summary:**

Since approximately 80% of K-12 teachers in the United States are White, students of color often interact with White adults in most educational settings. In order to implement anti-racist teaching practices and facilitate difficult conversations among our students, educators must first be introspective and ask themselves the following questions: How can we ensure every interaction with students of color contribute to their growth? How can we avoid inadvertently perpetuating the micro-aggressive and racist practices that feed the school-to-prison pipeline? How can we communicate to students of color that they are valued? Creating productive partnerships with dedicated, reflective White teachers is essential to transforming the education system to authentically serve students of color. This session capitalizes on the event theme to create a safe space for participants to engage in honest, reflective conversations and activities to generate approaches we can immediately implement in our interactions with students of color.

**D.4**

**Potomac (1306)**

Barry Clemson

“Developing a Foundation Myth for 2100”

**Summary:**

“As a foundation myth develops over time, it becomes a way for people to understand the nature of the world they live in and their place within that world.” Our current foundation myth is more appropriate for 1800 than for 2100. Two aspects of a modern foundation myth must be the values of diversity and inclusiveness and a systems science approach to complex issues. Both of these support “difficult conversations”. This workshop focuses on articulating a foundation myth more suited for the modern world. This work requires the insights of poets, mystics, and scientists in collaboration, but workshop participants will have a chance to think hard, with others, about this crucial question.

## **Session E: 10:30-11:45**

**E.1**

**Hampton (1316)**

Heather Lindenman

Workshop: “Seeking Multiple Perspectives in the Writing Classroom”

**Summary:**

Participants in this workshop will practice strategies for perspective-taking and empathy-seeking in the writing classroom and will adapt their own writing projects and curricula to incorporate these strategies.

## Session F: 1:15-2:00

F.1

Hampton (1316)

Deborah Christie & Myleah Kerns  
"Fostering Confidence and Autonomy in Student Writers"

**Summary:**

Focusing on non-traditional students, the presenters discuss their research on how to help students find room for their own voices amidst the chatter of a loud, digital world. The presenters address the question: how to START a difficult conversation. Instructors may be used to managing difficult topics when lots of varying perspectives are being voiced within the classroom, but an emerging trend seems to be students reluctant to voice opinions both in class discussion and in first year writing classes. The presenters conduct surveys to establish what factors influence a student's willingness, or even ability, to voice a clear position on a subject. The panel will discuss methods and findings, as well as offer suggestions and sample assignments to foster confidence and greater feelings of autonomy in student writers.

F.2

Executive (1310)

Kole Matheson and Bill Camp

Kole Matheson: "Here's What I Meme: Using Multimodal Genre to Facilitate Difficult Conversations"

**Summary:**

Memes have become a pervasive mode of communication on social media and other internet mediums. Furthermore, memes are a genre all their own, inviting inquiry within new rhetorical studies. While produced by individuals, memes seem to reflect broader cultural attitudes, especially when they go viral or are popularized beyond the individual who composed them. At times these cultural attitudes are hilarious, inclusive, and worthy of celebration; however, at other times these cultural attitudes are offensive, difficult to discuss, or even avoided by students in classroom conversations. Nevertheless, the manifestation of some popular internet memes undeniably evidence persistent racism, sexism, ableism, and more. This presentation will explore how memes might be utilized by teachers to expose and facilitate difficult conversation topics, while meeting students where they are in the digital age.

Bill Camp: "Burke's Pentad and Frankenstein Films"

**Summary:**

The presenter will discuss a research project on using Kenneth Burke's pentad on dramatism to analyze adaptations of Frankenstein films, modeling how Burke's pentad could serve as a methodology for student writing which considers the act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose discover each film's motive or true meaning. Several films will be presented as examples, including the 1931 adaptation directed by James Whale, who was one of the first openly homosexual figures in Hollywood.

### **F.3 VA Rice (1307)**

Michael Holt

“Finding a Voice and Building Confidence: Hesitant Writers in the Classroom”

#### **Summary:**

When asked to describe their writing skills, students are likely to hesitate before responding. Some ask clarifying questions, while others indicate they are unable to respond. For the purpose of this workshop, the hesitant writer is defined as one unable to commit to the writing task at hand. A brief presentation examines the relationship between voice and confidence; then, focus is placed on difficult discussions as a platform for in-class writing assignments. After the presentation, collective learning exercises will take place. Participants will work in small groups or teams to develop learning modules or in-class assignments to achieve specific outcomes

## **Session G: 2:15-3:00**

**Wrap-Up Session with Kristi Costello and Jenn Sloggie**

**Executive (1310)**

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The Department of English would like to thank the following people for their help and support in the organization of this year’s conference and events:

- The Thistle Foundation
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- Erica Paredes and Marsha Jones, from the English Department Front Office
- This year’s talented and enthusiastic presenters and participants

*Don’t forget to recycle your program! Thank you for making this conference a great success!*