



# JUST WRITE!



Quarterly Newsletter of the University Writing Center at UCF



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## LETTER FROM THE EDITORS:

We welcome you to the latest edition of *Just Write!*, a newsletter organized and sponsored by the UCF University Writing Center. This edition was created by Mia Pelletier, Rachel Stillword, and Shia Kirby. We'd like to extend thanks to our writing center leaders, Mariana Chao, Matthew Bryan, and Deborah Weaver. Their support has made this newsletter possible. Additionally, thanks to all our writers who take the time to bring their work to the center. You all make the UWC the incredible space that we know and love.

The UWC is and always has been a place that strives to embrace collaborative learning while engaging with writers from all backgrounds. A lot of different genres find their way into the writing center, and people from several studies come to work as tutors in the center, something we highlight in our Steps to Success column. As it turns out, anyone can be a writer, and we see that very plainly in this edition.

On that note, we're happy to introduce our eighth Flash Fiction contest winner. We hope you enjoy perusing *Just Write!*, and we hope something here inspires you to come write with us!

### FROM THE EDITORS:

MIA PELLETIER, SHIA KIRBY, AND RACHEL STILLWORD





# DIRECTORS WRITE

**Professor Matthew Bryan**  
**Assistant Director of the UWC**

This past October, I presented at the International Writing Centers Association conference along with Debbie Weaver, UWC Director, and Mekenzie McElroy, a former UWC tutor. Our talk, “Emergent Collaborations: Fostering Community and Student Success through Synchronous Online Writing Groups for First-Year Composition Courses,” focused on sharing some of the research that informed a new initiative we’ve been running in the center this year. The first part of my portion of that talk is included below, and I hope serves as a preview of how we’re currently thinking about the impact of emergent technologies on writing center work:

I want to start by addressing the “emergent” that’s in both the title of our panel and prominently featured in the conference call for proposals. In that latter context, it was tied to “emergent technologies,” which makes sense given the high level of interest in writing centers in current conversations around, for example, generative AI. As a panel, we had some concern coming into this conference about whether the technologies we were using for our online writing groups—things like Zoom, Qualtrics, Google Sheets, email—were “emergent” enough. This led to some reflection on what emergent means in the context of technologies. Perhaps instead of emergent—which implies a kind of new arrival—we might think of technologies as *emerging*.

The technology theorist N. Katherine Hayles (1999) gives us some language with which to think about what such emerging might look like. She writes, “When changes in [embodied] practices take place, they are often linked with new technologies that affect how people use their bodies and experience space and time. Formed by technology at the same time that it creates technology, embodiment mediates between technology and discourse by creating new experiential frameworks that serve as boundary markers for the creation of corresponding discursive systems. In the feedback loop between technological innovations and discursive practices, incorporation is a crucial link” (p. 205). Technologies create new possibilities, and individuals shape themselves in response to the technologies they use. In other words, as we create and use new technologies, they inevitably create and use us.

The question for us became, then, less focused on technologies themselves and more the possibilities we can create with those technologies. We wanted to ask how technology use in writing centers can support emergent collaborations, between both students and programs. Like many university-based centers, the UWC at UCF had only a minimal online footprint prior to the start of the pandemic in 2020. Up to that point, less than 10% of our consultations took place online. Since then, however, and well after UCF started to re-emphasize in-person instruction a couple of years ago, about half of our sessions take place online. These are conducted synchronously via Zoom, in appointments that students schedule through our scheduling software TracCloud. It’s clear that, even as the majority of UCF students have returned to campus and in-person instruction, there’s still a high-level of demand for synchronous online consultations.

## Reference

Hayles, N. K. (1999). *How we became posthuman: Virtual bodies in cybernetics, literature, and informatics*. University of Chicago Press.



# TUTORS WRITE

RACHEL STILLWORD

Over this last semester, I've had the opportunity to do writing and conduct research on the importance of inclusion and diversity within safe spaces. The writing and research covered topics that are often missed by writing center studies, such as how writing center tutors are portrayed on online websites. The portrait of these tutors illustrated that perhaps some writing centers wish to focus on more specialized centers rather than the more diverse peer tutor ideology centers like UCF wishes to foster. However, when writing and thinking about how these centers are portrayed, an individual tutor must think about what they are saying and evaluate why they might include it in their bio. The primary reason for such carefulness is that students will pick tutors based exclusively on what was within that bio rather than any other information that could have been provided through a real session.

This careful construction of your own words must also be utilized when synthesizing some of the research already done on this topic. It is important to portray your points both clearly and easily to your audience so that individuals may not misconstrue the meaning of your words. Strategies that I've often employed to make sure that is not happening is to read every word carefully and then summarize each paragraph that I am looking at and making sure that I'm coming to a conclusion that is most supported by the articles. In addition, because I was synthesizing from multiple different places, it was also important to come to a conclusion that supported both articles and what they were discussing with their research, rather than with a single article.

The best way, in my experience, to make sure that writing is staying focused and supporting the research that is being looked at is to not make assumptions about the research. Furthermore, because it is a synthesis of the research, I learned that it was important not to be too critical of the strategies currently being discussed within it. The University of Central Florida Writing Center focuses less on specialization. Within our job, our focus is on being a peer, which leads to more collaboration within roles and projects. Thus, it was concluded that when portraying tutors on our website, it was best to give writers a perspective that was less of as a teacher or professional in their field and more of one as another student. Yet despite those differing opinions, it was important to see why other writing centers practice the way that they do, and it, therefore, gives us perspective on our practices and why they are so important.





**COMMUNICATION SCIENCES  
AND DISORDERS**

When writing in the Communication Sciences and Disorders degree, I've found that the most common assignments have been research papers written in APA formatting or short responses on clinical and behavioral expectations of clients that may have certain situations/disorders. For example, in my Behavioral Studies course, we've written a group presentation on different assigned diagnoses and what behaviors can be seen from these patients. We've also written a research paper on a chosen behavioral intervention and it's costs to patients and their families.



However, in my Anatomy and Physiology of Speech, Language, and Hearing course, we've had to write short responses on different bodily structures and how damage or issues with these structures impact communication and swallowing for those patients. We also wrote on how we could use what we learned in the course to help with patients, and what terminology can we use in the SLP setting.

**IMANI RODRIGUEZ**

**LITERATURE**

Writing in literature courses most often takes the form of conducting literary analysis, or literary criticism: offering an interpretation of a work of literature you have slowly, intentionally read. It can mean writing about books that have already been written about—a lot. Many a high school senior, after all, graduates with at least one essay on Shakespeare under their belt.



Given that, the argument can be more important than the topic—it's not what you say, it's how you say it. Constructing a careful, thorough analysis that supports a central argument is integral to an effective final paper. More importantly, it's integral to the development of the analytic skills necessary to do well in literature long-term.



**AMANTIA MENALLA**

**TECHNICAL  
COMMUNICATION**

Technical communication writing relies heavily on plain language. In academia, a term like plain language can feel foreign. We are often trained and obligated to write solely in academic tone and language, so writing in plain language can be an adjustment. Technical communication utilizes a variety of different modes to convey information in a plain fashion. Some of the primary modes include memos, manuals, and annotated bibliographies.



The main objective of this form of writing is to mold and convey information in a way that suits the intended audience. Much of the work done in the genre relies on instructions or relaying information for a new intended audience to simplify any complex terms or jargon. This is where the importance of plain language comes in, as people should not be struggling to merely comprehend information when attempting to utilize instructions or understand a broader concept

**MIA PELLETIER**



# Starlight, Stars Write!

SHIA KIRBY

Horoscopes aren't only useful for deciding what outfit to wear in order to receive the best luck from the universe. They can also be used to assist creative writers in crafting a well-rounded three dimensional character. The Big Three of star signs in particular can shine through a character's dialect and actions if considered by the author- the sun, moon, and rising signs. Keep reading to see how each of the Big Three can be incorporated into creating interesting and unique characters in your writing!

**Sun Sign:** A person's sun sign is the most dominating part of their personality when it comes to astrology. Because of the sign's strong influence on the Sun the day they were born, a character's sun sign will have the most influence on their personality. As you think about your character, use their sun sign to help determine their strengths, weaknesses, beliefs, and ideal self. With this in mind, you can write your character's development arcs around achieving common goals of their sun sign, as their journey may end with them achieving this best version of themselves!

**Moon Sign:** While the sun sign represents the most ideal version of one's self, their moon sign highlights their innermost thoughts and feelings. Moon signs resonate with the emotional side of a character, so utilize the traits of this particular sign to develop how they may react to vulnerability and the emotions of others. This sign can also be helpful in understanding what the emotional needs and wants of your character may be. A moon sign may be a good place to start if you are figuring out your character's inner motivations that drive their development and the plot!

**Rising Sign:** Not to be confused with the sun sign, rising signs dictate how others perceive a person to be. It is often considered the masking sign that allows people to operate in the moment and has the most influence on day-to-day activities. When developing a character, you can consider their rising sign to determine how they interact with other characters and events in your writing. Using traits from a character's rising sign could also help you create a perfect plot twist into their true nature!

Astrology can absolutely prove itself to be useful in creating well rounded characters and interesting facets of their personalities and goals, so I urge you to spend some time and consider a new way of examining the characters you develop in your work!





# This Semester at the UWC

SHIA KIRBY, MIA PELLETIER, AND RACHEL STILLWORD

## Open Mic Night

On October 24, 2024, brave Knights proved that there's nothing scary about reading to attendees of the UWC's annual Halloween Open Mic Night! The event featured chilling tales, spooky Halloween-themed trivia, and "boo"tiful costumes!

This Open Mic Night was made special by so many individuals. The Events Committee at the UWC did an exceptional job organizing and hosting the event, making sure that this Open Mic Night was beyond fang-tastic. UCF's LEAD Scholars Academy donated an array of ghastly decorations to contribute to the atmosphere of the night. The center's very own Professor Weaver surprised the audience with a funny, yet moving piece about her feelings towards Halloween. Open Mic winner, Krista Ruffo, had an array of poems with inspiration ranging from a classwork assignment, her medical history, and a bird she found while gardening. She believes that Open Mic Nights are "not as scary as they seem, even if you don't consider yourself a writer, because it is a complete judgment free zone".

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the behind-the-scenes success of this event, and thank you to everyone who participated as a reader or guest at our Open Mic Night!

## UWC Workshops

UWC's workshop committee worked hard to engage students through three workshops this past semester. The most successful workshop was the twenty common errors, hosting the largest turnout. The most 'important' workshop was the integrating sources workshop, as this workshop likely catered to a wide audience and helped a variety of students from a variety of different backgrounds and disciplines. Integrating sources is an integral skill for any genre of writing, so it is important that the UWC is able to provide support in this area.

As opposed to the work done by tutors in the center, workshops rely on a more directive, teaching approach. The committee shares all of the work, dividing tasks among the members and working collaboratively to convey information. They look at what they have and propose any changes they may want to make, and make adjustments with the examples according to past engagement. The workshops operate as a lecture based, class style discussion rather than the collaborative learning processes observed in the UWC sessions.





# This Semester at the UWC

SHIA KIRBY, MIA PELLETIER, AND RACHEL STILLWORD

## What We Talk About When We Talk About Politics

In light of the current political climate, the UWC showcased “What We Talk About When We Talk About Politics,” a seminar with lead speakers Dr. Aubrey Jewett and Dr. Stephanie Wheeler. The goal of this event was to introduce strategies for how to approach others despite current divides and discuss the impact rhetoric has on civil discourse.

Dr. Jewett commented on “how many students showed up and seemed interested in this topic.” He was surprised and excited by all of the great questions that he was asked. Yet, with Dr. Jewett’s more practical discussion on current affairs in politics, and Dr. Wheeler’s discussion on rhetorical theories, it is no surprise that the conversation was engaging and led many individuals to be inspired for the future.

In light of this, Dr. Jewett gave a bit of advice on the current state of politics and how to continue these discussions outside of it. He explained that those holding office will always try to use persuasive language to sway populations. Because of this, people must think and engage critically with others when discussing an individual candidate, instead of only using a single perspective.



## Thanksgiving Book Swap

One thing the UWC continues to be grateful for this semester is reading! That’s why the center hosted the Thanksgiving Book Swap, where UCF students were able to grab a new story, treat themselves to a cookie, swap their old books for something they haven’t read before, and write what they were grateful for this year on leaves to decorate the UWC!



The tutors who ran the book swap were amazed to see the joy of reading UCF students had as they browsed the selection of works. They had several meaningful and enlightening conversations with students who were eager to share what they were interested in reading, how they can get involved at the UWC, and what they were most grateful for.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this heartwarming event!



# TUTOR'S CHOICE FLASH FICTION

ELEMENT: **GOLD**

My brother clutched the notebook in his tiny palms like it was the most sacred book imaginable. It was a simple Mead composition notebook, wide-ruled and speckled with black and white. His name was written in black Sharpie ink on the cover, and the curve of every letter was neat and precise. His puffy blue jacket almost shrouded the notebook, but I could see it still, grasped in his hands with immense care and reverence.

“So, when you put the leaves between the pages and then close the book, bacteria can’t grow,” he began, pushing his black-rimmed glasses further up on his nose.

I nodded. I was walking beside him with my hands pushed in my pockets and pressed tightly against my body. They were still cold though, so I balled them up into fists in a futile attempt to provide extra warmth. It was finally autumn in New York, and the streets of Queens were only just starting to gain their color. Every block stretched out in front of us as a glowing orange sea with the occasional purple, brown, gold, or green streak. Its shine spread to every bench and corner, every bodega, every porch, and every WELCOME mat adorned with dirt and twigs.

Today, autumn’s sea of orange leaves crashed into our block, and my brother was swimming gleefully in it.

“That’s very cool,” I say. I have heard this spiel many times before. He stops suddenly to stoop down to the ground. We seem to have found the jackpot; some unsuspecting neighbor of ours has raked up some leaves into a small pile as if for my brother himself. I wince as his hands sift through what I imagine are millions of germs until his hands latch onto a spectacular leaf that is as bright as a tangerine. It is crinkled at the edges, the stem is bent, and a couple of holes peek through its middle, but my brother is captivated by its gleam regardless. He opens the notebook beside him carefully and flips through its pages until he finds an empty one. Satisfied, he places the orange leaf against the white and blue lines of a page before closing the book back softly. I have seen him repeat this process about nine different times now.

“And you could do it with flower petals too,” he continues, now sitting criss-cross applesauce on the concrete. I sigh. We will be here for a while. I take a seat next to him on the ground, my hands still in my pockets. We are blocking the sidewalk, but it is too chilly for anyone else to be outside.

“That’s very cool,” I say again. I offer him a gentle smile that he doesn’t see. His hands dig through the pile like a pirate plunging his fingers through a treasure chest for doubloons and rubies.

## “NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY”

We were supposed to take a quick walk around the block to drop off Mom’s envelope, but I don’t have the heart to tell him that it’s time to go home.

“Mhm. The pages absorb the moisture.”

“That’s very cool.”

“When I’m forty and old like Dad, I’m going to look back at this notebook and all of the leaves are going to look the exact same. Isn’t that cool?”

“That’s very cool!” I say with a little more enthusiasm. The green Cub Scout cap atop his head is all I can see as he leans closer to the pile, elbows propped up on the ground. I shiver, closing my eyes and opening them again.

Suddenly, he gasps. There is a quick movement. His hand darts into the pile and fishes something yellow out. He has caught something big.

“Look!” he exclaims, his eyes widening as he proudly shows off his catch. In his hands lies a beaming golden leaf, most likely from a yellow poplar tree, with no holes, crinkles, or dirt.

This one actually looks gold, as if it was born straight from the sunlight streaming in through the trees and shining on my brother. A grin is etched on his face from ear to ear, and his hazel-brown eyes are flickering with jubilation. The gilded leaf lays flat in his palms like an offering. I gladly accept and take it upon myself to place it just as carefully into the notebook. He squeals with joy, one of my favorite sounds in the world.

This gold will stay, just for a little





# Raiya Shaw

## CONTEST WINNER



### About the Author:

Raiya Shaw is a writer, editor, and undergraduate student at UCF. Her poetry has been featured on NBC 6 News and she has won multiple awards from the Omari Hardwick bluapple Poetry Network for her work. She has been published in Blue Marble Review, Of Poets & Poetry, and IMPRINT Magazine, among others, and is currently a reader for Black Fox Literary Magazine, a chapter writer and editor for Her Campus, and a guest editor for Palette Poetry literary magazine.



Our Flash Fiction contest is a running column of Just Write! The contest is held each semester.

Our next element is **PINK**. Open submissions will run through . To submit visit this link or scan the QR code!

### Upcoming Contest:

#### WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR:

- Original Flash Fiction 750 words or less
- The poignant and meaningful use of our next element: **PINK**
- You are free to explore any theme you wish!

#### WHAT WE'RE NOT LOOKING FOR:

- Fanfiction
- Excessive or over-reliance on profanity
- Gory, sexual, and/or graphic imagery
- Writing that promotes racism, sexism, and/or other forms of discrimination.





# JUST WRITE!

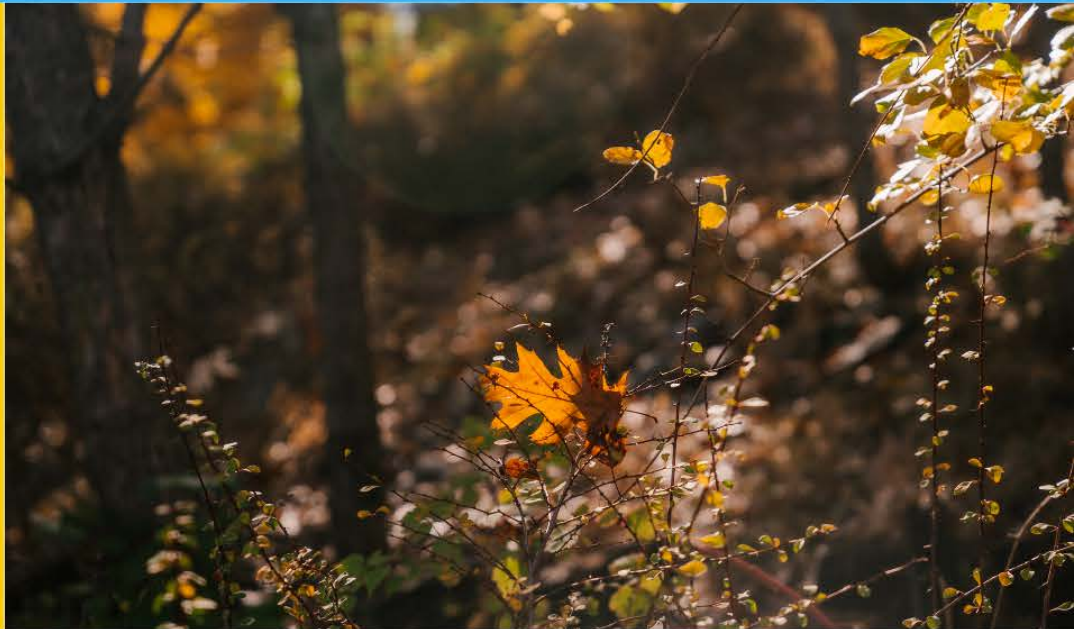


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## RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

### Publication Opportunities:

*Convergence Rhetoric*: A peer-reviewed online journal for upper-division undergraduate writing in the Humanities!

- <https://convergence-rhetoric.net/>

*Cypress Dome*: Publishes an annual literary magazine of student work and hosts a variety of events.

- Open submissions are November 1st-December 31st.
- [cypressdome.org](http://cypressdome.org)

*Stylus*: A journal for the exemplary writing and research produced by students in ENC 1101 and 1102.

- Check with your ENC 1101 or 1102 professor.
- [writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/](http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/)

*IMPRINT*: A UCF student magazine supported by the Department of Writing and Rhetoric.

- [writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/imprint](http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/imprint)

*The Pegasus Review*: A UCF literary magazine published twice yearly.

- Open submissions all year!
- [floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/](http://floridareview.cah.ucf.edu/)



### Future Events:

UWC:

- Check out [@ucfuwc](https://www.instagram.com/ucfuwc) on Instagram for more updates about upcoming events, or visit our website for more details

<https://uwc.cah.ucf.edu/events/>

