

Education is Our Mission

"We are helping ESL students, we are helping immigrant students, we are an essential component of democracy."



Alysha Alston
Writing Center Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"What we do in the WC is a microcosm of how our society operates on the macro level. The way we interact with students and faculty embodies the intricacies of a democracy and how we disseminate information, knowledge, etc. in order to make decisions that are vital to us on a personal and societal level."



Yvonne McKenzie
Writing Center Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"Being able to express ideas and the way you feel about things through writing gives one the power of a free mind. Every day that I help a student I get the sense that I am helping to set a mind free and through that, my mind gets richer. The power of writing is something invaluable that cannot be bought."



Eva Soriano Gomez
Writing Center Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"As tutors, we help students explore their opinions. We help them to think critically... We encourage them to do good... We give them the power of education. We shape their integrity by making them aware of moral values. All these qualities are crucial for a country's citizenship."



-Shuma Begum
Former English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

Tutor Talks

In a recent prompt our tutors were asked to reflect on their work at the Writing Center as it relates to the ideas shared by Frederick Douglass's "knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave" and their own participation in American democracy.

Tutors were also asked if there were ways to make stronger connections between their work and their vision of American Citizenship.

The following is a compilation of their responses.

"We show up online to do what we can for students to try to help them keep going and stay on track to build for a better future... Education is a personal responsibility, so we're there to support, and make our time about others."



-Victoria Muñoz, PhD
Assistant Professor of English, CUNY-Hostos

"Imagine leaving a horrid area of the world with ruthless government, the democracy found in America can resemble an Oasis in various ways. Thus, it is [essential] to teach students the importance of democracy, so they understand their freedom. I believe this will be extremely beneficial for ESL students since they have a new grasp of democracy in America so we [tutors] can be the bridge that connects these two worlds for them."



Jazzy Saini
Writing Center Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"To be an American means to be free. Free to express yourself and your thoughts without recrimination of the law. So I believe that my work is aiding people to find their voices and speak their truth. I try to challenge their views and make them question everything and I believe this makes for better citizens."



Jenifer Vivar
Writing Center Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"I do believe knowledge is power and something no one can take from you... If I'm able to help anyone in the writing center [I hope I can help them] to be confident in themselves... We [tutors] keep reminding others that we do have a choice and that we can beat those obstacles that are purposely put in front of us. Frederick Douglass was right, knowledge can be the pathway to freedom. I am grateful to be a part of such an amazing team."



-Kyanna Pratt
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

English Department Newsletter

Volume 4 | Issue 2

Table of Contents

Deputy Chair's Message	1
Issue Note	1
Faculty Book Releases	2
Quarantine Reading List	2
ENG Courses Outcomes	3
Adapting to Online Tutoring	3
Writing Center Seminars	4
Women's History Month	4
Tutor Talk	5
Faculty Excellence	5
Upcoming Events	6

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Deputy Chair's Message Term Greetings



It's hard to believe that it's been over a year since we were together on campus. I'm often reminded of E.M. Forster's appeal "Only connect!" as well as lines from Walt Whitman's *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*: "It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not." The time and the miles of distance have taken their toll on us, but our work as educators, writers, and researchers has continued—often in new and innovative ways—while our city and state have remained "on pause." I deeply appreciate the work that we have done to connect across the distance with our students and with each other as colleagues. Thanks as always for everything you do.

Issue Note

Education is Our Mission



At the March 4th Professional Development for the Writing Center Tutors, Sarah Key, our Poet-in-Practice, asked tutors how education in writing can honor the democratic ideals of our nation. The tutors' dazzling responses, featured on the cover and on pages 5 and 6 of this issue, well illustrate what faculty know at

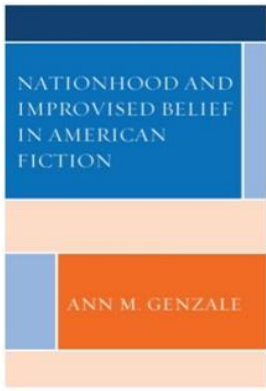
their core: education is for the greater good.

Remote education is a new frontier. But the data from Fall 2020 course outcomes (page 3) shows that there are also surprising opportunities mixed with these new challenges. Faculty are varying their approaches in synchronous and asynchronous courses to bring students the best possible experience of online education. Our January 27th PD, hosted by Strong Start to Finish (SSTF) and organized by English's Professor Porter (details on page 6), is a further testament to our college's efforts to overcome pedagogical challenges, and to meet students where they are.

Faculty remain invested in excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. Page 2 features two new scholarly books by Professors Genzale and Muñoz. The Writing Center team, headed by Professor Nguyen, has been overcoming challenges to virtual operation (page 3), and is highly active in student-facing programming this semester, offering semester-long seminars in writing and reading (page 4). The Women's History Month Task Force, headed by Professor Fisher, has offered a robust slate of synchronous and asynchronous activities to honor Women's History Month (page 4).

We thank this issue's generous contributors: Heidi Bollinger, Carl Grindley, Ann Genzale, Victoria Muñoz, Jerilyn Fisher, Tram Nguyen, Adelyn Castro, Writing Center Tutors and Administrators, and Elizabeth Porter.

Faculty Book Releases



Professor Ann Genzale:
Nationhood and Improvised Belief in American Fiction (Lexington Books, 2021)

Q: What is the book about?

A: This book focuses on depictions of adapted, individualized religious and spiritual practices in the work of three major 20th Century American novelists—Louise Erdrich, Toni Morrison, and Cristina García—and explores how these practices provide a sense of belonging and connection in

response to experiences of marginalization and exclusion.

Q: What is your most significant finding?

A significant finding of this project is the novels' shared emphasis on how these syncretic, adaptable belief systems transcend national and cultural borders. Despite their different historical contexts, the novels portray common themes of cultural hybridity, flexibility, and the grounding of religious experience in worldly, day-to-day life. Together, their representations of improvised belief gesture toward more inclusive and empathetic ways of seeing and building community.



Professor Victoria Muñoz
Spanish Romance in the Battle for Global Supremacy: Tudor & Stuart Black Legends (Anthem Press, 2021)

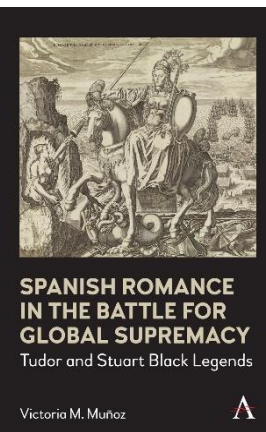
Q: What is the book about?

A: It's a study of England and Spain's conflicts in the transatlantic world, manifesting in the form of sea piracy and land raids, which were then allegorically reflected in literature. It particularly reveals how fictional romance informed both countries' imperialist conquests about the globe in an

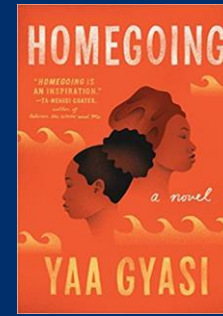
unfolding battle for global supremacy. Much of this conflict literally took place between the pages of books of chivalry, in the form of a covert culture war that attached rich ideological meanings to fictional characters.

Q: What is your most surprising discovery?

The book shows how much of England's imperial iconography grew out of the country's Tudor and Stuart-era obsession with Spanish romance, ironically deriving inspiration from Spain's own conquistadors who helped to promote this pernicious culture of imperial Quixoticism, the credulous reading of romance as an allegory and justification for global conquest.



English Department Quarantine Reading List

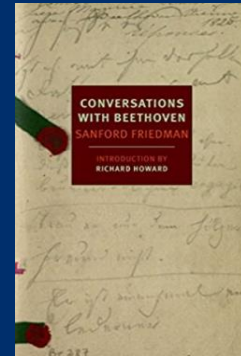


Yaa Gyasi,
Homegoing (2017)

"an engaging yet harrowing work [...] traces the lineage of two African half-sisters from the 18th century to the present-day."
— Prof. Porter

Sanford Friedman,
Conversations with Beethoven (2014)

"[Beethoven's final year] through his conversation notebooks [...] Quite funny (Ludwig is very crusty), & occasionally quite moving." — Prof. Bernardini

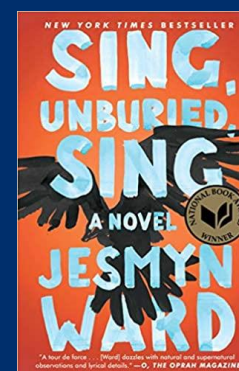
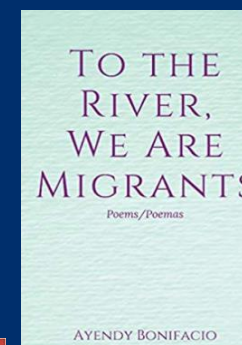


Pamela Sneed,
Funeral Diva (2020)

"Personal essays and poetry that transport the reader to NYC in 1980s [...] and the enduring bonds between the living, the dying, and the dead."
— Prof. Rice-Gonzalez

Ayendy Bonifacio,
To the River, We Are Migrants (2020)

"A bilingual poetry collection that flows like the river that carries souls to strange places bounded by language. This poetry is healing."
— Prof. Muñoz



Jesmyn Ward,
Sing, Unburied, Sing (2017)

"a powerful exploration of intergenerational trauma in the tradition of Morrison & Faulkner" — Prof. Bollinger

Adapting to Online Tutoring By Writing Center Tutors



On March 4th 2020, the Hostos Writing Center held a Professional Development Day. Tutors were asked to read and respond to the article, “From Behind a Screen: Fostering Effective Tutoring in Virtual Sessions” (*Dangling Modifier*, 2021) by Julia Konow. Below is what they produced.

Because we can’t look into students’ eyes we have a lost an important part of the tutoring experience; moving forward we have to figure out new ways to connect to them through the screen.

The transition to online tutoring has created many unique hurdles for both Tutors and Tutees, and therefore, additional support must be provided to both. We discussed using additional examples and many types of unique explanations for tutees.

Due to students not being able to meet physically at the WC, a multimodal approach is important to be able to connect with students in ways that are familiar to them, which makes our inclusion into their world easier.

Virtual tutoring is very isolating, which makes it difficult to connect with students. We want to project the warmth and love that we feel for the process through the online media.

In spite of virtual settings, which are isolating, as tutors we need to continue to project our warmth and enthusiasm, stick with higher order needs, and not overwhelm with too much feedback, but help boost confidence in students and their writing.

The unprecedented circumstances we are experiencing have forced us to be resourceful and adopt various roles to overcome our new challenges with virtual tutoring, and even though it has been difficult, tutors have been able to adapt and to rise above the situation and continue to support students.

Some bad news, some good

By Prof. Carl Grindley

Completion and pass rates were generally down in Fall 2020, especially in ENG 110, where only 49% of our students earned D or higher grades. Results were better in sections of ENG 100 with 53% of students earning D or higher grades, and ENG 10+110 where 51% of students earned D or higher grades. The most interesting observation is that in ENG 110, students in asynchronous courses passed at a much higher rate than synchronous students (50% to 45%). Conversely, in ENG 111, students in synchronous courses outperformed students in asynchronous courses by 70% to 60%.

Table 1. ENG 100 Completion Rates

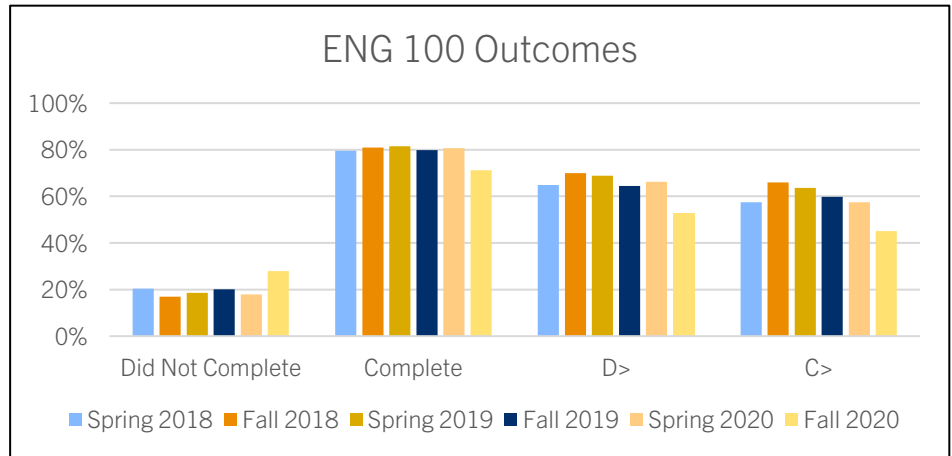


Table 2. ENG 110 Completion Rates by Modality

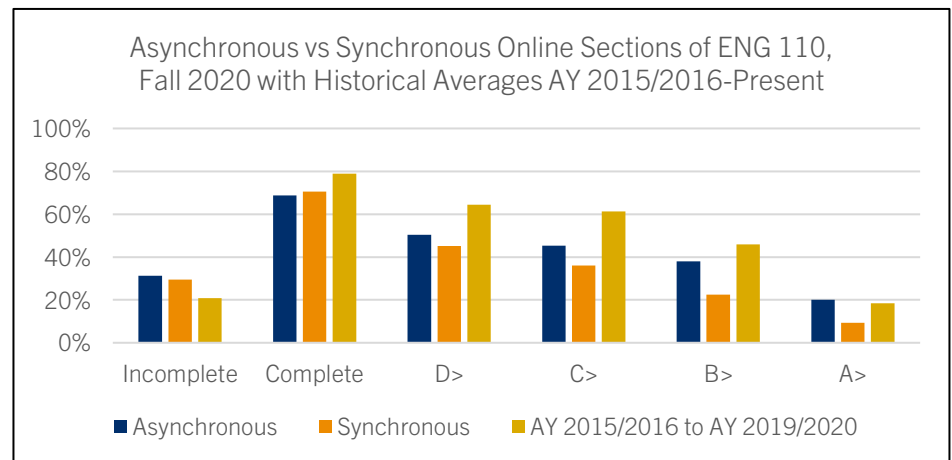
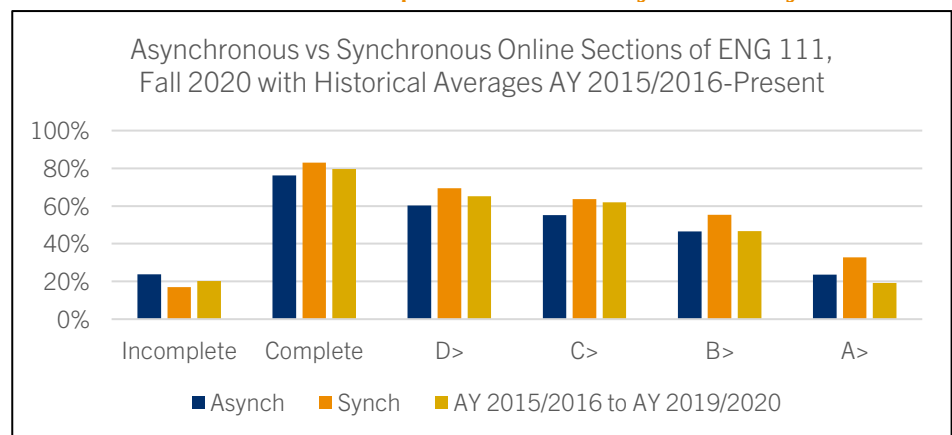


Table 3. ENG 111 Completion Rates by Modality



READING MEET-UPS

Spring 2021 Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|---|
| 2/16 | Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i> | 4/6 | Morrison's
<i>Song of Solomon</i> Part 2 |
| 2/23 | Sophocles's
<i>Antigone</i> Part 1 | 4/13 | Morrison's
<i>Song of Solomon</i> Part 3 |
| 3/2 | Sophocles's
<i>Antigone</i> Part 2 | 4/20 | Morrison's
<i>Song of Solomon</i> Part 4 |
| 3/16 | Morrison's
<i>Song of Solomon</i> Part 1 | 4/27 | Morrison's
<i>Song of Solomon</i> Part 5 |



Tuesdays @ 4PM

Via Zoom

(RSVP for link)

WRITING SEMINARS

Spring 2021 Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|---|------|--|
| 2/19 | The Occasional Poem:
From Lincoln to Gorman | 3/19 | In the Eye of the Brainstorm:
Gathering Your Thoughts |
| 2/26 | Prompts:
What Your Professor Is
Asking You? | 4/9 | Research:
Google Like You Mean It |
| 3/5 | How to Rev Up a Thesis:
The Engine of Your Paper | 4/16 | A Story for the Season |
| 3/12 | Paraphrasing:
In Other Words | 4/23 | A Place for Everything:
Outlining |
| | | 4/30 | Spring Cleaning:
Scrubbing Out Exam Stress |

Fridays @ 4PM Via Zoom



FEATURED EVENT:

Educating for Change: Women's Stories Part II of the four-part "Educating for Change" series, this 30-minute virtual screening of "College Behind Bars" will be followed by a Q&A panel.
Friday, March 26 | 7 p.m. (entry at 6.45 p.m.)

MONTHLONG ONLINE ACTIVITIES:

We encourage students to learn about the struggles and accomplishments of daring women who defied gender boundaries and have achieved against the odds. Learn more about the 2021 honorees at <https://nationalwomenshistoryalliance.org/2020-2021-honorees>

The National Women's History Museum offers free events/exhibits about women's achievements throughout history in various fields. Among the exhibits is one about Harriet Tubman that can be used in conjunction with the class activity below. Explore at <https://womenshistory.org/>

Class activity: Have students debate the merits of putting the face of Harriet Tubman on the front of the \$20 bill (replacing defamed and racist President Andrew Jackson). This initiative was proposed by the Obama administration in 2016 and is supported by the Biden administration.

Listen and Watch

Discover the story of Claudette Colvin, who was 15 years old in 1955 when she refused to give up a seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama. To learn more, attend the National Youth Summit Teen Resistance to Systemic Racism (<http://s.si.edu/3vwZEVL>).
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jeanne Theoharis,

100 Years Since Women's Suffrage

In light of the pandemic curbing activities last March, the centennial (1920-2020) of women winning the right to vote is continuing to be celebrated through 2021! Visit <https://www.2020centennial.org/>

An episode of "Can We Talk?," a podcast from the Jewish Women's Archive, discusses suffrage from the perspective of African-American and Jewish women who participated in the struggle to win the vote.
Listen at <http://bit.ly/19amendmentpodcast>

For full details on these and other activities for Women's History Month at Hostos CC, visit bit.ly/hostosccherstory

Tutor Talks

In a recent prompt our tutors were asked to reflect on their work at the Writing Center as it relates to the ideas shared by Frederick Douglass's "knowledge makes a man unfit to be a slave" and their own participation in American democracy.

Tutors were also asked if there were ways to make stronger connections between their work and their vision of American Citizenship.

The following is a compilation of their responses.

"Thinking about my work here and how it correlates with American citizenship and democracy. This reminds me of Bob Marley's lyrics: 'Emancipate yourself from mental slavery, none but ourselves can free our mind.' I know that education is essential to changing, rebuilding, and redefining the world we live in... It would be a crime for me to not commit in some way to sharing this gift with others."



Maya Abdoussala
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"I agree with Frederick Douglass that knowledge and literacy are connected to the idea of freedom. The Writing Center consistently frees students from the murky waters of confusion and regularly builds bridges between professors and students... Each day that students choose to attend a seminar, partake in a reading meet-up, or meet with a writing tutor, they participate in American democracy..."



Ashley Thomas,
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

Recognizing Faculty Excellence Publications

- Bernardini, Craig. "The Disturbed Things," [PANK] "Hauntings" folio, 1 Nov. 2020. <https://pankmagazine.com/2020/11/01/hauntings-the-disturbed-things/>.
- Connolly, Andy, co-ed. *Philip Roth Studies*. Special Issue: "Philip Roth Remembered." 16.1 (2020).
- Darling, Gregory. Review of Padraig O Rain. *Four Offaly Saints. The Lives of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, Ciaran of Seir, Colman of Lynally and Fionan of Kinnitty* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2018). *North American Journal of Celtic Studies*, 4.2 (2020).
- Genzale, Ann. "The Words are Maps: The Contemporary Hiking Memoir as Life Writing." Travel Narratives and Life Writing. Special issue of *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, 8.1 (2021): pp.21-32.
- Genzale, Ann. *Nationhood and Improvised Belief in American Fiction* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2021).
- Muñoz, Victoria. "'More strange than true': Finding America Among the Faeries." 27 Oct. 2020. *Shakespeare & Beyond*. Folger Shakespeare Library. bit.ly/morestrangethantrue
- Muñoz, Victoria. *Spanish Romance in the Battle for Global Supremacy: Tudor and Stuart Black Legends* (London: Anthem Press, 2021).
- Porter, Elizabeth. "Clarissa's Commerce: Relocations and Relationships in London." *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 33.3 (Spring 2021): 349-367.

Presentations

- Bollinger, Heidi. "Drawn by Hand: Students as Graphic Memoirists." Teaching Life Writing Conference: a Virtual Conference on Nonfiction and Pedagogy, University of Alberta, Canada, 10 December 2020, online via Zoom. Conference Presentation.
- Rice-González, Charles. "Intersections of an Afro-Latinx Queer Bronxie." The Living Gallery, Gibney Center, 26 February 2021, Zoom, New York, NY. Reading and Performance.

Congratulations

- To Prof. Jerilyn Fisher, who was invited to join the Editorial Board of the Women's Studies Quarterly, published by the Feminist Press of the City University of New York.
- To Prof. Sean Gerrity, who was accepted to participate in the MLA's "Summer Teaching Institute in Reading-Writing Pedagogy" at Columbia U. Description from the site: "The MLA Teaching Institutes has been awarded a grant by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to strengthen the teaching of English at access-oriented institutions (AOIs).
- To Prof. Linda Hirsch, who was elected to the Hostos Community College Presidential Search Committee.
- To Prof. Krystyna Michael for the birth of her daughter this past February.
- To Prof. Tram Nguyen, named "Unsung Hero of the Week" by the OAA in *Hostos Seminario* 4.9 (2021) for her work designing and facilitating Writing Center Spring programs.

More Congratulations

To Prof. Elizabeth Porter, who was invited to serve as a Contributing Editor for the *Scriblerian*, a biannual review journal for literary criticism.

To Professor Elizabeth Porter, Winner of the Defoe Society's 2019 Maximillian E. Novak Essay Prize for Best Published Essay on Daniel Defoe for "Metropolis in Motion: Defoe and Urban Identity in *A Journal of the Plague Year*." *Digital Defoe* 11.1 (2019): 119-131. Rprt.

To Professor Anne Lovering Rounds, who was invited as a guest artist to compose and record new poetry for a podcast series created by the organization Clearing the Stage, founded by the New World Symphony.

To Professor Juan Soto-Franco for the completion of his second master's degree in Computer Education and Technology from Ohio University, completed December 2020 (pictured below).



Image credit:
Prof. Juan Soto-Franco

Special Thanks

To the participants in the virtual January 27th PD on Fostering Transparency and Communication in the Online Classroom, supported by Strong Start to Finish grant, Prof. Elizabeth Porter, SSTF Faculty Resident, English Chair, Andrea Fabrizio, & Deputy Chair, Heidi Bollinger. A special thanks to Profs. Carl Grindley, Jason Buchanan, Alexandra Milsom, Sean Gerrity, Christine Hutchins, Louis Bury, Victoria Muñoz, & Krystyna Michael!

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, April 7th | 3:30 – 4:30 pm

Faculty Reading Series Features Prof. Ann Genzale, discussing *Nationhood and Improvised Belief in American Fiction* (Lexington Books, 2021).

Tuesday, April 13th | 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Queering The Curriculum: How to Integrate LGBTQ Information Into Coursework

This panel & workshop addresses shares techniques for including LGBTQ information into coursework in classes that are not LGBTQ+ specific.

<http://bit.ly/hostosqueercurriculum>

Course-level Meetings | 3:30 PM via Zoom

Developmental: Tuesday, April 27th

ENG 110: Wednesday, April 14th

ENG 111: Monday, April 12th

Electives: Monday, April 19th

"My work as a writing tutor at Hostos's Writing Center enables me to witness the beauty and significance of America's diversity, which is in large part because of its democracy... It is crucial for all, students or otherwise, to understand the power and value associated with articulating and expressing themselves through writing. By treating the students I encounter with respect and integrity... I participate in my vision for American democracy."



-Sierra Whitaker
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"I hope we can educate people on more than just grammar and structure. I hope we can educate them on how they can be good humans."

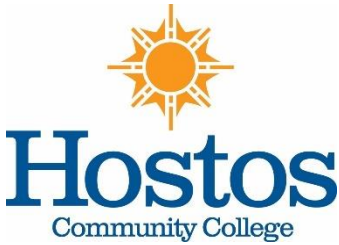


-Dana Edmund
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos

"I believe the best help we give at the writing center is not just for helping students understand what 'other' writers are trying to say, but also helping with what the students themselves want to say."



Damien Rivera
English Tutor, CUNY-Hostos



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