

...indicates that in order to become better writers we are going to have to "undo" the potential damage done to the spirit of the essay (and most real writing) by the many approaches to teaching writing that frame essays (and most other forms of writing) as a set of rules to be mastered in order to not lose points.

The "Un"...

What is an (Un)essay?

The short answer -- An *unessay* is a writing project done for the purpose of exploring questions and ideas of interest to the writer and not for the purpose of learning a narrow and static set of "rules" (ex. don't use "I," use 5 paragraphs, MLA format, etc.).

Writing critically with and from multiple, informed sources is perhaps the single, most common trademark for the kind of writing and thinking that is expected of you in the academy. However, this does NOT mean:

- *that you write about things you don't care about,
- *that you write as if you sound like an encyclopedia/wikipedia,
- *that you omit your own voice and perspective,
- *that you cannot be creative and energetic...

DR. CARMEN TEACHERS

that you must sound like the type of person who might wear wool/plaid jackets with suede patches on the elbows in order to be taken seriously, that you cannot be everything that makes up your multiple selves, that you cannot be Hip Hop, R&B, Soul, Bomba, Dancehall, Soca, Metal, Bachata, EDM, or Rock-N-Roll, that you cannot have some fun with it!

You do not give up who you are to be an academic writer; on the contrary, you take who are even MORE seriously.

You are not going to be left unprepared for instructors who assign "real" essays... the things you will be doing in an unessay will help improve your "real" ones: excellent "real" essays are about things writers are interested in, and emerge from the writer's sense of a rhetorical situation. If you learn how to write compelling and effective "unessays," you'll find it a lot easier to do well in your "real" essays. But more importantly, you might find yourself writing real "real" essays (i.e. essays that are true to the experimental and personal origins of the genre) instead.

Given a choice, most instructors would rather read those kinds of essays anyway.

you are not going to be left unprepared for instructors who assign "real" essays. Questions like how to format your page or prepare a works-cited list (i.e. the kind of thing many students obsess about in such classes) are actually quite trivial and easily learned. You can look them up when you need to know them (that's what I do, anyway). Increasingly, you can get your software to handle these things for you.

What your software, and MLA handbook can't teach you is how to...

How to Cite Like a Badass Tech Feminist Scholar of Color

A citation zine by Rigoberto Lara Guzmán and Saraceta Amrute

ripz · Following
Published in Data & Society Fables · 6 min read · Aug 22, 2019

This is the first post in our ongoing series *Strategies for Unsettling Technology Research*. The series aims to unsettle existing research practices by centering Indigenous, Asian, and Black feminist perspectives and *unpeeling technology's* myriad relationships to the historical, unfinished, and everyday effects of empire.

what do you mean that essays and other forms of writing can be OPEN and FLEXIBLE?

This means that there are no formal requirements like MLA format or page length or even that your writing project has to be words on 8.5" x 11" paper. If you can accomplish your purpose in 8 pages, great. Or maybe you need 8 pages. If your writing will be more effective by incorporating images and other media into your work, then do it. Maybe your project is best presented as a video or as an audio essay or an interactive webpage. Then use video, or sound, or other forms of multimedia. Maybe you speak another language or even multiple forms of English and using this language in your work will be effective -- do it.



Kaiya Gordon's "Intake Essay" plays with the "make-form" in their-essay to explore personal struggles with mental health.

Intake Essay

Kaiya Gordon

NEWELL HEADLINE INTAKE ESSAY

Please complete this form in this form and bring it to the first class. I may see you but not a paper for you to take to all people. You may take it to all people.

Date of Birth: 05/09/94 Name: Kaiya Gordon

City: New York State: NY

Are you the person who is going to be posted to your phone use (social)?

Current City: New York State: NY

Are you the person who is going to be posted to your phone use (social)?

Are you the person who is going to be posted to your phone use (social)?

Are you the person who is going to be posted to your phone use (social)?

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google this...

Read this @ <https://trianglehouse.squarespace.com/r/evolve/issue-twenty/intake-essay>

the unessay

wait... what is it?

an TEXT *UNESSAY* ??

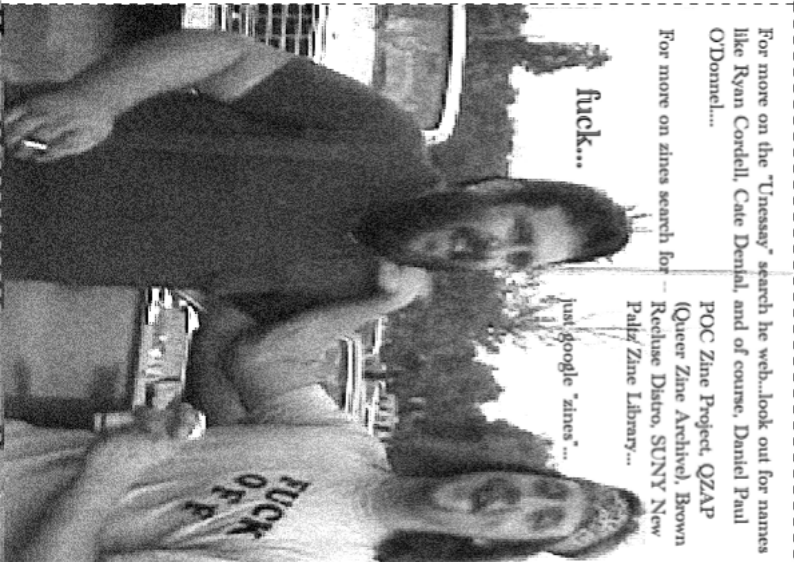
CONTEXT

the "unessay" was originally developed by Daniel Paul O'Donnell, a medievalist and textual studies scholar.

the "unessay" invites you. The "unessay" invites us to resist overly prescriptive definitions of what an essay even writing in general -- is or can be.

XY X0

As a writing project the "unessay" calls our attention to the idea that essays (and many other forms of writing) are actually very flexible and open and can be used to explore and discuss -- take action on!!!! -- nearly any topic that matters to you. The "unessay" invites us to resist overly prescriptive definitions of what an essay even writing in general -- is or can be.



ION!

UN!

About 126,000,000 results (0:37 seconds)

a prefix meaning "not," freely used as an English formative, giving negative or opposite force in adjectives and their derivative adverbs and nouns (unfair; unfairly; unfairness; unfelt; unseen; unfitting; unformed; unheard-of; un-get-at-able), and less freely used in certain other nouns (unrest; unemployment).

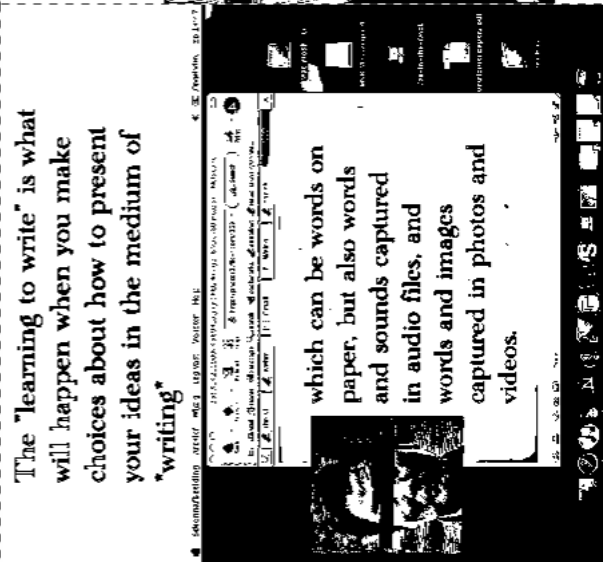
What about learning to write "real" essays? Isn't all this flexibility a waste of my time?

This is a good question. I don't have a better answer than O'Donnell, the originator of the unessay, so I'll use his words here (altered only slightly)...

wait... what is it?

PURPOSE AUDIENCE

The slightly longer answer -- There's a good chance that you've come into this class with the expectation that you will be writing something called "papers" or "essays." Great! Essays, as I hope you'll experience them in this class are wonderful things. However, my experience also generally shows me that students come into an English class with the idea that these things called essays (or papers) are unwieldy, inflexible, rule-bound monsters. For example, if you've been told never to use the personal pronoun "I" in an essay or that an essay should always be 5 paragraphs, you've experienced this "essay as rule-bound monster" approach to writing.



What is most important is that the choices you make about the presentation of your ideas help your audiences engage with your work.



READ HANIF

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1991 JUL P.1

riot girl

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