

...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. Questions like how to format your page or prepare a works-cited list f.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 Saravita Armita  
 This is the first post in our ongoing series Strategies for Unsettling Technology Research. The series aims to nurture existing research practices by centering Indigenous, Asian, and Black feminist perspectives and unpacking technology's myriad relationships to the historical, unfinished, and everyday affects of empire.

rather read those kinds of essays anyway.

Given a choice, most instructors would

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

are true to the experimental and personal origins of the genre) instead.

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

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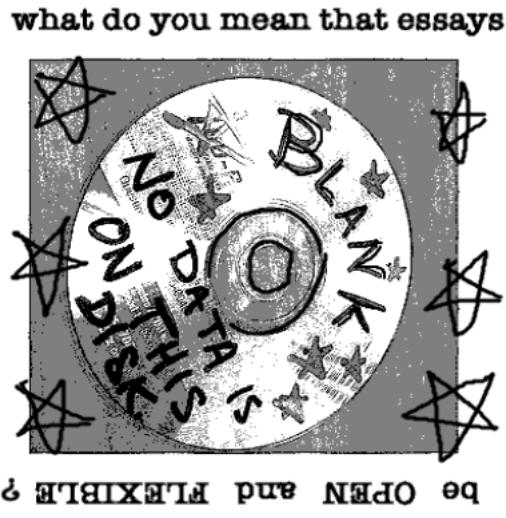
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what do you mean that essays and other forms of writing can be OPEN and FLEXIBLE?



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

google this...

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

SEARCH: [ ]  
 NAME: Kaiya Gordon  
 EMAIL: [ ]  
 PHONE: [ ]  
 ADDRESS: [ ]  
 COMMENTS: [ ]



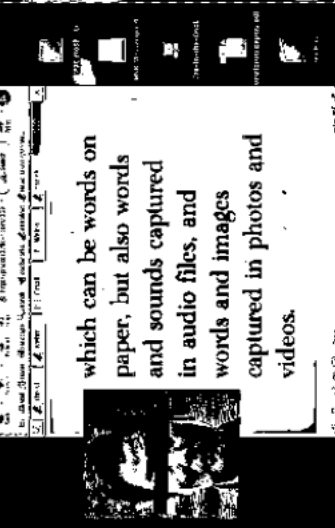
wait... what... **THIS** **AUDIENCE**

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 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.

an TEXT CONTEXT  
\*UNESSAY\*  
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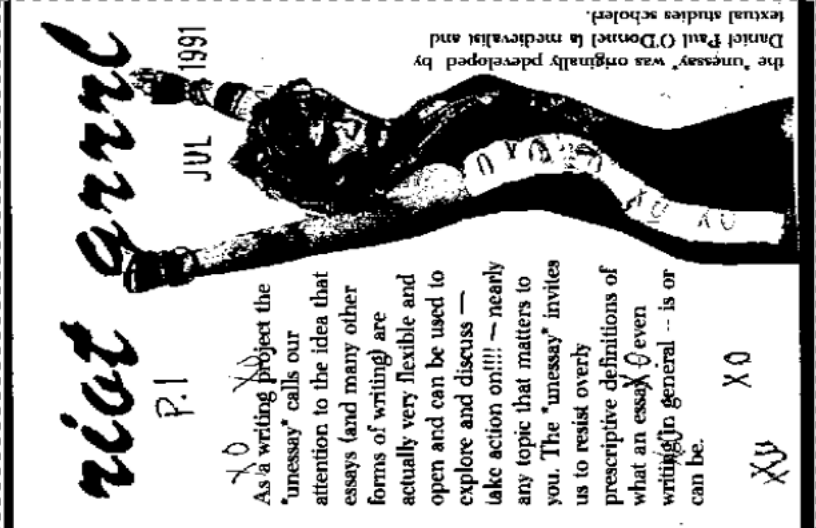
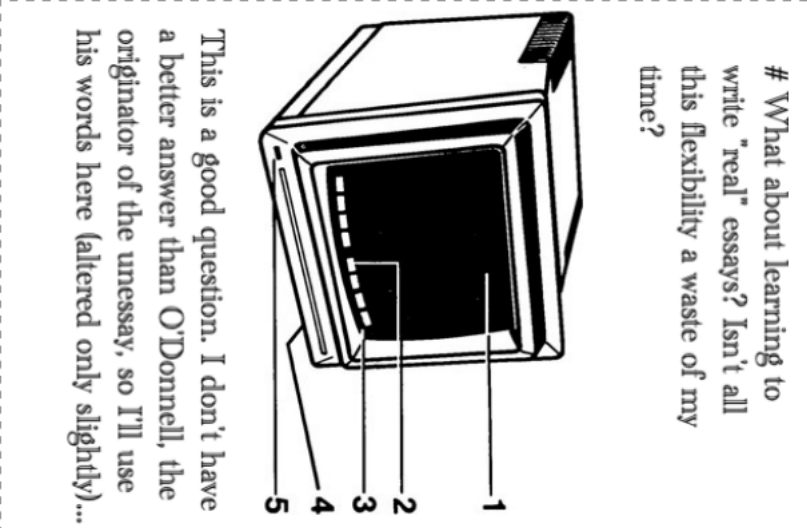
The "learning to write" is what will happen when you make choices about how to present your ideas in the medium of "writing"



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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READ HANIF  
READ HANIF



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)...

the "unessay" was originally developed by Daniel Paul O'Donnell in medieval and textual studies school.