

Rewriting Our Stories

Summer Scholars Summer 2020

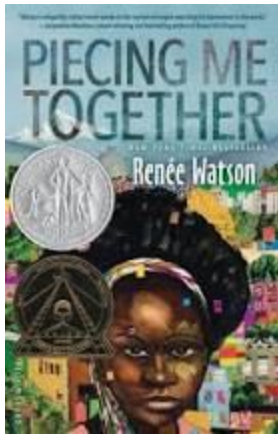
Dr. Kesi Augustine

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[Office hours 10 am - 12 pm on Wednesdays and Fridays](#)

Google Classroom Code: 2z3m7rq

Course Description:



Who writes stories about us? Do they get it right? How can we use our own voices to create narratives that feel true to teenagers today, especially in a world that is increasingly ambiguous and chaotic?

This creative writing course will provide 9th grade Scholars with a series of exercises for helping them to understand the lack of representation of children of color in literature, and to write our own physical descriptions, settings, authentic dialogue, and conflicts for both our imagined characters and our lived experiences. We will read and discuss excerpts of scholarship, lectures, podcasts, and stories by contemporary writers of color like Jacqueline Woodson, Walter Dean Myers, Jason Reynolds, Angie Thomas, Akwaeke Emezi, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Renée Watson.

Reynolds, Angie Thomas, Akwaeke Emezi, Elizabeth Acevedo, and Renée Watson.

This writing intensive course:

- serves as a gateway to 9th grade Writing & Thinking workshops, and offers a writing discipline that will prepare students for the daily routines in Literature of the Americas classrooms.
- familiarizes Scholars with the basic exercises of Bard College's Writing and Thinking framework: freewrites, focused freewrites, writing from images, writing to music, and loop writing with help from writing exercises inside and outside of class of increasing length.
- Scholars will also consider these practices as tools that help them to embody the five competencies of social and emotional learning: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, self-management, and relationship skills.
- Scholars will workshop at least one piece of writing to completion (2 pages), and participate in a reading of their work at the end of the session. Short in-class writing exercises may provide inspiration for Scholars' later work.

Participation

- Each Scholar is expected to maintain active participation during all class sessions. This includes keeping your Zoom camera on (this will be your expectation during formal classes in the fall),
- focused listening when your peers speak,
- sharing in small groups,
- and contributing to the larger group discussion by using the “raise hand” option on Zoom or reflecting in the chat.

Your observations do not need to be fully formed in order to be shared, but they do need to be thoughtful and relevant. The chat is our way of connecting with one another in real time, and this is not a formal space. Feel free to use any of the reactions. But please keep your comments respectful of your peers.

Reading and Writing Schedule

(Day 1)

Friday, July 10 - Introductions Through Writing

Classwork: Meet Dr. Augustine - “I AM” (poetry reading); Writing Exercise: Focused Freewrite (FFW) - “I am...” OR “A moment I will never forget...”; Partnered Shares; Syllabus Distribution

Homework: Join Google Classroom + read Elizabeth Acevedo, *The Poet X* ([excerpt](#)).



Week 1 - *all in class exercises are presented in the context of Summer Scholars’ focus on the “self” for Week 1.*

Monday, July 13 - Character - Real & Imagined

Classwork: Writing to an Image - [CCBC Statistics 2018](#);¹ Share Outs; [“Meet” Elizabeth Acevedo](#); Defining Character; Reading: Character Xiomara, from Elizabeth Acevedo, *The Poet X* (excerpt, 2018, via [Acevedo’s reading](#)); Mini Discussion

¹ Huyck, David and Sarah Park Dahlen. (2019 June 19). Diversity in Children’s Books 2018. *sarahpark.com* blog. Created in consultation with Edith Campbell, Molly Beth Griffin, K. T. Horning, Debbie Reese, Ebony Elizabeth Thomas, and Madeline Tyner, with statistics compiled by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison: <http://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/books/pcstats.asp>. Retrieved from <https://readingspark.wordpress.com/2019/06/19/picture-this-diversity-in-childrens-books-2018-infographic/>.

Homework: Bring in an image of a place that you have happy memories with, or a place that you would like to visit someday.

Image of author Elizabeth Acevedo © Melissa Lyttle, NYT.



Tuesday, July 14 - Setting

“Some of the novels that are in bookstores today - I started in high school” - Watson, “Piecing Me Together Book Talk,” 2017

Classwork: Writing Exercise: Freewrite (FW); Check Ins; Defining Setting; Gallery Walk; “Meet” Renée Watson - “[Where You From?](#)” [International Literacy Association Conference, 2019](#)”; Writing Exercise: FFW - “Where I’m from...” OR “A place where...” ; Small &

Large Group Shares.

Homework: Reading: Renée Watson, *Piecing Me Together* ([excerpt](#), 2018), and think about how she is creating setting.

Image of author Renée Watson © Renée Watson.

Thursday, July 16 - Setting (cont’d)

Classwork: Writing Exercise: Writing to Music; Shares/Check Ins; Read Around & Discussion of Character and Setting in *Piecing Me Together*

Additional support for working with Watson’s novel adapted from [Piecing Me Together: A Discussion Guide About Race, Class, Gender, and Intersectionality](#) (Bloomsbury).

Homework: [Assignment #1: Literary Portrait](#), **Due Sunday, July 19 by 11:59 pm as a .doc on Google Classroom.**

Week 2 - all in class exercises are presented in the context of Summer Scholars’ focus on “community” for Week 2.



Monday, July 20 - Character, Setting, and Dialogue

Classwork: Informal Check-Ins; Writing Exercise: Freewrite (FW); Dialogue - Definition & Stakes with help from “if speaking is belonging” by Aja Monet (*My Mother Was a Freedom Fighter*, 2017); Meet Angie Thomas; Read Around: [The Hate U Give \(2017\)](#); Film Screening: *The Hate U Give* (2018); Large Group Discussion on Dialogue.

Homework: Rest and recover.

Image of author Angie Thomas © Imani Kayyam.

Tuesday, July 21 - Character, Setting, Dialogue (cont'd) - Our Writing and Speaking

Classwork: Loop Writing; Talk That Talk - Make Your Characters Speak & Dialogue with A Classmate

Homework: Read [Pet by Akwaeke Emezi \(2019, excerpt\)](#). *This is our longest excerpt yet, but an important addition to our texts - read through as much as you can.*

Thursday, July 23 - Dialogue (cont'd)

Classwork: Writing to Music, Reflections on Student Writing from Assignment #1; Angie Thomas on the Craft of Listening and Dialogue (from *Find Your Voice: A Guided Journal for Writing Your Truth*, ; Return to partnered work for Assignment #2

Homework: **Homework #2 (graded): due Sunday, July 26 by 11:59 pm on Google Classroom.**

Week 3: Revising & Celebrations! *all in class exercises are presented in the context of Summer Scholars' focus on "the world" for Week 3.*

Monday, July 27 - Conflict

Classwork: Writing from Images - Book cover to *Pet*; Writing Exercise - FFW in response to Gwendolyn Brooks poem excerpt - "...we are each other's magnitude and bond"; Partnered Shares; Large Group Shares; Closing Reflections on the Importance of Listening with Jacqueline Woodson's "learning to listen" series (from *Brown Girl Dreaming*, 2014); Meet Akwaeke Emezi of the "Make Me a World" imprint - "[building a world](#)"; Receive final assignment.

Homework: Identify the idea that you want to work on, or the piece you'd like to revise, for your [final assignment, due by Sunday at 11:59 pm](#).



Image of Akweke Emezi © Akweke Emezi.

Tuesday, July 28 - Conflict (end).

Classwork: Conflict in *Pet* via "Text Mining" and FFWs.

Homework: Bring in creative writing to share with your peers during Thursday's final session.

Thursday, July 30 - The End

Classwork: FFW - “the end...”; Shares; Shout Outs for Assignment #2; reflections on revision with Angie Thomas, and Walter Dean Myers, *Just Write! Here’s How* (HarperTeen, 2012); Community Shares; A Special Thank You from Dr. Kesi.

Homework: Complete your final assignment.

Friday, July 31 - Program Celebration, Shares, Goodbyes.