Antiracist Pedagogy Spring 2022
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Track C- Antiracist Assessment Practices

I wanted to implement anti-racist assessment practices in my creative writing syllabus, specifically how I assess students on a macro level.

Creative writing workshops have had the same basic principles in the US since the 1940s/50s. This revolves primarily around writing for a single audience (white, male, literary realism-centered). It also centers around forcing the writer being workshopped to be a passive (and sometimes completely powerless) member of the workshop. Unfortunately, this idea only reinforces what many people of color feel in their everyday lives.

On the flipside, in an anti-racist workshop, the writer is given more control and input on how their work is read and workshopped. This includes removing the dreaded "gag order" during workshop, as well as meeting with the instructor before and after workshops to reflect and plan for future workshops. This also includes those doing the workshopping to not read for that "default" audience (white, male, literary realism-centered) and to instead read for the audience the writer has intended. This helps ensure the workshop is emphasizing writers (and audiences) of color.

In my syllabus, this assessment implementation is best represented by the grade breakdown. Here, you will see both how old, traditional creative writing workshops are generally assessed, as well as how a creative writing course with a focus on anti-racist pedagogy is assessed.

The largest difference is chipping away at the emphasis on traditional writing and workshopping practices as the primary way a student receives a grade. In the anti-racist syllabus, more emphasis is put on community building and creating an atmosphere that is inviting, which will have a trickle-down effect on the workshopping and writing being conducted and create a more inclusive writing and classroom environment.