

Sherrie Fernandez-Williams

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Professional Profile: Experienced teacher, administrator, and writer with a distinctive ability to create safe learning environments.

Education: MFA in Writing, Hamline University, 2005

Teaching Experience:

Instructor: Critical Reading and Composition, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN 2023

- Develop student critical reading skills using text across genres
- Engage students in analyzing texts and situating work within their cultural, social, and historical context
- Engage students in the process of brainstorming, composing, and revising critical writing developing skills necessary for future academic success

Teaching Artist: Summer Adult Program, Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, MN 2023

- Deepened student knowledge about the genre of creative nonfiction
- Familiarized students with approaches to writing creative nonfiction and craft elements used in speculative memoir, contemplative writing, lyrical essay, and research-based creative nonfiction.
- Led discussions on literary works overtly embedded within a social, cultural, and historical context. The authors included Kazim Ali, Safia Elhillo, Ross Gay, Joy Harjo, Carolyn Holbrook, Erika Sánchez, Scott Russell Sanders, Joni Tevis, and Kao Kalia Yang.
- Created a safe space for workshopping student writing by leading participants through guidelines designed to promote encouragement while providing critical feedback and ensuring those tools are used throughout the course.

Adjunct Instructor: MFA Program's Prose Hybrid Concordia University, St. Paul, MN, 2019

- Led online discussions on assigned readings
- Workshopped students' creative work
- Provided feedback on students' creative work
- Graded creative and critical work.
- Kept student portal updated with class materials, grades, and instruction.

Teaching Artist: Summer program for teen writers, Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, MN 2015, 2016

- Designed a multi-genre course, *Writing in the Real World*, for teens 13-17
- Guided students through elements of craft to enhance their narrative voices
- Led students through workshops paying close attention to essential literary components such as insight, precise language, urgency, images, dialogue, scenes, and the use of symbols.

- Worked with character development to expand the world of protagonists while maintaining specificity.

Instructor: Bridges Scholars Program at Hamline University, Saint Paul, MN 2008-2014

- Taught twenty sections of *Bridges Scholars: Discover Your Vocational Identity* to undergraduate students
- Redesigned course and successfully petitioned faculty governing body to increase credit hours from 2 to 4 credits.
- Designed innovative lesson plans with an emphasis on active learning to build professional skills in undergraduate students, including writing, speaking, and the ability to develop healthy professional relationships

Adjunct Instructor of English Composition II at Minneapolis Community and Technical College 2012

- Engaged students in critical conversations on literary works
- Taught students the fundamentals of writing college research papers, including MLA formatting and discerning scholarly works.
- Formed learning circles to promote collaborative learning

Adjunct Instructor at Bethel University, Saint Paul, MN 2003, 2004

- Co-created and taught the Visual and Written Creativity Course to meet the Fine Arts requirement for undergraduate, adult learners
- Familiarize students with the essential elements of creative personal narrative.
- Provide students with tools to constructively critique the work of classmates.
- Engage students in literary analysis of classical and contemporary personal essays.
- Increase comfort level with written communication.

Guest Teaching:

- Lead community classes with Hennepin County Libraries and Ramsey County Libraries, 2015-present
- Invited Community Class “Voices that Sing in Black and White” at the New Griots Black Arts Festival, Phoenix Theatre, Minneapolis, 2015
- Guest Presenter for Wesley Center Scholars at Hamline University, 2009, 2013, 2015
- Guest Presenter for Undergraduate Creative Writing Course, Hamline University, 2013, 2014, 2015
- Facilitated a 4-week creative nonfiction workshop, Brothers Inc, Saint Paul, MN, 2012
- Guest Lecturer for Womanist/Feminist Theology, Hamline University, 2010
- Guest Lecturer for Womanist Theology, United Theological Seminary, 2010, 2012
- Guest Presenter at Broadway High School for teenage mothers, 2008
- Facilitated a 4-week workshop on Writing for Healing at the Domestic Abuse Project, 2005
- Workshop Facilitator on Writing for Self-Discovery at Center Baptist Church, 2005
- Workshop Facilitator on Spiritual Writing at Ambassadors Baptist Church, 1999, 1998

Administrative Experience:

Co-Curator, Queer Voices, Minnesota, Minneapolis, and St. Paul 2020-Present

- Organize literature events, including readings, book launches, and writing workshops.
- Create electronic and hardcopy promotional materials
- Serve as host at literature events, welcome and involve audiences in activities
- Serve as liaison with partners, Hennepin County Libraries, and Quatrefoil Libray, Mpls.
- Facilitate writing circles, lead discussions about literary work highlighting specific craft elements, engage participants in writing prompts, and create a safe environment for all participants regardless of experience or skill level.

Program Officer, Minnesota State Arts Board, St. Paul, MN 2017-2023

- Manage two individual artist grant programs offered through the Arts Board
- Facilitate 15-16 panel trainings and public meetings for the Artist Initiative and Cultural Community Partnership programs
- Engage in outreach activities, including leading workshops, information sessions, and holding individual appointments for artists across the 11 regions of the state
- Read draft proposals and provide feedback to applicants to strengthen their proposals
- Review 600-700 submitted applications a year and make determinations about eligibility
- Communicate with 140-150 grant recipients multiple times yearly, address concerns, and advise grantees through the contract amendment process.
- Read and approve contract changes.
- Read and approve final reports from all grantees.

Program Manager Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, MN 2014-2017

- Coordinate the Mentor Series. Research and contract a diverse set of artists to serve as mentors. Prepare award guidelines and implement outreach strategies in consultation with the Marketing Department.
- Lead book discussions on the work of visiting authors
- Determine entrants' eligibility and follow through on problem applications.
- Respond to general inquiries, fulfill guideline requests, and process 250-300 entries.
- Serve as liaison and contact person to external groups, including funders, potential applicants, presenting artists, and the general public.
- Facilitate orientations and appropriate preparatory meetings for all programs.
- Plan all travel arrangements for visiting artists.
- Work with booksellers to ensure that books by all artists are in stock promptly and are available for sale at all public events.
- Assist Development efforts for program funding, including participating in meetings with funders, writing proposals, and preparing reports.
- Collect participant and audience input, then analyze, report, and act on results.
- Establish and maintain realistic timelines for all programs.
- Oversee many public presentations. Make arrangements for receptions, contract technical help, and serve as host and spokesperson for the Loft.

Program Director for the Bridges Scholars Program in the Career Development Center, Hamline University, Saint Paul, MN 2008-2014

- Create and facilitate workshops around self-discovery and present to students in various classrooms as guest of the faculty.

- Meet with Bridges students individually to offer further assistance on professional skills and future planning.
- Recruit, hire, train, and supervise Bridges Scholars instructors and team leaders.

Admissions Advisor at the Center for Graduate and Continuing Studies at Bethel University, 1998-2003

- Worked diligently toward meeting admissions goals
- Coordinated and facilitated informational seminars
- Developed and maintained follow-up contact schedule
- Advised students in credit-building options during the pre-major stage
- Created individual planning schedules for students
- Explored new marketing strategies aimed at reaching students of color
- Collaborated with community leaders in identifying candidates for scholarships

Leadership and Service:

(Include but are not limited to the following:)

- Elected to serve on University-Wide Diversity Integration Committee at Hamline University
- Served two-year appointment as Chair of the Diversity Committee of the Division of Student Affairs at Hamline University, coordinated educational opportunities for the division of Student Affairs in the areas of Race, Gender, Class, Sexual Orientation, and Ability/Disability 2010-2012
- Member of the Diversity Committee of the Division of Student Affairs at Hamline University 2008-2014
- Served as an intergenerational mentor during Spectrum's (LGBT Student Organizations) weekend retreat. Spring, 2012
- Co-facilitator of the Black Women's Circle at Hamline University, designed to provide black female students a safe space to discuss issues pertinent to this community. 2009-2014
- Member of Hamline University's LGBT Coalition working to bring fairness and equality to members of the LGBT community at Hamline, 2012.
- SafeZone Member at Hamline University 2008-2014
- Served one year as co-chair of *CommUnity Week* at the University of Saint Thomas, organized and marketed campus-wide educational events around diversity issues. 2006

University Awards and Honors

Winner of the Wesley Award, Hamline University

Winner of the Social Justice Award, Hamline University

Winner of the Outstanding Staff Award from Multicultural Student Alliance, Hamline University

Winner of the Rainbow Award from the LGBT Student Organization, Hamline University

University of St. Thomas, Spirit of Excellence Community-Builder Award

Colleague of the Month, Bethel College

Book Publications:

Soft: A Memoir, North Star Press, 2014

Black Goddess of the Fully Integrated Self: poems, Finishing Line Press, July 2023

Work In Progress

Here Before, A Novel

Other Publications:

Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "Here Before" (essay) *We Are Meant to Rise*, 2022
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "Hunger" (poem) *Dilydoun Review*, 2022
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie, "Homeland, Like the Girl Who Sang Soweto, (poem) *Can't Stop, Won't Stop*, Rain Taxi, 2020
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "May the Circle," (poem) *Minnesota Review* 2020
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "no disrespect to officer quinn," (poem) *Serendipity*, 2019
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "the crossing," (poem) *Aquifer: The Florida Review* 2018
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "she be like, damn" (poem) *Wrath-Bearing Tree*, 2018
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "juanita," (poem) *Wrath-Bearing Tree* 2018
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "hot tea," (poem) *Wrath-Bearing Tree* 2018
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "tony," (poem) *Wrath-Bearing Tree* 2018
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "inflammation," (poem) *Wrath-Bearing Tree*
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie "A Case for Writing While Black," (essay) *How Dare We! Write*, edited by Sherry Quan Lee, Modern History Press, 2017
Fernandez-Williams, Sherrie. "First Faint Lines." (essay) *The Poverty and Education Reader* edited by Gorski, Paul and Landsman, Julie. Virginia: Stylus Publishing 2014.
(publications under a previous name)
Maze, Sherrie Lynn, "*Origin*," (essay) *Segue- Miami University*, Fall 2005
Maze, Sherrie Lynn, "*A Thin Line*," (essay) *Branch Magazine*, 2005
Maze, Sherrie Lynn, "*In Knots*," (essay) *SubtleTea*, 2005.
Maze, Sherrie Lynn, "*Mother*," (essay) *Summit Avenue Review*-2006.

Literary Awards and Honors:

2021-2023 Jerome Hill Fellowship, Jerome Foundation
2021 Voices in Black Literature for Children, 2nd Place Winner
2018 Ann Meek Poetry Award, *Aquifer: Florida Review*
2015 Beyond the Pure Fellowship in Writing, *Intermedia Arts*
2011 Artist Initiative Grant in Prose, *Minnesota State Arts Board Grant*
2009 SASE/Jerome Award in Writing, *Intermedia Arts*
2009 Loft Mentor Series Winner in Creative Nonfiction
2008 Givens Black Writers Collaborative Winner
2005 SASE Writer to Writer Mentor Series Winner
2000 Playwrights' Center's Jones Commission Award Winner

Public readings include but are not limited to...:

Readings by Writers, University Club, St. Paul, MN
Book Promotion Readings: Subtext Bookstore, Magers and Quinn, Birchbark Books, Common Good Books, Eat My Words Books, Saint Paul Library-Merriam Park, Minneapolis Central Public Library, Hamline University

Cracked Walnut Series

Queer Voices Reading Series, Intermedia Arts

Flash Nonfiction Publication Reading, Magers and Quinn

Black Women's Circle culminating event, Hamline University

Birchbark Books Reading Series, Birchbark Books

SASE/Jerome Award Reading, Intermedia Arts

Queer Voices Reading Series, Intermedia Arts

Mentor Series Reading, Loft Literary Center

LGBTQ African-American Writers, Quatrefoil Library

Nu Griots Reading with the Givens Foundation, Penumbra Theater

SASE Mentor Series Culminating Event

Hamline University, First Friday

Bethel University, Black Writers Series

Performing Arts Center, Reading of my full-length play by professional actors, Untitled,

Playwrights' Center, Reading of my full-length play by professional actors, "Everything is Everything,"