

ASHLEY WELLS
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BIOGRAPHY

Ashley Wells is a senior lecturer in the English Department at Utah State University, where she teaches Introduction to Creative Nonfiction, Advanced Creative Nonfiction, and argumentative writing. She chairs the Website Content Committee, which handles all news and features for the department website. In this role, Ashley manages the committee, assigns features, mentors student writers, and edits all content. Additionally, she serves on the department's creative writing committee and is the *Sink Hollow* magazine Poetry Advisor and the Creative Writing and Art Contest Director. She also serves on the Lecturer Advisory Committee and Awards Committee. Prior to joining the faculty at USU, Ashley was a faculty lecturer at the University of Iowa, where she directed and co-directed the Writing Center, guiding students toward a sustainable writing and editing practice. At the University of Iowa, Ashley developed and taught courses on multi-modal writing and speaking for the web, in collaboration with the Creative Writing Certificate program, teaching students to develop their own websites and podcasts. There, she served in administrative and leadership roles. Ashley has also taught Forms of Literature courses in nonfiction and fiction, as well as courses on blurred boundaries in nonfiction.

Ashley Wells earned her MFA at California State University, Fresno. Her book, *The Cowgirl and the Racehorse: A Recovery*, was published with Lantern Media and Publishing in October 2020, and her essays, interviews, and blog posts have appeared with *Bitch* magazine, *Jezebel*, *Calling All Horse Girls*, *Utah Public Radio*, *Connotation Press*, and *Women in Higher Education*. Ashley is currently working on a new book project, *A Generation Lost*, which explores queerness, disability, chronic pain, generational trauma, incarceration, and addiction. An essay from the collection in-progress was recently awarded First Place in the Creative Nonfiction Essay category for the 2023 Utah Original Writing Competition. Her creative writing nonfiction teaching interests include nature writing, trauma writing, writing disability and pain, archival research, and addiction narratives, with an emphasis on intersectionality.

EDUCATION

California State University, Fresno

Master of Fine Arts, Creative Writing - Nonfiction, May 2012
Thesis: *Girls and Horses: An Exploration of Power and Risk*

Bachelor of Arts, English, May 2008
Bachelor of Arts, Women's Studies, May 2008
Magna Cum Laude

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Senior Lecturer, English Department, Utah State University, August 2020-present

- English 2010: Research Writing in a Persuasive Mode, including summer sections
- English 3440: Creative Nonfiction
- English 4440: Advanced Creative Nonfiction
- USU 1010: Connections

Supplemental Instruction Faculty Mentor (Fall 2022-Spring 2023)

- I mentored four supplemental instruction leaders, who offer tutoring and study sessions for my English 2010 students.

Faculty Lecturer, Rhetoric Department, University of Iowa, August 2016-August 2020

- Rhetoric 1030
- Rhetoric 1040: Writing and Reading
- Rhetoric 2070: Persuasive Stories: From Riot Grrrl to Beyoncé (a GE Core Elective in the area of Values and Culture and counted toward the Creative Writing Certificate)
- Rhetoric 2055: Cowgirl Stories: The Rhetoric of Freedom (F2F and Asynchronous online; a GE Core Elective in the area of Values and Culture and counted toward the Creative Writing Certificate)
- Rhetoric 4980: Special Projects for Undergraduates (zine and personal narrative writing for the web)
- Rhetoric 1000: For the Birds: Learning from the Rhetoric of Raptors (a first-year seminar)
- Rhetoric 1000: From Riot Grrrl to Beyoncé (a first-year seminar)

Graduate Instructor Mentorship

- I mentored several graduate students in pedagogy and professional development, reviewing syllabi, assisting with curriculum, and offering guidance on classroom practices.

Writing Center

- Acted as Summer Co-Director for two years (2018, 2019) and Summer Director for one (2020).
- Worked with undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in ongoing weekly appointments; Ran programing for graduate students working on their dissertations.
- Developed the Rhetoric Writing Studio to support summer school students taking Rhetoric courses.
- Coordinated writing center research.
- Completed Teaching in a Writing Center course.

Instructor, English Department, Kirkwood Community College, August 2013-2016

- Elements of Writing (F2F and Distance Learning)
- English Composition I (F2F, Distance Learning, and Asynchronous online, as well as concurrent enrollment)
- English Composition II (F2F, Distance Learning, and Asynchronous online, as well as concurrent enrollment)
- Forms of Literature: Fiction

- Forms of Literature: Nonfiction
- Writing Center tutoring

Instructor, English Department, Iowa Wesleyan University, August 2015-2016

- English 100: Fundamentals of English
- English 105: College Composition & Research
- Communications 147: Introduction to Public Speaking
- English 201: Writing & Research about Literature

Lecturer, English Department, Cornell College, October 2014-December 2014

- English 111: Blurred Boundaries in Creative Nonfiction

Lecturer, Women's Studies Department, California State University, Fresno, August 2012-May 2013

- Critical Thinking: Gender Issues
- Introduction to Women's Studies

Graduate Teaching Associate, English Department, California State University, Fresno, August 2009-May 2012

- English 5A: Academic Literacy I
- English 5B: Academic Literacy II
- Creative Writing Nonfiction

Instructor, Health Careers Opportunity Program, California State University, Fresno, June-August 2010

- English Composition

PUBLICATIONS

BOOK-LENGTH

- *The Cowgirl and the Racehorse: A Recovery*, memoir published with Lantern Media and Publishing, October 2020

ARTICLES AND ESSAYS

- "Comparing Tutoring Strategies in Recurrent Tutorials" in *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship* with Carol Severino and Deirdre Egan, December 2021
- *Calling All Horse Girls* book club selection, February 2021
- "What I Don't Teach" in *Women in Higher Education*, January 2015
- "Matter" in *Connotation Press*, September 2014
- "I Learned about Feminism from American Girl's Felicity" on Jezebel.com, March 2013
- *Cowgirl Narratives* 16-post guest blog series with *Bitch* magazine, February-May 2013
 - "Exploring Gender in Cowgirl Narratives"
 - "In Classic Western Films, Cowboys Wander While Women Stay at Home"

- “A Feminist Perspective on the American Rodeo”
- “National Velvet: Is this Feminist Film Still Relevant?”
- “Remember Flicka? The Main Character Used to be Male”
- “Rewatching 1991’s *Wild Hearts Can’t be Broken*, the Films About Femininity and Diving Horses”
- “In Real Life, as in Disney’s *Brave*, Some Choose Horses Over Husbands”
- “How I Learned About Feminism from American Girl’s Felicity”
- “The Feminist Way to Ride a Horse”
- “Disney’s *Secretariat* and Sexism in the Horseracing Industry”
- “Do Horses Heal?”
- “How My Little Pony and Barbie Market to Horse-Loving Girls”
- “What Do Horses Mean to Mad Men’s Betty Draper?”
- “Women Warriors on Horseback: How Xena and Mulan Retell Mythology”
- “Interview with Author of New Book *The Yonahlossee Riding Camp for Girls*”
- “Happy Trails”
- “The Fall” in *Connotation Press*, March 2012

CREATIVE READINGS

- *The Cowgirl and the Racehorse: A Recovery* reading at the Living with Animals Conference, March 2023
- *The Cowgirl and The Racehorse* reading, Helicon West, August 25, 2022
- *The Cowgirl and The Racehorse* reading, California State University, Fresno, Fresno Writers Live, July 2021
- *The Cowgirl and The Racehorse* reading, California State University, Fresno, Fresno Writers at Home Series, December 2020
- *The Cowgirl and The Racehorse* reading, The Greatest Indoor Reading Series, November 2020
- “A Pledge” at the Graduate Research and Creative Activities Symposium, May 2012
- “Discovering Instinct” at Rogue Performance Festival, March 2012
- “The Fall” at Rogue Performance Festival, March 2011

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES, PRESENTATIONS, AND AWARDS

- Faculty Mentor to Chloe Scheve, National Conference on Undergraduate Research, December 2024-April 2025
- USU 1050 Speakers Series Panel, December 5, 2024
- “Popular Sources in the Classroom: Digital Literacies for Public Life Beyond the Institution,” English Department Compositionist Conference, Utah State University, August 2024
- First Place in the Creative Nonfiction Essay category for the Utah Original Writing Competition, October 2023
- Lecturer of the Year Award, English Department, Utah State University, October 2022
- “Best Practices for Faculty,” USU First-Generation Consortium roundtable, August 2022

- “On Critical Thinking and Empowerment: Using bell hooks to Create Community,” English Department Compositionist Conference, Utah State University, August 2022
- First Scholars Faculty and Staff Award nominee, Aggies First Scholars, Utah State University, April 2022
- *The Cowgirl and The Racehorse: A Recovery*, an invited talk with Fresno State’s graduate Form and Theory: Nonfiction course, November 9 2021(the book was an assigned text)
- “The Hero’s Journey,” invited talk, USU Aggie First Scholars Potential Within Seminar, October 2021
- Connections Panel, invited talk, Utah State University, August 2021
- “Joy in Creativity—Stretching Our Skills with Podcasts,” English Department Compositionist Conference, Utah State University, August 2021
- “First-Generation Experiences,” University of Iowa Conversation Center Training, January 2021
- “Metaphor, Illness and Meaning: The Aesthetics and Ethics of Writing Pain,” The Examined Life Conference, October 10, 2020
- “First Generation College Students: A Commitment to Radical Openness,” Utah State University’s English Department Compositionists Conference, August 25, 2020
- “First-Generation Experiences,” University of Iowa Conversation Center Training, September 2020
- “Creating a Conduit to the Academic Commonplace for First-Generation Students Enrolled in an Introductory Rhetoric Course,” presentation accepted for CCCC Convention, March 2020 *conference cancelled due to coronavirus
- “Faculty Panel on Supporting First-Gen Students,” University of Iowa First-Generation Task Force Meeting, March 12, 2020
- “Teaching Archival Assignments,” University of Iowa Colloquium, February 21, 2020
- College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Collegiate Teaching Award Nominee, University of Iowa, January 2020
- “First-Generation Experiences,” University of Iowa Conversation Center Training, January 2020
- “Teacher & Writer: Finding Reciprocity,” North American Review Conference, April 2019
- “Teaching Cowgirl Stories: The Rhetoric of Freedom,” Living with Animals Conference, March 2019
- “You@UI: Being First-Gen@Iowa,” University of Iowa, October 2018
- “Making a Minor Course,” University of Iowa Rhetoric Department Colloquium, April 2018
- “First-Generation Rhetoric Instructors—Here to Hear,” University of Iowa “I’m the First” First-Generation Summit, April 2018
- “First-Generation Experiences,” University of Iowa Conversation Center Training, March 2018
- “Embracing Complexity: Rhetoric of Identities & Communities, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department Colloquium, September 2017
- “Negotiating the Personal with Writing Center Students,” Iowa Writing Center Consortium, April 7, 2017

- “Reconnecting,” AWP Intro Journals Project award nominee, November 2011
- Graduate Student Research and Creative Activities Support Award, November 2011

MEDIA CONTRIBUTIONS

- *Calling All Horse Girls*, I interviewed activist Bri Noble, May 2021
- *On the Books*, and interviewed with Fresno State’s MFA program blog, March 2021
- *Utah Public Radio*, interviewed by Utah Public Radio’s Tom Williams September 2020
- *Iowa Magazine*, March 2019
- *Daily Iowan*, December 2018
- *Daily Iowan TV*, December 2018
- Archives Symposium Interview, February 2018

UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENT SERVICE

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

- Lecturer search committee member, March 2025
- Graduate Assistant Director of Composition search committee member, March 2025
- Sink Hollow Poetry Advisor, Utah State University English Department, August 2024-present
- Faculty Mentor to Chloe Scheve, National Conference on Undergraduate Research, December 2024-April 2025
- Sink Hollow Creative Writing Contest Director, Utah State University English Department, January 2024-present
- English Department Awards Committee, member, Utah State University English Department, October 2023-present
- Academic Support and Retention search committee member, Utah State University, January 2023-February 2023
- Lecturer Advisory Committee, Utah State University English Department, September 2021-present
- English Department Website Content Committee Chair, Utah State University English Department, August 2021-present
- Aggie First Scholars, *Our Potential* subcommittee member and editor, Utah State University, March 2021-May 2023
- English Department Newsletter Committee, Utah State University English Department, February 2021-May 2021
- Aggie First Scholars Curriculum subcommittee Chair, Utah State University, January 2021-May 2023, including summer curriculum development
- Creative Writing Committee, Utah State University English Department, October 2020-present
- Aggie First Scholars Faculty Advisory Committee, Utah State University, October 2020-May 2023

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

- CCCCs Certificate in Excellence Committee subcommittee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2019-May 2020
- Core Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2019-May 2020
- First-Generation Celebration Planning Committee (a sub-committee), May 2019-May 2020
- One Day for Iowa Creative Group, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, March 2019-April 2019
- Challenge Grant Proposal Committee (sub-committee), University of Iowa Rhetoric Department December 2018-January 2019
- First-Generation Living Learning Community Co-organizer, University of Iowa, September 2018-May 2020
- Colloquium Committee Chair, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2018-May 2020
- Professional Development Program Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2018-May 2020
- Professional Guidance Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2018-May 2019
- National First-Generation Celebration Communications Committee subcommittee, University of Iowa, August 2018-November 2018
- First-Generation Faculty and Staff Network Coordination a subcommittee, University of Iowa, March 2018
- TA Hiring Officer, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, January 2018-August 2020
- Colloquium Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2017-May 2018
- Excelling@Iowa Leadership Team, University of Iowa, July 2018-May 2020
- Executive Committee (an appointed position), University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2017-August 2019
- Rhetoric Minor Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2017-May 2018
- Hancher Auditorium Embracing Complexity Steering Committee, University of Iowa, May 2017-May 2019
- Academic Curriculum Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, January 2017-May 2017
- Outreach and Donors Committee, University of Iowa Rhetoric Department, August 2016-May 2017
- First-Generation Task Force, University of Iowa, August 2016-August 2020

OTHER RELATED EXPERIENCE

Idaho Arts Commission Fellowship judge, February 2023-April 2023

Be Your Own Best Editor, a workshop led by writer Lilly Dancyger, July 2023

Writing and Publishing Addiction Narratives, a workshop led by writers Lilly Dancyger and Erin Khar, August 2022

Invited Book Talk, Seminar in Form and Theory of Creative Nonfiction, California State University, Fresno, November 2021

Conference for Antiracist Teaching, Language, and Assessment, hosted by Oregon State University, October 2021

Reporting for Creative Writers, class with writer Emma Copley Eisenberg, May 2021

Essay Contest Judge, California State University, Fresno, March-April 2021

AWP, member, April 2021-present

Writing Personal Essays with Substance, workshop led by writer Lilly Dancyger through Catapult, June-July 2020

Unlocking Tough Stories, workshop led by writer Katherine Standefer through Catapult, May-June 2020

Indexing for Creative Discovery, workshop led by writer Esmé Weijun Wang, May 24, 2020

Tin House Writer's Workshop, July 2019

Iota Writing Workshop: Writing Social Justice, December 2018

Department of Corrective Services (DCS) Sixth Judicial District Diversity Committee, volunteer, November 2018-May 2019

Invited Lecture, Counseling and Related Fields, University of Iowa, Fall 2016

Association of Writers & Writing Programs Conference (AWP), April 2015-present

Invited Lecture, "Animal Ethics," Ethics in Human Relations and Counseling, University of Iowa, Spring 2015

Bread Loaf Orion Environmental Writers' Workshop, June 2014

Writing the Nonfiction Book Proposal, Iowa Summer Writing Festival workshop led by writer Venise Berry, June 2013

Communications Project Coordinator, Farm Sanctuary, June 2013-July 2014

Tin House Writer's Workshop, July 2011

Editorial Assistant, *The Normal School Magazine*, August 2010-May 2012