

Who are you writing for?

Moves towards linguistic justice in a non-language course

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Who are you writing for?

Linguistic justice strategies for ARTH 225: *Fashion and art*



- Language acknowledgement
- Translanguaging
- Critical language awareness pedagogies

Fabiola Jean-Louis, *Marie Antoinette Is Dead*, 2017.

"Putting Indigenous first": Language acknowledgment

This course uses English, a language brought to this land by settlers and colonizers, and which was often used to overshadow or extinguish Indigenous languages—Anishinaabemowin, Kanien'kehaka, Onondaga, and Wendat—spoken in this region for hundreds of years. Language policies and beliefs, such as those employed in Canadian Residential Schools to destroy Indigenous language traditions, and which suggest one language or dialect is best—rather than that multiple languages and dialects are valuable culturally, socially, cognitively, and otherwise—are still widespread. They limit all of us and disproportionately impact Indigenous, newcomer, multilingual, and multidialectal populations.

Use your full linguistic repertoire: Translanguaging

While the business of our class will be conducted in English and assignments submitted for grading must be in English, multilingual students are encouraged to draw upon their full linguistic repertoire in completing work for this course. This might include taking notes in a home language, reading research materials in multiple languages, or using words or phrases in a language other than English (accompanied by a translation) for rhetorical effect in writing.

Progressive and pragmatic: Critical language awareness

QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE SLAMMED FOR WEARING UNDERGARMENTS IN NEWLY REVEALED SALON PORTRAIT




Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun (French, Paris 1755–1842 Paris). *Marie Antoinette in a Chemise Dress*, 1783. Oil on canvas; 89.8 x 72 cm. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

- Scaffolded assessments
- Choice in genre
- Writer's memo
- Guided peer review
- Regular engagement with writing

Progressive and pragmatic: Critical language awareness

The Maidservant Paragon: The Milkmaid

As an employer of domestic servants myself, my fellows often ask me: how do you keep such well-mannered maidservants? After a long consideration (and constant badgering) I decided to write a guide on how to exorcise the devilish wills from my domestic labourers, in hopes that you may learn the most effective manner of teaching for unteachables: visual depictions. We, in the Dutch Golden Age, are blessed with Genre paintings — or scenes of everyday life — which not only reflect our contemporary society, but also provide symbolic representations of behaviour, and their subsequent moralization. They are wonderful, as they provide a clear cultural condemnation of behaviours, visually codifying our societal rules. It is complex, yet visually simple, and legible to everyone socialised in our seventeenth-century context. Their power is immeasurable, which is why I must admit that I use Johannes Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* [Fig.1] to visually train my maidservants in good behaviour. In particular, the best lessons reside in her clothing, as Vermeer constructs her image in opposition to our cultural narrative of maidservants, providing quiet, hard-working and chaste women as a paragon example.



Before analysing *The Milkmaid* with your maidservants, it is important to identify the clothing articles in the painting to encourage a similar uniform amongst your staff. As such, the unnamed figure wears a yellow, oval neckline bodice; the orange seams are discernible. It is form-fitting, with buttons along the front. The sleeves remain yellow until the mid-upper arm, wherein it changes to a blue and green hue. A thick, cream collar elongates her neckline, hiding her skin. She wears a Dutch cap (possibly Hollar style) with only her hairline visible. At her waist, a tied blue apron shields her red skirt; there is subtle pleating in both of these articles. Most notably, she wears no jewellery or makeup, remaining completely unadorned. The materials in her outfit seem quite similar, suggesting simple, unrefined linen or cotton.

She is a character of simplicity.

- Scaffolded assessments
- Choice in genre
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Amelia Mackenzie, Page from *Employer Guide to Maidservant Dress: How to Fashion Propriety in the Seventeenth-Century Netherlands: An Analysis of the Dress in Johannes Vermeer's The Milkmaid as a Cultural Reaction to Decorum and Misogyny* (project for ARTH 225), 2023.

Write a short reflection that uses a person or stage in the fashion system (or more than one of these) as a metaphor to describe who you are as a writer and researcher.



Reflections

“Almost all of the writing I’ve done since I was a kid has been in an academic context. I enjoy writing once I’ve got an idea to run off of but I can find it tricky to get started, especially when I become too focused on whether or not my idea/theme will allow me a good grade or fit into the instructor’s framework. I feel like my relationship to the writing and research process aligns with a couple of steps in the fashion system. I feel like I am both the designer and the factory worker. I enjoy coming up with ideas and topics, and mulling over how I want to approach an assignment or piece that I’m writing, and I find pleasure in settling on an idea that I believe will work well. That being said, I also find myself being drawn into the homogenous nature of academic writing, and producing works that only serve to get a good grade or a participation mark. This is especially true for me when doing scientific or “serious” writing, which although fitting in with typical academic writing, is also incredibly tedious to produce. In this sense my creativity and desire to do well within academia are at a bit of a crossroads. I think my main goal as a writer in my next few years of university is to learn to allow a bit more of the “designer” aspect to leak into my writing, to allow my writing to be more personal (when called for) and to focus on how I can approach a prompt in a way that actually interests me. I want to work more on producing works I’m really proud of, instead of creating something that will fit in with the mass production of academia.”

- Reflection by Zoe Florizone for ARTH 225

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