

Research Statement

Writing, Technology, and the Politics of Belonging

My research examines how writing technologies, institutional expectations, and cultural narratives shape authorship, rhetorical judgment, linguistic legitimacy, and belonging in postsecondary education. Across my projects, I return to a shared question: how do writers learn what they must sound like, look like, or conceal to be recognized as competent students and scholars?

My primary research project, *From Ghostwriter to Co-Author: AI as Sponsor of (il)Literacy*, investigates how generative AI redistributes rhetorical labor. Discussions of AI-assisted writing frequently rely on a binary between cheating and innovation. This framing obscures the more consequential question of what work the writer continues to perform. When AI generates fluent prose invisibly and the writer accepts that prose without sufficient planning, comparison, monitoring, or revision, the system functions as a ghostwriter. It may produce a successful text while reducing the writer's opportunity to practice rhetorical judgment. I am exploring whether repeated delegation can create a form of trained incapacity: polished production becomes easier while independent rhetorical decision-making becomes more difficult. This concept remains a developing line of inquiry that requires careful grounding in rhetorical and organizational theory.

The alternative is not to treat AI as a person, equal partner, or legal author. I use co-authoring to describe a visible and bounded distribution of rhetorical labor in which the human writer retains responsibility for purpose, criteria, selection, revision, attribution, and reflection. These models describe different arrangements of rhetorical labor, authority, visibility, and responsibility—not simply different tools or prompt styles. My Rhetorically Governed Co-Authoring (RGC) framework translates this distinction into three phases. During Anchor, the writer defines the rhetorical situation, success criteria, AI role, boundaries, and documentation plan. During Field, AI is used for bounded option generation rather than automatic authority. During Filter, the writer compares, rejects, selects, revises, attributes, and reflects. The framework is designed not as a universal prompt formula but as a pedagogical cycle for keeping judgment visible.

A second research program examines English Insecurity and AI-Assisted Writing. I use English insecurity to describe distrust of one's linguistic and rhetorical resources produced through repeated encounters with expectations of correctness, fluency, professionalism, and academic legitimacy. For multilingual, immigrant, international, and first-generation writers, generative AI may appear to offer private and nonjudgmental assistance. A writer can ask a system to make a passage sound more academic or professional without exposing uncertainty to an instructor, employer, or institutional gatekeeper. Yet the same process may flatten voice, erase cultural rhythm, standardize expression, and reinforce the idea that a writer's language must be repaired before the writer's ideas can be taken seriously.

Current projects within this program include *The Price of Sounding Like You Belong: Generative AI Feedback, English Insecurity, and Shame Rhetorics in Multilingual Writing* and *Beyond "Make It Sound Professional": Preserving Multilingual Rhetorical Agency in AI-Assisted Professional Communication*.

Together, these projects examine how shame, professionalism, and institutional language expectations shape the appeal and consequences of AI-assisted polishing.

My research on Dark Academia approaches academic identity from a different but connected direction. Dark Academia functions not merely as an aesthetic but as a platformed literacy identity system: a cultural script for how study, intelligence, discipline, exhaustion, and scholarly legitimacy should look. This project asks how students learn to perform study, discipline, productivity, and scholarly legitimacy—and how generative AI complicates an aesthetic that often celebrates visible labor, textual mastery, and intellectual suffering.

A related developing project, *“Ponte Las Pilas” and First-Generation Shame Rhetorics*, studies how educational messages about effort can combine encouragement, care, obligation, warning, and shame. Its meaning depends on speaker, context, relationship, and institutional setting. The project is especially interested in how care and coercion may become rhetorically inseparable when educational effort is tied to family sacrifice, migration, mobility, or collective expectation.

My teaching research brings these inquiries into assignment and curriculum design. *Scaffolding Rhetorical Judgment in Composition* examines how visible intellectual checkpoints can help students make, articulate, and reflect on rhetorical decisions. This work treats scaffolding not merely as deadline management but as a means of making usually concealed writing processes available for instruction and transfer.

Together, these projects contribute to rhetoric and composition, digital literacy, writing pedagogy, multilingual writing, and critical AI studies. My broader research agenda argues that the central question of generative AI is not simply whether a machine participated in producing a text. We must also ask what intellectual labor remained visible, what forms of language were rewarded, whose uncertainty was concealed, and whether the writer gained greater capacity to act in future rhetorical situations.