

Faculty Information Literacy Stipend Final Report

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Course: WGST 3370

Semester: Fall 2024

Introduction

WGST 3370 is a class that focuses on feminist theory and speculative fiction and is cross-listed as a 3000-level English class. The course is writing and reading-heavy, and students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of feminist theory as well as produce researched writing. I decided to create this project in the place of a more traditional research essay in the hopes that learning to edit Wikipedia would help students think more deeply about research and feminist knowledge production. In conversation and collaboration with Julia Anderson, we chose three SLOs for the project: Authority Is Constructed and Contextual, Research as Inquiry, and Scholarship as Conversation.

In order to edit effectively, students first had to learn how to understand and evaluate different kinds of sources, how to read sources, and how to use search systems. They also learned about scholarship conventions and how to enter a conversation with other scholars' research. Because Wikipedia is a communal site, it already has an elaborate system of checks and balances as well as standards for acceptable edits. I believe that this makes Wikipedia an ideal place for students to explore the idea of scholarship as conversation, since discussions of peer review and monographs can feel abstract to an undergraduate.

In terms of feminism, much of feminist analysis (especially intersectional analysis) asks us to think about who is an authority and why, and to also examine how social systems and institutions contribute to our ideas of authority. This connects to the SLO about authority. In this assignment, we focused on feminist writers and critics, many of whom are not well-known and whose work was dismissed when it was initially published in the 60s, 70s, and 80s. By improving their pages, we corrected the gender gap on Wikipedia as well as addressing a problem in scholarship. This addresses the idea of "scholarship as conversation." Finally, it was our hope that by equipping students to edit Wikipedia, they felt capable of taking this skill with them in the future and continuing to edit the site. I think this project offers an opportunity for students to hone their research and scholarship skills in a very practical way, and to develop a skillset that they can use in the future.

Description of the information literacy assignment or activities

Julia Anderson came to our class multiple times to help students with the project. We decided to scaffold the project by having smaller assignments, which included completing several trainings through the WikiEdu website that familiarized students with the policies and ethics of Wikipedia. Ms. Anderson led students through activities that had them compare robust and "stub" Wiki pages and guided them through learning to recognize gaps in the information on the pages. Students also practiced finding and

evaluating different kinds of sources and learned to recognize that, for this project, there might be sources besides peer-reviewed publications that were appropriate to use and cite.

Eventually, students chose a page of their own on a course-related topic to edit. They turned in a list of annotated sources to me, and once approved they began the work of editing their chosen page. After the pages went live, they interacted with other Wiki editors as appropriate. Ultimately, they submitted a packet of all their work and a short reflection essay talking about their experience doing the project and how it differed from a more traditional paper.

Method of assessment

Students were earned points on the project for completing trainings, turning in drafts, peer review, and their final finished page. They were graded based on what they submitted, not whether the page's edits were allowed to stand (though no page edits were deleted by other editors that I am aware of). On the whole, students performed very well and produced polished and thoughtful work.

I was surprised and very pleased by the results. I had expected some resistance from students since the idea of editing Wikipedia can be intimidating. However, many students expressed that they were excited to learn something new and that they understood how this assignment supported the research skills and goals of the course. They also mentioned that Ms. Anderson was invaluable in making the process less intimidating and making it feel manageable.

Results and impact on student learning

The reflection essays submitted by students indicated that they were pleased with the work they produced and felt like the project was useful. Some sample responses:

"When I'm submitting a paper for an assignment, I'm aware that my professor will be the only person reading what I write. With this Wikipedia project, the live publication aspect puts an extra element of "pressure" in the sense that you will have other people reading your edits and therefore relying on you to provide accurate information that adds to their understanding of a specific topic. It definitely gives you the feeling of having shared a research paper with someone other than your professor."

"I think this was a very interesting experience to find, edit, and publish those edits on a Wikipedia site. I am a frequent visitor of Wikipedia, but I often think of my Wikipedia visits as "not educational" because I'm not looking up scholarly topics that I usually would research in college classes[...] However, this experience taught me that there's a lot of time and in-depth research that goes into editing a Wikipedia site. I think at first, the editing process scared me a bit because it's permanent. I also was nervous because I know there are people who really rely on Wikipedia for information, and I was worried that I would be giving information that may be unhelpful. I also learned that it's okay to change your research halfway through if you find more meaningful information that leads you down the path of a different topic."

"I enjoyed this project far more than a traditional essay assignment. Having a framework to start with (the original page, before my edits) made it much easier for me to jump in and get to writing."

“In a basic sense, I learned the editing side of Wikipedia. I did not understand the effort and behind the scenes research that must happen for information to be published, and stay published, on Wikipedia.”

“I had never edited a Wikipedia article before this class and its assignment. I will not lie; I was kind of intimidated by the prospect of having my work on such a well-populated online encyclopedia. I think the most challenging part of the assignment was, like a traditional project or essay, getting started. For this assignment in particular, I did not know who or what to pick as the subject to research. Almost luckily, I was absent from class one day and met with Julia Anderson to discuss what I missed that day. [...] I do not think I would have had the same positive experience if I had not gone to Julia.”

“This was my first time editing a Wikipedia page, and the process was much more user friendly than I initially expected. It is intimidating to edit something so well known, used, and generally respected. I am personally technologically challenged as well, so the idea of working in the backend of any website is very daunting, but working in the visual editor made it all far more digestible. The Wikipedia courses and class sessions with Julia served as excellent preparation and confidence building as well. I am looking forward to keeping tabs on the page and adding to more that I am passionate about. I love the idea that these collaborative research and writing pieces are preserved throughout time but also edited across it.”

“I am confident with the entire process and feel empowered to become an active participant in the Wikipedia community now. I also learned that it is a far more trustworthy source (by and large) than I was taught throughout elementary, middle, and high school. Going through the planning, research, and editing process myself gave me a new appreciation for the credibility of Wikipedia pages. Looking at the backend and examining the countless edits made by different users further solidified my confidence in the validity of Wikipedia’s information. Users are very quick to correct errors from what I have observed! I have already found myself using Wikipedia as a reference far more than at the start of this semester. It has a wealth of information and is a great way to work around paywalls.”

Summary and next steps

I will be using this assignment again in the fall when I teach this course. One of the tweaks I will make is to use more of the resources available on WikiEdu, which even offers a way to pair your course with specific volunteer editors as mentors for students. I think interacting with other editors will help streamline some of the editing process on the site (some of the actual website editing was intimidating to students) and will also further encourage students to think of their work as part of a collaboration.

I feel that this assignment was very successful and that it accomplished the goals Ms. Anderson and I had set out in the beginning when we first discussed it. I look forward to continuing to use and refine the assignment, and hope that my students will continue to find it useful.

Appendix

Wikipedia Editing Research Project

This semester, you will learn to edit Wikipedia! You will choose a Wikipedia page that relates to our course material, identify weaknesses or gaps in the page’s content, and

work to correct it through finding sources and editing the page with a brief contribution. You will need to find at least four sources to support your research, and at least one should be a peer-reviewed article or book (unless there is a reason this kind of source is not appropriate for your topic).

Why are we doing this?

- Wikipedia is a site we all use, though we may have been warned against it. After completing this project, you will have an in-depth knowledge of its workings and be able to evaluate reliability and authority.
- Wikipedia has a well-documented gender bias. By editing pages on female writers and critics, you will be helping to solve that problem.
- Learning to edit requires a similar skill set as a research paper: evaluating sources, finding sources, entering into a scholarly conversation. We are just applying these skills in a different way.

What will I be graded on?

- We will break the project down into small assignments, due over the course of the semester.
- You will receive points for finding appropriate sources, conversing with other Wiki editors, attending trainings, and editing the page. Your grade will depend on these assignments rather than what the final Wiki page winds up looking like.

What does this look like?

- Learn about online information production and how Wikipedia works.
- Learn how to edit and use Wikipedia.
 - Wiki Training 1: Policies due 9/10
 - Wiki Training 2: Evaluating due 9/12
 - Wiki Training 3: Evaluate an article due 9/12
 - Wiki Training 4: Improving Representation due 9/26
- Choose a page related to our course material that needs work.
- Conduct research with library and online resources to fill in the gaps on your chosen page.
- Submit Assignment 1: Page, Sources, & Gaps due 10/3 detailing your page, what information you think is missing, and the sources that will fill this gap.

- NB: This step is going to be tricky! If you don't do it well, you will feel frustrated and be going down rabbit holes all semester. Reach out to Julia Anderson or Dr. B for help if needed.
- Write your draft. Assignment 2: Rough Draft due 10/29
- Get feedback from Dr. B and peers & give feedback to others. Assignment 3: Peer Review due 11/5 Revise as needed. Assignment 4: Draft to Dr. B due 11/12
- Post your work to Wikipedia.
- Get feedback from Wikipedians.
- Submit final page and annotated bib to Dr. B.
- Submit a reflection essay talking about your experience.
- Wiki Project: Final Packet due 11/22

Student Work:

Final Edited Page

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pamela_Zoline

The screenshot shows the Wikipedia article for Pamela Zoline. The page is titled "Pamela Zoline" and includes a summary paragraph: "Pamela Zoline (or Pamela Lifton-Zoline; born on June 20, 1941) is an American science fiction writer, painter, and activist." Below this, there are sections for "Background" and "Writing". The "Background" section mentions her birth in Chicago, Illinois, and her time in London. The "Writing" section discusses her experimental approach to science fiction and her work "The Heat Death of the Universe". The page also features a sidebar with navigation links and a "Tools" section on the right.

Pamela Zoline

Art

Zoline was formally trained as a painter during her time at the Slade School of Art. Her style blends the natural and supernatural, often experimenting with the interplay between the two. In Zoline's words, "Art is meant to be practical and illuminating, to move the furniture of the world around."^[1]

She is the **Mountainfilm Festival** 2024 mural artist and very active member of the Telluride art community. Zoline's mural for this year's festival depicts a man dwarfing his parents and their home during a visit to their New York apartment.^[4] It is modeled after **Diane Arbus'** 1970 photograph *A Jewish Giant at Home with his Parents in the Bronx, New York.*^[11]

Zoline has long been a defender of murals and other art in Telluride's public spaces. She is a believer in the conversations they spark and perspectives they challenge. In defense of adding murals painted for the Mountainfilm Festival to remain on local buildings beyond the dates of the festival, Zoline argued, "The fact that we're a historic district doesn't mean that history stopped in the era of significance. We, right now, are making the history for the folks who come after us."^[12]

Activism

Zoline is an advocate for environmental education and protection at the grassroots and institutional levels, particularly as it relates to the **Rocky Mountains**. In addition to her co-founding of the **Telluride Institute**, her writing and art are also reflective of this.^[13] In a 2024 interview, Zoline summed her philosophy on activism stating, "I don't think there's going to be any future that's not radical."^[10]

Personal Life

Zoline and her husband, **John Lifton-Zoline** (also known as John Lifton), have lived in **Telluride, Colorado** since the late 1960s.^{[8][14]} She and John raised three children here, Abby, Jos, and Gabe. In 1984 she co-founded the **Telluride Institute** with Lifton and others.

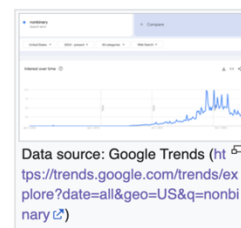
Works

- *The Heat Death of the Universe and Other Stories*, 1967 (short story collection).
- *The Holland of the Mind*, 1969.
- *Sheep*. Likely Stories: A Collection of Untraditional Fiction. Treacle press, 1981.
- *Annika and the Wolves*. Coffee House Press, 1985.
- *Instructions for Exiting This Building in Case of Fire*. *Interzone #12* 1985
- *Busy About The Tree Of Life*. The Women's press, 1988.
- *Aulde Fleet Polder: A Festschrift for John Clute and Judith Clute*. Old Earth Press, 2006

Notes

The 21st century additionally saw global conversations around gender identity which helped further the presence of androgyny in fashion. In the mid-2010s, online searches for the word "nonbinary" skyrocketed, and young people began to see themselves as nonbinary or gender nonconforming.^[72] Actor [Lachlan Watson](#), who uses they/them pronouns, posted a photo on Instagram wearing a t-shirt saying "Gender is Over," a riff on the [John Lennon](#) and [Yoko Ono](#) "War is Over" poster.^[73]

Singer [Billie Eilish](#) has also openly called gender roles "ancient."^[74] Since her musical debut in 2016, Eilish has worn both traditionally masculine and feminine silhouettes, wearing a [Marilyn Monroe](#) inspired [Oscar de la Renta](#) gown to the [Met Gala](#) in 2021 to being referred to as a "hey mamas" lesbian after an appearance on [Chicken Shop Date](#) in 2024 where she wore an oversized tee, bandana, and backwards cap.^{[75][76]}



LIVE LINK: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Androgyny>

- Contents hide
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 - Personal Life
 - ✓ Bibliography
 - Novels
 - Short fiction
 - References
 - External links

References [\[edit \]](#)

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|---|--|
| Stina Leicht | |
| Born | March 29, 1972 (age 52)
St Louis, Missouri, US |
| Occupation | Writer |
| Nationality | American |
| Period | 2009-Present |
| Genre | science fiction space opera
fantasy |
| Website | |
| https://www.csleicht.com/ | |

- Text
- ☐ Small
- ☒ Standard
- ☐ Large
- Width
- ☒ Standard
- ☐ Wide
- Color (beta)
- ☐ Automatic
- ☒ Light
- ☐ Dark

Link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stina_Leicht

