



Teaching Responsiveness in Creative Writing

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ABSTRACT

As our globe has reacted to the coronavirus pandemic, many articles have been published that make the case: “In this time of crisis and isolation, the role of art becomes more central to our lives, whether we realise it or not,” as Louis Netter writes in *The Conversation* (from April 1, 2020). What does it mean to cultivate an artistic response to crisis? How can we teach aesthetic responsiveness? Responsiveness entails many things, including attunement to the particularities and contingencies of time, place, and community and the ability to imagine, investigate, reframe. What theories of writing enable responsiveness? Turning to ancient Egyptian and Greek philosophies of rhetoric, the presentation argues that creative writing is uniquely situated to facilitate artistic responsiveness when we draw upon multiple traditions, not centering a Greco-Roman philosophical inheritance over multiple cultural lineages. Investigating aesthetic theory alongside discussions of epideictic rhetoric, which theorize the act of orienting one’s words for a specific public occasion, we find that creative writing has long and deep theoretical roots to draw from as we consider artistic response.