

Mike Piero

Professor of English
Cuyahoga Community College
Westshore Campus
www.mikepiero.org

Education

- Ph.D., English, August 2020
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA
Dissertation: *Playing on the Threshold: Topological Chronotopes
And Video Games*. Supervisor: Marc A. Ouellette
- M.A., English, May 2011
John Carroll University, University Heights, OH
MA Essay: "Writing J. M. Coetzee: Summertime, Auto/Biography, and the
Resistance to Being Written."
- B.A., Secondary English Education, May 2008
The University of Akron, Akron, OH
- A.A., December 2005
Cuyahoga Community College, Cleveland, OH
- High School Diploma, May 2005
Medina Senior High School, Medina, OH

Teaching Experience

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| 2013-Present | (Full) Professor (tenured), English, Cuyahoga Community College
Associate Professor (tenured), English, Cuyahoga Community
College (2018-2020; Assistant Professor, English (2013-2018) |
| 2024-Present | Adjunct Professor, Southern New Hampshire University
Associate Faculty, University of Arizona Global Campus |
| 2011-2013 | Adjunct Professor, John Carroll University
Adjunct Professor, Cuyahoga Community College
Adjunct Professor, Ursuline College
Adjunct Professor, Notre Dame College |
| 2009-2011 | Graduate Teaching Assistant, John Carroll University
EN 111 & 112 Composition Instructor |

Courses Taught (*in face-to-face, fully online, and blended formats*):

ENG 0900: Transition to College Composition
ENG 0990: Language Fundamentals II
ENG 1001 Intensive College Reading and Writing
ENG 1010/1020 College Composition I and II
ENG 101H/102H Honors College Composition I and II
HUM 1020/102H: Honors The Individual in Society (Mandel Scholars Academy)
ENG 2770: Rhetorics of Gaming - Introduction to Video Game Analysis
ENG 2350: British Literature I
ENG 2360: British Literature II
ENG 179H; Honors Contract, Honors Ethics in IT Discourse
ENG 2820: Advanced Independent Study, The Brontës and Society
ENG 282H: Advanced Honors Ind. Study, Reading Digital Games and Culture
ENG 282H: Advanced Honors Ind. Study, Marxist Theory and Media
ENG 282H: Advanced Honors Ind. Study, World Literature and Ethics
HUM 282H: Advanced Honors Ind. Study, Sustainability and Student Engagement
USP 350: Introduction to Culture: the City, Ursuline College

Research Interests

game studies, media studies, critical theory, J.M. Coetzee studies, (post)modernist literature, cultural studies, creative writing

Publications – Peer-Reviewed

“A Far Cry from Greatness: Christian Fundamentalism, Liberty Porn, and the ‘Good People’ of Trump’s America in *Far Cry 5*,” *The European Journal of American Culture*, vol. 43, no. 2, 2024, pp. 109-125.

“Leveling Up Honors Education: Video Game Analysis in the Honors Classroom.” *The New Honors: Advanced Learning for Today and Tomorrow*, edited by Graeme Harper, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2024, pp. 77-92.

“Turnt, Trippy, and Tipsy: Video Games, Drugs, and Allo-Ludicity.” *Anglica Wratislaviensia*, special issue “Gaming America,” edited by Agata Zarzycka, vol. 61, no. 2, 2023, pp. 61-76.

Video Game Chronotopes and Social Justice: Playing on the Threshold, Palgrave Macmillan, Games in Context series, 2021.

“Post-COVID Pedagogy and Ethics: A Call to Teach the Banality of Evil.” *The CEA Mid-Atlantic Review*, vol. 29, 2021, pp. 39-51.

“Gaming under Sovereign Power: The Chronotope of the Abject in *The Binding of Isaac*.” *Eludamos. Journal for Computer Game Culture*. Special issue on Philosophy and Video Games, guest edited by Jan-Hendrik Bakels, vol. 11, no. 1, 2020, pp. 55-70.

Being Dragonborn: Critical Essays on The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim. Edited by Mike Piero and Marc A. Ouellette, McFarland, 2021.

“Introduction: *Skyrim* as an Exemplary Game Text,” with Marc A. Ouellette. *Being Dragonborn: Critical Essays on The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, edited by Mike Piero and Marc A. Ouellette, McFarland, 2021, pp. 1-11.

“Portraits of the Neomedieval Family-Idyllic: Patriarchal *Oikos* and a Love without Love in *Skyrim*” with Marc A. Ouellette. *Being Dragonborn: Critical Essays on The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, McFarland, 2021, pp. 120-136.

"*Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* in Print and Film: Imaginations, Catastrophes, and the Being with of Being." *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2019, pp. 104-124.

“Dialogical Numbers: Counting Humanimal Pain in J.M. Coetzee’s *Elizabeth Costello*” *Transnational Literature*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2018, pp. 1-19.

English 1020: College Composition II. OER Textbook for College Composition II co-written with Tri-C Westshore’s English Department for free distribution, 2019.

“Coetzee, Blanchot, and the Work of Writing: The Impersonality of Childhood” *MediaTropes*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2014, pp. 79-97.

“Book Review of *Communal Modernisms: Teaching Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture in the Twenty-First Century Classroom*” *Teaching English in the Two-Year College*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2014, pp. 96-98.

“Wilde Expectations.” *What Philosophy Can Tell You About Your Lover*, edited by Sharon Kaye, Open Court, 2012, pp. 95-103.

“Happiness, Dexter Style.” *Dexter and Philosophy*, edited by Richard Greene, George Reisch, and Rachel Robinson, Pop Culture and Philosophy Series, Open Court, 2011, pp. 219-227.

Publications – Creative Writing

“Latibule” – *Midway Journal*, 19.1, 2025, Short Story

“The Keeper of Numbers” – *J Journal: New Writing on Justice*, Fall 2024, Short Story

“Midwest Sneakers” – *The Sandy River Review*, vol. 44, Spring 2024, Poem

“Hillbilly Rituals” – *The Sandy River Review*, vol. 44, Spring 2024, Poem

“Melancholy: The Game” – *Impost: A Journal of Creative and Critical Work*, Vol. 17, 2024, Poem

“The Pearl” – *Oak Tree Journal*, issue 1, May 2023, Flash Fiction, faculty spotlight

“Dragon Blood Tears” – *Midway Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, April 2023, Poem

“Switchful Lives” – *Midway Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, April 2023, Poem

“Gamer Theory” – *Midway Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2, April 2023, Poem

“The Collector of Angels” – *The River*, April 2023, Poem

“Daughters” - *The River*, April 2023, Poem

“Chronotopes of Power” - *Moveable Type*, University College London, Fall 2022, Short Story

Invited Contributions, Book Blurbs, and Occasional Pieces

Finalist, “Latibule” in Flash Fiction Contest, *Midway Journal*, 2024.

Acknowledged in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 11th edition, 2024.

Book Endorsement, *Representations of Poverty in Video Games* by Adam Crowley, June 2022.

Podcast Guest, “Video Games and the Humanities,” *More Human* podcast, episode 10, May 23, 2022.

Book Endorsement (Back Cover), *Conspiracy Theories in the Time of Coronavirus: A Philosophical Treatment* by Richard Greene and Rachel Robison-Greene, April 2022.

Radio Segment, “Studying Video Games as Culture.” *The Academic Minute*. The American Association of Colleges & Universities in concert with WAMC Northeast Public Radio. October 5, 2021. <https://academicminute.org/2021/10/mike-piero-cuyahoga-community-college-studying-video-games-as-culture/>

“Engaging Diverse Communities and Student Populations with Video Games: a Community College Perspective.” *MediaCommons Field Guide*. December 18, 2018. <http://mediacommons.org/users/mikepiero>

“Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs in Print and Film: Technology, Imagination, and the Networked Catastrophe.” *MediaCommons Field Guide*. December 3, 2016. <http://mediacommons.org/users/mikepiero>

Current Writing Projects

Rogue Burnout

debut novel (commercial/upmarket); seeking literary agent and publisher

High Score: A Cultural History of Drugs in Video Games

writing stage; seeking representation

Midwest Secrets

debut poetry collection – in revision

Let the Dead Bury the Dead

debut short fiction collection – in progress

Academic Conference Presentations

“‘Every Herb Bearing Seed’: *Reefer Madness* and Playing Prohibition in Rockstar Games’ *L.A. Noire*.” 2022 Literature/Film Association Conference, New Orleans, 21 October 2022.

“Liberty Porn: *Far Cry 5* and the “Good People” of Trump’s America.” Community College Humanities Association National Conference, Cleveland, OH, 14 October 2022.

“Game On: Engaging Students with Video Games Inside and Outside the Classroom.” Ohio Association of Two-Year Colleges (OATYC) Conference, Cleveland, OH, 7 October 2022. Poster Presentation.

(canceled) “The (Topological) Chronotope of the Archipelago: Video Games, Archipelagic Maps, and Playing Colonial Conquest.” Archipelagic Memory: Intersecting Geographies, Histories and Disciplines Conference. University of Mauritius. Moka, Mauritius, 4-6 August 2020, canceled due to COVID-19.

(canceled) “Rhetorics Outside Immunity/Autoimmunity: CFS/ME, *Inconnu(e)immunity*, and Bodies under “Dysfunctional” Sovereign Power.” Rhetoric Society of America Conference, Portland, OR, conference canceled due COVID-19 pandemic.

“Will You Be My Player 2?: Compulsory Monogamy, Video Games, and the Chronotope of Coupled Love.” Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference. Albuquerque, NM. February 2020.

“The Butthole of Time: The Chronotopic Fart as Pharmakon in *South Park: The Fractured But Whole*.” Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference. Albuquerque, NM. February 2019.

“Poetic Madness: the Chronotope of Madness and Poetic Dwelling in *Borderlands* and *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*.” Cultural Rhetorics Consortium Conference. Kellogg Conference Center. East Lansing, MI. Nov. 16, 2018.

“Poetic Characters: Video Games and their Chronotopic Markings.” Humanities Unbound. Old Dominion University. Norfolk, VA and WebEx. April 20, 2018.

“The Threshold Moment of Play: (re)Uniting Time and Space in the Study of Video Games” *Popular American Culture Association Conference*. Indianapolis, IN. March 27, 2018.

“Playing on the Threshold: the Chronotope of the Abject in *The Binding of Isaac: Rebirth*.” *Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference*. Albuquerque, NM. February 8, 2018.

“Unleashing the Hammer of Justice: the Predestined Player and Puritan Play in *World of Warcraft*” *Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference*. Albuquerque, NM. February 12, 2016.

“Food within the Spectacle: Restraining Excess in Medieval and Modern Food Communities.” Midwest Modern Language Association Conference. Columbus, OH. November 14, 2015.

“Preparing a Course for Quality Matters (QM) Review: a Faculty Perspective” Ohio Association of Two Year Colleges Conference. Hosted at Wright State University. October 10, 2014.

“*Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* in Print and Film: Technology that Entangles Imagination.” South Atlantic Modern Language Association Conference. Atlanta, GA. November 10, 2013.

“The Beginnings of Isolated Personalities in the Works of J.M. Coetzee.” 2012 Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture Since 1900. Louisville, KY.

Invited Talks and Formal Presentations

Workshop, “Empathy Machine: VR Immersive Narratives and the Humanities,” Mandel Youth Humanities Academy, Mandel Humanities Center, February 21, 2025.

Invited Talk, “Gaming and Happiness.” Learning for Life Lecture Series, Cuyahoga Community College, Westshore Campus, November 15, 2023.

Invited Panelist, The Ohio State University, Dr. Karin Jordan’s Preparing Future Faculty Doctoral Class, October 31, 2022.

Invited Talk, “Read, Write, Game: How Video Games Communicate Culture and Shape Our Lives.” Lorain County Community College Writing Center Lecture Series. November 17, 2021.

Invited Talk, “From First-Generation College Student to Tenured Professor: Building a Career at a Community College.” Preparing Future Faculty Doctoral Workshop Series. The Ohio State University. October 19, 2021.

Invited Talk, “Playing the Game (of Life) on Hard Mode: Racism in Video Games and our Discussions about Games.” *Let’s Talk About It* Discussion Series. Cuyahoga Community College. February 3, 2021.

Keynote Address, “Finding Love in Learning, a VR Experience” Spring 2018 Dean’s Honors Reception. April 11, 2018.

“Writing Effective Essays for College Admission & Transfer.” 2016, 207, 2018 Transfer Symposium. Cuyahoga Community College. Western Campus. April 7, 2018.

Moderator. “Living in a Crucible: A Multidisciplinary Panel Discussion.” Fall 2015 Honors Lecture. Westshore Campus. November 10, 2015.

“Fast Food in the Middle Ages and Today.” Public Lecture. Learning for Life Lecture Series. Cuyahoga Community College. Westshore Campus. November 19, 2015.

“Coetzee Fiction and the Work of Writing: *The Childhood of Jesus*.” J.M. Coetzee and the Politics of Writing, a Panel Discussion. Cuyahoga Community College, Westshore Campus. April 23, 2015.

“Simon Armitage’s *Black Roses*” Books that Made a Difference. Westshore Campus Event. April 16, 2015.

“A Bit of Backward Design.” with Rachel Harmon, Senior Instructional Designer. Faculty Development Workshop—Westshore Campus. September 13, 2014.

“Best Practices: Engaging Students with Coetzee Fiction to Think Critically” Presenter. 2012 Spring Faculty Luncheon. Cuyahoga Community College. January 12, 2012.

Awards, Grants, and Honors

2024 Awarded Faculty Innovation Grant (FIG) for creation of OER game studies textbook for sophomore-level game studies English course. Reassigned time.

2024 Finalist, *Midway Journal* Flash Fiction Contest (for “Latibule”), July 2024

2024 Winner, *Millions of Suns* Writing Contest, Fiction Category (for “Rituals” short story), University of Michigan Press, March 2024.

- 2023 Awarded Faculty Innovation Grant (FIG) for Meta Quest 3 purchase and creation of a Humanities-based VR pedagogical repository. \$5000 grant.
- 2022 Awarded Faculty Innovation Grant (FIG) for gaming technology purchase and implementation in English courses. Cuyahoga Community College. \$5000 grant.
- 2022 Professional Improvement Leave (sabbatical), Spring 2022
- 2020-2021 Recipient, 2020-2021 Mandel Humanities Faculty Fellows Fellowship, “The Chronotope of the Archipelago: Video Games, Archipelagic Maps, and Playing Colonial Conquest.”
- 2019 Co-recipient of Tri-C President’s Excellence Award for OER ENG 1020 Textbook Creation.
- 2019 Awarded inaugural Tri-C Teaching and Learning Excellence Grant (Tri-C Foundation) for Honors Program trips and programming, \$2000.
- 2018 Awarded Faculty Innovation Grant (FIG) for research on and implementation of using video games for writing instruction in the composition classroom. Amount: one course release. Dec. 2018.
- 2018 Awarded 2018 PCA/ACA Conference Travel Grant for Community College Faculty, \$1,000
- 2016 Awarded 2016-2017 Instructional Professional Development grant to organize a Spring Honors reading series and public event surrounding race relations in Cleveland. Grant also helps support Honors Program. Amount: \$1500.00
- 2015 ENG 2360 British Literature II web-based course earns national Quality Matters (QM) recognition. August 2015.
- 2015 Awarded a 2015 CCC-AAUP/JFSC Distinguished Service Medal
- 2015 Recipient of national 2015 Innovation of the Year Award, “Breaking the Tutoring Mold: The CCW Learning Café, WSHCS ‘Under the Stairs,’ and Small Group Tutoring.” League for Innovation in the Community College. May 2015.
- 2015 Recipient of Tri-C President’s Excellence Award, Committee on Learning Outcomes Assessment
- 2014 Awarded 2014-2015 Instructional Professional Development grant to organize a college-wide Coetzee lecture panel. Cuyahoga Community College. Amount: \$1000.00

- 2013 – Present Professor, English, Cuyahoga Community College (2020-Present)
Associate Professor, English (2018-202)
Assistant Professor, English (2013-2018)
- Teach fully online, blended, and on ground courses in college composition, British literature, game studies, and the humanities
 - Developed new permanent ENG 2770 Rhetorics of Gaming: Introduction to Video Game Analysis course
 - Coordinate the Honors Program at Westshore (2015-2020)
 - Coordinate the Writing Center at Westshore (2014-2015)
 - Founding Member, Committee on Learning Outcomes Assessment, 2014-2018, 2022-2024
 - Conduct faculty peer observations each academic year
 - Formally and informally mentor students
 - Drive curriculum development, professional development opportunities, and student success initiatives
 - Student mentoring and direct student service
 - Peer faculty observations and mentoring
 - Committee service
- 2017-Present IT Consultant, AAUP – CCC Chapter Office
- Designed and manage www.ccc-aaup.org
 - Software/hardware diagnosis and troubleshooting support
 - Software training and consulting
- 2019 Adjunct Professor, Ashland University
- Taught online asynchronous composition courses in their Correctional Education program
- 2012-2013 Website Manager, Dept. of English, John Carroll University
- Built new websites as needed:
 - Professional Writing site launched February 2013
 - New Creative Writing site launched April 2013
 - Managed, updated, wrote content for, and advertised all websites and social media for JCU’s Department of English, including its homepage, composition program site, creative writing site, professional writing site, and Facebook/Twitter accounts
- 2011-2013 Adjunct Professor: John Carroll University, Ursuline College, Cuyahoga Community College, Notre Dame College
- Taught courses in college composition
- 2008-2011 Senior Writer, Bright Hub Inc.

- Wrote how-to and troubleshooting articles for the following online channels: Education, Digital Photography, PC Gaming, Mac, and iPhone
- SEO research and optimization
- Careful editing and media documentation
- Served as Contributing Editor of Digital Photography Channel

2010, 2011 Summer Research Assistant, John Carroll University, Dept. of English

2009-2011 Graduate Teaching Assistant, John Carroll University

- Taught EN 111/112 Composition and Rhetoric courses
- Conducted writing consultations at JCU Writing Center, 2009-2010
- Served on departmental committees
- Event planning and coordination

2008-2011 Senior Writer, Bright Hub

- In collaboration with editors, I wrote technology articles and tutorials, all SEO optimized

Faculty advisor: Honors Program, 2015-2020; Westshore Gaming Club, 2016-Present

Committees:

Advancement in Rank Committee, Westshore Campus, Chair (2023-2024)
 Mandel Steering Committee (2023-2024)
 Chair, Mandel Youth Humanities Academy Subcommittee (2023-2024)
 Member, Mandel Faculty Fellows Subcommittee (2023-2024)
 Tenure Committee, Chair (2020-2021)
 Curriculum committees (2013-Present, ENG 1001, 2350, 2360, 2770).
 College Credit Plus Advisory Committee (2013-2016)
 Professional Improvement Leave Committee (2014-2015 [Chair], 2016-2018)
 Search Advisory Committees (2016-2019, 2022)
 Committee on Learning Outcomes Assessment (2014-2018)
 Grade Dispute Committees (2013-Present)
 LMS Review Task Force (2013-2014)
 Prior Learning Assessment Task Force (2014-2015)
 Library Committee (2013-2015)

Refereed Reader:

Games and Culture
Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies
Transnational Literature
Queen City Writers
 Bloomsbury's *Approaches to Digital Game Studies* series
 Brill (Education)

Volunteering:

Various Tri-C community events (2013-Present)
Lake Ridge Academy Library Assistant (2019-2020)
Volunteer Marketing and Promotions Coordinator, John Carroll University, Simon
Armitage Poetry Event, April 7, 2014.

Events Organized

- 2023 Co-organized 4 VR/AR Open Lab Days for students to experience cutting-edge virtual/augmented reality technology, October/November 2023.
- 2022 Co-organized Mario Kart tournament event in collaboration with Tri-C Counseling Department and Westshore's Gaming Club, October 2022.
- 2019 Organized Mandel Lecture, "Lapidary Practice: Art, Genocide, and Memorial in the Work of South African Artist William Kentridge," Guest Speaker, Dr. Brian Macaskill, John Carroll University. November 15, 2019.
- 2019 Organized Honors Lecture, "Virtual Worlds: Histories, User Experience, and New Possibilities." Guest Speaker, D'An Knowles Ball. October 14, 2019.
- 2018 Organized Honors Lecture, "Outspoken: Thriving as Creative Writers in a Gig Economy" with guest speakers Sara Holbrook and Michael Salinger. November 29, 2018.
- 2018 Organized Honors Lecture, "Lapidary Practice: Art, Genocide, and Memorial Commemoration in the Work of South African Artist William Kentridge," Guest Speaker, Dr. Brian Macaskill, John Carroll University. April 12, 2018.
- 2017 Organized Honors panel, "Becoming Food Conscious" with six guest leaders in Cleveland's local food scene. Organized in collaboration with Food Conscious of Cleveland. Westshore Campus. October 18, 2017.
- 2017 Organized Honors discussion: Race Relations in Cleveland, an Open Discussion, with guests Dan Moulthrop, RA Washington, and contributors to *A Race Anthology* (2016). Westshore Campus. April 5, 2017.
- 2016 Organized and moderated college-wide, interdisciplinary Honors lecture panel: "Eugenics in the US: Then and Now, a panel discussion" 9 November 2016.
- 2016 Organized and moderated Honors lecture panel: "Video Games and Culture: How Gaming Shapes Learning Outside the Classroom" featuring two student speakers and a guest speaker, Dan Cox, from Old Dominion University via WebEx. Westshore Campus. April 25, 2016.
- 2015 Organized Honors discussion panel: "Living in a Crucible: A Multidisciplinary Panel Discussion." Westshore Campus. November 10, 2015.

- 2015 Organized a college-wide and public lecture panel featuring professors and students discussing the works of J.M. Coetzee, *J.M. Coetzee and the Politics of Writing*
- 2015 Helped organize the inaugural “Books that Made a Difference” event at the Westshore Campus with the Westshore Library Committee.
- 2014 Co-organized a college-wide professional development event, “(Re)articulating Writing Assessment for Student Success” with guest speaker, Dr. Brian Huot, Kent State University. Cuyahoga Community College. Westshore Campus. 29 March 2014.