

# Stanford

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## Erik Ellis

Advanced Lecturer  
Writing and Rhetoric Studies

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### Bio

#### BIO

Erik Ellis has been teaching for the Program in Writing and Rhetoric since 2011. He holds a BA from Beloit College, an MA in journalism from the University of Colorado at Boulder, an MFA in creative writing from New York University, and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English from the University of Arizona.

Erik's PWR 1 course, "Prowling Toward Certainty: Exploration as Argument," challenges students to research and write about controversial issues about which they feel ambivalent. Students get to practice writing as a way of thinking—an authentic, exciting quest for meaning that values intellectual discovery over formulas.

Students in Erik's PWR 2 course, "Once Upon a Cause: Producing Picture Books for Local Children," not only analyze picture books and write essays about them but collaborate closely with a group of classmates to create an original, compelling, and educationally appropriate picture book for children at Lucille M. Nixon Elementary (a short bike ride from campus). During a series of field trips to the school, the kids offer inspiration and constructive criticism to PWR 2 students as they develop and revise their picture books, which also reflect individual research projects. Needless to say, Erik loves picture books and considers this multimodal genre not only fun—though not always—but rhetorically sophisticated and powerful. You can read a Stanford News story about the PWR 2 picture book project here: <https://news.stanford.edu/2018/03/01/stanford-students-craft-big-life-lessons-books-little-kids/>.

Erik has written about style, the essay, the multimedia essay, and is currently working on a project about picture books.

#### ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Advanced Lecturer, Writing and Rhetoric Studies

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### Research & Scholarship

#### CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

SPECIALIZATION: the essay, style, multimodal composition, visual rhetoric, picture books

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### Teaching

#### COURSES

##### 2025-26

- Writing & Rhetoric 1: Prowling Toward Certainty: Exploration as Argument: PWR 1EE (Aut, Spr, Sum)

- Writing & Rhetoric 2: Once Upon a Cause: The Rhetoric of Picture Books: PWR 2EE (Win)

**2024-25**

- Writing & Rhetoric 1: Prowling Toward Certainty: Exploration as Argument: PWR 1EE (Aut)
- Writing & Rhetoric 2: Once Upon a Cause: Producing Picture Books for Local Children: PWR 2EE (Win, Spr)
- Writing Academic Arguments: The Art of the Essay: PWR 1D (Sum)

**2023-24**

- Writing & Rhetoric 2: Once Upon a Cause: Producing Picture Books for Local Children: PWR 2EE (Aut, Win, Spr)
- Writing Academic Arguments: The Art of the Essay: PWR 1D (Sum)

**2022-23**

- Writing & Rhetoric 1: Prowling Toward Certainty: Exploration as Argument: PWR 1EE (Aut)
- Writing & Rhetoric 2: Once Upon a Cause: Producing Picture Books for Local Children: PWR 2EE (Win, Spr)
- Writing Academic Arguments: The Art of the Essay: PWR 1D (Sum)

## Publications

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### PUBLICATIONS

- **Completely Out of My Domain: An Institutional Narrative of Multimedia Collaboration** *Kairos*  
Ellis, E., Underwood, D.  
2015; 20 (1)
- **Back to the Future?: The Pedagogical Promise of the (Multimedia) Essay** *Multimodal Literacies and Emerging Genres*  
Ellis, E.  
edited by Bowen, T., Whithaus, C.  
University of Pittsburgh Press.2013
- **Toward a Pedagogy of Psychic Distance** *The Centrality of Style*  
Ellis, E.  
edited by Duncan, M., Medzerian Vanguri, S.  
The WAC Clearinghouse and Parlor Press.2013
- **Shushes in the Parlor: Reclaiming the "Conversation" Metaphor** *Disrupting Pedagogies in the Knowledge Society: Countering Conservative Norms with Creative Approaches*  
Ellis, E.  
edited by Faulkner, J.  
IGI Global.2012