

Special Issue: Call for Proposals

When Mars Attacks: Doing Writing in Times of War

War and “business-as-usual” are not terms that many assume coexist. For those of us unfortunately familiar with such turbulent times, life is often measured by what we can still achieve despite the war, and we have learned not to wait for better days. As such, the reality for those of us teaching in the Middle East and other spaces of conflict requires creating a “business-as-usual” pedagogy, institutional practice, and scholarly output while our colleagues and students are displaced, our neighbors shift to online instruction, and we follow our respective live news coverage. While we are maintaining our survival and ensuring the institution functions, this special issue works to confront our lived experiences in times of war and its effects on teaching and writing.

Writing studies scholars note that language and writing have always been entwined with colonial projects, and therefore war and conflict (Arnold, 2025; You, 2018). While language and writing may be instituted to concretize power and ideology, by nature, language and writing also have the power to adapt across situations and contexts, especially in times of conflict and uncertainty. As writing studies teachers and scholars, we often grapple with language ideology and when confronted with war, the consequences of being part of a soft power apparatus become more immediate and tangible. In this moment, when multiple manifestations of conflict are being fueled by language ideologies worldwide, we acknowledge the multiple and layered consequences of violence, and the ripple effects popping up in governments and classrooms otherwise untouched by war.

Every day is filled with moments we remind ourselves to keep going, and war forces us to acknowledge how deeply embodied our daily academic lives are. Robinson (2006) jokes that as academics we live in our heads. That our bodies are just means of transporting our heads to meetings. We know now that wars force us to acknowledge the embeddedness of our daily practices in the phenomenal world outside of our heads, and that it takes intentional reflection to adapt anew each time we hear drones, explosions, sonic booms, ambulance sirens wailing by and to work with our bodies to yet again write, teach, think.

By nature, writing and composition have the power to adapt across situations and contexts. But it is difficult and exhausting. It may also be punishing for authors if adapting results in resistance to the academic writing machine (Henderson et al. 2016). And it requires a shift of focus, context, and genre to recognize the ways in which we (faculty and students) are mediated by and mediating writing. We also shape our work through a pedagogy of care as we figure out how to adapt our language, pedagogies, and access for our students and (though we often forget) ourselves (Motta & Bennett, 2018). Students and faculty are living without electricity, in tents, with extended family members, with curfews, different time zones, in battle fields.

This special issue, *When Mars Attacks: Doing Writing in Times of War*, invites submissions from war zones and diasporas regarding your praxis, pedagogies, autoethnographies, and theories as you navigate the disruptions of war or the ripple effects and hot spots that follow. We welcome

submissions that explore the broad question of what characterizes the experience of being an academic in times of war.

Topics can include, but are not limited to:

Pedagogy

- War and violence shaping pedagogy and/or writing
- Multiple, overlapping events informing or mediating best practices
- The ways in which connection is built or damaged
- Speaking to our collective trauma in the classroom
- Resistance to personal writing and expressivist process

Institution

- Maintaining practices (tenure/hiring/textbooks/exams) when the practice no longer fits the context
- Disrupting and/or problematizing programmatic building and change
- Concerns about continuity across students, staff, and faculty
- Displacement

Individual

- Students (and colleagues) recognizing that education is the ticket “out” - and what “out” may mean in different Middle East contexts
- Education never fully becoming a ticket “out” and carrying the war with you whenever you go about your new business as usual
- Brain function shifting from large output to small daily tasks
- Changes in our socializing

Ripple Effects and Hot Spots

- Global and local media discourse in narrativizing events, blame, and action
- Our own ethics of representation and language choice
- Other manifestations of conflict and adaptations across outside governments
- Generational effects of multiple wars and overlapping events
- New global conversations and new global relationships

While our journal serves the Middle East North Africa region, we welcome proposals from scholars entrenched in war zones and facing the ripple effects from outside. To that end, we are required to follow the bounds of both American and Lebanese laws. We understand that such content brings anxieties - we are happy to publish under a pseudonym.

Please submit proposals of 300-500 words by June 30th, 2026. We are accepting proposals through outlook forms. Feel free to reach out to menawritingstudies@aub.edu.lb with any submission questions or concerns.

MENA Writing Studies Journal accepts manuscripts written in MLA (9th edition) and APA (7th edition). Our submissions include:

Think pieces (3,500 words)
Full-length articles (7,000 words)
Translingual Literacy Narratives (7,000 words)
Programmatic Interviews (7,000 words)

Our projected timeline for the special issue:

Proposals due by June 30th
Editorial acceptances by July 31st
First draft submitted by January 15th, 2027
Reviews completed by March 31st, 2027
Second drafts submitted by June 30th, 2027
In press by late 2027/early 2028

References

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<https://doi.org/10.37514/INT-B.2025.2678>
- Henderson, L., Honan, E., & Loch, S. (2016). The production of the academic writing machine. *Reconceptualizing Educational Research Methodology*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.7577/rerm.1838>
- Motta, S. C., & Bennett, A. (2018). Pedagogies of care, care-full epistemological practice and ‘other’ caring subjectivities in enabling education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 23(5), 631–646.
- Robinson, K., & Aronica, L. (2009). *The Element: How Finding Your Passion Changes Everything* (1st ed.). Penguin Publishing Group.
- You, X. (2018). *Transnational writing education*. New York: Routledge.

Submissions

We accept rolling submissions for full length articles, think pieces, book reviews, literacy narratives, and interviews. Please refer to the [Guidelines for Submission](#)¹ to submit appropriately formatted documents with the cover sheet to menawritingstudies@aub.edu.lb.

MENA-related writing studies research

We are interested in timely empirical research, theory, and praxis regarding writing in the region. While submissions are published in English, we invite articles discussing the theory and instruction of writing studies of any language in the region, at all education levels.

We accept full-length article manuscripts (7,000 words including references) and think pieces (3,500 words including references).

Book reviews

Book reviews of MENA region and global texts fitting the aims and scope of this journal, including multilingual texts on linguistics, composition, multiple literacies, and various ages are encouraged (1,000 to 1,500 words to review a single text and 3,000 to 3,500 to review multiple texts in conversation).

Translingual, transnational literacy narratives

We invite literacy narratives from both students and scholars highlighting the linguistic and composing processes engendered by translingual and transnational sponsors (up to 7,000 words).

Interviews

We encourage anyone working on initiatives that contribute to the goals of furthering collaboration, education, or research in the region—whether small or large scale, inside their classes or beyond—to engage in interviews. (If you or someone you know is doing this kind of work, interview them!)

To document the unique work conducted in each writing program, we publish interviews of faculty, staff, and administrators with innovative writing studies and faculty development projects (7,000 words).

News and Events

MENAWCA was hosted at NYU Abu Dhabi from 9 to 12 October 2025. The *MENA Writing Studies Journal* is publishing conference proceedings with guest editor Anita Moutchoyan, coming Summer 2026.

¹ <https://www.aub.edu.lb/MENA-Writing-Studies-Journal/Pages/Guidelines-for-Submission.aspx>

The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at AUB held its annual international teaching conference in April 17, 2026. The *MENA Writing Studies Journal* is publishing conference proceedings with guest editor Malakeh R. Khoury, coming Fall 2026. For more information on the conference, you can email ctl@aub.edu.lb.

If your organization or institution has events or news that you would like shared with *MENA Writing Studies Journal* readership, please email menawritingstudies@aub.edu.lb.

Organizations, Listservs, and other Resources

Our work in the region is not possible without the decades-long commitments from the international writing studies organizations and listserv networks below. To continue the conversation on your terms, we recommend that you engage with organizations and subscribe to the listservs below.

MENA Writing Studies Listserv

The *MENA Writing Studies* Listserv operates to connect regional writing studies personnel across borders and the diaspora. Our goal is to build the writing studies network with regional diasporic conversations, welcoming both formal and informal correspondence. With this network, and in the scope of MENA writing studies, we welcome members to:

- Share the work (research, teaching, and administrating) we are engaged with
- Ask questions regarding local pedagogical and programmatic best practices
- Announce calls for conferences, papers, research participants, and job opportunities
- Share news of conferences, journal issues, and major/master tracks

To subscribe to our listserv, register your email address [here](#)².

MENA Writing Studies Map

This ongoing project started by the *MENA Writing Studies* Editorial Board is a map of the various MENA writing spaces that we work from. It's a map through which we hope to reflect our territory: our institutions, professional activities, and research that we engage in. Please fill out this [form](#)³ to add your program and/or yourself to the map. You can use this [link](#)⁴ to visit the map and see the institutions, activities (journals & competitions), and research interests that have been added. , and we're looking forward to getting to know and collaborating with your writing programs and writing studies activities.

² https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A_lists.aub.edu.lb_wws_subscribe_menawriting.studies&d=DwMFAg&c=slrrB7dE8n7gBJbcO0g-IQ&r=-xRJUc4XPjf0ewA9bxEn2w&m=v6_mlnagMnN-detY4iRd8uwpCvK5ZDZWhjpGj6eA4mNzTWZShiaMzrVyfgpw-bk1&s=aX4LqeONJ4jYMxmv1U54DE0GpfxqYgBUXL-ke2I90NM&e=

³ <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe7-54yxhfrvVFOJYQejo8T-NbazQhunRr3CSHRI-gSK4dy9w/viewform>

⁴ <https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?hl=en&mid=1RBIIJfMbsLXOPIThHsuamnz8unuHJJ8&ll=33.900453231027214%2C35.4808577384046&z=17>

English or Englishes Podcast

The *English or Englishes* Podcast is developed and hosted by Sweta Kumari, Aieshah Arif, and Neelam Hanif and was developed as part of their project *Perceptions and Positions of Postcolonial Englishes* through the NYU Abu Dhabi Research Kitchens. You can use [this link](#)⁵ to access the podcast on Spotify:

International Researcher's Consortium

The International Researcher's Consortium is a Standing Group at the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The consortium hosts a workshop on Wednesday of the CCCC's and [documents the scholarship online](#)⁶. The IRC also hosts workshops associated with other international conferences such as [EATAW](#)⁷ and [WRAB](#)⁸.

MENAWCA

Middle East North Africa Writing Center Association brings together writing centers, academic support staff, and writing faculty from across the region. A biennial conference is hosted in different countries with timely themes. They also manage a google group to share correspondence regarding studies and calls for proposals. [Ask to join the mailing list through this link](#)⁹.

Teaching Writing in Lebanon

Teaching Writing in Lebanon is a listserv dedicated to news, events, and calls for proposals relating to the teaching of writing in Lebanon. To subscribe to the listserv, [sign up through this link](#)¹⁰ or send an email request to teachingwritinglebanon-request@aub.edu.lb.

Transnational Composition Group

The Transnational Composition Group is a Standing Group with the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The group also has a listserv which shares information and resources regarding transnational and translingual writing practices. To subscribe to this listserv, please send an email to transnationalwriting@fiu.edu, and provide your name and email address along with a request to subscribe.

Writers in the University: Conversations with Scholars Videos

In this set of videos, six faculty members at the American University of Beirut talk about

⁵ <https://open.spotify.com/show/3d5p0wDMk7n2FPsKk6q3SK>

⁶ <https://wac.colostate.edu/community/international-writing-studies/>

⁷ <https://eataw-wa2026.ut.ee/>

⁸ <https://www.isawr.org/writing-research-across-borders-2026/>

⁹ <https://groups.google.com/g/menawca-mailing-list?pli=1>

¹⁰ <https://lists.aub.edu.lb/sympa/subscribe/teachingwritinglebanon>

writing in their academic disciplines, learning to write in different languages, and writing guidance they offer to their students. The project was carried out by John Pill, a language testing specialist, and Amy Zenger, a composition and rhetoric specialist, with the aim of contributing to the teaching and learning of academic writing in the MENA region and beyond. A [project page](#)¹¹ provides information about the development of the videos, which could be replicated in other contexts. You can use [this link](#)¹² to access the videos.

Writing Studies Listserv

The Writing Studies Listserv is a moderated list of international, but predominantly United States centered, news and postings within the composition and rhetoric community. Daily communication regarding job postings, calls for papers, and study participants are circulated. To subscribe to the listserv, follow [the Writing Studies listserv link](#)¹³, and follow the directions.

¹¹ <https://www.aub.edu.lb/writers-university/Pages/Projects.aspx>

¹² <https://www.aub.edu.lb/writers-university>

¹³ <mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.NODAK.EDU>



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