

# When writing matters: Exploring writing as inquiry

PhD course, fall 2019 at Urban Futures Open Research School, 4,5 ECTS  
Organised by Mistra Urban Futures/ Chalmers  
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Transdisciplinary co-production has emerged as a research approach to reach knowledge about how to identify, deal with and solve complex societal issues. This entails integrating different research actors and knowledge from both society and academia, into the same creative process. The Urban Futures Open Research School has during 2017–19 delivered a set of successful PhD courses as introductions to methods and capacities for transdisciplinary co-produced research. This course takes its starting point in previous experiences, namely in the inquiry of different methods and processes for collaborative writing, with the aim to further explore how writing matters in transdisciplinary research projects.

Writing is without doubt a key practice in scholarly work. Nevertheless, in traditional research approaches, writing has primarily been approached as a representational tool, used to communicate the results once the analysis is completed. Thus, writing becomes a retrospective exercise and ‘an add-on to research and scholarship instead of an integral part of it’ (Badley 2009: 209). In envisioning that writing can be something more than a mechanical reporting on what we already know, Richardson and St. Pierre (2005: 971–972) asked: ‘What else might writing do except mean?’. In other words, writing as a method of inquiry. The purpose of this course is to explore writing, as a way of carrying out transdisciplinary research involving both academia and practice. However, we are not only working on writing as a method, but also on how we can understand writing as a collaborative process; “collaborative writing as inquiry”.

The course will intensely explore ‘the written’, not only as writing exercises, but also as collective reading exercises, to deeply engage with texts of different kinds. Throughout the course, we will focus on the process of writing and how you can develop your own writing practices. The course will be conducted in a workshop mode and aim for an intimate setting of both academic researchers, PhD students and experienced practitioners with an interest in understanding the capacity of writing, of evolving one’s own writing knowledge, and of writing together. The course also invites participants of previous courses at the Urban Futures Open Research School.

## AIMS

This course is offered for you who are dealing with so called ‘wicked urban problems’ in your daily practice or who aim to address such current and future urban challenges in your PhD research, and who see the urgency for a transdisciplinary approach in your practice. We will start with a half-day ‘crash course’ introduction to transdisciplinary research, but will from there move onwards into writing through individual and joint exercises. A joint examination assignment will conclude the course.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completion of the course, the student is expected to be able to:

### *Knowledge and understanding*

- understand the larger scope of what transdisciplinary co-produced research entails.
- understand how to use writing as a research enquiry.

### *Competence and skills*

- develop your capacity to understand how writing matters and what it can do during transdisciplinary research processes.
- develop your reading and writing practices and understand how they inform each other.

### *Judgement and approach*

- be mindful about the scholarly and practical impact of collaborative writing.

## COURSE DESIGN

The course is divided into two sessions of each 2,5 days. The first session starts with a join lunch at 12.00 the 19<sup>th</sup> of November and ends 16:00 pm on the 21<sup>st</sup>. The second session starts at 13.00 the 10<sup>th</sup> of December and ends at 16:00 pm on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Being a course about collaborative writing as inquiry, the importance of participants to be present during the days are of utmost significance.

## COURSE LANGUAGE

The course will be performed at the 'language spoken in the room', i.e Swedish or English depending on the participation at each moment.

## COURSE DATES

Session 1: 19<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup> of November

Session 2: 10<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> of December

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

In order to be eligible for the course the applicant must fulfil and prove the general entry requirements for postgraduate studies i.e. master's degree or equivalent. Each applicant should also send in a *short letter of motivation*, describing his/hers interest for transdisciplinary co-production and writing. A CV is also required.

## EXAMINATION (GRADES)

For examination, 80% participation is required. A final exam assignment is written jointly towards the end of the course. The participation at final evaluation is compulsory. The grading scale comprises Pass and Non Pass. If attaining a pass degree, participants will receive a written certificate.

## COURSE EVALUATION

The course concludes with a compulsory written and oral course evaluation.

## LAST DATE FOR APPLICATION

21<sup>st</sup> of October 2019

## LITERATURE

Required readings will be listed as part of the detailed schedule which will be sent out two weeks in advance of the course start. Reading material will be available at the course's digital platform.