



AUTHORING JUSTICE

Online Course Report
E-learning Department

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Introduction

The written word is a powerful vehicle for social change.

Under the guidance of Professor Andrew Leon Hanna, author of *25 Million Sparks: The Untold Story of Refugee Entrepreneurs* (Cambridge University Press) - in this course, we explored how to write non-fiction narrative with empathy and strength on an issue or area that the participants' feel most enlivened to change in the world. In particular, human centered narrative storytelling, the style of writing emphasized in this course, can effectively shine a light on those who are excluded, honor their equal dignity, and move society toward greater mutual understanding and change. The course encompassed 5 modules with approximately 25-30 hours of active learning.

The main learning objectives included how to:

- learn about the principles of narrative non-fiction writing
- gain deeper understanding of the whole process - from their first idea and outline to the book proposal - through precise tips and examples
- develop and reinforce writing skills through the reading of excerpts from key non-fiction works and the drafting of short assignments and their own Capstone Project (~2,000-word piece)
- hone their approach, style and methods through tailored personal feedback
- explore ethical issues to consider throughout the writing process
- learn from the tactical wisdom, firsthand experiences and writing tips shared by the main lecturer and the guest speakers
- contribute to creative brainstorming and peer-to-peer support

The ultimate aim of the course was to inspire a new generation of authors to harness the power of the written word for profound social change.

The course in a nutshell

Key information



3 Jun-26 July
2024



Open EdX



5+ h/week



Webpage



Teaser



2 surveys,
3 padlet exercises

A snapshot

Main lecturer
and
webinar guests



- **Andrew Leon Hanna**, main lecturer, entrepreneur, lawyer, author, and professor
- **Kao Kalia Yang**, author, public speaker, teacher
- **Albie Sachs**, former judge on the Constitutional Court of South Africa
- **Jemma Neville**, writer and journalist
- **Casey Gerald**, author
- **Joel Rickett**, managing editor Ebury - Penguin Random House

Course structure

5 Modules

- ✓ Selecting a writing topic
- ✓ Narrative Non-fiction
- ✓ Navigating the writing process
- ✓ Ethical considerations
- ✓ Getting published



Capstone Project

Draft and submit a 2,000-words work
(long-form article or part of a book)



Write 200-250 words
on the human rights
area that most makes
you "come alive"



Draft a 200-250-words
synopsis of your
Capstone Project



Celebrate during our
class reading of
excerpts from our
Capstone Projects

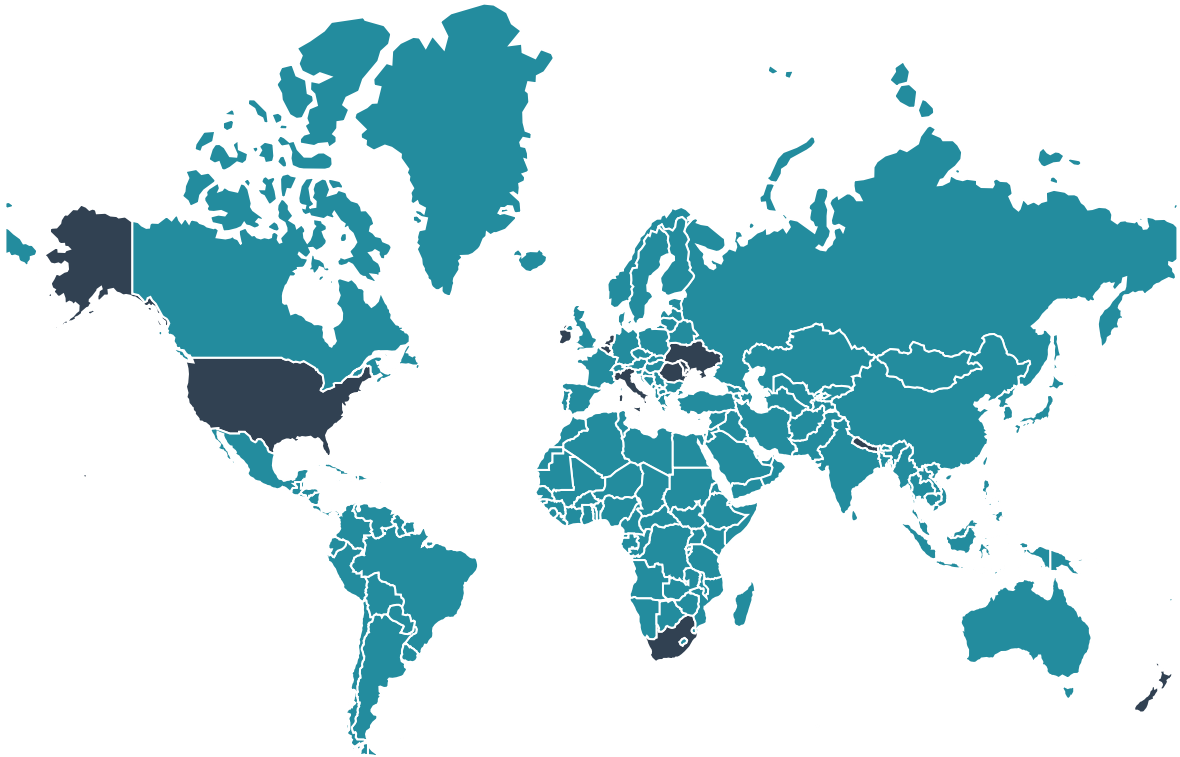
Highlights

- **tailored feedback** on assignments and capstone project
- **guidance of the main lecturer**, Andrew Leon Hanna
- **final celebration and publication of excerpts** published in [GCHR Magazine](#)
- flexible **online format**
- **engaging webinars with renowned authors**
- **high-profile participants** with diverse backgrounds
- **global representation** from various regions
- focus on **ethical considerations** throughout the course



Demographics

13  **PARTICIPANTS FROM
ACROSS THE GLOBE**



The course attracted 13 participants from across the globe, representing diverse backgrounds, including lawyers, human rights advocates, academics, students, and a historian specializing in the intersection of resistance, power, and human rights in South Africa, as well as individuals with expertise in English literature and law.

Participants' profiles



NGO professionals & human rights defenders



Staff of International organisations



Academics and students



Lawyers



GCA alumni

Participants' motivation

Inspired to advance human rights

All participants demonstrated a strong determination and motivation to write for change, clearly expressing their interest through the following motivation and hopes:

to learn how to write about human rights and report on social injustices in a way that can spark interest and raise awareness with people that are not already familiar with these themes.

to hone my skills to write non fiction so that i can continue doing this in the future, in order to contribute to advancing human rights.

to learn how to write about human rights and report on social injustices in a way that can spark interest and raise awareness with people that are not already familiar with these themes.

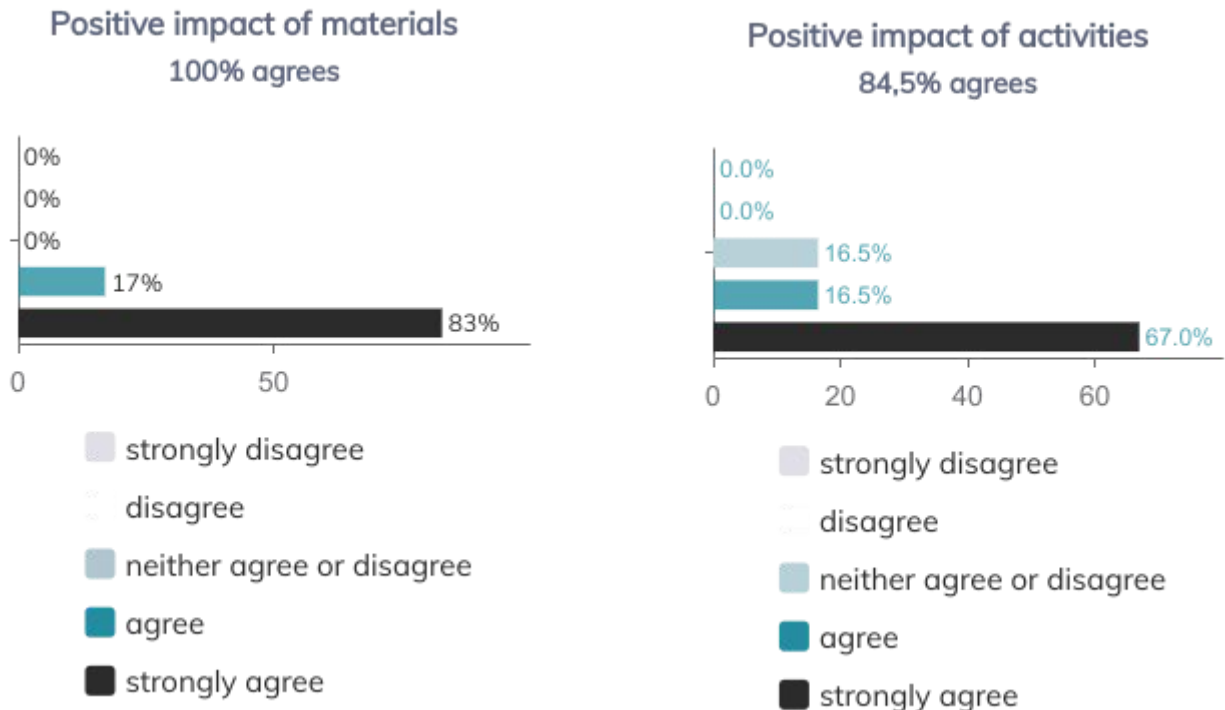
Eager to improve their skills

I hope to learn and equip myself with all the necessary techniques to report and write about refugees/asylum seekers, justice, human rights, international humanitarian law and peace mediation, in an interesting and engaging manner. Through this newly acquired knowledge, I hope to gain enough confidence to truly start writing and hopefully, get my act together and get my writings out there by courageously publishing them. Let's see where this new adventure takes me along with my existing and future writing ideas!

(I would like) to become more confident in my non-fiction writing and to be able to write down my stories in a more engaging way.

Evaluation*

The course materials and activities were generally well-received.



100% gave 4-5*

When asked to give an overall rating on a scale of 1 to 5, 50% of survey respondents gave 4* and 50% assigned 5*.

100% would recommend

All of respondents indicated that they would recommend the course, rating it as either extremely likely (33%), very likely (17%), or likely (50%).

*This report is based on the responses from the participant experience survey conducted via SurveyMonkey, with 6 out of 13 participants providing feedback.

Impact

Empowering writers



The participants reported that **the course had a positive impact** on various aspects of their work and personal goals. The new knowledge and skills gained from the course enhanced their ability to write compelling narratives and conduct thorough research.



This improvement not only elevated the quality of their work but also **improved their confidence as writers and advocates.**

The course provided opportunities for personal growth and professional development.

I will change my writing and add more story telling details. I have also been considering writing a book, and may now even do so after this course.

I will use it in my daily writings, in professional contexts, and also to continue working on my story.

(What I plan after the course is) to write long form articles about themes dear to me and hopefully have a bigger impact than standard reports because it's a better way to communicate and engage with people outside of the human rights world.

Practical application

By sharing their experiences and insights, participants learned **how to inspire others and potentially influence public opinion** and policy; particularly in areas where human rights are at risk of being forgotten or undermined.

Some participants decided to incorporate more storytelling elements into their writing and even consider writing a book. This represents a powerful step in their journey as writers and human rights advocates:

I will definitely use the knowledge gained to write and publish popular science/non-fiction articles on human rights issues in Moldova. I have already written such articles for news portals, and I will be able to do it even better and more interesting thanks to the new knowledge gained.

I am thinking about writing a book about the tragic events of April 2009 in Moldova (mass demonstrations after the parliamentary elections, arrests and torture of hundreds of demonstrators), in which I participated as a human rights defender, because I see that the memory of those events is being erased. Thanks to the course, I have a better understanding of the process of writing such books and will be able to better plan my actions if I decide to write a book on this topic.



Recommendations from participants



Overall, the course largely met and in some aspects even exceeded the participants' expectations, particularly with the live interactions with authors, carefully selected video materials, and book excerpts.



We have also received valuable feedback on what to improve, as some participants:



- expected even more tutoring on the writing process
- suggested mid-process checks on the writing of the Capstone project
- recommended that webinars be more thematic and focused
- found that reading excerpts during webinars was not strictly necessary
- suggested to increase interactions between participants for a more collaborative experience
- asked for more time for completing the assignments



Participants' appreciation

I enjoyed the course very much. The assignments and the seminars were great. If I would change anything, I would make the course longer and add even more amazing seminars.

I loved the course. The speakers, Andrew's feedback, the interaction with the other participants. The fact that the course is online has the great advantage of studying with a very diverse group of people from different regions the world.

I enrolled in this course to challenge myself to do something new and hopefully learn about a new writing style for me. Overall I think I've reached my objectives with this course, I feel better equipped to write about human rights issues in an engaging and emotionally immersive way and I am satisfied with my capstone project. I think the online material was really helpful in providing a methodology and some on-point examples (excerpts) of what is expected when speaking of some writing techniques. Ethical considerations were also key. I think the writing progression that Andrew set up was easy to understand and try on my own, his feedback to my synopsis and final project was crucial.(...)

I will try to get onto the writing path and write a book or two. I will also try to see whether I can use the knowledge I've acquired in the course to enhance my academic writing, reporting, social media posts, as well as my communication and presentation skills. I now believe in the power of storytelling even more, and I just can't wait to explore its endless possibilities.



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