

# GRUB Street Workshop Ethical Guidelines 2023

## Updated Guidelines

*Note: the information below will be included in our [Student Guidelines](#), which are shared with students prior to joining their classes.*

### ***Ethical Guidelines for Sharing Work During Workshop***

Sharing your work in a feedback setting relies on a respectful and constructive exchange of perspectives, critiques, ideas, and suggestions. It also relies on the confidence that your work will be safe from plagiarism in the class. This can be complex territory that relies on building trust, engaging in communication within the class setting, and coming in with some clarity around definitions and expectations. Below are some introductory suggestions on how to engage with all of it.

### ***What happens if I believe my work has been plagiarized in class?***

This can be a very distressing experience, in which a writer can feel like boundaries have been violated. First, we encourage you to refer to the definition at the end of this section\*, as well as [this document](#), which provides expanded definitions for and an overview of plagiarism, confidentiality, and privacy as technical terms.

To clarify, writing on a similar *topic* or *theme* is not plagiarism. For example, there are thousands of books on the topics of grief, loss, the state of our world, etc. A writer stating in class that they are writing about a *topic*, *place*, or *event* does not mean that another writer cannot do the same, since topics and references cannot be singularly owned by one writer in the group. If you still believe your work has been directly

plagiarized or its specific language, content, or context appropriated without prior discussion or permission, we recommend that you speak with your instructor and after hearing the instructor's suggestions, speak with the writer if you think that is appropriate or advised.

You can also contact us directly at [programs@grubstreet.org](mailto:programs@grubstreet.org) if that feels more appropriate. Our programs team will be happy to assist, provide further information, facilitate a solution, and/or take appropriate action when warranted. **We do want to make clear:** blatant plagiarism of someone else's work, as reflected in the specific language, content, or context of the writing in question is grounds for a warning and/or dismissal from the class.

***What happens if a student uses or has been influenced by aspects of another student's writing such as setting, stylistic approaches, or cultural details?***

As a workshop participant, you can be inspired by a classmate's writing without having to explicitly use elements or details of their work. While doing this may not be strictly plagiarism, it isn't in the best interest of your relationships with writing colleagues and can disrupt the trust built in a class setting. On the other hand, *being influenced* by someone else's work is a common practice, as poetic and literary devices are often forms of inspiration and methods that many writers share. Particular strategies of craft, form and style do not belong to a person using them in an assignment. For example, if you are writing a draft with short chapters, it does not exclude anyone else from using that method, nor do they need permission.

***The critique guidelines say, "be helpful, not harmful," but a classmate and I are so different (in age, gender, race, culture, etc.) that I feel as though I don't have the authority to comment on their work. How do I approach feedback in that situation?***

Be honest and acknowledge your gaps or biases while responding to the piece. Approaching our feedback with generosity and curiosity—especially when our experience or perspective might differ from the one portrayed in a piece of writing—can lead to more productive and honest interactions between writer and reader. For instance, we might not always be the intended audience for a particular piece of writing. Our artistic or cultural understanding may not align with what's on the page. However, we still have a responsibility to interrogate our response to the piece and how to provide constructive feedback.

Moreover, it is crucial to understand that no one group of people is monolithic—whether this be Black people, elders, unhoused people, men, women, queer people, Korean, Diné, immigrant, and the list goes on. People of any particular group do not all have the same experiences, perspectives or feelings, so they should

not be expected to have any particular or same insights on a character of a similar background. Thus, it should be the responsibility of every participant in the class to interrogate intent, audience, and gaps in cultural understanding with respect, generosity, open-mindedness, and a willingness to engage with our own biases and gaps.

**\*Definition of Plagiarism:** Copying of another's expressive work without attribution.

## Note on Cultural Appropriation

Given the clear distinctions between plagiarism and cultural appropriation, a separate process is needed to unpack the latter, discuss with and train our instructors, and include language in our guidelines. For now, we're including a couple of resources we found relevant and useful:

- Bruce Ziff and Pratima Rao's introduction to their anthology [\*Borrowed Power: essays on cultural appropriation\*](#).
- Ella Shohat and Robert Stam's introduction to [\*Unthinking Eurocentrism\*](#).

## Additional Resources

- [A Memo on Plagiarism, Copyright, Privacy, and the Public Domain](#), December 2022, Prepared by Jessica Silbey on behalf of GrubStreet
- [Plagiarism and Copyright Infringement Video](#)