



Assignment 1: Letter to Self from the Future

Background:

This exercise is inspired by a short story “Evidence” by Alexis Pauline Gumbs in the anthology of speculative fiction from social movements, Octavia’s Brood. This story was shared with me by Penn Pannel, who led our research team in a ‘letter to the self from the future’ exercise. Instructions for a similar exercise is available at: <https://workthatreconnects.org/resource/letter-from-the-future/>

Learning Objective(s):

- Engage in a speculative, imaginative process about your own future
- Engage in a speculative, imaginative process about disasters and climate change
- Practice writing in a non-academic format

Core concepts/terms:

- Visioning
- Storytelling

Evaluation Criteria: You will be graded based on your demonstration of your ability to:

- Try and write out of what may be your comfort zone.
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Your task is to engage in an exercise that involves visioning a future, speculating about the future, and writing in a storytelling manner. Simply put, you need to write a 500ish word letter from yourself in 2050 to yourself now.

There are essentially no requirements for this exercise. But you may find it fruitful to consider some of the prompts below. At the risk of stating the obvious, I hope you’ll write the letter from the frame of reference of this course: emotions/compassion, disasters/climate change, different ways of ‘knowing.’

- Where might you like to live? What type of lifestyle?
- What types of personal relationships will be meaningful for you in the coming years?
- What types of activities will be meaningful for you in the coming years?
- What types of work will be meaningful to you in the coming years?
- What are some foreseeable struggles you might encounter?
- How might climate change impact your location, lifestyle, relationships, activities and work?
- What might cause you to quit or change paths in the next few decades?

If it is challenging to think about writing a letter, you could also approach this assignment by imagining that a KU student has reached out to you for advice. In their email to you, they remind you a lot of yourself circa 2020.