

# E. Katherine Kottaras (she/ they)

[KATHERINEKOTTARAS.COM](http://KATHERINEKOTTARAS.COM)

## Education

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<b>M.S. Kinesiology</b>	<b>Point Loma Nazarene University</b>	<b>September 2020</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concentration: Integrative Wellness</li></ul>		
<b>M.A. English</b>	<b>University of California, Irvine</b>	<b>September 2006</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Concentration: Classical Rhetoric and 20<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature</li></ul>		
<b>B.A. Teaching of English, <i>Cum Laude</i></b>	<b>University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign</b>	<b>January 1999</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minor concentration: Social Studies (Sociology and Anthropology)</li></ul>		

## Certifications and Trainings

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<b>Embodied Equity Certification, University of San Diego/ Pasadena City College</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Community-Based Learning Fellowship, Pasadena City College</b>	<b>2023-present</b>
<b>Healing Centered Education Certification, with Dr. Angel Acosta</b>	<b>May-June 2021</b>
<b>American Council on Exercise (ACE) Certified Health Coach</b>	<b>Summer 2021</b>
<b>American Council on Exercise (ACE) Certified Personal Trainer</b>	<b>Spring 2019</b>
<b>@ONE Certificate in Online Teaching and Learning</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
<b>Yoga Blend, RYT-200</b>	<b>Spring 2011</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A non-dogmatic style of yoga utilizing the fundamental teachings of yogic philosophy</li><li>• Studied the Yoga Sutras, poses, modifications and props, pre/post-natal, principles of alignment, pranayama &amp; meditation, sound &amp; chanting, and holistic healing</li></ul>	
<b>Postsecondary Reading and Learning Certificate, California State University, Fullerton</b>	<b>Spring 2011</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For Adult Reading and Learning Instruction</li></ul>	

## Honors

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- **Co-recipient, 2024 Community Excellence Grant**, funded by a gift from Mackenzie Scott to PCC
    - \$20,000 grant awarded to support Mujeres de la Tierra to uplift local environmental heroes and storytellers via student-created children's books
  - **PCC Community-based Learning Faculty Fellow**, 2023
  - **PCC Above and Beyond Award**, Outstanding Service to Students, June 2021
  - **PCC Safe Zones Ally of the Year Award**, for work on Safe Learning Environment Committee to support students who are undocumented and LGBTQ+, June 2019
  - **Bravo Award Generalist Winner**, The Music Center, Los Angeles, CA, February 2004
    - Recognizes teachers and schools for creativity, innovation and excellence in arts education
    - Awarded to one teacher each year from all of L.A. County who uses the arts to revitalize teaching, enhance academic achievement, teamwork and cross-cultural communication
  - **E. Veda Streitmatter and Arlys Conrad Scholar**, UIUC English Department, June 1998
    - Awarded to students in the English education program
  - **Dean's List**, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1995-1999

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<b>Associate Professor of English</b>	<b>Pasadena City College</b>	<b>2007-present</b>
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- English 1A, 1B, and 1C Transfer-level Reading and Composition
  - Including online 8-week and 16-week courses since 2013
  - Themed: *Researching Mindfulness and Researching Contemplative Environmentalism*
- Additional courses taught: Creative Writing (Creative Nonfiction, Poetry, Fiction, and PCC *Inscape* Literary Magazine); Children's Literature

## ACADEMIC SERVICE

### **2023-present: Community Based-Learning (English 1A, English 7, English 1C, and English 59)**

- Spring 2024: PCC 2023 Community-based Learning Faculty Fellow and recipient of the 2024 Community Excellence Grant (funded by a gift from MacKenzie Scott)
  - Students are working to support the efforts of Mujeres de la Tierra, which is a grassroots environmental equity non-profit founded in 2004, in the city of Los Angeles. Mujeres de la Tierra has the distinction of being the first Latina-founded and led 501(c)(3) environmental organization that focuses on the healing of La Madre Tierra (Mother Earth) in Southern California.
  - For their work in English 7: Inscape Magazine and English 1A: Reading and Composition, my students researched and prepared presentations and booklets that will be shared by Mujeres de la Tierra's Dia de los Muertos during their talk to educate community members on the 1943 Zoot Suit Riots (80th Anniversary). The goal for Mujeres de la Tierra is to honor the facts of history as well as honor those who were impacted by the riots and highlight how Latine youth continue to be targeted today.
  - During Spring 2024-Spring 2025, we will continue our partnership. Ms. Munoz is requesting that PCC students create a picture book to highlight local environmental heroes, so my students in English 59: Children's Literature and English 1C will work on this. We are planning for a fall 2025 event.
  - As part of this project, I am implementing graduate-level research on Contemplative Environmentalism and place-based community storytelling to enhance community health and connection in partnership with my colleagues, students, and community organizations during my daily work at Pasadena City College.

### **2021-present: Campus Mindfulness Projects**

- Mindfulness Mondays: Mindful Antidotes to Burnout for the PCC Community
  - With support from the Office of Professional and Organizational Development (OPOD), I coordinated and co-led Mindfulness Mondays: Mindful Antidotes to Burnout for the PCC Community with with Suzana Pilipossian, M.A. and Dr. Jason Vasquez, PCC Lead Psychologist to:
    1. Examine definitions of workplace "burnout" from a trauma-informed, holistic perspective that includes concerns for well-being of body, mind, and spirit;
    2. Discuss the ways individual faculty and staff can prioritize their own psychosocial, emotional, and environmental well-being in the face of structural pressures; and
    3. Integrate the lessons into first-person mindfulness experiences via physical (body-based) activity that will include all-levels gentle seated and standing yogic movement, breathing, and meditation.
- **2022: Worked with PCC Library to build OER / resource page for Mindfulness, Contemplative Practices, and Trauma-Informed/Healing-Centered Practices**
- **Presented on Mindfulness in Higher Education, for PCC faculty, staff and managers, 2014-present**
- April 7, 2021, Led Introduction to Yoga and Meditation, with PCC Queer Alliance Club
- February, 2021: Recorded "Introduction to Mindfulness for Working with Community College Students" Workshop for the Vision Resource Center to make available for asynchronous FLEX credit; it is the inaugural PCC-specific learning content item
- Spring 2021: Served as Meditation and Mind Club Co-Advisor
- November, 2020: Worked with Jason Vasquez, Lead Psychologist in Personal Counseling, to develop resources to help faculty and staff manage election anxiety
- November, 2020: Led 70+ faculty, staff, and students in a Zoom meditation on the morning of Election Day 2020
- September 15, 2020, Speaker with Professor Jeong K.O. on the Health and Wellness Career and Social Justice Panel as part of PCC's Career Communities Social Justice Conference
- Monday, May 13, 2019, Speaker on Health and Wellness Career Panel, hosted by the PCC Robert G. Freeman Center for Career and Completion
- May 18, 2018: Presented on Mindfulness in Higher Education for PCC English Division spring retreat, included meditation
- August 2017: Presented on Mindfulness in Higher Education for Pasadena City College Stretch Accelerated Composition (STACC) Program Conference on Student Equity
- 2016-2017: Completed sabbatical study on Mindfulness in Higher Education

- Professional Development Workshop on Mindfulness, first presented 2012-2014
- Attended International Symposium for Contemplative Studies, Denver, Colorado, 2012
- **PCC Yoga and Meditation Club Advisor and Teacher, 2012-2017**
  - Taught weekly all-levels vinyasa flow classes to PCC students
  - Advised executive board with Inter-Club Council responsibilities
  - Organized donation of recycled yoga mats from Jade Yoga during the 2012 Tadasana Festival to distribute free to students
  - Led community yoga session at PCC Journey to Wellness Fairs
  - Organized a student and faculty yoga and tai chi retreat, Monrovia Canyon, 2012-2014

### Committee Work

- Chair, Academic Senate Safe Learning Environment Committee, 2017-2023
  - Drafted the procedure guiding interactions between PCC faculty, staff, and students and federal immigration officials
  - Secured location and funding for the QUEST Center (Queer and Undocumented Empowerment Support to Thrive) for Undocumented Students and LGBTQ+ students; opened early 2020; now The Dream Resource Center and The Pride Center
  - Advocated for campus-wide sexual harassment training
  - Advocated for trauma-informed, healing centered practices
- Member, Safe Zones Coalition, to support undocumented and LGBTQ+ scholars
- Academic Senate Faculty Representative, Sustainability Committee, January 2020-2023
  - Contributed to draft Carbon Pledge and mission statement
  - Serve on sub-committees: Indirect GHG emissions and non-Carbon Neutral curriculum
- Academic Senate Faculty Representative, Food Service Vendor Committee, 2021
- Academic Senate Faculty Representative, Health and Safety Committee, 2019-2021
- Organizer, English Department sponsored- Annual Poetry Month Celebration, 2014-2020
- Designer, Model English 1A Online 8-week course and led pilot program, 2015-2016
- Academic Senate Treasurer, 2017-2018; Member, Academic Senate, 2018
- Member, English Division Writer-In-Residence Committee, 2014-2019
- **Revised English courses:** English, 25A Modern Literature; English 25C, Women in Literature; English 5B, Creative Writing

### Additional Employment

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<b>Yoga Teacher</b>	<b>Yoga Blend, Burbank, CA</b>	<b>September 2012 - 2018</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Substitute for Basics, Gentle, Yoga and Sound, Yin (Stretch), and Gentle Back Care (2012-16)</li> <li>● Led Yoga and Writing Workshops, 2018, for writers, or for those who want to write The workshop offers an energizing Vinyasa flow series, meditation, and stimulating writing exercises to help students access the stories that dwell within</li> </ul>	
<b>English Teacher</b>	<b>John Burroughs High School, Burbank, CA</b>	<b>2001-2007</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● English 11 Honors/AP English Language and Composition, Business Academy</li> <li>● SDAIE (Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English) &amp; Special Education Collaborative</li> <li>● Introduced and advised <i>Mantra</i> Literary Magazine, a student-produced publication for student poetry, prose, artwork, and music as extra-curricular involvement for students</li> <li>● Advised SHARE Club, Guided students to organize weekly and holiday food and clothing donation drives to assist Burbank Temporary Aid Center, Burbank, CA</li> </ul>	
<b>Middle School Teacher</b>	<b>Wilson Middle School, Pasadena, CA</b>	<b>2000-2001</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taught Language Arts Ancient World History, and Visual Art</li> <li>● International Baccalaureate Program, Grades 6-8</li> </ul>	
<b>English Teacher</b>	<b>Joliet West High School, Joliet, IL</b>	<b>1999-2000</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Taught ninth-grade English; worked with children of incarcerated parents</li> <li>● Advised <i>Serendipity</i> Literary Magazine</li> </ul>	

## Community Service

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- Glendale Environmental Coalition: Member; Organized “Environmental Racism and Climate Justice” panel with moderator, Dr. Michael Mendez, November 15, 2020
- Volunteer poetry teacher to girls ages 8-12 for YWCA Glendale’s Camp Rosie, June-October 2020
- Member of Coalition for an Anti-Racist Glendale, 2020-2023
- Volunteer (Team Member), We Need Diverse Books, 2017-2019
- Board member, Children’s Literature Council of Southern California, 2017-2018
- Moderator, Inaugural Youth Lit Salon: “Fighting Words”, Grandview Library, Glendale, CA, Hosted by the Children’s Literature Council of Southern California, May 21, 2016

## Publications

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### Writer for Young Adults and Children

More at [katherinekottaras.com](http://katherinekottaras.com)

**How to Come Out to the Jasmine First: On Writing and Loving in the Natural World**,  
ed. Dr. KE Ogden, June 17, 2025

**A Rainbow Inside My Body: Finding Peace Through Yoga,  
Breathing, and the Chakras**, co-written with Vanitha Swaminathan,  
illustrated by Holly Hatam, Penguin/ Viking, 2024

**Yoga with Eleonora (Series)** – Pillow Fort TV Kids/ Bold Soul Books, 2024

**How to Be Brave – A Novel**, Macmillan/St. Martin’s Press, November 2015

**The Best Possible Answer – A Novel**, Macmillan/St. Martin’s Press, November 2016

### Visual Art

**YOU WERE BORN OF LOVE**, selected by glendaleOUT for their exhibit,

**“MAPPING MY QUEER: Body Mapping Our Queer Identity,”**

hosted by the Glendale Library, Arts & Culture,

on display at Adams Square Mini Park and Brand Library and Art Center, June 2023

### Essays, Poetry, Pedagogy, and Critical Theory Work

“3 Imperfect Rules for Writing,” *Writer’s Digest*, 2016

“Once Upon a Time: A Reflection on Body Image,” *The Yoga and Body Coalition*, 2015

“A New Year’s Tale,” *Elephant Journal*, January, 2012

“Point of Inflection,” *The Poetry of Yoga: A Contemporary Anthology*, 2012

“What We Do,” in the literary anthology, *Mamas and Papas: On the Sublime and  
Heartbreaking Art of Parenting*, San Diego City Works Press, 2010

“Comparing Portrayals of Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Photography and Literature”

“An Exploration of The Crucible through Seventeenth-Century Portraits”

*ReadWriteThink.org* by the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) 2010

“‘Arbitrary Metaphors’ in *The Age of Innocence*: Friedrich Nietzsche’s Influence on Edith  
Wharton’s Portrayals of Deceptive Language and Social Performance.”

*The Edith Wharton Review*. Spring 2010 (Graduate Thesis written at UC Irvine)

## Panels and Presentations

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- 2025 AWP panelist exploring how creative writing can empower community college students in the English composition classroom. Alongside Wendy Silva, Daniel Ruiz, and James B. De Monte, we discussed how creative writing serves as a tool for growth, self-efficacy, and healing, especially for students facing complex challenges.
- 2024-2025: Moderator: English Division Visiting Writers Series: Writing Children’s Literature with local KidLit authors and illustrators: Danielle Davis, Benson Shum, Mirelle Ortega, Maple Lam, Jennifer Torres, Natasha Khan Kazi, C.M. Potter, Lynell George, Ryka Aoki, Writing Success Center
- January 2022: Moderator: English Division Visiting Writers Event with Karen Yin

- Spring 2020, Moderator: English Division Zoom Poetry Celebration & Interview with Yumi Sakugawa
- November 19, 2018, Hosted a live Zoom workshop for English 1A students with YES! cofounder and editor-at-large Sarah van Gelder, author of *The Revolution Where You Live: Stories From a 12,000 Mile Journey Through a New America*, who presented live from Washington state (before Zoom sessions were fashionable, so ancient history [are you allowed to lol in your own CV?])
- September 30, 2018, Breath for Words: A Generative Writing Space Workshop, Yoga Blend, Burbank, CA
- September 28, 2018, Teaching Faculty, 2018 SCBWI L.A. Working Writer's Retreat, Holy Spirit Retreat Center, Encino, CA
- Moderator for panels with YA/children's literature writers, Chelo Manchego, author and illustrator of *The Want Monsters* and *Little Royal*, published by Shambhala Publications, Aaron Hartzler, author of *Rapture Practice*, and Lee Wind, author of the middle grade book, *No Way, They Were Gay?*
- April 22, 2018, L.A. Times Festival of Books, Moderating YA Panel, Nothing Left to Lose, with Gayle Forman, Emily X.R. Pan, Farrah Penn, and Marie Marquardt
- February 3, 2018, Barnes and Noble, Aliso Viejo, CA, with Lilliam Rivera & Carrie Arcos
- September, 2017, Temple City Library, Temple City, CA
- September 16, 2017, Pasadena Loves YA Festival, "Love and Trust" panel, with Maurene Goo, Ameriie, and B.T. Gottfred
- April 23, 2017, L.A. Times Festival of Books, Young Adult Fiction: Who Do You Think You Are?
- April 1, 2017, 2017 Literary Orange Fest, Teen/YA Panel
- March 25, 2017, Keynote Speaker. Ontario Teen Book Fest, Ontario, CA
- March 18, 2017, City of Commerce Book Fest, City of Commerce, CA
- March 9-11, 2017, Southeastern Young Adult Book Festival, 2017, Murfreesboro, TN
- March 4, 2017 Charlotte Huck Children's Literature Festival, with the Children's Literature Council of Southern California, Redlands, CA
- November, 2016, NCTE/ALAN, Atlanta, Georgia, Signing at NCTE Annual Convention and presentation at ALAN Workshop: "LIFEBLOOD OF REBELLION:" TEACHING POETRY FROM YA LITERATURE TO ENGAGE TEENS"
- November 5, 2016, Book launch for THE BEST POSSIBLE ANSWER with Charlotte Huang & Amy Spalding, Vroman's Bookstore, Pasadena, CA
- September 29, 2016, Presented to 270 students at John Burroughs High School, Burbank, CA on Fear and Writing
- August 13, 2016, 1-4pm, Writing Workshop, Children's Books Writers of Los Angeles, CBW-LA
- July 7, 2016, Teen Summer Writing Institute at the City of Commerce Public Library, City of Commerce, CA
- June 28, 2016, with Ashley Herring Blake, Jeff Zentner, and Courtney Stevens, Barnes and Noble, Brentwood/Nashville, TN
- June 20, 2016, Hot Summer Teen Reads with Sarah Jude, Zac Brewer, and Kat Zhang, Left Bank Books, St. Louis, MO
- June 2016 Barnes & Noble Teen Book Fest, Oakbrook Center, Oakbrook, IL, Anderson's Bookstore, Naperville, IL, & Printer's Row Lit Fest, Chicago, IL
- June 4, 2016. LitFest Pasadena, Pasadena, CA
- May 14, 2016, Tots, Tweens, and Teens Book Fest, Pasadena, CA
- April 9-10, 2016, 21st annual L.A. Times Festival of Books, the campus of USC, Spoke on two panels: YA Fiction: Love & Other Disasters with Amy Spalding, Morgan Matson, Emery Lord, & Robin Talley Fiction: The Game of Life with Pamela Ribon, Sara Benincasa, Heather Cocks, and Jessica Morgan