

# Taiwana Shambley

Fiction Writer, Teaching Artist, Youth Worker

*Teaching and empowering young people who are queer, trans, and/or disabled, through the lens of the literary arts and black radical tradition.*

Licensure: Tier 2, 5-12 Communication Arts/Literature | Tier 1, Early Childhood Special Education  
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**Technical Skills:** Salesforce | Infinite Campus | Headrush | MLA | Chicago Manual Style | Google Classroom & Suite | Squarespace | Wordpress | Canva | Adobe InDesign

**Pedagogy:** Curriculum Design | Composition Writing | Literary Craft Analysis | Creative Writing | Relationship Based Positive Reinforcement | Cultivating Compassion-based Student-Teacher Relationships | Tier 1 Restorative Justice Circles | Whole Class Instruction | One on One Tutoring | Small & Large Group Discussions | Culturally Responsive Teaching | Socratic Method | Content Scaffolding | Classroom Management | Mandated Reporter Training

**Content Areas of Specialty:** Abolition Praxis | Feminist Philosophy | Black Women Writers | Speculative Fiction by Women | Fiction for Social Change | Direct Action Organizing | Anti-capitalist Praxis | African American Literature | Black Feminist Thought | Afrofuturism

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## EDUCATION

### Master of Fine Arts

06/2024 - 06/2025

*Antioch University, Los Angeles, California*

- MFA Program for Creative Writers: Fiction
- All but essay and thesis; degree to be awarded June 2025
- Continuing graduate education from Warren Wilson College's MFA Program which I attended from 01/2022 - 09/2023 and earned +30 graduate credits.

### Bachelor of Arts

08/2017 - 04/2021

*Augsburg University, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- Majors: English (creative writing) and African American Studies (radical social movements)
- Executive Editor, *The Echo* Student Newspaper
- Outstanding Student Award in Philosophy (Saint Paul College)

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## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### Early Childhood Special Education Teacher

04/2024 - 06/2024

*PreK at Brooklyn Center Elementary, Brooklyn Center, Minnesota*

- Works with youth ages birth to five years old on language acquisition and development, communication skills, and managing emotions.
- Develop curriculum for early childhood aged youth.
- Maintain healthy, care-based relationships with young people and their families.
- Long term substitute teacher contracted through Teachers on Call.

### Graduate Student Instructor, First-Year Writing 1120

09/2024 - 12/2025

*Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota*

- Develops college level curricula in the field of English Composition including critical essay writing, the creative writing process, and literary research practices using these texts: *First-Year Composition: from Theory to Practice* (Coxwell-Teague and Lunsford) and *Dynamic Activities for First Year Composition* (Reznizki and Coad)
- Tutors students one on one via class time and office hours in the act of learning and demonstrating mastery in their writing.
- Facilitates positive student-teacher relationships for first year college students.

### Fiction Teacher

01/2023 - Present

*The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- Reinterpreted storytelling craft elements from BIPOC cultural lenses (Double Session Class)
- Designed and led engaging syllabi and lesson plans on abolition movements (12 Week Class).

- Creatively simplified and explored abolition intersected with craft elements of fiction.
- Developed meaningful relationships with marginalized adults new to writing fiction.

### **English Language Arts Teacher**

**08/2023 - 01/2024**

*PiM Arts High School, Eden Prairie, Minnesota*

- Reinvigorated and led syllabi and lesson plans for 9th and 10th grade English students.
- Intersected the creative writing skill of "reading like a writer" with traditional English curricula.
- Developed healthy, professional, and relational teacher-student relationships.

### **Fiction Teacher**

**01/2023 - 05/2023**

*Saint Paul Conservatory for Performing Artists*

- Simplifies craft elements of fiction, including the short story & novel forms, characterization, narrator, plot, and more.
- Instructs & mentored high school students from multicultural and queer & trans communities.
- Fosters a collaborative, community-minded, safe classroom space.

### **Creative Writing Mentor**

**09/2022 - 05/2023**

*Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, Write Like Us*

- Mentored five emerging creative writers, including one on one lessons, extensive feedback, and writing workshops.
- Spokesperson at creative writing classes across Twin Cities Community Colleges.
- Interviewed and hosted public events featuring nationally-acclaimed authors

### **Teaching Artist**

**11/2022 - 05/2023**

*Upstream Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- Collaboratively leads developmentally appropriate arts lessons.
- Builds meaningful relationships with youth with disabilities.

### **Literature Teacher**

**06/2020 - 08/2020**

*Breakthrough Twin Cities, Saint Paul, Minnesota*

- Designed education curriculum and lesson plans for 7th, 8th and 9th grade students.
- Trained and applied three-week long orientation on a critical teaching pedagogy curriculum nationally renowned by Princeton Review.
- Mentored and built meaningful relationships with middle school-aged students that outlasted fellowship tenure.

### **Queer Liberation and Spoken Word Poetry Teacher**

**01/2018 - 08/2018**

*Maxfield Elementary School and Murray Middle School, Saint Paul, Minnesota*

- Mentored elementary and middle school-aged children in using creative writing to cultivate and amplify their stories.
- Prepared daily curriculum for first to 8th grade students.
- Facilitated lesson plans on poetic form, literary device, and performance.

## **SELECTED WORK EXPERIENCE**

### **Program Associate, Black Community Trust Fund**

**11/2022 - 07/2023**

*Nexus Community Partners*

- Coordinates community engagement efforts such as visioning sessions and media outreach.
- Executes administrative and logistic tasks such as scheduling, finances, and internal organization.

### **Campaign Lead, End Youth Prisons MN**

**07/2021 - 06/2022**

*Legal Rights Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- Led the creation and planning of an abolitionist campaign to end Minnesota's practice of youth prisons through the use of storytelling and the arts to shift local discourse and policy.
- Created and facilitated a youth fellowship focused on teaching direct action organizing.
- Designed curriculum for Radical Imagination Writing Series, a collection of workshops that use creative writing to imagine alternatives to youth incarceration.

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## LITERARY AWARDS

### CURA Artist Neighborhood Partnership Initiative Grant

2022-23

*Center for Urban & Regional Affairs, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

- Awarded competitive \$15,000 grant to lead the creation and editing of a collection of stories written by incarcerated and formerly incarcerated youth in Minneapolis.

### Sunspot Lit Semi Finalist

2022

*Sunspot Literary Journal, Durham, North Carolina*

- Selected as semi finalist of the "Inception" contest for the opening of her in progress debut novel.

### PEN/Faulkner Teaching Fellow Finalist

2022

*PEN/Faulkner Foundation, Washington, D.C.*

- Selected as fellowship winner; PEN/Faulkner Foundation gives out three major literary awards: the PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction, the PEN/Malamud Award for Excellence in the Short Story, and the PEN/Faulkner Literary Champion.

### Windows & Mirrors Fellow

2022

*The Loft Literary Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota*

- Selected by one of the country's leading literary centers a recipient of a six month mentorship for emerging Young Adult authors.

### Next Step Fund Grant

2020

*Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Saint Paul, Minnesota*

- Awarded this prominent and competitive Minnesota grant for my fiction by renowned grant foundation.

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## PUBLICATIONS

- 2025, Zest Publishing, an imprint of Lerner Publishing, *Poems for Justice: A YA Poetry Anthology Holding the Past, Recognizing the Present, and Imagining the Future of Policing*
- 2023, Self Published, *One Good Argument for Youth Prison Abolition*
- 2023 Public Philosophy Journal, *Abolition or Reform Youth Prisons: Abolition or Reform?: A Public Holistic Response*, in collaboration with Jason Swartwood
- 2022 Minnesota Women's Press, *Nothing For Us Without Us*
- 2020 Academy of American Poets, John Mitchell Poetry Prize
- 2020 Belt Publishing, *Black in the Middle: an Anthology of the Black Midwest*