

A CREATIVE COVER LETTER

ESTEBAN TOUMA

A perhaps misguided attempt at being considered for the role of Marketing and Brand Specialist by blatantly copying observable style guidelines and presenting an unconventional cover letter

IMAGE CREDIT:

Esteban Tuma, *The Renovated Marble Floor*, 2026, Digital Photo: Personal Collection

UMMA Logo and other brand elements recreated using Adobe Illustrator and other tools. The author apologizes for any inconsistencies and copyright infringements





THE ARTS ARE NOT A
WAY TO MAKE A
LIVING. THEY ARE A
VERY HUMAN WAY OF
MAKING LIFE MORE
BEARABLE.”

KURT VONNEGUT JR.

A MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

COVER LETTER*

As I look for new professional opportunities I've been dreading working on the dull and trite artform of the cover letter. Probably one of the worst creative experiences ever. But for the first time in a while I am excited to write one! My skillset and experience, the mission of UMMA, and the nature of the position allows me to be, for once, honest in my writing. It allows me to present myself not only as a professional communicator, media producer, and former college educator, but mainly to share the creative force that drives my life. I want to show myself here as a real person: an individual who has a drive for finding creative ways to connect with others -, with my colleagues, if you will, in our shared profession of being human.

My name is Esteban and I am restlessly creative. I love exploring new projects and experiences. Because of that, and in defiance of the conventions of the cover letter artform, I am tempted to start by telling you not about my layered professional experience but about my personal one, the stuff the other cover letters I've been writing have missed. Like sharing the satisfaction I got from learning how to use watercolors during the pandemic and opening an Etsy shop. The merch I create to promote the band I recently formed. The posters and flyers I've printed and distributed to promote the comedy shows I produce or perform at. These examples embody who I am: both professionally and personally I am committed to the idea of finding creative ways to connect with people.

This commitment also explains why my professional experience has been so varied. Working as a Senior Content Producer and as the Spanish Content Lead at Babbel I've developed content campaigns for video, design, web, and social media. I collaborated and coordinated with designers, marketing, paid social, and freelancers on a variety of projects to create content that not only reflects the brand's visual identity and mission, but also takes into account our target audiences and institutional needs. When I spearheaded the creation of our @learnspanishbabbel account, I had to create a specific visual identity in both video and static design, translating difficult language concepts into engaging material. The growth of that account was driven by that same creative engagement. It's my approach to connection that allowed Babbel to trust me with their branding beyond my initial responsibilities: as Babbel's spokesperson, I have represented the brand in PR campaigns, ads, marketing materials, and high-profile interviews with the New York Times, NPR, The Guardian, and many other media outlets.



1



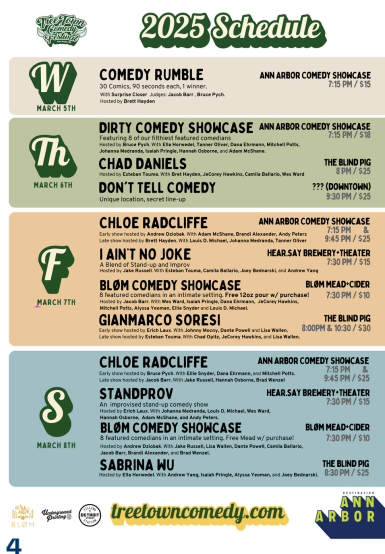
2



3

SAMPLE OF SOME PERSONAL PROJECTS

1. Quito's landscape - Ink and watercolor
2. Merch design for The New Popes band - Digital Drawing in Procreate
3. Comedy Bingo Logo - Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, Canva



4



5



6

My work has always been focused on connection and community engagement. My experience in administrative and faculty roles at Madison College has given me a practical understanding of how university departments and stakeholders can work together to deliver initiatives in the service of the students and the community. Even as an instructor, I developed curriculum and created engaging activities in order to connect with students and faculty. At Tree Town Comedy Festival, where I volunteer as Communications Director, I create unique print and digital content to promote and run a four-day stand-up comedy event - which include flyers, schedules, social media posts, press releases, merch, and so on. My work also means selecting and booking comedians who are able to connect with others, in an art form that can at times easily engender antagonism. As a contributor to Wisconsin Public Radio, I had the privilege of helping turn one of my radio pieces, a reflection on midwest small-talk as a new immigrant, into an award winning animated adaptation for PBS.

Much of my career has been built around the same opportunities UMMA embraces: taking ideas that can be complex, specialized, or unfamiliar and finding the language, visual approach, or story that makes them meaningful to a particular audience. As a story-teller, comedian, and performer, I have attempted to bridge the perspective of my identity as a South American-Palestinian immigrant from Ecuador, attempting to deconstruct stereotypes, propose new perspectives, and promote multicultural understanding. As with my professional work, that process has always started with the audience: understanding what will make a person stop, look, listen, laugh, learn, or become curious. Then I build the creative work around that response.

So that's it. My attempt at being somewhat honest and create a real connection in a cover letter. I am a communicator, a language expert, video producer, spokesperson, radio producer, performer, event producer, and even an amateur musician, but there is a through-line in all of my experiences: something that moves me in the same way, I suspect, that moves you, the people who make UMMA what it is. You bring art and ideas to the center of public life, and I have spent my career trying to do the same with language, media, education, comedy, and storytelling: take something worth sharing and find a way for another person to see themselves in it. I would love the opportunity to find creative ways to do that at UMMA.

SAMPLE OF SOME PROFESSIONAL PROJECTS

4. Tree Town Comedy Festival 2025 schedule for print / 5. Graphic design for Learn Spanish with Babbel social media account / 6. Social media thumbnail for Babbel's global Instagram short-form video I produced

FULL PORTFOLIO AT ESTEBANTOUMA.COM



SUMMARY

Communicator, media producer, writer, and performer with an enthusiasm for the ingenious tools humans create to connect with one another. I am passionate about the ways media and collaborative communication intersect, and the role the visual arts and storytelling play when trying to understand the world and our role in it.

WORK EXPERIENCE

BABEL - SPANISH CONTENT LEAD / SENIOR CONTENT MEDIA PRODUCER 2021 - Present

Media / Video Production Scripting, editing, strategy, campaign development, and data analysis for engaging short-length videos and static designs, collecting millions of views. Account lead for @learnspanishbabel. Content localization and repackaging for different audiences.

Multimedia Production Podcast production and hosting, long-form Youtube videos, in-app content, graphic design

PR / Marketing / Learning Content / CRM Support Spokesperson for Babel / Writing and editing of quotes and briefs for media pitches / Paid social content strategy and collaboration / CRM campaign support / Web dev. support

Teaching / Coaching / Training Live streaming content, partnership events, coaching instructors, leading workshops

MADISON COLLEGE CHAIR - WORLD LANGUAGES DEPT. / INSTRUCTOR 2013 - 2019

Leadership, coordination, and strategy for department's course instruction and curriculum. Budgeting, project coordination and logistics, scheduling, college-wide collaboration

Curriculum development and student engagement, including instructional design and promotional strategies for the English department's "Literature in Translation" and "US Latino Literature" classes

Tutorship, Mentorship, and Student Guidance

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY - ASSISTANT TO THE EDITOR 2010 - 2012

Editing, layout design, proofreading, and research support for Cervantes academic journal

OTHER PROJECTS

TREETOWN COMEDY FESTIVAL Communications / Social, print and digital media lead / Event producer / Host

LOVE WISCONSIN Media Producer / Social media / Graphic design

WISCONSIN LIFE / WISCONSIN PUBLIC RADIO Contributor / Writer / Production Assistant

STAND-UP COMEDY / PERFORMANCE Featured in Comedy Central, NPR, Sirius XM, The Moth

EDUCATION

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY - MA NORMAL, IL

Transatlantic Cultural Studies. Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Cultures - Spanish

UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR - BA QUITO, ECUADOR

Communications and Literature

UW PLATEVILLE / ADULT EDUCATION GRADUATE LEVEL CLASSES

Professional Development

SKILLS

SOFTWARE SKILLS Adobe Creative Suite, Canva, Dash Social, Airtable, Frame.io, Metricool, Trello, ClickUp, WordPress, Squarespace

LANGUAGES English, Spanish (native), German (beginner)

AWARDS / CERTIFICATES Midwest Journalists Broadcasting Association - Severeid Award, 2024

Dear UMMA Hiring Committee,

As I look for new professional opportunities I've been dreading working on the dull and trite artform of the cover letter. Probably one of the worst creative experiences ever. But for the first time in a while I am excited to write one! My skillset and experience, the mission of UMMA, and the nature of the position allows me to be, for once, honest in my writing. It allows me to present myself not only as a professional communicator, media producer, and former college educator, but mainly to share the creative force that drives my life. I want to show myself here as a real person: an individual who has a drive for finding creative ways to connect with others -, with my colleagues, if you will, in our shared profession of being human.

My name is Esteban and I am restlessly creative. I love exploring new projects and experiences. Because of that, and in defiance of the conventions of the cover letter artform, I am tempted to start by telling you not about my layered professional experience but about my personal one, the stuff the other cover letters I've been writing have missed. Like sharing the satisfaction I got from learning how to use watercolors during the pandemic and opening an Etsy shop. The merch I create to promote the band I recently formed. The posters and flyers I've printed and distributed to promote the comedy shows I produce or perform at. These examples embody who I am: both professionally and personally I am committed to the idea of finding creative ways to connect with people.

This commitment also explains why my professional experience has been so varied. Working as a Senior Content Producer and as the Spanish Content Lead at Babbel I've developed content campaigns for video, design, web, and social media. I collaborated and coordinated with designers, marketing, paid social, and freelancers on a variety of projects to create content that not only reflects the brand's visual identity and mission, but also takes into account our target audiences and institutional needs. When I spearheaded the creation of our @learnspanishbabbel account, I had to create a specific visual identity in both video and static design, translating difficult language concepts into engaging material. The growth of that account was driven by that same creative engagement. It's my approach to connection that allowed Babbel to trust me with their branding beyond my initial responsibilities: as Babbel's spokesperson, I have represented the brand in PR campaigns, ads, marketing materials, and high-profile interviews with the New York Times, NPR, The Guardian, and many other media outlets.

My work has always been focused on connection and community engagement. My experience in administrative and faculty roles at Madison College has given me a practical understanding of how university departments and stakeholders can work together to deliver initiatives in the service of the students and the community. Even as an instructor, I developed curriculum and created engaging activities in order to connect with students and faculty. At Tree Town Comedy Festival, where I volunteer as Communications Director, I create unique print and digital content to promote and run a four-day stand-up comedy event - which include flyers, schedules, social media posts, press releases, merch, and so on. My work also means selecting and booking comedians who are able to connect with others, in an art form that can at times easily engender antagonism. As a contributor to Wisconsin Public Radio, I had the privilege of helping turn one of my radio pieces, a reflection on midwest small-talk as a new immigrant, into an award winning animated adaptation for PBS.

Much of my career has been built around the same opportunities UMMA embraces: taking ideas that can be complex, specialized, or unfamiliar and finding the language, visual approach, or story that makes them meaningful to a particular audience. As a story-teller, comedian, and performer, I have attempted to bridge the perspective of my identity as a South American-Palestinian immigrant from Ecuador, attempting to deconstruct stereotypes, propose new perspectives, and promote multicultural understanding. As with my professional work, that process has always started with the audience: understanding what will make a person stop, look, listen, laugh, learn, or become curious. Then I build the creative work around that response.

So that's it. My attempt at being somewhat honest and create a real connection in a cover letter. I am a communicator, a language expert, video producer, spokesperson, radio producer, performer, event producer, and even an amateur musician, but there is a through-line in all of my experiences: something that moves me in the same way, I suspect, that moves you, the people who make UMMA what it is. You bring art and ideas to the center of public life, and I have spent my career trying to do the same with language, media, education, comedy, and storytelling: take something worth sharing and find a way for another person to see themselves in it. I would love the opportunity to find creative ways to do that at UMMA.

