In this paper I will start by developing an account of language as risk, arguing that from this perspective genre can be understood as a strategy for routinization and thus the reduction of risk. I will go on to consider notions of indexicality and scale, arguing that a comprehensive account of indexicality needs to address what I call after Zygmunt Bauman the ”bringing in” of scalar meaning as well as the more conventional notion of indexicality as a pointing out from meaning to context. I will then go on to critically review the notion of genre in academic literacies, considering genre as dynamic, and historically emergent. To exemplify this dynamic approach to text and text production I will focus on the emergence of experiential writing in the social sciences, and its development in student writing, showing how it is a relatively unstabilized genre whose norms are somewhat ill-established, not always made explicit pedagogically and drawing out the consequences of this for student writers. I will show how student experiential writing typically indexes scalar phenomena concerned with particular disciplinary epistemologies in the social sciences and discuss the problems that such experiential writing may pose for students. I will conclude by drawing out implications for teaching academic writing to Masters students, arguing that it is worth making students aware of the disciplinary epistemological issues, understood as what counts as knowledge and as a knowledge claim, as they are routinely indexed in experiential writing.

Keywords: Risk, Academic Literacies, Scale.