

TEACHING WRITING

T C X G 4 6 4
W I N T E R 2 0 0 8

MW 4:30- 6:45 @ WCG 116
Website: www.catalyst.washington.edu
Librarian: Jennifer Sundheim
 sundheim@u.washington.edu
TLC -<http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/ctl/>

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Course Overview

This advanced course is designed for teachers, education and composition studies students, and writers who want to understand some of the cognitive and social aspects of writing and enhance their abilities both as writers and teachers of writing. In this course, emphasis will be placed on theories and practices of writing education, the history and challenges of writing assignments and assessment. We will also explore pedagogical questions of social class, ethnicity, multilingualism, gender, sexual orientation, disability, and nationality. Specific topics to be addressed include: writing process theory, motivating writing in school settings, improving academic literacies, writing instruction pedagogies, grading effectively and efficiently, and the ideologies and assumptions behind various approaches to writing curricula.

You will explore theoretical foundations about the teaching of writing to help you develop a repertoire of teaching techniques and strategies. This will further allow you to develop your own philosophy of teaching to match your own teaching style and the needs of a diverse student body. By and large, this course combines a pragmatic and theoretical approach to training you as a writing teacher. This course is hands-on and relies heavily on small group work, discussion, and presentations; therefore, the success of this course is directly correlated to engaged participation. Throughout the quarter, everyone will read, write, and discuss their own and others' writing, plan writing activities, and research issues related to curriculum development of state-mandated writing assessment.

Because this class is intended for a variety of students with different learning goals, we will define individual course objectives more specifically as a group early in the quarter. If you are enrolled in this course to prepare for teaching, assignments and discussions will provide you an opportunity to consider your own teaching philosophy and to prepare a teaching portfolio that defines how you would approach the task of writing instruction. If you are not enrolled in this course to focus on teaching, activities will allow you to reflect on your own writing process and gain valuable writing tools. Broadly, this course has been designed to provide you with a theoretical background and practical tools for teaching writing.

More specifically you will learn:

- ✎ about theoretical issues underlying the teaching of writing
- ✎ how to reflect about yourself as a learner and a teacher
- ✎ how to develop a teaching philosophy
- ✎ how to plan and develop a writing course with detailed lesson plans & assignments
- ✎ how to identify and analyze well designed writing activities that engage learners
- ✎ how to design pedagogical tasks aligned with teaching philosophies or program goals
- ✎ how to apply appropriate and effective assessment tools for evaluating writing

Required Texts

- 📖 Anne Ruggles Gere, Leila Christenbury, and Kelly Sassi. *Writing on demand: Best practices and strategies for success*. 2005.
- 📖 Other texts will be posted on the course website. You are expected to have hard copies of these e-readings with you in class on the dates we are discussing them.

Classroom Community

Consider this class as your reading and writing community where everyone's ideas and opinions are worthy of attention and consideration, regardless of whether you agree with them. I encourage you to use inclusive language and non-sexist language whenever possible. Respect for diversity of all kinds—in terms of race, ethnicity, age, sex and gender, sexual orientation, ability/disability, political and ideological belief, and so on—is essential to creating a respectful, safe, and STIMULATING intellectual environment. These diversities and differences can be our most valuable asset as a class. Please respect the other members of this class so we can all be open and honest about who we are and what we think and believe.




Communication

It is my goal to create an environment where both teacher and students routinely practice a respectful exchange of thoughtful ideas. I believe that learning is a result of relationship, and communication is at the heart of that interchange. Because I want to avoid anything that causes a break-down of good dialogue, I've learned to be wary of email. While it is convenient, email can also create problems precisely because it is so instant. People have been known to say things in email that they never would have said if they were facing their listener or if they had taken time to gather their thoughts. Feel free to email me questions that need quick answers or to set up appointments, but anything important should be discussed in a way that promotes maximum understanding. So let's plan on face-to-face conversation when anything of issue is at stake—that's what my office hours are for, and I'd love for you to stop by. If those times are impossible for you, then we can arrange for another mutually convenient time. (By the way, another insufficient time and place to discuss anything of substance is the busy setting before or after class.) Because email is another form of course-related communications, there are boundaries around the times in which I am available and when you can expect a response; in other words, you should not expect a response to emails sent outside of traditional working hours, such as in the evenings or weekends. If you are absent for any reason, please do not email me to ask what you missed. Better to contact a trustworthy peer and to check the course website.

Graded Work




Planning for Teaching (20%)

To give you sense of why you might take particular approaches to writing and teaching, the first unit of the course will focus on the planning aspects, as you reflect on your values in relation to writing, learning, and teaching. You will produce a writing narrative and a teaching (or learning) philosophy to gain a sense of your own values and interests. In addition, you will investigate scholarly theories about teaching and writing in small groups, and create a pedagogy report which includes an overview of the pedagogy, key names and terms, and an annotated bibliography.

-  Writing Narrative (5%)
-  Teaching/Learning Philosophy (5%)
-  Pedagogy Report –Theoretical Approaches to Teaching Writing (10%)



Teaching (25%)

This part of the course takes a hands-on approach, in which you will be required to analyze assignments and create your own. You will choose a writing topic of interest and focus on it throughout the quarter; you will research the topic to produce a handout that outlines a scholarly overview of a topic and provides readers with an annotated bibliography about resources. Next you will design a writing activity (either for the classroom or a homework assignment), related to your topic.

-  Writing Assignment Critique (5%)
-  Scholarly Overview –Topics in Composition Handout (10%)
-  Creating Writing Activities—Relating to Topics in Composition (10%)

Evaluating (15%)





The final writing component in writing instruction is usually the evaluation process; therefore, we will consider a variety of approaches to grading and apply rubrics to writing samples as the final unit of the quarter. You will prepare a critique of a sample rubric of your choice and apply that rubric to a writing assignment.

-  Rubric Critique (5%)
-  Applying the Rubric –Evaluating Writing (10%)

Researching - Project (25%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will do independent research about teaching writing and present your findings in a project of your choice. The project allows you to synthesize what you have learned throughout the quarter, combining your understanding of writing theories with writing practices, in a format that is most appropriate to your scholarly and/or career interests.

Your project options include:

-  Observe a writing class
-  Interview a writing teacher
-  Analyze classroom materials (writing assignments, syllabus, assessment tools)
-  Create a teaching portfolio (online or paper-based)

Participation (15%)

Participation grades will be evaluated on a check system based on engagement with classroom activities and assignment guidelines. Daily writing assignments—informal writing activities and early drafts of formal writing assignments—are also essential to fostering fruitful discussions as they provide an opportunity for thoughtful preparation and thinking through writing.

Intellectually rigorous engagement during discussion is vital to the production of valuable knowledge; therefore, discussion and small group work will be a regular classroom activity in which thoughtful and engaged participation will be evaluated positively as a component of your participation grade.

Members of the class will also participate in an online discussion board, which is meant to locate our writing in a network that is readable by all and allows for continuing conversations amongst groups. You will be required to post responses to the board, which will be evaluated based on critical insight and productive use of "comments."

The use of personal computers are permitted for class activities, but not for personal use, such as checking email, surfing web sites, visiting chat rooms, and/or playing music. Distracting behavior such as: sleeping in class; chatting with classmates or whispering during lectures and/or discussions; texting; arriving late; and leaving early during class activities is frowned upon and will be negatively reflected in your participation grade.

Late work

Because assignments build upon each other, turning work in late seriously impedes your ability to complete the required work of the course and negatively impacts your ability to contribute to discussions and group work. Therefore, work submitted late will result in penalties which will affect your overall grade for the course. It is your responsibility to be aware of deadlines and turn your work on time. Daily informal writing assignments will not receive any credit if turned in after the beginning of class on the appropriate due date. In regard to formal writing assignments, I will subtract .5 (or half a letter grade) for every class day that the paper is late. Assignments not received in soft-copy on Collect It AND in hard copy at the beginning of class are considered late and will be graded accordingly. I do not accept assignments via email. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get the hard copy to me in class or during office hours AND it is your responsibility to get the assignments from a classmate or from the course website. You must attend class regularly in order to stay informed and should not count on the course website as your only source of information.

Expectations

As the grader of your classroom participation and written work, I have high expectations. I am most interested in seeing you demonstrate your ability to: work with complex ideas; explore concepts and evaluate resources thoughtfully and seriously; use language and conventions rhetorically; adapt to different audiences, genres, and rhetorical purposes; comprehensively revise your work and rethink your approaches to ideas and writing; and use writing to explore your own relationship to writing.

I don't grade on a curve. That means anyone has the opportunity to earn whatever grade his/her work merits as measured by the course grading rubric. Final grades in the "A" range (4.0) will be reserved strictly for exceptional work. "B" grades (3.0) will be considered for work above the average. "C" grades (2.0) will reflect the typical expectations of college work for a senior-level class.

“D” grades (1.0) will be for work below typical expectations. “F” grades will be for work that does not meet the class standards.

Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Participation & Daily Assignments	
		Participation & Daily Assignments	Numerical Equivalent
A	4.0		
A-	3.5	✓+	4.0
B	3	✓	3.0
B-	2.5	✓-	2.0
C	2	0	0
C-	1.5		
D	1		
F	.5 No credit		

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty involves properly citing other people's ideas and language in your writing. In your writing in this class you are encouraged to cite extensively from the work of others. However, if you fail to cite other people's ideas and language in your work, you've committed plagiarism.

Summarizing someone else's work and not citing them is also plagiarism. Don't plagiarize. If you run out of time or energy on an assignment, come and talk to me about an extension. For more information on academic honesty and how to avoid plagiarism see <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/orientation/guide/guide-13.html>.

Inclement Weather

In the case of inclement weather (snow and ice), Call the UWT snow #: 253-383-INFO. This number will inform you whether the campus has been closed. If the campus is open, we will be having class. You can also call us at our offices (253.692.4755 or 253.6924624) for recorded information about the meeting of our class. In almost all cases, we will meet as long as the university is open; I will send an announcement to the class listserv if class is to be cancelled.

Teaching and Learning Center (TLC)

The Teaching and Learning Center offers academic support for students at all levels of expertise-- review, undergraduate, graduate and TA. For your writing, reading, learning strategies and public speaking needs, please make an appointment online at <http://moodle.tacoma.washington.edu/signup/index.shtml> or visit KEY 202. For your math needs, assistance is available on a drop-in basis, Monday to Friday, hours are posted at http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/ctl/about_us/mathhours.cfm

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a temporary or permanent disability, contact Lisa Tice, Manager of Disability Support Services (DSS) in the Mattress Factory Building, Suite 206. An appointment can be made through the front desk of Student Affairs (253-692-4501), by phoning Lisa directly at (253) 692-4493 (voice)/(253) 692-4413 (TTY) or via email at ltice@u.washington.edu. Appropriate accommodations are arranged after you have conferred with the DDS Manager and presented the required documentation of your disability to DSS.

Because this class is a living and changing organism, the schedule and the syllabus are subject to change.