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# ENG 5500-001: Practicum in Writing Center Theory & Practice

Daiva Markelis  
*Eastern Illinois University*

Jad Smith

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**ENGLISH 5500: Practicum in Writing Center Theory & Practice**

Friday 1-3 pm in the Writing Center (Coleman Hall 3110)

This practicum is a seminar in the theory and practice (*praxis*) of writing center consulting. Each week, we will discuss readings and issues related to your work in the writing center.

**Daiva Markelis**

Writing Center Director

Coleman Hall 3375

office phone: 217.581.6291

cell: 217.549.8352

e-mail: [dmmarkelis@eiu.edu](mailto:dmmarkelis@eiu.edu)

**Jad Smith**

Assistant Director, EIU Writing Center

Coleman Hall 3605

cell phone: 217. 280.0044

e-mail: [jdsmith3@eiu.edu](mailto:jdsmith3@eiu.edu)

**Attendance and Participation**

Because we talk about important issues for our community of practice, because much of the work done in practicum is collaborative, because you are serious scholars & professionals, and because you receive one course credit for this course, it is reasonable to expect you will attend—on time—every class session. *If an emergency arises, contact Dr. Markelis and Dr. Smith as soon as possible via email or phone.*

Of course, you are expected to come to class with all books and other materials, prepared to contribute to a lively informed discussion of assigned readings.

**Assessment, Evaluation, and Grades**

You will receive written and oral feedback on your performance in this class, the written work you submit, and your work as a consultant in the writing center. You will not receive a letter grade for this course: the options are “credit” or “no credit.”

**Overview of Assignments**

Here is a summary of the assignments and activities you will complete by the end of the fall term:

- Participation in Discussion Group on Facebook
- Responses to Practicum Readings
- Observation Memos
- Leading Article Discussion
- EIU Writes Blog Post
- Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting

## Description of Assignments

### Posts on the EIU Writing Center Facebook page

The EIU Writing Center Discussion Group on Facebook is one of many places theory and practice will co-mingle. We will post announcements, schedule changes, etc., *so check in regularly*.

We will also use this space to reflect on experiences and articulate questions or insights.

The **deadline** for the first post of the week is noon Wednesday. A second post in which you reply to or interact with the content of another post should appear by 10:00 a.m. Friday.

### Formal Responses

Most weeks you will compose a formal written response in which you analyze and reflect on concepts, strategies, and issues presented in one of the assigned readings as part of the development of your praxis and philosophy of Writing Center consulting. This 300-500 word response—which may have an assigned focus, audience, genre, or citation format—should focus on an aspect of the essay or article that seems worthy of careful analysis and detailed response: a key point, a significant feature of the author(s)'s research methods or approach, an assumption implicit in their argument, a tactic or strategy they advocate. Use summary to provide context for your discussion of key passages, which should be quoted or paraphrased and cited. Your analytic response should include consideration of both theory and practice: to what extent do these ideas align with what you have learned about peer tutoring, and to what extent are they reinforced—or complicated—by situations you have encountered as a writing consultant.

### Observation Memos

At least twice this semester you will write a memo following your formal observation of a session facilitated by one of your Writing Center colleagues. Submit these memos electronically to the consultant observed and provide electronic copies to Drs. Markelis and Smith (as a “cc”). In these memos you should do the following: 1) describe the arc of the session and key moments within it to the consultant you observed; 2) identify tactics, strategies, or moves that struck you as effective or appropriate, and anything else you learned from watching his or her work with this particular student writer; and 3) focus on specific moments when the consultant responded effectively to the demands of the moment—and describe a teachable moment s/he may have missed.

### Leading Article Discussion

You will be responsible for choosing one of the articles on the syllabus (or another one approved by the WC directors) and leading a class discussion of approximately 30 minutes.

### EIU Writes Blog Post

On a pre-arranged schedule, you will compose and revise one post for the EIU Writing Across the Curriculum program's public blog, *EIU Writes*. This can be an interview; mini-lesson; writing-related reflection; or discussion of on an issue, practice, or truism about writing or the teaching of writing.

### Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting

Your personal philosophy—the principles that support your practice as a consultant—will emerge as a synthesis of the ideas and experience you bring to the Writing Center, ideas and approaches you develop through experience, and the research and scholarship we discuss. This document will serve as a capstone for this seminar, and provide a starting point for your evolution as a consultant during the spring semester.

## Schedule

### Key to Reading Assignments

ATG = *A Tutor's Guide* (2<sup>nd</sup>)

ESL = *ESL Writers* (2<sup>nd</sup>)

MLA = *MLA Handbook* (8<sup>th</sup>)

# = handout, link, or .pdf

BG = *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (6<sup>th</sup>)

LG = *Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory & Practice*

APA = *Pub. Manual of the Amer. Psychological Assn.* (6<sup>th</sup>)

*opt.* = optional

### Practicum Reading & Writing Assignments

- Week 1: 8-24      “Breaking Ice and Setting Goals,” Bruce (ESL 33-41)  
 “Inside the Tutoring Session” (BG 11-27) + “Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process” (BG 28-46)  
 “Tutoring Writing is Performing Social Work is Coloring Hair: Writing Center Work as an Activity System,” Carter  
<http://www.praxisuwc.com/carter-32>
- Week 2: 8-31      “Principles of MLA Style” (MLA 3 - 58)  
 “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text,” Kei Matsuda and Cox (ESL 42-50)  
 OR “Looking at the Whole Text,” Staben & Nordhaus (ESL 78-90)  
*Writing Across Borders* (video)  
**Response to one ESL reading due** (use MLA citations)
- Week 3: 9-7      Before Friday: Take CLAST (test + answer key at front desk)  
 “Can You Proofread This?” + Appendices A-D (ATG 140-158)  
 # “Addressing Genre in the Writing Center,” Clark  
 APA Manual (pp. 65-78)  
**Response to Essay of your Choice due** (APA citations)
- Week 4: 9-14      # “The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity in U.S. College Composition,” Matsuda  
 # “Inviting the Mother Tongue: Beyond ‘Mistakes,’ ‘Bad English,’ ‘Wrong Language,’” Elbow  
 # “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Trilingual Approach,” Horner, Lu, Royster, and Trimbur  
**Response to Essay of your Choice due** (APA citations)  
*Sign-ups: Blog Post due date*
- Week 5: 9-21      “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers,” Harris (ATG 23-33)  
 # “*Kairotic* Moments in the Writing Center,” Taylor, Kory et al.  
**Response due: Draft or describe your own section of the *Kairos* essay**  
**Sign-ups: Leading Discussion**

- Week 6: 9-28  
 “What Line? I Didn’t See any Line,” Wingate (ATG 9-16)  
 “Organizing Ideas: Focus Is the Key,” Trupe (ATG 98-106)  
 “Helping Writers to Write Analytically,” Rafoth (ATG 107-14)  
**Observation memo due**
- Week 7: 10-5  
 “Raising Questions about Plagiarism,” Bouman (ESL 161-175)  
 # “Reading: Securing Its Place in the Writing Center,” Horning OR  
 # “Reading with a Purpose in the Writing Center,” Carillo  
 “Plagiarism,” “Self-Plagiarism,” “Quoting and Paraphrasing” (APA 170-173)  
 “Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty” (MLA 6-10)  
**Response due**
- Week 8: 10-12  
*Fall Break: no class*
- Week 9: 10-19  
 “A Balancing of Efficiency and Exploration: Tutoring Writers in Advanced  
 Classes,” Zemliansky (ATG 85-97)  
 # “In this article, I argue...” (TETYC)  
**Discussion leaders:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Week 10: 10-26  
 # “All Writers have More to Learn,” Rose  
 # “Listening in/to the Writing Center: Backchannel and Gaze,” Santa  
 “The Idea of a Writing Center,” North (LG 63-78)  
**Discussion leaders:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Also: 2<sup>nd</sup> Observation memo due**
- Week 11: 11-2  
 # “Queering the Writing Center,” Denny  
 Also, another reading TBA  
**Discussion leaders:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Week 12: 11-09  
 # “Learning Differences,” Dunn  
 # “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers, Sommers  
 OR # “Composing Practices of One- and Multi-Draft Writers,” Harris  
**Discussion leaders:** \_\_\_\_\_
- Week 13: 11-16  
 Re-read at least one influential essay or book chapter from the syllabus  
 “Redefining Our Existence: An Argument for Short- and Long-Term  
 Goals and Objectives,” Barnett (LG 194-201)  
**Philosophy Pre-Writing due (see prompt)**

*Thanksgiving Break*

Week 14: 11-30

**Peer Review** of Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting  
# "Tutoring Writing as Career Development," Kiedaisch  
**Bring two copies of *draft* Writing Center Philosophy**

Week 15: 12-7

**Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting due**  
Spring Semester Scheduling