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# ENG 5502-001: Mentored Composition Teaching

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# ENG 5502: Mentored Composition Teaching

7:00-9:30 pm Th CH 3159 & 3691

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Whoever does not study rhetoric will be a victim of it.”

~Ancient Greek wall inscription

“Having to say something is a very different matter from having something to say.”

~John Dewey, *How We Think*

“Great writing is created in revision—rethinking, rewriting, adding, subtracting, repositioning, editing. In effect, fine writing is born in change.”

~Ralph Wahlstrom, *The Tao of Writing*

## Texts

- *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher's Guide*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. White.
- *First Day to Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Curzan & Damour
- *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Lindemann
- *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Glen & Goldthwaite
- Articles found via EBSCO, ERIC, JSTOR, and other means
- Articles distributed via email or handout

## Course Description

This course provides a foundation for the effective teaching of first-year composition and other writing classes. Building from theory and pedagogy covered in English 5007 and English 5500, we will immerse ourselves in the *praxis* of teaching writing at the college level. Students should be prepared to engage vigorously in discussion, analysis, reflection, and performance.

The seminar will address these topics and activities:

- Exploring various research strands related to the teaching of writing
- Designing writing assignments
- Crafting lesson plans
- Facilitating peer review and workshops
- Implementing strategies for effective conferences
- Responding to and evaluating writing
- Performing effective classroom activities
- Facilitating productive discussions and small group work
- Using in-class assessment practices
- Reflecting on teaching experiences
- Establishing *ethos* as an instructor
- Building a course policy and syllabus

- Constructing a persuasive and visually appealing curriculum vitae
- Assembling a teaching portfolio—curriculum vitae, teaching philosophy, sample course policy, ENG 1001 syllabus, sample assignments, and sample handouts

In sum, success in this course includes (1) finding your own creative ways to make topics and assignments personally interesting—especially if your first instinct is to label them “boring” or “too hard,” (2) believing that you have something worthwhile to say, and (3) expressing it after you’ve debated/ pondered/ listened/ read/ explored beyond the surface.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will...

- Grow as critical thinkers and writers
- Gain knowledge about writing pedagogy
- Explore and question ideas and arguments about language acquisition, transfer of learning, classroom management, lesson planning, writing assignments, classroom discussion, small-group work, and response/evaluation of student writing
- Reflect on current practices in writing classrooms and experiences in classrooms
- Connect disciplinary knowledge to specific contexts that you work in currently and you will be part of in the future
- Analyze the arguments, evidence, assumptions, and research methodologies of scholarship
- Evaluate and critique scholars’ arguments based on the efficacy of their evidence, assumptions, and research methodologies
- Analyze rhetorical contexts and craft cogent documents appropriate to those contexts
- Assemble a cohesive and persuasive teaching portfolio

## Expected Performance Outcomes

Participants will ...

- Work effectively, ethically, and professionally as a member of a graduate seminar
- Participate in discussion of reading assignments throughout the semester
- Craft cogent, rhetorically effective documents for multiple purposes and contexts
- Direct discussion productively
- Craft pedagogically sound lesson plans and assignment sheets
- Create a teaching portfolio that accurately reflects appropriate pedagogical approaches for writing instruction
- Be prepared to teach

## Course Requirements

Because this is an inquiry-based seminar, active and constructive class participation is key. You should read. You should think. You should analyze. You should question. You should listen. You should reflect. You should mull. You should argue (with civility). You should ponder. And do it all over again and again and again...

We will reflect. We will talk. We will write. We will discuss pedagogy.

Below is a basic to-do list for this seminar:

- Active participation in discussion
- Reaction memos for assigned readings (credit or no credit)

- Leading of discussion on an article about writing pedagogy
- Lesson plans
- Writing assignments
- Teaching demonstrations
- Teaching portfolio

### **Your Instructor**

If you are having any trouble with the material covered in this course, or if you simply want reassurance that you are on the right track, please do not hesitate to visit with me. Many times a short visit to go over an assignment or to clarify an issue can save you time in the long run and improve your chances of success in this course. In addition to being in my offices during posted hours, I can also make arrangements to meet at other times to better accommodate your schedule.

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

### **Opportunities for Revision**

You have the opportunity to revise writing assignment sheets and lesson plans. Time allotted for revision is one week from the day they are ready to be passed back in class. I will not grade revisions unless the original graded document is submitted with it. If you choose to revise, it should help your overall grade. However, I expect deep revision, not just surface editing.

### **Attendance, Late Work Policy, and Expectations**

Students are expected to attend every class. However, as detailed in the EIU Undergraduate Catalog, “properly verified absences due to illness, emergency, or participation in an official University activity” are recognized. When an absence is unavoidable, students are responsible for acquiring missed course materials and the information supplied in class (sickness or emergency), submitting an assignment at a time in accordance with the instructor (University activity), or using one of their late assignment opportunities (sickness, emergency, or University activity).

However, lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.

You have the opportunity to use one extension in order to submit a late assignment of your choosing. If you want an extension to be granted, you must communicate with me about your situation prior to the class time the assignment is due. This can be done by a phone conversation, an exchange of emails, or talking with me in my office. Unless it’s an extreme situation, I will typically grant an extension of a day or two.

Although I keep accurate records of your grades and progress, I expect you to keep track of your grades. You should document all your point totals for essays, journals, quizzes, and other assignments throughout the semester to give yourself an idea of your grade in the course. It is your education, and students should take an active role in assessing how they are doing in their courses.

### **Reaction Memoranda**

Over the course of the semester, you are required to write ten reaction memos (addressed to me). These memoranda are designed to have you react to and analyze concepts, precepts, ideas, and issues that authors present in their works. Depending on what text you’re responding to, the memo

may focus on an author's main point in one section of the text, an assumption within his or her argument, or specific details or ideas in the text that you want to closely analyze and respond to.

You can write a reaction memo to any specific section of a textbook or an article. You're only permitted to provide one per week, but keep in mind you need to write ten for the semester.

These memos are graded pass/fail:

- If the memo mainly provides a summary of an article or a point, it will fail: 0/10.
- If you provide a thoughtful, analytical, and interesting reaction to an author's ideas, it will pass: 10/10.

In sum, REACT.

Besides each memorandum demonstrating an interesting, valid, and accurate response and analysis of reading material, each document needs to demonstrate stylistic maturity and mastery of editorial conventions (grammatical correctness). These documents need to be at least one single-spaced page in a memo format. I prefer serif typefaces such as Garamond, Times New Roman, Goudy Old Style, and Adobe Caslon Pro.

### **Teaching Journal/Blog**

For each week you're working in the classroom, you need to write two entries in a teaching journal or private blog. The aim of this assignment is for you to reflect on your observations and experiences in the classroom—to play with ideas, to critically think about what's working and what's not, and to ponder other ways to engage and challenge and support students in the classroom you're working in.

I will assign a grade for this assignment at quarters of the semester. However, I would like to have entries submitted (or be able to read them) weekly. Here are the dates your journals/blog will be evaluated:

- February 5<sup>th</sup>, 25 points
- March 5<sup>th</sup>, 25 points
- April 9<sup>th</sup>, 25 points
- April 30<sup>th</sup>, 25 points

### **Discussion Leader (DL) Responsibilities**

While active class discussion stemming from close and reflective reading is expected of all members of this seminar, you will be assigned to be a discussion leader for an article one time during the semester. In this position, you will lead discussion through thoughtful questions and activities that are text-specific for you and your colleagues to make connections to other authors and ideas.

Keep in mind that a discussion leader does not lecture. Instead, you are facilitating discussion. Your role is to get your colleagues talking about the article in a fruitful and responsible way. You're not filling people's heads (the banking method of education) via lecture, so you need to direct an engaging discussion that is carefully plotted. You should plan to use 15-20 minutes for directing discussion and/or activities related to the article you're assigned.

## Teaching Demonstrations

During the semester you will do three mock teaching sessions, and your colleagues will act as first-year students. I will not grade these. However, after each performance, students will provide feedback about your teaching demonstration. Also, after each teaching session, you will do a self-assessment that you'll send me, and we'll then meet to talk about your performance. These demonstrations serve as formative assessment—feedback to help you identify your strengths, smart ideas, and places for improvement.

Here are the topics/themes of the teaching demonstrations:

1. Leading discussion about or a small-group activity connected to an article/essay for a composition class
2. Directing a class to do an invention or small-group activity tied to a writing assignment you've crafted
3. Open Option (requires instructor approval)—Some possible topics: rhetorical principles, revision, paragraphs, argumentation, transitions, editing techniques, new media, style, research methods, work with sources, good vs. weak sources, *et al.*

## Using the Writing Center

I encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, and documenting your papers. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Consulting sessions last anywhere from 10 to 40 minutes.

## Class Conduct

Our classroom community demands good manners, careful listening, respect for diverse backgrounds and opinions, and equal time for everyone who wants to share his or her perspective.

I expect students to act in a mature and collegial manner. You should come to class having read the material, eager to participate, and ready to write.

### Guidelines to Abide by in Any College Course:

1. Come to class on time and stay the entire period.
2. Bring texts, paper, and writing utensils.
3. When we discuss a reading or writing assignment, have the materials in front of you.
4. When we are doing in-class writing, be prepared to actively brainstorm, draft, and compose your ideas.
5. Have opinions and ideas and support your opinions and ideas with details and examples.
6. Play well with others by respecting people's opinions and being open to them.
7. Actively help your peers in collaborative activities like peer review.
8. When working in a group, stay on assigned tasks.

9. Do not carry on side conversations with other students when the instructor or a student has the floor during class.
10. General rudeness and disrespect is not tolerated.
11. Cell phones need to be turned off and put away.
12. Texting is not tolerated.
13. No profanity.
14. No sleeping. If you do, I will ask you to leave.
15. Unless it's an emergency, use the restroom before or after class.

If you have concerns about this list or any other aspect of the class, please arrange to discuss the matter with us during office hours. Similarly, if circumstances arise that will affect your performance in this class, let me know as soon as possible.

### **Email Policy**

I welcome emails if you have questions or concerns about your work in this class. However, I expect you to write emails in a professional manner—not like you are texting a close friend.

When you send an email, follow the guidelines below. Emails should...

- Have a clear and concise subject line that provides gist of the email, such as “Question about This Week’s Reading” or “Availability for a Meeting?”
- Begin with a formal address, such as “Dr. Taylor:” or “Professor Taylor:”
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in a succinct manner
- Use paragraph breaks for reading ease and strong organization
- Be edited and proofread effectively so as not to cause confusion
- Refrain from using abbreviations or text-prose
- Close with a short statement followed by a comma and your name, such as “Thanks for your time,” or “Sincerely,” or “Have a good weekend,”

If an email does not follow these guidelines, I will simply reply to the email with this message: “Please resend this email once it’s been revised to fit the standards of a professional email. See page 6 of my course policy.”

### **A Social Contract of Honesty**

In this class, there is a social contract between the instructor and students that the work submitted will be the students’ own documents, not someone else’s work.

### **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Here is the official statement on plagiarism by the EIU English Department: “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work” (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.”

In this class, if a student is found to have plagiarized, the document will earn a zero for the assignment, and I will report the occurrence to the EIU Judicial Affairs Office.

In general, if you have to have a source before your eyes as you write, you need to copy it accurately, put quotation marks around it, and acknowledge your source. If you are paraphrasing information from a source, you need to use an introductory phrase and properly cite what page or paragraph (if it's online) the information is located.

For further clarification, below is an explanation of plagiarism from my previous English department that details this important concept.

### Plagiarism

To present someone else's work or ideas as one's own is plagiarism. A student can commit in these ways:

- Copying, word for word, someone else's writing without putting that passage in quotation marks and identifying the source.
- Taking someone else's writing, changing some of the words, and not identifying the source;
- Taking someone else's ideas or organization of ideas, putting them into his/her own words and not identifying the source;
- Having someone else change the student's writing—a tutor, friend, or relative, for instance—and creating the impression that this is the student's own work; or
- Purchasing or downloading papers or passages from the Web.

## Composition of the Overall Grade

(all assignments and point totals are tentative)

<b>Participation</b>		170 points (19%)
Discussion, in-class writing, small-group work	100	
<u>Writing Process</u>	20	
10 points available for each peer review session		
2 peer reviews x 10 points		
<u>Presentations</u>		
Discussion Leader work	50	
Teaching Demonstrations	Ungraded but assessed	
<b>Shorter Writing Assignments</b>		520 (58%)
Memo of Introduction	10	
Reaction Memoranda (10 @ 10 points each)	100 (11%)	
Teaching Journal/Blog (evaluated at quarters)	100 (11%)	
Lesson Plans (3 @ 50 points each)	150 (17%)	
Assignment Sheets (3 @ 50 points each)	150 (17%)	
Feedback Memorandum	10	
<b>Capstone Assignment</b>		200 (23%)
Teaching Portfolio	200	
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>890 points</b>

## ENG 5502 Syllabus

All deadlines and readings are tentative

ARE = *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating*

FD = *First Day to Final Grade*

Rhet = *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*

StM = *The St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*  
*Take 20*

# = article/handout

- 1/15 Introduction to the course  
Ch. 1: Becoming a Teacher; FD  
Ch 1: Why Teach Writing?, Ch. 2: What is Writing?, and Ch. 3: What Does the Process Involve?; Rhet  
View Answers to Questions 2, 3, and 5 of *Take 20*  
# Smittle, "Principles for Effective Teaching"
- 1/22 Ch. 3: Classroom Activities (56-65); StM  
Ch. 3: Weekly Class Preparation, Ch. 4: Running a Discussion, and Ch. 5: Trusty Class Plans (Ch. 5 recommended but not required); FD  
View Answers to Question 6 and 10 of *Take 20*  
# Neal, "Look Who's Talking: Discourse Analysis, Discussion, and Initiation-Response-Evaluation Patterns in the College Classroom"  
# Bunn, "Motivation and Connection: Teaching Reading (and Writing) in the Composition Classroom"
- 1/29 Ch. 13: Developing Writing Assignments; Rhet  
Ch. 4: Successful Writing Assignments; StM  
Ch. 1: Writing Assignments and Essay Topics; ARE  
View Answers to Question 8 of *Take 20*  
**Lesson Plan due**
- 2/5 Conferences about Assignment Sheet (during the week)  
**Teaching Demonstration 1**  
# Elbow, "Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process"
- 2/12 Ch. 5: Evaluating Student Essays; StM  
Ch. 3: Responding to Student Writing and Ch. 4: Issues in Grading Writing and Using Scoring Guides; ARE  
Ch. 14: Responding to Student Writing; Rhet  
Viewing of *Beyond the Red Ink*  
View Answers to Questions 14 and 16 of *Take 20*  
Assignment sheet and sample student papers distributed  
**Assignment Sheet 1 due**
- 2/19 Discussion of Evaluating Sample Papers  
# Auten, "A Rhetoric of Teacher Commentary: The Complexity of Response to Student Writing"

- # Mellon & Sommers, “Audiotaped Responses...” **DL:**  
 # Edgington, “Encouraging Collaboration with Students on Teacher Response” **DL:**  
 # Smith, “The Genre of the End Comment”  
 Sommers, “Responding to Student Writing”; StM
- 2/26 # Devet, “Welcoming Grammar Back into the Writing Classroom”  
 # Blaauw-Hara, “Why Our Students Need Instruction in Grammar, and How We Should Go about It”  
 # Wolff, “Knowledge of Conventions and the Logic of Error” from *The Outcomes Book*  
 # Lunsford & Lunsford, “‘Mistakes Are a Fact of Life’: A Comparative National Study”  
**Lesson Plan due**
- 3/5 Conferences about Assignment Sheet (during the week)  
 Ch. 7: Prewriting Techniques, Ch. 8: Shaping Discourse, & Ch. 9: Teaching Paragraphing; Rhet  
 Ch. 5: Teaching Invention & Ch. 7: Teaching Arrangement and Form; StM  
**Assignment Sheet 2 due**
- 3/12 Ch. 15: Designing Writing Courses; Rhet  
 # *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing & WPA Outcomes Statement*  
 # Sullivan, “‘A Lifelong Aversion to Writing’: What if Writing Courses Emphasized Motivaton?”  
 # Little Liu, “More Than the Latest PC Buzzword for Modes: What Genre Theory Means to Composition” from *The Outcomes Book*  
 View Answers to Question 4 of *Take 20*  
**Peer Review of the Teaching Philosophy**
- 3/26 Ch. 8: One-on-One Interaction with Students; FD  
 Ch. 8: Using Portfolios; ARE  
 # Boynton, “See Me: Conference Strategies for Developmental Writers”  
**Teaching Philosophy due**
- 4/2 Ch. 12: Teaching Rewriting; Rhet  
 Ch. 8: Teaching Style, Ch. 9: Teaching Memory, & Ch. 10: Teaching Delivery; StM  
 # Costello, “The New Art of Revision? Research Papers, Blogs, and the First-Year Composition Classroom” **DL:**  
**Teaching Demonstration 2**
- 4/9 Ch. 9: Feedback from Students; FD  
 # Feuer, Midterm Assessment Techniques: Unearthing the Vital Learning and Growing That Occur beneath the Surface **DL:**  
 # In-class assessment techniques; Angelo & Cross  
**Lesson Plan due**
- 4/16 Conferences about assignment sheet and final teaching demonstration (during the week)  
 Ch. 10: Preparing for the Job Market; FD  
 # Sample CVs  
**Peer Review of Curriculum Vitae**

### **Teaching Demonstration 3**

- 4/23 # Woods, “Moving Beyond ‘This is good’ in Peer Response”  
# Strasma, “‘Spotlighting’: Peer Reponse in Digitally Supported First-Year Writing Courses”  
**DL:**  
# Eades, “A Working Model of Pedagogical Triangulation: A Holistic Approach to Peer-Revision Workshops” **DL:**  
# Oakes, “The Readaround Community” **DL:**  
# Johnson, “Critical Reading and Response: Experimenting with Anonymity in Draft Workshops”

### **Assignment Sheet 3 due**

- 4/30 Conferences about the Teaching Portfolio (during the week)  
Bloom, “Why I (Used to) Hate to Give Grades”; StM  
# Hassel and Baird Giordano, “Transfer Institutions, Transfer of Knowledge”  
# Fallon, Lahar, & Susman, “Taking the High Road to Transfer”  
View Answers to Question 7, 9, and 11 of *Take 20*

Tu 5/5 **Teaching Portfolio due**  
**Feedback Memo due**