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ENG 5011-001: Basic Writing Pedagogy

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ENG 5011: Basic Writing Pedagogy
7:00-9:30 pm W

Dr. Tim N. Taylor
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Texts
- Basic Writing, Otte & Mlynarczyk
- Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960; Ritter
- Errors and Expectations: A Guide of the Teacher of Basic Writing; Shaughnessy
- A Guide to College Writing Assessment; O'Neill, Moore, & Huot
- Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared; Rose
- Articles found via JBW archives, EBSCO/ERIC, and JSTOR
- Articles distributed via email or handout

Course Description
In this seminar we will explore the history of basic writing courses at two-year and four-year colleges and the pedagogical practices germane to them. Part of the course will undertake defining basic and developmental writing with respect to institutional structures, and we will analyze the status and future of basic writing in the profession and higher education.

We will attempt to understand the societal, cultural, and socio-economic forces that influence these "remedial" courses and the students who take them, so we will examine the socially constructed nature of basic writing, especially in light of scholars' historical research about basic writing programs at Yale, Harvard, and the University of California at Berkeley.

In addition to discussing the othered status of basic writing in higher education, we will also study these important issues and concerns:
- Types of basic writing programs
- Ways students are placed into basic writing and college composition courses
- Assessment practices
- Evaluation of student writing in general
- Common and problematic approaches to grammar instruction in these courses

In this seminar, you will not only learn about the history and pedagogical practices of basic writing, but you will also develop curricula as if you were a member of an English or a Writing Studies department. Students who enroll in this course will craft documents that will prepare them to teach basic writing courses. For example, one major assignment is a group project/simulation game where three or four people work as a developmental writing curriculum committee. Each group will create a basic writing course that details learning objectives, learning outcomes, placement procedures, required textbooks, a common syllabi, and assessment activities for the course.
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
- Improve academic research skills
- Gain knowledge about rhetoric/composition studies, basic writing, placement and assessment practices, program development, and writing instruction
- Apply knowledge to institutional and pedagogical contexts via lesson plans, a seminar project, and a group curriculum project
- Question definitions of literacy, basic/developmental writing, and college writing
- Question and explore language acquisition, situated learning, and transfer of learning
- Reflect on current practices in writing classrooms and your own experiences in those 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
- Analyze a rhetorical context and craft cohesive and meaningful seminar project—conference paper, journal article, or unit plan
- Synthesize disparate scholarship and make distinctions among epistemologies, theoretical underpinnings, and approaches to writing instruction
- Evaluate and critique scholars’ arguments based on the efficacy of their evidence, assumptions, and research methodologies

**Expected Performance Outcomes**
Participants will exhibit the ability to...

- Work effectively and ethically and professionally as a member of a graduate seminar
- Lead and fully participate in discussion of reading assignments throughout the semester
- Craft relevant and rhetorically effective reaction memos in response to reading assignments
- Conduct library, electronic, and field research effectively
- Present research articles to colleagues in an articulate and lively manner
- Direct discussion productively
- Craft, develop, and polish a research-based seminar project
- Create a college-level course proposal that includes course objectives, performance outcomes, model syllabi, placement procedures, and appropriate assessment measures

**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. You should ponder. And do it all over again and again and again...

We will talk. We will write. We will research. We will discuss basic writing.
Below is a basic to-do list for this seminar:

- Active participation in discussion
- Weekly reaction memos for assigned readings (credit or no credit)
- Student-initiated research
- Leading of discussion on articles about basic writing
- Lesson plans
- Individual seminar project
- Group developmental writing curriculum project

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.

**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 a paper or to clarify a concept can save you time in the long run and improve your chances of success in this course. In addition to being in my office 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.

**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 that 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 for late assignments.

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.

If there is an extreme discrepancy between in-class and out of class work, I reserve the right to base a student’s grade on in-class work alone.

**Reaction Memoranda**

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For most class periods, you are assigned to write a reaction memo (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.

Over the course of the semester, I have assigned twelve memos on the syllabus. However, you only need to write ten. These memos are 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 memos need to be at least one single-spaced page in a memo format.

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 in order 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 activities related to the article you're assigned.

Article Presentation (AP) Responsibilities
For almost every week of the semester, a student will be assigned to present a reading not on the syllabus that's connected to the developmental reading, programmatic issues, placement, assessment, responding to student writing, and other concerns connected to basic writing. You can find relevant articles from the bibliographies provided via these resources:

- Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Basic Writing
- Archives of the Journal of Basic Writing
- Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing
- ERIC/ERIC
- JSTOR

In this concise but detailed presentation (5-10 minutes), you need to summarize the article and how it relates to basic writing and provide specific details and notable aspects of the article that are interesting and thought-provoking for your colleagues. A concise handout is expected. Your audience needs to walk away from the presentation with a strong grasp of what the author of the
article argues for or discusses and how it relates to the greater whole—Rhetoric/Writing Studies, Basic Writing Studies, theories of learning, et al.

**Seminar Project & Presentation**
This research project is designed for you to work with a topic, subject, issue, or argument related to basic writing that you’re interested in exploring with greater depth and detail.

This project must have a defined outside audience; it’s not just meant for this class. It should move beyond this seminar.

You have three different options for this project:

- **Conference paper** (6-8 pages) along with a proposal/abstract that concisely introduces your project that connects to reading and your work done in ENG 5011 and possibly elsewhere
  - For this project, you have to identify a specific conference you would submit the proposal and paper.
- **Journal article** related to your concentration in the M.A. program that connects to reading and work done in ENG 5011 and possibly elsewhere
  - For this project, you have to identify the journal you would submit the article and produce an article according to the submission guidelines of that journal.
- **Unit-long lesson plan** (three to five weeks) that pulls from your work in ENG 5011 and translates that work to the specific audience you would be teaching.
  - For this project, you have to identify the grade level and course you’d be teaching and provide detailed rationales and discussion about the lesson plan’s progression. The lesson plan will have to show theoretical foundations and provide rationales for pedagogical strategies and tactics.

There will be a prospectus due approximately a month before your conference with me where you provide a solid draft of your project. And then you present your research and ideas at the end of the course during the final time.

**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. Emailing in a professional manner will help you with other professors and also give you practice in effective communication.

If you want to send either of us 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 “Dear Dr. Taylor:”
- Use a respectful tone
- Provide questions or information in an 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 pages 5-6 of my course policy.”

**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.

**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 in a paper, the paper will earn a zero for the assignment, and I will report the occurrence to the EIU Judicial Affairs Office.

Generally, 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, here is an explanation of plagiarism from my previous English department that explains 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.

A Social Contract of Honesty
In this class, there is a social contract between the instructors and students that the work submitted will be the students’ own documents, not someone else’s work. To put it simply, do your own writing.

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.

We 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 others’ 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. Text messaging 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 impact your performance in this class, let me know as soon as possible.
Composition of the Overall Grade
(all assignments and point totals are tentative)

Participation 100 points (12%)
Discussion, in-class writing, small group work, informal presentations

Presentations 150 (18%)
- Discussion Leader duties 50
- Outside Article presentation 50
- Curriculum Project presentation—Final 50

Shorter Writing Assignments 190 (22%)
- Memo of Introduction 10
- Reaction Memoranda (10 @ 10 points each) 100 (12%)
- Prospectus for the Seminar Project 50
- Lesson Plans (2 @ 10 points each) 20
- Feedback Memorandum 10

Major Course Assignments 400 (48%)
- Seminar Project (Individual) 200 (24%)
- Curriculum Project (Group) 200 (24%)

Total Points 840 points
ENG 5011—Basic Writing Pedagogy
All assignments and due dates are tentative
BW = Basic Writing
GCWA = A Guide to College Writing Assessment
JBW = Journal of Basic Writing
CCC = College Composition and Communication
CE = College English
BWe = Basic Writing e-Journal
# = Handout

W 1/9
Introductions and Introduction to the Course
Shaughnessy, “Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing”
Rose, “Colleges Need to Re-Mediate Remediation” The Chronicle of Higher Education

W 1/16
Intro & Ch. 1: Historical Overview of BW
#Connors, “Basic Writing Textbooks: History and Current Avatars” (1987)
Goto, “Basic Writing and Policy Reform: Why We Keep Talking Past Each Other”
JBW 21.2 (2002): 4-20
AP:
Memo of Introduction due
Reaction Memo due

W 1/23
Ch. 2: Defining Basic Writing and Basic Writers of BW
Bizzell, “What Happens When Basic Writers Come to College” CCC 37.3 (1986): 294-301
AP:
Reaction Memo due

W 1/30
Ch. 1-4 of Errors & Expectations
AP:
Reaction Memo due

W 2/6
Ch. 5-8 of Errors & Expectations

AP: Reaction Memo due

W 2/13 Lives on the Boundary
Rose, “The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University” CE 47.4 (1985): 341-59
AP: Reaction Memo due

W 2/20 Before Shaughnessy: Basic Writing at Yale and Harvard, 1920-1960
Bailey, “Remedial Composition for Advanced Students” CE 8.3 (1946): 145-48
AP: Reaction Memo due

W 2/27 Ch. 3: Practices and Pedagogies of BW
#Troyka, “Defining Basic Writing in Context”
AP: Anonymous Mid-Term Feedback
Reaction Memo due

W 3/6 Ch. 4: Research of BW
Hull, Rose, Losey Fraser, & Castellano, “Remediation as Social Construct: Perspectives from an Analysis of Classroom Discourse” CCC 42.3 (1991): 299-329

Lesson Plan due
Reaction Memo due

Spring Break

Reveal of the Curriculum Project and Assignment of Groups
Prospectus for the Seminar Project due

W 3/27
Goen & Gillette-Tropp, “Integrating Reading and Writing: A Response to the Basic Writing ‘Crisis’” JBW 22.2 (2003): 90-113
Grego & Thompson, “Repositioning Remediation: Renegotiating Composition’s Work in the Academy” CCC 47.1 (1996): 62-84
DL: Tassoni, “(Re)membering Basic Writing at a Public Ivy: History for Institutional Redesign” JBW 25.1 (2006): 96-124

AP: Reaction Memo due

W 4/3

AP: Reaction Memo due

Ranking of Institutions for Placement Queries

W 4/10
Intro, Ch. 2: Historicizing Writing Assessment, & Ch. 3: Considering Theory of GCWA
# Smittle, “Principles for Effective Teaching in Developmental Education” Journal of Developmental Education

AP: Lesson Plan due

Results of Placement Queries

W 4/17
Ch. 4: Attending to Context & 5: Assessing Student Writers—Placement of GCWA
Crowley, "Response to Edward M. White's 'The Importance of Placement and Basic Studies'" *JBW* 15.1 (1996): 88-91
DL: Royer & Gilles, "Basic Writing and Directed Self-Placement" *BW* e 2.2 (2000):
Web
AP:
Seminar Project due

W 4/24  
Ch. 6 Assessing Student Writers—Proficiency & 7: Conducting Writing Program Assessments of GCWA
Wolcott, "Evaluating a Basic Writing Program" *JBW* 15.1 (1996): 57-69

Feedback Memo due

Final: W 5/1, 7:00 pm, Curriculum Project due and Presentations

**Articles That Didn't Make the Majors—Some Possibilities for Article Presentations**

Adler-Kassner & Harrington, "In the Here and Now: Public Policy and Basic Writing" *JBW* 25.2 (2006): 28-49.
Bloom, "Freshman Composition as a Middle Class Enterprise" *CE* 58.6 (1996): 654-75.
Horne, "Discoursing Basic Writing" *CCC* 47.2 (1996): 199-222.
Lu, "Conflict and Struggle: The Enemies or Preconditions of Basic Writing?" *CE* 54.8 (1992): 887-913.