

Policy Statement

English 583-001

Teaching Writing: Issues in Rhetoric and Composition.

Office Hours, Fall 2007: Mondays 1-3; Tuesdays 11:30-12:30; and Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30; and by appointment. Bates 103.

Phone number: 572-5336

e-mail: brothermel@wsc.ma.edu

A master can tell you what he expects of you. A teacher, though, awakens your own expectation.

--Unknown

Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition.

--Jacques Barzun

Too often, I hear that old quotation, “Those who can’t, teach.” It has been used in popular film and culture to poke fun at and criticize our profession. Yet ours is a vocation, a vocation of love; true teachers know this. Those who instruct, who nurture, who hope patiently and lovingly each and every day understand the quotation is really, “Those who can, teach.”

--Melinda Pellerin-Duck, a teacher at the High School of Commerce in Springfield, MA, from “The Colors and Strands of Teaching” published in Sonia Nieto’s *Why Teach*.

Required Texts and Supplies:

- Warner, Mary L. Ed. *Winning Ways of Coaching Writing: A Practical Guide for Teaching Writing Grades 6-12*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2001.

- Finn, Patrick J. *Literacy with an Attitude: Educating Working-Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*. Albany: State University of New York, 1999.
- ENGL 0383/0583 Custom Made Publication (a packet of course readings that you will find in the book store).
- A notebook or folder with loose leaf paper to use for in-class writing and response (separate from your course notebook).
- Numerous handouts--have a large three-ring notebook to accommodate them.

Course Description: With increased pressure to make the teaching of writing a top priority, teachers today often find themselves sorting through a confusing array of philosophies, designs, texts, and resources as they try to answer questions like the following: How do I provide students with meaningful feedback? What makes for effective assignments? How do I balance the teaching of writing with other areas of instruction? Can I reach students of diverse cultural backgrounds? By focusing in on a number of such key pedagogical and theoretical issues, this course will help participants feel more confident in their roles as teachers of writing. Just as important, this course will provide students with opportunities to strengthen their own writing as they reflect on how various composition and rhetorical theories inform their own writing processes.

Course Objectives:

- Understand, reflect on, and enter into current written and oral conversations about the various issues relevant to the teaching of writing in K-16 classrooms.
- Explore the relationship between our own work as writers and the ways in which we teach writing.
- Write with power and precision, in varied rhetorical contexts.
- Work collaboratively, coordinating writing and revision activities within a group.

Please note that this course also supports NCTE Standards:

- 3.6.1-3: Knowledge of the range and influence of print and nonprint media and technology in contemporary culture.
- 3.7.1-2: Knowledge of research theory and findings in English language arts.
- 3.2.1-5: Knowledge of the practices of oral, visual, and written literacy.

Assignments: Students are required to write four formal short essays and one longer documented essay (12-15 pages) in multiple drafts, and to lead one fifteen-minute interactive presentation. All students will also write 6 response papers and keep an in-class journal. See the specific guidelines for the response papers included in your course folder. All students will also compile and submit a writer's portfolio at the end of the semester.

Out-of-class assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date specified on the syllabus. Assignments handed in late will be marked down. All writing assignments (except the journal and in-class writing) should be typed and properly formatted using the

MLA citation system. Any exceptions to the above guidelines must be discussed with me in advance of due dates.

Grading: Criteria for success will be discussed in conjunction with each assignment throughout the semester. Your final grade will be based on the following point system:

Graduates:

- Literacy Narrative: 100
- Critical Research Review (on an assigned article related to your project topic): 100
- Exploratory Research Essay: 75
- Documented Essay: 175
- Interactive Presentation: 100
- Teaching Scenario/Visual Essay: 50
- Participation: 100
- Portfolio: 150
- Six Response Papers and In-class Writings: 125
- Sample Assignment/Critique: 25

Total: 1000 points

Participation is graded as follows:

For a checkplus, the student will

- make oral contributions to discussion several times per class meeting in a way that forwards the discussion effectively (e.g., helps make the discussion more collaborative and constructive);
- encourage others to participate by asking provocative questions or noting agreements or disagreements;
- listen to and respond to what others say;
- have no more than one absence
- show excellent preparedness for class (be completely up to date on readings and assignments).

For a check, the student will

- make regular contributions (at least once per class meeting) to discussion in a way that forwards the discussion effectively;
- have no more than 1.5 absences;
- usually show thorough preparedness for class.

Students who seldom speak in class, who have more than two absences, and/or who do not demonstrate preparedness will receive a check minus.

Attendance: Since the work that we will do in this class involves discussion and collaborative learning, attendance is vital. Your success as well as the success of the course depends upon your regular participation. Students with more than two absences may have their grades reduced; students with more than 3 absences will likely be asked to withdraw from the course.

When I compute grades at the end of the semester, numbers will correspond to the following letters (i.e., 925 and above equals A, 900-924 equals A-):

- A = 925
- A- = 900
- B+ = 875
- B = 825
- B- = 800
- C+ = 775
- C = 725
- C- = 700
- D+ = 675
- D = 625
- F = 624 and below
- Checkplus = 93
- Check= 80
- Checkminus=67

Scholastic Dishonesty: Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Plagiarism may lead to failure for the course and/or suspension from the college. All cases will be reported to the VP for Graduate and Continuing Education.

Tentative Course Schedule

This schedule covers due dates for major reading and writing assignments. There will be additional reading and writing assignments.

September 6: Welcome! Introduction to the course. Why write? Why teach writing? Telling our stories. Teacher identity. Invention work for literacy narratives. Literacy and its varied definitions. Seeking a volunteer for response workshop Sept 12.

- **HW for September 12: Read Fishman and Rose (first two articles in Custom Publication); Also, read handouts: Avery; student essay; and Elbow and Belanoff. Working on first draft of literacy narrative--please bring two copies of your essay to class on the 12th (in your folder see the assignment sheet for the literacy narrative). Also, bring in a literacy artifact to class on the 12th.**

September 12: First formal draft of literacy narrative due (bring two copies to class). Present artifacts. Model response workshop with a volunteer writer. Conceptions of literacy. Exploring the writing process. Writing practice inventory.

- **HW for September 19: Read Perl and Elbow in Custom Publication (third and fourth articles). Read in Warner, Tchudi, 1-14. Final draft of literacy narrative due September 19.**

September 19: Literacy narrative due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic our readings. Perspectives on the composing process. Invention and prewriting. Introducing the critical review and research project. Volunteer to bring topic for mini-writing workshop next class.

- **HW for September 26: In Warner, read Shannon 105-121. Read student critical review. Read in Finn 1-81. Response paper 1 due (see guidelines in course folder). Bring a tentative article topic idea to class as well.**

September 26: Response paper 1 due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by member of class. Composing process continued. Discuss Finn reading. Research project discussed--selecting an article. Beginning the inquiry process. What does rhetoric have to do with the teaching of writing? Sign up for mini-conference to receive article from me.

- **HW for October 3: Read Corbett (fifth article in Custom Publication). Read in Warner, Klintworth, 28-42. Working on first draft of research review, due Monday, October 3. Response paper 2. Volunteer for next class workshop.**

October 3: First formal draft of research review due (bring four copies to class). Response paper 2 due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by member of class.. Rhetoric and the teaching of writing. Analyzing discourse and its occasion. Audience and invention--applying to our own essays. The writing workshop—motivating writers to revise. Teaching scenario.

- **HW for October 10: Read Wesley and Dean (seventh and eighth pieces in the Custom Publication); and in Warner, piece by Warner on 15-27.**
Revising research review.

October 10: Research review due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic provided by instructor. The revision process—helping students move towards focus. Teaching form/genre. Sample student essays—responding to them. Going further with our research--writing a proposal and expanding our own knowledge base--the source bibliography.

- **HW for October 17: Read Morgan (sixth piece in Custom Publication) and two other essays on assignments from *English Journal* (links to essays will be**

provided). In Warner, read Bellman 210-234. Response paper 3 and project proposal due October 17. Working on tentative bibliography, due October 31, and exploratory essay, due November 6.

October 17: Response paper 3 and project proposal due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by member of class. Designing assignments. Experimenting with genre.

- **HW for October 24: Read Finn 81-155. Response paper 4. Working on tentative source bibliography for October 31. Come up with a follow-up assignment or a critique/revision of an existing assignment, due Oct 24.**

October 24: Response paper 4 and assignment due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by member of class. Discuss Finn reading. More on designing assignments and tailoring them to diverse needs. The exploratory essay assignment.

- **HW for October 31: Working on tentative source bibliography for October 31. Finish reading Finn. Read in Warner, Honegger 87-104. Sumaryono/Ortiz (link to essay will be provided); sample student exploratory essay. Response paper 5 due October 31.**

October 31: Tentative source bibliography and response paper 5 due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by member of class. Discuss Finn reading. English language learners in the writing classroom. Teaching scenario.

- **HW for November 6: Writing exploratory essay for November 6. Read in Warner, Madigan/Alvarez, 122-142.**

November 6: Exploratory essay due. Class begins with mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by the instructor. More on working with diverse populations.

- **HW for November 14: Working on a first draft of the documented argument for November 14.**

November 14: First draft of documented argument due. Responding to and evaluating student writing. Stations activity. Sign up for conferences to be held November 20 and 21.

- **HW for November 28: Final draft of the documented argument for November 28.**

November 28: Final draft of documented argument due. Mini-writing workshop, topic suggested by student. More on responding to student writing. Relation of grammar instruction to writing instruction--teaching scenario.

- **HW for December 5: Read in Warner, Honegger 42-66, Tchudi 176-193, and Cheville (last article in Custom Publication). Prepare inquiry presentations. Response paper 6 due on December 5.**

December 5: Response paper 6 due. Writing assessment and new technologies. Inquiry presentations from half of the class. Portfolios assigned.

- **HW for December 12: Final inquiry presentations. Reading TBA.**

December 12: Final presentations. Discussing the writing portfolio. Mini-writing workshop to conclude our semester.

Writing portfolio due in my office, Bates 103, by 5 pm Tuesday the 18th. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope so that I may return your portfolio. This envelope will be worth 10 points of your grade.