

**ENG290. How to Write: Academic Writing and the Pedagogies that Support It**  
*Professor Rebecca Finlayson*

Office hours: Mon 2-3 PM and Tues 1-3 PM; Palmer 317; 843-3293

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**Catalogue Entry:** ENG290 is an interdisciplinary, community-integrative course that engages students in the study of academic composition and writing pedagogies within the fields of composition and rhetoric, literacy studies, cognitive psychology, urban studies, and education. Students in the course develop theoretical frameworks for learning and teaching writing and assist an area public high school in establishing a peer-led writing center.

**Course Description:** In this interdisciplinary course, we will explore the myriad ways that students learn to write and how they write to learn. The readings and guest lecturers will offer theoretical frames from the fields of composition and rhetoric, literacy studies, cognitive psychology, philosophy, gender studies, and education. As we consider this range of approaches to writing, learning, and teaching, we will focus especially on collaborative methods, as collaborative learning occupies an important place in Rhodes writing courses as well as in the Writing Center. With this emphasis in mind, students in the course will move beyond our own classroom and into a Memphis public high school to collaborate in the establishment of a peer-led writing center. Because this course offers focused attention to writing, along with analytical writing assignments, as well as a service learning experience, it fulfills two Foundation Requirements: F2i (writing intensive) and F11 (integrative community).

The course will be divided into 3 segments:

- Collaborative Learning and Writing: writing centers, peer tutoring, partnerships, workshops (Rhetoric and Composition Studies, Educational Studies, Secondary Education)
- Composition Studies (The Writing Process: thinking, writing, revising, responding; Cognitive Psychology, Rhetoric and Composition Studies)
- Writing Difference: race, gender, disability, language and literacy (Urban Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Disability Studies)

Most weeks, Tuesday will be devoted to discussion of the reading and Thursday to collaborative learning (presentations, teaching demonstrations, HS partnership activities, etc.) and guest lecturers. Students in ENG290 will attend TR; students in ENG465 will attend only T (and will do only the accompanying Tuesday reading and assignments).

### Course Texts

Because this is a relatively new field and because this is a unique course, many of our readings will be in PDF form on Moodle.

Murphy, Christina and Sherwood, Steve. *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors, Third Edition*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007. Most of these articles will also be on Moodle.

You will need a writing “rules” book but may use one you already have. Alternatively, the bookstore has ordered some of these:

Hacker, Diana, *Rules for Writers*, 6th ed. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2008.

## Assignments & Policies

You will have a writing assignment due nearly every week; these will include 2 short writing and teaching topic essays, 4 team presentations, 8 substantive journal entries, and a final research paper.

*Team Presentations (20% total):* 5% each 4x. These presentations will be done in conjunction with your team. You may designate responsibilities any way you like, if all team members agree. Please submit a list of these responsibilities along with a copy of the presentation so that your grade reflects accurately your portion of the work. For example, you may have each member responsible for X number of PPT slides or have each member responsible for a particular topic or action (research, writing, presenting). Each team member must also submit a confidential 1-sentence assessment and check grade (√+, √, √-) for each member of team.

*Writing and teaching topics (10% total):* 5% each 2x. The goal of this assignment is to apply theory to practical teaching methods. You will conceive of, plan for, and demonstrate your topics to our class. You may choose to teach any topic related to collaborative learning for Teaching Topic #1 and any topic related to writing for Teaching Topic #2, but the subject and method of your teaching should arise from our class texts. For example, after reading articles that address facilitative tutoring, you may choose to construct a lesson for tutors on “asking good questions.” Alternatively, after reading articles that address revision, you may wish to create a lesson on helping writers be better objective readers of their own writing. As you plan your topic and teaching demonstration, pay attention to how your own writing and personality may inform your method. Your audience is college and/or high school tutors (for TT#1) and writers (TT#2). Throughout the semester, members of our class will teach their topic to us, the students. Plan to teach for approximately 10 minutes. For each teaching topic, you will need to submit the following (see Moodle doc for more info):

- Short essay (~300 words) that identifies which method or process you will use (integrating key terms and concepts from your text) and why you chose it.
- Handout for “students.”

*Community-integrative (service) learning activities and self-reflection journal (40% total):* A minimum 10 hours of service (20%) throughout the semester with one of our partner schools is required to pass this course. Your service work will allow you to employ various writing pedagogies and to explore how writers of different backgrounds and levels respond to these methods. Throughout your work, you will maintain a Service Journal (20%) and at the end of the semester, you will develop a paper (see below) that synthesizes your service experience with the theories we have studied..

*Final paper and presentation (20% total):* At the end of the semester, you will write a 2500-word (8-9 page) paper that sets forth your theoretical position with regards to writing and teaching writing, along with how that theoretical position informed your service learning experience. Then, in collaboration with your “team,” you will give a presentation to the class documenting your team’s collective work establishing a writing center in a Shelby County school.

*Participation (10%):* A primary focus of this course is collaborative learning. That said, members of the class must be present to collaborate. Attendance is required. You may miss 2 classes without penalty. Henceforth your final grade will suffer 1 tier (B becomes B- and so on). Students who miss more than 6 classes will fail the course.

## Community-Integrative Learning & Service

At the beginning of the semester, students will divide into service teams with approximately 5 students per team. Each team will be responsible for establishing a Writing Center in a Memphis area public high school. Team activities will include at least 10 hours of service at the high school:

- Meet with team’s high school administrators and faculty to assess WC needs for their students (Week 3 and 5 of semester). [2 hours total]
- Finalize WC plan and establish schedule for student training; confirm with school via email.
- Provide peer tutor training for high school students (Weeks 7, 10, 11). [6 hours total]
- Conduct follow-up visits throughout remainder of term (Weeks 12, 13-14). [2 hours]

Subsequent semester teams will either follow the same activity set for a new school or will provide assessment and modifications and training for existing programs.

A **SERVICE JOURNAL** concerning your ongoing *reflections* and *explorations* of the theoretical and practical issues concerning writing education, especially in the context of your service. Journal entries are designed to promote **integration** of *community experience* with *readings*, using each to deepen your understanding of the other. Journal entries should be 300-500 words. One entry may be a “double”.

You’ll need a total of 8 entries by the end of the semester. Some journal entries will have a specific assigned question (see syllabus). Every other entry should address domains 1 & 3. Where appropriate, you should also address domain 2. This domain is highly contingent on your experiences and assumptions, so it’s unrealistic to expect you to address it in every entry. The requirement is that you address this domain in at least 4 entries. Your journal entries are due via Moodle by Friday @ midnight of the week assigned.

Domain	Description
1	<b>Narration or description</b> of the key acts or events from your weekly service experience. This is where you should describe practical problems that arose and/or solutions you tried or discovered. Where appropriate, include details about the faculty and/or student(s) with whom worked (e.g., for students: age, grade level, particular challenge the student faces, etc.). Avoid simply stringing together a list of events; consider connections between experiences and any unifying themes that arise.
2	<b>Self-reflection</b> of how your assumptions, theoretical commitments, feelings, and/or goals <i>affected</i> (positively or negatively), <i>directed</i> (successfully or unsuccessfully), or <i>were altered</i> (the better or for the worse) as a consequence of items in domain 1.
3	<b>Analysis &amp; Synthesis</b> of the intersections of service experience and readings. Here the goal is to explore your experience by reflecting on how it enhances your understanding of course ideas (perhaps making you appreciative or critical of them) and vice versa. You may integrate details from a variety of domain 1 entries; when doing so, refer to the relevant entry #[s]. Be sure to explain key ideas sufficiently, since it’s likely that the details of the ideas will help you better interpret and assess your service experience. This domain demonstrates critical engagement with <i>both</i> service experience (especially as represented by 1 & 2 above) & reading material.

## Course Schedule

### INTRODUCTIONS

#### Week 1

*Aug 27. Thursday.* Establishing a relationship between what we will *study* and what we will *do*. Establish schedules, teams, general team duties. HS questionnaires and timeline distributed.

### COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND WRITING

#### Week 2

*Sept 1. Tuesday: Peer Tutoring*

Kenneth Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind"

Tobin, "Writing Center as a Key Actor in Secondary School Preparation"

Find and read any article listed in "High School Writing Centers Resources"

*Sept 3. Thursday: Team presentations*

**Due: Presentation/Interview for HS meeting (teams work and present in class).**

#### Week 3

##### Service Learning 1

First meeting with HS admin/fac

At HS site (1-hour, allow for travel time)

Team scheduled with primary contact

*Sept 8. Tuesday: The Idea of a Writing Center*

Stephen North, "The Idea of a Writing Center" (Sourcebook 32-46)

Andrea Lunsford, "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center" (Sourcebook 47-53).

Gillespie and Lerner. "The Tutoring Process"

*Sept 10. Thursday: Why collaboration?*

**Due: Teaching Topic #1 with presentations**

Muriel Harris, "Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors." \*

Christina Murphy, "Freud in the Writing Center: The Psychoanalytics of Tutoring Well" (Sourcebook 95-100).

#### Week 4

**Journal entry #1:** Consider how your understanding of collaborative learning and writing informed your first visit with the high school faculty.

*Sept 15. Tuesday: Urban Education*

**Continued: Writing and Teaching Topic #1 presentations (4x)**

Carter, Prudence. “Straddling Boundaries: Identity, Culture, and School.”

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. “From the Achievement Gap to the Education Debt: Understanding Achievement in US Schools.”

*Guest lecturer (Education):* Zac Casey, Assistant Professor of Educational Studies

*Sept 17. Thursday: Secondary Education*

**Due: Presentation for second HS meeting (team does not present, just turn in PPT to Moodle)**

Writing samples from HS writers will be posted on Moodle. Please read before class.

*Guest lecturer (High School Education):* Michelle Hope, MAT, TN Master Teacher Language Arts

**Week 5**

Service Learning 2

Second meeting with HS admin/fac

At RC during class (1 hour)

**Journal entry #2:** Consider how collaborative learning and writing will help the students at your site. What approaches and suggestions from our reading do you think will be most useful?

*Sept 22. Tuesday: Collaboration in action*

**Continued: Teaching Topic #1 presentations (4x)**

Greiner, Alexis. “Tutoring in Unfamiliar Subjects.”

Harris, Muriel. “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers.”

Brooks, Jeff. “Minimalist Tutoring” (Sourcebook 168-73).

Clark, Irene. “Collaboration and Ethics in Writing Center Pedagogy.” (Sourcebook)

*Sept 24. Thursday: Team partnership meeting*

*ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING WITH HS FACULTY (during class; location/room TBA)*

COMPOSITION STUDIES

**Week 6**

*Sept 29. Tuesday: Writing as Learning*

**Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

Toby Fulwiler, “Writing: An Act of Cognition”

Janet Emig, “Writing as a Mode of Learning”

James Reither, “Writing and Knowing: Toward Redefining the Writing Process”

*Oct 1. Thursday: Team instruction*

**Due: Presentation of training PPT #1 (20 minutes)**

## Week 7

### Service Learning 3

First training for HS student tutors

At HS site (2 hours, allow for travel time)

Team scheduled with primary contact

**Journal entry #3:** How has your understanding of the writing process informed your tutor training?

*Oct 6. Tuesday: Composing*

#### **Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

Peter Elbow, "Teaching Two Kinds of Thinking by Teaching Writing,"

Linda Flower and John Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing"

*Oct 8. Thursday: (NO CLASS today) CLASS WILL MEET THE FOLLOWING MONDAY @ 4:30*

Linda Flower and John Hayes, "The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem."

## Week 8

No Service Learning component this week.

*Oct 12. MONDAY: Cognition CLASS MEETS AT 4:30 in Palmer 206 (our classroom)*

*Guest lecturers (Cognitive Psychology):* Katherine White, Associate Professor of Psychology, and Geoff Maddox, Assistant Professor of Psychology

*Oct 13. Tuesday: Revision*

#### **Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

Nancy Sommers, "The Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers"

Richard Lanham, "Where's the Action?"

Fulwiler, Toby. "Provocative Revision" (Sourcebook)

Young, Beth Rapp. "Can You Proofread This?"

*Oct 15. Thursday: Team Instruction*

#### **Due: Presentation of training PPT #2 (3x; 20 minutes each)**

David Bartholomae, "Inventing the University"

## WRITING DIFFERENCES

## Week 9

No Service Learning component this week.

### **Journal entry #4**

*Oct 20. Tuesday. No class / October Break.*

*Oct 22. Thursday: Culture and Gender. NO CLASS TODAY.*

CLASS WILL MEET TOMORROW AT 4:30 in Palmer 206 (our classroom)

Meg Woolbright, "The Politics of Tutoring: Feminism within the Patriarchy" (Sourcebook 67-79).

Margaret Tipper, "Real Men Don't Do Writing Centers."

Blythe Clinchy, "Issues of Gender in Teaching and Learning"

*Guest lecturer (Gender Studies):* Leslie Petty, Associate Professor of English and Director of Gender and Sexuality Studies

**Week 10**

Service Learning 4

Second training for HS student tutors

At HS site (2 hours, allow for travel time)

Team scheduled with primary contact

**Journal entry #5**

*Oct 27. Tuesday: Culture and Race*

**Due: Teaching Topic #2 presentations**

Anis Bawarshi and Stephanie Pelkowski, "Postcolonialism and the Idea of a Writing Center" (Sourcebook 79-95)

Anne Ellen Gellner, et al. "Everyday Racism: Anti-Racism Work and Writing Center Practice"

Marilyn Cooper, "Really Useful Knowledge: A Cultural Studies Agenda for Writing Centers" (Sourcebook 53-67).

*Oct 29. Thursday: Education and Hope*

*Guest lecturer (Philosophy of Education):* Patrick Shade, Associate Professor of Philosophy

**Week 11**

Service Learning 5

Third training for HS student tutors

At HS site (2 hours, allow for travel time)

Team scheduled with primary contact

**Journal entry #6**

*Nov 3. Tuesday: Non native speakers and writers*

**Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

Gillespie and Lerner. "Working with ESL Writers"

Powers, Judith. "Rethinking Writing Center Conferencing Strategies for the ESL Writer." (Sourcebook)

*Nov 5. Thursday: English Language Learners*

Muriel Harris, "Cultural Conflicts in the Writing Center: Expectations and Assumptions of ESL Students" (Sourcebook 206-219)

*Guest lecturer (ESL/ELL Studies):* Erin Hillis, MA PDSO, Associate Director of International Programs

## **Week 12**

### Service Learning 6

Meeting with HS admin/fac

At RC during class (1 hour)

### **Journal entry #7**

*Nov 10. Tuesday: Learning Disabilities*

#### **Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

Shoshana Beth Konstant, "Multisensory Tutoring for Multisensory Learners," (Sourcebook 109-111).

Jan C. Thompson, "Beyond Fixing Today's Paper: Promoting Metacognition and Writing Development in the Tutorial through Self-Questioning."

*Nov 12. Thursday: Team partnership meeting*

*ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING WITH HS FACULTY (during class; location/room TBA)*

## **Week 13**

### Service Learning 7

Follow-up meeting with HS student tutors

At HS site (1 hour, allow for travel time)

Team scheduled with primary contact (this week or early next week)

*Nov 17. Tuesday: Language, Literacy, and Culture in the Classroom*

#### **Continued: Teaching Topic presentations**

bell hooks, "Language: Teaching New Worlds/New Words"

Joanne Kilgour Dowdy, "Ovuh Dyuh," *The Skin That We Speak: Thoughts on Language and Culture in the Classroom*

*Nov 19. Thursday: Literacy in Memphis*

*Guest Lecturer: Kevin Dean, Executive Director, Literacy Mid-South*

## PRESENTATIONS

## **Week 14**

Service Learning 7 (if not completed last week)

**Journal entry #8:** This is your final journal entry. In it, please reflect on the entirety of the semester. What was difficult? Unexpected? Gratifying? How did the reading in the course influence your experience?

*Nov 24. Tuesday: Peer review for final paper.*

**Due: draft of final paper (bring hardcopy to class)**



*Nov 26. Thursday: NO CLASS / Thanksgiving Break*

### **Week 15**

*Dec 1. Tuesday: Team 1 presentation*

*Dec 3. Thursday: Team 2 presentation*

### **Week 16**

**Due: Final paper**

*Dec 8. Tuesday: Team 3 presentation*

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor. Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F. Deadlines: Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfilment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit. Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course. Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.