

OBERLIN COLLEGE
RHETORIC and COMPOSITION 481/ENGLISH 399
Teaching and Tutoring Writing Across the Disciplines

Fall 2006 Mr. Podis, King 139, x58612; len.podis@oberlin.edu; Hrs: T-Th 2–3 p.m. or by appt.

Course Objectives:

- to train you to be a helpful and effective writing associate (tutor)
- to give you practice and guidance in working with student writing
- to encourage you to reflect on your own writing habits and processes
- to introduce you to the fields of composition studies and writing pedagogy

Requirements:

1. regular **attendance**—no more than 2 absences without just cause, please; I insist on this not to cultivate orderly or submissive behavior, but because the participatory nature of the course requires that everyone be present—in other words, the course aims to promote the type of interactive learning that many of the readings on the syllabus advocate, and it is important that we are present to interact.
2. assigned **readings** on pedagogy and writing theory and practice—see schedule below
3. a reading **journal** (2-3pp) due in class every Tuesday (refer to sample entries)
4. in-class **discussion** of tutoring issues and experiences and (as appropriate) of assigned readings and sample student essays
5. **tutoring**: at the drop-in writing center in Mudd, or for a writing intensive course, or both; note that everyone in this course should also enroll in RHET 483, “Tutoring Lab.”
6. an **essay** (7–10 pages) to be drafted and revised over the first half of the semester (topic suggestions will be given later); final draft due in class on Thursday, October 12.
7. an **essay** (10–12 pages) on any subject related to the course, to be drafted and revised during the second half of the semester; final draft due in King 139 on Monday, December 18.

Grading. While grades may provide feedback and motivation, they are subjective, often unreliable, and prone to create hierarchical situations. In keeping with the counter-hegemonic pedagogy stressed in the course, I’d like us to deemphasize grading a bit. I would urge us to concentrate on the important tasks before us, such as sustaining a productive dialogue, learning from each other, and helping others. I will use a form of contract grading. If you (1) attend regularly, (2) participate in course activities with dedication, and (3) do all the assignments in a thoughtful way, you will earn a B+. While some might call this egregious grade inflation, I believe it is justified because you are carefully selected, academically talented folks who are being asked to function at a very high level for the benefit of the institution and society. If you meet the terms of the contract and go a step further to show exceptional commitment and enthusiasm, you will move into the A range. If you don’t meet the contract (e.g., due to absences, failure to do the work, lackluster commitment or performance, etc.), your grade will be lower. I will invite you to submit a final self-evaluation that I will consider as I determine final grades.

Texts (all are available at the Oberlin Bookstore):

- *Working with Student Writers: Essays on Tutoring and Teaching*, ed. Podis/Podis
- *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Victor Villanueva
- *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America’s Educational Underclass*, by Mike Rose
- Also: Selected handouts. These are articles from professional journals and various student papers received since the publication of *Working with Student Writers*

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

Week 1: Tuesday, September 5:

For the first class period, we will spend some time introducing ourselves, reviewing the syllabus, and discussing tutoring assignments. We will also look at some sample journal entries from past years and, as time allows, do some writing in response to a questionnaire I will hand out. *For Thursday*, please complete the questionnaire.

Week 1: Thursday, September 7:

Bring the completed questionnaire to class. We will discuss our answers in detail. We will also discuss the practice tutoring sessions scheduled for next week. I will try to recruit some writing associates (tutors) from past semesters to demonstrate tutoring techniques, and I hope some people from our class will agree to be tutees for these sessions. If you are currently working on a piece of writing about which you would welcome some advice, or if you have an existing paper that you wouldn't mind revisiting, please offer your services as a tutee for a practice session.

Assignment for next week: Read the selections listed under "Week 2" and write your first journal entry for class on Tuesday, September 12. In general, I would ask you to try to do the coming week's reading over the weekend so that you will be ready to write your journal entry to bring to class each Tuesday. I will often ask you to read excerpts aloud from your journals as a way of initiating class discussion, and I will usually collect your journals at the end of class on Tuesdays so that I can respond to them and return them to you on Thursdays. Ideally, your journal entries will play a crucial role in shaping class discussion.

Week 2: September 12 & 14

1. ADVICE ON PEER TUTORING/ 2. WRITING AS A PROCESS

Readings (to be read for this week, preferably by Tuesday's class)

In *Working with Student Writers* (hereafter *WSW*):

1. "Introduction" (pp. 1–7)
2. Section I. "Tutoring Writing: Practical Advice" (pp. 9–14)
3. "Working at the Drop-In Center," by Katie Gilmartin (pp. 15–21)
4. "On Working with a Class," by Tisha Turk (pp.23–32)
5. "Speaking the Written Voice," by Alicia Koundakjian (pp. 33–37)

In *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory* (hereafter *CT*):

6. "Teach Writing as a Process Not Product," by Donald M. Murray (pp. 3–6)

Handout:

7. "Processing Writing," by Polly Dondy-Kaplan

- The first journal entry is due in class on Tuesday, September 12.
- This week we will attempt to do some practice tutoring in class.

Note: There will be an introductory meeting of RHET 483, Tutoring Lab, on Thursday, September 14 at 4:30pm. All students in RHET 481/ENGL 399 should attend.

Week 3: September 19 & 21

1. PERSPECTIVES ON PEER TUTORING/ 2. REVISION STRATEGIES

Readings

In *WSW*:

1. Section II. "Perspectives on Peer Tutoring" (pp. 39–44)
2. "Training Peer Tutors for the Writing Lab," by Leonard A. Podis (pp. 45–51)
3. "Peer Tutors and Institutional Authority," by Jeremiah Dyehouse (pp. 53–57)
4. "Peer Tutors: What the Teacher Can Learn," by Leonard A. Podis (pp.59–65)

In *CT*:

5. "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," by Nancy Sommers (pp. 43–54)

Handouts:

6. "Tutoring Writing: Healing or What?" by Diane Stelzer Morrow
7. "The Motives Behind Tutoring and Being Tutored," by Franchesca Medina

Note: The 7–10 pp. paper will be assigned this week; it will be due Thursday, October 12.

Week 4: September 26 & 28

**1. FACILITATING AND RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING/
2. WORKING WITH ESL AND BILINGUAL STUDENTS**

ReadingsIn WSW:

1. Section III. "Facilitating and Responding to Student Writing" (pp. 67–72)
2. "'Like, it was, you know what I mean?': Conversational vs. Presentational Speech in Student Academic Discourse," by Emily Fawcett (pp. 73–83)
3. "Improving Our Responses to Student Writing: A Process-Oriented Approach," by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis (85–94)
4. "The Dilemmas of Grading," by Noelle Howey (pp. 95–100)

Handouts:

5. "The Comments They Made: A Personal Exploration of Helpful and Unhelpful Commentary," by Naomi Strand
6. "Strangers in Academia: The Experiences of Faculty and ESL Students Across the Curriculum," by Vivian Zamel
7. "Writing Beyond the Words: How Native Language Can Influence Orientation and Purpose of Academic Writing," by Maria E. Barajas

Note: This week we will tutor each other in class to brainstorm ideas for the 7–10pp paper.

Week 5: October 3 & 5

1. WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM/ 2. FORM AND GRAMMAR

ReadingsIn WSW:

1. Section IV. "Writing in the Classroom: Approaches and Methods" (pp. 101–106)
2. "Perspectives on the Writing Classroom," by Leonard A. Podis (pp. 107–116)
3. "No Answers: Interrogating 'Truth' in Writing," by Noelle Howey (pp. 117–121)
4. "Identifying and Teaching Rhetorical Plans for Arrangement," by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis (pp. 123–137)

In CT:

5. "Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar," by Patrick Hartwell (pp. 205–233)

Handouts:

6. "Teaching Arrangement: Defining a More Practical Approach," by Leonard A. Podis
7. "The Music of Form: Rethinking Organization in Writing," by Peter Elbow
8. "Glazed Looks and Panic Attacks: The Challenge of Teaching Grammar to Basic Education Students," by Kate Daloz

Note: Continue tutoring each other in class on the 7–10pp. essay this week.

Week 6: October 10 & 12

1. Writer's Block & Authority Issues/ 2. Writing Online

Note: No journal entry is due this week because the 7-10pp essay is due.

Readings

In WSW:

1. Section V. "Writer's Block and Authority" (pp.139–142)
2. "Learning from Writer's Block," by Jenny Love (pp. 143–150)
3. "Consciousness, Frustration, and Power: The Making of Contextual Writer's Block," by Miriam Axel-Lute (pp. 151–168)
4. "Authority Issues in Online Instruction," by JoAnne M. Podis (pp.169–178)

Handouts:

5. "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle," by Min-Zhan Lu
6. "Pedagogical *In Loco Parentis*: Reflecting on Power and Parental Authority in the Writing Classroom," by JoAnne and Leonard Podis
7. "Writing in the Information Age: The Language of E-Mail and Instant Messaging," by Elizabeth Weinstein

Note: 7–10 pp. essay is due in class Thursday, October 12

Before you submit the paper, I will ask you to talk in class about what you wrote, what you learned, what the process was like, etc. Also please choose an excerpt (a paragraph or so) to read aloud to the class. In this way everyone in the class can benefit from your paper.

Week 7: October 17 & 19

*******Fall Break*******

Note: In your journal for next week, please include a midterm evaluation of the course, including reflections on your own work so far. Next week in class we will talk about your views of the course and consider any suggestions for change that you would like to make.

Week 8: October 24 & 26

"DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES": WRITING, TEACHING, LEARNING —PART I

Readings

In WSW:

1. Section VI. "Discourse Communities: Issues and Problems" (pp. 179–184)
2. "Scientific Writing: What's So Difficult About It Anyway?" by Anita Stone (pp. 185–192)

In CT:

3. "Inventing the University," by David Bartholomae (pp. 623–653)

Handouts:

4. "Reflections on Academic Discourse," by Peter Elbow
5. "The Vexation of Class," by Nick Tingle
6. "'I Hate Writing Papers So Much I Want to Die!' and Other Problems with Academic Writing," by Bridget Heersink

Week 9: October 31 & November 2

“DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES”: WRITING, TEACHING, LEARNING—PART II

Readings

In WSW:

1. “Defining a Persona Within the Boundaries of Academic Discourse, or God, I Sound Like a Pretentious Ass,” by Elizabeth Schambelan (pp. 193–198)
2. “Traveling the Middle Ground: Bridging the Dichotomies Between Academic and Personal Discourse,” by Holly Thompson (pp. 199–206)

In CT:

3. “Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing,” by Mina Shaughnessy (pp. 311–317).

Handouts:

4. “Academic Papers Within the College Discourse,” by Kanupriya Arora

In *Lives on the Boundary*, by Mike Rose:

5. Chapter 1
6. Chapter 6 (If you have time, read chapters 2–5, also. Next week we’ll read Ch. 7 & 8)

Note: 10-12 pp. essay will be assigned this week (final draft due Mon., Dec. 18)

Week 10: November 7 & 9

EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED LEARNERS

Readings

In WSW:

1. Section VII. “Empowering Marginalized Learners” (pp. 207–212)
2. “My Hidden Class Consciousness,” by Monica Bielski (pp. 213–220)
3. “Writing in Academia: The Politics of Style,” by Virginia Pryor (pp. 221–227)
4. “Writing Tutors and Dyslexic Tutees: Is There Something Special We Should Know?” by Jennifer Wewers (pp. 229–237)

Handout:

5. “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder & the Writing Process,” by Emily Ascolese
6. “Is a Working-Class Hero Really Something to Be? Rediscovering Class Identity,” by Leonard A. Podis

In *Lives on the Boundary*, by Mike Rose:

7. Chapter 7
8. Chapter 8

Note: Tutor each other (prewriting) on the 10–12pp. essay.

Week 11: November 14 & 16

CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL APPROACHES IN TEACHING, TUTORING, AND PAPER-WRITING

Readings

In WSW:

1. Section VIII. "Politics of Literacy: Challenging Traditional Approaches" (pp. 239–242)
2. "How Much to Tell? The Role of the Teacher in the Politicized Classroom," by Jennifer Breen (pp. 243–250)
3. "On the Use of 'I' in Academic Writing," by Samantha Sansevere (pp. 251–260)
4. "My Paper," by Alice Peterson (pp. 261–266)

In CT:

5. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class," by James Berlin (pp. 717–737)

Handouts:

6. "Between the Drafts," by Nancy Sommers
7. Untitled expository writing paper (dated 3/15/99) by Dinah Shepherd

Week 12: November 21 (No Class Thurs., Nov. 23—Thanksgiving Day)**1. IDENTITY, DIVERSITY & WRITING/ 2. RETHINKING SCHOLARLY RHETORIC****Readings**In WSW:

1. Section IX. "Identity Issues in the Teaching of Writing" (pp. 267–270)
2. "Caught Between Skin Color and Dialect: A Non-Essentialist View of the Use of Black English," by Monica Anthony (pp. 271–283)

In CT:

3. "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," by Maxine Hairston (pp. 697–713)

Handouts:

4. "Demystifying the Discourse," by Melissa Hoskins
5. "Revealing Silence: Rethinking Personal Writing," by Anne Ruggles Gere
6. "The Rhetoric of Reproof," by Leonard A. Podis and JoAnne M. Podis

- Tutor each other on the 10–12pp. essay

Week 13: November 28 & 30**1. MORE IDENTITY ISSUES/ 2. "CONTACT ZONES" IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING****Readings**In WSW:

1. "'The Me Experience': Composing as a Man," by Donovan Hohn (pp. 285–299)
2. "Writing Inside Out: Issues of Sexual Identity in the Writing Classroom," by Rebecca Phares and David Schwam (pp. 301–314)

In CT:

3. "Composing as a Woman," by Elizabeth A. Flynn (pp. 571–585)
4. "Feminism in Composition: Inclusion, Metonymy, and Disruption," by Joy Ritchie and Kathleen Boardman (pp. 587–609)

Handouts:

5. "Standard English? I Speak English But That Ain't My Standard," by anonymous tutor
6. "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone," by Richard E. Miller

7. “The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued,” by A. Suresh Canagarajah

- Tutor each other (this week & next week) on the 10–12pp. essay

Week 14: December 5 & 7

ISSUES AND TRENDS IN COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY

Readings

In CT:

1. “Post-Process ‘Pedagogy,’” by Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch (pp. 97-125)

Handouts:

2. “Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century,” by Richard Fulkerson
3. “The Nervous System,” by Richard E. Miller
4. “The Economics of Authorship: Online Paper Mills, Student Writers, and First-Year Composition,” by Kelly Ritter
5. “The Hero with a Thousand Voices: The Relationship Between the Narrative and Academic Styles,” by Aaron Rester

- Tutor each other on the 10–12pp. essay

Week 15: December 12 & 14

CONTACT ZONES IN ENGLISH STUDIES AND ACADEMIA

Readings

In WSW:

1. Section X. “Problems and Issues in English and Composition Studies” (pp. 315–318)
2. “No Voice, No Vote: The Politics of Basic Writing,” by Lauren Podis (pp. 319–324)
3. “Stuck *in* Composition: Two Anecdotes from the 112th MLA Convention,” by Leonard A. Podis (pp. 325–327)
4. “Contextualizing the Debates: A Historical View of Expository Writing,” by Grace Chang (pp. 329–336)

Handout:

5. “Beyond Fear and (Self-)Loathing in the Composition-Literature Wars,” by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis

Note: This week I would like you to give a brief oral report (approx. 5 min.) on your final paper. Please come prepared to give a synopsis of the paper and to read an excerpt aloud. Plan to discuss the writing process you went through and what you learned from writing the paper. Also feel free to ask the class some questions about your project. I’ll ask half the class to give their report on Tuesday and the other half on Thursday (we can follow alphabetical order).

The last class will be held on Thursday, Dec. 14. The final draft of the 10–12pp essay is due Monday, Dec. 18 in King 139 at 4:30pm. I also invite you to submit a self-evaluation (perhaps 2pp). Feel free to include an estimate of the grade you think you have earned. While I cannot promise to give you that grade, I will definitely take your self-evaluation into consideration.