

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

**Spring 2005** Mr. Podis, King 139, x58612; email: len.podis@oberlin.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00–3:00 p.m. or by appointment

**Course Objectives:**

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

**Requirements:**

1. regular **attendance**—no more than 2 absences without just cause, please; I insist on this not because I want to cultivate orderly or submissive behavior, but because the participatory inquiry methods of the course require that everyone be present to participate—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,” with Professor Laurie McMillin
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, March 24
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 Wednesday, May 18
8. a workshop-style **presentation** to the class, focusing on the draft-in-progress of your 10–12 page essay. Presentations should be about 35 min. I’ll circulate a sign-up sheet after break.

**Grading.** While grades can provide helpful feedback and external motivation, they are invariably subjective, often unreliable, and prone to create hierarchical situations. In keeping with the counter-hegemonic pedagogy advocated in the course, I hope we can deemphasize grading somewhat. I would urge us instead to concentrate on the important tasks before us, such as sustaining a productive dialogue, learning from each other, and helping those with whom we work. I will use a form of contract grading. By this I mean that everyone who (1) attends regularly, (2) participates in course activities with dedication, and (3) does all the required assignments in a thoughtful way will earn a grade of at least B+. While some might call a default grade of B+ an egregious example of rampant grade inflation, I believe it is justified because you are all carefully selected, highly talented folks who are being asked to function at a very high level for the benefit of the institution. If you meet the terms and spirit of the contract and go a step further by demonstrating great commitment to and enthusiasm for the work, you will move into the A range. If you don’t meet the terms of the contract (e.g., due to absences or failure to do the assignments), your grade will be lower. I will invite you to submit a final self-evaluation which 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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 associates’ essays received since the publication of *Working with Student Writers*

Online sources for writers and teachers: An excellent collection of links to online resources for writers is available at <http://www.oberlin.edu/rhetoric/students/online.html>

## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

### **Week 1: Tuesday, February 8:**

For the first class period, we will spend some time introducing ourselves, reviewing the syllabus, and discussing tutoring assignments, which are being arranged with the help of Professor Laurie McMillin in RHET 483. 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, February 10:**

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 be able to serve as tutees. If people are working on a piece of writing about which they would welcome some advice, that would be ideal.

*Assignment for next week:* Please read the selections listed under “Week 2” and write your first journal entry for class on Tuesday, February 15. 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 and suggesting any changes we should make in the course as the semester progresses.

**Note:** We need to discuss how we want to set up the practice tutoring sessions for next week

### **Week 2: February 15 & 17**

#### **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

**Note:** The first journal entry is due in class on Tuesday, February 15.

**Also:** This week we will attempt to do some practice tutoring in class.

## **Week 3: February 22 & 24**

### **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. "Joe says, 'Communication, what kind of communication?'" by Charlotte Byrd
8. "Spreading the Word: A Proposal," by Michael Kish

**Note:** The 7–10 pp. paper will be assigned this week; it will be due Thursday, March 24.

## **Week 4: March 1 & 3**

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

#### **Readings**

##### In 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
8. "The Motives Behind Tutoring and Being Tutored," by Franchesca Medina

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

## **Week 5: March 8 & 10**

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

#### **Readings**

##### In 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. "Pedagogical *In Loco Parentis*: Reflecting on Power and Parental Morality in the Writing Classroom," by JoAnne and Leonard Podis
7. "Teaching Arrangement: Defining a More Practical Approach," by Leonard A. Podis
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: March 15**

**\*\*No Class on Thursday, March 17!\*\*** Mrs. Podis and I will be presenting a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in San Francisco.

### **1. WRITER'S BLOCK & AUTHORITY ISSUES/ 2. WRITING ONLINE**

#### **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. "Writing in the Information Age: The Language of E-Mail and Instant Messaging," by Elizabeth Weinstein

**Note:** As we will not have class on Thursday, March 17—a time when we might have tutored each other on the paper due next week—I would strongly urge you all to visit the Writing Center at least once this week to get some reaction and response to your draft or partial draft. Visiting the Writing Center will not only help you in developing your paper but will also give the Writing Center Associates some business!

## **Week 7: March 22 & 24**

### **“DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES”—PART I: WRITING, TEACHING, LEARNING**

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

#### **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

### **Note: 7–10 pp. essay is due in class Thursday, March 24**

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 to read aloud to the class. In this way everyone in the class can benefit from your paper.

## **Week 8: March 29 & March 31**

### **\*\*\*\*\*Spring 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 9: Tuesday, April 5 & 7**

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

#### **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)

##### Handouts:

3. “For Whom Do I Write? A Discussion on the Discourse of Academia,” by Erin Savage

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

4. Chapter 1
5. 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 Weds., May 18)**

## **Week 10: April 12 & 14**

### **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)

##### In CT:

5. "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing," by Mina Shaughnessy (pp. 311–317).

##### Handout:

6. "Demystifying the Discourse," by Melissa Hoskins

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

7. Chapter 7
8. Chapter 8

**Note:** Tutor each other in class to brainstorm on the 10–12pp. essay. Presentations will begin this week.

## **Week 11: April 19 & 21**

### **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. "Post-Process 'Pedagogy,'" by Lee-Ann M. Kastman Breuch (pp. 97-125)

##### Handouts:

6. "Between the Drafts," by Nancy Sommers
7. Untitled expository writing paper (dated 3/15/99) by Dinah Shepherd
8. "The Hero with a Thousand Voices: The Relationship Between the Narrative and Academic Styles," by Aaron Rester

## **Week 12: April 26 & 28**

### **1. IDENTITY, IDEOLOGY & COMPOSITION/ 2. RETHINKING OUR SCHOLARLY ETHICS**

#### **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. "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class," by James Berlin (pp. 717–737)
4. "Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing," by Maxine Hairston (pp. 697–713)

##### Handouts:

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

## **Week 13: May 3 & 5**

### **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)

##### Handouts:

4. "Standard English? I Speak English But That Ain't My Standard," by An Anonymous Peer Tutor
5. "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone," by Richard E. Miller
6. "Writer's Block and Religion Papers: Seeking God and Defining Self at a Secular Institution," by Andrea Eshelman

**Note:** Tutor each other in class on the 10–12pp. essay, as appropriate.

**Week 14: May 10 & 12****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)

**In CT:**

5. “Feminism in Composition: Inclusion, Metonymy, and Disruption,” by Joy Ritchie and Kathleen Boardman (pp. 587–609)

**Handouts:**

6. “The Nervous System,” by Richard E. Miller
7. “Beyond Fear and (Self-)Loathing in the Composition-Literature Wars,” by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis

**The last class will be held on Thursday, May 12. The final draft of the 10–12pp essay is due Wednesday, May 18 in King 139. Note that I am also inviting you to submit a self-evaluation (perhaps two pages or so). Please feel free to include an estimate of the grade you think you have earned . . . or not. . . . If you do suggest a grade, I cannot promise to give you that grade, but I will definitely take your self-evaluation into consideration as I determine final grades for the course.**