OBERLIN COLLEGE
RHETORIC and COMPOSITION 401/ENGLISH 399
TEACHING AND TUTORING WRITING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES
Fall 2014 Prof. Len Podis (King 139; Office Hours: Tu–Th., 2:00 p.m.–3:00 p.m. or by appt.)

**Course Objectives:**
- to educate and train you to be a helpful and effective Writing Associate
- 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 a compelling reason, 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. The course aims to promote the type of interactive learning advocated in the course readings, and attendance is necessary to achieve this.
2. assigned readings on pedagogy and writing theory and practice—see schedule below
3. a weekly journal entry (2-3pp), generally 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 Writing Center, or for a W-Int or W-Adv course, or for the Ninde Program
6. an essay (8–10 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 16.
7. an essay (10–15 pages) on any subject related to the course, to be drafted and revised during the second half of the semester; final draft due Saturday, December 20, at 9:00 p.m.
8. a presentation (approx. 20-25 minutes) based on the draft-in-progress of your second essay.

**Grading:** While grades may provide useful feedback and motivation, they are notoriously subjective, often unreliable, and prone to create hierarchical situations. In keeping with the counter-hegemonic pedagogy of the course, I will deemphasize grading. I encourage us rather to focus on the challenges we face: sustaining a productive dialogue, learning from each other, and helping others. To help us achieve those goals, 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 traditionalists might see this B+ baseline grade as “grade inflation,” I believe it is justified because you are a group of self-selected, academically talented folks who are functioning at a very high level for the benefit of the institution and society. If you honor the contract and go a step further to show exceptional commitment to your work, you will move into the A range. If you don’t meet the contract (e.g., due to absences, sloth, or lackluster performance of duties), your grade will be lower. I will invite you to submit a final self-evaluation (approximately 2 pp.) that I will consider as I determine course grades.

**Texts (available at the Oberlin Bookstore, but Mike Rose’s book may be in short supply):**
- *Working with Student Writers: Essays on Tutoring and Teaching*, 2nd edition, Podis/Podis
- *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*, 3rd edition, 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 not included in *Working with Student Writers.* They are available on Blackboard. (OVER)
SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

Week 1: Tuesday, September 2:
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 4:
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 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 working on a piece of writing about which you would welcome some advice, or if you have an old paper 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 9. In general, I would ask you 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 collect your journals at the end of class on Tuesdays so 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 9 & 11

ADVICE ON PEER TUTORING

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

In Working with Student Writers (hereafter WSW):
1. “Introduction” (pp. 1–6)
2. Section One. “Tutoring Writing: Practical Advice” (pp. 7–11)
3. Ch. 1 “Working at the Drop-In Writing Center,” by Katie Gilmartin (pp. 13–19)
4. Ch. 2 “Tutoring’ Beyond the Writing Center: Peer Consulting in the Classroom,” by Tisha Turk (pp. 21–32)
5. Ch. 3 “Speaking the Written Voice,” by Alicia Koundakjian (pp. 33–37)
6. Ch. 4 “The Motives Behind Tutoring and Being Tutored,” by Franchesca Medina (pp. 39–46)

Handout (available on Blackboard):

- The first journal entry is due in class on Tuesday, September 9.
- This week we will attempt to do some practice tutoring in class.
Week 3: September 16 & 18

1. PERSPECTIVES ON PEER TUTORING/ 2. PROCESS AND REVISION

Readings

In WSW:
1. Section Two. “Perspectives on Peer Tutoring and the Writing Process” (pp. 47–49)
2. Ch. 5 “Working with Peers at the Writing Center: Tutoring for Diverse Disciplines,” by Peggy Putney (pp. 51–56)
3. Ch. 6 “Peer Tutors and Institutional Authority,” by Jeremiah Dyehouse (pp. 57–61)
4. Ch. 7 “Processing Writing,” by Polly Dondy-Kaplan (pp. 63–70)

In Cross-Talk in Comp Theory (hereafter CT):
5. “Teach Writing as a Process Not Product,” by Donald M. Murray (pp. 3–6)
6. “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers,” by Nancy Sommers (pp. 43–54)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
7. “Tutoring Writing: Healing or What?” by Diane Stelzer Morrow

Note: The 8–10 pp. paper will be assigned this week; it will be due Thursday, October 16.

Week 4: September 23 & 25

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

Readings

In WSW:
1. Section Three. “Facilitating and Responding to Student Writing” (pp. 71–74)
2. Ch. 8 “Like, it was, you know what I mean?” Conversational vs. Presentational Speech in Student Academic Discourse,” by Emily Fawcett (pp. 75–85)
3. Ch. 9 “Improving Our Responses to Student Writing: A Process-Oriented Approach,” by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis (pp. 87–95)
4. Ch. 10 “The Comments They Made: An Exploration of Helpful and Unhelpful Commentary,” by Naomi Strand (pp. 97–103)
5. Ch. 11 “The Dilemmas of Grading,” by Noelle Howey (pp. 105–110)
6. Ch. 29 “Writing Beyond the Words: Language Minority Students and School Discourse,” by Maria E. Barajas-Román (pp. 301–310)
7. Ch. 30 “Theory and Practice: Integrating ESL Scholarship and Peer Tutoring Pedagogy,” by Emma Nolan-Thomas (pp. 311–321)

Handout (available on Blackboard):
8. “Strangers in Academia: The Experiences of Faculty and ESL Students Across the Curriculum,” by Vivian Zamel

Note: This week we will tutor each other in class to brainstorm ideas for the 8–10pp paper.
Week 5: September 30 & October 2

1. Writing in the Classroom/ 2. Grammar, Form, and Arrangement

Readings
In WSW:
1. Section Four. “Writing in the Classroom: Approaches and Methods” (pp. 111–114)
2. Ch. 12 “Perspectives on the Writing Classroom,” by Leonard A. Podis (pp. 115–123)
3. Ch. 13 “No Answers: Interrogating ‘Truth’ in Writing,” by Noelle Howey (pp. 125–129)
4. Ch. 14 “Glazed Looks and Panic Attacks: Teaching Grammar to Basic Writers,” by Kate Daloz (pp. 131–138)

In CT:
5. “Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar,” by Patrick Hartwell (pp. 205–233)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
8. “Identifying and Teaching Rhetorical Plans for Arrangement,” by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis

Note: As appropriate, we may continue to tutor each other in class on the 8–10pp paper.

Week 6: October 7 & 9

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

Readings
In WSW:
1. Section Five. “Writer’s Block” (pp.139–141)
2. Ch. 15 “Learning from Writer’s Block,” by Jenny Love (pp. 143–150)
3. Ch. 16 “Consciousness, Frustration, and Power: The Making of Contextual Writer’s Block,” by Miriam Axel-Lute (pp. 151–168)
4. Section Seven. “Online Writing and Electronic Communication” (pp. 213–215)
5. Ch. 21 “Authority Issues in Online Instruction,” by JoAnne M. Podis (pp.217–228)
6. Ch. 22 “Internet Forums and the Writing Student,” by Aaron Miller (pp. 229–236)
7. Ch. 23 “Writing in the Information Age: The Language of E-Mail and Instant Messaging,” by Elizabeth Weinstein (pp. 237–249)

Handout (available on Blackboard):
8. “Blackboard the Discussion Slayer: A Critical Examination of Blackboard Posts at Oberlin College,” by Charlotte Sawyer
Week 7: October 14 & 16
“DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES”: WRITING, TEACHING, LEARNING—PART I

*Note: No journal entry this week because the 8-10pp essay is due.*

**Readings**

In *WSW*:
1. Section Eight. “Discourse Communities: Issues and Problems” (pp. 251–254)
2. Ch. 24 “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. 523–553)

**Handouts (available on Blackboard):**
4. “Reflections on Academic Discourse,” by Peter Elbow
7. “From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle,” by Min-Zhan Lu

*Note: 8–10 pp. essay is due in class Thursday, October 16*

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 our class can benefit from your paper.

**Week 8: October 21 & 23**

****Fall Break****

*Note: In your journal for next week, please add a midterm evaluation, including reflections on your own work so far. We can discuss your views of the course next week in class.*

**Week 9: October 28 & 30**

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

**Readings**

In *WSW*:
1. Ch. 25 “Defining a Persona Within the Boundaries of Academic Discourse, or God, I Sound Like a Pretentious Ass,” by Elizabeth Schambelan (pp. 263–268)
2. Ch. 26 “Traveling the Middle Ground: Bridging the Dichotomies Between Academic and Personal Discourse,” by Holly Thompson (pp. 269–276)
3. Ch. 27 “Academic Papers Within the College Discourse,” by Kanupriya Arora (pp. 277–284)

In *CT*:

**Handouts (available on Blackboard):**
5. “A Guide to Teaching and Tutoring Writing Across the Intelligences,” by Kate Cook
6. “Page Counts: Do They Really Count?” by Laura Stein

In *Lives on the Boundary*, by Mike Rose:
7. Chapter 1
8. Chapter 6 (If you have time, please read Ch. 2–5, as well. We’ll read Ch. 7 & 8 next week.)

*Note: 10-15 pp. essay assigned this week (final draft due Saturday, Dec. 20 at 9:00 p.m)*
**Week 10: November 4 & 6**

**EMPOWERING MARGINALIZED LEARNERS**

**Readings**

In WSW:
1. Section Nine. “Empowering Marginalized Learners” (pp. 285–287)
2. Ch. 28 “Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and the Writing Process,” by Emily Ryan (pp. 289–300)
3. Section Ten. “Class Background and Writing: Teaching, Tutoring, Learning” (pp. 323–326)
4. Ch. 31 “My Hidden Class Consciousness and the Impact of Socioeconomic Class in Academia,” by Monica Bielski Boris (pp. 327–334)
5. Ch. 32 “Writing in Academia: The Politics of ‘Style,’” by Virginia Pryor (pp. 335–341)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
7. “The Vexation of Class,” by Nick Tingle

In *Lives on the Boundary*, by Mike Rose:
8. Chapter 7
9. Chapter 8

**Note:** Tutor each other (brainstorming/prewriting) on the 10–15pp. essay.

**Week 11: November 11 & 13**

**CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL APPROACHES: TEACHING, TUTORING, AND WRITING**

**Readings**

In WSW:
1. Section Six. “Challenging Traditional Approaches” (pp. 169–172)
2. Ch. 17 “The Hero with a Thousand Voices: The Relationship Between the Narrative and Academic Styles,” by Aaron Rester (pp. 173–182)
3. Ch. 18 “On the Use of ‘I’ in Academic Writing,” by Samantha Sansevere (pp. 183–193)
4. Ch. 19 “Why Do We Write?” by Dinah Shepherd (pp. 195–199)
5. Ch. 20 “Demystifying the Discourse,” by Melissa Hoskins (pp. 201–212)

In CT:
6. “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone,” by Min-Zhan Lu (pp. 467–483)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
7. “Between the Drafts,” by Nancy Sommers
8. “The Value of Student Writing as Reading,” by Leonard A. Podis and JoAnne M. Podis
9. “Flaw(less): Ignoring the Errors and Approaching Student Writing as Reading,” by Kirsten Martin
Week 12: November 18 & 20

IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND POWER IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

Readings

In WSW:
1. Section Eleven. “Issues of Identity and Power in the Classroom” (pp. 353–356)
2. Ch. 34 “Caught Between Skin Color and Dialect: A Non-Essentialist View of the Use of Black English,” by Monica L. Davis (pp. 357–368)

In CT:
3. “Inviting the Mother Tongue: Beyond ‘Mistakes,’ ‘Bad English,’ and ‘Wrong Language,’” by Peter Elbow (pp. 641–672)
4. “Oakland, the Word, and the Divide: How We All Missed the Moment,” by Adam J. Banks (pp. 827–868)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
5. “African American Language, Rhetoric, and Students’ Writing,” by Staci Perryman-Clark
6. “The Place of World Englishes in Composition: Pluralization Continued,” by A. Suresh Canagarajah
7. “Pedagogical In Loco Parentis: Reflecting on Power and Parental Authority in the Writing Classroom,” by JoAnne and Leonard Podis

Week 13: November 25 (Note: No class on Nov. 27—Thanksgiving Day)

1. MORE IDENTITY ISSUES/ 2. “CONTACT ZONES” IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Readings

In WSW:
1. Ch. 33 “Rural Blue-Collar Identities and the Writing Process,” by Desirae Sweet (pp. 343–351)
2. Ch. 35 “Writing Inside Out: Issues of Sexual Identity in the Writing Classroom,” by Rebecca Phares and David Schwam (pp. 369–382)

In CT:
3. “Composing as a Woman,” by Elizabeth A. Flynn (pp. 581–595)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
4. “Composing Queers: The Subversive Potential of the Writing Center,” by Jonathan Doucette
5. “Fault Lines in the Contact Zone,” by Richard E. Miller
6. “Revealing Silence: Rethinking Personal Writing,” by Anne Ruggles Gere
Week 14: December 2 & 4

**ISSUES AND TRENDS IN COMPOSITION PEDAGOGY AND SCHOLARSHIP**

**Readings**

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

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
2. “Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century,” by Richard Fulkerson
4. “The Rhetoric of Reproof,” by Leonard A. Podis and JoAnne M. Podis
5. “Writing, Rhetoric, and Composition in the Age of Obama,” by Morris Young

**Week 15: December 9 & 11**

**CONTACT ZONES IN ENGLISH STUDIES AND ACADEMIA**

**Readings**

In *WSW*:
1. Ch. 36 “No Voice, No Vote: The Politics of Basic Writing,” by Lauren Podis (pp. 383–388)
2. Ch. 37 “Contextualizing the Debates: A Historical View of Expository Writing,” by Grace Chang (pp. 389–396)

Handouts (available on Blackboard):
3. “Stuck in Composition: Two Anecdotes from the 112th MLA Convention,” by Leonard A. Podis
4. “Beyond Fear and (Self-)Loathing in the Composition-Literature Wars,” by JoAnne M. Podis and Leonard A. Podis

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The last class will be held on Thursday, December 11. The final draft of the 10–15pp essay is due **Saturday, December 20 at 9:00 p.m.** Please submit it electronically, as an email attachment. I also invite you to submit a self-evaluation (approximately 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.