“Everyone has the capacity to write, writing can be taught, and teachers can help students become better writers.” So begins the NCTE guideline on the teaching of writing. This, at the core of it, is what the Rhetoric and Composition Department is about, and it’s what the Writing Associates Program is all about. We might even change it to read “teacher and other students can help students become better writers.” It’s a radical idea, really, but experience has shown that thoughtful, informed, generous WAs play a significant role in other students’ education. On top of that, the very process of WAing is often transformative for WAs, giving them new ways to think about writing, about learning, about the world, as well as tools and approaches for thinking about and carrying out teaching, collaboration, and mentoring.

The goals for this course are:

1) to introduce you to the field of composition -- its main schools of thought, its values and ethics -- and to the issues that matter in the "larger conversation " about writing pedagogy
2) to help you become an effective Writing Associate
3) to encourage you to connect theory and practice
4) to help you reflect on the process of working with other writers; to prepare you for other kinds of teaching you might do in the future
5) to lead you to reflect on you own writing processes and your experience as a writer at Oberlin

But really, if you want to be a good writing associate, you should have already taken this course. That is to say, because you will be working with students at the same time that you are taking this course, you may often find yourself saying as you work through the syllabus, “I wish I had known this before.” The trouble is, we cannot know everything in advance before we start working. If we had to know everything first, no one would ever be able to teach or help anybody else with anything! Instead, you will need to accept that you will be learning as you go along, and that working with students, encountering new ideas, and changing your mind is essential to this learning. The chance to change your mind and develop is not the result of bad scheduling: it’s what learning and humility and growth are all about. Instead of becoming an expert before you start, you’ll need to be open to situations, to reading, to learning about the foundational ideas of this field, to trying things and changing your mind, and thus to evolve in your thinking and your practice.

You will notice on the syllabus that I often include the dates when the readings were published. These dates matter, for, to some degree, I want you to understand the historical development of writing pedagogy. You need not take every reading as gospel truth. Sometimes I have you read something because it offers perspective on the development of ideas, because it served as a kind of milestone. And sometimes, even if some aspects of a reading seem anachronistic or even controversial, you will need to read generously and openly and critically all at the same time. On the syllabus, I have also tried to include some context for the readings to guide you.

You will be helping other students with their writing – that’s key: at the same time, you will be working on your own writing, developing your sense of argument and your understanding of style. Although I expect that most of write well in many situations, I want you to accept the notion that there is more for all of us to learn about writing. As a teacher, I hold the bar high for your writing: please understand that I may push you to try more, to aim higher.
**Required Texts, available at the Oberlin Bookstore:**
Fitzgerald and Ianetta, *The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors*
McAndrew and Reigstad, *Tutoring Writing*
Williams, *Style, 11th edition*
AND many many readings on Blackboard

**Requirements**
1. regular attendance—Attendance is important because of the participatory and interactive nature of the course. The course just can’t work if people are not here or if they are not prepared for class. So no more than 2 absences without good cause. More absences than that will affect your grade. Connected to this, please plan to arrive to class on time.
2. careful attention to all reading, writing, and other assignments. Plan to read everything in preparation for class and to have copies of the readings in class. I recommend that you read the articles in the order that they are listed on the syllabus because I have arranged them purposefully and, in some cases, writers are responding to the work of those before them.
3. participation in class. This involves speaking as well as attentive, active, generous listening.
4. WA-ing. All students in this class will work as WAs as part of their learning. Those who work in the writing center will WA for at least three hours. They will be paid for any additional hours they work beyond that. Similarly, course tutors should plan to work an average of 7-8 hours per week for their course.
4. your presence. 1) Because of various mishaps in the past, I am tempted to make this a laptop/iPad/phone-free classroom. Please be mindful. 2) Be in class on time; late=absent. 3) Stay in class once you are here; please take care of bathroom and other issues before class. 4) most importantly, listen, be open while you are here. Similarly, please don’t pack up to go before the class period has ended.
5. journal. Plan to keep a working journal on the Bb site. Plan to write twice a week starting right away. In your journal entries, reflect on what we are reading, what your experiences are as a WA, our discussions in class. Please do more than simply report “I saw this student; she did that and this.” Instead, wonder, explore, ask questions. If it seems weird to write journal entries that I will read, you can treat them as letters to me. I will read your journals every two weeks or so and comment on them; I will look for a total of 4 entries for a two-week period of at least 300 words or so. Please don’t put them off.
The journals should be kept on Bb; simply go to that tool and create a private journal.
6. projects/assignments: Projects & assignments must be complete and on time.

**Grading**
15% Informal assignments: Projects 1, 2, 3, 5, Shop Talk. Each assignment is worth 5 points total and will be marked on a 5 point scale. 5= excellent, 4=very good, 3=good, 2=some issues, 1= substandard, 0=no credit
10% Style project, 10 points total
10% Project 4.
5% Project 6.
10% Project 7.
20% Project 8: Final project. Letter grade on final revision
10% journals; Marked on completeness, thoughtfulness, length, 10 points total
20% Class participation
**Ethical Practice** Much of our some discussion will focus on your experiences as a student and as a writing associate. To protect the privacy of faculty and students, we need to be careful about using names or identifying individuals. Sometimes, of course, this isn’t entirely possible, so please recognize that our conversations are private and should not go beyond the classroom. In our writing and research, we need to follow the guidelines for ethical practice set up by the institutional review board (IRB). Thus, you shouldn’t survey or interview people without considering the guidelines; in some cases, it will be necessary to get the approval of the IRB and obtain the written permission of your subjects. Please contact me before going ahead with research involving human subjects and look at the IRB link on the Bb startup page.

**Note:** We will use Bb a lot in the course. When you post something, please be sure to use a .doc, .docx, or .pdf ending – otherwise we won’t be able to access your attachment. Please note that the schedule is subject to change, especially after midterm.

**Please Note:** Fitzgerald and Ianetta’s *Oxford Guide* frequently asks you to write a bit or prepare for discussion. Do these things.

The schedule may change due to our interests and concerns. There are open spaces later in the semester to accommodate our interests. Due dates, though, should remain the same.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>9/1</td>
<td>NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing, Bb Tutoring Writing, “What Tutoring Writing Isn’t”, pp. 14-20</td>
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<td>Due 9/7</td>
<td>Project 1. WA session: Team up with someone in the class and practice working as a WA. Both of you should come to the session with an assignment, issue, or piece of writing (it can be something from the past, but it’s really useful to have something that you are really working on or something that you are not sure about). The writer may decide to role-play a bit, but this is not necessary. As a WA, try to put into practice some of what you’ve been learning. Be sure you take on both roles. You can use the Writing Center for your session if you like. Create and revise a 500-word response about the experience and post it on the discussion forum of Bb by 7 pm Sunday 9/7. No first drafts or unedited mss please!); read the responses of your peers before class.</td>
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| **9/10** | Fitzgerald and Ianetta, “Authoring Processes,” pp. 96-108  
McAndrew and Reigstad, “Tutoring When the Writer Does Not Have a Draft” pp. 31-41  
McAndrew and Reigstad, “Tutoring Different People,” 89-102  
Flashback: Sommers, “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” (1980), Bb |
| **Writing Center Opens** | Project 2: write something short, due Sunday, 9/13 by midnight. Post on Bb. |
| **9/15** | Berrett, “Students can Transfer Knowledge,” Bb  
Key Terms for Writing and Rhetorical Practice, Rhetoric Dept. OC, Bb  
Roskelly, “What Do Students Need to Know About Rhetoric?” Bb  
Graff and Birkenstein, from *They Say, I Say*, Bb |
| **9/17** | **The Larger Context in Which We Work**  
Coates, “Letter to My Son,” Bb |
| **9/22** | Lukiannoff and Haidt, “The Coddling of the American Mind,” Bb  
Deresiewicz, “The Neoliberal Arts” Bb |
| **Style project** | Working with *Style*: Williams’ Style is a classic book aimed at helping writers make their prose more readable. We’ll work through this book in pieces because it will not only help you help others, it will help you think differently about your own prose. Please note that though Williams focuses on things at the sentence level, these are not lessons in “grammar” (though you may learn some things about grammar, usage, and punctuation on the way to improving your style).  
Refer to the handout for what to do with Style. Prepare to discuss things on 9/24. Read Lessons 1 & 2; work with (apply) Lesson 3 as described above.  
Bring your folders to class. |
| **9/24** | Shop Talk 1: 2 students lead  
Style project: First things due by classtime. |
| **10/1** | **Directive vs Non-directive Teaching**  
Brooks, "Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work" (1995) Bb  
| **Project 3** | For class on 10/3: Using the readings to guide you, write marginal and end comments on the draft called “Project 4” on Bb. You can print out the piece and write comments by hand; you can also respond to it digitally. Imagine that you are making comments on a paper that the student will revise. |
| **10/3** | Project 3 due in class.  
Sommers, "Responding to Student Writing," 1982, Bb  
Straub, "Responding -- Really Responding -- to Other Students' Writing," from *The Subject is Writing*, (1999) Bb, 10 pp  
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<tr>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>Style, Lesson 4</td>
<td>Project 4 Due Friday, 10/16 by 4 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td>Style, Lesson 5&amp;6</td>
<td>Shop Talk 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/12</td>
<td>Extending Writing Pedagogy &amp; WAing to Speaking Practices</td>
<td>Project 5: Final project proposal due.</td>
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Possible readings

Oxford: O’Leary, It’s Not What You Say, But How You Say It (and to Whom)
Young, “Nah, We Straight,” Bb
Denny, “Queering the Writing Center” (2005) SWT

Trimbur, “Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning,” (1989), Bb

Learning disabilities folder on Bb
Oxford: Babcock, “When Something is Not Quite Right”

Trimbur, "Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms" (1987) Bb
Shamoon and Burns, A Critique of Pure Tutoring” (1995) SWT
Clark and Healy, "Are Writing Centers Ethical?" (1996) Bb