

College Writing: Theory and Practice

Spring 2020 (CRN: 21819)

Prof. Lori Jacobson

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(Writing Resources Center)

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I. COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: College Writing: Theory and Practice (WRIT 399)

Meeting Times: MW 12:00-12:50, Swem Library, Cox Classroom

Scheduled Exam Time: Thursday, May 7, 9:00-12:00*

*Your final project will be due by noon in place of an exam.

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the history, theory, and practice of tutoring writing in academic settings. Participants will explore and discuss the ideas that shape writing center practices, and they will develop a toolkit of practical strategies to use during one-on-one consultations. Course topics include: process pedagogy, collaborative learning, consulting across cultures and abilities, working with various genres and disciplines, global to local revision strategies, and information literacy. Assignments in this course will allow participants to observe, analyze, and reflect on consulting sessions and will culminate with a personal philosophy of consulting.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors (6th edition)

Additional readings, available on Blackboard (Bb), from:

The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors (Christina Murphy, Steve Sherwood)

ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors (Shanti Bruce and Ben Rafoth)

The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors (Lauren Fitzgerald and Melissa Ianetta)

Available as free, open education resources [OER]:

Writing in College: from Competence to Excellence

(<http://pressbooks.opensuny.org/writing-in-college-from-competence-to-excellence/>)

Purdue Online Writing Lab (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>)

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will:

- Understand writing and research as a process of discovery and investigation as well as a mode of communication.
- Gain insight into the writing and research processes of writers.
- Learn tutoring strategies for conferring with writers and researchers.
- Learn to apply theoretical concepts and specific tutoring techniques to meet the needs of individual writers and researchers.
- Develop an awareness of writing genres and expectations across a variety of academic disciplines

IV. COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

Assignments and Evaluation: We will use Blackboard to post all assignments and will use its announcements function to keep you up-to-date on class activities. Remember to check email daily.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- 15% Participation and Engagement
- 10% Reflection 1 “How I Write”
- 10% Reflection 2 “Consultant as Consultee”
- 10% Reflection 3 “Consultation Observation”
- 25% Reflection 4 “My Philosophy of Consulting”
- 30% Assessment of a Tutoring Strategy

Grading Scale:

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59 = F

Participation and Engagement: Think of our class as a learning team, and think of yourself as a vital member of the team. Plan to come to class on time and prepared. Preparation includes completing all reading and writing assignments, and bringing thoughtful questions and comments to share with the class. In class, listen actively and respectfully to your instructor and your peers, contribute to the class discussion, and make an earnest effort on in-class activities.

The following ongoing learning activities are also factored into your participation grade:

Consulting Toolkit Journal: Throughout the semester, you will keep a journal focused on your developing knowledge of tutoring practices. This may include notes on practical strategies for tutoring writing, effective questions to deploy during tutoring sessions, significant passages from readings, and more. You may choose to keep your journal in a

notebook, or in a Word or Google doc. The journal is intended to be a resource that you can return to as you craft your philosophy of consulting and begin your work in the WRC.

Discussion Questions: All students will be responsible for posting discussion questions to our Blackboard site prior to class. Discussion questions should focus on the reading assignments and should be designed to provoke meaningful discussions among your peers.

Article Presentation & Handout (Group Assignment): During our unit on tutoring multimodal projects, your small group will be assigned an article focused on strategies for working with a specific genre (e.g., podcasts, posters, videos, etc.). As a group, you will summarize the article, create a handout, and present these at the March 30 staff meeting.

You will receive a mid-term assessment of your class participation (with clear instructions about how to improve your grade).

Assignments: Detailed assignment prompts will be provided in class and on Blackboard. Deadlines are listed in the course schedule.

Reflection Papers: These papers allow you to analyze your thoughts about and experiences with writing and consulting. As analytical essays, each should have a thesis, and be well-organized, fully developed, and grounded in our course readings and discussions.

How I Write: (2-3 pages) In your first reflection paper, you will examine and discuss your own writing process. As part of this assignment, you will schedule an appointment in the WRC to brainstorm ideas or work on your draft. In the *Bedford Guide*, Exercise 3D “The Writing Process in Action” (Topic 1) will help you get started. You may also want to refer to the questions in Exercise 4B “Reflecting on Your Own Writing Concerns.”

Consultant as Consultee: (2-3 pages) In your second reflection paper, you will describe and analyze your experience being a consultee as you prepared for your “How I Write” reflection paper. Exercise 3E “Reflecting on Being Tutored” will help you get started.

Consultation Observation: (2-3 pages) For your third reflection paper, you will first observe 3 consultation sessions led by experienced WRC consultants. Then describe and analyze your experiences, and explain what you learned from them. You will receive observation sheets to fill out during each session. Exercise 2B “Observing Tutoring Sessions” will help you get started.

My Philosophy of Consulting: (3-5 pages) For your final reflection paper, you will articulate your personal philosophy of consulting. Your paper should synthesize the ideas you have developed about: your work with student writers, course readings and discussions, and your observations of and conversations with other consultants. A

consulting philosophy should draw on the theories and practices of others, but it frames these in a highly personalized way. It reveals *your* conception of tutoring writing, describes *your* tutoring practices, and offers a justification for why you tutor the way you do. Refer to Exercise 9A “Articulating Your Tutoring Philosophy” for more ideas.

Assessment of a Tutoring Strategy: (4-6 pages) Throughout this course, you will be introduced to a variety of strategies for tutoring writing that could be validated or challenged through research (for example, the common strategy of having a consultee read the paper aloud). For this assignment, you will choose one strategy and find at least three sources that address it. Read the sources, and consider the following questions: What have other scholars and practitioners claimed about the strategy? Is there disagreement about its validity? Have perspectives on this strategy changed over time? Then write a blog post for the WRC’s *From the Center* blog which describes the strategy, explains when and why it might be used in consultations (and/or when it might be avoided), and reflects on any controversies or disagreements about the strategy.

Conferences and Revisions: When you hand in your reflection papers and the draft of your tutoring strategy assessment, you will schedule a brief one-on-one conference with Prof. Jacobson. At the scheduled conference, we will discuss your paper’s strengths and weaknesses. Any paper can be revised, but keep in mind that revision involves more than simply correcting grammar and spelling errors. Revision (literally “to see again”) requires you to think deeply and reconsider what you’ve written and how you’ve written it. **Revisions are due one week after the scheduled conference** and must be handed in with the original graded paper with instructor comments. Revisions are graded by averaging the original grade with the revision grade.

V. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Because seminar-style courses depend on the participation of all students, your presence in class is essential. **You will be allowed two unexcused absences—no questions asked.** Each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by one-third of a letter grade (A- to B+, for example). Excused absences include those arranged with me beforehand and those accompanied by appropriate documentation (such as notification from the Dean’s Office).

Class Climate: The class climate of a successful seminar-style course is open-minded and collegial. Most of our class periods will be filled by small- and large-group discussion of the assigned readings as well as collaborative activities. In order for this work to be productive, all students need to feel comfortable participating. We will create and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect in which everyone’s ideas can be heard.

Assignments: You should complete all assigned readings by the start of class, and bring the readings to class (on your laptop, or hard copy). Class activities are directly linked to the assigned readings. All assignments must be completed in order to receive a grade for the class. **You may turn in one assignment late without penalty** (but you must let me know in advance

when you are choosing this option); otherwise, late work will affect your grade. I will not give an “Incomplete” except under extreme and documented circumstances.

Manuscript Preparation: All papers should follow MLA format (including one-inch margins and 12 point, Times New Roman font); see the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) page for “MLA General Format” and guidelines posted to Blackboard.

Important Dates: The deadline to add or drop a class is January 31. The deadline to withdraw from a course is March 23.

Honor Code: The pledge of the W&M Honor Code states, “As a member of the William & Mary community, I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, or steal, either in my academic or personal life. I understand that such acts violate the Honor Code and undermine the community of trust, of which we are all stewards.” I expect you to uphold this pledge in your classwork; all of the work you produce for this course should be your own. We will devote class time to the ethical use of sources, but if you have additional questions about avoiding plagiarism, please ask me.

VI. **RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING WRITING, RESEARCH, AND STUDY SKILLS**

The Writing Resources Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. To make an appointment, visit the WRC webpage www.wm.edu/wrc.

Swem Library Research Librarians are available to help you find the resources you need for any research project or paper. Make a research appointment online through the Swem Library home page, or call 757-221-INFO (4636).

The Tribe TutorZone offers workshops and one-on-one consultations to help students improve their time management and college-level study skills. Contact the TutorZone at 757-221-2510 or tutorzone@wm.edu. Or visit their website to make an appointment.

VII. **STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (SAS)**

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation.

VIII. WRIT 399 COURSE SCHEDULE

Meet in the Cox Classroom, Swem Library, except on days designated *WRC.

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
FOUNDATIONS			
W Jan 22	Introduction to course		
M Jan 27 *WRC	Pizza Meeting Meet the consultants	Murphy and Sherwood, "The Tutoring Process: Exploring Paradigms and Practices"	
W Jan 29		Anson, "Process Pedagogy and Its Legacy" Lerner, "Writing Center Pedagogy" Teller, "Are We Teaching...." Hesse, "We Know What Works..."	Make an appointment at the WRC.
M Feb 3 *WRC	Staff Meeting Opening Day <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Professionalism in the Writing Center</i>	BG Chapter 1, "The Writing Center as Workplace" Fargo, "They Can and They Should"	Come to the staff meeting with a question for the current consultants.
W Feb 5 *WRC		North, "The Idea of the Writing Center" Bruffee, "Peer Tutoring and the Conversation of Mankind"	
M Feb 10		Ede, "Writing as a Social Process" Lunsford, "Collaboration, Control, and the idea of a Writing Center"	DUE: Reflection 1 -- "How I Write"

PRAXIS AND PROCESS			
W Feb 12		BG Chapter 2 "Inside the Tutoring Session" Robinson, "Socratic Questioning" Mackiewicz and Thompson, "Motivational Scaffolding"	
M Feb 17 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Decoding the Assignment Sheet</i>	Kendall, "The Assignment Sheet Mystery"	
W Feb 19		BG Chapter 3 "Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process"	DUE: Reflection 2 -- "Consultant as Consultee"
M Feb 24		Brooks, "Minimalist Tutoring" Carino, "Power and Authority in Peer Tutoring"	
W Feb 26		Grimm, "New Conceptual Frameworks" BG Chapter 4, "The Writers You Tutor"	
TUTORING AND IDENTITY			
M Mar 2 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Neurodiversity in the Writing Center</i>	Babcock, "When Something is Not Quite Right" Neff, "Learning Disabilities and the Writing Center"	
W Mar 4 *WRC		Kiedaisch and Dinitz, "Changing Notions of Difference"	DUE: Reflection 3 -- "Consultation Observation"
M Mar 9	Spring Break		Bring employment documents to March 16 staff meeting!
W Mar 11	Spring Break		

M Mar 16 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Working with International Writers</i>	Videos: Writing Across Borders (videos) Website: Cultural and Linguistic Awareness	Bring employment documents!
W Mar 18		Leki, "Before the Conversation" Myers, "Reassessing the 'Proofreading Trap'" Nan, "Bridging the Gap"	
M Mar 23		Barron and Grimm, "Addressing Racial Diversity in a Writing Center: Stories and Lessons from Two Beginners" Young, "Should Writers Use They Own Language?"	
TUTORING ACROSS FORMS AND DISCIPLINES			
W Mar 25		Grutsch McKinney "New Media Matters" Sabatino "Design Theory and Multimodal Consulting"	
M Mar 30 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Tutoring Multimodal Projects (Group Presentations)</i>	Excerpts from "Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects"	DUE: Article Presentation and Handout (Group Project)
W Apr 1		BG Chapter 5, "Helping Writers across the Curriculum"	
M Apr 6		Guptill, "Clarity and Concision: Writing Like You Drive" "Paramedic Method: A Lesson in Writing Concisely" (Purdue Owl) and handout "The Paramedic Method".	
W Apr 8		Guptill, "Getting the Mechanics Right" Lunsford and Lunsford, "The Top Twenty"	

M Apr 13 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Addressing Various Tutoring Situations</i>	BG Chapter 7 “Addressing Various Tutoring Situations”	
INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE WRITING CENTER			
W Apr 15		BG Chapters 6 and 8 “Tutoring in the Information Age” and “Research in the Writing Center” Guptill, “Secondary Sources in Their Natural Habitat” and “Listening to Sources, Talking to Sources”	
M Apr 20		Website: “Information Search Process” TBD	DUE: DRAFT of Assessment of Tutoring Strategy
W Apr 22		Brown, et al. “Taking on Turnitin” TBD	
M Apr 27 *WRC	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Handling Difficult Consultations</i>	Sherwood, “Censoring Students, Censoring Ourselves” Blanda, “The ‘Other Side’ Is Not Dumb”	
LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD			
W April 29	<i>Last Day of Class</i>	Sherwood, “Portrait of the Tutor as an Artist”	Bring your <i>Consulting Toolkit Journal</i> to class. DUE: Reflection 4 -- “My Philosophy of Consulting”
Th May 7	<i>Scheduled Exam Time: 9:00-12:00</i>		DUE: FINAL Assessment of Tutoring Strategy