

ENGLISH 1110: ON WRITING

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FALL 2009

Course Description

This course will give us the chance to explore a range of issues related to writing. Readings from composition theory will be paired with a variety of literary models that sometimes embody the principles under discussion and other times complicate them. Throughout the semester we will comment on sample papers so that we may apply practically the principles we are learning theoretically. Additionally, we will write three essays (5-7 pages) and a final essay (10-12 pages), which will give us the chance to explore course concerns in our own writing. All essays must engage critically with at least three sources while seeking to explore a question relevant to the topics of that sequence. You will have the freedom to explore the questions of your choosing, and you will be expected to write like writers, mindful of your obligations to yourself and your readers. We will conference with each other for every paper, thereby gaining experience in peer tutoring and also enacting the very premise of the program -- becoming better writers through the help of an informed peer. Responsibility for introducing readings will rotate among the class. At the end of the semester, each of us will make a 20-minute presentation based on our final essay.

Grading is mandatory S/NC. Attendance at every class is required. More than two unexcused absences, and/or more than three unexcused late assignments, will result in no credit for the course.

Course Texts * (available at the Brown Bookstore)

Course Pack

Lanham, Richard. *Revising Prose*. New York: Simon + Shuster, 1992-Fourth edition.

Hacker, Diane. *The Bedford Handbook* (optional if Fellow already has a grammar book)

Syllabus

Sept. 10 **Getting Started**

- *THE EXPERT MIND*. By: Ross, Philip E., Scientific American, 00368733, Aug2006, Vol. 295, Issue 2
- [Scientific American](#); Aug2006, Vol. 295 Issue 2, p64-71
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- **The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year**
- Nancy Sommers, Laura Saltz
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Sep., 2004), pp. 124-149
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140684>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #1.

Sept. 15 **Responding to Student Writing**

- **Responding to Student Writing**
- Nancy Sommers
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (May, 1982), pp. 148-156
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357622>
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- **The Components of Written Response: A Practical Synthesis of Current Views**
- Brooke K. Horvath
- *Rhetoric Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Jan., 1984), pp. 136-156
- Publisher: [Lawrence Erlbaum Associates \(Taylor & Francis Group\)](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/465572>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #2.

Sept. 17 Writing as a Learning Process

- **On Students' Rights to Their Own Texts: A Model of Teacher Response**
- Lil Brannon, C. H. Knoblauch
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (May, 1982), pp. 157-166
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357623>

- **The Concept of Control in Teacher Response: Defining the Varieties of "Directive" and "Facilitative" Commentary**
- Richard Straub
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (May, 1996), pp. 223-251
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/358794>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #3.

Sept. 22 Skills and Process

- **Problem-Solving Strategies and the Writing Process**
- Linda S. Flower, John R. Hayes
- *College English*, Vol. 39, No. 4, Stimulating Invention in Composition Courses (Dec., 1977)
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/375768>

- **Encouraging Critical Thinking: A Strategy for Commenting on College Papers**
- Patrick Slattery
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Oct., 1990), pp. 332-335
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357661>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #4.

Sept. 24 Presence

- **Presence in the Essay**
- Gordon Harvey
- *College English*, Vol. 56, No. 6 (Oct., 1994), pp. 642-654
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/378310>

- **When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own**
- Jacqueline Jones Royster
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), pp. 29-40
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/358272>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #5.

Sept. 29 Why Write?

"She: Portrait of the Essay"
Cynthia Ozick

[OUR ESSAYS, OURSELVES.](#)
Cristina Nehring, Cristina
Harper's Magazine, May2003, Vol. 306 Issue 1836

"My Bird Problem"
Jonathan Franzen
New Yorker, August 8, 2005
<http://www.lexisnexis.com/us/Inacademic/search/homesubmitForm.do>

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #6.

Oct. 1 Writing

Assignment: Choose a topic that engages with issues that we have been discussing and write a 5-7 page essay and exchange with a classmate and comment on each other's paper electronically. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences.

Oct. 6 The Conference

Intimacy and Audience: The Relationship between Revision and the Social Dimension of Peer Tutoring

- Thom Hawkins
- *College English*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Sep., 1980), pp. 64-68
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/376037>

Training Tutors to Talk about Writing

- Stephen M. North
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Dec., 1982), pp. 434-441
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357958>

Conversational Learning

- Alan Thomas
- *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (1994), pp. 131-142
- Publisher: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1050899>

Collaborative Learning and the "Conversation of Mankind"

- Kenneth A. Bruffee
- *College English*, Vol. 46, No. 7 (Nov., 1984), pp. 635-652
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/376924>

Assignment: Exchange the second draft of your essay with a different classmate. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences.

Oct. 8 Revising

Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers

- Nancy Sommers
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Dec., 1980), pp. 378-388
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/356588>

"The End of the Novel of Love"
Vivian Gornick
The End of the Novel of Love, Beacon Press (1997), pp. 151-165

Assignment: Final draft of essay due (along with first and second commented drafts). Read through and comment on paper #7.

Oct. 13 Developing Ideas

- **The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem**
- Linda Flower, John R. Hayes
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Feb., 1980), pp. 21-32
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/356630>

"Upside Down and Backwards"
William T. Vollman

A COMET'S TALE. By: Bissell, Tom, Harper's Magazine, 0017789X, Feb2003, Vol. 306, Issue 1833
[Harper's Magazine](#)

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #8.

Oct. 15 Teaching Organization and Argument

- **Evidentials, Argumentation, and Epistemological Stance**
- Ellen L. Barton
- *College English*, Vol. 55, No. 7 (Nov., 1993), pp. 745-769
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/378428>

Paragraphing for the Reader

- Rick Eden, Ruth Mitchell
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Dec., 1986), pp. 416-441
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/357912>

THE WAR BUSINESS.

Chalmers Johnson
Harper's Magazine, Nov2003, Vol. 307 Issue 1842, p53-58

Assignment. Read through and comment on sample paper #9.

Oct. 20 Writing

Assignment: Choose a topic that engages with issues that we have been discussing and write a 5-7 page essay and exchange with a classmate and comment on each other's paper electronically. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences.

Oct. 22 Peer Conferences

Listening for Silence.

Mark Slouka
Harper's Magazine, Apr99, Vol. 298 Issue 1787, p63, 6p, 3c;

"The Silence of the Secular"

Atchley, J. Heath
Literature and Theology, Vol. 21 No. 1, March 2007, pp. 66-81
<http://litthe.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/reprint/21/1/66>

Assignment: Exchange the second draft of your essay with a different classmate. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences.

Oct. 27 Disciplinary Differences in Writing

"*Disciplinary Secrets and the Apprentice Writer*"
Gregory Colomb

Resource Publication Series, Montclair State College, 1988
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED35233>
1

[Tense Present.](#)

David Foster Wallace
Harper's Magazine, Apr2001, Vol. 302 Issue 1811, p39

Assignment: 1.) Bring in a writing prompt from your concentration and write a one paragraph description of the disciplinary conventions of your concentration. 2.) Final draft of essay due (along with first and second commented drafts).

Oct. 29 **Style**

Revising Prose
Richard Lanham
Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1992.

- **Use Definite, Specific, Concrete Language**
- Richard Ohmann
- *College English*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Dec., 1979), pp. 390-397
- Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/376279>

[THE NUMBING OF THE AMERICAN MIND.](#) By:
Thomas de Zengotita
Harper's Magazine, Apr2002, Vol. 304 Issue 1823, p33

Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #10, revising passages, the logic of which you'll explain in class.

Nov. 3 **On Grammar**

[GRAMMAR PUSS](#)
The New Republic, JANUARY 31, 1994, 5550 words, Steven Pinker

- **The Phenomenology of Error**
- Joseph M. Williams
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 32, No. 2, Language Studies and Composing (May, 1981), pp. 152-168
- Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/356689>

- **Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar**
- Laura R. Micciche
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 55, No. 4 (Jun., 2004), pp. 716-737
- Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140668>

Assignment: Familiarize yourself with the Bedford Handbook or another grammar book. Then do the following, in this order:

- Complete and bring to class the Grammar Diagnostic (on the Writing Fellows Website).
- Assume that all the sentences have been written by a fellowee, and suggest following strategies.

In class we'll do a cold reading of sample paper # 11.

Nov. 5 Writing

Harris, Daniel. "Coolness"

Assignment: Choose a topic that engages with issues that we have been discussing and write a 5-7 page essay and exchange with a classmate and comment on each other's paper electronically. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences.

Nov. 10 Negotiating Difference

- **On the Rhetoric and Precedents of Racism**
- Victor Villanueva
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 50, No. 4, A Usable Past: CCC at 50: Part 2 (Jun., 1999), pp. 645-661
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/358485>

- Fox, Thomas. "Race and Gender in Collaborative Learning"

- **Talking across Difference: Intercultural Rhetoric and the Search for Situated Knowledge**
- Linda Flower
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Sep., 2003), pp. 38-68
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3594199>

Assignment: Exchange the second draft of your essay with a different classmate. In class, we'll conduct peer conferences

Nov. 12 New Horizons

- **Made Not Only in Words: Composition in a New Key**
- Kathleen Blake Yancey
- *College Composition and Communication*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Dec., 2004), pp. 297-328
- Publisher: [National Council of Teachers of English](#)
- Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4140651>

Assignment: Final draft due. Come prepared to discuss the topic of your final presentation

Nov. 17 Topic Pitch Continued

Nov. 19 Writing Fellow Presentations

Nov. 24 Writing Fellow Presentations

Nov. 26 Writing Fellow Presentations

Dec. 1 Writing Fellow Presentations

Dec. 3 Writing Fellow Presentations

Dec. 8 Writing Fellow Presentations

Dec. 10 Conclusions and Evaluations

Final Paper due on the day of your oral presentation. Please submit the final paper along with the fellowed draft and a self-evaluation.

Some Thoughts on Fellowing:

1. Read holistically first – no pen
2. Speak from “I”
3. Use a helpful, friendly tone
4. Don’t be sarcastic or condescending
5. Always say something positive
6. When you make a suggestion, explain why
7. Saying “effective” or “appropriate” usually beats saying good
8. Balance specific and general comments
9. Make sure internal and external comments correlate
10. Prioritize comments to two-four suggestions that make the most difference
11. Give intuitive explanations
12. Be concrete, specific and as directive as necessary
13. Provide questions rather than statements -- you want to prompt critical thinking and conversation
14. Don’t label errors – example: “awk”
15. No cookie-cutter comments – acknowledge individuality
16. Don’t revise for students; explain revision strategies
17. Don’t give the impression that there’s only one way to write an essay, but be prepared to discuss the various rhetorical ramifications of different approaches

Some Thoughts on Leading Class Discussion

1. Read the article carefully, keeping in mind its relevance to the WF program and other readings
2. Write a brief summary of the article
3. Highlight a few brief passages to which you can call our attention, so as to refresh our memory of the reading.
4. Have a few questions for the class that don't simply test comprehension but open on to problematic concerns. Look closely at the writing. Beyond what an essay argues about writing, how does its manner of expression persuade or not? Examine what follows an assertion. The more skillful the writer, the more the sequence of logic may seem all but inevitable. Is it? In choosing to move in one direction, does the writer neglect other interesting possibilities?