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.

Syllabus

Getting Started

Scientific American; Aug2006, Vol. 295 Issue 2, p64-71

*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.

Responding to Student Writing

*Responding to Student Writing*
Nancy Sommers
Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/357622

*The Components of Written Response: A Practical Synthesis of Current Views*
Brooke K. Horvath
Publisher: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (Taylor & Francis Group)
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/465572
Assignment: Read through and comment on sample paper #2.

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
Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/358794

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

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.

Presence

**Presence in the Essay**
Gordon Harvey
Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/378310

Why I blog – Andrew Sullivan


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

Why Write?

"Why I Write"
George Orwell
Gangrel, Summer 1946.
http://www.netcharles.com/orwell/essays/whyiwrite.htm

"Why I Write"
Joan Didion
http://books.google.com/books?id=CpnIIEb kpNcC&lpg=PA17&dq=joan%20didion%20why%20i%20write&pg=PA17#v=onepage&q=joan%20didion%20why%20i%20write&f=false

"My Bird Problem"
Jonathan Franzen
Za-Granizza : /adult/ ... MY BIRD PROBLEM
New Yorker, August 8, 2005

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

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 workshop 5 essays.

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

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 workshop 5 essays.

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.
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

“What I Heard About Iraq”
*London Review of Books*
February, 2005
Eliot Weinberger
http://www.lrb.co.uk/v27/n03/eliot-weinberger/what-i-heard-about-iraq

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

Teaching Organization and Argument

**Evidentials, Argumentation, and Epistemological Stance**
Ellen L. Barton
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 ecstasy of influence:*
A plagiarism
*By Jonathan Lethem*

http://www.harpers.org/archive/2007/02/0081387

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

Writing

“Epitaph for the White Hipster”
Mark Greif

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 workshop 5 essays.

Workshop

*The Empty Chamber*

*Just how broken is the Senate?*
*by George Packer*

http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/09/100809fa_fact_packer#ixzz0wmojXmnU
Assignment: Exchange the second draft of your essay with a different classmate. In class, we'll workshop 5 essays.

Disciplinary Differences in Writing

"Disciplinary Secrets and the Apprentice Writer"
Gregory Colomb
Resource Publication Series, Montclair State College, 1988

Tense Present.
David Foster Wallace

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).

Style

Revising Prose
Richard Lanham

Postmodernist Prose and George Orwell
Stephen K. Roney

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

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

On Grammar

Stephen Fry
http://vimeo.com/15412319

GRAMMAR PUSS
The New Republic, JANUARY 31, 1994, 5550 words, Steven Pinker

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

Writing

**The Phenomenology of Error**
Joseph M. Williams
Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/356689

“Letting Go”
*What should medicine do when it can’t save your life?*
by Atul Gawande
http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/02/100802fa_fact_gawande#ixzz0wmpAB9b6

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 workshop 4 essays.

Negotiating Difference

Bell Hooks

**On the Rhetoric and Precedents of Racism**
Victor Villanueva
Publisher: National Council of Teachers of English
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/358485

Assignment: Exchange the second draft of your essay with a different classmate. In class, we’ll workshop 4 essays.

Assignment: Final draft due.

In-class Freewrite: “As a Writing Fellow…”
Come prepared to discuss the topic of your final presentation

Topic Pitch Continued

Writing Fellow Presentations
Writing Fellow Presentations
Writing Fellow Presentations
Writing Fellow Presentations
Writing Fellow Presentations
Writing Fellow Presentations
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?