

English 492/592: Topics (Writing Center Theory/Practice) Fall 2006 (3 credit hours)

Meeting Time: Mondays, 4:00-6:00
Instructor: Dr. Christopher Ervin
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Office Location: 204 Dakota Hall

Class Location: Old Main, Room 201
Office Phone: 677-6502
Office Hours: Tue 8:00 am-11:00 am
 Thu 10:00 am – 1:00 pm

Course Description

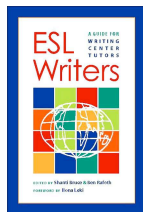
This course is a prerequisite for employment at the University Writing Center (UWC).

In this course, we will learn about the history and theoretical foundations of and best practices for writing centers and individualized writing instruction. Those not employed by the University Writing Center may be invited to join the staff midway through the semester.

The course helps you to develop your advanced academic writing and research skills as you study best practices for individualized writing instruction. You will write at least three short papers and a research paper. Areas we will focus on include writing center history; tutoring non-native speakers of English; ethics in the Writing Center; tutoring proofreading and grammar; online writing consultation (distance learning); educational research methods; writing center assessment; and other topics. As part of this course, you will complete a 15-20 hour practicum in the UWC. The course meets requirements for both undergraduate and graduate student English majors and minors or for students pursuing a degree in the College of Arts and Sciences (3 hrs. upper-division credit for 492; 3 credit hours graduate elective credit). **Course prerequisites:** sophomore standing or permission of instructor; required of those who want to join the USD Writing Center staff.

Required Texts

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2004. **(copy provided on loan).**



Rafoth, Ben, and Shanti Bruce, eds. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2004. ISBN 0867095806.

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. **(copy provided on loan).**



Various articles and book chapters on e-reserves/Web CT

Course Goals

- explore the history of writing centers and peer tutoring in writing
- learn about theories of peer tutoring
- examine how gender, race, culture, second-language acquisition, and disability shape students' writing *and* individualized writing instruction
- practice using technologies in individualized writing instruction
- regularly reflect and report on interactions with student writers
- explore the ethics of individualized writing instruction
- learn how to complete research (empirical, historical, and/or theoretical) about writing center work
- learn to deliver an effective conference-style presentation
- improve writing/editing abilities through multiple drafting, peer review, and instructor feedback on all written work

Web CT

Course materials and reading assignments will be posted in Web CT. Students are expected to make use of Web CT this semester.

Course Activities

University Writing Center Practicum

All students in English 492/592 complete a 15-20 hour practicum in the University Writing Center this semester by spending one or more hours per week in the Center. The first three weeks of the semester, excluding the first week of classes when the UWC is not open, will be spent observing only. Then, for two to three weeks you will complete supervised writing consultation (tutoring). At that point, you may be asked to join the staff of the UWC; if you are asked and agree to become a member of the staff, you will begin your employment with the UWC as a paid hourly consultant. You must still complete all required activities for English 492/592, though, including self-observations, journaling, and so on. 492/592 students who do not wish to join the staff or who are not asked to join the staff will not be penalized in any way in the course; however, those students must continue to observe and complete supervised writing consultation.

Class Participation: Completing all assigned reading and writing; participating in whole-class as well as small-group discussions; completing assigned observations and supervised writing consultation; attendance; in-class writing: All are part of your 20% class participation grade. Additionally, we will have peer review workshops for written assignments and mock consulting (tutoring) sessions throughout the semester.

Weekly Observation/Reflection Journal: Each week as you observe in the UWC, you will complete one journal entry of at least 300 words. If you observe a writing consultation, you should write about and reflect on that session. If, during the time you observe, no students come into the UWC, you should write a reflective journal entry about the week's reading or about a topic relevant to the UWC. Journals will be collected and read periodically (not always with advance notice), so **bring your journal to every class meeting**. Journaling checked periodically will be 10% of your final course grade. All journal entries will be submitted in your final portfolio.

Observation Essays: Twice this semester, you will write a **3-5 page summary + analysis** of a writing conference. One observation will be of another consultant; one will be a self-observation:

1. *Observation of Another Consultant*: Observe a writing conference (at least 30 minutes long), take notes, and write a **3-5 page summary + analysis** essay. We will complete peer tutoring on this essay draft before you submit a second draft to me for feedback. The final draft of this observation essay will be submitted in your final portfolio.

2. *Self-Observation Essay*: Choose one of the following options. You will complete peer tutoring on a draft of this essay before you submit a second draft to me for feedback. The final draft will be submitted in your final portfolio.

- Option 1: Videotaped Self-Observation + Summary/Analysis Essay. Videotape yourself working with a student (at least 30 minutes long), and write a **3-5 page** essay summarizing and analyzing the writing conference.
- Option 2: Audiotaped Self-Observation w/Transcription + Analysis Essay. Audiotape yourself working with a student (at least 30 minutes long), review the writing conference, transcribe the entire conference, then, analyze the transcript based on criteria outlined in the assignment sheet for this activity and write a **3-5 page** analysis essay (excluding transcript).

Philosophy of Tutoring Statement: By the end of the semester, you should have developed a philosophy of tutoring writing. You will write a 1-2 page statement of that philosophy, which will serve as the introduction to your final portfolio. You will complete peer tutoring on this draft before submitting a second draft to me for feedback.

Research Projects: In order to support and advance undergraduates' understanding of sound research methods at the U., each student this semester will participate in an original educational research project. We will spend time discussing what educational research accomplishes, working with "human subjects" and obtaining IRB (institutional review board) approval, planning and implementing an educational research project (especially formulating a strong research question and choosing research methods), and writing up and "publishing" research results (either in papers for conference presentations or for print or electronic publication).

Research projects may be planned individually, OR students may contribute to Dr. Ervin's research in a faculty-undergraduate collaboration, which may result in co-authored publication or co-presentation at the International Writing Centers Association's semi-annual conference in March in Houston, Texas.

Final Paper + Mini-conference Presentation: Write a 7-10 page paper to present at our end-of-semester mini-conference and to submit for consideration for IdeA Fest in the spring. This paper will be based on your original research project. I will strongly encourage those with promising research papers to submit them to *The Writing Lab Newsletter*, *Praxis*, *Young Scholars in Writing: Undergraduate Research in Writing and Rhetoric*, or another academic journal for consideration for publication.

Those students who opt to contribute to Dr. Ervin's research project will write their own papers about their part of the project and will be invited to continue to work with Dr. Ervin after the end of the fall semester and until the project is completed.

Final papers are due in the final portfolio and are not graded individually. You will complete peer tutoring on your draft of the final paper before submitting it in the final portfolio. Mini-conference presentations are worth 10% of your final course grade and will be graded based on a set of criteria that we will discuss in advance.

English 592 ONLY

Students enrolled in English 592 will have three additional requirements: (1) the final paper must be at least 15 pages; (2) the research project must be individually planned and implemented; and (3) students enrolled in English 592 will lead discussion (plan questions/activities that will facilitate discussion about assigned readings) during ONE class meeting this semester (not the entire class, just for one activity or over one set of readings).

Due Dates

- Weekly journal will be collected periodically
- Observation of another consultant essay draft due for peer tutoring on
- Second draft of observation essay due
- Self-observation essay draft due
- Second draft of self-observation essay due
- Research project proposals due
- Research paper draft due
- Mini-conference presentation due date TBA
- Final portfolio due

Assessment

All major written work and projects will become part of your final portfolio, which will be graded A-F based on specific criteria outlined in each writing assignment and on the general criteria listed below. Final course grades will be as follows:

- Weekly journal: 10%
- Mini-conference presentation: 10%
- Final Portfolio: 60%
- Attendance/Participation: 20%

Final Course Grades: 100-90 = A; 89-80 = B; 79-70 = C; 69-60 = D; below 60 = F.

Grading Scale for Papers/Projects:

Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter	%	Letter	%
A+	100	B+	88	C+	78	D+	68	F	below 60
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72	D-	62		

Course Policies

Attendance: When you miss **ONE** evening class, it's the same as missing **AN ENTIRE WEEK** of MWF or TTh classes. Thus, my attendance policy is simple: come to class. Absences due to a death in the family, illness, automobile accidents, and the like **are treated as regular absences**. Absences due to university-sanctioned activities (athletics and academic conferences, for instance) are excused, but students must submit assignments **before they are due**. In case of heavy snow, try to e-mail me, but use common sense in deciding whether to drive. However, even during heavy snow, classes will meet unless the university is closed.

If you know you will miss class for any reason, contact me *before* missing class and make arrangements with me.

Specific penalties for excessive absences follow:

- 1 absence: no penalty
- 2 absences: final grade lowered by 10 points (one letter grade)
- 3 absences: final grade lowered by 20 points
- 4 absences*: automatic course failure or instructor-initiated drop

*A student who fails this course due to excessive absences will not be allowed to continue as a UWC staff member.

Late Writing Assignments & Make-up Policy: If you must miss class, submit what's due **ahead of time**. Otherwise, late writing assignments and homework will not be accepted.

Late Arrivals, Early Departures, Cell Phones, Electronic Devices: Don't be late. Don't leave early. It's disruptive. If you have extenuating circumstances, talk to me ahead of time. Turn off cell phones and other electronic devices before you enter class. If you have an emergency that requires you to leave your cell phone, please turn it on vibrate mode and let me know at the beginning of class.

Required Departmental, University, and Board of Regents Policies

The following policies are requirements for every English department course syllabus:

College of Arts and Sciences Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is defined as using the words and/or ideas or structure of another, representing them to be your own, without proper credit to the author or source. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism will result, at a minimum, in a grade of 0 for that assignment. Since it is impossible to evaluate a plagiarized paper, no credit can be given.

At the discretion of the instructor, a student may be:

- a. Failed in the course
- b. Dropped from the course
- c. Assigned a reduced grade for the course.
- d. Allowed to rewrite and resubmit the assignment for credit.

Statement of Compliance with ADA. Any student who feels s/he may need academic accommodations or access accommodations based on the impact of a documented disability should contact and register with Disability Services during the first week of class. Disability Services is the official office to assist students through the process of disability verification and coordination of appropriate and reasonable accommodations. Students currently registered with Disability Services must obtain a new accommodation memo each semester.

Freedom in Learning. Students are responsible for learning the content of any course of study in which they are enrolled. Under Board of Regents and University policy, student academic performance shall be evaluated solely on an academic basis and students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study. Students who believe that an academic evaluation is unrelated to academic standards but is related instead to judgment of their personal opinion or conduct should first contact the instructor of the course. If the student remains unsatisfied, the student may contact the department head and/or dean of the college which offers the class to initiate a review of the evaluation.

English 492/592: Writing Center Theory and Practice Reading/Writing Schedule

Texts:

Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. 2nd ed. New York: Longman, 2004.

Rafoth, Ben, and Shanti Bruce, eds. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2004.

Ryan, Leigh. *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. **(copy provided on loan)**.

Articles on e-reserves (ID Weeks Library)

Week 1: September 1

No class this week. I will be out of town. Class will begin on Sept. 8. Writing Center DOES open Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Week 2: September 8

Introduction to the Course and the Work of Writing Consultants

- Due:**
- (1) Read Leigh Ryan's *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors*, chapters 1-5 (exclude pages containing the exercises)
 - (2) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapters 1, 2, and 4

Week 3: September 15

History of Writing Centers in Higher Education in the U.S.

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapter 11
 - (2) Read Carino, Peter. "Early Writing Centers: Toward a History." *WCJ* 15 (Spring 1995): 103-115. Download available from electronic course reserves.
 - (3) Read Lunsford, Andrea. "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center." *WCJ* 12 (1991): 3-10. Download available from electronic course reserves.
 - (4) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 4

Week 4: September 22

Working with Writers: Theory and Practice

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7
 - (2) Read Smith, Brooke Ann. "The Socratic Method: The Answer for the New Tutor." *The Writing Lab Newsletter* 29.7 (March 2005): 9, 15. (provided)
 - (3) Post to online journal

Week 5: September 29

Working with ESL Writers: Theoretical Matters

- Due:**
- (1) Read *ESL Writers*, chapters 1, 2, 11, 13, 14, and 15
 - (2) Read Wolff, Janice M. "Tutoring in the 'Contact Zone.'" In *Stories from the Center: Connecting Narrative and Theory in the Writing Center*. Ed. Lynn Craigie Briggs and Meg Woolbright. Urbana: NCTE, 2000. 43-50. Download available from electronic course reserves.
 - (3) Post to online journal

Week 6: October 6

Working with ESL Writers: Practical Matters

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapter 9
 - (2) Read *ESL Writers*, chapters 3, 5, 7, and 8
 - (3) Post to online journal

Week 7: October 13

Writing Center Research & Mini-conference Panel #1

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapter 10
 - (2) Read Thonus, Terese. "What Are the Differences? Tutor Interactions with First- and Second-language Writers." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13 (2004): 227-42. Download available from electronic course reserves.
 - (3) Read Gillam, Alice. "Introduction." *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*. Eds. Paula Gillespie, Alice Gillam, Lady Falls Brown, and Byron Stay. Mahwah, NJ: LEA, 2002. xv-xxix. (e-reserves)
 - (4) Read Lerner, Neal. "Insider as Outsider: Participant Observation as Writing Center Research." *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*. Eds. Paula Gillespie, Alice Gillam, Lady Falls Brown, and Byron Stay. Mahwah, NJ: LEA, 2002. 53-71.
 - (5) Read Carino, Peter. "Reading Our Own Words: Rhetorical Analysis and the Institutional Discourse of Writing Centers." *Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation*. Eds. Paula Gillespie, Alice Gillam, Lady Falls Brown, and Byron Stay. Mahwah, NJ: LEA, 2002. 91-110.
 - (6) Post to online journal

Mini-conference panel #1: "Breaking Down Boundaries and Barriers: An Ecology of Writing Centers." Presenters: Christopher Ervin (chair), Crystal Gorden, Jamie Barnett, Amber Wegehaupt

Week 8: October 20

No class. Out of town for IWCA/NCPTW conference.

Use this free week to begin research for your final paper + presentation

Week 9: October 27

Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Editing/Proofreading

- Due:**
- (1) articles about language acquisition/second language acquisition/linguistics (TBA on course reserves)
 - (2) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 13, "Can You Proofread This?"
 - (3) Post to online journal
 - (4) Observation of another consultant + observation report due today

Report from the IWCA/NCPTW conference (Ervin, Barnett, Gorden, and Wegehaupt)

Week 10: November 3

Ethical Issues in the Writing Center & Working with Learning Disabled (LD) Writers

- Due:**
- (1) Read *ESL Writers*, chapter 10, "Raising Questions about Plagiarism" by Kurt Bouman, pp. 105-116

- (2) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 2, "What Line? I Didn't See Any Line" by Molly Wingate, pp. 9-16
- (3) Article(s) on other ethical issues (e-reserves—TBA)
- (4) Article(s) on working with students with disabilities (e-reserves—TBA)
- (5) Post to online journal

Week 11: November 10

Working with Writers in Literature (English 210), Creative Writing (English 283), and across the Disciplines

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 6
 - (2) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 10
 - (3) Read *Allyn and Bacon Guide*, chapter 12
 - (4) Article(s) about working with literature students (TBA, course e-reserves)
 - (5) Post to online journal

Week 12: November 17

Online Writing Centers

- Due:**
- (1) Read *ESL Writers*, chapter 9
 - (3) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapter 11
 - (4) Two chapters from *Taking Flights with OWLs* (e-reserves)
 - (5) Post to online journal

Week 13: November 24

No class. Thanksgiving break.

Week 14: December 1

More Strategies & Special Projects in the UWC

- Due:**
- (1) Read *Helping Writers One to One*, chapters 5, 7, 8, and 9
 - (2) Post to online journal
 - (3) Reports on remaining research/administrative projects
 - (4) Videotaped self-observation + report due today

Week 15: December 8

Mini-conference

In class: Mini-conference panel #2

Week 16: Final Exam Period: Thursday, Dec. 15, 8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Mini-conference

In class: Mini-conference panel #3

Final papers due today.