

English 492/592: Topics (Writing Studies) Spring 2009

Meeting Time:	Mondays, 4:00-6:45	Class Location:	Arts and Sciences 105
Instructor:	Dr. Christopher Ervin	Office Phone:	677-6502
E-mail:	cervin@usd.edu	Office Hours:	MWF 8:00-8:30 am & 10:00-11:30 am
Office Location:	204 Dakota Hall		

Course Description

English 492/592: Topics (Writing Studies) is an advanced writing and research course whose focus is not only the practice and development of writing skills but also the study of the scholarly discipline of rhetoric and composition, a profession that has emerged to support and study the teaching of writing, rhetoric, and other means of communication in American schools and colleges.

You will study best practices of and the theory and research about the teaching and tutoring of writing by reading and discussing composition and rhetoric and writing center scholarship, by conducting an observation/practicum project, and by completing three writing assignments (described below).

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 for 592. **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)**.

Hillocks, George. *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice: Integrating Theories*. New York: Teachers College P, 1995. ISBN 0807734330. Used copies available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble online, and Abebooks.com for \$20.00 or less.

Troyka, Lynn, and Doug Hesse. *Simon and Schuster Handbook for Writers*. **(provided)**.

Villanueva, Victor, ed. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. Urbana: NCTE, 2003. Downloadable from ERIC.

Various articles and book chapters on e-reserve.

Learning Outcomes and Assessments

By the end of this semester, you will have:

- developed an expertise in rhetoric and composition theory and pedagogy (assessment: exam; essays one, two, and three)
- regularly reflected and reported on your observations of writing instruction and/or interactions with student writers (assessment: observation reflections)
- further developed your academic writing, research, and editing skills (assessment: essay one, two, and three; observation reflections)

Course ActivitiesObservation/Practicum Requirement

All students in English 492/592 complete an observation/practicum project either in the University Writing Center, in one or more writing courses, or by completing a writing fellows practicum in the IdEA program or another writing-intensive course. The total time spent on the observation/practicum requirement should be 15 hours over the semester. For each observation/consultation, students complete an observation reflection (assignment sheet to be distributed). Students in this course who are already staff members of the University Writing Center may **not** fulfill the practicum requirement in the Writing Center.

Class Participation

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

Writing Assignments

Assignment sheets will be distributed, along with the schedule of reading assignments and deadlines for each unit, at the beginning of each unit.

Essay One

No fewer than 1500 words (around five pages), written in Chicago style, includes a proposal, one formal draft, and an option for revision. Topic should be relevant to unit one: history and founding theories of rhetoric and composition.

Essay Two

No fewer than 1500 words (around five pages), written in APA style, includes one sketch, one formal draft, and an option for revision. Topic should be relevant to unit two: Teaching and tutoring practices.

Essay Three

No fewer than 2400 words (around eight pages), written in MLA style, includes one sketch, one formal draft, and an option for revision. Topic should be relevant to unit three or negotiable with instructor.

Final Exam

Final in-class essay exam covering course readings. Final exam will also include at least one essay question that I write based on one of your essay topics.

Practicum Briefs

You will submit four practicum briefs on your observation/practicum project as it progresses. Assignment sheet to be distributed during class meeting #1.

Conferences

At least three times this semester we will meet individually to discuss your progress on your writing and research. These conferences are required to remain in good standing in the course.

Graduate Student Requirement

Graduate student requirements are as follows:

- Essays must be a minimum of 2400 words (around eight pages). Essays two and three may be written separately or combined into a single semester paper of no fewer than 5000 words (around 18 pages). Essay one due date same as listed below; essay two and three same as below; option to combine essay two/three into single paper due date same as essay three.
- Lead discussion during one class about a topic of interest (you will choose the readings for this class meeting; it will take place late in the semester so you will have a good sense of your interests).
- Final exam process for graduate students will be modeled after the MA exams in English. Discuss individually with me for more details.

Tentative Due Dates

- Essay One: February 23
- Essay Two: March 23
- Essay Three: April 27
- Observation reflections: Periodically.
- Final Exam: May 7

Assessment

Practicum Briefs: 10%

Essay One: 10%

Essay Two: 20%

Essay Three: 25%

Final Exam: 15%

Participation: 20%

(timely submission of drafts, active participation in class, attendance at conferences, preparation for peer review, and so on)

Final course grades will be as follows:

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	95	B	85	C	75	D	65		
A-	92	B-	82	C-	72	D-	62		

Course Policies

Submission of Written Work

All out-of-class assignments must be submitted via e-mail as an MS Word OR rich-text format attachment. Assignments are due before class meets on the day they're due.

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 (remember, **we meet only eleven times this semester!**):

- 1 absence: no penalty
- 2 absences: final grade lowered by 10 points (one letter grade)
- 3 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, contact me and submit assignments that are due **ahead of time**. Otherwise, late assignments, including midterm and final exams, will not be accepted. No make-up exams will be given except under extreme extenuating circumstances.

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.

Instructor's Policy on Academic Integrity

Plagiarism occurs when a student knowingly or unknowingly submits another person's published or unpublished (print or web) writing as his/her own, has another person dictate what should be written, or has another person write an assignment and submits that work as his/her own.

Students who violate this policy should understand that they are making a decision that will result in failure from this seminar and, if applicable, dismissal from the Honors program and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. On the other hand, students who adhere to this policy make the decision to challenge themselves intellectually; these students decide to abide by ethical principles that illustrate

they value the educational opportunities presented to them and that they believe the quality of students' work should be evaluated equally.

In this course, **we trust each other** to adhere to the principles of academic integrity discussed in this section of the course syllabus. My assumption is that you will submit work that is your own, that you wish to be evaluated on the quality of your own work rather than the quality of someone else's work. However, if I begin to question the integrity of your assignments, I will ask you in for a conference, during which I will discuss the questionable assignments and will decide whether to submit your work for an originality check through Turnitin.com.

The Fine Print

Academic Integrity

The College of Arts and Sciences considers plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty inimical to the objectives of higher education. The College supports the imposition of penalties on students who engage in academic dishonesty, as defined in the "Conduct" section of the University of South Dakota Student Handbook.

No credit can be given for a dishonest assignment. At the discretion of the instructor, a student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty may be:

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

-- Adopted by vote of the faculty of the College, April 12, 2005

Students who have engaged in academic dishonesty may be referred to the USD Office of Rights and Responsibilities for violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Fair Evaluation

Each student is entitled to a fair grade in each course in which he or she is enrolled. It is the right and the responsibility of an instructor to establish criteria for evaluation for each course which he or she teaches, and to determine the degree to which an individual student has fulfilled the standards set for the course.

Students should be apprised that extraneous factors, such as eligibility for sorority or fraternity membership, for scholarship or financial aid awards, for athletics, for timely graduation, or for admission to graduate or professional schools, have no bearing on the determination of grades. The quality of the student's overall performance with respect to standards for evaluation will be the only basis for judgment.

Resolving Complaints about Grades

The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is ordinarily for the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the course instructor. If that attempt is unsuccessful, the student may bring the matter to the Department Chair, who will assist the instructor and the student in reaching a resolution. Grade appeals not resolved with the assistance of the Department Chair may be directed to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences (for undergraduates) or to the Dean of the Graduate School (for graduate students), provided that the grading decision at issue would affect the student's final course grade. The student initiating the grade appeal should be prepared to show that the grade was decided unfairly. According to South Dakota Board of Regents Policy 2:9, any academic appeal must be initiated within thirty calendar days from the date that the student received notification of the grade, unless the grade is assigned within fifteen calendar days of the end of the term. In that case, any appeal must be initiated within fifteen calendar days after the start of the next term (fall, spring, or summer).

Statement on Freedom in Learning

The following statement is required by the South Dakota Board of Regents.

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.

Assessment Disclaimer

Any written work submitted for this course may be used for purposes of program review and/or faculty development.

Disabilities

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. For information contact:

Ernetta L. Fox, Director
Disability Services
Room 119 Service Center
(605) 677-6389
www.usd.edu/ds; dservices@usd.edu

Course Assignment: The Practicum

Practicum Options

- Observations and possibly supervised tutoring in the University Writing Center
- Observations of English 101, English 210, English 201, English 283, or English 205
- Writing fellow for selected IdEA capstone courses (to be arranged with Sarah Wittmus and selected faculty of the IdEA program)
- Writing fellow for other courses, to be determined
- Other practicum project that you might propose, which would involve you in observing or actually doing writing instruction or tutoring

Practicum Briefs

Purpose: In each practicum brief, you will reflect on the progression of your practicum project and communicate to your instructor and peers how your practicum project observations and/or participation contribute to your understanding of the teaching and tutoring of writing. Practicum briefs, though informal, should adhere to the conventions of standard academic writing. Use your *Simon and Schuster Handbook*.

Length: approximately 600 words

Format: MLA, APA, or Chicago

Due Dates: Listed in schedule. Each practicum brief will have a first draft for peer tutoring and a revision submitted to Dr. Ervin via e-mail.

Specific Descriptions of the Briefs:

- Brief #1 should introduce the practicum project and your role in the project, possibly bringing the project into conversation with course readings.
- Brief #2 should provide an update on the project and a significant reflection on your role in the project, possibly bringing the project into conversation with course readings.
- Brief #3, same as brief #2.
- Brief #4 should bring the project to a close, reflecting on the entire project and situating the project within the composition theory you've read this semester.

Essay One: Founding Scholars, Theories, & Concepts in Rhetoric and Composition Studies

Purpose: In this essay, you will develop an expertise about a single theory or concept in composition and rhetoric and discuss that concept or theory at length.

Initial Research and Reading: Begin with one of the composition scholars we discussed during the first three class meetings, or one of the scholars listed below, whom we got to know by viewing *Take 20* on the first day of class. Then, after doing some preliminary research and reading of that theorist's work (see research resources listed below), choose a single concept or theory to write about. *Your research for this paper is not limited to the scholar you begin with*; in fact, you should include work from no fewer than three composition scholars in your final draft.

Proposal Requirements: In 150-300 words, define the concept/theory, state which scholars you're using to study the theory, and provide a working bibliography. Also include a plan for completing the research and writing in a timely manner.

Length: no fewer than 1500 words

Due Dates: Proposal due (hard copy in class and via e-mail to Dr. Ervin) on Feb. 9
First formal draft due (hard copy in class for peer tutoring) on Feb. 23
First formal draft due to Dr. Ervin via e-mail by 7:00 pm on Feb. 24
Optional revision of first formal draft due one week after graded essay one is returned by Dr. Ervin

Begin your research with one of the following scholars:

- Sharon Crowley
- Patricia Bizzell
- Donald Murray
- Nancy Sommers
- Linda Flower (and John Hayes)
- Lisa Ede
- Andrea Lunsford
- Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford
- David Bartholomae (NOT Donald Barthelme!)
- Min-Zhan Lu
- Elizabeth A. Flynn
- Richard C. Miller
- James Berlin
- Ellen Cushman
- Victor Villanueva
- Peter Elbow
- John Trimbur
- Ed White
- Kathleen Blake Yancey

OR any of the scholars listed here (from *Take 20*)

- Linda Adler-Kassner
- Cheryl E. Ball
- Bill Condon
- Cheryl Glenn
- Brian Huot
- Erika Lindemann
- Paul Kei Matsuda
- Mike Palmquist
- Malea Powell
- Nedra Reynolds
- Mike Rose
- Jacqueline Jones Royster
- Howard Tinberg