English 821: Writing Program Design and Administration
Fall 2015—Wednesdays 4:30-7:10 PM

Prof. E. Shelley Reid

Robinson A439: Tuesdays 12:00-1:00 pm, Thursdays 9:15-10:15 am, **and by appointment**

Phone: 571-306-2772 (text message only, no voice)

Online: ereid1@gmu.edu, https://engh821001f2015.pbworks.com/

Course Goals

English 821 is a topics course in composition studies. We will seek to identify the key challenges in administering a writing program—any program that delivers mass writing instruction—and becoming/surviving as an administrator of such a program (any person officially or unofficially setting goals and troubleshooting). We have some linked goals:

> To understand the field WPA as a scholarly endeavor and trace some of the key scholarly lines of inquiry into its questions

> To strengthen our abilities to see and act upon key strengths, opportunities, and challenges that define contemporary writing programs

> To understand and build practices based on the range of (sometimes competing) professional identities that WPAs can develop

> To identify opportunities for practice, innovation, and research that will contribute to student learning, faculty development, program development, and scholarly advancement

Course Tools & Expectations

The Books, Readings, and Tools

> Malenczyk, *Rhetoric for WPAs* (2013)
> Reiff et al., *Ecologies of Writing Programs* (2015)
>
> Membership in CWPA and WPA-GO
>
> Additional readings accessible via university library databases, accessible through the library's E-Reserves, or posted on our wiki.
>
> If you have a laptop or tablet you can bring to class, please do so.

The Assignments and Grade Values, Very Briefly:

Adopted Program Blog (15%) and Responses (5%)	20%
Emergency Bibliography and Memo	20%
Data-Gathering Plan	15%
Major Scholarly Project	40%
Community presence	5%

Revisions are always allowed; final drafts are due by December 14 unless otherwise specified.

Other Policies of Note

Attendance is expected. I get bored with classes where there's just talking and taking notes, so you can expect each class to include a high amount of non-replicatable interactive learning. If you're not with us, we can't really help you make up the experience—and more importantly, we'll have missed your particular contributions that evening. If you have to miss a class, please contact me as soon as possible to let me know. (You have a complicated life, and I have a complicated life, but WPAs have to show up: if you miss more than one class for reasons other than alien abduction or kidney donation, your Community grade will drop significantly.)

A strict *late work* policy is generally inappropriate for this class, given our emphasis on drafting and revising through the semester.

> However, when you're asked to **bring a draft**, please make every effort to **bring something**—a half-draft, a version, your notes, an envelope scribble—so you can share your work and receive feedback from the community.

Beyond that, I expect that you'll mostly keep up with both the reading and the writing as assigned. We may be adjusting the class work as the semester goes along, so it's important that you stay in touch with the online syllabus. If you have to miss a due date, or you start to feel that you're falling behind, please let me know as soon as you can so we can work out some alternatives. Please don't suffer in silence under the gray cloud of doom: studying for a PhD is supposed to be difficult but I truly don't intend it to be dire.

Although it goes without saying, sometimes saying it is important, especially for an interactive class: you should maintain an attitude of **professional respect and courtesy**—though certainly not always agreement—toward other members of the classroom community.

Students with disabilities: Students with documented disabilities are legally entitled to certain accommodations in the classroom. Students requesting such accommodation must present faculty with a contact sheet from the Office of Disability Services (703-993-2474). I will gladly work with students and the ODS to arrange fair access and support.

GMU Nondiscrimination Policy: George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the

basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or age. Mason shall adhere to all applicable state and federal equal opportunity/affirmative action statutes and regulations.

Assignments

A WPA writes a little bit of everything: Informal and formal emails, notes to self, memos to other administrators, assessment reports, program announcements and policies, conference papers and scholarly articles. Almost always these projects overlap, require more time than is actually available, and involve sticky administrative and political choices. For our class, then, you won't just write one massive research project at the end of the semester. You should feel free to let these smaller projects lead into and overlap with one another—within your own ouvre and within the classroom community generally.

Adoption Blog: *5 posts, 500-1000 words each, 15%*

Early in the semester you'll select a pair of writing programs to "adopt" for this fall, so that you can connect our readings and class discussions to the practices of WPA leadership. You may not select a program you or other members of the class are currently directing or teaching in: your familiarity with those programs is presumed. In each of your blog posts, you will document some aspect of one or both programs to indicate how some question or strategy we are reading about might come to life for that program: questions, opportunities, warts and all.

Write for an audience of your peers and other WPAs. Each entry should include

- Information about one or both programs that is particularly relevant to the issue you're writing about (some of this information may be "supposed" if needed in order to supplement online resources)

- Connections to the scholarship that provokes and/or supports your observations

- Explication of your own concerns, interpretations , or recommendations

We'll use "blog" as our stand-in default for "short public writing." You may write each of these in a similar, objective, accessible-academic-voice blogging approach, or you can experiment with "becoming" the director of the program(s) and writing with a more focused purpose or audience: as (for instance) a personal blog entry reflecting on a situation in the program; as a listserv-post suggesting a problem and/or asking for input; as an email update to colleagues or administrators at "your" school; or as a short report directed to on- or off-campus colleagues.

Blog entries will be assessed primarily on the insight and relevance of the analysis you provide: how do you connect the pieces to enable others to see the complications, your program, and/or possible policies or solutions more clearly? You will also be assessed, to a lesser degree, on focus and accessibility: have you prioritized a central point and presented your ideas accessibly enough that readers can grasp the key issues easily? Entries will be marked as **H**onors, **S**atisfactory, or **U**nsatisfactory . These marks may be *loosely* translated to 10, 8.8, and 7 on a 10-point scale. They may be revised.

Collaborative Blog Response: *4-6 responses, 5%*

Post an engaged, "…and here's another thing" response (150-200 words) to at least one blog entry from each of Blogs 1-5. Four responses total earns an **S**, six earns an **H**.

Emergency Memo and Annotated Bibliography: *1000–1500 words, +4-6 sources, 20%*

Scenario: I'd estimate that at least once a year, an engaged WPA suddenly needs to acquire additional expertise about some aspect of writing programs, quickly, in response to events happening on campus that could affect his/her program. Your school might want to raise course caps, improve or limit technology access, change its admissions criteria, propose or cut programs to help athletes/multilingual writers/transfer students/basic writers; add an all-campus book or a learning commons or living-learning communities; extend or delete a research program, WID program, assessment program, or TA education program. (We'll discuss alternate possible scenarios you might choose: yours needs to be relevant to a writing program you know, local or adopted.)

Response: Identify, review, and annotate (100-200 word annotations) at least four sources; at least two of these must come from your research beyond our syllabus. Then write a memo (800-1000 words) to an appropriate administrator explaining what you would recommend for your program and why.

You should strive to achieve some tricky balances. Unit and university administrators don't have time to become (or much interest in becoming) experts in our field, and yet they can't operate unless they understand the substance of your reasoning. These administrators often prefer concrete data and examples, which are difficult to come by in relation to program administration. They tend to prefer direct stepwise recommendations, and yet you likely won't be able to move quickly or predict accurately how your program will respond.

You may experiment with writing that takes place along a continuum of fairly informal ("Dear Jonah,") to somewhat formal ("It has been proposed that…"). Assessment criteria will be discussed further in class as the project develops.

Data-Gathering Plan, *800–1200 words, 15%*

WPAs—individually and as a field—never have enough data. Working alone or collaboratively, outline a plan to gather data relevant to your writing program (live or adopted) and its needs: describe what kind of research or assessment action a scholar, teacher, or administrator—like you or guided by you—might realistically become involved in within the next year or two, what need(s) that would fill, what steps would be needed, and what resources that would involve.

Part 1: Identify the research or assessment question(s), the stakes for the WPA, and some anticipated benefits of or changes resulting from conducting this action.

Part 2: Refer to two or three sources in the field to help explain the validity or context of your question, explain the approach you plan to take, and/or support the value of the results you might achieve

Part 3: Identify the site(s) for study or measurement, some key steps involved in this project, any additional resources required or any additional learning you would need to do in as a WPA to competently collect and assess this data, and any complications that could arise

Part 4*:* Works cited list.

Note: This is not a research proposal, although it could turn into or influence a scholarly project. You do not need to have your IRB clearance or your financing in order; you do not need to already know your statistical modeling method or precisely what kind of coding you would use on student writing. Your main goal here will be to identify and focus a research question or assessment need and begin to imagine how to take action on that need in an informed, complications-aware way.

I'm your target audience, standing in for the WPA you will become, since this is more exercise than live-wire project. An early draft of such a project would likely be for your-WPA-eyes only, so you can include exploratory considerations and aim for a register above napkin-notes but not necessarily as formal as share-with-the-dean memos.

Major Exploratory Project: *Likely 5000–7000 words, 40%*

Investigate a question related to program administration or administrators, and propose your possibility-evaluation, situated analysis, or tentative argument. Draw on scholarly research in the field, but take your analysis into the open spaces, conundrums, difficulties, alternate sites, gray areas, and/or or un(der)analyzed scenarios that give you room to ***add new perspectives to the field, even if you're not adding new data***. This is not a literature review.

We'll work in stages: a proposal, a research conference, a draft, a revision. You'll be asked to write in formal scholarly prose—despite the fact that many or most of you will not yet be drawing a firm conclusion (because firm-ish WPA conclusions are always situated, and not all of *you* are yet). You might explicitly adopt a "What If X?" approach to this project, exploring multiple options across multiple priorities or locations. You might propose a more directive argument or profile—and yet clear space for thorough discussion of alternatives and limits.

If you *are* collecting or working with data, please check with me early on to see whether you want to do this as a "classroom project" or with IRB approval. Length here is approximate, not "cast you off the island": meanwhile, if you have a reason to work on a project *significantly* shorter than 15 pages or longer than 20, or you'd like to work in a format other than text-only, please talk to me about your ideas.

English 821: Writing Program Design & Administration, Fall 2015
From *Rhetoric for WPAs* (WPA), *Ecologies of Writing Programs* (Profiles), GMU Electronic Reserves (ERes) and Library Databases (D'Base)

Date	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Blog Due
Week 1, Sept. 2	Key questions for WPA Theories of Administration Adopt-a-program	***D'Base***: Klausman, "Toward a Definition…" *TETYC* 40.3, March 2013 ***Online***: Skim adoption list; pick top 5? ***Online***: Skim one scenario ***Online/Profile***: Reiff et al., "Ecologies" pp. 1-13	In class: Program diagrams In class: Initial issues identification	
Building a Program: Learning and Instruction				
Week 2, Sept. 9	Programs and Curricula 1: WPA and FYC	***WPA***: Ch. 4, FYC; Ch. 11, Transfer, Ch. 23, Size ***ERes***: FYC—Choose two: Hesse, Redd, Wardle & Downs ***Online***: WPA Outcomes Statement ***Bring an FYC Syllabus***		
Week 3, Sept. 16	Programs and Curricula 2: Other courses/foci	***WPA***: Choose two: Ch 3, 5, 6, 17, 21 OR Gladstein 4 ***WPA***: Choose one: Ch. 2, 9, 10 ***D'Base***: North, "Idea of a Writing Center," *College English* 46.5 (Sep., 1984), pp. 433-446 ***Profiles***: Baliff, "Writing Intensive"		Blog 1: Definitions *Post by Friday 11:59 pm, respond by Monday*
Week 4, Sept. 23	Faculty Development 1: TAs and New Pedagogy Education	***ERes***: Dobrin, "Finding Space," Trubek, "Chickens, Eggs" ***ERes***: Yancey, "Professionalization" ***D'Base***: Reid et al., "Effects of WPE," *WPA* 36.1, 2012 ***Profiles***: Dively, "Standardizing"		
Week 5, Sept. 30	Faculty Development 2: Continuing Faculty	***WPA***: Ch. 13 "Instructor," and Ch. 14 "Faculty" ***Online***: Shea et al, "Transforming the Curriculum" *ATD* 2006 ***D'Base***: Lamos, "Credentialing Writing Teachers," *WPA* 35.1, 2011 ***ERes***: Robb, "Model for Professional Study"	Scenario proposals for Emergency Memo	Blog 2: Faculty *Friday & Monday*

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Blog Due
Week 6, Oct. 7	WPA and Change 1: New Curricula Lukes?	**WPA**: Ch. 25 "Freedom" **D'Base**: Reid, "Changing" **ERes**: Crosby & Bryson, "Developing" & "Implementing" **Profiles**: Fishman & Reiff "Transfer"		
Week 7, Oct. 14	WPA and Change 2: Program Initiatives	**WPA**: Ch. 8 "Mission," Ch. 24 "Politics" **Online**: Reid, "QEP in WPA" **Profiles**: Choose one: Sanford, "Writing Center," Moore et al., "Transition"	Emergency Memo Adopted site question list	
Week 8, Oct. 21	Assessing College Writing Programs	**WPA**: Ch. 12 "Assessment," Ch. 26 "Standards" **ERes**: Haswell & McLeod, "WAC Assessment" **ERes**: Perelman, "Mass-Market Assessment as BS" **Profiles**: Walker & Miles, "Assessment"	Stack o' questions: Exp. Project	Blog 3: Curriculum *Friday & Monday*
Building an Administrator: WPA as Scholar, Manager, Activist, Leader				
Week 9, Oct. 28	WPA as Scholar	**Online**: McLeod, "Definitions" **WPA**: Ch. 30 "Research" **ERes**: Yancey and Morgan "Reflective Essays" **ERes**: Weiser "Local Research" **ERes**: Leverenz, "Ethical Issues"	Proposal: Major Exp. Project; Schedule conferences	
Week 10, Nov. 4	WPA as Leader & Collaborator	**ERes**: Mirtz and Cullen, "Beyond Postmodernism" **ERes**: Crawford & Strickland, "Interrupting Collaboration" **ERes**: Badaracco, "Don't Kid Yourself" **Profiles**: Brady et al., "Collaborative"	Data Collection Proposal Research conferences	Blog 4: Dear WPA *Friday & Monday*
Week 11, Nov. 11	WPA as Manager: Labor and Budget	**WPA**: Ch. 27 "Policy," Ch. 28 "English" **ERes**: Anson, "University Budgets" **ERes**: Strickland, "Revolution" **Online**: NCTE Statement on Contingent Faculty		Blog 5: Identity *Friday & Monday*

	In Class	**Reading Due**	**Writing Due**	**Blog due**
Week 12, Nov. 18	WPA as Activist	*WPA*: Ch. 22 "Community," Ch. 31 "Principle" *ERes*: Adler-Kassner, "Taking Action"	Draft: Major Exp. Project	
		Thanksgiving Holiday		
Week 13, Dec. 2	WPA as MacGyver	*Online*: CWPA: "Evaluating the Intellectual Work" *WPA*: Ch. 29 "Intellectual Work" *ERes*: Charleton et al., "Constructing"		
Week 14, Dec. 9	Wrap-ups	*Online*: Adam Banks CCCC Keynote video Greatest Hits: TBA	Revised short projects, as needed	
Dec. 14			Major Exploration Project	