

# English 615: Composition Instruction—Practices & Principles

Spring 2014—Innovation Hall 323—Tuesdays 7:20-10:00 PM

## Prof. E. Shelley Reid

Robinson A439: Tuesdays 5:30-6:30 pm, Wednesdays 4:30-5:30 pm, and by appointment

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## Course Goals

In English 615, we'll focus on developing strategies to solve writing-teaching problems. You'll find both immediate help with course planning *and* support for your continuing development as a teacher of writing, as well as a community of engaged peer-learners.

Class sessions and assignments will help you find a workable balance between *principles* and *practices* in teaching: you need both perspective and repertoire in order to identify the problems that face writing-learners and choose responses that best enable further learning.

We'll focus on how you *notice teaching and learning* in order to help you strengthen your teaching vision and increase your teaching range. One way to notice how people teach or learn writing is to *write and revise writing* while you reflect on those actions, so we'll do that, too.

Finally, we'll place a high value on *collaboration and community development*, because good teachers almost never become good—or stay that way—all on their own.

## Course Tools & Expectations

### The Books & Readings

Bean, *Engaging Ideas*, second edition (2011)

Moore and O'Neill, *Practice in Context* (2002)

Straub, *A Sourcebook for Responding to Student Writing* (1999)

Also, we'll use readings accessible via university library databases, accessible through the library's E-Reserves, or posted on our wiki.

### The Assignments and Grade Values, Very Briefly:

Teaching Practicum Assignments (3)	25%
Syllabus Folder	30%
Community Contributions (online and in class)	20%
Exploration Essai Sequence	15%
Teaching Exploration Portfolio	10%

*Revisions* are always allowed; let me know if you'd like to revise something for a new mark/grade. Your final *portfolio* is due during the last week of class.

There is no final exam in this class. However, in recent years, we've scheduled an all-TA dinner during finals week (615+610); we'll discuss scheduling options a little later in the semester.

## Grading Expectations for Class Assignments

To earn full credit (or “A”-level grades) on your assignments for this class, your writing generally will need to be

- **complete**, including all steps or pieces, and responding to all designated questions
- **specific**, drawing on “one-time-only” examples, direct quotations, and/or individual events to support your reflections/claims, “going deep” on a few points rather than covering a broad issue
- **aware of complexities**, alternatives, contradictions, and/or multiple variables: your attention to questions will be as valuable and valued as your hypotheses and answers
- **reflective about connections** between principles and practices, between your experiences or desires and your plans, among ideas presented about teaching or learning writing
- responsive to the needs of our classroom **community**—depending on the assignment, this may entail being consistent or on-time with a task, engaging or supporting your peers, or including or recognizing their contributions
- and, in the case of the final version of your exploration essay and syllabus materials, **well-written**: focused, organized, thoughtfully revised, engagingly voiced, all details attended to

**Short assignments** may be marked as **Honors**, **Satisfactory**, or **Unsatisfactory** based on these criteria. These marks may be *loosely* translated to 10, 8.8, and 7 on a 10-point scale. A balance of H’s and S’s will be sufficient to earn an “A” for a collection of assignments.

## Other Policies of Note:

**Attendance** is expected. This is a collaborative, workshop- and participation-intensive class, so missing more than one meeting will affect your community participation grade. (And we’ll miss you!)

A strict **late work** policy is generally inappropriate for this class, given our emphasis on drafting and revising through the semester. I expect that overall you’ll keep up with both the reading and the writing as assigned. If you have to miss a due date, or you start to feel that you’re falling behind, please let me know so we can work out some alternatives.

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.

<p><b>Please save everything</b> you write for this class: all drafts, reflective writing, scribbles, assignments, etc. This will make assembling your portfolio in May <b>much easier!</b></p>
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## English 615: The Assignments

**Notes about assignment “grades”:** This is a workshop-based class with a strong emphasis on revision. You will receive very few formal “grades” on your written assignments, though you will receive a profusion of evaluative and supportive comments from me and your peers. Nearly all students who keep up and complete the assignment steps earn an A for the course. If at any point you are concerned about your letter-grade-standing for an assignment or overall, please come see me to discuss it.

### Community Contributions: 15% (assignments) + 5% (participation)

At various points this semester, you’ll need to share your thoughts, ideas, or resources formally with the rest of your peers in this class, and help move our conversations forward. I know, you talk and share ideas with each other all the time—but putting ideas in writing in a structured setting both *helps you think more clearly* and *leaves a record we can all go back to*.

**Seven contributions are required:** Three discussion board assignments, one collaborative Kindling activity, two Full Circle activity posts, one trading card. Completing all of them in a thoughtful and mostly timely manner will earn you an A (14/15). If you prefer to earn an A+ (15/15), or you are generally quiet in class and would like to increase your participation grade (that will run at 4.5/5 for general good behavior), or you need to make up some ground because you were absent or turned in a CC significantly late, you may do additional Optional CCs: more discussion posts, more learning activity posts, more trading cards. Check with me if you want to calculate the math precisely. Caveat: you cannot count more than two bonus CCs done after April 25.

### STP discussions: Three, two-post discussion contributions

The goal of these discussions is to “put one and one together” to help us think about solving teaching problems but not necessarily to create an answer. Instead, looking back on a few weeks’ worth of readings and discussions, what now/still seems crucial, challenging, overlooked, or complicated? Take a few minutes before you write to scan back over what we’ve read, written, discussed, or collaborated on recently: what stands out?

- Post an **opening discussion** to your group’s discussion board on Blackboard by the Part 1 Deadline.
  - Write about **1-2 paragraphs** (150-300 words total) to “wrangle” with one or more key questions for the Inquiry we just completed. You should suggest some ways of thinking/writing/teaching, but you need not come to a single definite conclusion
  - Focus on **Solving Teaching Problems: what challenges face writing learners and writing teachers, and how might we balance competing needs to enable writers to learn and transfer their learning?**
  - Include at least one direct (short) quotation from a reading for the Inquiry Unit
- Read the posts added by others in your group (and by those in other groups, if you’re interested!)
- Post a **response** to your group’s discussion board by the Part 2 Deadline
  - Post as a Reply to a particular person’s post
  - Write about 1-2 paragraphs that build out from earlier arguments

- Include direct quotations from at least two posts made earlier in your group's discussion to keep it *conversational*

***Why aren't we just holding these discussions in class, as in other classes with assigned readings, where it's much more fun and the feedback is instant and there's more teacher input so it's not just the blind silently milling around with the blind?***

Because in this class we need a third to a half of every meeting for you and your peers to *practice teaching*—to solve actual teaching problems, not hypothetical ones—moving from the bleachers to the swimming pool, something we can *only* do together in a classroom

Because there's value in distance: in responding to an arc of readings, with time to spot the connections and discontinuities, to have figured out what's really elbowing you in the ribs, rather than giving your just-for-tonight off-the-cuff response—and value in having a record of an extended conversation to return to later

Because there's value in written-discussion: in practicing it as a genre increasingly important in our world, in learning how to learn in multiple settings, in “hearing” from people who don't usually speak much in a quick classroom give-and-take, in using writing to become more aware of what's interesting to you because writing constructs as well as represents knowledge, in gaining precise language to identify pedagogical concepts

### **Collaborative Kindling (once)**

Working with a partner, design and implement a 10-15 minute activity to help kindle our critical thinking and problem solving neurons in regard to a class reading, assignment, or key question. Your goal is not to get your peers to tell you what they came into class thinking, as you might if you “opened the floor for discussion,” but to kindle in as many of them as possible a new, more complex, more discomfiting, more connected, more expansive, more learner-focused, more problem-aware, more personally relevant, or more layered or nuanced response to (part of) the issue. You will probably have time to focus on only *one of* these growth areas for a small but steady fire; you should prefer power to coverage and better questions to clear solutions or solid judgments.

You should design your Kindling to have

- a low threshold and a broad reach: everyone in class should be able to participate right from the start, and not just by watching the event go by
- interactivity that goes beyond an IRE pattern (teacher initiates, student responds, teacher evaluates)
- encouragements or rewards for discovery, insight, innovation, complication: you should seek responses or contributions that you cannot directly predict
- a way to conclude that suggests how the newly complicated or dissonant ideas can be or feel productive: what are your peers better prepared for now? what's a next step?

Your Kindling might involve whole group or small group or paired discussion, mini-lectures, reading, writing, drawing, questions, scenarios, quizzes, cellphone votes, standing, moving, markers, Google, interviews, videos, music, exchanges, memories, wishlists, hard choices, speed dates, cookies, poetry, sentences, ranking, imaginary friends, dictionary definitions, proposals, revisions, debates, roleplays, 3-D glasses, minions, or Star Trek Action Figures.

You and your partner need to complete a 5-sentence Before Analysis -- ideally, do this *before* your Kindle!

- one believing sentence about the class reading or idea that your activity is based on, and one doubting sentence, as a way of seeing the complications of what you're about to dive into
  - to write a believing sentence, get into your most positive frame of mind, assuming the author/idea is total genius: what is superduper fantastic and productive and engaging and interesting about what an author proposes, that could change the world and light up the sky and taste like chocolate ice cream?
  - to write a doubting sentence, move into your most skeptical frame of mind, wondering if the author/idea is steeped in disconnected lunacy: what is totally impractical, way off in left field, completely ignorant of key factors in a real classroom, left over from some dusty bin of the 1960s?
- one short sentence connecting your question/issue/text to some other question/issue/text we've been discussing
- one sentence describing some “low-hanging fruit”—ideas you expect most of your peers to enter having an opinion or response about
- and one sentence describing what new perspectives or awarenesses or connections you want to kindle in them

You and your partner need to complete a 3-5 sentence After Analysis (what worked best, what was hardest, what surprised you) after you do your Kindle. Email your pair of analyses to me afterwards.

### “Full Circle” Activity: Two activities posted

*Twice* during the final weeks of the semester—once for our writing process sequence, once for our researched writing sequence—post and be ready to discuss a class activity or homework assignment that can help students move through a particular writing sequence.

### Trading Card: One required

Create a Writing Teacher Trading Card, based on one of the articles or chapters you've read. (Sign up in class or by email.) These cards will be printed out and distributed to class members. In addition to the author's name and article title, your trading card should include at least

- one interpretive summary sentence
- one Solving (Writing) Teaching Problems note: what does this help with/connect to?
- one question, gray area, or connection to another reading/concept
- and, on the back, two or three quotable quotes.

You may also include items (serious or lighthearted, true or fictional) such as graphics, nicknames, mottoes, vital statistics, hobbies, vanity license plates, Voted-Most-Likely-To..., etc. Forms and models can be downloaded from the wiki; I'll provide the cardstock and help with the printing.

## Class and Workshop Participation

Particularly strong or particularly passive engagement in *in-class* activities will factor into the final Community Contribution grade. If you miss class for something other than illness or emergency, or you miss more than one class, check with me about what you might need to contribute in return.

## Teaching Practicum Assignments: 25%

The Teaching Practicum Assignments ask you to wade into the weekly work of a writing teacher: designing a writing assignment prompt, grading student essays, and running part of a class session. All three of the TPAs are required, and will be evaluated as H (100%), S (88%) or U (70%).

### TPA 1: Collaborative Doubleteach

**Once** this semester, you and a partner will be asked to **teach 20-25 minutes of class** together, present a five-minute DoubleVision reflection, and post your Doubleteach Notes.

You will ask us to imagine ourselves as first-year composition students, and teach an activity appropriate for English 101.

You should link your **Doubleteach Notes** to the Course Calendar page, due the evening you teach:

- a *learning goals statement*: what are/were two or three goals you have for students through this activity? what skills, abilities, or understandings should they improve on via your activity?
- the *outline* of the activity you are leading, along with information about where to acquire any readings, videos, websites, or advice you found relevant, and
- a *connections statement*: what are one or two articles, chapters, key questions, or previous discussions that your presentation draws on or resonates with?

**Please time and balance your activity:** by the 25-minute mark, you should have a way of concluding the exercise and moving to your reflection. You and your partner should both participate in the teaching, either collaboratively throughout or in tag-team style, and in the reflection.

**DoubleVision Reflection:** Take advantage of the opportunity to “see” both as a teacher and a student, and share with us 2-3 teacherly decisions that you made that were easier/harder because of your current/previous preferences or experiences as students. Alternately, note anything you observed about your “students” while you were teaching that you weren’t used to seeing as a student. You may also choose a single question to poll your “students” on, in reverse double-vision mode: did something you did work for them as students, and would they use it as teachers of students-not-like-them?

**Post-Game Analysis:** Within one week after the class session, you will each turn in (email) a **1-2 paragraph reflection** addressing how your initial goals for the activity were or weren’t met, your analysis of the strengths or challenges of the activity, what you learned, what balancing you were engaged in, and what you might keep/change if you teach this again. Please also add a note about the collaboration (who did what) and the act of collaborating (how did it work?). (Save a copy.)

Completion of the teaching session and the analysis will automatically earn you an H.

## TPA 2: Conscientious Grading

Submit—via individual or (strongly encouraged) **partnered conference** with me—two composition papers, with your written comments (and tentative letter-grades), from the set posted on the Wiki. Be sure to read the assignment prompt that engendered the papers, and be prepared, in each case, to discuss the *principles* behind your responses as well as your questions.

**Post-Game Analysis:** After the conference, **email** me 1-2 paragraphs: What were your assumptions going into this assignment? How, if at all, did they change? What were/are you trying to balance? What three reminders do you want to give yourself about responding to students? What questions are you still wrestling with? You should save a copy of this email.

### Why so much of this endless post-game reflection stuff???

Assignments like the TPAs demonstrate that you can do something successfully once, in a sheltered situation. The reflective, metacognitive process is your (and my) best indication about whether you can *deliberately* repeat the action, improve it, and/or adapt it to real-life teaching when you get there. Otherwise, we'll just be hoping that you'll feel inspired at the right moment.

Reflecting *in writing* both causes you to think more precisely and more expansively, and leaves a record of your ideas and intentions for you to revisit later. It also strengthens your mental muscles, helping you develop teacherly habits of mind. If our goal is to have you learn strategies that are useful over the long term, the reflective writing is crucial. If it feels uncomfortable or distracting, please try to be patient with it, or come talk with me.

## TPA 3: Clear sighted Assignment

Draft an assignment prompt for a main essay for English 101 or a similar class. Include the instructions as you would give them to the class, as well as a description of the specific criteria for evaluation (what constitutes an "A" or "C" essay?) and/or a grading rubric, checklist, guide, or plan-of-action.

In describing your criteria, or in a separate annotation/reflection, please attend to (or expand on) a minimum of **three abstract or hard-to-define essay features** as focal points: "has a minimum of grammatical errors" is not very abstract, but "attends to audience needs" or "has good support" or "is original" is. Remember to describe the writing ("provided clear examples"), not the state of mind of the author ("showed good effort").

For each of these, you should describe what a competent or "C-level" performance would entail, and what an outstanding or "A-level" performance would look like on the page. Having clear definitions of your competent and exceptional criteria helps you give student writers language for what they're trying to do, lets them see what to aim for positively rather than what treacherous bogs to avoid, and helps you know what to teach toward—and highlight in assigned readings—as you work with your students

**Post-Game Analysis:** Write a paragraph or two reflecting on your goals for this assignment, any difficulties that you would expect college writers to encounter in working on this assignment, and how you might help those writers meet your goals.

## Syllabus Folder (30%)

Building a syllabus that meshes principles with good practices requires you to synthesize a lot of information. Experienced teachers often complete a syllabus without specifically noticing the various steps in the process or articulating their thinking about these actions. In this class, we'll take the time to notice the process, and we'll go stepwise through it so that you can ask questions and try out ideas regarding each element.

This semester you will develop a workable syllabus outline for English 101. It will probably not be your dream syllabus. After all, since you will start working on it even before you have completed English 615, and well before you've begun to teach English 101, you won't have enough time to know precisely what your dream is. Your goals in this class are to (a) learn some of the core elements of a successful English 101 syllabus at GMU, (b) learn some of the main strategies in designing a semester-long writing class, and (c) reach the end of the semester in possession of a working syllabus that you could, with a little work, step into fall semester with in August.

Your Syllabus Folder will comprise three parts: your preparation notes, your three-day plan, and your tentative syllabus framework. Drafts, steps, and notes will be counted for completion (5%); final assignments (three-day plan and syllabus frame, 10% & 15%) will be marked H, S, or U.

### Syllabus Prep Notes

We'll work through some preliminary steps toward designing a syllabus, such as

- Reviewing others' syllabi
- Observing another writing class session, and discussing its syllabus with the teacher
- Comparing composition textbooks
- Identifying key learning goals for the course, and matching assignments to them

You'll write up some informal notes, plans, and questions in these areas to serve as guides for drafting the syllabus itself.

### English 101 Syllabus Framework

**Step 1: Syllabus Mashup Sketch + Reflection.** Choose one of the Core Syllabi provided for you and one other English 101 syllabus from the GMU program that you like. You are welcome to use your Mentor's or a friend's syllabus or any other syllabus resource from <http://composition.gmu.edu> as you plan. Post both base syllabi to your Syllabus Folder page.

Using the Core Syllabus as a starting point, make at least one major change and no more than two major changes using elements of your second syllabus and/or your earlier work for this class (e.g. your assignment prompt). A major change could be

- using a different textbook or theme
- significantly changing a major project assignment
- changing the order of major project assignments
- adding or deleting a major project assignment

You may also or instead make 2-4 minor changes. A minor change could be

- altering the focus/topic of a major assignment
- adding, deleting, or changing one or more minor projects (journal, blog, reflection)
- adding, deleting, changing some readings, conferences, activities
- changing the grade weights of the major assignments
- altering the pacing of the course to have some projects due a little earlier/later

This mash-up guide is suggestive, not comprehensive. Your goal is to gain some familiarity with the key components of a semester-long first-year writing class and begin to identify some of your own preferences as a writing teacher. This is an early draft of one possible, workable syllabus for one possible English 101 class at GMU. Remember: you are not yet drafting your Dream Syllabus.

*Reflective writing (1 paragraph):* Why did you choose this Core Syllabus over the next most appealing one in the group, and what interests you about the changes you made? What elements of this syllabus sketch connect to core principles you have about teaching or learning (writing)? What are some assumptions that you're making—about your students, about learning, about teaching—in sketching this plan? What balancing acts are you engaged in?

### **Step 2: Expanded draft + Reflection**

To your earlier mashup sketch, make some modifications:

- Add or change at least one (optional) policy statement, course intro, grading description, design/layout approach, or other “front matter” element: you can create your own brand new, or “mashup” from another teacher’s syllabus.
- Add to the daily schedule: note where your three-day plan fits in and sketch in at least 3-6 additional major learning goals or activities for other class days during the semester. (Consider the Full Circle lists as well as the DTs and Kindles as you look for options.)
- **Optional:** Add a notation about a Major Change you’re considering at this point but haven’t had time to develop. Ask readers your questions about the effects of this change.

*Reflective writing (1-2 paragraphs):* Practice hat-switching, and look for four ways people can connect with as well as resist or question your syllabus. 1. Where do you most strongly connect with it? question it? 2. Where might a student most strongly connect with or question it? 3. Where might a memorable teacher from your past feel most at home, or most surprised? 4. Which composition theory/theorist is most in tune with (part of) this syllabus, and which one questions (or is questioned by) it?

### **Step 3: Portfolio draft**

Option 1: Turn in your Expanded Draft with perhaps a few minor modifications/additions **and the annotations below.**

*Option 1 Reflective writing (Annotation + 1-2 paragraphs):* Using post-its, scribbles in the margin, or a different font, *annotate* your syllabus with 4-6 comments that “pull back the curtain”: which best practices or teaching principles are you enacting (or hoping to enact)? For instance: “I want this paragraph to help students see me as an Elbow-like reader, not a red-pen slasher” or “I’m doing a researched essay second to help students see that *all* writing is research-based.” For your paragraphs, draw on any of the reflective questions we’ve been using throughout the semester: what do you see about your writing/teaching/learning as you look at this syllabus?

Option 2: If you’re really itching to break the mold and create a 101 syllabus that doesn’t match the Core Syllabi, run the first draft of it: set out the major assignments and grade weights, sketch the main due dates, and complete the reflective writing below.

*Option 2 Reflective writing:* What interests you about the syllabus you made? What elements of this syllabus sketch connect to core principles you have about teaching or learning (writing)? How does it meet the major GMU English 101 learning goals? What are some assumptions that you’re making—about your students, about learning, about teaching—in sketching this plan? What risks are you taking, and why are you convinced they’re worth taking?

### Three-Day Plan

Submit a three-day course plan for an English 101 or similar course. For each day, describe the activity/ies that you would have students engage in as they worked toward completing an essay, and note the approximate time given to each. It may help your peer reviewer if you briefly explain what major assignment students would be working toward. You should include at least two specific written homework assignments (not just “read X” and not a full draft of an essay) that will make students responsible/accountable for some learning outside of class, and/or scaffold them toward a way of thinking/writing that you want to build on in class.

*Reflective writing:* Begin *each day’s* plan with a brief statement: what are your main learning goals for the day? (Remember the difference between a teaching goal and a learning goal: what should students know/do better after class?) Conclude *each day’s* plan with 1-2 sentences about possible pitfalls and/or back-up plans, and a 1-2 sentences connecting your plan to principles, goals, or procedures we’ve been discussing or reading about.

## Exploration Essai Sequence (15%)

### Exploration Essai, Three Sketches—Tap Into A Vivid Moment

Write quickly for a paragraph or two or so (200-300 words) describing each of the following three scenes (thus, around 2-3 double-spaced pages total):

- A memorable incident in your life as a *student*
- A vivid memory from your life as a *writer*
- An important encounter with (or as) a *teacher*

The memories can be positive or negative, or more mixed. Focus more on describing your experiences and responses at the key moment than on background or exposition. This is *informal* writing: our goals emphasize discovery and insight, not (yet) craft.

In addition, please list **4-8 questions** about (your) writing, teaching, and/or learning that these scenes raise for you, or that occur to you separately from these scenes. These should be questions the answer to which could begin, “Well, it’s complicated” or “It could kind of go either way.”

Post an **anonymous** copy of everything (see online directions) to the wiki to share (but not to turn in).

### Exploration Essai, Initial Draft—Explore the Complications

Choose one or two of your sketch ideas or questions (or one[s] like them) about learning, teaching, and/or writing—focusing on a scene or question with a tension that you do not know *the* answer to already—and draft an essay-length exploration (4-6 pp.) of it/them. Your goal should not necessarily be to provide an answer, but instead to explore why more than one answer/approach might be “right,” or to identify what pieces of a question raise complications in trying to respond to it, or to show how achieving a goal might have been or could be more difficult than it seems.

If as a writer you need to feel grounded in an argument or position statement, try something like this: “I think \_\_\_\_ is important because \_\_\_\_ but also complicated/difficult to explain/decide, primarily because \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ but also due to \_\_\_\_ .”

Write “from home”: that is, this should be a (first-person) *essai* about what *you* see, believe, and wonder (and why), rather than a statement about what *should* happen for all good teachers or students everywhere. Your own experiences should form a core of the *essai*, since they (will) form a core of your teaching; your own analyses should give the writing motion. You may consider this draft of the EE a personal/creative text, allowing for experimentation and innovation in voice, format, and diction/style, and allowing for the possibility that you are not headed toward an answer.

You may but do not need to include material from one or more of your sketches.

A once-through reader should be able to follow a line or two of thinking through the essay. However, this assignment is absolutely not designed to elicit a “teaching philosophy statement,”

polished and complete, even if you find yourself articulating (or questioning) some of your key principles.

Post a copy to the wiki for our workshop; include a Feedback Guide for your readers. After that, complete a Post Script to for me to review as I read it, and schedule a conference with me.

### Exploration Essai, Revision/Expansion:

Revise and expand your early draft in order to integrate regular, thoughtful, specific references to a range of the articles, experiences, and theories you've encountered during this class (and your ongoing teaching, noticing, or observing). Your revised draft may thus begin to resemble more closely a "typical" graduate-level research essay. On the other hand, it might begin to fray some at the edges, or become a dialogue or roundel; it might need to have columns, footnotes, or section headers. You need not obliterate the personal voice or experience that lies at its foundations.

You are welcome at this point either to stay with "It's still complicated!" as your unifying idea, or to start to lean toward an answer, a suggestion, a prioritization, a call (to yourself) to action(s). If you move toward answers, be sure to continue to allow for complications, balancing acts, situational variables that might make your proposal *an answer* (for you, for this class, at this point) rather than *the answer*.

The expanded draft should be about **6-9 pages** long. You should **directly quote** from at least **4-6 outside sources** either in support of or as contradictions to your own ideas; take the time to "sit" with each outside reference for at least a sentence or two of professional conversation, rather than just name-dropping.

Prepare a draft—according to your writing group's preferences (discussed in class)—for the workshop. You will turn in a draft to me (with a Post Script) or have the option to set up a conference.

Your final Exploration Essai will earn a letter grade as part of your Portfolio. Please see the EE Grading Guide to note that significant credit will be granted to essays that take risks, embrace ambiguities, consider messinesses, concede insufficiencies, and/or present alternatives—that is, essays that exhibit characteristics of exploration.

### Teaching Exploration Portfolio (10%)

Your class portfolio may be print (in a binder or folder) or built from a Wiki page. It should include the following, arranged in an order that makes sense to you and helps your exploration of the work of writing teachers cohere along a line or two of inquiry. Your portfolio should "go to show" a thing or two about your thinking as a (writing) teacher.

- All major workshop drafts of your Exploration essay, with original Post Scripts

- All elements of your Syllabus Folder: notes, drafts and final versions, including reflective writing
- At least one set of notes or write-up from a class observation, this semester or last
- Two (other) CC assignments or posts
- Your revised Exploration Essay with a new Post Script OR your proposal and Additional Class Prep Material with reflective writing
- An annotated Table of Contents: In 2-3 sentences, note how a selection or cluster of selections contributes to your ongoing development as a writer/writing-teacher, what was difficult or interesting about producing it, and/or why you chose it from among other options. If an item is updated or revised and needs to be re-evaluated, please also note it here.
- A short, reflective Introductory and/or Concluding essay that ties the portfolio together—something more than just a list of what's in there (2-4 pages; we'll talk more about this in April)

You may also include copies of other posts, class handouts, or other teaching-related materials selected for their connection to and/or support of other required materials.

Also, I'd be delighted if you'd include a selection of writing you've done recently *outside* this class—*not to be graded*, of course, but to round out your picture of yourself as a writer/teacher, and to show-off a little of what you can do when you're more "in your element." (Why this one?)

**Note 1:** In this portfolio, risk-taking will be noted and considered positively. Your portfolio will also be evaluated on Awareness of Complexity, Organization/Cohesion, and Focus of Development.

**Note 2:** Chronology is a fairly limited coherence device for a course portfolio—it substitutes the professor's order for your own. "Here are all my essays, and here are all my TPAs" is perhaps a little more cohesive; "These groups go from documents where you can see me thinking the most like an anteater to documents that show me thinking the most like a centaur" might be a little over the top, but does base the portfolio cohesion in your own experience and sense of the world rather than in the syllabus I created. Likewise, "Here are all my discussion posts because I worked hard on these" is less a contribution to a story development than "Here's my second discussion post, which I've chosen because it shows how I am struggling between two aspects of my teaching nature." If you take some time with the inclusion-and-organization questions, you may find that the TOC annotations become not just necessary, but perhaps also engaging: why is **this here**?? what does it mean to you?

**Note 3:** If you're doing a wiki portfolio, it needs to be a cleaned-up, author-designed document, just as it would be in paper copy.

- For example, for the Syllabus Folder elements (for example), please don't just link me to your Syllabus Folder page and say "have at it, it's all there somewhere." :-)
- Drafts should still be drafty and can (probably should!) contain peer comments and questions, but they should be reviewed by you and placed as needed into your portfolio-wiki
- Documents should either be copied **onto new wiki pages** (preferred, so the wiki site reads smoothly) or be copied into documents/PDFs that are linked to your pages (perhaps necessary for Reid-commented-upon drafts).

## Post Script

Write 200-400 words of informal reflective commentary from the writer's point of view—perhaps a little like a DVD commentary voice-over track—to accompany any essay draft or revision you give to me.

You should reflect, as specifically as possible, on the following:

- what went as expected as you wrote/reviewed/revised this essay, and what was surprising or disorienting
- what, if anything, you learned from writing this essay that will be useful in teaching other people to solve writing problems
- what about the assignment or process you would do differently if you were assigning a similar essay to undergraduates

You may also reflect on one or more of the following, or any related issues:

- what parts of the essay seem to be working well (or not) & why
- any experiments you did or risks you took in writing; any “rules” you broke
- what you have changed (so far) as you've revised, or hope to add later
- what you've done or would like to do similarly or differently in another essay
- anything you want(ed) to include or do in this essay but didn't
- any balancing acts you've been working on as you wrote
- any questions you have about the overall essay or specific parts of it
- what you'd like to learn more about—in terms of writing and/or teaching

## Critical Learning Reflection Questions

*Adapted from Stephen Brookfield, *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher**

- A1: What did you learn this week, from any source, about writing or teaching?
- A2: At what moment in class this week (or during class-related activities) did you feel most engaged with what was happening?
- A3: What action that anyone (teacher or student) took this week in class (or in class-related activities) did you find most affirming and helpful?
- B1: What did you most struggle with or puzzle over this week about writing or teaching?
- B2: At what moment in class this week (or during class-related activities) did you feel most distanced from what was happening?
- B3: What action that anyone (teacher or student) took in class (or in class-related activities) this week did you find most puzzling or confusing?
- C1: What about the class or your learning this week surprised you the most? Why?

## English 615: Spring 2014 Initial Calendar (Please see online calendar for links and updates)

### First Inquiry: Enabling writing learning through reader response

	In Class This Week	Reading Due This Week	Writing Due This Week	Presentations/Reminders
<b>Week 1,</b> Jan. 21	Who's in this class? What's involved in writing-learning (SWP)? What's involved in writing-teaching-learning (SWTP)?	<b>Wiki</b> (in-class): Macrorie, "The Poison Fish"; Lamott, "First Drafts" <b>Online</b> (in-class): GMU Composition Website, Faculty Resources site: <a href="http://composition.gmu.edu">http://composition.gmu.edu</a> <a href="https://compositionatgmu.pbworks.com">https://compositionatgmu.pbworks.com</a> (Use "aristotle" + "plato" or "composition" + "rhetoric" as UserID + Password, or Request Access.)		Access <b>Database</b> articles via the E-Journal Finder tab on the library home page: <a href="http://library.gmu.edu">http://library.gmu.edu</a> . Enter the title of the journal, then choose a database that has the issue you need, then browse to find the correct full-text issue.  <b>E-Reserve Readings</b> can be accessed through the library page, using the E-Reserves tab at the top: our class password is <b>instruction</b> (no caps).
<b>Week 2,</b> Jan. 28	What kinds of comments support writing learning/learners and enable problem solving? How can we balance various needs as we comment? Workshop: Commenting	<b>Bean:</b> Ch. 16, "Writing Comments" <b>Straub:</b> Sommers, "Responding"; Daiker, "Praise" <b>Straub:</b> "What if Drugs..." essay and comments (make your comments first!) <b>Online:</b> Reid, "5 Principles" <b>OPTIONAL:</b> <b>Online:</b> Video, "Teachers' Comments..." <b>Database:</b> Calhoon-Dilahunt and Forrest, "Developmental Writers' Responses" <i>TETYC 40.3</i>	Syllabus Folder: Post two GMU 101 syllabi to your syllabus page in time for class tonight. (Your mentor's can be one; for another, check the Comp Resources archive.)	Bring 2 ideas for DoubleTeach activities  Coming up: Sign up to DoubleTeach Sign up to Kindle  <b>Wiki:</b> By next Tuesday, schedule a TPA #2 Grading Conference
<b>Week 3,</b> Feb. 4	How can we balance grading with teaching & learning? What can grades accomplish? what limits or challenges do they bring? How can we grade fairly and efficiently? Workshop: Backwards design of assessment criteria; DB Review	<b>Bean:</b> Ch. 14, "Rubrics" & Ch. 5, "Correctness" <b>Straub:</b> Elbow, "Ranking"; also, skim "John Cougar" essay and comments <b>Online:</b> Reid on Grading <b>Online:</b> Reid on Time Management	<b>TPA #2: Grading</b> (this week: conference + email follow-up)  <b>First Discussion Board Review:</b> Blackboard First Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (2/7) Second Deadline = Mon. 11:59 pm (2/10)	Kindlers (bonus CC):  DoubleTeachers (bonus CC):  Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions

## Second Inquiry: Designing assignments to support writing learning

	In Class This Week	Reading Due This Week	Writing Due This Week	Presentations/Reminders
<b>Week 4,</b> Feb. 11	<p>How do we help students think rhetorically in a world of tests, formulae, and clear answers?</p> <p>How do we create problem-solving situations for students?</p> <p>What elements must writers consider to solve a writing problem, and what strategies do writing learners need?</p> <p>Workshop: Exploration Essai Sketches, Asgt Analysis</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Chapter 3, “Rhetorically”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> M. Tremmel, “What to Make of the Five Paragraph Theme,” <i>Teaching English in the Two-Year College</i> (TETYC) 39.1 (2011).</p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Freire, “Banking Education” <b>or</b></p> <p><b>Online:</b> Kirkley, “Problem Solving”</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Online:</b> Burger, “Teaching Students to Fail”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Salazar, “Stop Teaching...”</p>	<p><b>Exploration Essai, 3 Sketches</b></p> <p><b>Post one anonymous copy, for sharing with peers (follow the link for instructions)</b></p> <p>Bring someone’s assignment prompt to class</p>	<p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p>
<b>Week 5,</b> Feb. 18	<p>How can we help writing learners use awareness of purpose, discipline, genre, and media to improve their writing?</p> <p>Is it true that “everything’s an argument,” and how might that affect assignment design?</p> <p>What’s necessary for a rhetorically and pedagogically sound assignment prompt?</p> <p>Workshop: Assgt. Prompt, EE narrowing</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Ch. 4 “Genres” and Ch. 6 “Assignments”</p> <p><b>Moore:</b> Chapter 12: “Save the World”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Reid on Assignments</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Takayoshi &amp; Selfe, “Multimodal”</p>	<p><b>TPA #3: Assignment Prompt Draft</b></p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Schedule class observation(s)</p>
<b>Week 6,</b> Feb. 25*	<p>How can we scaffold learning to help students solve writing problems and connect principles to practice in their own work?</p> <p>Workshop: EE Review</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Chapter 8, “Active”</p> <p><b>Moore:</b> Ch. 9 <b>or</b> 10 <b>or</b> 13</p> <p><b>Online:</b> <i>Writing Spaces</i>: Choose one chapter</p>	<p><b>Exploration Essai:</b> Post draft + feedback guide to wiki</p> <p>Schedule EE Conference</p>	<p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p>

	<b>In Class This Week</b>	<b>Reading Due This Week</b>	<b>Writing Due This Week</b>	<b>Presentations/Reminders</b>
<i>Week 7,</i> Mar. 4	<p>What should students learn in a semester of first-year writing instruction?</p> <p>What sequences of assignments, readings, or activities can help them learn?</p> <p>What strategies encourage students to retain, apply, and transfer writing learning to other situations?</p> <p>Workshop: Activity principles, DB Review</p>	<p><b>Online:</b> Review GMU Comp Site, 101 goals</p> <p><b>Online:</b> WPA Outcomes for FYC</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Framework for Writing</p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Yancey “Reflection”</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Moore:</b> Skim Chapter 2 <b>or</b> 3 <b>or</b> 5 (Course overviews)</p>	<p><b>TPA #3: Asgt. Prompt</b></p> <p><b>BEFORE BREAK:</b> <b>Second Discussion Board</b> <b>Review:</b> Blackboard First Deadline = Wed. 11:59 pm (3/5) Second Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (3/7)</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Schedule class observation(s)</p>

### Third Inquiry: Engaging writing learners in classroom communities

<i>Week 8,</i> Mar. 18	<p>What roles can writing instructors play in the classroom to encourage writing learning?</p> <p>What balancing acts face instructors who need to motivate, scaffold, and direct writing learners?</p> <p>How can we pace a semester-long syllabus to build students’ confidence, skills, and knowledge as writing problem solvers?</p> <p>Workshop: Backwards design and Syllabus feedback</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Chapter 10, “Small Groups”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> Elbow, “Embracing Contraries,” <i>College English</i> 45 (1983) 327-39</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Noyd, “Over/Underteaching”</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Online:</b> McCabe &amp; Lane, “Role of Student Evals”</p> <p><b>St. Martin’s Guide:</b> Skim Chapter 3</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Establishing Classroom Ground Rules</p>	<p><b>Syllabus Mashup Sketch</b></p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>Double Teachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Bring two comp textbooks</p>
<i>Week 9,</i> Mar. 25	<p>How do we teach writing learners to (want to) review and revise their writing?</p> <p>How do we teach writing learners to review and suggest revisions for one another’s writing?</p> <p>Workshop: Three-Day Schedule, Revision Plan for EE</p>	<p><b>Moore:</b> Ch. 22, “Radical Revision”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Reid, “Peer Review”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> Devet, “Welcoming Grammar...” <i>Teaching English in the Two-Year Coll (TETYC)</i>, Sept. 2002.</p> <p><b>Rhetoric:</b> Skim Chapter on Arguing, Analysis, or Research</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Online:</b> Corbett, “A Better Way”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> MIT Peer Review Videos</p>	<p><b>3-Day Schedule Draft</b> <i>Link as a wiki page to Syllabus Page</i></p> <p>Bring all trading cards</p> <p>Bring/post current draft: EE</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p><b>Wiki:</b> Sign up for Solving Class Management Problems Group</p>

	<b>In Class This Week</b>	<b>Reading Due This Week</b>	<b>Writing Due This Week</b>	<b>Presentations/Reminders</b>
<b>Week 10</b> April 1	<p><b>Online Class</b></p> <p>What expectations might writing learners bring with them to class?</p> <p>How can writing teachers respond to encourage learning &amp; risk-taking?</p> <p>Workshop: EE Review</p>	<p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Brooke, “Underlife”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> Lisa Delpit, “The Silenced Dialogue” <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> 58 (1988)</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Liou, “Stereotype Threat”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Reid, “Risk-Taking”</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL</b></p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Rose, “Average”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Krebs, “Fail Better”</p> <p><b>E-reserves:</b> Doyle, “Why Students Resist”</p>	<p><b>Exploration Essai Revision &amp; Expansion draft</b> + Feedback Guide: Post Online</p>	<p>Online Kindlers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p><b>Wiki:</b> Sign up for Full Circle options</p>
<b>Week 11</b> April 8	<p>How do we use personal principles, pedagogical advice, and priorities for student learning to respond to challenging interpersonal interactions?</p> <p>How can we sequence activities to introduce, reinforce, and assist students with elements of writing problem solving?</p> <p>Workshop: Full Circle 1</p>	<p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Skorczewski “Playing the Role”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> WPA Plagiarism Statement</p> <p><b>Various:</b> Class Management Reading(s)</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Database:</b> K. Johnson, “Millennial Teacher” <i>Pedagogy</i> 6.1 (2006)</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Jenkins, “Toward a Rational Approach to Plagiarism”</p>	<p><b>Syllabus Folder Notes</b> Due: Class observation(s) (Post to Syllabus Folder Page)</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p>
<b>Fourth Inquiry: Case Studies in Writing Learning</b>				
<b>Week 12</b> April 15	<p>How is college-level inquiry and research different from what students have done before?</p> <p>What do writers need to learn to produce a well-researched, sourced argument?</p> <p>How do we help writers focus, research, draft, revise, and present supported academic arguments?</p> <p>Workshop: Full Circle 2</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Chapter 13, “Research”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> Hlavaty &amp; Townsend, “Library” <i>TETYC</i> December 2010.</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Fister, “Why The ‘Research Paper’ isn’t Working”</p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Skim Graff &amp; Berkenstein, “Appendix of Templates”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Skim Reid, Syllabus Advice Page</p>	<p>Full Circle 1 Posted</p> <p>Add ideas for Full Circle 2 topics; sign up for one</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>Double Teachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: Reid on Discussions Reid on Class Sessions</p> <p>Optional: Proposal for Alt EE Asgt.</p>

	<b>In Class This Week</b>	<b>Reading Due This Week</b>	<b>Writing Due This Week</b>	<b>Presentations/Reminders</b>
<b>Week 13</b> April 22	<p>How, why, and when do we teach reading and critical thinking in a writing class?</p> <p>How do we help students “level up” to analysis, synthesis, and outside-the-box thinking?</p> <p>Workshop: Syllabus Frame</p>	<p><b>Bean:</b> Ch. 9 “Reading”</p> <p><b>Moore:</b> Ch. 18 “Reading Response” <b>or</b> Ch. 19, “Research Journal”</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Jamieson “Reading and Engaging Sources” (ATD 10.4, 2013)</p> <p><b>Online:</b> Chart of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL:</b></p> <p><b>Bean:</b> Ch. 2 “Critical”</p>	<p><b>Syllabus Frame: Expanded draft</b></p> <p>Bring two paper copies with you to class, please: this is the way many students will encounter your syllabus.</p> <p>Full Circle 2 Posted</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle, please read:</p> <p>Reid on Discussions</p> <p>Reid on Class Sessions</p>
<b>Week 14</b> April 29	<p>How do we <del>serve</del> engage with writing teaching problems?</p> <p>How do we support multilingual speakers and writers in a composition classroom?</p> <p>Workshop: Portfolio</p>	<p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Matsuda &amp; Silva, “Cross-cultural”</p> <p><b>E-Reserves:</b> Ferris &amp; Roberts, “Error feedback”</p> <p><b>Database:</b> Johnsen et al., “Messy Teaching,” <i>TETYC</i> 37.2 Dec. 2009</p>	<p><b>Third Discussion Board Review:</b></p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>First Deadline =Wed. 11:59 pm (4/30)</p> <p>Second Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (5/2)</p> <p><b>Final Portfolio: Due by May 7</b></p>	
May 6 or May 13	<p>Location TBA</p> <p>TA Summit: All first-, second-, and (optional) third-year TAs meet for pizza, pot-luck, and idea-sharing.</p>			