

English 615: Composition Instruction—Practices & Principles

Spring 2012—Innovation Hall 320—Tuesdays 7:20-10:00 PM

Prof. E. Shelley Reid

Robinson A420: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 pm, Thursdays Noon-1:00 pm

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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, occasional 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)	15%
Syllabus Folder	30%
Community Contributions (online and in class)	20%
Final Teaching/Writing Portfolio (including the Exploration Essay)	35%

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 class members.

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

Inquiry 1: Enabling writing learning through reader response

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Presentations/Reminders
Week 1, Jan. 24	Who's in this class? What's involved in writing-learning (SWP)? What's involved in writing-teaching-learning (SWT-P)?	Wiki (in-class): Macrorie, "The Poison Fish"; Lamott, "First Drafts" Online (in-class): GMU Composition Website, Faculty Resources site: http://composition.gmu.edu https://compositionatgmu.pbworks.com (Use "aristotle" + "plato" or "composition" + "rhetoric" as UserID + Password, or Request Access.)		Access Database articles via the E-Journal Finder tab on the library home page: http://library.gmu.edu . 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. E-Reserve Readings can be accessed through the library page, using the E-Reserves tab at the top: our class password is instruction (no caps).
Week 2, Jan. 31	What kinds of comments support writing learning/learners and enable problem solving? How can we balance various needs as we comment? Workshop: Peer Review	Bean: Ch. 16, "Writing Comments" Straub: Sommers, "Responding"; Daiker, "Praise" Online: Reid on Time Management Straub: "What if Drugs" essay and comments (make your comments first!) OPTIONAL: Online: Video, "Teachers' Comments Through Students' Eyes"	Draft of Warm-up Essay due for in-class workshop—post your copy to Blackboard 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
Week 3, Feb. 7	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	Bean: Ch. 14, "Rubrics" & Ch. 5, "Correctness" Straub: Elbow, "Ranking"; also, skim "John Cougar" essay and comments Online: Reid on Grading	Warm-up Essay , with Post Script, comment analysis & and revised paragraph Email copy to Shelley, or Upload to your Private Page on the wiki (preferred!)	Kindlers (bonus CC): DoubleTeachers (bonus CC): Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm Wiki: By next Tuesday, schedule a TPA #2 Grading Conference

Inquiry 2: Designing assignments to support writing learning

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Presentations/Reminders
Week 4, Feb. 14	<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: Text shopping & Writing Spaces browse</p>	<p>Bean: Chapter 3, “Rhetorically”</p> <p>Database: M. Tremmel, “What to Make of the Five Paragraph Theme,” <i>Teaching English in the Two-Year College</i> (TETYC) 39.1 (2011). (Use E-Journal Finder)</p> <p>E-Reserves: Freire, “Banking Education”</p> <p>Wiki: Reid, Decoder Page</p>	<p>TPA #2: Grading (this week: conference + email follow-up)</p> <p>First Discussion Board Review: Blackboard First Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (2/10) Second Deadline = Mon. 11:59 pm (2/13)</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p>
Week 5, Feb. 21	<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: Sketch feedback, Assignment analysis</p>	<p>Bean: Ch. 4 “Genres” and Ch. 6 “Assignments”</p> <p>Moore: Chapter 12: “Save the World”</p> <p>E-Reserves: Takayoshi & Selfe, “Multimodal”</p> <p>Online: Reid on Assignments</p>	<p>Exploration Essay, 3 Sketches</p> <p><i>Post one anonymous copy, for sharing with peers (follow the link for instructions)</i></p> <p>Bring someone’s assignment prompt to class</p>	<p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Schedule class observation(s)</p>
Week 6, Feb. 28	<p>How can we scaffold learning to help students solve writing problems and connect principles to practice in their own work?</p> <p>Workshop: Assgt. Prompt, EE narrowing</p>	<p>Bean: Chapter 8, “Active”</p> <p>Moore: Ch. 9 or 10 or 13</p> <p>Online, Writing Spaces: Choose one chapter</p> <p>OPTIONAL: Moore: Ch. 18 (reading responses) or 19 (research log)</p>	<p>TPA #3: Assignment Prompt Draft</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p>

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Presentations/Reminders
Week 7, Mar. 6	<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: EE shaping, Activity principles, DB Review</p>	<p>Online: Review GMU Comp Site, 101 goals</p> <p>Online: WPA Outcomes for FYC</p> <p>Online: Framework for Writing</p> <p>E-Reserves: Yancey “Reflection”</p> <p>Online: Rueker, “Reimagining Eng. 1311” <i>Composition Studies</i> 39.1 (2011)</p> <p>Moore: Skim Chapter 2 or 3 or 5 (Course overviews)</p>	<p>TPA #3: Asgt. Prompt</p> <p>BEFORE BREAK: Second Discussion Board Review: Blackboard First Deadline = Wed. 11:59 pm (3/7) Second Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (3/9)</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Schedule class observation(s)</p>

Third Inquiry: Engaging writing learners in classroom communities

Week 8, Mar. 20	<p>Online Class</p> <p>EE posted by Tues. 7:10 pm</p> <p>Part 1 finished by Tues. 9:00 pm</p> <p>Part 2 finished by Thurs. 11:59 pm</p> <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>Workshop: EE review</p>	<p>Bean: Chapter 10, “Small Groups”</p> <p>Database: Elbow, “Embracing Contraries,” <i>College English</i> 45 (1983) 327-39</p> <p>Online: Noyd, “Over/Underteaching”</p> <p>OPTIONAL (20-MINUTE SKIM):</p> <p>Online: Blair, “Teaching Composition Online” http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/8.2/binder.html?praxis/blair/index.html</p> <p>Online: GMU Composition Policies about Online Class Sessions</p> <p>Online: Corbett, “Teaching Writing with Tech”</p>	<p>Exploration Essay: Post draft + feedback guide to wiki</p>	<p>ONLINE Kindlers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Syllabus Folder: Bring two comp textbooks</p> <p>Sign up for an Exploration Essay Conference</p>
Week 9, Mar. 27	<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: EE Revision</p>	<p>E-Reserves: Harris, “Rewriting”</p> <p>Moore: Ch. 22, “Radical Revision”</p> <p>Online: Reid, “Peer Review”</p> <p>Online: Corbett, “A Better Way”</p> <p>OPTIONAL</p> <p>E-Reserves: Rose, “Average”</p> <p>Online: MIT Peer Review Videos</p> <p>Database: Devet, “Welcoming Grammar...” <i>Teaching English in the Two-Year Coll (TETYC)</i>, Sept. 2002.</p>	<p>Revision Plan, Exploration Essay</p>	<p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Bring/post current draft: EE</p> <p>Wiki: Sign up for Solving Class Management Problem (SCaMP) Group</p>

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Presentations/Reminders
Week 10 April 3	<p>What expectations might writing learners bring with them to class?</p> <p>How can writing teachers respond to encourage learning & risk-taking?</p> <p>How can we pace a semester-long syllabus to build students' confidence, skills, and knowledge as writing problem solvers?</p> <p>Workshop: Syllabus Sketch, EE Conversations</p>	<p>E-Reserves: Brooke, "Underlife"</p> <p>Database: Lisa Delpit, "The Silenced Dialogue" <i>Harvard Educational Review</i> 58 (1988)</p> <p>Online: Liou, "Stereotype Threat"</p> <p>Online: Reid, Syllabus Advice Page</p>	<p>Syllabus Frame Sketch</p> <p>Bring all trading cards</p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Wiki: Sign up for Full Circle options</p>
Week 11 April 10	<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: Three-day Plan, Full Circle 1</p>	<p>E-Reserves: Skorczewski "Playing the Role"</p> <p>Online: WPA Plagiarism Statement</p> <p>Various: SCaMP Reading(s)</p> <p>OPTIONAL:</p> <p>Database: K. Johnson, "Millennial Teacher" <i>Pedagogy</i> 6.1 (2006)</p> <p>Online: Jenkins, "Toward a Rational Approach to Plagiarism"</p>	<p>3-Day Schedule Draft <i>Link as a wiki page to Syllabus Page</i></p> <p>Syllabus Folder Notes 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: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p>
Fourth Inquiry: Case Studies in Writing Learning				
Week 12 April 17	<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 + EE</p> <p>Option: online, 9:00-10:00: Comments due by Wed. 11:59pm</p>	<p>Bean: Chapter 13, "Research"</p> <p>Database: Hlavaty & Townsend, "Library" <i>TETYC</i> December 2010.</p> <p>Online: Fister, "Why The 'Research Paper' isn't Working"</p> <p>E-Reserves: <i>Skim</i> Graff & Berkenstein, "Appendix of Templates"</p>	<p>Exploration Essay Revision & Expansion draft + Feedback Guide: Post Online</p> <p>Full Circle 1 Posted</p> <p>Add ideas for Full Circle 2 topics; sign up for one if you'd like</p> <p><i>In-class: Full Circle 2 Drafting</i></p>	<p>Kindlers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p> <p>Optional: Set up end-of-term conference</p>

	In Class	Reading Due	Writing Due	Presentations/Reminders
Week 13 April 24	<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 draft, portfolio</p>	<p>Bean: Ch. 2 “Critical” and Ch. 9 “Reading”</p> <p>E-reserves: Doyle, “Why Students Resist”</p> <p>Moore: Ch. 18 “Reading Response” or Ch. 19, “Research Journal”</p> <p>Online: Chart of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning</p> <p>OPTIONAL:</p> <p>Online: Teaching Reading Presentation Video—Gallagher, the author of <i>Readercide</i>, talks to this year’s National Writing Project teachers in DC.</p> <p>Online: Felder, “A Note about Dealing with Student Resistance”</p> <p>Online: Reid, “Risk-Taking” (see very last item on the linked page)</p>	<p>Syllabus Frame: Second generation expanded draft</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>DoubleTeachers:</p> <p>Before you do a Kindle or DT, please read: http://mason.gmu.edu/~ereid1/teachers/tchguidediscuss.htm</p>
Week 14 May 1	<p>How do we solve 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>E-Reserves: Matsuda & Silva, “Cross-cultural”</p> <p>E-Reserves: Ferris & Roberts, “Error feedback”</p> <p>Database: Johnsen et al., “Messy Teaching,” <i>TETYC</i> 37.2 Dec. 2009</p>	<p>Third Discussion Board Review:</p> <p>Blackboard</p> <p>First Deadline = Fri. 11:59 pm (4/27)</p> <p>Second Deadline = Mon. 11:59 pm (4/30)</p> <p>Final Portfolio: Due by May 7</p>	<p>Complete Full Circle 1 and Full Circle 2 if not completed already.</p>
May 8 or May 15	<p>Date, Time, Room TBA</p> <p>TA Summit: All first-, second-, and (optional) third-year TAs meet for pizza, pot-luck, and idea-sharing.</p>			

English 615: The Assignments

Notes about assignment “grades”: This is a workshop-based class with a strong portfolio component. 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*.

Eight contributions are required: Three discussion board assignments, two learning-arc activity posts, one trading card, one collaborative Kindling activity, and one Class Minutes sheet. Completing those in a thoughtful and timely manner will earn you an A- (13.5/15). If you prefer to earn an A, or you are generally quiet in class and would like to increase your participation grade, or you need to make up some ground because you were absent or turned in a CC late, you may do additional Optional CCs: any two will boost you about one grade level (A- to A, for instance). Caveat: you cannot count more than two bonus CCs done after May 1.

SWT-P discussions: Three, two-post discussion contributions

The goal of these discussions is to “put one and one together” 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 full paragraphs** 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 Writing Teaching Problems (SWT-P): 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 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 full 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*

Learning Arc Activity: Two activities posted

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

Trading Cards: Minimum 1 required

Create a Writing Teacher Trading Card, based on one of the articles or chapters you've read. (Sign up in class, or by emailing Shelley.) 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.

Collaborative Kindling: One required

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, 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, or Star Trek Action Figures.

You and your partner need to complete a 5-sentence Before Analysis (one believing and one doubting sentence with “because” clauses, one short sentence connecting your question/issue/text to some other one, 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) and a 3-5 sentence After Analysis (what worked best, what was hardest, what surprised you).

Class Minutes: One required

To further enhance your double-vision, the class session after you do your DoubleTeach, you and your DT partner need to take minimalist minutes on the session, and post a combined minutes-sheet to the wiki. You’ll complete a Class Minutes Form during class, and upload an e-copy with a 2-3 sentence comment at some point after class.

Additional Sweet-P Post: Optional

- Post an additional Solving Writing Teaching Problems response to your group’s discussion board, preferably before the next SWT-P discussion begins
 - Post as a Reply to a particular person’s post
 - Write about 1-2 full paragraphs that build out from earlier arguments
 - Include direct quotations from at least two posts made earlier in your group’s discussion

Additional Trading Card or Scenario post: Optional

For any reading that hasn’t been carded, complete a Trading Card. Alternately, post a scenario or response to our Teaching Scenarios page. **Add your name** to your post.

Class Activity Bank: Optional

Contribute a **handout describing an in-class activity** for a writing class and link it to to (and briefly describe it on) the Class Activity Bank Page.

You may describe a class activity that you have read about, found online, or seen another writing teacher use; if you do so, be sure to give credit as needed. You may also describe something you *have tried* or *would like to try* in your own classroom. Or you may do a little of both: borrow some from an idea you encountered elsewhere (say where!), and add your own “twist” to it—which is how most teachers teach anyway! Be sure to **add your name** to your post.

Other: Optional

If you think of another kind of contribution you’d like to make, let me know.

Class and Workshop Participation

Particularly strong or particularly passive engagement in **in-class** activities will factor into the final Community Contribution grade.

Teaching Practicum Assignments: 15%

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 likely ask us to imagine ourselves as first-year students, and teach an activity appropriate for English 101. In your DoubleVision reflection, then, explain how students in English 615 (or grad school generally) might benefit or might have benefitted (or not) from a similar exercise related to the work we're doing—how might that activity have differed from the one in English 101? why?

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

- a *learning goals statement*: what are/were two or three goals you have for students through this 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 drew 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.

Post-Game Analysis: Within one week after the class session, you will each turn in (paper or 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?). You should save a copy of this email.

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.

Post-Game Analysis: Add 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

Building a syllabus that meshes principles with good practices, that matches your style and goals as a teacher with the requirements of the course and the university, 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.

Your Syllabus Folder will comprise three parts: your preparation notes, your three-day plan, and your tentative syllabus frame. Drafts, steps, and notes will be counted for completion; final assignments 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 Frame

Step 1: Sketch + Reflection Draft a sketch of an English 101 course you could teach. At this point, you should include at least 4 key kinds of information: the textbook(s) you might use, an outline of the main essay assignments you would give (what kind of essay, how long), a breakdown of the grade-weights for the course, and a semester-long schedule noting the main essay dates (drafts due, workshops, finals due). You are welcome to use your Mentor's or a friend's syllabus, the 101 Sample Syllabus or any other resource from <http://composition.gmu.edu> as you plan.

Reflective writing (1 paragraph): What elements of this syllabus sketch connect to core principles you have about teaching? 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 sketch, add some of the standard “front material” as specified by the 101 Sample Syllabus (contact info, description, policies); more fleshed-out statements of your essay descriptions or other assignments; clear explanations of your grading criteria; and a few more key items in your daily schedule (workshops, conferences, special events).

Reflective writing (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. Concentrate on articulating your main principles, getting a general rhythm down, and taking steps toward meeting key learning goals thoroughly—rather than on filling in every date/task.

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.

Three-Day Schedule

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.

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.

Essay-length Writing Assignments

Warm-up Essay

In an organized, thoughtfully-focused short essay (2-4 pages), explain to your peers (and articulate for yourself) whether you believe in principle that First Year Composition classes **best serve students** if they focus primarily on encouraging students to develop their independent voices, **or** if FYC best serves students when it focuses more strongly on helping the students master conventions and meet the expectations of American Academic Prose. For now, please don't answer "both are important."

Note: There is **no right answer** to this question, or at least no commonly agreed-upon one. I continue to wrestle with it myself, changing my mind a little every time I teach. Like me, you are a student, a writer, and a teacher, and you thus already have **an** answer to it—you have a *theory* that you can explore—whether you've thought about it in these particular terms before or not.

Post three copies (see online instructions) for our peer workshop. You'll have the opportunity to reflect, review, and revise, if you wish, before you complete a Post Script (see below) and turn everything in to me the following week. **This essay has no separate grade weight:** you will include it in your portfolio, but it will not affect your final writing-quality grade.

Exploration Essay, 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.

On a separate page, please list **3-5 questions** about (your) writing, teaching, and/or learning that these scenes raise for you. These should be questions the answer to which could begin, “Well, it’s complicated” or “It could kind of go either way.”

Post one **anonymous** copy of everything (see online directions) to class to share (but not to turn in).

Exploration Essay, Initial Draft—Explore the Complications

Choose one or two of your sketch-questions (or one[s] like them) about learning, teaching, and/or writing—one(s) that you do not know *the* answer to already—and draft an essay-length response (4-8 pp.) to 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 the question raise complications in trying to respond to it, or to show how achieving a goal 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) essay about what *you* see, believe, and wonder (and why), rather than a statement about what *should* happen. Your own experiences should form a core of the essay, since they (will) form a core of your teaching; your own analyses should give the essay motion. You may consider this draft of the EE a personal/creative essay, 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 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 peer review, compose a Revision Plan and add to your wiki document. In class, we’ll try out some revision options. After that, complete a Post Script to for me to review as I read it, and schedule a conference with me.

Exploration Essay, 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 essay may thus begin to resemble more

closely a “typical” graduate-level research essay, but 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.

The expanded draft should be about **7-10 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 Essay will earn a letter grade as part of your Portfolio.

Teaching/Writing Portfolio

Your final 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 work cohere into a single story.

- All major workshop and final drafts of your Warm-up and Exploration essays, with original Post Scripts—and a **new Post Script** for your new Exploration revision
- 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
- 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
- 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: In this portfolio, risk-taking will be noted and considered positively.

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?