



## Seminar in the Teaching of English Composition

ENG 79000 • Fall 2015

**Professors:** Dr. Cheryl Smith and Dr. Lisa Blankenship  
Department of English

**Class Time & Location:** Thursday, 2:30-4:30pm, English Dept Seminar Room, 7-238

**Contact:** [cheryl.smith@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:cheryl.smith@baruch.cuny.edu) / [lisa.blankenship@baruch.cuny.edu](mailto:lisa.blankenship@baruch.cuny.edu)

### Course Description and Objectives

This seminar focuses on the history, theory, and practice of teaching college-level writing. Our emphasis is on the pedagogical choices we make and how our choices may be informed by theories on teaching and learning to write, our experiences in school (as both students and teachers), and our beliefs about education, writing, and reading.

We will use our classroom experiences during the semester to talk about the complex dynamics of teaching and learning and develop informed approaches to syllabus construction, classroom management, assignment design, and commenting and grading. We will also explore larger questions informing the teaching of college writing and English studies more broadly. These will be determined by our common interests and may include: multilingual writers; digital media and multimodal composition; visual rhetoric; the politics of access and remediation; the history of open admissions at CUNY and Mina Shaughnessy; Writing across the Curriculum; critical pedagogy; feminist rhetorical practices; the future of English departments, and other relevant issues to the field of English studies. Seminar participants will develop their individualized approaches to and theories on teaching first-year composition and represent them in a final teaching portfolio suitable for use on the job market.

### Course Outcomes

- Apply and adapt theories of composing process to the teaching of writing.
- Reflect critically about your own teaching and writing practices.
- Design and implement inquiry-based, scaffolded writing assignments that enhance student learning.
- Integrate digital technologies into reading and writing pedagogy in meaningful ways.
- Respond to and evaluate student writing in ways that encourage revision and deep learning.
- Plan and implement interactive course sessions that help students develop transferable reading and writing skills (e.g, invention and research strategies, audience analysis heuristics, reflective habits, critical reading strategies, revision and editing techniques)
- Adapt instruction to the individualized needs of students.
- Develop practical skills in classroom management and course organization.

- Design a course syllabus that achieves the common outcomes of writing program curriculum while also contributing actively to our collaborative culture of innovation.

## Texts

- *St. Martin's Guide to Teaching Writing*, 7th edition. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2014. Eds. Glenn, Cheryl and Melissa A. Goldthwaite.
- Readings on our course Blogs@Baruch website:  
<http://blogs.baruch.cuny.edu/baruchteachingpracticum2015/>

## Assignments

**Weekly Reading Responses:** You'll write a response to course readings each week on our course website. Responses should be approximately 300 words for all readings for the week and should include a brief response and questions the texts raise for you.

**Discussion Lead:** The final six of our fourteen class meetings will be led by each of you. You will choose a topic related to composition theory and instruction that interests you, choose ~3 article-length readings for the day, and help lead us in a discussion about the readings and topic. We'll ask that you draft a formal proposal for your topic, readings, and activities and select a date to present on Sept 17. Your presentation + discussion lead should entail your writing 1-2 pages of notes and your responses to the topic and readings, and you should come prepared to help facilitate the discussion reading based on your notes. You may focus on anything you like relative to the day's readings, but here are some possibilities: an insight that you find particularly useful for teaching; a point you disagree with; and/or a follow-up question that explores or complicates the implications of the reading.

**Teaching Portfolio:** During the semester, you will compile a digital teaching portfolio representing your experiences in the classroom and your beliefs about teaching. You will turn in your portfolio at the end of the semester, but it will contain materials that you could use on the job market.

Your digital portfolio should be housed on Blogs@Baruch and will be password protected so that only you, Cheryl, and Lisa can view it. (See "Creating a Blogs@Baruch Site" document on our course website for directions if you need them.) It should include separate page tabs for each of the following<sup>1</sup>:

- **Teaching journal:** We'll ask that you post your reflections and questions about your teaching experiences at least four times during the term, around once per month, although you could do more if you find it helpful. These entries should appear under your Home tab as "new posts" and will appear chronologically. The remainder of the contents below should be "new pages."
- **Teaching philosophy:** By the last day of class we'll ask you to compose a statement of your beliefs about and approaches to teaching composition.
- **Course syllabus:** Post your initial syllabus, and by the end of the final week of classes upload an annotated syllabus as well. On the annotated version, use Word Comment to write about the usefulness of the required texts, the utility of activities (e.g. conferences, quizzes and other in-class

---

<sup>1</sup> For a good example of an academic's professional website (that includes a teaching section with a teaching philosophy) see [Jason Palmeri's site](#). For a sample teaching portfolio site Lisa used while on the job market in 2013 please see: <https://lisablankenshipteaching.wordpress.com/teaching-philosophy/>  
user name: blankenshipteaching; password: committee

work) and assignments, how the course related to student needs and abilities, the effectiveness of the pacing, and other matters you would consider for improving the course next time.

- **Assignments:** Post your major course projects/assignments.
- **Sample student work(s):** By November 1, post a variety of student writing that support your teaching philosophy/assignment goals (at least three along a range of grades; you will need these for your teaching observation in November.)
- **Peer evaluation:** You will be observed and evaluated by a senior member of the faculty in November. You will be contacted, likely via email, by the faculty member to arrange the best day for her/him to visit your class. You should be prepared to share your syllabus, course assignments and context for the day's visit, the day's agenda, and a set of 3 student papers along a range of grades with your comments and grade. Within 1-2 weeks after the observation the faculty member will arrange to meet with you to discuss the class. For this page on your portfolio, please write your reflections about the process—what went well, not so well, and what you may adjust based on the feedback you receive.
- **Student evaluations:** Include any student questionnaires or evaluations you may have given, e.g. midterm evaluations. Add the college end-of-term evaluations when you have them as you may need these on the job market.

## Selected Resources

- The Online Writing Lab at Purdue: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- University of Richmond Writer's Web: <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb.html>
- Diary of a New TA:  
[https://graduate.asu.edu/tablog/category/preparing\\_teach?destination=taxonomy%2Fterm%2F526](https://graduate.asu.edu/tablog/category/preparing_teach?destination=taxonomy%2Fterm%2F526)
- Teaching tips index:  
<http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm>
- The Bedford Bibliography for Teachers of Writing:  
<http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/bb/contents.html>
- Bibliographies for Composition by Topic: <http://wrt-howard.syr.edu/bibs.html>

## Schedule of Classes

### Th, Aug 27: Getting Started

*Reading/HW:* *St. Martin's Guide*, chapters 1 and 2; Michelle LaFrance and Stephen J. Corbett, "[A 21-st Century Attendance Policy](#)"; Stephanie Resee Mason, "[Late Again](#)"; create your digital portfolio/website for the course using Blogs@Baruch (see directions on our course website under "Schedule")

*Activities:* First day discussion, housekeeping, and questions

### Th, Sept 3: Course Design and Daily Lesson Plans

*Readings/HW:* *St. Martin's Guide*, Chapter 3; Erika Lindemann, *A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Chapter 14, "Designing Writing Courses"; respond to readings on our course website (weekly reading responses should be approximately 300 words for all readings for the week and should include a brief response and questions the texts raise for you)

*Activities:* Discuss readings; workshop possible topics for discussion lead (Cheryl and Lisa will can help with sources, readings, and day's activities; formal proposal due for your topic and sign up for dates on Sept 17)

Possible topics:

- Students' Right to Their Own Language (and Identities)
- Labor Issues in the Teaching of Composition and the University
- Writing Across the Curriculum, Communication Across the Curriculum
- Multilingual Writers/Learners
- Digital Media and Multimodal Composing
- Visual Rhetoric
- The Politics of Access and Remediation
- The History of Open Admissions at CUNY and Mina Shaughnessy
- Critical Pedagogy
- Feminist Pedagogical and Rhetorical Practices
- Using Technology and Course Blogs for Traditional and Hybrid Classrooms
- The Past and Future of English Departments
- Defining Writing Studies in the Twenty-first Century
- Grammar and Style

**Th, Sept 10: no class (classes follow a Monday schedule to compensate for Labor Day holiday)**

**Th, Sept 17: Assignment Design**

*Readings/HW:* Teaching journal entry due on your digital portfolio site (short entry on how the course is going so far/questions for discussion); *St. Martin's Guide*, Chapter 4; "Framework for Success" and Patrick Sullivan, "'A Lifelong Aversion to Writing': What if Writing Courses Emphasized Motivation?"; notes and findings from "The Meaningful Writing Project"; sample assignments

*Activities:* Discuss readings; look at sample critical/close reading assignments and share ideas for your own assignment design; workshop your first assignments for future tweaks and to help with critical reading assignment; formal proposal due for your topic and sign up for discussion lead dates

**Th, Sept 24: Low Stakes Writing**

*Readings/HW:* Anson et al on low-stakes writing; examples of LS writing assignments; Elbow, "High Stakes and Low Stakes in Assigning and Responding to Writing"; Theory/History: Tobin, "Process Writing," Tarvers, "Approaching Writing from Literary Studies," Flower and Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing" Benefits of low stakes writing: <http://www.wsc.mass.edu/facultycenter/lowstakes-benefits.pdf>

*Activities:* Discuss readings; look at examples of low-stakes writing; develop LS writing activities for your class and next major assignment

**Th, Oct 1: Multimodal Composition**

*Readings/HW:* Lauer, Claire. "Contending with Terms: 'Multimodal' and 'Multimedia' in the Academic and Public Spheres." *Computers and Composition* 26 (2009) 225–239; Chp. 1 of Palmeri, *Remixing Composition*; watch [Adam Banks's Chair's Address](#) at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, March 2015

*Activities:* [Prof. Jason Palmeri](#) will join our class; look at sample multimodal composing assignments and student work; discuss ways of using multiples modes (images, video, and sound) for low-stakes composing and invention work as well as major assignments

**Th, Oct 8: Responding to Writing: Peer Review and Instructor Feedback and Assessment**

*Readings/HW:* St. Martin's Guide, Chapter 5 pp 125-160, Bishop (309), and Sommers (333); Walk, "Commenting on Student Writing"; "Rubrics"; "Cover Letters"

*Activities:* Discuss peer review; sample peer review handouts; sample writer's cover letters; grade norming session with sample student papers along a range of grades

**Th, Oct 15: Working with Sources in Ethical and Sophisticated Ways**

*Readings/HW:* McClure, Googlepedia (<http://writingspaces.org/mcclure--googlepedia>); Mark McBeth's Reflected Annotated Bibliography assignment; teaching journal entry due by class time on your digital portfolio site about how your course is going and questions you have

*Activities:* Discuss approaches to annotated bibs; discuss research-based assignments and look at samples

**Th, Oct 22: Style and Grammar: Theoretical and Pedagogical Practice**

*Readings/HW:* BSM Chp 8; Richard Lanham, "Writing for Concision"; Milac, "Theories of Style and Their Implications for the Teaching of Composition"; Micchiche, "Making a Case for Rhetorical Grammar"; post a draft of your research-based major assignment to course blog for workshopping

*Activities:* Discussion of readings; model and practice style imitation; bring examples of your own writing and/or student writing to discuss

**Th, Oct 29: TBD by discussion leader**

*Readings/HW:* tbd by discussion leader

*Activities:*

**Th, Nov 5: TBD by discussion leader**

*Readings:*

*Activities:*

**Th, Nov 12: TBD by discussion leader**

*Readings/HW:* TBD by discussion leader; teaching journal entry due on your digital portfolio site

*Activities:*

**Th, Nov 19: TBD by discussion leader**

*Readings:*

*Activities:*

**Th, Nov 26: No class, Thanksgiving**

**Th, Dec 3: TBD by discussion leader**

*Readings:*

Activities:

**Th, Dec 10: TBD by discussion leader (final day of class)**

*Readings:*

*Activities:* TBD by discussion leader; course Portfolio due; final teaching journal entry due on your digital portfolio site; discussion of course portfolios and course itself; wrap up; anonymous course feedback via Qualtrics survey