

English 220A
Spring 2007
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office hours: M 1:00 to 2:30, R 12:00 to 1:30, and by appointment

English 220A: Teaching College Writing

Course goals

Welcome to this seminar, which is designed to prepare you to teach first-year college composition. As we focus on how academic texts are produced and consumed, we'll be covering issues in pedagogy as well as issues in composition; given that I subscribe to Writing Across the Curriculum's tenet that writing *is* learning, the two are natural partners. Like writing, learning and teaching are ongoing processes, constantly subject to revision: be ready for an exciting—and sometimes challenging—exchange of ideas in this learning community. Effective teaching often relies on risktaking, so while we should all work to make this a safe learning space, we should also each push ourselves to take some risks with the materials presented. Too, because I subscribe to the Social Epistemic tenet that knowledge is socially constructed, much of the work in this course—even the graded work—will be collaborative; as such, you will need to find ways to work with course colleagues such that your learning—about the word, about the world, and about yourself—is augmented.

In many ways, the work we do here will be similar to the work that takes place in a FYC classroom—be ready to take time out to discuss classroom dynamics and procedures, to turn a teacherly eye on our own activities. By the end of the semester, you will have some knowledge of the history and theory of the field of composition, as well as some experience in practical approaches to the college writing classroom. You will also have prepared a Course Portfolio that includes a sample First Year Composition course syllabus and Calendar, a sequence of writing assignments for that course, and a Teaching Philosophy Statement that details your theoretical and philosophical approach to teaching composition. That said, the primary goal of this course is for all participants to develop as critically self-reflective teacher/learner/scholars through reading, writing, discussion, and workshopping.

Required texts

- Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader* (second edition), by Victor Villanueva
- A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, edited by Tate, Rupiper, and Schick.
- pdf articles: I will email those to you: you are required to print them out
- One monograph and two journal articles of your own choice—part of the collaborative Annotated Bibliography

Reading dates are assigned on the calendar below like this <V> (for the Villanueva book) or <T> (for the Tate book). Be advised: this course requires the quality of your intellectual engagement with the readings and with your colleagues' ideas consistently to be rigorous! It's imperative that you come prepared to discuss all the day's required readings and to write about them in class, especially in terms of making connections with

earlier readings as we build upon our knowledge. This course is a seminar, and, as such, many of the readings will be presented by colleagues; however, I expect all class members to complete all of the assigned readings with careful attention to reading critically. Do not merely skim: read with a dictionary by your side, annotating the text, engaging the ideas actively, incorporating the theories and practices you read about into your own repertoire.

On each class day on which readings are due I require that you will submit some writing, too, in order to help us generate ideas for further discussion. For these reading responses, first, please compose and submit a brief (approximately one paragraph) synopsis of each article assigned for that day. Second, select *one* of the day's articles on which to complete and submit to me a *dialectical journal* entry. In creating your entry, fold your paper into two columns before you begin: in the left column, as you read the article, copy down a sentence or two when you come across something that you find provocative or that gets your passions flowing or that starts ideas or connections bouncing around your head in exciting ways. In the right column, write the ideas that the quoted sentence(s) generate for you. For each article you select, find at least three passages to quote and write on. The dialectical journal is a writer-based activity; as such, don't edit your ideas, but rather treat the right column as a catch-all for any connections you want to make.

Graded Assignments

Writings—Since this is a graduate seminar, I expect that you will demonstrate respect for all participants in the forum by adhering to due dates and the usual conventions of academic discourse, following either APA or MLA guidelines in *all* out-of-class writings. Every submission should be typed double-spaced in 12 pt font, with 1 inch margins all around, page numbers after the first page, and a title. Please type your name, the date, the draft number, and course number in the top left corner of the first page (no cover pages, please). In order to earn at least a passing grade in the course, you must submit all assignments; furthermore, I don't accept late submissions.

Since this is a Composition course, you will find that I assign a great deal of writing, both formal and informal, out of class and in. Often, informal writing or responding assignments will be counted as part of your participation grade. You'll compose—and revise--informal responses to readings, English 1A writing assignments, critically self-reflective process narratives, responses to colleagues' writings, freewrites, formal annotations of theoretical texts in the field of Rhetoric and Composition, responses to FYC students' writing, an English 1A syllabus and calendar, and observations of others' classroom teaching.

And again because this is a Composition course, I will evaluate your work this semester using a *Portfolio* system: the attached handout provides more information about the Portfolio requirements. Throughout the semester, you'll be drafting and getting feedback on all of the required Portfolio documents. You will then have the opportunity to improve your drafts with revision before the Portfolio is due at semester's end. This process not only allows for the processes of writing, thinking, and learning to happen recursively, but also provides you the opportunity to earn the majority of your course grade based only on your very best work. Each time you submit a piece of formal writing, you should attach to it your earlier marked drafts, workshop responses from colleagues, and other process details. And those materials will trace for me your revision work.

Although what I am really interested in is your development as a critical reader, thinker, writer, and teacher, grades are an academic requirement that none of us can escape. Your final grade for this course will be determined as follows:

Collaborative work

Presentations: 2 @ 75pts	150
Class Annotated Bibliography	100

Individual work

Reading Responses	75
Class observations & write-up	75
Participation	100

Course Portfolio **500**

- Cover Letter
- Teaching Philosophy Statement
- Writing Sequence
- Course Syllabus and Calendar
- Selected informal writings

total possible points 1000

Expectations

Workshops--Several class meetings will be spent on writers' workshops: not only will this provide you multiple opportunities for feedback on your own work, but it will also give us all a chance to discuss the various ways in which effective workshopping can happen in FYC.

In order to earn credit for a workshop, your draft must meet all the criteria of the assignment, *including length and format*. For each workshop, bring a copy of your paper for each one of your group members plus a copy to turn in to me. **Note:** each time your workshop draft doesn't meet the criteria and each time you miss a workshop that's on the syllabus--including during the last two weeks of the semester--your semester grade will be reduced by one third of a grade (for example, an A- will become a B+).

Discussions--Again, I emphasize my expectation that you will come to class prepared to engage in *rigorous* discussion about the issues we'll encounter. If you're a student who prefers to sit back and listen, this class may not work well for you! I hope that we will create here together a very lively dialectic in which respect for diverse opinions within our learning community is fostered. In no case will discriminatory language be tolerated; those using sexist, racist, homophobic, or other disrespectful or derogatory remarks will be dismissed from class for that day and will earn an absence.

Attendance--Regular attendance in seminar is crucial to your academic success. If your absence is unavoidable, be sure to hand in any work due before that class day, and to find out from a course colleague--before the next class meeting--about what you missed. After your first absence, each day you miss will earn you a third of a grade point reduction from your course grade (for example, a second absence would mean a course grade of A- would be reduced to a course grade of B+). In addition, late arrival or early departure from class will earn you a tardy: two tardies count as one absence and carry the same consequences.

Plagiarism--Do your own work. Too, scholarly research tends to reward those who demonstrate a savvy ethos by researching and citing with due attention. I will not reward academic dishonesty by honoring it with a passing grade. The *University Policy Manual*

states that “Plagiarism is the use of distinctive ideas or work belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person’s contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporating another’s work into one’s own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge.”

Furthermore, because this is a seminar in pedagogies, be sure to give credit when you use—or borrow or adapt—others’ teaching materials in your own teaching: in other words, the scholarship of teaching is subject to the same citation rules as the scholarship in any other field. If you have questions, ask before you act.

Conferences—I require that you attend my office hours (or make an appointment to meet with me individually or with your group at some other mutually convenient time) **at least once** before Week 9. Use this as a time to ask questions, to brainstorm for upcoming presentations, to work on revision ideas for your writings, or to discuss your academic and professional development.

Extra Help—Please consider me as a resource: that’s what I’m here for, right? Also, reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first week of class if you have specific needs.

And finally, this syllabus is a piece of writing; as such, it’s constantly subject to revision. I’ll announce any changes in class.

Notes

Course Calendar

- M 1/29 Course overview. Introductions. Presentation sign-ups.
DUE by noon Thursday 2/1: email me re: Course Syllabus
- M 2/5 <Freire pdf; V xi-15, T 36-53>
Due today—and for almost every class until 4/23: reading response
- M 2/12 <V 43-54, 255-270; 273-297>
Workshop: one article entry for group Annotated Bibliography
- M 2/19 <T 132-164; V 487-503, 547-569>
Workshop: two *more* article entries for Ann Bib
- M 2/26 <V 505-546; T 54-70; <http://www.csus.edu/englishta/index.htm>>
Workshop: FYC essay assignment sequence—one essay
- M 3/5 <Murray pdf; Elbow & Belanoff handout; V 461-478>
Workshop: monograph entry for Ann Bib
- M 3/12 <V 773-796, 829-846; 655-676; Delpit pdf>
- M 3/19 Workshop: FYC essay assignment sequence—two essays
Due: Submit final draft of group Annotated Bibliography
- M 3/26 Spring break
- M 4/2 <Shaughnessy pdf; hooks pdf; T 183-224;>
Workshop: FYC course syllabus
- M 4/9 <T 1-18; 92-112; V 205-254>
- M 4/16 <T 113-131; Roskelly pdf; V 623-655>
Due: Class Observation write-up
- M 4/23 <V 205-234; 311-318, 523-547>
Workshop: Course Portfolio
Due: draft Writing Sequence
draft Teaching Philosophy Statement
- M 4/30 Workshop: Course Portfolio
Due: draft FYC Syllabus
Due: group workshop script
- M 5/7 Workshop Course Portfolio
Due: draft Cover Letter
Due: group workshop script
- M 5/14 Due: Course Portfolio

Collaborative Work

Because I subscribe to the Social Epistemic philosophy that knowledge is socially constructed—in other words, that we can learn best by listening to one another and by working together—a significant portion of your grade in this seminar is based on my evaluation of your collaborative work. Early in the semester we will form groups consisting of three or four colleagues who will work together for collaborative writings, presentations, and workshops. The class will also work together to produce a formal Annotated Bibliography of composition sources. Your collaborative assignments are as follows:

Presentations (2 @ 75 points each)

Each group will sign up to lead discussion on readings for two class meetings for approximately 60 minutes each time (including time for questions). The following hierarchy of values details the presenting group's responsibilities on those days:

--to **interrogate** the day's readings in the light of previous readings and experiences.

Consider yourselves experts in the readings for that day: it is absolutely essential that *every* member of a presenting group is knowledgeable about *every* piece of reading. Do *not* simply summarize the assigned reading; rather, the presenters should theorize about the readings by probing for connections and contradictions among the assigned readings as well as contextualizing those readings within other 220A readings and conversations.

--to research and **present** text(s) from *outside of* class readings.

In order to help us all be better informed about current conversations in the field, this assignment requires that you bring in recent and relevant outside source material from the field of composition that comments upon, contests, and problematizes the topics in the assigned reading. As such, be sure that you have researched the day's issues carefully (be prepared to visit the CSUS Library to look at leading journals in the field such as *CCC*, *JAC*, *CE*, *JBW*, and others).

--to **suggest** classroom applications using the texts' theories.

Theory tends to be useful only insofar as it can be applied to particular situations; therefore, the presenting group should briefly provide one or two practical applications that demonstrate the day's theories in action in the FYC classroom. Consider how the theories might inform us as we teach, for example, brainstorming or other prewriting activities, workshopping, critical reading skills, revising, researching, editing, analyzing, or citing.

--to **compose** a handout to enhance and supplement the presentation.

Because it's always difficult to fit as much as we would like into 45 minutes, the group should prepare and distribute to each course colleague a handout that includes (*at least*) the following:

Works Consulted (including assigned *and* outside sources)

Open-ended discussion questions

Details and guidelines for FYC classroom application materials.

--to **critically self-reflect** on the process of reading, researching, and presenting that topic.

Each group member will not necessarily earn the same grade; so, at the beginning of class on your presentation date, I require that each person submit an informal, confidential summary of her or his process in preparing for the presentation. In other words, each person should write a brief narrative of the process, for my eyes only. Be sure to write about what you did, what you believe your colleagues did, how your ideas came together, how you explicitly and implicitly divided the workload, and what happened each time you all met.

I encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss your presentation ideas.

Annotated Bibliography (100 points)

This semester the class will prepare collaboratively an Annotated Bibliography of useful composition texts to be published online at the department's webpage. We will be adding to the publication of previous English 220As' bibliographies (see <http://www.csus.edu/englishta/220AbibFall05.doc>). Each of you will contribute three entries: one on a monograph and two on articles from journals in the field.

As you begin your research, you may use those other bibliographies as your guide; at the same time, try to focus your own research on an area that will help *you* with *your* ongoing investigations in the field of Composition as a teacher/learner/scholar, adding to the sources already included in those earlier seminars' published Bibs.

Each annotation should consist of an MLA or APA citation and two brief paragraphs of your writing. The first paragraph summarizes the text you've selected, highlighting the main arguments, research methods, and conclusions of the text. The second paragraph contextualizes your text within the larger field of Composition theory, commenting on its usefulness to specific audiences.

Beyond these minimum requirements, you all will need to make several important decisions as you compose this collaborative text: producing a seamless final document will be easier if you have early discussions on format, length, and style concerns. I will allow a little classroom time for this collaborative conversation; however, you will need to accomplish all of the research, reading, and writing, and much of the collaboration outside of class (see course calendar for workshop and due dates of various segments). Be prepared to use email or group meeting times so that the process is collaborative from the beginning; this will help produce a seamless final draft for submission.

Each colleague will receive an individual grade for this assignment. To help me in assigning your score, please submit to me, in hard copy, a brief outline/narrative of your own participation in the Annotated Bibliography process (following the model of the Group Presentation confidential memo).

Class Observations

One of the best ways to learn about teaching is to watch people doing it. Often, new teachers can be underprepared in pedagogical strategies: we tend to stick to the models we know, even when those don't necessarily incorporate the most effective teaching methods.

In order for you to gain some insight into what actually happens in FYC classrooms, you will attend two different sections of 1A taught by two different CSUS teachers this semester. It's important to treat this assignment—and their classrooms—with professional respect. As such, once you have selected the classes, I require that you email the teachers requesting permission to visit their class, offering a couple of different days for your potential visit, and telling them your purpose. Please CC me in your email, and in any other further communication you have with faculty about this assignment. Try to get some variety to this assignment by selecting two people whom you know have very different teaching styles, experience levels, and so on.

When you are in the classroom for your observation, be unobtrusive, unless the teacher wishes you to participate. Take careful notes, perhaps having some categories written down before you begin. Consider, for example, such things as the number of different activities (lecture, small groups, individual, whole class, pairs, workshops) the class goes through on that day, the ways in which the teacher manages the class, the size and shape of the room, the ways in which the teacher engages the students and the students engage one another, the ways in which course texts are used, the ways in which writing processes are addressed, and the implicit or explicit messages you perceive being communicated by participants.

When you have completed both visits, write a 3 to 4 page essay in which you discuss and analyze your observations. Be sure to find a focus for your essay, one that concentrates not on evaluating the teachers, but on analyzing the classroom dynamics using your knowledge of composition theory. Use specific details from your observations to support your analysis.

Your write-up is due for submission in class on 4/16. I look forward to reading them; let me know as soon as possible if you have any questions.

Course Portfolio

A considerable segment of your semester grade—50%—comes from my evaluation of your Course Portfolio. I use portfolio assessment for a variety of reasons. First, it allows most honestly for process and progress in writing, offering semester-long opportunities for feedback from multiple sources. Second, the portfolio process encourages authentic revision, work wherein the writer really does re-vise, or look again, at the writing, from the inside out. Third, it allows the writer to select the way to present the work. Portfolio assessment of writing is considered best practice by many leading researchers in the field (see White, Condon, Hamp-Lyons, and others); I urge you to consider using portfolio assessment in your own teaching. And that is the fourth and final reason I chose to use it for this course: as a model. That said, reading your portfolios is also one of the culminating activities to which I really look forward with excitement every semester!

For now, start keeping everything that you create for this course—yes, everything! I will remind you frequently: anything and everything that you produce for or surrounding this course is fair game for your portfolio. So keep freewrites, emails, class notes, all drafting materials (remember to hit <save> and <print> every so often as you are composing at the computer), workshop responses that you give and get: keep everything. For almost every piece of formal writing assigned in this course, we will hold Writer's Workshops which will let you give and get feedback on your drafts-in-process. Moreover, workshopping provides you as a preparing teacher with the opportunity to practice various workshop formats that you may adapt to your own teaching. After each Workshop, I will suggest revisions, pose questions, and note grammar and mechanical concerns as necessary.

Because a portfolio is a collection of your work throughout the semester that demonstrates your progress, learning, and achievements, preparing a portfolio requires the following steps (see Condon & Hamp-Lyons): collecting—gathering together all of your work; selecting—thoughtfully choosing which documents you will use as evidence of your process and progress; and reflecting—framing your selection with a cover letter that explicitly details your awareness of that process and progress.

At the minimum, your Portfolio will include a Cover Letter, a Teaching Philosophy Statement, a FYC Writing Sequence, a FYC Course Syllabus and Calendar, and selected informal writings. Your portfolio arrangement is up to you; in other words, choose the order that best fits your own portfolio goals. Consider what it is, exactly, that you want readers to believe about your reading, writing, and thinking processes as a teacher/learner/scholar: arrange the documents within your portfolio in such a way that your message is conveyed both explicitly and persuasively.

Cover Letter: The purpose of your cover letter is to introduce your portfolio to me, to explain how the portfolio shows your growth as a teacher/learner/scholar. Your cover letter is the document that really enables your portfolio to be both self-contained and self-referential: it will explain, explicitly and in detail, exactly what the reader is going to see and why you believe she should see it. Your cover letter will be the glue that holds together the portfolio; consider using various letter formats and fonts and pagination so that the letter guides your reader, step by step, through the entire portfolio from beginning to end. It should introduce your reader to everything—yes, everything!—she will read from cover to cover.

Teaching Philosophy Statement: The purpose of your Teaching Philosophy Statement is to explain to readers—those who might hire you for a teaching position—the theories that drive your classroom practices. Of course, your own emerging theory may well be a synthesis of leading current comp theories; however, your specific classroom practices will

reflect that synthesis. For example, if you adhere to a Social Epistemic viewpoint, then your pedagogy may include a lot of group activities, collaborative writings, and workshopping. Similarly, if you favor Expressivism, then your syllabus probably focuses on discovery drafts and workshopping and revising. The classrooms of most comp teachers reflect a collage of such theories: in your Statement, show your working knowledge of the relevant theories and support your theorizing with specific details about particular activities and assignments you have planned.

FYC Writing Sequence: The purpose of your writing sequence is to have prepared a set of formal essay assignments for a CSUS FYC classroom that includes prewriting and revising prompts and activities. It should explain to your FYC students exactly what's required of them in order to produce those 5,000 words of writing. It's called a sequence because one assignment should inform the next: each of the assignments should mesh theoretically with the general goals of the course and with one another. Each assignment should provide students the context of the assignment (a quotation from readings is a useful way to do so), the task itself, the purpose of the task, some generative questions or activities, evaluation criteria, and due dates.

FYC Course Syllabus and Calendar: The purpose of your syllabus and calendar is to have prepared a working draft that's usable in the CSUS TA Program; check out their webpages at http://www.csus.edu/englishta/English_TA_Texts.htm for full information about policies and programmatic course requirements. Your syllabus, which is like a contract, should explain to your FYC students what they can expect of you, and you of them, throughout the semester. Please note that you may assign only readings that are available on that webpage; similarly, you are required to assign a Writer's Handbook and a Rhetoric from the approved list on the TA webpages. In addition, you must adhere to all department and program policies, including those for English 1A course goals and evaluation criteria, absence, plagiarism, and accommodations for students who have disabilities.

The final, polished drafts that you submit for each of these writing assignments should include one earlier draft with my written responses and should be of publication quality: that is to say, final drafts should adhere to MLA or APA guidelines or should use a contextually appropriate format for a college course, and should be free of grammar and mechanical errors. While neither MLA or APA provides guidelines for citing the scholarship of teaching, I nevertheless require that you attribute all sources for teaching materials that you have borrowed or adapted.

Selected informal writings Feel free to include early notes or drafts, workshop responses that you wrote or received, emails, reading annotations, or other informal writings as support for your cover letter. You should, however, include only documents that are mentioned, explicitly, in your cover letter: tell your reader not only that such a document is there, but also why it's there—what does it demonstrate about your reading, thinking, or writing processes as a teacher/learner/scholar this semester?

We will spend the last three weeks of class in Writers' Workshops designed to help you prepare your materials for submission: I will evaluate your Portfolio according to the criteria listed on the Portfolio Pre-Vision Sheet, which I will distribute closer to the end of the semester. In the mean time, let me know what questions you have: I strongly encourage you to visit me during office hours to discuss your Portfolio process and choice.