

## **ENG 289-503: Intermediate Composition**

MWF 200 450pm, McMicken 323  
Summer Term (June 18<sup>th</sup> to July 11<sup>th</sup>)  
University of Cincinnati

**Instructor:** Hannah Rule  
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**Office Hours:** MWF 1-2pm (and by appt.) || 220 McMicken

### ***Writing about Writing—Investigating Composing Processes***

**Course Description/Goals:** English 289 (Intermediate Composition) reinforces and builds upon what you have learned in English 101 and 102, introduces higher-level learning and thinking about writing and reading practices. This course emphasizes critical reading and writing skills, advanced research and analytical skills, as well as rhetorical sensitivity to differences in academic, professional, and public writing. With an organizing focus on “writing about writing,” this section of ENG 289 aims to look more deeply at our notions of “the writing process” by investigating what real people do when they write. We will question, explore, and study first-hand the many “hows” of writing in a variety of contexts. We will interrogate our own ways of doing writing, read and comment on research and theory about writing processes, engage in reflective research practices about aspects of our own processes, as well as conduct primary research inquiry of an individual or community of writers or of another issue related to writing activity.

**Required Texts:** 1) PRINTED COPIES of posted course readings, available on Blackboard  
2) Active UC email and Blackboard accounts, checked regularly

### **Course Requirements & Expectations**

**Classroom Expectations** Please be courteous and respectful of everyone, particularly when we are sharing ideas, both written and verbal. Please keep cell phones, laptops, newspapers, work for other courses, and other distractions stowed away during class. Please be on time as habitual tardiness is disruptive. Be prepared everyday to be an active participant as it is your activity—writing, thinking, and speaking—that is the real content of this course. Finally, be sure to bring your printed readings everyday.

**Attendance** *Attendance in this course is mandatory.* Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Because this is a highly compressed term, you will be allowed one free absence to use at your discretion. In the unlikely case of a university-approved absence (observation of a religious holiday, participation in a university-approved sporting or other event) will you be able to make up missed in-class work, and only with proper and prior notification and/or documentation. Absences beyond the allotted one will result in a deduction of points from the final grade (deduction TBD by the instructor).

**Late and/or Missing Work Policy** Quite simply: I don't accept late work. Do not turn things in late. If you miss the deadline for a major assignment and too much time has passed, I will request that you drop the course. Again, if it's late, it doesn't earn credit. However, I am aware that “things happen,” things which might prevent you from meeting a deadline. In order to for me to consider accepting something late, you must notify me prior to the assignment's deadline of the circumstances and we will then negotiate an alternate due date.

**Conferences** I strongly urge you to take advantage of my regular office hours to discuss your work in the course. In addition to in-person meetings, I am always willing to answer questions/respond to concerns via email.

**Formatting** Each assignment may require a different format for submission. You may need to bring a hard copy to class; you may need to submit through Blackboard. I will always make this clear in class and on assignment sheets. For all assignments, please use MLA style documentation and formatting: e.g. 1-inch margins, reasonable font like Times New Roman, Garamond, Didot, etc., double-spaced, with proper MLA heading, formatting, and documentation.

**Plagiarism** In the Composition Program, any case of plagiarism can result in an automatic grade of F for the course and a letter in your college file explaining the incident. It is ultimately your responsibility to be sure that you have cited all your work properly and that you've demonstrated academic honesty. The University's policies on academic honesty can be found here: [http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Academic\\_Integrity.html](http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Academic_Integrity.html)

**Students with Disabilities** Students with disabilities should present official documentation from the Disabilities Services office during the first two weeks of class so appropriate accommodations can be made.

## **Assignments and Grades**

**Discussion Board:** (10% || 50 total points: 5 posts at 10 points each) Between class meetings and often in response to assigned readings, you will post responses to discussion questions on Blackboard. For each response, expect to write at least 250-500 words (shoot for around 1.5 to 2.5 double-spaced pages, if you were writing in Word). In addition to posting your own writing, you will respond to at least one of your classmates' posts. In general, this writing will be evaluated for depth of thought/consideration and demonstration that you've read the material. The purpose of the discussion boards posts is to give you a chance to think more deeply about the readings and topics in the course, as well as generate starting points for in-class conversations.

**Reflections: Experiments in Process:** (40% || 200 points: 4 reflections at 50 points each) These 2-3 page reports/experiments are designed to have you go out in the world to discover things about writing. These experiments/reflections will include a data section and a discussion section in which you respond to some reflection questions about what you've discovered. The purpose of these reflections is to have you practice primary research methods like interview and observation, to reflect on your own processes, to gain insight into how you write in different contexts, and to "test" theories of process in your own experience.

**Writer(s) In Action: Primary Research Project :** (50% || 250 points) In this term-long research project, you will use primary research methods to provide some answers to a question you've formulated about the composing processes of a writer or group of writers in a certain context, or about some aspect of writing in the world. We will study and practice these methods, as well analyze samples of this kind of writing. You will post these research projects on a class Wiki site, taking advantage of multimedia components like photos, video, design, etc.

*\*\*\*Details about all of these assignments can be found on the Assignment Descriptions file\*\*\**

**TOTAL:** 500 POINTS

*Grades follow university's standard 10/100-point scale:*

94-100=A; 93-90=A-; 87-89=B+; 86-83=B; 82-80=B-; 79-77=C+; 76-73=C; 72-70=C-; 69-67=D+; 66-63=D; 62-60=D-; 59 or below=F

## Course Schedule

*Schedule is subject to change* make sure you note changes made in class and posted on Bb Announcements

*Readings are due the day they are listed*

Please bring copies of the assigned readings with you to class

<p><i>What can we discover about how people do writing?</i></p>	<p><i>Mon June 18</i></p>	<p><i>Wed June 20</i></p> <p>Read Wyche</p>	<p><i>Fri June 22</i></p> <p>Read Grabill, Driscoll p. 153-166</p> <p><b>DB #1</b>, post by 12pm today</p> <p><u>Reflection #1 due</u> Submit to Bb "Assignments" by 9pm today</p>
<p><i>Stuff, Bodies, Emotions – Unusual Aspects of Process</i></p>	<p><i>Mon June 25</i></p> <p>Read Perl, McLeod</p> <p><b>DB #2</b> due 12pm today</p> <p><u>Reflection #2 due</u> Submit to Bb "Assignments" by 9pm today</p>	<p><i>Wed June 27</i></p> <p>Read Leibowitz</p> <p><b>DB #3</b> 12pm today</p> <p><u>Proposal</u> for Primary Research Project due posted to your wiki page, by 9pm today</p>	<p><i>Fri June 29</i></p> <p>Out-of-Class Research Gathering Day!</p>
<p><i>Studying Writing Processes</i></p>	<p><i>Mon July 2</i></p> <p><u>Reflection #3 due</u> Submit to Bb "Assignments" by 9pm</p> <p>Read Driscoll p.167 to end, Berkenkotter and Murray</p> <p><b>DB #4</b> 12pm</p> <p>BRING to class copies of Ransom, Cullington (you don't need to read them in advance)</p>	<p><i>Wed July 4</i></p> <p><b>No Class Meeting</b> Independence Day</p>	<p><i>Fri July 6</i></p> <p>Read Prior/Shipka, p. <b>DB #5</b> 12pm</p> <p><u>Research Records</u> due hardcopies, in-class</p>
	<p><i>Mon July 9</i></p> <p><u>Reflection #4 due</u> <b>hard-copy, in-class</b></p>	<p><i>Wed, July 11</i></p> <p><b>No Class Meeting</b></p> <hr style="width: 20%; margin: 0 auto;"/> <p><u>Primary Research Project</u> due by <b>9pm</b> today, to your wiki page</p>	

- 1) **Discussion Board Pointers** || 5 posts at 10 points each || 50 points/10%
- 2) **Reflections: Experiments in Process** || 4 Reflections at 50 points each || 200 points/40 %
- 3) **Writer(s) in Action: Primary Research Project** || 250 points/50%

### 1) Discussion Board Pointers

- You will post in discussion board 5 times over the term. Each post is worth a possible 10 points. To earn the full 10, be sure that you 1) post on time, 2) post thoughtfully, 3) respond thoughtfully to at least one classmate. Generally, if your post is late, it will earn 0 points. I will grade these posts on quality completion – depth of thought, engagement, and demonstration you’ve read the assigned reading; generally full, half, or zero credit.
- Your post and response on discussion board will be due by noon on the day listed in the course schedule.
- Discussion board is a space where you can think about the readings and topics of the course. It’s meant to help you get into the reading material, hear what others think about it, and allow students who might be quieter in class discussion to share their ideas. Discussion board also helps you practice writing in an academic, but more conversational way. Often topics or issues that come up on the board will extend in to our classroom discussions.
- For every post, you will respond to the question(s) listed, but you may also elect to post on a topic *not* specifically asked about as long as it relates to the reading material under discussion.
- I encourage you to think out loud about these topics – consider taking two views of the question under discussion, or pose more questions about the topic at hand. Think of discussion board as a thinking/questioning space, not necessarily an opinion or assertion space.
- When you respond to a classmate’s post, *RESIST THE URGE TO JUST AGREE* or “like” what the poster is saying. Do more than that. Instead, think about how the poster has made you understand something that you didn’t, point out places where you are disagreeing or understanding something differently, pose questions that the poster’s response makes you want to know, etc. In other words, don’t evaluate; rather engage with the content and do more thinking about it.

### 2) Reflections: Experiments in Process

- These short investigations give you a chance to practice primary methods and reflect upon gathered data. They give you a chance to begin investigations into aspects of human writing activity that you may not get time to consider in your major research project. Your main goal in performing these assignments is to take up the role of inquisitive investigator trying to discover something about writing processes. I’m looking for you to follow your interests and pose questions and hypotheses. I’m hoping you *discover* things about writing activity that you never thought about before.
- The orchestration of your summer schedule will be *EXTRA* difficult for this course. Be sure you have looked at the reflection(s) due for the week and make sure you have sufficient time to execute it.
- Each reflection has its own set of directions. Please read them carefully!
- Reflections 1, 2, and 3 will be due on the dates listed in the course schedule by 9pm posted electronically to Bb Assignments. When you post to Bb, please *both* copy and paste your response into the field provided *AND* upload the file. Reflection 4 will be a hard-copy due in class, July 9.
- Each reflection is scored out of 50 points. Criteria for evaluation: did the investigator: 1) follow the directions of the reflection?, 2) provide the required data?, 3) ethically represent their subjects?, 4) thoughtfully reflect on the data gathered and pose questions?, 5) carefully prepare the reflection report, making her/his writing clear, readable, engaging?
- Each reflection should be at least two pages. You can go over that limit.

#### Reflection ONE: Zooming in on how writing works

Due June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9pm to Bb

Thus far in the course, we’ve thought in fairly broad terms about your own writing processes. For this reflection, you’re going to *zoom in*, attempting to observe more of the intricacies of how you do writing in a certain context. Broadly, you’re going to answer the question, **“what are all the things I’m doing when I write X?”** and answer it with as much detail gained in observation as possible.

**First**, you'll need to choose a time that you'll be writing something to focus your observations on. You certainly can choose to study a time when you're doing academic writing (posting to discussion board, taking notes during another course, writing an essay for another course, etc), but you need not choose something academic. Broaden your sense of writing: you might choose texting, chat, email, Facebook, commenting, blogging, writing a grocery list, journaling, letter writing, list-making, work-related writing...and the list goes on.

**Next**, once you've decided what you're going to observe yourself writing, decide *how* you're going to observe it. You can choose to videorecord yourself writing, you can audio record yourself talking about what you're doing as you're doing it (talk-aloud protocol), you can have someone else watch you write and record observations, or you can do the writing, then write a fast reflection about everything you just did.

Once you've done the writing you're observing, if possible, take a **picture** of it to include in your reflection file (or you could also copy and paste the content you wrote, if applicable).

Once you've gathered your data, you're ready to **write the reflection**.

At the top of your document, fill out the following information, and copy and paste the image of what you wrote (if you don't have a picture, include a photo copy of what you wrote, or explain why you don't have a copy of it)

#### **DATA**

- 1) What, where, when, why, how (with what tools) I wrote:
- 2) How I recorded my observations:
- 3) Statements of Observation: (in list form at least **15** things that you did while you were writing)  
e.g. My pace was very fast. I wrote as fast as I can type. I sent my message without rereading it  
I made several spelling errors that I didn't correct: e.g. yiour (there were 8 spelling errors in total)  
I didn't capitalize any letters  
I was watching TV at the same time I was writing, but not focused on it  
ETC.

After being as detailed about what was going on as you were writing, you're now ready to discuss the data. Make a new section in your document called,

#### **DISCUSSION**

(Here answer *three* of the following questions please be clear about which questions you've chosen):

- What surprised you about your observations?
- What conclusions can you draw about your what your process is like, based on this writing situation?
- What were the most interesting things you noticed about observing yourself in this way?
- What were the limitations or difficulties in making the observations you did?  
What do you think you missed?
- If you were conducting a follow-up study of yourself doing this kind of writing, what questions would you try to answer? What would you want to know more about?

### **Reflection TWO: Interviews on the Writing Process Due June 25<sup>th</sup>, 9pm to Bb**

For this reflection, you'll practice the art of interviewing. You'll choose **one** person to interview about the details of their writing processes.

First, you'll need to prepare for your interview, selecting a person you know whom you think might be interested in talking with you about their writing process. When you ask someone, you'll want to make sure they understand what you mean by "writing process" and that they'll have some things to say You should contact them to make arrangements for your interview: you can do a phone, in-person, or email interview.

Next you'll need to prepare your questions. You all will have your interviewee answer the listed questions below, **you will write at least two more questions** and then ask and record **at least one follow-up question during your interview**.

You'll need to decide how to make a record of the interview. Consider video, audio, writing down what your interviewee says, etc. each has its advantages and its difficulties. Whatever you choose, remember that you need to fully and accurately represent your participant's responses. This can be a lot of work!

After your interview, write up the report like this:

**DATA**

First Name of your Participant, age (if they agree to provide it), occupation, relationship to participant:

Location, date of interview:

Method of recording participant responses:

**Interview Record**

What kind of writing do you tend to do most in your daily life? (this can be *any* kind of writing...)

What kind of writing is most important (or what kind of writing do you do most) in your life right now and why?

*How* do you tend to do that writing? What processes do you tend to go through to write?

+ your own prepared question

+ your own prepared question

+ at least one follow-up question

**DISCUSSION (to be written after you've completed your interview):**

Please answer **all** of the following questions:

- What aspects of performing this interview were difficult? Why?
- What might you do differently if you do interviews for your research project?
- What did you find interesting or surprising about your interviewee's responses? What questions about how people write might you want explore further?

**Reflection THREE: Writing with Different Tools, Different Spaces** **Due July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9pm to Bb**

For this reflection you will experiment with the role of material spaces and things in the act of writing. Choose a time this week when you have to write something (again, could be any kind of writing). Think about where you'd *normally* write that thing. Let's say you decide to experiment on writing your DB post. If typically you compose it right in the forum space, this time choose another place to compose: your cell phone, with pen and paper, in an email to yourself, in a blog post, in a wordprocessing doc, on Facebook, etc. etc. (if you choose DB writing, when you're done composing on another tool, you'll have to figure out how to move the writing into DB. This could include just retyping it into a forum post).

Here's another example: let's say you have to write an essay for another course you're taking: instead of using Word, try writing some of the essay in one of the place or with one of the tools listed above. Or try composing some text messages first by handwriting them out. You're looking for some contrast in the nature of the writing tool.

***Your goal is to test whether the tool impacts how and what you write.***

Once you've experimented with writing in another place, you're ready to write up your reflection.

**DATA**

What you wrote:

How you usually write this thing:

What you wrote with instead:

Observations (list at least 10 things you noticed about writing in the new space/with the new tool):

## DISCUSSION

Please answer *each* of the following questions:

- Overall, how did writing in the new space/with the new tool feel or work differently than what you would normally write with?
- How did writing with something else make you think differently about the tool you typically use for writing?
- From your observations, do you think that the tools we use for writing impact or shape to any extent how and what we write? Why or why not?

### Reflection FOUR: Writing with the Body

Due July 9<sup>th</sup>, hard-copy, in class

Perl's study of felt sense suggests that we write not only with the mind, but also that our physical bodies get involved; we write with the body too. For this reflection, through observation of yourself or another writer, you're going to see if you can gather some preliminary data on what the body does during writing.

First, figure out the writer you're going to observe and how you're going to record your observations. If you choose to observe yourself, you'll need to record yourself writing something. You can use a webcam or set up a cell phone, video, or digital camera somewhere in the room you're writing. To gather your observations, you'll then review the recording. If you choose to observe someone else writing, you can simply watch them and make notes. Video recording though is preferable for either option; do live observations only if you don't have access to a recording device.

As you review the recording, look for *anything* that the body is doing while it's writing. Record your exploratory observations in the reflection report:

#### DATA:

Whom I observed, what they were writing, when/where they wrote:

How I recorded the writing session:

**Observations** about what the physical body did as it wrote: (include a list of at least 10 observations, more if you can...we'll talk in class about the kinds of things we might look for in observation)

#### DISCUSSION:

Please answer *each* of the following questions:

- What seemed to be the most important or meaningful or interesting thing(s) you noticed about what the writer's body did while it wrote? What do you think was going on there?
- Given your observations, what do you think about the idea of the body's involvement in writing acts? In other words, do you think that we do write with the body just as much as the mind?
- If you were to continue an inquiry into writing and the body, what might you be interested in focusing in on?

### 3) Writer(s) in Action: Primary Research Project

In this term-long primary research project, you will design and execute a study about some aspect of writing and how humans do it. Your research will start with a research question, a question you will generate with the help of the course readings: you might study the writing process of your little sister, a friend, yourself, you might think about writing and technology, writing and social media, writing and the body, gestures, emotions, planning, rituals, environments, etc. *You're going to figure out something that you want to know about how a person or community of people do writing, figure out how you might begin answering that question with primary research data collection, execute those methods, and write a 6-8 page report that details your findings and implications.*

We'll be reading a range of existing research on writing, including some written by undergraduate students, that will help generate questions you'd like to ask, model methodology, and demonstrate the genre conventions of a primary research study. All of the reading in the course, then, is directly informative to this project.

You'll complete this project in three parts:

1) **Proposal** due posted to your Bb Wiki page, by 9pm Wed, June 27<sup>th</sup> (25 points)

Answer *each* of the following questions:

- What is your research or guiding question? That is, what do you want to know about how people do writing? Why is this question interesting or important to you?
- What kind of secondary research might be relevant to your study?
- What methods (interviews, observations, surveys, text/artifact analysis, other) will you use to answer this question? You may wish to draw on more than one method. Why are the methods you selected appropriate for the question you're asking?
- What is your plan to execute these methods?
- What problems do you anticipate in conducting this research? How might you deal with those concerns?

2) **Research Records** due in-class, Fri July 6<sup>th</sup> (25 points)

- Bring *all* of the research you've gathered so far notes, observations, completed surveys, interview records, etc. Don't worry about copies, as I won't need to collect it.
- This material will be checked for credit during the class period. This is a means of demonstrating that you're conducting the research in a timely manner.

3) **Primary Research Essay** posted to Bb Wiki page, by Wed, July 11<sup>th</sup> 9pm (150 points)

- Equivalent of 6-8 double spaced pages (or 1500 or more words)
- An essay in which you introduce your inquiry, detail the methods you used to answer the guiding question, discuss what you've found and conclude with the implications of your study.
- The essay will enact genre conventions we find in the studies we're reading: e.g. use sections like introduction, methods, discussion of results, or some variation. We'll study in more detail how to sound like a primary investigator in writing.
- In addition to executing primary research methods, including survey, interviews, observation, text analysis, the essay must review at least some secondary research on the topic. Because the main focus will be on primary research, two to three secondary sources will be sufficient, though you can surely include more.
- Essays should follow MLA citation and Works Cited style. (Exception includes design because you're using a web space to write your essay, you can take liberties with the design. You don't need to double space your work follow the design features of online writing).
- Because you're composing electronically, you can take advantage of wiki features like video, images, photos, etc. We will discuss what kinds of multimedia material might be useful for your readers to see.
- We'll spend time in-class discussing models of this kind of research writing and develop a rubric for evaluation.
- There is no blanket requirement for the methods you use. One researcher might be able to collect surveys only, while another might need to rely on a mix of observation, interview and analysis. A major part of the task here is to figure out what methods are suited to answer the kind of question you want to ask. In the methods section of your essay you'll have to defend the choices you've made.
- A specific rubric for evaluation will be developed in class.