

ENG 461-001 The Teaching of Writing

The Writing Teacher as Researcher

T/TH 4:25—5:40pm
303 Humanities Classroom

Dr. Hannah Rule

Office Hours: 11 am-1 pm; 3-4pm T/TH
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Course Description

The Writing Teacher as Researcher

“students preparing to teach writing in public school or college should understand important conceptual underpinnings of composition and the teaching of writing and should test them out in practice” (134)

Richard Gebhardt, “Balancing Theory with Practice in the Training of Writing Teachers” (1977)

Writing is a “uniquely powerful multi-representational mode for learning” (125)

Janet Emig, “Writing as a Mode of Learning” (1977)

Education is “...essentially something which must be tailored to its recipient; [it] must come from the pupil himself[./herself]’ and the task of educators is to `...make sure that this growth is not inhibited, or that it is, more positively, encouraged”

Mary Warnock (1977), quoted in *Action Research, Principles and Practice* (McNiff, 1988, p. 49)

This course explores the theory and practice of teaching writing, mostly in middle and secondary school contexts. It’s a course designed to support courses and programs in education, though it may be appropriate for students interested in college level writing instruction and/or tutoring in writing, especially as the course builds allegiances with writing research and pedagogies at the collegiate level.

The above quotations introduce the three foundational tenets that organize this course: First, that teachers-in-training should understand and interrogate relationships between theory and practice—how our concepts, beliefs, and philosophies inform what we do in our classrooms and vice versa. Our textbook will help us think in this way: the structure provides background and research on important aspects of writing pedagogies as they relate to practical applications, including assignment and activity suggestions. Second, that writing itself is a method of exploration, discovery, and learning. As such, you will **do** a lot of writing to explore and apply a range of writing pedagogies and approaches. Lastly, that learning (learning to write, learning to teach writing) should be in the hands of the learner herself: the direction of this course will be largely steered by you, by your own interests, questions, and goals. Overall, we will approach the content of this course (and establish one approach for thinking of your identity as a teacher) through the **idea of the teacher-researcher**. The writing teacher-researcher might engage in systematic research studies of their classroom, but more than that, the teacher-researcher is an approach that emphasizes inquiry, reflection, observation, revision & redesign, and ongoing development through immersion in the professional field.

In this course then, you will learn about important issues impacting the teaching of writing and you’ll have the chance to evaluate, revise, and extend those issues toward building your own approach to teaching writing. You will cultivate your knowledge not only as a teacher of writing, but also as a writer, thinker, and professional.

Course Goals and Outcomes

Through this course, you will be able to:

- Articulate approaches and possible activities used to support the development of student writing in a wide range of genres
- Develop and oversee a range of assignments and experiences geared toward improving your students' reading and writing abilities
- Respond to and evaluate the writing of your students
- Understand and respond to current research and issues in your professional field
- Develop a philosophy of teaching writing
- Engage in ongoing inquiry practices using primary research methods to discover knowledge about your professional field/the teaching of writing

Required Texts

1) *Concepts in Composition: Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Writing, 2nd Edition*

Irene Clark, et. al. Routledge, 2012

ISBN 13: 978-0415885164

**** Please ensure that you've purchased the SECOND edition*

2) Other required readings available through links and PDFs on Blackboard

Plan to bring these readings, print or digital access, to class on the assigned days for discussion

Course Policies and 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 every day to be an active participant as it is your activity—writing, thinking, and speaking—that is the real content of this course. Be sure to bring printed or digital copies of the readings on the day there are due so that you may reference them during discussion and other activities.

Attendance Attendance in this course is mandatory. Based on USC's "10 Percent Rule," you'll be allowed three absences (either unexcused or excused) in the course without penalty. In the case of a university-approved absence (observation of a religious holiday, participation in a university-approved sporting or other event) you be able to make up any missed work, if you present proper and prior notification and/or documentation. Absences beyond the allotted three can result in a deduction of points from the final grade (deduction TBD by the instructor; a 1% (5 points) minimum deduction for absences beyond the allotted three).

Late and/or Missing Work Policy Late work is not accepted. If you miss the deadline for a major assignment and too much time has passed, I may request that you drop the course. If it's late, it doesn't earn credit. For daily in-class writing or activities, there can be no make-ups. For larger assignments though, because inevitably "things happen," I'm willing to consider accepting something after its due date, IF you notify me prior to the assignment's deadline of the circumstances. We will then negotiate an alternate due date. It's your responsibility to contact me to make these arrangements.

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, on Blackboard, and/or on assignment sheets. For all assignments, please use MLA style (or other documentation 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. If you're more familiar with another documentation style, you may use it in place of MLA.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism In accordance with USC's Honor Code, it is your responsibility to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit in your work in this course (and all your courses). As writing is a main component of this course, in particular it is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism. Violations of the University's Honor Code include, but are not limited to, presenting another's ideas as your own, improperly citing sources, using another's work as your own, allowing someone to write an assignment or part of an assignment for you, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. Any instances of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment, as well as additional disciplinary measures including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. For more information, please see the Honor Code from the Office of Academic Integrity, found here: <http://www.sc.edu/policies/ppm/staf625.pdf>

Accessibility The University of South Carolina provides high-quality services to students with disabilities, and we encourage you to take advantage of them. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should: (1) Register with and provide documentation to the Office of Student Disability Services in LeConte College Room 112A (777-6142), and (2) Discuss with me the type of academic or physical accommodations you need as soon as possible.

Revisions to the Course Schedule It's important to me to take account of the vibe and interests of the class as a whole. I've planned out our term in detail, but may wish to make changes (skip some readings, add some etc.) to the daily work in the course based on what we all decide we care about. In general, you can count on doing all the assignments as listed (for the points/percentages listed), but there may be changes to readings, homework, in-class writing, etc. In general you can use the initial schedule to plan out your work in the course. I'll do my very best to avoid moving any deadlines up (rather, if there are changes needed, I will do my best to give you MORE time rather than less).

Assignments and Grades

Informal/In-Class Writing/Participation

- **15% | 75 points**
- In class, your **active participation** is expected. To earn participation points, you should 1) attend class regularly and be on-time, 2) complete assignments and come to class with copies of the readings under discussion, 3) thoughtfully and regularly contribute your ideas to discussion, 4) listen to your classmates and respond to their thoughts, 5) thoughtfully and actively participate in in-class activities.
- You'll have the chance to evaluate your oral participation at the end of the term (out of 35 points)
- In addition to oral participation, this grade will also account for your **preparedness and participation in in-class writing**, including workshops, peer reviews, responses to reading assignments, etc. You may also be quizzed on reading assignments. More often, I will ask you to do some writing along with our reading assignments as "homework."

Discussion Leaders

- **5% | 25 pts.**
- Once or twice (we'll determine by the final size of the class), you'll sign up to be a Discussion Leader. You will be tasked with 1) reading the assignment with extra care, 2) extending our

conversation. You might a) design an activity that speaks to the focus of the readings (an activity that you might have your students do, e.g.) b) create discussion questions (related to the assigned chapter/article(s)) for the class to talk about, c) seek out some materials that take the topic to your particular specialization and informally present those to the class.

- You don't need to, but you can coordinate with the other leaders on your assigned day(s).
- You'll write up your response and discussion questions or activity to turn in to me.

Blog (or other public reflection space)

- **15% | 75 points**
- I'll set you up on the Blog feature of Blackboard, or you'll provide a link to your own personal blog space (through Weebly, Wordpress, etc.). You'll be expected to make **at least 6 posts** during the course of the term (of around 500 words minimum) as well as **respond to at least two posts from your classmates.**
- You should use the space to think through ideas from the course, or from your other courses/experiences—write when you feel compelled to! (don't wait to do all your posts at the end of the term!)
- I'll ask you, during our class discussions, to share any posts that were informed by the readings under discussion. I may ask you to talk about what you wrote and/or show us the post.
- Generally you'll manage this space. It's your responsibility to engage and to ensure you're posting regularly. I want the space to be an authentic place where your writing to learn and think, and not primarily for a grade. I'll participate in these spaces as well.

Praxis report

- **20 % | 100 points**
- Based on an extension of a concept we're discussing, or one you identify in your particular area—you'll write a rhetorical summary and application of 3 scholarly articles from academic journals related to your field. In the second half of the report, you'll develop a classroom practice, activity or assignment based and a short rationale based on what you discovered. *Details about this assignment can be found in Assignment Descriptions.*

Case Study/Primary Research Investigation

- **30% | 150 points**
- Includes a proposal and research records. *Details about this assignment can be found in Assignment Descriptions.*

Philosophy of Teaching Writing + Reflection Memo

- **15% | 75 points**
- Including a reflection on the work in the course. *Details about this assignment can be found in Assignment Descriptions.*

Grades

I follow the University's grade scale, grading on a 10-point scale:

A=90-100 C=70-77
 B+=88-89 D+=68-69
 B=80-87 D=60-67
 C+=78-79 F=59 and below

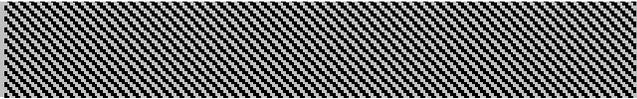
Informal Writing/ Participation	15%	75 pts.
Blog	15%	75
Discussion Leader	5%	25
Praxis Report	20%	100
Case Study	30%	150
<u>Philosophy of Teaching Writing</u>	<u>15%</u>	<u>75</u>
	100%	500 pts. total

I'll specify more detailed essay requirements in each assignment. If you have a question about a grade you receive on an assignment, please feel free to discuss it with me

COURSE SCHEDULE (as of 8/21/14)

- In addition to this schedule, please regularly check Blackboard for updates and reminders
- This schedule is subject to revision—please make sure you're using the most updated version
- **Readings and assignments due ON the day they are listed**

	Topics	Assignments	Due Dates
TH Aug 21	INTRODUCTIONS		
T Aug 26	The Teacher-Researcher Approach	Read Preface of <i>Concepts in Composition</i> (CC) Read Bardine, "Research to Practice" Read "What is TR?"	
TH Aug 28	What is writing? What can it do? →	Read Irmsher, "Writing as a Mode"	
T Sept 2	What should writing instruction do?	Read "Multiliteracies for the 21st Century"	
TH Sept 4	Process	Read CC pp1-23. After reading through the chapter, find a scholarly article OR lesson plan/activity resources on any aspect of the writing process that relates to your age specialization. Bring a copy or the resource with you to class for sharing.	
T Sept 9	Process	Read Woodworth, "Rhetorical Precis"	
	Introduce Praxis Report		
TH Sept 11	Invention	Read CC 57-68.	
T Sept 16	Revision	Read CC 82-90. Read CC 100-107.	
TH Sept 18			
T Sept 23	Assessment	Read Atwell, "Making the Grade" Read Elbow, "High Stakes and Low Stakes"	
TH Sept 25	Assessment	Read CC 145-165	
T Sept 30	Peer Review/Workshop Proposals		Case Study Proposal Due, hard-copy, in-class
TH Oct 2	Style	Read CC 235-243	Conferences this week
T Oct 7	Grammar	Read NCTE Some questions and answers about Grammar Read CC 267-269; 276-282; 289-291	Conferences this week
TH Oct 9	Grammar		
T Oct 14	Linguistic Diversity	Read Selection of Students Right to Their Own	

	Language		
	Read CC pp. 357-367		
TH Oct 16			
T Oct 21			
TH Oct 23	NO CLASS—Fall Break		
T Oct 28			
TH Oct 30			
T Nov 4	NO CLASS—Election Day		
TH Nov 6	Reading and Writing	Read and Select a NCTE statement on reading—write a short summary and response of your selected statement. Bring to class to share.	Final Praxis Report Due
T Nov 11	Reading and Writing	Lamb, “Teaching Nonfiction”	
TH Nov 13	Digital Literacies	Read Dunn & De Mers, “Reversing Notions”	
T Nov 18	Digital Literacies	Read CC 409-426.	
TH Nov 20	Workshop		Case Study Draft due—at least 2 pages of writing
T Nov 25	Digital Literacies	Read NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing	
TH Nov 27	NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break		
T Dec 2			FINAL CASE STUDY due , hard-copy, in-class
TH Dec 4	Course Evals Review of Phils		Required Draft of Teaching Philosophy due

There is no final exam in this course, but the **Final Teaching Philosophy and Reflection Memo due at our exam time: Tuesday, December 9th at 4pm** (in our regular classroom). Plan to spend about an hour in class for wrap-up.