Course Description

Writing: a skill developed both in and out of school, one that reflects our thinking, one that often mirrors our reading abilities, one that comes with increasing ease to people who practice. But how did we begin to write? Early in our education, someone showed us how to hold a pencil, where to place a period, ways to form paragraphs, and methods of building arguments. We learned that literary devices can enhance our writing, and we began to employ advanced writing processes. In many ways, over extended time and through varied practice, we became the writers we are today.

Most English majors understand the importance and power of strong writing skills. However, your future students will mostly not become English majors, and they will be in the developmental stages of their skill-building. Your task as their English teacher is to guide them, model for them, give them useful assignments and meaningful feedback, and provide them with the tools to launch themselves ahead.

This course will help you begin to see how to support student writers. We will focus on writing instruction based in a process model (planning, drafting, writing, revising) but we’ll also discuss the importance of designing good prompts, providing meaningful feedback, and the role of both the Common Core and state assessments in your writing instruction. You’ll hear from real teachers in the classroom doing the work of writing instruction and have the opportunity to work with Writing Coaches of Missoula.

Fair warning: everything we do in this class is practical. That is, you’ll be engaging in practices you’ll be able to implement with your future students. You need to know, from a student’s perspective, how the practices operate and how they feel. For your development as a teacher, we’ll discuss they “why” and “how” of every activity.

Course Objectives

To provide beginning teachers with the knowledge of written composition, including an understanding of and practice in:

• composition processes
• different forms of written discourse for different text types/purposes and different audiences
• the effects of written language (including different levels of usage and dialects) upon purpose, audience, and comprehension
• identifying and assessing the developmental abilities of writers
• the role of grammar instruction in improving writing
• writing instruction in different genres, formats, and interdisciplinary projects
• direct and indirect assessments and formative/summative assessments of writing
To provide beginning teachers with opportunities to
• design, implement, and evaluate writing lessons and strategies that reflect current research in literacy and learning theory
• experience different ways to organize students for effective whole-class, small group, and individual work
• explore a variety of effective instructional strategies and materials appropriate to diverse cultural groups and individual learning styles
• design and use writing instruction to promote and assess students' thinking, learning, and communication skills
• interpret assessments of students' writing for students, parents, and other educators

To develop in beginning teachers the professional behaviors and dispositions that
• all students can learn and are worthy of a teacher's attention and assistance
• all learners and languages/dialects have value and worth
• teachers need to take informed stands on professional issues
• teachers need to create communities of learners and encourage all students to become literate, creative, and responsible individuals
• teachers need to model the value of writing as a way to learn and develop personally as well as a way to communicate with others

Course Topics
• writing processes
• designing effective writing assignments
• responding to students and their writing interests and proficiencies
• planning, organizing, conducting, and reflecting on writing workshops
• peer response and collaborative editing groups for writing
• teacher and student conferences on writing
• formative and summative writing assessments (NAEP, Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium)
• criteria and holistic/analytic rubrics for assessing/evaluating writing
• technology, media, and writing instruction
• role of grammar in writing instruction
• goals of school-wide writing programs (writing across the curriculum)
• relationship between writing and reading and the other language arts
• research in the teaching of writing across the curriculum
• state and national standards for writing and language (Montana Common Core Standards)

Required Texts


Course Assignments

Discussion Forums: Sept. 25, Oct. 23, Nov. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 4

The course requires one original post to the discussion forum hosted in the course moodle every week that it’s assigned (graduate students must contribute two original posts per assignment), and a meaningful response to at least two other participants’ forum posts. Each forum includes discussion prompts. Participants are expected to post detailed, thoughtful and respectful posts that address the prompts. Comments such as, “I agree,” or “I don’t know,” are not sufficient responses. If you agree or disagree with a statement, theme or idea, explain why you agree or disagree. Participants are also expected to respond to their classmates’ forum posts. In general, a response to a classmate could be structured as, “I agree/disagree and here is why . . .” or “Your comment helped my understanding because . . .” or “Your reflection is interesting. It led me to wonder if . . .” See Discussion Rubric for evaluation criteria. Links to outside readings, articles, or other resources are strongly encouraged, especially for graduate students.

A note about discussion etiquette: please note that in online discussion, it is often difficult to detect tone of voice. Sarcasm, humor, and anger can sound the same. Please be sure you are communicating the way you want to be heard, and don’t leave your comments up to the readers’ imaginations to interpret.

The first posts are due by Fridays at 11:55 pm, on the due dates set above. For example, the first post of the first forum is due September 25. The responses are due by 11:55 pm the following Monday. For example, the responses to the first forum posts are due September 28. All posts are due by 11:55 pm. Late forums will assigned late grades, both for original post and response posts. See late policy, below.

Lesson Demonstration September 22

In this lesson demonstration, you'll teach your classmates using your original quick-write prompt. The assessment of this lesson will be based in your preparation, the careful wording of your prompt, and your ability to help your classmates understand the purpose of the prompt, not its success or your “performance.”

Lesson Plan September 29

In this lesson plan, you will demonstration that you understand the components of a strong lesson plan, including learning targets, a hook, modeling, independent practice, and meaningful assessment. It is the plan surrounding the prompt you'll be demonstrating on September 22.

Rubric October 27

You will create an original holistic or analytic rubric for a writing assignment that you design. This rubric will help you assess students’ writing and guide them toward improvement. You’ll have the opportunity to peer review this rubric before turning it in.
Unit plan

Your unit plan represents your learning about writing instruction. This unit must center on writing instruction, but it could also include poetry or film or even a novel. It could be the opening or closing lessons of a larger unit. The unit will consist of four consecutive lessons, each of which must include some meaningful writing component. There must also be evidence of the writing process (planning, drafting, peer review, revision) although your unit could be more creative than four lessons covering each of those features. A rubric must be included, and the Common Core standards must also appear.

You will not demonstrate your unit for the class but will share highlights in an interactive presentation. A formal assignment and rubric will be provided later in the course.

Writing Coaches/Alternate

Students who participate in Writing Coaches of Missoula will present their experiences on December 8. Students will plan ahead to design a cohesive presentation in which each student relates a unique perspective on the overall experience. More information will be provided as the course develops.

Students who do not participate in Writing Coaches of Missoula will present research on writing coaching or peer review, including sharing an annotated bibliography of useful resources. More information will be provided as the course develops.

Graduate Analysis Essay

Graduate students will select two recent (published within 5 years) articles or chapters outside our regular reading selections that present different perspectives on some feature of writing instruction, such as prewriting, revising strategies, rubrics, peer review, and so on. In this essay you will analyze the perspectives and determine the merits of each. Be prepared to deliver a short (5-minute) presentation of your analysis in class at the final class meeting.

Evaluation – Undergraduate

Discussion Forums: each forum is worth 10 points for a total of 50. You are expected to make one original post and two follow-up posts in each assigned forum by the due dates provided.

Lesson Demonstration: 25 points
Lesson Plan: 50 points
Rubric: 50 points
Unit Plan: 200 points
Writing Coaches/Alternate: 75 points

Evaluation – Graduate

Discussion Forums: each forum is worth 15 points for a total of 75. You are expected to make two original posts and two follow-up posts in each assigned forum by the due dates provided.

Lesson Demonstration: 25 points
Lesson Plan: 50 points
Rubric: 50 points
Unit Plan: 200 points
Writing Coaches/Alternate: 75 points
Graduate Analysis Essay: 50 points
Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Scale</th>
<th>Points (Undergraduate)</th>
<th>Points (Grad Credit)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>418-450</td>
<td>488-525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>405-417</td>
<td>472-487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>391-408</td>
<td>456-471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>373-390</td>
<td>435-455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>360-372</td>
<td>420-434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>346-359</td>
<td>404-419</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>328-345</td>
<td>383-403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>315-327</td>
<td>367-382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>301-314</td>
<td>351-366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>283-300</td>
<td>330-350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>270-282</td>
<td>315-329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59 or lower</td>
<td>0-269</td>
<td>0-314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Attendance Policy
This course lasts fifteen weeks. Students are expected to attend every class. However, life happens: You may miss or leave early from three classes. If you have an attendance break (miss class or leave early from class) more than three times in the semester, your overall course grade will be reduced by 5% for each class missed/left. Any work due during your absence is still due. Extreme circumstances will allow for exceptions; please communicate with me.

Late Work Policy
Late work will be assessed a full letter grade, or 10%, deduction per day it is late (including weekends). After 4 days (including weekends), late work will not be accepted. Extreme circumstances will allow for exceptions. Please contact me in case of extreme circumstances or in advance of any planned absences to discuss accommodations.

Grammar Policy
All formal work in this class has a grammar/spelling component built into the evaluation. As future English Language Arts teachers, you are held to a higher grammatical standard. I will point out persistent problems in your written work as I see them. Try to see this as a method of strengthening yourself as a teacher.

Schedule of Topics and Activities
Week One: Introduction; the writing process  
Read *Teaching Adolescent Writers* Chaps. 1-3 for Sept. 8  
September 1, 3

Week Two: Writing prompts & the writing process  
NO CLASS SEPTEMBER 10  
Read *Teaching Adolescent Writers* Chaps. 4-6 for Sept. 15  
September 8
Week Three: the writing process & writing a lesson plan
Bring copies of your original prompt on Sept. 22 & Sept. 24

Week Four: Teachers as coaches, students as writers; lesson demonstration
Forum 1 due Sept. 25 (part 1) and Sept. 28 (part 2).
Lesson plan due on the moodle Sept. 29
Read Oh Yeah?! Chaps. 1-3 for Sept. 29

Week Five: Argumentation
Read Oh Yeah?! Chaps. 4-5 and 7 for Oct. 6

Week Six: Argumentation; rubrics and formative assessment
Read “Is It Done Yet?” Chaps. 1-3 for Oct. 13

Week Seven: Rubrics and formative assessment
Read “Is It Done Yet?” Chap. 4, Teaching Adolescent Writers Chap. 7 and 6 Traits Intro & Chap. 1 for Oct. 20
Rubric due in class Oct. 20 (bring 2 printed copies)

Week Eight: Peer review; conference & assessment
Forum 2 due Oct. 23 (part 1) and Oct. 26 (part 2).
Rubric due on the moodle Oct. 27
Read 6 Traits Chaps. 2-5 for Oct. 27

Week Nine: Grammar instruction & revision; unit plan how-to
Read 6 Traits Chaps. 6-8 for Nov. 3

Week Ten: Rubrics and summative assessment; unit plan how-to
NO CLASS NOVEMBER 5
Forum 3 due Nov. 6 (part 1) and Nov. 9 (part 2).
Read “Is It Done Yet?” Chaps. 5-6 for Nov. 10

Week Eleven: Unit plan preparation
Post any media needed for presentations by class time on Nov. 17.

Week Twelve: Interactive unit presentations
Forum 4 due Nov. 20 (part 1) and Nov. 23 (part 2).
Unit plans due online by midnight Nov. 23

Week Thirteen: Technology with writing
NO CLASS NOVEMBER 26

Week Fourteen: On-demand & standardized writing situations
Forum 5 due Dec. 4 (part 1) and Dec. 7 (part 2).

Week Fifteen: Writing Coaches/Alternate Presentations
Graduate students submit analysis essay online by midnight on Dec. 8.
Revised unit plans due by midnight the day before our final class meeting.

Week Sixteen: Final Class Meeting
Reflections; Grad analysis essay reviews
**Academic Policy**
Academic honesty is expected. Students should complete their own work. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, will be addressed directly by the instructor. References should be cited in discussion posts and any other written work submitted, using APA or MLA format. Please see the section on Academic Conduct from the University of Montana Student Conduct Code.

**Disability Services**
“The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.”

**Other Requirements**
Students in the English Teaching Program are required to join National Council of Teachers of English, [www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org). Students are also encouraged to join NCTE’s state affiliate, Montana Association of Teachers of English Language Arts, [www.oipi.mt.gov/MATELA](http://www.oipi.mt.gov/MATELA).