

**Fall 2011**  
**ENGL 591: Writing Pedagogy and Practice**  
**Seminar Meetings—Fridays, 11:00-12:15 (Oddfellows Board Room)**  
**Labs—individual schedules**

---

Dr. Terra Caputo  
Office: Odd fellows 230

Email: tcaputo@allegheny.edu  
Phone: 332-4334

*Office Hours:*

- Monday 2:30-4
  - Wednesday 10-12
  - Friday 2:30-5
  - and by appointment
- 

**Course Objectives:**

This course is designed to provide new writing consultants with necessary theoretical and practical knowledge in the fields of composition and rhetoric, writing center theory, and writing pedagogy. Consultants will meet for 75 minutes each week to discuss current research in relevant fields and will work 2 hours each week in the Learning Commons to gain practical experience informed by the theoretical discussions of the seminar. This 2-hour shift will count as the “lab” portion of the course and is viewed as a vital, hands-on component of the consultant training experience. The readings, discussions, and written work of the course are designed to help students meet the following objectives:

- To become appropriately versed in pertinent and current theories of composition and rhetoric, writing center philosophy, and writing pedagogy
- To gain practical experience and guidance while working with student writing in a variety of disciplines and written from a variety of student perspectives
- To increase your own consciousness, as a writer and as a tutor, of language and its rhetorical purposes and uses
- To understand the ways in which current theory in relevant fields informs the practice of teaching and tutoring undergraduate writing in the liberal arts

**Required Course Texts:**

Hacker, Diane, and Nancy Sommers. *A Writer's Reference*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston/New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2010.

Podis, Leonard, and Joanne M. Podis (eds). *Working with Student Writers: Essays on Tutoring and Teaching*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2010.

Villanueva, Victor. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2003.

*The Writing Lab Newsletter* (open access online)

## **Grading and Assignments:**

### **Grammar Mini-Lesson: 15%**

Though the Learning Commons does not offer “editing services” to Allegheny students, a significant number of your peers will still ask for and need direct instruction in grammar. However, because the goal is to facilitate a process of learning for the student writer—not just to produce a better paper—straight sentence-level corrections are not the best approach to grammatical issues in the consultation situation. Thus, it is critical that you learn how to teach, model, and facilitate the process of sentence-level editing in a way that allows the student to learn and practice this type of editing on their own. You will sign up to teach a 5-7 minute grammar lesson for one of the top 20 sentence level errors (Lunsford). This grammar lesson will be taught in the context of a mock consultation; your fellow trainees will serve as an audience and will help to evaluate the clarity, creativity, and usefulness of your lesson. More details of the exact requirements of this assignment will be provided in advance.

### **Blog—Connecting theory and practice: 15%**

You will keep a weekly journal, using the Sakai forums, of your experiences in the Learning Commons. The goal of this journal is to give you a space in which to reflect on your experiences and observations, act as an inquirer by raising questions and issues you feel are significant to peer consultation pedagogy, and explore the connections between the practical experience of tutoring in the Learning Commons at Allegheny and the writing center and composition theory we discuss in the seminar. You will be evaluated on the quality, depth, and genuine intellectual curiosity/value of your posts. Ideally, a thread of inquiry will emerge for you as you move through the semester, but you should feel free to explore any issues and questions that come up for you through your experiences. I am less concerned with *what* you say in the blog and more concerned with the ways in which your blogs reflect your genuine engagement with the materials and investment in improving your own philosophies and practices as a consultant. However, to protect the privacy of your fellow consultants, I will ask that any observations and questions you offer happen in relation to your own interactions with your students. You will NOT be asked to comment on the practices of other consultants whom you observe working in the space.

### **Written Peer Reviews—with theoretical justification and rationale: 20%**

Twice this semester you will write a detailed peer review of a sample essay. The first part of the peer review will identify and explain 3 revision suggestions the student writer might consider. The second part of the review will explain, using pertinent critical sources and theory, the rationale for your suggested revisions. Why these suggestions and not others? Why will these suggestions work for this particular writer? Why are these suggestions the priority for this paper? Peer reviews should be no longer than 3 pages—your goals are clarity and conciseness.

Mock Consultation (followed by oral, theoretical defense): 25%

Your written peer reviews are an opportunity to practice, with time to think out, reconsider, and revise, for the real thing. The mock consultation will be the culminating exercise of the semester, your opportunity to demonstrate what you've learned over the course of the semester, both in terms of the practice you've obtained in the Learning Commons and the theory you've internalized in the seminar. I will perform the role of student writer; you will perform the role of consultant. I will present you a short (2-3 page) paper, and you will have 30 minutes to lead me through a facilitated process of revision. You will then have 30 minutes to orally defend the choices you made in the mock consultation. The goal is to demonstrate what you have determined are some of the best practices in peer tutoring in writing and to justify those practices using your knowledge of current and respected writing center theory.

Final Seminar Paper (8-10 pages): 25%

*\*details TBA*

***Course Schedule (subject to adjustments with due notice):***

	<b><i>Readings</i></b>	<b><i>Formal Assignments</i></b>
<u><i>Writing as Process</i></u>		
<i>Week 1:</i> <i>(week of</i> <i>9/5)</i>	Simpson—"Whose Idea of a Writing Center is This, Anyway?" ( <i>WLN</i> ); Murray—"Teaching Writing as Process Not Product" ( <i>CT</i> ); Sommers—"Revision Strategies of Student Writers" ( <i>CT</i> ); Emig—"Writing as a Mode of Learning" ( <i>CT</i> )	
<i>Week 2:</i>	Perl—"The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers" ( <i>CT</i> ); Podis and Podis—"Improving Our Responses to Student Writing: A Process-Oriented Approach" ( <i>SW</i> ); Strand—"The Comments They Made" ( <i>SW</i> )	
<u><i>'We're Not an Editing Service': Pushing Students to Think Critically About Big Picture Issues</i></u>		
<i>Week 3:</i>	Beattle—"Grammar Rule 6,139: Forget the Grammar For Now" ( <i>WLN</i> ); Brooks—"Minimalist Tutoring" (handout); Hawthorne—"We Don't Proofread Here': Re-visioning the Writing Center to Better Meet Student Needs" ( <i>WLN</i> )	
<i>Week 4:</i>	Asking the "right" questions—pushing global revisions and developing critical student writers	
<u><i>Teaching Writing at the Sentence Level</i></u>		
<i>Week 5:</i>	Daloz—"Glazed Looks and Panic Attacks: Teaching Grammar to Basic Writers" ( <i>SW</i> ); Hartwell—"Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar" ( <i>CT</i> ) <b>Written Peer Review #1 Due</b>	
<i>Week 6:</i>	Grammar Matters—Considering the Place of Grammar in WC Tutoring Sessions	

<u>Grammar Mini-Lessons</u>	
Week 7:	<b>Individual Presentations</b>
Week 8:	<b>Individual Presentations</b>
<u>Identity and Difference in Student Writing</u>	
Week 9:	Davila—"Rewriting Race in the Writing Center" (WLN); Davis—"Caught Between Skin Color and Dialect: A Non-Essentialist View of Black English" (SW); Min-Zhan Lu—"Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone" (CT)
Week 10:	Phares and Schwam—"Writing Inside out: Issues of Sexual Identity in the Writing Classroom" (SW); Royster—"When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own" (CT) <b>Written Peer Review #2 Due</b>
<u>The Language "Barrier": Working with ESL/ELL Writers</u>	
Week 11:	Rafoth and Bruce—selections from <i>ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors</i> (handouts)
Week 12:	No Class—Thanksgiving Break
Week 13:	Linville—"Editing Line by Line" (handout); Nolan-Thomas—"Theory and Practice: Integrating ESL Scholarship and Peer Tutoring Pedagogy" (SW); Mosher, Granroth, and Hicks—"Creating a Common Ground with ESL Writers" (WLN)
<u>Tutoring Writing Across the Disciplines</u>	
Week 14:	Stone—"Scientific Writing: What's So Difficult About it Anyway?"; Hoyer—"Discovering Disciplinary Rhetorical Practices" (WLN); Savini—"An Alternative Approach to Bridging Disciplinary Divides" (WLN)
Week 15:	Working with "foreign" languages: navigating disciplinary discourse
Final Exams	<b>Mock Consultations—by appointment (December 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>)</b>
December 21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Seminar Papers due by 5pm to the Sakai drop box</b>