

# English 317: Composition Theory & Practice

Fall 2016 M 4:10-6:55 Franz 222

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3 PM and Fridays 1-2 PM

## Required Texts:

**-BEDFORD:** Leigh Ryan & Lisa Zimmerelli *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors, Fifth Edition*. Bedford/St. Martins 2009. ISBN 978-0312566739. (\$13)

**-SOURCEBOOK:** Christina Murphy & Steve Sherwood, eds. *St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors, Fourth Edition*. Bedford/St. Martins 2011. ISBN: 9780312661915 (\$20)

**-ESL:** Shanti Bruce & Ben Rafoth, eds. *ESL Writers: A Guide for Writing Center Tutors, Second Edition*. Boynton/Cook 1999. ISBN 9780867095944 (\$31)

**-THEYSAY:** Gerald Graff/Cathy Birkenstein *"They Say / I Say": The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing Second Edition* Norton 2009 ISBN 9780393933611 (\$26)

**-STYLE:** John R. Trimble *Writing With Style: Conversations on the Art of Writing, Third Edition*. Prentice Hall 2011 ISBN 9780205028801 (\$43)

-Also essential: your own copy of the campus writing handbook, which you should already own:

**WADSWORTH:** Kirsznner & Mandell *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Edition*. Wadsworth Cengage 2011. 9780495912958 (\$35)

...and two **blue books** (available behind the bookstore counter for 75c. each: one is for doing in-class writing/journaling – bring it to class each time; the other is for your final exam.)

***"our job is to produce better writers, not better writing."***

**–Stephen North "The Idea of a Writing Center"**

The aim of our course is to give you the concepts, practice, and experience to assist in the improvement of others' writing (a role that for many of you includes fulfilling your nomination to become one of the University of Portland's Writing Assistants in BC 163). As North notes, our goal as assistants should be less about copyediting individual papers; we should instead focus on discussing how to improve a peer's writing as a whole. We will work toward this aim first by having you reflect on your own writing, drawing from areas of your writing experience and inexperience, and building up your confidence as a writer, teacher, and campus ambassador. We will read a wide range of material (which will offer conflicting opinions) on what makes good writing, good revising, and good advising, in order to find the methods that best suit your personal experience, outlook, and inclinations. A variety of writing tasks – papers, journal responses, case studies, interviews, self-critiques, peer assessments, and a research project – will keep us experimenting and processing to find what works and does not work for you. And while it is important that you emerge from our semester of readings and assignments with confidence and technical expertise in writing, you should be comforted by the fact that the best Writing Assistants are the ones that can *listen actively* and ask the right *questions* – rather than have all the answers.

## Learning Objectives: *as an active citizen of the course, you should be able to:*

- relate the history of the idea of the writing center, its functions, and its conflicts
- demonstrate your knowledge of writing as a process
- exhibit a habit of self-reflective practice
- demonstrate sharp awareness of the structure, forms, and strategies of college-level writing
- have familiarity and facility in the differing forms of writing from disciplines across campus
- exemplify professional tutoring practices and fundamentals
- assist students of varied backgrounds, learning skills, and abilities
- exhibit strong verbal communication skills and sensitivity in advising
- show familiarity with rules of grammar and a variety of documentation styles

**Development:** *You will work toward these objectives through:*

- commitment to each day's readings (esp. by reading carefully, taking notes as you read and participating in discussion, and reviewing the readings/notes before class)
- diligent oral participation in small-group and larger-class discussions
- frequent writing tasks, including journaling, quizzes, in-class writing, reports, and completing a Writing-Center-related research paper
- practice in the Writing Center through interviews, observations of veteran WAs, and guided advising sessions
- collective sharing of knowledge about the specific disciplinary fields of writing you know best
- preparation for a comprehensive exam through synthesis, brainstorming, and reflection

**Course Requirements:**

**1. Participation:** Because this is a workshop, active participation in discussions and small-group work will be essential. Participation consists of being prepared (by getting the assigned reading completed on time), being alert and curious about the day's topics, having comments and questions to contribute to each of our discussions, and being on time. Your continued silence – particularly if it's because you have not done the reading or because you're late or absent – will hurt your grade.

I will be responsible for creating an environment that is considerate of all viewpoints and contributions; you will be responsible for voicing your views (even if you're shy). If you cannot come up with answers to contribute to our discussions, you can surely offer probing questions, which are equally valuable.

**2. Writing Assignments:** The majority of your grade will be based on writing assignments, both informal and formal, that you will complete. You will maintain a journal throughout the semester (a blue book brought daily to class), in which you will write reflections and responses to the readings, class discussions, and tutoring sessions. It will also be the location for many informal in-class writings and even pop-quizzes (which cannot be made up). You will periodically turn in the journal for review. Among your formal writings, you will write a **literacy narrative** that reflects on your autobiographical path toward becoming a writer. You will also turn in interview reports (of WAs and professors about their expectations), short reports, and statements. At the end of the term you will submit a substantial Writing-Center related research project.

**3. Final:** It will be important, toward the end of the course, to make the time and space for synthesizing all you learned, and perhaps even create a study sheet of the most important points for your future use in appointments tutoring writers. For this purpose, I assign a comprehensive final. A series of short-answer questions will test your retention of the course material and your degree of achieving many of the course objectives. The best way to prepare for the final is to keep up with each week's reading, engage yourself in class discussions, and keep track of the patterns of what makes strong writing and excellent tutoring.

**Course Grade Percentage:** *In order to pass the course, you must complete all class requirements*

- 10% literacy narrative
- 15% journal notes, quick-writes, quizzes
- 20% short assignments (interviews, reviews, reports)
- 20% participation in class and the Writing Center
- 20% final project
- 15% final exam

**Contacting me**

I'm happy to talk to you in office hours, and I welcome you to stop by during my posted times or by appointment. In helping you to brainstorm paper ideas, organize your thoughts, or think through revision, face-to-face conversation will help best. So save email for small or basic questions: it's not a good medium for reading drafts or addressing lengthy questions. I also discourage big questions about your papers within 24 hours of their due date, as last-minute advice seldom helps.

**University Policies and Resources:**

A Note on Plagiarism: I expect that all of your assignments for this course will contain original work by you written for this class. Plagiarism is the use of another's writing or ideas as if they were your own. This includes

copying from any text, web page, or anyone else's paper without acknowledging that the words or ideas are not yours. I will be vigilant in reporting acts of plagiarism to the university authorities.

## **University of Portland's Code of Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is openness and honesty in all scholarly endeavors. The University of Portland is a scholarly community dedicated to the discovery, investigation, and dissemination of truth, and to the development of the whole person. Membership in this community is a privilege, requiring each person to practice academic integrity at its highest level, while expecting and promoting the same in others. Breaches of academic integrity will not be tolerated and will be addressed by the community with all due gravity. Please see the University Bulletin for policy: <http://up.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2016-2017/bulletin/University-Academic-Regulations/I-Code-of-Academic-Integrity>

## **Assessment Disclosure Statement**

Student work products for this course may be used by the University for educational quality assurance purposes.

## **Accessible Education Services (AES)**

Students who experience a disability and require an accommodation to fully participate in this class, contact the Accessible Education Services office, located in Buckley Center, Rm. 163 or call 503-943-8985. If you have an AES Accommodation Plan that includes academic accommodations that apply to this course, make an appointment to meet with your professor to discuss how your accommodation will be implemented. You are responsible for giving sufficient notice to your professor for timely implantation of your accommodation; therefore it is recommended you speak with your professor in the first week of the semester or as soon as your accommodation plan is activated. Also, meet with the professor if you have an AES Safety Plan and/or wish to discuss emergency medical information or special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated. Requests for alternate location for exams and/or extended exam time should, when possible, be made two weeks in advance of an exam, and must be made at least one week in advance of an exam.

## **Shepard Academic Resource Center (SARC)**

The Learning Resource Center, located on the first floor of Buckley Center within SARC (BC 163), provides peer assistance tutoring for writing, math, speech and presentations, languages, business and economics, sciences and nursing. **For Writing.** Go to [www.up.edu/learningcommons/writing-center](http://www.up.edu/learningcommons/writing-center). You will need to register as a user the first time you go to the website. If you cannot make any of the posted office hours, you can arrange an appointment by emailing [writing@up.edu](mailto:writing@up.edu). **For Math.** Math assistants are available on a walk-in basis. Please go to [www.up.edu/learningcommons/math-resource-center](http://www.up.edu/learningcommons/math-resource-center) for a current schedule of hours math assistants are available. **For Speech and Presentations.** Speech assistants from the Communication Studies Department are available by appointment only. Just send a request to: [speech@up.edu](mailto:speech@up.edu). **For International Languages.** Language assistance is available by appointment; go to [www.up.edu/learningcommons/language-assistance](http://www.up.edu/learningcommons/language-assistance) and send an email to the target language. **For Biology and Chemistry.** The Chemistry Department offers peer mentoring on a walk-in and appointment basis. The Biology Department offers peer mentoring on a walk-in and appointment basis. **For Business and Economics.** In collaboration with the Pamplin School of Business, the Learning Commons now offers peer learning support in Economic and Business Law by appointment only. Go to [www.up.edu/learningcommons/Economics-and-Business](http://www.up.edu/learningcommons/Economics-and-Business) for appointment information. **Learning Assistance Counselor.** Learning assistance counseling is also available in BC 163. The counselor teaches learning strategies and skills that enable students to become more successful in their studies and future professions. The counselor provides strategies to assist students with reading and comprehension, note-taking and study, time management, test-taking, and learning and remembering. Appointments can be made in the on-line scheduler available to all students in Moodle or during posted drop-in hours.

## **Mental Health Statement**

As a college student, you may sometimes experience problems with your mental health that interfere with academic experiences and negatively impact daily life. If you or someone you know experiences mental health challenges at UP, please contact the University of Portland Health and Counseling Center in Orrico Hall (down the hill from Franz Hall and Mehling Hall) at <http://www.up.edu/healthcenter/> or at 503-943-7134. Their services are free and confidential, and if necessary they can provide same day appointments. Also know that the University of Portland Public Safety Department (503-943-4444) has personnel trained to respond sensitively to mental health emergencies at all hours. Remember that getting help is a smart and courageous thing to do – for yourself, for those you care about, and for those who care about you.

## **Non-Violent Community Statement**

University of Portland Faculty, Staff, and Students are committed to creating a community free of interpersonal violence, in which all members feel safe and respected. Each of us has a personal responsibility to reject violence or intimidation of any kind. Resources for those experiencing or wishing to report violence can be found on our community against violence website: <http://www.up.edu/cav/>

### **English Department Grading Standards**

**A:** The A paper is excellent. It expresses a significant idea in a superior manner. Its thesis is clear, consistent, and well-argued, and the evidence, well-analyzed, strongly supports the thesis. The organization is logical, and the writing is inventive, precise, and grammatically sound. From its compelling introduction to its provocative conclusion, the paper fully considers and engages the reader in the expression of its argument.

**B:** The B paper is good. It expresses a sound idea in a functional manner. Its thesis is generally relevant, clear, and well-supported, though evidence and analysis of that evidence may be lacking in places. The paper is logically organized, although it may lack coherence in structure. Stylistically and mechanically, the writing is sound but may contain some minor distractions or errors.

**C:** The C paper is fair. It expresses a merely adequate idea in an ordinary manner. Its thesis is vague or undeveloped, and it frequently contains lapses in reason or support. Often the expression of the idea is weak because the writer has not completely thought through the argument, and the paper's structure, which is typically confused and lacking clear transitions, reflects this weakness. The writing may contain major grammatical and stylistic problems.

**D:** The D paper is poor. It expresses an unclear point in a weak manner. It may fail to address the assignment. Its thesis is extremely vague, unclear, or illogical; it suffers from major problems in organization, and its evidence, if present, does not clearly connect to the thesis. The writing is error-ridden and demonstrates little consciousness of audience.

**F:** The F paper is unintelligible. It contains no point or its point is plagiarized.

### **Elements of an Effective English Argument Paper**

**INTRODUCTION:** An introductory section that provides the reader with the context for the argument and why the discussion matters. The introduction should seek to engage and connect with a reader. It should contain a thesis to give the reader a sense of the paper's purpose and direction.

**THESIS:** An assertion about the meaning of the text that serves as the organizing principle of the paper. The thesis asserts something that could potentially change what a reader knows, understands, or thinks about the text. The thesis is a summation of the paper's argument though not the argument in its entirety (otherwise, why need the whole paper?). The paper should address a question about a text, rather than simply make an observation.

**ORGANIZATION:** The structural logic of the paper that makes its ideas accessible to the reader. The paper should be divided clearly into paragraphs, each containing a topic sentence that encapsulates the claim that paragraph is making. That claim is then supported through concrete evidence and analysis of that evidence. Each paragraph should be linked clearly to the ones before and after it by way of transitional phrases. The paragraphs should develop the thesis, so that early paragraphs give the most basic point, and the following ones build upon that.

**EVIDENCE:** Support for the thesis in the form of quotations from or allusions to the text. The paper must demonstrate through analysis how the evidence connects to the assertion. Quotations should not stand alone; the most effective way to use them is embed them into the paper's sentences.

**STYLE:** Writing that clearly and precisely expresses the paper's ideas. It should be vigorous and fresh writing that takes chances and avoids clichés. The writer should stretch to find the most effective stylistic means to express the ideas of the paper.

**MECHANICS:** Clear adherence to the conventions of grammar and mechanical correctness as set out in the University handbook, *The Pocket Wadsworth Handbook*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

**CONCLUSION:** A concluding section (usually a paragraph) that both ties up the paper and also further stimulates the reader. The conclusion should include a differently-worded restatement of the paper's idea, but should not constitute mere rehash of the paper. Instead, it should pursue the implications of the paper's argument (answer the "so what?" question), suggest ways of complicating the argument, or propose ongoing questions about the topic.

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**English 317 SCHEDULE:** Readings listed under each day should be completed by that day.

### **I. What is Writing?**

**M Aug 29** Course overview, in-class video: *Shaped by Writing: The Undergraduate Experience* (15 m.)

### **II. What is a Writing Center?**

**M Sept 5** *Bedford* vii-ix Intro, 1-5 The Writing Center as Workplace, and 6-16 Writing Process.  
*Sourcebook* 44-58 Stephen North "The Idea of a Writing Center,"  
70-76 Andrea Lunsford "Collaboration, Control, & the Idea of a Writing Center,"  
97-111 Steve Sherwood "Portrait of the Tutor as an Artist."

### **III. What is a Writing Assistant?**

**M Sept 12** \* **Literacy Narrative due for peer review**  
*Sourcebook* 1-33 Murphy/Sherwood "The Tutoring Process,"  
112-127 Peter Carino "Power and Authority in Peer Tutoring."  
*Bedford* 17-40 "Inside the Tutoring Session."

**M Sept 19** \* **Literacy Narrative due**  
*Sourcebook* 128-132 Jeff Brooks "Minimalist Tutoring,"  
133-146 Shamoon/Burns "A Critique of Pure Tutoring,"  
148-154 Steven Corbett "Tutoring Style, Tutoring Ethics."  
*Bedford* 41-73 "Helping Writers," "The Writers You Tutor."

**M Sept 26** *Bedford* 87-114 "Helping Writers Across the Curriculum," "Coping with Difficult Tutoring Situations," "Summing it All Up."  
*Style* (Stephen Trimble book) ix-28 (ch. 1-3, Intro – Openers).

### **IV. I Forget: What are the Basics of Writing Again?**

**M Oct 3** \***Assignment presentation due**  
*Wadsworth* 1-33 (Writing Basics: Purpose, Audience, Essay Writing).  
*Style* 29-47 (ch. 4-5, Middles - Closers).

**M Oct 10** *TheySay* xiii-77 Graff/Birkenstein Prefaces, Intro, Starting w/what Others are Saying, Summarizing, Quoting, Responding, Distinguishing.

**M Oct 17** **Fall Break**

**M Oct 24** *TheySay* 78-192 Naysayer, Why it Matters, Connecting, Voice, Metacommentary, Entering Discussions, Writing in the Sciences, Social Sciences.  
*Style* 48-119 (ch. 6-12, Diction - Proofreading).

**M Oct 31** **No Class**

**M Nov 7**      **(Meet at Library)** *Style* 121-173 (ch. 13-17, Punctuation- Epilogue).  
*Wadsworth* 182-231 (skim) MLA docu. style; 234-263 (skim) APA docu. Style.

## **V. How Can Writing Assistants Overcome Challenging Situations?**

**M Nov 14**      *Sourcebook* 249-262 Julie Neff “Learning Disabilities and the Writing Center,”  
233-247 Anne DiPardo “Whispers of Coming and Going,”  
302-325 Nancy Barron & Nancy Grimm “Addressing Racial Diversity.”  
*Wadsworth* 264-299 (skim) Chicago and CSE documentation style.

**M Nov 21**      *ESL* 1-13 Ilona Leki “Before the Conversation,”  
18-30 Theresa Tseng “Theoretical Perspectives on Learning a Second Language,”  
33-40 Shanti Bruce “Breaking Ice and Setting Goals,”  
42-49 Matsuda/Cox “Reading an ESL Writer’s Text.”  
In class: *Writing Across Borders* (OSU video)

**M Nov 28**      *ESL* 51-63 Carol Severino “Avoiding Appropriation”  
66-75 Amy Jo Minett “Earth Aches by Midnight,”  
116-129 Cynthia Linville “Editing Line by Line.”  
*Sourcebook* 284-299 Sharon Myers “Reassessing the Proofreading Trap.”

**M Dec 5**      *ESL* 161-171 Kurt Bouman “Raising Questions about Plagiarism,”  
208-215 Ben Rafoth “English for Those Who (Think They) Already Know It.”  
*Bedford* 115-120 Appendix A + B.

**F Dec 11**      **\*Final project due under my office door**

**M Dec 12**      **\*Final Exam 4:10pm**