

# WRA 395 Writing Center Theory and Practice

Spring 2016

Tuesdays, 5–6:20pm

300 Bessey Hall

## Office Hours:

Tuesdays 4-5pm (sometimes 4:15)

Thursdays 4-6 pm (in The Writing Center or my office)

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## COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

*Writing Center Theory and Practice* is designed to examine the techniques and theories that inform the practice of tutoring writing. In particular, this course will train you to tutor writing in The Writing Center at MSU, as well as other tutoring spaces across campuses, ages, identities, and communities. The course will focus on the practical components of writing center work and how these methods can be applied across settings. Specific topics will include collaborative learning, consultation approaches, consultant roles, grammar instruction discussions, consulting strategies for a variety of clients (on campus and in the community), technology use in the writing center, composition & learning theories that influence writing center work, and resource development.

In this course, we will:

- develop ourselves into effective peer consultants in writing who can staff the various consulting spaces across campus and in the community,
- discuss the development of writing center theories and practices,
- study the role of composition and learning theories on tutoring practice, and
- study the role of tutoring practice on composition theory and research

## REQUIRED AND TEXTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

- MBTI test (about \$30)
- Class blog - [www.writingcenterexplorations.org](http://www.writingcenterexplorations.org)
- Google Classroom – [googleapps.msu.edu](http://googleapps.msu.edu) (login with msu email address, join class using code **9fda8mc** )
- Google Drive – add class folder to your Drive

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

### MAJOR PROJECTS (70% or 700 points)

- Project 1: Writing Histories (100 points)
- Project 2: Consulting Philosophy (150 points)
- Project 3: Annotated Bibliography (100 points)
- Project 4: Multimodal Project (200 points)
  - Project 4a: Presentation (150 points)

## **ONGOING PROJECTS (30% or 300 points)**

### **READING & RESPONSE BLOG POSTS (100 points)**

- Reading Response Blogs (11 total)

### **CONSULTING & REFLECTION BLOG POSTS (100 points)**

- Writing Center Sessions (3 observations, 3 co-consults, 1 lead = 7 total)
- Friday Writing Center Staff Meeting (1 total)
- Field Notes (10 total)

### **SERVICE LEARNING & REFLECTION BLOG POSTS (100 points)**

- Service Learning Reflections (7 total)
- 10-12 hours with community partners

## **GRADING SCALE**

Percentage	Grade
100-94	4.0
93-87	3.5
86-82	3.0
81-77	2.5
76-72	2.0
71-67	1.5
66-62	1.0
61-below	0.0

GRADING – Points for each project will be assigned, generally, on the following criteria (but specific criteria will be discussed for each project):

*Exemplary:* Exemplary work reveals an astute and consistently effective understanding of rhetorical principles, an exceptional range of micro- to macro-level detail, and very few minor editorial problems. It may indicate students' willingness to take risks, to push themselves beyond safe or obvious responses to an assignment. This kind of exemplary work could be used as a model for classmates to emulate. It may even be worthy of publication. If it's a collaborative project, group partners identified a student's contributions as outstanding. Perhaps the student took a leadership role.

*Good:* Good work reveals a generally commendable understanding of rhetorical principles, a generally effective range of micro- to macro-level detail, and several minor editorial problems. Although good work is more than just acceptable, it may indicate that a student took relatively safe or obvious approach to an assignment. Good work is less likely to be considered a model for others. If it's a collaborative project, group partners identified a student's contributions as generally strong. Partners indicate that the student's contributions were an important part of the project.

*Acceptable:* Acceptable work reveals a basic, serviceable understanding of rhetorical principles, and just enough micro- to macro-level detail. Or an acceptable project

may be inconsistent, offering appropriate detail in some places but not others. A few major editorial adjustments may be needed. An acceptable project meets minimum assignment requirements. If it's a collaborative project, group partners identified a student's contributions as unexceptional. Partners may indicate that the student only did what was asked but did not take any initiative. Partners may indicate that the student's contributions had to be revised somewhat.

*Poor:* Poor work indicates a significant misunderstanding of rhetorical principles. Micro- to macro-level details are frequently inadequate or inconsistent. Excessive errors weaken the writer's credibility. Inconsistencies and lack of detail may indicate that an assignment was thrown together at the last minute. If it's a collaborative project, group partners identified a student's contributions as minimal or weak. Partners may indicate that the student did not do everything he or she promised. Partners may indicate that the student often missed meetings without attempting to catch up.

*Unacceptable:* Unacceptable work is often incomplete. Significant portions of the project may have been left undone. Or perhaps portions of the project were copied from other sources without attribution or revision. (See the section on "Academic Honesty.")

**WORK SUBMISSION** – All coursework will be submitted through Google Classroom by the due date specified for each assignment. Late work will be deducted 10% for each day it's late. You are highly encouraged to develop data backup habits now because "computer crashes" are not acceptable excuses for late or incomplete work. Check out your AFS space ([afs.msu.edu](http://afs.msu.edu)) or a cloud service like Dropbox ([dropbox.com](http://dropbox.com)).

**MULTIMODAL WORK** – You are encouraged to explore digital multimodal reading responses and reflections. This could be visual (drawing, graphic design, photo manipulation, memes, etc.), video (iMovie, Snapchat, Instagram, gifs, etc.), text (poetry, rants, manifestos, etc.) some combination of these, or surprise me. Use this space and these assignments to learn something new, or practice something old.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**ATTENDANCE** – This class involves lots of collaboration and discussion, therefore your attendance and preparation for each class is mandatory. You are allowed 2 absences in this course; for every absence beyond 2 your course grade will be deducted by 10 points. If you have 0 absences this semester, you'll earn 20 points toward your course grade, 1 absence and you'll earn 10 points.

If you must be absent, send me an email and let me know; and if you're working in a group you must also let your group members know. It is your responsibility to find out that day's activities. Your first stop should be our Google Drive folder, where I will upload each day's slides after class; your second stop is your peers.

Finally, being late and/or leaving early is unprofessional. You must be on time to fully participate in this class. *Every late arrival or leaving early will be considered an absence.*

CLASS PARTICIPATION – To be successful in this class you must participate, in fact, the success of this class, and your future as consultants, relies on your participation. Blogging, tweeting, peer review, class discussion, paying attention in class, coming prepared, fulfilling your service-learning hours, field observations, engaging course materials in reading responses - these are the myriad of ways to participate in this course. That said, what I mean by participation is active engagement in the community of this class.

COMMUNITY ACCOUNTABILITY – In this class we will be reading, viewing, writing about, and discussing controversial topics. I expect you to treat one another and me with respect and maturity. There may be disagreements among us as we come to this class with a wide range of experiences and histories. I welcome our differences. But, **I will absolutely not tolerate any form of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, or body discrimination.**

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY – Your work submitted for this class is generally considered confidential pursuant to the University’s student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees are required to report suspected child abuse/neglect and allegations of sexual assault to the appropriate campus authorities when they become aware of such matters in the course of their employment. Sexual assault survivors are encouraged to meet with the Sexual Assault Program at the MSU Counseling Center for confidential counseling and advocacy services.

COMMUNICATION – Outside the classroom, you will primarily communicate with me via email. I will make every effort to respond within 48 hours. If you have not received a response from me after 48 hours, please email me again. I also encourage you to come to office hours – Tuesdays 4-5pm and Thursdays 4-6pm. Note that you’re likely to get a quicker response via Twitter - @soulsmls. And if you are ever unclear about an assignment, a policy, a task, please ask.

ACCESSIBILITY – MSU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services, and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at (517) 884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

ACADEMIC HONESTY – I take academic honesty seriously. Plagiarism, of any sort, will not be accepted and/or tolerated in this class. If plagiarism is evident and/or suspected, I will pursue it in accordance with the WRAC Department Guidelines and University Policy. Michigan State University has adopted the following statement about academic honesty:

#### General Student Regulations

##### 1.00 PROTECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP AND GRADES

The principles of truth and honesty are fundamental to the educational process and the academic integrity of the University; therefore, no student shall:

- 1.01 claim or submit the academic work of another as one's own.
- 1.02 procure, provide, accept or use any materials containing questions or answers to any examination or assignment without proper authorization.
- 1.03 complete or attempt to complete any assignment or examination for another individual without proper authorization.
- 1.04 allow any examination or assignment to be completed for oneself, in part or in total, by another without proper authorization.
- 1.05 alter, tamper with, appropriate, destroy or otherwise interfere with the research, resources, or other academic work of another person.

Procedures for responding to cases of academic honesty and possible repercussions are outlined in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide. They can also be found on the web at: [msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html](http://msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html). Note that the new procedures require instances of academic dishonesty be reported through the registrar's office and forwarded to the Dean of the College in which the student's major resides.

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY** – As members of a learning community, students are expected to respect the intellectual property of course instructors. All course materials presented to students are the copyrighted property of the course instructor and are subject to the following conditions of use:

1. You may record discussions or any other classroom activities and use the recordings only for your own course-related purposes.
2. You may share the recordings with other students enrolled in the class. But sharing is limited to using the recordings only for course-related purposes.
3. You may NOT post the recordings or other course materials online or distribute them to anyone not enrolled in the class without advance written permission from me and, if applicable, any students whose voice, image, or intellectual property is included in the recordings.
4. Any student violating the conditions described above may face academic disciplinary sanctions.

## **RESOURCES**

The Purdue OWL – [owl.english.purdue.edu](http://owl.english.purdue.edu)

Counseling Services – [counseling.msu.edu](http://counseling.msu.edu)

LGBT Resource Center – [lbgtrc.msu.edu](http://lbgtrc.msu.edu)

Women's Resource Center – [wrc.msu.edu](http://wrc.msu.edu)

Sexual Assault Program – [endrape.msu.edu](http://endrape.msu.edu), 24-hour crisis line (517) 372-6666

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities – [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu)

Office of Support Services – [oss.msu.edu](http://oss.msu.edu)