



The Knight Institute

for Writing in the Disciplines

WRIT 7100: Teaching Writing | Summer 2020

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing 7100 prepares new instructors of Cornell's First-Year Writing Seminars to teach courses that both introduce students to particular fields of study and help them develop the sophisticated writing skills they will need throughout their undergraduate careers. Seminar discussions and readings on pedagogical theories and practices provide an overview of the teaching of writing within a disciplinary context. Participants develop written assignments to be used in their own First-Year Writing Seminars.

WRITING 7100 INSTRUCTIONAL TEAM

Tracy Hamler Carrick, Director, Writing Workshop; Faculty, Knight Institute
Sean Cosgrove, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of History
David Faulkner, Director of First Year Writing Seminars; Faculty, English/Knight Institute
Daniel Friedman, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of German Studies
Grace Catherine Greiner, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of English
Kelly King-O'Brien, Associate Director of Writing in the Majors; Faculty, Knight Institute
Alice Mercier, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of English
Kate Navickas, Director, Knight Writing Centers; Faculty, Knight Institute
Natalie Nesvaderani, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of Anthropology
Alicia Patterson, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of Philosophy
Jessica Sands, Multilingual Writing Specialist, Writing Workshop; Faculty, Knight Institute
Scott Sorrell, Faculty, Knight Institute; PhD, Department of Anthropology
Abigail Sprenkle, Co-facilitator, Graduate Student, Department of Medieval Studies
Brad Zukovic, Faculty, English/Knight Institute

COURSE RATIONALE

Writing 7100 has three purposes: one theoretical and two practical. First, we want to introduce you to the challenges of teaching Writing Seminars with a disciplinary focus. Second, we want you to leave the course with an advanced draft of a syllabus and a selection of assignments you can use in your First-Year Writing Seminar. Because reflection on the learning process helps facilitate good teaching, we ask you to include *rationales* in the assignments you draft for this class and encourage you to share appropriate versions of these rationales—perhaps as learning outcomes—with your students. Third, we hope this seminar will be a laboratory in learning and teaching. In this seminar, we try to model effective teaching methods; we encourage you to experiment with strategies and techniques you can use in your own seminars.

The guidelines for First-Year Writing Seminars (included in *The Indispensable Reference*) represent practical manifestations of a two-tiered philosophy about teaching writing. **Writing should be the central activity of each course—a substantial amount of class time should be devoted to it.** Therefore, we require a certain number of assigned papers and place limits on the amount of reading assigned each week. **Since writing is best taught and practiced as a process,** we require guided revision and encourage preparatory writing and sequenced assignments.

We also know that Writing Seminars succeed when they help build communities of writers. We hope this course will help build communities of teachers. Sharing assignments with other teachers and, we hope, learning from the work colleagues produce will be among the central tasks of Writing 7100.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- You will draft and revise course materials—including a syllabus and sequence of assignments—for a First Year Writing Seminar to be taught within the next academic year.
- You will demonstrate, through your course materials, an understanding of how to teach a First Year Writing Seminar embedded in disciplinary practice and in accordance with the Knight Institute’s guidelines.
- You will develop strategies for responding to student writing.
- You will explore models of collaboration that are transferrable to your own courses and to other professional settings.
- By engaging with course reading and classroom discussion, you will begin (or continue) to develop your capacity to participate in professional, reflective discussions on theories and practices of teaching writing.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at all six seminar meetings is required. Timely submission of all assignments is required. If you have any problems or conflicts, please contact your section leader as soon as possible. Successful completion of the course is required of all instructors who wish to continue teaching in the Writing Program. Writing 7100 is a one-credit, S/U only course.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

TEACHING ARTIFACTS

These assignments should help you develop a semester-long plan for your seminar, draft individual assignments, and prepare detailed plans for at least four weeks of teaching. Because these assignments are intended to help you build your course, we encourage you to think of each week’s assignment as part of a cumulative sequence, portions of which you may choose to revise over the course of the summer (and again during the semester).

ASSIGNMENT RATIONALES

Each assignment should include a *rationale*, both to open a discussion with those who read and respond to your assignments and to prepare you for discussions with your future students. The rationale is a place to explore your desired learning outcomes for a particular assignment and locate it within the work of the course. Most of the sample assignments available through our eCommons archive include rationales. ***No assignment will be considered complete without a rationale; think of these as fully-articulated statements, NOT a token few sentences.***

LEARNING OUTCOMES

As part of your course planning, we expect you to produce *learning outcomes* that will help direct your course. We encourage you to include specific learning outcomes with each assignment. Learning outcomes, like rationales, help you articulate what you are doing and why. They help you describe your teaching to audiences of students—which can be crucial to your success as a teacher—and to colleagues—which could be crucial to your success as a faculty member. For examples of discipline-appropriate learning outcomes, see *The Indispensable Reference for Teachers of First-Year Writing Seminars*, pp. 4-5.

PEER COLLABORATION

We will regularly devote class time to meeting with peers to review the draft assignments you've produced. Your instructors will participate in these discussions in addition to responding to your assignments in writing or in face-to-face conversations. We expect that this peer review process will both help you improve your teaching materials, and give you practice in a version of peer collaboration that you may find useful in your own seminars.

PRESENTATIONS

Your facilitators may incorporate informal presentations on teaching as part of your 7100 section. In First-Year Writing Seminars, presentations help students become active learners and active participants in the course. They can also be useful stages in the writing process. In Writing 7100, presentations may provide you with opportunities to "test drive" assignments or exercises by leading a part of the class and receiving feedback from your colleagues.

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Assigned readings come from the following texts, distributed at orientation or available online. They will provide both theoretical and practical support as you plan your First-Year Writing Seminar. In choosing these reading materials, we try to provide you with resources you may find helpful over the course of your teaching career. You may find that some of this reading will be more helpful after you have begun teaching; or when you are preparing to teach a second time; or when you prepare for the academic job market.

- Katy Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj. *The Elements of Teaching Writing*.
Written by Cornell faculty for teachers of courses like yours, *The Elements of Teaching Writing* is the central text for this course. Although we assign chapters for each week's meetings, you may find it helpful to at least scan the whole book **before our first class meeting**.
- Keith Hjortshoj. *The Transition to College Writing*.
The Transition to College Writing is a companion volume to *Elements*. Although its audience is first-year students, it helps frame the kinds of problems writing teachers are likely to face in helping high school students become college students. You might even consider assigning it in your own course!
- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *"They Say/I Say": The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*.
A widely used handbook and a popular source for insights and practical guidance in conceiving of academic writing as a conversation into which writers insert themselves. May be particularly helpful when you design Language and Style exercises in Week 4.
- *Indispensable Reference for Teachers of First-Year Writing Seminars*. John S. Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines.
- *Faculty Guide for Working with Multilingual Student Writers* (Purdue Writing Lab).
- Other materials are available through the Knight Institute website, the Archive of Teaching Materials (see below) and on your section's Canvas site.
- Knight Archive of Teaching Materials: sample syllabi, assignments, and exercises.
Hard-copy archives of past syllabi are available to Cornell instructors in M101 McGraw Hall. A web-based archive of teaching materials created by Cornell instructors is accessible online. These materials have won Knight Institute prizes. Use the link "Archive of Teaching Materials" at the Knight Institute's home page to access this site (<http://knight.as.cornell.edu/archive-teaching-materials>). All prize-winning materials are also archived in hard copy in the Knight Institute Office in McGraw M101.

A note on required reading: We may not spend significant class time discussing assigned reading directly. However, class discussion proceeds on the assumption that the readings provide a common framework for conversation and exchange, a common language for assessing one another's work, a source of coherence in a diverse program. Moreover, we expect that these readings will shape your written assignments and the teaching practices you describe in your rationales.

SEMESTER AT A GLANCE

WEEK 1

WEEK OF
JUNE 22

TEACHING WRITING IN A DISCIPLINE: WHAT IS IT? WHY DO IT?

You will be teaching a course that is supposed to introduce students both to the demands of writing in the university and to the thinking and writing characteristic of your particular discipline (*not* to “cover” exhaustively a topic or field of study). We begin the course by asking you to think, write, and talk about the connection between academic writing and the work of academic disciplines.

WEEK 2

WEEK OF
JUNE 29

WRITING PROCESS I: PREPARATORY WRITING & SEQUENCING A SINGLE ASSIGNMENT

Most writing is not produced in a single sitting. Experienced writers take it for granted that writing proceeds through stages. They expect to do preliminary work prior to drafting an essay/article/poem/book. Once they have drafted the piece, they expect to revise. Think about your own writing process. How do you get from an idea to a finished piece? Think about the procedures and the “order of operations” of your discipline. Are particular writing practices or microgenres—field or lab notes, interviews, close reading, descriptive sketches, journal entries—typical of the early stages of the writing process? This week, we consider how to build these practices into your writing class. How do we *teach* them?

WEEK 3

WEEK OF
JULY 6

RESPONDING TO STUDENT WRITING

Teachers have opportunities to respond to student writing in many different ways, at many different stages of the writing process. Writing to a student about a paper is a powerful way to intervene in a student's life as a writer. A conference can be just as powerful. A discussion at an early stage of a paper can sometimes do more to improve a final draft than extensive written comments. And for some students, the most memorable feedback they receive comes from peers. This week we consider kinds of interventions are most effective – what, when, where, how, and from whom?

WEEK 4

WEEK OF
JULY 13

LOOKING AT LANGUAGE: SENTENCES, PARAGRAPHS AND STYLE

All writing classes are fundamentally language classes. Disciplines are marked by particular kinds of language use. (Indeed, these *uses of language*, even more than the “topics” your students read about and discuss, are the true focus of the writing seminar.) This week, we ask you to think about language as something you want your students to understand and something you want them to use. How can teach students to be more astute producers of prose and more astute *readers* of the prose of others?

WEEK 5

WEEK OF
JULY 20

WRITING PROCESS II: SEQUENCING ASSIGNMENTS ACROSS THE COURSE

This week our focus shifts to sequences that connect one project with another. We ask you to build on the work of previous weeks to produce **a sequence of essay assignments, complete with preparatory exercises**. This may involve revising, repurposing and/or expanding on previous assignments.

WEEK 6

WEEK OF
JULY 27

ON THE BRINK OF DAY ONE

This week we focus on the semester about to begin. We will discuss a range of matters practical—appropriate activities for the first day(s) or week(s) of class—and theoretical—the place of writing in the university, in our lives, and in the lives of our students.