ENGL 259
Seminar in Composition Studies
Professor: Skinnell
Fall 2018
Section: 44694

Professor: Dr. Ryan Skinnell
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Website: http://www.RyanSkinnell.com
Office: Faculty Office Bldg. 111

Office Hours: TH 2:00-4:00pm & by appt.
Class Days/Times: TH 4:00-6:45pm
Class Location: BBC 221
Prerequisites: Classified standing or instructor consent

How—and in what limited ways—might reading and writing be made to matter in the new world that is evolving before our eyes? Is there any way to justify or explain a life spent working with—and teaching others to work with—texts? ~ Richard E. Miller, Writing at the End of the World

If we expect students to be active learners, engaged in conscious theorizing and open to being transformed, we must also approach teaching as active, committed learners and knowers.
~ Jane E. Peterson, “Valuing Teaching”

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging
Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, and assignment instructions can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for checking the messaging system through MySJSU to learn of any updates.

Engl 259 Course Description
In this course, we will study current approaches to studying and teaching writing. Specifically, we will examine perspectives about writing that inform its instruction: what writing is, how it is studied, how it is taught, how it should be taught, and whether or not it even can be taught. Our overarching goal will be to understand writing/composition as a complex, situated act in order to chart possibilities for developing and improving our work as teachers and scholars. The course will focus on situating issues associated with teaching writing in theoretical frameworks of rhetoric and composition studies, and we will discuss practical teaching issues, as well.

Required Texts
(please bring texts to class when we are discussing them)
Gary Tate, et al., A Guide to Composition Pedagogies, 2nd ed.
Eodice, Geller, and Lerner, The Meaningful Writing Project
Prendergast, Can I Use I?
Additional reading (accessible on Canvas)
Engl 259 Course Goals
1) to explore and evaluate a range of approaches to studying and teaching composition
2) to situate composition in relation to values and expectations that teachers, students, and outside influences bring to the scene of instruction
3) to engage in productive discussions about teaching and studying writing
4) to articulate theoretically informed goals and objectives for writing classrooms
5) to practice modes of academic inquiry

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Develop a portfolio of teaching materials and strategies.
2. Explain the portfolio’s function and contents.
3. Tie portfolio contents to a specific philosophy of teaching writing.
4. Tie portfolio contents to a specific synthesis of our reading this fall.

How Does This Work Contribute to Your Graduate Studies in English?
Rhetoric is one of the many disciplines that inform literary study, but this course is not about literary studies. Rather, this course asks us to develop and apply an expertise in rhetoric as we contemplate how to teach and study writing. Looking at the English graduate program learning objectives below, it is worth asking how rhetoric & writing studies is like but not like literary studies:

Department of English Graduate Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)
• Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
• Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
• Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
• Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
• Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language

Procedures
This course will be demanding. The reading load is heavy, the material is often challenging, and course requirements are substantial. During most class periods, we will discuss teaching, discuss readings and responses, do group activities, and hear presentations.

Participation
For a class like this one, much of the learning happens in class. Therefore, it is imperative that you be in class every day and participate in class activities and discussions. Class participation entails: (1) demonstrating that you’ve completed the readings/assignments, (2) contributing to class discussions, and (3) completing in-class assignments.
Please note: sometimes projects and class discussions will include material of a sensitive nature. In this course, students may encounter materials that differ from and perhaps challenge their understanding of reality, their ideas, and their beliefs. Students are encouraged to discuss issues that may arise from such material with the instructor.

Please ALSO note: If you have special needs or accommodations requests, see me as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in your forfeiture of the accommodations you may deserve.

Course Requirements and Grades
1) Teaching Portfolio (20%)
2) Online activities (20%)
3) Class Observation report (15%)
4) Presentation (15%)
5) Reading Responses (20%)
6) Class participation (10%)

Grading Policy
All work must be submitted on time. Any unexcused late work will be graded down a full letter grade for every day it is late. If there is a reason you cannot make a deadline, contact me BEFORE THE DEADLINE. You must turn in all assignments to pass the class.

Course grades will be calculated using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73% - 76%</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67% - 69%</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>63% - 66%</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>60% - 62%</td>
<td>D-</td>
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<tr>
<td>0% - 59%</td>
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University Policies
For information regarding the following policies, please see syllabus information web page at: http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo

- General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student
- Course Requirements and Assignments
- Attendance and Participation
- Accommodation to Students’ Religious Holidays
- Dropping and Adding
- Academic integrity
- Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material
- Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
- Student Technology Resources
- SJSU Peer Connections
- SJSU Writing Center
- SJSU Counseling & Psychological Services
Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Because this is a 4-unit course, students can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancement:

- collateral readings
- higher level critical thinking exercises
- presentation technologies
- field experience

Assignments
Teaching Portfolio
The major project in this class will be a teaching portfolio. It will include: (1) a teaching philosophy, (2) a teaching CV, (3) a writing syllabus (4) and a “meaningful writing project”.

Online activities
Online activities include two reflection essays submitted on Canvas—one at the beginning of the semester, and one at the end—and a number of peer review activities using Eli Review. These are variations of activities SJSU’s first-year students do.

FYC Observation
You will visit an experienced writing program instructor’s class and produce a short (1-2 page) report describing what you learned (e.g., a teaching approach, activity idea, classroom organization/management strategy, etc.). You are strongly encouraged to arrange a follow-up meeting with the instructor. Your report will be due to me at the end of October, and you will also be expected to send a copy to the instruction for his/her records.

Presentation
Each of you will choose one chapter from Tate, et al.’s *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* to present to the class. Your presentation *must* include a one-page handout briefly outlining the chapter & its relevance to the class. You must also include citations to possible additional sources on the pedagogy. Your presentation should be approximately 12-15 minutes long.

Reading Responses
Members of the class are expected to write responses to 5 readings. Responses should not simply summarize or repeat points raised in the readings or class, but should build upon those points to advance our discussion. You are welcome to discuss your reaction to the reading (liked or disliked, agreed or disagreed, etc., and why), an observation for how it enlightens the work of our class, or the relationship of a reading to your own thoughts about teaching.

Responses should be short (300-600 words is fine), and you will submit them on Canvas. I will evaluate them based on evidence that you have read the assigned readings and have attempted to expand upon the issues raised in a thoughtful way. I will not grade papers based on format, usage, or grammar, but I do appreciate reading error-free prose.

*Writing is physical work. It’s sweaty work. You just can’t will yourself to become a good writer. You really have to work at it.* ~ Will Haygood
**Tentative Course Calendar (subject to change)**

**READINGS** listed should be read **BEFORE** class

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available on Canvas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
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</table>
| 1    | Aug 23| Introduction to the course / Romance (and) Writing  
Literacy narrative(s)  
What are we doing? Why are we doing it? |
| 2    | Aug 30| Learning what we already think  
**DUE:** Literacy Narrative  
**Read:** Ball and Loewe*  
Chapter: “America is Facing a Literacy Crisis” (Jacob Babb)  
Chapter: “First-Year Composition Prepares Students for Academic Writing” (Tyler Branson)  
Chapter: “You Can Learn to Write in General” (Elizabeth Wardle)  
Chapter: “Some People are Just Born Good Writers” (Jill Parrott) |
| 3    | Sept 6| That’s a terrible idea!  
**DUE:** Reading Response #1  
**Read:** Ball and Loewe*  
Chapter: “The More Writing Process, the Better” (Jimmy Butts)  
Chapter: “Strunk and White Set the Standard” (Laura Lisabeth)  
Chapter: “Leave Yourself Out of Your Writing” (Rodrigo Joseph Rodríguez)  
Chapter: “Teaching Grammar Improves Writing” (Patricia A. Dunn)  
Chapter: “Grammar Should be Taught Separately as Rules to Learn” (Muriel Harris) |
| 4    | Sept 13| If you build it, they will come  
**Read:** Tate, et al. (pp. 1-19)  
Crowley, The Invention of Freshman English*  
Fulkerson, Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century*  
Ball and Loewe*  
Chapter: “Anyone Can Teach Writing” (Seth Kahn) |
| 5    | Sept 20| Rhetrickery  
**Read:** Parker, Where Do English Departments Come From?!*  
Corder, Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love*  
Powell, Learning (Teaching) to Teach (Learn)* |
| 6    | Sept 27| Let’s not forget what we’ve forgotten  
**DUE:** Reading Response #2  
**Read** Royster, When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own*  
Bloom, Freshman Composition as a Middle Class Enterprise*  
Rose, Language of Exclusion* |
| Date | Oct 4 | Let’s not forget II

**Read:** Matsuda, Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity*
Williams, Phenomenology of Error*
Hartwell, Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar*
Ball and Loewe*
Chapter: “Official American English is Best” (Steven Alvarez)

| Date | Oct 11 | What are we doing, and why are we doing it?

Introduce teaching portfolio
**Read:** Eodice, Geller, & Lerner, Chs. 1-3
Brooke, Underlife and Writing Instruction*

| Date | Oct 18 | I see we’re still doing whatever it is that we are doing

**DUE:** Reading Response #3
**Read:** Eodice, Geller, & Lerner, Chs. 4-6
Smith, The Genre of the End Comment*

| Date | Oct 25 | Responding to Students

Guest Speaker: Melissa Meeks

**Read:** Wiliam, “The Secret of Effective Feedback”*
Straub, “Responding—Really Responding—To Other Students’ Writing”*
Meeks, “Givers Gain Teaching Philosophy”*
Ball and Loewe*
Chapter: Chapter: “When Responding to Student Writing, More is Better” (Muriel Harris)
Chapter: “Student Writing Must be Graded by the Teacher” (Christopher R. Friend)

| Date | Nov 1 | I see you made a mistake

**PORTFOLIO WORKSHOP (post drafts of portfolio materials)**

**DUE:** Reading Response #4
**DUE:** ELI Review activities
**Read:** Lunsford and Lunsford, Mistakes Are a Fact of Life*
Ferris and Roberts, Error Feedback in L2 Writing Classes*
Robillard, We Won’t Get Fooled Again*
Ball and Loewe*
Chapter: “Plagiarism Deserves to be Punished” (Jennifer A. Mott-Smith)

| Date | Nov 8 | Politics in the Classroom

**DUE:** ELI Review activities
**Read:** Berlin, Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class*
Brodkey, Making a Federal Case Out of Difference*
Prendergast, *Can I Use I?* (pg. 1-63)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 Nov 15</td>
<td>Do we know anything yet?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>DUE:</strong> ELI Review activities</td>
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<td><strong>DUE:</strong> Reading Response #5</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Read:</strong> hooks, Engaged Pedagogy*</td>
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<td>Vitanza, Three (Counter)Theses*</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prendergast, <em>Can I Use I?</em> (pg. 64-130)</td>
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<td>14 Nov 22</td>
<td><strong>THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS</strong></td>
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<td>15 Nov 29</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
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<td>16 Dec 6</td>
<td>CLASS OBSERVATIONS DUE</td>
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<td>Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td><strong>TEACHING PORTFOLIOS DUE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FINAL REFLECTION DUE</strong></td>
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<td><strong>FINAL EXAM (2:45-5:00pm)</strong></td>
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I will be available during Finals Week to discuss the course, grades, or anything else. Feel free to email me to make an appointment.

*it was... ah, words can’t describe!*  

*are you sure? that’s what they do*  

Toothpaste For Dinner.com
1. Basic Writing, Mutnick and Lamos

2. Collaborative Writing, Howard and Kennedy

3. Community-Engaged, Julier, Livingston, and Goldblatt

4. Critical, George

5. Cultural Studies, George, Trimbur and Lockridge

6. Expressive, Burnham and Powell

7. Feminist, Micciche

8. Genre, Devitt

9. Literature and Writing, Farris

10. New Media, Brooke

11. Online and Hybrid, Hewett

12. Process, Anson

13. Researched Writing, Howard and Jamieson

14. Second Language Writing, Matsuda and Hammill

15. Writing Across the Curriculum, Thaiss and McLeod

16. Writing Center, Lerner

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