

ENG 247  
Teaching Writing: Theory and Practice (1 credit, WRIT)  
Spring 2004

Dr. Rebecca Taylor  
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Office Hours: M 2:30-4:30, Th 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

### *Course Description*

This course introduces contemporary theories and practices of writing instruction to prospective teachers; our particular focus is on the middle and high school levels. We'll talk and read extensively about rhetorical approaches to teaching writing; the writing process; literacy, community, and diversity issues in the writing classroom; and evaluation and assessment. This course asks you to *learn* and *do*--so we'll practice a variety of classroom strategies, including peer response, in-class invention, collaborative writing, and journaling. Perhaps most importantly, ENG 247 invites future teachers to reflect upon what it means to do this kind of work. We'll consider more than the "how's" of teaching writing; we will think also about the "why's." Why become a teacher of writing? Why spend so much time teaching students to write? What does our writing help us see/ know/ realize/ do in the world? Why should good teachers of writing also strive to be good writers themselves?

### *The WRIT or "W" Course*

This is one of your three required WRIT (writing intensive) courses at Gustavus. As such, you can expect to write often, formally and informally, and to revise each formal assignment before it's graded. Peer response is a major component, and you'll consider the comments of peers *and* professor when you revise. In addition to the formal writing assignments described in the syllabus, you'll also do a good bit of informal writing, both in and out of class. All work should be documented according to MLA style as discussed in Andrea Lunsford's *Everyday Writer*.

### *Required Texts*

- Kirby and Liner, *Inside Out: Developmental Strategies for Teaching Writing* (third edition)
- Williams, *Preparing to Teach Writing: Research, Theory, and Practice* (third edition)
- Andrea Lunsford's *Everyday Writer*
- Handouts and library reserve materials as needed

### *Evaluation*

**A Writer's Self-Portrait (15%):** This 4-5 page personal essay helps us understand how you view yourself as a writer. You might describe and analyze your own writing process, share a particular moment from your writing history, or discuss your own strengths and challenges as a writer.

**Style Analysis Exercise (10%):** This writing assignment requires you to study your Self-Portrait in order to describe your use of voice, syntax, vocabulary, etc.

**Analysis of a Classroom Practice (20%):** This 4-6 page analytical essay requires you to apply one or more theories of writing instruction (material from course readings) to your observation of or reflections on an actual classroom practice.

**Case Study of a Writer (20%):** Early in the semester, each student will identify a writer ("research subject") to observe and interview. You'll then draft a case study of that writer. Case studies will describe the writer's cultural and educational context and analyze the writer's approach to one specific writing task.

**Reading Journal (15%):** There will be two kinds of journal entries. First, in preparation for every Tuesday class meeting, select one reading (due that Tuesday as well) and summarize the reading briefly. Next, respond to the reading. Here your goal is to tie theories of writing pedagogy to real world experience. For instance, notebook entries could make connections between this course and EDU courses, tutoring experiences, or your own learning experiences as a student. Each Tuesday entry should be 1-2 pages typed (single-spaced). On Thursdays, we'll use the first or last 20-30 minutes of class for in-class writing in the journal. I'll ask you to respond informally to class discussion issues, readings, or questions that others have raised. We'll keep this journal through week seven only. I will collect and respond to journals twice this term.

**Collaborative Teaching Demonstration (10%):** Working in groups of three, design a writing activity for the classroom and demonstrate that activity. Teaching demonstrations should be approximately 15-20 minutes long. Groups will also submit a one page rationale for the activity.

**Participation and Preparation (10%):** Your P&P grade is based on several criteria: 1) Reading material thoroughly and preparing questions for class as needed; 2) rough drafts turned in on time; 3) peer response participation; 4) daily preparation for small and large group activities; 5) participation in class discussion.

### ***Policies and Resources***

#### **Attendance and Late Papers**

The collaborative nature of many assignments and activities makes it impossible for students to "make up" work following an absence. Consider these policies carefully:

1. I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences. I expect your full participation throughout the course; excessive absences (beyond two class meetings) will result in a lower course grade.
2. If you do not complete a rough draft on time, I reserve the right not to comment on that rough draft. Moreover, since peer response workshops are scheduled regularly throughout the semester, if you do not bring rough drafts on designated due dates, you cannot receive credit for participating in peer response.
3. Your work will lose one third of a letter grade for every day that a writing assignment is late. After three days, I will not accept the assignment. If your work must be late due to medical or family emergency, and you discuss that emergency with me, you should expect to turn in your work as soon as you return to class after your absence (no penalty).

#### ***Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty***

Using the ideas and/or words of another writer and representing them as your own is plagiarism. I will spend time during class helping you learn to balance the voices in your papers and to quote, paraphrase, and summarize other writers responsibly. Ultimately, though, it is your responsibility to give credit to those whose ideas and language you utilize when you write. Plagiarism is a very serious offense within the scholarly community, and the college does not permit it. In this class, *documented cases of plagiarism can result in failure of the course*. Note also that I will submit copies of plagiarized work on final drafts of formal papers to the Dean's office. The following statement indicates your understanding of the Gustavus Honor Code and its relationship to plagiarism. Please include the statement in full and sign below it on every graded (final draft) paper: "On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, nor tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work."

## **The Writing Center**

At the Writing Center, peer tutors can help you to clarify your thinking, structure your papers, develop evidence, hone your style, and practice self-editing skills. The Writing Center is not a proofreading service. Call x6027 for hours or visit the Writing Center web site:  
<http://www.gac.edu/oncampus/writingcenter>

English 247 Calendar: Subject to change. Always.

### **Week One: A Rhetorical Perspective**

2/10 Introduction to the course: Why write? Why teach writing?  
Mapping Activity: How did you get here?

2/12 Williams (Ch 1) What the heck is rhetoric?  
In class journal

### **Week Two: What do we value?**

2/17 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 1, 2, and 9)  
What the heck is "good writing?"  
A vocabulary for the course: global issues and local issues

2/19 Williams (Ch. 2)  
Why does rhetorical theory matter?  
Discuss writing assignment one  
In class journal

### **Week Three: So how do we do this?**

2/24 Williams (Ch. 3)  
What are "best practices" in teaching writing?

2/26 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 3,4), Calkins (handout)  
Best practices and younger students  
In class journal

### **Week Four: Writing Workshop**

3/2 Williams (Ch. 4), Kirby and Liner (Ch. 8)  
Collaboration and peer response workshops  
Journal collection one (bring all entries to date)  
Activity: modeling peer response; please bring three copies of your last journal entry.

3/4 Writing workshop: rough draft of assignment one due for peer response (three copies)

### **Week Five: What is revision?**

3/9 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 10)  
Revision strategies for multiple teaching contexts  
Writing Center field trip

3/11 Assignment one due; discuss assignment two  
Discussion: good sentences don't sit still  
Activity: the living sentence

### **Week Six: Teaching at the Sentence Level**

3/16 Williams (Ch. 6), handout (TBA)  
What about grammar?

- 3/18 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 6), Williams (Ch. 7)  
Style, voice, and dialect issues  
In class journal  
Assignment two due (style analysis exercise)

**Week Seven: Writing and Identity**

- 3/23 Mellix, Earley (handout)  
Understanding students' home literacy practices  
Introduce assignment three (critical paper)  
Journal collection two (all entries since last collection)  
3/25 No class (Taylor presents at CCCC)—work on critical paper

**Week Eight: The Politics of Writing Instruction**

- 3/30 Delpit, "Students' Right to their Own Language" (handouts); Kirby and Liner (Ch. 7)  
Teacher and student identity issues in the writing classroom  
Troubleshooting: critical paper  
Discuss teaching demonstrations

- 4/1 Draft one of critical paper due  
Peer response (bring three copies)

**Easter Recess/ Spring Break**

**Week Nine: What "English teachers" teach**

- 4/13 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 11, 12)  
Creative writing activities  
4/15 Kirby and Liner (Ch. 13)  
Invention activities  
Critical paper due

**Week Ten: Creative Classroom Strategies**

- 4/20 Teaching demonstrations: groups one and two  
4/22 Teaching demonstrations: groups three and four

**Week Eleven: Inviting Students to Write**

- 4/27 Williams (Ch. 9)  
Writing assignments for your students  
4/29 Williams (Ch. 10); Kirby and Liner (Ch. 14) and handout?  
respond, evaluate, assess, grade

**Week Twelve: Reading and Responding to Student Writing**

- 5/4 Handouts (Atwell on conferencing and Community of Writers)  
Conferencing strategies  
Discuss assignment four (case study)  
5/6 Working with student writing

**Week Thirteen: Fieldwork and Conferences**

- 5/11 Rough drafts of case study due for peer response  
5/13 No class: schedule conference with Dr. Taylor

**Week Fourteen: Conclusion**

- 5/18 Course evaluations; case studies due for graduating seniors  
Assignment Four Due: Exam day by 5:00 p.m.

English 247  
Teaching Writing: Theory and Practice  
Spring, 2004  
Dr. Rebecca G. Taylor  
Course Evaluation

1. What led you to enroll in this course? How does the course fit in with your program of study, major, or licensure requirements?
2. List the required Communication Arts/ Literature Teaching Major courses or Elementary Education courses that you completed prior to Spring, 2004. Comment on your own preparation for English 247. Were you ready? Why/ why not?
3. How well did the course meet your expectations and reasons for enrolling? Explain.
4. Comment on the expectations for the course (amount of reading, writing, speaking activities, small group assignments, etc.). Were the expectations appropriate for a level two English course that carries "W" credit? How did the requirements for this course compare with those of any other level two course that you've taken?
5. How well did the instructor meet her responsibilities (meeting class, leading discussion, preparing materials, sharing sample student essays, selecting texts, responding to papers, providing appropriate support and mentoring, etc.)? Comment.

6. What recommendations would you have for reading assignments in this course for the future? What texts should be eliminated? What texts should be kept?
7. What recommendations would you have for writing assignments in this course in the future? What assignments should be eliminated? What assignments should be kept and / or revised?
8. What is the most important thing that you learned about teaching writing this term?
9. What is the most important thing that you learned about yourself as a writer or your own writing this term?
10. Overall, respond to the effectiveness of this professor. What are her strengths? How can she improve?

**ENG 256: Reading and Writing Essays (1 credit, WRIT)**  
Fall 2004

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Taylor

Phone: x7392

Office Hours: 9:30-9:50, 10:30-12:00 M, W (and by appointment)

Class Location: VH 301

Email: [rtaylor@gac.edu](mailto:rtaylor@gac.edu)

Office: 315 Vickner

**Course Description**

The essay is hard to pin down. It's slippery. But it seems to be enjoying tremendous popularity lately. What makes this the age of the essay? Why do contemporary readers hunger for this genre? Remember that we toss the word "essay" around rather casually in academic settings, using it to invoke prose forms from "reports" to "articles" to "papers." If, as I will argue, none of these are *real* essays, then what is an essay? English 256 invites you to read, describe, analyze, and create the elusive genre known as the essay. We'll first review its history and criticism, and then we'll study contemporary examples, including feminist and multicultural challenges to the essay tradition.

**The WRIT Course**

ENG 256 is a WRIT course. As such, you can expect to write often and revise your formal work before that work is graded. Each writer will submit a final portfolio of essays at the end of the course. Writers will also practice a variety of narrative and expository techniques in more informal ways. Finally, English 256 is a workshop, which means that all writers will discuss their formal essays with other class members regularly. Your portfolio must be complete--with drafts of all essays and the final cover letter--in order for you to pass this course. All work should be documented according to MLA style. Finally, please submit all drafts of your work both electronically and on paper; this facilitates our whole-class workshop method.

**Required Texts (all available at the Bookmark)**

- PACKET: Reading and Writing Essays
- Robert Atwan, *Best American Essays*
- Bill Roorbach, *Writing Life Stories*
- Optional: Andrea Lunsford's *Everyday Writer* or other style manual

**Evaluation**

**Formal Portfolio (60%):** A portfolio is a collection of your best work, fully revised and edited, accompanied by a self-reflective cover letter. That letter introduces readers to your work, describes the revisions you have made throughout the semester, and analyzes the fruits of your labor. I'll evaluate the portfolio at the end of the course. The portfolio will contain rough and final drafts of three formal essays. I'm not going to give you "assignments" or "sample topics." Instead, I offer these guidelines:

- Vary essays in length. One should be "small," one ought to be "medium," and one should be "large." Your portfolio should contain approximately 20-24 pages of revised and polished prose, including the cover letter.
- Vary them in perspective. At least one should include the viewpoints of other writers. You can read this as a "research" component, but once you read lots of essays, you'll understand quickly that "research" means something *really* interesting and varied in this genre.
- Vary them in style. Experiment at least once with a different point of view or voice, or maybe try to work with sentence variety. I'd love to see an essay in the portfolio that makes me say, "Geneva Q. Gustie wrote *that*? Wow. I had no idea."

**Informal Writing Exercises (20%):** Informal writing exercises focus your attention on particular rhetorical and stylistic techniques, and I encourage you to experiment with those techniques! Each week, you'll prepare one informal exercise (it will either be one designed by yours truly or one that comes directly from Bill Roorbach's *Writing Life Stories*). You may find that your exercises eventually become rough drafts of essays. Each exercise is worth ten points; at the end of the semester, your exercise average will be worth 20% of your final grade.

**Book Review and Presentation (15%):** Select one essayist--someone we've read in class or someone you already know and love--and read and review one of his/her book-length collections. Draft a short (2-3 pages) review of that book; prepare that review so that it is appropriate for a specific publication (i.e. *Rolling Stone* or *The New Yorker*). Then prepare an oral presentation that paints a portrait of this writer as "a mind at work."

**Participation and Preparation (5%):** Your P&P grade is based on several criteria: 1) Rough drafts turned in on time; 2) peer response and workshop participation; 3) daily preparation for small and large group activities--including distribution of draft copies for all members of the class when your work is "up" for discussion; 4) class preparation and careful reading; and 5) small group discussion leadership.

### Policies and Resources

**Attendance and Late Papers:** The collaborative nature of many assignments and activities makes it impossible for students to "make up" work following an absence. Consider these policies carefully:

1. Your final grade will lower by one point for every class *hour* missed over four. I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences. Please do not ask me to do so.
2. Late rough drafts are a problem. If you cannot complete a rough draft on time, I reserve the right not to comment on that rough draft. Likewise, you will forfeit your chance for peer response or whole group workshop.
3. You will lose one point for every day that an informal writing exercise is late. After three days, I will not accept the assignment. If your work must be late due to medical or family emergency, and you discuss that emergency with me, please turn in your work as soon as you return to class after your absence (no penalty).
4. You can "take a late" on one of your informal writing assignments OR one rough draft of a formal essay one time, no penalty. On the due date, simply note "take a late" and the date you propose to turn in the work. Remember: if you take a late on a rough draft, you forfeit the chance for peer response--and my feedback will certainly be late, too.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** Using the ideas and/or words of another writer and representing them as your own is plagiarism. We will devote some time to discussing the conventions for citing, paraphrasing, and evoking other writers in creative nonfiction. Plagiarism is a very serious offense within the scholarly community, and the college does not permit it. In this class, *documented cases of plagiarism can result in failure of the course*. Note also that I will submit copies of plagiarized work on final drafts of formal papers to the Dean's office.

In addition, Gustavus Adolphus College has adopted an Honor Code. Please include the following statement indicating your understanding of the Gustavus Honor Code when you submit your final portfolio: "On my honor, I pledge that I have not given, received, nor tolerated others' use of unauthorized aid in completing this work."

**Resources for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a physical disability, a learning disability, or another condition that requires accommodations, please let me know during the first week of class so that your learning needs may be met appropriately. Provide documentation to the Advising Center.



## The Writing Center

At the Writing Center, peer tutors can help you to clarify your thinking, structure your papers, develop evidence, hone your style, and practice self-editing skills. The Writing Center is not a proofreading service. Call x6027 for hours or visit the Writing Center web site:  
<http://www.gac.edu/oncampus/writingcenter/>

### English 256 Calendar

Dates are subject to change. P= selection in packet A= selection in Atwan's book R=Roorbach

\*Note: When your writing is up for workshop, please send your essay to all class members via email at least 48 hours prior to the workshop session.

#### Meet the essay.

Th 9/9 Introduction: Virginia Woolf meets *The Onion*  
essays as political action

#### Come a little closer—the essay won't bite.

T 9/14 A: Introduction and Prologue (1-32); handout: Hardison  
exercise one due

Th 9/16 R: Chapter 1 (Getting Started); A: Gates, Aldrich, McClanahan  
--GROUP ONE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Tell your story.

T 9/21 P: Sanders, Murray; Handouts: Hampl ("Red Sky in the Morning" and "Memory and Imagination"); R: Chapter 2 (Memory)  
exercise two due

Th 9/23 A: McPhee, Hodgman; P: Mellix  
--GROUP TWO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Set the scene.

T 9/28 A: Kincaid, Lopez; R: Chapter 3 (Scenemaking)  
exercise three due

Th 9/30 P: Ozick, Sommers; introduction to peer response  
--GROUP THREE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### Get some feedback.

T 10/5 No class--Nobel Conference

Th 10/7 rough drafts essay #1 due for peer response; exercise four due

**Make important distinctions.**

T 10/ 12 A: Tan, Talese, Sanders; R: Chapter 5 (Characters and Character)  
exercise five due

Th 10/14 A: Dillard, Grealey, Updike

**Presentations and Workshop**

T 10/19 Roorbach Chapter 8; presentations 1-5 due with book reviews

Th 10/21 Presentations 6-10 due with book reviews

T 10/26 No class—fall break

Th 10/28 Rough drafts of essay #2 due for peer response

**Think about synthesizing information.**

T 11/2 A: Rushdy, Dershowitz; R: Chapter 7 (Finding the Facts)

--GROUP FOUR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

exercise six due

Th 11/4 R: Chapter 4 (Big Ideas)

Introduction to Writer's Workshop

**Learn to argue.**

T 11/9 A: Halberstam, Conroy  
presentations 11-15 due with book reviews

Th 11/11 P: Bridwell-Bowles; R: Chapters 9 and 10 (Saying It Right and Building a Building)  
exercise seven due

**Argue with passion.**

T 11/16 P: Royster, Walker  
--GROUP FIVE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Th 11/18 R: Chapters 8 and 11 (Metaphor and Meaning and Reaching Readers)  
exercise eight due (write in class)

**The early writer catches some comments.**

T 11/23 WORKSHOP

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Th 11/25 No class: Thanksgiving Recess

T 11/30 WORKSHOP

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Th 12/2 WORKSHOP  
exercise nine due (Roorbach)

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T 12/7 WORKSHOP

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Th 12/9 WORKSHOP

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**Did we miss anything?**

T 12/14 Portfolio Workshop (small group) and course evaluations  
exercise 10 due (Roorbach)

**EXAM DAY** Final portfolios due by noon.



## Course Evaluation

1. What led you to enroll in this course (i.e., general education requirements, interest in subject)?
2. How well did the content of the course meet your expectations and reasons for enrolling? Explain.
3. Comment on the expectations for the course (amount and nature of writing assignments, readings, speaking activities, etc.). Were the expectations appropriate for a second level writing course? How much time did this course require compared with other courses?
4. How well did the instructor meet her responsibilities (meeting class, leading discussion and setting up small groups, responding to papers, conferencing with students, and so on)? Comment.

5. What recommendations would you have for writing assignments and/ or oral presentation assignments in this course for the future? Please comment on both formal essays and informal exercises.
6. What recommendations do you have for future reading assignments in this course? Which readings should be eliminated? Which readings should be kept? What kinds of readings would you like to see added?
7. Comment upon the use of the portfolio assessment system and feedback method in the course. How useful did you find peer response? Whole class workshops? Conferences with the professor?

8. Write an overall evaluation of this course: What are its strengths? Where can it improve?

9. Write an overall evaluation of the instructor: What are her strengths? Where can she improve?