

CL 360/CW300

Teaching Reading and Composition: Theorizing ¹ One's Practice

Course Goals: This 2-unit seminar is designed to help Comp Lit GSIs approach with confidence the task of teaching courses in the University's Reading and Composition requirement as offered in CL 1A and 1B, as well as in other courses. The work we will do is predicated on the notion that confidence comes from three sources:

- 1) familiarity with core ideas about how people learn to read and write at the college level
- 2) access to a repertoire of practices and strategies through which teaching and learning can be organized
- 3) opportunity to discuss one's teaching practice with others, to reflect upon one's own teacherly choices, and to develop a cohesive, effective teaching practice

Required Texts: Readings will be available on our class bSpace site or as handouts. Our readings come from a range of sources including foundational pieces from the *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, and *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*, as well as pragmatic pieces from *Strategies for Teaching First-Year Composition*, *A Teaching Subject*, *Teaching Composition: Background Readings 3rd ed.*, and *Scenarios for Teaching Writing*, and finally some increasingly relevant articles culled from the *Journal of Second Language Writing*. Some theory, some praxis, but all grounded in the work you're doing in R&C. An essential supplement to the course reader is the collection of student writing—some gathered from past students, and much collected from your present students. We will all learn a lot from those texts.

Course Projects: Seminar participants will work on two projects.

- 1) You will develop a detailed plan for one unit. Here, we'll define a unit as a 2-4 week slice of an R&C course during which a particular book (or other text) is being considered and during which all the in-class and out-of-class assignments are focused on reading and writing related to that text. We'll discuss unit plans and look at some examples. They offer an incomparable opportunity to reflect upon the pedagogical choices you make, and they give you a great snapshot of your teaching practice.
- 2) You will develop a syllabus for an R&C section that you'd like to teach, along with a rationale for your design. We'll discuss syllabus design at length in this seminar, and we'll look at examples.

Provisionally, the unit plan will be due around the 9th week, and the final version of the syllabus will be due at the end of the semester, and, ideally, shown at an RRR-week exhibition with guests from the Comp Lit faculty.

Workload: The university's expectation is that a 2-unit course will require 2-3 hours of preparation a week. Some of your preparation for this seminar will be to observe—and reflect upon—your teaching and your students' work, and then to organize those reflections in a way that you can meaningfully discuss them with your colleagues in the seminar. Some of your preparation will be to do the assigned readings. Some of your time will be devoted to creating the two required projects.

Expectations: I expect that you will attend regularly, do the readings, prepare for class discussions, and contribute meaningfully to the seminar every week.

Grading Criteria: This seminar is offered on a S/U basis, rather than a number-grade basis. I will, however, assign relative weights to the quality of your work on various elements of the seminar. Your unit

¹ "Theory" has developed an unsavory reputation among graduate students required to take a pedagogy course as preparation for an appointment to teach composition. Not to worry; CL students aren't alone in this attitude, nor are Berkeley GSIs. Articles have been written about theory avoidance in GSI prep courses. (I won't ask you to read them!) For this course, I would like to propose that we engage in *theorizing*. That is, for every pedagogical approach we consider, every assignment we design, lesson we create, syllabus we craft, etc., we ask WHY? Why ask our R&C students to do x instead of y? What ideas about how students learn lie behind each pedagogical choice? Where do our ideas come from? Are they rooted in something we've experienced? Observed? Been told? Read about? Can we justify these ideas? Has anybody else had them before us, and does that matter? Theorizing: it's all about the *why*.

plan will account for 35% of my assessment, your R&C syllabus will account for 35%, and your conscientious, creative preparation for seminar discussions will account for the remaining 30%

Topics: Please note that the sequence of topics may change in order to accommodate your interests and exigencies as your semester in R&C unfolds, and to accommodate the schedules of our guest CL experts. Other topics may be added, pursuant to your request.

Week 1:

Introductions and logistics
Your goals for the course

Week 2:

Who are our students and what do they want?

Readings for today:

“Letter to Maggie” (James Slevin)

Excerpt from *Clueless in Academe* (Gerald Graff)

“Misreadings, Miswritings, Misunderstandings” (David Bartholomae)

[Alternatively, depending on my sense of your interests: “Inventing the University” (David Bartholomae)]

Pedagogy-in-progress issues (Each week we’ll set aside time to discuss issues that have arisen in your R&C classrooms. The goal here is to connect your experiences in your classroom with the work of the seminar, as well as to collaboratively problem-solve, where appropriate.)

Week 3:

Who are our students (Part 2)?

Readings for today:

Samples of students’ essays (I’ll provide this sample set from my archives. Later I’ll ask you to bring in samples of your own students’ work for us to consider. We’ll discuss the protocol for securing students’ permission for this.)

Our project for today: Appraise the writing of incoming R&C students, generalizing proficiency levels, and making preliminary assessments of students’ needs

What should we be teaching?

Readings for today:

“The R&C Requirement at UC Berkeley” (Original version, 1989, D. McQuade; 2010-11 revision, R&C Committee.)

Our project for today: Strategize approaches for working with tensions between students’ preparation levels and course goals, between our professional expertise and R&C goals

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 4:

What is the place of R&C in the academy?

Reading for today:

“The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University”: (Mike Rose)

What does Comp Lit want its R&C instruction to accomplish? (Comp Lit Expert Guest)

Our projects for today: (1) Continue discussion begun last week in light of this week’s reading and Comp Lit Expert Guest’s comments, and (2) Begin “Misreadings” exercise: articulating a rationale for choosing a text, laying the theoretical groundwork for a unit plan

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 5:

Teaching writing as a process: Some theory and an application

Readings for today:

“Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers” (Nancy Sommers)

“Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language” (Mike Rose)

“Fun?” (Lex Runciman)

Our projects for today: (1) Building and sequencing writing assignments, and (2) Present ‘Misreadings’ exercise result

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 6:

Teaching writing as a process (Part 2): Responding to students’ writing

Readings for today will be selected from among the following pieces, according to your needs and teaching styles:

“Guidelines for Responding to Student Writing” (Richard Straub)

“Writing Comments on Students’ Papers” (John Bean)

“Responding to Student Writing (Edward White)

“Using Group Conferences to Respond to Essays in Progress” (Susan K. Miller)

“One Dimension of Response to Student writing: How Students Construct Their Critics”
(Carol Rutz)

“Another Kind of Student-teacher Talk: Conversational Responding and Revising” (Seth Kahn)

Our project for today: Work with drafts written by selected R1A/R1B students from your classes (if available)

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 7:

What’s useful to know about theories of reading?

Reading for today:

“The Role of the Reader’s Schema in Comprehension, Learning, and Memory” (R.C. Anderson)

Schema Activation and Schema Acquisition” (John D. Bransford)

Unit plans from past CL 360 seminar participants

Our projects for today: (1) Layer a reading assignment for a CL R&C course using schema theory, and (2) Check in on your unit plan

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 8:

Teaching reading for Comp Lit: How to teach techniques for close reading (Comp Lit Expert Guest)

Catch up on our discussion of the readings (if necessary)

Our project for today: Continue working collaboratively on assignment-layering elements your unit plan, incorporating close reading techniques

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 9:

Your Unit Plan Presentations

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 10:

Addressing language-use issues: Is focusing on form the same as teaching grammar?

Readings for today will be selected from among the following pieces, according to the demographics of your R&C section and your needs:

“Responding to Errors in [second-language] Student Writing” and

“Beyond Error Correction: Teaching Grammar and Self-editing Strategies to L2 Writers”

(Dana Ferris)

“L2 Composing Strategies and Perceptions” (Ilona Leki)

Second Language Writing and Post-process Pedagogy: Selections from the *Journal of Second Language Writing*

Chapters from *Rhetorical Grammar* (Martha Kolln)

Sample R&C student writing

Unit plan revisited: Fitting grammar- and syntax-work into your unit plan

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 11:

Crafting the Research Component of R1B: Teaching the process not assigning the product

(Guest librarian from the Teaching Library)

Saying the P-word: Teaching and supporting academic honesty

Readings for today:

“Preventing Academic Misconduct” in Teaching Guide for Graduate Student Instructors (GSI

Teaching and Resource Center)

Reviewing “Fostering Academic Integrity” (Online Ethics Course for GSIs)

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 12:

Syllabus Design

Readings for today:

“Syllabus Design: (Barbara Gross Davis)

On Syllabi (Victor Villanueva)

Sample syllabi

Our project for today: Apply the sensibility and rationale of your unit plan to your proto-syllabus

Week 13:

Assessment: Responding to students’ final drafts

Grading: Developing a rubric for assigning grades and using it as a teaching tool

Readings for today:

“Developing Rubrics for Instruction and Evaluation” (Chris Anson and Deanna Dannels)

“Contexts and Criteria for Evaluating Student Writing” (Jane Hindman)

Sample rubrics

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

YOUR DRAFT OF YOUR SYLLABUS IS DUE TO ME ON MONDAY OF WEEK 14

MY RESPONSES ARE DUE BACK TO YOU BY FRIDAY OF WEEK 14

Week 14:

: **Syllabus Design (Part 2):** Collaborative work on Draft 2 of your syllabi (Aka: Articulating—and perhaps justifying—the theories behind your pedagogical decisions)

Pedagogy-in-progress issues

Week 15

RRR Week Syllabus Exhibit (with invited Comp Lit faculty) [tentative]

FINAL VERSION OF YOUR SYLLABUS IS DUE TO ME ON THE LAST DAY OF THE SEMESTER

An important word about Class Management:

Topics in class management will quite likely arise for you throughout the semester, typically as an outgrowth of the Pedagogy-in-Progress segment of each seminar meeting. A full discussion of these topics, supported by readings, is essential to our course. However, rather than scheduling them as a bloc to be considered on a pre-ordained day, it fits my pedagogy and teaching style to address them in small segments throughout the semester, dictated by your week-to-week experiences in your R&C classes. My experience tells me that we'll need to consider the following topics, and we'll add others as your experiences direct us.

Class discussions: Making them organized, focused, and productive, but not overdetermined
Getting the ball rolling; asking the right questions; stepping out of the center of discussions

Group work: Organizing for results, monitoring and intervening gracefully

Class management and student issues: Addressing proficiency imbalances in a class; equalizing participation structures, dealing with problems, promoting a respectful and productive class culture

Readings to support these topics will be selected from among the following pieces, with my strategic additions as your needs and teacherly concerns dictate:

Sections from

Tools for Teaching (Barbara Gross Davis)

Engaging Ideas (John Bean)

Asian Students' Classroom Communication Patterns in U.S. Universities (Jun Liu)

and

“Approaches to Productive Peer Review” (Fiona Paton)

“Course Management Guidelines” (Rebecca Moore Howard)

“Handling the Confrontative Conference” (Ruth Overman Fischer)