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**English 375**  
**The Teaching of Literature and Composition**  
**Thursdays 10.30 am – 12.30 pm, 305 Wheeler Hall**

**Course Description:**

This course introduces new English Department GSIs to the theory and practice of teaching literature and writing both at UC Berkeley (in English 45 A-B-C, C107, R1A, R1B) and beyond. At once a seminar and a hands-on practicum, English 375 will provide new instructors with strategies for leading discussion, teaching literary analysis, responding to and evaluating student writing, teaching the elements of composition, managing their time, designing courses, syllabi, and writing assignments, and approaching other elements that make up the work of teaching here and elsewhere. By the end of the semester, you will have developed sets of teaching materials for the English 45 sequence and for the Reading and Composition program, and you will have had opportunities to watch others in the classroom, to benefit from feedback on your own teaching, and to hear suggestions for future professional development.<sup>1</sup>

**Course Requirements:**

1. There are **11 practicum assignments**, plus one final submission. As you will see from the schedule of classes below, these are due at most of our class meetings, usually in multiple copies. They are designed to be immediately useful for this term's teaching or, in the case of some assignments due later in the semester, your first section of R1A or R1B. You will be receiving feedback on all of these materials, both from the instructors of the course and from your peers in small-group, in-class workshops. All must be completed to receive credit for the course.
2. In addition, there is a **short required reading assignment** for each meeting. We have vetted these carefully and kept them to a minimum. For that last reason, we hope you will also read some of the optional pieces listed for each week when you are able to do so. Familiarity with these readings will help your teaching and prepare you for the job market in the future. In addition to the required and optional readings listed by week below, see also the English 375 Bibliography for Further Resources in the packet of course readings (Volume 1) to be distributed at our first class meeting, and also available on our bCourses site. Please bring your course reader or online versions of the readings with you to each class meeting.
3. Two class observations, each to be incorporated into a practicum assignment, as follows:

[A] Observing a fellow first-time TA – i.e., one of your colleagues in this class, whose section meets at a different time from your own class. You will, in turn, be observed by – and you will receive feedback from – one of your colleagues in the **class**. **This observation must be completed on or before Friday, September 25, in order to use it for the assignment due Thursday, October 1.** (Later in the semester, one of the 375 instructors will observe your class, and you should also expect the professor teaching your lecture course to visit your section as well.)

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<sup>1</sup> *This course qualifies for the GSI Teaching and Resource Center's Certificate of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.*

[B] Everyone in the class will be paired with an experienced GSI mentor teaching a section of R1A or R1B this semester, whose class you will observe once. **This observation must be completed on or before Friday, October 2, in order to use it for the assignment due Thursday, October 8.** On the first day of classes, you will sign up for a mentor, based on your schedule.

4. Finally, because so much of the work for this class takes place during our Thursday morning meetings, you may miss **no more than one** of the scheduled meetings this term. If you do miss a meeting unexpectedly, you should send in the practicum by email. If you know of your absence in advance, you must send it in prior to the class meeting.

### **Required and Optional Readings:**

- *Volume 1* has the required readings. We have purchased copies for each of you, and you will receive them at our first class meeting. The volume is also up on our bCourses site (<https://bcourses.berkeley.edu/>), both in full and by item, for those of you who strongly prefer reading on an e-reader or the equivalent. Extra hard copies can be ordered from University Copy (see below).
- *Volume 2* has all of the recommended optional readings. It is available in two forms. You can order a hard copy from University Copy (2425 Channing Way) and/or it is available on our bCourses site, in full and by article.

For Further Reading, please consult the English 375 Bibliography.

Frequently used online resources include:

*Teaching Guide for Graduate Student Instructors* (GSI Teaching & Resource Center):

<http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/tghome.html>

Barbara Gross Davis. *Tools for Teaching*. Second edition. San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2009. Available through the library's eBrary:

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/berkeley/docDetail.action?docID=10317792> (or search OskiCat)

## Schedule of Classes and Assignments

*The topics listed below will serve as basic guidelines, with variation and deviation as needed. We will be sure to create time each week for your teaching questions and concerns as they arise.*

### **Week 1 / Thursday, August 27**                      **(1) Overview of Our Class**                      **(2) The First Day of Your Class**

*(1) Overview of the course, including the practicum and reading assignments, observations, GSI Mentors for the class, and our bCourses site. Overview of the English Major, with special attention to the 45 series, upper-division lecture courses with sections, and their place in the major. Collaborating with a lead professor, with thoughts from visiting faculty and GSIs (2) What to do on the first day of section. Planning student engagement in the classroom and outside it: online forums? presentations? What to cover in your section syllabus?*

#### **Practicum #1 due:**

A draft of your section syllabus, a.k.a., your section policy sheet. Bring twelve copies to our class meeting.

#### **Required Reading:**

- (1) Sample section syllabi

### **Week 2 / Thursday, September 3**                      **Leading Discussion / Things to Know About Undergraduate Life**

*Planning, structuring, and leading a successful discussion: objectives, time constraints, etc. What makes a good question? Classroom dynamics and fostering civility. The pros, cons, and best practices for group work. Handling silences. Sensitive subjects and situations. GSI authority and maintaining boundaries. Undergraduate student life and its challenges. Department structures of academic advising. Questions of student diversity and gender / resources for students with health problems, disabilities, or in distress. Berkeley Connect in English. Students' extracurricular conflicts with academic obligations.*

#### **Practicum #2 due:**

Draft your class lesson plan for tomorrow's section on Friday, September 4. Try to state explicitly your intellectual goals for the class, as well as other classroom dynamic or pedagogical goals. Suit activities to your goal(s). Show the breakdown of the hour by placing time frames next to each activity. The lesson plan should include a trajectory of major discussion questions, and it should fit on a single piece of paper. Bring six copies to our class meeting.

#### **Required Readings:**

- (1) Peter Elbow, "Embracing Contrarities in the Teaching Process"<sup>2</sup>
- (2) Barbara Gross Davis, "Asking Questions"
- (3) Paulo Freire, "The Banking Concept of Education"

#### **Optional:**

- (1) Stephen Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, "Keeping Discussion Going" and "Keeping Students' Voices in Balance"
- (2) *Teaching Guide for Graduate Instructors*. Under "Teaching Sections" (from menu on the left): "Creating Discussion Guidelines," "Active Learning Techniques," "Group Work," and "Encouraging Participation," <http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/tghome.html>
- (3) Kenneth Bruffee, "Consensus Groups: A Basic Model of Classroom Collaboration"
- (4) Mary Louise Pratt, "Arts of the Contact Zone"
- (5) Richard Miller, "Fault Lines in the Contact Zone"
- (6) Robert D. Murray, "Race and Reconstruction in the Contact Zone"

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<sup>2</sup> For complete bibliographic information for all of the readings, see the two Course Readers' Table of Contents.

- (7) Min-Zhan Lu, “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone”  
 (8) Jim Winship, “Creating a Safe and Engaging Classroom Climate”

**Reminder from the GSI Teaching and Resource Center:**

\* The online course, “Professional Standards and Ethics for GSIs” must be completed by Saturday, September 5 by all new GSIs. Please don’t forget it, since Graduate Division will not let GSIs who haven’t completed it be reappointed!

**Week 3 / Thursday, September 10**

**Teaching Literary Analysis**

*What went right or wrong in your class last week? (We will continue the practice of devoting time to this question throughout the semester.) On reading – closely, slowly, critically. Arc of skills. Designing in-class and homework exercises suited to these goals. Models: to use or not to use?*

**Practicum #3 due:**

- (1) Think over, and write a paragraph about, a critical text that informs or has informed your idea not only of what close reading is but also (and more importantly) how to teach close reading.
- (2) Choose *one* of the following two options: (a) Draft a handout on literary analysis and close reading for distribution to your students now or in the future. Or (b) Select a passage from the text you are now teaching and provide questions designed to elicit student close reading and critical analysis. Whichever option you choose, please do bring twelve copies to class.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Sample handouts on literary analysis and close reading.

**Optional:**

- (1) Helen Vendler, “Exploring a Poem”
- (2) Marie Ponsot and Rosemarie Deen, “Writing About Literature”
- (3) Nancy Chick, Holly Hassel, and Aeron Heynie, “‘Pressing an Ear Against the Hive’: Reading Literature for Complexity”

**Week 4 / Thursday, September 17**

**Paper Writing: Teaching Argument, Thesis, and Organization**

*The writing process. What skills do students have to know to write papers in the Major? How do you teach them? In what order? Preventing and responding to academic misconduct. Sample student theses and arguments.*

**Practicum #4 due:**

Choose one of the following three options: (1) Write a draft of a handout on theses and argument, designed to help undergraduates understand what these are (and aren’t). (2) Select a passage from the text you are teaching and write three hypothetical student theses – of varying levels – that might be based on the passage. Also include your analysis of their strengths and/or weaknesses. (3) Craft a hypothetical paper prompt for the class you are teaching and write a page or so considering possible student responses to the prompt (this is an exercise also designed to help you think about what goes into a good prompt). Bring six copies to class.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Selected handouts on thesis statements, argument, revision, and plagiarism
- (2) Catherine Cronquist Browning, “Ethical Engagement: Practical Solutions for Addressing Plagiarism in the Writing Classroom”

**Optional:**

- (1) Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, "Making Good Arguments: An Overview." *The Craft of Research*.
- (2) Jeanne Fahnestock and Marie Secor, "Teaching Argument: A Theory of Types." *Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for College Writing Teachers*.
- (3) Teaching Guide for Graduate Instructors: "Working with Student Writing."
- (4) Barbara Gross Davis, "Helping Students Write Better in All Courses." *Tools for Teaching*.

**Week 5 / Thursday, September 24    Responding to Student Writing: Grades, Comments, Time Management**

*Engaging with student writing in person and in writing. Grades: definitions, distributions, etc. Grading rubrics. Grading philosophies: what should they accomplish? Kinds and tools of assessment. Writing comments (how much is too much? what takes priority? margins vs. end comments, etc.). Campus procedures for acting on a plagiarism case (if not discussed earlier). Midterm evaluations for this class.*

**Practicum #5 due:**

We will provide you with a sample student essay from one of the English 45s. Comment on it (in the margins and with an end comment) and grade it, and bring twelve copies of this marked essay to class.

**Required Readings:**

- (1) Maxine Hairston, "On Not Being a Composition Slave"
- (2) Nancy Sommers, "Responding to Student Writing"
- (3) Richard Lanham, "Where's the Action?"

**Optional:**

- (1) David Bartholomae, "Inventing the University"
- (2) Jeanne Podis and Leonard Podis, "Improving Our Responses to Student Writing"
- (3) Barbara Walvord and Virginia Johnson Anderson, "Managing the Grading Process"

**Important Reminders:**

\* If you have not yet done midterm evaluations before this, then your section tomorrow (September 25) is the last chance for doing so. You will need the student responses for the upcoming practicum. We will have given you examples of midterm evaluation sheets before this date.

\* Tomorrow (September 25) is also the last day for observing your English 375 colleague's section and having your section observed by your counterpart.

**Week 6 / Thursday, October 1    (1) Mid-semester Reflections    (2) Responding to Papers of ESL Students**

*(1) The experience of being observed. What have you learned from your mid-semester evaluations? How will you incorporate feedback from your students and from your peer's observation of your class? (2): A continuation of last week's class on responding to student writing, but focused specifically on papers written by non-native speakers.*

**Practicum #6 due:**

Prepare a 1-2 page reflection on the two questions posed above. What have you learned from your mid-semester evaluations? How will you incorporate feedback from your students and from your peer's observation of your class? Be ready to present to the class or to a smaller group briefly (no more than 5 minutes each per presentation). Bring two copies to class for Katie and Wendy.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Materials on ESL Errors

**Optional:** TBA

**Important Reminder:**

\* Your observation of your English R1A/B GSI Mentor's class needs to occur before next week's class.

**Week 7 / Thursday, October 8**

**What is Reading and Composition?**

*The history and practice of R&C at Berkeley and elsewhere. University-wide and department definitions of R&C level classes. Making the transition from teaching a discussion section to teaching an R1 course. What sorts of materials are appropriate for your R1A/B class? What themes might organize such a class (or which might be problematic)? The pros and cons of using literature and/or literary theory to teach composition. What are alternative kinds of texts or materials to assign?*

**Practicum #7 due:**

Write 1-2 pages on your observation of your mentor's R1A/B class. Questions to consider: what specific goals did the meeting that you visited appear to accomplish? How did these goals seem to fit into the objectives of the course as a whole, as you understand it from the syllabus? What differences did you observe – if any – between the students you observed in R1A/B and your own students in English 45? (Feel free to include anything else that strikes you as salient.) Bring two copies to class.

**Required Readings:**

- (1) The recommendations of the 1989 Reading and Composition Committee (Donald McQuade et. al.) and the most recent (2011) "Curricular Goals and Guidelines" for the program
- (2) Erika Lindemann, "Freshman Composition: No Place for Literature"
- (3) Gary Tate, "A Place for Literature in Freshman Composition"
- (4) Christine Farris, "Literature and Composition Pedagogy"

**Optional:**

- (1) Karen Spear, "Controversy and Consensus in Freshman Writing: An Overview of the Field"
- (2) Jean Ferguson Carr, "Composition, English, and the University"
- (3) Mike Rose, "The Language of Exclusion: Writing Instruction at the University"
- (4) David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky, "Facts, Artifacts, and Counterfacts: A Basic Reading and Writing Course for the College Curriculum"

**Week 8 / Thursday, October 15**

**Planning your R1A or R1B Course: Course Descriptions**

*Discuss and workshop course descriptions. Recent models: pros and cons. Defining your subject. Materials to assign, continued. Teaching grammar and other writing skills. Teaching research in R1B. Beginning to think about the design of your syllabus: arc of the class, coverage, appropriate expectations, etc.*

**Practicum #8 due:**

A draft of your R1A or R1B Course Description. Please bring copies for *all* class members to our meeting. Also post your course description to our bCourses website.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Please skim through the two semesters of R1A/B course descriptions. Choose 2 or 3 descriptions that you particularly like or find useful, and be ready to talk about what you like about them. Keep a mental note of content or wording that you want to avoid.

\* *If you are interested in looking at other semesters' offerings instead, go to the English Department's website (<http://english.berkeley.edu>) and click on "COURSES" in the menu toward the left. You will see links for current and upcoming (or most recent) semesters, plus an "Archive of Courses" with links to past courses beyond that.*

**Optional:**

- (1) Marie Ponsot and Rosemarie Deen, "Grammar and Graphics"
- (2) Rei Noguchi, "Teaching the Basics of a Writer's Grammar"

**Week 9 / Thursday, October 22 (1) Crafting Assignments in R1A/B (2) Technology in the Classroom**

*(1) The staging and scaffolding of a writing assignment in a composition class, where revision is an important part of the process. This will include a discussion of peer editing and incorporating group work into the writing process. We will probably discuss commonly assigned style guides and writing manuals, whether to assign one, and how to use it. (2) Using online resources and technology in the classroom and outside of it.*

**Practicum #9 due:**

Preliminary preparation for an in-class workshop on the staging of the writing process. Details TBA.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers"

**Optional:**

- (1) Barbara Gross Davis, "Designing Effective Writing Assignments"
- (2) Margaret Kantz, "Helping Students Use Textual Sources Persuasively"

**Week 10 / Thursday, October 29 Future Professional Development and Teaching Portfolios**

*What are the components of a teaching portfolio, and how are these used? What is a teaching philosophy – and what makes a good one? Suggestions from the Placement Committee and/or a graduate student who has been on the job market. Guest: Oliver Arnold, Placement Committee Chair*

**Practicum #10 due:**

Choose one of the following. (1) If you feel ready, outline ideas for or elements of your future teaching philosophy. (2) If the first option doesn't appeal at this stage, write a paragraph or two on a particularly good moment or intervention with a student or with your class this semester, including your thoughts on why it was good. If you prefer, you can write about a less-than-good moment and what you took away from it for the future.

**Required Reading:**

- (1) Selected teaching philosophy statements from former winners of the Campus's Distinguished Faculty Award
- (2) Teaching portfolio of a former Berkeley PhD (Rae Greiner, now Associate Professor of English, University of Indiana)
- (3) "Guide to Producing a Teaching Portfolio"

**Optional:**

- (1) John Guillory, "The Very Idea of Pedagogy"

**Week 11 / Thursday, November 5****Individual Conferences**

*Individual Conferences with Katie and/or Wendy on your syllabus in progress and other issues that you would like to discuss. If you have a draft of your syllabus, or any part thereof, please bring it to the conference for discussion. See reading below.*

**Required Readings:**

- (1) Donna Duffy and Janet Jones, "Stalking the Superior Syllabus"
- (2) Sample Syllabi

**Week 12 / Thursday, November 12****Syllabus Workshop**

*Workshop complete syllabus drafts.*

**Practicum #11 due:**

A copy of your entire R1A or R1B syllabus draft, including the course description, office hours and contact information, required and optional texts and/or online resources, schedule of readings, written assignments and due dates, grading and weighting of the grades, course policies (e.g. on lateness, absences, late work, incomplete work, plagiarism, etc.), and other features you plan to include. See the Duffy and Jones essay as well as the sample syllabi assigned for last week for further ideas. Bring in twelve copies.

**Required Reading:**

See last week's required reading and review as necessary

**Week 13 / Thursday, November 19****Wrapping Things Up / Final Class Meeting**

*Further topics by popular request. Returning to topics that received too little attention. Conclusions.*

**Reminder:**

\* Final version of your syllabus due, incorporating any feedback from last week's workshop, or any second thoughts, etc. Bring two copies to class, and post the final version to bCourses.

**Week 14 / Thursday, November 26****Thanksgiving: No class meeting!****Week 15 / Thursday, December 3****No class meeting!**