

English 791: College Teaching in Language and Literature

Professional Learning for Writing Instructors

Class meeting Fridays 11:30 a.m. – 2:15 p.m. Wright Hall C235	Instructor Dr. Kaitlin Clinnin kaitlin.clinnin@unlv.edu Office: RLL 259 Office Hours: W 12-2 p.m.	Co-Instructors Elaine Bunker Dr. Mariya Tseptsura Elena Brokaw Cody Gambino Kayley Hopster
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Course Description

English 791 is an introduction to the theory and practice of teaching college-level writing. The purpose of this class is two-fold: 1. To develop the pedagogical content knowledge needed to be an effective writing instructor and 2. To support and assist you in your first semester teaching composition at UNLV.

English 791 is focused on providing you with the knowledge and skills needed to be a better instructor. These skills will help you during your first semester teaching ENG 101 and also provide the foundation needed to teach a range of courses including writing, literature, and creative writing. Good pedagogy transfers across courses. As such, this class is not an introduction to rhetoric and composition theory (although there are such course offerings available). We will read scholarship from writing studies to understand current theories of writing and how we can best teach writing to students. 791 is structured as an active learning environment. The course models pedagogical approaches that you can adopt and adapt to your own classroom.

Course Learning Objectives and Outcomes

Course Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for English 791 are taken directly from the Conference on College Composition & Communication (CCCC) position paper “Statement on Preparing Teachers of College Writing.” According to CCCC, “Effective college teachers of writing require a broad base of theoretical knowledge, including:

- *Rhetorical knowledge*- an understanding of how audience, purpose, and context shape writing
- *Linguistic knowledge*- an understanding of professional genres and conventions for writing
- *Instructional knowledge*- an understanding of a broad base of practical, pedagogical knowledge and experience, and an ability to apply research and best practices in the field of rhetoric and composition, including using effective strategies for designing writing curricula, courses, and assignments; providing constructive feedback on students’ drafts; assessing students’ writing formatively and summatively; and working with diverse learners

- *Ethical and effective research methods*- an understanding of both secondary and primary research methods, as well as a knowledge of plagiarism, copyright law, and human subjects protection
- *Technical knowledge*- an understanding of how to prepare students to address the evolving nature of persuasion and communication in the 21st century”

The course learning objectives represent a career-long commitment to developing one’s expertise and practices as a writing instructor. As such, we will address each of these knowledge sets in English 791 with the understanding that this class cannot and should not be the end of your learning and growth as a writing instructor.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and participate in current conversations about the content and teaching methods of college-level writing and articulate a developing philosophy of teaching
- Discuss major rhetorical concepts such as the rhetorical situation, rhetorical appeals, genre, and argument
- Respond to issues of race, gender, class, ability, and language in writing and classroom practices
- Develop instructional materials informed by rhetoric and composition theory using backwards design and universal design for learning
- Apply rhetoric and composition theory and writing pedagogy to classroom activities such as lesson planning, structuring class time, workshoping and conferencing, responding to student writing

Requirements

Materials

You are responsible for the following materials:

Engaging Ideas: The Professor’s Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom 2nd edition by John C. Bean (2011). Available through the UNLV bookstore or online.

Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies (Classroom Edition) edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle (2016). Available through the UNLV bookstore or online.

Additional readings posted on WebCampus

Grade Breakdown and Assignments

The assignments for 791 are designed to help you develop as a writing instructor by engaging with rhetoric and composition scholarship, soliciting feedback on teaching, reflecting on

professional learning events and teaching experiences, and creating instructional materials. Full assignment prompts will be available on the WebCampus course page.

Reflective Teaching Journal (25%): Each week you will write a short response to a provided prompt. The prompt may ask you to respond to the weekly reading and apply the concepts to your classroom, discuss your classroom experiences, or reflect on aspects of writing, teaching, and teaching writing. **Journals entries are due every Thursday before class by 11:59pm.** Entries should be uploaded to the appropriate journal entry assignment on WebCampus.

Reflective Teaching Portfolio (25%): A teaching portfolio is an ongoing record of your teaching experience. The portfolio is a chance for you to articulate your beliefs about teaching, writing, and teaching writing and to demonstrate how these beliefs influence your classroom materials and practices. The portfolio will include English 102 materials, an annotated lesson plan, and a reflection on writing, teaching, and teaching writing. You can think of the reflection as a draft version of a future teaching philosophy, which you will need to write for most academic or teaching jobs.

Class Observation and Conference (15%): Part of developing as an instructor is receiving constructive, supportive feedback on your teaching and learning to use feedback to assess your strengths and identify areas to improve. You will be observed by one of the Composition Program Directors during a meeting of your Fall 2019 class. Prior to your observation, you will write a reflection that articulates your teaching experience so far this semester and identifies areas you would like teaching feedback on. After the observation, you will meet with the Composition Program Director who observed you, and you will add to this reflection to identify aspects to work on for the rest of the semester.

Class Activity Presentation and Materials (15%): The semester culminates in the “Steal My Idea” event. You will prepare a 5-minute presentation that introduces an activity, strategy, or resource that other instructors can use in their writing course.

English 101 documentation (15%): Throughout the semester, you will need to share documents from your English 101 class for program assessment. I may also ask you to bring materials from your class to 791 to workshop or review in class.

Participation and attendance (5%): This class only meets once a week, and each class day covers a significant amount theoretical material, pedagogical applications, and workshops. Participation means preparing for class in advance, showing up to class on-time, engaging in the material for the entire class meeting, contributing to small group work, and treating everyone with civility and respect during class discussions and activities.

Course Policies

Attendance in a graduate course is expected. In English 791, attendance is critical to your development and success as an instructor in English 101. If you will be absent due to a professional obligation (presenting at a conference) or a personal issue (illness, family emergency), you must contact Dr. Clinnin as soon as possible to arrange make-up work. Failure to make-up the missed class will result in your final course grade being lowered by 1/3 of a letter grade (example: from A to A-). Excessive absences may result in a failing course grade.

Tardiness is disruptive to the classroom environment and prevents you from fully participating in class discussions and activities. Excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade.

Academic Misconduct is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

Student Work should be turned in at the indicated on the syllabus and assignment sheets. Late submission of an assignment will result in the deduction of **one full letter grade** for each day past the due date (for example, B+ to C+). If you know ahead of time that a particular deadline will be difficult for you, please contact me **at least one week in advance**. I can work with you to accommodate alternative deadlines if appropriate given enough time. The grade will also not be affected if an assignment is late for reasons that would result in an excused absence. Unexcused absences or technological misfortunes are not acceptable excuses for failing to meet a deadline.

Classroom Community is the idea that everyone should feel welcome, respected, and safe in the classroom and online spaces. In the classroom, discussion of readings, ideas, and peer productions are at the center of everything we do. We will frequently work together in small and large groups, discuss sensitive issues, and provide feedback on peer work at various stages of production. Be a good classroom citizen: respect one another, feel free to disagree or critique but do so in productive ways, and remember that we are all here to learn.

Personal Technology such as laptops, cell phones, and tablets are allowed in the class. Although technology is welcome in class, please remain on task during our limited class time. Any inappropriate technology usage will be noted and will negatively impact your participation grade.

Class Cancellation Policy: In the unlikely event that class must be canceled, I will contact you via email. I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Resources

Disability Resource Center (DRC)—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to me during office hours so that we may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach me before or after class to discuss your accommodation needs.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

UNLV Student Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): A recent study (Levecque and Anseel 2017) found that 1/3 of PhD students are at risk for developing depression, and 51% of respondents experienced symptoms of poor mental health including stress, depression, loss of sleep, and excessive worry. If you are experiencing any of these or other symptoms, know that you are not alone. If you experience personal problems or situational crises during the semester, please contact UNLV CAPS (702-895-3627; www.unlv.edu/srwc/caps) for assistance, support and advocacy.