

## **GS 300 Theory and Practice of Peer Tutoring**

### **Half block, January 2013**

#### **required texts**

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Murphy, Christina and Steve Sherwood, eds. *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors*. 4<sup>rd</sup> ed. Bedford/St Martin's, 2011.

Wardle, Elizabeth and Doug Downs. *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*. Bedford/St Martin's, 2011.

#### **course description**

GS 300's primary goal is to introduce you to theory underpinning effective peer tutoring practice and thoughtful writing instruction. Many of you are accomplished young writers. In addition, many of you are practicing peer tutors—you've worked with roommates, siblings, CC acquaintances, and high school friends on their writing. But writing center work demands more than the ability to write effectively or tell people how to 'fix' their writing. You are, in effect, stepping into a teaching position, a quasi-professional role in which you are (sometimes precariously) positioned as both peer and authority, an equal partner with writing center clients and an individual bearing the weight of institutional and ethical expectations. We will work together in GS 300 and subsequently in GS 395 *Peer Tutoring Practicum* to facilitate, articulate, and negotiate your position as writing center tutors.

A secondary but perhaps no less important goal of GS 300 is to provide a space, forum, and opportunity for you to reflect upon who you are as a writer. Your vision of yourself as a writer was instrumental in your applying for a position in the writing center and was central to our reading of your application and interview. But how have you arrived in this course? As you begin writing center work, reflection on where and how you situate yourself in a textual world is of more value than knowing where the comma goes. A grounding in who you are as a writer, reflecting on your struggles as well as your successes, will position you for unexpected challenges and epiphanies to come.

#### **course facilitators**

I've taught writing center practicums in previous lives at Loyola University (New Orleans), the United States Air Force Academy, and the American University in Bulgaria, but never with such able assistance. It's my pleasure to be working in our half block with Jackson Buckley, Amanda Noel, and Margo Simon, three senior tutors I've selected as teaching assistants for our course. Amanda, Margo, and Jackson bring years of writing center experience to this course; their leadership and advice will be central to this course and your developing vision of Writing Center work. In addition, Nate Siebert, our Writing Center professional tutor, will be participating in our half block class, bringing his experience as graduate student director of the UCCS Writing Center to our table. I look to them for guidance—you will undoubtedly profit from following my lead. In addition, other members of our peer and professional staff may sit in or lead discussions, participate in workshop activities, or offer tutorials as you work through course material and come to see yourself(s) from the dual perspective of writer and tutor.

### daily syllabus

M 1/7 Peter Elbow's *Writing With Power*, "Introduction" and "Some Essentials" (xiii-xxvi, 3-25): wrongness and felt sense, quality and bad writing, sharing writing, freewriting. Introductions all around (and around). Your idea of a writing center. Syllabus, assignments, course texts, and requirements.

T 1/8 Murphy and Sherwood's *St. Martin's Sourcebook*, "The Tutoring Process" and "Readings: Entering the Professional Conversation" (*StM* 1-43).

Stephen North's "The Idea of a Writing Center" (*StM* 44-58).

Kenneth Bruffee's, "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind'" (WCwebsite: Resources/For Tutors/PROWL 2011-12, 206-218).

Sharing of reader response.

W 1/9 Andrea Lunsford's "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center" (*StM* 70-77).

Stuart Greene's "Argument as Conversation" (*WaW* 9-21).

Molly Wingate's "What Line? I Didn't See Any Line" (PROWL 2011-12, 9-16).

Peter Elbow's, "More Ways of Getting Words on Paper" (47-58).

Donald Murray's "All Writing is Autobiography" (*WaW* 56-66).

Sondra Perl's "What Is Felt Sense?" (PROWL 2011-12, 1-14).

Sharing of reader response. Freewriting. Tutorial scenarios.

R 1/10 Jeff Brooks' "Minimalist Tutoring" and Linda Shamoon and Deborah Burns' "A Critique of Pure Tutoring" (*StM* 128-148).

James Porter's, "Intertextuality and the Discourse Community," Keith Grant-Davie's "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents," and "Christina Haas and Linda Flower's "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning" (*WaW* 86-138).

Sharing of reader response. Re-visioning writing center work.

F 1/11 Peter Elbow's "More Ways to Revise" (121-145), "Audience" (177-198), and "Feedback" (237-251).

Malcolm X's "Learning to Read" and Sherman Alexie's "The Joy of Reading and Writing" (*WaW* 353-366).

**Literacy narrative drafts (1000 word min/5 copies).** Reading and response groups.

**Submit revised literacy narratives by 5pm, Friday 1/11.**

**Potluck dinner @ 6pm. Location TBA.**

**Presentation groups.** Pairs or trios will present each of the nine essays we read and discuss between Mon 1/14 and Wed 1/16. Everyone will be assigned one essay Friday afternoon, 1/11. Please meet with your partner or group the evening before you present your essay.

M 1/14 Peter Carino's "Power and Authority in Peer Tutoring" (*StM* 112-127).

John Trimbur's "Peer Tutoring: A Contradiction in Terms?" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 21-28).

Irene Clark and Dave Healy's "Are Writing Centers Ethical?" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 242-259).

Presentations and listserv response.

T 1/15 Marilyn Cooper, "Really Useful Knowledge: A Cultural Studies Agenda for Writing Centers" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 53-67).

Meg Woolbright, "The Politics of Tutoring: Feminism within the Patriarchy" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 16-30).

David Bartholomae's "Inventing the University" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 60-85).

Presentations and listserv response.

W 1/16 Nancy Grimm's "The Regulatory Role of the Writing Center" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 5-29).

Anis Bawarshi and Stephanie Pelkowski's "Postcolonialism and the Idea of a Writing Center" (*PROWL* 2011-12, 79-95).

Harry Denny's "Queering the Writing Center" (*StM* 263-284).

Presentations and listserv response. Peer response to proposals.

**Paper proposals (four copies):** Choose a reading assigned between Mon 1/14 and Wed 1/16 as the primary lens you will employ to focus on the challenges presented and opportunities afforded by peer tutoring as it is practiced in American colleges and universities. Proposals should run 400-500 words and include a bibliography identifying three additional sources which will inform your inquiry, at least one of which must be a source not assigned in this syllabus.

**Moving from proposal to draft: required Writing Center appointments with Writing Center peer staff regarding proposal, Wed 1/16 (2:00-8:30).**

R 1/17 **Morning tutoring and videotaping sessions in the Writing Center, 9:30-12:00.**

**Lunch in TLC3 at 12:40**

**Final paper revision due at 5:00.**

#### **coursework required**

*Literacy narrative:* What does it mean to be literate? By what process have you arrived at your present state of literacy? What is your relationship with your writing self, with texts, and with words? Our beliefs and understanding of literacy are deeply rooted in personal experience. Few of us learn to read and write on our own, so our literacy is inevitably interwoven with our social and cultural circumstances. Reflect upon and unpack your experience in an essay of 1200-1500 words.

Initial draft due in class: Fri 1/11

Revision due: Fri 1/11 by 5pm

*Reflection on and critical analysis of writing center theory and practice* (due Thursday 1/17 at 5pm): Take up an issue derived from a common week two course reading and apply other course readings and outside sources to reflect on the manners in which theory seems to bear on and complicate the practice of tutoring. A proposal discussing the question driving your inquiry into tutoring practice and identifying your core text and a minimum of three additional sources will be required. Your final paper should run from 1600 to 2000 words and cite sources relevant to your discussion. Employ MLA citation format effectively and correctly, please. This paper will be revised and developed during the spring semester should you enroll in GS 395.

Proposal draft (400-500 words) due in class: Wed 1/16

Writing Center tutorial with peer staff in regard to proposal/paper: Wed 1/16

Videotaped Writing Center tutorials over draft with course peers: Thurs 1/17

Final draft due: Thurs 1/17 at 5pm.

*Listserve reading response* (due evenings of M 1/7, T 1/8, W 1/9, R 1/10, S 1/13, M 1/14, and T 1/15): On days listserves are assigned, you'll need to write and submit two responses to readings that evening, with the exception of Thurs 1/10 and Tues 1/15, when a single listserve response will suffice. Each response should run from 250-300 words. Responses can amount to reflection on or questions in regard to the reading, but must address at least two discrete readings assigned for that day in a pointed, analytic fashion—please do not merely summarize the reading. This does not have to be polished writing, but you will need to submit reading responses in a timely fashion, so that your responses might better serve as a discussion forum which will then extend into our class sessions.

*Listserve, presentations, tutorials, and videotaping*: On the occasions when listserve postings are due, one response must be posted to the class listserve no later than 8pm (the second response should be posted by midnight). On each day responses to readings are assigned, print a response composed by someone else, bring that copy to class, and be prepared to discuss this response in class. On the afternoon of Fri 1/11, everyone will be assigned a week two reading which he or she will present prior to class discussion with one or two partners. You will be required to engage in a Writing Center tutorial on either the afternoon or evening of Wed Jan 16. On the morning of Thurs 1/17, you will be videotaped during a tutorial session in which you will serve as both tutor and tutee—we'll be reviewing these videotapes during GS 395 *Peer Tutoring Practicum*.

### **Course grading, attendance policy, and salaried employment**

GS 300 and GS 395 are both offered P-track only. A grade of S in GS 300 is required to enroll in GS 395; a grade of S in GS 395 is a requirement of employment as a writing center tutor. Students working close to the low-end margins of S-grade work in either GS 300 or GS 395 should not anticipate employment as writing center tutors.

Given the intense (and brief) nature of GS 300, absences will be excused only on grounds of dire illness, incapacitating injury, or justifiable and unavoidable circumstances. Please contact me by email or at 389-6809 *before class* should you need to miss class. We will meet daily from 9:15 to 12:15 in Bemis lounge. *This is both an academic class and a professional audition*: on-time attendance and active participation are baseline requirements for successful completion of the course and gainful Writing Center employment.

GS 395 will proceed as an extension of GS 300 and will be grounded in actual CC Writing Center practice. We will continue to work with all three GS 300 required texts, as well as an additional text, Leigh Ryan and Lisa Zimmerelli's *Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (5<sup>th</sup> ed). We meet as a class three times a block during blocks 5 and 6. GS 395 can be (but very rarely is) successfully completed by the end of block 6 or 7; the course must be completed by the end of block 8. Completion of GS 395 qualifies you for salaried work in the CC Writing Center.

Best regards,  
Tracy Santa