

TE 848: Writing Instruction and Assessment

(an online course)
Spring 2014

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Course Websites and Web Tools:

Email Email will be the primary way to communicate in the course. If you have not activated your @msu.edu account, please do so by the end of the first week of classes. If you use an email account other than your MSU account, please have your MSU account forward your messages to your alternate account, since I will use your MSU address for all class correspondence.

Desire2Learn (D2L): <https://d2l.msu.edu/> Log on using your MSU ID username and password. The link for our course will show up on your course menu. You will use this course management site to access readings, to email members of our course, etc. The 24/7 D2L Help Desk number is (517) 355-2345. (Some of you may have used ANGEL in the past; this course management system is replacing ANGEL at MSU)

GoogleDocs: <https://docs.google.com/a/msu.edu> We will use GoogleDocs for two purposes: (1) I will share the link to a single Google Doc where I will keep notes, comments, etc. throughout our course, and where I will invite you to do the same. This is also where you will post your Puzzlement assignments. (2) You will compose your Genre Portfolios and Final Projects on Google Docs and share them with me on the date they are due. Keeping your work here will facilitate storage, accessibility, and ease of feedback. Please let me know if you need more information on how to use this secure, MSU-housed document manager. I will be providing more information in the weeks to come.

Skype At times, we will be working in online writing groups. Given that Skype is free of charge and will enable you to speak with all of your group members simultaneously, I would recommend downloading this software, so that you have it available for these online meetings. (Simply go to <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-us/home> and click on the "Get Skype" tab. NB: You will not need a webcam to use Skype. You may simply rely on each other's voices). You will receive more information about these online writing groups in the weeks to come. You may also feel free to use Google Hangout if you prefer this online communication system to Skype.

Course Description:

TE 848 is an online course designed to facilitate our growth as writers, our understanding of the complexities of writing, and our development as teachers of writing. Therefore, we enter into this course with openness toward invitations to write—invitations that allow us to experience the act of writing while coming to know ourselves as writers. Throughout the course, we ask questions of ourselves as writers, considering, “What assumptions do we hold about writing?” “What steps or processes do we enact when we write?” “How do we grapple with unfamiliar genres of writing?” In addition to interrogating ourselves as *writers*, we will also inquire into the act and notion of *writing*, asking such questions as, “What is the relationship between reading and writing?” “For whom and for what purposes do we write?” and “How does writing respond to different genres, purposes, and technologies put in its midst?” Using our experience of writing gained from our experience as writers throughout the course, we investigate what it means to *teach* writing, asking “How might we design a course that supports students’ development as writers?” “How can we create and assess effective writing assignments?” “How should we respond to students’ writing?” and “How can we accommodate the range of needs of a diverse population of student writers?” Thus, this course reminds us, in its constant movement from *writer* and *writing* to *teacher* of writing, that effective writing instruction and assessment begins with the act of writing (in a diverse set of modes and genres) and an ability and willingness to identify as a writer.

Course Goals:

- To facilitate our development and understanding of ourselves as writers, as well as our writing habits and practices
- To better understand the complex relationships that writing entails—those between reading and writing, purpose and genre, etc.
- To put our experience of writing/as writers in conversation with our pedagogical practices so that we may design effective writing instruction and assessment for students of diverse backgrounds and needs.

Important Note about the Course:

TE 848 is designed with the assumption that all or nearly all of those in attendance have a current or recent teaching context to consider when completing assignments, participating in class discussions and so on. If this is not the case for you, please try to arrange to volunteer in a classroom or other educational context during the course.

Course Texts:

Required Texts (please purchase immediately):

- **For those teaching/interested in teaching Pre-K or elementary grades:**
Graham, S., MacArthur, C., & Fitzgerald, J. (2007). *Best practices in writing instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- **For those teaching/interested in teaching middle or secondary grades:**
Lindemann, E. (2001). *A rhetoric for writing teachers*. 4th ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

- **Everyone:** Hillocks, G. (2006). *Narrative writing: Learning a new model for teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Recommended Text (Though not required, you may find this text quite helpful from a practical standpoint.):

- Davis, J. & Hill, S. (2003). *The no-nonsense guide to teaching writing: Strategies, structures, solutions*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Additional Required Readings:

Additional readings, videos, and resources will be posted to our *Desire2Learn* (D2L) site. In order to access readings for your final projects, it will be essential that you understand how to use the MSU library's online journal databases. Please visit the MSU library help desk (<http://www2.lib.msu.edu/contact/askalib.jsp>) if you would like further assistance with this process.

Description of Course Assignments and Grade Breakdowns:

Participation and Leadership (Worth 10 Possible Points)

Even though we will not have the opportunity to meet collectively in one physical space, this course is still designed in a way that will allow us to learn from one another. Therefore, your full participation in this class is essential. Participation entails the following: (1) on-time completion of all readings and assignments (2) thoughtful engagement with and deep processing of the course readings (3) responsiveness to your classmates' thinking (4) thoughtful engagement with your assigned writing group.

Since leadership implies going beyond the bare minimum, I am expecting that you will *earn* your 10 participation points. Therefore, I will be making note of your contributions to the course above and beyond the bare minimum. You may, for example, reply to students' puzzlement posts on our Google Doc, comment on my notes on the Google Doc, alert classmates to useful resources, exhibit remarkable thinking in your assignments, etc. If you have any questions about participation, please do not hesitate to let me know. You may earn up to 1 participation point per week, maxing out at 10 possible points.

Puzzlements (Worth 15 Possible Points/5 Points Each)

As you know, one of the goals of the MATC Program is "engaging in critical inquiry." In order to scaffold you toward the achievement of this goal, I am asking that you complete **three (3)** "puzzlement" writing assignments throughout the semester. You may submit your 3 puzzlements at any time **after January 13** and **before April 11**. These puzzlement compositions should be between 1 to 1 ½ double-spaced pages (350-500 words), and should respond to the week's readings by posing and expounding upon some question, problem, etc. that the readings raise for you. In other words, I am much more interested in your critical questioning than I am in neatly tied-up answers. Hopefully, writing through your question will help you to better understand the issue at the heart of your

“puzzlement,” thereby illustrating the power of writing to learn. Make sure that you demonstrate active engagement with the reading, and do feel free to draw upon your own teaching experience in these writing activities.

Puzzlements are due by 5 PM on the Friday of the week the reading has been assigned, and they should be posted with your name next to them on our course Google Doc. In other words, if you choose to submit a puzzlement in week 2 (January 13-January 19), the puzzlement would be due on Friday, January 17, by 5 PM. This will allow your classmates time to read your puzzlement and respond to it if they so desire.

I strongly encourage you to type your puzzlements and save them in Microsoft Word before copying and pasting to the Google Doc.

Practitioner Strategies (Worth 15 Possible Points):

Since many of us, if not all of us, are practicing teachers, this assignment is designed to help you help each other locate teaching ideas/strategies/assignments related to the course topics. By the beginning of Week 2, each of you will be assigned to a Writing Group. You will notice in the right column of our Course Calendar (at end of syllabus), each writing group has been assigned a topic on which to research teaching ideas/strategies/assignments. **Each Member of the Writing Group** is to locate a text to review in relation to the topic, read the text, and then summarize for us (**in one page**) **one idea** that you found helpful for your own teaching or that changed your thinking about something related to the teaching or assessment of writing. **These one-pagers are due on Desire2Learn by midnight on the Sunday of the week they are due.** Please cite the source from which you have gleaned your idea, and feel free to include any attachments (photographs, diagrams, videos, etc.) that you feel might help your classmates understand and use the concept/strategy you are hoping to convey. I have included a list of possible texts to use for this assignment at the end of this syllabus. I have only one request: Please refrain from relying on Lucy Calkins’s texts if these texts are already in use at your school. The idea here is to explore some new ideas.

Genre Portfolio (Worth 25 Possible Points):

Though we will introduce ourselves to the topic of “genre” in Week 2 of the course, between Weeks 7 and 10, we will be delving into two specific genres: poetry and narrative. As a way of experiencing genre from the inside out, you will complete a genre portfolio that will include drafts of your narrative or poetry writing, along with a detailed reflection on your experience of genre-based writing and your engagement in the writing process. It will be imperative that you read closely throughout Weeks 2 through 9, so that you can cite these readings in your reflection. The Genre Portfolio is due by midnight on **Sunday, March 16**. More details to follow.

Final Project: Practitioner’s Piece (Worth 35 Possible Points):

For your final project, you will develop, complete, and write up an article or essay for practicing pre-K, elementary, middle, or secondary teachers. This project is oriented

toward classroom application and instructional improvement. If you are teaching a writing class or a class that includes writing, you may wish to try out a new theory/method of writing instruction you have learned about, or you may wish to conduct an inquiry about some aspect of your teaching and/or students' learning. I strongly encourage you to discuss and work through your ideas about this project with me and with your writing group. For ideas about how this article might look, consult articles published in *The Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, *Voices from the Middle*, *English Journal*, *The Reading Teacher*, or *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*. We will be taking a look at some examples together, too, in Week 6 of the course. Length should fall between 8-12 double-spaced pages (1500-3000 words), excluding citations, appendices, etc.

Final Project Proposal due Friday, February 14.

Final Project Draft due by Sunday, April 20.

Final Project due by Wednesday, April 30.

Grading Scale:

94-100: 4.0

86-93: 3.5

79-85: 3.0

70-78: 2.5

0-69: 2.0

Academic Honesty

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to the community of teachers and scholars. This means that all academic work is prepared by the student to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. I assume that the student is honest and that all course work and examinations represent the student's own work. Violations of the academic integrity policy such as cheating, plagiarism, selling course assignments or academic fraud are grounds for academic action and/or disciplinary sanction as described in the University's student conduct code. **Incidents of plagiarism are taken very seriously and can result in automatic failure of the course.** Students are warned not to use any text verbatim on any class assignments without quotation marks and source citations. Warning: do not go to a site like Wikipedia (generally not a reliable or effective source anyway), copy and paste, and then "rearrange" words or sentences or replace a few words here and there – that constitutes plagiarism. If you are quoting verbatim, always use quotation marks and cite the page number (or, if your style manual calls for it, using block indenting with the source, including page number(s), immediately following the block).

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the College of Education adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations, 1.0, Protection of

Scholarship and Grades, and in the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide. Students who commit an act of academic dishonesty may receive a 0.0 on the assignment or in the course. For additional information, see the MSU's ombudsperson's website: <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/plagiarism.html>.

Confidentiality

This course involves extensive discussion of your teaching. **Please use pseudonyms for all colleagues, students, and members of students' families.**

Accommodations for Disabilities

Please contact me—I want to accommodate you. Students With disabilities should also contact the MSU Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 or 355-1293 (TTY).

Counseling Center

MSU has an Office of Student Affairs and Services, with a Counseling Center, for which the phone number is 517-355-8270. The Center is at 207 Student Services Building.

Observing a Major Religious Holiday:

You may make up course work missed to observe a major religious Holiday only if you make arrangements in advance with the instructor.

Services and Resources

MSU College of Education Office of Writing Assistance: 432-0425. Email: campbell@msu.edu. This office supports students in the College of Education in improving their writing.

MSU Writing Center: <http://writing.msu.edu> 432-3610. 300 Bessey Hall. The primary writing resource on campus.

MSU ESL Lab: http://elc.msu.edu/ESL_lab.html 353-0800. 714 Wells Hall. Specifically designed to assist international students with writing in a second language.

MSU Learning Resource Center: <http://www.msu.edu/user/lrc/> 517.355.2363, 202 Bessey Hall. Offers individualized assistance to help students develop successful learning strategies and study habits.

One important resource, available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, is the **MSU Libraries Distance Learning Service** at <http://www2.lib.msu.edu/about/dls/division-dls.jsp> (phone: 1-800-500-1554 or 1-517-355-2345; email at reachout@msu.edu). The MSU College of Education Technical Interns in Education (TIES) might also be of help to you (http://ctt.educ.msu.edu/?page_id=6). They are located in 133 Erickson Hall, by phone [517-355-TIES (8437)] or email (ties@msu.edu). As appropriate, you might also contact helplines for individual websites, for particular software, or for your particular computer.

Course Calendar (Subject to Change):

Week	Readings Due	Written Assignments
January 6-January 12	<p>Course Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read over Syllabus carefully -Read Toussant’s “Hey Matt! There’s a <i>Reason</i> We Write Like Every Day” -Skim NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing 	<p>Complete Student Profile on Google Forms (link emailed to you in December)</p> <p>On Course Google Doc, write a 3-sentence introduction of yourself.</p>
January 13-January 19	<p>An Overview of Genre Theory: Why and For Whom We Write</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read Cooper: What We Know about Genre -Read Devitt: Critical Genre Awareness -OPTIONAL: Read Miller: Genre as Social Action 	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 1/17).</p> <p>Touch base with Writing Group members about good meeting times.</p>
January 20-January 26	<p>An Overview of Writing Process with a Focus on Planning and Prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read Murray -Read Ch. 2 of Best Practices/Ch. 3 of Rhetoric -Skim Ch. 6 in Best Practices/Ch. 7 in Rhetoric -Read Rose: Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans 	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 1/24).</p>
January 27-February 2	<p>Composing Processes: Revision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Read Ch. 7 in Best Practices / Ch. 12 in Rhetoric -Read Nancy Sommers “Revision Strategies” -Read Blau: Competence for Performance in Revision 	<p>Possible puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 1/31).</p> <p>Writing Group 1: Strategies related to Revision due this week by Sunday, Feb. 2</p>

<p>February 3-February 9</p>	<p>Composing Processes: Writing, Reading, and Talk -Read Prose: Reading Like a Writer -Read Daniels: Literacy Café -Read Swaim: In Search of an Honest Response (elementary/pre-K) -Read Juzwik et al. (middle/high school)</p>	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 2/7).</p> <p>Writing Group 2: Strategies related to Peer Review or the relationship among Writing, Reading and/or Talk due this week by Sunday, Feb. 9.</p>
<p>February 10-February 16</p>	<p>Teachers as Writers -Read Andrew-Vaughn and Fleischer: Researching Writing: The Unfamiliar Genre Research Project -Read Dawson: Creating a Breathing Space -Begin reading for your final projects.</p>	<p>Final Project Proposals due by Friday, February 14, at 5 PM. (Please email one-paragraph explaining your plans for your final project to me at macalus7@msu.edu).</p>
<p>February 17-February 23</p>	<p>Trying on Genre: Narrative Writing -Read Hillocks Chapters 1, 2, 4</p>	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 2/21).</p> <p>Begin drafting your narrative memoir.</p>
<p>February 24-March 2</p>	<p>Trying on Genre: Poetry -Read Certo -Read Apol</p>	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 2/28).</p> <p>Begin drafting 1-2 poems.</p> <p>Writing Group 3: Strategies related to poetry writing due this week by Sunday, March 2.</p>
<p>March 3-March 9 (MSU Spring Break)*</p> <p>*Note that there are no required written assignments due this week, and that I have made next week an “on your own” week to allow you time to complete your Genre</p>	<p>Trying on Genre: Narrative Continued -Read Hillocks Chapters 7, 8, 9, 10 -Skim Ch. 3 in Best Practices</p>	<p>Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 3/7).</p>

Portfolios.		
March 10-March 16	Work on Genre Portfolios/ Continue reading for Final Project	Genre Portfolios due by Sunday, March 16 at midnight.
March 17-March 23	Emotions and Writing -Read Yagelski: Writing as Praxis -Other Readings to Be Determined	Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 3/21).
March 24-March 30	Teaching Writing in the 21st Century: Assessment -Read Ch. 13 in Best Practices/Ch. 13 in Rhetoric -Read Nagin: Standards and Assessments for Writing -Read Wilson and Nimeczyk: Moving to the Center: Disorientation and Intention	Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 3/28). Writing Group 4: Strategies related to writing assessment due this week by Sunday, March 30.
March 31-April 6	Teaching Writing in the 21st Century: Responding to Student Writing -Read Wilson: Why I Won't be Using Rubrics to Respond to Student Writing -Read Sommers: Responding to Student Writing	Possible Puzzlement due this week (by Fri, 4/4). Writing Group 5: Strategies related to Evaluating/Responding to Student Writing due this week by Sunday, April 6.
April 7- April 13	Teaching Writing in the 21st Century: Working with Diverse and Multilingual Writers Readings to be assigned	Last week to turn in a Puzzlement! (by Fri, 4/11). Writing Group 6: Strategies related to working with diverse/multilingual writers due this week by Sunday, April 13
April 14- April 20	Teaching Writing in the 21st Century: Beyond the Written Word Readings to be assigned	Writing Group 7: Strategies related to non-text based writing due this week by Sunday, April 20. Draft of Final Projects due by Sunday, April 20.
April 21-April 27	Writing Week	Work on your final projects this week, and meet with writing groups to discuss.

April 28-May 2	FINAL PROJECTS DUE	Final projects due on Wednesday, April 30 by midnight.
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Possible Texts to Consider for your Strategies Assignment:

Marie Clay	How Very Young Children Explore Writing (Pathways to Early Literacy: Discoveries in Writing and Reading)
Anne Gere, Leila Christenbury, Kelly Sassi	Writing on Demand: Best Practices and Strategies for Success
David Kirkland	A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Young Black Men
Robert Yagelski	Writing as a Way of Being: Writing Instruction, Nonduality, and the Crisis of Sustainability
Martha Horn and Mary Ellen Giacobbe	Talking, Drawing, Writing: Lessons for our Youngest Writers
Georgia Heard	For the Good of the Earth and Sun: Teaching Poetry
Ted Kooser	The Poetry Home Repair Manual
Penny Kittle	Write Beside Them
Troy Hicks	The Digital Writing Workshop
Maisha Winn and Latrise Johnson	Writing Instruction in the Culturally Relevant Classroom
Lisa Miller	Make Me A Story: Teaching Writing Through Digital Storytelling
Matt Glover	Engaging Young Writers, Preschool To Grade 1
Mark Dressman	Let's Poem
Katie Ray	Wondrous Words
Nancie Atwell	Lessons that Change Writers
Traci Gardner	Designing Writing Assignments
Ralph Fletcher	Pyrotechnics on the Page
Mary Lee Prescott-Griffin	Writer to Writer
Carol Booth Olson	Practical Ideas for Teaching Writing as a Process at the High School and College Levels
Peter Elbow	Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process
Peter Elbow	Vernacular Eloquence: What Speech Can Bring to Writing
Kelly Gallagher	Teaching Adolescent Writers

Michael Smith, Jeffrey Wilhelm, James Fredricksen	Oh, Yeah?! Putting Argument to Work both In and Out of School
Nell Duke, Samantha Caughlan, Mary Juzwik, Nicole Martin	Reading and Writing Genre with Purpose in K-8 Classrooms
Katie Ray and Lisa Cleaveland	About the Authors

*Please note: This syllabus is subject to change per the instructor's discretion.

**I write this syllabus with thanks to Dr. Mary Juzwik, Dr. Janine Certo, and Dr. Anne Heintz, who have all taught past iterations of this course, and whose work has inspired my own course and syllabus construction. Dr. Anne Whitney and Dr. Christine Dawson were also instrumental in helping me plan this course.