



ENGL 5550.001

Studies in the Teaching of English

Fall 2023, University of North Texas

MoWe 2:00PM - 3:20PM, Lang 402 (the fishbowl!)

Instructor Information

Professor Matthew M. Heard, PhD.

Matthew.heard@unt.edu | LANG 409J (4th floor Language building) | Office Hours MW 11am - noon

Course Description

ENGL 5550 offers focused, specific, and relevant training in teaching practices and theories for graduate students who are teaching English courses or preparing to teach. Our goal for the semester will be to prepare you as a teacher to facilitate classroom learning and plan curriculum for future units and courses. We will take time each week to check in and reflect on what is going on in our classes, and we will use our own experiences and challenges to focus our reading, research and classwork on specific topics that are relevant to our classroom community this semester. Along the way, we will also pick up contemporary topics of conversation and debate in the fields of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, which have led the way in theorizing and examining the teaching of writing for many years.

Our class focus this semester will be "Teaching for Good," a line of inquiry that is also opens up questions about what "good" teaching requires. What is a "good" subject? A "good" classroom practice? What are "good" teachers and students? How are we as individuals uniquely oriented towards the "good" that we are responsible for addressing within first-year writing and English studies more broadly? These questions will necessarily require us to talk openly and honestly as a community this semester. We will also dig deep into research in order to help us address these questions in ways that advance conversations both locally and in our chosen fields.

Catalogue Description

Survey of current scholarly opinion concerning objectives and methods of instruction in written composition; supervised planning of the English curriculum, with special attention to problems related to teaching composition; development through practice of criteria for evaluating student composition.

Course Structure

This course will be taught face to face for one semester

Course Objectives

Over the course of this semester, you will be able to:

Know

- Practices for facilitating healthy classroom discussion and learning
- Methods for assessing composition
- Contemporary theories of teaching composition

Do

- Develop and execute class plans for undergraduate class sessions
- Plan curriculum for multiple units of first-year writing
- Find balance between teaching personality, student needs, and university expectations as a teacher

Understand

- How different student needs, expectations, and values affect the teaching of composition
- How larger cultural and corporate influences affect literacy and composition in the university

How to Succeed in this Course

ADA Accommodation

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) website (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Communication practices

To facilitate communication with me, please connect with me through my UNT email and/or by attending office hours. Keep in mind that I always try to respond to emails within 24 hours. Please reach out if you need help or want to talk over anything related to our class.

Success at UNT

UNT strives to offer you a high-quality education and a supportive environment, so you learn and grow. As a faculty member, I am committed to helping you be successful as a student. To learn more about campus resources and information on how you can be successful at UNT, go to unt.edu/success and explore unt.edu/wellness. To get all your enrollment and student financial-related questions answered, go to scrappysays.unt.edu.

Supporting an Inclusive Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and belonging. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are encouraged, personal attacks are unacceptable. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Required/Recommended Materials

Textbooks

1. Inoue, Asao. Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future. Parlor Press. Digital PDF FREE via WAC Clearinghouse: <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/perspectives/inoue/>
2. Course Readings – provided via our CANVAS page.

Technology requirements

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, students will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If circumstances change, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](https://online.unt.edu/learn) (<https://online.unt.edu/learn>).

Course Requirements

Assignments

Due dates and full descriptions of each assignment will be provided on our course Canvas site. For more information about using Canvas, please see <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-use-the-Syllabus-as-an-instructor/ta-p/638>.

Overview

Project	Percent of Total Grade
1. Book review	10
2. Topic Bibliography	15

3. Project - Research-Based Practice	30
4. Peer Teaching Review	15
5. Teaching Journal	15
6. Class Discussion and Participation	15
TOTAL	100

Peer Teaching Review

250 words each, 500 words total. You will need to make plans to visit two class periods taught by other instructors. One class period should be for an instructor teaching FYW. Another class period should be with a full-time faculty member (professor or lecturer) teaching a course other than FYW. Following this classroom visit, you will write a short review of each instructor's teaching, using classroom principles and terms to shape your description.

Book Review

500-750 words. For this assignment, you will review a book on the teaching of composition from the [WAC Clearinghouse online](#). The review will require you to read a scholarly book on teaching theory and practice. You will review the book by providing an evaluation of its potential effectiveness for helping your peers in learning to teach and theorize the teaching of composition successfully.

Topic Bibliography

750-1000 words. An annotated bibliography of 4-5 scholarly books on a topic of your choosing related to our course content--theorizing and practicing composition instruction. The book you choose for your book review can be part of this bibliography. Each annotation should include full bibliographic information and 4-5 sentences describing why the book should be considered useful to your peers in studying the teaching of composition. For ideas of topics, see the WAC Clearinghouse Book Series descriptions. <https://wac.colostate.edu/books/>

Project - Research-Based Practice.

Presentation (10-15 min). Project handout (2 pp). Project justification (750-1000 words). This project will require you to research, develop, and present a particular teaching practice that draws on contemporary composition scholarship and offers an effective intervention in the composition classroom. You will create a handout with instructions, tips, and research notes for other instructors to use. Additionally, you will present your information to other instructors and offer a written justification explaining how you developed your research and organized your information effectively.

Teaching Journal

250-300 words each week. An informal, low-stakes journal kept online through which you will respond to prompts each week and take time to reflect on your teaching experiences.

Assessment

For the purposes of this course,

- “A” WORK will constitute a final score of 90-100% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is impressively sophisticated and illuminating: inventive, balanced, justified, effective, mature, and expertly-situated in time and context
- “B” WORK will constitute a final score of 80-89.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is thorough and systematic: skilled, revealing, developed, perceptive, but not unusually or surprisingly original
- “C” WORK will constitute a final score of 70-79.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is acceptable but limited: coherent, significant, and perhaps even insightful in places, but ultimately insufficient in organization, articulation, perception, and/or effectiveness
- “D” WORK will constitute a final score of 60-69.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is incomplete and severely lacking: incoherent, limited, uncritical, immature, undeveloped, and overall not reflective of the performance expected of UNT undergraduates
- “F” WORK will constitute a final score of 0-59.99% of total points, and will represent an overall response that is unacceptable.

Academic Integrity

Every student in my class can improve by doing their own work and trying their hardest with access to appropriate resources. Students who use other people’s work without citations will be violating UNT’s Academic Integrity Policy.

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

The decision of the instructor will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity, which is responsible for maintaining student conduct records. The incident may result in an official disciplinary record for the student(s).

Academic integrity violations can include copying a passage from a source verbatim, but they can also include improper or misleading citations. Please note that all source material must be acknowledged, even if the material is paraphrased. Be careful to always acknowledge the work of other writers, and take the time to work out your thoughts and arguments without copying the work of others.

Please read and follow this important set of [guidelines for your academic success](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003) (https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003). If you have questions about this, or any UNT policy, please email me or come discuss this with me during my office hours.

Attendance and Participation

Please plan to make it to class each class period, and please let me know in advance if you will need to miss a class. If you miss more than 10% of classes this semester (3 class periods), I may take points off of your participation grade.

Note also that, in order to encourage your attendance, punctuality, and learning, I may provide pop quizzes of the previous week's material at the beginning of class. Plan to arrive on time because you must be present when class begins in order to take the quiz and receive credit.

Please also inform me if you are unable to attend class meetings because you are ill, in mindfulness of the health and safety of everyone in our community. If you are experiencing any COVID symptoms, please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider and consult with a professional before coming to class.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. All course readings will be provided on our Canvas site and/or through links to open access sources. Please keep up with our Canvas site for up-to-date readings and assignments. Note: students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact our class. See also [Emergency Notifications and Procedures Policy \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-049).

Week	Mon	Class Topic	Wed	Class Topic
Unit 1: Nuts and Bolts of Good Teaching				
Wk 1	21-Aug	Acknowledging UNT Teaching Expectations and Policies	23-Aug	Understanding the UNT FYW Curriculum
Wk 2	28-Aug	Facilitating classroom activities and discussions	30-Aug	Preparing class plans and unit plans
Unit 2: What counts for "good" teaching at UNT?				
Wk 3	4-Sep	BREAK – Labor Day!	6-Sep	Big questions: how are we prepared to teach for "good" within our roles in UNT English?
Wk 4	11-Sep	What responsibility do universities have to teach writing?	13-Sep	Understanding the role of writing instruction in the university
Wk 5	18-Sep	What role do textbooks and curriculum play in writing instruction?	20-Sep	Recognizing the curricular and textbook goals of our local FYW program
Wk 6	25-Sep	What larger community and coalitional goals do we serve as writing teachers?	27-Sep	Preparing for the responsibility of good teaching within the academy and the local community
Unit 3: What do good teachers do? What do good students do?				
Wk 7	2-Oct	Big questions: how do we approach the ideals of "good" teachers and "good" students in productive ways?	4-Oct	Recognizing UNT students: who are they and how do we teach them?
Wk 8	9-Oct	What do we not know or understand about students?	11-Oct	Acknowledging barriers to access and challenges for students
Wk 9	16-Oct	What practices of preparation lead to the best teaching environments?	18-Oct	Preparing curriculum and class plans

Wk 10	23-Oct	How do we assess writing fairly?	25-Oct	Planning for assessment
Unit 4: What can we do to be “good” teachers in the next semesters and beyond?				
Wk 11	30-Oct	Big questions: how do we get better as teachers through research and practice?	1-Nov	Witnessing conflicts and challenges in research on writing and teaching
Wk 12	6-Nov	How do we account for our own needs and goals as teachers?	8-Nov	Understanding teaching in the context of health and wellness
Wk 13	13-Nov	What changes in writing materiality and technology can we expect?	15-Nov	Researching trends in digital writing technologies and multimodalities
BREAK	20-Nov	NO CLASS!	22-Nov	NO CLASS!
Wk 14	27-Nov	How can we build community as UNT teachers?	29-Nov	Building networks for future semesters
Wk 15	4-Dec	What else about writing and writing instruction do we need to know?	6-Dec	Reflection, review, and preparation
F	11-Dec	Finals week (no class)	13-Dec	Finals week (no class)

Nuts and bolts of the first week: some topics to discuss

Breaking down class into modules

Facilitating Discussion

Grading and assessing student writing

Responding to student writing

Plagiarism

Textbooks and how to use them

Curricular goals

Handling disruptions

Accommodating students

Preparing for class

Teaching Argument

Teaching Narrative

Teaching Literacy

Teaching Style

Teaching Grammar

Big questions to address

What is the university's goal for educating students in English and first-year writing?

What is our responsibility as teachers to the writers in our classes?

What responsibility do students have for their own learning?

What are the most appropriate ways to engage students in learning in our classes?

How should we assess our students in order to encourage their "best" writing?