ENG 776: Approaches to Writing
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2016

Instructor: Shannon Carter, Professor of English
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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Texts:


Course Description:

English 776 examines the specific concepts necessary for student success in post-secondary writing. In other words, this course explores what students need to understand and apply to be successful writers in college and beyond, including methods for teaching composition in college. Throughout, the course will consider questions like the following: how does writing work? what does writing do? how do/can writers learn to become stronger, more sophisticated writers in a variety of contexts? what does doing so really mean?

Objectives:

- Demonstrate understanding of the “threshold concepts” necessary for student success in post-secondary writing;
- Demonstrate understanding of key research in writing studies that informs these threshold concepts;
- Demonstrate understanding of keywords in writing studies as informed by published scholarship in the discipline;
- Demonstrate ability to apply these concepts and keywords in writing instruction at the college level;
- Demonstrate understanding of the leading pedagogical approaches to writing instruction;
• Identify pedagogical approach(es), keywords, and threshold concepts most appropriate for student’s individual teaching philosophy and methods for writing instruction.

STATEMENTS

Campus Concealed Carry Statement
Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf> document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses.
Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

COURSE PLAN

Unit 1: Defining/Naming Threshold Concepts (weeks 1-8)
Objectives: Familiarize yourself with content knowledge in writing studies, a field of study that, for us, may also be labeled “rhetoric and composition,” “composition and rhetoric,” or “literacy studies. Understand the field’s terms (“keywords”), “threshold concepts,” and relevant scholarship and scholars. Be able to articulate what the research tells us about how writing works, how it does it, and how writers develop as writers.

Unit 2: Using Threshold Concepts (Weeks 9-11)
Objectives: Based on a deep understanding of the field’s terms, threshold concepts, and relevant scholarship and scholars, familiarize yourself with approaches to teaching students the content and procedural knowledge of our field—that is, what the research tells us about how writing works, how it does it, and how writers develop as writers (content knowledge) and how students can productively apply that knowledge as writers for a variety of purposes in a variety of contexts (procedural knowledge).

Unit 3: Threshold Concepts, Teaching Philosophies, and Course Design (Weeks 12-15)
Objectives: Apply what you learned in Units 1-2 to your own approach to writing instruction.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION
Assignment sheets, grading rubrics, and additional guidance for each of the following can be found at the appropriate link under the Course Home tab and in Doc Sharing (i.e., “Unit Response Paper,” “Final Project,” “Midterm Presentations,” “Book Review”)

PARTICIPATION (20%): To do well with this aspect of the course, you should contribute to the class discussion, raising questions, responding to classmates, and sharing insights in ways that keep the conversation moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways. Your contributions should demonstrate your careful reading of all assigned texts and preparation of any additional assignments. Wherever possible, take us to the text. Bring your readings to class so you have your notes on hand as we discuss them.

- **Discussion Leader (DL):** Twice this term, you will be required to serve as discussion leader for one of the chapters/articles assigned for that week. You can present individually or with a classmate. Review the syllabus for deadlines. You should all read all of the assigned chapters/articles so you can contribute fully to the class discussion on these readings; however, you need only read one of them as carefully and closely as is necessary to lead a discussion on them. A large portion of your participation grade will be determined by your performance as discussion leader.

- **Deadlines:** Throughout the term. See calendar below for specific deadlines.

RESPONSE PAPER (15%)

At the end of the first unit, you will complete a response paper that addresses key issues raised in the assigned readings and class discussions. Because the Response Paper (RP) will be submitted near midterm, I expect your RP to be well thought-out, critical, carefully written, and reflect a deep understanding of the assigned texts read and discussed throughout the unit. Your Response Paper will demonstrate your understanding of the Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies and major terms as articulated in our assigned texts, including Naming What We Know, Keywords in Writing Studies, and the CCC Poster Pages. [assignment sheet] [grading rubric]

- **Deadline:** Before class Week 9
- **Constraints:** Formal, 5-6 pages, MLA Style [MLA Format Guide]
- **Guidelines:** See Assignment Sheet and Grading Rubric above.

MIDTERM POSTER PRESENTATION (10%): Using the "CCC Poster Pages" as a model, create your own Poster Page for one of the Threshold Concepts discussed in our assigned text Naming What We Know. Like the models ("CCC Poster Pages"), your poster should not exceed one page (single-spaced, at least 10-point font, Times New Roman). Requirements include (a) complete title (Threshold Concept); (b) accurate, brief, concise, and informative summary of the selected threshold concept; (c) concise, insightful, and relevant description of the significance of this Threshold Concept to the field (writing studies/rhetoric and composition/composition studies) or the writing classroom; (d) complete, accurate citations for at least three scholarly publications that inform your understanding of the selected Threshold Concept (these three resources should include a complete citation for the relevant chapter in Naming What We Know); (e) relevant graphic/image to help communicate what you mean by the selected model Threshold Concept. For assignment sheet, template, and additional helpful materials, visit Doc Sharing in eCollege.
BOOK REVIEW (15%): One four-page review of a scholarly book in the field. These reviews are designed to expose the group to the wider scholarly conversation as well as provide you with the opportunity to do additional reading in an area of particular interest. The reviews should be similar in length and content to those found in a refereed scholarly journal in the discipline. Ideally, you should plan to submit this book review for possible publication. If interested in doing so, you should select a book that hasn’t been widely reviewed in our field’s key publications. For options, scan the references for each of our assigned texts. You can certainly select a scholarly book not referenced in our course readings if you prefer. That’s just a good starting place.

FINAL PROJECT (40%): A Teaching Portfolio in which you include the following: (a) an 8-10 page introduction that articulates the teaching philosophy, (b) a sample syllabus, which you should reference in your teaching philosophy with respect to the ways in which your course design and (c) sample writing assignment align with your teaching philosophy. Bonus: If you are considering pursuing a career in academia, you'll need one or more of the documents required below--especially your teaching philosophy. For details, go to the “Final Project” link under the Course Home tab in eCollege.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Key: Naming Threshold Concepts (NTC); Keywords in Writing Studies (KWS); A Guide to Composition Pedagogies (GCP)

UNIT 1: NAMING THRESHOLD CONCEPTS

Objectives: Familiarize yourself with content knowledge in writing studies, a field of study that, for us, may also be labeled “rhetoric and composition,” “composition and rhetoric,” or “literacy studies. Understand the field’s terms (“keywords”), “threshold concepts,” different ways to approach threshold concepts in the classroom, and relevant scholarship and scholars. Be able to articulate what the research tells us about how writing works, how it does it, and how writers develop as writers.

Week 1: 9/1

Introduction (to the course and one another)

- “CCC Poster Pages”: “Literacy/Literacies,” “Writing Studies,” “Composition,” “Rhetoric,” “Error,” “Process”

Week 2: 9/8

Naming Threshold Concepts/Composition Pedagogy

- NTC: “Introduction: Coming to Terms: Composition/Rhetoric, Threshold Concepts, and a Disciplinary Case” (Yancey); "Naming What We Know" (Adler-Kassner and Wardle), pages 1-14; "Metaconcept: Writing Is an Activity and a Subject of Study" (Wardle and Adler-Kassner), pages 15-16.
- GCP: “What is Composition Pedagogy? An Introduction” (Taggart, Amy Rupiper, H. Brooke Hassler, and Kurk Schick)
- KWS: “Introduction” (Heilker and Vandenberg)
- Frameworks for Success in Postsecondary Writing
- “CCC Poster Pages”: “Vocabulary,” “Revision,” “Process”
Week 3: 9/15

**Major Concept 1: Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Process**

*Discussion Leader Activity:* Select one chapter (each) from two of the assigned collections below. Before class meets, post your selections to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege. Everyone should be ready to talk about all of the assigned texts, including the “CCC Poster Pages.”

- **NTC:** “Writing is a Social and Rhetorical Activity” (Roozen), “Writing is a Knowledge-Making Activity” (Estrem), “Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences” (Lunsford), “Writing Expresses and Shares Meaning to be Reconstructed by the Reader” (Bazerman); “Words Get Their Meaning from Other Words” (Dryer); “Writing Mediates Activity” (Russell); “Writing is Not Natural” (Dryer); “Assessing Writing, Shapes Contexts and Instruction” (Scott and Inoue); “Writing Involves Making Ethical Choices” (Duffy); “Writing is a Technology through Which Writers Create and Recreate Meaning” (Brooke and Grabill)
- **GCP:** “Basic Writing” (Mutnick and Lamos), “Collaborative Writing” (Kennedy and Howard), “Community-Engaged” (Julier, Livingston, and Goldblatt), “Critical” (George), “Expressive” (Burnham and Powell)
- **CCC Poster Pages:** “Voice,” “Invention,” “Assessment,” “Audience,” “Discourse Community”

Week 4: 9/22

**Major Concept 2: Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms**

*Discussion Leader Activity:* Select one chapter (each) from two of the assigned collections below. Before class meets, post your selections to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege. Everyone should be ready to talk about all of the assigned texts, including the “CCC Poster Pages.”

- **NTC:** “Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms” (Bazerman), “Writing Represents the World, Events, Ideas, and Feelings” (Bazerman); “Genres are Enacted by Writers and Readers” (Davidson); “Writing is a Way of Enacting Disciplinarity” (Lerner); “All Writing is Multimodal” (Ball and Charlton); “Writing is Performantive” (Lunsford); “Texts Get Their Meaning from Other Texts” (Roozen)
- **GCP:** Feminist” (Micciche), “Genre” (Devitt), “Literature and Composition” (Farris), “New Media” (Brooke), “Online and Hybrid” (Hewett)
- **CCC Poster Pages**: “Genre,” “Multimodality,” “Rhetorical Situation,”

Week 5: 9/29
Major Concept 3: Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies

Discussion Leader Activity: Select one chapter (each) from two of the assigned collections below. Before class meets, post your selections to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege. Everyone should be ready to talk about all of the assigned texts, including the “CCC Poster Pages.”

- **NTC:** “Writing Enacts and Creates Identities and Ideologies” (Scott); “Writing is Linked to Identity” (Roozen); “Writers’ Histories, Processes, and Identities Vary” (Yancey); “Writing is Informed by Prior Experience” (Lunsford); “Disciplinary and Professional Identities are Constructed through Writing” (Estrem); “Writing Provides a Representation of Ideologies and Identities” (Villanueva)
- **GCP:** “Process” (Anson), “Researched Writing” (Howard and Jamieson), “Rhetoric and Argumentation” (Fleming)
- **Composition Forum (Special Issue: Writing and Transfer):** “From the Editors” (Weisser, Ballif, and Wardle)
- **“CCC Poster Pages”:** “Research,” “Language,” “Vocabulary”

**Week 6: 10/6**

Major Concept 4: All Writers Have More to Learn

Discussion Leader Activity: Select one chapter (each) from two of the assigned collections below. Before class meets, post your selections to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege. Everyone should be ready to talk about all of the assigned texts, including the “CCC Poster Pages.”

- **NTC:** “All Writers Have More to Learn” (Rose), “Text is an Object of Oneself That Can Be Improved and Developed” (Bazerman and Tinberg); “Failure Can Be an Important Part of Writing Development” (Brooke and Carr); “Learning to Write Effectively Requires Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort” (Yancey), “Revision is Central to Developing Writing” (Downs), “Assessment is an Essential Component of Learning to Write” (O’Neill), “Writing Involves the Negotiation of Language Differences” (Matsuda)
- **GCP:** “Second Language Writing” (Matsuda and Hammill), “Writing in the Disciplines and Across the Curriculum” (Thaiss and McLeod), “Writing Center” (Lerner)
- **KWS:** “English” (Canagarajah), “Multilingual/ism” (Tardy), “Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines” (Thaiss)
- **WPA:** “Understanding ‘Transfer’ from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study.” (Wardle)
- **Composition Forum:** “Creative Repurposing for Expansive Learning: Considering ‘Problem-Exploring’ and ‘Answer-Getting’ Dispositions in Individuals and Fields” (Wardle), “The Question of Transfer” (Taczak)
- **Exploring Composition Studies**: “Transfer, Portability, Generalization: (How) Does Composition Expertise ‘Carry’?” (Donahue), “Reimagining the Nature of FYC Trends in Writing-about-Writing Pedagogies”
- **“CCC Poster Pages”**: “Language,” “Vocabulary”

**Week 7: 10/13**

**Major Concept 5: Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity**

*Discussion Leader Activity:* Select one chapter (each) from two of the assigned collections below. Before class meets, post your selections to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege. *Everyone should be ready to talk about all of the assigned texts, including the “CCC Poster Pages.”*

- **NTC:** “Writing is (Also Always) a Cognitive Activity” (Dryer), “Writing is an Expression of Embodied Cognition” (Bazerman and Tinberg), “Metacognition is Not Cognition” (Tinberg); “Habituated Practice Can Lead to Entrenchment” (Anson); “Reflection is Critical for Writer’s Development” (Taczak);
- **KWS:** “Literacy” (Lindquist), “Location” (Clary-Lemon), “Materiality” (Bawarshi), “Body” (Shellenberger), “Gender” (Shellenberger), “Queer” (Kopelson), “Work” (Dryer)
- **Composition Forum:** “Mapping the Research: The State of Writing-Related Transfer Research” (Moore), “Selecting Genres for Transfer: The Role of Update in Students’ Antecedent Genre Knowledge” (Roundsaville), ”Notes Toward a Theory of Prior Knowledge and its Role in College Composers’ Transfer of Knowledge and Practices” (Yancey), “Beyond Knowledge and Skills: Writing Transfer and the Role of Student Dispositions” (Driscoll and Wells), “The Value of Troublesome Knowledge: Transfer and Threshold Concepts in Writing and History” (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick)

**Week 8: 10/20**

**Midterm Presentations: Posters on Threshold Concepts**

This week, we will wrap up Unit 1 (Naming Threshold Concepts) and introduce Unit 2 (Using Threshold Concepts). You will also present and submit your posters on threshold concepts. Before class, post your poster—ideally as a pdf to preserve formatting—to the “Poster” link under the Week 8 tab in eCollege. Doing so will ensure your classmates will have easy future access to your posters. *To facilitate class discussion on the day of your presentation, please bring enough hard copies for everyone since we won’t all have access to computers.*

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**UNIT 2: USING THRESHOLD CONCEPTS**

*Objectives:* Based on a deep understanding of the field’s terms, threshold concepts, and relevant scholarship and scholars, familiarize yourself with approaches to teaching students the content and procedural knowledge of our field—that is, what the research tells us about how writing works, how it does it, and how writers develop as writers (content knowledge) and how students can productively apply that knowledge as writers for a variety of purposes in a variety of
**Week 9: 10/27**

**Unit 2: Introduction to Using Threshold Concepts**

- **Response Paper due.** Before class, post it to the “Response Paper” link under the Week 9 tab in eCollege. You will present highlights from your response paper to the class.
- **NTC:** “Introduction: Using Threshold Concepts” (Adler-Kassner and Wardle)

**Week 10: 11/3**

**Using Threshold Concepts in Program and Curricular Design**

*Discussion Leader Activity:* Select one chapter from NTC. Before class meets, post your selection to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege.


**Week 11: 11/10**

**Enacting Threshold Concepts across University**

*Discussion Leader Activity:* Select one chapter from NTC. Before class meets, post your selection to the “Sign Up” link for this week in eCollege.


**UNIT 3: Threshold Concepts, Teaching Philosophies, and Course Design (Weeks 12-15)**

*Objectives:* Apply what you learned in Units 1-2 to your own approach to writing instruction.

**Week 12: 11/17**

**Book Review due**

*Overview: Final Project*

This week, we will discuss your Book Reviews and begin Unit 3. Before class meets, post your book review to the “Book Reviews” link under the Week 12 tab in eCollege. Be prepared to share highlights from your Book Review during class (informal, brief summary of your key points). Through eCollege, your classmates will have access to your complete Book Review. In
the second half of our class meeting, we will discuss your Final Project, including presentations of this project, which are scheduled to take place 12/8.

**Week 13: No Class Meeting**

Happy Thanksgiving!

**Week 14: 12/1**

No Required Class Meeting

I have cancelled our class meeting this week to give you additional time to work on your final project. During our regularly scheduled class time, however, I will be available to meet with anyone who would like to discuss their Final Project and/or ask questions.

**Week 15: 12/8**

Final Project Due!

Before this week’s class meeting, post your Final Project to the “Final Project” link under the Week 15 tab in eCollege. Be ready to present it to the class when we meet.