

# WR 440/540 Teaching of Writing

Western Oregon University

Dr. Jason Waite

[waitej@wou.edu](mailto:waitej@wou.edu)

HSS 302

503.838.9495

Office Hours: MW 2-3; T 12-3

## Texts:

Olson, Carol Booth. *The Reading/Writing Connection*. 3rd ed. Boston: Pearson, 2007.

Ray, Katie Wood. *What You Know by Heart*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002.

## Overview

Teaching people how to write effectively is tough. Teaching them to write well is even tougher. Some people will even go so far as to say that writing cannot be taught - that some people can do it and some can't. In this course, we will start with the assumption that writing can be taught, and we will work hard to figure out how to do it. Through readings, reflection on our own experiences as both writers and students of writing, familiarizing ourselves with the Oregon Department of Education's writing assessment standards, and doing lots of writing ourselves, we will explore the theory and practice of teaching people how to write both effectively and well.

With that said, by the end of this course you should have a good idea of how to organize a writing course/curriculum around learning objectives that flow from various teaching philosophies, how to develop exercises that help students understand and fulfill course objectives, how to write assignments that work toward fulfilling course objectives, and how to assess student writing in a number of ways (e.g., holistically and with analytical scales).

## Attendance

If you don't show up to class regularly (i.e., pretty much every time we meet), you won't do well in this course. In-class work and discussions are an integral part of this course, and your assignments must demonstrate a significant engagement with in-class activities. Bottom line: whether or not you come to class is up to you. If you choose not to come to class regularly, be prepared to face the consequences (i.e., not learning a whole lot and getting a low grade). As future teachers you should recognize the importance of regular attendance. Would you expect your future students to do well if they missed a lot of school? I do understand that things come up that are beyond your control. If you have to miss class I would appreciate it if you let me know in advance. I would be happy to meet with you to talk about what you missed; there is a limit to this, though (i.e., I will not recreate an entire class meeting during office hours or via email). If I have to miss class (don't hold your breath), I will let you know (via email and a notice posted by the classroom door) as soon as I can.

## Classroom Conduct

If you use your cellphone in any way (texting, etc.) during class, be prepared to be asked to leave the classroom. You should also be prepared to be asked to leave if you engage in excessive, disruptive (i.e., loud) chatting about

things not related to class.

If for some reason you need to make yourself available for phone calls during class, please let me know.

### **DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations at Western Oregon University, you are required to have your accommodations coordinated through the Office of Disability Services (ODS). ODS is located in APSC, Rm. 405. Phone: 503-838-8250 VTTY. Email: [ODS@wou.edu](mailto:ODS@wou.edu)  
*Veterans and active duty military personnel with special circumstances are welcome and encouraged to communicate these, in advance if possible, to the instructor.*

### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

Code of Student Responsibility

574-031-0030 Specific Standards and Policies

The following list of prohibited forms of conduct is not all inclusive since it is not possible to list all potential violations. The University requires that all students behave in a manner congruent with established community standards and in a manner conducive to the development of the individual. Actions detrimental to the mission of the University and the legitimate activities of the academic community which constitute the University are in violation of this Code and may be subject to judicial procedures.

1) Academic dishonesty, which includes but is not limited to:

(a) Cheating- intentional use or attempted use of artifice, deception, fraud, and/or misrepresentations of one's academic work;

(b) Fabrication- unauthorized falsification and/or invention of any information of citation in any academic exercise;

(c) Facilitating dishonesty – helping or attempting to help another person commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes students who substitute for other persons in examinations or represent as their own papers, reports, or any other academic work of others;

(d) Plagiarism- representing without giving credit the words, data, or ideas of another person as one's own work in any academic exercise. This includes submitting, in whole or in part, prewritten term papers of another or research of another, including but not limited product of commercial vendor who sell or distribute such materials. And the appropriation of and/or use of electronic data of another person or persons as one's own, or using such data without giving proper credit for it; or

(e) Any use or attempted use of electronic devices in gaining an illegal advantage in academic work in which use of these devices is prohibited, and such devices include but are not limited to cell phones, pdas, laptops, programmable calculators, etc.

### **Assignments**

**More detail about the requirements of each assignment, including grading criteria, will be given as we move through the term. Unless otherwise arranged, assignments should be delivered in hard-copy. If delivery via email is pre-arranged, you must send the document as an MS Word document (".doc" or ".docx.") or as an Apple Pages document.**

**Discussion/Presentation Groups:** For each day that a reading is assigned, you will meet with your assigned discussion group to talk about the reading assigned for that day. To prepare for the group work you should take notes while you are doing the assigned readings that engage, question, and otherwise address the material. Class-wide discussion will follow. Each group will have an opportunity to lead the class-wide discussion of one of the readings. Leading the class

discussion will require you to prepare your notes more formally than is necessary for regular group discussion. It will also require you to prepare a formal plan for leading the discussion. The plan should include a summary of the reading, a list of at least ten questions derived from the reading, and potential answers to your posed questions, and commentary (e.g., what do you think the value of the reading is? Are there potential problems with the reading? And so on). You will be turning both your individual notes and the group's plan in to me. **20% of Final Grade**

**Mini Lessons:** Along with a group of your colleagues, you will be required to design a "mini lesson" that you will teach to our class. This assignment has two parts. The first is a detailed document that explains the lesson (i.e., a "lesson plan" and justification) and provides a detailed account of each group member's responsibilities; you'll turn this document in on the day your group is scheduled to present. The second is the presentation of the lesson (i.e., "teaching the lesson"). **25% of final grade**

**Reflective Essay:** In 1500-3000 words, focus on a particular experience with writing that you have had as a student. Then, provide some detail concerning how traces of that experience have shaped your attitude toward writing and later experiences with writing that you have had.

**This is not a "research paper."** With this assignment, I am solely interested in your experience with writing and how that experience has shaped the person you have become. Although the essay is not a research paper, I do expect you to place your reflection within the context of the class readings and discussions. You will be sharing your essay with your colleagues through peer review. **25% of final grade**

**Final Exam:** The final will be a take home, open-book exam and will consist of three questions. Everyone will have to respond to the first question and then will choose two others from a list. Including all questions, the exam should be about 8-10 pages. **30% of final grade**

#### **Late Assignments**

Assignments are due in class on the date given in our schedule. Late assignments will be accepted but not without penalty. Two points will be deducted from your paper if it is turned in after class and for each twenty-four hour period after the due date (this includes weekends).

**Schedule (subject to change); please have readings done on the day that they are listed.**

#### **Jan.**

- 9 First day of class
- 11 Olson 1 and Ray1; Craft Analysis Workshop
- 16 MLK Holiday
- 18 Ray 3&4
- 23 Olson 3 and Ray 2
- 25 Olson 9
- 30 Mini Lesson Prep

#### **Feb.**

- 1 Ray 6 and Olson 10
- 6 Mini Lessons
- 8 Mini Lessons
- 13 Mini Lessons
- 15 Mini Lessons (if needed); Ray 7
- 20 Olson 11; Reflective Essay due for Workshop/Peer Review
- 22 Final draft of Reflective Essay due; Present Essays for Extra Credit
- 27 Olson 13; Present Essays for Extra Credit
- 29 Ray 8; Present essays for extra credit

#### **Mar.**

- 5 Ray 9; Present Essays for Extra Credit
- 7 Final Exam Distributed; Present Essays for Extra Credit; Conferencing

12 Present Essays for Extra Credit  
14 Final Exam Due

Finals Week: I'll be at a conference