Course Description
Since Mina Shaughnessy (1977) articulated her views of “basic writers”/“basic writing” with *Errors and Expectations*, the challenges and joys of teaching underprepared students how to write specifically to meet the expectations of an academic audience have been debated. Of course, this short history is embedded in the longer history of composition and the “woes” of underprepared college writers. Social factors such as the GI bill and other efforts to provide a college education to greater numbers of students, usually driven by national economic interests, have led to the fact that writing “abilities” of our current student population has become increasingly relevant to administrators, politicians, and the public. We are caught, additionally, between the narrowing gap of the 2014 No Child Left Behind deadline crippling K-12 education, increasing political pressure to make higher education accountable, and budget-driven pressures to both recruit and retain as many students as we can, even in an “elite” public institution such as Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

“Basic writing” questions are relevant to all levels of education, but we will focus on post-secondary teaching issues such as placement, assignments, definitions, and related social, political, and historical issues to the teaching of basic writing.

For this course, a background in composition theory is assumed; the theories of writing as process and the history of composition and rhetoric will not be covered. Students who have not previously taken composition theory will be at a disadvantage. All students, however, are expected to review references to major theories/authors if that is necessary to make readings clear.

Learning Objectives
Students will be able to:
- Analyze and synthesize current scholarship and major questions/issues related to the teaching of basic writing,
- Consider overlaps and concerns with other sub-fields of composition, and composition broadly,
- Become aware of the national organizations and professional resources available to teachers of basic writing,
- Connect national conversations regarding basic writing (both scholarly and otherwise) with concrete teaching experiences and local institutions,
- Define a personal philosophy of teaching basic writing, syllabus, and assignments suitable to use in job applications.
Graduate Studies Standards
I assume that you are all serious students who come to this course with the intent to learn; by that I mean to expand your knowledge, to challenge your assumptions, to seriously consider the questions raised by the course. To that end, certain behaviors are expected:

1. Students read weekly assignments on time, completely, to the last page, and they come to the seminar with serious response and a willingness to discuss.
2. Students do not assume that an assignment is legitimate only if it will be "tested." The work is done for its own sake.
3. Students expect that they will attend 100% of the time, and make home arrangements so that this will happen.
4. Students assume that open and equitable discussion and critique is the soul of a graduate seminar. Everybody participates. Students don't put the burden on the teacher or on other students to originate or maintain discussion.

(Graduate Studies Standards courtesy of Dr. Jan Haswell)

Late Assignments
I expect that you will do all your work on time and attend every class. There are no make-ups for reading responses, research project drafting, the midterm exam, and/or in-class participation activities unless a student has a documented crisis, such as an extended illness, in which case he/she must make arrangements with me in writing or face-to-face meeting. However, these make-ups will not be casually or automatically given.

The (1) Interview/observation report, (2) teaching portfolio, and (3) research project will be counted late and 5 points per day will be deducted unless arrangements are made in advance.

Grade Appeal Process
As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Respect for Diversity
We are the most diverse campus, in terms of self-disclosed ethnic identity, in the Texas A&M system. This means that we are all meeting and working with people who are different from ourselves in terms of their identities: whether that is defined by their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and/or religion. Respecting and accepting difference is vital to your success in this class, on this campus, as a future teacher in your own classroom, and in the global community.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism
I hope that I never have to question a graduate student's honesty, dedication or hard work. Plagiarism in this course would be constituted by presenting an essay, reflective writing, and/or discussion questions that you have not written as your own, and/or using a research source's words or ideas as your own without accurate citation in MLA or APA style. In the case that plagiarism or academic dishonesty
happens, students will fail the course. I will send a letter describing the situation to the Graduate Studies Director. Further action may be taken by the department.

**Notice to Students with Disabilities**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.), please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office, located in Driftwood 101, at 825-5816. If you qualify for a disability accommodation in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

**Books and Materials—FREE—See Wiki for Additional Resources**

- *Basic Writing*, by George Otte and Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk, 2010, Parlor Press and WAC Clearinghouse. (Available online or in print)

**Books and Materials—TAMU-CC BOOKSTORE or ONLINE**


**Major Assignments and Grade Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date Due</th>
<th>Percent of Total Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/In-Class Participation</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Journal/Online discussion</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview/Observation Report</td>
<td>June 8</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam (take home)</td>
<td>June 10 distributed</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>June 16 due</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Portfolio</td>
<td>June 18</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Philosophy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Syllabus w/ writing assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Responding to student writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Reflective Overview</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Project or CompFAQs</td>
<td></td>
<td>40% total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Topic selection</td>
<td>June 22</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Working annotated bib.</td>
<td>June 15</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Peer review DRAFT</td>
<td>June 17</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Final paper draft</td>
<td>June 25</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Oral presentation</td>
<td>June 30</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- WC visit</td>
<td>July 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Attendance/In-Class Participation (5%)**
Generally, Graduate Student participation is not a challenge; however, if it becomes evidence that students are unprepared for class, I will instigate assignments that will assess the level of preparation, which means I will begin to assign reading quizzes and/or other measures of individual accountability.

**Reading Discussion Postings (15%)**
For the work we do each week, you will be required to participate in the 5361 reading discussion/journal on wiki. Prompts will be posted.

**Interview/Observation Report (10%)**
Observation and interview with a teacher of basic writing, basic writers, and/or writing center consultant. Prior approval required. 4-5 page report. *(Detailed assignment on website)*

**Midterm Exam (15%)**
You will be asked to write an essay to synthesize your teaching philosophy and practices with the theories and scholarship of composition studies AND the scholarship of teaching and learning. Integration of readings, correct MLA, and academic discourse are required.

**Teaching Portfolio (15%)**
- Philosophy
- Syllabus w/writing assignments
- Responding to student writing
- Reflective Overview

**Research Project—Conference-Style Research Paper or CompFAQs Posting (40%)**
- Topic selection
- Working annotated bib.
- Peer review DRAFT
- Final paper/posting
- Conference-Style presentation
- WC visit