



## WRTC 336 Tutoring Writing

Spring 2018 Featherstone

[feathejj@jmu.edu](mailto:feathejj@jmu.edu)

Mon/Wed 9:05-9:55 a.m.

Classroom: University Writing Center

Office: SSC 1128, phone 8-6967

Office hours 10-11 a.m. Mon/Wed and by appointment

To learn, read.  
To know, write.  
To master, teach.  
-Hindu proverb

### Course Description

This writing-intensive course introduces students to the theory and practice of tutoring writing in academic settings and is suited for preparing tutors and teachers who will use writing across the disciplines. The course includes an apprenticeship in the University Writing Center and provides students with opportunities to develop as writers, scholars, and professionals. Students will be eligible for, *but not guaranteed*, employment as a consultant in a university writing center.

### Course Objectives

This course calls for the thoughtful study and practice of writing and its teaching. Learning objectives include the following:

- understanding writing center goals and functions
- knowing key terms and concepts for tutoring
- capably assessing writing problems

- communicating effectively with writers
- providing appropriate strategies for drafting, revising, and editing
- adapting instruction for diverse learners
- observing and practicing tutoring
- developing a mentoring relationship with a current tutor
- improving your own skills in writing & research
- reflecting upon your experiences

One of the goals of this course is to familiarize you with a collaborative teaching/tutoring model. To this end, this course takes a unique approach to teaching and learning by bringing together undergraduate students and professionals in the same classroom. Throughout the semester, we will also invite current tutors, university faculty, and other campus experts to contribute. We hope that you will welcome this unique experience and help to promote collaboration.

### **Textbooks**

The publisher has generously loaned each of you copies of the following two texts: Christina Murphy & Steve Sherwood's *The St. Martin's Sourcebook for Writing Tutors* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) and Leigh Ryan & Lisa Zimmerelli's *The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors* (6<sup>th</sup> ed. ).

*Note:* At the end of the semester, you will return these books. If you drop the course, please return the books to us so that others can use them. Also, please try to keep the books in good condition. Supplemental reading materials will be posted to Blackboard or available elsewhere online.

### **Our Classroom**

I plan for classes in advance. My planning includes the assumption that everyone has done all of the reading, discussion board posts, and other assignments for the day. If you show up to class unprepared, it will directly affect your participation grade. More importantly, it will affect the learning experience of your classmates and my ability to teach. The depth of our discussion is only possible when you arrive prepared. Please don't make the mistake of thinking that ANY participation is good. If you waste our class time trying to pretend that you have done the reading or assignment, I will be annoyed. More importantly, you will cheapen the classroom experience of your peers and bring their motivation down. **\*Any assigned reading is fair game for a graded quiz or in-class writing. Be prepared for this.**

## Outside of our classroom

I expect everyone to do *all* of the reading for the course. Your discussion contributions, questions, and writing should reflect a close engagement with the reading material. You are not likely to do well if you rely on skimming and prior knowledge alone. Most of your work will be done outside of the classroom. The sooner you understand this, the better.

## Genuineness

I encourage you to take your education seriously and be genuine. This does not mean that we won't have fun. We will. What it means is that you make full use of your educational opportunity, an opportunity many people in the world will never have. Here are some attitudes that won't get you much respect or fulfillment (or employment) around here: *What's the minimum I can do to get through this course with a decent grade? How can I quickly fill these pages so I can turn the paper in and just be done with it? How can I read just enough of this article so that the professor thinks I've read it?* Here are some attitudes that are more likely to lead to learning, respect, and fulfillment (and probably better grades): *How can I apply what I'm learning from the readings, class discussions, and guest speakers? How can I connect the readings to my personal experience of tutoring? What can I do to improve the quality of ideas and the clarity of language in my papers?* Another aspect of genuineness is sharing your honest thoughts in the classroom. We are all here to learn, not to appear cool or simply defend what we already think we know. We are here to think critically about ideas, readings, and our own writing.

## Attention and Mindfulness training

"The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will. . . An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence." -William James, 1890

In working one-to-one with students and faculty, our effectiveness hinges on our ability to pay attention. Because of the various cultural and technological challenges we face in learning to cultivate sustained attention, we will spend time in class and out of class practicing exercises to increase our ability to focus. Numerous studies in modern neuroscience and psychology have found that mindfulness training enhances one's ability to focus, learn, cope with stress, and

empathize, so we will make use of these techniques. Each student will keep a "mindfulness journal" to reflect upon the training and its application in everyday life.

## **Communication**

Please use the Canvas messaging system to contact me. If you message me, you can generally expect a reply within 24 hours with the exception of weekends or holidays. If you email me between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. (Eastern Standard Time), you are likely, though not guaranteed, to get a quicker response. When I am off-campus after 5 p.m. weekdays or during weekends/holidays, I am likely to be chasing a toddler or a crawling baby, so I am not likely to check or respond to messages in a timely manner.

Please note that you are responsible for keeping up with the syllabus, schedule, and assignment requirements. I will not necessarily remind you or make announcements about readings and assignment details.

Please check your email regularly for the duration of this course. I might make announcements or syllabus changes during the week. I might also clarify an idea from the readings or course discussion.

## **Course Policies**

### **Registration:**

Students are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying their class schedules on e-campus.

The last day to drop a Spring Semester without penalty is 1/16. The last day to withdraw from the course with a "W" is 3/16.

Please read over the [full explanation of registration deadlines](#).

### **Withdrawals:**

A student may withdraw from a course via e-campus prior to the course adjustment deadline and receive a "W" grade. After the course adjustment period, a student may request a withdrawal directly from the instructor of a course. If the faculty member approves the withdrawal, he or she may assign a "WP" grade for a student who is passing the course at the time of the withdrawal request or a "WF" grade for a student who is failing the course at the time of the withdrawal request. Assignment of the "WP" or "WF" grade is solely at the discretion of the instructor after discussion with the student. The instructor will assign the "WP" or "WF" grade at the time final grades are entered. As an alternative to granting the late course withdrawal with a "WP" or "WF" grade, the instructor may also deny a student's request for withdrawal after the course adjustment deadline. In this case, the student would be expected to remain in class and receive an earned grade at the end of the semester.

### **Honor Code:**

Students should adhere to the [JMU Honor Code](#) concerning academic dishonesty. Students are expected to abide by its precepts at all times. I distinguish between *intentional* and *unintentional* plagiarism. **If a student *intentionally* plagiarizes in a paper or is found being dishonest on an assignment for this class he or she will receive an F for the course.** Forms of academic dishonesty include the following:

**Collusion**-- lending your work to another person to submit it as his or her own;

**Fabrication**--deliberately creating false information on a works cited or reference page, and

**Plagiarism**--the presentation of another person's work as your own, whether you mean to or not.

### **Attendance Policy:**

College of Arts and Letters Policy Concerning Absences during the First Week of the Semester:

- Any student registered for this class who does not attend the first two (2) scheduled meetings of the class will be administratively dropped from this course. Students

dropped for non-attendance will be notified via e-mail by the Associate Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

- Students who fail to attend the first two meetings of class but who do not receive an e-mail notification have not been administratively dropped. Unless those students drop the course on their own, they will receive a grade at the end of the semester.
- All students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their schedules and changes made in their schedule via e-mail and through the web at <http://www.jmu.edu/registrar>.

### Paperless classroom (well, almost)

Don't get too excited. You will write papers for this class. However, you will submit all work electronically through Canvas. All course handouts (including the syllabus and schedule) and extra readings will be posted in Canvas. I encourage you to avoid printing course materials out unless necessary. If you must print, please use double-sided paper and recycle all paper when finished. Bins are available in every campus building. Sustainability is a part of JMU [culture](#), so please accept your responsibility.

### Grading Criteria

<b><u>Course Investment –</u></b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Contributions to in-class discussion, preparedness, effort given to practices and simulations</li><li>2. <i>Mini lesson.</i> Select a writing skill or topic that you're especially anxious or ignorant about (e.g., comma rules, annotated bibliographies, business proposals). Review handbooks, the UWC's link library, and other resources until you feel confident in this new area. Then, in a 5-minute presentation, teach your colleagues something they may not already know about the topic and, more importantly, how to tutor students who need help with this writing skill; refer to any resources that would be helpful during tutoring sessions, and show your colleagues how to use these resources.</li><li>3. Other in-class and outside of class assignments.</li></ol>	10%

<p><b><u>Apprenticeship</u></b> -The most challenging, useful, and rewarding part of this course will involve apprenticing in JMU’s writing center. Your apprenticeship will consist of three phases, through which you will observe tutoring (4 sessions), tutor collaboratively (4 sessions), and practice tutoring on your own (4 sessions). In all, the apprenticeship will require 12-15 hours of work outside of class, not including reflection papers.</p> <p>Reflection is an essential component of the apprenticeship, and this will be formalized in the reflection papers due for each phase.</p>	35%
<p><b><u>Tests</u></b></p> <p>Students will be tested on grammar, punctuation, citation, genre, and other types of specialized knowledge needed by writing tutors.</p>	10%
<p><b><u>Online Discussion Boards</u></b></p>	30%
<p><b><u>Learning Journal and Final Reflections</u></b> You will write biweekly informal journal entries based on the professor's prompts and a culminating self-reflection paper.</p>	15%

### Optional non-tutoring track

Although most students of WRTC 336 become increasingly excited by the opportunity to be a tutor, some do not. Some students realize that this work does not suit them, and that is completely understandable. Others discover some other activity or work that they want to prioritize. If you decide you won’t be applying to be a tutor in the UWC (which is perfectly fine and will not offend me), you will write an additional 3-5 page paper instead of completing last phase (or last two phases if you make your decision early enough) of the apprenticeship. Please contact me if you begin doubting your desire to be a tutor. You’ll need to schedule a meeting with me to discuss required essay for the non-tutoring track. Please note that your choice to take the non-tutoring option will not affect your grade adversely, nor will it make me dislike you personally.

## Grading Scale

A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-
98-100	94-97	90-93	88-89	84-87	80-83	78-79	74-77	70-73

## Grade Inflation

Average work will receive an average grade, which is a "C." To get higher than a "C," you must produce work that goes beyond fulfilling the requirements of the assignment. Below average work will receive a below average grade, which is a "D" or an "F." The fact that you received an "A" for your high school English classes or your previous writing courses does not obligate me to give you an "A." If you are willing to work hard, you should be able to get the grade you want. However, I suggest that you focus on learning, not grades. This course is meant to enhance your understanding of the tutoring craft and prepare you to be a professional writing consultant. That is the goal.

## Late Work

Work that is turned in after the due date will not receive full credit. Assignments will lose 10 percentage points for each day they are late. If you feel that an emergency might prevent you from turning in an assignment on time, please contact the instructor in advance of the due date. If you are involved with a sports team or campus organization that causes you to miss class, you should contact me in advance of the class you will miss.

## Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit for this course. In-class writings, quizzes, and activities can't be made up. See me about making up tests.

## **Disability Accommodations**

JMU abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which mandate reasonable accommodations be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodations, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate provision of accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services for students with disabilities. The office is located on the first floor of the Student Success Center and you may call 540-568-6705 for more information.

## **Religious Observation Accommodations**

All faculty are required to give reasonable and appropriate accommodations to students requesting them on grounds of religious observation. The faculty member determines what accommodations are appropriate for his/her course. Students should notify the faculty by no later than the end of the Drop-Add period the first week of the semester of potential scheduled absences and determine with the instructor if mutually acceptable alternative methods exist for completing the missed classroom time, lab or activity.

## **Classroom Etiquette**

As a class, we form a learning community. I spend time preparing for class and giving you thoughtful feedback on your work. Your peers deserve your respect.

1. Out of respect for me and your classmates, I ask that cell phones are kept out of sight and completely silent (not on vibrate) during class time. Texting during class is out of the question. This is good practice for your future tutoring sessions during which you will give your undivided attention to the client.
2. Please do not talk while the instructor or a classmate is addressing the class. This is extremely disrespectful to the person speaking. Again, this is an opportunity to practice active listening.

3. If you have a laptop, ipad, or netbook in class, it should only be used for tasks directly related to that particular class session. Unless it is part of the class assignment for that day, other websites, such as Facebook, should not be open.