ENGL 505M:

Professional Writing Practicum

Fall 2005: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:00-1:15pm, HEAV 227

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Required Materials

Texts

Teaching Technical Communication: Critical Issues for the Classroom.


Materials
Please be sure to make numerous backup copies of all your work on different media.
I strongly recommend purchasing a USB Drive (called “thumb” or “jump” drive – 16 mb should be fine).

Course Description
Reading professional literature on the teaching of professional and technical writing. Studies of methodologies, issues of assessment, and the relationship between theory and pedagogy. This course is not part of the degree requirement. Open only to teaching assistants in the Department of English.

This course is designed for new instructors of ENGL 420 and 421. Its aim is to prepare instructors to teach both classroom and online versions of English 420, Business Writing, and English 421, Technical Writing at Purdue by introducing relevant theories and teaching strategies through readings, class discussion, and hands-on workshops.

As you begin teaching Professional Writing, we will consider distinctions between teaching and researching composition, or academic writing, with professional, or non-academic writing. While this is too simple a dichotomy, it provides a common place where we can begin exploring the unique features of professional writing. One goal is to build a broader understanding of rhetoric in a variety of pedagogical and institutional contexts. Another is to build resources for program use. Whether your primary interest is professional writing or another field, this class provides a theoretical and pedagogical basis for effectively teaching professional writing. Students will interact both with students in the service courses, 420 and 421, as well as in the professional writing major, particularly students in 306. Over the course of the semester, students will participate in online discussion, write short documents relating to the teaching of professional writing, propose a final pedagogical project, and complete the longer project designed to prepare instructors to be independent and effective professional writing teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Professional Writers and Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line discussion</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Aug 23-Sep 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student interview</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sep 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>First classroom visit</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Oct 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second classroom visit</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nov 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogical Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Proposal: PW Teaching Project</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Oct 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedagogy Showcase</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Nov 22</td>
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<td>Wrap-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class Conference Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Nov 29-Dec 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
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<td>100% Total</td>
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Assignment Descriptions
Exploring Professional Writing and Writers
During the first four weeks of classes, you will be reading about the field of professional writing, planning your semester’s major projects, and engaging in discussions with mentors and students. Discuss your impressions of your PW classes and goals. Make time to meet with and learn about the department’s professional writing majors, and make time for 306 students to interview you. Expect to produce a short document each week both in class and online, and participate in discussion on such topics as:

- What is professional writing? What is its history?
- How do academic and non-academic writing interact?
- How do they interact productively for our needs?
- Who are professional writing majors?
- How do majors differ from service (420/421) classes?
- What pedagogical research needs to be done?

Mentoring
Undergraduate mentoring
Early in the semester, undergraduate majors enrolled in 306 will ask to interview you. Make time—perhaps half an hour—for them to ask you questions about your work in professional writing. After they have asked their questions, find out about professional writing majors at Purdue. Post your impressions, findings and thoughts to the online discussion, and compare your findings with others’: did your interview match other instructors’? Remember that you are learning from them: what can you find out from these students that will help you improve your class?

Peer mentoring
At two points in the semester, you will visit another instructor’s classroom. Remember that your primary purpose for attending is not to evaluate but to observe: How is your classroom different from this one being observed? What can you learn from another instructor? What have you seen that you will bring back to your classroom? Submit an observation report after each visit. In addition, each instructor will be visited by Michael and/or Peg during the semester.

Pedagogical Project
The major document for the semester is the pedagogical project which presents a developed syllabus with commentary, presents classroom research, or investigates a significant classroom issue either for presentation to students or for submission for publication. Students may choose to focus on a wide range of issues related to teaching professional writing, including:

- Assignment development
  - OSDDP as a long project in 420/421
  - White Paper assignment: defining workflows and classroom planning
- Technology development
  - Drupal or another technology (CSS, XML) for professional writing
  - Commercial and open-source software in the classroom
- Content for Professional Writing
  - Ethics in the professional writing classroom
  - Mentoring in the professional writing curriculum
  - Visual rhetoric and document design in professional writing
- OWL resource development
  - One option is to work with the writing lab to develop materials for online distribution

In order to complete this assignment, students will submit a proposal by Oct 20, prepare materials for public presentation during the annual Pedagogy Showcase (date TBD), and re-present revised materials to the class during a two-day mini-conference (Dec 6, 8). Discuss your pedagogy project with the instructor before the proposal is due. While you may be tempted to teach a project you are developing, you should closely follow the suggested syllabus through your first semester and plan to integrate your project next semester. We will be reading about two projects that were developed in the professional writing program at Purdue so that you have a sense of the scope as well as the history of this assignment.
## Calendar

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Deadlines &amp; Reading Assignment</th>
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| 1    | Aug 23, 25 | Introduction: What is Professional Writing (and how do we teach it?) | Read Spinuzzi handout and syllabus for Aug 25  
Read Dubinsky 1-23, esp Miller |
Read PWO, Instructor Resources |
| 3    | Sep 6, 8 | Professional Writing Majors: Who majors in PW? | Read Dubinsky 63-140, esp Connors, Thralls & Blyler  
Read PWO, Rhetoric of Professional Writing |
| 4    | Sep 13, 15 | Mentoring, Informing: Interviewing and being interviewed | Mentoring interview completed  
Read Dubinsky 207-278, esp Mirel  
Read PWO, Usability Testing |
| 5    | Sep 20, 22 | Writing in Groups: The limits of classroom simulation | Read Dubinsky 279-393, esp Spinuzzi  
Read PWO, Document Principles |
| 6    | Sep 27, 29 | Evaluation and Rubrics: Articulating goals and values | Read Dubinsky 395-476 and rubric.doc |
| 7    | Oct 4, 6 | Ethics in PW classroom: Rhetorical Ethics | First classroom visit completed  
Read Dubinsky 141-206, esp Porter  
PWO, Social and Cultural Issues |
| 8    | Oct 11 | Fall Break | No class |
|      | Oct 13 | Mentoring Checkpoint | Read Grabill & Simmons PDF, Staggers & Zoetewey PDF |
| 9    | Oct 18, 20 | Articulating our Projects | Pedagogical project proposal due |
| 10   | Oct 25, 27 | Technology in the PW classroom | Read Dubinsky 477-568, esp Breuch  
Evaluating PWO: Usability and the text |
| 11   | Nov 1, 3 | Is the Future of PW Your Future? | Read Dubinsky 569-620, esp Johnson-Eilola |
| 12   | Nov 8, 10 | Peer mentoring, being mentored, and evaluating mentoring | Second classroom visit completed |
| 13   | Nov 15, 17 | Pedagogy Showcase: Public Presentation  
Tentatively scheduled – date TBD | Pedagogical project completed |
| 14   | Nov 22 | Evaluation revisited | Evaluating the longer project in 420 |
|      | Nov 24 | Thanksgiving | No class |
| 15   | Nov 29, Dec 1 | Who are Professional Writers? | Read Final Interview Reports from 306 students. |
| 16   | Dec 6, 8 | Mini-conference | In-class conference presentation |
Course Policies

Attendance
You are expected to be in class every Tuesday and Thursday, participate in online discussion throughout each week, participate in collaborative work in-class and out, and to produce documents by each deadline. Each missed class is significant: communicate with the instructor regarding any missed class time. After two absences, student grades will be impacted. Please discuss multiple absences with the instructor.

Communication
Early in the semester, you will be asked to demonstrate your ability to:

- Access your Career Account and use your @purdue.edu email address,
- Send and receive email messages to the class list, email and open attachments, and follow email decorum,
- Check the course calendar before the beginning of each class, and
- Back-up your work via your home directory, disks, and/or email attachments to yourself.

Online Discussion and Classroom Participation
Email and online discussion allow students to pursue topics and ideas outside of class time. Every student is required to participate in online discussion. Online and classroom participation will be evaluated as 20% of the final grade. I read many posts to class discussion. However, I try to limit my participation so students have an opportunity to develop their own understanding of the material. Please keep in mind that online discussion is an extension of classroom space: post material you feel is appropriate for classroom discussion. Generally, if you check email a few times each week and post questions and concerns as they occur to you during your preparation for class, you will maintain an appropriate level of participation. Do not hesitate to ask questions online: chances are that someone in class has the same question, and often someone has an answer. Sometimes the question you are asking is far more complicated than you had imagined. There is no single “right” way to have an online discussion. You must participate in the online discussion in order to receive a grade in this course.

Due Dates and Grading
Please submit assignments when they are due. Late work is not acceptable. While I am happy to discuss grading practices and policies and will do my best to explain why students receive certain evaluations, grades are rarely changed. Please visit me in my office during office hours, and use email to contact me between class meetings.

Academic Integrity
Academic dishonesty is a serious crime. If you are suspected of academic dishonesty, you may be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students who may pursue disciplinary action. Forms of academic dishonesty include: Collusion - lending your work to another person to submit as his or her own; Fabrication - deliberately creating false information on a works cited page; and Plagiarism - the presentation of another person's work as your own, whether intentional or not. Please read and familiarize yourself with Purdue's student guide to academic integrity located at: [http://www.purdue.edu/usp/acad_policies/student_code.shtml].

The Writing Lab
The Writing Lab (located at 226 Heavilion Hall) offers a variety of writing resources for all students and teachers at Purdue, including half-hour tutorials, workshops, handouts and books, public use computers, a collection of tapes and software for writers of English as a Second Language (ESL), and an inexhaustible supply of animal crackers. Many of these resources can be accessed from the Online Writing Lab (OWL) at http://owl.english.purdue.edu. For more information, call 494-3723.

The Digital Learning Collaboratory (DLC)
The DLC (located in the lower level of Hicks Undergraduate Library) offers an active learning environment with a number of resources that you can access to help create multimedia projects. As a student, you can check out equipment, use the high-speed Macs and PCs, learn new software, or reserve space to work collaboratively on a class project. For more information, go to http://dlc.purdue.edu/, send e-mail to DLC@purdue.edu, or call 494-3751.

Adaptive Programs
The Adaptive Programs division of the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS) can arrange for assistance, auxiliary aids, or related services if you think a temporary or permanent disability might prevent you from gaining access to departmental or university resources listed above. Contact ODOS at 494-1247 or [www.purdue.edu/odos/] with any individual concerns.

Non-Discrimination
The instructor will not knowingly infringe anyone’s rights and will do his best to maintain access and safety for all students. Raise any concerns during or after class if you feel the classroom environment (whether due to instructor or student action) is hostile or otherwise inappropriate.