

College Writing: Theory and Practice

Spring 2024 (CRN: 21819)

Prof. Lori Jacobson

Office: Swem Library 145A (Writing and Communication Center)

Office Hours: Thursday 1:00-2:30 or by appointment

Zoom Personal Meeting Room: <https://cwm.zoom.us/my/lori.jacobson>

Email: ljacobson@wm.edu

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Course Title: College Writing: Theory and Practice (WRIT 399)

Meeting Times: MW 12:00-12:50, Tucker 325

Zoom Classroom (for occasional use, as needed): <https://cwm.zoom.us/j/96214631929>

Scheduled Exam Time: Tuesday, May 14, 9:00-12:00*

**This course does not have a final exam. The final paper will be due during the exam time.*

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the history, theory, and practice of tutoring writing in academic settings. Participants will explore and discuss the ideas that shape writing center practices, and they will develop a toolkit of practical strategies to use during one-on-one consultations. Course topics include: process pedagogy, collaborative learning, consulting across cultures and abilities, working with various genres and disciplines, global to local revision strategies, and information literacy. Assignments in this course will allow participants to observe, analyze, and reflect on consulting sessions and will culminate with a personal philosophy of consulting.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Available in Blackboard (Bb):

The Bedford Guide for Writing Tutors (6th edition)

Additional articles and excerpts, videos, and podcasts

Available as free, open education resources (OER):

Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence

<https://milnepublishing.geneseo.edu/writing-in-college-from-competence-to-excellence/>

Purdue Online Writing Lab

<https://owl.purdue.edu/>

III. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students in this course will:

- Understand writing as a process of discovery and investigation as well as a mode of communication.
- Gain insight into the writing processes of writers.
- Learn tutoring strategies for conferring with writers.
- Learn to apply theoretical concepts and pedagogical techniques to meet the needs of individual writers.
- Develop an awareness of writing genres and expectations across a variety of academic disciplines.
- Cultivate the listening presence and service mindset typical of effective consultants.

IV. COURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

Assignments and Evaluation: I will use Blackboard to post all assignments and will use its announcements function to keep you up to date on class activities. Remember to check email daily.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

15%	Participation and Engagement
15%	Reflection 1 “How I Write”
20%	Reflection 2 “Consultant as Consultee”
20%	Reflection 3 “Consultation Observation”
30%	Reflection 4 “My Philosophy of Consulting” (with Presentation)

Grading Scale:

93-100 = A	73-76 = C
90-92 = A-	70-72 = C-
87-89 = B+	67-69 = D+
83-86 = B	63-66 = D
80-82 = B-	60-62 = D-
77-79 = C+	0-59 = F

Participation and Engagement: Think of our class as a learning team and think of yourself as a vital member of the team. Plan to come to class on time and prepared. Preparation includes completing all reading and writing assignments and bringing thoughtful questions and comments to share with the class. In class, listen actively and respectfully to your instructor and your peers, contribute to the class discussion, and make an earnest effort on in-class activities.

The following ongoing learning activities are also factored into your participation grade:

 **Consulting Toolkit**

Throughout the semester, you will use a shared Google Jamboard to pin reminders and gather ideas that contribute to your developing knowledge of tutoring practices. You

might want to post notes on practical strategies for tutoring writing, effective questions to deploy during tutoring sessions, significant passages from readings, useful links, and more. The toolkit is intended to be a resource that you can return to as you craft your philosophy of consulting and begin your work in the WRC.

Discussion Questions

As indicated in the course calendar, you will post discussion questions in Blackboard after completing most reading assignments. From time to time, you will receive a discussion prompt instead. The primary purpose of these discussion questions or prompts is to help you engage with course ideas and make connections across readings.

Guidelines for Discussion Questions:

1. Write these questions to engage the attention of your peers; they will sometimes be used to stimulate class discussion.
2. Look for ways to connect your questions to issues and ideas we have explored through our readings and conversations.
3. Questions should make a direct connection to the reading(s). Most good discussion questions start with a sentence or two to provide context.
4. Read your classmates' discussion questions. When possible, make connections in your question to their ideas.
5. When there are multiple readings assigned on one day, you are only required to post a question about one of the readings.
6. However, your question may instead address a common theme, issue, or controversy that appears in more than one of the readings.

Alternating Groups + In-Class Response:

To maintain a manageable workload, you will be divided into two groups that will alternate responsibility for posting discussion questions. For example, students in Group A might be required to post questions on Monday, while Group B posts on Wednesday. Occasionally, both groups will be asked to post. These changes will be clearly labeled in Blackboard as GROUP A, GROUP B, and ALL. During the first five minutes of each class, you will read all the discussion questions and respond to one.

You must complete 14 of the 18 discussion questions/prompts for full credit.

Consultant Handbook + Checklist + Mentors

The *Consultant Handbook* describes the policies and procedures that guide the WRC's daily operations. You will review the Handbook with an experienced consultant, who will be assigned as your mentor. Complete the included checklist as you read and

discuss each section. Mentors and mentees should also seek out additional opportunities for engagement (e.g., consultation observations, walk-and-talk, etc.).

You will receive a mid-term assessment of your class participation (with clear feedback about how to improve your grade).

Assignments: Detailed assignment prompts will be provided in class and on Blackboard. Deadlines are listed in the course schedule.

Reflection Papers: These papers allow you to analyze your thoughts about and experiences with writing and consulting. As analytical essays, each should have a thesis, and be well-organized, fully developed, and grounded in our course readings and discussions.

Reflection 1—How I Write: (2-3 pages) In your first reflection paper, you will examine and discuss your own writing process. As part of this assignment, you will schedule an appointment in the WRC to brainstorm ideas or work on your draft. In the *Bedford Guide*, Exercise 3D “The Writing Process in Action” (Topic 1, p. 49) will help you get started. You may also want to refer to the questions in Exercise 4B “Reflecting on Your Own Writing Concerns” (p. 71).

Reflection 2—Consultant as Consultee: (2-3 pages) In your second reflection paper, you will describe and analyze your experience being a consultee as you prepared for your “How I Write” reflection paper. Exercise 3E “Reflecting on Being Tutored” will help you get started (pp. 50-51).

Reflection 3—Consultation Observation: (2-3 pages) For your third reflection paper, you will first observe 3 consultation sessions led by experienced WRC consultants. In your first session, you will simply observe and take notes; in your second session, you will participate; and in your third session, you will lead. After completing these observations, describe and analyze your experiences and explain what you learned from them. You will receive observation sheets to fill out during each session. Exercise 2B “Observing Tutoring Sessions” will help you get started (pp. 25-26).

Reflection 4—My Philosophy of Consulting: (4-6 pages) For your final reflection paper, you will articulate your personal philosophy of consulting. Your paper should synthesize the ideas you have developed about: your work with student writers, course readings and discussions, and your observations of and conversations with other consultants. A consulting philosophy should draw on the theories and practices of others, but it frames these in a highly personalized way. It reveals *your* conception of tutoring writing, describes *your* tutoring practices, and offers a justification for why you tutor the way you do. Refer to Exercise 9A “Articulating Your Tutoring Philosophy” for more ideas (p. 128).

Presentation—Crafting My Philosophy of Consulting: (5 minutes, with slides) In our last two class sessions, you will present your emerging philosophy of consulting and share the process you are using to develop it.

Conference

This semester, you will have one one-on-one conferences with Prof. Jacobson shortly after you hand in Reflection 3. At this conference, we will discuss your writing, your growth as a consultant, and your emerging thinking about your philosophy of consulting.

Revisions (Optional)

You have the option to revise any paper after receiving Prof. Jacobson’s comments, but keep in mind that revision involves more than simply correcting grammar and spelling errors. Revision (literally “to see again”) requires you to think deeply and reconsider what you’ve written and how you’ve written it. Revisions are due one week after you receive your feedback from Prof. Jacobson. Revisions are graded by averaging the original grade with the revision grade. NOTE: Reflection 4 is due during our final exam period, so you will not have the option to revise it.

V. COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Because seminar-style courses depend on the participation of all students, your presence in class is essential. **You will be allowed two unexcused absences—no questions asked.** Each additional unexcused absence will lower your grade by one-third of a letter grade (A- to B+, for example). Excused absences include those arranged with me beforehand and those accompanied by appropriate documentation (such as notification from the Dean’s Office). W&M also urges faculty to be sensitive to scheduling conflicts related to religious holidays. Please see the [Guidelines for Religious Accommodations](#) regarding absences for religious observances.

Course slides, readings, assignments, and materials produced by classmates will all be available via Blackboard. If you must miss class, use these resources to remain up to date.

Class Climate: The class climate of a successful seminar-style course is open-minded and collegial. Most of our class periods will be filled by small- and large-group discussion of the assigned readings as well as collaborative activities. For this work to be productive, all students need to feel comfortable participating. We will strive to create and maintain an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Readings: You should complete all assigned readings by the start of class and bring the readings to class (on your laptop, or hard copy). Class activities are directly linked to the assigned readings.

Assignments and Deadlines: All assignments must be completed to receive a passing grade for the class. You may turn in one assignment late without penalty (but you must let me know in advance when you are choosing this option); otherwise, late work will receive a reduction of one-third of a letter grade for each day late. I will not give an “Incomplete” except under extreme and documented circumstances.

Manuscript Preparation: All papers should follow MLA format (including one-inch margins and 12 point, Times New Roman font); see the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) page for “MLA General Format” and guidelines posted to Blackboard.

Important Dates: The deadline to add or drop a class is February 2. The deadline to withdraw from a course is March 25.

Honor Code: The pledge of the W&M Honor Code states, “As a member of the William & Mary community, I pledge on my honor not to lie, cheat, or steal, either in my academic or personal life. I understand that such acts violate the Honor Code and undermine the community of trust, of which we are all stewards.” I expect you to uphold this pledge in your classwork; all of the work you produce for this course should be your own. We will devote class time to the ethical use of sources, but if you have additional questions about avoiding plagiarism, please ask me.

Generative Artificial Intelligence: Because the primary purpose of the writing assignments in this course is reflection on your growth as a writing center consultant, the use or incorporation of any AI-generated content (from ChatGPT, Dall-e, etc.) in assignments is not allowed. Reflection occurs in the process of writing these papers, so using generative AI tools may interfere with your learning. These tools are likely to affect your work as future writing consultants, however, so we will find ways to explore their use during the semester. Please limit your use of these tools for this class to these exploratory activities.

VI. **RESOURCES FOR IMPROVING WRITING, RESEARCH, AND STUDY SKILLS**

The Writing and Communication Center, located on the first floor of Swem Library, is a free service provided to W&M students. Trained consultants offer individual assistance with writing, presentation, and other communication assignments across disciplines and at any stage, from generating ideas to polishing a final product. To make an appointment, visit the WRC webpage: www.wm.edu/wrc.

Swem Library Research Librarians are available to help you find the resources you need for any research project or paper. Make a research appointment online through the Swem Library home page: libraries.wm.edu.

The Tutor Zone offers free time management consultations and tools to help students improve their time management and college-level study skills. Contact the Tutor Zone at tutorzone@wm.edu. Or [visit their website](#) to make an appointment.

VII. ACCOMMODATIONS AND WELL-BEING

Please be aware of the following two policies related to accommodations and well-being:

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact **Student Accessibility Services** staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas.

William & Mary recognizes that students juggle different responsibilities and can face challenges that make learning difficult. There are many resources available at W&M to help students navigate emotional/psychological, physical/medical, material/accessibility concerns, including:

- The **W&M Counseling Center** at (757) 221-3620. Services are free and confidential.
- The **W&M Health Center** at (757) 221-4386.
- For additional support or resources & questions, contact the **Dean of Students** at 757-221-2510.

For more resources available to students, see: www.wm.edu/offices/wellness/resources/.

VIII. UNIVERSITY EVENTS

Recognized student organizations provide an opportunity for students to become engaged citizens. As part of my commitment to being an engaged faculty member, I like to support these organizations by attending events, performances, exhibits, debates, festivals, and so on. If there is an opportunity for me to attend one of your events, please let me know through email or after class. When possible, I make every effort to attend and see how you are helping create an engaging learning environment for all of us.

IX. NEWSPAPER & MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS (FREE)

William & Mary Libraries provides unlimited access to the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *The Atlantic* to current students, faculty, and staff. Learn how to create your free accounts: <https://libraries.wm.edu/databases/newspaper-subscriptions>

X. SYLLABUS ICONS



Discussion Questions (Post)



Consulting Toolkit (Check-in)



Consultant Handbook Checklist (Deadline)






Conference (Schedule)














Revisions (Optional)







XI. WRIT 399 COURSE SCHEDULE






 Discussions  Consulting Toolkit  Conference  Checklist  Revisions



DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 1			
M Jan 22	Staff Meeting Meet the Consultants Meet in the Swem Research Room (First Floor)		
W Jan 24	Course Introduction		
WEEK 2			
M Jan 29		Flowers, "Roles and the Writing Process" Lamott, excerpt from <i>Bird by Bird</i> Elbow, "Freewriting" from <i>Writing Without Teachers</i>	 Post one question or observation about the syllabus.
W Jan 31		Murphy and Sherwood, "The Tutoring Process: Exploring Paradigms and Practices" North, "The Idea of the Writing Center"	 Make an appointment at the WRC (schedule opens on 2/3).
WEEK 3			
M Feb 5 Meet in Ford Classroom	Staff Meeting Opening Day	BG Chapter 1, "The Writing Center as Workplace" BG Chapter 2 "Inside the Tutoring Session"	 Post one question for the current consultants. They will answer these during the staff meeting.

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
W Feb 7		Lunsford, "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center" Ede, "Writing as a Social Process"	
WEEK 4			
M Feb 12		Melzer, "Understanding Discourse Communities" Rothrock, "No Good Writers: Why Discourse Community Matters"	
W Feb 14		Brooks, "Minimalist Tutoring" Carino, "Power and Authority in Peer Tutoring"	
WEEK 5			
M Feb 19 Meet in Ford Classroom	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: TBD</i>	BG Chapter 3 "Tutoring Writers through the Writing Process" Kendall, "The Assignment Sheet Mystery"	 Post one question for the current consultants. They will answer these during the staff meeting. DUE: Reflection 1 - "How I Write"
W Feb 21 <i>Prof. Jacobson at SWCA Conference</i>	Guest Lecturer: Michael Clay (OUAA) Consulting on Personal Statements and Scholarship Essays	Browse through the "Writing for Scholarships, Internships, Jobs" resources linked in the WRC's "Re:Sources for Writing" web page.	 
WEEK 6			
M Feb 26		Harris, "Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors" Capdevielle, "Why Do You Ask?"	

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
W Feb 28		Mackiewicz and Thompson, "Motivational Scaffolding"	
WEEK 7			
M Mar 4 Meet in Ford Classroom	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: TBD</i>	BG Chapter 4, "The Writers You Tutor"	 Post one question for the current consultants. They will answer these during the staff meeting. DUE: Reflection 2 - "Consultant as Consultee"
W Mar 6	Guest Lecturer: Prof. Len Neighbors (Speech) Helping Students with Presentation Skills	Listen to the <i>Think</i> podcast "How to Give a Speech without a Script" from January 9, 2024 Browse through the Presentations and Visual Aids resource links in the WRC's "Re:Sources for Writing" web page to familiarize yourself with the options.	
WEEK 8			
M Mar 11	Spring Break		
W Mar 13	Spring Break		
WEEK 9			
M Mar 18	Participation Self-Assessment	Grimm, "New Conceptual Frameworks" Video: Writing Across Borders [29:58] Video: Cultural and Linguistic Awareness [6:49]	

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
W Mar 20		Cox, "Identity Construction, Second Language Writers, and the Writing Center" Matsuda and Cox, "Reading an ESL Writer's Text"	
WEEK 10			
M Mar 25 Meet in Ford Classroom	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: AI in the Writing Center</i> Trainees sign up for one consulting hour per week.	Deans, et al., "AI in the Writing Center: Small Steps and Scenarios"	 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
W Mar 27		D'Agostino, "AI Has a Language Diversity Problem. Humans Do, Too." Tiku, Schaul, and Chen, "This is How AI Image Generators See the World"	
WEEK 11			
M Apr 1	*Sign up for one chapter to read from the book Multimodal Composing. Trainees begin consulting one hour per week	Rinaldi, "Disability in the Writing Center" Kiedaisch and Dinitz, "Changing Notions of Difference in the Writing Center: The Possibilities of Universal Design" Hughes, "The Writing Center's Lack of Focus: Tutoring Students with ADHD" (Presentation)	 
W Apr 3		BG Chapter 5, "Helping Writers across the Curriculum" <i>Disciplinary Writing Guides</i> (select and read two from unfamiliar fields)	

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
WEEK 12			
M Apr 8	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Role Play Tutoring Situations</i>	BG Chapters 6 and 7 “Addressing Various Tutoring Situations” and “Tutoring in the Information Age”	 <p>Post one question for the current consultants. They will answer these during the staff meeting.</p> <p> 1 Sign up for a one-on-one conference with Prof. Jacobson.</p> <p>DUE: Reflection 3 - “Consultation Observation”</p>
W Apr 10		Grutsch McKinney “New Media Matters” One chapter from <i>Multimodal Composing: Strategies for Twenty-First-Century Writing Consultations</i> (see sign-up sheet from Monday, April 1).	
WEEK 13			
M Apr 15		Thonney, “Teaching the Conventions of Academic Discourse” Guptill, <i>Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence</i> , chapters 1-3.	
W Apr 17		Guptill, <i>Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence</i> , chapters 4-5.	
WEEK 14			

DATE	IN-CLASS	READING	ASSIGNMENT
M Apr 22 Meet in Ford Classroom	Staff Meeting <i>Staff Meeting Topic: Opening and Closing Routines</i>	Geller, "Tick-Tock, Next: Finding Epochal Time in the Writing Center"	
W Apr 24		Guptill, <i>Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence</i> , chapters 6-9. Video: Richard Lanham – Revising Prose [27:39]	 
WEEK 15			
M Apr 29		Presentations	DUE: Presentation - "Crafting My Philosophy of Consulting"
W May 1	<i>Last Day of Class</i>	Presentations	
Tu May 14	<i>Reflection 4 is due by noon (the end of our scheduled exam time).</i>		DUE: Reflection 4 - "My Philosophy of Consulting"