

Syllabus

English 606 is a practicum course, but most importantly it's a community of teachers. We will work together to reflect critically about our teaching of 111. This reflection will be used to both revise and expand our 111 plans and prompts, as well as to start developing a more concrete understanding of what your pedagogy is and is not. A key part of this will be the sharing of our joys, our struggles, our fears, our insights, and our challenges as new teachers at Miami. We'll work together to adapt our individual and collective 111 plans to the needs of the individual students we find in our classes. We will observe, analyze, and discuss our pedagogies with one another in order to work toward some sense of your pedagogy. We'll develop unique activities for 111 and share them with our fellow teachers. And, as we keep talking and keep writing and (dare we say it) keep reflecting, we'll ultimately end up transforming the 111 curricula.

Grading

Practicum is graded on a pass fail basis. *Do all the work, and you will pass.* If you ever turn in something that doesn't meet the "passing" standard, we'll contact you privately and give you a chance to revise.

Policies

Basically, come to class every day, work hard, be trustworthy, be kind, and let us know how we can best help you learn. (See legalese below)

- Access / Accommodations. We are committed to maximizing your learning potential and making this course as accessible as possible. If there is any way that we can adapt this course to better meet your unique needs as a learner, please let us know! If you have a documented disability, we are especially interested in providing any accommodations that have been best determined by you and the office of disability resources (Links to an external site.) in advance.
- Attendance. If you miss more than two classes, you will not pass the practicum course. Please attend every day and contact us in advance if you ever need to miss.
- Lateness. Please be on time. Two days late equals one absence. Talk to us if you have a scheduling problem.
- Respect. As we are clearly aware of by now, this is a lively group with a lot to say. In order to make sure that everyone has a space to talk, let's all maintain the respectful atmosphere that we have already established and keep this a place where we all feel welcome to contribute.
- Evaluation of Student Work. All assignments must be completed satisfactorily in order to pass the practicum. If your work is ever not meeting the "satisfactory standard," Jason will let you know and give you a chance to revise. While you may turn in two assignments up to a week late, excessive lateness (more than one week or more than two times) will result in failure for the practicum.

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- Confidentiality of Student Work. When sharing student work in class, please remove the student names. While you may refer to particular students in your teaching blog, please refrain from using their full names (and you might also choose a pseudonym if their first name is unusual).

Assignments

- Teaching Journal

The teaching journal is an opportunity for you to reflect critically on your classroom experiences, to learn from your own approaches and consider how you might implement change in productive ways. Not only is it important in the teaching process to reflect, but this can serve you when you teach your future classes. In other words, you are building a document to help you design and plan for future courses. Your journal can be digital (in GoogleDrive) or handwritten (turn in during class).

Select a lesson plan for a day of class or an isolated activity to reflect on. You have two options each week: a narrative approach or an annotated heuristic/lesson plan. For narratives, aim for around 200 words (though we're happy to read more!). For the annotations, write at least 3 substantive comments in that they should address: What you're commenting on? Why it's important, and How you could see it improving or changing?

Essentially, in your journals, you should be thinking about:

- Why did you initially design the activity or the specific lesson plan for the day?
 - What, in your day or activity, worked best?
 - What didn't work as well as you hoped? (think through why it didn't work; consider ways to better structure the activity or brainstorm ideas for a different activity)
 - How have your experiences this week shaped how your view your role in the classroom? How has your teacher persona and/or philosophy evolved or been reaffirmed?
- Dialectic Notebook

When due on the schedule, you'll contribute a minimum of 3 entries to our collaborative dialectic notebook about the readings. One entry might be a quote / paraphrase of a text (left side of notebook) or a response to a quote / question (right side of notebook), one will be a response to a peer's response (a comment in the margin or a reply to another's comment). In responding to quotes / paraphrases, you can be guided by the heuristic questions above (though your reflections in the journal will necessarily be more concise than those in the journal). Write your name at the end of each entry (for example, "-Bridget").

- Miscellaneous Informal Writing

At various times listed on the schedule, we'll ask for scaffold plans, samples of comments on student essays, reading responses etc.

- Activity Showcase

Towards the end of the semester, you will present an activity you developed or used in ENG 111 you feel was innovative, worked well, and/or failed miserably. This project is meant to help us cultivate an archive of activities to draw from in current or future courses. Your presentation will be 3-4 minutes followed by 1-2 questions from the class. You will also develop a 1-page handout that summarizes the activity (with steps for other teachers to use should they adopt the activity into their course and list any readings that accompanied the activity) and the rationale as to why you did the activity, how it was framed for students, and what topics or concepts it engages.

- Teaching Observation Narrative

In order to learn more about diverse approaches to teaching composition, we will ask that you sit in on a class session of a fellow teaching associate and write a reflective observation narrative about the experience.

To contextualize the session you observe, please ask for a copy of the teacher's syllabus / schedule and also ask them to tell you a bit about their approach to the inquiry they are currently teaching as well as specific outcomes for the day on which you will be observing them.

While you are sitting in on the class session, take detailed digital or handwritten notes of what you observe. Start by just simply recording what is happening minute by minute: what is the teacher doing and saying? what are the students doing and saying? who is talking and writing and who is not (considering factors such as gender and location in the room)? how does the teacher organize the activities and transition from one to the next? how is the room arranged? what technologies are being used? Your goal at this point is simply to capture on paper or screen as much detail about the class session as you can.

After your observation, you will then have an informal conversation with the teacher, telling them what you noticed and getting their perspective on what was most successful and/or challenging about this particular class session. You should make sure to include the teacher's perspective on the session in your narrative

Following the observation and conversation with the teacher, your goal is to draw upon your notes to write a reflective observation narrative (approximately 500 - 750 words) in which you describe what you observed and reflect about what you learned from the process.

Some questions you might consider as you compose your narrative include:

- 1) What learning goals or objectives did the teacher seek to achieve in the course session? What course activities seemed most or least productive for achieving those learning goals?
- 2) What evidence of student learning were you able to observe in the session itself?
- 3) What course activities seemed to provoke the most or least engagement from students? Why?
- 4) What strategies did the teacher use to organize course activities and convey information to students? Were there any moments in which students seemed confused and if so how might the teacher have clarified his or her instruction?
- 5) Can you point to any moments in which students demonstrated original critical inquiry or independent critical thinking? What did the teacher do to help students come to develop novel insights about writing, rhetoric, or another topic?
- 6) How would you describe the teacher's ethos and relationship to students? What specifically did the teacher do to cultivate this ethos / relationship?
- 7) What did you learn from the process of conducting this observation? Did you notice some pedagogical strategies that you might apply or adapt for your own teaching? Did you gain new insights into how your own classroom might appear from the students point of view? Did you find yourself wanting to give advice to the teacher you observed that also might good advice for yourself?