

ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy



Fall 2017, Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30 to 10:45 a.m., Founder's Hall 311

Instructor: Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr.

E-mail: bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu

Office: Warrior Hall 322C or University Writing Center

Office Hours: Walk-in or Email for an Appointment

Course Description: This class introduces students to the theory, research, and practices of tutoring writing by engaging them with the prominent scholarship on writing centers while providing practical experience through observations, co-tutoring, and live tutoring hours in the University Writing Center. Students are encouraged to synthesize the scholarship on writing centers with their own experiences to form a comprehensive philosophy of tutoring that is reflective and constantly open to revision. Upon successful completion of this course with a grade of B or better, students are eligible to become tutors for the University Writing Center.

Course Outcomes:

By the end of the semester, students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of a broad variety of strategies for tutoring writing
- Exhibit a firm understanding of writing center theory and scholarship
- Show an awareness of the composing challenges that various types of student populations confront
- Cultivate a comprehensive vision of what it means to compose effectively
- Develop a comprehensive philosophy of tutoring that is reflective and constantly open to revision

Required Textbooks and Materials:

- *The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice*, Eds. Robert Barnett and Jacob S. Blumner, ISBN (10) #0-205-57417-3 and ISBN (13) #978-0-205-57417-9
- Various .pdf articles and selections from major texts (available through Canvas)
- Access to a Computer (the university provides a number of computer labs)

This course will use the TAMUCT Instructure Canvas learning management system.

Logon to TAMUCT Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]

Username: Your MyCT username (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)

Password: Your MyCT password

Grading Scheme:

Forum Posts= 10%

Internship Completion= 10%

“Literacy Narrative”= 20%

“More Practice, More Problems”= 30%

“Philosophy of Tutoring”= 30%

Journals: Almost every class you will write in your journals for the first few minutes. You can either write by hand or type your journal entries. Most days, I will dictate a topic for you to write about. Think thoroughly about the topic, yet try to write continuously throughout the duration of the exercise. Sometimes, merely writing down your thoughts can help you to gain a better understanding of the topic and your own thought processes.

Forum Posts: Forum posts are an extension of our work in the classroom. Frequently, they will prompt you to contemplate upcoming topics of discussion for our class and/or ask you to reflect on your experiences tutoring in the University Writing Center. They should be posted the day before class by 12:00 P.M. at the latest (this gives me time to read them). These forum posts are informal, so do not concern yourself as much with grammar and syntax as you would for a final paper. However, do reflect seriously on the topics you are expected to discuss.

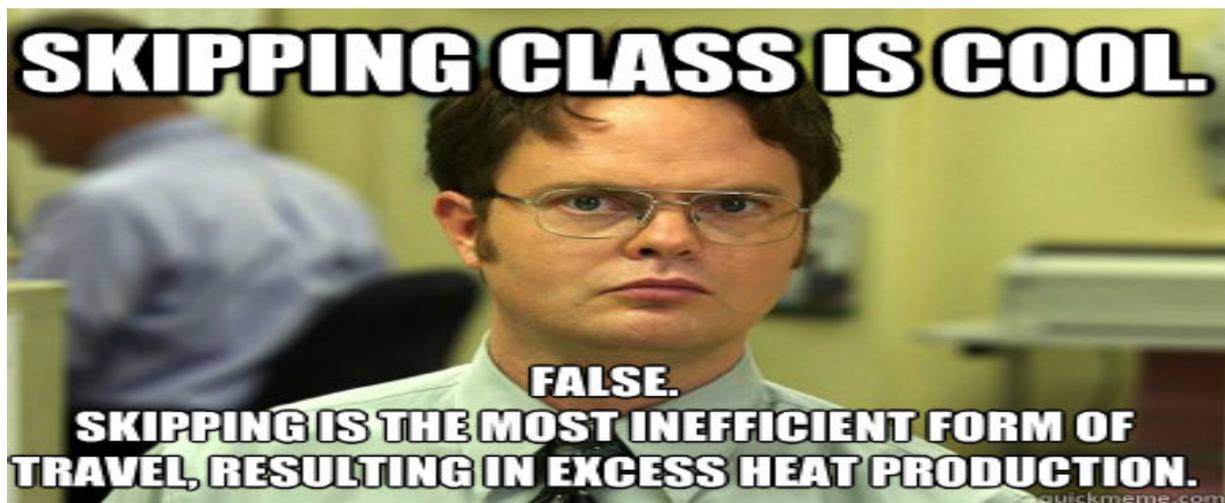
Your forum posts should be between 1-2 pages double-spaced. Under a page is probably not enough to elaborate on your ideas. Also, make sure to reply to at least one of your classmates’ forum posts with thoughtful commentary. Just posting to the forum is not enough—you need to enter into a conversation with your peers!

Internship: In order for you to gain experience tutoring writing, during the second half of the semester (weeks 9-16) you will tutor for 1 ½ hours in the Texas A&M University – Central Texas University Writing Center in lieu of attending class on Wednesdays. Your first appointment or two will be as a co-tutor, working alongside one of our experienced tutors. After your initial co-tutoring session(s), you will tutor independently.

In order to successfully complete this course, you are required to complete this internship. Successful completion will require you to be present and ready to tutor during all hours that you are scheduled (unless you have a conflict you have previously discussed with me or a sudden

illness that prevents you from fulfilling your scheduled hours). You are also expected to maintain a professional demeanor, including appropriate attire, polite engagement with the students you tutor, completing any necessary paperwork, etc. Remember, if you successfully complete this course with a grade of a B or higher, you will be eligible to work in the University Writing Center for the spring semester on forward—this internship is your opportunity to show me that you are ready for this responsibility!

Class Attendance Policy: Attending class is vital if you are to get the most out of this course. As a result, I do require that you miss **no more than four classes** throughout the semester. If you miss more than four classes, this will be grounds for possible failure.



However, I am willing to be lenient with this policy in the event of long-term health problems, family emergencies, or any other unforeseeable circumstance that might cause you to miss class. In spite of this, you will need to discuss these issues with me as they arise—do not attempt to come to me with a host of excuses at the end of the semester. If you miss class for any of the aforementioned reasons (or any other reason you believe is valid), please see me immediately so we can discuss this issue.

Civility (How to Avoid Being “That Guy or Gal”): This class will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category). While each of you have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately.

Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones, pagers or any other form of electronic communication during the class session (email, web-browsing, etc.). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This classroom functions on



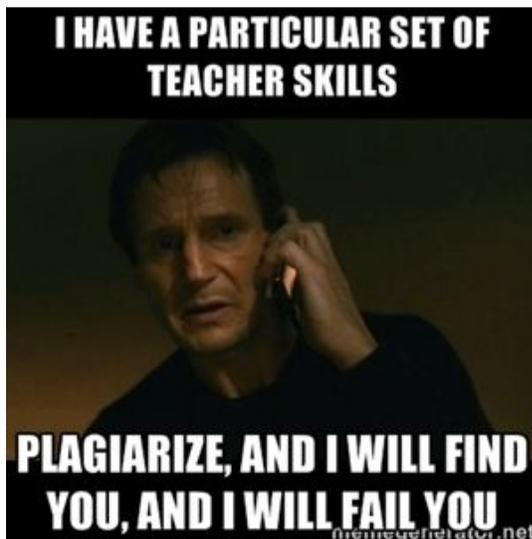
the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

However, please do feel free to engage in constructive criticism and debates. This policy is not meant to discourage disagreement or passionate conversation. We will be engaging in discussions and/or debates about a host of potentially controversial topics; it is not my intention to censor your opinions. Yet, I do feel it is important to foster an environment conducive to learning where no one feels threatened and/or not entitled to their opinion.

Remember, if you disagree with someone (including myself), always remember to argue against the **IDEA** the person is presenting—not the individual.

Late Work: While I understand that circumstances may arise that could prevent you from turning an assignment in on time, **I do not accept late work—period!** However, I am always willing to discuss extensions **ahead of time or work with you if unforeseen circumstances arise that could prevent you from handing your work in on time.** If you have a reasonable reason why you believe you should be entitled to an extension, or for why you were not able to meet a deadline, either come see me after class, during office hours, or e-mail me.

Academic Integrity: Texas A&M University – Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M – Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student’s academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student’s work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university’s Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university’s standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.



Class Plagiarism Policy: As an instructor, I operate by the WPA (Council of Writing Program Administrators) definition of plagiarism: “In an instructional setting, plagiarism occurs when a writer **deliberately** uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source.” The key here is deliberate—I do not want you to be so paranoid about plagiarism that it inhibits your creativity.

To that extent, any instance of “plagiarism” **that does not appear to be deliberate in intent** will be dealt with “in house.” You may be asked to revise; I may even deduct from your grade if this was a result of

negligence. However, unless intentional, you will not fail nor will you be brought up on plagiarism charges.

That being said, **deliberate plagiarism will not be tolerated in any manner.** If you willfully steal someone else's language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledgment, or submit an assignment for this class that you submitted for another (without previously discussing it with me), be forewarned—you **will receive a 0 for the assignment, and I will pursue plagiarism charges with the utmost zeal!** Such behavior hinders your learning, is unfair to your classmates, is a violation of my trust, and—above all else—is highly unethical. This is your one and only warning—you would be wise to heed it!

UNILERT: Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas
UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University – Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/security/unilert.php> to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

Technology Support:

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

Web Chat: <http://hdc.tamu.edu>

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student. For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Drop Policy: If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form, found through the Registrar's web page:

<https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/business-office/droppolicy.php>

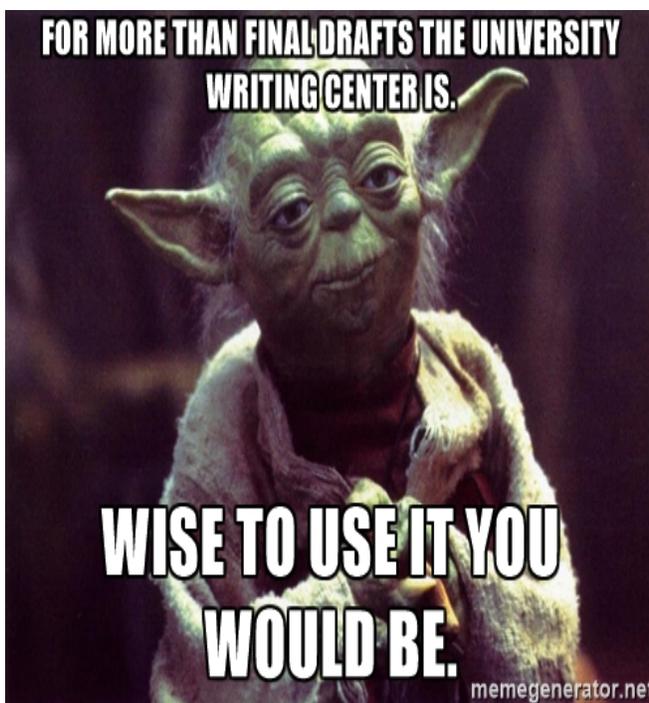
Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Support: At Texas A&M – Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion webpage:
<http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>.

TAMUCT supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php>. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines, please visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>.

University Writing Center: Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-5pm Monday-Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library on Mondays from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via WConline at <https://tamuct.mywconline.com/>. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.



While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

Tutoring: Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Library: The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>

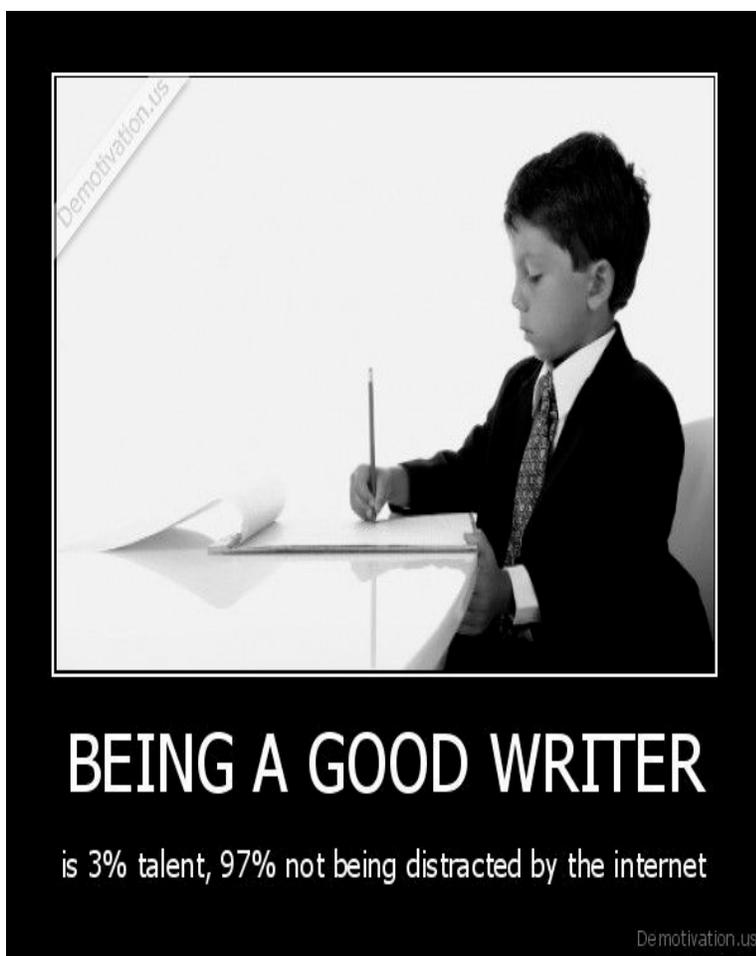
Artifact Collection: To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the English Department, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, your work for ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

ENGL 4388: Writing Center Pedagogy—Major Projects

“Literacy Narrative” (4-5 pages double-spaced)

Each time we sit down to compose, we bring to that particular text more than just the experiences of the current moment or our thoughts at the present time. Instead, our past experiences with writing, reading, and learning are a crucial element involved in our composing process, influencing how we perceive the present situation in a variety of ways. Being reflective about our literacy development is not only vital to being an effective writer but also critical to being an effective tutor. Much like us, every time students visit the University Writing Center, they are bringing to that particular tutoring session a myriad of past experiences that affect how they perceive you as a tutor and the specific text they wish to work on, the manner in which they view themselves as writers, the perspectives they view the current rhetorical situation through, etc. By reflecting on your own literacy experiences, you can gain a better understanding of your own development, an understanding that will benefit your tutoring practices.



Your first assignment asks you to compose a literacy narrative. Broadly defined, a literacy narrative is a story of reading and writing; a literacy narrative depicts, and reflects upon, events that were formative in your particular development as a writer, reader, and communicator. Unlike some other genres, a literacy narrative is less defined in terms of structure. Some of you may choose to write a chronological history of your literacy development; others might decide to depict “snapshots” of their literacy development that are non-linear in time; a few of you may choose to include dialogue while others will not; certain students might focus on their early childhood while others will primarily depict their struggles and triumphs with literacy during adulthood. In essence, there is no “right” or “wrong” way to structure your literacy narrative.

That being said, it is paramount that your literacy narrative provides analytical reflection about how the story you choose to tell has influenced the writer, reader, and communicator you have become. Take the time to reflect upon the readings and discussions we have had in class so far. Were you labeled a remedial student early in your education like many past writing center

clients or were you perhaps praised for your language abilities early on in life? What role did your family and/or your community play in your literacy development? Did a particular teacher/professor ignite your passion for reading and writing? Or, perhaps, did a particular teacher/professor hinder your literacy development and/or confidence? When you compose, is it primarily for educational contexts or for your own personal fulfillment? What particularities of your own writing process are unique and play a vital role in the manner in which you compose? As you have probably noticed, the possibilities and directions for this assignment are limitless.

This project will also serve as your introduction to the University Writing Center. As part of your assignment, you are required to make an appointment at the University Writing Center to discuss your literacy narrative. You can make this appointment at any point during your writing process, whether you are brainstorming ideas, trying to find an appropriate organizational structure, polishing a final draft, etc. Be prepared to potentially write about this appointment for the class forum and discuss it in class as well.

Your literacy narrative should be 4-5 pages double-spaced to be properly developed, incorporate at least two sources from the readings we have already completed (or will complete by the time the assignment is due), and follow proper MLA formatting and citation practices.

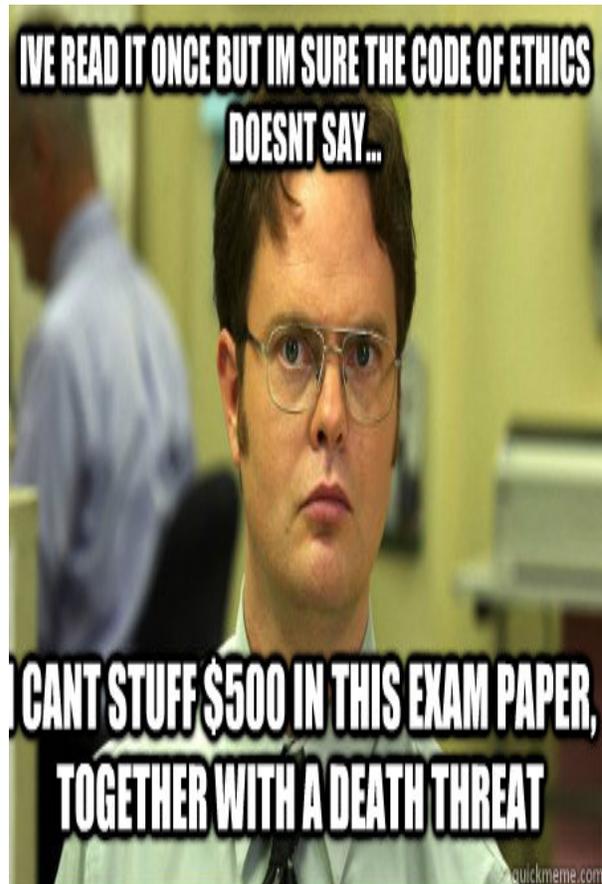
Evaluation for this project will primarily be based upon your ability to articulate a compelling narrative about your literacy development, the quality and effectiveness of the manner in which you organize your text, your engagement with—and integration of—the readings and discussions from class, and the overall polished nature of your finished product (e.g. grammar, proofreading, MLA style, etc.).

**“More Practice, More Problems”
(3-4 pages double-spaced and a 5-7 min. presentation)**

Unfortunately, tutoring is not an easy, formulaic endeavor. In any given tutoring session, we can encounter a host of problems that will test our limits as peer tutors and educators as well as, at times, our ethics and values. Your second major project asks you to identify a particular tension, problem, and/or ethical dilemma that can arise in a tutoring session and compose a written analysis of the dilemma that depicts the problem, delves into why it is a dilemma for tutoring, explores the available research on this issue, and suggests methods for properly handling the situation and/or appropriately resolving the dilemma. You will also give a 5-7 minute presentation to the class based on this analysis.

Examples of dilemmas include, but are not limited to:

- A student wants you to proofread his paper for him and show him all of the mistakes so he can get an A.
- After you point out something you absolutely know needs to be attended to in a piece of writing (or is absolutely wrong), the student still insists on proceeding in the same manner.
- A student comes to the University Writing Center with feedback from her instructor that is highly critical and dismissive of the student’s abilities.
- The assignment an instructor assigned to one of the students you are tutoring makes absolutely no sense and is convoluted to the point of causing utter confusion for both the student and you.
- A student is using African American Vernacular English (AAVE), one of a variety of world Englishes, or another dialect that is frequently looked down upon for a class in which you know the instructor is strict about using Standard American English.
- While reading a student’s text, you come across content that you find highly offensive.
- As you read a student’s text, you realize she is making an argument that you passionately disagree with.
- During a session, a student becomes emotional and starts crying.
- While reading a student’s text, you begin to suspect plagiarism.
- A student demands that you tell him what grade he will receive on his assignment based on the rubric he has brought with him.



Once you’ve selected a topic, you’ll want to research what the scholarship has to say about the particular tension you are examining. You are allowed to draw on the readings from

the class; however, you should also have at least two sources for your presentation from outside the required readings for the course as well. Take the time to explore what the best scholars in writing center research have to say about your topic.

After you've completed your research, you will compose your analysis, making sure that you frame the problem, explore why it is a dilemma, delve into the available scholarship on the issue, and provide suggestions for rectifying the dilemma in a productive fashion for all parties involved (if possible). Your analysis should be 3-4 pages double-spaced and in APA format.

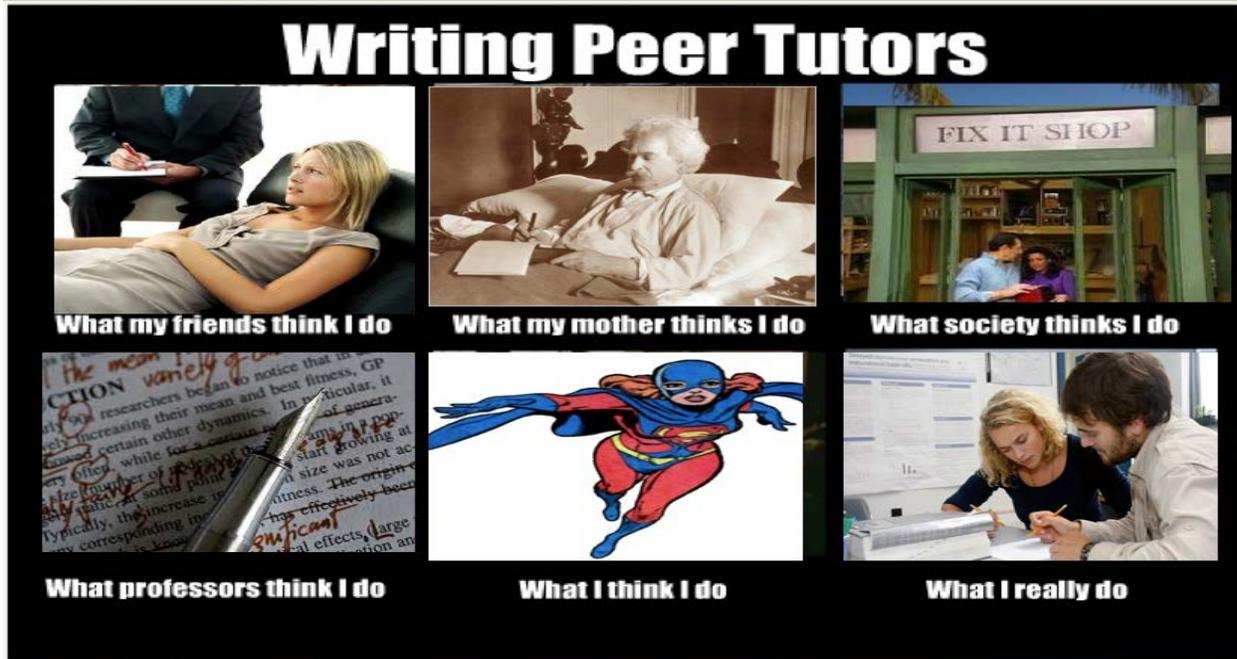
You will also create a 5-7 minute presentation on your dilemma. Although the organization and style of your presentation is up to you, you are required to have at least one visual, auditory, and/or kinesthetic aid. Overall, you can approach this presentation in a variety of fashions. Some students will approach this presentation with a more traditional, linear approach; other students might use a short video, skit, anecdote, etc. to peek interest; certain students might even choose to make the entire presentation participatory. The choice is yours, yet make sure it is rhetorically effective.

The written analysis and presentation will each count for half of your grade with the average of the two determining the overall grade for your project. Your analysis will primarily be assessed on the manner in which you frame—and persuade—your readers that this is a problem in writing center theory and practice; your ability to explore the ethical, epistemological, and pedagogical nuances of the subject in a nuanced fashion; the depth of your research; the validity—and practicality—of the solutions you provide; and the overall polish of your work (e.g. grammar, proofreading, APA style, etc.). Your presentation will primarily be assessed on your ability to articulate the dilemma you have chosen and provide relevant research, how engaging your presentation is, your public speaking skills (e.g. clear voice, engaging tone, avoiding verbal pauses, etc.), and—most importantly—your ability to provide practical solutions to such a dilemma for your peers.

“Philosophy of Tutoring” **(6-7 pages double-spaced)**

Hopefully, if I have done my job well this semester (and that is probably a big “if”), you will have noticed how theory and practice are connected in a reciprocal relationship; theory drives our practice yet our practice also informs our theory. Throughout the course of the semester, you have had the opportunity to engage with various perspectives, theories, and research from the scholarship on writing centers. In addition, you were able to gain first-hand experience tutoring. For your final assignment, you will need to integrate both of these in order to form your own philosophy of tutoring.

Teaching and/or tutoring philosophies are a difficult genre to say the least. You need to articulate both the rationales and theories that drive your practice as well as describe what these rationales and theories look like in practice. However, although this is a daunting task, it is a task that will benefit you immensely. Reflecting on why we do what we do allows us to question, and improve upon, our practice.



To get started, you will want to reflect upon what aspects of tutoring writing you think are most vital to being a successful tutor. You might ask yourself questions such as: What does it mean to compose? Are there particular theories of composing that are crucial to understand to be successful? How do you teach students these theories of composition? What, specifically, is your role as a tutor? Why should a tutor inhabit such a role? How do you balance tensions such as focusing on content vs. grammar, being facilitative as opposed to directive, etc.? Please use these questions as a heuristic to guide your brainstorming; you do not need to address every single question and you are quite free, and expected, to explore other questions/issues you believe are pertinent to tutoring writing.

Once you have an idea of the topics and issues you want to address in your tutoring philosophy, you'll want to organize them in an intriguing manner that will engage your reader

but also allow for a *cohesive* vision of what it means to tutor writing. In essence, your tutoring philosophy should address several aspects of tutoring writing yet should also make a central claim as to what makes for successful tutoring of writing. You will also want to incorporate the writing center scholarship we have read and discussed in class (or that you have discovered by working on your other writing projects) to provide evidence and support for your claims or, conversely, to argue against that scholarship, if you are so inclined. Remember, you are not required to agree with everything we have read nor are you expected to articulate the tutoring philosophy you believe I would like to read. This is *your* tutoring philosophy—take pride in it and make sure it reflects your attitudes and beliefs about writing and the tutoring of writing.

Your “Philosophy of Tutoring” should be 6-7 pages double-spaced and follow proper MLA, APA, or Chicago style formatting and citation practices. Assessment for this assignment will primarily focus on the depth of your articulations in regard to your theory and practice, the quality of your organizational structure and your ability to convey a cohesive philosophy of tutoring, your ability to integrate writing center scholarship to support your assertions or serve as a foil to your assertions, and the overall polished nature of your finished product (e.g. grammar, proofreading, MLA/APA/Chicago style, etc.). The main question I will ask myself when I assess your work will be: *How well does this future tutor articulate her/his philosophy of tutoring in order to demonstrate that she/he is ready to tutor writing in the University Writing Center at Texas A&M University – Central Texas?*