

**The Composing Process
EDU 614 (31735)**

**Fall 2009
Thursdays, 4:00-6:55
Nottingham High School Library**

Professor: Marcelle Haddix, PhD
Office Location: 206 Huntington Hall, Reading and Language Arts Center
Phone: 315-443-7642
Email: mhaddix@syr.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1PM-3PM and by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Bryan Crandall
Email: brcranda@syr.edu

To com•pose (v.): to create

They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. –Frederick Douglass (1845)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

EDU 614 The Composing Process is a graduate-level survey of the theory, research, and practice of writing and writing instruction for grades 5-12. This course promotes the thoughtful examination of writers and writing instruction. Throughout the course, students are introduced to strategies and skills they can use to enhance their own writing and the writing of grades 5-12 students. Using a process approach, students learn how to communicate ideas effectively in a variety of genres and for a multitude of purposes. Based on the most current understandings in the field, this course explores such topics as writer's workshop, conferencing, struggling writers, assessment, reading/writing connections, writing in the disciplines, revision and editing, the use of technology to support writers, and the management of writing instruction.

COURSE INTRODUCTION:

I often talk with teachers who will say, "I'm not a writer" or "I hate writing." And, even beyond these declarations, I have heard teachers say, "I hate *teaching* writing." This course will operate according to this key principle: teachers of writing must be writers themselves. I believe that it is not possible to teach something that you do not do yourself. And, further, if you are not passionate or engaged with what you are teaching, your students will notice. They will not be motivated to write if you are not motivated to teach them to write. With this philosophy in mind, in this course, you will be actively engaged in the ongoing practice of writing. This course will provide you with an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a writer, how individuals learn to write, and how to effectively teach the craft of writing.

Throughout the course, you will be introduced to strategies for teaching, learning, and assessment in the writing classroom. We will thoughtfully examine an array of current topics in the field of writing instruction, including but not limited to: writer's workshop; writing across content areas; digital technologies; multiple genres, multimodality, and multiliteracies; and various forms of assessment. The ultimate aim of this course is to develop our professional curiosities about how to best assess and address the literacy needs of *all* students through effective writing instruction.

Notice that the title of this course is "the *composing* process" opposed to "the *writing* process." While the teaching of writing is the crux of this course, an understanding of composing as multiple, complex, and varied (rather than static, finite and linear) is at its foundation. We will approach this course with an exploration of multiple forms of composing—writing, speaking, drawing, moving, creating, and so on.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

The primary goals of this course are to:

- To utilize writing as a tool for communicating, exploring, understanding, thinking, learning, and imagining.
- To examine current theories and research in the teaching of writing.
- To develop an understanding of the craft and practice of writing in and out of the classroom.
- To investigate strategies and skills to use in the meaningful, functional written expressions through a variety of genres, modes, and disciplines.
- To consider and apply various criteria for evaluating writing.
- To explore ways to manage the writing process and writer's workshop in grades 5-12 classrooms.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

You may purchase the following books at Follett's Orange Bookstore. The following texts are **mandatory** reading for the entire class:

Required Books:

Fisher, M. T. (2007). *Writing in rhythm: Spoken word poetry in urban classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
Newkirk, T., & Kent, R. (Eds.). (2007). *Teaching the neglected "R": Rethinking writing instruction in secondary classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The "heart" of my teaching can be understood through the reading of literature. The two novels that we will read alongside the scholarly texts, include:

Grimes, N. (2002). *Bronx masquerade* (ISBN 0142501891)
Sapphire. (1997). *PUSH* (ISBN 0679446265)

Required Journal Articles:

All journal articles are available from ProQuest and/or other online databases through the Syracuse University Library. See "Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments," pg. 6.

Blackboard:

You can access course information, assignments and guidelines, pdfs and links to all required and optional readings (*not* available on ProQuest and/or other online databases through the Syracuse University Library), as well as many online resources on composing in and out of the secondary English classroom on our Blackboard course. If you've registered for this course, you have been automatically enrolled in Blackboard; go to <http://blackboard.syr.edu> and follow instructions for logging in. Note: For any problems, or if you have not been assigned an SUID and password from the university, you will need to contact Computing and Media Services.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Guidelines and expectations for each assignment will be discussed in greater detail in advance of completion deadlines.

NCTE National Day of Writing Gallery Submission

10 points

This year, the National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) is sponsoring its first National Day of Writing on October 20, 2009. The goal of the event is to draw attention to the remarkable variety of writing we engage in, and to help writers from all walks of life recognize how important writing is to their lives. To celebrate the National Day on Writing, NCTE is curating a National Gallery of Writing—a digital archive of compositions accessible to all through a free, searchable website—a living archive of thousands of examples of writing from across the United States. I have created a local gallery for this class, *Composing Processes*, and we will each participate by contributing one example of writing to the gallery. We will discuss in greater detail, but compositions may include, but are not limited to, fictional or nonfictional pieces, critical reflections, poetry, memoir, dramatic prose, and so on. Compositions must be submitted for review no later than October 15, 2009. For more information, go to: <http://www.ncte.org/dayonwriting/about>

Mentor Writer Talk (Most influential writer)

10 points

We each have Mentor Writers. Katie Wood Ray suggests that we learn how to write through reading; we learn from our Mentor Authors, or as I call them, Mentor *Writers*. As you read texts, you take notice of voice, style, text structure, and so on. As teachers, it is important that we expose our students to an array of mentor writers so that they can explore the myriad ways in which writers express themselves. I would like you to select an adult fiction or non-fiction text to read on the quest to identify *your* mentor writer. Whose writing style do you admire? Whose voice can you relate to? Who takes risks in their writing that intrigues you? You will prepare a mentor writer talk addressing questions about how this particular writer serves as a mentor for you. During the first couple of classes, we will together brainstorm a list of writers for this assignment. Feel free to select your writer from this list, but please do not feel limited to the suggestions. Please email me (mhaddix@syr.edu) a quick description of your selected mentor writer and a brief proposal for your mentor writer talk by Thursday, October 1st. The schedule of presentations will be posted to <http://blackboard.syr.edu> by Friday, October 2nd. Format for your presentation will be discussed in greater detail in class.

Community Writing Conference Workshop or Poster Session

15 points

On Saturday, November 7, 2009, 10AM-1PM, our class will host a community writing workshop event at the Dunbar Community Center in Syracuse. This event will be open to students, grades 6-12, from the greater Syracuse area. The event will include workshops on academic writing and creative writing. You have the option of either facilitating (or co-facilitating) a 50-minute workshop for students in grades 6-8, 9-10, or 11-12. Or, you can put together a poster to be displayed in a Writing Resource Fair for students, parents, and other community members. More information to follow...

Spoken Word Poetry

15 points

We will discuss multiple ways of written and oral expression. And, we will look specifically at creative writing in the form of spoken word poetry. I will engage you in several activities to get your creative juices flowing. We will also watch videos of spoken word poetry performances. To support these activities, you will read Fisher's *Writing in Rhythm* and Grimes' *Bronx Masquerade*; both texts imagine writing theory and practice via the spirit of spoken word poetry (see Weekly Schedule of Readings). To compose your spoken word piece, I will ask you to take a couple of the in-class writing exercises and revisit/revise/rework them into publishable pieces. By publishable, I mean "take the mic" ready! During the November 12 class, we will participate in a spoken word performance workshop with the local group Verbal Blend, and we will have an Open Mic Poetry Slam. Be ready to share ("perform") your creative expressions with your peers. We'll discuss this more in class. So, take a breath! Calm down! Ommmmm.... (I'm envisioning you each doing a yoga sun salutation.)

Online Blog

25 points

Much of the educational research on adolescent literacy points to a mismatch between the literacy practices of teachers and their students. In this class, we will interrogate this notion by looking at our everyday literacy practices—how we make meaning in multiple contexts. I contend that successful literacy teaching requires being in tune with what your students are into in and outside the classroom. Many young people engage in online communities such as myspace and facebook for social networking, personal enjoyment, among other reasons. On these online communities, young people create profiles where they can share information about themselves through the development of a multimodal text. This development requires that they use multiple literacies and identities.

A huge part of the in-class assignments will involve developing your Online **Writer's Blog**. The goal of the online blog is to guide you through an ongoing process of critical reflection about your own writing identity as well as emergent understandings of teaching writing (via course readings and class discussions, etc.). Blogging, as a genre, engages the written, the visual, the audio, and the interactive. On the first night of class, we will discuss how to set up your blog for this class. More guidelines regarding how to use the blog will be

introduced in class. You have several options for creating your blog including eblogger.com, wordpress.com, among others.

From the start of class, you will upload a total of **8 blog entries**, minimally. Aim to upload one blog entry a week. Part of this assignment also involves your reading of other people's blog. From **November 16 through December 4**, I will expect that you read and significantly comment on at least 1 blog entry from each student in the class. I will also read and engage with your blogs purposefully November 16 through December 4. You will be given further instructions about how to share sites with me and with each other.

Please note: Your **final blog** should be a reflection about your experiences composing in an online/digital space. Close out blogs (for the purposes of this class) by Friday, December 4th.

Zine Project

25 points

A zine is a multi-genre piece that explores a topic of interest in multiple forms. For this assignment, I will ask you to select a topic of interest, mainly through prewriting activities. Then, you will consider what genres you will enlist to convey your understanding and exploration of this topic in different, creative ways. Questions you will consider include, What will be the layout of your zine? What is the "table of contents" of your zine? To help you determine the multiple genres you will employ, here is a list of ideas. Remember, this is just a list to get you started; you will definitely generate other ideas that we should discuss in our one-on-one writing conferencing during writing workshop.

Possible Genres:

Interview column

Letters to the editor OR "Dear Abby" like column

Comic strips

Photos/Illustrations

Poetry

Short Story

Play or dialogue

Research article or news report

Jokes or quotes

Book or article reviews

Lists of writing experiences or memories

Song lyrics

AND SO ON...

Your zine should employ at least FIVE different genres. It will be a mini-newspaper or magazine. You are the EDITOR IN CHIEF, HEAD COLUMNIST, JOURNAL WRITER, PHOTOGRAPHER, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, and much more. You will publish and share your zines in class during the final class, Thursday, December 10.

You will also be asked to submit a reflective essay (via email) that captures the history of your zine, specifying your processes of prewriting, topic development, peer conferencing, revision, and editing. Be sure to indicate where and how you used strategies and skills introduced in this course. Reflections must be e-mailed to me by 4:00 Thursday, December 10, 2009.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Attendance = Class Participation. As each class session will cover a significant amount of material, your attendance and full student participation is imperative. Attendance at all class sessions is required. Missing class (or a part of class) will contribute negatively to your final grade.

Participation includes being fully engaged in class activities, reading and responding to assigned texts, and completing all in-class and out-of-class assignments. Please refer to this syllabus and the blackboard space for course requirements. You are expected to come to each class session prepared to be a full participant in our community of learners.

Throughout the course, we will spend some time in writer's workshop and you will be engaged in the writing process, especially for the Zine Project. Since this course will be run as a workshop, it is important for you to be prepared, to be willing to share your writing, and to be involved effectively in your **"Critical Friends"** partnerships, which we'll discuss more during the first class.

GRADING:

For each assignment, a rubric with guidelines and specific expectations for grading will be provided in class. Your successful completion of this course will depend on your participation and engagement in all in-class and out-of-class activities. I will also take into consideration the amount of attention and professional care given to each course requirement.

Missed classes, or parts of classes, contribute negatively to your final grade. Further, any assignments not handed in by the specified due date will be **lowered by 1 point for each day late**. Final grades will be based on work received by **Thursday, December 10, 2009**. Assignments **will not** be accepted after that date.

Grading:

Gallery Submission	10
Mentor Writer Talk	10
Community Writing Event	15
Spoken Word Poetry	15
Online Blog	25
Zine Project	25

Total Points	100

Grading Scale:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B	85-89
B-	80-84
C	75-79
C-	70-74

Let's talk if you think you will earn a grade lower than this!

NOTE: Student work may be used for course advertising, evaluation data, or other publications about course activities with student names and other identifying information removed to ensure confidentiality.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

THEME ONE: I AM: a writer, a composer, an artist, a blogger, a thinker, a...	
September 10	<p><i>What does educational research say about teaching writing?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scherff, L., & Piazza, C. (2005). The more things change, the more they stay the same: A survey of high school students' writing experiences. <i>Research in the Teaching of English, 39</i>(3), 271-304. (ProQuest) 2. Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). <i>Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools</i>. New York: Carnegie Corporation/Alliance for Excellent Education. Available at: www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/WritingNext/WritingNext.pdf 3. NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing. Available at: http://www.ncte.org/positions/statements/writingbeliefs 4. NCTE Policy Brief, WRITING NOW. Available at: http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/PolicyResearch/WrtgResearchBrief.pdf
September 17	<p><i>Am I a writer? How did I learn to write? Do I like to write?</i> <i>What is the effect of identity on writing? Culture? Gender? Race? Social class? Language?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perry, K. H. (2008). From storytelling to writing: Transforming literacy practices among Sudanese refugees. <i>Journal of Literacy Research, 40</i>(3), 317-358. (ProQuest) 2. Daisey, P., & José-Kampfner, C. (2002). The power of story to expand possible selves for Latina middle school students. <i>Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, 45</i>(7), 578-587. (ProQuest) 3. Newkirk & Kent, Chs. 19, 20, 21
September 24	<p><i>What are young people writing? When are young people writing? Where are young people writing? Writing for WHAT?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Newkirk & Kent, Ch. 16, 17, 18 2. Applebee, A. N., & Langer, J. A. (2009). What is happening in the teaching of writing? <i>English Journal, 98</i>(5), 18-28. (ProQuest) 3. PEW Report on Writing, Technology, and Teens. Available at: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2008/Writing-Technology-and-Teens.aspx?r=1
October 1	<p><i>What is the goal of teaching writing? Where is the CRITICAL in the teaching of writing?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. PUSH by Sapphire 2. Chapter from Morrell, E. (2007). <i>Critical literacy and urban youth: Pedagogies of access, dissent, and liberation</i>. New York: Routledge. (Blackboard) <p>PLEASE NOTE **Class will attend the University Lecture: Dr. Ernest Morrell at Watson Theater (on the corner of Waverly and Comstock Avenue) @ 4PM.</p> <p>Assignment: Brief Email about Mentor Writer Talk Due</p>
THEME TWO: Composing Process(es) and More on the History of the Field of Teaching Writing	
October 8	<p><i>What are theories of writing development? Are there different writing processes? Can we teach writing?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hillocks Jr., G. (1995). The composing process: A model. In <i>Teaching writing as reflective practice</i> (pp. 76-95). New York: Teachers College Press. (Blackboard) 2. Matsuda, P. (2003). Process and post-process: A discursive history. <i>Journal of Second</i>

	<p><i>Language Writing</i>, 12(1), 65-83. (ProQuest)</p> <p>3. Newkirk & Kent, Chs. 1, 2, 3</p>
October 15	<p><i>What are our expectations for student writing? How do we assess students' writing? What about writing for "real" audiences?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Shelton, N. R., & Fu, D. (2004). Creating space for teaching writing and for test preparation. <i>Language Arts</i>, 82(2), 120-128. (ProQuest) Myhill, D., & Jones, S. (2007). More than just error correction: Students' perspectives on their revision processes during writing. <i>Written Communication</i>, 24(4), 323-343. (ProQuest) Lovejoy, K. B. (2009). Self-directed writing: Giving voice to student writers. <i>English Journal</i>, 98(6), 79-86. (ProQuest) Newkirk & Kent, Chs. 5, 6, 7 <p>Assignment: National Writing Day Submission Due</p>
THEME THREE: Realities of Writing in (and Outside) the Secondary English Classroom	
October 22	<p><i>What happens in the writing classroom? What is the writing workshop? What are the various genres of writing?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Newkirk & Kent, Chs. 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 Elbow, P. (1983). Embracing contraries in the teaching process. <i>College English</i>, 45(4), 327-339. (ProQuest) Tobin, L. (1991). Reading students, reading ourselves: Revising the teacher's role in the writing class. <i>College English</i>, 53(3), 333-348. (ProQuest)
October 29	<p><i>What is the relationship between writing and spelling? How can we help students who struggle with writing?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Sheehan, A. D., & Sheehan, C. M. (2000). Lost in a sea of ink: How I survived the storm. <i>Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy</i>, 44(1), 20-32. (ProQuest) Glasswell, K., Parr, J. M., & McNaughton, S. (2003). Four ways to work against yourself when conferencing with struggling writers. <i>Language Arts</i>, 80(4), 291-298. (ProQuest) Newkirk & Kent, Ch. 22
November 5	<p><i>What about digital literacies and multimodal texts? What kinds of student writing happen beyond the classroom?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Newkirk & Kent, Chs. 13, 14, 15
**Saturday, NOVEMBER 7, 10AM-1PM Writing Conference @ Dunbar Community Center	
November 12	<p><i>What can we learn from community literacy practices to support and enhance writing in schools?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fisher, <i>Writing In Rhythm</i> Grimes, <i>Bronx Masquerade</i> <p>Assignment: Spoken Word Poetry Performances</p>
December 10	<p><i>What happens when teachers become writers? How can we sustain our own writing lives as we support the composing processes of our students?</i></p> <p>Read:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cohen, B. (2004). The zine project: Writing with a personal perspective. <i>Language Arts</i>, 82(2), 129-138. (ProQuest) <p>Assignment: Zine Publishing Party, Reflections Due</p>

COURSE POLICIES:

Attendance and Punctuality:

Class absences will hinder your ability to successfully complete this course. Each student is allowed 1 excused absence. If you anticipate missing more than 1 class, you should consider withdrawing from this course.

Your final grade for this course will be deducted 1 letter grade for each unexcused absence. Further, it is your responsibility to demonstrate knowledge of any missed content due to absences.

You are also expected to be on time and ready to participate in class activities and discussion at 4PM. Lateness and tardiness will negatively impact your grade.

Late Work:

If you are absent on the day an assignment is due, you must email your assignment to me *no later than 6:30PM* on the due date or the assignment will be considered late. EMAIL: mhaddix@syr.edu. Extensions will be granted only in exceptional extenuating circumstances [e.g., severe illness, family death]. I will expect documented proof of the extenuating circumstance and to be informed of the circumstance prior to any request for an extension. **All other late assignments will be lowered by 1 point for each day late.**

Class Culture:

Be respectful of the professor and your fellow classmates at all times. Cellphones should be turned off (or on vibrate). Meals should be eaten during breaks. Text messaging and use of laptops to surf the net or answer email is not acceptable.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:

The following material comes from the Syracuse University Student Handbook (an online version of the Handbook with additional explanations of academic integrity and examples of how it may be violated can be found at <http://students.syr.edu/handbook/>):

At Syracuse University, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors. Academic integrity includes a commitment to the values of honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, and respect. These values are essential to the overall success of an academic society. In addition, each member of the university community has a right to expect the highest standards of academic integrity from all other community members. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonest act which is committed in an academic context including, but not limited, to the following:

Use of Sources Plagiarism is the use of someone else's language, ideas, information, or original material without acknowledging the source. Examples of plagiarism: (1) Paper is downloaded from an Internet source and/or obtained from a paper mill; (2) paper contains part or all of the writings of another person (including another student), copied without citation; (3) paper contains passages that were cut and pasted from an Internet source, without citation.

Course Work and Research (1) The use or attempted use of unauthorized aids in examinations or other academic exercises submitted for evaluation; (2) fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, sources for papers or reports; in clinical practice, as in reporting experiments, measurements, statistical analyses, tests, or other studies never performed; manipulating or altering data or other manifestations of research to achieve a desired result; selective reporting, including the deliberate suppression of conflicting or unwanted data; (3) copying from another student's work; (4) actions that destroy or alter the work of another student; (5) unauthorized cooperation in completing assignments or examinations; (6) submission of the same written work in more than one course without prior written approval from both instructors.

Additionally, the following statement on academic integrity has been adapted from one developed by Dr. Kelly Chandler-Olcott and will be upheld in this course:

The culture of K-12 education in the United States encourages teachers to share materials with each other and to adopt and adapt commercially published materials for their particular teaching contexts. It may be quite appropriate, therefore, for you to use in your coursework or professional field experience activities, handouts, and/or lesson plans that you obtained from a mentor teacher, colleague, found on the Internet, or developed with another student teacher. At the same time, units, lesson plans, and curriculum materials are products used in many School of Education courses, including this one, to gauge your individual mastery of concepts and skills central to your success in the profession. Consequently, you are expected to cite sources, including personal communication or professional development workshops, for any material in those assignments that you did not create on your own. Please see me if you have questions about how to do this accurately.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/SPECIAL NEEDS:

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For more information, see Office of Disability Services, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>