TEACHING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Thursdays 4-6 or Fridays 10-12
1112 Angell Hall

This seminar is intended for Graduate Student Instructors assigned for the first time to teach a writing section or course approved by the Advanced Writing in the Disciplines Program, though any graduate student in the University may enroll in it. This seminar will be, for the most part, a practical workshop designed to develop the expertise and confidence a GSI needs to teach writing in a discipline well. Readings will consist of both short articles on writing pedagogy and actual course materials—syllabi, assignments, student papers, and instructor comments. The latter materials will be drawn from the courses the GSIs in the seminar are teaching in the current semester as well as from courses other instructors have taught in past semesters. Seminar meetings will aim to help the GSIs enrolled make use of both the assigned articles on writing pedagogy and the experiences of other instructors, including the other GSIs in the course, in current and future teaching.

The seminar will meet seven times, once a week for two hours. It is a one-unit course, graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory. Because the seminar will aim to be immediately useful, this syllabus is somewhat informal. The following schedule sets out the general topics to be discussed, week-by-week. However, I have purposely left a little open-ended each week’s readings and discussion so that we can adjust our work as we go along in order to better meet your needs as new writing instructors. In some cases, I have listed more reading than we need to do; in others, I’ve listed none at all. We’ll see what works and doesn’t work for you as we go along.

RESOURCES FOR WRITERS

Later in the semester, I will assemble a list of useful handbooks and style manuals for writers in a variety of disciplines. For now, here are a few well-regarded general handbooks and style manuals:


In addition, the Sweetland Writing Center maintains a web page with a number of useful tools for writers, including a virtual edition of the Strunk and White classic, *The Elements of Style*. To see those tools, go to:

http://www.lsa.umich.edu/ecb/help/resources.html
SCHEDULE OF MEETING AND TOPICS

21-22 January  What Is Good Writing?


28-29 January  Conducting Workshops and Making Comments

Keith Hjortshoj, “Being in the Classroom,” (undated manuscript), pp. 1-20.
M. Elizabeth Sargent, “Peer Response to Low Stakes Writing in a WAC Literature Classroom,” in New Directions in Teaching and Learning 60 (1997), pp. 41-52.
6 examples of workshop or peer review procedures.

4-5 February  Strategies for Grading Fairly and Efficiently

Several examples of grading criteria, marking keys, and paper evaluations.

11-12 February  No Meeting

18-19 February  How Can We Get Students to Construct and Develop Arguments?

Several examples of brainstorming exercises.

25-26 February  Having Effective Conferences with Students

4-5 March  Winter Break – No Meeting

11-12 March  Midterm Evaluations and Strategies for Addressing Problem Students

18-19 March  Devising Effective Assignments and Courses