

*ENG 611 Winter 2021, 3 Credits CRN [22110, 22111]*

This course will meet remotely using the **UO Canvas Learning Platform** and Zoom. Our synchronous work together will be on *W* during our scheduled class time of 5:30-8:45 p.m.

Instructor: Emily Simnitt, PhD

Office Hours: *W*: 11-12, *R*: 2:30-4:30 p.m., by appointment [esimnitt@uoregon.edu](mailto:esimnitt@uoregon.edu)

Access Zoom Office Hours with this link: <https://uoregon.zoom.us/my/emilysimnitt>

Find up-to-date information about the class in announcements that will appear on the course web page. You will also receive announcements through email. Be sure to set how you receive notifications from Canvas so that you will be able to manage information in a way that works best for you.

## Course Description

First-year writing is "*a space, a moment, and an experience*--in which students might reconsider writing apart from previous schooling and work, within the context of inquiry-based higher education" (Downs 30). The Composition GE Seminar (CRN: 22270) is the theoretical component of the three-course pedagogy sequence designed to prepare you -- graduate students in English, Creative Writing, Folklore, and Comparative Literature -- to teach the 100-level writing classes in the UO Composition Program. The purpose of this theory-based seminar is to provide you the foundation upon which you can draw as you learn to teach in your first class supported by the ENG 612 practicum. Theory-based practice, or praxis, is iterative. This course introduces you to the theories of writing and writing instruction that you will return to again and again as you adapt, create, and refine materials to support student learning in 100-level WR courses.

Successful completion of ENG 611 is a necessary prerequisite for appointment as a GE to teach composition courses in English. Policies regarding appointments are summarized in the Composition Program Policy Manual.

## ENG 611 Goals + Outcomes

As graduate students, you know what it's like to be a student in an undergraduate course. You've also done a lot of academic writing, and you may have taught before or are currently teaching. Your prior experience shapes your own theory or explanation of how writing works and how we learn to write. In ENG 611, you will build on that knowledge and those experiences as you learn to sympathetically and critically engage with theories of writing and writing instruction. We'll work on this together as you learn to:

- describe key theoretical concepts of writing and identify how those theories are put into practice in UO Composition Program WR 121 course materials (including learning outcomes, syllabi, “essay cycles,” and assignment rubrics);
- prepare for membership in an inclusive, engaged, research-led UO teaching community;
- connect personal strengths and intellectual interests to the teaching of academic writing;
- formulate a theory-based philosophy and develop theory-informed materials for teaching academic writing.

## Course Materials

A primary text for this course is *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concept In Writing Studies (NWWK)*. You can purchase the text through the Duck Store or Amazon. The remainder of the material for the course will be provided as links / pdf in the [ENG 611 Texts](#) module. You can also find links to readings on the syllabus and in the weekly overview pages in the modules.

## Course Learning Methods: Compassion, Curiosity, Commitment

Success in ENG 611 will depend more on your openness to and curiosity than on your previous teaching experience or existing knowledge about the topics we will explore together.

Your grade will be determined by the *labor* you put in and your own *engagement* with course material, activities, the writing of your peers, and the course learning goals.

### I ask that you:

- Be a compassionate member of our teaching community — challenge yourself to take risks and support your classmates as they take risks.
- Be curious and open to new methods, ideas, and perspectives. You’ll do this by deeply and respectfully reading and responding to assigned articles and the work of your classmates. Sometimes this material will require watching and/or listening.
- Be willing to write, read, and respond as you would in any graduate seminar.

### I commit to:

- Checking your understanding of key concepts about writing and writing instruction.
- Deeply and respectfully reading your work and taking your ideas seriously.
- Challenging you to go further and take risks by giving feedback, asking questions, and providing additional material.

**Together we will** repeat this process until you feel more confident drawing on and responding to theory and imagining how you will apply it in your own classroom.

I am committed to making adjustments as we figure out together how to learn remotely.

## What You Will Do

### Overview of Course Assignments

Instructions and criteria for evaluation will be provided with each assignment so you know what is required for it to be considered complete. Grading comments will be provided to give feedback and let you know if your work is incomplete and whether it may be revised and resubmitted.

#### 1. *Weekly Class Activities*

Includes tasks completed in preparation for and during synchronous sessions on Zoom and Canvas:

- assigned readings for the course (in *Naming What We Know* and the Course Reading Material Module)
- exit tickets, freewrites, polls, chat check-ins, notetaking, and in-class discussion boards
- finding and sharing relevant articles with the class

#### 2. *Weekly Asynchronous Reflective Discussion Boards*

You'll use reflective writing-as-inquiry to engage with each week's material before and after Zoom discussions and activities. This series of assignments supports you in identifying key terms and passages, establishing a "personal" relationship with the concepts of the week, and making connections between theoretical concepts, the UO Composition Program curriculum, and teaching materials. Each week (except for your presentation week), you will complete:

- 1 300-word reflective post to the week's readings on your Group Discussion Board (prior to synchronous sessions)
- 2 100-word responses/questions to group members posts (during synchronous sessions)

Each group will also be responsible for posting a brief summary of the group's discussion on weekly class Engagement Board. The responsibility for posting the summary should rotate weekly amongst group members.

### 3. Artifact Presentation (scheduled during weeks 3-7)

A defining quality of the UO Composition Program teaching community is a deep commitment to sharing and collaborating on teaching materials. This assignment introduces you to that practice and provides you an additional opportunity to make connections between the theory we are reading and teaching artifacts. You will be assigned a week in which to present. Your presentation will include:

- a 10-minute in-class presentation of a teaching artifact you find on the TR Blog or Composition Program Canvas page
- a short write up describing and analyzing the artifact (counts in place of the Reflective Discussion Board in your assigned week)
- a brief annotation of an article you select related to the artifact or readings in your assigned presentation week

### 4. Final Portfolio (due at the end of the term)

During your time as a graduate student and in your future career, you may at various times be required to represent your teaching practice through a teaching philosophy and selection of teaching artifacts. This assignment gives you a headstart in putting together a professional portfolio of theory-informed materials. You will meet with me in the second half of the term to discuss your project and share in-progress work to receive feedback from your peers in weeks 8-10. The portfolio will include:

- a 1-page teaching philosophy or your personal theory of inclusive, engaged, research-led writing instruction
- the artifact from your presentation with any adaptations you expect to make
- a reading unit and description for a WR 121 essay cycle (3-6 readings) with some supporting materials
- brief annotations of 3-5 articles you read for class that relate to your philosophy or reading unit
- a reflection on your engagement with course goals and concepts

## Grading + Evaluation Principles

The grading policy for this course is built on the following principles:

You control your grade by deciding what work to complete.

Learning happens through steady engagement and reflection over time.

Assignments are the place where I encounter and respond to your ideas and learning.

The overall *work* of the course is more important than the subjective *quality* of any single assignment. Assignments build on each other.

All work will be evaluated as “complete” or “incomplete” using assignment-specific rubrics. Completing assignments as designed leads to the achievement of course learning goals.

“Incompletes” are my way of indicating your work isn’t satisfactory. Submitting unsatisfactory work repeatedly will start to lower your final grade. I’ll let you know how to improve and succeed.

“Stuff” happens and some work just needs to be excused.

## Wild Cards + Completing the Course

Because this is a graduate course, I expect you to complete all work of the course. You will learn the most by fully completing all of the assignments, and, in the best-case scenario, you will be able to do just that. However, if something happens, you will start the course with 2 wild cards that can be used to excuse missing or incomplete weekly activities and/or weekly discussion boards or unsatisfactory elements of submitted work for your presentation or portfolio.

Missing more than two discussion boards and/or weekly activities will lower your grade by a third for each missed board and/or activity (from an "A" to an "A-" or a "A-" to a "B+", etc.). Submitting incomplete work or unsatisfactory work on the presentation or portfolio will also lower your grade as described in the individual assignment details. You cannot pass the course without turning in work related to the presentation and portfolio assignments.

You must earn at least a B+ in order to be considered for a GE appointment teaching in the Composition Program.

I will provide feedback on your presentation and on your portfolio while it is in process and will offer a limited window for unsatisfactory or incomplete work to be revised and resubmitted if necessary. However, I don't anticipate this being necessary unless unforeseen circumstances arise that prevent your full engagement with the course. I am available to work with you individually!

## What You'll See In Grades

Wild cards will "show up" as "excused" with a note in comments and in assignment rubrics.

Satisfactory work will show up as a checkmark or "complete."

Unsatisfactory or incomplete work will show up as an "incomplete" with a note in comments and in assignment rubrics.

Missing or unsubmitted work will show up as an "incomplete" with a note in comments.

## Late Work Policy

- An automatic 48-hour extension is available for all assigned work.
- You do not need to contact me.
- After 48 hours, I can no longer accept your work without hearing from you. It will be considered unsubmitted and incomplete unless we come to an agreement.

Please make every effort to submit group discussion posts on time so your classmates have adequate time to respond.

## Shared Responsibilities and Extenuating Circumstances

I will do my best to be clear about assignment expectations and how I will assess your work. **It's your responsibility to contact me when you are confused, overwhelmed, or unsure about class expectations. Talk to me before an assignment is due, not after, if possible.**

That way I can help you talk through your confusion, brainstorm ideas, consider possibilities, give you resources, and discuss your work with you—that's an integral part of my role in our class! I can't make exceptions or extend grading deadlines unless you talk to me *before* the assignment is due.

I am only able to help you be successful in the course if we are in communication!

## Other Course Policies

Find a complete list of policies for all WR courses -- which also apply to ENG 611 -- on the Composition Program website at [composition.uoregon.edu](http://composition.uoregon.edu).

## Tentative Course Calendar

Find up-to-date information about the class in announcements on the home page.

Below is a schedule of assignments for the course. I reserve the ability to change the schedule but only after notifying you in advance by an announcement on Canvas.

Week 1 / Jan. 6

Introductions

**Read:** Downs, "[What Is First-Year Composition?](#)"; University of Oregon [new student advising module](#); [UO Composition Program Manual](#); University of Oregon "[Teaching Excellence](#)"

**Complete:** WK1 Reflective Discussion, Introductory Survey

Week 2 / Jan. 13

The Role of Theory in Writing Instruction

**Read:** *NWWK*: Preface, Introduction, Metaconcept (pg ix-16); hooks, "[Engaged Pedagogy](#)"; Love, "[Theory Over Gimmicks](#)"; WR121 Canvas Module: Discourse Community

**Complete:** WK2 Reflective Discussion, WK2 Class Engagement Board

Artifact Presentation Consultations begin

Week 3 / Jan. 20

Writing is a social and rhetorical activity.

**Read:** *NWWK*: Concept 1 (pg 17-34); Dasbender, "[Critical Thinking In College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic](#)"; *RRW*: How To Read (1-4); WR121 Canvas Module: Reading Analysis

**Complete:** WK3 Reflective Discussion, WK3 Class Engagement Board

Group 1 Artifact Presentations

Week 4 / Jan. 27

Writing speaks to situations through recognizable forms.

**Read:** *NWWK*: Concept 2 (pg 35-47); Vieregge, "[Exigency: What Makes My Message Indispensable To My Audience?](#)"; *RRW*: Questions (4-8); WR121 Canvas Module: Questions At Issue

**Complete:** WK4 Reflective Discussion, WK4 Class Engagement Board

Group 2 Artifact Presentations

- Week 5 / Feb. 3 Writing enacts and creates identities and ideologies.
- Read:** *NWWK*: Concept 3 (pg 48-58); Ryan, "[Constructing Scholarly Ethos in the Writing Classroom](#)"; *RRW*: Claims and Reasons, How To Write (8-19); WR121 Canvas Module: Drafting
- Complete:** WK5 Reflective Discussion, WK5 Class Engagement Board
- Group 3 Artifact Presentations
- Week 6 / Feb. 10 All writers have more to learn.
- Read:** *NWWK*: Concept 4 (pg 59-70); DePeter, "[How To Write Meaningful Peer Response Praise](#)"; *RRW*: Revising (20); WR121 Canvas Module: Peer Review
- Complete:** WK6 Reflective Discussion, WK6 Class Engagement Board
- Group 4 Artifact Presentations
- Week 7 / Feb. 17 Writing is (also always) a cognitive activity.
- Read:** *NWWK*: Concept 5 (pg 71-81); transparent assignment design handout; WR121 Canvas Module: Reflection
- Complete:** WK7 Reflective Discussion, WK7 Class Engagement Board
- Group 5 Artifact Presentations
- Week 8 / Feb. 24 Issues In Writing Instruction, Portfolio Preparation
- Read:** UO Teaching Resources "[How To Build a Reading Unit](#)"; article of choice for your portfolio; potential articles for reading unit
- Complete:** WK8 Reflective Discussion, WK8 Class Engagement Board
- Portfolio Consultations
- Week 9 / Mar. 3 Issues In Writing Instruction, Portfolio Presentation (continued)
- Read:** An article selected from class list (generated in week 8); potential articles for your reading unit
- Complete:** WK9 Reflective Discussion, WK9 Class Engagement Board
- Portfolio Consultations



Week 10 / Mar. 10    Developing your own theory of teaching writing.

**Read:** Love, "Abolitionist Teaching, Freedom Dreaming, and Black Joy"; Brookfield, "[What Is Critically Reflective Teaching?](#)"; sample teaching philosophy

**Complete:** WK10 Reflective Discussion, WK10 Class Engagement Board

FINAL

**Portfolio Due:** Friday, Mar. 12