



UCONN WRITING CENTER

## FALL PRACTICUM 2022

FRIDAYS 4-5PM

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome!

The goal of a “practicum” is the application of a field’s primary theory and concepts in practice, and that is precisely what we’ll be doing in this one-credit course as you move through your first semester of tutoring. The field of Writing Center research is about 40 years old – relatively young by academic standards – and it fits within the broader discipline of Writing Studies. There is a lot to learn and explore. As a field grounded in undergraduate tutoring and writing, it extends a uniquely warm welcome to younger voices and research.

Our goals for the semester ahead are threefold:

- to support you as you develop and hone your tutoring practice
- to introduce you to a range of Writing Center scholarship, both old and new
- to encourage you to explore participating in the field as a researcher

### ASSIGNMENTS

In addition to weekly reading and reflection, there are three written assignments which need to be completed to earn a “satisfactory” grade, and to remain on our tutoring staff.

#### 1. Tutoring Journal – Due every Thursday evening (by midnight), 9/22 – 11/10 [not 10/6]

One of the best ways to grow as a tutor is through honest and critical self-reflection. Reflecting on your tutoring practice is the strongest way you become more intentional in your tutoring, and more responsive to writers’ individual needs. Therefore, the goal of the tutoring journal is to provide you the space to do just that—reflect with intention.

For seven weeks, select one session from your shifts as the subject of your journal entry. This can be a session that stumped you, challenged you, or made you feel successful. For your entry, summarize what happened (1 paragraph), and then offer some honest reflection (1-2 additional paragraphs). “Reflection” here means an assessment of the assumptions about tutoring at work in that session, as well as some analysis of how the session extended or challenged or will help you revise your practices. Those are broad guidelines: these entries are meant to form a personal record of your practice, as well as your own changing ideas and contributions about what constitutes strong tutoring. The best journals will provide jumping-off points for changes, research opportunities, or maybe even new initiatives in this Writing Center.

#### 2. Formal Observation Reflection – Due on 10/6, midnight.

Schedule an observation of a tutoring session with a more experienced tutor (and ideally, someone you do not regularly work with). These will have to be planned in advance, of course, and the tutor leading the session will ask for the writer’s consent to be observed.

As you observe, take notes to answer the following questions:

1. How does the tutor set up the session? (For example, how do they create rapport with the writer? Set up the goals for the session?)
2. How does the tutor carry out the plan/goals? What specific strategies do you see them using throughout the session?
3. (If applicable) In what ways did the tutor have to deviate from the plan? Why do you think they had to?
4. How did the tutor end the session?
5. What other tutoring strategies would have worked to help the writer meet their goals for the session? In what ways would that have changed the development of the session?
6. You should expect to debrief about the session at some point afterwards.

The final assignment submission will have two parts:

- A. Short answers for the questions above, **and**
- B. A written letter to the tutor you observed (1-2 pages) that offers some constructive feedback for their session, and how your observation might influence your current tutoring practices. That letter should be shared with your “observed” peer.

### **3. Tutoring Philosophy OR Research Prospectus – Due Monday, Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**

The final assignment of the practicum offers you the choice of either composing a tutoring philosophy statement, or a research prospectus for an initiative or project you would like to undertake in the spring, or a policy change or practice you would like to see our Writing Center implement.

#### **Option A – Research Prospectus**

You’ve been around the proverbial block now, and next semester you’ll be a returning tutor. What changes or contributions would you like to make to the way our Center operates? Are there initiatives or pilot projects we should explore? Are there questions in the field of Writing Center studies that you would like to pursue? An idea you would like to explore and, potentially, present or write up?

A research prospectus is often a collaborative project, although you are welcome to do an individual one if you like. By writing one, you are not committing to doing it this spring; however, there are opportunities to do an independent study, to present ideas at the New England Writing Center Association or the International Writing Center Association, or even at UConn’s annual First Year Writing conference.

An acceptable research prospectus will be roughly 2-3 pages (although it can be longer) and include a brief bibliography, and a rough timeline of how you imagine your idea taking form. If you are working in a group, include a quick note that describes who was responsible for which part of the prospectus.

#### **Option B – Tutoring Philosophy Statement**

Tutoring philosophies are a very traditional practicum assignment. In a *brief essay of 3-4 pages*, you’ll use your journal entries and at least two readings to situate your tutoring practice within the larger field of Writing Center work. In short: what kind of tutor are you, anyway? A tutoring philosophy asks you to locate yourself somewhere on the continuum of directive and non-directive practice. But you should move beyond that, too, to consider *some* of the following questions (or anything else you feel is important): what have you learned about writing this semester? About writers, including yourself? What has been surprising to you as a tutor? What areas will you continue to expand and develop in practice? What part of your practice makes you the most proud? What do you think a good tutor always does?



## FALL 2022 SCHEDULE

\*\*\*This is contingent. New research and different concerns will arise, and we'll adjust accordingly.

Date	Topic + Preparation	Assignment Due
Week 1 8/28 – 8/31	<b>Orientation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mock Tutorials</li> <li>• Writing Center Nuts and Bolts</li> <li>• Intersections with Disability Studies</li> <li>• Linguistic Justice and ELL Writing</li> </ul>	AI and the Future of Writing – revisions due  Watch sample in-person video  Read Tutoring Resource Guide  Watch sample online video
Week 2 9/9	<b>Opening Week</b> FYE Staff Meeting & Preparation	Review all material in FYE Prep Fall 2022 folder (HuskyCT)  Prepare and rehearse FYE narratives  Review critical comments for FYE essay
Week 3: 9/16	<b>First Sessions &amp; FYE Prep</b>	<i>[Complete by Monday, 9/19]</i> Tech check with assigned partner  At least one rehearsal of FYE narrative
Week 4: 9/23	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tutor notes</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Summing Up the Session: A Study of Student, Faculty, and Tutor Attitudes Toward Tutor Notes”</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b></p> <p>Select two tutor notes from the scheduler – one of them from a colleague, and one of your own. What kind of work does it do for the writer? What can be improved, or extended, or how does it work as a good model?</p>	Tutoring Journal entry #1
Week 5: 9/30	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Tutoring Approaches</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All The Work” by Jeff Brooks</li> </ul>	Tutoring Journal entry #2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “A Critique of Pure Tutoring” by Linda Shamoon and Deborah Burns</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Which approach do you find most persuasive? What kind of tutoring do you currently practice, and what might you consider changing?</p>	
Week 6: 10/7	<b>Full Staff Meeting</b>	DUE: Formal Observation
Week 7: 10/14	<p><b>Supporting Revision</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 4 “Authoring Processes” p. 83-107, <i>The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors</i></li> <li>• “Motivational Scaffolding, Politeness, and Writing Center Tutoring” by Jo Mackiewicz and Isabelle Thompson</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> What strategies are most effective in encouraging revision for you as a writer?</p>	Tutoring Journal entry #3
Week 8: 10/21	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing in the Disciplines</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 6 “Tutoring Writing In and Across The Disciplines,” <i>The Oxford Guide for Writing Tutors</i></li> <li>• Selections, science writing guides</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> What are the conventions and assumptions of your discipline? What do you feel you need to know to tutor in a very different discipline?</p>	Tutoring Journal entry #4

<p>Week 9: 10/28</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing Centers and Antiracism</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Theory In/To Practice: Addressing the Everyday Language of Oppression in the Writing Center” by Mandy Suhr-Sytsma and Shan-Estelle Brown</li> </ul> <p><b>Preparation:</b> What changes to the rubrics would you make? What kinds of language would you include/omit?</p>	<p>Tutoring Journal entry #5</p>
<p>Week 10: 11/4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Full staff meeting</b></p>	<p>Tutoring Journal entry #6</p>
<p>Week 11: 11/11</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Research Conversations I</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Well, actually, <i>browse</i> the recent issues of <i>The Writing Center Journal</i> and <i>The Peer Review</i> (both online).</p> <p><b>Preparation:</b> Select one article of interest to you, and share the link of HuskyCT.</p>	<p>Journal entry #7 (Final one)</p>
<p>Week 12: 11/18</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Research Conversations II</b></p> <p>From our broader conversations in Week 12, we’ll select two articles for deeper reading and discussion.</p> <p>Alternatively, we’ll look at websites and initiatives of Writing Centers around the nation (and the world). What are other Centers doing that we can learn from?</p>	
<p>Week 13: 11/25</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Thanksgiving.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Eat. Sleep.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Bring back a good story or recipe.</b></p>	
<p>Week 14: 12/2</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Final practicum meeting</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Reflecting on a semester of directed reflection</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Due 12/6: Final assignment (Research prospectus OR tutoring philosophy)</b></p>		