

## ENGL 3082 Writing Center Practicum

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Writing Center

We meet weekly to reflect on our tutoring practices and engage with scholarship in writing center studies. By the end of the term, you will also take up an original research project.

### Learning Outcomes

- Practice the basic tutorial script: establishing rapport, negotiating session goals with writers, prompting writers to read aloud, listening actively, provoking active learning through conversation and questioning, distinguishing between higher- and lower-order concerns, and arriving at an agenda for revision/action beyond the session.
- Develop a flexible set of strategies for when that basic script might not be fitting.
- Annotate and debate a range of articles from contemporary scholarship on the theory, practice, and ethics of writing centers.
- Apply selected concepts from that scholarship to tutoring and center programming.
- Develop a philosophy of peer coaching through reading scholarship and reflecting weekly on actual sessions.
- Review research on a topic of your choice relevant to writing center practice and, if appropriate, collect data.
- Present that literature review, research and/or proposal to the full writing center staff.
- Articulate an action plan for applying your findings to the center's policies, practices, and/or staff development.

### Assignments

The most vital part of practicum will be the robust, in-class discussions about both experiences from that week's tutoring and a set of readings from the field of writing center studies. Those will work in tandem with these assignments:

- Tutorial observations (by you and of you)
- Weekly Perusall annotations or discussion postings in advance of class meetings
- Final project that moves through a process of two brief proposals > full proposal + working bibliography > peer and GA review > final submission > present at staff meeting in spring
  - *Options:* research proposal, annotated bibliography, review of recent journal/s, video/interview project, creation/revision of writing center resource, or planning and implementation of staff development session. Any can be done collaboratively.

### Course Schedule

All readings/assignments are due by the meeting indicated. Complete annotations in Perusall and submissions to the discussion board a minimum of **two hours before class**. (I have provided approximate page counts in parentheses—plan your reading accordingly!) Later in the semester, you will research and suggest readings for the class. When your reading is chosen, you will be responsible for leading discussion on it.

| DATE  | MEETING   | ASSIGNMENTS   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Week 0</b><br>August 19-23   | Orientation   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take notes on summer reading</li> <li>Compose essay draft</li> <li>Watch <a href="#">sample tutorial video</a> [soon to be updated for 2025] + sample online tutorial video [coming in summer 2025]</li> <li>Submit your bio</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 1</b><br>August 29<br><br>Center not open but practicum meets | Practicum   | <p>Read and annotate (35):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bugdala, Reardon &amp; Deans, "<a href="#">Summing up the Session</a>" (21)</li> <li>Shackel, "<a href="#">The Highs and Lows of Written Feedback</a>" (14)</li> </ul> <p>Browse the WOnline archives, identify what you consider strong models of tutor notes, and come to class ready to share 2 of them.</p>   |
| <b>Week 2</b><br>September 5  | Full staff meeting replaces class                                   | Complete a shadow/observation and take notes.   |
| <b>Week 3</b><br>September 12   | Practicum<br><br><i>A veteran tutor will observe you this week.</i> | <p>Read and annotate in Perusall (45):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stephen North, "<a href="#">The Idea of a Writing Center</a>"</li> <li>Molly Wingate, "<a href="#">Writing Centers as Sites of Academic Culture.</a>"</li> </ul> <p>Also read and take some notes for class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DelRusso et al. "<a href="#">Shifting the Center</a>"</li> </ul> <p><b>Bring 1 paragraph of notes toward each of these questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What might these 3 readings, each spaced about 20 years apart, suggest about writing center studies?</li> <li>What is your own (tentative) idea of a writing center?</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Week 4</b><br>Sept 19  | Practicum   | <p>Meet with the tutor who observed you and discuss how it went.</p> <p>Read Brooks, "<a href="#">Minimalist Tutoring</a>" and take some notes for class</p> <p>Read and annotate (35):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Muriel Harris, "<a href="#">Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Tutors</a>"</li> <li>Ryan &amp; Zimmerelli, "Inside the Tutoring Session"</li> </ul> <p>Based on your observation, orientation, readings so far, and your personal preferences, draft two basic scripts: one for 25-minute tutorials and one for 45-minute tutorials. That is, name stages for a typical session and your "go-to" moves, estimate the timing, include opening/transitional/closing phrasing you prefer, etc. These scripts can be rendered in paragraphs, as a list or table, as a visual flowchart/infographic, or as some combo of both. <b>Bring these to class to share!</b></p> |
| <b>Week 5</b><br>Sept 26  | Practicum   | <p>Read and annotate (46):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ryan &amp; Zimmerelli, "Tutoring Writers Through the Writing Process" (24)</li> <li>Wardle, "<a href="#">You Can Learn to Write in General</a>" (3)</li> </ul>  |

|                              |                                   |  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
|                              |                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitzgerald &amp; Inanetta, “Tutoring Writing In and Across the Disciplines” (19)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Week 6</b><br>October 3   | Full staff meeting replaces class |  |
| <b>Week 7</b><br>October 10  | Practicum                         | <p>Read and annotate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shamoon &amp; Burns, “<a href="#">A Critique of Pure Tutoring</a>” (15)</li> <li>Thonus, “<a href="#">Tutoring Multilingual Students: Shattering the Myths</a>” (10)</li> <li>Dembsey, “<a href="#">Naming Ableism in the Writing Center</a>”</li> </ul> <p>Revisit the scripts you drafted a few weeks ago and come to class ready to discuss any additions or revisions you would now make to it.</p> |
| <b>Week 8</b><br>October 17  | Practicum                         | <p>Browse the most recent issues of <a href="#">The Peer Review</a>, <a href="#">Praxis</a>, <a href="#">Writing Center Journal</a>, <a href="#">Another Word</a> and our <a href="#">own staff research page</a>. Select 2 titles that intrigue you (you needn’t read them—titles are enough for now). Post those titles and links to the discussion board. We’ll select 1 or 2 of those to read together.</p>  |
| <b>Week 9</b><br>October 24  | Practicum                         | <p>Read and annotate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suhr-Sytsma &amp; Brown “<a href="#">Addressing the Everyday Language of Oppression in the Writing Center</a>” (35)</li> </ul> <p>View <a href="#">Racism in the Margins</a> video</p> <p>Revisit the scripts you drafted earlier in the semester and come to class ready to discuss any additions or revisions you would now make to them.</p>   |
| <b>Week 10</b><br>Oct 31     | Practicum                         | <p>Readings TBA from your earlier suggestions</p> <p>Start thinking about final project proposal(s) and share them with each other while on shift this week. Come to class with 2 potential ideas.</p>   |
| <b>Week 11</b><br>November 7 | Full staff meeting                |  |
| <b>Week 12</b><br>Nov 14     | Practicum                         | <i>Post 2 different final project proposals to class to discussion board (at least one paragraph for each) along with at least one source you could use for each</i>   |
| <b>Week 13</b><br>Nov 21     | No regular class meeting          | Project proposal and initial bibliography due before Thanksgiving break  |
| <b>Week 14</b>               |                                   | Thanksgiving Break   |
| <b>Week 15</b><br>December 5 | Full staff meeting replaces class | <p>Schedule individual or small-group meetings with veteran tutor, one of the GAs, or Tom to discuss draft of your final project</p> <p>Final project due no later than end of finals week</p> <p>Research projects to be presented at full staff meeting this week or one of our spring 2026 staff meetings</p>   |