Course Description and Goals
Most students in the process of earning an advanced degree in English are strong writers. But even the most skilled writer might be puzzled about how to teach others to write well. This course will focus on this challenge to think about both theories and practices English teachers can use to help students become better writers and readers. To this end, the course has three primary goals: 1. to reflect on our own writing practices in the context of literacy learning and teaching, 2. to investigate contemporary scholarship in composition and writing studies, and 3. to analyze the affordances and constraints of literacy learning and the teaching of writing.

As a class, we will think about the practice of teaching writing in a number of ways. Throughout the semester, we will investigate the rationales and structures behind teaching people to read and write. How does one accomplish such a task? What are the challenges? What are the strategies? We will also analyze the effect of literacy through continued discussion of its imagined goals and impact on people’s lives. Much of this discussion will involve sorting out teachers’ and students’ expectations about literacy, particularly within the context of power, assessment, and standards. While we probably will not come to any firm conclusions, we'll use the opportunity to examine the curricular, pedagogical, and theoretical contexts that shape teaching and learning as a way to develop our own composition pedagogies.

Ideally, by the end of the course, students will be:
- familiar with various theories of teaching writing, reading, and composition.
- prepared to incorporate the course's theoretical discussions about composing and literacy into their own teaching.
- equipped with specific ideas for crafting assignments, marking papers, and giving students feedback.

Class Expectations and Responsibilities
As in other graduate seminars, your attendance, engagement, and participation are necessary for success in the class. You should plan on doing a lot of reading, writing and speaking. Your timely class contributions are an integral part of the success of the class and will determine how much you get out of it. If you have something that you’d like to discuss or cover in class, let me know as soon as possible and I'll see what we can do about incorporating it.
The reading load for this course is quite heavy, though the number of reading assignments will vary from week to week. The class discussions and lectures might not draw from all of the readings directly, but the materials are designed to expose you a range of ideas on a particular topic, which is key to developing your own writing pedagogy. Please be advised that most of the readings for this class are not easy reads. These works are challenging and theoretical in nature and will often be quite dense. In some instances, you might have to read the articles assigned more than once in order to understand them. Since you will be required to write or respond to a blog post on the assigned readings each week, it is imperative that you complete the assignments in a timely manner. Please plan accordingly!

On occasion, the writing you do in this class will be public. Blog writing and occasional writing are most obviously public but also, you will be asked to share other writing. You will always be notified in advance if your writing will be shared. Access to each other’s writing will help us as both writers and teachers of writing. By opening up the writing process for ourselves, we seek to gain insight into how to articulate that process to students.

The class also relies on technology so you must have an active email address that you check at least once a day. You are required to use (or at least forward) your QC address because that is the address used through Blackboard. You need to be able to receive emails that I will send out updating you on course readings, activities and assignments. Additionally, you need to have regular web, computer access, and a qwriting account in order to complete the blog requirement.

Requirements and Assessment
qwriting: The course website and blog will all be accessed through qwriting.org. You should go to the site and sign up for an account by Friday. You must have a QC email address in order to get a qwriting account.

**Your final grade will be determined as follows**
Participation: 15%
Weekly Blogging: 20%
Occasional Writing: 10%
Formal Writing Assignments
  Response paper (What is the goal of writing instruction?): 15%
  Annotated bibliography and faculty development plan: 30% total (15% each)
  Peer Responses: 10%

Participation and attendance: This course requires your attendance, punctuality, and full participation. I expect that you’ll all be here on time and ready to engage in the day’s activities. This means you should come to class before it starts, be prepared for the class meeting, have with you any necessary materials (readings, drafts, notebooks, etc.), and stay for the entirety of the class meeting. Students who are late should not come to class. While I will not set a specific attendance policy, please know that participation is part of your grade so your presence in the class is necessary. Also, there will be assignments and collaborative activities in class that will not only be part of your participation grade, but will play an important role in achieving the course goals. You will not be able to make these up. If an absence is unavoidable, it is your responsibility to get any materials and
find out what you missed from one of your classmates. If possible, please try to notify me prior to the absence.

Participation will be assessed according to the quality of your contributions to discussions and exercises, your preparation for daily class meetings, and the feedback you give in writing workshops and small groups (written and verbal). Also, I will be considering factors such as attendance and punctuality.

I grade participation according to the following scale:
A=daily, thoughtful participation in class discussion, all in-class writing
B=Frequent to occasional participation in class discussion, all in-class assignments
C=Participation only when called on or prompted, some attendance problems, most in-class assignments
D=Refusal to participate even when called on, attendance problems, some in-class assignments
F=Consistent lack of preparation for class, severe attendance problems

Blogging: Students will be expected to make a weekly contribution to the class blog, either as a poster or as a commenter. Each blog post will be a composed response to the weekly assigned reading. You may focus on one reading or analyze a theme that runs through them. You don’t need to discuss every reading, and you should not summarize the readings. Instead, do things like: identify a conflict between two authors, present a question that builds on an author’s argument, analyze a theme that runs through the readings, or connect the readings to a real-world situation. You can use your post to make comments, observations, and connections to other readings and to your own experiences as a writer and/or teacher. You can also use this space to ask questions about the readings or pose questions to your fellow students. Any quotations should be cited using MLA format. A general rule to follow when composing your post is to write about whatever has interested you from the week’s reading.

Each student will write two posts over the course of the semester that responds to some aspect of the week’s reading (each worth 6% of your grade). These will follow a schedule to be made the first week of class and will be due Mondays by 9 a.m. During weeks that you are not responsible for a post, you will be responsible for commenting on someone else’s post (each worth 1% of your grade). Your comments should engage the ideas in the posts as though you were having a conversation in class. Comments should be about 50 to 150 words and are due by Tuesdays at 9 p.m. You are responsible for looking over the posts before class on Wednesday at 4:30 pm. The original poster is responsible for summarizing the online conversation and introducing one or two related follow-up question in class. Please be responsible to one another by being on time with your work.

In most cases, multiple posts will be going up per week. Each blog post should open up a new line of discussion so please do not cover the same material in your posts. To avoid this, you should try to coordinate or assign readings with the other person or people posting during your week as a way to avoid any overlap. Posters should make every effort to avoid repeating ideas and responses to the same readings as their fellow posters.
In order to blog, you will need to sign up for a qwriting account at qwriting.org. Once you do this, go to our class blog and go to “Add Users” in the left-hand column. This should allow you to be an author of the class blog!

To summarize: three times a semester you will write long posts and present to the class and you will comment on your peers’ posts each week before Wednesday’s class.

**Formal Writing Assignments**

- **Response essay**
  - Peer review draft: by Wednesday, September 24 over email
  - Graded draft due: Wednesday, October 8

- **Annotated bibliography and grant proposal**
  - Annotated bibliography to peer group: prior to November 19 meeting
  - Faculty development plan to peer group: prior December 10 meetings
  - Graded drafts of the annotated bibliography & grant proposal:
    - December 18

  - **Occasional writing #1:** any day before the start of class between October 15 and November 5
  - **Occasional writing #2:** any day before the start of class between November 12 and December 10

**Peer Responses:** You will have three opportunities to participate in reviewing each other’s work before the final assignment is handed in for a grade. You will be responsible for writing feedback letters to each other, which will be assessed for this part of your grade.

**Occasional Writing:** An occasional paper is an essay in response to an occasion. They are short papers that will be read aloud. You will need to write two occasional papers this semester. We will be using these open topic papers to practice our own writing and use the experience to talk about the composing process.

**Class Policies**

- **Late papers:** All formal writing assignments will be submitted before class begins on the due date via email. Papers not handed in by the due date and time will be considered late. **Late drafts will drop 1/3 of a letter grade per calendar day late.** This late policy applies to first and second drafts. If you foresee an academic conflict with a due date, plan to complete the assignment for this class before the due date rather than after. Please back up your work and make hard copies for yourself in case anything happens. If you are having trouble completing the work in the course, please talk to me well in advance of deadlines. **You must complete all assignments in order to pass the class.**

- **Classroom atmosphere:** I see the classroom as a space where we can exchange ideas so the respect that we have for each other is extremely important. This course will operate under a spirit of nondiscrimination and equality. Disruptive behavior or offensive language will not be tolerated. This is a collaborative classroom so keep in mind that every person must feel comfortable expressing his or her ideas in class. We need to respond to each other with respect, even if we do not agree.

- **Technological distractions:** Laptops or tablets will be allowed in class, as long as you are using them to take notes or refer to PDF versions of the readings. I will let you know when they are or are not appropriate. I retain the right to stop allowing laptops in class if it...
seems like students aren't using them appropriately. Cell phones and any other gadgets that have the potential to make noises that distract classroom attention must be turned off or put on vibrate (if it's quiet) before coming through the door. While I understand occasional lapses in judgment, I will ask you to leave class for the day if receiving calls or texting during class becomes a problem. If you need to be available during a class session because of an extenuating circumstance, please let me know.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty includes but are not limited to:

1. Submitting essays or portions of essays written by other people, including well-intentioned friends and family.
2. Failing to document paraphrases, ideas, or verbatim phrases taken from outside sources.
3. Collaborating on an assignment without the explicit permission of the professor.
4. Submitting an essay written for one course to another course without the explicit permission of both professors.
5. Submitting work as one’s own that has been purchased or copied from a paper preparation service or web site.

Any work submitted to me that has been plagiarized will receive a failing grade and will be reported to the dean. This is a writing class and author integrity is crucial to the mission of the course, so any event of plagiarism will most likely result in a failing course grade.

Special Needs: If you believe you have a disability or exceptional circumstances for which you may need academic accommodation (including special formats/assignments, auxiliary aids, non-traditional instructional formats, etc.), please inform me as soon as possible in private. Students will also need to contact the Office of Special Services in Kiely 171 (718/997-5870) and get an academic accommodation letter.

Office hours: My office hours exist for you so please don't feel like you'll be interrupting me if you stop in. I'm glad to continue discussions from class, talk about paper drafts, clarify readings and assignments, or offer any other course-related advice you might need. If you'd like to meet outside of office hours, please let me know.

Writing Center: You are welcome and encouraged to take drafts of your essays to The Writing Center, located in Kiely Hall 229. Tutors are specially trained to help writers at all stages of the writing process, and from all disciplines. You can opt for one-on-one appointments or online tutoring. The Writing Center serves student writers at all levels of expertise and experience, from freshmen to graduate students. To make an appointment or learn more about the Writing Center, go to the web site: http://writingatqueens.org/the-writing-center/

The bottom line and student policy agreement: Professionalism is highly valued in this class, so each student should strive toward treating it responsibly (e.g., timely arrival, courteous interactions with other students and me, e-mail notes informing me if an absence cannot be avoided). Active disinterest in class discussions or assignments, or impolite interactions with peers will affect your grade. Conversely, interest in and polite engagement with peers and texts will help you achieve a high grade in the class.

By choosing to remain enrolled in this course, you agree to abide by the above policies and procedures.
Tentative Course Schedule

Subject to change

Readings and homework assignments should be completed by the date of class meeting under which they are listed.

Wednesday, September 3
Introduction to the course: What is writing? What is good writing?
HW: Go to qwriting.org and sign up for an account (you need you QC email address to do this). Then go to the class blog and sign up as an author.

Wednesday, September 10
An Overview of Perspectives on Writing and the Teaching of Writing

Wednesday, September 17
Standards

Wednesday, September 24-no class/QC closed
Peer review drafts of response paper due to group via email (copy me on email)

Wednesday, October 1
Nel Noddings, Education and Democracy in the 21st Century
Peer review of response essay

Wednesday, October 8
Writing for the Occasion
Response paper due
Wednesday, October 15

**Formulaic writing and other strategies, part 1**


Lesson plans:

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Wednesday, October 22

**Formulaic writing and other strategies, part 2**


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Wednesday, October 29

**Assessment and response**


**Wednesday, November 5**

**Revision and Response**


Lamott, Anne. “Shitty First Drafts”


**Wednesday, November 12**

**Technology and Play**


NCTE statement: [http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/digitalenvironments](http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/digitalenvironments)

Raley, Jessica. “Not That Kind of Writing: A Conversation With One Student About Writing in High School and Beyond.” *Catalyst For Change* Volume 36, Number 2: 9-17. Print.


**Wednesday, November 19**

**Variations and Access**


Peer group discussion of Annotated Bibliography

Wednesday, November 26 (day before Thanksgiving)
Conferences instead of class meeting

Wednesday, December 3

Grammar and language conventions


Wednesday, December 10

Language policy and engaging the public
http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/10/the-writing-revolution/309090/?single_page=true

Selection of articles from “Why American Students Can’t Write.” The Atlantic.
http://www.theatlantic.com/debates/education

Ravitch, Diane. “Obama’s Race to the Top Will Not Improve Education”

Peer workshop for Faculty Development Plan

December 18
Final projects due via email