

ENGL 995: Independent study
Administering and assessing writing programs

Study director: Jessica Enoch, Associate Director of Composition

Tuesday 3-4 p.m. – HS C15

This independent study will provide an introduction to the academic conversations within the field of **writing program administration**, as well as an opportunity to explore the issues writing program administrators face daily in the workplace. This overview will comprise a variety of considerations, including the following: how writing programs are situated, both administratively and politically, within universities; how they interact with English departments and first-year composition programs; how they communicate and establish common goals with faculty across the curriculum; and how they provide opportunities for professional development among faculty, staff, graduate students and undergraduates.

The following description of writing program administration is taken from a syllabus designed by Edward M. White and Theresa Enos for a course in WPA offered at the University of Arizona in Spring 2000:

Every Rhetoric, Composition, and the Teaching of English [RCTE] graduate who plans to teach at an American college or university should expect to serve a term or more as a campus writing program administrator [WPA] at some point—probably sooner than later and probably sooner than is really appropriate. Only recently has the position of WPA become commonly accepted and the demand for WPAs with training for the job is likely to exceed supply for some time to come. The definition and functions of the WPA vary widely from one campus to another, but we can usually assume that the WPA on any campus has the following expressed or implied tasks:

1. To speak for rhetoric and writing to the English department and to the campus at large: to serve on departmental and university committees, make public presentations about writing and writing requirements, and seek to protect and enhance writing programs on campus.
2. To be responsible for staffing, scheduling, budgets, curriculum, and standards for the first-year composition course [FYC] and perhaps other writing courses.
3. To engage, sometimes heavily, in assessment activities such as entering student placement, FYC exit criteria, mid-career or graduation writing requirements, and program assessment. The assessment responsibilities may also include assessment of teaching assistants and other faculty, as a central aspect of hiring and retention decisions.
4. To oversee or be heavily involved in Writing Across the Curriculum [WAC] programs, writing tutorial centers, teaching assistant and adjunct faculty training programs, and other faculty development programs.
5. To originate, administer and/or teach in undergraduate writing major or minor programs and graduate programs in rhetoric and composition.

(Meanwhile, survival on many campuses still depends on publication of research, as more significant than teaching quality.)

6. To take responsibility for a range of activities from assisting the English department chair in general to overseeing certain student publications, as defined by campus policies, traditions, or practices.

This independent study will examine each of these issues, some in more detail than others. A specific emphasis will be placed on the structure and implementation of writing program *assessment*. This area of focus will be supplemented by a program-wide descriptive inquiry into the "Writing at UNH" program, the UNH University Writing Requirement [UWR] and Writing in the Disciplines [WID] courses at UNH. As is the case with the majority of articles published in *WPA: Writing Program Administration* and presentations given at regional and national WPA conferences, much of the work in this course will be site-specific: it will examine broad theoretical issues through the "lens" of the institutions mentioned above. Although there will be no formal ties between the work done in this course and the Writing Program, Writing at UNH Director Elliott Gruner will be involved in some of the discussions attached to this study, and will serve as a consultant for the seminar paper.

Structure of the course

Weekly meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss the various books and articles on the reading list (attached) and to consider how the issues in the readings might apply to the ongoing work at UNH.

Written annotations will accompany the reading of each article or book and will serve as the basis for weekly discussions. Each annotation will briefly summarize the reading; respond to its content and connect it to other readings or previous discussions; and evaluate its usefulness for the seminar paper and/or future study. Annotations are to be emailed to Jessica Enoch and Elliott Gruner by the **Sunday night** before class each week and should total *two pages or more* per week. Each annotation will include a full MLA citation. **30% of course grade.**

A program assessment paper (6-7 pages) will be due at the Week 7 meeting. It will examine the current embodiment of the UNH University Writing Requirement and outline possible methods for assessing its impact, summarizing and considering the specific needs of the various institutional stakeholders. MLA format. **20% of course grade.**

A seminar paper overview (4-5 pages) will be due at the Week 11 meeting. It will propose brief goals for the seminar paper and give an overview of how these goals will be met. This overview will include a discussion of how the paper could have an impact on the field as well as on the writer's own professional development. Additionally, it will propose sources and research methods for the paper. MLA format. **5% of course grade.**

Finally, **the seminar paper** (15-20 pages), due May 9, will examine the broad issues discussed over the course of the semester by means of a site-specific study; after revision, the paper will be targeted for publication in *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Assessing Writing*, or a similar journal within the field of composition studies/writing program administration. MLA format. **45% of course grade.**

Reading schedule

Week One (January 17-21): Introducing constructivist evaluation

- Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989.

Week Two (January 24-28): Theorizing writing assessment

- Belanoff, Pat. "The Myths of Assessment." *Dialogue on Writing: Rethinking ESL, Basic Writing, and First-Year Composition*. Ed. Geraldine DeLuca et al. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 299-310.
- Huot, Brian. *(Re) Articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2002.

Week Three (January 31-February 4): Surveying WAC and WID assessment

- Fulwiler, Toby. "The Argument for Writing Across the Curriculum." *Dialogue on Writing: Rethinking ESL, Basic Writing, and First-Year Composition*. Ed. Geraldine DeLuca et al. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 345-58.
- Townsend, Martha. "Writing Across the Curriculum." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 264-74.
- Hughes, Gail F. "The Need for Clear Purposes and New Approaches to the Evaluation of Writing Across the Curriculum Programs." *Assessment of Writing: Politics, Policies, Practices*. Ed. Edward M. White, William D. Lutz, and Sandra Kamusikiri. New York: MLA, 1996. 158-73.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake, and Brian Huot, eds. *Assessing Writing Across the Curriculum: Diverse Approaches and Practices*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1997. Chapters 1 (Huot and Yancey), 2 (Walvoord), 3 (Kinkead), 4 (Selfe), 5 (Huot), 7 (Thaiss and Zawicki), 14 (Williamson)

Week Four (February 7-11): Understanding appreciative inquiry

- Mirtz, Ruth M. and Roxanne M. Cullen. "Beyond Postmodernism: Leadership Theories and Writing Program Administration." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 90-102.
- Whitney, Diana and Amanda Trosten-Bloom. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2003.
- Discussion with Mike McDonald, Robert J. Connors Writing Center

Week Five (February 14-18): Describing "Writing at UNH"

- Selected UNH documents

Week Six (February 21-March 25): Conducting inquiry

- Broad, Bob. *What We Really Value: Beyond Rubrics in Teaching and Assessing Writing*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2003.

- "Guidelines for Self-Study to Precede WPA Visit." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 388-94.
- Weiser, Irwin. "Local Research and Curriculum Development: Using Surveys to Learn About Writing Assessment in the Disciplines." *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher: Inquiry in Action and Reflection*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. 95-103.

Week Seven (February 28-March 4): Articulating WPA work

- Jackson, Rebecca and Patricia Wojahn. "Issues in Writing Program Administration: A Select Annotated Bibliography." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 467-90. (for reference only)
- **White, Edward M. *Developing Successful College Writing Programs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989.**
- WPA documents
Located in *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002.
 - Statement of Principles and Standards for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing
 - "The Portland Resolution."
 - "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition."
 - "Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing"
 - "Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Administration"
- **No annotations for the week**
- **Program assessment paper due (6-7 pages)**
- Discussion of paper

Week Eight (March 7-11): Rearticulating WPA work

- Bishop, Karen. "On the Road to (Documentary) Reality: Capturing the Intellectual and Political Process of Writing Program Administration." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 42-53.
- Kelly-Riley, Diane, Lisa Johnson-Shull and William Condon. "Opportunities for Consilience: Toward a Network-Based Model for Writing Program Administration." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 129-42.
- Peebles, Tim. "'Seeing' the WPA With/Through Postmodern Mapping." *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher: Inquiry in Action and Reflection*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. 153-67.
- Popham, Susan, Michael Neal, Ellen Schendel and Brian Huot. "Breaking Hierarchies: Using Reflective Practice to Re-Construct the Role of the Writing Program Administrator." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making*

Knowledge Work. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 19-28.

- Schneider, Barbara and Richard Marback. "Judging WPAs by What They Say They Do: An Argument for Revising 'Evaluating the Intellectual Work of Writing Program Administration.'" *Writing Program Administration* 27.3 (Spring 2004): 7-22.

Spring Break (March 14-18)

- **Conference on College Composition and Communication: San Francisco, CA**

Week Nine (March 21 -25): Outlining practical considerations

- Anson, Chris. "Figuring it Out: Writing Programs in the Context of University Budgets." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 233-52.
- Glau, Gregory. "Hard Work and Hard Data: Using Statistics to Help Your Program." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 291-302.
- Pantoja, Veronica, Nancy Tribbensee and Duane Roen. "Legal Considerations for Writing Program Administrators." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 137-53.
- Royer, Daniel J. and Roger Gilles. "Placement Issues." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 263-74.

Week Ten (March 28-April 1): Communicating with the outside

- Anson, Chris M. and Robert L. Brown, Jr. "Subject to Interpretation: The Role of Research in Writing Programs and Its Relationship to the Politics of Administration in Higher Education." *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher: Inquiry in Action and Reflection*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. 141-52.
- Kinkead, Joyce and Jeanne Simpson. "The Administrative Audience: A Rhetorical Problem." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 68-77.
- Schuster, Charles I. "The Politics of Writing Promotion." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 331-40.
- Stygall, Gail. "Certifying the Knowledge of WPAs." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 71-88.
- White, Edward M. "Use It or Lose It: Power and the WPA." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 106-13.

Week Eleven (April 4-8)

- **Seminar paper overview due (4-5 pages)**
- Discussion of paper

Week Twelve (April 11-15): Negotiating conflict

- Bamberg, Betty. "Conflicts between Teaching and Assessing Writing: Using Program-Based Research to Resolve Pedagogical and Ethical Dilemmas." *The Writing Program Administrator as Researcher: Inquiry in Action and Reflection*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999. 28-39.
- Gale, Irene. "Conflicting Paradigms: Theoretical and Administrative Tensions in Writing Program Administration." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 14.1/2 (Fall/Winter 1990): 41-50.
- Leverenz, Carrie. "Theorizing Ethical Issues in Writing Program Administration." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 103-15.
- Ward, Irene. "Developing Healthy Management and Leadership Styles: Surviving the WPA's 'Inside Game.'" *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 49-67.
- White, Edward M. "Power and Agenda Setting in Writing Assessment." *Assessment of Writing: Politics, Policies, Practices*. Ed. Edward M. White, William D. Lutz, and Sandra Kamusikiri. New York: MLA, 1996. 9-24.

Week Thirteen (April 18-22): Professional development through WPA work

- Anson, Chris M., and Carol Rutz. "Graduate Students, Writing Programs, and Consensus-Based Management: Collaboration in the Face of Disciplinary Ideology." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 21.2/3 (Spring 1998): 106-20.
- Enos, Theresa. "Reflexive Professional Development: Getting Disciplined in Writing Program Administration." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 59-70.
- Hesse, Douglas D. "Understanding Larger Discourse in Higher Education: Practical Advice for WPAs." *The Allyn and Bacon Sourcebook for Writing Program Administrators*. Ed. Irene Ward and William J. Carpenter. New York: Longman, 2002. 299-314.
- Long, Mark C., Jennifer H. Holberg, and Marcy M. Taylor. "Beyond Apprenticeship: Graduate Students, Professional Development Programs and the Future(s) of English Studies." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 20.1/2 (Fall/Winter 1996): 66-78.

Week Fourteen (April 25-29): Envisioning the future

- Bullock, Richard H. "When Administration Becomes Scholarship: The Future of Writing Program Administration." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 11.1/2 (Fall 1987): 13-18.
- Chase, Geoffrey. "Redefining Composition, Managing Change, and the Role of the WPA." *WPA: Writing Program Administration* 21.1 (Fall 1997): 46-54.
- Sullivan, Francis J., et al. "Student Needs and Strong Composition: The Dialectics of Writing Program Reform." *College Composition and Communication* 48.3 (October 1997): 372-91.

- Weiser, Irwin and Shirley K Rose "Theorizing Writing Program Theorizing." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002. 183-95.

Week Fifteen (May 2-6)

- Maid, Barry M. "More Than a Room of Our Own: Building an Independent Department of Writing." *The Writing Program Administrator's Resource: A Guide to Reflective Institutional Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2002. 453-66.
- Semester review, annotation review, discussion of paper

Last Day of class (May 9)

- **Final draft of seminar paper due (15-20 pages)**

Selected bibliography

- Black, Laurel, Donald A. Daiker, Jeffrey Sommers, and Gail Stygall, eds. *New Directions in Portfolio Assessment: Reflective Practice, Critical Theory, and Large-Scale Scoring*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann-Boynton/Cook, 1994.
- Haswell, Richard H., ed. *Beyond Outcomes: Assessment and Instruction Within a University Writing Program*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 2001.
- Hilgers, Thomas, and Joy Marsella. *Making Your Writing Program Work: A Guide to Good Practices*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992.
- Heckathorn, Amy. "Moving Toward a Group Identity: WPA Professionalization from the 1940s to the 1970s." *Historical Studies of Writing Program Administration: Individuals, Communities, and the Formation of a Discipline*. Ed. Barbara L'Eplattenier and Lisa Mastrangelo. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2004. 191-213.
- Hult, Christine, ed. *Evaluating Teachers of Writing*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1994.
- Janangelo, Joseph, and Kristine Hansen. *Resituating Writing: Constructing and Adminstrating Writing Programs*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook-Heinemann, 1998.
- Lynne, Patricia. *Coming to Terms: A Theory of Writing Assessment*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2003.
- Myers-Breslin, Linda. *Administrative Problem-Solving for Writing Programs and Writing Centers: Scenarios in Effective Program Management*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1999.
- O'Neill, Peggy, Angela Crow and Larry Burton, eds. *A Field of Dreams: Independent Writing Programs and the Future of Composition Studies*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2002.
- Roen, Duane, Barry M. Maid, Gregory Glau, John Ramage and David Schwalm. "Reconsidering and Assessing the Work of Writing Program Administrators." *The Writing Program Administrator as Theorist: Making Knowledge Work*. Ed. Shirley K. Rose and Irwin Weiser. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2002.