Composition Theory and Pedagogy

1. Course Description

ENGL 4343 - Composition Theory & Pedagogy

A study of advanced composition techniques, theories, and methods of teaching. Prerequisites: 6 hours of English.
3.000 Credit hours
3.000 Lecture hours

Levels: Undergraduate
Schedule Types: Lecture

Writing & Language Studies Department

2. Professor Contact Info:

Dr. Beatrice Mendez Newman
Professor, Department of Writing and Language Studies
Office: ELABS 208
Email: beatrice.newman@utrgv.edu
Office phone: 665-7384
Office hours: TU & TH, 8-10am and by appointment
Online office hours: most days throughout the day
Email response times: You may contact me anytime; during the day through around 7pm, I will usually respond within minutes; if you contact me after 7pm, I will likely respond first thing the next morning.

3. A Brief Overview of ENGLISH 4343

If you are taking English 4343, you are either required to take it for your degree plan or you are taking it as an upper division elective. Additionally, many of you are likely to be working toward teacher certification. Regardless of your entry route into English 4343, my goal is to promote a greater appreciation of writing in each of you—in other words, to help you enjoy writing and to enable you to discover the importance of writing for your personal and professional growth.

Class Activities: We will have three basic types of online class activities: (1) lessons that introduce you to the content (the knowledge base) of the writing task you are currently working on, (2) discussion boards that allow you to interact with your classmates, and (3) writing tasks that allow you to generate specific types of essays that reflect and apply our writing lessons.

Our ONLINE Environment: Our online environment will provide a great deal of autonomy for you as a learner, but with that independence comes responsibility for making sure you don’t get behind. In our summer course, you will need to log in to our course every day to make sure you stay on track and pay attention to course-related announcements and email messages. I will send you reminder messages every week to help keep you on track. Even though it’s an online class, I will be available for face-to-face conferencing in my office. I hope to actually meet some of you, even if you just come by to say hi and introduce yourselves. All our course material and assignments are on our Blackboard page organized into units.

Class Work: We have two content units (Unit 1—Writing Territories and Unit 2—Writing Pedagogy and Praxis) and two course framework units (the course orientation unit and the course reflection unit).
4. Course Objectives

4A. Departmental Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for English (SLOs)

English 4343 Student Learning Outcomes
Departmental Goals: Student Learning Outcomes for English (SLOs)
SLO 1—Students will be able to interpret and analyze a text using different approaches from literary, rhetorical and/or linguistic theories.
SLO 2—Students in certification tracks will demonstrate knowledge and skills in the areas of writing, literature, reading, oral communication, media literacy, and English language arts pedagogy.
SLO 3—Recent graduates who majored in English will demonstrate satisfaction with the programs in the English Department.
SLO 4—Students will be able to use discipline-appropriate technology applications (such as library databases, computer applications, Internet research, non-print media, multi-media applications, desktop publishing, etc.) in preparation and presentation of course projects.

4B. Student Learning Outcomes for English 4343

Student Learning Outcomes for English 4343
By the end of English 4343, students will be able to:
1. practice the planning, drafting, revising, and sharing processes of writing in a variety of genres (SLO 1, 2, 3)
2. participate meaningfully in online discussions focused on writing theory, practice, and pedagogy (SLO 1, 2)
3. connect their individual writing experiences to theories and practices presented in course resources in writing theory and pedagogy (SLO 1, 2, 3, 4)

5. What we'll do in English 4343

This Course Map provides a visual representation of our course structure. The unit materials and activities on our Blackboard page include overviews, due dates, and time and effort expectations for each unit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Orientation</th>
<th>Unit 1: Writing Territories</th>
<th>Unit 2: Best Writing Pedagogy</th>
<th>Course Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Content &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Unit Content &amp; Activities</th>
<th>Unit Content &amp; Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation Lesson</td>
<td>Unit lessons</td>
<td>Course Reflection Lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 discussion board</td>
<td>3 discussion boards</td>
<td>1 discussion board</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Unit Points: 100

Total Unit Points: 450

Total Unit Points: 250

Total Unit Points: 100

Each unit has a designated tab in our Blackboard menu. Each unit includes a unit overview, a "What's Due When" schedule of unit activities, and a Content and Activities folder with all unit materials, assignments, and quizzes.

PREREQUISITES: Each assignment has a threshold score that will indicate you’ve met the expectations for the assignment at a minimal level. If you meet this score, then you can move on to the next assignment. Prerequisites are designed to promote success in the major unit assignments. Each assignment includes a rubric which specifies the “meets expectations” requirements; if you don’t meet the success expectations, you’ll get feedback or be sent
back to the instructions so that you can resubmit the assignment until you meet the threshold score for the next assignment.

- **FEEDBACK:** When you submit an assignment, you’ll get formative feedback which tells you how effectively you completed the task and what you need to do to improve the submission. If you did not meet the minimum score (usually 70%) to move to the next assignment, you will need to apply feedback to revise and resubmit the assignment until you reach the “meets expectations” level described in the rubric. This is to enable you to end all assignments with the highest possible score and optimum learning levels.

- **RESPONSE TIME:** For minor assignments, such as discussion boards, you’ll get feedback usually within a few hours of your submission. Drafts of essays will generally be back to you with feedback in 24 hours. If I can’t stick to these feedback turn around times for a specific assignment, I’ll let you know via an Announcement once we launch the assignment.

- **ANNOUNCEMENTS and EMAIL:** I will rely on class announcements and emails to stay in touch with you. Since we are in an online, virtual classroom environment, this cyber communication will be vital to staying up with adjustments and updates. You need to check your email every day to ensure you have not missed reading such class updates.

- **LATE WORK:** Submitting assignments late will hurt your grade, derail your progress in interacting with classmates on our discussion boards, and significantly cut back on your revision and resubmission time. For some assignments, you will have the option to request a reasonable extension (presented in the submission options of the assignment). For all other assignments, a late assignment will be eligible for maximum 70% credit.

- **SUCCESS ALERTS:** If you fail to meet the deadline for an assignment, you will be sent a reminder about the missed due date. You will be able to submit the assignment through the closing date, but the grade will be reduced.

- **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:** Please check the technical requirements for full participation in online learning, presented in the syllabus tab and the technical requirements tab from our course menu on our Blackboard page. Some caveats: (1) do not send assignments from your phone; such submissions tend to be garbled and unformatted and will yield a low score; (2) not having updated hardware and software on your personal computer will not justify problematic submissions or non-submissions. We have numerous computer labs on campus which you can use to complete your course work.

- **BLACKBOARD SUPPORT:** If you something should go wrong with your Blackboard access, here’s the basic contact info from the Blackboard support tab on your syllabus menu. You need to keep in mind, however, that a Blackboard issue exacerbated because you waited till the last minute to do an assignment is not an excuse for a late submission. Also, I cannot change or “fix” anything related to Blackboard technology.

- **IN PERSON CONFERENCING:** Even though we are an online class, I invite you to come by my office whenever you feel that a face-to-face conference might help you better understand our course content or a specific assignment.

- **DROPS:** If you miss several consecutive assignments or fail to participate in our class for an extended period, you will be sent a drop notice advising you that you will be dropped if you don’t contact your professor immediately and get back on board with your course work. If you fail to start our course by Monday, January 22, you will be sent a drop notice.
6. Course grade calculation:
Your final grade will be based on the percentage of points you’ve accumulated. Your score is calculated automatically by the Blackboard gradebook which is based on the current number of assignments. The TOTAL in your “My Grades” at any given time reflects your score for the assignments that are due through that date. So, if there’s an assignment due on Feb. 1 and you haven’t yet submitted it, Blackboard calculates the score as a zero until you submit it and it’s scored. CAVEAT: simply submitting an assignment will not register a score or clear you to move on to the next assignment; you have to wait until I score it. This is why submitting your assignments early is important: early submissions allow time to revise and resubmit and ensure a top score.

The course map shows 900 total points for the course, but note the comment in the blue box about bonus points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Final Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Points required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100%-90%</td>
<td>900-810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89%-80%</td>
<td>809-720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79%-70%</td>
<td>719-630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69%-60%</td>
<td>629-540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59%-0%</td>
<td>539-0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each unit includes a “What’s Due When” chart that shows specific due dates and points for each assignment. Additionally, you have a whole course What’s Due When calendar in the course menu. However, since almost all of our assignments have prerequisite scores, an assignment will not show up on your Blackboard calendar until you meet the threshold/prerequisite score for the previous assignment.

There are redundancies throughout our course to help you stay on track and meet the requirements for an A in each unit and holistically in the course. Additionally, I will send the class an announcement at the beginning of each week to remind you of upcoming due dates.
7. Materials Required:
   - NO BOOKS REQUIRED
   - Each unit includes several readings which will be posted in the appropriate Unit Content and Materials Folder.

8. Meet SOPHIE—our guide to success
   A few semesters ago, I created a learning support strategy for my online classes which I named SOPHIE: Success Oriented Policies, Help, Incentives, & Examples. (You may know that the name Sophia means wisdom; SOPHIE is designed to keep us feeling wise about how we move through the course.) There is a SOPHIE tab in our Blackboard menu. SOPHIE is our repertoire of important info that you need in order to effectively negotiate our day-to-day course dealings, such as deadlines, required formatting for assignments, prerequisites, consequences for failure to submit assignments, online protocols, email requirements, bonus opportunities, virtual course attendance, and several other topics. SOPHIE also explains how institutional drop policies work in the context of our specific course. You need to refer to SOPHIE regularly to ensure you are meeting expectations for success. And, when you fail to follow a key guideline, I will refer you to SOPHIE and you will need to resubmit your assignment until it meets the guidelines and expectations presented in SOPHIE.

   A lot of the information presented in this syllabus will be expanded in SOPHIE, so make sure you pay attention to every section of SOPHIE.

   SOPHIE is under the COURSE TOOLS section of our Blackboard menu.
9. UTRGV INFO and Policy Statements

Calendar of Activities
Include in this section a table or list that provides information for students regarding important dates, assignments or activities. The UTRGV academic calendar can be found at https://my.utrgv.edu/home at the bottom of the screen, prior to login. Some important dates for spring 2018 include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 16</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 19</td>
<td>Last day to add a course or register for spring 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 12 – 17</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK – NO classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30 – 31</td>
<td>EASTER HOLIDAY – NO classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Last day to drop a course; will count toward the 6-drop rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2</td>
<td>Last day of classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Study Day – NO class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 4 – 10</td>
<td>Spring 2018 Final Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11 – 12</td>
<td>Commencement Ceremonies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The UTRGV disability accommodation, mandatory course evaluation statement and sexual harassment statement are required on all syllabi. Additional policy statements are optional, such as those covering attendance, academic integrity, and course drop policies.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

Students with a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects academic performance) who would like to receive academic accommodations should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) as soon as possible to schedule an appointment to initiate services. Accommodations can be arranged through SAS at any time, but are not retroactive. Students who suffer a broken bone, severe injury or undergo surgery during the semester are eligible for temporary services. Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at ability@utrgv.edu. Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be contacted by phone at (956) 665-7005 (Voice), (956) 665-3840 (Fax), or via email at ability@utrgv.edu.

MANDATORY COURSE EVALUATION PERIOD: Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades. Online evaluations will be available:

- Spring 2018 Module 1: February 14 – February 20
- Spring 2018 Module 2: April 11 – April 17
- Spring 2018 (full semester): April 11 – May 2

ATTENDANCE: Recommended on all syllabi; may be modified by the instructor as long as it is not inconsistent with UTRGV policy.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV's attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

SCHOLASTIC INTEGRITY: Recommended on all syllabi.

As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, test taking assistance (including self-plagiarism), and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board of Regents Rules and Regulations and UTRGV Academic Integrity Guidelines). All scholastic dishonesty incidents will be reported to the Dean of Students.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION, and VIOLENCE: Required on all syllabi. Do not modify.

In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “Responsible Employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect that is free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

COURSE DROPS: Recommended on all syllabi; may be modified by the instructor as long as it is not inconsistent with UTRGV policy.

According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

STUDENT SERVICES: Recommended on all syllabi.

Students who demonstrate financial need have a variety of options when it comes to paying for college costs, such as scholarships, grants, loans and work-study. Students should visit the Student Services Center (U Central) for additional information. U Central is located in BMAIN 1.100 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 1.145 (Edinburg) or can be reached by email (ucentral@utrgv.edu) or telephone: (888) 882-4026. In addition to financial aid, U Central can assist students with registration and admissions.

Students seeking academic help in their studies can use university resources in addition to an instructor’s office hours. University Resources include the Learning Center, Writing Center, Advising Center and Career Center. The centers provide services such as tutoring, writing help, critical thinking, study skills, degree planning, and student employment. Locations are:

- Learning center: BSTUN 2.10 (Brownsville) or ELCTR 100 (Edinburg)
- Writing center: BLIBR 3.206 (Brownsville) or ESTAC 3.119 (Edinburg)
- Advising center: BMAIN 1.400 (Brownsville) or ESWKHH 101 (Edinburg)
- Career center: BCRTZ 129 (Brownsville) or ESSBL 2.101 (Edinburg)