

## Course Syllabus

### COURSE NUMBER

**COMM 5900.01 COURSE TITLE: (Reading Seminars: Teachers as Writers**

**Sec 01 TERM: SU 2005 SITE: WEBH 325 INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Carolyn Lesser

[CLesserAuthor@aol.com](mailto:CLesserAuthor@aol.com)

314-962-1436...(6-8 pm. M-Th)

**CREDIT HOURS: 3 hours graduate credit**

**1. Course Description: The workshop format of this course will allow teachers to refine their own writing and to understand the process of composing in order to support the development of their own students' writing. Teachers will learn strategies to inspire students to construct and refine both narrative and expository compositions. This is a "hands-on" workshop with methods and activities that can be applied at all elementary and secondary levels.**

**2. Learning Outcomes: (Insert course outcomes and their links to program outcomes, relevant goals, dispositions, and MoSTEP/Professional Organization standards. Rows and columns may be added or deleted using the Microsoft Word Table Tool).**

Course Outcomes Program Goals SOE Goals, SOE Dispositions, and MoSTEP/Prof Standards Addressed

1. To recognize, accept, and use our creative gifts as writers.
2. To become confident writers of nonfiction.
3. To enthusiastically model nonfiction writing in the classroom.
4. To become comfortable writing in front of and with students.
5. To find a personal writing "voice."
6. To write as an easy, natural response to learning and being fully alive.
7. To make nonfiction writing a part of every content area.
8. To practice and learn to teach writing for the love of writing.
9. To make the fiction- nonfiction connection to enrich each genre.
10. To celebrate the joy of writing fascinating truth with original ideas and a unique writer's voice.

**NOTE** If your course is directly linked to a specific M.A.T. or certification program, please insert relevant program outcomes. If your course does not fit clearly into a single program or certification area, you may wish to delete this column. If you do not have a copy of your program's outcomes, please contact your M.A.T. coordinator. Questions regarding certification program outcomes should be forwarded to the Director of Undergraduate and Initial Certification. Note The individual instructor should decide what goes into this column based on student needs. Information may be coded with narratives attached to the document or narratives may be listed here.

Schedule of required readings, class preparations and assignments, lectures, discussions, student presentations, out-of-class assignments and exams.

REQUIRED READINGS.....SU 2005  
COMM 5900  
Sec. 01

Instructor: Carolyn Lesser  
ID #2047760  
314-962-1436

Selections from these texts will be used throughout the class for discussion, writing prompts and nonfiction writing.

*Awakening Genius in The Classroom,*” Thomas Armstrong, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998. ISBN 0-87120-302-2

*“Zen in the Art of Writing; Essays on Creativity,”* Ray Bradbury, Joshua Odell Editions, Capra Press, 1990. ISBN 1-877741-01-9

*“Bird by Bird,”* Anne Lamott, Anchor Book, Doubleday, 1995. ISBN 0-385-48001-6

*“On Writing Well,”* ISBN 0-06-096831-1 and *“Writing to Learn,”* ISBN 0-06-091576-5, William Zinsser, Houghton Mifflin Co.

CLASS PREPARATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS, LECTURES, DISCUSSIONS,  
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS, OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, AND EXAMS.

#### 1. SCHEDULE OF READINGS, CLASS PREP, ASSIGNMENTS: THE EXPEDITION BEGINS...

- ◆ Meeting 1...Exploring nonfiction across the curriculum, ... the nonlinear writing process...practicing creating the harbor for our community of word sleuths and wordsmiths... killing the critic...granting permission...being ten...the power of Crayolas...cut and paste.
- ◆ Meeting 2...Exploring nonfiction passions...practicing how to find and trap lightning bolt ideas...exploring expeditions into content areas...drawing to write.
- ◆ Meeting 3...Exploring to discover the truth as we research ideas and topics...practicing the information quest...people, places, books, internet, interviews...Questions as maps... Answers as waypoints...discovering the path into the work.
- ◆ Meeting 4...Exploring as we practice making nonfiction dazzle and sing...finding the minutia of the truth...images and voice...show and take...writing the hook.
- ◆ Meeting 5...Exploring creation and invention...practicing talking on paper... thunderclap scribbling...Anything Goes rough drafts...back to more research...or drawing... or another expedition...or interview in this nonlinear process...burying the work to free the editor.
- ◆ Meeting 6...Exploring revision...practicing digging it up...seeing what we discover... reading aloud and listening... inventing personal methods and editing questions that empower ...innovating peer conferences practices...editing and polishing one piece of our work.
- ◆ Meeting 7...Exploring as we practice turning prose to poetry, poetry to prose...back to creation and invention...or details and images...or more research...or another questions for the experts...or drawing...as we write nonfiction poetry and prose.
- ◆ Meeting 8...Exploring the nonfiction-fiction connection... practicing writing narrative within nonfiction...inserting nonfiction within fiction...the multigenre approach to nonfiction.
- ◆ Meeting 9...Exploring character within nonfiction...practicing creating and enhancing real characters...the human interest “hook”...empowering nonfiction.
- ◆ Meeting 10...Exploring publication...trade publishers...school publishers...academic journals...the no-chance drawer vs. the card catalog...planning to write, time, space, place...

passions rule.

- ◆ Meeting 11..... Exploring to plan our personal writing expeditions and those of our students
- ◆ Meeting 12...Exploring the writing tools of a formal author's reading format...reading selections from our work aloud...peer responses to the work...the power of affirmation...we are writers.

This class is about writing; practicing our writing, opening us to becoming writers to enhance our professional lives, and to write for the sheer fun of lining up the words on the page. This class is taught by a professional writer/author. Therefore, each class meeting will be spent writing, talking writers' talk, innovating our processes, organizing our work, inventing our studios, reading our writing, discussing our writing and the writing of others, writing in groups and individually, and discussing classroom applications of our writing processes. There will be time before and after class for individual conferences with the instructor. Questions are celebrated.

#### ADDITIONAL MEETINGS:

One or two class meetings may need to be re-scheduled due to the appearance schedule of the instructor, and may be satisfied by one or two research investigations at the St. Louis Zoo and/or the St. Louis Botanical Garden. These may be in lieu of one or two class meetings or in addition to the scheduled class meetings.

#### **MATERIALS TO BRING TO EACH AND EVERY CLASS:**

I do not accept any writing torn from a spiral bound notebook. Please bring a 3-ring loose-leaf notebook and the loose-leaf paper you love to write on.....lined, unlined and whatever you love to write with. No goofy colors of ink, please, only black or blue. Bring a few #2 pencils for drawing. Paper will be supplied. Handouts will always be 3-hole punched for your notebook.

#### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS CRITICAL TO WRITERS... ACQUIRE ASAP...**

The **thesaurus** and **dictionary** of your dreams. Get the best you can afford and **no abridged anything!**

We need all the words the world can offer and when we run out we will invent our own!!!

**RESOURCES: REQUIRED TEXTS...**these will begin your professional writer's library...

*Awakening Genius in The Classroom,*” Thomas Armstrong, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1998. ISBN 0-87120-302-2

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**REVALUATION: (basis of evaluation with explanation regarding the nature of the assignment and the percentage of the grade assigned to each item below)**

Participation..... 60 points  
Two final polished writing pieces.... 40 points  
100 points possible

1. Everyone begins with an A
2. Participation is key.....110% in = 110% out...5 points per class.
  - \*personal goal-setting for each class...writing with intent
  - \*discussion
  - \*in class writing and reading
  - \*handing in one piece for me to comment/reflect on
  - \*questions
3. One polished nonfiction piece and every single piece of that process. I want to see what you did and how  
you did it....your process...messy parts are great! 20 points.
4. One nonfiction poem and every single part of that process. I want to see what you did and how you did it...  
your poetry process....messy parts are great! 20 points.
5. Non-evaluated reflections about your journey through this class, turned in at the end of our class.

**AssessmentsLinks to Course OutcomesPercentage of Grade**

**3. GRADING SCALE:**

A = 95-100 points  
B = 85-95 “  
C = 75-85 “

**Note: ALL PAPERS/PROJECTS MAY BE RETURNED VIA A SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE. PAPERS ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR PICK-UP IN THE SOE OFFICE.**

#### **4. ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY:**

**(You may use or modify this statement or create your own).**

**Students at Webster University are expected to practice academic honesty.**

##### **Avoiding Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is intentionally claiming that another person's work is his/her own or implying that another person's work is his/her own (through inadequate or inaccurate citations of reference material.)

Students:

- ◆ Should not copy whole portions of text from another source as a major component of papers or projects.
- ◆ Should identify the title, author, page number/webpage address, and publication date of works when directly quoting small portions of texts, articles, interviews, or websites.
- ◆ Should appropriately identify the source of information when paraphrasing (restating) ideas from texts, interviews, articles, or websites.
- ◆ Should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association Style Guide when referencing all research sources.

Consequences of Academic Dishonesty:

**(Instructor may list specific consequences here)**

For further information about the consequences of academic dishonesty please consult the Webster University Student Handbook.

#### **5. ACCESSIBILITY/ACCOMODATIONS POLICY:**

If you have a disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations contact the Director of the Academic Resource Center, Dr. Pat McLeese, at (314) 968-7495.

**WEBSTER UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Vision:** “. . . We all must work to make this world worthy of its children.” (Casals, 1970)

**Mission:** The School of Education at Webster University provides its students with the know experiences, and practical tools that help them guide both themselves and others toward lifelc learning. The School of Education is a community of educator-scholars who apply critical refle and creative energies to enhance learning in schools and other educational settings. The facul strives to support this community by modeling effective teaching practices based on sound the and research. Personalized approaches create a challenging, yet supportive environmer permits the risk-taking necessary for learning and growth. The School of Education encourages faculty and students to work actively toward this end, keeping in mind that action must be root visionary, yet realistic, thinking. This thought and action process underscores the development c inner-directed self-understanding, an outer-directed global perspective, and an appreciation c human diversity that arises from both.

**Theme:** Developing a world of learners through knowledge, leadership, and life-long learning.

The universal mandala (a circle with intersecting vertical and horizontal lines) graphically repres the conceptual framework of the School of Education. The outer circle provides the framework “world of learners” in cultural settings. The two axes represent the theme components of knowle leadership, and life-long learning. These lines are broken to emphasize the fluid relationship of t goals and integrated concepts. Each quadrant represents one of the school's four goals candidates: to develop knowledgeable learners, informed instructors, reflective collaborators, responsive educators.

### **Goals**

1. Education candidates will demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter, knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of pedagogy based on inquiry and scholarship.

The knowledgeable learner:

- 1.1 knows content that supports conceptual understanding;
- 1.2 applies tools of inquiry to construct meaningful learning experiences;
- 1.3 identifies developmental factors in student learning; and
- 1.4 understands theoretical principles of effective instruction to plan learning experiences.

2. Education candidates will incorporate multiple assessment and instructional strategies to support effective educational practices based on research and theory.

The informed instructor:

- 2.1 designs curriculum based on students' prior knowledge, learning styles, strengths, and needs;
- 2.2 understands and uses a range of instructional strategies;
- 2.3 uses a variety of communication modes, media, and technology to support student learning; and
- 2.4 employs a variety of formal and informal assessments to monitor learning and modify instruction.

3. Education candidates will reflect on the roles educators take as leaders of change through collaboration with colleagues, students, and families in schools and communities.

The reflective collaborator:

- 3.1 values and integrates reflection to grow as a professional;
  - 3.2 promotes communication and collaboration with colleagues, families, and community leaders;
  - 3.3 seeks relationships with families and students to support student learning; and
  - 3.4 initiates change that benefits students and their families.
4. Education candidates will demonstrate respect for diversity through responsive teaching and learning that values individual differences.

The responsive educator:

- 4.1 understands and responds appropriately to issues of diversity
- 4.2 acknowledges social and cultural contexts to create effective teaching and learning environments;
- 4.3 adapts instruction to the learner's knowledge, ability, and background experience; and
- 4.4 identifies resources for specialized services when needed.

**Dispositions:**

NCATE defines dispositions as "the values, commitments and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. " (Professional Standards, p. 53) There is significant value in focusing attention on qualities that make an effective teacher.

1. Understands and Respects Self
  - 1.1 Understands and respects that s (he) may be different from others
  - 1.2 Embraces an openness to change (adaptability, flexibility)
  - 1.3 Exhibits curiosity
  - 1.4 Engages in reflection
  
2. Understands and Respects Others
  - 2.1 Understands, respects, and responds appropriately to diversity in a variety of settings
  - 2.2 Exhibits empathy
  - 2.3 Commits to fairness and honesty
  - 2.4 Listens respectfully to other points of view
  
3. Understands and Respects Professional Communities
  - 3.1 Commits to professional behavior in university and school cultures
  - 3.2 Practices informed decision-making in university and school cultures
  - 3.3 Communicates and collaborates in university and school cultures
  - 3.4 Accepts academic rigor (willingness to work/ high expectations)
  - 3.5 Affects change with courage and confidence

(Attach Specialty Program Area Professional Standards, MoSTEP General Standards, and MoS Subject specific competencies if desired).