

## **PRWR 6000—Issues and Research in Professional Writing**

**Spring 2000; Tuesdays, 6:30–9:15, WB 111/HU 231**

**Instructor: Dr. Sarah Robbins**

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**Tel. XXX-XXX-XXXX; home—XXX-XXX-XXXX (Please use home number between 9:00 a.m. and 10 p.m. only.)**

### **Course description:**

PRWR 6000 will introduce MAPW students to the three concentrations in the program: applied writing, creative writing, and composition and rhetoric. Examining both differences in the program strands and issues that are important to all three, the course will focus on current questions about the practice of writing in a variety of professional contexts. Students will draw upon theory and research to explore such concepts as audience, authorship, literacy communities, and ownership in various forms of publication. They will consider ways in which professional writing has been shaped by developments in the larger culture, such as changes in available technologies (e.g., the impact of computers) or re-definitions of audience (e.g., web users; Oprah's book club or specialized magazines/journals). They will also develop plans for doing effective research about writing in settings important to their own professional development, such as schools, businesses, communications centers, or the publishing business.

### **Required Texts:**

- *Keywords in Composition Studies*, Paul Heilker and Peter Vandenberg
- *White Oleander*, Janet Fitch
- *The New Century Handbook*, Christine A. Hult and Thomas N. Huckin, eds.
- *How I Wrote Jubilee*, Margaret Walker
- **Course pack of essays** from *Writing in the Workplace: New Research Perspectives* (Spilka, ed.); *Electronic Literacies in the Workplace* (Sullivan and Dautermann, eds.); *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology* (Selfe and Hilligoss, eds.); *Teaching Lives: Essays and Stories* (Bishop); *Under Construction: Working at the Intersections of Composition Theory, Research, and Practice* (Eds. Farris and Anson); *CCC*; *Written Communication*
- KSU guidelines for research (copies supplied by instructor)
- Additional handouts--individualized readings provided by the instructor or selected by students (See the schedule later in this syllabus.)

### **Recommended Supplemental Texts:**

Joseph M. Williams. *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2000. 0-321-02408-7.

Cook, Claire Kehrwald. *Line by Line: How to Improve Your Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985 (or later edition). 0-395-39391-4.

### **Grade Breakdown**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Percentage of grade</b>
Analysis of a professional journal	10%
Interview with a professional writer	20%
PowerPoint, web page(s), or “newsletter” on a cluster of <i>Keywords</i>	10%
Presentation from reading on an issue/trend	20%
WebCT postings (minimum of 5)	10%
Participation in class (informal presentations, discussion); attendance	10%
End-of-course research proposal (exam)	20%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### **Attendance Policy:**

Since the class is a seminar, regular attendance is crucial. You may miss one class without any academic penalty. Unexcused absences after the first will be reflected in your oral participation grade.

#### **KSU Statement on Academic Integrity:**

Revision of Section Three, Subsection XVI of the Faculty Handbook

(Approved by the KSU Faculty Senate 3/15/99 and Effective Summer, 1999)

Every KSU student is responsible for upholding the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, as published in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. Section II of the Student Code of Conduct addresses the University’s policy on academic honesty, including provisions regarding plagiarism and cheating, unauthorized access to University materials, misrepresentation/falsification of University records or academic work, malicious removal, retention, or destruction of library materials, malicious /intentional misuse of computer facilities and/or services, and misuse of student identification cards.

Incidents of alleged academic misconduct will be handled through the established procedures of the University Judiciary Program, which includes either an “informal” resolution by a faculty member, resulting in a grade adjustment, or a formal hearing procedure, which may subject a student to the Code of Conduct’s minimum one semester suspension requirement.

**LAST DAY TO DROP WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY: March 17**

# **Tentative Schedule for Major Assignments and Class Meetings**

## **January 11:**

### **Fear and Fun in Writing**

#### **Classroom activities:**

- writing personal introductions for classmates you interview
- discussion of first writing assignment (analysis of audience[s] and purposes for a professional journal, with summary and critique of one article/essay from the publication)
- discussion of readings on fear and courage dimensions of writing

#### **Readings:** [provided in class handouts]

Keyes, "Points of Courage" from *The Courage to Write: How Writers Transcend Fear*

Min-Zhau Lu, "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle" (excerpt)

Barbara Kingsolver, "How Poems Happen," from *The Beacon Best of 1999*

**Computer lab activities:** introduction of WebCT platform for course; composing a posting to course bulletin board in response to the excerpt from Keyes; using reading previews from the WebCT tools (example: pre-reading questions for January 18, including questions about internships, workplace professionalism, intersections between composition studies and creative writing)

## **January 18:**

### **Overview of the MAPW Program--What is "professional writing"?**

#### **Assigned readings:**

Robert R. Johnson, "Tales from the Crossing: Professional Communication Internships in the Electronic Workplace," *Electronic Literacies in the Workplace*, Eds. Patricia Sullivan and Jennie Dautermann. Urbana: NCTE, 1996. 238–52. [course pack]

Wendy Bishop, "Crossing the Lines: On Creative Composition and Composing Creative Writing," from *Teaching Lives: Essays and Stories* [course pack]

Tim Mayers, "(Re)Writing Craft," *CCC 51* (September 1999): 82-89. [course pack]

#### **Classroom Activities:**

- roundtable of program graduates describing their experiences with internships and capstone preparation
- discussion of assigned readings
- additional discussion of first major writing assignment (journal analysis)

## **January 25:**

### **Supporting Professional Writing by Reading Professional Journals**

Library session—surveying and selecting journals/periodicals for first major writing assignment

(See separate handout describing expectations for your critique of a professional publication, including analysis of audience and purpose, along with a summary and critique of one essay/article)

## **February 1:**

### **Exploring Careers in/using “Applied Writing”**

#### **Classroom Activities:**

- Roundtable of professional writers discussing their workplaces, genres used, audiences
- Visit from Pauline Jones, KSU Career Development Support Specialist
- Discussion of guidelines for second major writing assignment, based on interviewing a professional writer

**Note: First assignment due (See January 25 and separate guidelines)**

## **February 8:**

### **Examining Terms from Studies of Writing-Revision, Peer Evaluation, Collaboration, Genres, Social Construction, Literacy**

#### **Reading Assignments:**

Janis Forman, “Literacy, Collaboration, and Technology: New Connections and Challenges,” *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*. Eds. Cynthia L. Selfe and Susan Hilligoss. New York: MLA, 1994. 130–43. [course pack]

[Freeman], Mary E. Wilkins. “A Poetess.” *A New England Nun and Other Stories*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891. [course pack; Note: “A Poetess” was originally published in *The Atlantic Monthly*.]

Terms from *Keywords*: Revision, Peer Evaluation, Collaboration, Social Construction, Literacy

#### **Informal Writing Assignment to prepare for class discussion:**

Write brief bullet points or striking phrases from the entries for each of the terms listed above (from *Keywords in Composition Studies*). Based on your careful consideration of the explanation of one of the terms, post an argumentative personal response or detailed inquiry question to the WebCT bulletin board. Write at least one response to another class member's posting.

**Class discussion:**

- outlining approaches for preparing a PowerPoint presentation, a “newsletter” (using desktop publishing techniques) or a simple web-based project on a cluster of terms from *Keywords*
- observations on the WebCT postings
- using *Keywords* terms to interpret “A Poetess” and the essay by Forman

**February 15:****Collaborative Writing Project Based on *Keywords*****Reading assignment:**

Do a preliminary reading of these terms from *Keywords*, looking especially for concepts that might be profitably clustered for consideration by the class.

*academic discourse, argument, audience, composing/writing, discourse community, error, evaluation, expressive writing, ideology, intertextuality, invention, marginalization, portfolio, practice/praxis, process, rhetoric, style, voice, writing center*

**Writing assignment:**

Post a WebCT bulletin board entry about your preliminary work for your interview essay, including whom you are interviewing and why, several questions you plan to ask/have asked, and an anticipated (sub)genre and possible venue for your interview essay.

**Class Activity:** Group work on how to prepare a PowerPoint presentation; quick look at desktop publishing options for group presentation assignment

**February 22:****Building Communities of Writers and Readers****Class Activities:**

- roundtable of writing program administrators who have organized writing conferences for a variety of audiences and venues

Linda Hubert, Agnes Scott College Writers' Conference

Mary Zoghby, Kennesaw State CLWC coordinator for 1999 and 2000

Carolyn Denard, founder, Toni Morrison Society; director, first TM conference

Geri Taran, coordinator, Georgia Writers' Association

- computer classroom: introduction to Netscape Composer as an option for building WebPages for the group presentation assignment on *Keywords*

**Note: second major written assignment due—interview with a professional writer**

**February 29:**  
**KSU's CLWC; Time for Group Work on *Keywords* Project**

**Class Activities:**

**I. Preview of CLWC-related assigned readings:**

- *White Oleander*
- advertising materials for the CLWC
- handouts on the “Oprah Effect” (Kinsella, Bridget. “The Oprah Effect.” *Publishers Weekly*. 20 January 1997. 276–78. And Thigpen, David E. “Winfrey's Winners.” *Time*. 2 December 1996. 84.)
- Select readings for March 21 session.

**II. Group Work on Presentations based on *Keywords* terms or clusters of terms**

**March 7:**  
**Spring Break**

**March 14**  
**Meeting Time for Groups to Prepare *Keywords*-based Presentations**  
**Instructor Available for Individual or Group Conferences**

**(March 15 or March 16):**  
**Recommended CLWC Conference Attendance**

**Note:** Since our class read *White Oleander*, attending the March 15 CLWC evening session would be somewhat preferable. If you are unable to attend either March 15 or March 16, please see the instructor to discuss suitable alternative plans for attending another professional writing conference, workshop, book-signing, or similar event sometime during the term.

**March 21:**  
**Group Presentations based on *Keywords* and using a display technology**

**March 28:**  
**Some Research Approaches in Professional Writing**

**Assigned readings:**

Jamie MacKinnon, “Becoming a Rhetor: Developing Writing Ability in a Mature, Writing-Intensive Organization,” *Writing in the Workplace: New Research Perspectives*. Ed. Rachel Spilka. Carbondale: Southern Illinois U Press, 1993. 41–55. [course pack]

Joyce Magnotto Neff, “Grounded Theory: A Critical Research Methodology,” *Under Construction: Working at the Intersections of Composition Theory, Research, and*

*Practice*. Eds. Christine Farris and Chris M. Anson. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1998. 124–35. [course pack]

Margaret Walker, *How I Wrote Jubilee*.

KSU Guidelines for Research

**Classroom activities:**

- **Researchers' Panel**

Program faculty members JoAllen Bradham, Robert Hill (with GRA), and Carol Harrell discuss the research they are doing as working professionals in creative, applied, and composition/rhetoric concentrations.

- **Discussion of assigned readings**
- **Selection of a “choice” reading for Trends/Issues presentations, to be prepared with a partner (See April 18 and April 25.)**

**April 4:**

**Personal Projects—Beginning Your Research Proposal**

Class will not meet. Use this time to do preliminary work on your research proposals, as well as to prepare readings and other materials for classes in the Issues/Trends Cluster.

**Writing Assignment:**

Post to WebCT a brief, tentative description of a professional writing research project you could do, including your inquiry question(s), site(s) for research, basic methodology plan, and rough timeline.

**Reading Assignment:**

See April 11, when a number of complex assignments are due. Besides beginning the work for that date, you will need to read your “choice” piece for the Issues/Trends Cluster so that you can begin planning with your partner when we meet on April 11.

**Issues/Trends Cluster**

*Class sessions for April 11, April 18, and April 25 will all focus on issues and trends in the study and practice of professional writing. Particular attention will be paid to topics recommended by past program graduates and current faculty.*

**April 11:**

**Craft, Style and Editing in Writing for the MAPW Program**

**Reading and writing assignments:**

Read the essay by Wendy Bishop, “Teaching ‘Grammar for Writers’ in a Process Workshop Classroom,” *Teaching Lives: Essays and Stories*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1997. 43–55. [course pack]

Write an **informal** description and critique of (some aspect of) *The New Century Handbook*. Make some notes on similarities and differences in your classmates' responses to the handbook.

Prepare a comprehensive folder of your writing for the course. Include printed copies of your WebCT postings. In preparation for an informal presentation to the class, make notes for an inventory of your style and "error" patterns, along with some specific goals you will set for your time in the program, to improve your craft, style, and editing. (Follow guidelines provided in a separate handout.)

**Class activities:**

- Discussion of *The New Century Handbook*'s strengths and weaknesses, as well as approaches for effective editing of your writing throughout the program, including dealing with documentation issues and styles.
- Discussion of Bishop's essay in light of your preparation of your writing folders, which will be handed in at the close of class
- Time to work with your partner(s) on your presentation for April 18 or April 25.

**April 18:**

**Technology and Professional Writing**

**Assigned reading:**

[www.writers.com](http://www.writers.com), *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*. Fall Books special section, Sunday, November 14, 1999, S1–S2. [course pack]

Identify one website that is useful to you as a professional writer. Print out enough copies of the home page for all class members and come prepared to outline its potential benefits.

**Classroom activities:**

- Discussion of assigned readings
- Presentations by pairs of students who have reviewed one of the following readings:

Jennie Dautermann, "Writing with Electronic Tools in Midwestern Businesses," *Electronic Literacies in the Workplace: Technologies of Writing*. Eds. Patricia Sullivan and Jennie Dautermann. Urbana: NCTE, 1996: 3–22.

Jane Zeni, "Oral Collaboration, Computers, and Revision." *Writing With: New Directions in Collaborative Teaching, Learning, and Research*. Eds. Sally Barr Reagan, Thomas Fox, and David Bleich. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. 213–26.



Johndan Johnson-Eilola, "Reading and Writing in Hypertext: Vertigo and Euphoria," *Literacy and Computers: The Complications of Teaching and Learning with Technology*. Eds. Cynthia L. Selfe and Susan Hilligoss. New York: MLA, 1994.

Nancy Allen. "Ethics and Visual Rhetorics: Seeing's Not Believing Anymore." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 5.1 (Winter 1996): 87–105.

Charles Kostelnick, "Supra-Textual Design: The Visual Rhetoric of Whole Documents." *Technical Communication Quarterly* 5.1 (Winter 1996): 9–33.

William H. O'Donnell and Emily A. Thrush, "Designing a Hypertext Edition of a Modern Poem," *The Literary Text in the Digital Age*. [excerpt]

- **computer lab session**

reviewing the presentation of *White Oleander* on amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com websites, including critique of online reviews and other framing materials (e.g., "About the Author" blurbs, excerpts from the novel), as well as the rhetoric of visual design

## **April 25:** **Ownership, Authority, “Public” Authorship and Intellectual Property**

### **Reading assignment from *Keywords*:**

*Authority, epistemology*

### **Classroom activities:**

- Discussion of assigned readings
- Presentations by pairs of students who have reviewed one of the following readings:

Anthony Pare, “Discourse Regulations and the Production of Knowledge,” *Writing in the Workplace: New Research Perspectives*, Ed. Rachel Spilka. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993. 111–23.

Peter Mortensen, “Going Public,” *CCC* 50.2 (December 1998): 182–205.

Susan Miller, “New Discourse City: An Alternative Model for Collaboration.” *Writing With: New Directions in Collaborative Teaching, Learning, and Research*. Eds. Sally Barr Reagan, Thomas Fox, and David Bleich. Albany: SUNY Press, 1994. 283–300.

Myers, D. G. “The Elephant Machine.” *The Elephants Walk: Creative Writing Since 1880*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1996. 146–68.

Candace Spigelman, “Habits of Mind: Historical Configurations of Textual Ownership in Peer Writing Groups.” *CCC* 49.2 (May 1998): 234–55.

Judy Segal, Anthony Pare, Doug Brent, and Douglas Vipond. “The Researcher as Missionary: Problems with Rhetoric and Reform in the Disciplines.” *CCC* 50.1 (September 1998): 71–90.

Jack Stillinger, “American Novels: Authors, Agents, Editors, Publishers.” *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. 139–62.

Cluster of materials on intellectual property issues associated with the compositions of Martin Luther King—articles and essay excerpts from *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, and *CCC*.

“The Bookstore in America: Borders,” *Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 217–50.

Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month-Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1997. [excerpt]

Michael Kreyling, *Author and Agent: Eudora Welty and Diarmuid Russell*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991. [excerpt]

*The Professions of Authorship* (eds. Richard Layman and Joel Myerson), 24–38, and Belle Waring, “the struggle of the independent bookseller,” *The Writer’s Chronicle* (December 1999): 18–23.

“The Crushing Power of Big Publishing.” *The Nation* March 17, 1997 11–31.

*The Beacon Best of 1999: Creative Writing by Women and Men of All Colors* (Browse to select some excerpts from the collection. Pay particular attention to the “framing” of the selections via the cover art, blurbs, print/presentation design elements, end sections on “Contributors,” “Credits,” and “Publications,” etc.)

## **May 2:**

### **EXAM**

All students will give an oral overview of their research project proposals, which will be due at the beginning of the assigned exam period.

If necessary, reports/presentations not completed during the previous class will be scheduled for this final meeting.