



# ENGLISH 4980

**ENGL 4980 + ENGL 4981 // ENGL 6980 + ENGL 6981  
WRITING SUPPORT THEORY AND PRACTICE  
CLEMSON UNIVERSITY**

**SPRING 2022  
IN-PERSON**

**Dr. Chelsea Murdock**

*There's beautiful potential in writing. There's beautiful potential in every writer.*

*Not everyone can see that potential. Even fewer can cultivate it into something more.*

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores several topics crucial to writing center work. For the first few weeks, course content will concentrate mainly on tutoring and consulting practices—strategies and techniques to help you work with a wide range of students and their writing as well as the theories behind them. This will include a brief overview of writing center history and positionality within institutional contexts. It is important for writing centers to understand their origin and the way they exist in relation to the past. We will consider the way writing centers story themselves into being, what that looks like, what that means, and how it affects the way tutors/consultants engage with clients. As the semester progresses, we will consider a variety of topics within writing center praxis including diversity and inclusion, Englishes, “correctness,” and responsive assessment. Throughout the term, the course participants will focus on four very important tenets found in Indigenous methodologies: respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility. *How* writing centers do the work of supporting writers is as important as the work of supporting writers. Therefore, this course is a mixture of theory and active practice.

The ENGL 4981/ENGL 6981 portion of the course is listed as a “lab” in iRoar. This accounts for the active learning that will take place in the course through observations within the Writing Center, practice sessions, conferences, and any other additional active learning experiences. This will never amount to more than one hour per week.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS AND SUPPLIES**

- Several of our readings will be PDF or online articles. These can be accessed through Canvas.

## **COURSE POLICIES & GRADING PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance**

As this course is being held in a variety of modes, there is no “attendance” in a traditional classroom sense. As an instructor, I am monitoring the completion of course activities and materials. If materials for a week of the course are not completed, I will reach out to you.

## Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The following is Clemson's official statement on "Academic Integrity": "As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a 'high seminary of learning.' Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form."

A simple definition of plagiarism—one that we will expand upon this semester—is when someone presents another person's words, visuals, or ideas as his/her own. The instructor will deal with plagiarism on a case-by-case basis. The most serious offense within this category occurs when a student copies text from the Internet or from a collective file. *This type of academic dishonesty is a serious offense that will result in a failing grade for the course as well as the filing of a formal report to the university.*

See the Clemson site below for information about Academic Integrity and procedures regarding the violation of Clemson policies on scholastic dishonesty: <http://www.clemson.edu/academics/academic-integrity/>.

## The Writing Lab (Cooper Library, Third Floor)

The Writing Lab is a writing support service available to the entire student body, regardless of major or academic standing. It provides students opportunities to discuss questions or problems related to academic writing—from generating a topic and thesis to organizing a draft and integrating appropriate citations. The Writing Lab's goal is to help Clemson students become confident and effective writers. **As an ENGL 4980 student, you should feel free to utilize the Writing Lab to receive additional help or feedback on any course assignments or projects.** You learn more about the Writing Lab on their website: [www.clemson.edu/writing-lab](http://www.clemson.edu/writing-lab).

## Students Accessibility Services

It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services to discuss their individualized needs for accommodation. For more information visit <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/sds/index.html>

## Title IX (Sexual Harassment) Statement

Clemson University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.) in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/title-ix/>. Mr. Jerry Knighton is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator and is also the Director of Access and Equity. His office is located at 111 Holtzendorff Hall, [864.656.3181](tel:864.656.3181) (voice) or [864.565.0899](tel:864.565.0899) (TDD).

## Office Hours

Office hours are just as much "your time" as class time. These hours are for any questions that you have regarding assignments and course content. As this is an online/hybrid course, office hours will be held via Zoom (a videoconferencing tool). Online office hours are scheduled as such to be accessible to those students who have commitments that do not allow for in-person meetings. Accessibility is paramount where office hours are concerned. Videoconferencing, instant messaging, and so on are viable alternatives to in-person meetings. Email Dr. Murdock at [cjmurdo@clemson.edu](mailto:cjmurdo@clemson.edu) to set up a time.

**SURPRISE! You've stumbled onto a SAVE POINT. To verify that you have read the syllabus, email Dr. Murdock a picture of some flowers or puppies. Either will work. In your email, introduce yourself and let Dr. Murdock know your major and year of study.**

## Grading Policy

Your major assignments will receive individual grades. These assignments help to track your progress as we

move through the semester. We will conduct peer review in this course as well. Peer review indicates your willingness to be a part of the course, and to collaborate with others in the class.

As with any course, you will get out of it what you put into it. Your goal is to demonstrate your development toward mastery of the five learning outcomes for this course. These goals will be discussed throughout the course.

For each major assignment, I will make the grading rubric available on Canvas before the project is due. These rubrics are meant to provide clarity and guide your decision-making in the composition process.

While each writing situation may call for some adjustment in the overall criteria based on the rhetorical situation, the following descriptive rubric is consistent with the values of first-year composition at Clemson and describe very general indicators that both you and I may take into consideration when assessing your work and progress in the course. While the final interpretation and assessment of your grade remains my responsibility, the work that earns the grade falls entirely to you the student.

|              |                                      |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| A = 90 – 100 | D = 60 – 69                          |
| B = 80 – 89  | F = 60 and below                     |
| C = 70 – 79  | I will round up grades .5 and above. |
|              | I will round down .5 and below       |

**A:** Represents *excellent* participation in all course activities (including attendance and promptness); all assigned work completed *on time*, with very high quality in *all* work produced for the course. Evidence of *significant* and *sustained* development across the five learning outcomes.

- Responds fully to topic and thoroughly addresses issues.
- Shows unusual or substantial depth and complexity of thought, including strong analysis.
- Demonstrates clarity, focus, organization, and unity throughout.
- Thoroughly investigates the topic; shows full development with supporting detail.
- Documents ideas, information, and questions according to convention.
- Demonstrates superior control of diction, shows appropriate variety of sentences, and incorporates smooth, well-integrated transitions.
- Evidences mastery of mechanical and technical aspects of writing.

**B:** Represents *good* participation in all course activities (including attendance and promptness); all assigned work completed *on time*, with consistently high quality in course work. Evidence of *marked* and *above average* development across the five learning outcomes.

- Clearly and directly responds to topic and to issues.
- Shows depth and complexity of thought; investigates issues and addresses basic counterarguments.
- Demonstrates effective organization and adequate development.
- Incorporates a wide range of sources; uses plenty of detail to support ideas and conclusions.
- Documents sources correctly, with occasional minor errors.
- Contains only minor mechanical errors and exhibits no pattern of errors.

**C:** Represents *average* participation in all course activities; all assigned work completed, with generally good quality overall in course work. Evidence of *some* development across the five learning outcomes.

- Addresses question or topic and explores issues but draws no clear conclusion.
- Shows clarity of thought and organization but fails to show sufficient complexity or depth of thought.
- Uses only a few basic sources.
- Attempts to include adequate detail and development but may leave out obvious counterarguments.
- Attempts to document correctly.
- Demonstrates competence in mechanics; avoids major errors.

**D:** Represents *weak and uneven* participation in course activities; some gaps in assigned work completed, with inconsistent quality in course work. Evidence of development across the five learning outcomes is partial or unclear.

- Consistently strays from topic; is oblique or irrelevant.
- Reflects simplistic, reductive, or stereotypical thinking; relies heavily on generalization; shows little evidence of research.
- Shows poor or confusing organization; is too short.
- Contains garbled paraphrases; words or passages are nearly plagiarized.
- Documentation is careless, incorrect, or missing in some cases.
- Exhibits consistent flaws in language, syntax, or mechanics.
- Exhibits inadequate research or reading.

**F:** Represents minimal participation in course activities; serious gaps in assigned work completed, or very low quality in course work. Evidence of development is not available.

- Distorts topic or assignment; fails to address assignment; fails to establish topic.
- Provides no development.
- Contains obvious or deliberate plagiarism; lacks documentation of some or all sources.
- Displays gross technical or mechanical incompetence and repetitive errors.
- Exhibits inadequate research or reading.

# MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

*NOTE: ALL assignments must be in an ELECTRONIC format.*

## **Project One: Writing Process Narrative**

This assignment requires students to consider their own writing process. In a writing center, consultants are often a part of the writing process. That writing process is individual to the clients that seek out writing support. In order to best understand the writing process, students are asked to reflect on their own process. Students will be required to research elements of their process and incorporate that research into their narrative. This assignment should include a Works Cited page, formatted according to MLA standards, and be a minimum of **1200** words.

**15% of Final Grade**

## **Project Two: Writing Support Philosophy**

This assignment requires that you create a text (written, aural, visual, and/or electronic) that communicates your philosophy of writing support. How might you describe yourself as a tutor/consultant/coach/fellow? What do you think the role of the writing center is? What can the role of the writing center be? What is the role that diversity, inclusion, and equity plays in that role? What role do you think narrative or story plays in writing support? What has contributed to your sense of how writing support should be created, maintained, and conveyed? You will present this piece to your fellow Fellows in a symposium.

**20% of Final Grade**

## **Project Three: The Research Project**

This assignment will be an individual or partner project. You will research a topic associated with writing support, peer tutoring, or writing center theory and/or practice. You will give a presentation on this research in a public symposium. More information to come.

**25% of Final Grade**

## **Portfolio**

In lieu of a final exam, you will complete a final multimodal portfolio due during your final exam time. The portfolio will include your peer consultation/tutoring philosophy, a reflection on your observations and consultations, and a reflection placing your course readings into conversation with your observations and philosophy. You must submit a portfolio in order to pass the course.

**30% of Final Grade**

## **Participation & Weekly Response Writing**

Your participation grade involves contributing to our discussions in class, reading quizzes, showing up prepared for class and teacher conferences, and so on. In other words, participation is measurable and represents your commitment to this course.

**20% of Final Grade**

# Assignment Policies

## Due Dates

All major assignments are due at 11:59pm EST on specified days. Any extensions need to be documented in writing. Late work (without pre-acknowledged extension) will negatively affect your grade. If a paper is turned in after the due date, its lateness will be taken into consideration when assessing the grade.

## Extensions

You may receive an extension on any assignment, except those that are temporally-limited (such as presentations). I will work with you to establish a reasonable timeline for submission of your work given your specific circumstances. It is easier to anticipate than react to a delayed submission, so contact me as soon as you know that you will be unable to complete an assignment by the established deadline.

Writing is a process. I acknowledge that and support your ongoing development as communicators by allowing the revision of assignments. My feedback on major class assignments will be written with future revision in mind. Likewise, though I may indicate specific errors and common habits in your writing that deviate from “standard” English, I will not copyedit your projects. Read this section carefully for my policies regarding revision as they are very specific.

## Revision

In this course, you can revise **three assignments**. (This does not include in-class work or presentations.) If you intend to submit a revision, schedule a Zoom meeting with me no later than one week following the return of your grade. Following that meeting, we will have an agreed-upon Revision Submission Deadline [RSD]. This date will be about two weeks following the meeting. I will not accept revised assignments after the RSD. The revised assignment will receive an entirely new grade, replacing the previous grade for the assignment.

Procedures for submitting a revised assignment will be decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on the assignment’s original requirements and submission.

**IMPORTANT:** Once you have completed your revision **AND IN ORDER FOR YOUR REVISION TO BE CONSIDERED COMPLETE**, you must submit a short (300 word) reflection on the revision you performed. This should be submitted along with your revision. You must do so for each revised assignment.

**Note:** You may certainly go to the Writing Lab for a consultation on your revision, but I will not require that you provide any sort of proof that you went to the Writing Lab.

# Schedule

| Week     | Date | Title of Class   | Readings  | Activities Due  |
|----------|------|--|---|---|
| <b>1</b> | 1/12 | <b>Course Introduction</b>                                       | Syllabus  | N/A   |
|          | 1/14 | <b>Values and Tenets</b>   | N/A   | <b>Discussion Board:</b> Writing Center Playlist                            |
| <b>2</b> | 1/17 | <b>Martin Luther King Jr. Day</b>                                | N/A   | N/A   |
|          | 1/19 | <b>The Idea of a Writing Center</b>                              | North, "The Idea of a Writing Center"<br><br>Lunsford, "Collaboration, Control, and the Idea of a Writing Center"   | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>What is your "idea of a writing center"?</i> |
|          | 1/21 | <b>Post-De-Para-Colonialism and the Idea of a Writing Center</b> | Bawarshi and Pelkowski, "Postcolonialism and the Idea of a Writing Center"<br><br>Suhr-Sytsma and Brown, Theory In/To Practice: Addressing the Everyday Language of Oppression" | Critical Response #1*   |
| <b>3</b> | 1/24 | <b>"Pure" Tutoring</b>   | Brooks, "Minimalist Tutoring: Making Students Do All the Work"<br><br>Shamoon and Burns, "A Critique of Pure Tutoring"  | <b>Discussion Board:</b> The "Ideal" Writing Consultant                     |
|          | 1/26 | <b>Reflection</b>  | "Cultivating Reflection and Metacognition"<br><br>"Stages of the Writing Process"   | Critical Response #2  |
|          | 1/28 | <b>The Proofreading Trap</b>                                     | Cogie, Strain, and Lorinskas, "Avoiding the Proofreading Trap: The Value of the Error Correction Process"   | <b>Discussion Board:</b> The Proofreading Trap                              |
| <b>4</b> | 1/31 | <b>No class.</b>   |   |   |
|          | 1/2  | <b>The Proofreading Trap?!</b>                                   | Myers, "Reassessing the Proofreading Trap"  | Critical Response #3  |
|          | 2/4  | <b>Asking Questions</b>  | Thompson and Mackiewicz, "Questioning in Writing Center Conferences"  | Discussion Leader Sign-Up   |

|          |      |                                      |  |  |
|----------|------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
|          |      |                                      |  | <b>Discussion Board:</b> Reflective Practice   |
| <b>5</b> | 2/7  | <b>Starting</b>                      | Bishop, "Opening Lines: Starting the Tutoring Session"   | N/A.   |
|          | 2/9  | <b>Stopping</b>                      | Thonus, "Time to Say Goodbye: Writing Center Consultation Closings"  | Critical Response #4   |
|          | 2/11 | <b>Note-Taking</b>                   | Bahrainwala, "'Should I Take Notes As You Brainstorm?': Examining Consultants' In-Session Notes"                           | <b>Discussion Board:</b> Questions   |
| <b>6</b> | 2/14 | <b>No class.</b>                     |  |  |
|          | 2/16 | <b>The Whole Person</b>              | Driscoll and Wells, "Tutoring the Whole Person: Supporting Emotional Development in Writers and Tutors"                    | Critical Response #5   |
|          | 2/18 | <b>Resilience</b>                    | Lerner, "Resilience and Resistance in Writing Center Theory and Practice" (Content Warning: school violence, gun violence) | <b>Discussion Board:</b> Defining Resilience   |
| <b>7</b> | 2/21 | <b>Language Diversity</b>            | "Students' Rights to their Own Language"   | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>How do we respect individual voice?</i>                 |
|          | 2/23 | <b>Setting Boundaries</b>            | Parsons, "Tutors' Column: 'Just Say 'No': Setting Emotional Boundaries in the Writing Center is a Practice of Self-Care"   | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>Why are boundaries important in writing support?</i>    |
|          | 2/25 | <b>Antiracism in Writing Support</b> | Coenen, Folarin, Tinsley, and Wright, "Talking Justice: The Role of Antiracism in the Writing Center"                      | Critical Response #6   |
| <b>8</b> | 2/28 | <b>Transfer</b>                      | Frazier, "Towards a Model of Building Writing Transfer Awareness Across the Curriculum"                                    | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>How might we encourage transfer in the Writing Lab?</i> |
|          | 3/2  | <b>Feminist Writing Support</b>      | Woolbright, "The Politics of Tutoring: Feminism within the Patriarchy"   | Critical Response #7   |
|          | 3/4  | <b>Constellations</b>                | Brooks-Gillies, "Constellations Across   | Write a 200–250-word topic exploration for Project Two.                                |

|           |                     |                                 |   |  |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
|           |                     |                                 | Cultural Rhetorics and Writing Centers”   | You can use bullet points, 12pt font. What potential subjects are you interested in for this project?            |
| <b>9</b>  | 3/7                 | <b>Brave/r Spaces</b>           | Hermann, “Brave/r Spaces vs. Safe Spaces for LGBTQ+ in the Writing Center: Theory and Practice at the University of Kansas” | <b>GUEST SPEAKER:</b> Jacob Hermann<br><br>Critical Response #8  |
|           | 3/9                 | <b>Research Day</b>             |   |  |
|           | 3/11                | <b>Decolonial Possibilities</b> | Medina, “Decolonial Possibilities in a Multilingual FYC”  | Discussion Leader: Hannah  |
| <b>10</b> | 3/14                | <b>Writing + Engineering</b>    | Pierre, “Embracing the Other Culture: Bridging the Gap Between the Writing Center and Engineering Studies                   | Discussion Leader: Emmaline<br><br><b>Discussion Board:</b><br>Supporting the Sciences                           |
|           | 3/16                | <b>Authority</b>                | Corbett, “Negotiating Pedagogical Authority: The Rhetoric of Writing Center Tutoring Styles and Methods”                    | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>What does authority look like in a writing support session?</i>                   |
|           | 3/18                | <b>Tutors/Writers</b>           | Spellmeyer, “Straighten Up and Fly Right: Writers as Tutors, Tutors as Writers”   | Discussion Leader: Hannah K.   |
| <b>11</b> | <b>SPRING BREAK</b> |                                 |   |  |
| <b>12</b> | 3/28                | <b>Science!</b>                 | Shome, “Closing the Gap: A Practical Guide to Science in the Writing Center”  | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>How might we support writing when we have no expertise in the subject matter?</i> |
|           | 3/30                | <b>Work Day**</b>               | N/A   | N/A  |
|           | 4/1                 | <b>Work Day**</b>               | N/A   | N/A  |
| <b>13</b> | 4/4                 | <b>No class.</b>                |   |  |
|           | 4/6                 | <b>Creative Writing</b>         | Ozer, “Tutoring Creative Writers in the Writing Center”   | WLN Choose Your Own Adventure<br><br>Critical Response #9  |
|           | 4/8                 | <b>Pronouns</b>                 | Hopkins, “By Any Other Name: The Value of Using Correct Personal Pronouns”  | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>How might incorrect pronoun usage</i>   |

|               |      |                                       |     |  |
|---------------|------|---------------------------------------|-----|--|
|               |      |                                       |     | <i>play out in a writing support appointment?</i>  |
| <b>14</b>     | 4/11 | <b>Emailed Feedback</b>               | N/A | Check your email for a sample paper from Dr. Murdock. Follow the prompts to complete the Emailed Feedback practice activity. |
|               | 4/13 | <b>No class.</b>                      |     |  |
|               | 4/15 | <b>Reflection Day</b>                 | N/A | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>What connections and themes can we see throughout the readings this term?</i>                 |
| <b>15</b>     | 4/18 | <b>Share Your Research Day</b>        | N/A | Bring your research paper to class. Be prepared to summarize it for the class.   |
|               | 4/20 | <b>Writing Support Panel</b>          | N/A | GUEST SPEAKERS: Current Writing Fellows – Lauren and Gracie  |
|               | 4/22 | <b>Where do we go from here?</b>      | N/A | N/A  |
| <b>16</b>     | 4/25 | <b>The Idea of the Writing Center</b> | N/A | Contribute to the Google Jam Board.<br><br>Complete form for final exemption.  |
|               | 4/27 | <b>The Final Practical</b>            | N/A | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>How have we grown?</i>  |
|               | 4/29 | <b>Constellating Writing Support</b>  | N/A | <b>In-Class Discussion:</b> <i>Why do we use constellating as our metaphor for writing support?</i>                          |
| <b>Finals</b> | 5/6  | <b>All revision agreements due.</b>   |     |  |

\* Every week you will have at least one critical response engaging your assigned readings. Critical responses (CRs) should be succinct, between 250-500 words. This can vary from week-to-week. Your critical responses will be visible to other members of the course.

These are not reflections—they are meant to demonstrate your engagement with the subject matter, your own experiences with it, drawing connections between the readings and class discussion, and relate it to your experiences. You can quote the readings.

(10 points each, 100 points total).

\*\* Work Days are reserved for focused work on the upcoming project submission. This provides time for individual meetings with Dr. Murdock, for focused writing, or ongoing research. Conferences are often held on these days.