Class Schedule:

Week:	Date:	What we're doing in class:	Reading due this date:	Writing due this date:
1	W 9/4	*Introduction:* • What is Metacognition? What is Writing about Writing? • What is a "text?": Points of Entry and Annotation for Close Reading • Why Write? How Do We Write? For Whom? • Shifting Ways of Seeing and Knowing; Our Positionality; Writing as Place • Lenses for WAW/NYC Seminar (Creative Expression, Social Activism, Environmental Advocacy)	Donald Murray, "Writing and Teaching for Surprise." *from* John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*	
2	W 9/11	*What's in an Education?:* • The System and You • Race, Place, and Education • College Initiation: High School to College *What is "Writing Studies"?:* • "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing." • What is a Discipline? What is Interdisciplinarity? • What is the Role of Prior Knowledge? • Writing Studies Fields in Research • Key terms for Writing Studies <u>Diagnostic Survey</u> <u>Introducing Writing Identity Blogs</u>	Jean Anyon, "Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work," **printed and annotated.** bell hooks, "Engaged Pedagogy," *from Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994), **printed and annotated.** ***Lens: Social Activism***	**Blog Post #1.**
3	W 9/18	*What is Writing? Who is a Writer?:* • Writing as Thinking; Writing to Learn • Dismantling Writing Myths • Re-thinking Revision • The Composing Process • What is a "Writing Product"? <u>Setting up Writing Identity Blogs</u> <u>Critical Response Assignment</u>	Gwen Hyman and Martha Schulman, "Introduction: Anyone Can Learn to Write," from *Thinking on the Page: A College Student's Guide to Effective Writing*, **printed and fully annotated.** Nancy Sommers, "Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers," **printed and fully annotated.** ***Lens: Creative Expression***	**Blog Post #2.** Bring laptops!

From Elizabeth Wardle & Doug Downs Writing about Writing

world — and to put you in touch with other people's ideas and research about writing. Our goal is to help you have robust, healthy, research-based ideas about writing that will make you a more successful writer. "Research-based" ideas are important ideas that have actually been studied and tested, and they have been demonstrated to work for experienced writers.

Considering constructs about writing and assessing whether your ideas about writing are misconceptions might be difficult at times and will require you to be willing to think through ideas that might be uncomfortable.

Threshold Concepts of Writing

Some conceptions of writing matter more than others. Recently, researchers from the United Kingdom, Ray Meyer and Jan Land, identified what they call **threshold concepts** — ideas that are so central to understanding a particular subject that a learner can't move forward in that area without grasping them. However, grasping threshold concepts is hard because they are based in the research of particular fields or areas of study, and that research is often in conflict with popular, commonsense ideas about topics that haven't been tested or thought through carefully.

For example, one of us has been doing a research project with some historians and was surprised to learn that professional historians don't think that studying history is about dates, events, or learning lessons for the future. Rather, the historians said that studying history is about learning to recognize multiple narratives and to see each narrative as an interpretation that must be understood in context. These historians were frustrated that the History Channel and common conversations about history lead people to misunderstand what history is and how to study it. When students engage in their history classes, the historians have to spend a lot of time (years, sometimes) helping students understand what narratives are, what it means to see narratives as someone's interpretation of past events, and how to research the context of the narratives. Until students can do these things, they can't move forward in their study of history at the college level.

As the history example illustrates, when learners are introduced to threshold concepts in different disciplines, they often find them troublesome, and it can take a long time to really grasp them. While learners are struggling with the ideas, they find themselves in a *"liminal" space* — a space where they move back and forth, start to get a handle on the ideas, then realize they don't really have a handle on them. Learning in this liminal space can be quite uncomfortable because learners have to examine their previous ideas and experiences and try to understand something that might conflict with those ideas.

But when learners finally do grasp these threshold concepts, the way they see things is changed — *transformed*, likely for good. Different ideas and experiences make sense and seem related in ways they hadn't before — in other words, learning

threshold concepts is what Meyer and Land call an *integrative experience*. Whe history students understand that history is made up of a set of competing narrative that interpret events in different ways, and that these narratives and events must b understood in context, they start to question everything they see. If they see a nev story about the Confederate flag, for example, they recognize that people who tal opposing views of it have competing narratives, are examining different pieces the historical record, and interpreting that historical record in different ways. Instea of asking who is right and who is wrong, new questions emerge — for exampl how groups of people can interpret the past in such different ways. These are th kinds of questions that motivate historians to conduct and publish research. Whe history students finally grasp central threshold concepts, they see and understar the world differently, and find interesting research possibilities through their ne perspective.

Threshold concepts of writing are no different than other threshold concepts their troublesomeness. In some ways, writing threshold concepts may be even mo troublesome to learn than threshold concepts in other disciplines. Because everyo writes, and writing is so common in our schools, lives, and daily experiences, by th time we get to a place where we are actually studying writing (usually in college wr ing classes) we've had a long time to solidify our non-research-based views abo writing. so we have to overturn them and sta anew

WRITING IS NOT JUST SOMETHING PEOPLE DO, BUT SOMETHING PEOPLE STUDY

In order to really engage with threshold concepts about writing, there is one ba underlying concept that you'll need to grapple with first: that writing is not ju something that you *do*, but also something that people *study*. Usually in high scho students write about literature, and instruction in writing is often limited to thin like grammar, style, and form. But there is a lot more to writing than that, and the are scholars who study writing for a living. Writing can be studied because it is complex activity about which little is actually known. (In contrast, in earlier scho ing, writing is often treated as a fairly basic, fundamental skill. As you'll learn in t class in which you're using this book, there is *nothing* "basic" about writing.)

Writing scholars want to know things like how we learn to write, how we can tea writing well, how technologies affect our writing processes, and how we use writi to accomplish our goals, communicate, and persuade one another. The study of p suasion goes back a long way, to Aristotle (c. 350 BCE) and before. The formal stu of how writing works, though, is more recent, beginning sometime in the 1950s. T activity of writing is difficult to study because people use it for so many differ things and go about it in so many different ways. And compared with many otl academic fields, the field of writing studies has had only a short time to get start on that research. At first, most study of writing concentrated on student writers, l

Prof. Epelbaum

WRIT 101

Writing Identity Blog Guidelines

What it is:
Your WordPress "Writing Identity Blog" will trace [interdisciplinary] connections you're making between your courses (your linked classes and beyond). It is a space where you will write through your evolution as a reader, writer, and thinker.

When:
Your "Writing Identity Blog" will be a work-in-progress all term, but should be designed and ready to go by **Week 4, Wednesday, 9/25.**

Why:
You may (and I hope you do!) also send out an invitation to any friends, family, roommates, co-workers, etc., whom you feel would be interested in your blog. It is important that the blog have a public component beyond the class; while writing is not always public, it is critical that you begin to transfer your growth and feelings about yourself as a writer and thinker to other situations and contexts. Writing a blog can lend that task urgency. I hope many of you continue your blog once our course is over.

How it Works:
Once you've created your WordPress blog, a direct link will be posted on Blackboard under "Writing Identity Blogs." Please **follow** *everyone* in the course.

On your blog, you will post each new draft of each major assignment, following the syllabus.

On your blog, you must make at least **5 out-of-class posts for the term** that may or may not tie in to our assignments, may or may not connect your linked courses. I hope you post more than 5! These non-draft posts can be about anything that you feel somehow reflects you as a reader, writer, and thinker. For example, linked or copied posts from Instagram, photos you've taken, insights, conversations with family or friends, quotes from readings or people or places that inspire you, links to favorite films or books, memes or gifs, your own creative work like poetry, scripts, links to dance performances, etc.

For each major assignment (Creative Critical Response Blog, Comparative Analysis Essay, and Theory of Writing), you will be assigned to a "support group" (different for each assignment). **Each week, you must comment on the draft posts of two members in your group.** You are welcome to comment outside of your "support group," as well as comment on out-of-class posts as much as you please (see below), <u>but each student should receive at minimum two comments per week on their drafts.</u>

Your "support group" comments *do not* have to be extensive—after all, you are also busy drafting your own assignments—but should contribute something constructive for the writer, like a thoughtful question, or an insight or idea on the content, structure, or rhetorical awareness of the draft.

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hed by Utah State University Press
print of University Press of Colorado
ırapahoe Avenue, Suite 206C
ɛr, Colorado 80303

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The University Press of Colorado is a proud member of
The Association of American University Presses.

niversity Press of Colorado is a cooperative publishing enterprise supported,
, by Adams State University, Colorado State University, Fort Lewis College,
ɔolitan State University of Denver, Regis University, University of Colorado,
sity of Northern Colorado, Utah State University, and Western State Colorado
sity.

paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American
al Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library
ıls. ANSI Z39.48-1992

)78-1-60732-577-2 (paper)
)78-1-60732-578-9 (ebook)

r of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

: Adler-Kassner, Linda, editor. | Wardle, Elizabeth A., editor.
laming what we know : threshold concepts of writing studies / edited by Linda
r-Kassner, Elizabeth Wardle.
ıtion: Classroom edition. | Logan : Utah State University Press, [2015] | Includes
ographical references.
ers: LCCN 2016014716 | ISBN 9781607325772 (pbk.) | ISBN 9781607325789
ok)
s: LCSH: English language—Composition and exercises—Study and teach-
Higher)—United States. | English language—Rhetoric—Study and teaching
her)—United States.
ɛation: LCC PE1405.U6 N36 2015 | DDC 808/.042071—dc23
ɔrd available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016014716

From Naming What we know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies

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3 by the University Press of Colorado

hed by Utah State University Press
print of University Press of Colorado
rapahoe Avenue, Suite 206C
er, Colorado 80303

hts reserved
actured in the United States of America



The University Press of Colorado is a proud member of
The Association of American University Presses.

niversity Press of Colorado is a cooperative publishing enterprise supported,
, by Adams State University, Colorado State University, Fort Lewis College,
olitan State University of Denver, Regis University, University of Colorado,
sity of Northern Colorado, Utah State University, and Western State Colorado
sity.

paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American
al Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library
als. ANSI Z39.48-1992

978-1-60732-577-2 (paper)
978-1-60732-578-9 (ebook)

of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

: Adler-Kassner, Linda, editor. | Wardle, Elizabeth A., editor.
Naming what we know : threshold concepts of writing studies / edited by Linda
r-Kassner, Elizabeth Wardle.
tion: Classroom edition. | Logan : Utah State University Press, [2015] | Includes
ographical references.
iers: LCCN 2016014716 | ISBN 9781607325772 (pbk.) | ISBN 9781607325789
ok)
s: LCSH: English language—Composition and exercises—Study and teach-
Higher)—United States. | English language—Rhetoric—Study and teaching
her)—United States.
cation: LCC PE1405.U6 N36 2015 | DDC 808/.042071—dc23
ord available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2016014716

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