Introduction:
This course involves the planning and implementation of an introductory college-level composition course. Participants will plan and teach a section of composition under the supervision of the instructor. The aim of the course is to provide support and guidance, as well as a theoretical base in the teaching of writing to first-time instructors of composition.

“Bewildering, depressing, maddening, debasing, I should have found this work years ago, but for the growing conviction, which strengthens as the years go by, that the meanest of these works [student papers] if we will only let ourselves see it truly, is a very marvelous thing. Careless, thoughtless, reckless as these [students] so often are, the most careless, the most thoughtless, the most reckless of all, has put before me an act of the creative imagination for which... one can find no lesser word than divine. All unknowing, and with the endless limitations of weakness and perversity, he has looked for himself into the great world of immaterial reality, which, just as he knows it, no other human being can ever know; and with these strange, lifeless conventions we call words, he has made some image of what he has known in that world which is all his own, and that image begins by and by to arouse within me some conception of what life has meant to him.”
Barrett Wendell, professor of rhetoric at Harvard in the 1890's, from: English Composition, Charles Scribner’s Sons 1903 pg. 304
Objectives:
By the end of this course, you will be able to:
• conceptualize and plan a complete course in writing at the first year post-secondary level
• implement a complete composition course at Plymouth State University
• adjust your plans to meet the needs of an actual group of students.
• become familiar with theoretical orientations towards teaching composition
• learn ways of looking at and responding qualitatively to student work.
• learn to assess student work and plan instruction accordingly.
• evaluate student work and arrive at a final semester grade
• work as part of a reflective practice group
• work collaboratively with others to think deeply about dilemmas and concerns which arise from your teaching practice
• investigate the work of one student writer in depth
• reflect on your teaching and prepare weekly responses to share with other instructors
• discuss the development of student writers in composition, as well as your own evolving identity as a composition instructor

Evaluation:
Observations (3) 10%
Bi-Weekly OP writing 15%
Response to Readings 20%
Teaching Log/Participation/dedication 15%
Process paper 20%
Student Study project 20%

Teaching Log/Weekly OP writing
Reflecting on teaching is very important. I would like you to take at least ten minutes after each class you teach to write in your journal, documenting what transpired in class, reflecting about your reactions, and raising probing questions to help you think more deeply about the meaning of classroom events.
Every other week you will use this journal as the basis for finding an “occasion.” We will use the OP as described below, as the basis for class discussion. Others will help you to reflect on what you are seeing. This will provide you with a record of what you experience over the course of the semester. It will be invaluable as you write your final paper and reflect on your experience as a whole.

Occasional Papers are a way to think more deeply about your experiences teaching composition. Occasional Papers are written on the occasion of some occurrence that made you think. In these papers, you will describe the occasion, reflect on the possible significance of the occasion, and raise questions for us to consider. The point of an OP is to reflect on what happens in your teaching of writing. An OP must be written out completely and cannot be told rather than read.
1. Watch for something worth thinking about.
   a. Something you do that makes you think
   b. Something you notice about a student
   c. Something you notice in student work
d. Something a student says
e. A reaction you have which puzzles you.
f. Something other people do which bothers or pleases you.
g. An idea that you have that seems as if it might lead to something more.
h. A comment that means more to you than its simple meaning.
i. An insight that is worth expanding and recording

2. Take time to describe the event as accurately as you can. Put it down with all of its inconsistencies and lack of resolution.
3. Consider it, reflect on it. Take it seriously. Be interested in what it might tell you. What is going on? Is there anything to reveal by reflection that might not be immediately obvious? Do not expect closure. Struggle for truth. Go beyond what everyone always thinks about this. Open up the topic rather than finishing it off. Do not fake anything.
4. Raise questions about your experience and its implications which could be discussed in the group.

We will discuss the OP. The discussion is one of the most important parts. It must be serious and intellectual. It must explore the topic from new angles. If we finish a discussion about an OP thinking about the topic in a slightly different way, then things have worked out well. If we leave thinking in exactly the same way as we did when we started, then the activity has failed. The OP should make us think about everything more deeply. The purpose is not to solve or resolve an issue, but to open up issues for our consideration. It should raise questions and attune us to the presence of more questions.

Observations:
I will conduct at least two observations (probably more) of your class in progress and provide detailed response. These observations will be scheduled in advance. There are some restrictions on my availability, but if we plan ahead, this should not be a problem.
You will all visit my composition class once and we will process that visit together.
In addition, you should visit at least two sessions of a composition course taught by another instructor. I will provide a list of classes available for visitation. In your write-up, you should note the date, time, and instructor of the class in a heading. Note also how many students were present and the subject of the lesson. Describe in the first section exactly what you observed in detail. In a separate comments section, respond to what you saw. What struck you about what you observed? What did you learn that you could apply to your classes? What questions do you have about what you observed? Format for write-ups:

Your Name
Name of Instructor:
Date and Time of Observation

I. What I Observed:

Write an objective observation of what went on in the class. Refrain from inserting value judgments. Your aim in this section is to show the reader what you saw. For example, if you are observing a student who is drawing in his notebook, yawning and staring out the window, note all of these behaviors, but do not write that the student was bored. Just report what you saw in relation to the areas you are asked
to look at in the guidelines. As much detail as you can get in this section is helpful, but you do not have to report every word that was said. The reader should have a good sense of what transpired in the class.

II. Commentary

In this section, you should comment on the meaning of what you saw. What did this observation mean to you? What moves did you see the teacher make? You may include subjective impressions, but be sure to identify them as such: “I had the feeling that there was a lot of tension in the room, as if certain members of the class had a bad history with each other.”

III. Implications

In this section, you should raise questions about the implications of what you saw. You can speculate about what might have happened if the class had been conducted differently, for example. The aim of this section is to help you to begin to think beyond what you have seen to broader questions about teaching, learning and writing. You might raise probing questions about what you observed.

Student Study Project
For this project, you will observe one student closely over the course of the semester. You will copy all of that student’s work for analysis, interview him or her, and record your observations of that student in the classroom. I will provide a detailed assignment sheet for this project.

Culminating Process Paper
I would like you to pull your responses to this experience into a process paper to be shared at the end of the semester. You will copy all of that student’s work for analysis, interview him or her, and record your observations of that student in the classroom. I will provide a detailed assignment sheet for this project.

Reading Responses
Each week you should prepare a one page single sided response to the assigned readings, copied for all of the participants in the class. In these responses, you should try to work out your understandings of the material and raise questions for everyone in the group to consider. Some of these readings are quite challenging. Please advance your tentative understandings and raise questions about them.

Participation and discussion:
For part of each class, we will be acting as a reflective practice, or critical friends group. We will be following the protocols of reflective practice. You will be expected to take one the role of facilitator and presenter at least once each over the course of the semester. Each week one of you
will be responsible for bringing a question or concern to the group for us to discuss. Your participation in these sessions is crucial to your learning. The success of the group depends on every one of us.

We will also be meeting to discuss progress in your classes and the readings. You should come to class prepared. You will be expected to give and receive feedback, to share your responses to what is going on in your class, to offer and receive suggestions and feedback, and to discuss issues and problems with the group. In addition, each week I will prepare a presentation on a particular theme related to the teaching of composition.

I am available to help you during my office hours or any time you can catch me on campus. I don’t mind if you call or text me on my cell phone. Please seek help sooner, rather than letting small problems grow into big ones.

Note: Teaching composition is very challenging. Be prepared to work harder than you had dreamed possible. You will be responsible for responding to student writing. Your students deserve timely and detailed response to their work. This is your job. Prepare to devote up to a half hour per paper at the beginning. Budget your time.

Teaching will challenge you in ways you had not anticipated. If you are doing your job well, you will be stretched. You will feel uncomfortable. Stay open to it. There is much to learn. We can help each other.

Class Schedule:

8/27 Preliminary Meeting to go over procedures and policies
Your first day/ Discuss: Murray Chapters 1 and 4

9/3 The first day of class
Moffett—“I, You, and It”
“Reflection is at the Heart of Practice”
Reading response due
Film: Beyond the Red Pen (in class)

9/10 Responding to student papers
“Introduction: The Elephant in the Classroom” Tobin
“How many Writing Teachers Does it Take to Read a Student Essay?” Tobin
Reading response due
Discussion of OP Group #1
Please bring any papers you have collected and we will look at student work and frame responses.

9/17 The Development of Student Writers
Newkirk Performance of Self—Part I Creating a Self that Works
Graffe—Clueless in Academe
Reading response due
Film: “Shaped by Writing” (in class)
Select student for student study
Discussion of OP Group #2
9/24  Teaching Revision
Welch—“Toward an Excess-ive Theory of Revision”
Sommers--- “Revision strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers”
Reading response due
Discussion of OP Group #1

10/1  Getting the most out of readings
Newkirk Performance of Self --Part II Positions Out of Favor
Tobin—“Reading our Classrooms, Writing Our Selves.”
Reading response due
Schedule your observations
Discussion of OP Group #2

10/8  Theories of teaching composition // Designing Rubrics
Newkirk Performance of Self  Part III The Debate
Tobin—“Reading Composition’s Misplaced Anxieties about Personal Writing”
Reading response due
Discussion of OP Group #1

10/15 Evaluating Student Work
“Embracing Contraries in the Teaching Process” Elbow
Sommers—“Responding to Student Writing” and “Across the Drafts”
Elbow—“Ranking, Evaluating and Liking”
Reading response due
Observation #1 due
Discussion of OP Group #2

10/29 Teaching the inquiry paper
Briefs-Elgin—“Happiness and the Blank Page”
Bruffee—“Collaboration and the Conversation of Mankind”
Reading response due
Discussion of OP Group #2

11/5  Dealing With Touchy Issues in Student Writing
“Car Wrecks, Baseball Caps and Man-to-Man Defense: The Personal Narratives of Adolescent Males” Tobin
Brodkey- “On the Subjects of Class and Gender in ‘the Literacy Letters’”
Reading Response due
Discussion of OP Group #2

11/12 The Place of the Personal
Tobin “What We’re Walling in, What We’re Walling Out.”
Kamler “Relocating Voice and Transformation”
Reading Response due
Observation #2 due
Discussion of OP Group #1
11/19  “Arts of the Contact Zone” - Mary Louise Pratt
Min-Zhan Lu “Professing Multiculturalism: The Politics of Style in the Contact Zone”
Reading Response due
Discussion of OP Group #2
Bring student study materials

11/26  The evolution of student strategies for editing and revision
Rose “Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans”
Draft of student study paper due

12/3   Student Study paper due (online)

12/10  Process Paper Draft Due (online)

12/17  Process Paper Due (online)