Teaching Statement (2012 – 2017)

"[Dr. Cook] truly seemed to enjoy helping students learn & succeed (and was quite effective at doing so); [he] demystified grammatical rules that had plagued me since grade school."
–anonymous student comment in Technical Editing (Fall 2012)

"Thank you for teaching me, Dr. Cook."
–anonymous student comment in Research Methods & Materials (Spring 2013)

"This course is incredibly useful for any undergraduate student—it challenges the way we've always lived and looked at the world. Curiosity is a dying aspect of human life, and this class taught me to question everything. I cannot imagine having this class with anyone other than Paul Cook. He is the best, most helpful instructor I've had at IUK. He is knowledgeable, enthusiastic, and facilitates excellent discussion and learning. I don't know how he ended up teaching here instead of some Ivy League school, but I feel incredibly fortunate to have had him."
–anonymous student comment in Literary Interpretation (Fall 2014)

"Every day was an academic adventure."
–anonymous student comment in Technical Editing (Fall 2015)

"I don't know that I have ever had a professor who made a greater effort to involve each student in intellectually stimulating conversation."
–anonymous student comment in Senior Seminar: English/Communication Arts (Fall 2016)

"I liked the content matter and the instructor's enthusiasm about the subject. The instructor was always encouraging of class discussion and was incredibly knowledgeable."
–anonymous student comment in History of the English Language (Spring 2017)

Excellence in Teaching

On page 3, the Indiana University Kokomo School of Humanities and Social Sciences Promotion and Tenure Criteria state that the following guidelines are to be used if Excellence in Teaching is being sought as the basis for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor:

a. **Teaching as the area of excellence**
The candidate should have demonstrated their teaching to be extremely effective in promoting student learning and engagement, with a documented pattern of assessment and reflection on teaching outcomes, and based on self, peer, and student evaluation and review. Evidence such as a consistent willingness to engage in new course development as needed, continuous course improvement, and to work individually with

students should be demonstrated. (See also sections 1.1 and 1.1.1 of the Department of Humanities Annual Evaluation and Promotion and Tenure Guidelines.)

In the preliminary following statement, I will show how I meet the criteria for Excellence in Teaching by grouping my activities and accomplishments into four broad categories cited in the IU Kokomo School of Humanities and Social Sciences Promotion and Tenure Criteria:

> (1) course development/improvement and effective teaching in diverse areas;
> (2) my individual mentorship of students at all levels, including undergraduate/graduate research;
> (3) initiatives in student learning and engagement—both solo and collaborative—on my own campus, statewide, and within the entire IU system; and
> (4) participation in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

In the Teaching Narrative that follows this Teaching Statement, I offer a narrative reflection on my pedagogical development over the last five years and the substantial revisions and advances I've made as a teacher of writing and literacy.

What follows is a summary of my teaching accomplishments.

(1) Course Development and Pedagogical Innovations

As I write in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy, my pedagogy is always dedicated to sharing knowledge and teaching practical skills of literacy and thinking. In addition to making sure my students have a firm grasp on content-based knowledge and writing skills, I also provide them with the necessary tools to map an area of inquiry or a critical conversation. In all of my courses and engagements with students, I strive to provide readings, artifacts, and exercises that (1) provoke intense discussions and responses that resonate with my students' own needs, interests, and experiences; (2) cultivate in them capacities for response, especially in terms of their encounters with others and with challenging texts and artifacts; and (3) expand their awareness of their situatedness in the world.

Since joining the faculty at Indiana University Kokomo in the fall of 2012, I have developed and taught just **over 40 courses total** for a diverse range of students at all levels, from incoming freshmen in the [Bridge Program](#) and at-risk students in first-year writing courses to second- and third-year graduate students working on their theses, English majors and non-English majors, and a fair sampling of every other type of student in between. Among those courses some highlights include:

- three Senior Seminar Capstone courses in English (ENG-L 495), Communication Arts (SPCH-S 400), and New Media Theory (NMAT-G 411);
- an invited Honors Colloquium on digital culture and media (HON-H 399);
- six completed thesis projects for students in the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program (three as thesis Chairperson);

- an Independent Study in Writing (ENG-W 395) and two Internships in Writing (ENG-W 398);
- five themed courses in [Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs);](#)
- nearly a dozen Honors-option courses (HON-H 275), which involved developing special assignments for individual Honors students;
- and more than a dozen Senior Seminar projects with individual students (see "Mentoring Students" below for more details).

More specifically, I have now developed and taught **16 new courses** in ten regular-term semesters at IU Kokomo. My teaching has also been observed by my colleagues a total of six times in five years—these observation letters are linked to the individual faculty member's name below:

- ENG-W 365: Technical Editing ([Observed by Dr. Scott Jones in Fall 2012](#))
- ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation ([Observed by Dr. Joe Keener in Summer 2015](#))
- ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, & Inquiry I ([Observed by Dr. Chris Darr in Fall 2015](#))
- ENG-W 132: Elementary Composition II ([Observed by Dr. Tara Kingsley in Spring 2017](#))
- ENG-G 301: History of the English Language (Observed on two separate occasions by [Prof. Wayne Madsen](#) and [Dr. Eva White in Spring 2017](#))

A *note on viewing the course profiles*: Below is a complete list of the courses I have developed and taught during my tenure at IU Kokomo. Clicking on course titles will take you to a course profile, which includes

- a brief reflection statement on how I have assessed student learning and revised the course as needed based on student and peer feedback and my own ongoing pedagogical research;
- course evaluation summaries (quantitative and qualitative data); and
- relevant course materials, such as the most recent course syllabus, key assignments, course projects, and pedagogical innovations from the past five years of teaching.

In several cases, I also include older versions of the syllabus when I explicitly highlight a major curricular revision or thematic overhaul of the course in my course reflection. Some course profiles also contain excerpted comments from the previously-mentioned teaching observation letters from my faculty colleagues.

Finally, an asterisk (*) next to a course title denotes that I have taught this course multiple times, each time with significant revisions to the curriculum and pedagogical approach. A hashtag (#) next to a course title indicates that some semesters this course was also cross-listed as a graduate-level course (LBST-D 511) in our [Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS) program](#), which means I also developed an alternate, graduate-level syllabus and curriculum specifically for these students that included additional assignments, course projects, and readings. (I have developed three such graduate-level syllabi/courses for MALs students.)

- ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, & Inquiry I*
- ENG-W 132: Elementary Composition II*
- ENG-W 210: Literacy & Public Life*
- ENG-W 215: Intro to Rhetoric
- ENG-W 311: Writing Creative Nonfiction
- ENG-W 365: Technical Editing*#
- ENG-W 368: Research Methods & Materials*#
- ENG-W 395: Independent Study in Writing
- ENG-W 398: Internship/Independent Study in Writing
- ENG-W 400: Issues in the Teaching of Writing#
- ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation*
- ENG-L 295: American Film Culture*
- ENG-L 495: Senior Seminar in English / SPCH-S 400: Senior Seminar in Communication Arts
- ENG-G 301: History of the English Language
- NMAT-G 411: New Media Theory (Senior Seminar Capstone)
- HSS-E 110: IU Kokomo Summer Bridge Program*
- LBST-D 511: Thesis Writing (MALS Program)
- HON-H 399: Honors Colloquium on "Digital Culture and Its (Dis)Contents"

As the only faculty member at IU Kokomo with a PhD in rhetoric and composition studies and a full-time teaching load—and given my diverse research background—I am capable of teaching a wide variety of courses, seminars, and independent studies with students in several overlapping disciplines, including cultural studies, new media theory/technology studies, rhetorical theory and history, linguistics, technical editing, film studies, research methods and materials, critical theory, and composition/writing studies. Fortunately for both my teaching portfolio and my research interests, my colleagues in the Department of English and Language Studies (ELS) specialize primarily in literary studies, which gives me the chance to hone my teaching and research in creative and relevant ways. Furthermore, my colleagues in the ELS department have been incredibly supportive and generous in allowing me the freedom to develop courses and curricula that pique my interests. In other words, I have a great deal of autonomy in terms of what I can teach, as evidenced by the list above, but I am also able (and quite willing) to shape my interests to the needs of the ELS Department in strategic and innovative ways.

(2) Mentoring Students at All Levels

Throughout my career at IU Kokomo, I have made a special effort to forge mentorship or "coaching" relationships with students regardless of major, level, or academic area. I have mentored and written countless letters of recommendation for individual students, several of whom have gone on to graduate school, competitive TA-ships, and in one case even the editorship of an academic journal. I am a regular participant in our campus's VIP recruitment days, I have always served as an interviewer at our annual Crimson and Cream Scholarship Days, acted as a judge for our Department's high school writing contest, as a reviewer for *Field* (our literary journal), and I've acted with students in a stage production of *You Can't Take It*

with You and even played flag football (2012 and 2013), basketball (2013), and softball (2016) on the "#FACULTAFF" team. In 2015-16, I also assisted with the coaching of our Cross-Country Team under the leadership of Coach Jason VanAlstine.

I regularly assist the retention efforts of the Academic Advising Office by reaching out to and in some cases assisting students I have come to know well, and I share my passion for learning as much as possible, whether that takes place in the classroom, via Table Talks (see below for more detail), on the stage, on a run, or on a trip to a Bloomington art gallery. Each year since 2013, I have been an enthusiastic participant in the IU Kokomo Student Research Symposium, judging presentation panels, helping out with the organization of the event, and especially encouraging my own students to submit their research projects and actively mentoring and supporting those who do. In many cases, I have provided in-depth feedback to several students about their presentations as a judge and even worked with individual students to design courses and submit their work for publication. I have also co-developed a course with an undergraduate student that I taught in Spring 2015 as the second iteration of ENG-W 210: Literacy and Public Life.

Graduate Research
I have served as the thesis director for three successful MALS thesis projects:
- Navi Vernon, "Write to Recovery: Isolating Characteristics of Successful Therapeutic Writing to Guide Others Towards Recovery" (2014)
- Mary Kennelly, "What's Up with Grading in First-Year Writing?" (2015)
- Chad Wagoner, "Mixed Martial Arts and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy: Is There a Correlation?" (2016)

I have also served as a thesis committee member for four successful MALS thesis projects:
- Greg Ogle, "Friendship and Trust in Second Life: An Autoethnography of Social Interactions in an Anonymous Virtual World" (2014)
- Scott Manthe, "Signals of Participation: Degrees of Involvement at Internet-only and Over-the-air Student-run College Radio Stations" (2015)
- Jesse Sopher, "A Queer Golden Age: Negotiating Influences of Advocacy, Community, and Heteronormativity in Queer Television Narratives" (2015)
- Keith Lane, "Workplace Assimilation: A Study of the Perception of Being Valued" (2016)

Undergraduate Research, Internships, & Independent Studies
- Alexis Nash, "A Meta-investigation of Internships in the US" This Academic Internship explored the concept and history of academic internships, using as our primary text Ross Perlin's book *Intern Nation: How to Learn Nothing and Earn Little in a Brave New Economy* (2012). (2015)
- Joshua Mahoney, TA and course co-developer for "The Corporation: Giants among Us" This Academic Internship resulted in the development of the second iteration of ENG-W 210: Literacy and Public Life, which took as its theme the role of multinational corporations in American society. (2014)

- Julie Earl, "An Exploration of the Common Core Standards in K-12 Public Education in Indiana." This Independent Study on the Common Core in Indiana's public high schools culminated in a presentation at the IU Kokomo Student Research Symposium. (2013)

(3) Initiatives in Teaching, Learning, and Student Success

Teaching and researching at a regional, teaching-intensive, and primarily undergraduate university has provided me with ample opportunities to engage with both students and teachers from across campus and across the state of Indiana. In this section, I outline some of these initiatives and highlight my contributions to enhancing student learning and expanding the curriculum.

Director of Writing

As Director of Writing, a leadership position I have held since 2014, my teaching-related responsibilities include (but are not limited to)

- mentoring, training, and retaining a core of adjunct faculty, a group of approximately 17 dedicated writing instructors, several of whom have been with IU Kokomo for several years;
- developing and leading a two-day in-service training program every summer for adjunct and resident instructors of first-year writing (ENG-W 131/132) since 2014;
- working one-on-one with adjunct faculty and helping them develop as teachers (e.g., conducting classroom observations of teaching, meeting in my office for pedagogical discussions, and communicating with adjunct instructors via email and Canvas);
- making textbook adoptions and other curricular and pedagogical decisions for everything related to ENG-W 131/132;
- researching, planning, and developing a Writing-in-the-Disciplines replacement course for ENG-W 132: Elementary Composition II at the 200-level called ENG-W 221: Sophomore Writing Lab;
- working with other Writing Directors in the IU system on various committees and subcommittees to revise and develop curriculum for ENG-W 131, launch initiatives, and plan a statewide conference; and
- building and maintaining our "Resources for ENG-W 131/132" Canvas site (access requires IU credentials) to communicate with adjunct faculty, share handouts and assignments, make announcements/updates, and to train adjunct and resident faculty in how to use Canvas more effectively to respond to student writing;

In 2013-14, I was part of an IU system-wide committee that was charged with overhauling the major assignments and curriculum in ENG-W 131. I also research best practices related to writing-intensive courses and making sure that our campus's definitions are in line; ensure other pedagogical best practices related to the complexity of writing and writing instruction; visit colleagues' classrooms to talk with their students about the writing process, ESL/L2 issues, or even a specific issue such as APA documentation. I have developed and delivered several informal workshops on grading and responding to student writing, crafting more effective writing assignments, and grading with Canvas. I have also attended department and school

meetings with other units on campus (such as the Schools of Nursing and Education) to address the issues they see in student writing. I helped the Director of the Writing Center revise the Writing Center's tutor report forms and student referral forms, and I am also responsible for performing the Writing Center Director's annual evaluation.

Table Talks at IU Kokomo

In the fall of 2015, prompted in part by the data gathered by our campus's [National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE)](#) and by my own experiences in the classroom, I developed Table Talks at IU Kokomo, a project in enriching student learning and engaging with faculty colleagues across campus that is important to me and my overall teaching philosophy. [Table Talks is an exclusive opportunity](#) for students to sit down with a panel of select faculty over lunch to discuss challenging, contentious, and sometimes controversial topics outside of the more hierarchical, often grade-driven structure of the classroom. Shortly after developing the idea, I was joined by a colleague in Communication Arts with whom I now co-produce our events. As of the summer of 2017, Table Talks has held nine events on topics ranging from the high costs of college and the intersections of belief and knowledge to discussions of gender and identity in the workplace and even "fake news" and the automotive history of Kokomo, Indiana. I also maintain an [active group page](#) for Table Talks on Facebook and Canvas where we post relevant articles and podcasts, as well as announcements for upcoming events. VCAA Dr. Mark Canada has twice commended us for our success with engaging students, and I have uploaded these emails to the eDossier system in the "Unsolicited Notes from Students" folder.

Faculty Fellow – Student Success Academy

In the Spring of 2017, after being nominated by my chair, I was selected by the [Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (CTLA)](#) at IU Kokomo to be a Faculty Fellow in the [Student Success Academy](#), a relatively-new teaching initiative on our campus that trains faculty in best practices for promoting student success, engagement, and retention in first-year courses such as ENG-W 131/132. Faculty Fellows in this program participate in CTLA programming, act as guest speakers, and offer workshops, webinars, and other activities to promote student success, implement new innovations into their classroom practices, and share their research with faculty campus-wide.

Basic Online Developer's Certificate

In 2013, I earned my [Basic Online Developer's Certificate](#) from the CTLA by completing all required coursework, including the extensive Universal Design Guidelines course for student accessibility. I was also an enthusiastic early-adopter of Canvas, and I have helped many faculty—both adjunct faculty and resident faculty colleagues—navigate the complexities of Canvas for their own courses, in both online and face-to-face formats.

Advance College Project (ACP)

In the fall of 2014, I assumed my one-year role as [IU's ACP site visitor](#) for the north-central Indiana region. This responsibility taught me a great deal about how ENG-W 131 is taught in Indiana high schools, and it put me into regional high school classrooms where I was able to meet and respond to questions about IU Kokomo and our first-year writing courses. I am still

active in the statewide ACP program through IU Bloomington, and I plan to attend their annual summer workshop in July 2017.

KEY Taskforce and REAL Criteria Subcommittee Member

I am an active member of both the KEY Taskforce and the REAL Criteria subcommittee (Record of Experiential and Applied Learning). Both of these valuable activities have allowed me to shape academic programs and policy at the campus level, including reshaping our first-year programs and course offerings for incoming freshmen in our Rethinking the First Year (RFY) Initiative.

Core Transfer Library (CTL) Reviewer

As CTL Reviewer (2014 - Present), I am responsible for reviewing numerous syllabi for both creative writing and professional writing courses from institutions that transfer students to IU Kokomo (and vice versa). Our goal is to ensure the course criteria from these institutions meet the curriculum standards for these same courses at IU Kokomo.

Unsolicited Notes and Emails from Students

I have uploaded nine unsolicited messages from students in the "Unsolicited Notes from Students" in the eDossier system. Several of these emails specifically note my effective "teaching style" and my ability to engage students both in and outside of the classroom. Two of these emails are notes of support and appreciation from VCAA Dr. Mark Canada.

(4) Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

I have participated in a variety of SoTL activities, including researching and publishing two collaborative research studies on both "ends," so to speak, of the college spectrum: from first-year college students to graduate students in an interdisciplinary MA program. The first study is a qualitative examination of graduate student writing pedagogy in so-called "hybrid" courses (i.e., courses with both an undergraduate and graduate enrollment); this piece is forthcoming in late 2017. The most recent study, which was accepted for publication in August 2017, provides an overview of student gains in information literacy in first-year writing and communication (speech) classes like ENG-W 131 and SPCH-S 121. I have also given five teaching-related presentations at large national and international pedagogy conferences, and coordinated/presented at a statewide academic conference for writing teachers in both college and K-12.

After teaching my first graduate class in Spring 2013 (ENG-W 368/LBST-D 511: Research Methods and Materials), I grew increasingly interested in researching graduate student writers. Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the study of writing, writing pedagogy, and writing curricula at the undergraduate level (thanks largely to the work of scholars in rhetoric and composition studies), but relatively few studies heretofore have taken into account the graduate student writing experience, particularly at the master's level. This is especially evident in the case of "hybrid" courses—that is, courses with both undergraduate and graduate student

enrollments—which are fast becoming a fixture at many colleges and universities, including IU Kokomo.

By means of recorded and transcribed interviews with nine current or recent graduate students from IU Kokomo and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, this study contributes to our understanding of (1) graduate student writing expectations in hybrid courses, (2) available institutional and pedagogical supports for graduate student writing, and (3) graduate students' experiences with writing pedagogy and training more broadly. Given the breadth and diversity of graduate student responses represented in this study, results emphasize themes that (1) involved the greatest number of graduate student voices and (2) offered the most provocative questions for scholars and teachers of graduate student writers. The study concludes with a call for a reconsideration of how we teach graduate writing and the role of hybrid courses in the master's curriculum. This article has been accepted for publication in a forthcoming book that is slated for print in 2016. Most importantly, doing this research has given me a new set of strategies and perspectives with which to work as I continue to teach graduate-level courses, particularly those that have to do with the teaching of writing, as I am slated to do in the fall of 2018. I look forward to returning to this research and using it my class in the fall.

Working with three other colleagues from across campus as the Information Literacy Assessment Team (ILAT) on a large-scale study of information literacy in first-year classes, our team submitted a study to the journal *Assessment Update*, which was serendipitously accepted at the end of August 2017. This collaborative study provides a data-rich, longitudinal examination of information literacy assessment in ENG-W 131 and SPCH-S 121 on the IU Kokomo campus. The Information Literacy Assessment Team (ILAT) was pleased to learn of our acceptance so close to the deadline for this dossier.

Peer-Reviewed SoTL Publications

Henderson, Brian R. and Paul Cook. "Voicing Graduate Student Writing Experiences: A Study of Hybrid Courses at Two Master's-level, Regional Institutions." *Graduate Writing Across the Disciplines: Identifying, Teaching, and Supporting*. Eds. Trixie Smith and Katie Manthey. Fort Collins, CO: WAC Clearinghouse, 2017. Print. (In press: forthcoming in 2017.) Please click here for our acceptance email.

He, Yan, Paul Cook, Chris Darr, and Polly Boruff-Jones. "Assessing Information Literacy on a Regional Campus." *Assessment Update* (2018): Print. (Accepted in August 2017; forthcoming in mid-2018.) Please click here for our acceptance email.

SoTL Presentations

- In March 2015 and April 2016, I presented papers at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Tampa, Florida and Houston, Texas, respectively. Both of these presentations focused on writing pedagogy, the teaching of writing, and issues related to Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines (WAC/WID). CCCC is the international flagship conference for rhetoric and composition

studies, and as such has a year-to-year acceptance rate of under 15% for contributed talks.

- In April 2014, I presented for the first time at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) meeting in Philadelphia on a panel that included Peter McLaren, a well-known critical pedagogy theorist and scholar. AERA is a national interdisciplinary research association for scholars who conduct educational research.

- In September of 2016, I researched active reading pedagogy for K-12 and college students and presented a workshop on teaching students to read critically at IUPUI's *Disciplinary Pathways to Learning* conference in Indianapolis. I recruited a colleague in philosophy to help with the workshop and several adjunct writing faculty and full-time faculty from IU Kokomo also attended the conference. I was also a member of the six-person committee of IU writing directors who organized and put on this statewide conference for teachers of writing.

- Collaborating with colleagues in Communication Arts and the IU Kokomo Library, the "Information Literacy Assessment Team" (ILAT) developed a longitudinal study of information literacy assessment in ENG-W 131 and SPCH-S 121. In October 2016, we presented the findings from our pilot surveys at IUPUI's annual Assessment Institute, and I began transforming our presentation into a publishable manuscript. (We also presented a revised version of this presentation at the 3rd annual Faculty Research Symposium at IU Kokomo in March 2017.) In June 2017, we submitted this manuscript to *Assessment Update*. This valuable research on assessing how and where our students get their information serves all academic areas at IU Kokomo.

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Teaching Narrative (2012-2017)

I tend to do a lot of my teaching preparation while I'm doing something else.

For the last three years, I've been a fairly avid long-distance runner, and I find that some of my best ideas for courses, topics, readings, writing projects, and even in-class and group activities seem to come to me when my body is challenged or even exhausted. I like to think that's when my mind—and perhaps my "teaching mind," in particular—is most active and responsive. Physical pain can work wonders for pushing one out of the well-worn ruts and paths that typify much of our pedagogical thinking. I like to use this to my advantage as a teacher, sometimes in unconventional ways.

To take just one example, several semesters ago, when I was teaching ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation for the first time, I was a bit troubled that my students seemed to be having such a difficult time with the fundamentals of Saussurean linguistics and semiotics (i.e., the relationship between the sign/signifier/signified)—tough sledding for anyone, to be sure—so I came up with an idea one day on a long run. I would use the signifier of an ordinary runner's sweatband in order to explain Saussure's piercing insight into how language works: that is, that words (signifiers) do not carry within them some sort of intrinsic meaning, but that signifiers *mean* or "make meaning" only by virtue of (a) their difference from other signifiers—that is, by virtue of what they are *not*—and (b) the social conventions of the larger linguistic community. So, for example, the neon sweatband, an accoutrement familiar to all runners who sweat profusely (as do I), is also a signifier that functions within a particular semiotic economy of recognition.

Quite simply, as I explained to my students, when people see a middle-aged man running down the street, my sweatband lets them know that I am merely out for a jog, *not* that I have just knocked over a liquor store or that I am running from the cops or some other kind of mishap. In other words, the sweatband-as-signifier serves an utterly practical semiotic function within the discourse community. It alerts anyone who happens to pass me that I am *exercising*. How do the people that I meet know this? The short answer is context. Because of the shared, social nature of language and signs, that's how. (Hats off to Ferdinand de Saussure, too, for making a series of insights that would forever alter critical theory and the study of interpretation more generally.)

I really wasn't sure how this example would work, or if it would work, but it worked quite well, I'm happy to report. Many of my students used this example—and some elaborated upon it quite convincingly and creatively, I should add—in future class discussions and even on their final exams for the course.

I bring up this fairly ordinary example of my pedagogical thought process and practice not merely to suggest that long-distance running is a good pedagogical invention strategy. It is, and I could offer several more examples of how it has led me to other breakthroughs in my

teaching, but that's not the main point. I bring up this example because it taught me something useful about teaching and practice that I want to further explore in this narrative. Namely, over time, it taught me how to conceive of teaching as a practice, like running.

This is an idea I've encountered in scholarship on pedagogy before, particularly when I was researching and writing my dissertation and my 2009 *JAC* article "What Is Pedagogy?" But before I started running long distances, I didn't fully grasp how closely related these practices really are. This teaching narrative, which attempts to cover the last five years of my teaching career, from the fall of 2012 to the spring of 2017, takes as its starting point the idea that teaching—and the teaching of writing in particular—is a complex process of painstaking growth and constant learning. In short, if I wasn't always thinking about my teaching, always trying to find ways to make it better, more ethical, more effective, more real and relevant to my students and where they are in the world—as I write in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy below—then I would not be a terribly exciting or effective teacher. If I didn't think of teaching as a *reflective practice*, similar in many respects to the running I do, then my teaching would not evolve, develop, or adapt. As I will also discuss in this narrative, being flexible and adaptive is key to pedagogical success and to the concept of reflective practice.

I have made several significant strides at IU Kokomo since joining the faculty. But nothing in my job is more important to me nor closer to my heart than teaching. Teaching is the reason I became a professor; it is the reason that I continue to do this job, frankly, and it is from my teaching that I draw strength. In this third-year teaching narrative, I begin by reproducing the text of my revised Teaching Philosophy (see below), before then turning my attention to a select handful of chronologically-arranged courses organized around what I will call teaching "moments." These are significant moments from the last five years at IU Kokomo that illustrate both the usefulness of reflectively engaging one's pedagogy as an ongoing practice and, I believe, some of the best of what I can offer our students and our campus.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy (Rev. June 2017)

Because of my training as a rhetorician and writer, I am continually intrigued by writing pedagogy's potential to afford students a flexible relationship with complexity and contingency, whether we understand these terms as referring to shifting rhetorical situations, the ever-changing constraints and possibilities of students' writing processes, or the spaces students inhabit in their own engagements with the world outside of the classroom. My pedagogy is always dedicated to sharing knowledge and teaching practical skills of literacy and thinking. At the same time, it also involves exploring the dynamics, difficulties, and possibilities of living in a world composed of commonalities and differences; engaging questions of citizenship and social responsibility; and engaging the ways in which the past lives in the present and how it affects who we are and what we can become. Indeed, I believe that at their core, the best humanities courses continually strive to attune students to the fact that the present they now inhabit has a history. It's important to me that my students understand how everything, from the most mundane artifact of popular culture to the most sublime work of high art or literature, can be traced, explored, and ultimately found to be constitutive, in a very real way, of what we are and how we understand ourselves as humans.

Thus, in addition to making sure my students have a firm grasp on content-based knowledge and writing skills, I also provide them with the necessary tools to map an area of inquiry or a critical conversation. Toward these ends, I endeavor to provide them with readings, artifacts, and exercises that (1) provoke intense discussions and responses that resonate with my students' own needs, interests, and experiences; (2) cultivate in them capacities for response, especially in terms of their encounters with others and with challenging texts and artifacts; and (3) expand their awareness of their situatedness in the world, but in such a way that avoids the often individualistic, navel-gazing tendencies of our times.

The rhetorical tradition's richly-documented emphasis on invention also forms a major focus of my overall teaching philosophy. The courses we teach in the humanities are nothing if not "ideas courses"—they depend for their very success upon not only students' capacities to grasp or recall ideas and concepts, but also to generate their own material, to *invent* ways of "making sense," and to compose a variety of texts (whatever the medium, genre, or purpose). This makes teaching these sorts of classes fun and interesting, but it also places a considerable burden on the instructor to keep lively discussions going; to challenge students to meet or even surpass the projected outcomes of the course; and to continually provide students with the sense that what they are learning is relevant and useful, particularly when the payoff is not immediately recognizable.

Finally, given the ever-present imperative to impart marketable skills, I believe that one of my primary responsibilities as a teacher is instilling in students an appreciation for how they might encounter, analyze, and intervene in the constitutive forces of institutions, ideas, concepts, and attitudes. Indeed, our present reality, in significant but often harsh ways, is precisely *not* of our students' own making, but it is nevertheless one to which they can become more appropriately, critically, and ethically attuned. This I strive for in all of my courses.

<center>***</center>

2012 & 2013

In the fall of 2012, I began as Assistant Professor of English at IU Kokomo. My first semester of teaching was not stellar; in fact, at the end of that semester, I recall a somewhat concerned Dr. Scott Jones, then acting as both Dean of HSS and Chair of the Humanities department, poking his head into my office one afternoon in the early spring of 2013 to debrief me on my teaching evaluations from the previous semester.

The gist of our conversation was that Scott wanted to make absolutely sure I wasn't upset or being too hard on myself. We talked about some of the specific comments from my course evaluations, such as the one that remarked on my lack of clarity on writing projects or the comment on my lack of organizational skills. These were hard to take, but the experience taught me something valuable about my teaching during my first semester at IU Kokomo that I

have since improved upon. Namely, these evaluations taught me that our students, particularly those in first-year courses such as **ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, & Inquiry I**, often have significant life issues that prevent them from successful, and they need extra support in many cases to receive the same quality of teacher-student interaction that one might receive on a fully-residential campus.

Here are a few telling notes from my first Teaching Narrative from 2012:

> My initial response [to the lack of student activity during my office hours and via Oncourse/e-mail] was to dig in and to make even more earnest exhortations for students to make use of my time; what I realize now was that I failed to recognize how truly difficult it is for many of our students to carve out time on campus to meet with their instructors. Many of our students are on campus for one reason: to attend class. In writing courses, of course, time spent outside of class, whether reading, writing, brainstorming with a writing center tutor, or discussing revisions with an instructor, is crucial to success. Some researchers even suggest that it is the most significant indicator of a student's success in a first-year writing course. Because in the past students have routinely remarked on evaluations that meeting with me to get feedback on writing projects is one of the most productive aspects of my classes, I mistakenly assumed that "more of the same" was the way to go. I dug in my heels and hoped for the best, and I think this is why many students found my feedback to be less helpful than they hoped, even though in my written feedback and revision notes were extensive.

In short, I realized quickly that for many of our students, such luxuries as the time to meet to discuss drafts of writing projects were just going to be out of reach, so I responded by completely revamping how I approached first-year writing. I immediately began taking courses from the CTLA on developing quality writing courses and teaching writing online (that summer and fall I would design and teach IU Kokomo's first fully-online section of ENG-W 131), and I researched different methods for reaching students outside of the classroom via Oncourse (later Canvas).

Starting in the spring of 2013, I also taught **ENG-W 132: English Composition II** for the first time, and I used my experiences during my first semester teaching ENG-W 131 to make this a much more successful first-year writing course. Late in 2012, spurred on by the difficulties I noticed some of my students were having balancing school with in some cases a full-time (or greater) workload, I developed a themed section of ENG-W 132 on work, employment culture in the US, and "the working life." In this course, students developed writing, reading, research, and interpretive capacities by thinking, reading, talking, and writing about work and its many intrusions—welcome and otherwise—into our lives. Students wrote "working autobiographies," interviewed friends, family, and community members for their empirical (APA) research writing project, and read some of the finest statements about work in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including excerpts from Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*, Terkel's *Working: Americans Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel*

about What They Do, and Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*, the novella that provided the basis for students' MLA literary analysis writing project.

As I mentioned, I centered the course on the concept of "work" and "work experiences," since at the time more than 80% of our students worked at least part-time and working in the US has been one of my primary research focuses ([see also my article published in *Workplace* in 2013](#)). This themed focus on work allowed students to write and discuss a topic about which they felt they had some personal experience, as evidence by this remark on a course evaluation from Spring 2013:

> It [the writing process and reading about "work"] really is [exciting]! Not to be a sap, but I did want to take a second and let you know how fond I am of your teaching style. I feel like as students you challenge us while at the same time giving us the freedom to be creative and develop our own style. I didn't even like writing before your class, and now I love it. So really, I am very appreciative.

I bring up this extended example in part because it has to do with my continuing development as a writing teacher at IU Kokomo, which is an essential part of my academic identity, but it also indicates something about my ability (and willingness) to conceive of my teaching as an ongoing practice about which I always strive to be reflective and critical. My biggest anxiety after teaching ENG-W 131 in my first semester was that my assignments and readings were not "meeting students where they are," as we say; that is, my anxiety was that I was not articulating the relevance of writing and reading to my students through our course readings and writing projects (which I call "WPs" for short). My turn to developing a writing course in which the relevance of the skills I was teaching were emphasized and foregrounded helped my students realize the relevance of writing and reading about these experiences.

Before I even moved to Kokomo, in the summer of 2012, I was asked if I would teach a long-defunct course in **ENG-W 365: Technical Editing**. Being a new hire, I said "sure!" even though I had not yet taught the course or really any course like it. In my first semester teaching ENG-W 365, even though my evaluations were not perfect, I was able to establish a base course that worked, and through the years I've taught this course five more times (and I am currently teaching it now in Fall 2017) for a grand total of six sections—one each Fall. For many, teaching Technical Editing might not sound like a lot of fun, but it is one of my favorite courses to teach at IU Kokomo for several reasons: first, students learn so much about the editing process and about grammatical rules (cf. the first epigraph to the Teaching Statement document above) that the course is just a joy to teach; second, students routinely contact me after the conclusion of the course to tell me how useful it has been. Emily (Ross) Smith, who took ENG-W 365 with me that fateful first time in Fall 2012, would go on to become the Associate Editor of the *Journal of Teaching Writing* at IUPUI, in part because of her stellar work in my class and her development as both an editor and a writing teacher. (Ms. Ross now works as web writer/content developer for the Media and Marketing Department at IU Kokomo.) Reading back through my narratives from 2012, I can see that I was perhaps harder on myself regarding ENG-W 365 than I should have been. This class was a success, but more importantly, it gave me a firm foundation on

which to build future sections and future copyeditors. I plan to continue to teach ENG-W 365 each fall as long as it continues to draw student interest and support.

More than any other course I developed for the spring of 2013, **ENG-W 368: Research Methods & Materials**, which was another "defunct" course I was in charge of bringing back to life (so to speak), was the *most* challenging and time-consuming course to plan, develop, and teach. It was also one of the most gratifying teaching experiences I've yet had. To help explain this apparent mismatch, I refer to two separate sets of student comments on my teaching evaluations. One student wrote, "I am of the firm opinion that Dr. Cook is a great professor, a large source of information, and very helpful, but we were never on schedule with his syllabus, and he was all over the place in regards to organization." Then, from a student in the same class, this series of remarks: "Extremely well organized. Any deviation was logical & explained in full."

I mention this apparent contradiction because I think it helps illustrate the challenges of teaching a course that, in some significant ways, must be all things to all students. At a large, research-intensive institution, this course could be designed and delivered exclusively as a course on research methods and materials for English and writing studies majors, but that luxury is simply not available at a smaller campus such as IU Kokomo. Put differently, because I suspected (correctly) that this course would be taken by students from diverse majors and disciplinary backgrounds, I wanted to design a course that would not only give students of all backgrounds and abilities the "basics" of academic research and scholarship (i.e., library-based research, empirical research methods, interpreting and classifying existing research, writing literature reviews, etc.), but also one that would give English majors a broad overview of what it means to do research in literary studies and rhetoric and composition. On top of this, I also wanted to give education majors and liberal studies graduate students a firm grasp on how to conduct research in their own fields, disciplines, and areas of interests.

Students completed mini-ethnographies, inventoried their professional and personal research interests, learned about how digital tools and resources are rapidly revolutionizing the way researchers work, and in some cases completed impressive, in-depth research projects from a variety of disciplines. However, all of this required a great deal of planning and some trial-and-error. The student who wrote of the disorganized nature of the class was not wrong, but neither was the student who wrote that the course was well organized. In my eagerness to cover as much content and as many skills and capacities as possible, my "default" mode for this class was to err on the side of content-overload; this approach can often engender a feeling in some students of disorganization and "rush," and this, I should add, is a feeling with which I am in total sympathy and that I have already taken pains to address in my major course revisions for ENG-W 368/LBST-D 511.

Also, due to the fact that the course was a dual-enrollment or so-called "hybrid" course—that is, a course with both undergraduate and graduate enrollment—I may have at times unwittingly erred on the side of the graduate students when it came to such issues as reading load and in-class activities. Since the spring of 2013, however, I have taught this course once more and I

have taught nearly a half-dozen hybrid courses with undergrad and grad students, so my ability to "shuck and jive" with both sets of students has improved dramatically, as evidenced by my more recent course evaluations from these types of courses (more on this below). Even in this section of ENG-W 368 in Spring 2013, the undergraduate student who complained about the perceived disorganization of the course also wrote of the teacher-student relationship and student-centeredness that "This is Dr. Cook's strong point!" (Please note the exclamation point.)

What I learned from this experience, and what I continue to hone as I teach more and more hybrid courses, is that these courses require an almost "schizophrenic" attunement to the needs of both sets of students. It is not enough to simply challenge undergraduates to strive to reach graduate student heights; this may come in time, but one must, in effect, *envision* teaching hybrid courses as an exercise in teaching two sets of students simultaneously. So far in this narrative, I have attempted to describe this process in terms of what I've been called reflective practice: the notion that teaching, like long-distance running or carpentry or playing the sitar, is a lifelong practice.

Unabashedly, **ENG-L 295: The "Outsider" in American Film Culture** was the most fun I had teaching in Spring 2013. This was also the first film course I've ever taught, however, which meant that I had to overcome some considerable anxiety and engage in extensive research and reading as I endeavored to design and develop this course. I am gratified to report that all of this hard work paid off in the end; this was perhaps the most successful—and certainly the most highly-rated—of the courses I taught in Spring 2013.

Students wrote at the end of the semester that "[Dr. Cook is] [a]bsolutely the best professor as far as caring about helping the students," and "I really enjoyed this class—it made me want to start watching film [sic] that provoke thought [,] something I used to do often and with life getting busy I kind of stopped." Another student opined, "Definitely one of the best instructors I've had (and that's saying a great deal); [Cook] shows a clear interest in helping students succeed & is willing to go out of his way to make that happen. Excellent course; great selection of independent films ([I] feel like I have been exposed to a wide range of cinematic experiences; appreciated the ability to select my own film for the short writing project)."

But without a doubt, the comments from students that I appreciated the most from this course were those that signaled an appreciation for the extra time and effort I put into helping a large survey-type course of some 29 students feel more like an intimate, seminar-style classroom: "He showed up early, showed us how to have better class discussions, and made the class enjoyable." And from the same student, a nod to my availability: "He always had open office hours and met with us whenever we needed help." I mention these remarks specifically because, at least to my mind, they indicate a key feature of my overall pedagogy, one that I have tried to hone to a fine point in my five years at IU Kokomo—namely, the way I have often found it necessary to help students learn how to become better, more engaged *students*, apart from (and in addition to) whatever the specific content of a course might be. I continue to work

on and hone this aspect of my teaching through the concept of reflective practice that I've been sketching thus far in this narrative.

Giving students compelling and provocative readings, projects, and curricular content is vitally important, to be sure, as I detail in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy. But I also believe that when one is teaching at a regional, commuter campus like IU Kokomo, provocative course content is simply not enough to make a course successful; in some instances, one has to work hard to help students learn *how to become students*, whether this means coaching students through class discussions, meeting students "where they are" in one-on-one meetings, or even just showing a genuine interest in students' ideas and writing projects. These might not be "flashy" or conspicuous modes of pedagogy, but I have learned over time that this is one of my pedagogical strong points, to paraphrase the more critical student from ENG-W 368/LBST-D 511 (quoted above), and it is a feature of my teaching that I have carried forward to the present day, whether teaching an Honor's colloquium of nine students, or a film survey of 29. Finally, perhaps at the risk of putting too fine a point on this *all* of this, I also firmly believe that this mode of pedagogy makes a significant contribution to the development of a feeling of community among students and faculty at IU Kokomo.

In the fall of 2013, I was presented with the exciting opportunity to teach the first course I've ever taught on what is (essentially) my sub-area of specialty: the history, theory, and practice of writing instruction in the United States. My dissertation was, among other things, a history of writing instruction and its intersections with what I call "crisis discourse" in rhetoric and composition studies and in the larger arena of higher education, and as I sat down to plan **ENG-W 400: Issues in the Teaching of Writing** in late summer of 2013, I was emboldened by the knowledge that it would directly tap into my past and present research itineraries ([see my Research Statement for details](#)).

I split the course into two overarching units: the first attempted to give students a firm grounding in what we might call writing studies' more "traditional" disciplinary targets and concepts: the history of current-traditional rhetoric and its complicated legacy in the academy; (the rise, fall, and quasi-resurrection of) process pedagogies and expressivism; the powerful, ongoing influence of classical rhetorics in the teaching of writing; issues surrounding the special needs of basic writers and L2 learners; and critical pedagogies and political approaches to teaching writing, language, and culture.

With this "zoomed out," eagle-eye view of the discipline firmly in place, the second half of the semester was then devoted to exploring select issues and questions more in a much more in-depth manner: we explored, for instance, feminism and writing studies; race, rhetoric, and ideology, the enormous impact of the "digital turn" on rhetoric and composition studies and on the academy *writ large*; and we even ended the semester with a unit on academic labor and the very timely issues related to contingent faculty and collective action. (In fact, one student remarked in a written comment on my evaluations that s/he wished we had spent more time on the labor issues—next time I will be sure to make this revision.) I am also quite proud to note that, in addition to this being one of the most enjoyable courses I've yet had the pleasure

to teach, it was also one of the most successful; I received a perfect "1" on item #21 — "Compared to other instructors I've had, this instructor is outstanding"—from both undergraduates and MALS (graduate) students.[1]

In my first few months on the job in the fall of 2012, former English program Chairperson and Associate Professor of English Ann Cameron asked me if I would like to develop and teach an online section of ENG-W 131. At the time, I was brand new to IU Kokomo, and I jumped at the opportunity to make my mark pedagogically and in terms of curriculum development and service to the program. However, at the time, I really had no idea how much work would be involved in, essentially, going from "zero to 60" with an online course. I accepted the challenge, however, and I'm glad I did.

This section of ENG-W 131 *was* my summer of 2013. I did also teach two sections of ENG-W 132 face-to-face, again on the theme of work and workplace culture in the US, and I sent off another manuscript to the well-regarded WAC/WID journal *Across the Disciplines* that would be published in the summer of 2014. But designing and developing this **online section of ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, & Inquiry I**, of all things, was the first thing I thought about when I awoke in the morning, and it was the last thing I thought about before I went to bed at night. To say I had some anxiety about developing it is tantamount to saying that the original *Star Wars* turned out to be a pretty popular movie.

I spent the better part of 2013 taking the required courses from CTLA, and so when summer rolled around, I was well-prepared. My deadline to have the course 90% complete happened to be in mid-July; not only did I make the deadline, but my online course reviewer, Associate Professor of Economics Dr. Dmitriy Chulkov, remarked at the time that it was one of the most complete, comprehensively-developed courses he had yet seen from a first-timer.

Student comments were sparse, in part because only three students completed course evaluations. But the comments I did receive were overwhelmingly positive. One student commended me for the way the course was organized. S/he wrote, "I like the way the class was organized. We were able to work at our own pace [,] and the instructor always got back with us in a timely fashion." A second student wrote, "I could pretty much work in it at my own pace and know what we were doing ahead of time so I could work ahead to make sure I gave myself the time needed for that assignment." These particular comments gratified me immensely, since studies indicate that one of students' most frequent complaints about online courses is that they are disorganized. As to potential improvements to the course, one student suggested the following: "Just make sure all the assignment sheets have the same information regarding where to submit the assignment," while another student simply wrote, "It's good the way it is." (Incidentally, I quickly discovered the issue to which this former student refers and rectified the inconsistency.)

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[1] n=7.

2014

In the fall of 2013, I was approached about teaching my first Honors Colloquium at IU Kokomo. The course, **HON-H 399: Digital Culture & Its (Dis)Contents**, was a foray into the silicon jungles of digital culture, and it marked my initial teaching foray into the areas of technology, media, and culture—an area that has been one of my research interests for some time, but that until the spring of 2014, I never had the opportunity to address pedagogically.

One significant pedagogical experiment I tried in this course was to give students a grading "menu" whereby they could arrange and design their own graded projects and assignments. These ranged from mini-research papers to book reviews, blogs, and multimedia presentations. At least one student liked this format, writing that "I liked how we were able to make choices on how the course went."

Even though several students did comment on how much they enjoyed (or came to enjoy) the focus on digital culture, the majority of the written comments seemed to indicate that students also appreciated my ability to create a classroom environment conducive to learning and exploration. For example, one student explicitly stated that s/he "liked how the instructor taught/explained and the environment he created in class," while another student wrote, "Dr. Cook knows what he's talking about. He's very knowledgeable about his teachings, and he is always available to talk to; he even gave us his. . . personal number in case we needed to get ahold [sic] of him." Yet another student remarked that "Dr. Cook made the material discussed in class enjoyable" and "The class discussions helped me remember the material." Finally, another student wrote that "Dr. Cook is a great professor. He cares about his students and he clearly wants us to succeed."

One strength that I bring to my teaching is the ability to convey conceptually-challenging and sometimes controversial ideas to undergrads in such a way that (a) doesn't scare them away and (b) also makes them feel at ease. I have written about this previously as a pedagogy of care or kindness, and, in short, it works well with our student population.

The spring of 2014 also marked the second time I had the opportunity to teach **ENG-W 368 & LBST-D 511: Research Methods & Materials**, and I was gratified to have the chance to revise some of its shortcomings from my initial attempt (see entry above for more details). More than any other course I routinely teach, this course might be the most challenging and time-consuming course to plan, develop, and deliver, even from one year to the next. Next to teaching first-year writing, I think this is the most difficult course I teach.

Part of the challenge of this course can be explained by the sheer project-load. Students complete mini-ethnographies, keep research logs and blogs, inventory their professional and personal research interests, perform field work (both physical and digital), learn about how digital tools and resources are rapidly revolutionizing the way researchers work, explore CITI and IRB certification, and complete full-scale, in-depth research projects through several theoretical and practical lenses.

So, at the same time, ENG-W 368/LBST-D 511 is also one of the most gratifying and, I would say, "hard-earned" teaching experiences I've yet had. And my qualitative course evaluations, which were quite positive for this course (a marked improvement over 2013), are rivaled only by my quantitative evaluations: in most categories, my scores were close to a (perfect) 5.0 ("Strongly Agree") among ENG-W 368 (undergrad) students. In the graduate-level course, LBST-D 511, the numbers were slightly lower, but still very close to 4.0 ("Agree") in most categories.

The comments focused mainly on the practical usefulness of the course ("I learned how to write a project proposal and a lit review which will be helpful for my thesis proposal" and "I learned a lot of research strategies that have helped me with several papers this semester") and my own effectiveness in terms of flexibility and open-mindedness. Students also noted the difficulty of the course and the "boring" nature of some of the materials. Indeed, perhaps my favorite comment for this course is from the student who wrote, "Dr. Cook goes above and beyond to make sure we succeed. This class wasn't my favorite, but [Dr. Cook] made it worthwhile."

I attribute the continuing success of this course to the simple fact that our students have few other opportunities to take another course with a similar scope and level of rigor. And I routinely hear from students that more courses with a similar focus on research would be useful (indeed, I plan to work on developing these courses post-tenure). I pride myself on making this course as rigorous and comprehensive as possible, and the most significant challenge of teaching Research Methods on a small campus is that the course must cover a great deal of territory both in the Humanities and in Social Science disciplines.

When I first had the idea to revive the long-defunct **ENG-W 210: Literacy & Public Life** as a literacy course centered on the concept of the American dream, I could not have known how successful (and enjoyable) this course would turn out to be. I suppose what really surprised me the most was the fact that from the start of the semester students took so readily to the idea of discussing, analyzing, and even critiquing the concept, the history, the images, and the mythology of the American dream. Rather than having to sell students on the idea that the American dream is worthy of critique and interpretation, in other words, students jumped at the opportunity to spend a semester doing just that and more. This built-in enthusiasm made teaching this course easily the most enjoyable experience of the semester; I underscore the students' enthusiasm in this narrative because I think it could be interpreted as a compelling indication of the types of courses our students aren't (or weren't) getting and are interested in taking.

The student comments that emerged from this course were, as I expected, quite positive. The most prevalent theme that emerged from the students' remarks was that the course taught them to think critically and to interrogate myths and ideas that have become ossified in American culture and society. One student, for instance, wrote the following:

> As always with Dr. Cook, the things he teaches are relevant to the outside world [cf. Teaching Philosophy above] and cause you to stop and think about things.

This class used a variety of interesting texts and you can tell that Dr. Cook puts a lot of thought into what he teaches. . . . The most valuable thing I learned in this course would be to think critically about things I have often taken for granted.

Another student opined that the most valuable take-away from the course is that s/he learned "How America really is. I experienced a hard-core dose of reality, and I'm much smarter and better prepared for life outside of college after taking this course." Another student remarked that the course "made me think about things I haven't before."

Also, on the issue of multimodality and using a variety of texts and readings, several students made comments such as "I liked the material we covered in class. Some pieces were contemporary, and some weren't [and] that was cool. I like that we had good discussions consistently." Another student wrote that the use of "visual aids" and "various media" made the lessons more enjoyable and interesting. Other students were slightly more sanguine about what they learned (such as the student who wrote, forlornly: "Finding a job is going to be difficult"), but overwhelmingly the student comments indicated that the class found the sometimes difficult lessons about American culture, history, and the American dream to be valuable for their educations and relevant to their lives.

The few comments and observations that were critical of the course indicated that the weekly discussion forum posts were too frequent, and I have come to agree. In fact, I am currently teaching ENG-W 210 (Spring 2015) as a course on corporations and corporate culture, and I have decided to make discussion posts less frequent (i.e., bi-weekly) but also more substantive (e.g., students are often asked to incorporate outside research or write longer, more analytically-demanding posts).

What I most want to celebrate about ENG-W 210 is that nine students (roughly 93% of those who left written comments) made remarks to the effect that they found the course thought-expanding and generative of critical thinking, as well as compelling and clearly relevant to their lives as students and citizens: "this course really generates critical thinking and new ways to analyze the things we are exposed to in this country. Overall I really liked this course and the instructor." The quantitative evaluations were as close to perfect as I've received in a course to date; there were no categories in which the mean score was less than 4.0 ("Agree").

In the summer of 2014, I taught for a second time the **online version of ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, & Inquiry I** that I designed in the summer of 2013 and taught for the first time in the fall of that year. This gave me the valuable opportunity to revise and fine-tune some of the shortcomings of that initial online offering.

The course evaluations were positive. I was particularly impressed with the quantitative portion of the evaluations, which indicate that most students selected either 4 ("Agree") or 5 ("Strongly Agree") in most categories. One student indicated in the qualitative portion that the course was too difficult and the grading too strenuous and/or unclear. In my support, each draft of each paper submitted to my online writing courses are returned with two forms of feedback: a copy

of the draft with digital mark-up and a WP Revision Sheet. In some cases, students received feedback from me on the same WP two or three times, and it is not at all unusual for my online writing students to get significantly more feedback from me than students enrolled in a face-to-face writing course. As is noted in the research on online writing courses, this is due to the nature of digital writing pedagogy.[2]

I was also troubled by the one student who indicated that I was difficult to track down. I don't recall the specifics of this incident, but I would like to add that I strive to make myself available to all of my students, and I am particularly sensitive to making my online students feel welcome and comfortable about meeting me on campus or even calling me on my mobile phone. Here is the text of a note I include on all of my online syllabi:

> Even though this is an online course, I actively encourage my online students to visit me during office hours as often as they like, just as I do with my face-to-face (f2f) students. I look forward to meeting each of you and talking about your drafts and your performance in the course—whether in person or online in our "virtual" classroom. My office is located on the second floor of the front side of the Main Building (KO). As you walk in the front doors (the main entrance), take a hard right and ascend the stairs. At the top of the stairs, simply turn left and walk down the corridor. My office is almost on the end of the hallway on the right—KO 232.

I will continue to take care to make sure that I am as available to my students as I can be during regular business hours (and beyond in special circumstances). I enjoy teaching writing online, and I think that in the right context and with the right instructor, digital writing pedagogy can be as productive and rigorous as any face-to-face writing course. I will continue to teach and thereby fine-tune ENG-W 131 online regularly.

Teaching ENG-W 131 face-to-face again in the fall of 2014 after teaching it online for the two previous iterations presented me with two gratifying opportunities: the first was to be able to design a brand-new themed course for IU Kokomo's then newly-revised Freshman Learning Communities (FLCs). Research repeatedly indicates that a student's freshman experience is closely connected to that student's later success and retention in higher education. At IU Kokomo and many other institutions, first-year writing courses such as ENG-W 131 are often at the forefront of students' first-year experiences and are a key component of the success of our FLCs.

The second opportunity with which I was presented was to work closely with Dr. Scott Jones, former Dean of HSS, to develop and teach a new themed course cluster called "Images, Texts, & Reality." The focus of our course cluster was on how images and texts work as "co-conspirators" in both the production and reception or analysis of meaning, or what we typically think of as the real.

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[2] Warnock, Scott. *Teaching Writing Online: How and Why*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2009. Print.

My "half" of the course cluster led students through an exploration of different ways of looking at the same phenomena: race and ethnicity, class and work, poverty and wealth, gender bias and sex discrimination. How are different positions and perspectives within these various phenomena "formed" through the interplay of texts and images? How can a critical attunement to texts and images allow for seemingly entrenched positions to be opened up, critiqued, and (perhaps) revised? These are heady questions for freshmen, but this is part of what I understand to be the spirit if not the letter of the new FLCs mandate: to attempt to do bold things with students.

In this case, I think the gambit paid off. Not only were my quantitative scores among the best of any of my courses in 2014 (almost all categories had a mean score of 4.5+, no small feat for any instructor in any course, but exceedingly rare in ENG-W 131), but also my qualitative evaluations were stellar. Students wrote of my enthusiasm, passion, and upbeat attitude about the course materials. One student remarked, "I really like when a professor loves what he does and cares about our success and Dr. Cook does and that made this class enjoyable." On the overall rigor of the course, another student wrote: "I have learned a lot of valuable things from this class. The one I probably learned most was that it takes hard work and time to get better at something." Finally, another student observed of the classroom environment that s/he most liked "[b]eing active in class. In other words, I didn't feel like I was just sitting in class. I felt as if I was in a group of people discusing [sic] several things."

In terms of the assignment sequence, my course followed the one set out for ENG-W 131 sections throughout the IU system by the IU Writing Directors (of which I am a part) and for those administered by the Advance College Project (ACP), for which I served as Site Visitor in Fall 2014. I piloted this assignment sequence for the first time in my FLC section of ENG-W 131 in the fall of 2014. In brief, the sequence of assignments is spot on in terms of how it builds rhetorical skills and capacities from summary, to critique and analysis, to synthesis and beyond, but as is evident in several of the qualitative evaluations, students felt that the five writing projects were rushed and/or not paced as well as they should have been. Based on my successes with these assignments in Fall 2014, I then revised and reconfigured the assignment sequences for all sections of ENG-W 131 in order to improve both instruction and consistency across sections.

ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation, which I first taught in Fall 2014, represented my first attempt at teaching an "L"-designated (i.e., literature) course at IU Kokomo, and I was gratified to be able to expand and round out my teaching portfolio. Keeping in mind both the fact that this course is generally taken by non-English majors and the fact that this course traditionally has a rather large enrollment (29 students completed the course in fall of 2014), I decided to design the course more as an interpretive, "tools-based" survey of literature and concepts central to literary interpretation and theory (e.g., culture, authorship, ideology, subjectivity, etc.).

This pedagogical approach worked. The qualitative comments for this course were perhaps the most effusively positive I have ever received: "The instructor pushed me beyond my ordinary abilities," "It [the course] was a completely different way of looking at things in life," "This class made me think about topics I had not studied before," and "I liked that this course actually made me think things through, unlike some of my other classes." Several students liked the enthusiasm and energy that I brought to the class lectures and discussions. One student remarked, "I really like the way the instructor gets people involved in class discussions, and I also liked the course readings… I learned to question everything." In short, students seemed to enjoy and learn a great deal from our lively class discussions and my use of multimedia texts in lectures and weekly assignments, in-class writing, and discussion forum posts.

I tried to make this course as valuable and useful as possible to the greatest number of students: useful and relevant for the English or Humanities major, but also capacious enough to be of some practical use to a Business or Nursing student, too. I try to bring this pedagogical orientation to all of my courses, but as I mentioned previously, the make-up of ENG-L 202 lends itself best to this sort of focus. As one student wrote, "The material in this course was presented and discussed in a manner that allowed all students to understand."

The student critiques of the course fall into one of three categories: (1) the reading load was too heavy, (2) there were too many weekly discussion posts, and (3) the course readings pushed too hard against some students' beliefs and were sometimes offensive. (For example, Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* was singled out a couple of times by students for its vulgarity.) I am sensitive to the fact that students are often inundated with readings and with discussion posts, and one significant revision for the next time I teach ENG-L 202 is that I'm going to try to space-out our discussion posts such that we have time in class to highlight and discuss some of the more compelling posts from one week to the next.

I am also quite sensitive to students' perceptions of the content of the readings and their usefulness or relevance to the course, but as I discuss at length in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy (above) I think one of the great advantages to teaching humanities courses is the exposure that students receive to provocative, controversial, and, frankly, *different* texts and experiences. Humanities scholars and teachers have an obligation to help students explore— *together*, in small seminars as well as large non-majors courses—the significant conflicts and contradictions of our shared circumstances. There is great pedagogical value in the kinds of productive, civil disagreements that reasonable people can have about themes, concepts, ideas, and even eras in American history (e.g., we spent significant time discussing the War on Drugs in the US and how competing understandings of history and culture play out in this specific conceptual/discursive arena).

According to the results of IU Kokomo's 2013 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), students indicated that they do not have enough opportunities in their coursework to engage

with or discuss challenging or controversial topics and discussions.[3] I envision my version of ENG-L 202 to be in part a direct response to this indicated curricular need.

Also, the data from the qualitative and quantitative portions clearly indicate that this approach produced a positive experience for the majority of students—my numbers are well over 4.0 ("Agree") in almost all categories and 4.5+ in many, while some students described their experience in the course as "enlightening," "stimulating," and "incredibly useful for any undergrad student." "Well organized, & the subject was easier to understand because of Dr. C," was how one commenter put it.

ENG-W 365: Technical Editing, which I again taught in Fall 2014, marked an exciting occasion for me and my tenure at IU Kokomo: to wit, it marked the first time I was teaching a course at IU Kokomo for the *third* time. I had written in my 2012 FAR that "the next time I teach this course I plan to make three rather large-scale revisions that I think will maintain the rigor of the course while making the inherent challenges of technical editing more manageable for students." And the next year, in my 2013 Faculty Annual Report (FAR), I rehearsed some of the successes I gleaned from these revisions.

This particular semester, I was able to approach the course with much more confidence, which I think translated into a rather successful iteration of ENG-W 365. (This semester I instituted what I call "Cool Down Days" as class sessions in which we slow down, review key concepts in technical editing, and further practice/hone skills we've already learned, such as paper or digita mark-up procedures.) Several students noted this in my more casual or "laid back" approach to the course. One student, for example, wrote that I made "technical editing fun and rewarding," while another wrote that the course "had a very casual feel to it." Another student observed, "I liked that Dr. Cook was very energetic every class. He also made something like editing, which can be intimidating, fun and easy to learn." Other students opted to write about how much they learned and, perhaps most importantly, how valuable the full range of editing skills will be for them in their other coursework and in their future careers.

Another significant revision from 2013 that I continued for this time around was that I scaled-back the resume editing assignment; this semester I opted not to work with Career Services to give students "real-world" resumes. This had been a valuable experience in 2012, but the logistics were incredibly time-consuming, and I felt that whatever benefits or gains the students received from knowing that they were working with "real" job seekers was really undermined by the amount of time it took all of us to coordinate our efforts, ensure anonymity, and so forth. So, this time around, as in 2013, students simply edited either their own resumes or those of friends, family, and classmates. This continuing practice proved successful again this year, too.

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[3] Ross, Kathy. Committee discussion. Faculty Learning Community on Sustainability and Teaching. CTLA. IU Kokomo. 12 Mar. 2013.

I have finally come to the realization that we I need to develop and offer a new series of editing courses, or perhaps a frequent special topics course that could tackle, say, digital media and the cutting edge of the editing profession. Another course might focus exclusively on copyediting and grammar, syntax, and mechanics. I believe the demand exists for these kinds of courses, which could easily function as both core and adjunct courses to the minor in Writing, Editing, and Media. I plan to pursue the development of these courses post-tenure

2015

The year 2015 marked an exciting year for both my teaching and my continuing development as a teaching professional.

In the spring, I taught **ENG-W 311: Writing Creative Nonfiction** for the first time at IU Kokomo. The course, which introduces students to the burgeoning and fascinating genre of creative nonfiction, takes students on an historical as well as theoretical foray into not only how this genre developed (from James Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* to Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*), but also how the genre is traditionally conceived by practitioners and writers. To that end, students read and analyze some of the finest examples of creative nonfiction available—both historical and contemporary, novels and short works—and learn to internalize the kinds of discipline and habits of observation that good writing demands.

My qualitative evaluations in this course were generally positive, if a tad . . . *lackluster* when compared to the kinds of effusive comments I usually receive from my classes. Interestingly, however, my quantitative scores were among the best of my teaching career, with "perfect" scores of "5" in several key categories, including "My instructor is well-prepared for class meetings" and "My instructor shows genuine interest in students" plus several more. The qualitative comments ranged from generally positive to quite positive, with more than one student commenting on my enthusiasm, my ability to lead effective discussions, and my tendency to push students out of their "comfort zones."

The only negative qualitative comments from this course focused on the quantity of readings and the number of books I had students purchase for this course. It is true that we didn't have an opportunity to get through one of the novels that I put on the syllabus, as one student points out, and the next time I have an opportunity to teach this course, I am going to make the difficult decision of which of my texts to cut from the list. I am currently thinking about assigning excerpts from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (rather than the entire 450-page volume) so that students can get a sense of Agee's inimitable creative nonfiction writing style and the way he takes on such challenging and delicate subject matter as poor white sharecroppers in 1930s Alabama.

When I taught **ENG-W 210: Literacy & Public Life** in the spring of 2014 as a course on the mythology of the American Dream, I didn't plan on doing another version of the class right away. However, in conversations that I had with students and based on events that were

happening in the US (and the world) at that time, it occurred to me late in 2014 that teaching the course again—and taking on the multinational corporation as our semester-long focus—would be an effective way to get at some of the underlying social and economic issues that plague so many Americans as we stumble into the 21st century.

In this particular course, the qualitative responses were sparse, which is very unusual for evaluations of my courses. I chalk this up to the fact that this course had such a small enrollment: only five students remained at the end of the course, down from seven at the start of the semester. The comments were positive, however, with the exception of these two, each from a separate evaluation: "No room for creativity!" was one response, while "Not worth my time" was the other. The latter response I don't understand; the former response was embedded within two other positive remarks about my teaching, including the statement that "Dr. Cook is young, fun, and enthusiastic" and "[The most valuable thing I learned in this course was] the inner-workings of corporate America." Again, the quantitative scores were quite good for this course, too, with every student in the class marking "Strongly Agree" for the item that reads "My instructor encourages me to participate in class discussions."

In response to the comment regarding the perceived lack of creativity in the course assignments, I plan to develop a writing project for the next time I teach this course that uses creative elements. One such idea I have since come up with, depending on what the theme is for the next section of ENG-W 210, would be to have students write what is called a "literacy narrative" in which they detail their experiences with literacy from any number of backgrounds: cultural, social, occupational, religious/spiritual, academic, etc. Indeed, one of my favorite aspects of teaching ENG-W 210: Literacy & Public Life is that I have the opportunity to engage students in discussions of how they became "literate" (i.e., knowledgeable about customs and conventions) within different areas—most of which are outside of formal schooling. I am currently (Fall 2017) teaching ENG-W 210 as a course on so-called "fake news" and information literacy in the digital age.

My third "course" in Spring 2015 was **ENG-W 398: Internship in Writing**, an internship/independent study that I developed for Alexis Nash, a senior in Communication Arts. Since Alexis plans to enter the marketing ranks after graduation and since she has already completed so many marketing internships in both Kokomo and Indianapolis, we decided together that it would be interesting to take a "meta-" approach to interning and explore the history of internships in the US. Along these lines, we drew up a common syllabus and began working our way through such texts as Ross Perlin's explosive 2012 book *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy* and George Ritzer's classic statement on the social and cultural effects of post-Fordism: *The McDonaldization of Society* (1993). Even though course evaluations are not part of our internship or independent study procedures, I know from conversations with Alexis and, more importantly, from the quality of her work over the course of the semester, that she learned a great deal from our work together this spring.

In the summer of 2015, flush with duties related to running the first-year Writing Program (see Service Narrative), I was glad that I was slated to teach a course that I had already taught once

before: **ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation**. As anyone who teaches in higher education knows, there is quite often a world of difference between teaching the same course in a regular 16-week semester and teaching it as an "accelerated" 6-week course. When one factors in the cultural mythologies surrounding summer (and summer school), 6-week writing intensive courses, regardless of content, are not only more challenging to design than a semester-long class, but they are even more difficult to execute.

For example, out of the 16 total students who started the course, six students had withdrawn by the end of the semester (nearly 40% of the class). The biggest challenge in delivering summer courses in one of the accelerated formats is not that it can't be done—it can, as I discuss below—but that it requires a level of dedication and sustained engagement that is difficult for many of our students to achieve. Nevertheless, there were quite a few stand-out students and success stories in this course, too, as both the final grades and the course evaluations attest.

The most persistent themes among all the comments fall into two categories, both of which are positive: remarks concerning the skill of close reading and remarks having to do with my enthusiasm and passion for the course and the course materials. No fewer than five students mentioned their appreciation of having learned how to close read texts, which is a major learning outcome of this course. Three of these students specifically referred to the process of "close reading," while the other two students referred to "active reading" and the ability to read contexts in subtle ways. One student wrote that there "was more re-reading of the texts than I would like (though it was understandable that we would need to go over some things more than once)." At first glance, it might seem that this student wasn't so thrilled about how I teach close reading/active reading strategies (really, I demand it from my students), but if you look closely at the statement, I think one can also discern a begrudging appreciation for re-reading challenging literary and theoretical texts.

As I write in my Statement of Teaching Philosophy above, more important to me than the specific content of a course are the skills and outcomes that students can take from that course and transfer to other courses and beyond in their careers. I believe that ENG-L 202 is a course that at our institution is uniquely posed to do that—it is a general education course that fulfills a number of requirements on campus, in particular the near-universal "critical thinking" requirement. It is an opportunity for the English program/department to market itself to the students of the wider campus, and I am happy to say that I "won" over several students from these sections of ENG-L 202 over the years. Some have even become English majors/minors and writing minors because of this course.

This is why I am so deeply troubled by a comment such as this one: "Critical thinking is not a skill I need to develop to get the job I will apply for after college." Such a statement is, first of all, false, but it also seems to indicate that this student felt that s/he did in fact develop critical thinking skills in this course. In fact, if you look closely at the text of the evaluation, you will see that the student scratched through the word "something" in an earlier draft of the evaluation and wrote in its place: "a skill." I'm only being a tad facetious when I call this a small but rather

graceful act of thoughtful revision; being critical about one's own writing is, of course, just one of the many skills that require critical thinking.

Other students had positive remarks to make about my enthusiasm and passion for the course, and I like to think that this is an "aura" I bring to all of my courses. I do realize that I enjoy this course, in particular, because it allows me to teach both literary texts and critical theory. One remark that stands out to me reads thusly:

> Paul is extremely passionate about his work and he does it well. Sometimes he can expect too much of his students in terms of immediate comprehension of class materials. His grading is pretty rough in addition to ridiculous standards for participation; however, he remains a great professor. He can just be demanding of his students.

I hope that the bulk of this note stands on its own, and I do note that this is one of my most cherished remarks from 2015 in that it suggests both my rigor and my passion. However, I would like to briefly address the only negative theme from these evaluations: the one having to do with my grading rubrics for Discussions. The following comment makes the point most forcefully: "I was 100% unsatisfied with the grading scale. I would receive the same grade on forum posts whether or not I spent 5 minutes on an assignment or 5 hours on another."

I have two ways of responding to this remark: first, it is possible that some of the Discussion prompts we do on a regular basis throughout the semester require a different level of commitment—both in terms of intellect and time. Some of the early prompts, for instance, are less time-consuming and therefore "easier" in that I am trying to acclimate students to the process of posting and responding to Discussions. In fact, I work hard to provide students with instruction—both in class and via regular Canvas announcements and handouts—on precisely what I expect in the Discussion posts. Second, I always provide students with plenty of feedback on Discussions and other graded work in a timely manner so they can learn from my feedback on previous assignments. For an example of the extensiveness of my feedback to students, I offer the following screenshot from Canvas:

For ease of reading, here is the full-text of my feedback to this student:

> You make some insightful observations here, _____, but if every interpretation is equally valid, as you suggest here, then why interpret at all? What's the point? Is it just for kicks?
>
> Let's take this out of the realm of poetry and literature for a moment and try our hand at a so-called "real world" example, one "ripped from the headlines," so to speak:
>
> Police, in their dealings with the public, have a great deal of what we might call interpretive "freedom" when determining how to deal with various situations. When you get pulled over or stopped, the officer immediately begins "reading" or interpreting the situation: are you drunk? Are you on drugs? Are you friendly, hostile, angry, bitter, dangerous, scared, etc.? What kind of person are you?
>
> Police are very often wrong in their interpretations—as we have seen in recent weeks and months and years with the various shootings of unarmed young men—and yet their interpretation matters much more than yours or mine or that of the average citizen, especially in the heat of the moment. So we're left with a couple of questions: whose interpretation is right? Whose interpretation "wins"? Clearly, in the real world, some interpretations matter more than others.

The officer, upon seeing a young white female behind the wheel of a car, might have a completely different interpretive reaction than if seeing, say, a young black man or Pakistani woman, particularly if this hypothetical situation is taking place in Indiana. Why? How does context/background play a role in interpretation? How do we account for these interpretive differences?

On the one hand, we cannot simply accept the author's interpretation or version of events. But on the other hand, we can't simply ignore the author either. The idea that all texts have authors is, as Nealon and Giroux say, a "soothing conclusion" in that it seems to offer us an authority—perhaps even a final authority—on what something means.

But what other factors influence meaning and interpretation? Think back to the hypothetical situation I sketched above regarding the police officer: besides the two human actors (you and the cop) what other forces are at work in this situation? What other factors come into play to influence interpretation and meaning?

Some interpretations—many interpretations, in fact—are just plain wrong. Was George Zimmerman wrong about Trayvon Martin? If I tried to argue that the *Harry Potter* series was a great book on the federal income tax code, wouldn't I be wrong? What are your thoughts on these questions?

I work to establish a "feedback loop" with students in my courses so that we are constantly developing a rapport both in class and through Canvas. Sometimes I send out "podcast" audio announcements and mini-lessons through Canvas, as well, which is as useful a pedagogical strategy as it is a time-management tool. If I ever run out of time in class, I know that I can cover a key concept or lesson through these audio announcements; if I do too much writing in one sitting, I can always give students feedback on papers and projects via the same audio capabilities. As Director of Writing, I have made it my business to learn the ins-and-outs of Canvas as early and as thoroughly as possible so that I can teach it to adjuncts and use it in my own courses (see also Service Narrative).

By way of a quick segue into the fall of 2015 and my third attempt at teaching **ENG-L 202: Literary Interpretation**, I would offer another potential explanation for the perceived lack of clarity when it comes to the Discussion prompts. One student's remark isolates what I think is the lynchpin "problem" some students seem to have with the grading rubric for Discussions: "The grading system was fair, but [I] never got clear explanations on what was needed for achieving above 90's. Though a lot of feedback was given." As I explain to students on the aforementioned "Guidelines for Discussions" handout:

1. **Grading—I will grade your "official" or primary posts in accordance with these rules. In total, you'll be responsible for around 8 to 10 primary message board posts. I will evaluate each one on a 10-point scale:**

   - If you complete them *adequately*, you will receive 8s.
   - If you go above and beyond the basic requirements of the assignments, you will receive 9s.
   - Very good—completed with a great deal of effort and thought—posts will receive 10s.

   A message board post will receive a 7 or below if it
   - Is too short.
   - Shows little thought or has clearly been "mailed-in."
   - Is excessively sloppy in terms of grammar, spelling, and mechanics, especially to the point that it is difficult to understand.
   - Engages in personal attacks or other breaches of common online etiquette.
   - ***Is late***.

I would also like to note that the quantitative evaluations for ENG-L 202 in both summer and fall of 2015 were stellar: nearly all of the mean scores are 4.5+ in both sections. The qualitative comments from students in the Fall 2015 ranged from generally positive to stellar, with several students commenting on how much they were challenged by the course and yet how enjoyable and useful they found it to be. Here are a few examples: "I learned how to (really) read and analyze a text. I also learned how to question things and turn things into theory. Love this course!" Or "Dr. Cook has really expanded my thinking, and I am grateful for that." And finally, "The most valuable thing I learned in this course was the ability to analyze things more deeply than I could have imagined." I am not trained as a literature scholar, though my MA is in Literature, and so I am particularly fond of my success in teaching ENG-L 202. I have enjoyed my "turn" teaching it, and I look forward to teaching the course again soon.

One other exciting development in the fall of 2015 was that I had the opportunity to develop and teach another section of **ENG-W 131: Reading, Writing, Inquiry I** in another FLC. Moreover, I was able to teach it with my colleague, Dr. Chris Darr, Associate Professor of Communication Arts. After several long conversations about how writing and speech are taught in first-year courses like English Composition and Public Speaking, we both decided that we could do a better job of teaching rhetoric—the common "thread" that binds writing and speech (and many other things) together—than can be found in many textbooks. So we set out to create a combined FLC that we eventually titled "How to Win Arguments and Persuade People: An Introduction to Rhetoric, Speech, and Writing."

I must confess that as much as I truly enjoy teaching ENG-W 131 and ENG-W 132, one of the established "hazards" of such a course is that first-year students can be famously unpredictable when it comes to course evaluations. Even when I think that a section of ENG-W 131 has gone well, and they usually do, I always hold my breath a bit until I receive my evaluations. These

evaluations were genuinely surprising to me in part because they were so overwhelmingly positive; this is indeed rare for ENG-W 131 on our campus. Aside from the usual detritus one sees on every evaluation ("too many papers," "graded me too hard," "essays stressed me out," etc.), there were few negative comments and no clear negative "theme" to the qualitative remarks. Several students commented on how they liked the thematic consistency of the readings and the conceptual sequencing of the writing assignments (from summary to analysis to comparison, etc.), as in this remark: "I like the consistent subject matter we discussed throughout this course. Each assignment was connected to the last. I think Dr. Cook approaches teaching in a matter of fact, but understandable manner, while making it fun and interesting." Or this comment: "What I liked most about the course and the instructor was the amount of freedom we had for assignments." One student even commented on how the skills s/he learned in this class would transfer to other courses: "It helped me learn how to write papers for other classes."

My quantitative scores for this section were strong overall with only a few at or right below a 4.0 on the scale ("Agree"). I continue to work hard to improve my approach to teaching our first-year students, many of whom are at-risk students, and FYW has been shown to be an effective way to retain students when executed properly.

Last but certainly not least, the fall of 2015 marked the first time in my career that I had taught the same course four times (except for first-year writing, of course). I have come to not only enjoy teaching **ENG-W 365: Technical Editing**, but I think it has become one of my favorite courses to teach. Students take the course for a variety of reasons: some because they need it for their writing minor or some other requirement, some because they have a genuine curiosity about the material. But by the end of the semester, it never fails that this class—whether 12 students or 23—comes together and really "bonds" over the material.

I think part of this might be due to the final project assignment, which is a large-scale editing project intended to simulate the same kinds of challenges presented by "real world" editing situations. Aside from the predictable interpersonal drama and communication snafus that inevitably arise, students learn quickly (with my guidance) how to work together on an editing team, how to divide the labor, how to achieve consistency across documents and versions, and so forth. These sorts of skills are inherent to technical editing, of course, but they are also an organic part of any contemporary US workplace, and I repeatedly stress this "dual-function" of the final projects to the students. And, as the comments below show, I think that students appreciate the practical, "hands on" nature of the course as much as they do the review of key grammatical concepts and learning about the principles of editing and their potential futures as editors and writers.

The quantitative scores for this course were quite high (the mean scores are above 4.25 or 4.5 in each category), so I won't rehearse them here. However, I would like to point to a couple of interesting trends in my qualitative scores that I think merit mention. First, my favorite comment from this course, and one that I have, frankly, become accustomed to hearing from students in this class, appeared on the evaluation in response to the question, "What is the

most valuable thing you learned in this course: "I learned that I want to be an editor. I had kind of known that already, but this class kind of solidified my decision." Another student remarked that s/he learned how "not to over-edit things, which will help when I get a book editing job." Another student opined that s/he "liked the style of this course. It was a lot of hands-on learning and discussion [,] which was very beneficial. Dr. Cook is also really easy to talk to if you don't understand something."

The only negative remarks centered on the amount of homework (it's an editing class: there will be a lot of practice at home) and the midterm exam, which I have come to think of as something of a "rite of passage" for this course. It is an exceedingly difficult exam that tests students' knowledge of grammatical, syntactical, and mechanical rules in standard edited American English and their ability to effectively copyedit complex, technical documents. However, I think the exam is more than fair, and students have so many other opportunities to make up extra points, that it functions really as a kind of "high bar" that I challenge students each fall to step over. We do also spend between 4 and 6 weeks on grammar, syntax, and mechanics, depending on the make-up of the class and their organic editing abilities, and students always comment about how much they appreciate this detailed review.

Here is the most detailed "complaint" regarding the difficulty of the midterm exam:

> The class was considerably less painful than I thought it would be. My only major problem was the difficulty of the editing test. I don't think a test should be so hard that you have to be a grad student to get an A. That being said, Dr. Cook did a wonderful job making sure everyone was at least on the same page throughout the whole semester. I would not hesitate to take other classes with him in the future.

I remarked the first time I taught this course, back in the fall of 2012, that I thought the course was an interesting one for English majors because it throws them for a bit of a loop. In a course like Technical Editing, there are "right" and "wrong" answers, and in many cases, you either know the material (the grammatical rules, mechanics, and so forth) or you don't. I do think that this can be a "wake up" for some of our students, but I have worked in a bit of a "spiel" regarding the midterm that both prepares students for the challenge—and forces them to study harder, which is good—and reassures them that they will do fine if they work hard and practice. Students don't always get the grades they want or expect, in other words, but they sure do learn a lot about the English language, how it works, and how to use it effectively in various situations. I look forward to teaching ENG-W 365: Technical Editing at IU Kokomo for many fall semesters to come.

2016

In 2016, I developed and taught three capstone/Senior Seminar courses: NMAT-G 411: New Media Theory, ENG-L 495: Senior Seminar for English, and SPCH-S 400: Senior Seminar for Communication Arts (these latter two capstone courses were combined in one large course).

The first of these capstone courses, **NMAT-G 411: New Media Theory**, really "began" in 2015, when I was approached by my faculty colleagues in our New Media program to teach the senior-level capstone course in new media theory based on my previous teaching experience in my well-received Honors Colloquium on digital culture and my own research interests. As I've already described above, I developed an effective capstone seminar informed by my own background in critical theory and cultural studies, which formed the conceptual bridge that allowed me to teach this class.

Digital technologies have become enmeshed into our everyday lives to such a degree that one can be forgiven for thinking, "What more can we possibly say about them?" So I figured this sense of "digital exhaustion" might have a special resonance with New Media students in a senior-level capstone course. However, I also wanted to give these soon-to-be-graduates some flexibility in terms of choosing and developing their assignments and projects for the course. To that end, I implemented a Coursework Menu from which students would choose any combination of assignments and projects totaling 50% of the final course grade. Students made their choices, provided a rationale for the projects they chose, and then submitted a Coursework Agreement. Because this was a Capstone/Senior Seminar course, I also wanted students to spend considerable time reflecting on the skills they had learned in their degree program, so I structured the seminar around the various theories and concepts that circulate throughout new media studies and critical theory.

Finally, I took quite seriously the "theory" part of this course. I wanted to make sure that students could do more than merely *describe* new media phenomena; I also wanted my seniors to be able to take these phenomena apart and understand the constitutive concepts that make them "work." Asking students to effectively map out 50% of their grade via the Coursework Menu—which could include anything from blogging and responding to discussion questions to making a podcast—encouraged them to map out their own itinerary through such challenging sites as digital identity, social media, privacy and surveillance in the information age, and the economic foundations of digital culture.

In the Spring of 2016, I also developed and taught my first section of **ENG-W 215: Introduction to Rhetoric**. Since its "invention" in the fifth century BCE, *rhetoric*—the study and practice of persuasion through language, signs, and symbols—has been a powerful force in public affairs, education, politics, and in the practice of civic life, even though today rhetoric is rarely studied outside of English and communication arts. This has always struck me as odd, since the impact that rhetoric and the study of persuasive language has had on Western societies really cannot be overstated. In fact, until around the middle of the nineteenth century, rhetoric dominated formal education in Europe and the United States. My overall teaching objective when developing and teaching ENG-W 215 was to show (and yes, *persuade*) my undergraduates that to study the history of rhetoric is to explore the evolution of ideas, politics, and—in short— *ways of being together* in the world as they have developed since the time of the ancient Greeks.

As a writing teacher, whether I'm teaching the history of rhetoric or a film class on zombies (more on this below), my courses are always grounded in the Writing in the Disciplines (WID) dictum that to write about a topic is to explore that topic. In WID and in Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) circles, this is called "writing to learn," and it is a foundational tenet of contemporary composition studies. Put plainly, "writing to learn" is the notion that students learn, retain, and use information best when they are consistently engaged in the recursive process of writing about, reflecting on, and discussing with others the materials and concepts they are learning. I believe this is especially true when students encounter challenging, difficult, and even frustratingly-opaque readings, such as the classical works of Plato, Aristotle, and others.

For this reason, I consciously designed this content-heavy 200-level survey of the rhetorical tradition as reading-intensive, with a special focus on active or engaged reading. Active reading calls attention to students' own reading processes, prompting them to slow down and reflect on what they read, sometimes spending several minutes working through a single passage or even sentence. I supply handouts, guidelines, and we practice active reading in class. The difficult language of the primary texts of classical and modern rhetorical theory can be alienating in their difficulty, and thus require a kind of attentive, reflective reading process to which most of today's students are simply not accustomed.

I also wanted students in this class to understand from the outset just how relevant a study of rhetoric and rhetorical history can be for their present circumstances, so we spent a great deal of time in class discussions and in writing projects exploring the interdisciplinary nature of rhetoric and persuasion. Rhetoric, as the ancient Greeks well knew, is probably *the* "interdisciplinary" discipline. No other single discipline encompasses so many disparate fields of knowledge or is as central to human understanding as is the study of the persuasive uses of language.

Finally, I wanted to make sure that students were learning how to develop as *rhetoricians* (i.e., persuasive and effective speakers and writers), so in addition to evaluating students' mastery of the course content (i.e., the major figures and concepts in the history of rhetoric and rhetorical thought), my short writing assignments (or "SWAs") were designed to allow students to form connections among and between various theories of language, politics, culture, power, social identities, and civic action.

Earlier in this narrative I described my successful experience teaching ENG-L 295: American Film Culture for the first time in Spring 2013 on the theme of "the outsider"/Other in American film history. The course theme was so successful, in fact, that I went on to revise it for Fall 2016 with a slightly more focused lens: the figure of the zombie in American film culture. My primary goal in both sections was to marry a traditional film survey class with a cultural studies approach. I can safely say that my students—who were a diverse group of learners—thoroughly enjoyed this course. The second course explored the three phases of the zombie figure in American film culture by placing the zombie within its various historical contexts. First, we explored the zombie in classical-era Hollywood horror films, inspired by the Haitian voodoo zombie, such as

White Zombie (1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943). Second, we examined how American filmmaker George A. Romero in his seminal *Dead* trilogy forever redefined "zombiedom" and gave zombies a distinctly political and social twist. Finally, we examined modern zombie films and their often dystopic, sometimes overtly-political positioning in contemporary cinema. Some students had never put together a teaching project or presentation such as the one they encountered in this course, and I credit that project with some of the very positive comments I received.

Also in 2016, I taught the combined course **ENG-L 495 & SPCH-S 400: Senior Seminar for English and Communication Arts** majors. The overall pedagogical goal of this admittedly rather ambitious Senior capstone course was to show students how academic disciplines and the knowledges, practices, and identities they produce are not "natural" or accidental, but constructed via complex processes of specialization, professionalization, socialization, and what scholars call "boundary work." One of my primary research interests dating back to my grad school days has to do with the way modern academic disciplines work to produce knowledge via complex processes of boundary-setting and differentiation—a series of moves and techniques closely related to the circulation of disciplinary power, as has been discussed extensively in the work of Michel Foucault, Stephen Mailloux, Thomas Gieryn, David Russell, and others.

Traditionally, Senior Seminar courses for English and Communication Arts majors at IU Kokomo have been combined into a single section. This is done for several practical reasons: primarily to ensure that the course has enough students to "make" (i.e., meet enrollment requirements) and to save faculty labor and time, but also because English and Communication Arts faculty work closely in the same school and tend to collaborate on both pedagogical and scholarly projects. When I was asked to teach this course in Fall 2016, I was excited that I would have the opportunity to teach both sets of students, even though this meant attempting the (arguably) impossible: creating a seminar-like environment for some 30+ students. Still, I was encouraged in that I would be able to use both my research background and my training in rhetoric and composition studies to explore with students how their separate disciplines came to be separate disciplines in the first place. Given my liminal status as a "rhet-comp person"—a status that puts me between on the boundary between literary studies/English and Speech Communication—I thought, as did my Chair and others, that I would be a good candidate to teach such a class.

My hope was that by discussing, reflecting on, and writing about their past two or three years of coursework in their respective majors, these students would come to see the constructed, historically-contingent nature of academic disciplines and thus be better able to engage complex problems and issues after graduation from multidisciplinary perspectives. The projects that students developed in this class were diverse and many were excellent. Some of the most effusively positive comments I received from students in 2016 were from this particular course (see below for full qualitative data).

However, the course also received some significant criticism—as did I. Many students were put off by the divided nature of the course and some felt that there was tension between English and Communication Arts majors. One of the first assignments I had students complete asked them to bring in copies of their unofficial transcripts or simply a list of all of the courses they had taken in their majors thus far. I then asked them to reflect on the skills and capacities (e.g., critical thinking, analysis, summary, public speaking, reading skills, etc.) that each course developed and write them down; the idea was that when we met to discuss our first set of readings, we could also talk about how the institutional and even curricular boundaries that exist between English and Communication Arts courses appear much more permeable when one considers the many similarities at the "root" of our disciplines. I developed a worksheet and set up a way to share these reflections anonymously in Canvas. I had high hopes that this would get the semester off to a good start, begin to build community between the students, and make a statement about the constructed—although no less "real"—boundaries between academic disciplines.

Two things happened. First, a destructive tornado touched down just blocks away from IU Kokomo at the same time that the semester was getting started and during that crucial early-semester period of "getting to know" each other and building trust. Chaos ensued in the days and even weeks that followed as several of my students lost their homes and the campus community in general worked hard to recover from the destruction.

Second, when we did re-start the semester a few days later, the dynamic that developed between students was tense and non-productive. Rather than exploring the "differences that unite us," to put it in a somewhat corny way, some students apparently misread this exercise as an attempt to vaunt English over Communication Arts. (One irony here is that at the time we were reading Plato's *Phaedrus*, a text that is about love and learning—all the more ironic is that this dialogue is probably assigned in far more Speech Communication theory and history courses across the US than in the typical 400-level English class. But I digress.)

There were two other significant structural problems with the course—both of which were my fault entirely. First, as many of the written comments attest, I tried to cram too much dense reading and too many time-consuming online discussions into a course in which students also had to complete a large-scale project with a faculty mentor. Students seemed to respond positively to the in-class discussions, even students who were otherwise quite critical of the course, so I should have made more time for in-class discussions while lessening the readings and homework. I think I was overly enthusiastic—and therefore overly ambitious—about how much we could get done, and I vastly underestimated the impact that 30+ students would have on the seminar atmosphere I was trying to develop.

One of the fundamental assumptions of a seminar course, whether at the undergraduate or graduate level, is that the students in the class will have had similar curricular experiences and that they will be at roughly the same level in terms of their coursework and skills. Because this class was so large—and because it was made up of two sets of students from different programs—my insistence on making this a true seminar (rather than, say, a large

workshop/lecture course) ultimately led to some of the semester-long problems that plagued the course. In short, I was trying to cram too much into one semester and develop a seminar vibe among a lecture-sized group of students. In retrospect, I'm not quite sure what I was thinking. But as usual, the students' remarks were quite insightful, as in this particularly thoughtful critical response:

> The course was not what I expected. That is not necessarily a bad thing, but the students' bad reaction to the setup of the course was probably the worst part. For a while, the atmosphere was very stressful both for students and the professor. I simply think more thought should have been put into the course structure, and more consideration should have been taken for others on all parts. There was a lot of disrespect from disgruntled students, and obvious frustration from disgruntled prof. More organization and less class assignments and more focus on projects and after-college life.

And this student is correct. While I do think the atmosphere improved over the course of the semester, especially by the final third of the term when students were finishing up and sharing their Senior Seminar projects (many of which were stellar, by the way), the vibe that developed in the class from those first few weeks proved to be counter-productive in the long run.

I am currently teaching this course again in Fall 2017, but this time, I am only teaching English majors. Based on my experience teaching this course in Fall 2016, we decided as a department that attempting to "split" a single Senior Seminar course between both English and Communication Arts—while there are some obvious areas of conceptual and theoretical overlap—resulted in a much larger class than is typically warranted in a "seminar"-type setup. This new arrangement will also enable me to focus more energy and class time on the unique professionalization issues that affect English majors (applying for graduate school, developing a strong writing sample and resume/CV, and submitting a book review to a journal for potential publication). Finally, the course will include a weekend Writers' Retreat to IU's Bradford Woods near Bloomington, Indiana in November 2017.

On the whole, my course evaluations continue to be good to strongly positive—some are stellar (see Supplemental Files for full course evaluation information). Dr. Joe Keener, Associate Professor of English and Chair of the English and Language Studies Department had the following to say about my teaching in 2016:

> What is especially impressive about your teaching is not only the variety but how many other disciplines on campus benefitted from your expertise. This kind of teaching is not just referring to the general education courses you teach that serves all students, but upper-level, more specific coursework. For example, you developed a new Senior Seminar course that not only provides top-notch instruction for English students but Communication students as well. NMAT was also fortunate to have you design a 400 level capstone course for their discipline.

Having said that, English has also profited from your teaching experiences. You designed a brand-new writing course, Introduction to Rhetoric, and had major course revisions for your L295 film class, changing the focus and curriculum. All of your courses for 2016 were thoughtfully refined in some kind of way. An Honors section of one class, chairing a MALS thesis committee, serving on another thesis committee, offering an Honors section of one of your classes, and holding the workshop/tutorial for 15 adjunct instructors in Composition add to your teaching portfolio.

The campus at large has also benefitted from your teaching efforts and expertise. Your involvement with the Bridge Program has, no doubt, resulted in student success. It was necessary to revise your instruction and curriculum, you offered these students a high-impact practice by taking them to two different museums in Indianapolis, and local press coverage for your efforts.

The syllabi and the assignments reveal quality course construction, and the student evaluations suggests that implementation was also effective. While there were some difficulties in Senior Seminar, it is clear that these were by-products of trying to produce a seminar that serves both English and Communications students. The course evaluations and student comments in total reveal a pattern of positive responses to your classes and instruction. Your peer observations of two faculty outside of your area shows a commitment to instruction on the IU Kokomo campus.

2017 (Spring semester only)

In Spring 2017, I taught two courses, one of which was brand-new to IU Kokomo: **ENG-G 301: History of the English Language**. This course examines the history of the English language from Old English to the present day, with a particular focus on its recent changes—many would say "mutations"—in the digital age. Course content covers the macro-history of the English language and the Indo-European family of languages, various local cultural histories of English, dialectical variation, and some of the basic concepts of structural linguistics (phonemes, morphemes, grammar, and syntax).

Originally, when I was first asked to teach this course, it was because of student need: a student in another degree program was getting ready to graduate and s/he needed a course in linguistics to complete the program's degree requirements. I was happy to oblige, particularly since researching and developing this course gave me the opportunity to reach back to the early days of my graduate training. Then, as a young MA student, I briefly thought that I would perhaps pursue a career in sociolinguistics. Studying under Dr. Tom Nunnally, an emeritus professor of linguistics and scholar of Southern speech at Auburn University, I took several seminars in both the history of the English language and linguistic diversity in the Southeastern

US; I even presented a research paper at SECOL at the University of Alabama—the first conference presentation of my career (in 2004).

So, I was excited to teach and develop this course, though I knew it would need to perform several crucial pedagogical functions: students would likely have never taken a course in linguistics or language history prior to this one, even among the English majors, so I decided to spend the first several weeks of the semester acclimating students to the basic tools and concepts of language study. I also wanted to give students an overall framework for the course that would make sense to virtually any second- or third-year college student; I chose to arrange the bulk of the rest of the term as a more or less strict chronology of the history of the English language, from Old English to the present day. Students also developed teaching demonstrations in pairs that allowed them to explore some specific concept in linguistics or in the history of English.

Finally, it was important to me that students have the tools and the space to reflect on how language and power are inextricably connected in practical ways in society, especially as it relates to the ongoing war(s) over Standard American English (SAE) and various "English-only" movements in US culture. To this end, using a variety of multi-modal texts and readings (including podcasts, films, and the late David Foster Wallace's essay on language, power, and dictionary-making), we examined linguistic variation in contemporary English speech patterns via the documentary film *Do I Sound Gay?* (Dir. Thorpe, 2014), Rosina Lippi-Green's analysis of linguistic prejudice in animated Disney feature films, and an historical overview of the so-called "Ebonics" debates from the 1990s over students' rights to use African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the classroom.

Finally, given current events and student interest, the second course I developed for Spring 2017 was a new themed section of **ENG-W 132: Elementary Composition II** that tackled the epidemic of so-called "fake news" and the critical importance of information literacy in the digital age. This version of the course led students through an exploration of how to spot and analyze "fake news." Students gained valuable experience in information literacy by analyzing and writing about the infamous #PizzaGate scandal, concepts such as "digital polarization" and "filter bubbles," and even important epistemological questions such as "How do we know what we know?" and "Which sources of information can be trusted in the digital age?" The student evaluations in this course were overwhelmingly positive, which (again) can be challenging in first-year writing courses.

Note on Supporting Documents

While this document is by no means a comprehensive record of my teaching documents, as this could easily entail a thousand or more uploaded files, I keep excellent digital and print archives for all of the courses I teach. Furthermore, my teaching documents, course reflections/narratives, and course evaluations for all of my courses are available to anyone at my professional website (paulgcook.org) and on my Academia.edu page (XXX). If anyone would like to see anything related to my teaching, whether teacher, administrator, colleague, student, parent, or community member, they have but to ask.