

# Teaching Experience at The University of California, Irvine

~ Andrew Warren ~

UCI is perhaps unique among research institutions in the freedom it allows its doctoral students to design their own courses. More often than not we choose the texts, create the writing assignments and, most importantly, define and implement our own pedagogical approach. To lend some specificity to my range of teaching, I invite you to consult my course syllabi and essay prompts at my teaching website: <http://www.populous-solitudes.com/teaching.html>. Please also find attached a summary of my teaching evaluations, and a more extended description of one of my sample freshman writing seminars.

## *A. Courses I Have Designed.*

Advanced Expository Writing (W139): The course completes UCI's core writing sequence, and is typically taken by juniors and seniors from a range of majors. Advanced Writing aims not only to solidify their writing in a number of styles, but also introduces them to a number of academic or popular discourses, in my case philosophy, fiction and pop-science writing. Over several years I was able to teach and model texts as wildly divergent as Plato's *Parmenides*, the collected poems of Emily Dickinson, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* and *Philosophical Fragments*, and even David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*. These texts, in turn, become both subjects and models for the students' own writing, which for me included a close reading, an application of a theoretical or critical text to a piece of literature, and a piece of non-academic "popular" prose modeled on a particular genre. Please see my teaching website for a concrete example of how the course works.

The Poetic Imagination (E28A): This is the UCI English major's introduction to the genre of poetry. My particular courses dealt with the ways in which poets respond to other poetry—poetry written in the past, as well as poetry of their contemporaries. That is, we looked at how, in the words of Harold Bloom, poets "clear imaginative space for themselves." A smaller motif was the issue of translation, for which we read scores of translations of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*. Please see my teaching website for a more replete description.

Humanities Out There (H.O.T.): Last year I was nominated to teach 11<sup>th</sup> grade English for UCI's nationally recognized Humanities Out There Program (H.O.T.), which brings undergraduate tutors into the "at risk" Santa Ana Unified School District. It was my job to work with the Santa Ana teacher to design lesson plans for my undergraduates to teach to the high school students in small groups. Last spring I delivered a talk on my work in H.O.T. entitled "Pedagogy, Bilingualism, Empowerment: Translating Roberto Bolaño's *Los Perros Románticos* at Santa Ana High School" at the California Association of Freirean Educators Conference at UCLA. In the spring I was also employed by H.O.T. to redesign their website, coordinate testing and evaluation, and write corporate grant applications on the program's behalf. On account of my experience with H.O.T., together with my time working as a weekly AP English tutor in *McSweeney's* 826LA project in East Los Angeles, I would be very interested in one day creating a program like H.O.T.

The Rhetoric of Consciousness (W39B): I co-designed this version of the standard freshman writing course with my friend and colleague, Aaron Winter. The tagline ran: "Consciousness. What is it,

who has it, and how much is it selling for on eBay?" Please see my teaching website for a more extended description.

Comic and Tragic Vision (E28B): This course is part of the same introductory sequence as The Poetic Imagination, but focusing upon drama. My particular class focused specifically upon colonial and postcolonial drama. Texts included Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Aimé Césaire's *A Tempest*, Lady Gregory's and WB Yeats' *Cathleen ni Houlihan*, Joyce's *Exiles*, Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World*, Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, and the stage adaptation of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*.

### *B. Courses Taught from a Model Syllabus:*

The Young Romantics (E102C): In the winter of 2005 I was a teaching assistant for Professor Hugh Roberts' survey course on Byron, Shelley, Keats and de Quincey. I held office hours, graded papers, helped design exams and, most importantly, lectured extensively on de Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* to a crowd of about ninety students.

Intensive Writing (W37): Writing 37 is an accelerated writing course that allows students to accomplish the work of two lower-division writing courses in one quarter rather than two. Because I had taught creative writing in the past, my first teaching assignment at UCI was in this intensive writing seminar where my particular job was to facilitate small writing workshops of 12 to 15 students in coordination with a more experienced instructor. Because of the intensive nature of the course, I met with each student individually for each paper, often more than once, a practice I carried over into all of my subsequent courses.

Argument and Research (W39C): W39C is an introduction to argument and research designed to help students prepare for university writing, and to engage responsibly and effectively in democratic debate and policy-making. In my particular sections we read Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*.

### *C. Teaching Experience Outside of UCI*

Timothy McSweeney's 826LA Non-Profit Tutoring: Dave Eggers' wonderful writing project gave me the opportunity to work as an AP English tutor at Oscar de la Hoya Animo Charter School. Each week I worked with a small group of four high school seniors from a severely underprivileged East Los Angeles neighborhood to help them remain competitive with more affluent students on the AP test. The experience, which meshed nicely with my collaborative work in the Santa Ana Unified School District, reinforced my sincere belief that universities must do everything within their powers to reach out to students within their communities.

Exploration Summer Program, Wellesley College: In the summer of 2002 I designed syllabi for and taught creative writing and poetry to ninth and tenth graders at a highly competitive summer institute.

# Summary of Teaching Evaluations

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Date	Course	Overall Evaluation	Course Average
Summer '08	Advanced Expository Writing	8.77 / 9	NA
Winter '08	Humanities Out There	Does not apply	Does not apply
Fall '07	Humanities Out There	Does not apply	Does not apply
Summer '07	Advanced Expository Writing	7.55 / 9	NA
Summer '06	Advanced Expository Writing	8.57 / 9	NA
Spring '06	The Rhetoric of Consciousness	6.4 / 7	5.9 / 7
Winter '06	Advanced Expository Writing	6.7 / 7	6.3 / 7
Fall '05	Advanced Expository Writing	6.6 / 7	6.3 / 7
Summer '05	E28A: Poetic Imagination	NA	NA
Spring '05	E28B: Comedy and Tragedy	5.8 / 7	5.7 / 7
Winter '05	TA: The Young Romantics	Does not apply	Does not apply
Fall '04	E28A: Poetic Imagination	6.1 / 7	5.8 / 7
Spring '04	Argument and Research	5.9 / 7	5.8 / 7
Winter '04	Argument and Research	6.5 / 7	5.8 / 7
Fall '03	Intensive Writing	6.8 / 7	6.1 / 7

\*UCI's Summer Session misplaced my evaluations, though this was arguably my most successful course.

## Assorted Student Comments

“Andrew Warren is very enthused to be teaching this class. I can tell that he spent a lot of time and thought in choosing the texts for this class, and the lectures (discussions) for each. He tells us, as writers, to choose a topic we are interested in and we can see him following his own methodology as an instructor.”

“[Andrew's] mandatory conferences are a MUST! They're very helpful for writing/literature courses especially.”

“He would provide the class with an overview (outline) of each day's lecture before starting; this helped to structure the course contents more effectively. He gave specific feedback on our papers, returned them on time, and would always seem available in case we had questions. Very good relationship with his students.”

“He is very approachable and always seems willing to help. You can tell that he really cares about his students.”

“Best professor [*sic*] at UCI.”