

**USCDornsife**  
**Department of**  
**English**

English 593 (32793): Practicum in Teaching English and Narrative Studies

2 units/Fall 2024/Wednesday 5-6:20/Taper Hall 109 & online (note: I will always have the Zoom open; during Sept and Oct we will be hybrid, so feel free to come to the room if you are on campus; after October, we will be on Zoom only)

Professor Chris Freeman/cefreema@usc.edu  
Office: Taper Hall 410, 10-1130 M/W & by appt.

**“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility.” – bell hooks**

**“School, by definition, conditions us to believe that there are others who know better than we do; it encourages and often forces us to give up our own judgment in favor of the judgment of those in authority. School, by its very existence, militates against the very thing that education is for – the development of the individual.” – Jane Tompkins, *A Life in School***

### **Course Description**

Participants are expected to have prior training in pedagogy and teaching methods through the USC Writing Program or Thematic Option. This course builds on that training and on actual teaching experience to work at a more advanced level. The course will work in coordination with

- English 297 “Introduction to the Genre of Nonfiction”
- English 298 “Introduction to the Genre of Fiction”
- English 299 “Introduction to the Genre of Poetry”
- English 105 “Creative Writing for Non-Majors”

and with some other lecture courses which use graduate teaching assistants. Participants will attend and observe one of the above classes two to three during the semester. You should also observe other departmental courses. These observations will be an important part of our discussions in seminar and will supplement our conversation and analysis of the written material with which we will be working. By the end of the semester, participants will

- 1) be comfortable with techniques for relating successfully to undergraduate students;
- 2) have learned principles of lesson plan design and execution;
- 3) be familiar with principles of assignment design and grading techniques;
- 4) develop a repertoire of techniques for leading and advancing classroom discussion; and
- 5) formulate and adopt a strategy for further development as a teacher/scholar and have begun to assemble a portfolio of teaching and related professional materials.

In their course work and research, graduate students are prepared intellectually for the profession, but the transition from the PhD into the professoriate is a critical time in the professional development process. Students enter graduate school in a cohort, but the work often sends the cohort in different directions. This course not only reunites some of the cohort near the end of the PhD, but also fosters collaboration integrating the roles of scholar and teacher, addressing many of the challenges of shifting responsibilities in the move from graduate student to professor. This course addresses these issues directly and in consultation with peers and other professional mentors.

Successful, effective teaching goes well beyond our own disciplinary knowledge. It is also about connecting with our students, about connecting our students to the material, and about connecting the material to our world. The same thing holds true for our individual relationship to “the profession”: we know that good teaching and active scholarly work will be expected of us as we move forward in our careers, but what else does a successful academic career entail? Different types of positions and opportunities require different approaches. These are some of the topics this seminar’s participants will explore. This course will add significant dimensions to graduate student training at the critical time near degree completion.

### **Learning Goals**

- \* Developing various course plans, syllabi, and assignments
- \* Honing teaching styles and approaches for different types of material, different forms and genres, different levels of courses, and different size groups
- \* Collaborating to troubleshoot issues in the classroom and beyond it; to create assignments and activities; to evaluate and grade work effectively and fairly
- \* Sharing success stories and challenges, and keeping a written record of our reading, teaching, observation, and discussion work throughout the semester
- \* Understanding your role in a larger department; in a college/university; within the larger profession
- \* Creating resources and sharing options and awareness of opportunities beyond the classroom, in administration or outside of the academy
- \* Supporting collegial development and personal and professional growth

### **Readings and Texts**

*The Slow Professor: Changing the Culture of Speed in the Academy*, Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber (University of Toronto Press, 2016; Kindle edition recommended; also available as audio book)

Articles from *The New Yorker*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, etc. on Brightspace

### **Grading (Credit/No Credit)**

50% Reflective portfolio (midterm and end of term evaluation)

40% Classroom observations and reports/updates

10% Participation and engagement in seminar discussion (note: missing more than two seminar meetings will likely result in NO CREDIT)

### **Engagement**

Participants will attend sessions and actively engage with readings and discussions; will sit in on their peers' and colleagues' courses and share brief responses; facilitate discussions of readings; draft a statement of teaching philosophy; and create a course syllabus and attendant assignments. Written work will be evaluated in each participant's portfolio at midterm and at the end of the semester (6-8 pages by the end of the term). The portfolio should be an ongoing document starting in week one, and include reading notes, discussion notes, teaching reflection, and comments on classroom observations.

### **Weekly Schedule** (*subject to change as schedules necessitate*)

**Meeting One (9/11, hybrid):** discuss syllabus, course/semester goals; current teaching assignments; guest: Quade French, USC Dornsife, Associate Dean of Academic Culture & Well Being

**Meeting Two (9/25, hybrid):** update on teaching so far; guest: Gregg Hecimovich, Furman University & Harvard; discuss plans for classroom observations; begin to approach colleagues for visits

**Meeting Three (10/9, hybrid):** Intro and chapter one of *Slow Professor*; guest: Brandi Wells, Assistant Professor, CSU-Fullerton and recent USC CW PhD

**Meeting Four:** Between late September and late October, I will observe each of you teaching (pre-arranged and if possible) and will have one-on-one follow-up conversations

**Meeting Five (10/23, hybrid):** chapters 1 and 2 of *Slow Professor*; guest: Piotr Florczyk (USC CW PhD; University of Washington, Seattle); report on classroom visits and observations

**Meeting Six (11/13, Zoom only):** *Slow Professor*, chapter three (book will be continued in spring 2025); reports on teaching and on observations; guest: Trisha Tucker, USC Dornsife, director of Thematic Option

**Meeting Seven, if needed, on 12/4, or one-on-one sessions before the end of the semester.**

## **Definition of Excellence in Teaching** **USC Department of English**

All writing is creative, and all civic engagement requires a sophisticated understanding of discourse and interpretation. The USC Department of English is committed to the power of the story, the word, and the image. We analyze and organize complex ideas, evaluate qualitative information, anticipate how real audiences respond to language, and study behaviors of complex characters leading uncertain lives with competing values. We develop critical abilities for a successful life, but our stories tell us why life is worth living.

Excellence in teaching is an active engagement with these commitments, perspectives, and values. A student with a major in **English** should graduate with an appreciation for (1) the relations between representation and the human soul, and (2) the relations between words and ideas. Teachers will encourage this appreciation through their knowledge and conveyance of the subject, the appropriateness of instructional materials, and the quality of their students' responses. We expect our students to:

- understand the major representations in English discourse from earliest beginnings to the current moment; all literatures exist in conversation with earlier literatures;
- organize and interpret evidence;
- feel the experiences of others, both by engaging in literatures and by their own efforts to create new literatures;
- understand how periods, cultural intentions, and literary genres differ;
- grasp the skills and theories of interpretation, and the history of our own discipline;
- see how interpretive interests shift with time and place;
- attend to linguistic details of semantics, phrasing, and structure;
- assume there are reasonable alternative understandings of a text;
- adjudicate differences through reasoned arguments that honestly engage counter-arguments.

Our students will have lives in very different arenas, but all calling for skills in discourse, empathy, civil argument, and civic engagement. We cannot and should not say what those careers will be; we train students for jobs that have not yet been invented.

English Department students with an interdisciplinary major in **Narrative Studies** should expect instruction that inculcates an appreciation for all of the above, and coordinates with definitions of teaching excellence in USC's corresponding departments.

The Department of English adheres to the modalities of instruction published in the "USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching."

Approved September 18, 2018  
Undergraduate Studies  
Committee  
Department of English

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### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

*Statement on University Academic and Support Systems*

#### **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course.

The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### **Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate-](#) and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

### **Support Systems:**

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.