Teaching Assistantship, Rhetoric and Writing Studies
Undergraduate Program 2016-2017

The Rhetoric and Writing Studies Undergraduate Program at The University of Texas at El Paso are glad you are interested in becoming a Teaching Assistant (TA). Most TAs will teach both composition courses offered to UTEP students: RWS 1301—Rhetoric and Composition I and RWS 1302—Rhetoric and Composition II. These courses are intended to help students develop their rhetorical and writing knowledge and skills within Anne Beaufort’s five knowledge domains: writing process knowledge, subject matter knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, genre knowledge, and discourse community knowledge. Therefore, we teach writing as a complex activity in which students are given guidance and often collaborate as they invent, draft, revise, and edit their writing. Drawing on the rich scholarship of Rhetoric and Writing Studies, we have designed our courses to help students address the challenges of 21st century composing. In these courses, students are empowered to determine the most effective strategies, arrangements, and media to use in different rhetorical contexts.

Teaching Assistants play a valuable role in the composition program. While working toward their 18 hours of graduate credit, TAs work as tutors in the University Writing Center for 15 hours a week, observe classes, and participate in ongoing professionalization activities. Then, unlike many disciplines where TAs assist a faculty member with grading and lab meetings, Composition TAs teach their own sections of RWS 1301 and RWS 1302. To help TAs meet the needs of teaching these important and sometimes demanding courses, we have created a two-semester program that prepares them for classroom instruction through learning about rhetoric and composition theory and pedagogy, tutoring students in the University Writing Center, and observing classroom instruction and activities. Professional development workshops are also offered.
To be qualified to teach RWS 1301 and 1302, TAs must meet the following criteria:

1. Pass English/RWS 5346: Composition Theory and Pedagogy with a B or better
2. Tutor in the University Writing Center for two semesters/15 hours per week
3. Observe experienced writing instructors in the classroom for one semester
4. Participate in the TA shadowing program where you will “shadow” an instructor for one semester.
5. Complete 18 hours of graduate work in English (B or better)

The graduate student assistantship is renewable on a semester-by-semester basis based on your performance and also funding.

To remain in good standing in the program, you must:

1. Receive favorable evaluations in the UWC or as an instructor.
2. Remain in good academic standing.
3. Follow all program, Department, and University policies for instructors/TAs.

Based on scheduling demands, and once qualified, TAs teach two courses per semester. Additional support is provided through weekly meetings, workshops, instructional feedback through observations, and mentoring. By the time TAs graduate, they will be well prepared to teach writing in various settings.

Please note that although TAs will not be in the classroom during their first year, they will receive funding.

TA Education Program
Composition Theory and Pedagogy Course

English 5346 is an intensive course offered during the fall semester. The course covers topics important to composition studies such as the scope and image of composition, invention, rhetoric, collaboration, teaching with technology and technological literacies, evaluation and assessment, tutoring, teaching grammar in context, second language writers, and so on. Connections between the theoretical knowledge of Rhetoric and Writing Studies and classroom practices are developed. The class meets for 5-7 meetings during the fall semester.
Tutoring in the University Writing Center

Following the pedagogy class, TAs will be assigned hours to tutor in the University Writing Center. Tutoring is one of the best ways to prepare for teaching as it provides TAs with individual perspectives on how students write, what their strengths and weaknesses are, and what their concerns are. It also helps TAs to create strategies for helping students improve their writing. TAs will participate in the UWC’s weekly meetings.

Classroom observations

As part of ENGL 5346, TAs observe 1301/1302 instructors to gather teaching strategies and tips. In the spring semester, TAs are assigned to shadow an experienced instructor for one course.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Theresa Donovan
Director
Rhetoric and Writing Studies-Undergraduate Program
Department of English
The University of Texas at El Paso
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915.747.5222
tldonovan@utep.edu

Please submit the TA application (page 4), unofficial transcripts, and any other documentation via email to Dr. Donovan, tldonovan@utep.edu. You can also print out the page and leave in Dr. Donovan’s box in the English Department.
APPLICATION FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (Applications accepted until all positions filled.

Name: _______________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: ___________________________ Email: __________________________

Highest Degree Awarded: ___________________________ Date: ________________

College-Level Teaching Experience? Yes/No

If “Yes,” what subject/class?

For what period of time?

Please provide:

1. Transcripts (can be unofficial).

   [Official transcripts must be turned in to the Department to be eligible to teach.]

2. Check the master’s program in which you intend to study:

   ___Rhetoric and Writing Studies

   ___Teaching English

   ___English/American Literature

   ___Creative Writing

By signing below, I certify that I have read the application and understand that the assistantship is renewed on a semester-by-semester basis based on my performance in the program, and that I must fulfil the criteria listed on page 2 to remain eligible for the assistantship.

Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________