Director
Eugene Hammond, (631) 632-7390

Program Assistant and Graduate Certificate Coordinator
Amanda McMahan (631) 632-7390

Graduate Certificate Awarded
Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies

The Program in Writing and Rhetoric, in conjunction with the English Department and the Linguistics Department, offers a course of study that leads to the Graduate Certificate in Composition Studies. The certificate program, a 15-unit graduate program accredited by the State University of New York, is designed to complement graduate work in literary studies or provide further professional development for those already teaching composition.

Composition Studies gained disciplinary status in the early 1970’s because of a growing body of research focused specifically on the learning processes involved in gaining writing literacy. It is a multi-disciplinary field, drawing its theories, research, and practices from psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, cognitive psychology, language acquisition research, genre theory, rhetorical theory, and linguistic anthropology.

Teachers who are grounded in this body of theory and research will be better equipped to diagnose students’ writing problems and implement effective teaching strategies or to begin a doctoral research project in composition.

Individuals who could benefit from this certificate program include M.A. and M.A.T. candidates in English who are preparing for a teaching career in high school or community college teaching, Ph.D. candidates in English who would like a broad-based degree program and may want to do research in Composition Studies, and high school and college teachers seeking advanced training, accreditation, or promotion.

The certificate may, but need not, be completed in four semesters and may be started in the first year of graduate study or in subsequent years. It is recommended that students begin their work in the fall semester, with one of the practicum courses, so that the theoretical work in subsequent courses is grounded in first-hand experience of working with students on their writing. Graduate students who have a teaching assistantship in the Writing and Rhetoric program would take WRT 698 or EGL 698. Masters level students and public school teachers with a BA degree or MA degree would start with WRT 592 or EGL 592, Problems in Teaching of Writing.

Admission to the Graduate Certificate Program in Composition Studies is open to any student enrolled a graduate degree-granting program at Stony Brook University or to free-standing certificate students who have completed their B.A.’s who meet the admissions criteria.

For applicants already admitted to the university, admission involves filling out a brief form. For admission to the free-standing Certificate Program in Composition Studies, students are required to have earned a bachelor's degree with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 on a 4 point scale. The following must be submitted to the Program in Writing and Rhetoric for admission to the certificate program:

A. A letter of application stating the purpose of study
B. A graduate School application form
C. An official transcript of undergraduate record culminating in a bachelor's degree and graduate degree transcript if applicable
D. Two letters of recommendation from teaching supervisors and/or professors

The forms and additional information are available through the Program in Writing and Rhetoric office:

Program in Writing and Rhetoric
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5340

Certificate Requirements
The certificate, which can be completed in two years, consists of five core required courses:

WRT 506 / EGL 506 Studies in Literary Theory
WRT 509 / EGL 509 Studies in Language and Linguistics or LIN 527 Structure of English
WRT 612 / EGL 612 Composition Theory
WRT 613 / EGL 613 Research in Composition
WRT 698 / EGL 698 Practicum in Teaching of Writing
(for Ph.D. candidates or teachers with an M.A. degree) or
WRT 592 / EGL 592 Problems in the Teaching of Writing
(for M.A. and M.A.T. candidates or teachers with a B.A. degree)

Affiliated Faculty
Broselow, Ellen, Linguistics, Ph.D., 1976, University of Massachusetts-Amherst: Phonology; phonetics; second language acquisition.
Patricia Dunn, English. D.A. The University at Albany, 1991. Composition and Rhetoric; English Education; Disability Studies.
Finer, Daniel, Linguistics, 1976, University of Massachusetts-Amherst: Syntax; semantics; language acquisition.


Kenneth Lindblom, English, Director of the English Teacher Education Program. Ph.D. Syracuse University, 1996; English Education; Theory, History, and Practice of Composition-Rhetoric; Discourse Pragmatics

Martinez-Pizarro, Joaquin, English, Ph.D., 1976, Harvard University: Literary history of the Middle Ages; classical and medieval backgrounds; comparative studies.


Executive Committee

Glockner, Marvin, Associate Dean, School of Professional Development, Stony Brook University.

Joyce, Edward, Department of English, Suffolk Community College.

Kaufman, Dorit, Chair, TESOL Certification, Department of Linguistics, Stony Brook University.

Lewis, Lorna, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Three Village School District.

Schneider, Howard, Dean, School of Journalism, Stony Brook University.

Stephen Spector, Chair, Department of English, Stony Brook University.

Rianna, Maria, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Port Jefferson.

NOTE: The course descriptions for this program can be found in the corresponding program PDF or at COURSE SEARCH.