

## College of Lake County Writing Center - Tutor Development Course

English 260: Introduction to Writing Center Theory & Practice – Fall 2026

Thursdays, 2:30 – 5:15 pm, Room TBA

Instructor: Dr. Jenny Staben, Faculty Coordinator, Writing Center

### Why do I have to take a course my first semester as a writing tutor?

At the CLC Writing Center, we take your development as a tutor very seriously, and we believe that an academic course is the best way to prepare and support you as you take on this complex and demanding role—especially now that you will be working in both virtual and face to face modalities.

- As a writing tutor in a community college writing center, you will be working with writers from a wide range of backgrounds who have varying amounts of academic preparation.
- These writers will come from courses across the curriculum—everything from English to history to dental hygiene.
- Finally, the writers you work with may be at any stage of the writing process—from generating ideas for an assignment to working on thesis and organization issues to proofreading a near final draft.

As a result, there is no one tutoring process, a set of steps to learn and follow, but rather you will need to constantly adjust your approach and strategies to meet students' needs.

This isn't easy but tackling this challenge may be one of the most rewarding decisions you make as a student at CLC. Like any skill worth learning, becoming an effective writing tutor is an on-going process of exploration and reflection that never really stops.

With this in mind, English 260 has been designed to introduce you to the fundamental issues of theory and practice underlying writing center work, to involve you in the ongoing writing center "conversation," and to help you begin your journey as a reflective tutor/practitioner.

### Shouldn't I take the course before I start tutoring?

New tutors often expect that they will take the course one semester and start tutoring the next. This is a model that is used at many four-year schools. However, at CLC you will be tutoring and taking the course **at the same time** because we believe that works best for you and for us.

One advantage is simply related to time—most peer tutors are full-time students and will only be at CLC for two years or so. We want you to have as many semesters in the writing center as possible.

The other and far more important benefit is that the course and tutoring complement each other. Learning about ways to work with writers might be interesting in the abstract, but these readings and conversations will be much more meaningful if you are actually working with writers. You will get a chance to put strategies and ideas into practice and in turn, bring your experiences with those strategies and ideas back to the texts and discussions.

## What can I expect from this course?

That's a great question!

- Expect to be challenged.
- Expect to read, write, and think a lot.
- Expect to get to know your classmates and your teacher well.
- Expect to have fun.

English 260 is an upper-level English course so you will be doing a fair amount of reading and writing every week. **Like any college course, the usual rule of two hours of work for every hour in class applies.**

The readings range from very accessible and practical texts (because they've been written specifically for undergraduate tutors) to more challenging articles, written by writing center scholars for professionals in the field.

In this course, you will write a lot, but you will not be writing formal, researched academic arguments. Instead, most of the assignments will involve reflective writing—you thinking in depth on paper about the readings, your experiences on the writing center floor, and about observations you do of others and yourself.

### Course Overview

Over the course of sixteen class meetings, we will explore many topics crucial to writing center work.

- Two of the main topics of the course are tutoring and tutoring practices—strategies and techniques to help you work with a wide range of students and their writing as well as the theories behind them.
- However, from the very beginning of the course, we will also reflect on issues related to identity, literacy, and difference—three concepts that are vital to the work writing tutors do.
- This is because, as a writing tutor, particularly one at the College of Lake County, you will constantly be collaborating with writers who are different from you—in terms of language, literacy experiences, culture, socio-economic background, and in any other number of ways.
- Other course topics include the on-going debate over what a writing center should be, how difference connects to political issues related to language and literacy, as well as different approaches to teaching writing—all of which are topics that influence writing centers and their workers.

### Readings/Projects

In this course, you will be asked to read and respond to a variety of materials and do several projects outside of class. Each week, you will be assigned readings that pertain to the next week's topic. In addition to the weekly readings, here's a quick overview of the other course projects:

Reflective Journal	Metacognitive Reading Log*	Things We Carry – Reflective Writings	Peer Observation	Tutoring Session Analysis	Final Project
Most weeks you will write a journal entry of about 2 pages (typed, double-spaced) reflecting on your tutoring experiences that week.	For each reading you do, I will ask you to respond to three prompts that ask you to identify five important ideas, two places where you have questions or see connections to your experience or other readings.	This reflective activity (which will take the place of the Reflective Journal at 3 key points) will give you the opportunity to think through the complexity of your own identity as a writer, student, and community member.	You will observe an experienced tutor in the writing center and write a brief report / reflection.	In the second half of the semester, you will record and analyze one of your tutoring sessions.	In lieu of a final exam at the end of the semester, you will be asked to write a reflective piece (approximately 6-9 pages in total) composed of two parts: a Self-Reflection and a Personal Tutoring Philosophy

### Guidelines for English 260 Reimbursements

All new peer writing tutors are required to enroll in English 260: Introduction to Writing Center Theory and Practice.\* Because, as a tutor, you are providing an important service to the College, we are offering you the opportunity to be reimbursed for the cost of tuition and fees for this 3-credit, *transferable* course. However, you must meet the following conditions:

- ❑ Earn a B or higher in the course.
- ❑ Miss no more than **three (3) classes**.
- ❑ Work in the writing center in both Fall 2026 and Spring 2027.
- ❑ Submit a photocopy of your receipt for the tuition paid.

Reimbursements will be processed at midterm of your second (spring) semester.

\*\*Peer Tutors who currently pay out-of-state tuition (such as international students here on student visas) **will be** required to participate in the training course (English 260). However, the reimbursement only covers the In-District cost of the course.

**If you have any questions about English 260 or the reimbursement guidelines, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Jenny Staben, Faculty Coordinator of the Writing Center at (847) 543-2594 or via e-mail at [com611@clcollinois.edu](mailto:com611@clcollinois.edu)**