



Western Massachusetts Writing Project
Department of English
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing

Overview: The Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing is sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, a professional development program within the Department of English and the Division of Continuing and Professional Education. Participants complete courses totaling 15 graduate credits in writing and literacy pedagogy to develop their capacity as teachers and teacher-leaders in the field. **Certificate recipients may go on to receive an M.A. in English from UMass by completing 6 additional courses.**

Purpose and Goals: K-16 educators enrolled in the Graduate Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program receive a strong grounding in writing and reflective teaching, while developing a framework for teaching writing and literacy across the curriculum. Participants gain a deep understanding of literacy learning through a combination of working on their own writing; reflecting on their teaching practices; and reading current research in composition, literacy, and writing pedagogy. Following the National Writing Project model of “teachers teaching teachers,” participants share successful writing activities and develop and implement curriculum. They formulate research questions about their teaching practices and document the effects of their instruction by collecting and analyzing student work.

Need: High-quality professional development in the field of literacy (including literacy in the disciplines) is in high demand in the area. Many schools and districts in western Massachusetts—along with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education—look to WMWP to provide courses and workshops for teachers. All of WMWP’s programs for teachers are led by teachers, and the certificate program is an avenue by which teacher-consultants can develop expertise, confidence, and flexibility as teacher-leaders in their schools and in WMWP programs.

About the Curriculum: There are three **required** courses totaling 9 credits, usually taken in this order:

English 591LL: Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits) (previously English 591AA)

English 591Q: Teacher Inquiry Seminar (3 credits) (previously English 591AB)

English 712: Writing and the Teaching of Writing (3 credits)

There are several **electives** that can fulfill the remaining 6 credits:

English 591C: Writing Teachers Writing (1 credit)

English 591NN: Teaching for Racial Justice: Identity, Culture, and Pedagogy (3 credits)

English 591T: Teaching with Technology (3 credits)

English 592D: Principles & Practices of Effective Content-Area Literacy Curriculum Design (3 credits)

English 592E: Teaching Social Justice through the Lens of the Holocaust (3 credits)

English 592L: Civics Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits)

English 592R: Reading and Teaching Literary Nonfiction and Informational Texts (3 credits)

English 592S: Science Literacy Leadership Institute (3 credits)

English 592T: Topics in Literacy Education (1 credit) (may be repeated for up to 3 credits)

English 593C: College, Career, and Community Writers Program (3 credits)

English 593R: Reaching and Teaching All Learners (3 credits)

English 891LL: Composition Theory (3 credits)

English 891Z: Introduction to Research on Writing (3 credits)

English 891I: Writing and Emerging Technologies (3 credits)

The **Literacy Leadership Institute** (English 591LL), which is normally the starting point of the Certificate in the Teaching of Writing program, is open by application to teachers at all levels of education and in all subjects. Admission to the Literacy Leadership Institute includes acceptance into the certificate program, which is an optional extension. The Literacy Leadership Institute engages participants in three key activities: personal writing and peer response, reflection on and sharing of literacy teaching practices, and inquiry into pedagogical questions in the educational literature. Participants develop from this experience an inquiry stance and an inquiry question to be examined in action research in their classrooms the following year (**Teacher Inquiry Seminar**, English 591Q). Having completed these two steps, they are deemed WMWP teacher-consultants, eligible to lead professional development programs. Those who wish to go deeper may pursue the remaining requirements for the certificate. **Writing and the Teaching of Writing** (English 712) offers a theoretical foundation and explores practical questions in the teaching of writing, and the electives enable participants to develop particular areas of expertise while building their leadership skills in literacy education and their capacity to have an impact on colleagues in their schools, districts, and region.

The primary objective of the program is to develop teacher-leaders who not only demonstrate effective teaching practices in their own classrooms but also influence other teachers and administrators through leadership of professional development programs and peer-to-peer interactions. The certificate program can be completed in as little as two years, depending on course availability and participants' own schedules. The Literacy Leadership Institute and Inquiry courses are a full-year sequence, and the remaining courses can be taken beginning the following year. While the sequence outlined above is typical, it is not the only possibility. Sometimes teachers are introduced to WMWP through professional development courses offered in their schools, in which case, they might complete electives before enrolling in the Literacy Leadership Institute. The exact sequence of courses is less important than the overall objective of teacher leadership.

Process: Literacy Leadership Institute fellows who wish to pursue the certificate program should declare their intentions to Certificate Program Coordinator by the conclusion of the teacher inquiry course (English 591Q) including documentation of any requirements already fulfilled. Certificate candidates are responsible for monitoring their progress and notifying the coordinator when all requirements are completed, supplying transcripts as needed. Certificates will be awarded by the Graduate School and acknowledged at the annual Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing Conference.

Availability: The Literacy Leadership Institute and Inquiry courses are offered annually. Writing and the Teaching of Writing is offered every other year. Elective courses are offered regularly through the sponsorship of school districts and/or Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, or by open enrollment through Continuing and Professional Education.

Semester		WMWP Course Possibilities	Typical Cost
Required	Summer 2020	English 591LL: Literacy Leadership Institute	\$347 + \$500 fee*
	Fall/Spring 2020/21	English 591Q: Teacher Inquiry Seminar (extension of 591LL)	\$347 (591LL fee)
	Spring 2021	English 712: Writing and the Teaching of Writing	\$347 + \$400 fee*
Elective	Fall 2020	English 592R: Reading and Teaching Literary Nonfiction ...	\$347 + \$400 fee*
	Summer 2021	English 592E: Teaching Social Justice through Lens of Holocaust †	\$347 + \$0 (grant)
	Summer/Fall/Spring	English 593C, 593CE: College/Career/Community Writers (6 cr.) †	\$694 + \$600 fee*
	Fall 2021	English 593R: Reaching and Teaching All Learners †	\$347 + \$400 fee*
	Fall/Spring/Summer	Annual 1-credit courses: English 591C and 592T	\$147 + \$0–250*
TOTALS		15 credits (3 required courses plus 6 credits of electives)	~ \$3,000-\$3,500

*Fees pay for teaching of courses. Fees are waived when courses are supported by grants or schools. †Tentative.

Please contact coordinator Bruce Penniman (penniman@english.umass.edu) if you have questions about the certificate program or would like to join a new cohort of certificate candidates. Please state the courses you have completed and the years you enrolled in them.