
Professing, Research, and Systems Thinking: A Graduate Seminar

Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Centennial Hall, Room 1916

Dr. Erica Rogers

4404 Centennial Hall

rogerse@uwec.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Video Office Hours: Weds 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Office phone: (715) 836-2388

This seminar will focus on what it means to profess, to enact the professorial identity within today's complex academic environment. We will explore the teaching body as a complex system with elements and interrelations that ultimately serve a purpose. Beginning with Shari Stenberg's book, *Professing and Pedagogy: Learning the Teaching of English* (2005) we will identify and map our own attitudes about teaching,

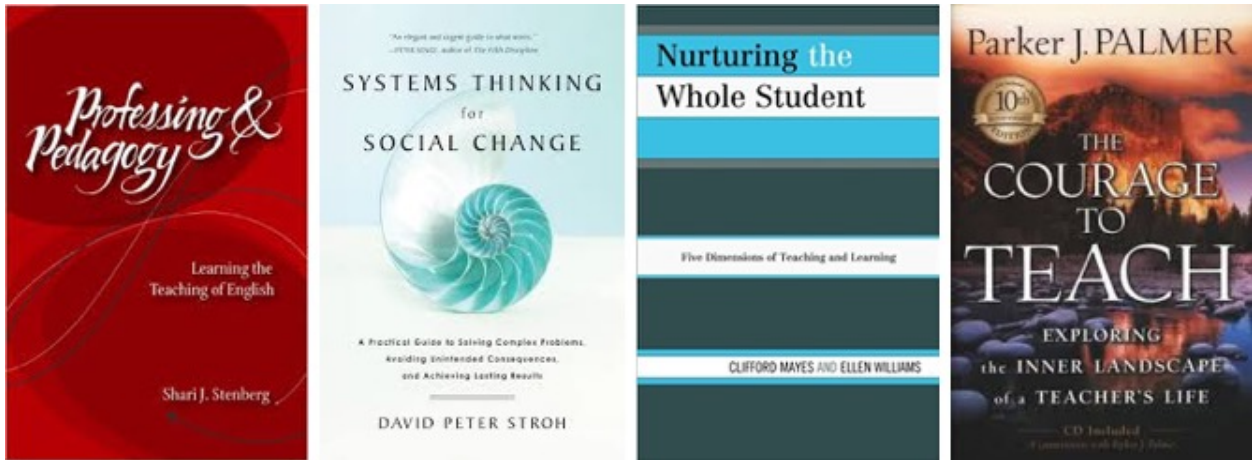
where they came from, and how they shape our identities as teachers. We will then work with texts aimed at applying systems thinking to our work, and this book: *Systems Thinking for Social Change* by David Peter Stroh (2015). From there, we will look at a specific pedagogical practice, holistic pedagogy, to see what interconnections we can locate, explore, and observe. We will rely on *Nurturing the Whole Student: Five Dimensions of Teaching and Learning* by Clifford Mayes and Ellen Williams (2013), Parker Palmer's *The Courage to Teach* (2007), and assorted articles addressing interesting challenges to teaching and learning.

After rigorous debate and reflection, and drawing from Donna Qualley's (1997) sense of "reflexive inquiry," we will then tackle qualitative research projects that explore teaching and pedagogy from our individual interests, perspectives, and lines of inquiry. The course will end with our writing of academic texts for journals or conferences that we have self-selected, or a course design with supporting curricula, assignments, and syllabus. Throughout the course, you will keep what I call an "Inquiry Notebook," a creative receptacle for your inquiries, reading, notations, and contemplations. We will explore graphic recording, reflexive inquiry, and writing from the systemic perspective, when the primary goal is to locate and trace interconnections. Ultimately, this seminar is a semester-long inquiry experience that promotes systemic thinking in order to take the big-picture view of one's profession, and the systems that rely on it.

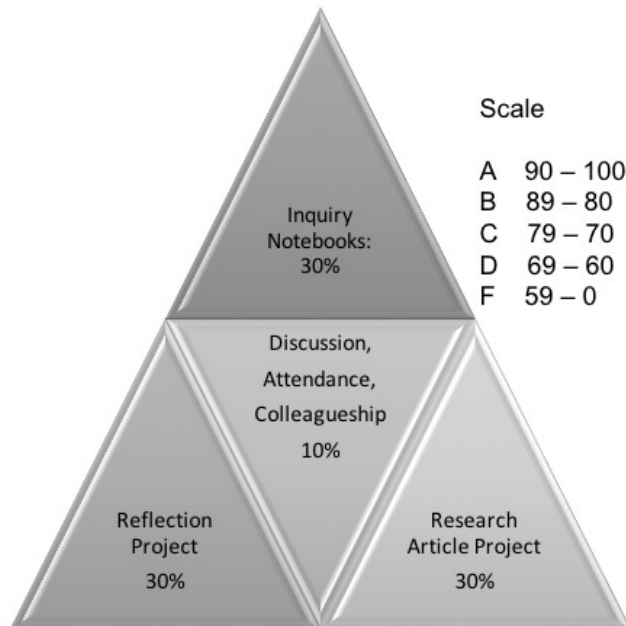
Required Technologies and Supplies

- Computer and Internet access to our course via the Desire2Learn LMS
- MS Office Suite (available to you free through our Learning Technologies Support at www.webaddress.com)
- Various art supplies, including scissors, pens, pencils, watercolor paints, inks, tape, glue, and a can of workable fixative
- A hardbound sketchbook, 9 1/2 by 11 inches, filled with acid-free, non-perforated pages. Cachet makes a lovely one, and Michael's carries a store brand that is affordable.

Required Texts



Assessment



The course is anchored to three major projects: your inquiry notebook, reflection project, and research project. The remaining percentage allows for the evaluation of your depth of commitment to others' learning, the classroom community, and your presence.

You will have several opportunities for one-to-one conferences with me, either in person or via video conference. All evaluations of your work are aimed at contributing to your qualifying exam, field and focus lists, or moving your work to a public sphere. Ultimately, the research component of the course is designed to support your graduate work.

Policy

Community Practice: We will work together to create a learning community with a shared sense of responsibility. The goal is to create an environment that will support our inquiries and conversations. To this end, we will begin with an ethical stance of civil discourse. From there,

we will discuss and shape our overall approach to sharing ideas in order to make sure that all members of our learning community feel capable and supported while speaking. Because pedagogies and teaching philosophies are deeply personal, rooted in who we are, and connected to what we hope to accomplish in the world, it is important for us to nurture a climate of deep respect, even when we may differ in perspectives. Nurturing that climate, however, is best done through collaborative conversation rather than an edict in a syllabus. For the full student conduct policy for this campus, please see: www.deanofstudentswebsite.com, and our current campus-wide diversity and equity initiative at: www.chancellorplanford.com.

Challenges: Many of us experience difficulty when learning. If you have a documented learning disability, the Office of Student Services has many support options available. Texts can be converted to eReader and audio formats, for example. I will upload all project instructions to the LMS site for our course so that those of you who may require more time to complete assignments can read them over and schedule a conference with me to make an academic plan. For more information about services available to you, see: www.studentservices.com.

Families, too, can bring complexity and challenge to our best efforts to learn. Employment, too, makes its demands. Rather than suffer these challenges alone, please contact me so we can work on a collaborative approach to manage whatever comes your way. For those of you responsible for the primary care of another partner, child, or parent, my primary goal is to make sure that all learners feel supported and encouraged.

Social Services and Support: Our campus has a food pantry for students. If you are food insecure at any time during the semester, you can receive a care package. Please see: www.campuspantry.com for more information, including distribution times. For those who meet income thresholds, there are pre-holiday and break distributions to ensure that you do not go hungry at these times. The Student Health and Counseling Center provides eight sessions of free, on-campus mental health support, medication screenings and distribution, online workshops, and various support groups for graduate students. Self-care is an important psychodynamic part of your education, and the SHCC aims to support you. For more information, please see: www.healthcenter.com.

The Women's Center, LGBTQ Center, Veteran's Center, and the Multicultural Center offer programs, workshops, safe spaces, mentors, and other services aimed at supporting your education. For a full list of services and programs, see the Student Involvement website: www.studentinvolvement.com.

Academic Support: In addition to support I provide, the Writing Center offers peer-tutoring, workshops, and other programmatic support to all graduate students on campus. To schedule an appointment, or enroll in workshops, please see the Writing Center website at: www.writingcenter.com. The Academic Success Office, too, offers tutoring, programming, and diagnostic support for all learners on campus. Please see the website: www.academicssuccess.com.

If you have a need not addressed here, please let me know. I will connect you to campus and community resources whenever possible.

Assignment Schedule

Week	Assignment
Week One	<p style="text-align: center;">Introductions, course overview, community planning session.</p> <p>Please preview the community planning document on our course site on the Learning Management System (LMS).</p> <p>Post: (By Friday at 9 p.m.) your introduction video. Using Kaltura, record a short (no longer than 3 minutes) video that: 1) Introduces yourself and your area of interest; 2) Identifies learning goals you have, and why or how you believe this course will help you to achieve them; and, 3) Your immediate concerns as a student and emerging teaching professional. Post your video on the “Introductions” discussion board on our course site on the LMS. Before class next week, review your colleague’s posts. Recording and uploading instructions are available on our course site.</p>
Week Two	<p style="text-align: center;">Professing and Pedagogy Part I</p> <p>As you prepare to watch and read, get your graphic recording supplies ready. As you read the following assignment, try your hand at visual notetaking in your Inquiry Notebook. To format your notebook, please see “Inquiry Notebook Instructions” on our course site on the LMS.</p> <p>Watch: Rachel Smith TED talk https://youtu.be/3tJPeumHNLY</p> <p>Read: Stenberg, to page 63</p> <p>Write: A contemplative response (per Inquiry Notebook instructions)</p>
Week Three	<p style="text-align: center;">Professing and Pedagogy Part II</p> <p>Read: Stenberg to page 149, and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook.</p> <p>Write: A contemplative response and POST your most pressing questions on the “Stenberg: Discussion Starters” discussion board.</p>

<p>Week Four</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thinking in Systems Part I</p> <p>Watch: Bud Caddell TED Talk: https://youtu.be/mOheTsPx220 and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook.</p> <p>Read: Stroh, Chapters 1-6, and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook</p> <p>Write: A contemplative response. To get started, begin with the following prompt. We'll use your writing as a starting point for tonight's discussions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thinking in terms of education, what "simple solutions" have been used to address complex system problems, and to what effect?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Try mapping yourself as a learning system. What are your elements? Flows? Interrelations? What are the reinforcing and balancing feedback loops in your system? Once you have done this mapping work, what is the purpose of your system? Does it match the declared purpose so many of us use to explain why we are in graduate school?</i></p>
<p>Week Five</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thinking in Systems Part II</p> <p>Read: Harvey et. al, "Predicting the Grades of Low-Income-Ethnic Minority Students from Teacher-Student Discrepancies in Reported Motivation" and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook.</p> <p>Read: Stephens et. al. "Unseen Disadvantage: How American Universities' Focus on Independence Undermines the Academic Performance of First-Generation College Students" (PDF on our course site on the LMS).</p> <p>Read: Freire excerpt from his book, <i>Pedagogy of the Oppressed</i> (PDF on our course site on the LMS) and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook.</p> <p>Watch: Melissa Crum TED talk: https://youtu.be/sgtinODaW78 and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook. Also, check out Dr. Crum's Mosaic Education Network: http://www.mosaiceducationnetwork.com</p> <p>Take: The Implicit Test by Project Implicit at Harvard University. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html</p> <p>Write: A contemplative response</p>

Week Six	<p style="text-align: center;">Thinking in Systems Part III</p> <p>Read: Stroh, Chapters 7 – 13. Our class focus today will be to attempt to map the systemic nature of a problem in education we want to address. We will put Stroh’s ideas to use rather than discuss them.</p>
Week Seven	<p>WRITE: A course reflection project. Before writing, read through your graphic recordings and contemplative responses while looking for patterns, ruptures, and/or moments where you stopped your inquiry short. Step back to think through our assignments, class discussions, and in-class activities. Once you have done this reflection work, write a reflection paper that identifies what you have learned, contemplated, and mused while in the course. A reflection is, essentially, an autoethnography. Some reflection projects in the past have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compared new knowledge to one’s own education experiences, noting the systemic inequalities and advantages that have led them to their current standing as advanced degree seekers. • Written a “Facing Current Reality” project, noting their own actions that may contribute to a problem they most wish to solve. • Designed a systems approach to curricula for a course they hope to one day teach, including sample assignments, rubrics, and syllabi. <p>It is up to you to determine the most meaningful writing experience you may need at this time, and your author’s note should explain your reasons for the project, what you learned while doing it, and future directions you could take your line(s) of thinking. Please submit your Inquiry Notebook and this writing assignment in class today.</p> <p>Schedule: An assessment conference. I will distribute the sign-up sheet in class, and you can indicate your preference for an in-person or video conference. During this conference, we will discuss your reflection paper and my evaluation of it. I will return your Inquiry Notebooks to you during our meeting.</p>
Week Eight	<p style="text-align: center;">Systems Thinking and Holistic Pedagogy</p> <p>Read: Mayes and Williams (entire book). As you read, think of the book in light of what we’ve learned about systems, learning and teaching, and the complexity of biases (implicit and explicit) that may be at work. We will discuss this book before tackling an activity to help us think more deeply about the learning dimensions Mayes and Williams describe. Use your graphic recording skills to map this reading.</p>
Week Nine	<p>Read: Palmer (entire book) and create a graphic recording page (or pages) in your Inquiry Notebook. We will discuss our recordings and the implications of the book. One line of inquiry will rest with this question: If we “teach who we</p>

	<p>are,” as Palmer contends, what might we have to do to address our biases if we are to take on critical pedagogies aimed at social justice?</p>
<p>Week Ten</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Graduate Seminar as a Writing Community</p> <p>From this point onward, the course will function as a generative and supportive site for your academic work. For some, this will mean working on an article or conference proposal and presentation specific to their disciplinary interests. For others, this will mean working on some aspect of their field and focus essay for the qualifying exam. Some may want to begin with designing a course and its curricula, including the key assignments, supporting materials, and course syllabus with schedule. A complete project overview is available on our LMS.</p> <p>DUE: Please come to class today with a complete reading list for your qualitative project. Your list should be introduced with a brief essay (500 – 700 words) that explains your research question or line of inquiry, what you hope to accomplish, and what kind of writing project you will be (or think you will be) doing. Submit a digital copy to our LMS dropbox.</p> <p>I have provided various videos, articles, and other resources on our LMS to help you think about your project, its potential, and how it could fit within your larger work as a graduate student. The work should be writing that you want and need to do rather than a project you hope will impress me or prove that you have learned from me. I look forward to seeing work from a spectrum of interests, disciplinary locations, and purposes. I do hope, however, that your work addresses in some way the systemic issues within the field, or how systemic issues may be affecting teaching within your discipline. But that’s just a hope. It has been my experience that students create far more interesting research projects than I could create for them. This is your time to embrace “autonomy, mastery, and purpose” as Daniel Pink and Edward Deci would say (remember that video on our first day together?)</p>
<p>Weeks Eleven and Twelve</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Graduate Seminar as a Writing Community</p> <p>Please bring your selected reading materials, laptop, and Inquiry Notebook. We are going to experiment with writing and reading together in support of a larger goal. Informative summary abstracts for each of your readings should be written as you go, and are due as an appendix to your final project. Weeks eleven and twelve are workshop sessions, designed to create an oasis of sorts – a guaranteed two hours of writing and reading that is focused and undisturbed. I will provide culinary support in the form of coffee, tea, and snacks.</p> <p>Schedule: Please schedule an in-person or video conference consultation with me so that we can discuss your project ideas and direction.</p>

<p>Week Thirteen</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Graduate Seminar as a Writing Community</p> <p>Today, please bring a working draft of your project. We will be discussing project issues before meeting in our small groups for peer review and discussions.</p>
<p>Week Fourteen</p>	<p>Small group peer review. This time, send your group members a digital copy of your project two days before class to provide them time to read your work in preparation for our class session.</p>
<p>Week Fifteen</p>	<p>Large Group Sharing of Projects: We will discuss our projects briefly, presenting what we have been working on, and where we hope it leads. This informal sharing is a conversation, low-stakes, and meant to celebrate our work.</p> <p>Inquiry Notebooks are due this day, and will be returned to you during dead week. I understand that you may need your notebooks, so I will assess quickly and make arrangements for the prompt return of your books. Typically, I arrange for pickup one week from today. If you need or want your notebook sooner than that, let's make arrangements.</p>
<p>Dead Week</p>	<p>I will be in our classroom with your inquiry notebooks, ready for you to pick them up. I am also available this time to address questions and concerns about your project.</p>
<p>Finals Week</p>	<p>Due: Final copies of your projects are due to me via the LMS dropbox or in whatever format you believe is easiest to display the complexity of your work. I will accept projects until the final day of this week, by 5:00 p.m.</p> <p>On Saturday night, you are invited to my home for a celebration dinner. We have much to celebrate! Details will be provided on our LMS and by email.</p>