

**HANDBOOK FOR  
TEACHING  
FIRST-YEAR WRITING  
AT  
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY**

[www.montclair.edu/writing](http://www.montclair.edu/writing)

August, 2010

Dear New First-Year Writing Faculty Member:

Welcome to the MSU First-Year Writing Faculty!

I hope you will find teaching first-year writing here at MSU rewarding. Our students in their diversity of backgrounds, interests and points of view are, I suspect, what is best about working at MSU. In addition I hope that the institution itself, and the department and program in particular, will be a supportive, collegial place where you will find the support that you need and deserve. As Director of First-Year Writing, I see my job of making the first-year writing program as strong as it can be in large part fulfilled by working to be supportive of the diverse, talented group of faculty who teach here. To that end, I try to be responsive to concerns, both specific and shared, and to be available for consultation on teaching and other matters, as needed. I am supported by the department secretary Phyllis Brooks (who can answer your administrative questions, as well as many other questions), the two Assistant Directors Bonnie Dowd and Maria Giura, as well as the department administrator Rashida Batte-Bowden, and the chair, Dan Bronson. Of course, though I hate to say it, we're stretched thin with over 65 first-year writing faculty, nearly half of whom are new to the department this year. But please, ask if you have a question, and we'll see what we can do.

I've worked with other faculty to put together this handbook, primarily from materials that are also available on the Teaching Writing web site: <http://english.montclair.edu/writing/teachingwriting/>, though some materials are from other areas within Montclair State. This printed handbook consolidates the most crucial information that you will need. I am hoping the pleasure of paper will induce closer reading of these materials. That said, please do not ignore or forget the web page, which is frequently updated. Most important, be sure to keep up with your MSU email. You can have it forwarded to a preferred email address, but be sure you're checking it several times a week.

I am most easily available by email. If need be, we can set up a phone appointment. I don't mind talking "off-hours," though you will find that I am not in my office more than several hours a week, quite possibly not the same hours that you're on campus! . If I do not respond to your email within two or three days, or less if it's urgent, by all means contact one of the assistant directors or Phyllis and/or email me again. I miss/overlook emails sometimes and will only be grateful if you send me a reminder.

I hope you have a wonderful semester and year.

Sincerely,

Emily Isaacs  
Director of First-Year Writing  
Department of English

### Who Are MSU Students?

Here are a few facts to introduce our students. The first-year full-time class (as of fall '09 data) was 61 percent female, 39 percent male; 97 percent were from New Jersey. Eight percent were African-American, 5 percent were Asian, 19 percent were Latino/a, and 50 percent were white (with 13 percent not reporting). Just 1.4 students identified as international although according to 2006 data, 17 percent reported that their first language is not English.

For the fall 2009 incoming first-year class, the average SAT score was 1000 (494 verbal/507 math), and the average high school class rank was in the 67th percentile. About a third of incoming first-year students indicated that they received As in high school, and more than three-fourths indicated they received Bs or better. Yet, most spent 5 or fewer hours doing homework each week. Eighty-two percent were fulltime students, and 79 percent lived off-campus. Seventy-six percent were in the 18-24 age bracket, with 17% in the 25-34 range. Only 34 percent of students graduate from MSU within four years, although 62 percent of students will complete their undergraduate degree within six years. This suggests most of the remaining students do not complete their degrees, though perhaps they do complete them elsewhere. These retention rates are better than what is found at most state universities like MSU.

MSU students are over-committed with work, school, family and other obligations, so you need to help them make school work a priority—ideally by requiring regular and accounted for assignments early and often. They are quite willing to try the game plan you introduce, if you introduce it quickly. They are not familiar with extensive homework, and they are experienced with high grades, so both of those expectations need to be directly addressed, with kindness, but also firmly.

All of our students, if asked, will tell you about troubles with parking, housing, or registering for classes; for many of them, being a fairly anonymous student at an institution serving 16,000 students is a new experience. There is little you can do but sympathize, and interestingly, many of the issues around “adjustment” are being addressed these days in a required course for all first-year students, “The New Student Experience.” This course, just one-credit in weight, is really devoted to helping students adjust to MSU life; it has been developed in response to data that such courses improve student retention.

The vast majority of first-year students are not only enrolled in “The New Student Experience,” but they are also part of a learning community in which a group of students are enrolled in two or three courses, thus giving students a chance to get to know each other better. As well, this may mean you have a group of 19 who have the same intended major or career.

All statistical information came from MSU’s Office of Institutional Research:

<http://oit.montclair.edu/InstResearch/factbook/index.html>

### Requirements for Syllabi

The First-Year Writing Program director staff reviews syllabi for all first-year writing faculty. Once reviewed, current syllabi are kept on file in the English department office. On the first day that veteran faculty meet their classes, they need to give the English department secretary a paper copy of their syllabi. **New faculty should prepare a draft syllabus for the August seminar; final copies will be due the following Monday.** All syllabi will be reviewed; if there are omissions or concerns, faculty will be contacted. If you hear nothing, your syllabus is in great shape.

A good syllabus introduces students to the instructor and course, provides practical information and guidance, and ultimately serves as a kind of contract between student and teacher. You are welcome to use, revised or not, any of the syllabi that you find on the main Teaching Writing web site. Below are some guidelines to use to help you in developing your syllabus.

Please note that for several categories, you can and should refer your students to the **Prefatory Chapters of MSU's custom edition of the Hacker Handbook** rather than duplicating the information on your syllabus.

#### REQUIREMENTS:

**Basic information about you.** Include your name, office location, email address, and office hours. Also, please include the English Department web page ([english.montclair.edu](http://english.montclair.edu)) and let students know that if your class is canceled they will find this information on the web site. (A mass email via Blackboard also makes sense.) It follows that if you are going to have to miss class, be sure to call the department secretaries as much in advance as possible so that they can post the cancellation on the web site and make a note of the absence for our records.

**Required texts.** See [Textbook selection guide](#) on the teaching writing website.

MSU's custom edition of Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* is a required text. It may be necessary to remind your students before or on the first day of class that MSU's custom edition is not available for purchase online and must be purchased from the campus bookstore. Further, students need to be reminded to bring their handbook to class.

**Purpose of the course.** To develop this section of your syllabus you should look over the description of your course from above, and then adapt into your own language.

**Course requirements.** Cover such issues as length and number of essays and other writings, expectations for readings; requirements on revision, peer review, attendance, participation, timeliness, etc. Although you want to be clear about your requirements, you do not need to take on a punitive tone. See prefatory material in *A Writer's Reference*.

**Writing expectations.** Using the Essay Criteria as defined on pages MSU 7-8 of *A Writer's Reference*, describe what competencies or writing outcomes you expect your students to achieve in this class. Outcomes or expectations for individual assignments are better found on individual writing assignments. Please work to use the language of the program (central claim, development, organization, analysis, clarity of prose) so that students receive a consistent message in all the classes and when they visit the Center for Writing Excellence. This criteria can be used in peer review and as a kind of rubric in comments and evaluation, and it can help students gain an understanding what it is that they do well and not.

**Reading and writing schedule.** While you may make some changes to such a schedule, students need to have a schedule of reading and writing for the semester, all laid out in black and white. Include readings, due dates (including drafts) and assignments, and ideally, topics covered. Be sure to identify the documented essay and a point during the semester when MLA material will be reviewed.

**Conferences (optional).** Some faculty choose to cancel classes for up-to-two non-consecutive weeks, during which time they meet with each student individually. Typically students are still doing a week's worth of work--perhaps completing a final draft of one essay and bringing a first draft to the conference for discussion.

**Accommodations (optional).** Many instructors find it helpful to include a statement similar to the following: "Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to receive a letter for me requesting accommodation. All requests must be approved by the DRC (Morehead Hall 305, x5431, <https://www.montclair.edu/health/drc/faculty.html>)

**Grading policy.** You need to make your grading policy clear. Although the vast majority of students accept grades that are given to them, a few do dispute grades; it is therefore in your interest (and in your students') to have a clearly articulated grading policy. Your policy should include a breakdown of how grades are determined (i.e., 15% journals; 10% attendance and participation; 55% major essays, 20% portfolio).

**Plagiarism Policy.** Include an explicit statement on plagiarism, both to inform students of MSU's definition and policy and also to warn them off of the practice. The prefatory chapter in MSU's Hacker Handbook clearly defines and explains the university's policy, so rather than repeating this information you might consider pointing to these pages (MSU-9 and MSU-10).

To avoid problems with plagiarism, speak with students about it at the beginning of the semester, include explicit reference to it in your syllabus, and most important, create original assignments and collect early drafts of work along with final drafts. If you suspect a student of plagiarism and would like help in dealing with the student, please contact the director or one of the faculty plagiarism advisors. In general, the director recommends that students fail the course, without discussion, and be referred to the Dean of Students' Office for disciplinary action. The Teaching Writing web page contains helpful definitions of accidental and intentional plagiarism, recommended consequences, and procedures.

## Grading

All final grades are submitted through the university's [web system](#), located via "faculty services" off the main faculty web page. During the semester faculty are contacted via the MSU mail account email to set up and confirm student rosters and faculty identification and PIN. Be sure to respond to these email notices and follow through on them. Grades can be submitted on the web anytime over several days, though the close date is hard and firm. **If you do not submit your grades on time, people get very upset. Strangely, often the deadline is at 9 am, which is unexpected and easy to miss.**

The policy for grading in first-year writing is as follows:

1. Grades will be fair and consistent.
2. Grading will be in accordance with criteria and distribution detailed in the syllabus. Students may not agree with the grades given, but they should be able to understand how each individual grade, as well as the final grade, is determined.
3. When evaluating student work on the letter system, faculty should take the following into account.

A is for excellent work

B is for very good work

C is for adequate or average work

D is for below average, inadequate work

F is for unacceptable work, i.e., work that is not at the college level.

Faculty should also consult (and suggest their students consult) MSU's custom edition Hacker Handbook (MSU-9) for detailed descriptions of A, B, C, D, and F papers.

4. Distribution systems for determining grades (i.e., x percent for essays, y percent for portfolio, z percent for homework, etc) need to be designed with a sense of caution for grade inflation. New faculty can find themselves with students who are regularly receiving Cs on papers suddenly earning Bs if they are not careful in their distribution systems.

5. First-year writing courses are indicator courses. Students and future professors need to be able to review these grades and have them be reasonably accurate indicators of students' writing abilities. Now, of course, every student who achieves a B in a 105 class may not choose to continue that level of performance in later courses, but you may find this imagined audience helpful to you as you fight off the pressure to raise grades. Students, quite reasonably, believe that the grade received is an indicator of their writing abilities and probable future success in writing. When fall 105 instructors become spring 106 instructors, they little like hearing from C or D performing students that they "always received Bs in 105." So we need to work together to consistently and fairly assess students' abilities as writers.

6. While there can be extraordinary sections--very weak ones and very strong ones—in general, most first-year writing sections are comprised of the full-range of students who are admitted to Montclair State University. Therefore, you can expect that your final grades will reflect this range, with close to an equal number of students earning final grades of C or B, and many, many fewer receiving As, Ds or Fs. If most of your students are heading for a B or B-, you probably need to revise your criteria--it's unlikely that most of your students are truly above average as that would more or less defeat the meaning of average. B is not average; it is very good.

7. "Benchmark" grades -- sample papers with grades --can be found under the "Benchmark grades" link on the teaching writing website.

**Grades of IN (Incomplete).** Incomplete grades should be given out rarely. Incomplete grades should be given out, at student request, in situations where a student is doing passing work and then, because of some unexpected event (a death, an illness, a catastrophe, etc.) is unable to do work for a period of a few weeks. The purpose of the Incomplete is to allow students to do the reading and writing that they were unable to do during their incapacity.

First-year writing faculty may not give grades of incomplete without permission from the First-Year Writing Director. This is simply because we have such high turnover that we have had problems with Incomplete grades being given out by instructors who we can no longer reach after the semester is over.

If a faculty member has a case that warrants an Incomplete, contact the First-Year Writing Director. If the director agrees to the Incomplete, the faculty member will also need to do the following:

- 1) Complete an Incomplete contract specifying exactly what needs to be done. (Available in the English Department office.)
- 2) Have this form signed off on by the faculty member, the student, and the director.
- 3) Write a brief memo detailing the grade-to-date (grades on all completed work as well as grades for anything else that is specified in the syllabus, i.e., participation) and the percentage weight of the work that is still to be completed; submit it with the contract. The accompanying memo should provide enough information on the student's grade to date to allow the director to assign a final grade if, by chance, the part-time faculty member were to become unavailable.

**Policy on Withdrawal Grades** The provost has published a [revised policy on withdrawal grades](#). Essentially students can withdraw without discussion with you up until the 9th week of classes. After that, students appeal not to the instructor but to the Dean of Students' Office.

**Policy on Change of Grade Requests** Increasingly, students are pressuring instructors to submit a change of grade if the grade earned will cause them hardship. In general, grades should not be changed once they are submitted and such changes are discouraged. Outside circumstances such as loss of scholarship, loss of financial aid, academic probation, or parental displeasure, although potentially heartbreaking, are not valid reasons for granting a change of grade. Instructor error

such as miscalculation of the grade is a valid reason. In all other situations, use your discretion and good judgment. Change of grade forms are available only through the English Department office.

**Grades of NC (No Credit)** NC grades are only available for ENWR100 students. A grade of NC should be reserved for those students who have worked hard and followed the syllabus (attended, participated, and completed assignments), but who demonstrate, through their writing, that they are not yet ready for College Writing I. (Note: the work of all borderline students should be submitted to the Borderline Review Readers, announced toward the end of the semester.) The NC grade is a grade given to students who simply need an additional semester of ENWR100: Introduction to Writing. An F is reserved for those students who fail to meet the requirements of the course (and may or may not write at an acceptable level). By mid-semester, faculty should be in conversation with students whose work suggests the possibility of NC. As well, general information about the NC grade should be available on syllabi. (See sample syllabi for sample text.)

**Additional Guidelines for Grading ENWR100 Students** The first concern for evaluating 100 students is their ability to succeed in ENWR105. Students whose writing does not seem to be at the level of ENWR105 incoming students should not pass ENWR100. More broadly, the "one grade easier" rule of thumb may be a helpful one to follow. To explain, what would be a C in 105 (adequate) would be a B in 100 (very good). When evaluating portfolios, it is helpful to consider the students' work primarily in terms of how they would look to a 105 instructor at the beginning of the term. If a student is receiving a B, that means it is reasonable that s/he can receive a C in 105.

### The Center for Writing Excellence – [www.montclair.edu/cwe](http://www.montclair.edu/cwe)

The Center for Writing Excellence is available to all university students who are committed to developing and improving as writers. Sessions with experienced writing consultants are designed to provide students with help on every aspect of the writing process, with the goal of enabling students to achieve long-term improvement, confidence, and independence.

The CWE is open in **Sprague Library, first floor, in the far right corner of the Reference area**. The CWE is staffed with graduate and undergraduate students who have typically taken a class in Writing Center Practice, and are part of regular, ongoing training. The CWE works closely with the FYW program, offering workshops and sponsoring discussions.

The CWE offers traditional face-to-face tutoring as well as various forms of online tutoring. In addition to our materials for students and faculty, the CWE has developed or located materials that may be of use to students.

Students tend to be reluctant or forgetful about making an appointment with a consultant; in general, we have found that students who go to the CWE are in classes where faculty support and encourage such use.

Faculty are encouraged to visit the CWE and the consultants to observe the CWE in operation. As well, consultants welcome hearing from faculty about their hopes and expectations for their students who visit the CWE.

Conversations about the CWE are welcomed by the director, Melinda Knight, who is always interested in faculty input and participation. She can be emailed directly at [KnightM@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:KnightM@mail.montclair.edu). Alicia Remolde, program assistant, is also available for consultant: [Remoldea@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:Remoldea@mail.montclair.edu)

## Contacts

### Useful Phone Numbers

Phyllis Brooks, English Department secretary: 973-655-4249

Rashida Batte-Bowden, English Department administrator: x4274

Emily Isaacs, First-Year Writing Director: x7502

Academic Advising: x7114

Bookstore: x5460

Computer/Technology Support: x7835 (for CHSS); in the event that CHSS is gone for the day: x7971

Counseling Services (CAP): x5211

Disability Resource Center: xr5431

Human Resources: Helen Caruso/Benefits x4394 or Diane Gasparatos/Other x4395

Library: x4291

Office of the Dean of Students: x4118; Student Conduct (Jerry Collins): x6981

Parking: x7580

Police Department: x5222

Technological Training (Blackboard, etc.): x5449

University Ombudsperson: x4206

Women's Center: x5114

Center for Writing Excellence: x7911

### Useful MSU Web Sites

First-Year Writing Teaching Page: <http://english.montclair.edu/writing/teachingwriting>

Center for Writing Excellence: [http://english.montclair.edu/Programs2/FirstYear/Writing\\_center.htm](http://english.montclair.edu/Programs2/FirstYear/Writing_center.htm)

Blackboard: <http://montclair.blackboard.com/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Academic Calendar: <http://www.montclair.edu/academiccalendar/10.html>

Human Resources "All in the Family" Program (benefits for staff):

<http://www.montclair.edu/pages/hr/allinmsufamily.html>

Institutional Research: <http://oit.montclair.edu/InstResearch/factbook/index.html> (At this location you can find "fact books" filled with interesting information about students, as well as other public statistical reports on MSU and its students.)

Library: <http://library.montclair.edu/>

Local Information: <http://www.montclair.edu/local/>

Services for Students with Disabilities: <http://www.montclair.edu/health/drc>

Student Handbook: <http://www.montclair.edu/studenthandbook/>

Adjunct Faculty Union: <http://nj.aft.org/060250/>

Teaching and Learning Center: <http://www.montclair.edu/teachingcenter/index.shtml>

Web for Faculty: <https://wfs.montclair.edu/afhomepg.htm> (payroll info, grading, etc.)

NJ Transit: [www.njtransit.com](http://www.njtransit.com)

### **Useful MSU Email Addresses**

Dan Bronson: [bronsond@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:bronsond@mail.montclair.edu)

Phyllis Brooks: [brooksp@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:brooksp@mail.montclair.edu)

Rashida Batte-Bowden: [batter@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:batter@mail.montclair.edu)

Emily Isaacs: [isaacse@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:isaacse@mail.montclair.edu)

Bonnie Dowd: [dowdb@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:dowdb@mail.montclair.edu)

Maria Giura: [giuram@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:giuram@mail.montclair.edu)

CHSS Tech Team: [CHSSTech@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:CHSSTech@mail.montclair.edu)

Helen Caruso (Benefits): [Carusoh@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:Carusoh@mail.montclair.edu)

Jerry Collins (Student Conduct): [collinsje@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:collinsje@mail.montclair.edu)

## General Administrative Information

**Office Space and Keys.** Office space is very, very tight, and not under the control of the department. All adjunct faculty use Dickson 259; all half-time time faculty use a two-room office suite, Dickson 201. Lecturers are assigned, in groups of 2 or 3, to individual offices.

DI 259 access is through a swipe card, available from Phyllis Brooks. Keys for other offices will be available from Rashida Batte-Bowden right before the semester starts.

**Computers.** Computers are in all the offices. You are free to use them to store materials and print. However, as soon as exams are over in May, the Tech Team will come through and wipe out all the hard drives, ready or not. Full-time faculty will receive laptops once office assignments are complete; Rashida Batte-Bowden will follow up with you on these.

**Copy Cards.** Upon request, Rashida will give faculty teaching one or two sections a copy card containing 240 copies. Faculty teaching four classes may request an additional card for up to 500 copies. We have a very low copy budget. To minimize copying needs, place most documents on Blackboard for students to download themselves. In addition, peer review sheets (common types) are available in the large faculty offices.

If you have additional copying to do, consider using the RICOH machine, which does not require a copy card, but which is a little trickier to use (and requires a per sheet minimum). To learn how to use this machine, ask a veteran teacher or a member of the CHSS Tech team (located in rm 337) to teach you.

**Copy Machines.** Three copy machines and the Ricoh machine are available in DI 153. The code to enter the copy machine room is 1324.

**Faculty Mailboxes.** Mailboxes are located in DI 439.

**Overloading Courses.** Invariably students will approach you about overloading your course; in other words, they will ask you to add them to your class roster even though it is already at capacity. You are not allowed to make this overload, and you should tell your students so. Inform students that there is a strict policy against overloading classes. Students with extraordinary circumstances should come to the English department. This policy does seem penal, but it is developed from years of experience and in light of the extraordinary efforts we have made, as a department, to request the resources to keep our class size unusually low. At present, a low class size is a promise that the University offers to first-year students. All that said, on occasion the department will be requested to make special allowances for particular students or when enrollment has ballooned unexpectedly. We will resist these pressures strenuously, but on rare occasion the director will inform you that one or two students have been added to your class.

**University Identification Cards.** New employees must obtain a University identification card. It can be used for attendance at on-campus or community-sponsored events. The card is required for withdrawal of books from the Library, access to University buildings after official closing, and other important purposes. Employee identification cards can be obtained from the ID Card Office, located on the lower

levels of the Student Center near the computer lab. Employees must present their official offer letter (available from Phyllis once your paperwork is complete) or a signed verification of employment letter from Human Resources to obtain a card. The identification card must be returned to the Division of Human Resources when employment is terminated. Lost or damaged cards will be replaced at a fee of \$10.

**E-Mail/ISP Accounts.** MSU and the English Department in particular is email dependent. You cannot function without one and without checking your email at least twice a week. (If you have problems with too much mail from discussion lists, simply follow the instructions at the bottom of the problematic email for removal from the list.) We do not make phone calls or seek you out via alternative means; MSU email is required.

Electronic Mail accounts are established for new hires soon after the employee's appointment has been entered into the HRS system in the Division of Human Resources. The Office of Information Technology will issue the username and grant access upon verification of employment.

**Parking Permits.** Convenient parking comes at a cost for students and for faculty, part-time and full-time. Employees must obtain a parking permit to utilize the parking facilities on campus. Permits can be obtained at the Parking Services Office in the Red Hawk Deck, level P1. Appropriate documentation must be obtained and presented in order to receive an employee parking permit such as license plate number, car make and year. For more information, please call the department of Parking Services at extension x7581.

Free parking is only available for those willing and able to walk a distance, and even this parking requires a permit. Around 24 hours after you get a net id and set up a password, you can get a free parking permit for the surface (outdoor) lots at MSU, as an adjunct, instructor, lecturer, etc. The downside is that it's difficult to find a spot unless you teach at 8:30 am!

Cost of a parking permit for the Red Hawk Deck for part-time faculty for 2009 – 2010 was \$275 plus a \$40 deposit for the tag (similar to an EZ pass); also for 2009- 2010, a one semester parking permit cost \$137.50 plus a \$40 dollar deposit. There will be a cost increase for 2010-2011. The cost of a parking permit for full- time faculty is based on salary. Parking permits are available on a first come first serve basis and can be obtained either in person or online. Please check the web site <http://www.montclair.edu/facilities/fs/taps/index.html> regarding the date you can begin applying for a parking permit as well as for hours of operation.

**Faculty Lounge.** A small lounge with a refrigerator and a microwave is located in DI 334. See Phyllis for the door code if you would like to use the room.

**Food.** There are many food services available on campus, including a cafeteria in the Student Center, convenience stores in the basement of the Student Center, Cafe Diem adjacent to the library and Red Hawk Diner.

**Montclair.** Various restaurants and services in Upper Montclair and Montclair can be found [here](http://www.gotomontclairnj.com/).  
<http://www.gotomontclairnj.com/>.

**Payroll.** First-year writing faculty are paid on the regular biweekly payroll. Paychecks are distributed one week after the pay period ends. Regular biweekly paychecks and direct deposit stubs are distributed according to the Regular Payroll schedule via the web at <http://www.montclair.edu/HR/payroll/>. Payday is Friday unless it's a holiday. Under certain limited circumstances, employees can elect to have their paychecks mailed to their home address by making a request to Payroll Services. Please refer to the schedule for dates.

**Pension Forms.** Forms must be filled out every year.

**Part Time Employee Health Benefits.** Chapter 172 provides part-time faculty members and employees at Montclair State University eligibility for enrollment for coverage in the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), provided that the part-time employee is a member of a State administered retirement system. Under the law, the employee can enroll in NJ Direct 15 and the Employee Prescription Drug Plan (Medco). If an eligible employee or faculty member elects to enroll and purchase coverage, the employee or faculty member must pay the full cost of the coverage.

Coverage could begin October 31, 2010, depending on how soon you apply for benefits. Without prescriptions, monthly rates range from \$517.88 for single to \$1,294.70 for family. With prescriptions, monthly rates are an *additional* \$142.16 for single, \$355.42 for family. For member and spouse/partner and parent and child rates, please contact Helen Caruso in Human Resources at x4395.

**Blackboard Training.** A complete training schedule can be found at <https://frontpage.montclair.edu/trainingannounce/index.html>. You will also occasionally receive emails from Susan Graham ([grahams@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:grahams@mail.montclair.edu)) regarding schedule updates.

**Rosters/Sections/Enrollment/Classrooms.** Once you receive your net id, go to the Montclair web site, click [quick links](#), then [web for faculty](#), then [faculty and advisor services](#). Enter your faculty ID (or social security) and pin. There will be a site map for faculty schedules, class lists, etc.

**Payments for Training.** Part-time faculty will be compensated \$500 total for the three-day first year writing seminar, with deductions for missed sessions. Full-time faculty are not compensated.

**First Year Writing Listserv/Mentor Mentee Program.** If you have any questions about teaching and/or classroom management, you can also contact your colleagues by emailing the first year writing listserv at [firstyearwriting@chss-lists.montclair.edu](mailto:firstyearwriting@chss-lists.montclair.edu). If you wish, you may also be matched up with a mentor for your first year. The Mentor Mentee Program matches veteran First-Year Writing faculty with newly hired faculty and will you give the opportunity to discuss any questions and challenges you might be facing in your first year at Montclair State. If you're interested in being matched with a mentor, please contact one of the assistant directors.

## First-Year Writing Faculty Requirements and Supervision

All first-year writing faculty are required to:

- meet classes on time, instruct students according to program guidelines, and provide appropriate and clear assessment of students' work in class.
- be accessible to students. While adjunct faculty are not required to hold office hours (half-time and instructor faculty are), all faculty are required to be available for student consultation.
- submit book orders and syllabi to the English Department for review.
- attend one opening meeting each semester.
- attend one workshop each semester.
- cooperate along department guidelines for regular (though for veterans, increasingly less frequent) reviews of performance through student evaluations and faculty observations. Faculty grades will be reviewed as well through electronic means.

The English Department will support First-Year Writing faculty primarily through the Director of First-Year Writing but also through the assistant directors, secretary, department administrator, and the Chair. Administrative questions should be sent first to the department secretary. It's most effective to contact the director first through email, but best efforts will be made to follow-up email contact through a meeting or at least a phone call. The English Department Chair works closely with the FYW Director, and can provide guidance when the director is unavailable.

### Evaluations

First year writing faculty are evaluated both by their students as well as by faculty.

**Peer Evaluation:** During the course of the semester, you will be contacted by Phyllis Brooks with the name of the faculty member who will be conducting the observation and evaluation. Faculty will review your syllabus and some graded papers and will visit and observe one of your classes. After this, an official evaluation will be written up and placed in your file.

**Student Evaluation:** New first year writing faculty will also be evaluated by their students. About the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester, Phyllis Brooks will send you an email regarding the date when student evaluations will be conducted in your classrooms. A student assistant will visit at either the beginning of your classes or towards the end to hand out the evaluation sheets. You will be asked to leave the room until the evaluations are completed. Once you have submitted your grades, the results of the student evaluations will be emailed to you.

Faculty are expected to participate in activities as detailed by position (lecturer, half-time and adjunct faculty).

Faculty will also have their syllabi and grades reviewed, and will be reviewed in light of extra student feedback volunteered by individual students.

### **Administrative Limits to Re-Hiring**

All questions about continuing employment should be directed to the director. The English Department seeks to re-hire successful faculty to the extent that administrative and other rulings allow, and to the extent that we have courses that need faculty. If the department observes problems or issues with an individual's teaching, our first action will be to consult with faculty and work together to understand the issue, and if necessary, make changes.

Adjunct faculty are hired semester-to-semester, and can work, indefinitely. Half-time faculty are hired on a year-to-year basis, on a two-year limited expectation; English Department policy mandates a two-year limit, with exceptions for extraordinary need. Instructor faculty are hired on a year-to-year basis, with a limit of three years. There is no exception to this policy; it is set by the administration in connection with state law and union contracts which would, in effect, require a university to consider instructors for tenure at the point where instructors began working a fourth year.

## Questions and Answers

### 1. Do you suggest that students do a formal oral presentation during the semester?

A: No, presentations are discouraged. Students have a separate speech requirement, so we do not need to duplicate that experience.

### 2. What is your attendance policy?

A: Two to three absences, no questions asked, excused or not. Beyond that, final grade drops half a grade. I am not interested in doctor's notes and tell students to save their absences for a bad day, the flu, etc. All that said, if a strong student who is regularly prepared and conscientious falls apart and misses three classes, I may choose not to penalize her. I think you can give students breaks on an individual basis, with care. I typically do not promise anything but rather at the end of the semester when I am computing final grades I make a few adjustments to my policy, as I see fit.

### 3. How much information should be included in syllabus/course schedule? Some of the samples seem overwhelming.

A: There is no right answer here. In years gone by, faculty wrote 1 page syllabi and told students very little; they were in charge. Now there are some very long syllabi. They need to be a little bit long so that the program can be consistent – that all faculty are requiring the right amount of papers, responding to drafts, assigning an appropriate amount of reading, writing, etc. Whether or not you detail what you do in each class is up to you. It has its advantages and allows you to follow your own syllabi very closely. But it's not required. The sample syllabi are partially detailed so as to be useful to new faculty. Faculty do not need to copy syllabi for students as they can instead simply be posted to Blackboard.

### 4. Do you advise using a sign-in/sign-out sheet for late arrivals or early exits?

A: No, but you can use your judgment. Such sheets make students think that teachers don't know who they are. You could just make a note of it, and speak individually to any students who were having problems. You are not required to "prove" that students are absent, tardy, or anything else.

### 5. What technology is available in the classrooms to which I am assigned?

A: Highly variable. You need to check out what room you are in and see what is there. If you don't have what you need, call the tech office (x7971) to see what is available for borrowing. Additionally we have a DVD player you can borrow; see Phyllis.

### 6. Is D a passing grade?

A: YES. We have letters A-F, and only F grades are failing grades. Students with D and F grades have the option of repeating the course for an improved grade, with only the best grade factoring into the overall GPA. Please see grade criteria in the Hacker handbook and the web site for descriptions.