Description

How should we assess writing? That apparently simple question raises others: Why should we assess writing? Whose interests are served, and whose are subverted, through writing assessment? What, after all, makes writing “good”? Is it even possible to assess writing? In this seminar we will trace the history of writing assessment, locating its origins in the early intelligence and personality tests developed during the first decades of the twentieth century. We will interrogate the theoretical assumptions that have informed attempts during the past fifty years to determine writing ability and quality, and we will consider the relative strengths and limitations of both large-scale and classroom assessment methods and practices. Indeed, throughout the course of the seminar we will move between classroom applications and writing program considerations. Furthermore, writing assessment always has social consequences, and we will explore the political ramifications of assessing writing.

Textbooks (Tentative)

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