

English 7823/8823
Topics in Composition Studies: Writing Assessment
Fall 2017
Mondays 5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

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)

Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man*. NY: W. W. Norton, 1996.
ISBN: 0393314251

Inoue, Asao. *Antiracist Writing Assessment Ecologies: Teaching and Assessing Writing for a Socially Just Future*. Parlor Press, 2015. ISBN: 1602357730

O'Neill, Peggy, Cindy Moore and Brian Huot. *Guide to College Writing Assessment*. Logan, UT: Utah State UP, 2009. ISBN: 0874217326

White, Edward, Norbert Elliot, and Irvin Peckham. *Very Like a Whale: Assessment of Writing Programs*. Utah State UP, 2015. ISBN: 087421985X