



**ELON**  
UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR  
**Engaged**  
**Learning**

## **Writing Beyond the University: Fostering Writers' Lifelong Learning and Agency**

**2019-2021 Research Seminar**

**Call for Applications**

**Deadline to Apply: November 12, 2018**

The Center for Engaged Learning's 2011-2013 research seminar on *Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, sponsored by Elon University, fostered significant growth in what higher education knows about transfer of writing knowledge and practices. Seminar participants' research appears in a special issue of *Composition Forum*, two edited collections (*Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer*, *Understanding Writing Transfer*), and dozens of other publications. Seminar scholars and others have contributed to our understandings of students' and faculty perceptions of writing transfer (Bergmann & Zepernick; Driscoll), students' meaningful writing experiences (Geller, Eodice, & Lerner), critical transitions within the university (Boyd; Goldschmidt; Gorzelsky, et al.; Hayes, Ferris, & Whithaus; Wardle & Mercer Clement), the ways in which cognitive issues or student dispositions influence writing behaviors (Driscoll & Wells; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak), and teaching for transfer (Robertson & Taczak; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak).

There is, however, a compelling need for more research on (preparing students for) writing beyond the university. A relative few scholars have looked at writing experiences beyond the university (Faigley; Hughes, Gillespie, & Kail; MacKinnon), with many professional/technical writing scholars providing rich case studies of specific workplace contexts, but without a transfer lens. Fewer scholars, though, have focused on transfer beyond the university, examining work-integrated learning spaces like internships and co-ops (Anson & Forsberg; Brent; Dilger & Baird; Jennings), service-learning (Bacon; Bowden & Scott; Zimmerelli), civic activism (Alexander & Jarratt), reflection for transfer for writing center consultants (Driscoll), or writing in self-sponsored spaces (Rosinski).

Writing Beyond the University opens a space for scholars to come together to address the need to know more about writing in contexts beyond the university.

This kind of writing can occur in a number of discrete or overlapping contexts, including...

Workplaces and civic spaces. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Employment while in school
- Employment post-graduation

- Community service volunteer work
- Civic engagement, for example on a social or political campaign
- Service on a non-profit board

Contexts for self-sponsored writing. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Poetry slams / spoken word events
- Online spaces for sharing writing/publishing, such as zines and blogs
- Social media platforms
- Kickstarter / Go-Fund-Me narratives or other proposal pitches
- Fanfiction sites
- Games/gaming
- Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives submissions

Academic contexts that focus on transitions to contexts beyond the classroom or university.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Work-Integrated Learning (e.g., Internships, Co-ops)
- Community-Based Learning or Service-Learning
- Undergraduate Research

### **Research Seminar Focus for Multi-Institutional Studies**

The CEL Research Seminar on Writing Beyond the University aims to add evidence-based research from a multi-institutional and multi-disciplinary lens to address the following overarching research areas and potential sub-questions:

- Understanding writing experiences and writing knowledge development across/among contexts for lifelong learning. Research teams might consider...
  - How are writers navigating the changing nature of communication tasks, tools, technologies, and strategies in a volatile world?
  - What does a writer's lifespan look like – how is it defined, described, experienced – across different and changing contexts?
  - What types of collaborative writing experiences do writers encounter across different contexts?
  - How are writers' developing professional identities, subjectivities, and practices informed by writing experiences *within* academic contexts that give writers opportunities to focus on transitions to contexts *beyond* the university?
- Exploring writing and writers' experiences, prior knowledge, and writerly capacity. Research teams might consider...
  - What writing is composed in contexts beyond the university?
  - How is writing perceived, valued, and conceptualized by stakeholders in these contexts?
  - What writing are alumni encountering beyond the university?

- How do writers manage/use/adapt academic writing knowledge into writing beyond the university?
- How do pedagogies like project-based learning influence writers' practices in contexts beyond the university?
- Facilitating writers' ongoing self-agency and networked learning (both *networks* of people and *networked* access to and integration of knowledge). Research teams might consider...
  - What habits of mind and dispositions facilitate writers' ongoing self-agency and networked learning, enabling them to respond to new rhetorical situations for writing?
  - How might universities build writers' capacities for writing, in and beyond the university – as well as writers' appreciation for their own self-agency based on their prior knowledge and experiences?
  - What practices, conditions, etc. facilitate writers' transfer of knowledge and practices among writing contexts beyond the university?
  - How might universities partner with industry, civic organizations, and others to foster writers' lifelong learning?

The Center's research seminars employ mixed methods to explore multi-institutional questions about engaged learning, and research teams will be encouraged to work with diverse populations of research participants/subjects, including students, alumni, and community/workplace partners from historically underrepresented groups. We anticipate that some participants in the 2019-2021 research seminar may establish longitudinal research plans, with collaborations continuing beyond the dates of the sponsored research meetings.

### **Research Cohorts and Seminar Logistics**

The Center for Engaged Learning Seminar will support multi-institutional research addressing this theme, with three one-week summer meetings on the Elon University campus.

- **July 14 – 19, 2019:** Participants will meet on Elon's campus to collaboratively develop and plan multi-institutional research projects to be conducted throughout the following year at the participants' own institutions. These research cohorts will enable larger scale studies and explorations of the impact of different institutional contexts.
- **July 12 – 17, 2020:** Participants will meet to share their initial multi-institutional results and to plan a more sharply focused research agenda for the research cohort for year two.
- **July 11 – 16, 2021:** Participants will reconvene to share their year-two results, to plan continuations of their work, and to host a conference on the seminar theme.

Participants will produce significant, concrete outcomes. [Past Center for Engaged Learning research seminars](#) have generated [edited volumes, journal articles and book chapters](#), [white papers](#), and conference presentations – as well as local initiatives on participants' home campuses.

Elon University will provide lodging and meals for seminar participants during the seminar's 2019-2021 summer meetings. In addition, each participant will be reimbursed up to \$500/year (up to \$1000/year for international participants) for travel to the seminar's summer meetings at Elon University. Full reimbursement policies will be distributed to accepted participants. Other participant expenses, including travel costs above the limit and any research costs, will be paid by the participants and/or their home institutions.

## How to Apply

The review committee will select participants from a range of institution types (e.g., research-intensive universities, liberal arts colleges, teaching institutions, etc.) and geographic locations to ensure variety in the seminar's multi-institutional studies. The Center for Engaged Learning is committed to a diverse community of scholars across our programs and welcomes all applicants.

To apply, [submit a completed application](#) and abbreviated curriculum vita (CV, 4 pages maximum) by **November 12, 2018**. The online application form asks for the following information (limit each answer to 250 words or fewer):

- Which research area above are you most interested in examining, and why? You may highlight a sub-question or topic if appropriate, but please keep in mind that accepted participants will collaborate on developing *shared* research questions for their research seminar study.
- How does this topic fit with your existing scholarly/professional work or an anticipated trajectory for your scholarly/professional identity?
- What research methods do you have experience using, and what research methods might you employ to study this theme?
- How do your research interests relate to your institution's or organization's priorities or programs?
- What kinds of expertise or connections do you bring to the study of writing beyond the university?

[More than one person per institution may apply](#), particularly if institutional representatives are interested in different research areas. Although CEL Seminar projects will be multi-institutional, applicants should not form these teams before they apply; CEL Seminar leaders will create initial teams based on applicants' information.

A review committee, including the seminar leaders, will review applications, make selections, and notify all applicants by December 21, 2018. Questions about the application and selection process should be directed to [centerforengagedlearning@elon.edu](mailto:centerforengagedlearning@elon.edu).

Learn more at:

[www.centerforengagedlearning.org/cel-seminars/writing-beyond-the-university-research-seminar/](http://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/cel-seminars/writing-beyond-the-university-research-seminar/)