

About Us

Instructor



Denise Comer, English Composition I Professor

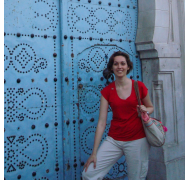
Denise is an Assistant Professor of the Practice of Writing Studies and Director of First-Year Writing at Duke University. She earned her Ph.D. in English Literature from the University of South Carolina, and she has been teaching writing for over fifteen years, twelve of which have been at Duke. Her leadership with several initiatives for Duke and the Durham community demonstrate her investment in teaching writing to all learners: a writing course for students who need more time and preparation with college-level writing, many of whom are first-generation/low-income; integrating responsiveness to English Language Learners across all first-year writing courses; writing workshops for low-income, high-potential urban middle-school children; and the [Duke-RMHD Family Story Project](#), a writing-based program for chronically and fatally ill children and families staying at the Ronald McDonald House of Durham.

Prior to Duke, she taught writing at the University of South Carolina, Chico State University, Butte Community College, and Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Her scholarship explores writing pedagogy, writing program administration, and the intersections between technology and the teaching of writing. She has two books forthcoming from Fountainhead Press in 2014: *Writing in Transit: A Reader* (ed.) and *It's Just a Dissertation: The Irreverent Guide to Transforming Your Dissertation from Daunting to Doable to Done* (co-written with Barbara Gina Garrett).

Denise grew up in a suburb of Washington, D.C. When not working, she enjoys traveling and spending time with friends and family. She lives in North Carolina with her husband and their three children.

[Admin Help](#)

Academic Consultants

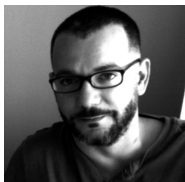


Maral Erol, Disciplinary Consultant, Social Sciences

Maral Erol is a postdoctoral teaching fellow at Duke University, where she has been teaching writing-intensive courses since 2008. The courses she teaches most often are Gender, Science and Technology, which explores the relations between science, technology and gender, and On the Boundaries of Medicine, which studies controversial issues related to the social aspects of medicine. In these two courses, she uses a combination of Science and Technology Studies literature as well as Medical Anthropology and Medical Sociology texts.

Maral has a PhD in Science and Technology Studies from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, and a BA and MA in Political Science and International Relations. Her research interests are gender, science and technology relations with a focus on biomedical technologies and medicalization. After completing her doctoral dissertation project on medicalization of menopause in Turkey, she published articles in the journals Medical Anthropology, Social Sciences and Medicine, and Sexualities, and contributed book chapters in several edited collections. She is currently working on her second project on the discourses of normal menstruation and the NovaSure procedure. She is also co-editing a book that brings together research from across social sciences and humanities on how individual and collective lives in Turkey have been transformed in the last twenty years.

Her work and life is divided between Durham, and Istanbul. When in Durham, she enjoys spending time with her husband, and discovering new places in town. When in Istanbul, she enjoys having Turkish coffee on the balcony with her parents, and rediscovering the city she loves.



David Font-Navarette, Disciplinary Consultant, Humanities

David Font-Navarrete is a musician, artist, and ethnomusicologist. He was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico and moved to Miami, Florida as a young man. After earning a BA degree in Anthropology/Sociology from Antioch College, he spent more than a decade as a professional musician and artist. He earned an MA from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2007, then earned a PhD from York University in 2011. Currently, he is a Lecturing Fellow at Duke University's Thompson Writing Program, teaching a seminar titled "World Music in a Post-Digital World." His current research projects include several of his diverse interests—Afro-Cuban, West African, electro-acoustic, and experimental art and sound—and often emphasizes the roles of history and technology in musical creativity. Since 1999, he runs Elegua Records, a small independent music label.



Paul Kei Matsuda, ESL Expert

Paul Kei Matsuda is Professor of English and Director of Second Language Writing at Arizona State University. He has published widely on second language writing, and has received a number of prestigious awards for his publications. A sought after speaker, he has presented plenary and keynote talks as well as lectures and workshops in various countries, including China, Hong Kong, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Qatar, Spain, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, and throughout the United States.

Paul has previously served as the director of writing programs at the University of New Hampshire and Arizona State University. He also has taught courses for teachers and researchers of writing at Purdue University, Miami University, and the University of New Hampshire. He has also held visiting professor and researcher positions at Nagoya University (Japan), Tamkang University (Taiwan), Thammasat University (Thailand), Penn State University (USA), the University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong SAR), and the University of Utah (USA).

Paul lives in Phoenix, Arizona, where he enjoys hiking and mountain biking. He also enjoys snorkeling and scuba diving as well as cooking and photography.



Marcia Rego, Writing Assessment Expert

Marcia Rego is Assistant Professor of the Practice and Director for Faculty Development and Assessment at Duke's Thompson Writing Program. She spent most of her life moving back and forth between Brazil and the U.S, earning a degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Brasilia, and a PhD in Cultural Anthropology from UC San Diego. She has done fieldwork in Brazil and in Cape Verde, West Africa, and is currently working on a book titled *Mingling Tongues: Slavery, Language and Nation in Cape Verde*.

Marcia teaches writing-intensive courses on Anthropology of the Body, Human Rights, Intercultural Communication, Anthropology of Health And Illness, and ethnographic research. She lives in Durham, where she shares a home with her husband, a daughter, and a border collie. When she is not working, she is usually making art with her family, reacquainting with her yoga mats, or driving her daughter around the Triangle to her many rehearsals.



Rebecca Vidra, Disciplinary Consultant, Natural Sciences

Rebecca Vidra is on the faculty of the Nicholas School of the Environment at Duke University. She is trained as a restoration ecologist, receiving her PhD in Forestry from North Carolina State University and her MS in Ecology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her background and interests in environmental communications lead her to Duke in 2004 as a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow where she taught environmental writing seminars in the Thompson Writing Program. She currently is working on a series of essays that examine the ethical questions of restoration and reclaiming native grounds, while serving as the faculty advisor to the literary journal, *the eno*. She is interested in using the tools of powerful writing for communicating the science and ethics of environmental issues. In 2013, she will begin a new research project that ties together cultural and ecological restoration in two very different places: the North Shore of Kauai and the southside of Dallas.

Rebecca teaches courses in Restoration Ecology and Environmental Ethics and serves as the Director of Undergraduate

Studies for the Environmental Sciences and Policy program. She teaches in a distance-based graduate program, the Duke Environmental Leadership Program, and tries out all kinds of fun technology to make the learning more engaging for her students. She is looking forward to working with her colleagues in this new Coursera course.

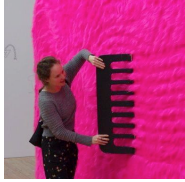
Rebecca enjoys winter sunrises and the fireworks of autumn trees from her Chapel Hill home, which she shares with her husband, two young daughters, a dog, cat, many chiggers, and a couple neglected yoga mats. Her family spends as much time on and near the sea as possible.



Edward M. White, Writing Assessment Expert

Edward M. White is a visiting scholar in English at the University of Arizona and professor emeritus of English at California State University, San Bernardino, where he served prolonged periods as English department chair and coordinator of the upper-division university writing program. State-wide in California, he has been coordinator of the CSU Writing Skills Improvement Program and for over a decade was director of the English Equivalency Examination program. On the national scene, he directed the consultant-evaluator service of WPA for fifteen years and in 1993 was elected to a second term on the executive committee of CCCC. His *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (1985) has been called "required reading" for the profession; a new edition in 1994 received an MLA Mina Shaughnessey award "for outstanding research." He is author of more than 100 articles and book chapters on literature and the teaching of writing, and has written five English Composition textbooks, most recently *Inquiry* (2004) and *The Promise of America* (2006). His *Developing Successful College Writing Programs* was published in 1989; *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating* was published in a 4th edition by St. Martin's in 2007. He is also coeditor of three essay collections for the MLA and SIU presses. His work has recently been recognized by the publication of *Writing Assessment in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Edward M. White* (Hampton, 2012), and by the 2011 Exemplar Award from the CCCC. His forthcoming book on the assessment of writing programs is scheduled for publication by Utah State University Press in 2014.

Support Staff



Kendra Atkin, Online Course Associate

Kendra Atkin works in Duke University's Center for Instructional Technology (CIT). Here she is helping Professor Comer shoot videos and build her course on English Composition within the Coursera platform. As the course continues, she hopes to assist in making its first iteration run smoothly!

Kendra recently completed an M.A. in Visual Culture from Lund University in Sweden, where she focused on popular culture and the relationship between visual media and hapticality (a sense of touch). She received a B.A. from the Gallatin School of Individualized Studies at New York University with a concentration on continental philosophy and feminist video art. She plans to start a PhD this fall.



Yvonne Belanger, Course Assessment

Yvonne Belanger leads assessment and evaluation for Duke's Center for Instructional Technology (CIT) and will be supporting data collection, analysis and reporting on student learning outcomes and evaluation of other course outcomes. Her expertise includes educational evaluation, qualitative and quantitative research methods, survey and questionnaire design, interviewing and focus group facilitation, data analysis and data visualization. In addition to designing and evaluating online courses, including other Duke Coursera MOOCs, her experience with online education includes having been a student in online courses for credit as well as completing the 2012 MITx pilot course, 6.002x Circuits and Electronics. She holds an M.S. in Instructional Design, Development and Evaluation from Syracuse University with a concentration in Applied Research and Evaluation and a B.A. from St. John's College, Annapolis.



Shawn Miller, Project Manager

Shawn leads the Center for Instructional Technology's work with other groups on campus to plan the evolution of Duke's suite of eLearning tools, platforms and collaborations including Sakai, WordPress, Kaltura, Coursera and others. Shawn has extensive experience working with groups across the university and with technology vendors to select, integrate and support tools for teaching and learning.

Shawn was previously a Senior Academic Technology Consultant for CIT. He was project leader for Duke's transition from Blackboard to Sakai (2011-2012) and led Duke's implementation of WordPress (2009-2011). Before coming to Duke, Shawn was Manager of Media Production for Instruction Support Services at the University of Texas at El Paso. Shawn holds an MA in Professional Writing and Rhetoric from the University of Texas.



Elise Mueller, Project Manager

Elise is an Academic Technology Consultant for Duke University's Center for Instructional Technology. She helps the languages instructors integrate technology tools into their teaching. In addition, she consults with faculty creating Coursera courses. She is a former German professor and graduate student advisor who loves to improve the teaching of others.

Berlin, Nebraska, and San Diego are just a few of the places Elise has lived. But she has adopted Durham, NC as her hometown. Travel, good food, and family are her definitions of happiness.

Guest Lecturers



Greta Boers, Course Librarian

Greta Boers has been working at Duke since 2002, originally as First Year Library Instruction Coordinator, working closely with the Thompson Writing Program where she first met Dr. Comer. Currently she is the librarian for the Classical Studies Department and the Program in Linguistics. In addition she teaches Afrikaans in the German Languages and Literature Department. Her commitment to an interdisciplinary approach to life generally is further demonstrated by her work for the last two years, which include an article on twin studies in medicine, published in the 21st Century Handbook for Anthropology and a recent book review for the Art Libraries Journal, as well curating two exhibits, one featuring her own collection of Uzbeki Suzanis and another on West African textiles.

She is also an avid gardener and an enthusiastic cook. She is owned by three cats. Her BA degree is in Anthropology from Emory University, where she was the Anthropology Librarian for 6 years. Her MLIS is from the University of South Carolina. Greta's professional interests include library skills assessment; the place of library skills development in the college curriculum; and the impact these research competencies have on creativity in scholarship.

Daniel Coyle, Author of *The Talent Code*

<http://thetalentcode.com/author/>

Live Google Hangout, April 2nd.

David Jarmul, Associate Vice President for News and Communications at Duke University

<http://newsoffice.duke.edu/contact-us/contact-news-communications#jarmul>

Special guest lecture, Week 11 (May 27 - June 2).

David Jarmul is Duke University's associate vice president of news and communications. He directs the news service, oversees the top-level web pages and coordinates a variety of communications activities, including a nationally syndicated op-ed article service. An honors graduate of Brown University, David came to Duke in 2001 after holding communications positions with the National Academy of Sciences, a major philanthropy and an international development organization. He is a former president of

the D.C. Science Writers Association and served with the U.S. Peace Corps in Nepal. His publications include two anthologies of op-ed articles, "Headline News, Science Views," which he edited while at the National Academy of Sciences. He has taught numerous workshops on how to write and publish op-ed articles.

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