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First Semester: Graduate Students, Teaching Writing, and the Challenge of Middle Ground (Studies in Writing and Rhetoric)

Jessica Restaino

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Jessica Restaino offers a snapshot of the first semester experiences of graduate student writing teachers as they navigate predetermined course syllabi and materials, the pressures of grading, the influences of foundational scholarship, and their own classroom authority. With rich qualitative data gathered from course observations, interviews, and correspondence, Restaino traces four graduate students' first experiences as teachers at a large, public university. Yet the circumstances and situations she relates will ring familiar at widely varying institutions.

First Semester: Graduate Students, Teaching Writing, and the Challenge of Middle Ground presents a fresh and challenging theoretical approach to understanding and improving the preparation of graduate students for the writing classroom. Restaino uses a three-part theoretical construct—labor, action, and work, as defined in Hannah Arendt's work of political philosophy, *The Human Condition*—as a lens for reading graduate students' struggles to balance their new responsibilities as teachers with their concurrent roles as students. Arendt's concepts serve as access points for analysis, raising important questions about graduate student writing teachers' first classrooms and uncovering opportunities for improved support and preparation by university writing programs.

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