

Applying for Teaching Positions at Community Colleges

WHY COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Community colleges, also called two-year colleges because they offer associate's degrees, currently comprise about 41 percent of higher education in the United States today. There are approximately 1200 community colleges across the United States, making these institutions a good option for individuals with geographical constraints. Community colleges are usually locally supported and primarily publicly funded, and they provide vocational training as well as postsecondary education to students who intend to transfer to four-year institutions.

While a master's degree is required to teach at most community colleges, institutions are also eager to attract highly qualified PhDs. Graduate students who excel at teaching and enjoy working with a diverse student population may find teaching at a community college to be a good fit for them. Community college faculty members are not expected to conduct research and publish as a condition of tenure, but teaching loads are fairly heavy (usually around 15 credit hours/semester).

FINDING COMMUNITY COLLEGE JOBS

Like bachelor's-granting institutions, most full-time, tenure track faculty positions are nationally advertised. Some community college postings are advertised through scholarly/research societies, so look to the organizations within your own discipline.

- HigherEdJobs.com and the Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com) are also good places to look for two-year faculty jobs.
- Most community colleges will also advertise on their own websites. The University of Texas at Austin provides a list of U.S. community colleges by state: www.utexas.edu/world/comcol/state

TIPS ON PREPARING EFFECTIVE APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Use a two-page résumé, not a CV.
- Emphasize your relevant experience and commitment to teaching in both your résumé and cover letter.
- De-emphasize your research experience. Accentuating your scholarship can suggest that you do not understand the nature of the institution to which you are applying.
- Show enthusiasm for the position and explain why you are interested in teaching there.



Kathleen Kelly

333 E. Main St. • Urbana, IL 61801 • (217) 555-5555 • cstudent@illinois.edu

Profile

Creative and passionate teacher dedicated to fostering a student-centered classroom environment based on mutual respect and collaboration. Committed to helping students identify and develop their own passions while becoming successful, confident writers.

Education

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

PhD in English

Expected graduation: May 20xx

MA in English

December 20xx

Minor in Gender and Women's Studies

University of Portland

May 20xx

BA in English, Valedictorian

Awards: Best Senior Thesis, Honors Student of the Year (20xx)

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Rhetoric and Composition

August 20xx-present

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Urbana, IL

- Designed and taught *Introduction to Composition* classes for first-year college students.
- Included on List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent for eight semesters based on outstanding student evaluations.
- Conducted conferences with students for each major paper assignment to address individual goals and progress.
- Emphasized research as an on-going process of discovery and growth, encouraging students to see research and inquiry as activities central to daily life. Teach students to conduct research and to critically evaluate the quality of sources.
- Evaluated student writing with an emphasis on skills that are transferable to other classes and contexts.
- Worked with a diverse population of students, including many international students and ESL students, and developed strategies for responding effectively to a wide range of writing abilities.
- Encouraged students to develop writing goals and then work to tailor each assignment to these goals.
- Used online learning management systems to organize content and communicate with students outside of class to encourage clarity and transparency.

Teaching Assistant, Literature

August 20xx-present

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Urbana, IL

- Designed and taught introductory literature classes, including four sections of *Introduction to Poetry* and one section of *Introduction to American Literature*.
- Included on List of Teachers Ranked as Excellent for three semesters based on outstanding student recommendations.
- Focused on local artists and slam poets to emphasize the interaction of poetry and everyday life.
- Integrated students' own poetry and poetic experiments into class discussion to encourage students to think of literature as a living, interactive art in which they play a part.

RÉSUMÉ SAMPLE (CONTINUED)

- Emphasized the use of primary sources to stress the historical contexts of each text.
- Utilized a course blog to encourage informal discussions of reading material outside of class.

Teaching Assistant, Aerospace Engineering

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

August 20xx-present

Urbana, IL

- Graded English language and argument skills for senior Aerospace design courses.
- Designed and delivered presentations on writing and presentation style.

Teaching Interests

Rhetoric and composition, American poetry, feminist and critical pedagogy, 20th century American literature, women's and gender studies.

Professional Experience

Chief Editor

The Cutting Ed Writing Center

Summer 20xx-present

- Created a writing and editing center in collaboration with the CEO of The Cutting Ed, an educational consulting business.
- Provide editing and other writing consulting services to clients from a distance, utilizing instructional technologies including e-mail, web-conferencing software, and an online project management application.
- Edited content and copy for academic articles, dissertations, and proposals.

Content and Copy Editor

Departments of Anthropology and Comparative Literature

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Fall 20xx-present

- Edited academic book collections entitled *South Korea's Neo-liberal Educational Transformation: Ethnographic Perspectives* (Fall 20xx-Spring 20xx) and *Symbolism, Its Origins and Its Consequences* (present).
- Worked with many ESL writers to improve English usages and idioms.

Freelance Editor

Fall 20xx-Summer 20xx

- Edited a variety of academic articles and dissertations in Education and Anthropology.

Service

Graduate Admissions Committee, Department of English

Spring 20xx

- Served as a knowledgeable resource for visiting potential graduate students, addressing their questions and concerns and matching them with other graduate students in their field.
- Maintained email and phone contact with potential students before, during, and after their visits to answer any questions that they might have.

Rhetoric Textbook Advisory Committee, Department of English

Spring 20xx

- Provided feedback on potential rhetoric textbooks for the 20xx-20xx school year.
- Collaborated with the other members of the advisory committee to finalize textbook decisions and discuss the structure of the common syllabus.

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COVER LETTER SAMPLE

Kathleen Kelly

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April 17, 20xx

North Portland Community College
9600 College Way North
Portland, Oregon 98103

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the English Instructor position at North Portland Community College. I am very excited about the prospect of working at North Portland, teaching a diverse group of students and focusing my time and energy towards mentoring students, collaborating with colleagues, and developing innovative, effective courses. In the last five years, I have designed and taught nineteen introductory composition and literature classes, and I have experience teaching students from many different cultural backgrounds, including many international students and students who possess a wide range of writing abilities. I have always been passionate about reading and writing, and I bring that energy into the classroom, encouraging my students to see each step of the writing process as a dynamic way to develop their ideas and to express their individual strengths.

My classes are designed with diverse groups of students in mind because they draw on students' own experiences as sources for conversation, writing, and research. These classes become more successful as student diversity increases because both the students and I are presented with a more vivid array of life experiences and knowledge. In my composition classes, for example, the first major research paper is an autoethnography, which allows students to develop their own voice and sense of authority by asking them to write about their own culture—a subject on which they are experts. I then ask them to expand their cultural conversations by doing research on elements related to their lives and aspirations. In my literature classes, students contribute their own poetry or poetry that they love to the class so that they can understand how their voices interact with the poets that we read. We have both daily poetry readings and a larger, more formal reading at the end of the year.

Because writing is a critical skill for all students to learn in order to succeed, I concentrate on helping students to develop individual writing goals and then adapt our class goals accordingly. I approach student writing on many levels by addressing both sentence-level and global issues. I believe that by providing students with a better understanding of structural grammar, we give them fuller access to many institutions, including their academic and professional lives. I also value creative ideas or viewpoints, especially when these ideas encourage responses from the rest of the class. This semester, my composition class is composed primarily of international students, many of whom have little confidence in their English language abilities. By placing students in smaller groups with students from other national backgrounds, I encourage all students to share their expertise and to learn from one another.

I believe that the most effective, energetic literature classes engage with local artists and contexts. Since many of my students come from Chicago, my poetry classes always begin with readings of Chicago poets such as Gwendolyn Brooks and Patricia Smith. I would be very excited to design classes for North Portland Community College that focus on Northwest artists such as Sherman Alexie, Octavia Butler, Gary Snyder, and Jimi Hendrix. In my literature classes, I draw on a diversity of sources to call attention to the richness and variety of poetry and American literature. In my current class, we have discussed how W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of double-consciousness can apply to both slave narratives and spoken

COVER LETTER SAMPLE (CONTINUED)

word poetry, and we have also analyzed Bruce Springsteen’s “Born in the U.S.A.” to discuss the tension between the exuberant patriotism of the chorus and the themes of class struggle and the anti-war messages of the verses. My classes focus on different learning styles by encouraging students to draw or freewrite when they are confused; these activities not only give students better access to literature, but they also encourage them to think about reading as a sensory, even tactile experience that can relate immediately to their own lives.

I am interested in online teaching, and I have already used many online learning tools in my classroom, including course management software system such as Moodle and Compass, which allow students to access course material and grades at any time, to interact with one another through discussion questions and blog posts, and to collaborate on projects and share writing ideas. I often hold “virtual office hours” with students over chat programs or Skype, especially when they are struggling with research or utilizing library resources. In my work as an editor, I have employed live sessions using screen sharing so that I can show clients my editing style in “real time.” I look forward to designing and teaching online courses in the future.

Teaching is the highlight of my day. It inspires and energizes me, and I want to devote my time to working with students and helping them to develop, express, and exchange their ideas. I am inspired by the community college mission to extend educational opportunities to students from diverse backgrounds, including first generation college students, ESL and international students, and students with a wide range of educational experiences and goals. I would be honored to be part of the process of making college more accessible and manageable for all students. As a Pacific northwest native, I look forward to returning to teach in the Portland community.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Kelly

John Preston

1618 N. Lynn Street • Champaign, IL 61820 • (217) 555-4444 • jstudent@illinois.edu

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois

- PhD in Musicology, expected May 20XX

Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

- MA in Musicology, 20XX
- Master's Thesis: "Expressionism in Nineteenth Century German Opera," directed by Dr. Andrew Bradshaw

Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

- BA in Music, 20XX
- Senior Research Project: "Effects of Note Configuration on Steel Drum Performance Technique," directed by Dr. Shannon Spencer

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, University of Illinois School of Music, Urbana, IL. May 20XX to present

- Led discussion sections for non-music-major undergraduate students in an *Introduction to World Music* course
- Created writing assignments and quizzes that encouraged students to see connections between their own music cultures and the music cultures of other peoples
- Led performance-based activities (for example, playing Brazilian samba and Australian didgeridu)
- Promoted student success by making myself available to students outside of classroom and office hours, through email, special appointments, and an evening review session before the final exam

Research Assistant, University of Illinois School of Music, Urbana, IL. August 20XX to May 20XX

- Arranged 12 pieces of music for salsa band
- Prepared 21 musical excerpts for publication using Finale 20XX

Teaching Assistant, Michigan State University School of Music, East Lansing, MI. August 20XX to May 20XX

- Led discussion sections for non-music-major undergraduate students in two Integrated Arts and Humanities courses (*Music and Culture: Music in the Spotlight* and *Music and Culture: Introduction to World Music*)
- Led undergraduate music majors in a two-semester historical survey of Western art music
- Prepared and taught lectures for *Music and Culture: Music in the Spotlight* course
- Addressed diverse abilities and learning styles by allowing students to choose from a variety of assignment options
- Enriched class experience by arranging for guest speakers and activities outside the classroom (for example, a museum trip and a dress rehearsal for a musical-theater production)
- Participated in teaching workshops offered by the Michigan State University Teaching Assistant Program (including workshops entitled *Technology in the Classroom* and *Teaching the Millennial Generation*)
- Promptly returned graded assignments to students
- Received excellent evaluations from my students and supervisors

K-12 Substitute Teacher, Kent County Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids, MI. May 20XX to June 20XX

- Taught core academic subjects, music, and physical education to students ages 5 to 19
- Promoted courteous conduct by demonstrating and insisting on respectful behavior

RÉSUMÉ SAMPLE (CONTINUED)

Percussion Instructor, Mt. Pleasant, MI, and East Lansing, MI. September 20XX to August 20XX

- Demonstrated marching fundamentals and performance technique to high school drumline students and helped students develop marching percussion skills
- Continually assessed student ability levels during auditions, full rehearsals, and one-on-one interactions
- Wrote drumline feature music and rearranged drumline parts to appropriately challenge students of varying skill levels
- Taught private lessons to students ages 6 to 20
- Helped students select and prepare appropriate music for recitals and auditions

COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEER WORK

- University of Illinois Excellence in Teaching Committee, September 20XX to present
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra, annotator for *Performance* Magazine, Issue No. 1 for 20XX-20XX season
- Michigan State University, annotator for Symphony Orchestra programs, 20XX to 20XX
- Michigan State University Day of Marching Percussion, volunteer, September 20XX and October 20XX
- Michigan State University Graduate Employees Union, steward for music department, 20XX to 20XX

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois

- Steel Band/World Music Ensemble, Member, 20XX to 20XX
- I-Pan Steel Band, Member, 20XX to 20XX
- Salsa Band, Timbalera, 20XX to 20XX
- Summer Concert Band, Section Percussion, 20XX
- Kalimba Ensemble, Member, 20XX

Michigan State University

- Symphony Orchestra, Section Percussion, 20XX to 20XX
- Percussion Ensemble, Member, 20XX to 20XX
- Wind Symphony, Section Percussion, 20XX to 20XX
- Concert Orchestra, Section Percussion, 20XX

Lansing Symphony Orchestra

- Substitute, Section Percussion, 20XX to 20XX

Grand Rapids Symphonic Band

- Section Percussion, 20XX to 20XX

Hohner Institute of Percussion, Alma, MI

- Percussion Works Project, Member, 20XX to 20XX

Central Michigan University

- Wind Symphony, Section Percussion, 20XX to 20XX
- Percussion Ensemble, Member, 20XX to 20XX
- Chippewa Marching Band, Member, 20XX

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Musicological Society
- College Music Society
- Percussive Arts Society
- Society for American Music

COVER LETTER SAMPLE

1618 N. Lynn Street
Champaign, IL 61820

31 July 20XX

Music/Humanities Search Committee
Golden Gate Community College
Mail Code 8041
PO Box 40010
Hope, MI 48901

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to apply for the “Faculty-Music/Humanities and the Arts” position at Golden Gate Community College recently posted on the Golden Gate Community College website. Dr. Clarissa Williams, my master’s thesis advisor and chair of the musicology department at Michigan State University, encouraged me to apply. I was excited to hear about this opportunity because I believe my experience teaching students from a variety of backgrounds, my commitment to excellence in teaching, and my desire to teach in my home state make me a very good match for this position.

As a teaching assistant at the University of Illinois and at Michigan State University, I have demonstrated an ability to engage students from diverse academic, musical, and cultural backgrounds. I have addressed different learning styles and abilities by allowing students to select their assignments from several options. In my *Music and Culture* recitation class at Michigan State, for example, students could build an instrument, interview a musician, perform for the class, or review a video for one of their project grades. In all of the courses I have taught to non-music majors, I have incorporated hands-on, performance-based activities into the curriculum. This summer I have helped students experience playing didjeridu, Gamelan Gong Kebyar, Agbekor drumming, and Samba Batucada in my *Introduction to World Music* class. In my teaching, I emphasize the need to consider music within its social, political, and intellectual contexts. I encourage students to share their own music cultures with one another through assignments and discussion section activities. I am firmly committed to the music education of students and audiences from all types of academic, musical, and cultural backgrounds.

My coursework and research have covered topics in a wide variety of time periods and geographical locations. In addition to surveys of western classical music history and introductory world music courses, I am prepared to develop courses on American popular music, opera history, film music, Wagner, romanticism, and twentieth century music. Furthermore, my experience as a teaching assistant for the Center for Integrative Studies in the Arts and Humanities at Michigan State University has prepared me to teach music from a global, interdisciplinary perspective.

Along with coursework and research, being a percussionist has shaped who I am as a teacher. I have come to value the variety of skill sets among different players in percussion ensembles, wind ensembles, and string orchestras. Through playing in steel bands I have become familiar with alternate ways of visualizing and explaining tonal and modal relationships. As a performer, I have experienced music as a participant-observer rather than an observer. I try to share this perspective with my students whenever possible, with

COVER LETTER SAMPLE (CONTINUED)

hands-on activities and group participation exercises. My hope is that my students can feel the same thrill of performing that I have experienced as a percussionist.

Throughout my career, I have demonstrated an ability to collaborate with colleagues and contribute to my field. This spring I volunteered at a conference titled *Genetic Criticism in an Interdisciplinary Context: Literature, Visual Arts, Theater, Music* at the University of Illinois and presented a paper at the College Music Society's Midwest Chapter Meeting at Bowling Green University. I regularly attend the American Musicological Society's *Teaching Music History Day* and the Percussive Arts Society's *Michigan Day of Percussion* conferences. I consider myself a lifelong learner and I take pleasure in gaining new insights and sharing my own views with others.

I am interested in teaching at GGCC because I believe high quality arts education should be available to all citizens. Studying music benefits both students and the community as a whole. I value GGCC's commitment to increasing educational opportunities and I would love to help GGCC in its mission to improve the quality of life and standard of living of my fellow Michiganders. I am very enthusiastic about serving the needs of GGCC students and I welcome an opportunity to discuss my teaching with you.

Sincerely,

John Preston