

Composition Studies
RWS 6319
Spring 2022
HUDS 313
Mondays and Wednesdays 4:30-5:50

Contemporary Topics in Composition Studies

Contact Information

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UTEP Catalog Description

An investigation of research and theories in composition studies from the 1960's to the present, with emphasis on critical literacy and writing in cultural contexts.

Course Description

RWS 6319 will introduce you to the field of composition studies as well as to the larger disciplinary domain of rhetoric and writing studies that simultaneously emerged. The goal is to familiarize you with the evolution of some of the field's key conversations and provide you with a disciplinary framework to ground your scholarly contributions to these conversations. The course is in part a historical survey, less of the origins, and more of the development of a discipline. It is organized primarily across topics or primary issues that have dominated scholarly conversations from the mid-'60s to the present, noting the ways they have been imagined, complicated, and reimagined. In our readings, we will strive to understand the writer's position and arguments, along with how and where they're contextualizing their work. The course will survey theoretical approaches to writing and the questions raised by those theories. It will also consider composition as a situated and relational practice. In part, our goal will be to understand the act of writing itself—how it takes place, what effects it has on people, and how it functions within culture. Questions stemming from our discussions will direct us to think deeply about our own positions as writers, students, teachers and workers, and as critical citizens. Our focus will be on the production of writing and on the conditions that surround the act of writing. Composition—also known as Writing Studies—is a field that concerns itself centrally—though not exclusively—with the teaching of writing. Therefore, much of what we read will concentrate on theorizing writing in classrooms and applying theory to classroom practices; however, we will also concentrate on the writing practices people employ in situations outside of the classroom. This course is focused more on theorizing writing as it is practiced than on understanding teaching practices. By the end of the course, you should have a clear idea of the theories and situations that shape the discipline; you should also consider your own positions in relation to composition theories and pedagogies. This semester, our focus will be on a few of the many contemporary conversations in the field, some that you will want to enter and may want to participate in during and beyond the scope of the class.

Objectives

By the end of the term, students should

- understand key conversations in the history and theory of composition studies
- articulate theoretical commitments in the context of disciplinary conversations

- account for their commitments vis-à-vis attention to politics of relation, location, and position
- participate actively in disciplinary conversations through research and writing

Required Reading

Fine, Michelle. *Just Research in Contentious Times: Widening the Methodological Imagination*. Teachers College, Columbia University, 2018.

Hitt, Allison Harper. *Rhetorics of Overcoming: Rewriting Narratives of Disability and Accessibility in Writing Studies*. CCCC/NCTE, 2021.

Lockett, Alexandria L., Ruiz, Iris D., Sanchez, James Chase, and Carter, Christopher. *Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods*. The WAC Clearinghouse/University Press of Colorado, 2021. Available as a free download from the WAC Clearinghouse/University Press of Colorado.

Martinez, Aja Y. *Counterstory: The Rhetoric and Writing of Critical Race Theory*. CCCC/NCTE, 2020.

Rose, Mike. *Lives on the Boundary: A Moving Account of the Struggles and Achievements of America's Educationally Underprepared*. Penguin Group, 2005 (first published 1989).

Assigned articles will be available as pdfs on Blackboard

Assignments

Bi-weekly issues papers (due weeks 4, 6, 8)	30%
Review and presentation of a contemporary book in the field	25%
Research into a target journal	15%
Final seminar project	30%

Issues Papers (10% each X 3 = 30%)

During the first half of the semester, you will submit 3 short issues papers, due in class at the end of weeks 4, 6, and 8. These papers of 4-5 pages (double-spaced) should concentrate on a theme that is coming up for you as you read. It can be a concern within the field, a social or educational problem, or a situation related to teaching. Your paper will reflect on and analyze the readings in relation to the issue around which you are organizing your discussion. Please refer to specific passages (quotes from articles) and arguments made (or not made) by the authors. This is an opportunity for you to explore your thinking as you grapple with the course materials. There is no reason to do additional reading for these papers; however, you are welcome to include relevant scholarship that you are reading in another class as it pertains to the issue you are considering.

Review of a Book (25%)

Mid-semester, you will review a full-length book written that has been published within rhetoric and writing studies or that is considered central to the work we do in this field. Your selection should develop out of your interest in the readings so far and will probably be a continuation of a subject we've studied or a book/article that appeared in the Works Cited of our class readings. The book you choose should be theoretical rather than pedagogical in focus. The assignment has 2 parts: You will write a journal quality review of about 3-5 pages following the genre of book reviews as they appear in the major journals (but not the extensive CCC review essays). Your reviews will be shared with the entire class and will help to expand our sense of conversations in the field, so keep your classmates in mind as part of your professional audience. Book reviews will be presented in class on March 23.

Research into a Target Journal (15%)

For this project, you will research one of the composition journals that you want to consider for publication of your work. Possibilities include (but are not limited to) *College Composition and Communication*, *College English*, *Composition Studies*, *Composition Forum*, *Pedagogy*, *Written Communication*, *Research in the Teaching of English*, *Literacy in Composition Studies*, *enculturation*, *Computers and Composition*, *Peitho*, and *The Writing Center Journal* as possible venues. This study is hypothetical; you will not be required to contact the journal as part of the course. However, you will learn to scout out and approach publication by evaluating a journal. We will review the process in class, and you will be given handouts from *College English* and other materials that will help you to create your own template for research into a target journal. The product of this assignment is a set of guidelines you set up for yourself with background information on the journal and the kind of work they accept as well as their submission requirements, an annotated bibliography of at least 4 articles related to your research interest that were published within the past 5 years, and other information that can help you understand the mission, purposes, and type of work that is generally accepted. You may submit this project in whatever form you wish as long as your query is comprehensive.

Final Seminar Project (30%)

Your final assignment will be a seminar paper in which you examine a topic in composition studies in greater depth. Building upon the topic proposal (April 6) and your research into a target journal (April 13), you will compose an essay of approximately 20-30 pages that brings together theories we have studied, a brief and relevant review of readings we have done for class as well as additional work that is pertinent to your subject, and your original topic of inquiry. You will consult and adhere to the submission guidelines for your target journal to find out the conventions for authors submitting full-length work to this publication, including page restrictions, authorial voice, and style. Assume that you are writing for an audience that reads that journal. Your seminar paper should include a minimum of 8-peer-reviewed research articles or 3 peer-reviewed research articles and 1-2 books. At least half of your sources should be articles/books new for this project that you did not already read for class. One-page topic proposals will be due in class on April 6. Before you draft your proposal, you should plan to meet with me outside of class to talk through your ideas. The final seminar paper is due electronically as a Word attachment posted on Blackboard by May 11 at midnight. Papers may not be submitted before the course has ended.

Course Policies and Responsibilities

Participation and Engagement

Class participation and keeping up with the readings are essential. You are expected to come to class prepared and ready to engage with the material. You are also expected to treat others with courtesy and respect, which includes (but is not limited to) active listening and thoughtful response.

You must adhere to CDC guidelines for safe social practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have masks in my office if you need one for class. The university also has available high quality KN95 masks for use in the classroom or other meetings. These may be picked up at the offices of [Environmental Health and Safety](#). If you test positive for COVID, please send a note to covidaction@utep.edu and let them know, so that they can provide support and information. Be safe!

Attendance

Attendance is required. As graduate students, you are expected to attend and participate fully in every class session. Students who anticipate being absent need to notify me prior to class, although this does not excuse the absence. More than two absences (equivalent to one week of class) may jeopardize your ability to pass the course. A successful graduate seminar, no matter what the focus, depends on the participation of everyone. As per the graduate student [regulations](#): “at the discretion of the instructor, a student can be dropped from a course because of excessive absences or lack of effort.” There is no make-up for missing

a class; please speak to a fellow student to see what you missed. That said, if you are going to be late for class for any reason, please come rather than miss class and get marked absent. If you are late, it is still possible to benefit from the lesson.

There is no late work policy. Please speak with me if you need more time to complete an assignment or if you would like to revise and resubmit your work.

Please retain all your work until final grades are posted.

Your teaching assistant or assistant instructor funding is dependent upon passing this course with at least a B.

Pertinent University Policies

Academic Integrity

The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Instructors are required to report the suspected academic dishonesty to the Office of Student Affairs. Visit the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#) page for more information on Academic integrity.

Accommodations

UTEP is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the [UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#) (CASS). Students are encouraged to visit CASS in room 106, Union East Building or contact them at 747-5148 or cass@utep.edu.

Military Students

If you are a military student (veteran, dependent, active) please visit the [Military Student Success Center](#). I also recognize the complexities of being a student veteran. If you are a student veteran, please inform me if you need special accommodations. Drill schedules, calls to active duty, complications with GI Bill disbursement, and other unforeseen military and veteran-related developments can complicate your academic life. If you make me aware of a complication, I will do everything I can to assist you or put you in contact with university staff who are trained to assist you.

Course Support Resources

Title IX	915-747-8358	Institutional Compliance
Dean of Students	915-747-5648	Dean of Students
UTEP Health & Wellness Center	915-747-5624	https://www.utep.edu/chs/shc/ studenthealth@utep.edu
UTEP Police Department	915-747-5611	https://www.utep.edu/police/ police@utep.edu

Counseling and Psychological Services	915-747-5302	https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/caps@utep.edu
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Academic Calendar Spring 2022

Jan 17th Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – University Closed
 Jan 18th Spring classes begin
 Jan 18–21st Late Registration (Fees are incurred)
 Feb 2nd Spring Census Day
 Mar 14-18th Spring Break (*TENTATIVE*)
 Mar 25th Cesar Chavez Holiday – no classes
 Apr 1st Spring Drop/Withdrawal Deadline
 Apr 15th Spring Study Day
 May 5th Spring – Last day of classes
 May 6th Dead day
 May 9-13th Spring Final Exams
 May 18th Grades are Due

Schedule of Assignments and Reading

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Assignments are due on date listed
 Schedule is subject to change; please be aware of any updates

Week	Monday	Wednesday
1		Jan 19 First class <i>Writing Studies as a Subject</i> Bazerman, “The Case for Writing Studies as a Major Discipline” (pdf) Trimbur, “Changing the Question: Should Writing Be Studied?” (pdf)
2	Jan 24 <i>Writing Studies as a Subject</i> Emig, “Writing as a Mode of Learning” (pdf) Britton, “Spectator Role and the Beginnings of Writing” (pdf)	Jan 26 <i>The Idea of Rhetorical Situation</i> Bitzer, “The Rhetorical Situation” (pdf) Vatz, “The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation” (pdf) Consigny, “Rhetoric and Its Situations (pdf)
3	Jan 31	Feb 2

	<p><i>Genre Systems</i></p> <p>Bakhtin, “The Problem of Speech Genres” (pdf)</p>	<p><i>Genre Systems</i></p> <p>Miller, “Genre as Social Action” (pdf)</p> <p>Devitt, “Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept” (pdf)</p> <p>Bawarshi, “The Genre Function” (pdf)</p>
4	<p>Feb 7</p> <p><i>Geographies and Ecologies of Writing</i></p> <p>Cooper, “The Ecology of Writing” (pdf)</p> <p>Reynolds, “Composition’s Imagined Geographies: The Politics of Space in the Frontier, City, and Cyberspace” (pdf)</p> <p>Dobrin and Weisser, “Breaking Ground in Ecocomposition: Exploring Relationships Between Discourse and Environment” (pdf)</p>	<p>Feb 9</p> <p>Rose, Mike. <i>Lives on the Boundary</i> Chapters 1-3 (pp. 1-65)</p> <p>Issues paper 1 due in class</p>
5	<p>Feb 14</p> <p>Rose, Mike. <i>Lives on the Boundary</i> Chapters 4-6 (pp. 67-132)</p>	<p>Feb 16</p> <p>Rose, Mike. <i>Lives on the Boundary</i> Chapters 6-8, Epilogue, Afterword (pp. 133-end)</p>
6	<p>Feb 21</p> <p><i>Contact Zones</i></p> <p>Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone” (pdf)</p> <p>Bizzell, “‘Contact Zones’ and English Studies” (pdf)</p> <p>Harris, “Negotiating the Contact Zone” (pdf)</p> <p>Note: T. Feb. 22 6:00 Blumberg Auditorium (library) Lauren’s talk on <i>Lives on the Boundary</i></p>	<p>Feb 23</p> <p><i>The Idea of Subjectivity and Discourse</i></p> <p>Clifford, “The Subject in Discourse” (pdf)</p> <p>Bizzell, Patricia. “Composition Studies Saves the World!” (pdf)</p> <p>Issues paper 2 due in class</p>
7	<p>Feb 28</p> <p><i>Disability Studies and Writing</i></p> <p>Kerschbaum, “Signs of Disability, Disclosing.” http://enculturation.net/signs-of-disability-disclosing</p> <p>Price, Margaret. “The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain.” (pdf)</p>	<p>Mar 2</p> <p>Hitt, Allison Harper. <i>Rhetorics of Overcoming</i> Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-60)</p> <p>Book selections must be approved</p>

	Dolmage, Jay. "Universal Design: Places to Start." http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4632/3946 .	
8	Mar 7 Hitt, Allison Harper. <i>Rhetorics of Overcoming</i> Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 61-121)	Mar 9 Hitt, Allison Harper. <i>Rhetorics of Overcoming</i> Chapter 5 (pp. 122-end) Issues paper 3 due in class
<i>Spring break – no classes on Mar 14 & 16</i>		
9	Mar 21 Book Reviews due —presentations in class	Mar 23 <i>Commitments to Social and Racial Justice</i> Royster, "When the First Voice You Hear is Not Your Own" (pdf) Prendergast, "The Absent Presence in Composition Studies" (pdf) Villanueva, "Memoria is a Friend of Ours: On the Discourse of Color" (pdf)
10	Mar 28 <i>Commitments to Social and Racial Justice</i> Hoang, Haivan. "Campus Racial Politics and a 'Rhetoric of Injury.'" (pdf) Wan, Amy. "In the Name of Citizenship: The Writing Classroom and the Promise of Citizenship." (pdf)	Mar 30 Martinez, Aja Y. <i>Counterstory</i> Prologue, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. xxv-52)
11	Apr 4 Martinez, Aja Y. <i>Counterstory</i> Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 53-109)	Apr 6 Martinez, Aja Y. <i>Counterstory</i> Chapters 5-end (pp. 110-146). Proposal for final project due
12	Apr 11 <i>Writing Beyond Writing in New Media Environments</i> Trimbur, "Composition and the Circulation of Writing" (pdf) Dush, "When Writing Becomes Content" (pdf)	Apr 13 <i>Writing Beyond Writing in New Media Environments</i> Ehrenfeld and Barton, "Online Public Spheres in the Era of Fake News: Implications for the Composition Classroom" (pdf) Gries, Laurie. "Writing to Assemble Publics: Making Writing Activate, Making Writing Matter." (pdf)

		Research into a Target Journal due
13	Apr 18 Lockett, Alexandria L., Ruiz, Iris D., Sanchez, James Chase, and Carter, Christopher. <i>Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods</i> Chapters 1 and 2 (inc. interchapters, pp. 3-90)	Apr 20 Lockett, Alexandria L., Ruiz, Iris D., Sanchez, James Chase, and Carter, Christopher. <i>Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods</i> Chapters 3 and 4 (inc. interchapters, pp. 91-164)
14	Apr 25 Lockett, Alexandria L., Ruiz, Iris D., Sanchez, James Chase, and Carter, Christopher. <i>Race, Rhetoric, and Research Methods</i> Chapter 5-end	Apr 27 Fine, Michelle. <i>Just Research</i> Preface, Acknowledgements, Chapter 1, Chapter 2 (pp. ix-27)
15	May 2 Fine, Michelle. <i>Just Research</i> Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 29-70)	May 4 Fine, Michelle. <i>Just Research</i> Chapters 5, 6, and Conclusion (pp. 71-123)
Final Project due Wednesday, May 11, submitted by 11:59 pm		

Publication Info for Assigned Articles

- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 1986. "The Problem of Speech Genres." Translated by Vern W. McGee. In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, 60-102. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Bazerman, Charles, "The Case for Writing Studies as a Major Discipline." *Rhetoric and Composition as Intellectual Work*. Ed. Gary Olson, Southern IL UP, 2002, pp. 32-38.
- Bizzell, Patricia, "Composition Studies Saves the World!" *College English*. Vol. 72, no. 2, 2009, pp. 174-187.
- Bizzell, Patricia, "'Contact Zones' and English Studies." *College English*, Feb., 1994, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Feb., 1994), pp. 163-169.
- Bitzer, Lloyd, "The Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. Vol. 1, 1968, pp. 1-14.
- Britton, James, "Spectator Role and the Beginnings of Writing." Reprinted in *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*, 3rd ed. Victor Villanueva and Kristen Arola, Eds. NCTE, 2011, pp. 151-173.
- Clifford, John. "The Subject in Discourse." *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*, Eds. Patricia Harkin and John Schilb. New York: Modern Language Association, 1991, pp. 38-
- Consigny, Scott. "Rhetoric and Its Situations." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 7, 1974, pp. 175-186.
- Cooper, Marilyn, "The Ecology of Writing." *College English*, Apr., 1986, Vol. 48, No. 4 (Apr., 1986), pp. 364-375.
- Devitt, Amy, "Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept" *College Composition and Communication*, Dec., 1993, Vol. 44, No. 4 (Dec., 1993), pp. 573-586
- Dobrin, Sidney I. and Christian R. Weisser, "Breaking Ground in Ecocomposition: Exploring Relationships Between Discourse and Environment." *College English*, May, 2002, Vol. 64, No. 5 (May, 2002), pp. 566-589.
- Dolmage, Jay. "Universal Design: Places to Start." *Disability Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2015, <http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/4632/3946>.
- Dush, Lisa, "When Writing Becomes Content." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 67, no. 2, 2015, pp. 173-196.
- Ehrenfeld, Dan and Matt Barton, "Online Public Spheres in the Era of Fake News: Implications for the Composition Classroom," *Computers and Composition*, vol. 54, pp.1-15.
- Emig, Janet, "Writing as a Mode of Learning" *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 28, no. 2, 1977, pp. 122-128.
- Gries, Laurie. "Writing to Assemble Publics: Making Writing Activate, Making Writing Matter." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 70, no. 3, 2019, pp. 327-355.

Harris, Joseph. "Negotiating the Contact Zone." *Journal of Basic Writing* , SPRING 1995, Vol. 14, No. 1 (SPRING 1995), pp. 27-42.

Kerschbaum, Stephanie L. "Signs of Disability, Disclosing." *Enculturation: A Journal of Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture*, no. 29, 2019. <http://enculturation.net/signs-of-disability-disclosing>.

Miller, Carolyn R. "Genre as Social Action." Reprinted in *Genre and the New Rhetoric*, ed. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, 23-42. Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1994.

Price, Margaret. "The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain." *Hypatia* vol. 30, no. 1, 2015, pp. 268-284.

Pratt, Mary Louise, "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession*, 1991, pp. 33-40.

Reynolds, Nedra, "Composition's Imagined Geographies: The Politics of Space in the Frontier, City, and Cyberspace." *College Composition and Communication*, Sep., 1998, Vol. 50, No. 1 (Sep., 1998), pp. 12-35.

Royster, Jacqueline Jones. "When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 47. no 1, 1996, pp. 29-40.

Trimbur, John, "Changing the Question: Should Writing Be Studied?" *Composition Studies*, vol. 31, no.1, 2003, pp. 15-24.

Trimbur, John. "Composition and the Circulation of Writing." *College Composition and Communication*. vol. 52, no. 2, 2000, pp. 188-219.

Vatz, Richard, "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation." *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. vol. 6, 1973, pp. 42-71.

Villanueva, Victor. "Memoria Is a Friend of Ours: On the Discourse of Color." *College English* 67.1, 2004, pp. 9-19.