

ENGL 510—COMPOSITION THEORY AND PHILOSOPHY



Royster

Vitanza

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Course: ENGL 510

Meeting Day and Time: Monday, 6-8:30 p.m.

Classroom: Modern Languages 213

Instructor: Professor Matthew Abraham

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1-3:15 p.m.; and by appointment

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Class Description: This class will help you to develop the necessary vocabulary and theoretical knowledge to expertly discuss and write about composition theory, how people take the thoughts in their heads and transform them into written discourse. You will be exposed to a number of theoretical outlooks on composing through which to understand the social, political, ideological and economic factors influencing how people write.

Composition theory has evolved through a number of theoretical paradigms in the last thirty years: From the current-traditional paradigm, which emphasized the five-paragraph theme, through to the post-process perspective, which wonders if writing can be taught at all, to post-post process theory, multiliteracies, multimodality, and translingualism, there has been no absence of contention in theorizing about how the act of composition happens. Throughout the semester, we will explore the various controversies writing professionals have initiated and attempted to resolve through the ongoing conversation that is composition theory.

For the semester, our goals will include the following:

- (1) Learning about the major theoretical perspectives informing the act of composing within the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition;
- (2) Applying these theoretical perspectives to your writing pedagogy;
- (3) Developing a working bibliography for contemporary scholarship on composition theory;
- (4) Advancing your own professionalization as you learn about the necessary steps in publishing an article in a Rhetoric and Composition journal;

(5) Working toward presenting at a national conference on writing such as NCTE or the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

Since this is a very small class, we will all work toward creating a seminar atmosphere where everyone will be committed to working together through some very exciting and innovative material.

Required Texts:

1. Susan Miller's edited collection, *The Norton Book of Composition Studies* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2009) and
2. Sidney Dobrin's *Postcomposition* (SIU Press, 2011)

Recommended for your professional library:

1. Byron Hawk's *Methodologies of Complexity* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).
2. Cindy Johaneck's *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition* (Utah State University Press, 2000).
3. Sidney Dobrin's *Constructing Knowledges: The Politics of Theory-Building and Pedagogy in Composition* (SUNY Press, 1997).
4. Louise Wetherbee Phelps' *Composition as a Human Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).
5. David Smit's *The End of Composition Studies* (SIU Press, 2010).

Grading

Your course grade for the semester will be calculated as follows:

‡Final Project (25%)—due **December 18th, 2013**

Two-Page Paper Proposal with Sources (5%)—due on **September 30th, 2013**

Annotated Bibliography (15%)—**due on November 4th**

†5 Reading Responses (30%)

**In-class Presentation (10 %)

***Discussion questions (5%)

****Participation (in-class and on list-serv) (10 %)

****In-class presentations**

I will circulate a sign-up sheet during our first class meeting. Please sign up to give a fifteen-to-twenty minute presentation on one of the articles listed on the sheet. You might create a handout to lead the class through the concept you will be discussing. You will receive full credit for this portion of the course just by doing the presentation and giving it a good-faith effort.

*****Discussion questions**

With the exception to our first class session on August 26th, **please email me two substantive questions about the reading under consideration by 2 p.m. on Mondays before every class session.** Although we will not meet on September 2nd (Labor Day) or November 11th (Veteran's Day), please send me your questions so we can continue to make steady progress through the material. We will use your questions to think through

the main issues within the specific pages that have been assigned. After removing your names from your submissions, I will distribute everyone's questions to the class.

†**Reading Responses**

Once a week, you will have an opportunity to reflect on what we are reading by responding to a question that I will email to you. This "reading response" is a way to help you gauge your understanding and understanding and retention of the course material, which will require a cumulative mastery. With the exception of the first week of class, I will email you the week's writing prompt every Monday after class. Your response to the prompt should be between **3.5-4 typewritten pages** (double-spaced, 11-point, Time New Roman font). You are required to submit five of these responses over the course of the semester. If you chose to respond to a particular prompt, be sure to do so within a week's time of its distribution. In other words, do not plan to do all your reading responses during the last week of class.

‡**Final Project:** Your final project, to be determined in consultation with me, will be due in class on December 18th, 2013 at our designated final exam meeting. You will receive detailed instructions about how to go about doing a **pedagogy project, a historical trace project, or a "great debates" paper project** throughout the quarter. For example, I will begin circulating some sample topics in the next few weeks so you will have plenty of time to think about what you will want to focus on in this final project. I will provide you with a detailed assignment sheet well in advance of the relevant due dates. I want you to pursue a topic of interest to you. If you decide to go the route of a traditional academic paper, you should produce between **twenty and twenty-five pages (double-spaced)**. If you would like, I am happy to provide you with extensive feedback on one draft of your paper if you give me your draft by December 1st

******Desire to Learn Site and Class list-serv:** If you visit <https://d2l.arizona.edu>, you will see that—by virtue of being enrolled in this class—you have access to course materials through the course blackboard site, as well as access to the class email list, which will facilitate communication between all of us during the semester. As is so often the case, the best ideas pertaining to the course material often come to you when you are not in class. By posting your ideas to the class-list, you can help me and others to understand the material a little better. If you have a question, please feel free to post it to the list, as others might have a similar question. You are required to make **at least three** substantive postings to the list-serv this semester. I hope to have some of the authors of our course texts join in us in online conversation.

Disability Support: Please see: <http://drc.arizona.edu/students>
Statement from <http://drc.arizona.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>:

Accessibility and Accommodations:

It is the University's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options. You are also welcome to contact Disability Resources (520-621-3268) to establish

reasonable accommodations.

Please be aware that the accessible table and chairs in this room should remain available for students who find that standard classroom seating is not usable.

Academic Integrity Policy:

Please see:

http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/sites/deanofstudents.arizona.edu/files/code_of_academic_integrity.pdf

Avoiding Plagiarism:

Please see: <http://www.library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/plagiarism/index.html>

Resource sites:

http://www.english.ohiou.edu/cifer/cifer_theory/

<http://compfaqs.org/CompFAQs/Home?from=Main.HomePage>

Schedule:

NBCS= Norton Book of Composition Studies

Session #1 (August 26th):

Introductions; Discuss Nystrand et al's "Where Did Composition Studies Come From?"

Session #2 (September 9th):

From *NBCS*: Discuss William Riley Parker, *Where Do English Departments Come From?* (3), Fulkerson's "Four Philosophies of Composition" (430-5), and Berlin's "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class" (667-84).

From D2L: Fulkerson's "Composition at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century," "Responses to Fulkerson," Faigley's "Turbulence of Theory," Vitanza's "Three Countertheses," North's "Introduction" from *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*; Kopelson's "Sp(1)itting Images," and Cory Lawson-Ching's "Theory and Its Practice in Composition"

Session #3 (September 16th):

From *NBCS*: Discuss John Brereton's *Composition Studies in the American College, 1875–1925* (98), Janet Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* (228), Albert Kitzhaber, *The Present State of Freshman Composition* (257)

From D2L: Berlin & Inkster's "Current-Traditional Rhetoric," Faigley's "Competing Theories of Process," Berlin's "Major Theories," Olson's "Toward a Post-Process Composition," Gage's "Why Write?" and Lindemann's "Why Teach Writing?"

Session #4 (September 23rd):

From *NBCS*: Sharon Crowley's *The Evolution of Current-Traditional Rhetoric* (333), Robert Tremmel's *Seeking a Discipline* (358), and Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede's *Representing Audience* (813)

From D2L: Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation;" Connors' "The Rise and Fall of the Modes of Discourse;" Crowley's "Response to Connors;" Lindemann's "What do Teachers Need to Know about Rhetoric?;" Corbett's "Introduction to Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student;" Booth's "The Rhetorical Stance;" Ede and Lunsford's "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Practice;" Elbow's "Closing My Eyes as I Speak: An Argument for Ignoring Audience."

Session #5 (September 30th):

From *NBCS*: Maxine Hairston's *Winds of Change: Thomas Kuhn and Revolution* (439), David Foster's *What Are We Talking About When We Talk About Composition* (451), Flower and Hayes's *The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem* (467), and Bizell's *Cognition, Convention, and Certainty: What We Need to Know About Writing* (479).

From D2L: LeFevre's "Invention as a Social Act;" Lunsford & Ede's "Collaborative Authorship;" Roskelly's "The Risky Business of Group Work" and Myers' "Reality, Consensus, and Reform in the Rhetoric of Composition Teaching;" Stewart's "Collaborative Learning and Composition."

Session #6 (October 7th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Introduction and Chapter 1

From *NBCS*: Mike Rose's *The Language of Exclusion at the University* (586), David Bartholomae's *Inventing the University* (605), and Robert Connors' *Composition-Rhetoric: Backgrounds, Theory, and Pedagogy* (685)

From D2L: Freire's "The Adult Literacy Process" and Chapter Two in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Ellsworth's "Why Doesn't This Feel Empowering?," Giroux & McLaren's "Teacher Education and the Politics of Engagement: The Case for Democratic Schooling," Villanueva's "Considerations for American Freireistas," Shor's "(Why) Education is Politics," Cushman's "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change," and Hairston's "Diversity, Ideology, and the Teaching of Writing."

Session #7 (October 14th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 2

From *NBCS*: Joseph Harris's *The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing* (748) and Kathleen Welch's *Ideology and Freshman Textbook Production* (759)

From D2L: Anson's "Teaching 'Grammar,' Usage, and Style in Context," Weaver's "Teaching Grammar," Sloane's "Invisible Diversity;" Miller's "The Feminization of Composition," Jarratt's "Feminism and Composition," Flynn's "Composing as a Woman," and Kirsch et al's "Charting Our Ways in Feminism and Composition"

Session #8 (October 28th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 3

From *NBCS*: Andrea Lunsford, *Toward a Mestiza Rhetoric: Gloria Anzaldúa* (1401), Lisa Delpit's *The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourse* (1311), Victor Villanueva Jr.'s *Maybe A Colony: Still Another Critique of the Comp Community* (991), Jacqueline Royster's *When the First Voice You Hear Is Not Your Own* (1117), Scott Richard Lyons's *What Do American Indians Want from Writing?* (1128), and Susan Jarratt's *Rhetoric and Representation in Postcolonial Feminist Writing* (1381)

From D2L: Prendergast's "Race: The Absent Presence in Composition Studies," and Villanueva's "On the Rhetoric and Precedents of Racism."

Session #9 (November 4th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 4

From *NBCS*: John Clifford's *The Subject in Discourse* (861), Susan Wells's *Claiming the Archive for Rhetoric and Composition* (911), Cynthia L. Selfe's *Technology and Literacy: Perils of Not Paying Attention* (1163), and Cynthia L. Selfe and Gail E. Hawisher's *Literacies and the Global Digital Divide* (1499)

From D2L: Haraway "A Cyborg Manifesto;" Porter "Why Technology Matters to Writing;" Kaplan "Ideology, Technology, and the Future of Writing."

Session #10 (November 18th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 5

From NBCS: Jacqueline Rhodes's *Writing and Critical Agency: From Manifesto to Modem* (1223), Brenda Jo Brueggemann's *Deafness and Autobiography* (1243), Douglas Hesse's *Who Owns Writing?* (1247), Richard Haswell's *Complexities of Responding to Student Writing* (1262)

From D2L:

Shaughnessy's "Diving In: An Introduction to Basic Writing," Warnock's "Liberatory Writing Centers: Restoring Authority to Writers"

Session #11 (November 25th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 6

From NBCS: James Paul Gee, *The New Literacy Studies* (1293), Bazermans' *The Problem of Writing Knowledge* (502), Deborah Brandt and Katie Clinton's *Expanding Perspectives on Literacy as a Social Practice* (1321)

From D2L: Cushman "Sustainable Service Learning Programs" and Shutz and Gere's "Service Learning and English Studies: Rethinking 'Public' Service."

Session #12 (December 2nd):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Chapter 7

From NBCS: Dwight Atkinson's *L2 Writing in the Post-Process Era* (1532) Christiane Donahue's *French Students' Development as Writers* (1544), Paul Kei Matsuda's *Identity and Power in a Japanese Online Discourse Community* (1583), A. Suresh Canagarajah's *The Place of World Englishes in Composition* (1617) Juan Guerra, *Nomadic Consciousness and the Practice of Transcultural Repositioning* (1643)

From D2L: Street's "The New Literacy Studies" and Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy."

Session #13 (December 9th):

From Dobrin's *Postcomposition*: Epilogue

Wrap-up

Final Exam Period (December 18th, 8:30-10:30 p.m.): Final project due

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