ENGL 696S: Composition Studies—Emerging Trends and Methods

**Similarities Across Theories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea Discovery</th>
<th>Aristotelian Canons</th>
<th>Fulkersonian Axiologies</th>
<th>Steps in Writing Process</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>invention</td>
<td>mimetic</td>
<td>brainstorming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattern Creation</td>
<td>organization</td>
<td>expressivist</td>
<td>prewriting</td>
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<td>Argument Expression</td>
<td>elocution</td>
<td>rhetorical</td>
<td>drafting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Product Polishing</td>
<td>delivery</td>
<td>formalist</td>
<td>proofreading</td>
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**Fulkerson's Complex 21st Century**

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<th>Critical/Cultural Studies</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Epistemology</th>
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<tr>
<td>mimesis</td>
<td>interpret</td>
<td>assess views</td>
<td>various texts</td>
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<tr>
<td>contemporary expression</td>
<td>expression</td>
<td>allow freedom</td>
<td>students</td>
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<td>Procedural Rhetoric</td>
<td>formalist</td>
<td>instruct</td>
<td>inform</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current/Traditional</td>
<td>rhetorical</td>
<td>practice</td>
<td>guide</td>
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**Instructor:** Professor Matthew Abraham  
**Class meeting room:** Modern Languages 201  
**Class meeting time:** Wednesday, 4-6:30 p.m.  
**Office:** Modern Languages 428  
**Phone:** 520-626-0775; 773-682-9322  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday, 2-4 p.m. and by appointment

**Description:** This course will examine the representative methods composition researchers have utilized to conduct their research from the field’s founding in the early 1960s through to contemporary approaches. Over the last four decades, composition researchers have developed an array of theories for producing knowledge within the discipline of composition studies. A major question for our consideration is: How does composition studies construct knowledge?

Coming to understand the frameworks through which this knowledge has been produced will be vital to your professional career. As the course title suggests, we will also study the emerging trends that are transforming how writing studies researchers are approaching the act of creating written discourse. As we survey how the field has imagined, pursued, and revised its guiding research questions and methods, we will also learn about how the teaching of composition and the discipline of rhetoric and composition have been configured historically within the university. These are ambitious
goals for a course that only last sixteen weeks, but I am committed to giving you the very best foundational knowledge of the field as you begin your doctoral studies

Course goals:
1) Learn about the leading methods for conducting composition research through an historical examination;
2) Understand the components of an experimental composition study;
3) Study the disciplinary rise of composition studies;
4) Understand emerging trends within the field of composition studies;
5) Describe the field’s boundaries and current debates about those boundaries.

Key Concepts:
Empirical Research
Ethnography
Feminist Research Practices
Racial Methodologies
Socially Progressive Research
Mixed Methods Research
Conducting Case Studies
Conducting Survey Research
Validity Constructs
Reliability
Randomization
Probability
Null Hypothesis
Empirical Methods
Quantitative v. Qualitative Methods
Prediction/Classification Studies
Composition Studies and Feminism
Composition Studies and Institutional Critique

REQUIRED TEXTS:

REFERENCE TEXTS (obtain at some point in your RCTE career):

*Major Assignments:*
1) Book review of a rhetoric/composition studies book released in the last three years (see list of possible texts)—due on **November 12th**;
2) 3 Short Writing Responses (3-5 pages)—due on **December 16th**;
3) Historical Journal Analysis (*CCC’s, RTE, College English, Written Communication*)—due **December 3rd**;
4) Presentation of an article in the bibliography to the class;
5) Final project (seminar paper, mapping project, historical trace project, journal article draft, etc.)—I would like a proposal for this by **October 29th**;

*Your will receive detailed descriptions of what is expected for these assignments well in advance of any due date.*
We will attempt to obtain a general understanding of these movements in Composition Studies:

Cognitive approaches (Flower and Hayes)
Expressivist Movement (Elbow, Britton, Moffett, etc.)
Process Movement (Tobin, Faigley, Trimbur, etc.)
Post-process Movement (Kent, Dobrin, Foster, Rice, Olson, etc.)
Theories of Complexity (Hawk, Barnett, Rickert, etc.)

General Remarks:

1) Attendance—you are doctoral students. Enough said!
2) Reading—the reading load may seem heavy and overwhelming, but just keep in mind that I don’t expect you to read everything I have placed on the syllabus. Much of this is for you to reference at a later point, as you build your own bibliography of the field. In other words, don’t fret if you are only able to make a small dent each week in the assigned reading—that is only to be expected!
3) Although you may not see an overarching framework in the beginning as we move from one theme to the next from week to week, you will develop a sense of how the field has framed its guiding questions toward the end of the semester;
4) Use this course to develop the big questions you intend to pursue in RCTE and beyond. As I always tell graduate students, there is no point in you developing a project in this course that does not serve—in some way—your long-term research goals. To that end, think of every assignment that you do in your early course work as positioning you in relation to your prospectus, dissertation, first article, etc.;
5) Begin professionalizing now by attending national conferences, reading the field’s major journals, corresponding with scholars in the field, etc.;
6) Try to build connections between the courses you are taking this semester. How, for example, does this course connect to your emerging trends and methods in rhetoric course?
7) Seek me out as often as much as you like; I’m here to help you!
8) Most all of the RCTE faculty will be visiting our class during the semester. Use their visits to begin thinking about how your research interests link up with the faculty’s;
9) Try to relax and derive some enjoyment from what you are learning—this is supposed to be a fun and enjoyable process, although it might not always seem that way.
696-S Class Schedule:

**Week 1 (August 27th):** Introduction

Discuss Fulkerson’s “Composition Studies at the Turn of Twenty-First the Century”; Responses to Fulkerson; Nystrand, et al.’s “Where Did Composition Studies Come From?”: Crowley’s *Composition in the University*—chapter 1 and 2.

**Week 2 (September 3rd):** Maritza Cardenas (Visitor)

Week 3 (September 10th): Damian Baca (Visitor).


Week 4 (September 17th): Adela Licona (Visitor).

Reading: Smagorinsky and Smith’s “The Nature of Knowledge in Composition and Literacy Understanding”: Flowers and Hayes’ “Cognitive Process”: Brand’s “the Why of Cognition”: Bizzell’s “Cognition, Convention, and Certainty”; Faigley’s “Competing Theories of Process”; Fulkerson’s “Process and Post-Process”; Marback’s “Embracing Wicked Design”: McGee’s “Practicing Socially Progressive Research in Powell and Takayoshi; Stephen North’s The Making of Knowledge in Composition—The Clinicians; Faigley’s Fragments of Rationality; “Marback’s “Embracing Wicked Problems”; Johanek’s Composing Research; (Designing a research study); Continue Sirc’s Composition as a Happening

Week 5 (September 24th):
Archival/historical—Working in the Archives; CCC’s special issue on Research Methodologies, September 2012; Editor’s Intro; “Archival Research in Composition Studies: Reimagining the Historian’s Role” (Ritter); Gold’s “Historiography”; Carter and Conrad; Gaillet; read Rawson’s “Archive This” in Nicholson and Sheridan; and Griebel’s “Community-Based Research and the Importance of a Research Stance” in Nicholson and Sheridan

Week 6 (October 1st): Ken McAllister (Visitor).

Critical Discourse Analysis—Read “Critical Discourse Analysis and Rhetoric and Composition” (Huckin, Andrus, Clary-Lemon); Barton’s “Resources for Discourse Analysis in Composition Studies”; Read Inoue’s “Racial Methodologies for Composition Studies” in Nicholson and Sheridan; Complete Sirc

Week 7 (October 8th): Tom Miller (Visitor)

**Week 8 (October 15th):** Anne-Marie Hall (Visitor).

Start empirical weeks: basic concepts of research design (validity, reliability, operationalization, constructs); quantitative/measurement/experimental/descriptive and inferential statistical analysis; qualitative; longitudinal/ ethnographic. Charney’s “Empiricism is not a Four-Letter Word and “Logocentrism to Ethnocentrism”; Haswell’s “Quantitative Methods in Composition Studies” in Nicholson and Sheridan and “Materializing the Material as a Progressive Method and Methodology” in Takyoshi, et al; selection from Johanek’s *Composing Research*;

**Week 9 (October 22nd):** John Warnock (Visitor).


**Week 10 (October 29th):** Amy Kimme-Hea (Visitor) (Quantitative v. Qualitative Research). “Writing as a Social Practice” in Smit’s *The End of Composition Studies*; Lauer and Asher’s *Composition Research*, “Quantitative Descriptive Studies”; Continue Byron Hawk’s *Counter-History of Composition*;
Week 11 (November 5th):

MacNealy’s *Strategies for Empirical Research*, “Overview of Empirical Methodology”; Jacobs’ “Troubling Research” in Powell and Takayoshi; continue reading Byron Hawk’s *Counter-History of Composition*; Chapter 1 in Shipka’s *Toward a Composition Made Whole*

Week 12 (November 12th): Aimee Mapes (Visitor). MacNealy *Strategies for Empirical Research*, “Concepts Basic to Quantitative Research”; Perry’s “Critical Validity Inquiry”; Moss’s “Shifting Conceptions of Validity”; Anderson’s “Simple Gifts”; Teston’s “Confidentiality in Research Design” in Powell and Takayoshi; Chapter 2 in Shipka’s *Toward a Composition Made Whole*

Week 13 (November 19th): Chris Tardy (Visitor). Working with Qualitative data; Lunsford’s “Conducting Writing Research Internationally”; Chapter 3 in Shipka’s *Toward a Composition Made Whole*


Week 15 (December 3rd): Workshop on seminar project.

Week 16 (December 10th): Wrap up

**Designated Final Exam period: December 16th, 3:30-5:30 p.m.—All work due.**
Bibliography


Responses to Fulkerson (Harkin, Mejia, Zorn, and Dickson)—*CCCs* (June 2006).

Gaillet, Lynee Lewis. “(Per)forming Archival Research Methodologies” *CCC* 64:1 (September 2012).


LaFrance and Nicolas. “Institutional Ethnography as a Materialist Framework for Writing Program Research and the Faculty-Staff Work Standpoints Project” CCCs 64:1 (June 2012).


Mortenson, Peter and Gesa Kirsch. *Ethics and Representation in Qualitative Studies in Literacy.* Urbana: NCTE.


Rickly, Rebecca. “The Required Research Methods Course as a Scene of a Rhetorical Practice.”


Smagorinsky, Peter and Michael Smith. “The Nature of Knowledge in Composition and


---. “Stephen North’s The Making of Knowledge in Composition and the Future of Composition Studies ‘Without Paradigm Hope’” in Massey and Gebhardt’s *The Making of Knowledge in Composition*.