

ENGLISH 502: THEORY AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING

Fall 2007

Instructor: Dr. Xiaoye You

Meeting time: Thursday 9:05A - 12:05P

Location: 102 Pond

CONTACT INFORMATION

Office: 135 Burrowes

Office Hours: Tuesday 10-11A and Thursday 1:30-2:20P or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The history of writing studies in the United States parallels the socio-political landscapes of post-WW II culture. Composition studies exists as a thin membrane between the discourse of the academy and the political, economic, and passionate pressures of everyone who stakes a claim to “literacy.”

In this course, we will trace the history of rhetoric and composition studies as the discipline has emerged alongside cultural ruptures. Our goal will be to better understand the questions and controversies within rhetorical studies and composition. Why have these questions mattered? Why do they continue to be important?

We will also want to understand the *rhetorics* of rhetoric and composition: Why is there so little agreement about what rhetoric is, or what composition should be? Additionally, this course will approach the same question that Plato posed so long ago: What is rhetoric’s subject matter? What is composition’s subject matter? And, finally, we will look beyond the U.S. context and reconsider rhetorical studies and composition in relation to the global political and economic forces. This course should give you a firm grounding in the conversations in rhet-comp, as well as a sense of why these conversations are relevant and important to broader cultural conversations.

REQUIRED BOOKS AND READINGS

Phaedrus, Plato

On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, Aristotle

Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges, James Berlin

Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985, James Berlin

The Methodical Memory, Sharon Crowley

On Symbols and Society, Kenneth Burke

Datacloud: Toward a New Theory of Online Work, Johndan Johnson-Eilola

Voices of the Self, Keith Gilyard

WEEKLY TALKING POINTS

Each week, you will make notes on our readings for that date. These should be meaningful notes to you, so they do not need to be especially formal. Notes can include questions, extensions, rebuttals, or the beginnings of writing ideas. Bring your notes to class with you, and be prepared to use these notes to *talk from* during class. Talking points should be about one page in length. They do not need to be in a formal, essayist style. Notes can be sentence or paragraph length statements. Be sure to include any page numbers you are discussing so that you can reference passages during our discussions.

DISCUSSION MAPPING/JOURNAL ANALYSIS

In the second half of the semester, we will focus on one of the most important journals in the field: *College Composition and Communication*. Starting with the first issue, we will map the conversations/major issues over the last five decades. What caused the rise of a particular issue and what led to its gradual demise? By analyzing the rhetorical patterns of the issues across time, we will also attempt to map changes in the journal as a (possible) reflection of changes to the field. We want to look at the topical patterns, the citation patterns, and other trends across the decades. Who is talking to whom? What seems to be the rhetorical contours of this journal? What issues seem to show up on this journal's radar screens? You might also look at this journal's founding: what are its historical contexts?

You will need to start by reading articles and recording/analyzing issues and rhetorical patterns across your assigned time period. Everyone will be assigned into a group that focuses on a certain time period. The group will decide together how to divide the readings. By October 15, each group will need to submit online a three-page summary of key issues that concerned the field during that period. The group will also select six to eight articles that both are representative of the period and address issues that we have not previously discussed in class. The class will read these articles together, and the group will lead class discussions.

ARTICLE AND CONFERENCE

At the end of the semester, you should turn in a conference-length paper (10 pages minimum) with a proposal that can be submitted to an appropriate (even if imaginary) Call for Papers (CFP). You may write on a topic that originates from your teaching or that comes from your reading of *College Composition and Communication*. You are encouraged to discuss your topic with me at any stage of your writing. Prepare a *ten-minute* presentation from this paper for our end-of-semester mini-conference. This conference date is TBA, but details will soon be available.

COURSE POLICIES

The usual policies apply. I reserve the right to lower attendance points for absences over a reasonable number (say, *two absences*). I will also turn down requests to turn in assignments late.

GRADES

Attendance: 10%

Talking points: 30%

Journal analysis and discussion: 20%

Conference paper: 30%

Presentation: 10%

August 30 – Introductions to Course

“Composition Studies: Dappled Discipline,” Janice Lauer

September 6 – Classical Rhetoric: The Greek Tradition

Phaedrus, Plato

“Kairos: A Neglected Concept in Classical Rhetoric,” James Kinneavy

September 13 – Classical rhetoric: The Greek Tradition

On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, Aristotle

September 20 – Composition Studies in the U.S.: A History

Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges, James Berlin

Rhetoric and Reality, James Berlin

September 27 – Critique of Current Traditional Rhetoric

The Methodical Memory, Sharon Crowley

“Linguistics and Composition Instruction,” Sharon Crowley

October 4 – New Rhetoric: Kenneth Burke

On Symbols and Society, Kenneth Burke

“Questions and Answers about the Pentad,” Kenneth Burke

October 11 – Technology and Writing

Datacloud, Johndan Johnson-Eilola

“Reimagining the Functional Side of Computer Literacy,” Stuart Selber

“A Multimodal Task-Based Framework for Composing,” Jody Shipka

October 18 – Colored Writing

Voices of the Self, Keith Gilyard

“Interrogating ‘Whiteness,’ (De)Constructing ‘Race’,” AnnLouise Keating

“Dispositions Toward Language,” Arnetta Ball and Ted Lardner

October 25 – Mapping the Conversation, 1950-69

November 1 – Mapping the Conversation, 1970-79

November 8 – Mapping the Conversation, 1980-1989

November 15 – Mapping the Conversation, 1990-1999

November 22 – Thanksgiving Break

November 29 – Composing in the Global Context

“Importing Composition,” Muchiri, et al.

“English Only and U.S. College Composition,” Bruce Horner and John Trimbur

“An Essay on the Work of Composition,” Min-Zhan Lu

“Rhetorical Borderlands,” LuMing Mao

“The Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity,” Paul Kei Matsuda

“The Place of World Englishes in Composition,” Suresh Canagarajah

December 6 – Composing in the Global Context: The Chinese Case

Writing in the Devil’s Tongue, Xiaoye You

December 13 – Mini-Conference (Details TBA)