

Introduction to Composition & Rhetoric

English 700, Fall 2014

Wednesdays, 10:00am – 12:30pm

Professor Christa Olson

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office hours:

Mondays 10:30-11:30am & 1:00-2:00pm

& by appointment

The field of Composition & Rhetoric is as varied in its foci, methods, and materials as any contemporary trans-discipline. This course aims to offer a sense of that variety, its historical roots, and its implications within and beyond English departments. Organized around units addressing the field's three major sub-fields—rhetoric, composition, and literacy—the course introduces recent scholarship and canonical texts as part of an ongoing effort to understand what counts as effective communication, how to produce it, and what it does.

Reading

Cicero, Marcus Tullius (1986). *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*. J.S. Watson, trans. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press

Dolmage, Jay Timothy (2013). *Disability Rhetoric*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press

Wan, Amy (2014). *Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

All books available at Room of One's Own

Article and chapter PDFs available on our Learn@UW page

Projects

Response essays. Toward the end of each unit you will compose a brief (3 page) essay that reflects on the central theme of the unit (“The ends of composition,” “What literacy does,” and “The good man speaking well and beyond”). These essays should be both synthetic and speculative. In other words, they should provide a cumulative picture of the issue at hand and an impetus toward further thought. I encourage you to bring your own area expertise and experience to bear on these essays, asking how your existing knowledge helps you understand the unit and/or how the unit helps you re-envision what you already knew. Response essays should be posted to our Learn@UW page the Monday before the last class in each unit. Response essays are due September 29, October 27, and November 24 for discussion on October 1, October 29, and November 26. Please be sure to read through your colleague's essays before class the following Wednesday.

Collaborative Bibliographies. The three themes we'll address this semester only scratch the surface of work being done by scholars in composition, rhetoric, and literacy. These collaborative bibliographies will expand our common repertoire. You will work with a group to compile and introduce an annotated bibliography that covers another major area of concern in the field of Composition & Rhetoric. We will choose topics and form groups early in the semester. Groups will present their bibliographies to the class at the end of the semester and share a 1-2 page written introduction as well. Though groups may choose any topic of interest to them, suggested topics include:

What counts as writing?	Language rights	Multimodality
Plagiarism	Global Englishes	New media
Writing technologies	Feminist Rhetorics	Public sphere
Transfer	Transnational Rhetorics	Civil discourse
Narrative	Translingual writing	Disability studies

Portfolio. At the end of the semester, you'll compile your response essays and bibliographies into a portfolio prefaced by a 3-4 page introductory letter reflecting on the semester and proposing next steps. You might consider how (or if) C&R and literary orientations participate in a common "English Studies" project; imagine new directions for C&R research; discuss pedagogical and political implications of the work we've covered; or any other 'next steps' that interest you.

Presence

Like most graduate courses, ENG 700 requires not just your weekly physical attendance but also your active presence. Please plan to be in class each week having read the assigned material and prepared questions, topics, or quotations you'd like to discuss. We all have different learning styles, and active presence doesn't mean constantly holding the floor—look for ways to listen, ask questions, propose topics, and offer responses that all demonstrate your engagement with the class and your colleagues.

Disability Services

If you have a disability that may have an impact your work in this class, please meet with me early in the semester to arrange accommodations that will allow you to fulfill course requirements. If you are interested in receiving university services and accommodations for your disability, please contact the McBurney Center for Disability Services by phone at 263-2741 or email at FrontDesk@mcb.wisc.edu.

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COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 – Starting Places

Wednesday, September 3 – Defining Fields

Read for today:

Forum on Rhetoric, Writing, and Composition Studies from *PMLA* May 2014

Carr, Jean Ferguson, “Composition, English, and the University”

Bizzell, Patricia, “We Want to Know Who Our Students Are”

Mao, LuMing, “Thinking Beyond Aristotle”

Atwill, Janet M., “Memory, Materiality, and Provenance”

Young, Vershawn Ashanti, “Straight Black Queer”

Walters, Shannon, “Unruly Rhetorics”

Matsuda, Paul Kei, “The Lure of Translingual Writing”

Week 2 – The Ends of Composition

Wednesday, September 10 – Beginnings

Read for today:

Berlin, James, “Where do English Departments Really Come From?”

Douglass, Wallace, “Rhetoric for the Meritocracy”

Shaughnessy, Mina, “Introduction” and “Expectations”

Week 3 – The Ends of Composition

Wednesday, September 17 – The Institutional Problem with First Year Composition

Read for today:

Crowley, Sharon, “The Politics of Composition” and “Freshman English”

Miller, Susan, “Introduction” and “The Subject of Composition”

Week 4 – The Ends of Composition

Wednesday, September 24 – On the Civic Purpose of Composition

Read for today:

Berlin, James, “Social-Epistemic Rhetoric, Ideology, and English Studies”

Hairston, Maxine, “Diversity, Ideology, and Teaching Writing”

Bloom, Lynn. “Freshman Composition as a Middle Class Enterprise”

Sledd, James, “Comment”

Week 5 – The Ends of Composition

Wednesday, October 1 – Language Politics

Read for today:

excerpts from “Students’ Right to their Own Language”

Young, Vershawn Ashante, “Nah, We Straight”

Harris, Joseph, “Error”

Canagarajah, Suresh, “Place of World Englishes”

Prof. Sam Looker visits

Week 6 – What Literacy Does

Wednesday, October 8 – Beginnings

Read for today:

Ong, Walter J., “Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought”

Goody, Jack, “What’s in a List?”

Scribner, Sylvia, & Michael Cole, “Unpackaging Literacy”

Street, Brian, “The New Literacy Studies”

Week 7 – What Literacy Does

Wednesday, October 15 – Literacy Sponsors, Myths, & Legacies

Read for today:

Brandt “The Sponsors of Literacy”

Graff, Harvey, “Reflections” and “Literacy, Myths, and Legacies”

Week 8 – What Literacy Does

Wednesday, October 22 – Literacy & Citizenship

Wan, Amy *Producing Good Citizens*

Prof. Amy Wan visits class by Skype

Week 9 – What Literacy Does

Wednesday, October 29 – The Consequences of Literacy

Read for today:

Heath, Shirley Brice, “Prologue” and “Learning to Talk in Trackton”

Prendergast, Catherine, “Introduction”

Vieira, Kate, “On the Social Consequences of Literacy”

Prof. Kate Vieira visits class

Week 10 – The Good Man Speaking Well and Beyond

Wednesday, November 5 – Beginnings

Read for today:

Cicero, Marcus Tullius, *De Oratore* (pp5-261 of *On Oratory and Orators*)

Week 11 – The Good Man Speaking Well and Beyond

Wednesday, November 12 – More than Rational Speech (Movements & Material Rhetorics)

Read for today:

Corbett, Edward, “Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist”

Cathcart, Robert, “Movements: Confrontation as Rhetorical Form”

Marback, Richard, “Detroit and the Closed Fist”

Week 12 – The Good Man Speaking Well and Beyond

Wednesday, November 19 – Not Just the Available Men of Persuasion

Read for today:

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, “A Call for Other Ways of Reading” and “When the First Voice You Hear is not your Own”

Zaeske, Sue, “Introduction” and “A Departure from Their Place”

Week 13 – The Good Man Speaking Well and Beyond

Wednesday, November 26 – Re-Embodying the *Wir Bonus*

Read for today:

Dolmage, Jay *Disability Rhetoric*

Prof. Jay Dolmage visits class by Skype

Week 14

Wednesday, December 3 – Bibliography Presentations

Week 15

Wednesday, December 10 – Bibliography Presentations