

ENGL314: Theories of Composition and Rhetoric
Fall 2008

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Zinzendorf 304, ext. 1511
Hours: M-F - 10:30-11:30 a.m.
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Course description and objectives

English 314: Theories of Composition and Rhetoric involves the study of contemporary theories of composition, of rhetoric in an academic setting, and of the pedagogy of writing. This course should be useful for English majors who are seeking secondary education certification or for students considering graduate school in rhetoric and composition. Its objective will be to make students aware and competent in their articulation of how theories of rhetoric, composition, and pedagogy inform contemporary practices in writing classrooms. Students completing this course successfully should be able to:

- Understand and describe the leading theories of composition over the last 30 or so years
- Understand and define key terms associated with composition and rhetoric
- Understand and describe the context of composition teaching in the U.S. today and something of its history
- Understand and take a position with respect to key articles in the professional conversation about composition, rhetoric, and pedagogy
- Articulate and reflect on their own theoretical positions with respect to composition and rhetoric in the classroom
- Present, both orally and in writing, an analysis/critique of the *praxis* of a section of WRIT100 at Moravian College **OR** of a topic of concern within the field of composition and rhetoric.
- Design a theorized writing course with at least one writing assignment.

Books:

Heilker, Paul, and Peter Vandenberg, eds. *Keywords in Composition Studies*. Portsmouth, N.H.: Boynton/Cook Heinemann, 1996.

Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper, and Kurt Schick. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. New York: Oxford UP, 2001.

Villanueva, Victor, ed. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory*, 2nd ed. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2003.

(Handouts will supplement these texts.)

Assignments and grades:

- **2 unit tests and a final exam.** These will be short-answer and/or essay; one will be done according to an *individualist* model and one will be done according to a *collaborative* model. Each unit test will be worth **15%** of your course grade; the final exam will be worth **20%**
- **A response journal** that I will expect you to write in regularly and faithfully. Entries will cover assigned readings from course reserves. The journal will also include a formal annotated bibliography of reserve *and* other readings. The journal will be worth **20%** of your course grade.

- **A presentation and paper** that analyzes and critiques the *praxis* of a section of WR100 at Moravian or of a topic of concern within the field of composition and rhetoric. The presentation will include handouts and perhaps visuals, and the paper will be a formal one including citations and appendices. This assignment will be worth **30%** of your course grade (1/3 for the presentation, 2/3 for the paper).

Academic honesty and plagiarism:

The Moravian College policy on academic honesty, as represented in the *Student Handbook, 2008-00*, p. 10, will apply in ENGL 314. At the same time, in this particular course, *plagiarism* might usefully be studied as “a topic of concern within the field of composition and rhetoric” (either for an individual research project or as a matter for class discussion).

Assignment schedule:

Week I

M 8/25 - F 8/29

T- Course introduction.

Th – **Writing**: initial inventory of attitudes, ideas, and experiences.

handout readings by Herzberg, Crowley, and Berlin (“Rhetoric, Poetic, and Culture”)

Week II

9/2 – F 9/5

T – handout reading from *A Primer for Writing Teachers*, 2nd ed., Chapter 1, T pp. 1-15

Th – handout reading from *Primer*, Chapter 1, pp. 15- 41; handout reading by

Fulkerson

Cross-Talk, essays by Kinneavy, pp. 129-39, and Berlin, pp. 255-70.

(please read pp. 127-28 as well)

Week III

M 9/8 - F 9/12

T – handout reading from *Primer*, Chapter 2, pp. 44-59

Cross-Talk, essays by Murray and Emig, pp. 1-15

Th – handout: *Primer*, Chapter 2, pp. 59-78

Cross-Talk, essay by Bruffee, pp. 415-36.

Week IV

M 9/15 - F 9/19

T – handout reading by Harrington et al.

Journal check

Th – review/prepare for **test; declare choice of semester project**

Week V

M 9/22 – F 9/26

T – **Test**

Th - *Guide*, Chapter 1 (“Process Pedagogy”)

Week VI

M 9/29 - F 10/3
(midterm)

T - *Guide*, Chapter 2 (“Expressive Pedagogy ...”)

Th - *Guide*, Chapter 3 (“Rhetorical Pedagogy”)

Fall break

M - T, 10/6-7

Week VII

W 10/8 - F 10/10

Th - *Guide*, Chapter 4 (“Collaborative Pedagogy”)

Week VIII

M 10/13 - F 10/17

T – *Guide*, Chapter 12 (“Technology and the Teaching of Writing”)

Th – handout readings by Takaayoshi and Selfe and by Selfe

Week IX M 10/20 - F 10/24	T - <i>Guide</i> , Chapter 5 (“Cultural Studies and Composition”) <i>Cross-Talk</i> , essay by <u>Berlin</u> , pp. 717-37. Th – <i>Guide</i> , Chapter 6 (“Critical Pedagogy ...”)
Week X M 10/27 - F 10/31	Test
Week XI M 11/3 - F 11/7	T – <i>Guide</i> , Chapter 7 (“Feminist Pedagogy”); <i>Keywords</i> : “Feminism” Th – handout readings by <u>Miller</u> and <u>Flynn</u>
Week XII M 11/10 - F 11/14	T – handout reading from <i>A Primer for Writing Teachers</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 166-80. Th – handout reading from <i>Primer</i> , Chapter 5, pp. 180-90. <i>Cross-Talk</i> , essays by <u>Hartwell</u> , pp. 205-33, and <u>Rose</u> , pp. 547-69. (please read pp. 505-07 as well)
Week XIII M 11/17 – F 11/21	T – handout readings by <u>Connors</u> and <u>David et al.</u> Th - review/planning for presentations
Week XIV M 11/24 - T 11/25 (Thanksgiving break)	Presentations
Week XV M 12/1 - F 12/5	T - Presentations Th – Presentations
Week XVI M 12/8 – W 12/10	T - course evaluations
Final exams F 12/12 – F 12/19	

Response journal/annotated bibliography

In general

Your journal should be a place for you to practice **interactive reading** by summarizing the main ideas of readings, by formulating and recording your responses to readings, by beginning to work out your own ideas in response to ideas you read, and by talking to yourself and to others.

As a journal, these are the basic considerations:

- *write often*
- *write a lot each time*
- *don't edit yourself as you write.*

The assignment is to write **at least one entry for each of nine pieces of handout readings assigned in the syllabus, the fifteen entries in *Keywords* listed below, and at least three others of your choosing from that book.** That is the minimum expected, but of course you may – and indeed are encouraged to – journal on any other assigned readings or on topics that come in class or on anything else related to the subject of this course. **Bring a version of your journal writing to class each day for sharing with others and post your entries to the Discussion Board section of the course Blackboard site.**

Content of entries

There should be **two** parts to each entry: numbered, labeled or otherwise differentiated. In part one, try to **summarize the main arguments/points/ideas of the reading.** (You should be able to do this in a paragraph or two; don't get too bogged down in the detail of what you're reading as you're trying to summarize it.) In part two, try to work out **your response to the reading.** Here, I hope you can think of what you're doing as participating in a "conversation" with authors, with classmates and/or with or about ideas. You may certainly be subjective, but you may also try to analyze/compare/classify/critique ideas you encounter. Or you may ask questions, etc.

Provide a **full bibliographic citation** for each reading. The *MLA Handbook* is the source for information about and models of such citations. Format these correctly, according to MLA style, whether you type or handwrite your journal. This citation may be at the top or the bottom of the relevant entry, but try to put it at the same place all the time.

Journal coverage

Basically, this will come from readings in *Keywords in Composition Studies* and from handout readings. two books: *The Politics of Writing Instruction: Postsecondary* (on reserve) and. The handout readings and one entry from *Keywords* are in the assignment schedule portion of the syllabus. The mandatory readings from *Keywords* are as follows:

academic discourse	discourse community	practice/praxis
collaboration	epistemology	rhetoric
composing/writing	ideology	students
critical thinking	literacy	teacher
cultural studies	pedagogy	feminism*

In addition, you are to read and write a journal entry on three other entries from *Keywords*. You may choose which these are.

* This entry is assigned in the syllabus for the week of 3 Nov.

Annotated bibliography

You'll complete this for the final submission of your journal, but you can work on entries for it as you go along through the semester. The format here calls for a full bibliographic citation (in MLA style, of course) followed by a paragraph of annotation: what the source has to say. This paragraph you may draw from the summary part of your journal entries, perhaps making it an even further refined and condensed summary statement. Do be objective – or descriptive, if you prefer -- in writing these annotations. Try to limit each summary to 250 words.

Example of annotated bibliography entry

Process and Portfolios in Writing Instruction. Vol. 26. Ed. Kent Gill. Urbana, Illinois:

The National Council of Teachers of English, 1993.

In this collection, English language arts teachers describe the benefits of using portfolios in assessing student writing and tell how portfolios and a process approach help students to build self-confidence and to develop sensitivity about what constitutes good writing. Most of the chapters are about junior high and high school assignments because it was at those levels that portfolios really got started as an assessment method and writing project for students. (71 words)

Grades

The first criterion I will use to assign a grade to your overall journal is purely quantitative: having the minimum required number of entries will earn you a C; this grade will vary downwards or upwards as the number of entries increases or decreases. I'll also look at how much you write per entry, whether you are letting the words and thoughts flow or whether you're just barely eking them out. This factor will account for a plus or minus in this part of your grade. If you give a good effort to writing the kinds of things described above, the length of a journal entry will take care of itself. I'm usually not one to count words, but if you want some kind of yardstick to measure minimum length of a journal entry, let's say a page and a half, single spaced.

In terms of quality, I will evaluate your journal in terms of your honest effort to do the kinds of things I have outlined above, which may be summarized as intellectual engagement with ideas in the readings.

I will not grade individual entries, only the journal as a whole.

Semester project

As per the course syllabus, you are to prepare

A **presentation and paper** that analyzes and critiques the *praxis* of a section of WRIT100 at Moravian or a topic of concern within the field of composition and rhetoric. The presentation will include handouts and perhaps visuals, and the paper will be a formal one including citations and appendices. This assignment will be worth **30%** of your course grade (1/3 for the presentation, 2/3 for the paper).

To elaborate, if you choose to study a section of WRIT100, you must

- Describe the approach and the pedagogy in terms of the theories we have been (or will be) studying.
- Describe the approach and the pedagogy in terms of ideology (as per Berlin, “Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Class,” an article we will read later on).
 “approach and pedagogy” would include:
 - Statements of course objectives
 - Choice of textbook(s) and their use in the course
 - Classroom activities and teacher’s role
 - Writing assignments – their nature, their sequence, how the teacher evaluates them.
- Provide appendices containing a copy of the course syllabus, assignment handouts, other important teaching documents, perhaps a copy of a student paper evaluated by the instructor.
- Give a copy of your paper to the Writing 100 instructor and consider inviting her/him to our class for your presentation.
- Especially for your presentation, handouts or overheads of the appendices to your paper will be helpful.

In order to do these things, it will be necessary to

- Interview the section teacher at least once
- Visit his/her class at least once
- Review his/her syllabus, writing assignments (informal and formal), and other relevant, revelatory handouts
- Consider books s/he has assigned for the class, particularly handbook and “rhetoric” and consider the teacher’s use of assigned books
- Perhaps look at the teacher’s comments and evaluation of sample student papers
- Consider the theory and pedagogy of the WRIT100 section in terms of reading you’ve done (or will have done) for ENGL314.

Follow this link for a list of this semester’s WRIT100 sections, with titles, instructors’ names, brief descriptions and meeting times: <http://home.moravian.edu/public/regis/noncatdescrfa08.htm>

Instructors have been informed of the possibility that a student in ENGL314 will be studying their class, but anyone whose WRIT100 section you may want to study must give their consent to participating in the project. I can help secure that consent, as needed, and I can tell you a little bit about individual

instructors whom you may not know. Also, to avoid possible conflicts of interest, do not choose my section to study and do not choose a section taught by someone from whom you are now taking a class or someone with whom you work in an extra-curricular activity. In any case, by Thursday 19 September, please decide if you want to follow this option or the one below and declare your intention to me.

If you choose to study a topic of concern within the field of composition studies, you must

- Define or designate such a topic. This should emerge from your reading and journal-writing or class discussion.
- Submit a research proposal (by Thursday, 10 Oct.) that
 - summarizes what you already know about the topic
 - describes briefly why this topic is of concern to the field or why it warrants investigation
 - articulates the questions you will want to investigate
 - attempts to define the scope of your investigation
 - lists relevant potential sources (textual and/or human) that you will consult
- Conduct research
- For your presentation, have a handout or overhead listing the main points of your findings and provide handouts of a bibliography of sources on this topic.

So, by **Thursday, 19 September** (sooner if you can and if it's convenient), I would like to hear from each of you as to the following:

- which of the options you wish to work with.
- if you wish to study a section of WRIT100, your preferences as to which section (please list 3 in order).
- if you wish to investigate a topic of concern to comp. studies, a list of potential topics (try to limit this to 3).