

Appendix G: "Research Methods in Composition and Literacy" Syllabus

Rhetoric 565: Research Methods in Composition and Literacy
Instructor: Dr. William FitzGerald

Spring 2014

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Hours: T 5-6, Th 12:30 - 1: 30 and by appt.

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Overview

This course is a practical guide to researching literate activity in the classroom and other spheres in which writing is produced and circulates. Introducing methods and methodologies for analyzing texts and their composition, the course prepares you to conduct genuine research and thus contribute to scholarship in composition and literacy. We will survey--and practice--methods and methodologies for archival, empirical and ethnographic research; learn the value of qualitative, quantitative and mixed modes of analysis; form meaningful research questions; and design cogent, practicable research studies in light of epistemological and ethical principles.

Specifically, you will learn to locate and interpret historical material through the paradigm of the archive; identify and collect qualitative data through interview and observation; code data using methods of grounded theory; and develop a "case study" approach to address a research question. Along the way, we will consider traditional and emergent sites of writing research in institutional and community contexts as well as in online settings. The projects you undertake in this course can serve as a springboard to teacher-research or a starting point for a future thesis or dissertation or other scholarship

Objectives:

In this course, you will learn to

- recognize the dominant research methods and methodologies in composition and literacy;
- identify and formulate meaningful research questions in writing studies;
- develop methodologically sound approaches to conducting research;
- consider and apply ethical principles of text-based and human subject research;
- design and articulate a research study reflecting mastery of intellectual and practical issues.

Texts:

Nickoson, Lee, and Mary P. Sheridan. (Eds.). *Writing Studies Research and Practice: Methods and Methodologies*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012.

Ramsey, Alexis et al. Eds. *Working in the Archives: Practical Research Methods for Rhetoric and Composition*. Southern Illinois UP, 2009.

Yin, Robert. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5/e. SAGE, 2013.

The above texts are available for purchase at the campus book center or online. Other readings, in academic journals, may be accessed through the internet or the Rutgers library.

Expectations and Policies

Evaluation: Course grades will be determined as follows:

Class participation *		15%
(attendance, discussion, postings, professionalism)		
Minor Assignments		15%
Research Question log	5%	
Practitioner Report	5%	
Journal Report	5%	
Major Assignments		70%
Archive Project	15%	
Empirical Project	15%	
Ethnography Project	15%	
Final Project: Research Proposal	25%	
Total		100 %

Attendance: This class involves engaged discussion and assigned contributions; weekly attendance is mandatory. In addition, you will lead discussion of an assigned article or chapter twice in the semester and write (and on occasion) post responses to readings prior to class.

Integrity: I place a high value on ethics and expect students to conduct themselves with integrity in classroom performance and in research and writing. You are strongly encouraged to clarify misunderstandings you might have about responsible methods of research and proper documentation. In addition, you are advised to consult the university policy on integrity (<http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/Academic-Integrity-Policy.php>)

Accommodation: If you have a documented disability, please inform me and we will work together to develop a reasonable accommodation.

Outline

The course is organized around three units focused on research domains: archival, empirical and ethnographic. Each of these units provides an opportunity to perform a small-scale study. A final unit allows you to design a substantial study that could be completed in the future. Any of these projects can serve as

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Readings and Activities (subject to revision)

Week One (January 21) -- Course Overview/Introduction to Research Methods

Rickly, Rebecca. "[Messy Contexts: The Required Research Methods Course as a Scene of Rhetorical Practice](#)" (read)

Lauer, Janice and William Asher. "[Introduction](#)" to *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*, Oxford University Press, 1988. (skim)

Johanek, Cindy. "[Composition Research: Issues in Context](#)" (Chapter One) in *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition*, Utah State UP, 2000. (skim)

Week Two (January 28) -- Introduction to Historiography and Archival Research

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Introduction; Journet; Rohan

Working in the Archives, Introduction and readings in Part One (Glenn and Enoch; Gaillet; Ostergaard; Gold; Mortensen)

Blakeslee, Ann and Cathy Fleischer. "[What's Your Question?](#)" *Becoming a Writing Researcher*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2007. 13-36. [skim and don't mind the gaps]

Week Three (Feb 4) -- Archival Research Methods (cont.)

Working in the Archives, Morris and Rose; Ramsey; Warnick; Zinkham

Gold, David. "Remapping Revisionist Historiography" *College Composition and Communication* 64:1 (September 2012): 15-34.

Bordelon, Suzanne. "Composing Women's Civic Identities during the Progressive Era: College Commencement Addresses as Overlooked Rhetorical Sites." *College Composition and Communication*. 61:3 (Feb 2010): 510-533.

Week Four (Feb 11) -- Archival Research Methods (cont.)

Working in the Archives, Yakel, Marshall, Masters, Tirabassi; Johnson

McKee Heidi and James Porter. "The Ethics of Archival Research" *College Composition and Communication* 64:1 (September 2012): 59-81.

Due: Journal Report

Week Five (Feb 18) -- Archival Research Methods (cont.)

Working in the Archives, Ritter, Lerner, Graban, Lucas and Strain

Buehl, Jonathan, Tamar Chute and Anne Fields. "Training in the Archives: Archival Research as Professional Development." *College Composition and Communication* 64:2 (Dec 2012): 274-305.

Carter, Shannon and James Conrad. "In Possession of Community: Toward a More Sustainable Local" *College Composition and Communication* 64:1 (September 2012): 82-106.

Week Six (Feb 25) -- Empirical Research

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Hass, Takayoshi and Carr; Blair; Lamos

Charney, Davida. "Empiricism is Not a Four-Letter Word." *College Composition and Communication*. 47.4 (Dec 1996): 567-593.

Johanek, Cindy. "Numbers, Narratives, and He vs. She: Issues of Audience in Composition Research." *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition*. Logan, Utah: Utah State UP, 2000. 56-85.

Selfe, Cynthia. "The Predrafting Processes of Four High- and Four Low-Apprehensive Writers." *Research in the Teaching of English* 18 (1984): 45-64.

Due: Practitioner Report

Week Seven (Mar 4) -- Empirical Research (cont.)

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Hesse, Haswell, Broad, Fishman

Lang, Susan and Craig Baehr. "Data Mining: A Hybrid Methodology for Complex and Dynamic Research" *College Composition and Communication* 64:1 (September 2012): 172-194.

Wardle, Elizabeth. "Understanding 'Transfer' from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*. 31.1/2 (Fall/Winter 2007): 65-85.

Due: Archival Study Project

Week Eight (Mar 11) -- Empirical Research (cont.)

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Sheridan Fleckenstein

Grant-Davie, Keith. "Coding Data: Issues of Validity, Reliability, and Interpretation." *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Eds. Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan. Southern Illinois University Press, 1992. 270-286.

Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method." *Handbook of Emergent Methods*. Eds. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber and Patricia Levy. New York: The Guilford Press, 2008. 155-170.

Wilder, Laura, and Joanna Wolfe. "Sharing the tacit rhetorical knowledge of the literary scholar: The effects of making disciplinary conventions explicit in undergraduate writing about literature courses." *Research in the Teaching of English* 44.2 (2009): 170-209.

Smagorinsky, Peter, Elizabeth Daigle, Cindy O'Donnell-Allen, and Susan Bynum. "Bullshit in Academic Writing: A Protocol Analysis of a High School Senior's Process of Interpreting Much Ado about Nothing" *Research in the Teaching of English* 44: 4 (May 2010): 368-405.

Week Nine (Mar 18) -- Spring Break (no class)

Week Ten (Mar 25) -- Ethnographic Research Methods

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Sheridan, Nickoson, Canagarajah

Anderson, Paul. "Simple Gifts: Ethical Issues in the Conduct of Person-Based Composition Research." *College Composition and Communication* 49.1 (Feb 1998): 63-89.

Brooke, Robert. "[Ethnographic Practice as a Means of Invention: Seeking a Rhetorical Paradigm for Ethnographic Writing](#)"

Cross, Geoffrey. "Ethnographic Research in Business and Technical Writing: Between Extremes and Margins" *Journal of Business and Technical Communication* 8:1 (Jan 1994): 118-134.

Due: Empirical Study project

Week Eleven (Apr 1) -- Ethnographic Research Methods (cont.)

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Selfe and Hawisher; Inoue; Grabill

Citron, Ralph. "Wearing a Pith Helmet at a Sly Angle: or, Can Writing Researchers Do Ethnography in a Postmodern Era." *Written Communication* 10:3 (July 1993): 371-412.

LaFrance, Michelle and Melissa Nichols. "Institutional Ethnography as Materialist Framework for Writing Program Research and the Faculty-Staff Work Standpoints Project." *College Composition and Communication* 64:1 (September 2012): 130-50.

Week Twelve (Apr 8) -- Digital Research and Case Studies

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Palmquist, Mullin and Blalock; McKee and Porter

McKee, Heidi and Danielle DeVoss. "[Introduction](#)" to Digital Writing Research.

Purdy, James P. and Joyce Walker. "[Digital Breadcrumbs: Case Studies of Online Research](#)" *Kairos* 11.2

Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives (daln.osu.edu) and IRB protocols

Due: Research Question Log

Week Thirteen (Apr 15) -- Digital Research and Case Studies (cont.)

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Lunsford

Yin, Robert. Chapters 1 and 2. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5/e. SAGE, 2013.

Jolliffe, David and Allison Harl. "[Texts of Our Institutional Lives: Studying the "Reading Transition" from High School to College: What Are Our Students Reading and Why?](#)"

College English 70: 6 (July 2008): 599-617.

Bizup, Joseph. "BEAM: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing." *Rhetoric Review* 27.1 (2008): 72-86.

Due: Ethnographic Study project

Week Fourteen (Apr 22) -- Literacy Research and Case Studies

Writing Studies Research and Practice, Rickly

Yin, Robert. Chapters 3 and 4. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 5/e. SAGE, 2013.

Berry, Patrick, Gail Hawisher and Cindy Selfe, [Transliterate Lives in Digital Times](#). C&C Digital Press, 2012. (see chapters as case studies)

Proposal Workshop

Due: Project Proposal drafts

Week Fifteen (Apr 29) -- Case Studies and Presentations

Yin, Robert. Chapters 5 and 6. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 5/e.* SAGE, 2013.

Presentations I

Week Sixteen (May 5) -- Presentations

Presentations II

Course Evaluations

Due: Research Project Proposal