ENL 6023-001 (Spring 2011)
Post-Process Composition Theories

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Office Hours: Mon 12:00-2:00, and by appointment

Course Description

We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist... using technologies that haven’t yet been invented... in order to solve problems we don’t even know are problems yet. Karl Fish

The creative, with skills in abstract problem solving and intellectual flexibility, have a better chance of thriving in this future world that Karl Fish describes. This future world—based not on linear, rule-governed logic—requires a paradigm shift in how we theorize rhetoric and composition.

This course begins with a brief review of the major theories of rhetoric composition, especially those of the modern and postmodern eras. Working from an interdisciplinary perspective, we explore the major tenets that expand on an established process paradigm. Such an expansion includes new metaphors including ecology and networks, derived from activity and complex systems theories. These metaphors have shifted the focus of rhetoric and composition from an author-centered and teacher-centered pedagogy to a relationship- or network-centered field.

We use a “post-process” framework to focus on three areas: (i) relations highlights concepts of literacy, discourse, genre, and visuality (relations of looking); (ii) locations explores spaces/places, ecologies, and materiality; and (iii) positions spotlights markers of identity such as race, gender, class, sexuality, and able-bodiedness.

We investigate the interdisciplinary theories that influence contemporary pedagogy for multiple and diverse audiences, including attending to the shifts in composition in a digital age. Students are encouraged to construct their own theories of rhetoric/composition.

Course Texts

6. About $30 for photocopies of reserve articles, computer disks, folders, poster board, etc.
7. Own e-mail account & regular, daily internet access.
Course Objectives

1. Gaining factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends)—distinguishing among the different theories and approaches in rhetoric/composition;
2. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing—compiling a portfolio for conference presentation and publication in rhetoric and composition;
3. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view—revising, evaluating, and reflecting on your own professional portfolio and your classmates’ writing.

Assignments (Grading Criteria)

Conference-Length Paper & Presentation (25%)
Publication Portfolio (25%)
Texts in Conversation Bibliography & Presentation (25%)
Quizzes, “Brown Bag” Workshop, & Discussion Leader (25%)

Grades

Rubrics for evaluation will be posted on Blackboard. Your grade will be determined by a percentage of the total number of possible points: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, and F=<60%

Assignments

Conference-Length Paper & Presentation:
This assignment has two parts:

1. Choose a field, camp, trend, person, theory, concept, etc. that relates to the topics we have been studying. Your choice could be connected to your area of interest or specialty. Develop a thesis/position, integrating your understanding and perspective of the topic with your research. You will also need a 150 word abstract, cover letter, and the call-for-papers of a conference you plan to send this 8-10 page paper. Use MLA format for your internal citations and Works Cited page. Your paper will be evaluated on the cogency, coherence, and rigor of your argument, its support, and the application (critique, and evaluation) of selected ideas presented in the course.

2. The oral presentation of this assignment to the class. During your presentation, you need handouts with Works Cited. Your presentation should be about 10 minutes long and we will have a 10 minute discussion where feedback will be provided also. Your presentation will be evaluated on content and professional delivery.

NOTE: The proposal for your semester project is due at week 5 and you are expected to adhere to the proposal from then on, although minor changes are acceptable. Late projects will be penalized up to one letter grade for every 24 hours. If your project is not submitted in class, do make sure a department staff member stamps your essay, indicating the time and date. Please save all drafts, pre-writing, brainstorming, and drafts that show your work-in-progress.
Ethical breaches in your research, tardiness, unexcused absences, and/or lack of commitment to the course and your work will affect your standing is course. Any questions about course and assignment expectations can be posed either in email or in person—should you have any confusion or need clarification, do contact me prior to submitting your work. All work submitted must be your own, with outside sources properly acknowledged with MLA citation formats. The wording states: “Scholastic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to commit such an act. The penalty for scholastic dishonesty is failure of this course. Please refer to the UTSA Student Code of Conduct at http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html and UTSA policies on Academic Honesty (under section 203) http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html.

Publication Portfolio:
Upon receipt of feedback from the conference-length paper and the specialty workshop, you will expand/revise your conference-length paper to target a particular journal or anthology. Expansion includes paper length, research, and primary/secondary sources (data, where applicable). Revision may require, quite literally, re-vision, which includes global changes in framing and organization. You will also need a revised 150 word abstract, and the call-for-papers of an anthology or journal you to which plan to send this 25-30 page paper. Use MLA format for your internal citations and Works Cited page. When you submit your portfolio, please include any revisions as well as written feedback received from colleagues.

Texts in Conversation Bibliography & Presentation:
This assignment involves working with sources for your conference paper and publication portfolio: (i) read and annotate 10-12 journal essays and book chapters on a particular topic related to the themes and ideas in this course; (ii) ascertain the lines of agreement, disagreement, controversy, and tensions these sources, quite literally putting these texts in conversation with one another; (iii) offer a 15-minute introduction to this research area and the questions/critiques that arise, situating this work within the scholarship of rhetoric and composition; (iv) conduct a 10-minute discussion; (iv) upload your completed annotated bibliography with 300-500 word introduction focusing on “texts in conversation” to Blackboard. This assignment provides a preliminary step to helping you articulate how your own research intervenes in the major conversations and approaches of your selected field.

An alternative is to read a book (we’ll negotiate on the book), write a 1500-word book review, and present it to the class. Consider publishing your review in a journal like Composition Studies.

Note: Books that are unavailable at the UTSA library can be interlibrary-loaned. Since it takes an average of 5-7 business days for an interlibrary loan item to arrive, you’ll want to plan accordingly. Renewals are prohibited for interlibrary loaned books.

Quizzes:
This in-class work cannot be made up. We may have regular quizzes (sometimes unannounced) on the assigned reading and class lecture, when necessary. To avoid quizzes, stay abreast of the reading and contribute actively and substantively to class discussion.
“Brown Bag” Workshop:
Since feedback is a crucial part of developing a robust research agenda, we will set time aside for each student to present his/her research. The following will be uploaded to Blackboard no later than 11:59pm a week before you are scheduled to lead the workshop: (a) a chapter or journal essay (approximately 30 pages) that everyone reads; (b) a 18-20 page working manuscript of your own writing. In the week that follows, everyone is responsible for reading the chapter/journal essay and working manuscript (in addition to the assigned reading for that week). You may select two colleagues to provide written feedback (in addition to the feedback provided by the instructor). The “brown bag” workshop lasts about 45 minutes and you are responsible for moderating and leading the discussion; you may choose a partner to co-lead with you (optional). Please submit all feedback in your publication portfolio.

Discussion Leader: By the first week, you will have chosen a topic/date to serve as discussion leader. In preparation for leading the discussion, read the assigned reading ahead of time, identifying the major ideas or key concepts that contribute to our exploration of post process composition and rhetorical theories. Then consider how that assigned reading fits in or dialogues with the other materials in the course (or relevant outside materials) as well as your colleagues’ research interests. Consider to what extent the assigned reading allows us to understand or illuminate post process approaches.

On your assigned day, (i) lead a 20 minute discussion on the assigned reading, referring to specific sections in our texts; (iii) raise questions and highlight tensions/controversies, pointing out how the assigned readings provide a framework or approach for understanding post process composition and rhetoric.

Attendance and Participation
• Because this is a graduate seminar and because your course grade will be influenced by your in-class participation and preparedness, regular, punctual attendance seems to be the most logical approach. More than one absence may affect your final letter grade (by one letter grade per absence).
• Daily reading and writing will be assigned. Do complete the assigned reading/writing on the days listed and come prepared to participate in class discussion. **No late assignments will be accepted without a medical excuse.**
• Student questions and debates all contribute to the overall growth of knowledge for the class. Learning studies show that in general, if a person has a question, then at least 1/3 of the other people in the class also have that question—SO ASK! You will encounter a number of interesting and perhaps controversial topics in this course, and you will not always agree with me or with each other. Learning to listen and understand different points of view is critical to class discussion. Careful listening also helps avoid needless repetition—a factor that your classmates will appreciate! Should your participation be minimal, the instructor may deduct up to one letter grade from your final grade.
• A graduate seminar relies on students to be prepared, active participants: the level of your engagement with the materials and in the class dialogues, and your addition to the class knowledge-base. This does not necessarily mean how much you talk in class. It means how you demonstrate your level of engagement with the literature of the profession and how connected you are to the profession’s on–going conversations.
• When you conduct/moderate a class discussion, feel free to utilize whatever techniques you may wish to make class interesting. Stay away from verbal hesitations (errs, ums, you knows, I thinks, etc.). Have a well-defined, legible game plan. Please don't read us your notes. Note: if you need clarification, a pep talk, or strategies while preparing for these discussions, see me—preferably a week before you're scheduled to lead the discussion.
• **Note on civility and professionalism:** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. To ensure all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class. **Cell phones** should be turned off or set to “vibrate/buzz only” before you come to class. If you must take a call, please step into the hallway to talk.
• Support services for students with disabilities are available through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in MS 2.03.18. See [http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm](http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm)