



Composition Pedagogies and Rhetorical Theories for Diverse Teaching Contexts

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Office Hours: Thursday, 5:30-6:30 and by appointment

Course Description

This course aims to take a comprehensive look at the wide array of theories and practices of pedagogical approaches to contemporary composition instruction. Current pedagogies include Expressivist, which emphasizes personal voice; Social-Epistemic, which focuses on the contexts in which writing takes place; Critical pedagogies, which roughly include, among others, Critical Race, Queer, and Feminist pedagogies, and Digital pedagogies, which ask student to create Web-based texts and to consider the impact of contemporary practices of textual distribution on writing.

In recent years, this mix has expanded to include various ideas about multimodality (including image, video, sound and design in essays); process (moving the emphasis away from final written products and on to writing processes); community-based learning (asking students to work in local non-profit organizations and to assist community members with their writing); writing-about-writing and teaching for transfer (pedagogies that emphasize content of composition and aim to help students transfer their knowledge of writing across multiple sites of learning). These theories aim to place students within authentic rhetorical situations, to increase their awareness of how to make rhetorical choices based on the demands of audience and genre, and to articulate their understanding of key terms in composition studies (such as rhetorical situation, exigence, discourse community, and context) so that they are equipped to apply what they learn in first-year composition in other writing situations.

Students will be asked to evaluate these pedagogical approaches based on their own experiences as students and instructors. We will want to pay special attention not only to the pedagogical theories under consideration but also to their feasibility. Given our particular contexts and frameworks (including students, faculty, administrators, and infrastructure) how might we use these theories to develop our own teaching practices?

Required Texts

A Guide to Composition Pedagogies. 2nd Ed. Oxford UP. 2013.

On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies. NCTE P. 2014.

Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing. Utah State UP. 2014.

Assignments

Discussion Board Posts (42%) (7; 750-1000 words) and Comments (21) (30%)

There will be ten opportunities for you to post to the discussion board; you will be asked to post seven times. If you post more than seven times, your lowest grade will be dropped. During the weeks that you participate, you should also post at least three comments in response to other students' posts (the responses and the comments should happen on the same weeks). The goal is to engage in an active, online discussion. Your original posts should begin with a summary of the main points in the assigned reading and then move into an analysis of it. If the text is difficult for you, or if you have questions about it, this is a good time to ask them. Be specific about where you're confused, or what your concerns are. Although you are invited to disagree with any of the authors, please do not use your disagreement as an opportunity to dismiss the writer or, worse, to critique their writing. If you disagree with a writer, tell us, specifically, what it is in the text that you disagree with.

Be sure to take advantage of the Web-based platform by linking out to other sources in including sound, image, and video as appropriate.

As an alternative, you may wish to produce a response that combines image and text (such as a cartoon, a drawing, a video, or something else) or that is itself housed elsewhere on the Web (such as a blog post, a Prezi, a Google doc or something else). In these cases, you would post a link in the Discussion Board to your artifact. If you want to pursue these avenues, remember that the resulting artifact's purpose should be both explanatory and interpretive as described above. A video recording of yourself responding in an off-the-cuff manner to one of the assignments, for example, would be inappropriate. A successful video response would most likely be scripted and do the work of the text-based response as described above. Also, even though Bb will allow you to upload a video, that playback, if it works at all, will not be good. If you do make a video, you'll have to post it to a video sharing site such as YouTube.

Your primary response should be posted by 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning; your secondary responses should be made before class. Be sure to maintain a civil, professional tone.

Discussion Board Grading Rubric

Did the writer

- Comprehensively summarize at least one of the assigned texts?
- Provide an analysis of that text?
- Maintain a professional, respectful tone?
- Adequately develop the response?
- Make use of the Web-based platform?

Final Project (48%)

The final project should reflect the course theme—composition pedagogy and rhetorical theories—and it should also contain a significant element of research that extends beyond the assigned reading for the class. By “significant,” I mean your final project should cite approximately ten scholarly articles that were not assigned for this class. However, the form of the final project is up to you. Here are some examples.

A scholarly essay that investigates one or more pedagogical and/or rhetorical theories.

Say, for example, that you wanted to learn more about cultural studies. For your essay, you

would conduct some research on the field of cultural studies and identify key essays. For this research, you would get a lot of guidance from the “Cultural Studies” article that we read in class. From there, you might read Dick Hebdige or Stuart Hall (non-composition source texts) and you might read more of Diana George, John Trimbur, or James Berlin. In this example, your goal is to learn more about the key moments in the history of composition studies on this subject. As you read the sources, you’ll get ideas about the direction you’re interested in. How seriously was the idea taken? Who opposed this pedagogical theory? What are some amazing assignments and courses that came out of this tradition? As you read, follow your interests. For an essay of this type, you should aim to write about twenty, double-spaced pages. This essay is exploratory in nature; you don’t have to make an argument about the value of your subject (though you will almost certainly have some thoughts on the subject).

A series of assignments and a syllabus based on a particular pedagogical approach or rhetorical theory with an essay justifying your choices. Perhaps you’d really like to put together a series of assignments sheets and a syllabus based on a pedagogical or rhetorical style. You might want to design a queer studies or a feminist studies composition course. What would that take? What would the assignments need to include in order to justify the title? In addition to the documents, you would write an essay in which you explained your choices. How do your writing assignments and your syllabus embody the values of queer studies? This essay would also require approximately ten citations.

A project in any medium (print or digital). While every project will need to be explained and situated within the existing literature (the supplementary essay as described in the previous example), you might want to create a project in another medium. There are many options for this project. Maybe you want to make a video that explains a concept to an audience of students, or maybe you want to write an assignment and make an example of what the result should be.

A research study of your own. If you move reasonably quickly, you could conduct primary research on some aspect of the effectiveness or results of pedagogical practices. For example, you might be interested in collecting data about students’ revision practices--first and second drafts of essays--and observing how classroom instructors teach revision. You could then situate your study within scholarship on revision. You might also want to simply set up a study. In this case, you would situate your study within the context of other, similar studies.

Or something else entirely. Whatever project you develop, you’ll need to situate it within the scholarly conversation that surrounds your subject. I’m always available to talk through ideas.

Collaboration. Teams of two students can collaborate on any project. While the projects that result from these collaborations don’t need to be twice as long, they should be more comprehensive than projects completed by individuals. If you decide to work with someone and it isn’t working out, you can always dissolve the partnership. Be sure to clearly state your desire to go forward individually in an email to your colleague on or before March 17, 2016. You can always come see me if you’re not sure what to do.

Final Project Grading Rubric

Did the writer

- Clearly present a research question or project goal?
- Provide answers to and the context of the research question by conducting independent research beyond the course assignments (includes approximately ten scholarly sources, though this number will vary based on the sources)?
- Present the material to its best possible advantage (i.e., exhibits reasonable control over the medium/media)?
- Edit the final project and include a works cited page?

Presentation (10%)

This is an informal presentation of your work; imagine that you are presenting it at a professional conference. There should be a visual component of some kind. If you make, for example, a video, you wouldn't just show it. You'd also have to describe how it's an expression of the pedagogical theory with which you're working. The presentation should be no fewer than seven and no more than ten minutes long (including any time for q and a). In the presentation, you should make clear your research question and your findings. You might not be able to tell the audience everything you learned; you'll have to isolate and highlight the key points. You should also be comfortable enough with your presentation material that you don't have to read from a script; you should be able to talk to your audience. Given the time pressures, you need to be able to quickly set-up and take down any equipment you need. You'll have a minute at most for each of these tasks.

Presentation Grading Rubric:

Did the writer

- Clearly present a research question or project goal?
- Effectively organize the research material for an oral and visual presentation (i.e., the writer does not simply read her final project but instead highlights its salient features so that the listener/viewer leaves with an understanding of what's important in the writer's work)?
- Present the material to its best possible advantage (i.e., exhibits reasonable control over the medium/media)?
- Stay within the time frame?

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is copying and using other people's words without proper acknowledgment or citation as it is indicated in the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity. All writing submitted for this course is understood to be your original work. Plagiarism is unacceptable and has serious consequences that can include a failing grade. In cases where I detect academic dishonesty (the fraudulent submission of another's work, in whole or part, as your own), you may be subject to a failing grade for the project or the course, and, in the worst case, to academic probation or expulsion. You are expected to read, understand, and adhere to CCNY's Policy on Academic Integrity, which is available here: <http://www1.cuny.cuny.edu/current/upload/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class session of this course and to be on time. If you miss two classes, your final grade will be dropped by one-half of one letter (a 90 to an 85, for example). If you miss three classes, your final grade will be dropped one full letter. If you miss four classes, you will not be able to pass the course. Consistent late arrivals and early

departures will have a negative impact on your grade. I will notify you by email if course absences (for full or partial classes) are having an impact on your grade. If you have special circumstances, please see me. I'm happy to work with you to help you complete this course.

Student Code of Conduct

All student members of the College community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates mutual respect for the rights and personal/academic well-being of others, preserves the integrity of the social and academic environment, and supports the mission of the College. The College has an inherent right to address behavior that impedes, obstructs, or threatens the maintenance of order and attainment of the aforementioned goals by violating the standards of conduct set forth in the University student conduct policies noted below as well as other policies that may be established by the respective Schools, Global Sites, and administrative offices of the University. The goals of the CCNY Community Standards are:

- To promote a campus environment that supports the overall educational mission of the University
- To protect the University community from disruption and harm
- To encourage appropriate standards of individual and group behavior
- To foster ethical values and civic virtues
- To foster personal learning and growth while at the same time holding individuals and groups accountable to the standards of expectations established by the Code of Conduct: <http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/community-standards.cfm>

Food and Drinks

Please! No eating in the classroom. Your snack could be a real distraction for other students. Drinks are fine.

Cell Phones and Computers

Please restrict your use of these devices to class related projects. Unless we're using them for a class related project, your cell phone should be out of sight. If you would like to use your phone on a regular basis for work during class time, please let me know how you intend to use it.

Schedule of Classes	
Date	Reading Assignment
February 4	Introduction
February 11	"What Is Composition Pedagogy?" 1-19. "Cultural Studies." 94-110.
February 18	"Feminist." 128-45. "Genre." 146-62.
February 25	"Researched Writing." 231-47. "Rhetoric and Argumentation." 248-65.
March 3	"Second Language Writing." 266-82. "Writing in the Disciplines and Across the Curriculum." 283-300.
March 10	"The Content of Composition, Reflective Practice, and the Transfer of Knowledge and Practice in Composition." <i>Writing Across Contexts</i> 1-36.
March 17	Proposals Due (if you are working collaboratively, your proposal should specify this) "The Role of Curricular Design in Fostering Transfer of Knowledge and Practice in Composition: A Synthetic Review." <i>Writing Across Contexts</i> 37-59.
March 24	"Teaching for Transfer (TFT) and the Role of Content in Composition." <i>Writing Across Contexts</i> 60-103.
March 31	"Introduction." <i>On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies</i> 1-27.
April 7	No Class
April 14	"Refiguring Our Relationship to New Media." <i>On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies</i> 28-69. "Direct to Video: Rewriting the Literacy Narrative." <i>On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies</i> 70-104.

April 21	"Prosumerism, Photo Manipulation and Queer Spectacle." <i>On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies</i> 105-26.
April 28	Spring Break
May 5	"Collaboration, Interactivity, and the <i>Dérive</i> in Computer Gaming." <i>On Multimodality: New Media and Composition Studies</i> 127-70.
May 12	TBD
May 19	Presentations (If all students are able to attend).
May 23, 10:00 a.m.	Research Projects Due