Wisdom begins in wonder.
--Socrates

Knowledge separates the educated from the common people. Neither knows. But the common person claims to know, while the educated knows that he does not know. . . . In the society of men of letters, the most abundant fruit that we shall reap is modesty of spirit by which no one would presume to know beyond his measure (89-90).
--Giovanni Battista Vico On Humanistic Education¹

I felt clueless, a feeling I have since come to learn is at the heart of the scholarly process. In academia, one is in a perpetual liminal space. As soon as you answer a research question, you ask another, your growing body of expertise simply marking the expanding edge of your ignorance.

--David Gold “The Accidental Archivist”²

**Course Description:** This course introduces graduate students to scholarly issues, designs and methods in rhetoric and composition. It focuses on ways of developing research problems and questions, designing studies, and conducting, reading and evaluating research. Some of the questions to be explored are:

- What are the major paradigms of research in rhetoric and composition?
- What is the nature of archival and empirical research in the field?

• How are research problems and questions made operational and transformed into plans of action? That is, how does one design a study?
• What is the relationship between research problems/questions and research design?
• What variety of scholarly reading and writing strategies operate within scholarship in rhetoric and composition? What is the relationship between these diverse literate practices and the multiple modes of inquiry that comprise the complex arena of research?
• What are the limitations of various research and scholarly methods?

Although this course provides an overview of various kinds of scholarship in the field (e.g., historical, feminist, theoretical, rhetorical, critical discourse analysis), it focuses primarily on archival and the broad, diverse range of empirical methods. Even if you never plan to conduct an empirical study, critical awareness of empirically grounded research in rhetoric and composition is crucial because so much scholarship in the field rests on claims derived from empirical work even when that work is not referenced. Further, regardless of your professional path, you may often be asked to justify curricula, programmatic or other kinds of decisions on empirical research studies; thus, you need to be able to read these reports critically and argue about them from an informed position.

What we [rhetoric and composition scholars] need . . . is room for multiple research methods, for flexible paradigms and theories that can help researchers adapt to changing needs of participants and the research community.

--Gesa Kirsch

COURSE GOALS:

• to help you develop a breadth of knowledge about scholarship in rhetoric and composition
• to help you become critical readers of research and scholarship in the field
• to help you become familiar with some of the major research and scholarly genres in the field
• to help you gain experience in posing research questions and planning a research design
• to give you experience in writing a research proposal—including crafting research questions, reviewing the relevant scholarly literature, and writing the design of a study
• to contribute to your professionalization in rhetoric and composition

Each researcher . . . takes (often unwittingly) an epistemological stance concerning the nature and genesis of . . . knowledge [and] this stance exerts a strong influence on what he or she takes as acceptable research.

--Patrick Thompson

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

**Print Sources**


**Online Sources**

[http://grail.oise.utoronto.ca/journal/lynnkostuch/archives/Scholars%20before%20researchers.pdf](http://grail.oise.utoronto.ca/journal/lynnkostuch/archives/Scholars%20before%20researchers.pdf)


[http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf](http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf)


Rose, Shirley. “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals.” [http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v1n3/rose.pdf](http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v1n3/rose.pdf)

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**


**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**


**REQUIREMENTS:**

**Assignments:** Detailed descriptions of the following required assignments will be distributed:

- Research Question(s) (10%) Due: September 29
- Review of Literature (25%) Due: November 3
- Research Proposal (35%) Due: December 8
- Issue Report (20%) Due: November 10-24
- Oral Presentation (10%) Due: December 1 or 8
Attendance and Participation: Because so much of what is to be learned in this course occurs in class, regular attendance is expected. The course is so constructed that even a few absences will create serious problems. Be prepared each class to offer comments and pose questions on the day’s assigned readings. In a word—keep up with the readings!

Late Assignments: Papers not turned in on the due date will be marked down a letter grade for each week the paper is late.

Incompletes: Please do not assume that an incomplete will be given upon request. University and departmental policy on the handling of incompletes will be followed; only in the case of verified emergencies and illnesses will an incomplete be given.

Withdrawal Deadlines:

- Course Withdrawal (in Person)          October 31
- Course Withdrawal (ASU Interactive & Sundial)   November 2
- Complete Withdrawal                      December 9
SYLLABUS
(TENTATIVE)

ENG 500 Ln# 84488

Syllabus Available online: http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/500home.html

Note: Assignments due on date listed.

WEEK 1 AUGUST 25
INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

WEEK 2 SEPTEMBER 1
LABOR DAY—NO CLASSES

WEEK 3 SEPTEMBER 8
INSPIRING RESEARCH PROBLEMS

Read: Casanave “Learning Participatory Practices in Graduate School” (handout)
“Foreword” pp. vii-x; Chapters 1-8 (pp. 1-80) in Beyond the Archives

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 15
ENTERING THE CONVERSATIONS

Read: Clark “Entering the Conversation: Graduate Thesis Proposals as Genre” (handout)
Penich-Thacker’s Dissertation Prospectus (handout)
Ricker’s Dissertation Prospectus (handout)
Berkenkotter, et al., “Conventions, Conversations, and the Writer” (handout)

Panel Presentation: Issues in Crafting Research Questions and Writing Research Proposals
by Dawn Penich-Thacker and Lisa Ricker

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 22
CRAFTING RESEARCH QUESTIONS/

Read: Chapters 9-17 (pp. 83-169) in Beyond the Archives

Rough Draft Workshop on Research Question and Rationale

Due: Rough Draft of Research Question and Rationale

WEEK 6 SEPTEMBER 29
WRITING AND LIBRARY SEARCHES

Read: Boyce “Work Habits of Productive Scholarly Writers” (handout)

Library Orientation and Search time

Due: Research Question and Rationale

WEEK 7 OCTOBER 6
JOINING THE CONVERSATION: WRITING IN(To) THE DISCIPLINE

http://grail.oise.utoronto.ca/journal/lynnkostuch/archives/Scholars%20before%20researchers.pdf


Zhu and Cheng “Negotiating the Dissertation Literature Review” (handout)

Bergin “Sitting in a Circle: The Debate over Student-Centered Instruction” (handout: sample literature review)

**WEEK 8 OCTOBER 13 RESEARCH DESIGN AND WRITING ISSUES**

**Read:** Harris, “Person, Position, Style” (handout)

Johanek “Introduction” and Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-55) in *Composing Research*

McNabb “Making the Gesture: Graduate Student Submissions and the Expectation of Journal Referees.”
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3986/is_200104/ai_n8942082?tag=artBody;col1](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3986/is_200104/ai_n8942082?tag=artBody;col1)

Rose “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals.” [http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v1n3/rose.pdf](http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v1n3/rose.pdf)

**WEEK 9 OCTOBER 20 RESEARCH DESIGN ISSUES**

**Read:** Johanek Chapters 3 and 4 (pp. 56-118) in *Composing Research*

Anderson, “Ethics, Institutional Review Boards, and the Involvement of Human Participants in Composition Research” (Handout)

[http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf](http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf)

**WEEK 10 OCTOBER 27 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH PRACTICES**

**Read:** Johanek Chapters 5 and 6 (pp. 119-189) in *Composing Research*

**Due:** Rough Draft of Review of Literature for Draft Workshop

**WEEK 11 NOVEMBER 3 RESEARCH ISSUES**

**Read:** Johanek Chapters 7 and 8 (pp. 190-209) in *Composing Research*

Brown and Dobrin “Introduction” (pp. 1-10); Lu “The Ethics of Reading Critical Ethnography” (pp. 285-98); Brown “Beyond Theory Shock” (pp. 299-315) in *Ethnography Unbound*

**Due:** Review of Literature
WEEK 12  NOVEMBER 10  RESEARCH ISSUES

Read: Horner “Critical Ethnography, Ethics, and Work” (pp. 13-34); Reiff “Mediating Materiality and Discursivity” (pp. 35-52); Schroeder “The Ethnographic Experience of Postmodern Literacies” (pp. 53-72) in Ethnography Unbound

Due: Issue Reports Due

WEEK 13  NOVEMBER 17  RESEARCH ISSUES

Read: Gaillet “Writing Program Redesign” (pp. 99-111); Brooke and Hogg “Open to Change” (pp. 115-130); Stevens “Debating Ecology” (pp. 157-80) in Ethnography Unbound

Due: Issue Reports Due

WEEK 14  NOVEMBER 24  RESEARCH ISSUES

Read: Hanson “Critical Auto/Ethnography” (pp. 183-200); Keller “Unsituating the Subject” (pp. 201-218); Williams and Miller “Changing Directions” (pp. 241-258) in Ethnography Unbound

Due: Issue Reports Due

WEEK 15  DECEMBER 1  SHARING OUR RESEARCH

Oral Presentations

WEEK 16  DECEMBER 8  SHARING OUR RESEARCH & WRAPPING UP

Oral Presentations

Due: Research Proposal