

# ENG 500 RESEARCH METHODS: RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION

Fall 2008

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Office Hours: Mon. 2-4:00  
Other Times by Appointment  
Web: [www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42](http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42)  
Course: [www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/500home.html](http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/500home.html)

*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 Education*<sup>1</sup>

*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"<sup>2</sup>

**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?

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<sup>1</sup> Vico, G. B. *On Humanistic Education*. Trans. G. Pinton & A. Shippee. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> Gold, David. "The Accidental Archivist: Embracing Chance and Confusion in Historical Scholarship." *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*. Eds. Gesa E. Kirsch and Liz Rohan. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2008. 13-19.

- 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<sup>3</sup>

### **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<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kirsch, Gesa. "Ethics and Future of Composition." *Composition Studies in the New Millennium*. P. 135.

<sup>4</sup> Thompson, Patrick. "Were Lions to Speak, We Wouldn't Understand." *Journal of Mathematical Behavior* 3 (1982): p. 157.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:****Print Sources**

- Kirsch, Gesa E. and Liz Rohan, eds. *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2008.
- Johanek, Cindy. *Composing Research: A Contextualist Paradigm for Rhetoric and Composition*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2000.
- Brown, Stephen Gilbert, and Sidney I. Dobrin, eds. *Ethnography Unbound: From Theory Shock to Critical Praxis*. Albany: SUNY, 2004.
- Handouts

**Online Sources**

- Boote, David N., and Penny Beile. "Scholars Before Researchers: On the Centrality of the Dissertation Literature Review in Research Preparation." <http://grail.oise.utoronto.ca/journal/lynnkostuch/archives/Scholars%20before%20researchers.pdf>
- Boote, David N., and Penny Beile. "On 'Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research': A Response to the Critique by Joseph Maxwell." [http://www.red-ink.ch/events\\_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-06\\_Boote\\_p32-35.pdf](http://www.red-ink.ch/events_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-06_Boote_p32-35.pdf)
- Maxwell, Joseph. "Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research: A Commentary on Boote and Beile's 'Scholars Before Researchers'." [http://www.red-ink.ch/events\\_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-05\\_Maxwell\\_p28-31.pdf](http://www.red-ink.ch/events_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-05_Maxwell_p28-31.pdf)
- McKee, Heidi, and James E. Porter. "The Ethics of Digital Writing Research: A Rhetorical Approach" [http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf\\_Articles/McKee\\_Article.pdf](http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf)
- McNabb, Richard. "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;coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3986/is_200104/ai_n8942082?tag=artBody;coll)
- Rose, Shirley. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals." <http://wac.colostate.edu/llad/v1n3/rose.pdf>

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2001. (The style manual for APA.)
- Gibaldi, J. *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: MLA, 2008.
- The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003.
- Bazerman, Charles, ed. *Handbook of Writing Research: History, Society, School, Individual, Text*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2008.
- Casanave, Christine Pearson, and Xiaoming Li, eds. *Learning the Literacy Practices of Graduate School: Insiders' Reflections on Academic Enculturation*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008.
- Clark, Irene I. *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: Entering the Conversation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2007.
- Olson, Gary A., ed. *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition*. Albany: SUNY P, 1997.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

- Addison, Joanne and Sharon James McGee, eds. *Feminist Empirical Research: Emerging Perspectives on Qualitative and Teacher Research*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999.
- Bishop, Wendy. *Ethnographic Research: Writing it Down, Writing it Up, and Reading it*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1999.
- Creswell, John W. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2007.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1995.
- Hayes, John. et al. *Reading Empirical Research Studies: The Rhetoric of Research*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1992.
- Kirsch, Gesa, and Patricia A. Sullivan, eds. *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Southern Illinois UP, 1992.
- Lauer, Janice M. and Asher, William. *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- MacArthur, Charles A., Steve Graham, and Jill Fitzgerald. *Handbook of Writing Research*. New York: Guilford Press, 2006.
- Manusov, Valerie Lynn, ed. *The Sourcebook of Nonverbal Measures: Going Beyond Words*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.
- McKee, Heidi A., and Danielle Nicole DeVoss. *Digital Writing Research: Technologies, Methodologies, and Ethical Issues*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2007.
- Mortensen, Peter and Gesa Kirsch, eds. *Ethics and Representation in Qualitative Studies of Literacy*. Urbana: NCTE: 1996.
- Pagnucci, Gian. *Living the Narrative Life: Stories as a Tool for Meaning Making*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 2004.
- Porter, James, and Patricia Sullivan. *Opening Spaces: Writing Technologies and Critical Research Practices*. Greenwich, CT: Ablex, 1997.
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1998.
- Weiss, Robert S. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free P, 1994.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

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

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|------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| • Research Question(s) | (10%) | <b>Due:</b> September 29    |
| • Review of Literature | (25%) | <b>Due:</b> November 3      |
| • Research Proposal    | (35%) | <b>Due:</b> December 8      |
| • Issue Report         | (20%) | <b>Due:</b> November 10-24  |
| • Oral Presentation    | (10%) | <b>Due:</b> 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

**Note:** Assignments due on date listed.

**Syllabus Available online:** [http:// www. public.asu.edu/~mdg42/500home.html](http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/500home.html)

**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**

**Read:** Boote and Beile. “Scholars Before Researchers: On the Centrality of the  
Dissertation Literature Review in Research Preparation.”

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

Boote, and Beile. "On 'Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research': A Response to the Critique by Joseph Maxwell." [http://www.red-ink.ch/events\\_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-06\\_Boote\\_p32-35.pdf](http://www.red-ink.ch/events_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-06_Boote_p32-35.pdf)

Maxwell "Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research: A Commentary on Boote and Beile's 'Scholars Before Researchers'." [http://www.red-ink.ch/events\\_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-05\\_Maxwell\\_p28-31.pdf](http://www.red-ink.ch/events_materials/ic01/zellweger/10324-05_Maxwell_p28-31.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=artB;coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3986/is_200104/ai_n8942082?tag=artB;coll)

Rose "What's Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals." <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)

McKee and E. Porter. "The Ethics of Digital Writing Research: A Rhetorical Approach"

[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