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?

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• 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

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REQUIRED TEXTS:

Print Sources

Handouts

Online Sources
http://grail.oise.utoronto.ca/journal/lynnkostuch/archives/Scholars%20before%20researchers.pdf
http://www.writing.ucsb.edu/wrconf08/Pdf_Articles/McKee_Article.pdf
http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3986/is_200104/ai_n8942082?tag=artBody:col1
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:


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

**Academic Dishonesty [Statement from CLAS]**

In the “Student Academic Integrity Policy” manual, ASU defines “‘Plagiarism’ [as] using another's words, ideas, materials or work without properly acknowledging and documenting the source. Students are responsible for knowing the rules governing the use of another's work or materials and for acknowledging and documenting the source appropriately.” You can find this definition at: [http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm#definitions](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/studentlife/judicial/academic_integrity.htm#definitions)

Academic dishonesty, including inappropriate collaboration, will not be tolerated. There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty.
**SYLLABUS**

(TENTATIVE)

**ENG 500** Ln# 84488

_Syllabus Available online:_  http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/ENG500/ENG500home08.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

Maxwell “Literature Reviews of, and for, Educational Research: A Commentary on Boote and Beile’s ‘Scholars Before Researchers’.” [link]

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.” [link]
Rose “What’s Love Got to Do with It? Scholarly Citation Practices as Courtship Rituals.” [link]

**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)

**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