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

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”

**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**


Handouts available on Blackboard (ENG500 site)

**Online Sources**


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 28
- Review of Literature (25%) Due: November 2
- Research Proposal (35%) Due: December 7
- Issue Report (20%) Due: November 9-23
- Oral Presentation (10%) Due: November 30 or December 7
**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)    November 6
- Course Withdrawal (ASU Interactive & Sundial online)    November 8
- Complete Withdrawal (in Person and Online)    December 8

**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
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# 80428

Syllabus Available online: http://www.public.asu.edu/~mdg42/ENG500home09.htm

Note: Assignments due on date listed.

WEEK 1 AUGUST 24 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

WEEK 2 SEPTEMBER 2 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 3 SEPTEMBER 7 LABOR DAY—NO CLASSES

WEEK 4 SEPTEMBER 14 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 Dr. Dawn Penich-Thacker and Dr. Lisa Ricker

WEEK 5 SEPTEMBER 21 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 28 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 5 JOINING THE CONVERSATION: WRITING IN(TO) THE DISCIPLINE


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

Jeff Holmes “Inhabiting GameSpace(s): Practically Situated Presence in Virtual Environments” (handout: sample literature review)

Ryan Skinnell “Revising History” (handout: sample literature review)

**Panel Presentation:** An informal talk on experiences writing a review of literature by Jeff Holmes and Ryan Skinnell

**WEEK 8  OCTOBER 12  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)

**Professor Shirley Rose** will visit the class to discuss her essay.

**WEEK 9  OCTOBER 19  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” (handout)

**WEEK 10  OCTOBER 26  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 2  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 9  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 16  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 23  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  NOVEMBER 30  SHARING OUR RESEARCH

*Oral Presentations*

WEEK 16  DECEMBER 7  SHARING OUR RESEARCH & WRAPPING UP

*Oral Presentations*

Due: Research Proposal