

## ENGL 790-001 | Survey of Composition Studies

Fall 2015  
Monday 530pm—8pm  
WMBB Nursing 135

<http://790compositionstudies.weebly.com/>  
PASSWORD: composition

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Office Hours: Tues 10-11am; Wed 11am-1pm; & by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar aims to understand the development and histories of composition studies, including the state of composition prior to disciplinarity, its present concerns, and future directions. We'll begin by exploring texts that circulated around 1970, the approximate origin of the modern discipline of composition studies, proceed through the decades, and conclude with various composition history retellings. Our investigative work will be framed by the varied, enduring, and roundly critiqued conception of "writing as a process;" we'll track the many competing ways this idea has shaped composition theory, research, and pedagogy and judge the extent to which the discipline can be declared "post-process." Toward building foundations for the study of composition and rhetoric, students will be expected to develop rigorous critical reading practices (reading log responses, discussion questions, bibliographic work, etc.) as well as write in scholarly genres (e.g., a conference-length critical essay).

### COURSE GOALS

- Understand, analyze, and critique major strands and movements in the history of composition studies
- Build connections and research interests in composition scholarship
- Develop scholarly literacies (critical reading and response, bibliography, conference length essay)

**REQUIRED TEXTS** | All books are available at the USC bookstore or online retailers

- *Norton Book of Composition Studies*, Susan Miller, ed.
- *Post Process Theory: Beyond the Writing Process Paradigm*, Thomas Kent, ed.
- *Toward a Composition Made Whole*, Jody Shipka
- Additional PDFs posted on our course website—please either bring prints or digital access to class

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS** | I'll provide selections from these books, but I encourage you to buy them.

- *English Composition as a Happening*, Geoffrey Sirc
- *Process This: Undergraduate Writing in Composition Studies*, Nancy DeJoy

### COURSE EXPECTATIONS

**Academic Honesty** Per the Office of Academic Integrity: "You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment, and will result in additional disciplinary measures. This includes improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation."

**Attendance** This is a graduate seminar and thus the ideal is that you'll attend every class session. One miss may not be avoidable. Do let me know if you have to miss a class. Based on USC's policy, if you miss 10 percent (or 1.5), of our meetings, you will be subject to a grade penalty. Three or more misses will be considered excessive and I may request that you drop the course. The bottom line is that you should do everything you can to attend every week. It's acceptable to leave early or come late if you must, just do alert me in advance.

**Participation** This is a graduate seminar and thus your active preparation and participation is expected. Optimal participation (in any graduate course) would include the following: 1) read, think through, and note questions and comments about the assigned readings before each class meeting, 2) actively listen and respond to your classmates during discussion, 3) contribute regularly to discussion while at the same time be mindful that you're not dominating the conversation, 4) contribute text/evidence-based insights to advance our conversation. Participation will also include posting discussion questions twice in advance of our class meetings (see below).

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES**

### ***Participation 10%***

See above for participation guidelines. This grade also includes taking two turns writing discussion questions in advance of class. You will post the questions on our class website by Sunday night. Write at least 2-3 questions informed by the readings for the week. To set up your questions, you can write a bit, include quotations, etc. and/or pose a series of related questions. You'll share at least some of your questions in seminar and field responses.

### ***Ink Shedding/Reading Log 20%***

For every class session, you'll prepare an ink shed/reading log entry about the set of assigned readings. This is a 1-page minimum, single spaced record of your thinking about the readings meant to aid your understanding and participation. It will also help you develop your interests and motivating questions, foci that can inform the major assignments in the course (the Bib and the Conference Length Essay) as well as scholarly interests and projects in the future.

You can select the elements to include in your ink-shed that work best for you. You can try different approaches. Some possible elements might include: 1) bibliographic/title information, 2) short rhetorical summaries, 3) pertinent quotes, 4) reactions, connections, questions. Another possible approach: write synthesis and response, concluding with a short list of quotes and a couple motivating questions. Or, try a dialectical notebook style, one side with short summaries and quotes, the other with reactions, questions, and connections to other texts. Be sure to date each entry at the top (e.g., 2: Aug 31).

This is not meant to be tedious or rote. Use any rigorous, personalized approach that works for you, so long as it helps advance your thinking in the course. I expect that for some weeks you'll write minimally (about 1 pg.) and other weeks you might be inspired to write more. It may take you some time to figure out what works best for you. Feel free to change course.

I recommend that you prepare your entries for the corresponding class meeting and bring a copy with you, but I won't check or collect them. Instead you'll compile them at two points during the term. You'll bring the your first set of entries-to-date to a mid-term conference. We'll discuss what you've done and set goals for the second, final due date at the end of the term. It's fine, in the end, if you have one week or so missing.

### ***Bibliography 30%***

Building from our shared readings, you'll choose an area, figure, movement, or some other focus in composition studies that you wish to learn more about. You'll then conduct research (collect 6-8 sources), read them, and for each, write critical annotations suitable for a newcomer composition studies audience. Using a composition pedagogy bibliography as a model, we'll compile these entries on a public website. *More information, on this assignment, posted to the class website, to follow.*

### ***Conference Length Final Paper + Proposal 40%***

An 8-10 page researched, exigence/intervention-driven essay related to disciplinarity, history, pedagogical questions, current issues, etc. in composition studies. You'll do some research on the genre of conference papers (either attend a conference, do some reading, or other means of understanding the conventions of the conference paper) and you can choose to structure your argument so that it could be suitable for oral delivery. Before conducting research and composing this final, you'll write up a proposal and get feedback from your classmates. *More information, on this assignment, posted to the class website, to follow.*

The course will follow the standard grade scale → A = 90 and above, B+ 85-90, B 80-85, C+ 75-80, etc.

## MAJOR ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

- *Schedule is subject to change*
- **Obviously, this does not include the weekly reading:** see course website for the reading schedule and for access to assigned PDFs/links

1: Aug 24

2: Aug 31

3: Sept 7                   **Labor Day—No Class Meeting**

4: Sept 14               *Bibliography project assigned.*

5: Sept 21

6: Sept 28

7: Oct 5                   Conferences—ink shedding check (you'll make an appointment with me sometime during these two weeks; we'll look at your reading log thus far as well as talk about your ideas for and progress on the two major projects in the course)

8: Oct 12               *Conference Length Essay Project Assigned.* Conferences—ink shedding check

9: Oct 19               *Optional, During Fall Break:* Attend the **2015 UNC Charlotte University Writing Program's Charlotte-Area Conference on Friday, Oct 23**. If you can't attend, do some informal research on the genre of the conference presentation. Hopefully we'll have some time to discuss (on the 26<sup>th</sup>) the conference paper genre and your impressions of its possible conventions, scope, and moves.

10: Oct 26               **Bibliography due**, finalized by Friday Oct 30th

11: Nov 2               **Conference Length Essay Proposal due.** We'll conduct an in-class workshop. More information on the scope of the proposal, as well as our plans for workshop, will follow.

12: Nov 9

13: Nov 16

14: Nov 23

15: Nov 30               **Ink Shedding/Reading Log due**

Exams: Dec 7-14       **Final Conference Length Essay due.** Due date and time TBD. We'll decide a deadline gracious to the class's end of term load.

## Appendix: How to Post on Weebly

You'll work with Weebly when you contribute discussion questions to our class website. We'll also use Weebly to create the public bibliography.

### **Step 1: Create an account**

I'll send you an invite to your email. You'll need to follow the directions to set up a Weebly account.

### **Step 2: Contribute Content to our Weebly site(s)**

#### **To Make your Discussion Q's Post:**

1. Log in to weebly.com (to have access to our site, you will have had to accept the invitation I sent you)
2. Click on our site to open it in the editor, and then click on the tab in the navigation bar "Discussion Qs."
3. Click on "NEW POST," drag over a "Text" box from the menu, write your post (be sure to click "Save" as you work so you don't lose your writing; or consider composing and saving in a Word doc, then copy and paste onto the blog).
4. Be sure to title your post and **SIGN your post with your name**.
5. Click "Post" when you're done. You'll see a pop-up screen that will indicate its success. You have the option too to edit your post after you've published it.
6. *\*\*\* I recommend that you save your posts in a Word document and/or save often as you're working just in case posting it doesn't work or Weebly is otherwise being a pain.*
7. If you encounter any problems posting the questions to our site, just email me them.

#### **To Create your Bibliography page:**

1. Log in to weebly.com.
2. Click on our site to open it in the editor, and then click on the tab in the navigation bar that matches your submitted topic. This is YOUR PAGE and you can generally design it as you wish. But, we'll look briefly at the design options and work as a class to design a general template we want to use to compile the pages.
3. After you update/change/add any content to your page, click "Publish" at the top. You'll see a pop-up message indicating the changes have been published.