Course Overview

This seminar is an introduction to writing studies, a field originally defined by the teaching of academic writing. In recognition that writing structures a good deal of our institutional and interpersonal exchanges, writing studies has expanded to include a much wider array of topics. Over the course of the semester, students will become familiar with the main academic journals and presses in the field, as well as work from related disciplines. This seminar is aimed at helping students to produce meaningful scholarship. Written work in the course will demonstrate competence in (most) of the following: ethnographic research, archival research, computer mediated communication, knowledge of rhetoric, knowledge of discourse, and research into situated literacy practices.

Readings:

Geoffrey Sirc *English Composition as a Happening*

Robert Connors *Composition Rhetoric*

Susan Miller *Textual Carnivals: the Politics of Composition*

Nystrand and Duffy *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life* (online as a Google book)

additional readings @ metaspencer.com (direct link @: http://www.english.illinois.edu/-people/-faculty/schaffner/teaching/fall2010/505)

Work:

weekly, informal writing research oral reports

Each week, I will briefly discuss a tool that can be useful in writing research. The following week, you will be responsible for informally reporting on your experiences using this research tool. Reports should be oral, succinct (no more than 2-3 minutes), and include examples. Prepare to be called on; not all students will be able to give a report each week.

response papers

Each week, students should compose and bring to class a short (1 page single-spaced) written response to the assigned readings for the week. Your written response should describe the main arguments in the readings, mention problems/questions you encountered, make connections between texts, and develop
a few questions for discussion. You can elect to miss one response paper during the term.

**report on a journal**

Academic disciplines are defined by their journals. Each student in the class is responsible for getting to know a journal that publishes writing research. Study the journal and produce a brief (2-3 pages single spaced) report on the journal for the other members of the class. Describe such things as typical topics published, who the contributors tend to be, who the editor is, character of the research (qualitative? quantitative?), and submission expectations. Is the journal peer-reviewed? If so, how does that work? These reports will be presented in class and published on the course website, so be sure to submit a copy of your report to Spencer (spencers@illinois.edu) as a .doc (not .docx) file. Sign up for a journal and day to present by Monday, September 13th.

Some of the journals to choose from:

- College Composition and Communication
- College English
- JAC: Rhetoric, Writing, Culture, Politics
- Composition Forum
- Journal of Computer Mediated Communication
- Enculturation
- Technical Communication Quarterly
- Written Communication
- Research in the Teaching of English
- Quarterly Journal of Speech
- Computers and Composition
- Visual Communication
- Journal of Writing Research
- Community Literacy Journal
- Journal of Literacy and Technology
- Rhetoric Society Quarterly
- Kairos: Rhetoric, Technology, Pedagogy
- Written Communication

**presentation of research**

In the final weeks of the class, the research for your final project should be well underway. During the final class sessions, students will give ten-minute oral presentations describing the main contours of the final project. Emphasize your argument in this presentation.

**seminar paper**

At the end of the semester, on December 13th, turn in an original piece of writing-studies research in the form of a seminar paper. Paper proposals are due November 1st. Scheduling a writing conference with Spencer is encouraged. Your paper should be written with a specific journal in mind; mention this connection in the front matter of your paper. Expectations for seminar papers differ between professors; for this class, I am looking for 20-25 pages of high-quality work. Your paper should involve original research in the field of writing studies. Develop a complex argument and include numerous connections to existing scholarship. Focus your
inquiry in one of the areas of writing studies discussed in the class; highlight the
original findings from your research.

Provisional Course Calendar

Monday 8/23
introductions
overview of the syllabus and assignments
research tool: Flickr
discussion about the field
in-class-reading: William Lutz, "Making Freshman English a Happening"

Monday 8/30
research tool: YouTube
research tool short presentations
read for today: Charles Deemer "English Composition as a Happening" (online @
http://www.ibiblio.org/cdeemer/happen.htm)
read for today: to p. 119 in Geoffrey Sirc's English Composition as a Happening
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 9/6 — Labor Day, Class Does Not Meet

Monday 9/13
*** email Spencer by today to sign up for a journal report date ***
research tool: Google News alerts
research tool short presentations
read for today: finish Geoffrey Sirc's English Composition as a Happening
read for today: Downs and Wardle “Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions:
(Re)Envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'”
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 9/20
research tool: delicio.us / delicious.com
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Becca Woodard, Research in the Teaching of English
read for today: to p. 170 in Robert Connors Composition-Rhetoric
read for today: Catherine Prendergast "The Fighting Style: Reading the Unabomber’s
Strunk and White"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)
Monday 9/27
research tool: MUSE
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Iftikhar, *Journal of Applied Linguistics*
read for today: finish Robert Connors *Composition-Rhetoric*
read for today: Peter Mortensen "What do we want from Books?"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 10/4
research tool: JSTOR
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Maggie, *Enculturation*
read for today: part I of Susan Miller's *Textual Carnivals: the Politics of Composition*
review NCTE resolutions and statements @ http://www.ncte.org/positions; choose one or two to talk about in class
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 10/11
research tool: LexisNexis Academic
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Sujin, TESOL Quarterly
read for today: parts II and III of Susan Miller's *Textual Carnivals: the Politics of Composition*
read for today: Min-Zhan Lu's "An Essay on the Work of Composition: Composing English against the Order of Fast Capitalism"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 10/18
research tool: Mendeley & CiteULike
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Kaia, *College English*; Tricia, *Visual Communication*
read for today: preface, intro, and chapters 1, 3, & 4 from Nystrand and Duffy *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life*
read for today: read Joseph Williams "The Phenomenology of Error"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 10/25
research tool: Library stacks
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Liz, *Journal of Second Language Writing*
read chapters 6, 7, & 8 from Nystrand and Duffy *Towards a Rhetoric of Everyday Life*
read for today: Geneva Smitherman "CCCC's Role in the Struggle for Language Rights"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)
Monday 11/1

*** email Spencer by today with a short proposal for your final paper ***
research tool: PubMed
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Kim to present; Pam, *College Composition and Communication*
read for today: Austin's "How to Do Things with Words"
read for today: Bakhtin's "Speech Genres"
read for today: Carolyn Miller's "Genre as Social Action"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 11/8

research tool: CCC Online
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Cody, *Computers and Composition*; Susanne, *Computers and Writing*
read Peter Medway's "Fuzzy Genres and Community Identities: the Case of Architecture Students' Sketchbooks"
read for today: Paul Prior et al "Re-situating and Re-mediating the Canons: A Cultural-Historical Remapping of Rhetorical Activity" @ http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/11.3
... focus on Prior's piece @
read for today: Spencer Schaffner "Urban Literacy Center Manifesto" @
http://www.technorhetoric.net/12.3/topoi/Schaffner
watch for today: Michael Wesch "The Machine is Us/ing Us" @
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gmP4nk0EOE
read for today: 2-3 recent posts at Denis Baron's blog @ http://illinois.edu/db/view/25
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 11/15

research tool: UIUC Libraries databases
research tool short presentations
report on a journal: Tanja, *Kairos*
read Anne Wysocki's "The Sticky Embrace of Beauty"
read Johanna Drucker's "Visual/Verbal: Symposium Response"
read Johanna Drucker's "Linguistic Authority in the Visual Text"
read Belinda Kremer's "So it was this Beautiful Night"
read Malea Powell's "Listening to Ghosts: an Alternative (Non)Argument"
response paper due (1 page single spaced)

Monday 11/22 — No Class, Thanksgiving Break

Monday 11/29

short presentations (10 minutes max) on final projects; workshop overview of main academic presses in the field

Monday 12/6
short presentations (10 minutes max) on final projects; workshop overview of "top programs" in the field

Monday 12/13 — Final Paper Due by 5:00 pm
email as a .doc (not a .docx) attachment to spencers@illinois.edu