

English 6233/4233: Composition Pedagogy

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Course Introduction

Not simply a how-to course, Composition Pedagogy introduces composition studies as a discipline. Our class meetings will provide a place to discuss larger disciplinary questions about writing, not just to teach writing per se. While you may never identify yourself primarily as a writing teacher, this course may be the only location where composition studies, as a discipline, as theory, as practice, is presented as a field within English Studies.

The course places college writing in historical and cultural contexts. The course will also include readings of current theories and major theorists in college composition studies. We will address the following questions: What are the theoretical underpinnings of practices in composition instruction? What place does instruction in grammar, style, and usage have in composition courses and in facilitating the literacy of student writers? Is there a "best" way that students learn to write? How do we teach writing to students with varied levels of experience? What approaches are available for classrooms with diverse populations of gender, race, age, and class? Why should we recognize these factors? Essentially, this course will examine what academic writing is, how to teach it, and the degree to which concepts and methods of composition pedagogies empower student writers.

Course Texts

Required texts listed in the order we will read them:

- Tate, Gary, and Rupiper, and Schick, Eds. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Oxford UP, 2000. Presents the major practices and theories related to college composition of the last 20-30 years.
- Berlin, James A. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900 - 1985 (Studies in Writing and Rhetoric)*. Southern Illinois UP, 1987. Offers a historical framework for the rise of rhetoric as a discipline and its relationship to college composition instruction.
- Crowley, Sharon. *Composition in the University: Historical and Polemical Essays*. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh P, 1998. A critical examination of the function of composition courses in United States colleges.
- Smith, Allison, Trixie Smith, and Karen Wright. *CompBiblio: Leaders and Influences in Composition Theory and Practice*. Southlake, Texas: Fountainhead P, 2007. A broad brush-stroke reference book to who's-who in composition studies and charts interdisciplinary influences.