ENGL 5369.001: TOPICS - GENRES IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION


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Fall 2016
Office: FC 275
Student Hours:
§ M 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
§ W 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
§ R 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
Philosopher Richard Rorty describes the latter part of the twentieth century as taking a “linguistic turn,” one in which language is the dominant tool in our sociocultural toolbox. However, Sherry B. Shapiro reminds us that “bodies” are the “preeminent material” upon which cultural inscriptions are made and its particular discourses embedded. Thus, this course centers on agencies and languages to examine the interconnection between language and its subjects and the linguistic differences or cultural inscriptions constructed as a result. Thus, if language, as used by subjects in culturally constructed contexts, is marked by struggle, then within the colonial legacies of a borderland context, language, as used by border subjects, offers practitioners an opportunity to study new territories in writing.

In this course, we explore networked process theory by Helen Foster to move us toward theorizing “complex networks with(in) which writers are imbricated by merely being” and the “complex networks that influence and pressure the act(or) of writing.” We explore how Mestiz@ scripts, as rhetorical practices, promote “new directions in rhetoric and composition” and how “Western rhetorical knowledge can be revised by learning from Mestiz@s” as Damián Baca implies. We explore what it means to remember Tejano singer Selena to reveal how acts of cultural memory and collective mourning, as Deborah Paredez argues, can construct and “transform concepts of national, racial, and gendered identities.”

For this course, students will generate ethnographic-based projects as a means to study the culturally constructed context of a designated sociocultural place and the relationships, positions, and locations of a language used by subjects with and in that environment. Students will draw from the rhetorical tenets and frameworks discussed in the course to observe a sociocultural space and present their findings (if possible back into that space) at the end of the semester.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What are the ideological implications of writing paradigms in rhetoric and composition?
- How are we to think through the social networks that discipline how we write?
- What are the interconnections between discourse and geographical space?
- What political implications do metaphors carry and how can metaphors enhance disciplinary knowledge or create new knowledge and understanding?
- How do material spaces affect rhetorical strategies?
- How are languages inscribed onto a culture and valued as commodities?
- Will factors of race, class, sexuality, and ability shape the discursive practices in a culture?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To gain factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends) in rhetoric and composition and apply that knowledge to writing or discussion activity.
2. To analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view in discussions and in writing activity by revising, evaluating, and reflecting on individual content as well as classmates’ content of ideas.
3. To develop specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in rhetoric and composition studies and synthesizing such skills, competencies, and points of view in the form of questions for discussions.
4. To discuss and document the interconnection that exists between language and bodies, discourse and geographical spaces, as well as literacy and pedagogies.
5. To develop rhetorical skills in expressing oneself orally and in writing by compiling and exhibiting an ethnographic project over a particular sociocultural community.

REQUIRED TEXTS


- Additional Select Readings and Reading Calendar Posted in Blackboard (BB)

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

First and foremost, you must attend class. For this graduate course (seminar), students must participate in several tasks, such as discussions, oral presentations, writing activities, e-chats, observations, fieldwork, and research gathering. I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and to share thoughts and/or responses to texts discussed in class. Please, bring the book or essays scheduled for that particular day to aid in the discussion. The assignments in this course are interconnected. You will use Dropbox, Google Drive, or any other cloud based application to load your project, but the main document of a particular project must also be loaded into Blackboard via SafeAssign in order to keep a record of that document in the grade book. A complete course calendar will be provided during the first week of class.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

In order to receive credit for this course, students must complete all the ethnographic-based projects.

Ethnographic-based projects, 3 totaling 75% of the course grade

Project 1: Subjectivity and Writing Processes (25%)
- Autoethnography Due 9/29

Project 2: Scripts of Resistance (25%)
- Imageword and Digital Narratives Due 10/27

Project 3: Culture Inscription and Commodification (25%)
- Local Ethnography Due 12/1 and final exam

E-Chats, 4 totaling 10% of the course grade
Weekly Contributions, 10 totaling 15% of the course grade

**Extensions and Late Work**

If there is a crisis that prevents you from meeting a deadline or attending class, you can request an extension to turn the work in late for that given day, but a penalty may be applied to your work submitted late. Extension approvals are entirely at the discretion of the instructor and will be determined by the reasons for your absence, your record of completion of work, and attendance. If awarded, the length of the extension shall be set by the student, understanding the penalty he or she will incur per day work is submitted late. All extensions must be confirmed by email. Please note that any assignment/project submitted late without an authorized extension is automatically penalized. The best thing to do is to communicate with your instructor and seek assistance when assistance is required.
**Ethnographic-Based Projects**

In “Putting Ethnographic Writing in Context,” Seth Kahn writes that ethnographic writing “challenges you to consider everything that is interesting and difficult about writing; it pushes you to generate, collect, analyze, and synthesize more material than you have probably had to work within one paper before” (175). Kahn continues to say that because “ethnographies are about actual people, the assignment makes you think about ethics (how you’re presenting information, how that information might affect people if made public, being as accurate as you can) and knowledge (what it is you really know at the end of the project and how you present that knowledge without sounding more confident than you should)” (175). These projects attempt to provide you with that practical experience. The ethnographic writing you complete in this course will ask students to look at writing as constituting relations, locations, and positions. For each project, students receive more detailed information, but the following information will provide you with a baseline for what these projects entail:

1. The first step, be observant of the sociocultural communities around you, communities you experience, engage, and/or are an active or passive participant. Consider also observing sociocultural communities (spaces) foreign to you, spaces unfamiliar or that alienate (border) you in some way.
2. The second step, choose a sociocultural community space for you to observe further in detail by conducting field research. Pointing to any comprehensive question, gather field notes as you explore key concepts by Suresh Canagarajah:
   a. Communication transcends individual languages
   b. Communication transcends words and involves diverse semiotic resources and ecological affordances
3. The third step, engage in ethnographic writing to produce your main document; variations of this document occur based on the particular project.
4. The fourth step, present your scholarly work to a community of your peers and/or back into the community spaces you observed.
5. The fifth step, introduce and innovated artifact from your ethnographic study as part of your presentation. The innovated artifact may be an artifact you located or created that conveys rhetorical tenets from the course and/or your findings in the study. What is an innovated artifact you ask? We will discuss this further in detail in class.

**e-Chats – Digital Footprints**

A digital footprint is data left behind by users on digital services. You will complete several digital footprints that correspond with a particular portion of the course. Small group discussions on the assigned readings sometimes take place through the Blackboard Learn discussion forums. There will be questions and directions; use these e-Chats as prompts for ideas. You need not address every issue. The prompts are intended to get you started writing and responding. There is an audience for these prompts beside yourself, and you can always write more than required to finish the thought you are exploring. You may use these e-Chats to engage in different kinds of writing: exploratory, personal, cultural analysis, rhetorical analysis,
public writing, creative nonfiction, and experimental. These e-Chats will engage your process of composing, and at times, the e-Chats can be beginning drafts of the writing to come in the projects ahead.

You start the e-Chat with an initial post in the discussion forum (at least 200 words). Then, you write at least three short interactive responses (at least 50 words per posting) by replying to at least 3 other students. The responses should contribute “something new” to the discussion, whether you ask a good question, articulate and interesting critique, or tell a story, etc. to cast the conversation in some new light. Do respond to three other students. At the end, you post a rejoinder (no word limit) as the “last word,” so to speak, on the thread you initially started. In total, your e-Chat post will have 5 posts in the discussion forum.

There are a total of 4 e-Chats for this course, assigned for homework and at various times throughout the semester.

- For the e-Chat, your initial post is due before class, due on Thursdays by 7:00 pm.
- Then, no later than three days after that Thursday, you post your responses to at least 3 other students, due on Sundays by 11:59 pm.
- Finally, you post your rejoinder before we meet again for class on Thursdays by 7 pm.

If you post after due dates and times, your entry will be marked late, and this may affect your grade. If some of your chats are late or you miss replies, this may pull your score down. Moreover, the lengths stated above do matter, so if you are short of words on some, be long on others.

RUBRIC FOR E-CHATS – each totals 100%

- 50% of the grade is based on quality, reliant on whether you (1) connect to earlier posts (b) synthesized various perspectives (c) responded specifically to issues raised (d) extended or complicated issues raised (e) raised new questions (f) reflected on and critiqued the issues.
- 50% of the grade is based on the quantity and timeliness of an e-chat: 5 (50%) entries; 4 (40%) entries; 3 (30%) entries; 2 (20%) entries; 1 (10%).

**Weekly Contributions**

You must be prepared to engage the class in meaningful discussion in a graduate seminar. Weekly, each student must bring two questions to initiate discussion in the class. Based on the reading material, questions should provoke discussion, synthesize information, direct the class toward a particular emphasis, or shed light on your interpretation/perspective of content in the course. Each student must post his or her questions in the discussion forum before class begins on Thursdays by 7 pm. Then, by the end of the day on Friday (11:59 pm), each student must post a reflective response to his or her own questions. The reflective response recaps main points of discussion for each question and offers closing thoughts about the discussion that took place. If other students chose to, they can add additional responses to your post in the forum.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F for the course.

DROPPING A CLASS
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. November 11th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

STATEMENT OF CIVILITY
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ACADEMIC ADVISING
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.
DISABILITY SERVICES
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

STATEMENT OF ACADEMIC CONTINUITY
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.