

ENGL 310: Theories of Teaching Writing

Instructor: Jacob Craig

Office: 74 George Rm. 202

Email: craigjw1@cofc.edu

Meeting Times: Tuesday & Thursday 12:15PM-1:30PM

Meeting Place: Maybank 300

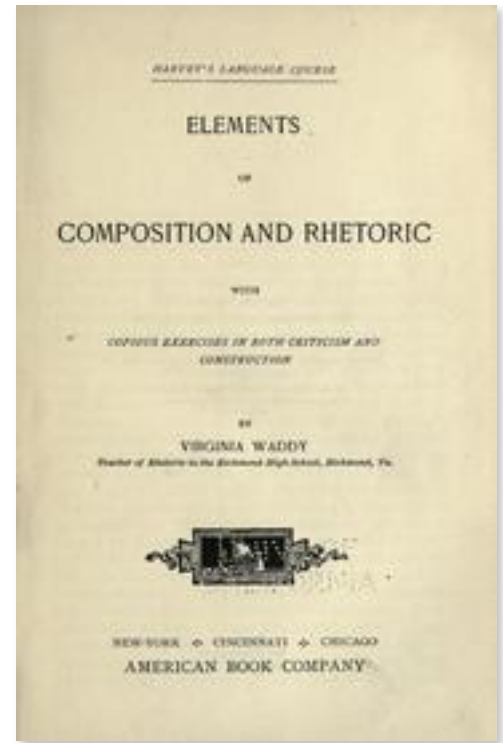
Office Hours: Monday=1PM-4PM; Tuesday=3PM-4PM;
Wednesday=9AM-11AM

An introduction to theories of writing developed through decades of rhetoric, composition, and writing studies research, this course examines the act of writing: how it is practiced and taught.

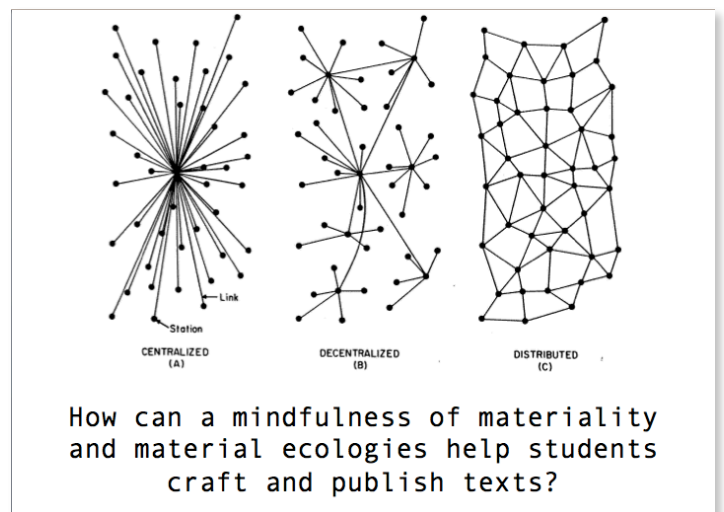
Specific to its first focus, writing as a practice, this course will examine theories of composing by addressing questions like: What role does psychology or cognition play in the writing process? What role do social forces—technological, economic, political, ideological, and linguistic—play in the writing process? How do people use writing to learn? To make knowledge? To act?

As its second focus, writing as a teaching subject, this course also introduces major theories of teaching writing, with a particular focus on how these theories inform approaches toward teaching and assessing writing. As part of this focus, this course will also consider how prompting students to write in both print and digital media can benefit their learning and what pedagogical challenges—including assessment—emerge when students are asked to write in a variety of media with a variety of technologies.

By the end of the course, you will be familiar with theories of writing be able to apply those theories to writing wherever and however it is produced and circulated—in other words, a writing praxis (i.e. theory-informed practices and practice-informed theory). For those primarily interested in teaching writing effectively or developing and assessing effective writing projects, you will leave this course with a set of assignments and activities grounded in



RHETORICIAN, n. f. [*rhétoricien*, Fr. *rhctor*, Lat.] One who teaches the science of rhetoric.
The ancient sophists and *rhctoricians*, which ever had young auditors, lived till they were an hundred years old. *Bacon.*
'Tis the business of *rhctoricians* to treat the characters of the passions. *Dryden's Dufresnoy.*
A man may be a very good *rhctorician*, and yet at the same time a mean orator. *Baker's Reflections on Learning.*



How can a mindfulness of materiality and material ecologies help students craft and publish texts?

theories of writing and a philosophy of teaching writing informed by the theories studied in this course.

OUTCOMES

Through a systematic study of the emergence and continued development of composition studies, students will learn:

- current theories, concepts, and models of writing to inform their practices as writers and future teachers of writing
- an understanding of the relationship between theory and practice and an ability to theorize practice and critique theory with reference to practice
- critical issues and current debates in the field of composition and rhetoric including issues of race, gender, disability, sexuality, and language
- the impact of the digital revolution on teaching, learning, and practicing writing
- the role of writing assessment in promoting and limiting student agency and student equity
- the limitations and affordances of the mechanisms used to make and share knowledge in composition studies including research methodologies and common academic genres

GRADING CONTRACT

You are guaranteed a B if you:

1. attend class regularly—not missing more than 3 classes;
2. meet due dates and writing criteria for all major assignments;
3. participate in all in-class exercises and activities;
4. complete and meet writing criteria of all low stakes writing assignments: **POSTS** and **SHARES**
5. copy-edit all final revisions of main assignments until they conform to the conventions of edited, revised English (unless otherwise appropriate given the genre you're composing);

Thus you earn the grade of B entirely on the basis of what you do—on your conscientious effort and participation. The grade of B does not derive from my judgment about the quality of projects. Grades higher than B, however, do rest on my judgment of the quality of your projects. To earn higher grades you must produce projects that I judge to be exceptionally high quality.

To earn the grade of A, you must produce **two** projects of exceptionally high quality. Exceptional quality varies from project to project, but overall, exceptional projects do more than meet the criteria of the assignment by bringing ideas together in novel ways; developing and explaining complex ideas; and providing sustained and systematic attention to the writing concepts we've examined in class.

PRESENCE POLICY

I will take attendance at each class meeting. Chronic failure to attend class will affect your grade.

Accommodations will be made for students with valid and documented absences (illness, death in the family, military duty, jury duty, religious holidays, official university activities). I will also work with students who experience issues with dependent care. Please see me as soon as possible if you foresee any of these issues so that we can plan on how best to keep you up-to-date with the course.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, students are responsible for getting class notes for the days they miss and for keeping up with assignments.

PROJECTS

Blog— teachingwriting.unwrite.org/wp-admin —To help explore ideas presented in the course readings, you will write and publish posts to our class blog. All blog posts are prompted; see the course calendar. In addressing these prompts, I am looking for five ways of engaging the material.

***Note: These criteria are adapted from Nathaniel Rivers' and Kathleen Blake Yancey's thinking about what blogs should do*

- a focused response on the reading and its elements
- connections that relate your response to recent discussions, your current coursework, something you might have read elsewhere, and/or previous experiences engaging with material of this nature in other contexts [as long as you help others see the relevance]
- commentary rather than summary to make particular aspects of the reading and making concrete through specific connections to your own experience inside and outside of class and previous readings
- thoughtful and analytical connections to others' responses in the context of the comments and replies in the thread
- inclusion of multimedia content and hyperlinks to additional resources on the Web that inform the discussion

To engage the material in these ways, you'll need to write at least 1 screen's worth of content—about 300 words.

Share—A more in-depth discussion than blog posts (1 page, single-spaced), *shares* should seek to synthesize and evaluate major themes and issues addressed through composition studies research. Like your blog posts, these documents should provide more commentary than synthesis and should be thoughtful and analytical, but unlike the blog posts, *shares* focus solely on course readings rather than experiences and conversations in other contexts. Thus, an effective *share* document should address the prompt—see the course calendar—and do so by drawing on and bringing together multiple sources of evidence as provided in our course reading. Share documents also must be included in your portfolio.

Portfolio—As we will discover, there are many kinds of portfolios: each meeting their distinct purposes and for their distinct audiences. This portfolio is meant to function as a site and opportunity for reflection wherein you will reflect back through the course in order to project forward to communicate and demonstrate the meaning and significance of these theories for you as a writer, as a citizen, and potentially a writing teacher.

Writing Praxis—Within rhetoric and composition, praxis is both a kind of knowledge and a process wherein theory informs practice and practice informs theory—in other words, as dialectical concepts. Drawing on our readings thus far on the dealing with early research on process and on concepts like the rhetorical situation and genre, start to articulate your praxis as a future of teacher of writing and/or as a writer. Because praxis is informed by theory, you should refer to our course readings fairly extensively. These discussions of our readings should contain enough summary, paraphrase, and quotation to define the concept, but the focus of your discussion should be

commentary and analysis—what the theory means and what significance it has on your understanding of writing/teaching writing.

Mapping Exigences—Throughout the semester, we have traced how researchers have sought to develop and share new knowledge to address gaps, to redirect conversations, and to include the underrepresented. One way of seeing this scholarly activity—the evolution of a research field—is in terms of Bitzer’s rhetorical situations wherein research functions like an evolving chain of exigences that are identified and addressed, leading to new rhetorical situations and new responses. In this project, you are going to create one representation of the evolution of composition studies by identifying three significant exigences and their accompanying responses. This project entails the creation of a table and an accompanying 5-6 page discussion explaining, elaborating, and clarifying your table.

Remediating Composition Theory—For this project, you will select a theory or a set of related theories we’ve discussed this semester and communicate those theories for a non-academic audience to address a specific rhetorical situation. To address an outside rhetorical situation, you will need to select and compose a genre appropriate for the rhetorical situation you selected. In addition to the genre you’ve composed, you’ll need to also complete a Shipkian statement of goals and choices (SOGC).

Final Project—Throughout the semester, you’ve been developing, revisiting, and revising a writing praxis. In this assignment, you will update the writing praxis you composed earlier this semester to include the concepts, issues, and concerns covered in your *blog* and *share* documents to compose a statement of writing praxis that brings to bear a broader set of theories than those included in your first attempt at a writing praxis.

WRITING LAB

I encourage you to take advantage of the Writing Lab in the Center for Student Learning (Addlestone Library, first floor). Trained writing consultants can help with writing for all courses; they offer one-to-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, please call 843.953.5635 or visit <http://csl.cofc.edu/labs/writing-lab/>.

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON HONOR CODE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism are violations of our Honor Code that, when identified, are investigated. Each incident will be examined to determine the degree of deception involved.

Incidents where the instructor determines the student’s actions are related more to a misunderstanding will be handled by the instructor. A written intervention designed to help prevent the student from repeating the error will be given to the student. The intervention, submitted by form and signed both by the instructor and the student, will be forwarded to the Dean of Students and placed in the student’s file.

Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student’s transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on

disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration—working together without permission—is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance.

Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor.

Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at (<http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php>)

CENTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES/SNAP

This College abides by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you have a documented disability that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see an administrator at the Center of Disability Services/SNAP, (843) 953-1431 or me so that such accommodation may be arranged.