

ENG 7980

History and Theories of Composition



Location: Lindley Hall, Room N390
Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays
6:15-7:45
Dates: Aug. 28 – Dec. 16, 2017

All course materials available in:

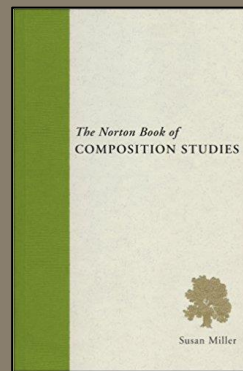


Dr. Ryan P. Shepherd

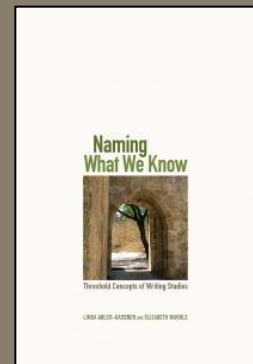


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Textbooks



The Norton Book of
Composition Studies
Susan Miller (Ed.)



Naming What We Know
Linda Adler-Kassner &
Elizabeth Wardle (Eds.)

Course Description

ENG 7980 will provide an overview of historical perspectives on composition studies as well as current theories. Students will be asked to put theories into conversation with current trends in the field and into conversation with their own teaching and research practices. Areas of study will include process, the social turn, transfer of learning, threshold concepts, and multimodality.

Course Outcomes

- Get a sense of the history of composition studies as a field.
- Understand the main theories of composition, both historically and currently.
- Connect theories to current research and teaching interests.
- Create your own theories of composition and how they should be applied.

Course Readings

Assigned readings will come from the class textbooks or will be provided as PDFs in Schoology. Please read all readings before class, post a response to the readings, and come to class ready to discuss what you've read.



Major Projects

During the course of the semester, you'll be asked to complete 3 smaller projects and one larger final project.

Expansion Project



The expansion project is designed to help you dig deeper into one topic of discussion. You will choose the topic of a single class period and read 3-5 additional articles or 1 additional book on that topic. Before class, you will create a short report (1200 words or multimodal equivalent) explaining why you chose those readings and what they added to your understanding of the topic. During the class discussion for that topic, you will provide context and connections from the additional readings.

Context Project



The context project is designed to help you explore connections between topics. You will choose a single reading from the class and look at the context surrounding it: what articles, books, and/or events influenced and were influenced by the reading. You will create a short report (1200 words or multimodal equivalent) explaining what you found and give a short presentation (3-5 minutes) on your findings to the class.

Gap Project



The gap project is designed to fill in a “gap” in what was covered in class material. Of course, not every aspect of composition studies can be covered in class. You will choose one area that we did not have time to cover, and you will read up on that area. You are expected to read at least 5-10 articles or 2 books on the topic. You will write a report (2000 words or multimodal equivalent) summarizing what you learned about this area and give a presentation (7-10 minutes) on your findings.

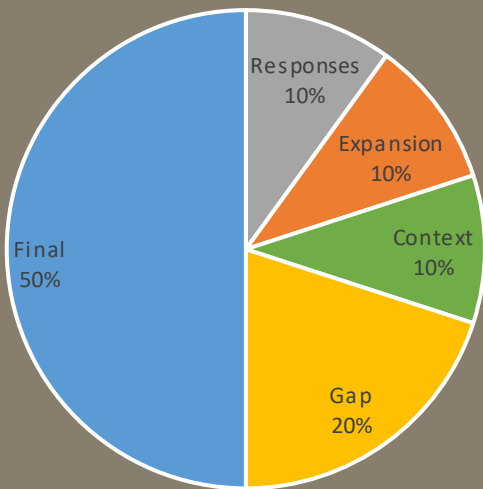
Final Project



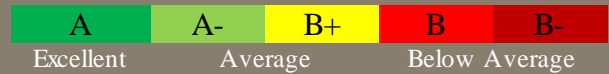
The final project is designed to help you create and explain your developing theories of composition—keeping in mind that these theories will evolve throughout your career. Your project should include how you define “composition,” what you think the relationship is between composition and English studies, how you think composition should be taught and studied, what ties composition together as a discipline, and how all of the above influences your own teaching and research processes. You will write a large report (5000 words or multimodal equivalent) explaining your theories of composition. The report should be well grounded in the theory of the field. Supplemental materials are encouraged. At the end of the semester, you will present your theory of composition to the class in a final presentation (7-10 minutes).

Grading

Your final grade will be broken down into the following percentages:



Grading Scale



- A** Outstanding: Expectations exceeded for all class assignments.
- A-** Good: Expectations met for all class assignments.
- B+** Acceptable: Expectations met with minor problems.
- B** Borderline: Expectations met with several minor problems.
- B-** Unacceptable: One or more assignments did not meet expectations for graduate work

Participation & Class Environment

Please do your best to encourage open dialog and civil discussion. Keep up with class material and engage with topics both inside and outside of class time.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class session. If you miss a class without prior approval from me, you will lose 5% of your final grade per class missed.

Participation

You are expected to engage actively in class discussion. Please be civil to other members of the class, and actively keep dialog open. If you cannot remain civil, you will be asked to leave and will be counted absent.

Tech

You are encouraged to use technology to help you learn. Please make sure that tech (cell phones, laptops, class computers, etc.) are used to add to class content, not to distract from it.

Late Assignments

Late daily assignments will not be accepted. Late major projects will only be accepted with prior approval. Except in extreme cases, late major projects will lose 10% per day until they are turned in.

Readings

Reading responses are due no later than 30 minutes *before* class time. Please read carefully and come to class ready to discuss what you've read.