

English 522 Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater
Thursdays 6:30-9:20 OfficeMcIver 114
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English 522: Teaching Composition, Theories and Applications

This course introduces participants to a range of pedagogical theories and research methodologies in the field of Composition Studies to prepare them to undertake their own research projects as well as to interpret the professional literature in the field. We=ll begin by grounding ourselves in contemporary theories and terms that guide current classroom approaches to teaching writing. Then, we=ll explore the wide range of methods used in composition researchBhistorical, feminist, narrative, linguistic, experimental, and cognitiveBin an attempt to understand how different research questions demand different methodological approaches. The major focus of the course is for participants to become competent at reading and evaluating the usefulness and application of research studies for their own teaching of writing.

English 522 is a required course for all students in the M.ED degree in English Education and will cover as well many of the readings on composition list for the comprehensive doctoral exams.

Readings:

Harris, Joseph. *A Teaching Subject: Composition Studies Since 1966*. Prentice Hall: New Jersey, 1997.

Heilker, Paul and Peter Vandenberg. *Key Words in Composition Studies*. Heinemann: New Hampshire, 1996.

Kirsch, Gesa and Patricia Sullivan. *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*. Southern Illinois Press, 1992.

There will be an extensive e-reserve reading list.

Learning Objectives:

Seminar participants will become familiar with the range of scholarly journals in the field and consult them throughout the course as they prepare their research portfolios. Some of these journals include: *Research in the Teaching of English*, *College Composition and Communication*, *College English*, *Journal of Advanced Composition*, *Journal of Basic Writing*, *Journal of Teaching Writing*, *English Education*, *Anthropology and Education*, *Harvard Education Review*, *Written Communication*, *Rhetoric Review*, *Writing Program Administration*, *Teaching in the Two Year College*, *Journal of Technical Writing*. Some of these journals are available online and others such as *Kairos* are exclusively online.

AResearch is the name we give to the activity of writing. . . whatever it searches for, it must not forget its nature as language.@ Roland Barthes

More explicitly, these are the skills you should master in English 522:

1. To learn and apply research methods appropriate to composition research (historical, feminist, ethnographic, narrative, linguistic, cognitive, etc).
2. To understand and critically analyze various research methodologies and studies.
3. To design a research project focused on ways of investigating writing instruction.
4. To research and write a review of the literature on some aspect of writing instruction.
5. To become familiar with current approaches in the fieldBi.e. educational reports, theoretical perspectives,

and pedagogical approaches to various issues of writing instruction.

6. To understand the relationships between research methods, findings and implications for the purpose of curriculum and instruction.

7. To make decisions related to curriculum and pedagogy based on research in the field.

Rituals and Routines

Since this is a graduate course, I expect everyone to arrive on time, be prepared, engage fully in our discussions and collaborate with one another in every way possible. You will be asked to participate in a great deal of group work and will be encouraged to write your final paper projects together. You should plan to not miss any classes unless in an extreme emergency situation which you would discuss with me by phone or email.

Research Design Portfolio

One of the major projects for this course will be to assemble a research portfolio which will include descriptions and critiques of a range of studies in the field taken from professional journals and book chapters. The portfolio is intended to provide participants with bibliographic resources for future research and inquiry. We will share the portfolios throughout the semester and at the end of the course when it will be submitted for evaluation.

Final Project

You will choose to either to propose a research design for a possible study you might want to conduct or write a bibliographic essay related to an area of composition studies of interest to you as a teacher and scholar.

While both projects will involve bibliographic grounding in a specific research area, the design focuses on methods and procedures for a potential research project whereas the thrust of the bibliographic essay is on assimilation of other studies on a specific topic such as writing assessment, basic writing programs, writing centers, or collaborative writing. The approximate length for these projects will be between 7-12 pages, rough due 10/30. Evaluation

The research portfolio and bibliographic essay/research design proposal will be equally weighted, along with full class participation. Class participation includes giving a report on a professional journal, co-leading a class discussion, as well as being prepared for weekly discussions and presenting your final project.

Participants are encouraged to collaborate with one another on any aspect of the course. The bibliographic essay, the research design proposal, and leading a class discussion, although each student will submit an individual portfolio.

Outline of Topics and Readings

Week One: Introduction (8/21) What Is Research?

Introduction to the course, to one another and to what it means to ask research-based questions.

Dr. Myers will attend this class to speak with M.ED. students about their program requirements.

Week Two: Keywords/Bibliographic Essays (8/28)

Reading: Heikler and Vandenberg, *Keywords in Composition Studies*. Read the introduction, browse the entire book and select two entries in the book that particularly interest you. Write a one or two paged paper about one of the terms, responding to what you found surprising, disturbing, confusing, or engaging about the keyword. Make one copy to hand in and keep one copy for your first entry in your researcher portfolio.***

Week Three: What is Composition Studies as a Discipline? (9/4)

Reading: Joseph Harris, *A Teaching Subject*. Read the book and write a two paged response to it, again

focusing on one of Harris=s key terms and whatever you found to be surprising, disturbing, or confusing about the book. This paper will become your second entry in your researcher portfolio.***

Week Four: Historical Approaches (9/11)

Reading: Sullivan and Kirsch, *Methods and Methodologies*, Introduction by editors and chapter by Robert Connors, *ADreams and Play@* and, @ E-Reserve, Frances Wright, *First Female Civic Rhetor in America@* by Robert Connors. Guest historian in Composition, Nancy Myers.

Week Five: Feminist Approaches (9/18)

Reading: Kirsch and Sullivan, *Methods and Methodologies*, Patricia Sullivan article, *AFeminism and Methodology,@* and from e-reserve: Hawisher and Sullivan, *AWomen on the Networks: Searching for E-Spaces of Their Own,@*; Flynn, *AComposing As a Woman.@* Write about one of these three articles for your portfolio.

Week Six: Quantitative and Positivist Approaches (9/25)

Reading Kirsch and Sullivan, *Methods and Methodologies* Schriver, *Connecting Cognition and e-reserve : Flower, AWriter Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problem Solving in Writing.@* Respond to one of these articles for your portfolio. Choose a professional journal which includes articles on writing (see list) to present to the rest of the class. Write a two paged summary/critique of the journal for your portfolio and make a copy to be handed in.***

Week Seven: Linguistic Approaches and Textual Approaches (10/2)

Reading: Kirsch and Sullivan, *Methods and Methodologies*, Huckin, *AContext-Sensitive Text Analysis@* and E-Reserve: Shaughnessy, Introduction and chapter one from *Errors and Expectations*. Write about one these articles for your portfolio. Have the topic for your bibliographic essay OR research design by this date and be ready to share it.

Week Eight: Narrative or Case Study Approaches (10/9)

Sullivan and Kirsch, *Methods and Methodologies*, Newkirk,, *AThe Narrative Roots of the Case Study,@* E-Reserve: Emig, *ALynn:Profile of a Twelfth Grade Writer,@* and *AClaiming the Essay for Himself: Nam@* from Herrington and Curtis=s *Persons in Process*. Respond to Newkirk and one of the other articles for your portfolio. (Schedule a conference with instructor this week to discuss plans for final project)

Week Nine: Ethnographic Approaches (10/16)

Sullivan and Kirsch, *Methods and Methodologies*, Moss, *AEthnography and Composition,: Studying Language at Home,@* E-Reserve: Chiseri-Strater, *AAatomy of a Discourse Community,@* and *AThe Discourse of Discourse Communities,@* from *Academic Literacies*. Respond to one of these studies for your researcher portfolio.

Week Ten: Action or Teacher-Research (10/23)

Sullivan and Kirsch, *Methods and Methodologies*, Ray, *AComposition from the Teacher Researcher,@* and study from Martha=s *Vineyard teacher researcher* (handouts). Summarize one article you have found useful for your final project and be prepared to discuss it in class.***

Week Eleven: Writing Workshop (10/30)

Drafts of projects due. Bring 3 copies to share with group, one to hand in.***

Week Twelve: Methodological Pluralism (10/6)

Sullivan and Kirsch, *Methods and Methodologies*, Kirsch, *AMethodological Pluralism@* and Roen and Mittan, *ACollaborative Scholarship in Composition: Some Issues.@* Write about one article for your portfolio. (Meet with instructor this week to discuss your final project)

Week Thirteen: Sharing Our Work: Presentations (11/13) (10-12 minute presentation)

Week Fourteen Sharing Our Work: Presentations (11/20)(10-12 minute presentation)

Week Fifteen (11/27) THANKSGIVING NO CLASS

Week Sixteen: (12/4) Last Class/Party

Researcher Portfolio due.*** These can be picked up during exam time.