

San José State University
College of the Humanities and Arts
Department of English and Comparative Literature
English 259, Seminar in Composition Studies
Section 1, Fall 2017

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Cynthia Baer
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Office Hours:	Thursday, 11 a.m. to noon. 3:00 to 3:45 p.m. and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Thursday, 4 to 6:45 p.m.
Classroom:	BBC 221 Classified standing or instructor consent is required to take this course. English 259 is a prerequisite or co-requisite for Teaching Associates and is highly recommended for any student, M.A. or M.F.A., who contemplates teaching writing as part of a career.
Prerequisites:	

How We Will Exchange Information?

We will use Canvas.

Course materials such as syllabus, readings, samples, and assignment instructions will be located in Canvas Learning Management System at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. I will also message you through Canvas announcements when there are updates to our schedule for the week.

You should, therefore, plan to bring a laptop to class meetings. We will also be exploring multimodal composition, so you should plan to explore software that supports multimodal composition.

We will work in teams.

This project-based course will require you to collaborate with 3 of your seminar colleagues. You should plan to make full use of the collaborative tools available to you through campus technologies and software.

What Is the Seminar in Writing Studies About?

What is writing? Why and how have we studied it? How do we learn it? Seminar members will collaborate in teams to design an English 1A course for SJSU's First Year Writing program, including a design philosophy, textbook choice, sample readings, writing assignment, and lesson plans. The team's course design will grow out of seminar reading, research, and discussion, which will survey the theory and practice of rhetoric and writing studies. Along the way, each member will produce three multimodal and one book presentation to help the seminar explore the intersection theory and practice.

I have designed this course as a project-based curriculum. All of our activities together will contribute to a single **collaborative project**: course designs for the 25 students we meet on day one in their ePortfolios from the summer orientation to college writing. I have put together a cohort of freshman writing students from our archive of placement portfolios to create for us a specific classroom “audience.” In our first two weeks we will study this audience and in the process also organize ourselves into 4 design teams. Over the remaining weeks, for this audience, we will investigate a range of course designs as expressions of specific pedagogies and theories. Each team’s course design will aim toward the same goal: to effectively facilitate all 25 students through a 15-week transition into college reading and writing within a specific local context (SJSU’s First Year Writing Program).

What Are Our Learning Goals as We Work Together?

Together this semester we will explore the disciplines we engage professionally when we design courses that facilitate composition study.

- to explore and evaluate a range of approaches to studying and teaching composition
- to situate composition in relation to values, assumptions, and expectations that teachers, students, and outside influences bring to the scene of writing instruction
- to engage in productive discussions about teaching and studying writing
- to articulate theoretically informed goals and objectives for writing classrooms
- to practice modes of academic inquiry

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop a functional design for a writing course.
2. Explain the course design.
3. Tie the course design to a specific philosophy of teaching writing.
4. Tie the course design to a specific synthesis of our reading this fall.

How Does This Work Contribute to Your Graduate Studies in English?

Rhetoric is one of the many disciplines that informs literary study, but this course is not about literary studies. Rather, this course asks us to develop and apply an expertise in rhetoric as we contemplate how to teach and study writing. Looking at the program learning objectives below, it is worth asking *how is writing studies like but not like literary studies?*

Department of English Graduate Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

- Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
- Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
- Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
- Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
- Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language

What Books Will We Read?

The sources we will read and share are all available at the bookstore, through Amazon, and sometimes through second hand booksellers. (Shop around.) Many are available in the library.

Textbooks

There are three required texts. Several articles are available in Canvas. You may want to purchase the text you are presenting on as well.

Adler-Kassner, Linda and Elizabeth Wardle. *Naming What We know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Classroom Edition. Utah State UP, 2016. ISBN 978-1607325772

Coxwell-Teague, Deborah and Ronald F. Lunsford. *First-Year Composition: From Theory to Practice*. Parlor Press, 2014. ISBN 978-1602355187

Tate, Gary, et al. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Oxford UP, 2014 (2001). ISBN 978-0199922161

Other Readings

There is also a list of 16 books (listed in the Canvas discussion called “*Rhetor* for an Evening”). From this list each of you will choose one text. This will be your book, as you become *rhetor* for an evening. You will read it and devise a means to present it to the class in some meaningful way. The meaning and means will emerge, as meaning and means do, from the exigences of the moment.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material

A laptop
Word Processing software
Presentation software
Collaboration software

How Can I Contact the Reference Librarian?

Toby Matoush
Phone: [\(408\) 808-2096](tel:4088082096)
Email: toby.matoush@sjsu.edu

What Work Will This Project-Based Course Require?

Because this is a 4-unit course, you can expect to spend a minimum of twelve hours per week preparing for and attending classes and completing course assignments. This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancements: Collateral readings, presentation technologies, and a term project culminating in a Teaching Portfolio.

Course Readings have been selected to allow us to explore a range of approaches to studying and teaching composition over time. Each of you is expected to come prepared to contribute to our synthesis of this reading as we work toward our course designs. Canvas discussions of the readings will require short responses from you each week. These Canvas comments will be the jumping off point for class discussion.

Collateral Reading and the Rhetor for an Evening segment of our evening program! The exclamation mark signals my FAV in the lineup of class activities. I have selected 16 texts from contemporary discussions of

writing and writing pedagogy. Each of you will choose one of these. Each evening will feature one of you as “*rhetor* for the evening,” presenting your chosen text to the class. I call you “*rhetor*” quite purposefully: Your job, as *rhetor*, is to figure out 1) what in your book will be useful or interesting to us on the evening you present, 2) what is the best way to make its use or interest apparent to us, and 3) lead an appropriate follow up activity. The presentation can be no longer than 10 minutes. The follow up activity can be no longer than 20 minutes. This will leave 15 minutes for discussion.

Those of you presenting in the final weeks of the course will also be selecting our reading for the week, choosing from your book a chapter for us to read with you.

Three Group Multimodal Presentations will allow each course design group to synthesize the reading and discussion within each of the modules as you work toward a coherent teaching philosophy and course design. Each group will produce a mix tape (in module 1), a remix (in module 2), and mix (in module 3). Each presentation will be composed of no more than 20 slides.

Two Individual Reflection Essays will help me to understand how you and your group members have worked to synthesize and apply our reading to produce the mix tape and the remix, and what you will be taking forward from this experience into your own teaching practice and philosophy.

A Syllabus Analysis will apply what you are learning in module 1 about how syllabi reflect specific and varied approaches to teaching and studying writing. You will each choose one English 1A or English 1AF syllabus in the department’s online archive from Fall 2014 to the present. Using what you have learned in your reading in module 1, you will write for the instructor whose syllabus you are analyzing the explanation of what pedagogies are represented in the syllabus. (2 pages single-spaced.)

A Class Observation and Analysis Report will apply what you have learned in modules 1 and 2 as you observe a classroom in real time. You will make an appointment with an instructor to discuss visiting the class, and then visit the class to observe. After the observation, you will analyze the class you witnessed to describe its pedagogy and to explain to your group how what you observed can help the group understand your own emerging designs for classroom engagement. (2 pages single-spaced.)

Final Project Evaluation: Your Teaching Portfolio is the culmination of all the work described above. It will include a teaching statement, a syllabus (reflecting the group’s course design), a sample assignment, and a scaffolded set of lessons/activities to support the students as they complete the assignment. Appended to the portfolio will be an annotated bibliography that demonstrating how the portfolio reflects the reading we shared over the 15 weeks of our exploration of writing studies.

How Will You Be Graded?

As part of our discussion of assessment we will create rubrics for each of the above assignments together. Considered rhetorically, a good rubric makes explicit the values implicit in the assignment itself.

I will use these rubrics to guide my evaluation of your work and provide feedback that helps you use each assignment as a stepping stone to the final project. We will devise many of these rubrics together as you learn how to develop these tools for your own course designs.

I use letter grades when I evaluate student work, on an A to F scale, including + and – values in the scoring. When tallying final grades and A+ is a 12, an A is an 11, and A- is 10, etc. Assignments will be weighted as follows:

<i>Rhetor</i> for an Evening Presentation	10%
Three Group Multimodal Presentations	30% (10% each)
Two Individual Reflection Essays	20% (10% each)
A Syllabus Analysis	5%
A Class Observation and Analysis Report	5%
A Final Project: Your Teaching Portfolio	30%

In this grading system, then an A- on the *rhetor* presentation would contribute 10 x .10 to the cumulative course grade that I will report in December.

There will be no extra credit work in this class.

More guidelines on grading information and class attendance can be found from the following two university policies:

- [University Syllabus Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf)
- [University Attendance and Participation policy F15-12](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.pdf)

What Is the Working Protocol in This Classroom?

In our first meeting, as an exercise in defining classroom expectations, we will negotiate standards for participation, attendance, arrival and departure times, behavior, safety, cell phone use, instructor and peer feedback, and time management.

Where Can You Find More Information about University Policies?

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#).

English 259, A Seminar in Composition Studies

Fall 2017

Course Schedule

The schedule is subject to change with fair notice. I will notify you of changes via Canvas.

The work for this course is broken into 3 modules that will pace us through the development of a first-year writing course for the 25 freshmen we have been assigned. The readings and activities and projects scheduled here will yield a course design that will help students to meet learning objectives for a GE Area A2 course at SJSU.

First Year Composition (FYC)

Guide to Composition Pedagogies (GCP)

MODULE 1, Currents in Composition: What is the NOW of this discipline?

Week	Date	Reading and Assignments	Project Deadline
1	August 24	Ferris and Roberge in Canvas: Come ready to get to know our students.	
2	August 31	Syllabus 1 and 2 in FYC. "Process" and "Second Language Writing" in GCP.	Ferris book presented
3	September 7	Syllabi 3 & 5 FYC; "Genre" and "Researched Writing"	Nowacek book presented.
4	September 14	Syllabus 7 & 10 FYC; "Expressive" and "Feminist" in GCP	Shipka book presented.
5	September 21	Syllabus 8 & 11 FYC;" Collaborative Writing," "New Media," "Rhetoric and Argumentation" in GCP.	Bawarshi book presented.
6	September 28	<i>Naming What We Know</i>	Group multimodal project, mix project + Individual reflection essay (2 single-spaced pages) Royer book presented

MODULE 2, Composing a Tradition: What do we owe to the past?

Week	Date	Reading and Assignments	Project Deadline
7	October 5	I will be at CSU English Council. Groups meet with me remotely and with each other face to face.	Draft of teaching philosophy for peer review (one single-spaced page).

		In groups you will peer review the draft teaching philosophy statements. You will also share your analyses of course syllabi and do a Canvas collaboration.	Short essay explaining the pedagogies reflected in one of the English 1A or 1AF syllabi online (2 single-spaced pages + annotated syllabus).
8	October 12	Aristotle <i>Book I</i> and Plato <i>Gorgias</i> [What is rhetoric?]	
9	October 19	Cicero, Quintillian (excerpts) and Crowley (article) [the practice of transformation, the figure of the Orator]	Teaching philosophy due. Crowley book presented
10	October 26	Erasmus (excerpt) and Christensen (article) [the practice of transformation]	Christensen book presented. Class observation + analytical report due.
11	November 2	Blair and Bain (excerpts) [the exigences of formalism and foundations of the paragraph]	Elbow book presented.

MODULE 3, A 21st Century Composition: How do we construct our future?

Week	Date	Reading and Assignments	Project Deadline
12	November 9	Yancey in FYC. Plus, Yancey, Huot and Crowley (excerpts announced by the rhetor)	Draft of a lesson plan + essay Yancey and Huot books presented.
13	November 16	Hooks and Horner (excerpts announced by the rhetor) Book Presentations	Group multimodal project: remix + Individual reflection essay Hooks and Horner books presented.
14	November 30	Banks and Freiburg (excerpts announced by the rhetor) Book Presentations	Banks and Reiff books presented.
15	December 7	Inoue and Matsuda (excerpts announced by the rhetor) Book Presentations	Matsuda and Inoue books presented.
Final Exam	December 14	5:15-7:30 Team Course Design: Mix Tape	Teaching Portfolios: teaching philosophy, syllabus and lesson plans, annotated bibliography