

San José State University
Department of English
ENGL 259, Seminar In Composition Studies,
Section 01, Fall, 2019

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Tom Moriarty
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 6:00-7:00PM and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Wednesdays 7:00-9:45PM
Classroom: FOB 104 Course Format

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging (Optional)

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](http://sjsu.instructure.com) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU](http://my.sjsu.edu) at <http://my.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

Course Description

Study of current approaches to composition.

Course Goals (Optional)

English 259 is a graduate seminar in Composition Theory. The course objectives are:

- To analyze and evaluate competing descriptions of the writing process.
- To recognize and evaluate the range of approaches to teaching composition.
- To examine assumptions underlying current theory and practice in writing instruction.
- To explore assumptions and implications of composition and rhetorical research.
- To identify key problems and issues surrounding current research in composition and rhetoric.

The main questions guiding our reading and discussions this semester, and some of the fundamental questions motivating research in this field, are:

- How do people write?
- How do people learn how to write?
- How should we teach writing?
- What are the consequences of teaching writing one way versus another?
- What are the consequences of writing and texts in the world? In other words, what do texts “do” in the world? Why are they important?

And by the end of the semester, you will develop tentative answers of your own to these and many other questions.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) (Required)

MA in English Program Learning Outcomes

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. 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.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

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

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.

- 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.

Required Texts/Readings (Required)

Textbook

Adler-Kassner, Linda and Elizabeth Wardle, Eds. *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies (Classroom Edition)*. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 2016.

Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper, Kurt Schick. *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. 2nd Edition. New York: Oxford, 2014.

Coxwell-Teague, Deborah and Ronald F. Lunsford. *First-Year Composition: From Theory to Practice*.

Anderson, South Carolina: Parlor Press, 2014.

Course Requirements and Assignments (Required)

Assignments

This class has a variety of graded assignments for your learning enjoyment.

Group Discussion Leaders

Each of you will have a couple of opportunities to serve as a discussion leader, which will require you to:

- Provide the class with handouts that include a detailed summary of the day's readings (all of them).
- Come to class with at least five discussion questions per reading and one synthesizing question that groups all of the readings together.

You will help lead the discussion in small teams and your job is to set the tone for the readings and the discussion. Your questions will be used in addition to the questions provided by the professor. Please work together on your handouts and your discussion questions and plan to lead the discussion as a group – please don't simply break up the work and have one person talk about one reading and another person talk about the other. Your job, in a lot of ways, is to be the core of that day's conversation. So talk with each other and with us.

Group Research Project and Presentation

You will join small group in the first part of the semester to empirically research two very important questions:

- How do people write?
- How do people learn how to write?

You will collect data on these questions and present your findings in class.

Exams

You will take 2 exams which will consist of the identification and explanation of key concepts, figures, and movements in Composition.

Seminar Paper

Finally, you will have the opportunity to write a long, researched seminar paper. The paper can take many forms, and we will discuss the possibilities as the semester goes along. In general, seminar papers for this class tend to fall into one of the following broad categories:

- A proposal for a first-year writing course, fully fleshed out in terms of readings and assignments, as well as a thorough theoretical discussion and argument for why this would be a good approach to teaching such a course.

- A researched argument that addresses one or more of the more theoretical discussions in the fields of composition and rhetoric. Previous papers have included:
 - Arguing your pedagogical position and best approaches to teaching writing in a more theoretical way than you might in the option above.
 - Exploring a pedagogical theory or approach that you find compelling, (or even problematic).
 - Predicting future trends in Composition based on its history.
 - Researching the history of Composition.
 - “Mapping” or exploring fully a particular key word or theory in composition and rhetoric.
 - Theorizing about the relationship among technology, rhetoric, and the teaching of writing.
 - Exploring the “divide” (or what I like to call the relationship) between rhetoric and poetic.

If you have ideas/topics that you would like to explore, please see me, and we will work out an assignment that fits both your interests and the goals and expectations of the course.

Any way you slice it, all papers must be between 12 and 15 pages long and include composition research consisting of at least 10 sources (and at least half of your sources must be different sources from the assigned course readings).

Short Weekly Response Papers

Respond to the readings for the week. That means don’t just summarize them – grapple with the ideas presented in them and think about how they respond to or challenge (or don’t) some of the fundamental questions that motivate inquiry and research in composition theory. Also, from time to time, talk about your sense of the field and where *your* thinking is trending in regards to the field’s concerns. Each response should be 250-300 words long.

Participation

Participation is an important part of the work of this seminar. You are expected to be prepared for class each week, which means doing all the reading, even if you are not presenting that day. You are also expected to fully participate in our discussions, which means sharing your own ideas and listening to and responding to the ideas of your classmates.

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Final Examination or Evaluation

Final Exam will meet on December 11, 7:45-10:00PM

Final Papers will be due. And there will be an informal presentation of projects.

Grading Information (Required)

Grades will be determined as follows. Late work will be penalized 10% for each day it is late.

Weekly Responses: 10%

Leading Discussion: 10%

Group Project and Presentation: 10%

Exam 1: 20%

Exam 2: 20%

Seminar Participation: 10%

Final Seminar Paper: 20% (failure to attend and participate in workshops will deduct up to 10% from your final grade)

Grades will be determined using the following scale:

A plus = 1000 to 970 points

A = 969 to 940 points

A minus = 939 to 900 points

B plus = 899 to 870 points

B = 869 to 840 points

B minus = 839 to 800 points

C plus = 799 to 770 points

C = 769 to 740 points

C minus = 739 to 700 points

D plus = 699 to 670 points

D = 669 to 640 points

D minus = 639 to 600 points

F = 599 points or lower

Classroom Protocol

Students are welcome to disagree with one another during class discussions; however, all our dialogue must be conducted with respect for each individual's opinions and work, and all discussions must be rated PG-13. In addition, please refrain from using your cell phones during class.

University Policies (Required)

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Make sure to review these university policies and resources with students.

ENGL 259 / Seminar in Composition Studies, Fall 2019, Course Schedule

Please note: Schedule is subject to change.

Key:

Guide: *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*

Naming: *Naming What We Know*

First Year: *First-Year Composition*

Week	Date	Topics, Activities, Due Dates, and Homework	Discussion Leaders
1	Aug. 21	<p>Introductions of each other Introduction to class, syllabus, books Response Papers (expectations) Discussion Leaders (expectations and sign ups) Group Project on how people write and learn how to write (guidelines and sign ups) Deep thoughts on a lot of things Developing data collection plans and refining research questions</p> <p>HW: <i>Reading</i> Guide: 1-19 (what is Comp. Pedagogy?), 212-230 (process). Naming: ix-11. <i>Group Project</i> Finish data collection plan and refining questions.</p>	
2	28	<p>Discuss readings Share Data Collection plans Begin collecting expert data in class</p> <p>HW: <i>Reading</i> Guide: 111-127 (expressive), 37-54 (collaborative writing), 20-36 (basic writing). Naming: 15-34. <i>Group Project</i> Finish collecting expert data, identify and make a plan with 2 non-experts.</p>	(2)
3	Sept. 4	<p>Discuss readings Begin analysis of expert data Finalize plans for collecting non-expert data</p> <p>HW: <i>Reading</i> Guide: 128-145 (feminist), 55-76 (community-engaged), 231-247 (researched writing), 248-265 (rhetoric and argumentation). Naming: 35-47. <i>Group Project</i> Collect data from non-experts.</p>	(2)
4	11	Discuss readings	(2)

		<p>Begin analysis of non-expert data</p> <p>HW: <i>Reading</i> Guide: 146-162 (genre), 163-175 (literature and composition), 266-282 (second language writing), 283-300 (WAC and WID). Naming: 48-58. <i>Group Project</i> Finish data analysis for both experts and non-experts</p>	
5	18	<p>Discuss readings Develop conclusions based on your data Make plans for presentation</p> <p>HW: <i>Reading</i> Guide: 177-193 (new media), 301-316 (writing centers). Naming: 59-81. <i>Group Project</i> Prepare Powerpoint slides and talk.</p>	(2)
6	25	<p><i>Group Project Presentation Due</i> Discuss readings Give talks Talk about first exam</p> <p>HW: Prepare for exam.</p>	(2)
7	Oct. 2	<p><i>Exam #1</i> Decide on reading list for second part of semester from <i>First-Year Composition</i> book.</p>	

8	9		
9	16		
10	23	<i>Brief, informal proposal for Final Paper due.</i>	
11	30		
12	Nov. 6		
13	13		
14	20	<p><i>Exam #2</i> Chat about Projects.</p>	
15	27	NO CLASS. Thanksgiving. Eat too much.	
16	Dec. 4	<i>Drafts of Final Papers due.</i> Feedback.	
Finals	11 7:45- 10:00PM	<i>Final Papers due.</i> Informal presentations of projects.	