

English 259, Seminar in Composition Studies

Section 1, Fall 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Cynthia Baer
Office Location:	Conferences held via Zoom, see Zoom link below. I will open the seminar link for drop in office hours, one hour before our scheduled session.
Telephone:	No phone contact.
Email:	Request a conference via email: cindy.baer@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Wednesday 3:00-4:00 p.m. and Thursdays by appointment.
Class Days/Time:	Wednesday, 4 p.m. to 6:45 p.m.
	Zoom link: [REDACTED]
Classroom:	Canvas link: https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1376206 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.

This course is designed in the Canvas Learning Management system to support our hybrid online course. Our meetings will be conducted online via Zoom. You will, therefore, need access to a computer and WiFi. We will also be exploring multimodal composition, so you should plan to explore software that supports multimodal composition.

Course materials such as the syllabus, supplementary readings, discussion prompts and responses, and assignment instructions will be located in Canvas Learning Management System at <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1375603>.

I will also message you through Canvas announcements when there are updates to our schedule for the week.

You will receive an email with a Zoom invitation and link to our regularly scheduled online sessions. You can also use the link in the table above. I use campus email to send and receive messages, so please regularly check the email on file for you with the university. (Probably this is your sjsu.edu email, unless you provided an alternative.)

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? These are the questions we will explore together as we collaborate in teams to design an English 1A course for SJSU's First Year Writing program.

I have designed this course, English 259, as a project-based curriculum. All of our activities together will contribute to a single **collaborative instructional design project**: In our final class period, each team will post to Canvas and present during our Zoom session a course design 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).

Along with the team course design project, and leading up to the first project milestone—the team design mixtape—we will spend the first 7 weeks exploring current theories and practices of rhetoric and writing studies, with a special emphasis on finding lenses that help us to take up the challenge to reform higher education to achieve the values of inclusion, equity, and sustainability. In subsequent weeks we will 1) travel back in time to explore the origins of writing studies we have researched and to think about how the forms of writing we study have evolved *from* and *through* that study and 2) return again to now to think about how the norms and conventions of the disciplines we study can be translated into the institutional structures in which writing studies happen—i.e. university classrooms, syllabi, grading systems. It is in these later weeks that your literacy autobiography will evolve into a teaching statement that organizes your thinking about the course design you develop with your team.

During the first research phase, you will post to our Canvas discussions a series of memories informed and inflected by your reading and our discussions of current theory and practice. From these posts, you will individually compose *a literacy autobiography/teaching statement*. This autobiography, will become your theoretical basis for the course design and teaching statement that you will turn in as *a final individual reflection and course design project portfolio*.

Thus, I have designed this course to be project-based and collaborative, even as it is rooted in your own language history. With this curriculum I mean to engage you in research and discussion that prepares you to practice writing and its instruction—consciously situated in both the private landscape of your own writing history and the public field of writing studies. Your goal, if you engage this design with me, is to map the intersection of your own writing life and the life of writing as a discipline of study we share with others.

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 in terms of its local terrain (the SJSU writing culture and community).
3. Tie the course design to their own life practice and history and to disciplinary currents in the philosophy and practice 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 online open access projects. (See the list provided in Canvas). I recommend you find online versions. These are typically searchable—a real time saver for online discussions. And the Kindle versions make annotation and documentation of your work with and in a text very easy!

Textbooks

There are three required texts. The Adler-Kassner and Wardle text is available in open access as PDFs. But it is worth having in a library of writing studies texts, if you are building one. So I have it on recommendation so that the bookstore will stock it.

1. REQUIRED. Canagarajah, Suresh. 2020. *Transnational Literacy Autobiographies as Translingual Writing*. ASIN B07S2T4J9G

[eBook at Routledge, <https://www.routledge.com/Transnational-Literacy-Autobiographies-as-Translingual-Writing/Canagarajah/p/book/9780367201838>] You can also rent or buy a Kindle version on Amazon:

https://www.amazon.com/Suresh-Canagarajah-ebook-dp-B07S2T4J9G/dp/B07S2T4J9G/ref=mt_other?_encoding=UTF8&me=&qid=

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

[e-book, https://www.ebooks.com/en-us/book/209656642/first-year-composition/deborah-coxwell-teague/?_c=1] You can also buy a Kindle version at Amazon, https://www.amazon.com/First-Year-Composition-Theory-Practice-Rhetoric-ebook/dp/B07QF3N6HP/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Coxwell-Teague&qid=1597097932&s=digital-text&sr=1-1

3. REQUIRED. Tate, Gary and Amy Rupert Taggart, et al. 2013. *Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. ISBN-10: 9780199922161. No eBook or Kindle version. Buy used or rent on Amazon.

4. RECOMMENDED. Adler-Kassner, Linda and Elizabeth Wardle. 2015. *Naming What We know: Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies*. Classroom Edition. Utah State UP, 2016. ISBN 978-1607325772.

[<https://muse.jhu.edu/book/40635>]

Other Readings

Supplementary articles and book chapters are available in Canvas within the discussion prompts. In the first discussion, for instance, you will find two articles about language learners in university classrooms.

You will each choose a book from the Rhetor for an Evening [book list](#). You will read and present this book to the seminar group. You may want to purchase the text you are presenting on. On the list, I have provided links to open access and online versions when available. 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

For Connectivity you will need a laptop, access to stable WiFi, access to Zoom and Canvas. The university can help you find the tools for the required connectivity.

For the regular exchange of information in a seminar, you will need word processing software, presentation software, collaboration software. Canvas contains much of what you need. You also have access to lots of software as an SJSU student. For more information on these resources visit [Student Technology Resources](#).

How Can I Contact the Reference Librarian?

Our library liaison is Peggy Cabrera. She is available to help you find resources to do your work in this course. She has set up a library resource page here: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=230087&p=1527093>

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. From week to week, I will post on our homepage a synopsis of the week's work and Zoom session agenda with links to the tasks. I will make suggestions about how to manage the workload for the week to get the work done in 12 hours.

This course will have integrated into the syllabus the following 1-unit enhancements (see asterisk): Collateral readings, exploring new writing and presentation technologies, and a term project culminating in a Course Design Portfolio.

Course Readings and Canvas Reading Discussions. 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 complete the reading each week and respond to the prompt on that reading. Prompts will ask you to think about your own writing history and practice as it is illuminated by and illuminates the week's reading. By completing the tasks outlined in the Canvas discussion prompts, you will be prepared to contribute to our synthesis of this reading as we work together in Zoom sessions toward our course designs.

Note: Canvas discussions of the readings will require short responses from you each week. There will be follow up prompts when we visit these discussion during our Zoom sessions. A discussion is not complete until all prompts (pre-session prompts and session prompts) have been answered.

****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) what can you do to 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. Doing the math, each rhetor for the evening presentation will take up 45 minutes of our Zoom time.

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 of each module in Canvas. 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. Composing these three presentations, you work toward a coherent teaching philosophy and course design.

Two Reflection Essays will accompany the mix tape and the remix projects. These will be posted to a discussion in Canvas. These essays, written individually, will allow each team member to reflect on the team work completed and to name what the personal take away from this team work: As you reflect on the work with your team, how is that work intersecting your research and your own writing history? How has the project helped you to advance or deepen your understanding of writing studies and your place in it?

These essays also allow me to understand how you 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. Reading these reflections, I can guide your progress.

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. These will be posted to a discussion in Canvas. Each seminar member will 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 and for the seminar group to explain what pedagogies are represented in the syllabus. This discussion thread will

thus become an archive of current SJSU writing program practice. Teams can draw on this archive as you develop your own syllabi for your team project.

Final Project Evaluation: Your Course Design Portfolio is the culmination of all the work described above. It will include 1) your literacy autobiography/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 throughout our exploration of writing studies.

How We Will Assess Our Learning?

All learning experiences culminate in some sort of final assessment—an opportunity for a student to gauge how far they have come since beginning the course ([University policy S17-1](#)). Traditionally, this is the Final Examination. In this course, however, your learning culminates in a Reflection and Portfolio Assignment. In this assignment, you will gather samples of your course design work that tell the story of your learning as a future writing instructor; you will write a reflection essay that explains to us (to me and to your writing instruction colleagues) what you have learned, how you learned it, and how you will use it in future learning—your own and your students’.

How Will My Progress Be Assessed During the Course?

The course will be graded according to our learning contract. A ***contract learning system*** guides you to regularly monitor and describe your own progress as you work toward a culminating project—in this class, that will be the multimodal anthology assignment you will complete with your team. The contract weighs equally all the work you submit—discussion posts, blogs, comments on the work of your peers, as well as the anthology and reflection essay. The smaller assignments are no less “weighty” in your and our learning process, since they build the ground for your effective theorizing in the course design project. Your final reflection essay will make explicit the learning that you transacted as you completed the smaller assignments to design a course with your team.

My goal in grading by contract is to emphasize the cumulative effect of a learning experience over individual artifacts of your learning. Your goal in a contracted learning community is to apprentice yourself within the community, to join its members as we engage in a designed learning experience guided by a faculty mentor. The contract spells out the terms of your work with the community, its norms and practices, expectations and standards. This agreement allows you to advance your own educational goals and measure your own learning outcome, but also contribute your learning to advance the learning of others.

The contract is not a unilateral document. In our first classes, we will work together to establish the norms, practices, and standards of the group. Our bottom line will be defined by our common purpose: What advances our study of writing and its instruction? What disrupts our collective progress as researchers in the field of writing studies? All the work you do will be measured against the norms and standards that realize our common research goals. You will succeed in this system if, every time you begin, execute, and complete a task, you allow yourself to be guided by our shared purpose as fellow researchers: How is the work I am about to do, am doing, have done increasing my own and my fellow researchers’ understanding of how we are immersed in and draw on traditions of language and language instruction as we engage and design the writing courses in which we teach and learn?

What Are the Terms of the Learning Contract?

By signing up for this 16-week 4-unit course, you agree to perform at least 12 hours of work outside of class time toward our collective research as writing scholars. The products of your labor—the discussion posts, your literacy narrative/teaching statement, the syllabus analysis and proposed syllabus, the lessons plans, the course design project, and the reflection essay will all be submitted in Canvas as a discussion post. Every one's post is available to everyone else at all times; we are all learning from each other—on one big collaborative learning journey. Each submission will each be awarded points toward the final course grade based on its usefulness and relevance to our shared research.

Each activity in the modules is worth 2 points. You will earn one point for each of the following:

1 point for Completeness

- You complete and submit the tasks outlined in on time the daily discussions.
- You complete all the replies prompted for the discussion in our Zoom follow ups.

1 point for Relevance to Our Collaborative Study

- You explicitly apply what we are reading and discussing together in Canvas and on Zoom to each task you do and submit.
- You refer to and document the reading and discussions you are applying in each submission.
- You submit work that advances our collaborative study—that is, work that contributes observations, curiosities and questions, confusions or insights useful to our collective study of how argument and analysis.

If you miss points by not completing one assignment, you can earn an extra point later. Here's how:

If you miss an assignment, you cannot earn the points for that work, but you can still make progress as a learner. If you dedicate extra time to your next learning activity, you can make an exceptional contribution to our collective learning and your own. You can earn an extra point to make up previously missed work by:

1. Including explicit reference to the readings and discussions you missed.
2. Using the previously missed work in the current assignment to help us find a new connection that advances our work together.

How Will Each Contribution to Our Shared Learning Be Evaluated?

I will use the following rubric to score each assignment completed in Canvas.

Does the work submitted help us to achieve our research goals?		
Criteria	Ratings	Points Possible
Completeness	+ .5 Completes & submits the tasks outlined on time.	0 – 1 point
	+ .5 Completes all replies prompted during the Zoom follow up.	

Relevance	+ .25 Explicitly applies to each task what we've read and discussed together in Canvas and on Zoom.	0 – 1 point
	+ .25 Helps us refer back to the reading and discussions by paraphrasing or quoting, naming the author & source, & providing page or date references.	
	+ .5 Contributes observations, curiosities and questions, confusions or insights useful to our collective study.	
Extra Point This points makes up work missed.	+ .5 Makes clear that the post returns to include in the current post work previously missed.	0 – 1 point
	+ .5 Draws connections between previous and current material to make an exceptional contribution--observations, curiosities and questions, confusions or insights—to our collective study.	
Total Points		0 – 2 points (+1 if there is make up work included)

How Will You Calculate Course Grades?

The grade you earn in the course based in the points you earn in each learning activity: *Total Possible Points is equal to <total # of discussion posts recorded in Canvas grades x 2 points per post>*

Your final grade in the course will be recorded as a letter grade, ranging from A to F. I will use + and – grades to refine the evaluation within the letter-grade categories.

There is no extra credit built into our syllabus. There is ample opportunity for everyone to learn defined in the work I have laid out for us, and I've build a way to give some credit to work made up because of unforeseen interruptions in your study. I can't imagine any of us having the bandwidth for extra credit!

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Possible Points</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>95 to 99%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 94%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>88 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>85-87%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 84%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>
<i>F</i>	<i>Less than 60%</i>

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](#).

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	Canvas: Read, Write, and Discuss	Project Deadline
1	August 19	Ferris and Roberge.	
2	August 26	Canagarajah, chapter 1 & 6, syllabus.	
3	Sep 2	Syllabus 1 and 2 in FYC. "Process" and "Second Language Writing" in GCP.	Ferris book presented
4	September 9	Syllabi 3 & 5 FYC; "Genre" and "Researched Writing" in GCP.	Nowacek book presented.
5	September 16	Syllabus 7 & 10 FYC; "Expressive" and "Feminist" in GCP.	Shipka book presented.
6	September 23	Syllabus 8 & 11 FYC;" Collaborative Writing," "New Media," "Rhetoric and Argumentation" in GCP.	Bawarshi book presented.
7	September 30	Viewing and discussing the projects. Sharing the reflection essays.	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
8	October 7	Aristotle <i>Book I</i> and Plato <i>Gorgias</i> [What is rhetoric?]	First draft of literacy autobiography due.
9	October 14	Cicero, Quintillian (excerpts) and Crowley (article) [the practice of transformation, the figure of the Orator]	Matsuda anthology presented

10	October 21	Erasmus (excerpt) and Christensen (article) [the practice of transformation]	Christensen book presented. Short essay explaining the pedagogies reflected in one of the English 1A or 1AF syllabi online (1 single-spaced pages + annotated syllabus).
11	October 28	Blair and Bain (excerpts) [the exigences of formalism and foundations of the paragraph]	Freire and Hooks books presented.
12	November 4	Yancey in FYC. Plus, Yancey and Huot (excerpts announced by the rhetor)	Draft of teaching statement for peer review (one single-spaced page). Yancey and Huot anthologies presented.

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

Week	Date	Reading and Assignments	Project Deadline
13	November 11	Hooks and Horner (excerpts announced by the rhetor)	Group multimodal project: remix + Individual reflection essay Horner anthology presented.
14	November 18	Banks and Freiburg (excerpts announced by the rhetor)	Banks and Freiburg books presented.
	November 25	HOLIDAY	
15	December 2	Inoue and Matsuda (excerpts announced by the rhetor)	Matsuda and Inoue books presented.
Finals Week	December 9	5:15-7:30 Team Course Design: Mix Tape	Course Design Portfolios: literacy autobiography/teaching statement, syllabus, assignment and lesson plans, annotated bibliography