

English 522

Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater
Curry 303
Wednesdays 6:30-9:20
Office: McIver 114
Email: e_chiser@uncg.edu

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. It prepares students 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 key terms that define the field and guide classroom approaches to teaching writing. Over the semester, we'll explore the methodologies used in composition research, along with articles and book chapters that reflect these approaches. Our goal will be to understand how different research questions demand different methods and methodologies that result in findings that guide and shape different approaches to teaching writing. My personal goal for the class participants is for them to feel competent at reading and evaluating the usefulness of research studies for their own teaching of writing. And, of course, I want the course to be personally meaningful to each of you.

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

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

Readings:

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

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

Tate, Gary, Amy Rupiper and Kurt Schick, *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2001.

There will also be an e-reserve 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 Educational Review*, *Written Communication*, *Writing Program Administration*, *Teaching in the Two Year College*, *Journal of Technical Writing*. And there are others. Some of these journals are available online and others such as *Kairos* are exclusively online.

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

1. To learn and apply research methods appropriate to composition research (historical, feminist, ethnographic, linguistic, cognitive, etc).
2. To understand and critically analyze various research methodologies and professional studies.
3. To design a research project focused on ways of researching 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 field, i.e. educational reports, theoretical perspectives, and pedagogical approaches to various issues of writing instruction.
6. To understand the relationship between research methods, findings and implications for the purpose of curriculum and instruction. To understand the relationship between research
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 attend each class and arrive on time. You should not miss any classes except in an extreme emergency which you would discuss with me by phone or email. As graduate students, I also expect you to be prepared, engage in our class discussions, and collaborate with one another in every possible way. You will be asked to do group work and will be encouraged to write your final papers collaboratively if possible.

Course Overview

There are two major projects in this course. One is to assemble a research portfolio and the other is to either design a possible research study or to write a bibliographic essay related to an area of interest in composition studies. Both of these projects will be turned in at the end of semester but the research portfolio will also be turned in at midterm. Combined with your class participation, these two projects comprise the major part of your course grade. You are welcome to talk about your course evaluation at any time during the semester.

Research Portfolio

You will begin your research portfolio with your first entry on Keywords in Composition Studies and continue descriptions and critiques of your reading, adding weekly to your portfolio. The overall purpose of the portfolio is to provide you with bibliographic resources for future research and inquiry. We'll share portfolios throughout the semester and at the end of the course when you will submit a reflection on the process of keeping a research portfolio.

Final Project

You will choose to either propose a research design for a possible study you might want to conduct (M.ED students will need to do this) or to write a bibliographic essay related to an area of composition studies of interest to you as a teacher and scholar. While both projects involve bibliographic grounding in a specific research area, the research design focuses on methods and procedures for a potential classroom study where the thrust of the bibliographic essay is on the assimilation of other studies on a topic such as writing centers, assessment, invention strategies, peer editing, response strategies. There

are many sample bibliographic essays in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. The approximate length of these projects will be between 10-15 pages with the rough draft due about three weeks before the course ends.

In addition to doing one of these two final projects, you will be asked to lead a class discussion, give a report on a professional journal, and present your final project. Participants are encouraged to collaborate with one another on any aspect of the course.

Outline of Topics and Readings

Week One (8/18) What Is Research?

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

Week Two (8/25) Keywords

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

Week Three (9/1) What Is Composition Pedagogy?

Reading: Introduction to *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* and two chapters by Ladd Tobin, "Process Pedagogy" and Christopher Burnham, "Expressive Pedagogy." Write a two paged paper about one of these two essays and bring three copies to class to share.

(Attend Johnnetta Cole and Beverly Guy Sheftall's discussion of their new book, *Gender Talk in the Virginia Dare room of the Alumni House at 4:00 Thursday Sept. 9th*)

Week Four (9/8) What Are Methods and Methodologies? Historical/ Rhetorical Approaches

Reading: Introduction by Sullivan and Kirsch and chapter by Robert Connors, "Dreams and Play" in *Methods and Methodologies*. In *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*, read essay by Covino, "Rhetorical Pedagogy." Write a response to both of these essays for your portfolio.

Week Five (9/15) Quantitative and Positivist Approaches

Reading: "Experimental and Descriptive Research Methods in Composition" by Richard Beach in *Methods and Methodologies* and e-reserve, "Writer Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problem Solving" by Linda Flower. Choose a professional journal which includes articles on writing (see list) and read several issues to prepare for discussing the journal with the rest of the class. Write a two-to three paged journal summary and critique for your portfolio and make a copy to be handed in.

Week Six (9/22) Feminist Approaches

Reading: "Feminism and Methodology in Composition Studies" by Patricia Sullivan in *Methods and Methodologies* and e-reserve, Flynn, "Composing as A Woman" and Susan Jarrett, "Feminist Pedagogy" in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*." Choose one article to respond to for your research journal.

Week Seven(9/29) Linguistic and Textual Approaches

Reading: E-Reserve, Shaughnessy, Introduction and Chapter 1 from *Errors and Expectations* and "On The Academic Margins: Basic Writing Pedagogy" by Deborah Mutnick in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*.

Have the topic for your bibliographic essay or research study ready at this class period and bring your research portfolio to share and be evaluated.

Week Eight (10/6) Narrative or Case Study Methods

Reading: "The Narrative Roots of the Case Study" by Thomas Newkirk in *Methods and Methodologies and e-reserve*, "Lynn: Profile of a Twelfth Grader" and Herrington and Curtis, "Claiming the Essay for Himself, Nam" from *Persons in Process*. Respond to Newkirk's article and one of the two case studies. Schedule a conference with me this week to discuss plans for final project.

Week Nine (10/13) Ethnographic Approaches

Reading: "Studying Language at Home" by Beverly Moss in *Methods and Methodologies and e-reserve*, "Anatomy of a Discourse Community" from *Academic Literacies* by Chiseri-Strater. Respond to one of these articles for your portfolio.

Week Ten (10/20) Action or Teacher-Research

Reading: "Composition from the Teacher-Research Point of View," by Ruth Ray in *Methods and Methodologies and e-reserve* draft of *What Works* by Bonnie Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. Be prepared to summarize one article you have found most useful for your final project.

Week Eleven (10/27) Collaborative Pedagogy and WAC

Reading: "Collaborative Pedagogy" by Rebecca Moore Howard and "The Pedagogy of Writing Across the Curriculum" by Susan McLeod in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies* and Roen and Mittan, "Collaborative Scholarship in Composition: Some Issues" in *Methods and Methodologies*. Write about one of these articles for your portfolio.

Week Twelve (11/3) Critical Pedagogy

Reading: "Critical Pedagogy: Dreaming of Democracy" by Ann George in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies and e-reserve*, Paulo Freire, "The Banking Concept of Education" and bell hooks, from *Teaching to Transgress*. Write about one of these articles for your portfolio.

Week Thirteen (11/10) Workshop

Reading: "Methodological Pluralism, Epistemological Issues," by Gesa Kirsch in *Methods and Methodologies*. Draft of your project due. Bring 3 copies to share in small groups.

Week Fourteen: (11/ 17)Alternative Pedagogies

Reading: "Technology and the Teaching of Writing" by Charles Moran and "Community Service Pedagogy" by Laura Julier in *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Write about both of these articles for your portfolio. Meet with me about your projects.

Week Fifteen (No Class, Thanksgiving Vacation)

Week Sixteen (12/1) Last Class

Researcher Portfolio due with final projects. Each student will give a five to six minute presentation with a handout about their project.

Please do not hesitate to meet with me before class when I will hold office hours from 5:30-6:30 in my office in McIver 114. Do not hesitate to email concerning any assignment that you don't understand. Let me know if there are any learning issues that may affect your performance in this course.