

ENG 612: Contemporary Composition & Discourse Theory

As an undergraduate requirement, composition was born as a remedial course in the “new university” of the late nineteenth century. As a field of intellectual study, it has come of age in just the last forty years, evolving in response to a variety of social, political, theoretical, and ethical influences. Over the course of the quarter, we will read and write about the scholarship of the field and test this material against our own pre-existing assumptions about and experiences with rhetoric, writing, literacy, and language use.

Professor J. Rhodes

UH 301.22

909-537-5026

Office Hours: MW 1-2:30 and by appointment

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REQUIRED MATERIALS

- Harris, Joseph. *A Teaching Subject: Composition Since 1966*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997.
- Villanueva, Victor, ed. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2003.
- Additional readings on electronic reserve and through Blackboard.
- An active CSUSB email account and regular web access. CSUSB supplies every student with a free email account, and there are a number of computer labs on campus; please let me know if you need more information.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADE DISTRIBUTION

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late work will be docked a third of a letter grade per day (not per class); thus, an “A” paper turned in on the Wednesday following its Monday due date will earn a “B+” because it’s two days late. If you know that you are going to need extra time, ask for it in advance (at least 24 hours) and you won’t be penalized. Please exercise this option (if you must) carefully; I will only grant an extension *once* per person per quarter. Also note that the coursework described below is *required*, which means that you must complete all assignments in order to pass the course.

Response Letters: 25%

Each week, from week two through week eight, you will exchange letters that reflect on and respond to the readings for that week. You will write a total of seven letters, each of which should be around 250 words (one typed page) long.

ENG 612: Syllabus, continued

Here's how it works: You will start the exchange by Monday, 1/15, writing an initial letter to your partner(s), who will write a response to you by Wednesday, 1/17. Each week, then, you will:

MONDAY: (1) Make sure you've sent your letter to your partner; (2) Read the letter your partner has written to you.

WEDNESDAY: Make sure you've responded to your partner's letter.

You do not have to address all of the readings for the upcoming class meeting; just respond to what your partner(s) has written and then comment on whatever strikes you as interesting, absurd, confusing, etc. about the readings. The first letter should be sent via e-mail to your partner no later than noon on Monday; letters written in response are due by noon on Wednesday.

Make sure to put a copy of each of your letters in the Digital Drop Box, so that you earn credit for completing the assignment. If all of your letters are in, on-time, and substantive, you're guaranteed an "A-" for this portion of the course. If your work is exceptionally substantive, you'll earn an "A"; if it is thin (in terms of content) or if you do fewer letters than required, you'll earn a grade lower than "A-."

Review Article: 25%

Each pair of letter writers will be responsible for writing a critical review from the list of additional readings (see each week's schedule for this list). The review will be due the Wednesday of whatever week you have chosen (please put it in the Digital Drop Box before class and give me a paper copy in class.) On that day, you should also be prepared to discuss the article and your review of it with the rest of us. *Please note:* During the week that you are producing your review, you are not required to exchange letters.

Final Project: 25%

For this assignment you will have the option of writing a bibliographic essay (on a topic of specific interest to you), a review essay of at least two books on issues rhetoric and composition, or a more traditional seminar paper. Any of these options should result in a written work 12-15 pages long, but we will discuss the specifics of each option more fully in class.

Teaching Philosophy (Final Exam): 25%

This project will serve as the course's "culminating" activity, in which you'll outline, explain, and defend your theoretical positions concerning the teaching of writing in relation to the readings we have done this quarter (and any other readings you find interesting or relevant to the teaching of writing.) In short, you'll situate yourself (at least provisionally) within the field. What are the conversations and questions driving the field? Where do you position yourself within them? Why?