

ENG 289-02: Intermediate Composition—LITERACIES

MWF 8am—850am
253 McMicken
Fall 2010
University of Cincinnati

Instructor: Hannah Rule
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OFFICE HOURS: MWF 9am—10am
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Course Description/Goals: English 289 (Intermediate Composition) reinforces and builds upon what you have learned in English 101 and 102, introduces higher-level learning and thinking about writing and reading practices, and focuses attention on how meaning is made, understood, and communicated across and within discourse communities. This course emphasizes critical reading and writing skills, advanced research and analytical skills, as well as rhetorical sensitivity to differences in academic, professional, and public writing. With an organizing focus on the notion of “literacies,” this section of ENG 289 will question and consider what language and written discourse *does*—that is, what work it does towards building notions of self, other, knowledge, and community.

Required Texts: 1) **PRINTED COPIES** of all course readings, available on Blackboard
2) Active UC email and Blackboard accounts, checked regularly

Course Requirements & Expectations

Classroom Expectations—Please be courteous and respectful of everyone, particularly when we are sharing ideas, both written and verbal. Please keep cell phones, laptops, newspapers, work for other courses, and other distractions stowed away during class. Please be on time as habitual tardiness is disruptive. Be prepared everyday to be an active participant as it is your activity—writing, thinking, and speaking—that is the real content of this course.

Attendance—*Attendance in this course is mandatory.* Attendance will be taken at each class meeting, though your grade will not suffer due solely to a certain number of absences. Rather, please be aware that *you will not be able to make up* reading responses, homework, or other class activities from any day that you are absent (absences including days you are ill, have an appointment, are taking a trip, are too tired to come to class, etc.). If you are concerned about your grade in this course, plan on missing no more than three classes total. Only in the case of a university-approved absence (observation of a religious holiday, participation in a university-approved sporting or other event) will you be able to make up missed in-class work, and only with proper and *prior* notification and/or documentation. I may urge you to drop the course should your absences become excessive (6+).

Late and/or Missing Work Policy—Quite simply: **I don’t accept late work.** Do not turn things in late. If you miss the deadline for a major assignment and too much time has passed, I will request that you drop the course. Again, to keep things simple, if it’s late, it doesn’t earn credit. However, I am aware that “things happen,” things which might prevent you from meeting a deadline. In order to for me to consider accepting something late, you must notify me *prior* to the assignment’s deadline that it will be late and we will then negotiate an alternate due date.

Conferences—I **strongly** urge you to take advantage of my regular office hours to discuss your work in the course. In addition to in-person meetings, I am always willing to answer questions/respond to concerns via email.

Formatting—Each assignment may require a different format for submission. You may need to bring a hard copy to class; you may need to submit through Blackboard. I will always make this clear in class and on assignment sheets. For all assignments, please use MLA style documentation and formatting: e.g. 1-inch margins, reasonable font like Times New Roman, Garamond, Didot, etc., double-spaced, with proper MLA heading, formatting, and documentation.

Plagiarism—In the Composition Program, any case of plagiarism can result in an automatic grade of F for the course and a letter in your college file explaining the incident. It is ultimately your responsibility to be sure that you have

cited all your work properly and to demonstrate academic honesty. The plagiarism statement is available in the English 101/102 *Student Guide*.

Students with Disabilities—Students with disabilities should present official documentation from the Disabilities Services office during the first two weeks of class so appropriate accommodations can be made.

Writing Center—Located in 257 McMicken, the Writing Center tutors are available to help with any aspect of a writing project, except editing. Take advantage of this resource for any of this course’s major assignments or for writing projects in your other courses. Appointments are recommended; call 513.556.3912.

Assignments/Grades:

Homework	Includes: short written responses, short answers to questions about readings, prewriting exercises, posts to discussion board, etc. Generally expect each homework assignment to be worth 5 points each, except in cases where more substantial engagement is required (in which case, the points would be increased). If applicable, typed homework is preferable—if you wish to handwrite, please be legible. <i>*Homework will always be listed on the Course Schedule and announced in class*</i>	50 pts./ 10%
In-Class Writing/ Activities	Includes: reading responses, reading quizzes, in-class writing responses, peer review activities, etc. Generally expect each in-class writing or activity to be worth 5 points, except in cases where more substantial engagement is required (as in a peer-review session) in which case the points may be increased. While often you will know to expect an activity in the next class, you may also anticipate “surprise” reading quizzes or responses.	50 pts./ 10%
Literacy Analysis	A 4—6 pg. essay that draws on your personal experience in which you select a formative literacy experience you’ve had in a particular context and then analyze the significance of that experience in relation to your own literacy development. <i>*See assignment sheet for more details on each of these assignments*</i>	100 pts./ 20%
Genre Analysis	A 4—6 pg. essay in which you carefully analyze a “genre” of an assignment/ writing/ project/ study you’ve produced in a university course besides this one. This analysis will include a full consideration of the assignment’s rhetorical situation, its status as a genre, your own ability to fulfill the generic expectations using examples from your own writing, as well as conclusions about genre, drawn in relation to your analysis as well as relevant course readings.	100 pts./ 20%
OPTIONAL: Revision	You have the option to engage in revision of <i>either</i> the literacy or genre analysis. This revision process, detailed on a separate assignment sheet, can add up to 15 additional points to the original earned essay grade.	Up to +15 pts.
Ethnographic Research Project	This project asks you to conduct primary research in order to get an up-close view of literacy in action within a discourse community. Through close observation and primary research tools like interview, this project asks you to document and analyze how a discourse community makes knowledge, communicates, allows or disallows inclusion, deals with difference, etc. This project will include a proposal step. Moving beyond the traditional essay genre, we will use either a class wiki or Blackboard to display projects that can take advantage of video, images, diagrams, photos, etc.	200 pts./ 40%

TOTAL: 500 points

Grades follow university’s standard 10/100-point scale:

94-100=A; 93-90=A-; 87-89=B+; 86-83=B; 82-80=B-; 79-77=C+; 76-73=C; 72-70=C-;
69-67=D+; 66-63=D; 62-60=D-; 50 or below=F

Important Dates for FALL TERM: Last day to DROP: OCT. 6; Last day to WITHDRAW: NOV. 18

Course Schedule

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This schedule features only major due dates and other important information not likely to change throughout the term, as well as the reading and assignments for only the FIRST UNIT. An Updated Schedule (that commences at Week 5) will be posted to Blackboard with the subsequent unit, featuring more reading and homework assignments.

Homework/Readings are due ON THE DAY they are listed.

Week 1		Wed. Sept 22	Fri. 24 HW: Find something out about literacy that expands your understanding of the term. Post around 250 words to discussion board about your findings by 9pm Thursday night. If you found info online, please post the link as well.
Week 2	Mon. 27 Szwed, "Ethnography" Klass, "Learning" HW: In around 250 words (bring hard-copy to class), explain how the readings expand your developing understanding of literacy/literacies.	Wed. 29	Fri. Oct 1 Rose, "I Just Wanna" HW: Using any medium besides writing (e.g. collage, drawing, painting, diagram, etc.—anything that doesn't rely solely on words), depict what you see as a formative literacy experience in Rose's narrative.
Week 3	Mon. 4 Tan, "Mother Tongue"	Wed. 6	Fri. 8 Barton & Hamilton, "Literacy Practices"
Week 4	Mon. 11 Draft of Literacy Analysis due in-class for review (counts as In-Class Writing)	Wed. 13	Fri. 15 Final Version of Literacy Analysis—due to Blackboard by 8pm
Week 5	Mon. 18 Bartholomae, "Inventing the University" (excerpt) HW: In around 250 words, describe a memorable writing experience you've had at university that might exemplify Bartholomae's perspective on writing in college.	Wed. 20 Excerpt from Irene Clark, "A Genre Approach to Writing Assignments" HW: Bring in a writing assignment you completed from another course—this can be any assignment where writing features	Fri. 22 Class CANCELLED
Week 6	Mon. 25 Miller and Shepard, "Blogging as Social Action" HW: How do Miller and Shepard structure their genre analysis? Make a descriptive list of the elements they use to identify and discuss the genre of the blog.	Wed. 27	Fri. 29
Week 7	Mon. Nov 1	Wed. 3 Draft of Genre Analysis due in-class for review (counts as In-Class Writing)	Fri. 5 Final Version of Genre Analysis Due—to Blackboard by 8pm

Week 8	Mon. 8	Wed. 10 Ethnographic Research Proposals Due— Hardcopy in class	Fri. 12
Week 9	Mon. 15	Wed. 17	Fri. 19
Week 10	Mon. 22	Wed. 24 Optional Revision: all steps completed by today	Fri. 26 No class: Thanksgiving Break
Week 11	Mon. 29 DRAFT of Ethnographic Research Project due IN-CLASS for review (counts as In-Class Writing)	Wed. Dec 1	Fri. 3 Final Version of Discourse Community Case Study Due

We will NOT meet during Exam Week, Dec. 6—10.

Literacy Analysis

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The Task: Write about a formative literacy experience you’ve had within a particular context and analyze that experience in relation to your overall literacy development, your understanding of literacy, and/or your understanding of literacy’s relationship to notions of self, community, knowledge, etc. Consider both affirming experiences as well as conflicted or ambivalent ones associated with becoming literate. Your overall goal is to use your experience as a way to theorize or exemplify “literacy,” or to generate an understanding of how meaning-making activities (i.e. “literacies”) shape us as individuals, groups, communities, thinkers, writers, students, Americans, English-language users, gamers, slang users, bloggers, etc. etc.

A strong essay will rely on thick description of personal experience and will use that experience as evidence towards supporting a perspective on literacy.

Questions to Consider:

- How do Rose, Tan, Szwed, Kress, and Barton and Hamilton expand your notion of what constitutes literacy?
- What kind of literacies did you acquire when you were a child? A teenager? A freshman in college?
- How are stories transmitted in your family?
- What kinds of languages do you use at home, in school, at work, online, in college assignments, in text messages, with friends, with family, with strangers? How does language differ depending on context?
- What role has music, sports, pop culture, or technology played in your literacy development?
- Do you consider yourself culturally literate? What might that mean?
- Do you consider yourself technologically literate? How does one become literate in this way?
- What kinds of self-sponsored literacy practices do you engage in?

Format and Requirements: 4-6 pages, double-spaced. Standard MLA format and documentation (see syllabus for more details on format). Draft (specifics on what constitutes a “draft” will be determined by the class) will be due for in-class review and will count as part of the In-Class Writing grade.

The Task: Carefully analyze a genre you produced for a college class (other than this one). You should describe the goal of the assigned genre, as well as its full rhetorical situation—that is, the purpose, conventions, implied audience, context, voice, attitude toward readers, format, etc. Based on these goals and characteristics, incorporate examples and quotations from some of your own writing in this genre and assess your efforts in fulfilling that genre. Consider what genre knowledge would have helped you at the time of writing, what you knew already about the genre, and where you see yourself “inventing” genre in less convincing ways. Finally, drawing both on your consideration of your own writing in an academic genre and our readings on genre, draw some conclusions about your study: how does this genre reveal something about the values, beliefs, and attitudes about what counts as knowledge in a given academic field? How does this genre reveal something about its academic discourse community?

Things to Consider:

- In addition to examining your completed assignment, if possible, seek out the original assignment description as well. This document will likely reveal much about the genre it expects in response and will likely help you to see the assignment as a genre.
- Some questions to help you open up the rhetorical analysis of the assignment genre: What voice did you write in? Did you use the first person? What kind of vocabulary did you use? Did you cite other scholarship? If so, how did you bring these other voices into the text? How did you credit these other works? What might a reader who was not in the course have trouble understanding about this genre? What kind of specialized knowledge is required to read this genre? How does the assignment look on the page? Are there sections? Images? MLA format? What are the criteria for evaluation—on what basis did your instructor judge the assignment? What did the instructor expect you to demonstrate in the assignment? Etc. etc...
- Consider as you work how you see or understand what a genre is and what work genres *do*. You might consider doing some freewriting about the genre readings to generate some ideas about genre to incorporate into your analysis.
- What does genre have to do with notions of literacy? What roles does genre play in creating/sustaining discourse communities? What roles does genre play in creating/sustaining academic disciplines?

Format and Requirements: 4—6 pages, double-spaced. Standard MLA format and documentation (see syllabus for more information on format). Draft (specifics on what constitutes a “draft” will be determined by the class) will be due for in-class review and will count as part of the In-Class Writing grade.

"Ethnography literally means 'a portrait of a people.' An ethnography is a written description of a particular culture - the customs, beliefs, and behavior - based on information collected through fieldwork." —Marvin Harris and Orna Johnson, 2000

The Task: Write an **ethnographic essay of approximately 2000 words (around 6-7 pages minimum) that presents detailed description and analysis of the literacy practices of a particular discourse community that you belong to or one that is new to you.** Your research will involve collecting primary data through interviews or observation and gathering samples of writing in the genres the discourse community uses. The focus should be on the composing practices and genres produced or used by the group.

An ethnography is a type of study conducted by anthropologists, communication specialists, and sociologists among other groups. It relies on primary and secondary data: conclusions are based on analysis of the information gathered. In addition, this project continues to expand on the concept of literacy and literacy practices that we have been exploring this term. We will read and study a couple of examples of this kind of writing and will extrapolate elements of this genre as a class to help you develop possible elements of your own ethnographic essay.

We will publish these essays in some electronic format to be determined later—possibly either a wiki or via Blackboard. Publishing your work in this format will allow you to experiment with incorporating other mediums into your essay including video, photos, images, etc. It will also give you a chance to have your work delivered to a wider audience.

Before you engage in this short-term study of a discourse community of your choosing, you will also need to prepare a **short proposal** for this study of around 500 words which answers the following questions:

- What specific group or community do you wish to study?
- In what ways does this group demonstrate itself as a discourse community? What sort of literacy practices, texts, or genres does this community use and/or produce?
- Why do you wish to study this discourse community?
- How will you go about data collection? How will you gain access to this community? What means of data collection will you rely on? (observation and field notes, interview, textual analysis, etc.)?
- What kind of secondary reading/research will be relevant to studying this community?

Things to Keep in Mind:

Direct quotations, actual samples of documents, and your observations compose the evidence in your essay.

The primary focus is on the composing practices, written texts, and language the group uses.

Along with your primary data, your research should also include secondary sources to support or amplify your field research. Sources may come from popular magazines and newspapers, non-scholarly Internet sites, or other sources, but it should also include scholarly sources appropriate to an academic essay. If nothing else, some of the course or outside readings about literacy and literacy practices will be relevant to everyone's project.

You are playing the role of ethnographer, interested in careful and thick description and with the aim to conclude about how a community seems to use and produce written discourse, language, genres towards constituting itself. You might hold the following core questions in mind as you explore your discourse community: what does it take to be literate within this community? As you work, keep returning to the Mahar and Moje articles for direction on the kind of data you might collect and how you might use those observations to draw conclusions about literacy, literacy practices, discourse community, etc.

Format and Requirements: around 2000 words of written content. You are encouraged to incorporate other medium, like photos, images, videos, etc. All secondary material should be cited using MLA style. Draft (specifics on what constitutes a "draft" will be determined by the class) will be due for in-class review and will count as part of the In-Class Writing grade.

You have the option of engaging in the below revision process with either the literacy or genre analysis. All steps must be completed by the date listed in the Course Schedule.

You can earn up to 15 additional points for excellent and considered engagement in this process, to be added to your original grade on the essay.

- 1) **CONFERENCE** with me about the comments and your drafting process
Set up a meeting with me (10 minutes or so) in office hours or by appointment. For this conference you will review the essay and my comments and prepare questions for us to discuss. We will discuss some of the major areas of concern and decide together ONE major issue to revise.
- 2) **ONE MAJOR ISSUE Revision**
After the conference, you will engage in the revision plan we decided on—e.g. revise the thesis and topic sentences, correct sentence level errors, craft transitions between each paragraph, develop analysis, etc. You're not revising *everything*, just the revision plan that we've decided you want to work on.
- 3) Write a 1-2 page **REVISION REFLECTION** (250—500 words):
In a reflection-letter format, you will respond to your experience in this revision process: how did this revision process help you see your writing differently? What are you going to do differently in your next piece of writing?
- 4) Quick **CONFERENCE** again
After your revision and reflection is complete, you will set up another meeting time with me to talk about your revisions. You will turn in the original graded Literacy Analysis or Genre Analysis, the revision, and the reflection at this conference.