

# ENGLISH 890: Studies in Rhetoric and Composition | GENRE THEORY, RESEARCH, PEDAGOGY

Spring 2021

Wednesdays, 440pm-725pm | HUMCB 308 | *Hybrid/Blend*: some sessions in HUMCB 308; the rest on Zoom

Instructor: Dr. Hannah J. Rule

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3-5pm & by appointment

- See "Video Office Hours & Appts" in the Bb main menu to join Zoom at your appt. time or during the open hours
- Appts. can be arranged in-person, safe and socially distanced

## Graduate Bulletin Description

Topics selected by the instructor for specialized study. Note: May be repeated as topics vary.

## Course description

*Genre Theory, Research, Pedagogy* | This course reckons with the established subfield of rhetorical genre studies in composition and rhetoric. The course will proceed in true seminar style: students and professor will work collaboratively to establish the terrain and animating questions of this subfield, develop shared bibliographies, steer the paths of our reading, and write and present argumentative position papers toward developing a final research article draft or seminar paper. In addition to specialized content knowledge, students will gain insight and practice in how scholars read, find exigence, situate, and eventually make knowledge that contributes to their field.

**Course Objectives** | By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Conceptualize methods, assumptions, animating questions, challenges in the subfield of rhetorical genre studies
- Analyze, summarize, synthesize and critique scholarship in rhetoric and composition
- Synthesize and intervene in course content with individual research conducted in an area of the student's interest
- Develop scholarly literacies including critical reading; intellectual engagement/conversation; summary and response; close reading and discussion; conference-style presentation; critical argumentation

## Required Texts

- ***Landmark Essays on Rhetorical Genre Studies*, edited by Carolyn R. Miller and Amy Devitt. Routledge, 2019.**
  - This is one to buy; we're reading it all. I've also ordered a copy which should be in the stacks at TCL
- + PDFs available in this Google Doc
- + *additional TBD readings we choose and read together or on your own*

## Course Requirements/Assignments

- ✓ Prep, Participation, Discussion Leading
- ✓ Discussion Board (and Informal Collaborative Annotated Bib)
- ✓ Conference-Style Position/Exploratory Papers (2)
- ✓ Final Researched Seminar Paper *Proposal*
- ✓ Final Researched Seminar (around 20 pgs.) *Paper*

## Final Grades

*Consistent effort, on-time delivery, growth, involvement in your learning is a good guide for succeeding in this seminar. I will be using letter grades on individual tasks in the course to help you gauge the merits of, and opportunities to develop, your scholarly work. However, I will assess final course grades *wholistically*, not by math. See "Grades" below for further details.*

## Course and University Policies

### Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment and will result in additional disciplinary measures. This includes improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation. If you are unsure what constitutes academic misconduct, please refer to the [University of South Carolina Honor Code](#).

### Disability Services

Students with disabilities should contact the [Office of Student Disability Services](#) (803-777-6142; [sasds@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:sasds@mailbox.sc.edu)) to obtain documentation if you need accommodations throughout the semester. Please make these arrangements early in the semester. For any student, at any time, if I can make class sessions or materials more accessible to you, please let me know.

### Attendance Policy

Since this is a graduate-level course based on seminar/class discussion, attendance and participation are required. You can miss one class meeting without penalty, although you are responsible for that week's reading and assignments. If you miss more than 10% of the class meetings, your grade could be dropped up to one-half letter grade. Missing more than 25% of our class meetings could result in failing the course. For further information, please consult [the University Attendance Policy](#). Since we're in a global pandemic during Spring 2021, if you are feeling ill or quarantining or have any other complications, we can work together toward flexible strategies that allow us rich and rigorous course experiences in these challenging times.

## → Instructional Delivery Methods

Due to the ongoing global pandemic, this course will be delivered in a Hybrid mode: some meetings will happen face-to-face in 308 HUMCB; the rest of the sessions on Zoom. As we can, too, safe and socially distanced in-person conferences are encouraged, but never required (conferences can also happen via video). If you can't come to an in-person session, you can instead join via video conference (details forthcoming on arrangements).

**70% seminar/discussion, 10% lecture, 20% student-led discussion** – Virtual and in-person class meetings will consist mostly of student- and professor-led discussion as well as short lectures by the professor. Engaged participation from every student is expected. Optimal participation (in any graduate course) is expected. To practice it, you should: 1) thoroughly read, think through, and annotate all assigned readings, 2) in discussion, actively listen and respond to your classmates, 3) contribute regularly while at the same time be mindful that you're not dominating the conversation, 4) contribute text-/evidence-based insights to advance insights of our conversation.

### Additional Resources

[USC Counseling Center](#)  
[Graduate School – Professional Resources](#)  
[English Department – Graduate Center for Teaching Excellence](#)

## ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

### ✓ Preparation, Participation, Discussion Leading

- **Preparation** means that you should a) carefully prepare all the readings prior to each class meeting, b) maintain note-taking and/or reflection of some sort that works for you (that might include short

summaries, pertinent quotes, questions, etc. for each text in a notebook or file), c) come prepared with things to talk about, and d) review texts and your notes ahead of class.

- **Participation** in seminar meetings means active engagement; it means listening and finding moments to advance the conversation. If you tend to be talkative, make sure others can get in; if you tend to be quiet, choose your moments to get in the conversation.
- **Discussion Leading:** working in this small seminar as we are, it will benefit *all*, every class meeting, to come with observations and at least one provoking question to tackle in discussion. Every session, I'll turn to you all to initiate conversation. I encourage you to use the discussion board (see below) ahead of our session to work out your observations and question(s).
  - These habits are important to build and practice for all scholarly work, including teaching. They are baseline expectations for all so that we all can get the most out of our seminar time together.
  - There won't be anything to turn in (notes are for you/have intrinsic value) for "formal" evaluation for this expectation. At any time, I'm available to discuss how to manage reading processes, note-taking, informal/process writing, and discussion question-posing, for this and for your other graduate courses.

### ✓ Discussion Board (and Informal Collaborative Annotated Bib)

- Discussion is going to be open every week; it's meant as an *intrinsically* motivated place to write publicly about the course topics. *That is, I'm not going to dictate how, or how much, you write and respond. . . I want to keep it open as to what might happen on the boards because I want it to work intrinsically to best support you, as well as our collective, thinking, exchanges, and immersion in this subfield.*
  - \* \* \* *We will work together on night one to specify, expand and change the above, agreeing on specific habits and intentions that can create a maximally collegial, collaborative, and useful space*
- In your discussion writing, you could preview and guide our discussion; get low-stakes practice at scholarly writing and collegial exchange, use writing to be accountable to readings and deepen comprehension
- I imagine that you might find it a useful place to write out what you're thinking about as your discussion question. I imagine you may not want to do that thinking out loud every week (but you're welcome to). I imagine that all of us will every week, check in on the board and read, at the very least.
- For the expectations of the course, *you should plan to make fairly consistent contact with the discussion boards over the semester, but don't sweat weeks you miss nor "writing too much."*

- **Informal Collaborative Annotated Bib:** I want us to practice 'works cited mining' with everything we read, to use this as a method for you to generate lines of interest and further reading. I'd like us to get in the habit of week looking up and browsing or reading at least one text from that piques your interest. I'll ask about your picks at the end of class sessions (on days we have readings), and ask that you contribute a citation and a little blurb to a Google Doc. You're welcome to add more at any time.

### Conference-Style Position/Exploratory Papers (2)

- Two times in the semester, you'll prepare a paper to deliver to the seminar.
- The idea is that these papers will encapsulate a position you're discovering in relation to work we're reading and/or pursue a line of curious questioning in relation to work we're reading. It's a stock-taking exercise to move you toward a final project that situates in rhetorical genre studies (and moving toward, by the way, may mean a productive dead end or a discovered impulse to change direction). The two papers may end up being in the same "territory"; equally they may take entirely different foci.
- Your paper should be shorter than a traditional conference paper – **around 10 mins to read and/or present (under 2500 words?)**
- The goal here is to practice, in short form, the gist of scholarly method – see or construct a conversation and figure out to move it. Said another way, papers should define and make progress on a troubling imperfection, confounding problem, productive conflict or contradiction, etc. Find something focused that needs addressing, adjusting, extending, celebrating, connecting, or doubting and do it!
  - You might (instead) find it productive to approach this as a questioning or exploratory exercise: what are you wondering and what are some potential answers?

- You'll deliver your paper and receive convo and questions. The spirit will be supportive and generative as we attempt to really *collaborate* throughout the term.
  - I'll give you detailed feedback on your paper.
- ✓ **Final Project: Conference-length Researched Proposal**
- An abstract of 250-500 words (typically calls for papers are in this word count range), initially articulating your final project. It should include, in one or two paragraphs:
    - **Title**
    - **Problem/Context:** establish a territory or problem space you want to take on. Usually, scholars make gestures to previous work, other scholars, conversations, trends in the field or world, etc. toward establishing a context for their claims. *Watch out for making this part too long, AKA: too much wind up, no pitch.*
    - **Your Intervention:** describe how you'll intervene and/or what your argument or claims are. As you can, also describe the methods or approach you'll use in the body of your essay and/or the texts you'll invoke and use to support your argument.
    - **Stakes/Potential Implications:** conclude with the "so what" – what difference your insights will make in the field (and in the world!)? Why does this project matter? How (and where) does it contribute?
    - Too list a provisional **bibliography** of at least 5 or more works that will feature.
  - We will workshop these proposals as a seminar in our last class session.
- ✓ **Final Project: Seminar-Length Researched Paper**
- A scholarly, researched argument that follows from an intervention or problem space you construct, one related to the main questions and topics of the course (as such, could include citation and work with at least one text we read together (not necessarily a strict requirement though)).
  - Around **20 double-spaced pages, MLA 8 format**, with complete and correct Works Cited.
  - Your argument should meaningfully engage with scholarship/research you've found and read – there isn't a set number but I'd say at least 10 or 15 sources is a good target.
    - You're welcome to (instead) consider this *article*-length. Generally, 10000 words or 30 pages is the outside limit of article publication length, with many journals preferring shorter, more like 7500 words.
  - To help you discover a focus, I'll try to provide some Call for Papers/proposals language or edited collection or special issue calls
  - Feel free to talk with me about your focus and approach.
  - You'll propose your project and get feedback from the seminar
  - Final papers due during exam week by Wednesday, April 28 1159pm (I picked this time and day because it is approximates our assigned time).

## GRADES

*Consistent effort, on-time delivery, growth, involvement in your learning is a good guide for succeeding in this seminar. I will be using letter grades on written work in the course to help you gauge the merits of, and opportunities to develop, your scholarly work (You can expect to see letter grades on the 2 papers, proposal, and of course, final research paper). For Participation etc. and Discussion, I will not give letter grades but will give you a qualitative feedback at the end of the term (probably with some comments throughout).*

I will assess final course grades *wholistically*, not by math. That is, you can earn "B's" or whatever on all the projects and still earn an "A" in the course. **The final grade is assessed on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis: have you done the work as described in the syllabus? Demonstrated sustained efforts and engagement? Consistently participated? Done the readings, assignments and activities expected of you? Shown up as a reliable and interested collaborator that contributes to learning in the seminar?** You should know where you stand on these measures throughout the semester, but I am always available for discussion. If there is a concern, I'll raise it with you. And at any time, if you have questions or concerns about assessment and grades, please see me!