ENGL 5563: Research Methods in Writing Studies
Spring 2023 | Midwestern State University | Dr. Coenen

Day	Time	Location
Wed	6-8:30 PM	Zoom/D2L

Contact

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Office Hours: MW: 10-11 AM & Noon-1 PM
　　　　　　R: 2:30-3:30 PM & by appointment
Email is the best way to contact me.

Course Goals

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
● Develop an understanding of research methods and methodologies used in writing, rhetoric, and technical communication studies.
● Use research tools to identify, locate, and access useful primary and/or secondary sources.
● Demonstrate the ability to plan and manage a research project: define research goals and questions, conduct a review of the literature and identify gaps in existing research, select appropriate methodology, and design a study.
● Use research tools to identify, locate, and access useful primary and/or secondary sources.
● Demonstrate the ability to plan and manage a research project: define research goals and questions, conduct a review of the literature and identify gaps in existing research, select appropriate methodology, and design a study.

Additional information about course objectives can be found on the department webpage, http://libarts.mwsu.edu/english/.

Course Materials

Required Texts:

● **RD:** *Research Design (Leavy, 2017)*
● **RMES**: *Research Methods for English Studies (Griffin, 2013)*
● **WSRP**: *Writing Studies Research in Practice (Nickoson & Sheridan, 2012)*

Other Resources:
● Access to D2L/Brightspace to receive messages and news and submit assignments
● A Gmail account (like MSUTexas account) to collaborate & access digital materials
● Microsoft Office or Google Suite (Pages & WordPerfect will not work). You may use the free Microsoft Online through MSU Portal.

Course Description & Philosophy

This course will explore research methods in the field of Writing Studies through critical lenses (informed by studies in feminism, race, disability, gender and queerness, etc.) by asking "How can we enact research on writing and writing cultures in ways that are accountable to the communities and people that our research relies on/claims to serve?"

To ground that question, we will look at scholarly works in writing studies that take examine diverse research sites, including sites of literacy instruction (college classrooms, writing centers, libraries, homes, etc.), archives, digital/online spaces, community organizing and activism, and workplaces, focusing primarily on ethical considerations surrounding research subjects or participants who have been historically marginalized, neglected, and/or exploited by academic (and other) institutions.

Participants in this course, including the instructor, will each work toward a final project: a research proposal with accompanying documents that initiate collaboration between the researcher and participants or the subjects' primary stakeholders. The projects for this course may take up research with participants (human subjects), archived materials, texts, and other subjects and materials, and throughout the semester, researchers will write to discover ethical issues their projects may encounter, using course writing to work through ways to develop accountability and collaboration in their research sites.

My rationale for accountable methods for researching historically neglected groups is two-fold. First, writing studies has shown that we have an obligation not only to incorporate knowledge from groups that have been

historically excluded from or exploited by academia in order to learn from what has been overlooked but also to serve those groups by identifying ways to repurpose our intellectual and financial resources as a sort of academic reparations. Second, given that the oppressive systems that facilitate marginalization and exploitation also shape our institutions and research methods, researchers must learn to critically examine, resist, and remake methods and methodologies to reject oppressive systems and rebuild equitable ones.

Graded Assignments

Weekly Compositions (30%)

Each week, you will connect to assigned readings and introduce related resources in a brief response in your choice of medium, which should approximate the amount of time and attention it would take a reader to read 1-2 single-spaced pages of text. These compositions should serve as seeds that could eventually support a research project. Prompts will vary throughout the semester; you may be given a question, assigned a specific text, or given a list of resources. Prompts will be posted on D2L.

Exploration of a Research Site (30%)

This project will ask you to spend time (at least 6 hours) in/with a potential research site, which could be a writing center, a writing program or classroom, an archive, and online forum, or any space that provides rich data for research in rhetoric, composition, literacy, or writing studies (the parameters of which we will discuss and discover through class discussion). As you begin to learn and investigate the site and its occupants and stakeholders, consider possible research questions and ways to collaborate with the occupants or stakeholders whose labor or presence sustains that site. Drawing on course readings, you will apply critical rhetorical methods/methodologies to design a (potentially collaborative) project that answers your research question and responds to needs articulated in the site. This exploration will lead to your final seminar project.

Research Proposal (30%)

Compose a detailed research proposal, including appropriate [documentation through the Institutional Review Board](#), preferably drawing upon your research site exploration, that describes your research design, drawing upon relevant research and methodology, discusses the potential complications of this research plan, and identifies the methods by which your research will be held accountable to collaborators/participants/interested parties.

Final Presentation (10%)

As your final presentation, you will propose your research project to the class as if they were your potential collaborators/participants/interested parties, in the form of a 15-20 minute presentation using modes that are appropriate for that audience. You will be encouraged to provide additional materials for use in the Q&A.

Course Practices & Policies

On Language Assessment

You may expect to learn "proper grammar" in this class, but linguists argue that every language and dialect has a distinctive grammar and no one grammar is inherently better or more correct. American universities rely on "Standard (American) Academic English" (SAE) to determine "college readiness," but this ["standard" is a false one rooted in intentional gatekeeping and discrimination](#) based on race, class, and citizenship status. In this class, your professor will assume that SAE is a false and flawed standard. Your language practices are relevant. You will not be chastised for using grammars other than SAE in discussion. We will discuss clarity, conciseness, and common language expectations in various

professional environments, and you will be given feedback based on those expectations; these goals are more practical and inclusive than striving for an arbitrary and false notion of correctness. Grammar police be warned. (See also CCCC's 2020 Demand for Black Linguistic Justice.)

Attendance Policy

Attending class on time and in person is one of the biggest predictors of success in my classes. A total of more than two (2) weeks' worth of absences, excused or not, will make it difficult for you to excel. Students who miss class are not directly penalized, but they miss opportunities to learn and discuss. Some activities may be made up if you make arrangements with me to do so within a week of absence. If you must miss multiple sessions for personal/health reasons, alert the Dean of Students and provide the necessary documentation so they can verify the situation for your instructors. Notify me via email in advance if you will not be able to make class or will join via Zoom. It is your responsibility to be present and prepared for class in order to succeed and maximize your learning.

Contacting Me & GroupMe

Because this is a writing course, emails sent to me must be professionally written using the standard email format. Emails not using professional standards may be ignored. In the body of your email, indicate your name and course. Allow 2 business days for a response to your email. You may also use our class GroupMe to ask questions and share resources among classmates.

Late Assignments

Late assignments (i.e. work not submitted to the proper dropbox by the designated due date and time) won't be accepted unless negotiated with HC *in writing* prior to the due date. Assignments in this course build upon one another, and collaborators rely on each other to complete work according to agreed upon timelines. If you have difficulty submitting, email me with your work attached.

Assessment and Revision

I will provide written or oral feedback on drafts prior to submission as needed, and I will inquire about your writing progress regularly. You may revise and resubmit any coursework within 2 weeks of receiving a grade and prior to finals week for additional feedback. Grade revisions will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and should establish expectations in a revision plan.

Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the use of another's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument (including text written by a generation system or artificial intelligence tool) in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing on the Works Cited page)–whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary. Graduate-level work inheres a high level of originality as well as high standards for citation practices. Grounding your work in relevant scholarship is central to participating in academic discourse. At the very least, plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment; at worst, the consequence will be an F in the course. Offenders will be reported to the Chair of the Department of English, Humanities, and Philosophy and the Dean of Students.

D2L & Google Drive

We will use D2L to access most course materials including the syllabus, timeline updates, assignment sheets, PowerPoints, your grades and writing feedback, and others. You will also submit formal assignments and find announcements on D2L, so please check it daily, especially before our class meets. Google Drive will also be used as a collaborative space and to store info.

University Resources & Policies

Accessibility & Technology

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the [Disability Support Services](#) in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 940-397-4140.

I want to ensure that this course is accessible to all students. If you have problems accessing campus sites or learning materials (physical or digital), talk with me about how we might improve that. I may refer to uses of technology that are not covered during class, but I will provide one-on-one or workshop-based support for students who are unfamiliar with said platforms.

Access to Microsoft 365

All students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 free of charge using their MSU Texas student email address. To acquire Office 365, visit https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/products/office?ms.officeurl=getoffice365?ms.officeurl=getoffice365 and create an account.

Writing Center & Tutoring

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, Writing tutors are available most weekdays. You don't need an appointment to use these services. Writing tutors will not edit your papers for you, but they will provide support and feedback at every stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to drafting, revising to proofreading. See https://msutexas.edu/academics/tasp/on-campus.php for more info.

University Computer Labs

The University provides four open computer labs throughout the week. These four labs feature access to Microsoft Office Suite for writing and internet access for research.

Location	Hours
Clark Student Center	24 hours (Mon-Sun)
Dillard 146	Mon-Thurs 6 AM – 7 PM
Moffett Library	Mon-Thurs 8AM – 10PM; Fri. 8AM-5PM; Sat 10AM-6PM; Sun 2PM-10PM
Legacy Hall	24 hours (Mon-Sun)

Campus Carry Statement

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to MSU Texas's Campus Carry page (https://msutexas.edu/campus-carry/).

Course Community

Ensuring a Learning Environment

College classes should be vibrant environments that foster creativity, discussion, and intellectual growth. You have the freedom to create the kind of intellectual community you desire. Included here are some characteristics of a thriving learning environment. Let's discuss what this looks like in practice:

Characteristics	Students will…	Professor will…
Communicative		
Accountable		
Receptive		
Engaged		
Respectful		

Learning with Equity & Generosity

As a class community, we have diverse bodies, experiences, and needs. Our diversity is a strength, and it's something we should strive to learn from. In order to learn in a safe environment, we must ardently reject language and behaviors that denigrate others based on identity category. In this learning space, hate speech, harassment, discrimination, & violence are not tolerated.

Committing to equity, inclusion, and accessibility requires us to do more than reject discrimination. Equity begins with acknowledging how our institutions (academic and otherwise) have oppressed, excluded, and marginalized people based on race, religion, sexual orientation, sex and gender expression, immigration status, language background, ethnicity, ability, socioeconomic status, age, body type, and other aspects of identity. Equity work continues with seeking to understand and resist those failures by educating ourselves about oppression, fostering conversation and learning about those topics, developing practices that respond to the needs of historically marginalized communities, and holding our communities and leaders accountable for becoming more equitable, inclusive, and accessible.

This course encourages the discussion and consideration of uncomfortable topics. We can work through discomfort and create a brave space for learning and exploration by showing respect and consideration of perspectives that differ from our own. There is a lot we don't know about each other, and our word choice in discussing social & political issues matters a great deal. Ignorance is not an excuse for cruelty or dismissiveness, but we all make mistakes as we learn, so we should be willing to forgive & learn from these situations.

Course Texts & Resources

*Indicates that we will read the entire text. For long works or anthologies without an *, we will read selections from the text, which will be provided as PDFs. Short works/articles will also be provided via Google Drive. Some of these are provided as optional resources and will not be assigned to all students.

Approaches to Research Methods

- *Griffin, Gabriele. *Research Methods for English Studies*. EUP, 2013. EBSCOhost.
- *Nickoson, Lee, and Mary P. Sheridan, eds. *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*. SIU Press, 2012.
- Leavy, Patricia. *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*. Guilford Press, 2017.
- CCCs Special Issue on Research Methodologies
- Royster, Jacqueline Jones, and Gesa E. Kirsch. *Feminist Rhetorical Practices: New Horizons for Rhetoric, Composition, and Literacy Studies*. SIU Press, 2012.
- Schell, Eileen E., and Kelly Jacob Rawson, eds. *Rhetorica in Motion: Feminist Rhetorical Methods and Methodologies*. University of Pittsburgh Pre, 2010.
- Powell, Katrina and Pamela Takayoshi. "Accepting Roles Created for Us: The Ethics of Reciprocity." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2003, pp. 394-422.
- Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory in the 21st Century: Applications for Advancing Social Justice Studies." *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd ed., edited by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, SAGE, 2005, pp. 507-535.

Literacy Instruction

- Grobman, Laurie. "'Engaging Race': Teaching Critical Race Inquiry and Community-Engaged Projects." *College English*, vol. 80, no. 2, 2017, pp. 105-132.
- Denny, Harry, John Nordlof, and Lori Salem. "'Tell Me Exactly What It Was that I was Doing that Was So Bad': Understanding The Needs and Expectations of Working-class Students in Writing Centers." *The Writing Center Journal*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2018, pp. 67-100.
- Denny, Melody. "The Oral Writing-Revision Space: Identifying a New and Common Discourse Feature of Writing Center Consultations." Writing Center Journal, vol. 37, no. 1, Jan. 2018, pp. 35–64.
- Rousculp, Tiffany. *Rhetoric of Respect: Recognizing Change at a Community Writing Center*. NCTE, 2014.
- Banaji, Paige, et al, eds. *The Rhetoric of Participation: Interrogating Commonplaces in and Beyond the Classroom*. Computers and Composition Digital Press, 2018.
- Cushman, Ellen. "The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1996, pp. 7-28.
- Gordon, June. *Beyond the Classroom Walls : Ethnographic Inquiry As Pedagogy*. Routledge, 2002.
- Berry, Patrick W., Gail E. Hawisher, and Cynthia L. Selfe. *Transnational Literate Lives in Digital Times*. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP, 2012.
- VanKooten, Crystal. *Transfer Across Media: Using Digital Video in the Teaching of Writing*. Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP, 2020.

Community Organizing and Activism
- Tetreault, Laura, *"We're Asking You to Show Up": Accountability as Rhetorical Practice for Queer, Feminist, and Racial Justice Allyship*. (2018). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 2982.
- Owens, Kim Hensley. "In Lak'ech, The Chicano Clap, and Fear: A Partial Rhetorical Autopsy of Tucson's Now-Illegal Ethnic Studies Classes." *College English*, vol. 80, no. 3, 2018, pp. 247-270.
- Dunn, Thomas R. *Queerly Remembered: Rhetorics for Representing The GLBTQ Past*. Univ of South Carolina Press, 2016.
- King, Lisa, Rose Gubele, and Joyce Rain Anderson, eds. *Survivance, Sovereignty, and Story: Teaching American Indian Rhetorics*. University Press of Colorado, 2015.
- Rice, Jenny. *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis*. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 2012.
- Mathieu, Paula and Diana George. "Not Going It Alone: Public Writing, Independent Media, and the Circulation of Homeless Advocacy." *College Composition and Communication*, vol. 60, no. 1, 2009, pp. 130-149.
- Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang. "Decolonization is Not a Metaphor." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-40.

Archives
- Ballif, Michelle, ed. *Theorizing Histories of Rhetoric*. SIU Press, 2013.
- Kirsch, Gesa, and Liz Rohan, eds. *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*. SIU Press, 2008.
- Richardson, Elaine B., and Ronald L. Jackson. *African American Rhetoric(s): Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. SIU Press, 2007.
- Clary-Lemon, Jennifer. "Museums as Material: Experiential Landscapes and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights." *Enculturation*, 2015.
- Shipka, Jody. "To Preserve, Digitize, and Project: On the Process of Composing Other People's Lives." *Enculturation*, 2012.

Digital/Online Spaces
- *McKee, Heidi A., and James E. Porter. *The Ethics of Internet Research: A Rhetorical, Case-based Process*. Peter Lang, 2009.
- Gries, Laurie E., & Hallinan, Blake, editors. *Doing Digital Visual Studies: One Image, Multiple Methodologies*. Computers and Composition Digital P/Utah State UP, 2022.
- VanKooten, Crystal. "Methodologies and Methods for Research in Digital Rhetoric." *Enculturation*, 2016.
- Sloan, Luke, and Anabel Quan-Haase, editors. *The Sage Handbook of Social Media Research Methods.* SAGE Reference, 2017. WorldCat.
- Opperman, Megan. "Intentionally Public, Intentionally Private: Gender Non-Binary Youth on Tumblr and the Queering of Community Literacy Research." *Community Literacy Journal*, vol. 12 no. 2, 2018, pp. 65-71.
- Rawson, K.J. "Rhetorical History 2.0: Toward a Digital Transgender Archive." *Enculturation*, 2013.
- Baniya, Sweta, et al. "Representing Diversity in Digital Research: Digital Feminist Ethics and Resisting Dominant Normatives." Proceedings of the Annual Computers & Writing Conference, 2018.

Workplaces
- Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke UP,

2012.
- ○ Tuck, Eve, and K. Wayne Yang, eds. *Toward What Justice?: Describing Diverse Dreams of Justice in Education*. Routledge, 2018.
- ○ LaFrance, Michelle. "An Institutional Ethnography of Information Literacy Instruction: Key Terms, Local/Material Contexts, and Instructional Practice." *WPA: Writing Program Administration*, vol. 39, no. 2, 2016, pp. 105–123.