

**ENG G102 KEY CONCEPTS IN RHETORIC AND COMPOSITION\***  
**NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY • FALL 2005 • THURSDAYS 6-8:30 P.M.**

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**Course Description**

This course has two aims: one, to provide an introduction to the fields of rhetoric and composition for all graduate students; and two, to help students in the Program in Rhetoric and Composition develop the vocabulary and frameworks needed for subsequent coursework. We'll begin by considering narratives that scholars tell about the development of these fields and their relationship to each other and to the disciplines of communication and literary studies. We will then spend two weeks looking at each of five concepts central to both fields. Our readings on these concepts — knowledge, context, discourse, authority, and ideology — will highlight points of contention about the concepts themselves and will serve as an overview of important issues, theories, and themes in rhetoric and composition.

*Note:* This course is a work in progress. If you have issues or concerns about the course, please do not wait until the end of the semester to voice them, as I may be able to address them immediately. Please talk with me, send me e-mail, or leave a note (signed or anonymous) for me in the English department office.

**Required Texts and Materials**

Lucaites, John Louis, Celeste Michelle Condit, and Sally Caudill. *Contemporary Rhetorical Theory: A Reader*. New York: Guilford, 1999. (Abbreviated LCC in the schedule.) Available at the NU bookstore and on reserve at Snell Library.

Villanueva, Victor, ed. *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Urbana: NCTE, 2003. (Abbreviated VV in the schedule.) Available at the NU bookstore and on reserve at Snell Library.

Articles on reserve at Snell Library. (A list of reserve readings is at the end of this syllabus.) All readings are also available for downloading in PDF format on our Blackboard site (under Course Documents).

A MyNEU account, along with access to the World Wide Web (for participation on Blackboard). You can log in to Blackboard one day after setting up a MyNEU account. To apply for an account, go to <http://myneu.neu.edu/>.

**Requirements and Grading**

The criteria I use to evaluate assignments include comprehension, focus, thoroughness, sophistication, use of supporting evidence, and professionalism. I will calculate your final grade as follows:

Presentation (8-10 minutes)	10 %
Write-up of presentation (5-7 pages)	25 %
Proposal for final paper (1 page)	5 %
Final paper (12-15 pages)	60 %

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\* This syllabus is subject to change. You will be informed during class of any changes to the syllabus. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed, including any changes to the syllabus.

## Daily Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Due
1	9/8	Introduction		
2	9/15	The disciplines of rhetoric & composition	Connors, Ede, & Lunsford (reserve); Ede (reserve); Gage (reserve); Lucaites & Condit (LCC 1-18)	
3	9/22	Knowledge	Scott (LCC); Farrell (LCC); Gaonkar (LCC); Cherwitz & Hikins (LCC)	
4	9/29	Knowledge	Bruffee (VV); Kirsch & Ritchie (VV); Berlin (VV 255)	
5	10/6	Context	Ede & Lunsford (VV); Ong (VV); Reynolds (reserve); Cooper (reserve)	
6	10/13	Context	Bitzer (LCC); Vatz (LCC); Biesecker (LCC); McGee (LCC p. 65)	
7	10/20	Discourse	Kinneavy (VV); Bizzell (VV p. 387); Jasinski (reserve)	Presentation write-up
8	10/27	Discourse	Foucault (reserve); Herzberg (reserve)	
9	11/3	Authority	Baumlin (reserve); Jarratt & Reynolds (reserve); Martin (reserve)	Proposal for final paper
10	11/10	Authority	Royster (VV); Mortensen & Kirsch (reserve); Bartholomae (VV)	
11	11/17	Ideology	Berlin (VV p. 717); Hairston (VV); Bizzell (VV p. 479)	
12	11/24	THANKSGIVING. NU CLOSED.		
13	12/1	Ideology	McGee (LCC p. 425); McKerrow (LCC); Charland (LCC)	Final paper (draft); copies TBD
14	12/8	Peer review; wrap-up		
15	12/15	EXAM WEEK. Final paper due by 3 p.m. on 12/15 in 433 or 406 HO.		

### Description of Assignments

1. **Presentation:** This assignment asks you to explain one theorist's understanding of a concept (for example, Lloyd Bitzer's notion of context) using a text or problem of your choosing. *Texts* and *problems* are here broadly imagined; you might work through a student paper, a classroom dynamic, a written or spoken text, a physical space, or a practice. (Please do not select a literary text for this assignment. Because most students already have some critical apparatuses for dealing with literary texts, using such a text to illuminate these concepts may create unnecessary confusion.) The primary emphasis of the presentation should be on the *concept* rather than on the text or problem. (Note: Each of the readings discusses multiple concepts. Make sure you concentrate on the concept that is the focus of our discussion, e.g., knowledge, context, discourse, authority, or ideology.)

Your presentation should last 8-10 minutes, should be very narrowly focused, and should include a handout (one copy for each class member, including me). The handout should include enough excerpts from the text or enough discussion of the problem to allow us to use the same text or problem to think through other concepts. You are welcome and encouraged to supply copies of the entire text if practical. Be sure to time yourself at home to make sure that your presentation is between 8 and 10 minutes. If your presentation is too short or too long, your grade will suffer; if your presentation runs too long, I will ask you to stop.

A formal **write-up** of the presentation (5-7 double-spaced pages) is **due on October 20**. Both the presentation and the write-up should include a discussion justifying your choice of text or problem. In other words, you should somewhere answer the question, "How does this text or problem *in particular* help us to understand the concept?"

2. **Final paper:** This major assignment (12-15 double-spaced pages) gives you flexibility in exploring the course material. Although the paper must engage narrowly with the ideas in the course, the exact shape of the paper is mostly up to you. The only constraint is that the paper must remain largely in the domain of rhetoric and composition studies (that is, it should not try to apply a concept from this course to another area of study, such as science, literary studies, or law). Your paper might explore:
- The complexity of one of the concepts using most or all of the readings on that concept. Your goal would be to sort out the diversity of understandings of that concept as well as the implications of these understandings. Do not write on the same concept that was the basis of your presentation. You may but are not required to go beyond the assigned readings for this course.
  - How two or three concepts relate to each other. One of these may be the concept that was the basis of your presentation. You may but are not required to go beyond the assigned readings for this course.
  - An issue that cuts across multiple concepts/readings (e.g., the institutional home of rhet/comp). Your paper does not have to foreground the key concepts themselves. You might need to do additional research beyond the assigned readings for this course.
  - Any other topic that is central to the ideas covered in the course.

Papers must have a narrow central argument and must be well supported with evidence and explanation. Please use MLA citation style. One-page (double-spaced) **proposals are due November 3**. Proposals should explain your topic, the question your paper will address (but not its answer, which you should not have yet figured out), your sources, and why you selected these sources.

### **Policies**

**Attendance** – Attendance is required. Missing more than two classes will affect your final grade and may prevent you from passing the course.

**Deadlines, extensions, and incompletes** – Written papers must be submitted on the day that they are due unless you have received an extension from me ahead of time. Late papers without preapproved extensions will be penalized by one full letter grade for each day they are late (e.g., an A will become a B). Make-ups for the presentation will be allowed only in the event of illness or other emergency that prevents you from attending class. I will assign the grade of incomplete for the course only under extraordinary circumstances. In order to receive this grade, you must have completed most of the work for the course and have encountered an emergency (for example, serious illness or a death in the family) that prevents you from finishing one or two assignments. If you find yourself in this situation toward the end of the semester, talk to me as soon as possible before the last assignments are due. Please do not ask for an incomplete if you are having trouble completing work because of time commitments at work or in other classes.

**Academic honesty** – I encourage you to bounce ideas off each other, offer each other suggestions, and seek other opinions about your work. When you use the citable work of someone else, though, document your source. If you use someone else's words or ideas without acknowledging the source, if you do not place quotation marks around (or set off from the body of the text) the directly quoted words of someone else, or if you submit work that you have completed in another context, then you have committed plagiarism, a serious breach of academic and professional conduct. Plagiarism is not only illegal; it is professional suicide. If you have questions about crediting the work of others as you complete your assignments, ask me.

## Reserve Readings

Paper copies of the following articles and book chapters are on reserve at Snell Library. Electronic copies are available on our Blackboard site (under Course Documents). You can download the files all at once in a zipped file (recommended only if you have a broadband connection) or individually.

Baumlin, James S. "Introduction: Positioning *Ethos* in Historical and Contemporary Theory." *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*. Ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin. Dallas: Southern Methodist UP, 1994. xii-xxvii.

Connors, Robert J., Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford. "The Revival of Rhetoric in America." *Essays on Classical Rhetoric and Modern Discourse*. Ed. Robert J. Connors, Lisa S. Ede, and Andrea A. Lunsford. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1984. 1-15.

Cooper, Marilyn M. "The Ecology of Writing." *College English* 48 (1986): 364-75.

Ede, Lisa. *Situating Composition: Composition Studies and the Politics of Location*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 2004. IX-20.

Foucault, Michel. "The Discourse on Language." *The Archeology of Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon, 1972. 215-237.

Gage, John T. "On 'Rhetoric' and 'Composition.'" *An Introduction to Composition Studies*. Ed. Erika Lindemann and Gary Tate. New York: Oxford UP, 1991. 15-32.

Herzberg, Bruce. "Michel Foucault's Rhetorical Theory." *Contending with Words: Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*. Ed. Patricia Harkin and John Schilb. New York: MLA, 1991. 69-81.

Jarratt, Susan C., and Nedra Reynolds. "The Splitting Image: Contemporary Feminisms and the Ethics of *Ethos*." *Ethos: New Essays in Rhetorical and Critical Theory*. Ed. James S. Baumlin and Tita French Baumlin. Dallas: Southern Methodist UP, 1994. 37-63.

Jasinski, James. "Discourse." *Sourcebook on Rhetoric: Key Concepts in Contemporary Rhetorical Studies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2001. 168-173.

Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 16 (1991): 485-501.

Mortensen, Peter, and Gesa Kirsch. "On Authority in the Study of Writing." *College Composition and Communication* 44 (1993): 556-72.

Reynolds, Nedra. "Composition's Imagined Geographies: The Politics of Space in the Frontier, City, and Cyberspace." *College Composition and Communication* 50 (1998): 12-35.