**English 563:**

**Research Methods in Language and Rhetoric**

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Winter 2019

Class Time: TTh 3:30-5:20

### Professor: Nancy Bou Ayash

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### Office: A418 Padelford Hall

### Office Hours: TTh 9:00-10:00, 2:15-3:15, & by appointment

*What we need . . . is room for multiple research methods, for flexible paradigms and theories that can help researchers adapt to changing needs of participants and the research community.* Gesa Kirsch "Ethics and Future of Composition"

**Course Description**

In this interactive graduate seminar, we will examine the ontological and epistemological assumptions, practical questions, and ideological issues that inform current empirical research in the larger field of language and rhetoric. Through these explorations, we will turn our attention to critical methodological issues about participant/researcher relationships, subject positionality, politics of location, ethics and representation in research approaches and practices. Though we cannot possibly cover in a single quarter all of the interesting research approaches and practices currently active in language and rhetoric studies, you should leave this seminar with a deepened understanding of the broad, critical questions shaping our thinking about and enactment of research in the field today.

During the second half of the course, we will go more deeply into a single qualitative methodology of ethnographic research for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data. We will explore the foundations and evolution of ethnography by looking at key texts grounded in various disciplines so as to become familiar with their research designs and their underlying epistemological assumptions. Our work and conversations will contribute to rethinking the ways in which we view and enacts the study, analysis, and representation of everyday and academic language and literacy practices in light of the changing demands of our modern times. More specifically, we will be exploring what research methods and methodologies to adopt and adapt as we attempt to more effectively understand and capture the mobile, translingual, transnational, and transmodal character of language and literacy in the 21st century.

**Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, you will

* become more familiar with the major empirical methodologies and fields of inquiry important in language and rhetoric research.
* become aware of the methodological, theoretical and rhetorical assumptions that underlie empirical research in language and rhetoric.
* gain a better sense of the development of empirical research in language and rhetoric.
* closely read, with more understanding and critical evaluation, empirical research publications in language and rhetoric.
* carve out an area of investigation and begin to design an original research project in language and rhetoric.

**Course Materials**

The course is largely organized around the following texts, which should be available at the UW Bookstore:

Blommaert, Jan. Ethnography, Superdiversity and Linguistic Landscapes: Chronicles of Complexity. Bristol, Buffalo: Multilingual Matters, 2013. Print.

Fraiberg, Steven, Xiqiao Wang, and Xiaoye You. *Inventing the World Grant University: Chinese International Students' Mobilities, Literacies, and Identities*. Logan: Utah State UP, 2017. Print.

Nickoson, Lee and Mary P. Sheridan. Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2012. Print.

Prendergast, Catherine. *Buying into English: Language and Investment in the New Capitalist World*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008.

You are responsible for downloading and printing all materials posted on the course Canvas website as pdf files or existing as html files on the web (see tentative schedule and reading list).

**Course Requirements**

The seminar will revolve primarily around discussion of empirical research in language studies and rhetoric and composition studies. You are expected to read the assigned articles with care and attention. In addition, you are expected to take active part in the following course requirements:

**1. Participation in Seminar Discussions (20%)**

Because this course is an upper-level graduate seminar, your own contributions to the work of the course will be central. These contributions will take form in the comments and questions you pose during our discussions and in individual seminar projects. Our weekly seminar meetings will be an occasion to rework our individual and collective responses to the readings and issues under consideration. The success of these seminar meetings depends on the engaged involvement of all members--both a practical and ethical obligation that we all take on. The importance of your role in the work of the seminar makes your attendance and timely submission of written work essential.

**2. Discussion Leaders on Research Methods and Methodologies (30%)**

In this seminar, you will be individually responsible for choosing an important issue in language and rhetoric research, present your findings (including an annotated bibliography), and lead class discussion of issues of research methods and modes of inquiry in language and rhetoric that pertain to your own projects or some other aspect of our work together this semester. Basically, your job will be to initiate, lead, and mediate class discussion in a way that offers an opportunity for us to think more deeply, practically, or in the moment about the concepts mobilizing our thinking, doing, writing, and interactions and about the implications for our work as qualitative researchers and writers. More details will be provided in a separate assignment prompt.

**3. Research Heuristic (10%)**

You are expected to complete a research analysis form for two of the research studies assigned for this class. Form should be posted on Canvas before class. Details will be discussed in class.

**4. Research Methodology and Design Portfolio (40%)**

As this course is designed to deepen your understanding of research in language and rhetoric today and help you develop a sense of how to put together an effective research plan to achieve your goals as teacher-scholars, you will have the opportunity to begin mapping out research questions and relevant methodological approaches in preparation for completing your exam field statement and eventually your dissertation prospectus.

This portfolio assignment encourages you to begin to look more deeply into a particular research methodology on a particular area of concern as you continue to study language or writing development, writers or language users/learners, contexts of writing/languaging/teaching/learning.

Your portfolio will be composed of: (1) a **research statement** (1-2 single-spaced pages) that broadly describes your ongoing research concerns and how you will focus your efforts as a novice researcher this quarter; (2) preliminary or **“mock” research prospectus** in which you articulate your research question(s) and describe how you envision your qualitative data collection, preliminary analysis, and library-based research providing a window into deeper/better understanding around your question(s); (3) **review of the literature** (5-7 double spaced pages) which will draw together resources that you have found independently on a methodology and/or a research framework of your choice (e.g. What is methodology X? How will it help you frame your work?) ***OR***—for those who would like to focus more closely on a particular research question related to the broader research concerns you’ve outlined in your research statement—a body of work oriented around a very similar research concern (e.g. What do we know about topic X? What have been the most animating questions and contributions to date? How would you characterize your own project’s interventions? Etc.); and finally, (4) **statement of researcher positionality and labor** (1-2 single-spaced pages) in which you describe the contextual, logistical, and ethical issues of research, which you think may impact the production and scholarly reception of a project like this (How will you address these issues? How might your own ideological positioning and assumptions about various identity markers (race, gender, ethnicity, social class, national origin, language background, etc.) inform your observations and potential interactions with participants/research sites/objects?)

**Below lies some course policies and regulations I must include:**

**Communication**

While I keep office hours, I recommend making an appointment ahead of time to reserve a slot or schedule an alternative time to meet. You should check your email and Canvas regularly for any announcements about meeting plans.

For questions or inquiries, the best way to reach me is through my UW email address that is listed on this syllabus and not Canvas. Please allow at least 48 hours for me to respond. I also don’t check my email over weekends so please plan accordingly.

### Attendance policy

Regular attendance in this class is absolutely necessary. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to know what you missed and what you need to prepare for the next class session.

### Late work policy

All work is due when assigned. An absence does not allow you to miss a deadline. Missing work will lower your grade for the course one-third letter grade (e.g., from an A to an A- or an A- to a B+). A late project draft will lower your grade for the course one-third letter grade. Students submitting final projects after the deadline but before the day grades are due will have their grade for the course lowered one full letter. Students submitting final projects after the deadline and the day grades are due will receive a failing grade.

**Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

Technology in the classroom is restricted to usages that enhance the learning environment for all students. Any use of technology that degrades the learning environment, or disrupts the classroom is prohibited. Mobile phone ringtones **must** be turned off in class. If there is a need to check for and/or receive a call (parent with sick child and similar needs), the student **must** inform the instructor in advance and get permission that the student may need to excuse him/herself to take an important call. Students should refrain from text messaging, game playing, and Internet surfing during class time in the classroom. Students who create a disturbance by mobile phone use will be warned and may be asked to leave the class session if the behavior continues. The use of laptops, notebooks, and tablets in the classroom is restricted at all times to very specific educational purposes, such as when presenting your work orally, taking notes or viewing class readings.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism can be defined as representing the words or ideas of someone else as one’s own in any academic exercise. Thus, all writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course, unless the instructor stipulates differently. Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask your instructor. If you plagiarize, your instructor reserves the right to grant you a failure for the course and your case may be reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

**Schedule and Reading List**

**Week 1: Introduction**

T 1/8 Course introduction, syllabus, readings, course policies and regulations

TH 1/10 Scholarly Conversations on Epistemology and Making Knowledge Claims

Nickoson and Sheridan, Foreword: New Methodological Challenges, xi-xvi

Nickoson and Sheridan, Introduction: Current Conversations on Writing Research, 1-12

**Week 2: Ethical Principles and Practices in Research**

T 1/15 Kirsch and Ritchie, “Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research” **(Canvas)**

Addison, “Data Analysis and Subject Representation in Empowering Composition Research”  **(Canvas)**

TH 1/17 CCCC Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research in Composition Studies

<http://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/ethicalconduct>

Brodkey, “On the Subject of Class and Gender in “The Literacy Letters” **(Canvas)**

***Discussion Leader(s)***

**Week 3: Narrative Inquiry**

T 1/22 Nickoson and Sheridan, “Narrative Turns”, 13

Motha, Jain, & Tecle, “Translinguistic Identity-as-Pedagogy” **(Canvas)**

TH 1/24 Nickoson and Sheridan, “Autoethnography”, 113

Hartse and Kubota, “Pluralizing English” **(Canvas)**

***Discussion Leaders***

**Week 4: Institutional/Program Review, Evaluation, and Reporting**

T 1/29 Nickoson and Sheridan, “Writing Program Research”, 140

Nickoson and Sheridan, “Longitudinal Writing Research”, 171

TH 1/ 31 Nickoson and Sheridan, “Institutional Critique”, 158

Tardy, “Discourses on Internationalization and Diversity in U.S. Universities and Writing Programs” **(Canvas)**

**Week 5: Undertaking (Critical) Ethnography**

T 2/5 Nickoson and Sheridan, “Making Ethnography Our Own”, 73.

***Discussion Leaders***

TH 2/7 Lillis, “Ethnography as Method, Methodology, and Deep Theorizing” **(Canvas)**

Horner, “Critical Ethnography, Ethics, and Work”

**Week 6:**

T 2/12 ***Discussion Leader(s)***

TH 2/14 ***Discussion Leader(s)***

Research Portfolio Workshop Session

**Week 7: Internationalizing Language and Rhetoric Research**

T 2/19 Prendergast, *Buying into English*, 1-73.

TH 2/21 Pedersen, “Academic English in Jordan”

**Research Heuristic 1 Due**

***Discussion Leader(s)***

**Week 8: New Direction for New Times: Researching Literate Lives in Motion**

T 2/26 Nordquist, “Methodology for Mobile Literacy.” In *Literacy and Mobility: Complexity, Uncertainty, and Agency at the Nexus of High School and College.* **(Canvas)**

Selfe and Hawisher, “Collaboration, Literacy Narratives, Transnational Connections, and Digital Media” **(Canvas)**

TH 2/28 Blommaert, *Ethnography, Superdiversity and Linguistic Landscapes*, 1-49

***Discussion Leader(s)***

**Week 9: Multi-Sitedness and Multi-Sightedness in Transnational Research**

T 3/5 Wolff, “Experience with Multi-Sited Ethnographies” **(Canvas)**

Bou Ayash “Appendix: An Ethnography of Language Representations and/as Practices”

TH 3/7 Fraiberg et al, *Inventing the World Grant University*

**Research Heuristic 2 Due**

**Week 10:**

T 3/12No Class-- Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC)

TH 3/14 No Class--CCCC

**Final Projects Due: Monday March 18, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.**

**The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus in order to address scheduling conflicts and/or class needs.**