



ENG 6811, Cultural Contexts Literacies In & Across Contexts

University of Central Florida
Texts and Technology Program
Thursdays, 7:30-10:20, BA 0205

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Office Hours: Thursdays 5-7
& Wednesdays 1-4pm

This graduate-level seminar approaches the idea of cultural context from a literacy studies perspective as a way to ground the range of contexts within which texts and new media are embedded and circulate. Specifically, we will track literacy within its situated, sociocultural, institutional, economic, material, and historical contexts as a way to think both within and across these scales.

The implicit argument of this course is that textual production and reception can be neither theorized, researched, nor taught acontextually, and that each of you, as burgeoning scholars, must begin to reckon with what context will mean for you and your work as you move forward in your doctoral studies. My hope is that as we read through course texts on literacy, and as you develop an understanding of possible ways to conceive of context, you will develop your accounts of context and how you would approach those theoretically and methodologically.

Course Texts

Literacy and Literacies: Texts, Power, and Identity, James Collins and Richard K. Blot

Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community, David Barton and Mary Hamilton

Literacy Across Communities, ed. Beverly Moss

Literacy in American Lives, Deborah Brandt

Writing from these Roots: Literacy in a Hmong American Community, John Duffy

New Media Literacies and Participatory Popular Culture Across Borders, eds. Williams and Zenger

Literacy: Reading the Word, Reading the World, Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo

PDF's of addition articles and book chapters will be available via WebCourses

Course Projects

Weekly Mirco Essays & Participation	20%
Leading Class Discussion	20%
Grounding Literacy with Visualization	20%

Seminar Paper Proposal with Annotated Bibliography	10%
Final Project Presentations	10%
Seminar Paper	20%

Weekly Mirco Essay and Participation

A micro essay is a highly compact single-spaced, single page essay (500-600 words). The idea behind the micro essay is to grab some things that interest you from the readings and throw yourself into articulating a specific question, idea, and/or concern that they brought to your attention. Your paper should respond to a major or minor theme of the course, address readings from the week during which you submit, and demonstrate your ability to think critically about the readings. These responses are intended to help you prepare for class. While I do want you to fully engage with the week's reading, you may also use them to generate interesting research questions and start drafting longer writing projects. Although most of the responses will be open-ended and flexible, I will occasionally ask you to write from a structured prompt, which I provide. **On days when you are leading class discussion (see below), and on days when major projects are due, you will not be required to complete a mirco essay.**

Leading Class Discussion

Working in pairs or small groups, you will make a brief presentation and lead a discussion on the week's reading. You will use the presentations to explore the specific texts in question, but also to think across the course texts to link theories, methodological frameworks, and studies. In addition, I encourage you to use these presentations to bring in and explore your own interests and connect course themes and readings with questions and concerns that inspire your professional work. These can include teaching, research, design, civic or corporate work, and so on. Feel free to be creative and interactive for these class discussions.

In addition to presenting on your topic for 15-20 minutes (depending on the size of the group), you should collectively prepare and pose a few discussion questions (no more than 4-5) for the class. I will handout and go over a guide for creating effective discussion questions for you to follow.

Class Presentations will cover portions of the following texts:

Literacy and Literacies: Texts, Power, and Identity, James Collins and Richard K. Blot

Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community, David Barton and Mary Hamilton

Literacy Across Communities, ed. Beverly Moss

Literacy in American Lives, Deborah Brandt

Writing from these Roots: Literacy in a Hmong American Community, John Duffy

New Media Literacies and Participatory Popular Culture Across Borders, eds. Williams and Zenger

Grounding Literacy with Visualization

Mid-way through the semester, you will offer an account of what context means to you and why context matters for thinking about texts and technology by choosing a concrete practice and building a context for. This assignment gives you the opportunity to reflect on the course readings and to develop your ideas amongst the different approaches to literacy in context that we have read. The core questions driving this inquiry include, among others: How does context operate for this practice? What does an explication of this practice contribute to our understanding of context? This project will require a paper, a visualization, and an in-class presentation. Your visualization can be created in whatever medium seems most rhetorically appropriate. I expect this paper to incorporate other scholarly voices and to develop a claim with stakes. Papers should be between 10-12 pages. If you would like, you can use this paper to start to explore the specific topics that you would like to develop further in your final project. **Visualizations and your projects major claims will be presented in class.**

Seminar Paper Sequence

Seminar Project proposal with annotated Bibliography

Peer Response of Seminar Paper Rough Draft

Seminar Paper Final Draft

Final Project Presentations

Seminar Paper Proposal with Annotated Bibliography

As an initial step toward your seminar project, you'll need to put together a proposal for the research you plan to do. In its most general terms, a research proposal asks researchers to carefully articulate the issue(s) or question(s) they propose to investigate, the relevance of such research, the method they plan to employ, and any difficulties they anticipate. From my own experience, crafting a research proposal is a valuable undertaking because it forces researchers to think carefully about their topic, the scope of their inquiry, and the suitability of the data they plan to collect. It also provides scholars with some momentum toward constructing the literature review of their research.

Seminar Paper

Based upon course readings and your own research, you will develop a 12-15 page seminar paper that is research-based and focused on a close study of some aspect of the seminar topic. It involves choosing a topic, doing the research as a way of narrowing down the topic and focusing analysis or interpretation, presenting the research in a oral format to the class so that they can question and comment on your evidence and conclusions, and completing a written text of the study aided by the responses at your presentation. The study you choose to pursue ought to reflect your curiosity or particular interests in regard to this subject. Additionally, your study should be anchored, as much as is appropriate given the topic, in both concrete analysis and supportive research—in other words, this paper must be grounded in theory, research, and scholarship.

Final Project Presentation

During our final exam time, I will expect each of you to make a 12-15 minute oral presentation of your final research project for the class. We will follow the format used in panel presentations at conferences so that those of you who have not yet had this experience can begin to prepare for the day in your professional career when you undertake this activity. As is true in panel presentations at conferences, you will be strictly limited to the time allotted. If you violate this time limit, I will pointedly intervene, and you will end up with a half-finished presentation. So please, plan and time your class presentation carefully. But as is also true of the most effective panels, presentations that engage the audience with sound, visuals, and other multimodal strategies are often preferable to those who just read their papers aloud. In other words, you must remediate your seminar paper for the rhetorical situation of the panel presentation.

Formal assignments for the above will be distributed throughout the semester

Course Policies and Procedures

Attendance—Missing class is strongly discouraged. If you do need to miss a session, it is your responsibility to speak with me to find out what you missed and to make the appropriate accommodations. Exceptions can be made in case of emergency, special circumstance, or illness.

Late work—*No late work will be accepted.* If you need to negotiate a special exception, please communicate with me BEFORE due dates or as soon as possible afterwards in the case of an emergency.

University Resources

Disability Resources

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center is a free resource for all UCF students. At the UWC, a qualified writing consultant will work individually with students on anything they're writing (in or out of class) at any point in the writing process--from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment go to the website, <http://uwc.ucf.edu/consultations.php>, stop by 105 Colbourn Hall, or call 407-823-2197.

Calendar

Week 1: Thursday August 23

“Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought” Walter Ong;
“The Consequences of Literacy,” Goody and Watt;
“A Critical look at Walter Ong and the ‘Great Divide,’” Brian Street

Week 2: Thursday August 30

“Literacy Practices and Literacy Myths,” Brian Street (Webcourses)
“Protean Shapes in Literacy Events,” Shirley Brice Heath (Webcourses)
Literacy and Literacies: Texts, Power, and Identity, James Collins and Richard K. Blot (pages xi-66);

Week 3: Thursday September 6

Literacy and Literacies: Texts, Power, and Identity, James Collins and Richard K. Blot (67-end)
Class Presentation of Reading

Week 4: Thursday September 13 *Situated and Sociocultural*

Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community, David Barton and Mary Hamilton (xii-169)

Week 5: Thursday September 20 *Situated and Sociocultural*

Local Literacies: Reading and writing in one community, David Barton and Mary Hamilton (170-end)
Class Presentation of Reading

Week 6: Thursday September 27 *Situated, Sociocultural, and Institutional*

Literacy Across Communities, ed. Beverly Moss (all)
“Introduction” to *Literacy and Racial Justice* and “Chapter 1: The Economy of Literacy: How the Supreme Court Stalled the Civil Rights Movement,” Catherine Pendergrast (Webcourses)

Week 7: Thursday October 4 Class-Cancelled due to Football Game Closure

Week 8: Thursday October 11 *Historical, Institutional, Economic, and Material*

“Introduction” and “Reflections on the History of Literacy: Overview, Critique, and Proposals,” Harvey Graff (Webcourses)
Literacy in American Lives, Deborah Brandt (all)
Class Presentation of Reading

Week 9: Thursday October 18 *Historical and Transnational*
(Dr. Rounsaville at Watson Conference—we will reschedule this class period)
Writing from these Roots: Literacy in a Hmong American Community, John Duffy (all)
Class Presentation of Reading

Week 10: Thursday October 25
Theoretical Account of Context with Visualization—Peer Review in class
“Chronotopic Laminations,” Paul Prior and Jody Shipka
http://wac.colostate.edu/books/selves_societies/prior/
“The Limits of the Local: Expanding Perspectives on Literacy as a Social Practice,” Deborah Brandt and Katie Clinton (Webcourses)

Week 11: Thursday November 1 *Literacy in Globalization*
Ground Literacy with Visualization Due
Chapter 1, “Constructing Transnational Studies” in Khagram and Levitt (Webcourses)
D.S. Warriner. “Introduction.” *Linguistics and Education* 18 (2007) 201–214 (Webcourses)
Transnational Literate Lives, Berry, Hawisher, and Selfe
<http://ccdigitalpress.org/transnational/ch1.1.html>

Week 12: Thursday November 8 *Literacy in Globalization*
Start imagining possibilities for your final project
Life and Debt
“Chapter 1: Against the Winds,” Gregorio Hernandez-Zamora (Webcourses)
“Undocumented in a Documentary Society: Textual Borders and Transnational Religious Literacies,” Kate Viera (Webcourses)

Week 13: Thursday November 15 *Literacy in Globalization*
New Media Literacies and Participatory Popular Culture Across Borders, eds. Williams and Zenger (selections TBD)
Class Presentation of Reading
Project Proposal with annotated bibliography due electronically by November 18th to be returned with my comments by November 23rd

Week 14: Thursday November 22 (Class Cancelled—Thanksgiving)

Week 15: Thursday November 29 (Last Day of Class) *Literacy and Pedagogy*
Literacy: Reading the Word and the World, Freire and Macedo (all)
Draft of final paper due for peer review—in class

Final Seminar Papers due with Final Presentations
Thursday December 6 during finals time: 7:00 p.m.—9:50 p.m.