

## DRAFT SYLLABUS

### EDUCATION 253A--RESEARCH IN WRITING

Fall, 2010

WEDNESDAY 1-4

CCN: 24106

5527 Tolman Hall

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#### **Overview**

Writing Research is a basic course for doctoral students interested in literacy, particularly in writing, and for MA students interested in the teaching of writing and how students learn to write, across the age range. The course also considers what is known about the relationships between reading and writing and what is known about how writing contributes to learning across the curriculum. Across the years, students with other main interests also have found the course useful in advancing their own thinking and research.

Besides reviewing important research that has been done in the field of writing research in the past 20 or so years, we will explore the theories that underlie the research, paying special attention to how to relate theory and empirical research. This aspect of the course should help students figure out how to use theory as part of the research that they do and how to use theory to think about classroom decision-making.

In addition, we will pay special attention to research methods that are commonly used in writing research and that can be useful for studying a number of topics related to teaching and learning. These include: (a) ways to link analyses of talk about writing and writing itself; (b) how to study students' thinking as they write and to link their thinking to their socio-cultural context; and (c) ways to assess written language. Such topics have broad implications for linking varied sorts of multimodal data in answering research questions, regardless of the topic of the research; for how to link studies of cognition with studies of sociocultural worlds; and for how to use written language data as a data source in a broad range of studies of teaching and learning.

Given the focus on writing, I try also to attend to the writing needs of the students in the class and help them develop as academic writers. For class projects, students will have the opportunity to work in an area of special interest. Doctoral students often use this course as an opportunity to make significant progress on a position paper or dissertation proposal; MA students often delve

deeply into some aspect of pedagogy and can make significant progress conceptualizing and writing their MA papers.

Foundational to all that we do will be an exploration of the theories and research methods that are commonly used in writing research. From this foundation, we then review and analyze empirical research in four key areas related to written language in school settings (Kindergarten through University):

1. Writing in the diverse communities schools serve, with attention to how the functions and uses of out-of-school writing relate to those in-school.
2. Learning to write in school, including writers' processes, their developmental paths, and the role writing plays in learning across the curriculum.
3. Teaching writing in school settings, including teaching-learning interactions and their effects on student learners and including the connections between learning to write and learning to read.
4. Evaluating writing in the classroom and for large-scale assessments.

### **Goals**

By the end of the course, I hope all students will: (a) develop a familiarity with some of the research on written language as it relates to writing in schools; (b) develop an understanding of the various theories that underlie research on writing and their implications; (c) develop some understanding of methods commonly used in studying written language and of how to use them; (d) learn how to read and critique writing research; and (e) consider directions for future research in this area of literacy studies.

## Requirements

### **Writings about the Readings (20%).**

Reading logs will be due each week. You will be expected to write about each of the readings for the week. First provide an abstract of what you have read (one for each piece if there are multiple pieces). The abstract might be anywhere from one paragraph to a couple of pages, depending on the length and complexity of the reading. The rule of thumb is "shorter is better." Try to include only the most central points in your abstract.

After you have abstracted the main points, provide your response to the reading. You might include what you think, and you might also include any questions the reading raises, including questions you have about what the author means. It is a good idea to write about what you don't fully understand and to try to articulate your confusion; written explorations may lead you to new understandings or point to questions you would like to discuss during class.

I will try to give you some time to add to your writing after class discussion, so that you can note what still puzzles you or so that you can note new thoughts that you have gathered from your classmates and professor.

A rough idea of length expectations. I expect about two pages per reading, with a little more for longer readings and a little less for shorter ones. These expectations are very flexible and will differ from individual to individual. If the writing is proving very helpful to you in processing the material and if you find you want to write more, feel free to do so. If the writing becomes a burden, which does not seem to help you grapple with the material, please come to see me--sooner rather than later.

### **Paper (50%)**

Topics for the course paper can focus on any area of theory or research related to writing in school settings that is of special interest to you. Ph.D. and Ed.D. students might want to work on a position paper or dissertation proposal. M.A. students might want to work on their M.A. projects. I expect each student to settle on a topic by the end of the first month of class. I will work with you on topic selection and am available to review outlines and drafts of papers as you are writing; in addition, you will be getting feedback from your peers.

**Due: September 29—Ideas for paper topics.**

**October 13—One page proposal.**

**November 15 (MONDAY)—Outlines and draft writing if you want me to review it.**

**December 1—Paper Due, accompanied by class presentation.**

### **Extra Book and In-Class Presentations (20%)**

You will read one book that reports on a major piece of research on writing and write a 1 page summary and opinion piece about the book for your classmates. The summary should be about 1/2 page and the other 1/2 page you can provide your opinions about the strengths and

weaknesses of the book, telling what you think is interesting as well as what else you'd like from the book.

You should use your presentation time to summarize the book, suggest what is useful about it, and to discuss any particular strengths or weaknesses you found in the theoretical framing, the research design and/or the methods.

Under the week of April 22 you will find a suggested list of books, but you also may choose a book that is not on the list. The only restriction on your choice is that the book has to report the results of empirical research that studies some aspect of written language in school. If you want to choose a book that is not on the list, please let me know.

You might want to read and report on a book that will be useful for your paper.

**Due: November 10.**

**Participation, including theory presentation on September 22 (10%).**

### Readings

The following books contain required readings and are available for purchase at the ASUC bookstore:

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination* (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1979/1986). "The Problem of Speech Genres," In M.M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press,

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with words*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Vygotsky, L. (1980). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

In lieu of a reader, see bSpace Resources for pdfs of other readings for this class. Print out these readings and bring them to class or have them available electronically. These readings are copyrighted and are for your personal use.

**SYLLABUS—EDUC 253A, SPRING, 2008—PROF. SARAH WARSHAUER FREEDMAN**

**PART I: THEORETICAL FRAMES FOR STUDIES IN WRITING**

9/1 Introduction to the course--Overview of the History and Theoretical Frames for Studying Written

Language

See long and extensive bibliography at:

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~drrussel/621/writing708.html> (a bit dated but good in many areas)

In class:

Nystrand, M. (2006). The social and historical context for writing research. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research*. New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 11-27. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Applebee, A., & Langer, J. (2006). The state of writing instruction in America's schools: What existing data tell us. Report from CELA. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Juzwik, M., S. Curcic, K. Wolbers et al. (2006). Writing into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Written Communication*, 23, 451-476. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

See *RTE* November bibliographies **PDF sample on bSpace Resources**

9/8 Theoretical Frames for Understanding Written Language: Vygotskian roots

- Symbol systems
- Language and learning
- Activity systems, mediation, and practice

READING:

Vygotsky, *Mind in Society*, pp. 19-30, 45-57, 79-91, 105-119

**Choose a topic for 9/22 theory presentation**

9/15 Theoretical Frames for Understanding Written Language: Bakhtinian roots

- Dialogic interactions

- Genre

READINGS:

Ultimately you'll want to read all of both to understand Bakhtin's theories as they apply to understanding how students learn to write, but for now, select portions that help you understand what Bakhtin means by dialogic interactions and genre.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (pp. 259-366, 417-422) (M. Holquist, Ed., C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press (Original work written 1934-1935).

Bakhtin, M.M. (1986). "The Problem of Speech Genres," In M.M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (pp. 60-102) (C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Eds. V. McGee, Trans.). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press (Original work written 1952-1953).

9/22 Additional theoretical frames, including expansion of Vygotskian and Bakhtinian frames (I will be away and you will video your presentations; I will Skype in if at all possible):

Assignment: Report on the set of readings that interests you most. Prepare a presentation for the class. For this presentation, you will review the theory and suggest ways it might be useful for thinking about studying written language. You might even imagine a concrete study that would be usefully framed by the theory. The theories below include the following: (1) ethnographies of communication and literacy practice (2) activity theory; (3) genre theory; and (4) discourse analysis, including varied linguistic theories. I have listed a consultant for each of the four sets of theory readings; these are my students who are at the dissertation stage and who are using the theory in their own research or who are using closely related theories.

Topic 1: Ethnographies of communication and literacy practice (Consultant: Agnes Mazur)

Hymes, D. (1972). "Introduction." In C. Cazden, V. John, & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Functions of language in the classroom* (pp. xi-xxxix). New York: Teachers College Press. **(On Reserve in EP Library or PDF)**

Street Brian. (1995). *Social literacies: Critical approaches to literacy in development, ethnography and education*. London: Longman. (see especially the first part of the book) **(On Reserve in EP Library)**

Topic 2: Activity Theory (Consultant: Sharon Merritt)

<http://www.edu.helsinki.fi/activity/pages/chatanddwr/>

[http://carbon.cudenver.edu/%7Emryder/itc\\_data/activity.html](http://carbon.cudenver.edu/%7Emryder/itc_data/activity.html)

<http://communication.ucsd.edu/MCA/Paper/Engestrom/expanding/toc.htm>

<http://lchc.ucsd.edu/MCA/Paper/Engestrom/expanding/intro.htm>

Lave J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, pp. 45-58. (concept of practice) **PDF on bSpace**

Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. More depth on the concept of practice and on issues of identity as they intersect with learning. **(On Reserve in EP Library)**

Leont'ev, (1981) in J. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology*. Armonk, NY: Sharpe Press. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

#### Topic 3: More on Genre and Genre Theory (Consultant: Kate Frankel)

Halliday, M.A.K. (1978). Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning. London: Edward Arnold, pp. 128-151. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Miller, C. (1984). Genre as social action. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 70, 151-167. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Kress, G. (1993). Genre as a social process. In B. Cope, & M. Kalantzis, Eds., *The powers of literacy. A genre approach to teaching writing*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 22-37. **(to be PDF on bSpace Resources)**

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. (see especially pp. **(On Reserve in EP Library)**)

Bakhtin, Speech Genres, pp.60-102.

#### Topic 4: Critical Discourse Analysis (Consultant: Liz Boner)

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language, language in social life series*. London: Longman. **(On Reserve in EP Library)**

or

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analysing discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, London/New York: Routledge. **(On Reserve in EP Library)**

and

Luke, Allan. (1995-1996). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 2-48. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Rogers, R., E. Malancharuvil-Berkes, M. Mosley, D. Hui, & G. O'Garro Joseph. (2005). Critical discourse analysis in education: A review of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, 75 (3), 365-395. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

## **PART II: EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF LEARNING TO WRITE IN SCHOOL, INCLUDING**

- **connections between school and out-of-school writing,**
- **writers' processes,**
- **writers' developmental paths, and**
- **teaching and learning**

9/29 Connections between in school and out-of-school writing  
Theoretical and methodological focus: Ethnography of communication

### **READING:**

Heath, S.B. (1983), *Ways with words*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, pp. 19-72, 190-235, 265-342.

### **Due: Ideas for paper topics.**

10/6 Inside Schools: Writers' Processes

Early studies analyzed text and process out of context. The theoretical lens was Chomskyan linguistics (1960s) and cognitive science (1970s-early 1980s). Using any one of the theoretical frames above, how would you critique these studies? What can they do that current, more sociocultural and critical studies cannot do?

The early turn was from studies of product to studies of process.

Theoretical and methodological focus: Cognitive, with its research tool of the think-aloud protocol

### **READINGS:**

Flower, L., & Hayes, J.R. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication*, 32 (4), 365-387. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Smagorinsky, P. (1998). Thinking and speech and protocol analysis. *Mind, culture and activity*, 5 (3), 157-177. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Ericsson, K.A., & Simon, H. (1998). Thinking and speech and protocol analysis. *Mind, culture and activity*, 5 (3), 178-186. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

### **Additional Resources:**

Also of interest is *Educational Researcher*, Volume 32, Number 8, November, 2003. Series of articles on novice-expert studies and the issue of gaining expertise.

For a critique of process work and an argument for sociocultural theory see: Prior, Paul. (2006). A sociocultural theory of writing. In C. MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research*. New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 54-66. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

10/13 Writers' Developmental Paths: Genre Theory (Special Guest: Kate Frankel)—Read Kate's paper for this class, which became a position paper and which she has submitted for publication). Talk about class papers. (I will be away but will Skype in if at all possible)

### READINGS:

Chapman, M. (2002). A longitudinal case study of curriculum genres, K-3. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 27 (1), 21-44. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Freedman, A., & Adam, C. (1996). Learning to write professionally: "Situated learning" and the transition from university to professional discourse. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, 10 (4), 395-427. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Beck, S. W. (2006). Subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the teaching and learning of writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 40(4), 413-460. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

**For a model course and position paper, taking a point of view on this aspect of writing research, see:** Frankel, Kate. (submitted). Rethinking the Role of Explicit Genre Instruction in the Classroom. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

### **Additional Resource:**

For a review of genre-focused research with a sense of its pedagogical implications, see: Donovan, C., & Smolkin, L. (2006). Children's understanding of genre and writing development. In MacArthur, S. Graham, & J. Fitzgerald (Eds.), *Handbook of writing research*. New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 131-143. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

**DUE: One page paper proposal (email to me by Oct 13)**

10/20 Writers' Developmental Paths: Vygotskian and Bakhtinian theory, with a focus on the analysis of linguistic interactions, including the analysis of texts in context

**READINGS:**

Nicolopoulou, A. G., & Richner, E. S. (2004). "When your powers combine, I am Captain Planet?": The developmental significance of individual- and group-authored stories by preschoolers. *Discourse Studies*, 6, 347-371. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Dyson, A.H. (2001). Donkey Kong in Little Bear country: A first-graders' composing development in the media spotlight. *The Elementary School Journal*, 10 (4). Special Issue: Writing. pp. 417-433. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

10/27 Teaching and Learning: Vygotskian and Bakhtinian theories of social interaction [

**READINGS:**

Gutierrez, K. (1994). How talk, context, and script shape contexts for learning: A cross-case comparison of journal sharing. *Linguistics and education*. 5, 335-365. (also study of application of writing process research) **PDF on bSpace Resources**

or

Orellana, M. (1995). Literacy as a gendered social practice: Tasks, texts, talk, and take-up. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 30 (4), 674-708. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

and

Knoeller, C. (2004). Narratives of rethinking: The inner dialogue of classroom discourse and student writing. In A. Ball & S. Freedman (Eds.), *Bakhtinian perspectives on language, literacy, and learning* (pp. 148-171). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. **PDF on bSpace**

or

Dysthe, O. (1996). The multivoiced classroom: Interactions of writing and classroom discourse. *Written Communication, 13* (3), 385-425. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

**DUE: Book Report Choices**

- 11/3 Inside Classrooms--Analyzing Instructional Talk around Writing and Mixed Methods (Possible Special Guests: Sperling and Calfee)

**READINGS:**

Add reading from *On Mixed Methods*. To be determined.

Sperling, M., & Woodlief, L. (1997). Two Classrooms Two Communities Two classrooms, two writing communities: Urban and suburban tenth-graders learning to write. *Research in the Teaching of English, 31*, 205-239. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Sperling, M. (2004). Is contradiction contrary?. In In A. Ball & S, Freedman (Eds.), *Bakhtinian perspectives on language, literacy, and learning* (pp. 232-251). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. **PDF on bSpace**

- 11/10 Writing in the schools: Vygotskian and Bakhtinian theory and mixed methods continued. (Possible special guests: Verda Delp and Suzanne Mills Crawford)

**READINGS:**

Freedman, S.W., Delp, V., & Crawford, S. (2005). Teaching English in untracked classrooms. *Research in the Teaching of English, 40* (1), 62-126. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Freedman, S.W., & Delp, V. (2007). Conceptualizing a Whole-Class Learning Space: A Grand Dialogic Zone. *Research in the Teaching of English, 41*(3), 259-268. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

Valdés, G. (2004). The teaching of academic language to minority second language learners. In A. Ball & S, Freedman (Eds.), *Bakhtinian perspectives on language, literacy, and learning* (pp. 66-98). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press. **PDF on bSpace Resources**

**Due Monday, November 15: Outlines and draft writing if you want me to review them. As you know, the more you have completed by this point, the better response I can give.**

11/17 (or alternate date) Writing in the schools (Book reports) (Video)

BOOKS TO SELECT FROM:

Fisher, M. T. *Black literate lives : Historical and contemporary perspectives*. New York : Routledge, 2009.

Fisher, M. T. (2007). *Writing in rhythm: Spoken word poetry in urban classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Freedman, S.W., with C. Greenleaf & M. Sperling. (1986). *Response to student writing*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Freedman, S.W. (1994). *Exchanging writing, exchanging cultures: Lessons in school reform from the United States and Great Britain*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Freedman, S.W., Simons, E.R., & Kalnin, J. (1999). *Inside city schools: Investigating literacy in multicultural classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hillocks, G. (1995). *Teaching writing as reflective practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hillocks. G. (2002). *The testing trap*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Ivanic, Roz. (1998). *Writing and Identity: The Discoursal Construction of Identity in Academic Writing*. Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins.

Langer, J., & Applebee, A. (1987). *How writing shapes thinking : A study of teaching and learning*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Lieberman, A., & Wood, D. (2003). *Inside the National Writing Project*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Luria, A.R. (1977-78). The development of writing in the child. *Soviet Psychology*, 16 (2), 65-114.

Nystrand, M., with A. Gamoran, R. Kachur, & C. Prendergast (1997). *Opening dialogue: Understanding the dynamics of language and learning in the English classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Valdés, G. (2001). *Learning and not learning English: Latino students in American schools*. New York: Teachers College Press.

**PART III EVALUATING WRITING IN THE CLASSROOM AND FOR LARGE-SCALE ASSESSMENTS**

11/24 (or alternate date)

Writing in the Schools: Policy and assessment issues: Overview--Holistic, analytic, primary trait scoring. Portfolios. Studies of the effects of assessment, from the National Assessment of Educational Progress to varied state assessment systems.

NO READINGS

12/1 **COURSE PAPERS DUE--PARTY AND PAPER PRESENTATIONS**