

## **A JOINT STANFORD-BERKELEY COURSE**

**RESEARCH IN WRITING AND WRITING INSTRUCTION: SPECIAL TOPICS  
FOLLOW-UP TO THE MIDWINTER RESEARCH CONFERENCE OF FEB, 2000**  
*New Literacies for New Times: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning  
for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

**ED 243 - Winter Quarter 2002—Stanford  
Spring Semester 2002—Berkeley**

**Tuesdays 4 - 7 pm**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This year's course will focus on a special topic. The topic of the course for this year will be "*New Literacies for New Times: Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*" The course will be co-taught by Dr. Arnetha F. Ball at Stanford University and Dr. Sarah W. Freedman at University of California Berkeley. In general, the course is designed to familiarize students with important theoretical perspectives that have dominated the literature in recent years. This course will serve as an introduction to the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin and their relationship to literacy studies and to the teaching and learning of writing. In addition, this course is designed to provide students with opportunities to consider how that theory and research apply to the practice of writing instruction. Through close and critical examination of key articles, books and chapters, the course aims to familiarize students with current and historical perspectives on Bakhtin, writing research, and key research findings that relate to teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Each week we will look at these issues from a micro level by looking closely at selected texts written by and about Bakhtin and Voloshinov, giving participants a broad survey of Bakhtin's work. Each week we will also look at these issues from a macro level by responding to works in progress written by contemporary scholars from a Bakhtinian perspective. Active participation in the course should result in the students' ability to engage in a critical evaluation, discussion and presentation of scholarship written from a Bakhtinian perspective.

Throughout the course, we will attempt to push the boundaries of current thinking on Bakhtinian theory by studying essays written by current scholars who are considering the significance of Bakhtin's work on critical issues of language, teaching, multilingualism and classroom discourse, and who are trying to understanding the linguistic practices of diverse language users as complex literate practices. As we dialogue with each other and some of the authors of these texts through on-line conversations, we will create a model of Bakhtinian "heteroglossia" and "dialogic intertextuality" that we will share with others through class presentations and possibly through other means of distribution and publication. The interactive and intertextual on-line conversations that emerge around the course readings will result in dialogic conversations that promise to add new perspectives to research on writing and Bakhtinian scholarship. The closing discussions in this course will focus on the challenges that lie ahead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

The class meetings will take place at Stanford University and UC Berkeley on alternate weeks. The course will begin with a general introduction and overview of the theoretical perspectives of Mikhail Bakhtin followed by weekly discussions of assigned course readings. In addition, each course participant will have an opportunity to read and respond to a selected text written by a contemporary scholar; lead an on-line discussion that focuses on that text; synthesize the results of that on-line discussion; and lead a class discussion on the text. Each essay will relate to our

unifying theme, *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*.

We will raise a number of questions and issues regarding Bakhtinian scholarship, writing research and instruction. Some questions and issues we may resolve; others may not be resolved in a course of one term. A major goal of this course is to discover that not only answers but also new questions emerge as we study, teach and conduct research in this field.

## COURSE READINGS

Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). Discourse in the novel. In Holquist, Michael (Ed), The dialogic imagination: Four essays by M. M. Bakhtin. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1986). The problem of speech genres. In Emerson, C. and Holquist, M. (Eds.) M. M. Bakhtin: Speech genres and other late essays. Vern W. McGee (Translator). Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M. M. (1968). Folk humor and carnival laughter. In Bakhtin, M. M., Rabelais and his world. Helene Iswolsky (Translator). Austin, TX: MIT Press.

Voloshinov, V. N. (1929). Marxism and the philosophy of language. Critique of Saussurian Linguistics. In Morris, P. (Ed.) *The Bakhtin Reader*, pp. 25-37.

## SUPPLEMENTAL TEXTS

Clark, K. and Holquist, M. (1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Farmer, F. (1998). *Landmark essays on Bakhtin, rhetoric and writing*. Lawrence Earlbaum Associates.

Halasek, Kay. (1999). *A pedagogy of possibility: Bakhtinian perspectives on composition studies*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Hirschkop, Ken and Shepherd, David. (1989). *Bakhtin and cultural theory*. NY: Manchester Univ. Press/St. Martin's Press.

Morris, Pam. (1994). *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*. NY: Routledge.

Morson, Gary Saul. (1986). *Bakhtin: Essays and dialogues on his work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

- Jan. 8th Introduction to course (class meets at Stanford)
- Jan 15th Overview of Bakhtinian Theory and Introduction to the work of Mikhail Bakhtin  
Discussion of "Discourse in the novel" (Class meets at Stanford)
- Jan 22nd Discussion of: "Discourse in the novel" continued

- Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at UC Berkeley)
- Jan 29th Discussion of: "Discourse in the novel" continued  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at Stanford)
- Feb 5th Discussion of: "The problem of speech genres"  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at UC Berkeley)  
Invite guest speaker (tentative). To Be Announced.
- Feb 12th Discussion of: "The problem of speech genres" continued  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at Stanford)
- Feb 19th Discussion of: "Folk humor and carnival laughter"  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at UC Berkeley)
- Feb 26th Discussion of: "Folk humor and carnival laughter" continued  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at Stanford)
- March 5th Discussion of: assigned excerpt from V. N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the philosophy of language: Critique of Saussurian Linguistics, found in The Bakhtin Reader, pp. 25-37.  
Student led critiques and illumination of the week's essays by contemporary scholars and a synthesis of the week's on-line discussions (class meets at UC Berkeley)
- March 12th Final Projects and concluding essays (class meets at Stanford)

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for the course will be determined in the following way:

- 25% Class attendance, assignments and participation in on-line and class discussions
- 35% Student led illumination of one essay written by a contemporary scholar, leadership demonstrated in stimulating an on-line discussion concerning that essay, and a class led discussion that synthesizes the week's on-line discussion
- 40% A 5 to 6 page paper that 1) summarizes, critiques, animates and illuminates your assigned essay that was written by a contemporary scholar and 2) pulls together the on-line discussion that occurred concerning your assigned essay in such a way that it pushes the scholar's paper forward.

Note: In order to complete the second assignment listed above, each course participant will select an essay that was written by a contemporary scholar and read it over very closely. By the Thursday prior to your assigned class session, you will post your initial critique, response and reactions to the paper. You will also stimulate a thoughtful interactive on-line discussion that focuses on a range of important and interesting points in the paper. By Sunday, each member of the class will respond to your comments. Before class begins on Tuesday, you will write up a synthesis of the week's on-line discussion and carefully prepare to provide the leadership for a stimulating in-class discussion concerning that essay.