

Gender and Literacy
WS151 Fall 2004

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This course explores the use of reading and writing to create and maintain social identities with an emphasis on gender, race and class. Our investigation will extend across different cultures and through history, thinking about writing as technology as well as writing as art. To this end, we'll do research with a variety of materials including our historical collections at campus archives as well as on-line book chats and real time book clubs. We will balance this with an exploration of illiteracy, who is illiterate here as well as abroad and how illiteracy has been addressed globally.

As part of this effort, we will also think about the nature of reading and writing in the academy. As such, we will be critically examining our own literacy as we simultaneously consider broader social and historical aspects of reading and writing. In addition, you will learn how to go about reading different types of academic texts and writing them.

Since this course is concerned with literacy, we will be writing regularly. The success of each person in this course is heavily dependent upon our collective effort as scholars. As such, you are expected to come prepared to each class having read the material, completed your written work and ready to engage in discussion. Below you will find an outline of all course readings and written assignments that will enable you to plan your work schedule.

Class Policies:

- The success of the seminar depends on regular and punctual attendance. If you will be absent due to the observance of religious holidays, please let me know in advance.
- If you have a learning difference that requires accommodation, please provide me with appropriate documentation from the Office for Students with Disabilities and let me know at the beginning of the term.
- Course work is due in class on the date indicated in the syllabus. Do not provide coursework electronically and please use at least a 12 point font such as Times, Times Roman, Palatino, New York. (They are easier on the eyes.) In the event of a printer crisis, do not come to class late. In those rare cases, you can submit the paper as late as 5 PM. Go to the Language Resource Center in the MLB or to the Lane hall computer lab if it is open and print out a copy. If work is not submitted on the day it is due, there will be one half grade penalty for each calendar day it is

late- e.g. due on Monday, submitted on Tuesday B+ becomes B, Wed. B-. etc. Resist the temptation to hang on to a paper because you are sure it will be perfect with more time. Meeting deadlines is a very valuable life skill learned as early as possible in your academic career.

- We will discuss plagiarism in detail since this is a course on literacy. While most students have familiarity with some citation format, many are confused about how to appropriately give a source credit when the idea rather than the exact words are used. Be advised that presenting someone else's work as your own is regarded as a violation of the most basic type of trust in the academy. Please familiarize yourself with the LS&A guidelines at <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/lsa/detail/0,2034,24%255Farticle%255F5143,00.htm>

Required readings:

The required books are available at Shaman Drum on State St. Readings for the first month of the course are available in a coursepack at Accucopy on E. William St. All other readings will be available electronically on University Course Reserves

Hodges, John, Suzanne Webb, Robert Miller, & Winfred Horner. *Hodge's Harbrace Handbook*. 2004 15th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace.

Purcell-Gates, Victoria. 1995 *Other People's Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Short writing assignments (40%) **Due throughout the first half of the course**

These short pieces will occur throughout the term to help you explore issues we are discussing as well as to introduce you to certain types of academic writing that will be important for your longer papers. They will be graded $\sqrt{+}$ (exceeds expectations), $\sqrt{}$ (meets expectations), and $\sqrt{-}$ (does not meet expectations). If you earn all \sqrt{s} , you will have achieved 80% of this part of your grade. Each + raises your grade 5 points; each minus lowers it 5 points. You cannot exceed a total of 40% of your grade.

Monaghan **Due Sept. 20 2-3 pgs.**

Using the understandings of literacy and of gender from the readings on Sept. 13 and 15, discuss how Monaghan views literacy and gender. Support your claims with evidence from her article.

Literacy practices of others **Due Sept. 27 4 pgs.**

The goal of this first paper is to do some exploratory research on literacy practices interviewing someone you know. You might find it interesting to interview an elderly person or someone from a different culture. Use Brandt's interview questions to help you formulate yours. You may wish to consider the following types of questions but feel free to consider any others that come to mind. Were reading and/or writing communal activities, something your family did as a group? Were there early literacy experiences that you recall? Were they emblematic of how your family or particular members of your

family viewed literacy? Did family members differ in whether they read for pleasure and in what they read? Do you notice patterns of reading or writing that differentiate your family along gender lines? Were there special places for reading and writing? Was a language other than English used in your home and if so, did you or your family members read or write in that language? For what purpose(s)? How are ethnicity, class and gender part of this picture?

Clements research **Done in class on Sept. 27**
Summary of Finnegan **Due Sept. 29 2-3 pgs.**

Comparison between Fishman and Wagner **Due Oct. 11 3 pgs.**

There are many comparisons to be made between these two articles. Select a number you find most compelling and which lend themselves to rich detail. Some of the issues you might consider (but to which you should not restrict yourself) are: How do the spoken and written word interact in the use of reading and writing? Who reads and writes and why? What role to other people play in an individual's contact with the written word?

Book Club paper (20%) **Due Nov. 3 6-8 pgs.**

You are going to study a book club, one that is on-line, on television or one that is on-going locally. Your paper will include a consideration of what it means to be a member of a reading community from the literature and how that relates to the book club you are examining, who the members are and how they came to participate, and how decisions are made about reading selections. Then you will select some aspect of the reader's responses to a particular reading to discuss in detail. This last part of the paper will account for the bulk of your grade.

Media review (20%) **Due Nov. 24 4-5 pgs**

I will prepare you for this assignment by doing an in-class exercise using material we have just read and a media account discussing it. Your task will be to find a media account of research on gender and computers, locate the original research on which it was based, and write a paper discussing the accuracy of the journalist's account including the writer's understanding of gender issues. Feel free to use sources mentioned under <http://www.terc.edu/mathequity/gw/html/weblinks.html> (listed on Nov. 17)

Writing about illiteracy for the media (20%) **Due Dec. 15 4-6pgs.**

You are going to write an article for a newspaper or magazine on illiteracy and its relation to gender. This might be an OP piece of the kind you find in the New York Times focusing on some key aspect of a literacy program or a feature article about a particular literacy program focusing on such issues as the need, impact, and characteristics. This article should also reflect your understanding of the issues surrounding illiteracy that we have discussed in the course.

Extra credit

If you bring in your voter's registration card, you receive 5 extra credit points. You need to do this by mid October.

Sept. 8 Introduction

Sept. 13 What is literacy?

Scribner, Sylvia. 1988 Literacy in Three Metaphors. In Eugene Kintgen, Barry Kroll, Mike Rose(Eds.) *Perspectives on Literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Gee, James Paul. 1996 *Social Linguistics and Literacy*. London: Taylor & Francis, pp.57-59.

Go to <http://www.onevotefilm.com> and be prepared to discuss it today

Sept. 15 What is gender?

Lorber, Judith. 1994 “Night to His Day”: The Social Construction of Gender (Ch. 1) and Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology (Ch. 2—especially 37-40 and 49-54) *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Monaghan, E. Jennifer. 1989 Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England. In Cathy Davidson(Ed.) *Reading in America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press.

Sept. 20 Literacy practices in modern America

Brandt, Deborah. 2001 *Literacy in American Lives*, Ch. 3 and Appendix (Interview Script) Footnotes for Chapters 3 and 4 appear after Chapter 4. This is followed by the Appendix.

Monaghan paper due

Sept. 22 Literacy practices in modern America

Brandt Ch. 4

On writing summaries

Sept. 27 Early American literacy

Meeting at the Clements Library 909 S. UNIVERSITY (NEXT TO THE PRESIDENT’S HOUSE) FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE LIBRARY SEE

WWW.CLEMENTS.UMICH.EDU/WHO.HTML

Literacy practices paper due

In-class writing assignment

Sept. 29 Technologies of literacy

Ong, Walter. 1988 Some Psychodynamics of Orality. In Eugene Kintgen, Barry Kroll, & Mike Rose(Eds.) *Perspectives on Literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

Finnegan, Ruth. 1988 Speech, Language and Non-Literacy: the Limba of Sierra Leone. *Literacy and Orality*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Summary of Finnegan due and to be discussed in class

On writing comparisons

Oct. 4 Technologies of literacy

Mignolo, Walter. 1994 Literacy and the Colonization of Memory: Writing Histories of People without History. In Deborah Keller-Cohen (Ed.) *Literacy : Interdisciplinary Conversations*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

Keller-Cohen, Deborah. 1994 The Web of Literacy: Speaking, Reading and Writing in 17th and 18th Century America. . In Deborah Keller-Cohen (Ed.) *Literacy : Interdisciplinary Conversations*. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.

Oct. 6 Communities of literacy: The religious and the secular

Fishman, Andrea. *Amish Literacy* . Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1988. Ch. 2

Farr, Marcia. (in press) Literacy and Religion: Reading, Writing and Gender among Mexican Women in Chicago. Marcia Farr (Ed.) *Latino Language and Literacy in Ethnolinguistic Chicago*. N.J.: Erlbaum. (electronic reserves)

Oct. 11 Communities of literacy: The religious and the secular

Wagner, Daniel, Messick, Brinkely, & Spratt, Jennifer. 1986 Studying Literacy in Morocco. In Bambi Schieffelin & Perry Gilmore(Eds.) *The Acquisition of Literacy*. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex, 233-260.

Comparison of Fishman and Wagner et al. due

Oct. 13 Session at Shapiro Undergraduate Library

We meet in 4059 Shapiro. Directions: take the elevator to the 4th floor, take a right as you step off the elevator, go to the windows, take another right. The classroom is half-way down this hallway, on the right.

Oct. 18 Fall Study Break

Oct. 20 Readers and their communities

Rosenblatt, Louise M. **Writing and Reading: The Transactional Theory Reader: Essays in Reader-Oriented Theory, Criticism, and Pedagogy** 20, (1988 Fall): p. 7-31 (Electronic reserves)

Radway, Janice. 1991. *Reading the Romance*. Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press, Ch. 2 (46-85)

Oct. 25 Readers and their communities

Finders, Margaret. 1996. Just Girls: Literacy and Allegiance in Junior High School. *Written Communication*, 13(1):93-129.

Come to class having surveyed the following book club web sites, prepared to discuss the similarities and differences among them in preparation for your book club paper.

<http://www.jocolibrary.org/index.asp?DisplayPageID=1259>

<http://www.spaghetlibookclub.org/>

<http://www.smartgirl.org>

http://www.oprah.com/books/books_landing.jhtml

Oct. 27 Readers and their communities

Sarris, Greg. 1992 Keeping Slug Woman Live: The Challenge of Reading in the Reservation Classroom. In Jonathan Boyarin(Ed.) *The Ethnography of Reading*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 238-269. (electronic reserves)

Work in the computer lab on book club

Nov. 1 Literacy in the academy

Bartholomae, D. 1985 Inventing the University. In M. Rose (Ed.) *When a Writer Can't Write*. N.Y.: Guilford Press, 373-85.
Hodge's Harbrace Handbook. 15th edition. Chapters 39 and 40.

Nov. 3 Language of authority: Standard language

Milroy, Lesley and James Milroy. 1991 *Authority in Language*. London and New York: Routledge, 28-54.

Heath, Shirley Brice. 1992 Why No Official Tongue? In James Crawford(Ed.) *Language Loyalties*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press. Excerpted from A National Language Academy? Debate in the New Nation. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 1976, 11:9-43. (electronic reserves)

Book Club paper due

Nov. 8 National Endowment for the Arts. *Reading at Risk 2004* Washington, D. C. Research Division Report #46. (electronic reserves)

Discussion of media review and in-class exercise

Nov. 10 Computers and gender

Film: The Digital Divide

Cooper, Joel and Weaver, Kimberlee. 2003 *Gender and Computers*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, Ch. 3 .

Nov. 15 Computers and gender

Valian, Virginia. 1999 *Why So Slow?* Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press, Chapter 2 pages 23-39 only; Chapter 3-Learning about gender .

Cooper, Joel and Weaver, Kimberlee. 2003 *Gender and Computers*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, Chapter 5- A Threat is in the Air .

Nov. 17 Computers and gender

Go to <http://www.terc.edu/mathequity/gw/html/weblinks.html> and read the following: Under the section Articles and Research- Gender

and Technology: De Bare's series of articles "Women in Computing", "Retooling Play"; also under Articles and Research, Marketing/Games for Girls/Popular Culture: "The Girl-Game Jinx", "Girl Games."

- Nov. 22. Illiteracy**
Film: Other People's Words
- Nov. 24 Illiteracy**
Purcell-Gates, Virginia. 1995 *Other People's Words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press Introduction and Chapters 1-3
Media review due
- Nov. 29 Illiteracy**
Purcell-Gates, Virginia. *Other People's Words*. Ch 4-7
- Dec. 1 Illiteracy**
Purcell-Gates, Virginia. *Other People's Words*. 8,9
Discussion with a representative from Washtenaw Literacy
- Dec. 6 National literacy campaigns**
Hayford, Charles. 1987 Literacy Movements in Modern China. In Robert Arnove & Harvey Graf(Eds.) *National Literacy Campaigns*. N.Y.: Plenum.
Freire, Paulo. 2001 Education for Critical Consciousness. *The Paulo Freire Reader*. Ana Maria Araújo Freire and Donald Macedo(Eds.) New York: Continuum, pp.80-110. (electronic reserves)
Discussion with a representative from the Family Literacy Institute
- Dec. 8 What is literacy for?**
Nafisi, Azar. 2004 *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. Part 2 Gatsby
Discussion with the Migrant Program, English Language Institute
- Dec. 13 Our journey**
Moje, Elizabeth. 2000 "To Be Part of the Story": The Literacy Practices of Gangsta Adolescents. *Teacher's College Record*, 109(3):651-690. (electronic reserves)
- Dec. 15 Illiteracy paper due by 5PM in 2110 Lane Hall**