



ENG 570: Strategies in Composition
THEME: Community Literacy
COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2015

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COURSE INFORMATION

Description: In English 570 (“Strategies in Composition”), students will examine strategies in composition for community engagement, especially with respect to the ways writing might help bridge the seemingly insurmountable gap between universities and the communities in which they are situated (the “town”/“gown” dichotomy). Together, we will consider questions like the following: How have everyday people used writing to make a difference in their local communities? How do/can ordinary people “go public”? How do/can college students go public, and how can educators best support them? We will cover issues in community literacy studies, featuring historical examples of ordinary people garnering rhetorical agency across local publics and contemporary examples of civic engagement both within and beyond the college writing classroom.

Required Texts: *Community Literacy and the Rhetoric of Local Publics* (Long 2008), *Writing and Community Engagement* (Deans et. al., 2010) *Writing Democracy*, special issue of *Community Literacy Journal* (Carter and Mutnick, Eds, Fall 2012), *Cedar Crossing* (Busby 2013).

Additional Resources, including prominent Community Literacy projects, can be found in our Zotero Group Library (<https://www.zotero.org/groups/english570/items>). I will continue to add to this list over the next several weeks.

ASSIGNMENTS

FORUMS (30%): We will hold the bulk of our class discussions in the “Forums.” You will have ten of these throughout the term. Our goals for each Forum are to explore the assigned readings, lectures, and other, related elements in meaningful conversation with one another, just as you would in any graduate seminar meeting face-to-face. For that reason, I ask you to keep up with your assigned readings, and post in each assigned forum at least twice—once early in the conversation to get things started and again later in the discussion to keep it moving in meaningful directions. [see [Grading Rubric: Forums](#)]

Deadlines: For our online discussions, each "Week" begins at midnight on Monday and ends before midnight the following Sunday. For our Forums each week, I ask that you post at least once early in the week (before midnight on Wednesday) and again before the week's end (before midnight the following Sunday).

UNIT RESPONSE PAPERS (20%): At the end of the first two units, you will complete a response paper that addresses key issues raised in the assigned readings, videos, and other related "texts." Because these Unit 1-2 Response Papers are more formal writing assignments than your contributions to the various Forums, I expect them to be well thought-out, critical, carefully written, and reflect a deep understanding of the texts read and discussed throughout each unit. Your best preparation for each RP will be extensive participation in the Forums throughout each unit. In other words, each unit includes at least two Forums. Each Response Paper serves as the culminating activity for a given Unit before moving on to the next. Therefore, *your contributions to the Forums throughout each of the four units will provide much fodder for your response papers due at the end of each unit.*

Unit 1 Response Paper: Definitions and Debates in the Community Literacy

Objective: Familiarize yourself with various definitions and debates surrounding Community Literacy (CL), especially as they might inform your understanding of CL's potential applications to your own interests as a teacher, writer, and scholar.

Unit 1 attempts to build a foundation for understanding Community Literacy. You will spend the bulk of this unit exploring recurring debates and themes in CL. Thus, for your Unit 1 Response Paper, you should (1) focus on an issue or theme that strikes you as key in the texts and projects we've explored thus far; (2) select one or two examples that seem to address this issue in meaningful, generative, and/or otherwise significant ways.

TIPS: If you are having difficulty identifying a core theme or issue to pursue in this first Response Paper, return to our course description (see "Description" in syllabus, page 1). That's an excellent prompt for this RP. You can also use most any of your Forum posts in Unit 1 as a jumping off point for this RP. That's not cheating, it's just smart! ☺ The Forums are designed for just this purpose.

In this response paper, demonstrate your understanding of the Unit 1 objective (above) by making extensive use of the critical texts assigned throughout this unit. **(3-5 pages).**

Unit 2 Response Paper: Exploring and Critiquing Community Literacy

Objectives: Explore and critique some prominent community literacy projects. Gain a sense of the field through an analysis of the projects produced under its aegis.

In Unit 1, we built a foundation for better understanding Community Literacy. Unit 2 complicates this foundation with specific, theoretically driven examples of CL that may begin to address issues in our discipline that you find most challenging/interesting/significant. You will spend Unit 2 exploring and critiquing various CL projects in preparation for our final project. Thus, for your Unit 2 Response Paper, you should (1) focus on an issue or theme that strikes you as key in the texts and projects we've explored thus far; (2) select one or two CL projects that seem to address this issue in meaningful, generative, and/or otherwise significant ways;

In the response paper itself, you should (1) offer a clear and concise explanation of the issue or theme you have identified, making excellent use of the texts from which you are drawing to identify that important theme (remember to make extensive use of our assigned course materials, especially for this unit!). (2) Next, you should demonstrate the important ways in which these CL

projects address the issue or theme you have identified. Though you may make meaningful use of at least one CL project in your response paper, the bulk of your analysis should rest on just one of these examples. The others serve to ground your analysis in a larger conversation by demonstrating your awareness of related work in CL.

TIP 1: We will discuss multiple examples of CL in the Forums, so you should make the most of them worth pursuing in your Unit 2 RP. I will also be adding additional examples to our [Zotero Group Library](#) over the next few weeks.

TIP 2: You may use this paper to try out ideas for your final project. In response to Unit 2, the final project should offer a clear and concise summary of the CL projects most relevant to the research and/or teaching agenda you'd most like to pursue. Keep that in mind as you select your projects for the Unit 2 Response Paper. Ideally, you'll be utilizing these response papers extensively as you prepare your final project.

As this is a response paper, I expect quotation from the text and representation from texts throughout the unit—not just one text. Also, be sure that this text shows you are developing a knowledge base that begins with the foundation laid in Unit 1. **(5-7 pages).**

BOOK REVIEW (20%)

One four-page review of a scholarly book in Community Literacy. These reviews are designed to expose the group to the wider scholarly conversation as well as provide you with the opportunity to do additional reading in an area of particular interest. The reviews should be similar in length and content to those found in a refereed scholarly journal like [Community Literacy Journal](#), *Enculturation*, *Composition Forum*, *Composition Studies*, *College English*, *College Composition and Communication*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. Ideally, you should plan to submit this book review for possible publication. If interested in doing so, you should select a book that hasn't been widely reviewed in our field's key publications. [see [Grading Rubric: Book Review](#)]

TIPS: "[The Art of Reviewing](#)" (*Perspectives*, 2001); "[On Writing Book Reviews](#)" (CUNY).

Options: You can find a list of options in the "[Book Reviews](#)" collection at our [Zotero Group Library](#).

Final Project: (30%): Seminar paper or other means of extending your initial observations and insight into an extended argument presenting relevant research. Details forthcoming. Everything you are working on this term informs this final project, so you'll be ready for it!

ATTENDANCE

The word *attendance* requires some re-definition for an online course. In a traditional course, people establish their presence in a number of ways: all take a seat, some ask or answer questions, others complain about the climate. In this class you will establish your presence through your written comments to the class discussion board. In other words, if you don't contribute to the electronic discussion, we won't know you're alive and well. However, you should feel compelled to offer only substantive comments germane to the issue at hand; please do not offer comments solely to establish the fact that you've logged on. We are not bound by a particular time slot, but count on checking the website and your email several times a week to stay caught up. If you need to be away from the keyboard the day an assignment is due, you **MUST** call me at the phone number above or email me and make *satisfactory* arrangements for turning in the assignment. Failure to make *satisfactory prior* arrangements will result in your forfeiting the opportunity to turn in that assignment. **Misunderstanding the directions for uploading an**

assignment is not a satisfactory reason for not submitting an assignment on time. It is your responsibility to make sure your assignments are uploaded properly and on time.

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

Instructors in the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion. (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]). Plagiarism on one assignment in this course will most likely lead to a failing grade for the course.

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services Texas A&M University-Commerce Gee Library Room 132 Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148 StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

FORUM	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
1	post to Forum 1 before midnight, Wed. 9/2	post to Forum 1 before midnight, Sun. 9/6
2	post to Forum 2 before midnight, Wed, 9/9	post to Forum 2 before midnight, Sun. 9/13
3	post to Forum 3 before midnight, Wed, 9/16	post to Forum 3 before midnight, Sun., 9/20
4	post to Forum 4 before midnight, Wed, 9/23	post to Forum 4 before midnight, Sun., 9/27
5	post to Forum 5 before midnight, Wed, 9/30	post to Forum 5 before midnight, Sun, 10/4
6	post to Forum 6 before midnight, Wed, 9/30	post to Forum 6 before midnight, Sun, 10/4
7	post to Forum 7 before midnight, Wed, 10/7	post to Forum 7 before midnight, Sun, 10/11
post	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
RP1	submit to RP1 discussion area (at Week 6 tab) before midnight, Monday, 10/5	respond to Unit 1 RP before midnight, Sun, 10/11

FORUM	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
8	post to Forum 8 before midnight, Wed, 10/14	post to Forum 8 before midnight, Sun, 10/18

9	post to Forum 9 before midnight, Wed, 10/21	post to Forum 9 before midnight, Sun, 10/25
post	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
RP2	submit to RP2 discussion area (at Week 9 tab) before midnight, Monday, 10/26	respond to Unit 2 RP before midnight, Sat, 11/1
FORUM	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
10	post to Forum 10 before midnight, Wed, 11/4	post to Forum 10 before midnight, Sun, 11/8
post	to get the conversation started	to keep the conversation moving
Book Review	submit to "Book Review" discussion area at Week 11 tab before midnight, Mon, 11/9	respond to Book Review before midnight, Sunday, 11/15

FINALS WEEK: Final Project due!

DETAILED SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: Monday, 8/31-Sunday, 9/6

Writing Assignments: Forums 1 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

WEEK TWO: Monday, 9/7-Sunday, 9/13

GUIDING QUESTIONS: What do we (or *can* we) know about the way writing functions in our everyday lives, over life spans, and across generations?

Writing Assignments: Forums 2 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Deans, Roswell, and Wurr (*Writing and Community Engagement*)

- Introduction (1-12)
- Brandt (15-34)
- Gere (34-49)
- George (50-60)

WEEK THREE: Monday 9/14, - Sunday, 9/20

GUIDING QUESTIONS: (1) What is it that compels people to write? The answer may seem obvious. In the classroom, the most visible writing activities seem to be those assigned and graded by the person in charge (teacher). In the workplace, employees may be "compelled" to write as part of their job duties. We might even get more esoteric about it, citing a writer's "love of language" as a reason to put pen to paper. However, our concern here is not an individual writer and his or her relationship with the act of writing. Our focus is community writing--writing in, for, and about communities. What might compel people to write for one another on behalf of one another? (2) How have everyday people used writing to make a difference in their local communities?

Writing Assignments: Forums 3 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 1
- Chapter 2

From Deans, Roswell, and Wurr (*Writing and Community Engagement*)

- Wells (151-66)

From Carter and Mutnick (*Writing Democracy*)

- Welch, "[Informed, Passionate, and Disorderly](#): Uncivil Rhetoric in a New Gilded Age"
- Carter, "[A Clear Channel: Circulating Resistance in a Rural University Town](#)"

Suggested Readings:

- Video: "Before Mexico City" ([Carter](#))
- Video: "A Clear Channel" ([Carter](#))

WEEK FOUR: Monday, 9/21-Sunday, 9/27

Writing Assignments: Forums 4 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 3

From Deans, Roswell, and Wurr (*Writing and Community Engagement*)

- Parks and Goldblatt (Chapter 23)
 - From the Community: "A Tattoo's Story" (Chapter 24)
 - From the Community: "My Decision" (Chapter 25)
- Jacobi (Chapter 34)
 - From the Community: "The Dinner Table III" (Chapter 35)
 - From the Community: "O Tenacious Weed" (Chapter 36)
 - From the Community: "Disturbing Where We Are Comfortable" (Chapter 37)
- Higgins, Long, and Flower (Chapter 13)
 - From the Community: "Maybe the Reason Why" (Chapter 14)
 - From the Community: "from Naming the LD Difference" (Chapter 15)

- Cushman (Chapter 17)
 - From the Community: Cherokee Nation and Michigan State University Students (Chapter 18)

Suggested Readings:

From *College English*, November 2013 (Special Issue: Digital Humanities)

- Cushman, “Wampum, Sequoyan, and Story: Decolonizing the Digital Archive” ([Zotero Group Library](#))
From *College Composition and Communication*, September 2013 (Special Issue: The Profession)

- Rogers, “A Prison Teaching Story” ([Zotero Group Library](#))
From *Community Literacy Journal*

- Carter, “HOPE, Repair, and the Complexities of Reciprocity” ([Zotero Group Library](#))

WEEK FIVE: Monday, 9/28-10/4

Writing Assignments: Forums 5-6 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

- Forum 5: Discuss this week’s readings
- Forum 6: Explore ideas for Response Paper 1 (due next week)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 4

From Deans, Roswell, and Wurr (*Writing and Community Engagement*)

- Deans (Chapter 9)

Select **at least three** chapters from the following list (your choice!):

- Hull and James (Chapter 8)
- Coogan (Chapter 16)
- Mathieu (Chapter 20)
- Kells (Chapter 26)
- Rousculp (Chapter 27)

Suggested Reading:

From *CCC*, September 2009

- Mathieu, Paula, and Diana George, “Not Going It Alone: Public Writing, Independent Media, and the Circulation of Homeless Advocacy” ([Zotero Group Library](#))

WEEK SIX: Monday, 10/5-Sunday 10/11

Writing Assignments: Response Paper 1 due; **Forum 7** (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 5
- Chapter 6

From Deans, Roswell, and Wurr (*Writing and Community Engagement*)

- Select one article we haven't already read/discussed (your choice!)

WEEK SEVEN: Monday, 10/12-Sunday, 10/18

Writing Assignment: Forum 8 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

Reading Assignments (Required):

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 7

From Zotero Group Library (link below):

- Mutnick, "[Inscribing the World](#)" (CCC, 2007)
- Grobman, "[I'm on a Stage](#)" (CCC, 2013)
- Carter and Conrad, "[In Possession of Community](#)" (CCC, 2012)
- Gold, "[Where Brains Had a Chance": William Mayo and Rhetorical Instruction at East Texas Normal College, 1889-1917](#)" (College English, 2005)
- "[Mark Busby Re-Opens Cedar Crossing](#)" (*Texas Observer*, September 2013)

From Busby, *Cedar Crossing*

- First Half!

WEEK EIGHT: Monday, 10/19-Sunday, 10/25

Writing Assignment: Forum 9 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

From Long (*Community Literacy*)

- Chapter 8
- Chapter 9

From *Cedar Crossing*
through the end!

Trailer: [Soul of a People: Writing America's Story](#) [1:47]

- Recommended: View the entire documentary at the Smithsonian Channel or on [YouTube](#)

From CLJ special issue on Writing Democracy ([Zotero Group Library](#))

- Carter and Mutnick, "[Writing Democracy: Notes on a Federal Writers' Project for the 21st Century](#)"
- Hirsch, "[Rediscovering America: The FWP Legacy and Challenge](#)"

WEEK NINE: Monday, 10/26-Sunday, 11/1

Writing Assignment: [Response Paper 2 due](#);

WEEK TEN: Monday, 11/2-Sunday, 11/8

Writing Assignment: Forum 10 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

From CLJ special issue on Writing Democracy ([Zotero Group Library](#))

- Long, et. al., "[Gambian-American College Writers Flip the Script on Aid-to-Africa Discourse](#)"
- Jolliffe, "[Shakespeare and the Cultural Capital Tension: Advancing Literacy in Rural Arkansas](#)"
- Kells, "[What's Writing Got to Do with It?: Citizen Wisdom, Civil Rights Activism, and 21st Century Community Literacy](#)"

From *College English*, Special Issue on Rhetorical Historiography and the Digital Humanities ([Zotero](#))

- Enoch and Gold, "[Seizing the Methodological Moment: The Digital Humanities and Historiography in Rhetoric and Composition](#)"
- Carter and Dent, "[East Texas Activism \(1966–68\): Locating the Literacy Scene through the Digital Humanities](#)"
- Ridolfo, "[Delivering Textual Diaspora: Building Digital Cultural Repositories as Rhetoric Research](#)"
- Graban, "[From Location\(s\) to Locatability: Mapping Feminist Recovery and Archival Activity through Metadata](#)"
- Cushman, "Wampum, Sequoyan, and Story: Decolonizing the Digital Archive" ([Zotero Group Library](#))

WEEK ELEVEN: Monday, 11/9-Sunday, 11/15

Writing Assignment: Book Reviews (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines)

WEEK TWELVE: Monday, 11/16-Sunday, 11/22

Writing Assignment: Forum 11 (see "Schedule at a Glance" above for deadlines) [extra credit]

- **For Forum 11, post a brief (250 word) post about your plans for the Final Project. At this point, we are just spit-balling ideas here. No need to know exactly what you wish to do for the Final Project—at least not yet.**

WEEK THIRTEEN: Monday 11/23-Sunday, 11/29

TBA (Happy Thanksgiving!)

WEEK FOURTEEN: Monday 11/30-Sunday, 12/6

Conferences with me (optional) to discuss your final projects, plans, and questions you may have.

WEEK FIFTEEN: Monday 12/7-Sunday, 12/13

Nothing is due. Take this time to work on your final projects. Jump into the discussion area (Q and A) for support and guidance throughout the week.

FINALS WEEK: Monday, 12/14

Final Project Due: Post to the "Final Project" discussion area before midnight Monday, December 14th.