

Composition Theory

A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest...Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult.

Michel Foucault, "Practicing Criticism," in *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984*, edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, translated by Alan Sheridan and others, New York, 1988, pp. 154-55.

This course will take a two-pronged approach to understanding what is meant by composition theory. We will be investigating what are some of the theories that underpin the knowledge making process of composition, and we will also be confronting disciplinary histories of what composition is or should be.

The course challenges the assumption(s) of composition's theories and theories' composition within the field. While providing an approach that offers student a solid and thorough grounding in composition, the course also is meant to allow you room to find ways to use the information in your own projects, your development as a teacher scholar or as a foil against the persona you have already crafted. In other words, you will be encouraged to take the course material and use it in new ways as it relates to your own intellectual trajectory.

We will also focus on exposing the hidden curriculum of graduate school so be prepared to ask questions so that we get to the nuts and bolts of the things people think you should already know but don't. When you finish the course, you will know composition theory as it relates to the history of composition as a discipline, as well as be a more confident scholar/teacher.



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Those who kan, do.

Those who kan, and who also undirstonde both theorie and practice, who kan communicate and kan ynspire wondir, who kan summon up all their wit and creativite to protect the hard-won wysdom of past and present, who care about future generaciouns. Thei teach.

