

Independent Study, ENGL 5391  
Fall 2017  
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The State of Texas does not require independent study syllabi publication to university websites. However, in an effort to show transparency with the independent study to those who may be interested, this document outlines the required work, assessment, materials, and schedule for an independent study with one doctoral student during fall 2017.

**Required Work:**

- Weekly readings with electronic responses posted to a blogging platform.
- Brief activities, including IRB training completion, observation study.
- Mini pilot study using empirical research methods.
- Annotation of ten sources for later use in comprehensive exams and/or dissertation.
  - You may choose to annotate these weekly or submit all by the end of week ten— or some other way as long as I have all ten annotations by week ten.
- Timed two-hour exam of the ten-sourced annotations with an example exam question.
- An early-stage 10- to 15-page dissertation prospectus outlining ten sources in literature review, methods and methodologies with rationales, timeline for completion, and contribution to the discipline.

**Assessment:**

Completion of the required work receives a holistic grade for the independent study at the completion of the term. All work will receive written and/or verbal feedback (but no grade).

We'll meet, in person or via video conference, every other week to discuss the readings and projects. I will post written and/or provide verbal feedback each week for reading responses either to the blogging space or via email.

**Required Books:**

1. Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's *Applied Communication Research Methods*
2. Anne Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer's *Becoming a Writing Researcher*
3. Gesa Kirsch & Patricia A. Sullivan's *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
4. Janice M. Lauer & J. William Asher's *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*
5. Lee Nickoson & Mary P. Sheridan's *Writing Studies Research in Practice: Methods and Methodologies*

**Required Materials:**

- Blogging platform for weekly reading posts (you choose) (can be public or private, as long as I have a link to read and comment on the posts)
- Research journal (paper or electronic)
- Multiple journal articles accessible via paywall or open access

## Readings:

### Week One (ending September 3) | Ethics in Research:

- CCCC Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Research in Composition Studies
- Ellen Barton's "Further Contributions from the Ethical Turn in Composition/Rhetoric: Analyzing Ethics in Interaction"
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Ethical Research" in *Applied Communication Research Methods* (If book does not arrive in time, let me know & will PDF the unit for you)

Complete IRB training by September 3.

At conclusion of week one (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 750-word (don't go over!) response regarding ethics in human subjects research.

Future Resource: <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/ethicalconductbiblio>

### Week Two (ending September 10) | Observation and Basic Research:

- Ann Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer's "Me, A Writing Researcher" and "What's Your Question?" from *Becoming a Writing Researcher*
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Basic Principles of Research and a Guide to Using This Book" and "Basic Concepts of Research" in *Applied Communication Research Methods*

Begin keeping a research journal (separate from blog space) to record ideas each week  
Complete prompts 1, 2, and 4 from "What's Your Question?"

At conclusion of week two (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response to the Boyle & Schmierbach chapters.

Complete prompt 4, except write down what you observed after the 30-minute observation and submit no more than 750 words by Sunday at midnight for this week via email.

### Week Three (ending September 17) | Case Studies:

- Janice Lauer & J. William Asher's "Introduction" & "Case Studies" from *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*
- Linda Flower & John Hayes "The Pregnant Pause: An Inquiry into the Nature of Planning" from *RTE*
- Thomas Newkirk's "The Narrative Roots of the Case Study" in *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*

- Thomas Diefenbach’s “Are Case Studies More Than Sophisticated Storytelling? Methodological Problems of Qualitative Empirical Research Mainly Based on Semi-Structured Interviews” in *Qual Quant*
- Fiona Hyland’s “The Impact of Teacher Written Feedback on Individual Writers” in *Journal of Second Language Writing*

At conclusion of week four (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 750-word (don’t go over!) discussion of the benefits and constraints of case studies.

Record/write in research journal with ideas for a pilot micro-study that can be designed and delivered within a short amount of time this semester.

#### **Week Four (ending September 24) | Ethnography:**

- Beverly Moss’ “Ethnography and Composition: Studying Language at Home” in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
- Mary Sheridan’s “Making Ethnography Our Own: Why and How Writing Studies Must Redefine Core Research Practices” in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
- Janice Lauer & J. William Asher’s “Ethnographies” in *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*
- Ellen Cushman’s “The Rhetorician as an Agent of Social Change” in *CCC*
- Richard Bailey & Mark Garner’s “Is the Feedback in Higher Education Assessment Worth the Paper it is Written On? Teachers’ Reflections on Their Practices” in *Teaching in Higher Education*

At conclusion of week four (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 750-word (don’t go over!) response to the value of ethnography in writing studies research for the researcher and the participants.

Begin assembling two sources a week for the annotated bibliography and the timed-exam. Please forward the two sources (all journal articles) to me each week, so that I may read them & then generate an exam question for the exam during week 11.

Continue writing in research journal about pilot micro-study—thinking about the research questions, problems, and methods.

#### **Week Five (ending October 1) | Planning a Study :**

- Ann Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer’s “How Do I Find Answers? Planning Your Qualitative Research Study” in *Becoming a Writing Researcher*
- Gesa Kirsch’s “Methodological Pluralism: Epistemological Issues” in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
- Richard Haswell’s “Quantitative Methods in Composition Studies: An Introduction to Their Functionality” in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*

- Bob Broad's "Strategies and Passions in Empirical Qualitative Research" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Theory and Reading in Scholarly Research" in *Applied Communication Research Methods* (only read excerpts/areas you find important to your knowledge)

At conclusion of week five (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response to ways of planning a research study.

Begin preparing a five-page research proposal for a pilot micro-study / forward the draft in progress (even if it's just a few hundred words) by the end of the week via email.

Transition discussion in research journal from pilot micro-study focus to discussion of short-and long-term research ideas, including dissertation and journal articles.

Forward two sources for me to read that you'll annotate and use for the timed-essay exam (count = 4 sources accumulated).

### **Week Six (ending October 8) | Surveys:**

- Keith Grant-Davie's "Coding Data: Issues of Validity, Reliability, and Interpretation" in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Survey Research" in *Applied Communication Research Methods*
- Janice Lauer & J. William Asher's "Sampling and Surveys" in *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*
- Anish Dave & David Russell's "Drafting and Revision Using Word Processing by Undergraduate Student Writers: Changing Conceptions and Practices" in *Research in the Teaching of English*
- Ann Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer's "How Do I Find Answers? Carrying Out Your Qualitative Research Study, Part II" in *Becoming a Writing Researcher*

At conclusion of week six (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response on the validity and reliability of survey research.

Submit five-page research proposal for the micro-pilot study via email by the end of the week.

Record dissertation and/or journal article research ideas in research journal—begin possibly mapping out research questions for dissertation.

Forward two sources for me to read that you'll annotate and use for the timed-essay exam (count = 6 sources accumulated).

## **Week Seven (ending October 15) | Content Analysis:**

- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Effective Measurement" and "Content Analysis" in *Applied Communication Research Methods*
- Christina Haas, Pamela Takayoshi, and Brandon Carr's "Analytic Strategies, Competent Inquiries, and Methodological Tensions in the Study of Writing" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Thomas Huckin's "Context-Sensitive Text Analysis" in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*

At conclusion of week seven (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response on rigor of content analysis.

Begin early-stage development of data collection for research (be sure to submit the data collection instruments for me to review before distribution, if that happens this week).

Record dissertation and/or journal article research ideas in research journal—write about dissertation questions & move into problem statements (if ready).

Forward two sources for me to read that you'll annotate and use for the timed-essay exam (count = 8 sources accumulated).

## **Week Eight (ending October 22) | Grounded Theory**

- Joyce Magnotto Neff's "Grounded Theory: A Critical Research Methodology" in *Under Construction* edited by Christine Farris and Chris Anson (PDF)
- Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss' "Introduction to Context, Process, and Theoretical Integration" and "Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis" in *Basics of Qualitative Research 3e* (PDF)
- Cathy Charmaz's "Invitation to Grounded Theory" (PDF)
- Ann Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer's "What Do I Do With the Information I Collect? Analyzing Data" in *Becoming a Writing Researcher*

At conclusion of week eight (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response on the validity and rigor of grounded theory.

Conduct pilot micro-study research/collect data/record observations as data comes in.

Record dissertation and/or journal article research ideas in research journal—write about problem statement and how it connects to larger discipline (if ready).

Forward two sources for me to read that you'll annotate and use for the timed-essay exam (count = 10 sources accumulated).

### **Week Nine (ending October 29) | The Methods Section**

- Peter Smagorinsky's "The Methods Section as Conceptual Epicenter in Constructing Social Science Research Reports" in *Written Communication*
- Clay Spinuzzi's "Secret Sauce and Snake Oil: Writing Monthly Reports in a Highly Contingent Environment" in *Written Communication*
- Ann Blakeslee & Cathy Fleischer's "How Do I Present My Research? Writing Up Your Findings" in *Becoming a Writing Researcher*
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Experiments and Threats to Validity" in *Applied Communication Research Methods*

At conclusion of week nine (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 250-word (don't go over!) response on the importance of detailed methods.

Submit a 3- to 5-page pilot micro-study results paper via email by the end of the week.

Record dissertation and/or journal article research ideas in research journal—think about methods you might use for the dissertation.

### **Week Ten (ending November 5) | Teacher-Based Research**

- Lee Nickoson's "Revisiting Teacher Research" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Ruth Ray's "Composition from the Teacher-Research Point of View" in *Methods and Methodologies in Composition Research*
- Asao Inoue's "Racial Methodologies for Composition Studies: Reflecting on Theories of Race in Writing Assessment Research" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Lisa Schwartz's "Challenging the Tyranny of the Five-Paragraph Essay: Teachers and Students as Semiotic Boundary Workers in Classroom and Digital Space" in *Literacy*
- Colin Lankshear & Michele Knobel's "An Introduction to Teacher Research as Document-Based Investigation" in *A Handbook for Teacher Research from Design to Implementation* (PDF)

At conclusion of week ten (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 500-word (don't go over!) response on the value of teacher-based research.

Record dissertation and/or journal article research ideas in research journal—begin tracing literature sources for dissertation (if ready).

We will meet to talk about the ten annotations, ideas you're thinking about, and discuss the format of the timed-exam.

### **Week Eleven (ending November 12) Interviews & Timed Exam**

- Cynthia Selfe & Gail Hawisher's "Exceeding the Bounds of the Interview: Feminism, Mediation, Narrative, and Conversations about Digital Literacy" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Michael Boyle & Mike Schmierbach's "Interview Structure" in *Applied Communication Research Methods* pp. 304-306

Two-hour exam will be conducted during this week. The exam question will be given at the start of the exam. Exam to be conducted in the English main office.

### **Week Twelve (ending November 19) | Feminist Methodologies**

- Gesa Kirsch & Joy Ritchie's "Beyond the Personal: Theorizing a Politics of Location in Composition Research" in *CCC*
- Kristine Blair's "A Complicated Geometry: Triangulating Feminism, Activism, and Technological Literacy" in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*
- Shirley Rose & Janice Lauer's "Feminist Methodology: Dilemmas for Graduate Researchers" (PDF)
- Jacqueline Jones Royster & Gesa Kirsch's *Feminist Rhetorical Practices* (PDF, excerpts)

At conclusion of week twelve (by Sunday at midnight), post up to a 750-word (don't go over!) response to feminist methodologies and their use in composition research.

Continue writing in research journal as appropriate (whatever bubbles up).

### **Week Thirteen (ending Monday, November 27) | Collaboration in Research**

- Duane Roen & Robert Mittan's "Collaborative Scholarship in Composition: Some Issues" in *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*

Review research journal from the semester on dissertation questions, problems, and possible methods alongside the ten annotated sources used from the timed-exam and begin mapping out the 10-15 page early prospectus document.

From November 27<sup>th</sup> until the end of the final exam hour, you'll work on writing the 10-15 page early prospectus document.