

Research Methods in Composition Studies

ENG 497 | Online
Spring 2021

Illinois State University

Professor Information

Professor: Dr. Erika M. Sparby

Email:

Zoom Room:

Zoom Hours:

Required Texts

Aja Martinez. (2020). *Counterstory*.

Other readings have been made available on Reggietnet as PDFs. However, if you are able to spare the money, I recommend purchasing the books written by MMU scholars.

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines the ways scholars engage in academic research about Technical Writing and Rhetorics (TWR) grounded in feminist, queer, critical race, and Indigenous theories. You will gain practical experience in planning the design and implementation of research projects. As such, you are advised to come to the course with a real research project either conceptualized or in progress (thesis, dissertation, article, book chapter, etc) so that you can refine your methods and methodologies. This course tackles the four questioned asked by Nickoson and Sheridan (2015) in *Writing Studies Research in Practice*: "How do [researchers] understand and come to writing research? What practical, theoretical, and ethical problematics confront writing researchers today? What does one gain and lost from adopting a particular methodology? And, finally, what might researchers be overlooking, excluding, silencing?" (p. 5)

The objectives for this course are to:

- Understand the nature and purpose of academic research in TWR
- Identify the kinds of research problems most common to TWR
- Review some of the literature most common to TWR
- Learn how to employ several research methods for qualitative study in TWR
- Understand the ethical dimensions of research practices in TWR
- Practice proposing and conducting a research study in Technical Writing and/or Rhetorics on a topic of your choice

***Thank you to Jessica Reyman and Rebecca Rickly for their syllabi*

Grade Distribution

Participation	10
Article Updates	10
Research Journal	10
Research Question/Statement	5
Literature Review	15
Journal Review	15
Research Proposal	25
Presentation	10

Grading Scale

**Grade are earned, not given.
I do not respond to requests for higher grades**

A	100-90
B	89-90
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 or below

Brief Assignment Descriptions

The assignments in this course are designed to meet the course objectives outlined above. Below are brief descriptions of the assignments; full prompts are available on ReggieNet.

Article Updates

Five times throughout the semester, you will select a supplementary reading on which you will become an expert. You will give the class in a brief overview of the reading's main points, and then lead a short discussion.

Research Journal

Five times throughout the semester, you will post an update on your research project to the forum. Apply some theories you've learned, start working on a methodology, provide insights, etc. Each entry should be ~400 words.

Research Question/Statement

Early in the semester, you will identify the research project you will be working on for the remainder of the semester. This can take the form of a question or a statement, but it should be related to a topic in TWR and should be narrowed and focused. The goal is something that could eventually be publishable.

Literature Review

Once you have identified your research question/statement, you will begin researching it. What have others in the field said about your topic? Where do you situate yourself in the conversation? What is your "so what?" – your contribution? Write a review that includes at least five sources.

Journal Review

For this project, you will select a journal from the list provided and write a brief description of the journal, a publication profile based on the past 5 years of journal issues, and a review of two selected articles published in the journal. Two pages, memo format, APA style.

Research Proposal

The final deliverable for this course will be a full research proposal. Introduce your research question/statement, justify it and place it in context in the field, and discuss your methodology and methods. You will also present briefly to the class and workshop it.

Participation

You are expected to come prepared to class every week. This means that you should do the reading and have thoughts to share about it. If you need to miss class, get in touch with me as soon as possible so we can work something out.

Course Policies

The policies in this syllabus are considered contractual at Illinois State University. If you remain in the class after day one, you have agreed to all that is required. I reserve the right to change the day-by-day schedule (with advanced notice), but not the requirements outlined above in the course description and below in the policies.

Professionalism

During class discussions, peer feedback, and in your writing, you are expected to treat others with respect. This pertains to all class members, the professor, and the audiences you write for and people you write about. I do not tolerate intolerant discourses. If a student engages in disrespectful or hateful speech, we will discuss conduct; if it happens a second time, the offender will be removed from the course altogether. You are expected to produce professional, high-quality documents that are appropriate for specific writing situations.

All ISU students are responsible for upholding the Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Code of Conduct available online. Submitting an item of academic work that has previously been submitted without fair citation of the original work or authorization by the faculty member supervising the work is prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment or for the course.

Homework Submission

- All coursework will be submitted by the start of class on the date the prompt lists.
- Late work is accepted for two days after the due date, but you will lose points from the final grade if no extension has been granted.
- Technological mishaps are not accepted as excuses for late work.

Technology

This course's information exchange is entirely digital, so a basic knowledge of some digital technologies is required.

- You are expected to back up all files;
- You are expected to have proficiency with your ISU email account and ReggieNet functionality;

You are expected to become proficient with unfamiliar computer technologies and apps.

Accessibility

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact SASS (Student Access and Accommodation Services).

Location: 350 Fell Hall

Phone: (309) 438-5853

TTY: (309) 438-8620

Website: <http://studentaccess.illinoisstate.edu/>

Email: ableisu@ilstu.edu