

English 750
Winter 2008
T,Th 9:30-11:18 am
Office hours: T, TH
2:00-4:00 & appointments

Prof. Harvey J. Graff
546 Denney Hall
Graff.40@osu.edu
292-5838

Introduction to Graduate Study in Literacy

This is a foundational course for graduate students interested in engaging in further studies in literacy. It is also an interdisciplinary course relevant to graduate studies in disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, education, public policy, and related fields.

The study and understanding of literacy has changed enormously in recent years. Although its importance is undoubted, literacy emerges as a much more complicated, mediated, and context-dependent subject than previous students, scholars, policymakers, and publics appreciated. It is therefore a much richer, challenging, and, in some ways, significant subject. Writing, reading, and other literacies are seen as pluralistic cultural practices whose forms, functions, and influences take shape as part of larger contexts: social, political, historical, material, and ideological. Literacy studies demand new, interdisciplinary, comparative, and critical approaches to conceptualization, theories, analysis, and interpretation. This course examines these currents as they take shape, and seeks to understand how a field of study is created among the disciplines and interdisciplines. Linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and history play prominent roles as various traditions, old and new, cohere or clash.

Toward that end, our topics include: "great debates" over literacy, its uses, impacts, and meanings; theories of literacy; histories of literacy; literacy and literacies; reading and writing and beyond; ethnographies of literacy in everyday life; academic and school literacies; literacy and language; literacy and schooling; literacy and social order—class, race, gender, ethnicity, generation, and geography; literacy and collective and individual action; recent research; research design and methodologies. Readings include the work of Shirley Brice Heath, Jack Goody, Deborah Brandt, Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, Brian Street, Donald McKenzie, Harvey Graff, David Barton, Ruth Finnegan, Mike Rose, among others across the humanities and social sciences.

The course has a number of goals:

- • Developing new understandings of literacy and literacies, their importance in history and contemporary society, culture, polity, and economies

- • Probing the nature of literacy in theory and practice, with respect to definitions, conceptualization, contextual understanding, and complex relationships
- • learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and interpretations, and practicing analysis and critical evaluation from a number of perspectives
- • developing advanced skills in written and oral expression
- • engaging in an interdisciplinary conversation about literacy studies, including critical approaches to literacy/ies followed in different disciplines and professions
- • comparing and evaluating different approaches, conceptualizations, theories, methods, and sources that relate to the study and understanding of literacy in its many contexts

Books

Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., Writing Without Words: Alternative

Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes (Duke UP, 1966) (082231388X)

Deborah Brandt, Literacy in American Lives Cambridge 2001 (0521003067)

Anne Haas Dyson, The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write: Popular Literacies in Childhood and School Cultures (Teachers College Press, 2003)(0807742805)

Harvey J. Graff, The Literacy Myth: Cultural Integration and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century (Transaction 1991 [1979]) (0887388841)

Shirley Brice Heath, Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classroom (Cambridge UP, 1983) (0521273196)

Donald McKenzie, Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts (Cambridge UP, 1999) (0521-64495X)

Mike Rose, The Mind at Work: The Intelligence of American Workers (Viking, 2004) (0670-03282-4)

Optional:

Ellen Cushman, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose, eds., Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook (Bedford/St. Martins, 2001) (0312250428)

David Barton, Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language 2nd ed (Blackwell, 2006) (1405111437)

Paulo Freire, The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation (Bergin and Garvey, 1985) (0897890434)

Brian V. Street, Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education (Longman, 1995) (0582102219)

In addition to readings indicated above, films may include

“The Wild Child” [Wk. 2]

“Children and Schools in Nineteenth-Century Canada” [Wk. 5]

“My Brilliant Career” [Wk. 6 or 8]

“High School” [Wk. 8]

Requirements

1. **Regular reading, attendance, and participation** in seminar discussion. Attendance is expected and taken into account in evaluation. Each week one or more students (depending on the size of the group) will draft and circulate *questions for discussion* in advance of that week’s class meeting. **Questions must be posted by email to the class with copies to Graff’s office no later than 7:00 a.m. on respective Tuesdays or Thursdays, and preferably the day before.** The student(s) responsible for circulating discussion questions each week is also responsible for *leading seminar sessions* that week. Preparation for class includes writing at least **4 1-2-page commentary papers** offering critical perspectives and raising questions about the assigned reading in a particular week. Select any 4 class sessions from week 2 to week 10. In addition, I expect each student to come to all other sessions prepared and with questions. Papers are due at the class at which that topic is discussed. None will be accepted late.

2. **Annotated bibliography of 6-8 items** on a topic or theme of your own choice, selected with the advice and consent of the instructor. Format also to be decided with my approval. **Due week 5**

3. A **comparison of two studies** in a critical essay that focuses on authors’ distinct approaches and methods including their conceptualization and contextualization of literacy, their uses of theory, their sources, their research design, the basis for their interpretation and conclusions, the significance of the work, etc. Your choice of entries for the bibliography

assignment might well reflect this assignment. This final essay should be no less than 5 and no more than 8 pages. **Due week 10**

1=approx. 40%; 2=approx. 20%; 3=approx 40% of final grade

Assigned reading. A seminar is pointless, and painful, unless the participants have read the assigned material with care. I expect you to read all the material assigned for each week's discussion. Some of the books may be out-of-print (not because they have lost their importance or value but because publishers now take books out of circulation very quickly). However, copies of all of them are on reserve in the library. So plan

ahead. I encourage you to think about useful questions for discussion, or issues that occur to you after the seminar is over

Leadership of one or more seminar sessions. One (or depending on the number of students in the class two) student is responsible for leading each seminar. The most important task of this assignment is to present questions and perspectives on the major topics and issues of that week, and on the reading specifically, that will generate good discussion. Think about how you will stimulate discussion. For most weeks, questions and tasks should be made available to all seminar members prior to class, no later than 11:00 a.m. on Tuesdays, by email and at the instructor's office.

Suggestions: choose particularly important passages in the works for analysis, photocopy them, and spend some time on their explication. (Better yet, distribute them in advance, along with discussion questions.) Choose key ideas and terms for elucidation, or focusing on the questions the work asks, its answers, and its relation to larger issues or themes, including previous weeks' work. Collect some reviews from academic journals and serious publications for nonspecialists and organize discussion around the assessment of these evaluations. Remember that the goal is not especially to find out what is wrong with the work, although that is important, but to understand its significance and contribution to large issues and questions. Think of ways of identifying themes and issues that include specific readings but may also look back to earlier weeks or look ahead to future weeks and topics. Depending on class size, the plan for the session might include breaking into small groups with specific tasks for part of the time. Seminar leaders are not expected to be responsible for the entire session.

Commentary papers. Students should write at least 4 1-2-page papers commenting on the week's reading. These should not summarize the book. Rather, the papers should present your reaction to the book: what strikes you as particularly interesting, important, outrageous, thought-provoking or worth thinking or talking about. They should include questions the reading raises for you and/or questions you wish to raise about the reading. Those questions as well as your comments will help you to prepare for seminar sessions. I will keep track of these papers, but they will not be given formal grades. They are very important. They prompt you to think about the reading before you come to the seminar, and they give me a good idea of how you are reading the material and how you write.

I expect one paper every two weeks, approximately, starting with the second week's reading assignment. These papers are due at the end of the session at which a book or

articles are discussed. They are not acceptable later, and they are an integral part of the seminar. To receive credit for the seminar, you must turn them in on time. I may ask students with especially interesting papers to share with the whole seminar.

Turning in assignments

All work that is turned in for evaluation or grading should be typed, usually double-spaced, with margins of 1-1 ½ inches on all sides; printed in 12 point font, in a legible type face. Be sure that your printer ribbon or toner allows you to produce clear copies. Follow page or word limits and meet deadlines. Follow any specific assignment requirements (formatting or endnotes or bibliography, for example). Use footnotes and endnotes as necessary and use them appropriately according to the style guide of your basic field. Commentary papers may be “semi-formal” and also use short titles (as long as they are clear) instead of footnotes. Your writing should be gender neutral as well as clear and to the point. If you have a problem, see me, if at all possible, *in advance of due dates*. Unacceptable work will be returned, ungraded, to you. Submitting work late without excuse will result in lowered grades.

Civility

Mutual respect and cooperation, during the time we spend together each week and the time you work on group assignments, are the basis for successful conduct of this course. The class is a learning community that depends on respect, cooperation, and communication among all of us. This includes coming to class on time, prepared for each day’s work: reading and assignments complete, focusing on primary classroom activity, and participating. It also includes polite and respectful expression of agreement or disagreement—with support for your point of view and arguments—with other students and with the professor. *It does not include arriving late or leaving early, or behavior or talking that distracts other students*. Please turn off all telephones, beepers, electronic devices, etc.

Academic Honesty

Scholastic honesty is expected and required. It is a major part of university life, and contributes to the value of your university degree. All work submitted for this class must be your own. Copying or representing the work of anyone else (in print or from another student) is plagiarism and cheating. This includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. This is unacceptable in this class and also prohibited by the University. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, must be reported to the Committee on Academic

Misconduct. For information on plagiarism, see <http://cstw.osu.edu/> especially http://cstw.osu.edu/writing_center/handouts/index.htm.

Writing Center

All members of the OSU community are invited to discuss their writing with a trained consultant at the Writing Center. The Center offers the following free services: Help with any assignment; One-to-one tutorials; one-to-one online tutorials via an Internet Messenger-like system (no ads or downloads); Online appointment scheduling. Visit www.cstw.org or call 688-4291 to make an appointment.

Disabilities Services

The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307

Class cancellation

In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the classroom door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

ENG 750

Harvey J. Graff

Winter 2008

**Introduction to Graduate Study in Literacy
Syllabus**

Background:

Ellen Cushman, Eugene R. Kintgen, Barry M. Kroll, and Mike Rose, eds.,
Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook (Bedford/St. Martins, 2001)

David Barton, Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language 2nd ed.
(Blackwell, 2006)

* *reserve and/or Carmen reading*

Jan. 3, 8 Week 1 First Things

For background, as needed: David Barton, Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of

Written Language (Blackwell, 2007), Chs.1-3, more if desired

*Jack Goody and Ian Watt, "The Consequences of Literacy," in Literacy in Traditional Societies, ed. Goody (Cambridge UP 1968), 27-68. See also Goody's

Introduction

*Ruth Finnegan, "Literacy versus Non-Literacy: The Great Divide," in Modes of Thought, ed. Robin Horton and Finnegan. (Faber and Faber, 1973), 112-144

*Kathleen Gough, "Implications of Literacy in Traditional China and India," in Literacy

in Traditional Societies, ed. Goody (Cambridge UP 1968) 69-84

*Harvey J. Graff and John Duffy, "Literacy Myths," Encyclopedia of Language and

Education, Vol. 2 Literacy, ed. Brian Street; Nancy Hornberger, general editor

(Berlin and New York: Springer, 2007)

Jan. 8, 10 Week 2 Impacts and Influences

*Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, "Unpacking Literacy," in Literacy, 123-137 [originally published in Writing: The Nature, Development, and Teaching of Written Communication, ed. Marcia Farr Whiteman (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1981)]

*_____. "Cognitive Consequences of Formal and Informal Education," Science 182 (1973), 553-559

*Brian V. Street, Social Literacies: Critical Approaches to Literacy in Development, Ethnography, and Education (Longman, 1995), Ch. 1, 17-27; Ch. 4, 74-99; Ch. 8, 160-178

*Harvey J. Graff, "Literacy, Myth, and Legacies: Lessons from the History of Literacy," in Graff, The Labyrinths of Literacy (exp. and rev. ed., University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995), 318-349

Additional: Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole. The Psychology of Literacy. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981. Rpt. 1999)

Brian V. Street, Literacy in Theory and Practice. (Cambridge University Press, 1984)

*Shirley Brice Heath, "Protean Shapes in Literacy Events," in Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy, ed. Deborah Tannen (Ablex, 1982), 91-117

*_____, "The Functions and Uses of Literacy," Journal of Communication, 29 (1980), 123-133

**Jan. 15, 17 Week 3 Writing/Reading/Producing/Consuming "Texts"
& The History of the Book**

Donald McKenzie, Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts (Cambridge UP, 1999)

*Robert Darnton, "What Is the History of Books?" and "First Steps Toward a History of Reading," in his The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History (Norton 1990), 107-135; 154-190

Select from:

*Carolyn Steedman, "Poetical Maids and Cooks Who Wrote," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 39 (2005), 1-27

*Barbara Sicherman, "Sense and Sensibility: A Case Study of Women's Reading in

Late-Nineteenth-Century America,” in Reading in America, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (JHUP, 1989), 201-225

*Jan Radway, “Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies,” Daedalus 113 (Summer 1984), 49-73

Additional: Jerome McGann, The Textual Condition (1991)
G.T. Tanselle, "Textual Criticism and Literary Sociology," Studies in Bibliography 44 (1991): 83-143.

Jan. 22, 24 Week 4 Literacy and Literacies and their Worlds

*Niko Besnier, “Literacy and Feelings: The Encoding of Affect in Nukulaelae Letters,” in Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy, ed. Brian V. Street. (Cambridge UP 1993), 62-86

Elizabeth Hill Boone and Walter D. Mignolo, eds., Writing Without Words: Alternative

Literacies in Mesoamerica and the Andes (Duke UP, 1966), Boone, “Introduction:

Writing and Recording Knowledge,” 3-26; Stephen Houston, “Literacy among the Pre-Columbian Maya,” 27-49; Mignolo, “Signs and their Transmission: The Question of the Book in the New World,” 221-70; Mignolo, “Afterword: Writing and Recorded Knowledge in Colonial and Postcolonial Situations,” 293-313

Additional: John Duffy, Writing From These Roots: Literacy in a Hmong Community (University of Hawai’i Press, 2007)

Niko Besnier. Literacy, Emotion and Authority: Reading and Writing on a Polynesian Atoll. (Cambridge UP, 1995)

Walter D. Mignolo, The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization (Michigan, 1995)

Jan. 29, 31 Week 5 Literacy, History, and Myth

Harvey J. Graff, The Literacy Myth: Cultural Integration and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century (Transaction 1991 [1979])[you may skim the quantitative chapters in Part I; read the introductions and conclusions carefully]

1st essay--Annotated bibliography due week 5

Feb. 5, 7 Week 6 Popular Literacy

Anne Haas Dyson, The Brothers and Sisters Learn to Write: Popular Literacies in Childhood and School Cultures (Teachers College Press, 2003)

*Glynda Hull, "Hearing Other Voices: A Critical Assessment of Popular Views on Literacy and Work," Harvard Educational Review, 63 (1993), 20-49

Additional: Dyson, Writing Superheroes (Teachers College Press, 1997)
or the work of Elizabeth Moj

Glynda Hull and K Schultz, eds., School's Out! Bridging Out-of-School Literacies with Classroom Practice (Teachers College 2002)

Margaret J. Finders, Just Girls: Hidden Literacies and Life in Junior High (Teachers College/NCTE, 1997)

Victoria Purcell-Gates. Other People's Words: The Cycle of Low Literacy. (Harvard University Press, 1995)

Feb. 12, 14 Week 7 Literacy, Community, Ethnography

Shirley Brice Heath, Ways With Words: Language, Life and Work in Communities and Classroom (Cambridge University Press, 1983). Prologue, Part I, Epilogue

*_____. "The Children of Trackton's Children: Spoken and written language in social change," in Cultural Psychology: The Chicago Symposia on Human Development, ed. J. W. Stigler, R.A. Shweder, & G.S. Herdt, eds. (Cambridge University Press, 1990), 496-519

*Elizabeth McHenry and Shirley Brice Heath, "The Literate and the Literary: African Americans as Writers and Readers—1830-1940," in Literacy, 261-274 [reprinted from Written Communication, 11 (1994), 419-444]

Additional: Ralph Cintron, Angels' Town: Chero Ways, Gang Life and Rhetorics of the Everyday (Beacon 1997)

or readers & reading/race/gender

Jacqueline Jones Royster, Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women (Pittsburgh, 2000)

Elizabeth McHenry, Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies. (Duke, 2002)

Feb. 19, 21 Week 8 Literacy and Lives

Deborah Brandt, Literacy in American Lives (Cambridge 2001)

Brandt on writing (in progress):

Deborah Brandt, "Changing Literacy," Teachers College Record, 105 (2003): 245-260

_____, "Drafting U.S. Literacy," College English 66 (2004): 485-501

_____, "Writing for a Living: Literacy and the Knowledge Economy," Written Communication,

22 (2005): 166-197

_____, "Who's the President? Ghostwriting and Shifting Values in Literacy," College

English, 69 (July 2007). 549-571

Feb. 26, 28 Week 9 Literacy Campaigns Compared

*Robert Arnove and Harvey J. Graff, "National Literacy Campaigns," in Literacy, 591-615 [also: Robert F. Arnove and Harvey J. Graff, ed., National Literacy Campaigns in Historical and Comparative Perspective (Plenum, 1987), 1-28] and at least one or two case study chapters from National Literacy Campaigns

*Paulo Freire, The Politics of Education: Culture, Power and Liberation (Bergin and

Garvey, 1985), Chs 6,7,8, 43-65, 67-96, 99-108

*Ira Shor, "What Is Critical Literacy?" Journal for Pedagogy, Pluralism and Practice

<http://www.lesley.edu/journals/jppp/4/shor.html>

Mar. 4, 6 Week 10 Literacy Work and Visual Literacy

Mike Rose, The Mind at Work: The Intelligence of American Workers (Viking, 2004)

*Paul Messaris, Visual Literacy: Image, Mind, and Reality (Westview, 1994), 1-40, 165-199

*Mike Rose, "In Search of a Fresh Language of Schooling," Education Week, Sept. 7,

2005

The Future? Reflecting together...

Mar. 6 John Duffy lecture

Writing From These Roots: Literacy in a Hmong-American Community (university of Hawai'i Press, 2007)

“Letters from the Fair City: A Rhetorical Conception of Literacy.” College Composition and Communication, 56.2 (2004): 223-50.

“Recalling the Letter: The Uses of Oral Testimony in Historical Studies of Literacy.”

Written Communication, 24.1, January 2007, 84-107

“Never Hold a Pencil: Rhetoric and Relations in the Concept of ‘Preliteracy.’” Written Communication, 17.2 (April 2000): 224-57.

Additional: Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics (Harper, 1994)

Luc Pauwels, ed., Visual Cultures of Science: Rethinking Representational Practices in Knowledge Building and Science Communication (Dartmouth College Press, 2006)

Catherine Prendergast, “The Economy of Literacy: How the Supreme Court Stalled the Civil Rights Movement,” Harvard Educational Review 72 (2002) 206-229 or her

Literacy and Racial Justice: The Politics of Learning after Brown v. Board of Education. (Southern Illinois UP, 2003)

Cynthia L. Selfe, Technology and Literacy in the Twenty-First Century: The Importance of Paying Attention (Southern Illinois UP, 1999)

New London Group, “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies designing Social Futures,” in Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures, ed. Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis (Routledge, 2000), 9-37 (also Harvard Educational Review, 1996)

Final essay due week 10