

ENG 625: Composition Theory

Instructor

Prof. Kirsti K. Cole

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Email

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Office Location

Armstrong Hall, 201G

Office Hours

Online M 4-6 or by
appointment

How to Contact

(by response rate)

1. Email
2. Skype (Kirsti.Cole)
3. Google Hangout
(kkcole@gmail.com)

Class Information

W 6:00-7:45pm
Online using Citrix Go To
Meeting (See p. 2-3)

A Typical Class Meeting

6-6:30: Short Discussion
6:30-7:00: Close Reading,
Methodological Praxis,
Analysis
7:00-7:45: Group Writing
OR Application Exercise

Course Overview

Composition Studies provides an introduction to the landmark works in and various competing theories of composition that shape scholarly and pedagogical practices in the contemporary field of rhetoric and composition. To help us construct a map of the complex theoretical terrain, we will consider the historical, cultural and political contexts in which particular practices and theories have emerged and been valued. Further, we will consider questions such as:

1. How do theoretical assumptions lead scholars and teachers to adopt particular practices, reject others, and appear to be blind to still others?
2. Conversely, how do certain kinds of literate, composition, and pedagogical practices give rise to, support, challenge or undermine certain theories?

One of the goals in this class will be to understand that our beliefs and those of others concerning the study and teaching of composition are corrigible. That is, theories are contingent, working explanations. Theorizing is a dynamic process. Understanding theorizing in these terms will help us to heed Richard Young's warning in the opening epigraph. Exploring landmark studies in composition studies beside and against each other and imagining alternative explanations will help us on this rich, theoretical journey.

Course Goals

- to develop a breadth of knowledge about pedagogy in rhetoric and composition
- to become critical readers of pedagogy and theory in the field
- to become familiar with some of the major pedagogy and theoretical lenses in the field
- to gain experience in course development and planning
- to get experience in writing a teaching philosophy
- to contribute to your professionalization in rhetoric and composition
- to become familiar with how composition theories impact course creation

Our beliefs about the teaching and study of writing have over the years taken on a special status: they are no longer corrigible; they have become, to borrow Wittgenstein's words 'how things are.' When this happens our assumptions tend to take on a certain formulaic quality. . . . When this happens, not only do we have trouble conceiving of any alternatives that are tenable, we have trouble conceiving of any alternatives at all. (161-62) Richard E. Young "Tracing Round the Frame"

Required Text (Paper)

All required texts for this course are available used online. Please note the title of the book as used in the syllabus:

- *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. 2nd Ed. Eds. Gary Tate, Taggart, Amy Rupiper, Schick, Kurt, and Hessler, H. Brooke. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013. (In calendar as **GCP**)
- *First Year Composition: From Theory to Practice*. Eds. Deborah Coxwell-Teague and Lunsford, Ronald F. Anderson, S.C.: Parlor Press, 2014. (In calendar as **FYC**)
- *The Norton Book of Composition Studies*. Ed. Susan Miller. New York: Norton and Co., 2009. (In calendar as **NBCS**)

Online Sources (Required)

- [NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing](#)
- [CCCC Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing](#)

Required Supplies

- Audacity (a free mp3 recorder you can download) or QuickTime
- Prezi or PowerPoint
- An MNSU email account
- Continuous access to a computer with Microsoft Word
- Desire2Learn UserID and password to access our course shell

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

- Rebecca Moore Howard's [Pedagogy, Teacher Training, and Composition Studies Bibliographies](#)
- [NCTE](#)
- [CCCC](#)
- [CompPile](#)
- [WAC](#)
- [WPA](#)

A philosophy of composition entails a set of assumptions concerning the aim of writing instruction and the nature of language and learning. . . . You cannot adopt an "atheoretical" or "nonphilosophical" approach to a course, as every act of teaching arises from some set of assumptions about what teachers should teach and how students learn. Stephen W. Wilhoit (28, 31)

Class Synchronous Meetings

Our synchronous class meetings will occur on Adobe Connect.

Please join me in an Adobe Connect Meeting.

Meeting Name: 625: Composition Theory

Summary: This is our class space for synchronous meetings during Fall 2015.

Invited By: Kirsti Cole (kirsti.cole@mnsu.edu)

<https://connect.shot.smsu.edu/comptheory/>

In order to troubleshoot, please visit this [website](#).

Class Asynchronous Meetings

All students will be responsible to complete the following (more information is below):

1. Weekly Microthemes: Microthemes are 500-word papers that serve as your "talking points" for that week's discussion, and they will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Microthemes are due 48 hours prior to class in the Dropbox (so Mondays by 10pm).
2. Class Chat Participation: On Wednesdays at 6pm we will meet in Adobe Connect ENG 625 Chat. We will spend half the class time discussing the readings (including the microtheme synthesis), course business, projects, etc. The second half of class will be spent in your group chats.
 - a. Group Chats will be set up in the Adobe, but you can Chat a number of ways including through Google Hangout. It's up to you.
 - b. Each group member will be responsible to report back about their group chats as a part of the weekly Post-Chat
3. Weekly Post-Chat: The Weekly Discussion Boards on D2L are your Post-Chat in which you summarize your group discussion, and reflect on the ways in which your microtheme ideas might have changed (may reference microtheme synthesis). You should post your Post-Chat no later than 10pm on Thursday following our Wednesday chat time.

What to Expect

- This course will be demanding. Because it is a survey course there is an extensive amount of material to cover, and you are expected to become familiar with all of it. I will rarely cover in lecture the material assigned to you in the reading. Thus, you must complete all of the reading before class in order to understand and participate in the day's activities. Expect minimal lecture and maximum student discussion and presentation. I value intellectual inquiry and discussion. I expect intellectually engaged students who are responsible for their own learning, who prepare carefully for each class, and who assume responsibility for their accomplishments and shortcomings. If you are confused about readings or ideas, you should (you must) ask questions.
- A note on notes: You may find that class discussion is not the best place for you to take notes; rather, I suggest you take notes *as you read* and then amend those notes after class based on what you learned that day. If you expect to do well on the midterm and final, you must keep up with main ideas, synthesize main points as you go, and thoroughly consider the relationship of new readings to previous readings as we read and discuss them. The best way to do this is through careful writing-to-learn notes. If you just wait and hope everything will come together when you sit down to write the midterm or final, you may find yourself sorely unprepared.
- A note on writing expectations: I expect every piece of writing you turn in to me to be polished, organized, and thoughtful. This is a class about Composition, and I am a Composition teacher. In addition, you are upper level or graduate level students, many of whom will (or already do) teach writing, and many of whom are English or English Education majors. As a result, I expect to see excellent writing from you. Prepare and revise!

Course Schedule:

The following schedule is a tentative breakdown of the reading and assignments that will be due over the course of the class. The first column indicates the day of class, the second column indicates what is to be accomplished for that day, as well as what is due, and the third column indicates homework that will be due the following class day.

Week	Subject/What Happens in Class	Readings for Class	Due for Class
1: 8/26	<p><u>Introduction</u> to the Course, Syllabus, Calendar, Projects, and Policies</p> <p><u>Discussion:</u> What is Composition and Rhetoric?</p> <p><u>Decide:</u> Who will write the first synthesis?</p>	<p><u>Have Read (Prior to Class)***:</u></p> <p><u>NCTE Beliefs about the Teaching of Writing</u></p> <p><u>CCC Position Statement on the Preparation and Professional Development of Teachers of Writing</u></p>	Familiarize yourself with D2L, Adobe Connect, and the syllabus.
2: 9/2	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>What do we know NOW about CompTheory? What do we still need to learn? Where do you fall in terms of your relationship to CompTheory?</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>Skim the Norton and start thinking about the focus for your annotated bibliography</p>	<p>GCP: Introduction</p> <p>FYC: Preface and Introduction</p> <p>NBCS: Preface and Introduction AND choose 1 article from Part 1, Roots to discuss in class.</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 1</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How your own work fits into the overview that you read? • What terms and jargon you are unfamiliar with and how you might get comfortable with the terms? • What gaps you see in the reading? • What questions you have and how to fill them?
3: 9/9	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>Thinking about where we come from, what are the ideological drivers behind composition in the university?</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>How do you feel about the roots of the field? Where do you agree? Where do you disagree?</p>	<p>GCP:</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 12</p> <p>NBCS: Part 1: Fulkerson p. 430, Crowley p. 333, Kinneavy p. 372, AND Emig p.228 OR Sommers p. 323 OR Shaughnessy p. 387</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 2</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do we come from? • Why do we exist? • How do we function within the systems of the university? • What are the ideas that we embrace or promote?
4: 9/16	<u>Microtheme Synthesis</u>	GCP: Process, Anson and Expressive,	<u>Write</u>

	<p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>Process v. Expressivism</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>What remains from each paradigm? Why? What's important? What's rejected?</p>	<p>Burnham and Powell</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 7</p> <p>NBCS: Part 2: Foster, Flower and Hayes, Bizzell, Faigley, Elbow</p>	<p>Microtheme 3</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <p>Process and Expressivism developed at roughly the same time as a response to the Current-Traditional model that Crowley discusses. What do they have in common? What are their differences? How do they each respond to the current-traditional and why?</p>
5: 9/23	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>What work does basic writing do? What work does the collaborative model do? How does this evolution support or detract (or other) from the foundational tenets and concerns of composition in higher ed?</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>Where are you on the spectrum so far</p>	<p>GCP: Collaborative Writing, Moore Howard and Basic Writing, Mutnick</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 10</p> <p>NBCS: Part 2: Bruffee, Bartholomae, Trimbur (Consensus)</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 4</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <p>What are the inheritances from Process and Expressivism that impact the work of collaborative and basic writing pedagogies?</p>
6: 9/29	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>Feminism, Cultural Studies, and Critical Theories</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>How does critical and/or cultural/gender theory impact the field? Why?</p>	<p>GCP: Feminist, Micciche and Cultural Studies, George and Critical, George</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 4</p> <p>NBCS: Part 2: Brodkey, Reynolds, Rose, Part 3: Sirc, Rhodes</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 5</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <p>As we enter the 1980s in the field, the concerns of people, politics, and the class/race/gender paradigm hit the field along with others (such as Literary Theory). How do these theories and insights impact the work of compositionists? Why is it important? What does it answer?</p>
7: 10/7	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis</u></p> <p><u>Discussion</u></p> <p>Writing across the curriculum and community based writing work</p>	<p>GCP: Writing Across the Curriculum, Thaiss and Community-Engaged, Julier</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 9</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 6</p> <p>Annotated Bib, 1</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p>

	<p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>Why might writing as non-comp class be useful? How might engaging the community help students succeed as writers?</p> <p><u>DUE: Draft 1 Annotated Bibliography</u></p>	<p>NBCS: Part 2: Harris, Part 3: Villanueva, Gere, Peck (Flower, and Higgins), Hesse</p>	<p>As the focus turns from politics back to writing, what is the nature of writing across the curriculum, and community based writing initiatives?</p>
8: 10/14	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis Discussion</u></p> <p>What is the role of technology in the classroom?</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>What might the best ways be to incorporate technology in the teaching of writing and reading?</p>	<p>GCP: Online and Hybrid, Hewett (New Media, optional)</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 8</p> <p>NBCS: Part 3: Selfe, Part 4: George, Miller and Shepherd, Romano (Field and de Huergo), Selfe and Hawisher</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 7</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does technological innovation provide for the field? • What are the cautionary tales necessary as we think about the use of technology in and out of the classroom?
9: 10/21	<p><u>Microtheme Synthesis Discussion</u></p> <p>In conjunction with the diversity theories we studied earlier, how does global learning, and diversity impact our understanding of the teaching of writing?</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>What are the necessary considerations as we move into an every more global and diverse first year writing (or otherwise) population?</p> <p><u>DUE: Final Annotated Bibliography (by Friday)</u></p>	<p>GCP: Second Language Writing, Matsuda</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 2</p> <p>NBCS: Part 3: Royster, Lyons, Moss, Part 4: Jarratt, Lunsford, Atkinson, Matsuda, Canagarajah</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 8</p> <p><u>Annotated Bib Final (by Friday)</u></p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <p>What are the impacts of ESL, L2, and diverse learners on writing pedagogy?</p>
10: 10/28	<p><u>ASYNCHRONOUS ONLY</u></p> <p><u>Microtheme Synthesis Discussion</u></p> <p>Rhetoric and Argumentation in the field</p> <p><u>Decide</u></p> <p>How might you engage rhetorical awareness in your</p>	<p>GCP: Rhetoric and Argumenation, Fleming</p> <p>FYC: Ch. 3</p> <p>NBCS: Part 1: Young, Part 2: Berlin, Connors, Lunsford and Ede</p>	<p><u>Write</u></p> <p>Microtheme 10</p> <p><u>Think About</u></p> <p>When we talk about the field, we typically call it Rhetoric and Composition; however, in many ways it is delineated as an area of</p>

	writing and reading classrooms?		study within composition. What does it provide to the field as a whole? How might it move from macro to micro and back effectively?
11: 11/4	<u>Microtheme Synthesis</u> <u>Discussion</u> Literacy as a concern in the teaching of writing and reading. <u>Decide</u> How does literacy diverge from the study of composition and rhetoric? <u>DUE: Draft 1 Teaching Philosophy or Creative Maps</u>	GCP: FYC: Ch. 1 NBCS: Part 1: Fox, Part 4: Gee, Delpit, Brandt and Clinton, and review Romano (Field and de Huergo), Selfe and Hawisher	<u>Write</u> Microtheme 11 TeachingPhil/Creative Map 1 <u>Think About</u> How does literacy intersect and add to the concerns of teaching writing and reading?
12: 11/11	<u>Microtheme Synthesis</u> <u>Discussion</u> Research in the writing classroom. <u>Decide</u> How might research intersect genre, literacy, rhetoric, and writing processes?	GCP: Research Writing, Moore Howard FYC: Ch 5 NBCS: Part 1: Braddock (Lloyd-Jones and Schoer), Part 2: Macnealy, Freedman	<u>Write</u> Microtheme 12 <u>Think About</u> How to research and how to teach research
13: 11/18	<u>Microtheme Synthesis</u> <u>Discussion</u> WaW: Politics or Pedagogy? <u>Decide</u> What is the common ground between WaW, Genre, WAC, and Literacy pedagogies?	GCP: Genre, Devitt FYC: Ch 11 NBCS: Part 3: Hesse, Yancey, Hayes, Bloom, Part 4: Miller and Shepherd	<u>Write</u> Microtheme 13 <u>Think About</u> Why the attention to genre and Writing About Writing? What does it do that other pedagogies don't? Is it more about students or a political stance within the university?
14: 11/25	No CLASS Microtheme is due by Sunday at midnight (or before) about the assigned reading.	<u>Read</u> GCP: FYC: Ch. 6 NBCS:	<u>Write</u> Microtheme 14, no synthesis <u>Think About</u> Putting theory into practice—review, position, identify
15: 12/2	<u>Microtheme Synthesis</u>	GCP: Choose 1: Writing Center, New Media,	<u>Write</u>

Discussion

New Directions and Final Thoughts

Decide

What did you get out of class?

DUE: Final Teaching Philosophy or Creative Map

Literature and Writing

FYC: Ch. 13

NBCS:

Microtheme 15

Final TeachingPhil/Creative Map

Think About

Your position within and your understanding of the history of Comp/Rhet. Where do we go from here?

Assignment Schedule

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Class Participation	25%	Every class period
Weekly Microtheme	15%	Every class period
Microtheme Synthesis	15%	Once during the semester for each student
Annotated Bibliography	25%	Oct. 7 th (Draft 1) Oct. 21 st (Final)
Teaching Philosophy OR Creative Map	20%	Nov. 4 th (Draft 1) Dec. 2 nd (Final)

With the exception of Microthemes, I will provide letter grades on each assignment and a letter grade for your final grade. Microthemes will receive a grade of "Credit" (C) or "No Credit" (NC).

Below are the grade criteria I will use when providing letter grades:

- A: This is graduate level work. The grade reflects work that is the result of careful thinking. This grade also reflects work that effectively contributes to a scholarly conversation.
- A-B: This is graduate level work, but there are minor problems with your argument and/or with your execution. This grade means that the work would need some revision in order to effectively contribute to a scholarly conversation.
- B-: This is not graduate level work, and there are significant problems with your argument and/or your execution. This grade means that the work has serious flaws or would need significant revision before effectively contributing to a scholarly conversation.
- C or below: This is not graduate level work, and there are major problems with the argument and the execution. This grade means that the work does not effectively contribute to a scholarly conversation.

Assignment Policies

The Public Nature of Writing: Please consider every piece of writing you do for this class to be "public property." Part of becoming a critical reader and writer is learning to appreciate the ideas and criticisms of others, and in this course our

purpose is to come together as a writing community. Remember that you will often be expected to share your writing with others, so avoid writing about things that you may not be prepared to subject to public scrutiny, or things you feel so strongly about that you are unwilling to listen to perspectives other than your own. This does not mean that you are not entitled to an opinion but that you adopt positions responsibly, contemplating the possible effect on others.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is stealing. Whenever you borrow a phrase, sentence, paragraph—or even an idea stated in your own words—from any outside source (news writing, magazine, TV show, book) without giving credit to that source, you have plagiarized. Plagiarism is cheating yourself and someone else. The consequences are severe, including failure for the assignment, probable failure for the course. If you have any questions about how to acknowledge someone else's words or ideas, see me. To pass this class all major writing assignments must be completed, and note that all writing for this class must be written for this class. Reusing a paper you wrote for another class, or back in high school, constitutes academic dishonesty.

Late Work: In the event of an emergency, late work will be negotiated with the instructor, however, as a rule, I do not accept late work. If you know that you cannot meet a deadline set in the syllabus, come and talk with me immediately and I'll be happy to accommodate you fairly.

Project Formatting: All papers are to be typed, and posted using Microsoft Word, 12-pont font, one-inch margins, double-spaced. On the first page of the paper, in the upper right hand corner, place your name, my name, course title, assignment name, and date.

Example:
MSU Student
Professor Cole
ENG 656
Assignment 1: Diagnostic
June 1, 2014

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance and participation are worth a significant portion of your grade. In class participation means showing up to class on time and prepared to either discuss the reading, discuss your homework, or workshop your draft. Online participation means that you post your work on time and respond in a timely and thoughtful manner. **THERE ARE NO EXCUSED ABSENCES** (barring emergency). If you miss more than 3 classes, your grade will drop by one full letter. Arriving late will result in attendance and participation points being docked every class day.

Email Procedure and Etiquette: It is easy to be informal and to be misunderstood via email. Please attend to the following recommendations when emailing or working online. Begin and end with appropriate salutations and conclusions. When emailing me, have a specific subject line that also indicates ENG 671. Make sure to be clear and concise in your email and/or posts. There is a 24 hr. response window on all emails during the workweek. I very rarely check email on the weekend.

Students with Exceptionalities: If you have a disability-related need for modifications in your testing or learning situation, notify me during the first week of classes. You will be asked to present documentation from the Office of Disability Services (132 Memorial Library, 389-2825) that describes the nature of your disability and the recommended remedy. You can find policy information at the following link:

<http://www.mnsu.edu/policies/approved/accessforstudentswithdisabilities.pdf>

Non-Discrimination: It is my policy (and a university policy as well) not to discriminate against any person because of age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, gender, national origin, race, religious creed, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Please adopt this policy in the classroom as well.

Violence and Harassment: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here: <http://www.mnsu.edu/affact/brochures/>

Questions: Please do not hesitate to ask questions in class or during office hours. My job is to help you learn the material. The easiest way to contact me is via email.

Planning and Pacing: You are given multiple days to complete projects because they are not designed for completion in one sitting. Start project work the day it is assigned or the next day. Do not expect support on projects within 24 hours of the deadlines.

Wisdom begins in wonder. –Socrates

Assignment Information

Weekly Microthemes

Microthemes are 500-word response that serve as your "talking points" for that week's discussion, and they will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Microthemes are due 48 hours prior to class on the Microtheme Discussion Boards weeks 2-15, and late papers will receive no credit. Your work on these papers will account for 15% of your final grade. Please do not exceed 500 words.

If we are reading multiple pieces during a given week, please devote some space to each of the readings. However, you can devote more space to one of the readings if you'd like.

These papers need not be completely polished prose, but they should provide evidence that you've read the week's readings carefully and that you've developed some ideas for our discussions. They should be devoted to finding connections amongst our readings and to raising questions. **They should not focus on whether or not you agree with the author(s).**

Some questions that might guide a Microtheme paper are (this list is not exhaustive):

- What definitions of rhetoric and/or composition are assumed or outwardly stated by the author?
- What is the relationship of this text to others that we've read?
- How has the author constructed his or her argument? Why?
- Who are the possible audiences for this piece?
- What kinds of evidence are being used? Why?
- What possible counter-arguments could be raised? Who would raise them? Why?
- What scholarly problem is the author addressing? How have others addressed this problem?
- What body of scholarship is the author engaging with? What other scholarly conversations might we connect this piece to?

****PLEASE NOTE**** Microthemes do not have to be ONLY traditional typed papers. If you choose, you submit your microtheme by experimenting with the following: alphabetic writing, sound, spoken word (Audacity is a good free program), image, collage, Prezi, YouTube, etc. The possibilities are endless, but if you do choose to deviate from a tradition format please include one typed, typical academic page (250 words), explaining your microtheme so that the synthesizer for the week has an easy time deciphering it.

Microtheme Synthesis

Each week, one-two student will provide a written synthesis of the submitted microthemes. This synthesis should locate common questions and topics raised by the microthemes and should serve as a launching point for the week's discussion. The paper is due to the Microtheme Board at the start of class, and the author will summarize the paper at the beginning of the class period. This paper will account for 15% of your final grade. Please do not exceed 750 words.

When grading these papers, I will be looking for the following:

- Does the paper locate common questions and trends in the microthemes?
- Does the paper tell a coherent narrative of the textual conversation?
- Does the paper raise questions and concerns that should be addressed during that week's discussion?
- Is the paper written effectively and coherently with very few grammatical errors?
- Has the author observed the 750-word limit?

Annotated Bibliography

For this assignment you will choose an area within Composition Theory and Pedagogy that is interesting to you and you will research it. You will benefit most from doing a historical to current review of literature in your annotated bibliography that pulls foundational as well as cutting-edge texts. Write on no less than 10 and no more than 15 sources.

What is an annotated bibliography?

An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph: the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.

What is an annotation?

Abstracts are the purely descriptive summaries often found at the beginning of scholarly journal articles or in periodical indexes. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority.

What is the process of writing annotations?

Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research.

1. First, locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic. Briefly examine and review the actual items. Then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic.
2. Cite the book, article, or document using the appropriate style.
3. Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that
 - a. evaluate the authority or background of the author,
 - b. comment on the intended audience,
 - c. compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or
 - d. explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.

How to critically appraise a book, article or document (Sample Prompts)

Initial appraisal:

- A. Author
 - a. What are the author's credentials—institutional affiliation, educational background, past writings, or experience? Is the book or article written on a topic in the author's area of expertise?
 - b. Is the author associated with a reputable institution or organization? What are the basic values or goals of the organization or institution?
- B. Date of Publication
 - a. When was the source published?
 - b. Is the source current or out-of-date for your topic?
- C. Edition or Revision

- a. Is this a first edition publication? If you are using a Web source, do the pages indicate revision dates?

D. Publisher

- a. Note the publisher. If a university press publishes the source, it is likely to be scholarly.

E. Title of Journal

- a. Is this a scholarly or a popular journal? This distinction is important because it indicates different levels of complexity in conveying ideas.

Content Analysis:

After the initial appraisal, you should examine the body of the source. Read the preface, table of contents and index. Read the chapters/sections that address your topic.

A. Intended Audience

- a. What type of audience is the author addressing? Is the publication aimed at a specialized or a general audience? Is this source too elementary, too technical, too advanced, or just right for your needs?

B. Objective Reasoning

- a. Is the information covered fact, opinion, or propaganda? It is not always easy to separate fact from opinion. Facts can usually be verified; opinions, though they may be based on factual information, evolve from the interpretation of facts. Skilled writers can make you think their interpretations are facts.
- b. Does the information appear to be valid and well-researched, or is it questionable and unsupported by evidence? Assumptions should be reasonable. Note errors or omissions.
- c. Are the ideas and arguments advanced more or less in line with other works you have read on the same topic? The more radically an author departs from the views of others in the same field, the more carefully and critically you should scrutinize his or her ideas.
- d. Is the author's point of view objective and impartial? Is the language free of emotion-arousing words and bias?

C. Coverage

- a. Does the work update other sources, substantiate other materials you have read, or add new information? Does it extensively or marginally cover your topic? You should explore enough sources to obtain a variety of viewpoints.
- b. Is the material primary or secondary in nature? Primary sources are the raw material of the research process. Secondary sources are based on primary sources. For example, if you were researching Konrad Adenauer's role in rebuilding West Germany after World War II, Adenauer's own writings would be one of many primary sources available on this topic. Others might include relevant government documents and contemporary German newspaper articles. Scholars use this primary material to help generate historical interpretations--a secondary source. Books, encyclopedia articles, and scholarly journal articles about Adenauer's role are considered secondary sources. In the sciences, journal articles and conference proceedings written by experimenters reporting the results of their research are primary documents. Choose both primary and secondary sources when you have the opportunity.

D. Writing Style

- a. Is the publication logically organized? Are the main points clearly presented? Do you find the text easy to read, or is it stilted or choppy? Is the author's argument repetitive?

Research Tips:

1. Work from the general to the specific, past to current
2. Record what you find and where you found it.
3. Translate your topic into the subject language or the indexes and catalogues you use.

Sample Annotated Bibliography Entry for a Journal Article in MLA Format

NOTE: Standard MLA practice requires double spacing within citations.

Bruffee, Kenneth A. "The Art of Collaborative Learning." *Change* March/April (1987): 42-47. Print

Bruffee has observed an increase in the use of collaborative learning strategies in both the classroom and the workplace, and he attributes this increase to the growing discussion of social constructionist theory. In the writing classroom, collaborative learning can take the form of peer editing and reviewing, as well as group projects. The key to success for collaborative learning in any classroom is semi-autonomy for the students. While the teacher serves as the director of group processes, there must be some degree of autonomy for the students so that they may take some responsibility for the direction of their own learning.

Waite, Linda J., Frances Kobrin Goldscheider, and Christina Witsberger. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review* 51.4 (1986): 541-554. Print.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. In contrast, an earlier study by Williams cited below shows no significant gender differences in sex role attitudes as a result of nonfamily living.

Teaching Philosophy or Creative Map

Teaching Philosophy

A teaching philosophy is a self-reflective statement of your beliefs about teaching and learning. In addition to general comments, your teaching philosophy should discuss how you put your beliefs into practice by including concrete examples of what you do or anticipate doing in the classroom. Teaching philosophies are typically between one and four double-spaced pages but may be longer or shorter depending on your circumstances. They are written for two particular audiences. The first is search committees, since teaching philosophies are increasingly becoming part of the academic job search dossier. The second audience is yourself and your colleagues. In this case, the teaching philosophy serves a formative purpose — a document that helps you reflect on and improve your teaching. Starting a teaching philosophy can be a difficult task, but it need not be. The steps outlined provide a structure for taking you through the drafting process step by step. Of course, there are as many different ways of writing teaching philosophies as there are writers. Feel free to deviate from this plan, skipping or adding steps to accommodate your personal writing style.

Getting Started:

1. Your concept of learning: Ask yourself such questions as "What do I mean by learning?" and "What happens in a successful learning situation?" Make sure to note what constitutes "learning" or "mastery" in your discipline.
2. Your concept of teaching: Note your values, beliefs, and aspirations as a teacher. (For example, do you wish to encourage mastery, competency, transformational learning, life-long learning, general transference of skills, critical thinking, etc.) What does a perfect teaching situation look like to you? Why do you consider this "perfect"? What is your role as a teacher? Are you a coach, a general, an evangelist, an entertainer?
3. Your goals for students: What skills should students obtain as the result of your teaching? You may think about your ideal student and what the outcomes of your teaching would be in terms of this student's knowledge or behavior. You may address the goals you have for specific classes or curricula and the rationale behind them (i.e., critical thinking, writing, or problem solving).
4. What methods will you consider to reach these goals and objectives? What are your beliefs regarding learning theory and specific strategies you would use such as case studies, group work, simulations, interactive lectures, etc.? You might also include any new ideas or strategies you have used or want to try.
5. Your interaction with students: What are your attitudes toward advising and mentoring students? How would an observer see you interact with students? Why do you want to work with students?
6. Specific examples: How are the values and beliefs noted above realized in classroom activities? You may discuss course materials, lesson plans, activities, assignments, assessment instruments, etc.
7. How will you assess student understanding? What are your beliefs about grading? Do you grade students on a percentage scale (criterion referenced) or on a curve (norm referenced)? What different types of assessment will you use: traditional tests, projects, portfolios, or presentations?
8. Professional growth: How will you continue growing as a teacher? What goals do you have for yourself and how will you reach them? How have your attitudes toward teaching and learning changed over time? How will you use your student evaluations to improve your teaching? How might you learn new skills? How do you know when you have taught effectively?

Once you've written down your values, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching and learning, it's time to organize those thoughts into a coherent form. Perhaps the easiest way of organizing this material would be to write a paragraph covering each of the eight questions you answered in the previous activity: your concept of teaching, your concept of learning, your goals for students, etc. These would then become the eight major sections of your teaching philosophy. Another way of knitting your reflections together—and one that is more personal—is to read through your notes and underscore ideas or observations that come up in more than one place. Think of these as "themes" that might point you toward an organizational structure for the essay. For example, say you read through your notes and realize that you spend a good deal of time writing about your interest in mentoring students. This might become one of the three or four major foci of your teaching philosophy. You should then discuss what it says about your attitudes toward teaching, learning. As noted previously, it's important that you provide concrete examples from your teaching practice to illustrate the general claims you make in your

teaching philosophy. In most cases, initial drafts of teaching philosophies don't include enough specifics. The following general statements about teaching are intended as prompts to help you come up with examples to illustrate your claims about teaching.

Further Resources:

[What's Your Philosophy on Teaching, and Does it Matter?](#) Article from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*
[Center for Excellence in Teaching](#) at the University of Southern California
[Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](#) at Iowa State University
[The Center for Effective Teaching and Learning](#) at the University of Texas at El Paso
[Teacher Portfolio and Preparation Series](#) at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, Second Language Teaching and Curriculum Center (includes philosophy of teaching statements written by language teachers).

Creative Map

If you don't plan to teach, you can write or create a creative map of composition theories for your project. A creative map has no set format but asks you to chart, draw, display, collage, or otherwise demonstrate **your understandings of the definitions, theories, schools, and evolutions of composition theory**. Like your weekly microthemes, you can do this in a number of ways: use alphabetic writing, sound, spoken word, image, collage, Prezi, etc. to create a personal but professional map of your understanding of composition theory. Refer to your microthemes, readings, annotated bibliography, and other resources for the course to create a map that would be equal to 1000 or so words typed. When you turn in your creative map, be sure to turn in one typed, typical academic page (250 words), explaining your map.

Example Prezi (this covers a much longer period than we do, and is a bit dull in terms of presentation but gives an idea):
http://prezi.com/r11-fdiwla18/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy&rc=ex0share