

ENGL 629

History & Theories of Composition



Northern Illinois
University

Application Project

Description

Grapple with the literature we've covered on composition theory and practice this semester and provide one of these four possible final projects.

- Provide a detailed “theory of composition” to explain your take on the field.
- Provide a shorter “theory of composition” along with an updated composition syllabus that puts your theory into practice.
- Design a composition-based research study.
- Draft a composition studies article.

All options are expected to be deeply connected to composition research and to extend that research in some way.

For All Options

Please meet with Ryan in advance to approve your topic. All options should include ample citations (10 or more citations) and be both connected to composition research and attempt to extend it: through new ways of thinking, new data, new research methods, or new practical applications. You are strongly encouraged to choose an option that will extend your own personal scholarly and pedagogical goals. Presentations are required but ungraded.

Option 1

Detailed Theory of Composition

For option 1, you will explain your personal “theory of composition.” Think of this as a combined teaching philosophy and research statement. The goal is to explain how you think that composition should be taught and researched with citations to back up your assertion. Examples should be given from your own teaching and research as well as others’. Detailed theories of composition should be 3,000-5,000 words.

Option 2

Applied Theory of Composition

Much like option 1, you will provide a theory of composition in which you explain how composition should be taught and researched. But unlike option one, you will actually apply these theories to a new version of a first-year composition class. For this option, you will provide a shorter theory of composition (1,500-2,500 words) along with a syllabus, schedule, major assignments, and other materials for a composition class. The choices made in your class should be justified by your theory of composition.

Option 3

Composition Research Study

Option 3 allows you to design a composition research study, such as for a capstone project, dissertation, or future publication. This should include preparing any research instruments (surveys, interview questions, writing sample collection, etc.) as well as preparing IRB forms. Your project should include a reflection (1,500-2,500) that clearly explains what you hope to find out from your study and how your study will show that thing. You should cite other scholars that you are building on or challenging.

Option 4

Publication Drafting

Option 4 allows you to prepare a draft of a publication in a journal or collection. The draft should look like the venue in which you hope to publish in terms of length and citation. Your draft should include a short note about what journal or collection you'd expect to submit to and an explanation for why that's a good fit (roughly 500 words).

Grading Contract

As with the exploration project, choose the level of grade you'd like for this assignment and complete *all* of the criteria for that column. Please be sure you are reading the appropriate criteria for the option you've chosen. If you are unsure if you are completing a criterion, please ask. If B+ criteria are not met, your grade will be a B or lower depending on the circumstances. Presentations are required for all options, but they are ungraded.

Option 1 Grades	A	A-	B+
Theories of Composition Teaching and Research	You have clearly explained what is important in teaching & researching composition and have explicitly connected methods to outcomes in teaching and researching.	You have explained what is important in both teaching & researching composition and what methods best meet the goals of composition studies.	One of the two areas is underexplained and/or specific methods are left vague.
Connection to Examples	You have provided clear and detailed examples of effective teaching and research in action and have explained how they support your points.	You have provided examples of effective teaching and research in action.	Some examples are mentioned but are not detailed.
Connection to Composition Research	You have cited several reputable scholars to help support your points. Their points are well synthesized into your own.	You have cited scholars that help to support your points.	Few scholars are cited and/or their points do not support your own.

Option 2 Grades	A	A-	B+
Theories of Composition Teaching and Research	You have clearly explained what is important in teaching & researching composition and have explicitly connected methods to outcomes in teaching and researching.	You have explained what is important in both teaching & researching composition and what methods best meet the goals of composition studies.	One of the two areas is underexplained and/or specific methods are left vague.
Syllabus	Your syllabus has clear and direct applications of your theories of composition. Connections are explained in your theory document.	Your syllabus has direct applications of your theories of composition.	The syllabus has some connections to the theory of composition, but connections are vague.
Connection to Composition Research	You have cited several reputable scholars to help support your points. Their points are well synthesized into your own.	You have cited scholars that help to support your points.	Few scholars are cited and/or their points do not support your own.

Option 3 Grades	A	A-	B+
Research Explanation	You have clearly explained the goals of your study and have clearly detailed how your specific research methods will contribute to the field.	You have explained the goals of your study and how your project will meet them.	Either the goals of the study or how they will be met are vague.
Connection to Composition Research	You have clearly explained how your project builds on and further adds to the field of composition studies.	You have explained either similar studies or studies you hope to build on.	How the project fits into the field is unclear.
Instruments and IRB	You have provided a complete IRB application draft and all research instruments. Instruments have been piloted.	You have provided IRB application drafts and drafts of research instruments.	IRB application drafts and drafts of research instruments are incomplete.

Option 4 Grades	A	A-	B+
Unique Contribution	Your project provides a unique contribution to the field of composition studies and directly builds on previous research.	Your project provides a unique contribution to the field of composition studies.	The project provides a contribution but may already be well covered.
Connection to Composition Research	Your project references and builds on previous research in the field, including research from the venue you hope to publish.	Your project connects to other research in the discipline.	Connections to other composition research are tenuous.
Fit to Venue	You provide a good venue for your work, give a clear justification for why your work is a good fit for that venue, and have worked to connect your work to that venue.	You provide a venue you hope to publish and a justification for why it's a good fit for your work.	The venue fit is unclear.

Presentations

Application Project presentations are short and informal. Each person has no more than 6 minutes to present their project and about 4 minutes for questions. Application projects presentations are ungraded: If you complete the presentation, you get full credit.

Due Date

- Application Project ideas are due on **March 31st**
- Application Project early drafts are due **April 21st**
- Application Project full drafts are due on **April 23rd**
- Application Project presentations are on **April 28th** and **30th**
- Application Project revision drafts are due on **May 5th**