

ED 229
Historical, Cultural, and Critical Perspectives on Literacy Theory and Research

Spring 2006
3030 Moore Hall
1:10-4:50 pm, Mondays

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Office hours Wednesdays 1-3 and by appointment.

Course Overview

According to the popular discourse, America is facing a tremendous literacy crisis. Poor children and children of color trail their affluent and White counterparts on traditional literacy assessments. Employers complain that workers do not possess requisite literacy skills at a time when changing communications technologies are making old and new literacy skills mandatory for participation in the global economy or even civic life. As all of this happens, urban schools continue to fail to provide access to literacies of power for their students as they also fail to account for the local and popular cultural literacies that their students bring with them into the classroom. The true literacy crisis is that educators and researchers have not figured out how to decrease the literacy achievement gap; a gap that carries with it severe social, economic, and political consequences.

Of course, nothing is inevitable, and there have been historic moments when populations have gained access to literacies of power as they also intervened in their conditions of oppression. Even now, literacy educators and scholars possess the potential to create positive, conceptually grounded and empirically tested strategies for transformative literacy education that can not only change classroom practices, but the world itself.

This course examines historical, cultural, and critical contexts of literacy theory and research in hopes to produce scholars and educators who are able to theorize, create, and/or investigate these transformational practices. It begins with an examination of the historical legacy of literacy as a vehicle to freedom and empowerment for marginalized populations. Students will read literature covering the Cuba literacy campaign and the struggles of African-Americans in the United States as they consider (and reconsider) the role of literacy education in social transformation. The class will also investigate the major paradigms of literacy theory and research during the past half century examining myths about great divides between oral and literate societies and the transformation

from “culturally neutral” theories of literacy to cross cultural and sociocultural theories. The course will also consider the impacts of the revolution in communications technologies on the nature of literacy and on contemporary new media literacy practices. Finally, the course will examine theories of critical literacy education and examples of literacy praxis in classroom and out of school settings.

Course Texts

There are two key texts for the course:

E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) (1988) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press.

This is the most definitive text that provides a survey of the historical tradition of literacy theory and research.

Morrell, E. (2006). *Historical, cultural, and critical perspectives on literacy theories and research*. Westwood, CA: UCLA.

This second text is a course reader, which will be available at Westwood Copiers.

Course Topics and Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading	Activity/Due Dates
4/03	Introduction		
4/10	AERA NO CLASS Literacy and Freedom	Perry	
4/17	Literacy and Freedom	UNESCO Reports Cuba Literacy Castro Speech	Group Teaching/Workshops
4/24	Historical Perspectives Literacy and the Great Divide	Goody& Watt Graff Olson De Castell and Luke	Group Teaching/Workshops Project Proposal
5/1	Cultural-Historical and Cross-cultural Approaches	Scribner and Cole Scribner Heath Vygotsky	Group Teaching/Workshops
5/8	Cultural/ Sociocultural Theory and Literacy	Lee Gutierrez, et. al. Moll Ball	Group Teaching/Workshops

5/15	New Literacy Studies	New London Barton and Hamilton Gee Street	Group Teaching/Workshops Project Update
5/22	Critical Literacy	Freire and Macedo Freire Arnové Hull Darder Luke, A.	Group Teaching/ Presentations
5/29	MEMORIAL DAY	Knobel and Lankshear Luke, C.	N/A
6/5	Critical Perspectives: Multimodal Literacies; Literacy and Popular culture	Lankshear and Knobel Kress Mahiri Morrell	Group Teaching/ Presentations
6/12	Course wrap-up	N/A	Course wrap-up/ Presentations
6/16	N/A	N/A	FINAL PROJECTS

Course Activities

Class Readings and Class Discussion:

Meaningful class discussion is a crucial part of the learning experience for students and instructors. Because we expect everyone to complete the class readings and come prepared for discussion, we will not have reading responses. This will give more time for individual writing projects. As such, preparing for class discussions will rely on students and instructors thinking deeply about assigned readings—developing defensible interpretations, negotiating meanings, and drawing connections to other works, concepts, or phenomena.

Anchoring a Discussion:

During several of the class sessions, I will ask a small group to anchor a discussion over a set of readings. What this means is that the group in charge will come with a set of activities and questions to get the class involved in the readings for the session. Activities and discussions should last about an hour and a half.

Writing Groups:

In addition to exploring issues relating to literacy theory and research, this course provides an ideal space to work on academic writing. As the final assignment is designed

to provide optimal flexibility, I hope that everyone in the class will be able to find a writing product that will work for them over the ten weeks of the course. To help in this process, we will devote an hour and a half each week for students to get together in small groups according to stage of graduate school and/or interests. The idea of these groups is for students to work together—brainstorming, sharing drafts, and eliciting critical, yet constructive feedback from a small group of peers.

Textual Products:

I want the writing assignments that emerge from the course to be valuable products for everyone involved. Given that students are at different stages of their graduate work and have different interests, this means that there will be a great deal of flexibility in creating projects that make sense for a ten-week period and for your particular stage of graduate school. Each of you should develop some piece that will utilize course themes and readings to push your work forward. Here are some ideas to get the ball rolling:

- An article for a peer-reviewed journal
- A draft of a dissertation proposal
- A draft of a proposal for a dissertation fellowship
- A focused literature review
- A proposal for a conference
- A write-up of a pilot study, practicum, or a section of a dissertation chapter
- A research design for a pilot study, practicum, or dissertation
- An annotated syllabus for a course to be taught at the undergraduate or graduate level

Works in Progress Conference

During the final two class sessions, everyone will have a chance to share their ongoing or prospective work as it relates to the issues of the course. For “academic capital” purposes, we can give this conference a real name (Works in Progress is merely a title-filler). You should plan to give a 10-15 minute talk showing how your work intersects with the issues of literacy theory and research and urban education that are central to this course. You should also plan to distribute a handout (front and back side of a page) for your colleagues in the class.

Course Bibliography

Literacy and Freedom

Perry, T. (2003). Freedom for literacy and literacy for freedom: The African-American philosophy of education. In T. Perry, C. Steele, and A. Hilliard (Eds.). *Young, gifted, and black: Promoting high achievement among African-American students*. Boston: Beacon, 11-51.

UNESCO (1965). Report on the method and means utilized in Cuba to eliminate illiteracy.

Castro, F. (1961). Speech made in Havana to launch the National Literacy Campaign.

Historical Perspectives

Goody, J., & Watt, I. (1968/1988). The consequences of literacy. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 3-28.

Graff, H. (1988). The legacies of literacy. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 82-95.

Kaestle, C. (1988). The history of literacy and the history of readers. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 95-126.

deCastell, S., and Luke, A. (1983/1988). Defining literacy in North American schools: Social and historical conditions and consequences. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 159-174.

Olson, D.R. (1988). From utterance to text: The bias of language in speech and writing. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 175-189.

Cross-cultural Perspectives

Scribner, S., & Cole, M. (1981/1988). Unpackaging Literacy. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 57-70.

Heath, S.B. (1988). Protean shapes in literacy events: Every-shifting oral and literate traditions. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 348-370.

Moll, L.C., Amanti, C., Neff, D., and Gonzalez, N. (1992). Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Lee, C. (2000). Signifyin' in the zone of proximal development. In C. Lee and P. Smagorinsky (Eds.) *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 191-225.

Ball, A.F. & Farr, M. (2003). Dialects, culture, and teaching the English language arts. In J. Flood, J. M. Jensen, D. Lapp, & J. R. Squire (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English language arts*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Gutierrez, K., and Rogoff, B. (2004). Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice. *Educational Researcher*, 32,5, 19-25.

Gutierrez, K., Baquedano-Lopez, Alvarez, H., Chiu, M.M. (1999). Building a culture of collaboration through hybrid language practices. *Theory into Practice*, 38, 2, 87-93.

New Literacy Studies

New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66, 1, 60-92.

Barton, D., & Hamilton, M. (2000). Literacy practices. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, and R. Ivanic (Eds.) *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. New York: Routledge, 7-16.

Gee, J. (2000). The new literacy studies: from socially situated to the work of the social. In D. Barton, M. Hamilton, and R. Ivanic (Eds.) *Situated literacies: Reading and writing in context*. New York: Routledge, 180-197.

Street, B. (1993). The ideological model. *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 95-128.

Street, B. (2003). What's "new" in New Literacy Studies? Critical approaches to literacy in theory and practice. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*, 5(2), 77-91.

Critical Perspectives

Freire, P., and Macedo, D. (1998). Literacy, reading the word and the world. The Paulo Freire Reader. New York: Continuum, 163-185.

Freire, P. (1970/1988). The adult literacy process as cultural action for freedom and education and conscientizacao. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 398-409.

Arnové, R. (1988). The Nicaraguan National Literacy Crusade of 1980. In E.R. Kingten, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (Eds.) *Perspectives on literacy*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois Press, 410-420.

Darder, A. (1991). Critical pedagogy as a foundation for bicultural education. *Culture and power in the classroom: Critical foundations of bicultural education*. New York: Bergin and Garvey, 73-98.

Luke, A. (1998) Getting Over Method: Literacy Teaching as Works in New Times, *Language Arts*.

Multimodal Literacies and Popular Culture

Knobel, M., and Lankshear, C. (2002). *Critical cyberliteracies: What young people can teach us about reading and writing the world*. Keynote address delivered to the National Council of Teachers of English Assembly for Research.

Lankshear, C., and Knobel, M. (2005). *Digital Literacies: Policy, pedagogy, and research considerations for education*. Open plenary to ITU Conference, Oslo Norway, October 20, 2005.

Alvermann, D. (2001) *Effective Literacy Instruction for Adolescents*. Executive Summary and Paper Commissioned by the National Reading Conference. Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.

Kress, G. (2003). Literacy and multimodality: A theoretical framework. *Literacy in the new media age*. New York: Routledge, 35-60.

Luke, C. (2000). Cyberschooling and technological change: Multiliteracies for new times. In B. Cope and M. Kalantzis (Eds.) *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. New York: Routledge, 69-91.

Mahiri, J. (1998). The challenge of African-American and youth culture in changing schools. *Shooting for excellence: African-American and youth culture in new century schools*. New York: Teachers College Press/NCTE, 1-21.

Morrell, E., and Duncan-Andrade, J. (2004). What they do learn in school: Hip-hop as a bridge to canonical poetry. In J. Mahiri (Ed.) *What they don't learn in school: Literacy in the lives of urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang, 247-268.

The following texts are suggested for further reading.

Barton, D. and Hamilton, M. (1998). *Local literacies: Reading and writing in one community*. New York: Routledge.

Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. New York: Routledge.

Lee, C., and Smagorinsky, P. (Eds.) (2000). *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cope, B., and Kalantzis, M. (Eds.) (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. New York: Routledge.

Mahiri, J. (Ed.) (2004). *What they don't learn in school: Literacy in the lives of urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang.

Morrell, E. (2004). *Becoming critical researchers: Literacy and empowerment for urban youth*. New York: Peter Lang.

Street, B. (1993). *Literacy in theory and practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gee, J. (2003). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ball, Arnetha, & Freedman, Sarah. (Eds.) (2004). *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language, Literacy, and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kozol, J. (1978). Children of the revolution: A Yankee teacher in the Cuban schools. New York: Delta.

Grading

Class attendance and participation: 20%

Anchoring a group discussion: 20%

Presentation at Works-in-Progress conference: 20%

Final Assignment: 40%