

RES 5535: Race, Class, and Gender in Literacy Research

Sections 375 & 376

Appalachian State University
Summer Session Teacher Term I

June 7 – July 2

Location: <http://blogs.rcoe.appstate.edu/classes/res5535su10/>

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*There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks,
and perceive differently than one sees,
is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all.*

Michel Foucault

*Text of pleasure: the text that contents, fills, grants euphoria; the text that comes from culture
and does not break with it, is linked to a comfortable practice of reading.*

*Text of bliss: the text that imposes a state of loss, the text that discomforts, unsettles the reader's
historical cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his [sic] tastes, values,
memories, brings to a crisis his [sic] relation with language.*

Roland Barthes

*Critique is understood as an interrogation of the terms by which life is constrained
in order to open up the possibility of different modes of living;
in other words, not to celebrate difference as such
but to establish more inclusive conditions
for sheltering and maintaining life that resist models of assimilation.*

Judith Butler

Course Description

This special topics course is an examination of the ways race, class, and gender provide socio-cultural and political contexts for literacy learning and expression. Autobiographical descriptions and research studies will be studied to provide an understanding and critique of children and adolescents' experiences with literacy in schools, families, and other institutional structures.

Course Materials

1. Hicks, D. (2002). *Reading Lives: Working-Class Children and Literacy Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.
2. [Additional readings](#) are available on my website
3. [Podcasts](#) of course lectures are available on my website

Course Standards & Objectives

The following NC DPI Standards provide the goals and objectives of this course:

NC Advanced Competencies for Master Teachers
<p><u>Standard 1: Instructional Expertise.</u> The candidate demonstrates instructional expertise by applying the theoretical, philosophical, and research bases for educational practice in P-12 settings to improve student learning. (<i>Indicators 4, 5, 6</i>)</p>
<p><u>Standard 2: Knowledge of Learners.</u> The candidate incorporates knowledge of the nature of the learner, learning processes, variations in learning abilities and learning styles, and strategies for evaluating learning into the planning, delivery, and evaluation of instruction. (<i>Indicators 1, 3, 4, 5</i>)</p>
<p><u>Standard 3: Research.</u> The candidate uses research to examine and improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement. (<i>Indicators 1, 2</i>)</p>
<p><u>Standard 4: Content Knowledge.</u> The candidate demonstrates advanced depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in the academic discipline and in education. (<i>Indicators 2, 4</i>)</p>
<p><u>Standard 5: Professional Development and Leadership.</u> The candidate engages in continued professional development and provides leadership at the classroom, school, and community levels, and within the profession. (<i>Indicator 1</i>)</p>

In addition to the above standards, you will, of course, hold your own personal and professional goals for your graduate work. And, the following are more specific course objectives:

1. To practice the art and craft of “blissful” reading (Barthes).
2. To learn philosophical frameworks that might be relevant to your professional work.
3. To explore different ways of perceiving and thinking by integrating “old” knowledge with “new” knowledge from the readings and online discussions.
4. To understand difference in regard to literacy learning and expression within and among people as a strength rather than a deficit to be overcome or to be “corrected.”
5. To interrogate what you know about literacy learning and expression; substantiate, challenge, and make complex that knowledge; and open up that knowledge by becoming more inclusive in your beliefs.
6. To turn the reflexive lens on yourself to examine your own personal histories and subjectivities regarding literacy learning and expression.

7. To move outside your own personal experiences to critique them and to see how they might limit your view of difference.
8. To go beyond “the personal” to examine and critique the institutional structures that enable restrictive conditions of literacy learning and expression by diverse Others.
9. To improve literacy skills and critical thinking skills.

Course Expectations & Requirements

This graduate course has specific expectations for participation and preparation. Please be prepared to engage critically and seriously with the subject matter and to interact respectfully with others on the Blogsite. This course is conducted exclusively online using a Blogging format. Each student is expected to post entries to the Blog as well as comment on others’ postings.

It is also important to understand that we all come from different backgrounds and experiences. Therefore, each of us brings to this course certain attachments to and notions of literacy learning and expression. To work through what might be conflicting and controversial opinions and to engage in the spirit of learning from others, our critiques will be issues-oriented rather than personal in intent. We will practice the arts of active listening/reading, reflective thinking, and careful expressive writing in our online forum.

In this course, we will explore theory and research that may be new to you. To move through what might be novel encounters, I ask that you practice “blissful reading” (Barthes) by doing the following:

1. Give yourself time to read carefully and to re-read, and give yourself some space to think about what you have read. Read in chunks of text and chunks of time. Do not expect to complete the reading in one sitting the night (or morning) before class.
2. Try to avoid referring to texts as “inaccessible” and subsequently distancing yourself from and resisting the text. Remember that *you* are the reader and that *you* are responsible for making meaning of the text; it is not the author’s “job” to do that for you.
3. Remember that there are no lone scholars; making meaning and constructing knowledge occurs in social contexts. Therefore, take away what you can from the text and be open to understanding at a later time. Attempt to release yourself from immediate, measurable understanding. Learning is a *process* that takes time, dialogue, patience, and receptivity. Give up on the idea of mastering a text in one reading!
4. Think outside of the theory/practice binary. What you do in your professional life, though it is practical and concrete, is indeed theoretical. Work to open up that binary so that you are able to see texts in different ways (i.e., the theoretical application to your practice).

Assignments

All assignments (readings, writings, etc.) are due on the specified date at the specified time. All assignments will be submitted on the Blogsite. Directions for submission are on page 6 of this syllabus.

Preparation & Contributions – Blog Postings (Critiques).

Read the material and prepare a thoughtful and thorough critique for the Blog. To prepare for your postings, actively *question* as you read. Questions that arise from your reading actually frame the content of your contributions. Also, think *open-mindedly* about alternative points of view, acknowledging the limits of your experience and attending to how you might incorporate new knowledge into your old frameworks. Some suggestions for crafting a critique:

- You interpret *assumptions and biases* in the text (including your own).
- You understand the *relevance* of the text to your own work and the world at large – perhaps you include a link in your blog to a current event!
- You understand the *significance* of what the text represents – why does it matter?
- You understand the *complexities* of social, political, and cultural problems.

Your post should be a provocative response to the reading that will deepen and enrich our own understanding of the text. Please focus your post on one or two key issues from the reading; there is no need to “cover” all of the content in the reading. As well, when there are multiple readings for one post/critique, try to find connections and *integrate* your critique, rather than dealing with the readings as separate entities.

NOTE: I recommend that you write your Blog in a Word document and then copy and paste it into the Blog, rather than composing directly into the Blog. If there is a tech problem with the Blog, it is always good to have a back-up!

Blog Comments.

Please provide comments to 4 different entries written by your colleagues in each posting cycle (of course, you can provide more than 4 if you’d like). Your Blog comments should be conversational and engaging, rather than a short, simple, acknowledgement of or agreement with the author’s ideas. Make concerted attempts to extend your colleagues’ ideas in your comments. If you disagree with what someone writes, please do so respectfully and collaboratively. (Do keep track of your comments so that you can rotate authors each time.)

I will read each of your Blog posts and comments, though I may not comment on each one each week due to the enormous amount of reading and writing involved. If I need to give you feedback of a personal, rather than public, nature, then I will message you in ASULearn. Credits for posts and comments will be put in ASULearn.

***A note on Blogs: please remember that the Blogsite is a public forum, not an internal one. This means that people anywhere in the world can access what you write. I monitor the site daily to keep those outside our course from posting.

Summative Self-Critique.

To be completed at the end of the course, this self-critique will be a reflection of

your learning over the semester and its applicability to your professional work. Plan to write approximately 2 pages single-spaced.

- Think about your reading/writing/thinking process this semester -- both your progress and product.
- Refer to the first page of our syllabus, where you see three quotes. Choose *ONE* of the quotes that best represents your learning with the course material.
- Describe, reflect, evaluate, critique your own work using the quote. You might want to begin by describing what the quote means to you in a general way, then refer to specific moments/readings/posts that exemplify your learning as related to the quote. *Please remember to be specific and not general.*
- You'll post this summative self-critique as the last blog post for the semester. You will not need to comment on others' posts, though I do hope you will read some of them at your leisure.

Evaluation and Grading

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Points</i>	<i>Scale</i>	
Blog posts (critiques of readings):	50%	94 – 100:	A
Blog comments:	30%	90 – 93:	A-
Summative Self-Critique:	20%	84 – 89:	B
Total:	100%	80 – 83:	B-
		70 – 79:	C
		Below 70:	F

Communication

The best way to reach me is via electronic mail. I will respond within 24 hours via email.

Accommodations of Disabilities

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at www.ods.appstate.edu or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

The Academic Integrity Code and Honor Pledge:

Students attending Appalachian State University agree to abide by the following Code:

- Students shall not lie, cheat, or steal to gain academic advantage.
- Students will oppose every instance of academic dishonesty.

Students agree to abide by the Academic Integrity Code when submitting the admission application. The Honor Pledge is a cornerstone of the Appalachian State University Academic Integrity Code and serves as a reminder of the University's commitment to academic integrity. No Appalachian student shall unfairly further their own academic performance. Students attending Appalachian State University pledge: "I have not violated the Appalachian State University Academic Integrity Code."

Posting a new entry on our class BLOG

1. Go to the Blogsite. <http://blogs.rcoe.appstate.edu/classes/res5535su10/>
2. Click POST A NEW ENTRY.
3. User name is res5535 and password is abc123 (lower case sensitive).
4. Click CREATE A NEW ENTRY ON THIS WEBLOG.
5. Give your entry a title. Make your title interesting and unique!!
6. Select the appropriate category, given the topic for the post.
7. Make your entry. (I recommend writing your entry in Word and then pasting it into the blog.)
8. Put your name at the end of your post. We won't know who wrote the entry if you forget your name!
9. To post your entry, select PUBLISH from the "Status" drop-down menu. *Your entry will not post unless you select PUBLISH!!*
10. Click SAVE to post your entry.

Posting a comment on our class BLOG

1. After reading a posted entry, you may make a comment using the comments fields as shown. If comment fields are not showing, click on the COMMENTS link at the end of the entry.
2. You will need to include your name and email address; then write your comments. Comments should be substantive (not, "Hey, great idea!"). Your comments should be conversational and engaging, rather than a short, simple, acknowledgement of or agreement with the writer's ideas. Make concerted attempts to **extend** your colleagues' ideas in your comments. Draw from your own experiences to make connections to your colleagues' ideas. Offer new perspectives.
3. Click POST when you are finished.

Course Schedule
(Tentative and Subject to Change)

DATE	TOPIC/READINGS	DUE
BEFORE 6/7	<p>Podcast – Course overview (on website)</p> <p>Introductions – Post an introduction of yourself and your general experiences regarding your own literacy learning and expression. This should be a narrative style that gives both a history of your literacies and some of your current interests in literacy learning/ teaching and expression</p>	BEFORE 6/8
M 6/7	<p>Dowdy, “Ovuh Dyuh”</p> <p>Delpit, “No Kinda Sense”</p> <p>http://abcnews.go.com/GMA/story?id=7130988&page=1</p>	Blog post (critique) due on Dowdy, Delpit, and news article
T 6/8	Blog comments (4) due	
TH 6/10	<p>Podcast – “Intro to Qualitative Research”</p> <p>Noll, “Experiencing literacy in and out of school: Case studies of two American Indian youth”</p>	Blog post (critique) due on Noll
F 6/11	Blog comments (4) due	
M 6/14	<p>Henry, “‘Speaking up’ and ‘speaking out’: Examining ‘voice’ in a reading/writing program with adolescent African Caribbean girls”</p> <p>Staples, “<i>Hustle & Flow</i>: a critical student and teacher-generated framework for re-authoring a representation of Black masculinity”</p>	Blog post (critique) due
T 6/15	Blog comments (4) due	
TH 6/17	Perry, “From storytelling to writing: Transforming literacy practices among Sudanese refugees”	Blog post (critique) due

F 6/18	Blog comments (4) due	
M 6/21	<p><i>Reading Lives: Overview (ch. 1) & Situated Histories of Learning (ch. 2)</i></p> <p>Please listen to the podcast after reading chapter 1 but before reading chapter 2.</p>	Blog post due. Open topic: Questions about content, connections to previous readings, examples from professional/ personal life to theory, etc.
T 6/22	Blog comments (4) due	
TH 6/24	<p><i>Reading Lives: Memories of Working-Class Girlhoods (ch. 3) & Fictions of Girlhood (ch. 4)</i></p>	Blog post (critique) due
F 6/25	Blog comments (4) due	
M 6/28	<p><i>Reading Lives: Boyhood Stories and Practices (ch. 5) & Hybrid Languages of Inquiry (ch. 6)</i></p>	Blog post (critique) due
T 6/29	Blog comments (4) due	
TH 7/1	Summative Self-Critique due to Blogsite <u>before 12 noon</u>	Blog post (critique) due