



ENG 677.01B and 677.02W: Issues in Literacy (Civic Writing)

Instructor: Jessica Pauszek, Assistant Professor of English

Office Location: HL 225

Office Hours: T 12-2; Wednesday online via skype, zoom, or YouSeeU, Thursday 1-2

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COURSE INFORMATION

Required Texts:

- *Women at Work: Rhetorics of Gender and Labor*, eds. David Gold and Jessica Enoch
- All other texts will be shared digitally through our course D2L and google drive.

Course Catalogue Description: A study of the problems and issues concerning literacy, literacy teaching, and literacy research. The course examines the social, political, educational, and cultural influences on literacy. May include emphasis on particular populations or problems.

Course Overview: Our goal for ENG 677 is to understand the theoretical underpinnings and practical application of civic writing. To do this, we will first discuss the nature of Civic Writing: What is it? How might we define it? How do people *enact* it? Our goal here is not to find just one idea of Civic Writing but rather to understand the complexity of it, to see what's at stake when people write, and to see how writing is used for social and civic change.

During this course, you'll see examples of civic writing in current contexts evoked through social media tweets and posts, zines, advertisements, and news articles. You'll also see how civic writing emerges in historical moments in an effort for social change, such as during the Arab Spring and #BlackLivesMatter movement. In this historical context though, we will also think about which populations, histories, and writings, have perhaps been excluded from traditional notions of Civic Writing. For example, we will examine self-generated literacy movements on local and global scales to understand how communities build activist networks. Such alternative histories as the Sea Island Citizenship Schools and Pecket Well College in the U.K. will ground our understanding of Civic Writing and discussions of our role within this work as members of the university.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Students will gain an understanding of what civic writing is; how they might enact it; and how they might integrate civic writing into their research and teaching**

- **Students will understand complexities and ethics involved in community-based projects**
- **Students will explore how civic writing is produced, circulated, and preserved**
- **Students will develop strategies for effective civic writing projects**

GUIDELINES

Online class activities: This course is dual modality and requires continuous effort from students to partake in the class and build discussions. Because this is a graduate seminar, I expect substantive discussion that not only shows an awareness of what the text does and what it argues (think, summaries!) but also explores concepts from the reading in relation to other texts and your own ideas (here, I want synthesis and questions to move the text forward). We are not in this class to find one exact answer but rather to think through multiple possibilities of Civic Writing and how we might use some examples to shape our own teaching and research goals.

A note on the syllabus: I'd like you to think about this course like an exhibition at a museum. In one semester, we cannot learn everything about Civic Writing. Therefore, the class is designed to provide an overview of some key themes, as well as provide examples for how scholars have enacted Civic Writing. Each exhibition has a curator, someone who pulls together pieces in a common theme, idea, or concept for an audience. The goal of each curator and each exhibit is to create a common theme for their collection. This course is also a curation -- of my ideas of the possibilities and constraints of Civic Writing. It is one version of an expansive field. We will work to build on these ideas and follow additional strands as well.

We have four modules: **Defining Civic Writing; Engaging Civic Writing; Archiving Civic Writing; and Enacting Civic Writing**. Here, the goal is for us to first develop an understanding -- a flexible definition of what it is -- followed by an exploration of how scholars in Composition and Rhetoric engage Civic Writing in their own ways. Then, we will see how particular forms of Civic Writing are archived and circulated today. Finally, we will conclude with individual projects where you determine how you might like to enact civic writing in your own classes.

Respectful Dialogue: Please understand that text does not always convey the same thing to each person. Therefore, if anyone has a question about text from the class, please bring it to our attention and we can respectfully discuss these ideas.

Attendance/Late Assignments: Attendance/ online participation is mandatory. Because the nature of our course and discussion posts/feedback, timeliness is incredibly important. However, if something is going on in your life to prevent such participation, please let me know immediately. Late essays may detract from your grade; however, I'm certainly willing to work with students who communicate with me.

STATEMENTS

Academic Honesty Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce does not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of **academic dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally-accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another person and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension and expulsion (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1, 2, 3]). Cheating, including plagiarizing papers in whole or part, will result in a grade of zero (0) on the assignment for the first offense and failure of the course for any subsequent offenses.

Collection of Data for Measuring Institutional Effectiveness

To measure the level of compliance with the university’s Institutional Effectiveness guidelines, throughout the semester, I will collect some of the ungraded texts you produce. The texts will be part of a portfolio created on your behalf and will be measured to ensure that our program “promotes practices that result in higher student academic achievement; an enhanced student experience; aligned and transparent decisions; and readily available information for improvement, accountability, and accreditation” (see Department of Institutional Effectiveness,” <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutus/institutionalEffectiveness/default.aspx>). This is solely an assessment of program effectiveness and in no way affects students’ course grades or GPAs.

ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Ge Library 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

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on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus <<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>> document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web

url:<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

Students are expected to be civil, polite, and accommodating to differences of opinion. Be kind to each other and realize that because we can only read your words and emoticons—not your body language, facial expressions or hear the tone of your voice—misunderstandings can occur.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

- ❖ **PARTICIPATION (Blogs, discussion posts, responding to classmates) (15%):** To do well with this aspect of the course, you should contribute to the class discussion, raising questions, responding to classmates, and sharing insights in ways that keep the conversation moving forward in meaningful, generative, and generous ways. Your contributions should demonstrate your careful reading of all assigned texts and preparation of any additional assignments. Participation is not just cheering people on saying “great post,” but rather delving into the readings, being specific with your analysis, and asking questions of each other.

- ❖ **ARCHIVAL ACTIVITY (Part of Participation grade):** You will explore a digital archive from the options provided and complete the activity posted on D2L, including summaries and descriptions of your research

- ❖ **VISUAL PRESENTATION OF TEXT AND RESPONSE (5%):** You will "present" ONE reading by creating some sort an audio/video/digital visualization of the text. This might be an infographic, a prezi, or more but I would like you to try something you have not used before. NO POWERPOINTS.

Each student will choose to present either f2f, via ZOOM, or online. If you are not presenting in real time, you should provide an audio or video recorded presentation.

- ❖ **RESPONSE PAPER (40%):** You will write two 3-4 page papers where you summarize articles and make connections with our class as well as other articles. This response paper should summarize the semesters’ readings (a few, not all) then provide a reflection on why/how this might connect to civic writing. I also want to see synthesis here. You might explore this based on the content, the methods used, how you would teach these articles, etc.

- ❖ **CIRCULATION ACTIVITY (20%) :** For this assignment, you will trace the circulation of a digital text (image, hashtag) or event, exploring where this text emerged and how it has circulated/changed/been revised. You will then produce a 1-2 page single-spaced document describing your findings.

- ❖ **FINAL PROJECT (20%):** Each student will complete an exploratory project in regard to our Civic Writing class. Students will choose a concept that we’ve discussed (or that has emerged from their research) such as circulation, civic engagement, community publishing, etc. and will explore that concept in a 6-8 page final paper. The goal with this paper is for students to develop a concept they are interested in, read more sources, and begin articulating how they see Civic Writing being enacted and to what effects. This project should be specifically focused on Composition and Rhetoric, Literacy Studies, or Writing Studies.

SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES will be outlined on D2L in detail