Introduction to Graduate Study in Literacy

This course introduces graduate students to the field of literacy studies. It emphasizes interdisciplinary research and scholarship that explores definitions of literacy and its uses across historical and cultural contexts. As such, it is relevant for graduate students in the humanities, social sciences, education, public policy, and related fields.

The study and understanding of literacy has changed dramatically in recent decades. Although the term literacy is widespread and often unquestioned as to its importance, literacy in actual use emerges as a much more complicated, mediated, and context-dependent subject than previously appreciated. Writing and reading now are seen as pluralistic cultural practices whose forms, functions, and influences take shape as part of larger social, political, historical, material, and ideological contexts. Literacy studies thus require new, interdisciplinary, comparative, and critical approaches to conceptualization, theories, analysis, and interpretation. This course examines these currents as they take shape, and seeks to understand how a field of study is created among the disciplines of linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and history, among others.

Toward that end, our topics include: "great debates" over literacy, its uses, impacts, and meanings; theories of literacy; histories of literacy; literacy and literacies; reading and writing and beyond; ethnographies of literacy in everyday life; academic and school literacies; literacy and language; literacy and schooling; literacy and social order—class, race, gender, ethnicity, generation, and geography; literacy and collective and individual action; recent research; research design and methodologies. Readings include the work of scholars across the humanities and social sciences. These readings are starting points not definitive statements on literacy.

The course has a number of learning goals including:

- Developing new understandings of literacy and literacies, their importance in history and contemporary society, culture, polity, and economies
- Probing the nature of literacy in theory and practice, with respect to definitions, conceptualization, contextual understanding, and complex relationships
- Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and interpretations, and practicing analysis and critical evaluation from a number of perspectives
- Developing advanced skills in written and oral expression
- Engaging in an interdisciplinary conversation about literacy studies, including critical approaches to literacy/ies followed in different disciplines and professions
• Comparing and evaluating different approaches, conceptualizations, theories, methods, and sources that relate to the study and understanding of literacy in its many contexts

Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to
• Engage in scholarly conversations in literacy studies
• Discuss/identify current debates and questions in the field
• Analyze and employ a range of research methods in literacy studies
• Discuss literacy as a social process

English 6750 fulfills a requirement for the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization (GIS) in Literacy Studies.

Mode of Delivery: We will meet on Zoom for every class meeting for all three hours per week. In addition, you will be expected to complete weekly reading assignments before each class. In-class sessions will be primarily discussion.

Required Texts (The OSU Bookstore price matches Amazon.)
Books: Background and Overview

Books: Case Studies and Ethnographies

Other Readings Available on Carmen (indicated by * in the daily syllabus)
Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

- **Carmen:**
  - Carmen, Ohio State’s Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit Carmen.osu.edu. Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
  - Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen
  - This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.
    - **Carmen accessibility**

- **Carmen Zoom:**
  - Office hours will be held through Ohio State’s conferencing platform, Carmen Zoom. A separate guide to accessing Carmen Zoom and our office hours is posted on the course Carmen page under Files.
  - Students may use the audio and video functions if a webcam and microphone are available. If not, there is still a chat function within Carmen Zoom for the student to live chat with the professor or TA in the virtual office hours room.
    - **Carmen Zoom** help guide

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** http://ocio.osu.edu/selfservice
- **Phone:** 614-688-HELP (4357)
- **Email:** 8help@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

Baseline technical skills necessary for online courses

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen

**Necessary equipment**

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Web cam and microphone
Necessary software

- Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.
- OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Assignments and Requirements

1. **Regular reading, attendance, and active participation** in seminar discussion. Attendance is expected and taken into account in evaluation. The success of this seminar depends on everyone’s full participation. As participants, we must read the assigned material with care. I expect you to read all the material assigned for each week’s discussion. So plan ahead. Think about useful questions and issues for discussion. Even if you are not leading discussion, come with questions and/or issues you want to discuss.

2. Each week one or more students (depending on the size of the group) will draft and circulate *questions for discussion* in advance of that day’s class meeting. **Questions must be posted on Carmen by 6:00 pm on Tuesday of each week.** The student(s) responsible for circulating discussion questions each week is also responsible for leading the seminar session that day. Pick a seminar session after September 4th.

**Leading of one seminar session.** The most important task of this assignment is to present questions and perspectives on the major topics and issues of that week, and on the reading specifically, that will generate good discussion. Think about how you will fuel lively discussion. Questions and activities should be made available on Carmen to all seminar participants prior to class, no later than 6:00 p.m. on the day before the discussion.

**Suggestions:** choose particularly important passages in the works for analysis, and spend some time on their explication. (Better yet, include them in your Carmen posting, along with discussion questions.) Choose key ideas and terms for elucidation, or focus on the questions the work asks, its answers, and its relation to larger issues or themes, including previous weeks’ work. Collect some reviews (if we’re discussing a book) from academic journals and serious publications for nonspecialists and organize discussion around the assessment of these evaluations. Remember that the goal is not especially to find out what is wrong with the work, although that may be important, but to understand its significance and contribution to large issues and questions. Think of ways of identifying themes and issues that include specific readings but may also look back to earlier weeks or look ahead to future weeks and topics. Depending on class size, the plan for the session might include breaking into small groups with specific tasks for part of the time. Seminar leaders are not expected to be responsible for the entire session; generally, seminar leaders will use the first half of class, but may use more, if discussion warrants it. Finally, pay attention to methods—design of study, what counts as evidence, etc.
3. Preparation for class includes writing two commentary papers (no longer than five pages, double-spaced) offering critical perspectives and raising questions about the assigned reading in a particular week. **One commentary will be on the class session for which you lead discussion.** Select any class session from week two to week fifteen for the second commentary. These commentaries should not summarize the material. Rather, the papers should present your reaction to the readings: what strikes you as particularly interesting, important, outrageous, thought-provoking or worth thinking or talking about. These short papers should include questions the readings raise for you and/or questions you wish to raise about the material. Those questions as well as your comments will help you to prepare for seminar sessions. I will not give formal grades until the second commentary is turned in. I will ask you to post at least one of your commentaries (of your choosing) on the class Carmen site. **Commentaries are due during the week in which that topic/reading is discussed.** That means the commentary must be turned in no later than Tuesday (6 p.m.) of that week.

4. **A Publishable Book Review.** Choose a book-length study of literacy that has been published within the last three years. Read it thoroughly and write a review that you can/will submit to an appropriate journal. Read through book reviews in two or three journals to get a sense of the genre. For those of you seeking a first publication, book reviews are nice starting points. You will also participate in a class book review symposium where you will do a 10-minute presentation on the book you reviewed. In addition to the main argument, strengths and weaknesses, you should situate the book within conversations we’ve been having (or will have) in class.

**Due: Oct. 14th Draft and Peer Review**  
**Due: Oct. 21st Final Draft/Book Review Symposium**

5. Compose a **critical essay (print or digital)** that focuses on an issue or question from our readings and/or discussions that has peaked your interest. Things to think about: what makes this issue/question worthy of further interrogation? Who are the stakeholders and what is at stake? Why are you interested in pursuing this question? What perspective and/or insight do you bring to this issue? In what direction do you see this issue/question proceeding? You should place this issue within the current scholarly conversation in literacy studies. Examine scholars’ distinct approaches to and methods for studying the issue/question. Decide on the appropriate methodological and disciplinary approach to answer your question. For example, will you take a historical approach and examine archival material? Does your question suggest an ethnographic perspective? This final essay, if print, should be 12-15 pages.

**Due: Oct. 28th One-page project description (ss)**  
**Due: Nov. 18th Progress Report (one single-spaced page)**  
**Due: Dec. 2nd Draft and Peer Response**  
**Due: Dec. 8th Final Draft**
Grade Distribution:
Seminar discussion 20%
Commentaries 20%
Book Review and presentation 25%
Final Critical Essay 35%

Grading Scale
A 4.0  A- 3.7  B+ 3.3  B 3.0  B- 2.7
C+ 2.3  C 2.0  C- 1.7  D+ 1.3  D 1.0
E/F 0

Instructor Feedback:
I will do my best to return graded assignments within one week. I am happy to meet with you to discuss your work at any stage in the process.

**Requirements for S/U students (6750.02):** 1) Lead one seminar discussion (and prepare questions); 2) compose and post one commentary on that discussion; 3) write a book review and participate in symposium; 4) keep up with all reading and attend all class sessions; 5) participate in class discussions.

Turning in assignments
All written work that is turned in for evaluation or grading should be double-spaced (unless otherwise noted), 12 point font, in a legible type face. Follow any specific assignment requirements. Use footnotes and endnotes as necessary and use them appropriately according to the style guide of your basic field (APA, MLA, Chicago Manual of Style, etc.). Your writing should be gender neutral as well as clear and concise. If you have questions, contact me, if at all possible, in advance of due dates.

Disabilities Services
Students with documented disabilities who have registered with the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform me as soon as possible of your needs. SLDS is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave; Tel.: 614-292-3307; VRS: 614-429-1334; Email: slds@osu.edu; Web: slds.osu.edu

Accessibility: I am committed to making this course accessible to all students. Please feel free to contact me to discuss your learning needs, or any aspects of the course that could be made more accessible, such as class material, resources, or activities. Even if you do not have a documented disability, remember that you can receive support outside of class during office hours and that university services like the Writing Center are available to all students. If you cannot afford groceries, are unable to access sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Dean’s Office of Undergraduate Education for support as soon as possible. Furthermore, if you are comfortable doing so, please notify me or an advisor to help you get connected with local resources.
Civility
Mutual respect and cooperation, during the time we spend together each week and the time you work on group assignments, are the basis for successful conduct of this course. The class is a learning community that depends on respect, cooperation, and communication among all of us. This includes coming to class on time, prepared for each day’s work: reading and assignments complete, focused on primary classroom activity, and participating. It also includes polite and respectful expression of agreement or disagreement. Please silence all telephones, beepers, electronic devices, etc.

Academic Honesty
Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University’s Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course. Faculty Rule 3335-5-487 states, “It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term ‘academic misconduct’ includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee.” In addition, it is a violation of the student code of conduct to submit without the permission of the instructors work for one course that has also been submitted in fulfillment of the requirements of another course. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resources/)

Class Cancellation Policy: If class must be cancelled for any reason, I will email the class the evening before or the morning of class.

Writing Center (online for autumn 2020)
All members of the OSU community are invited to discuss their writing with a trained consultant at the Writing Center. The Center offers the following free services: consultation with any writing assignment at any stage; one-on-one online tutorials via live chat or drop offs. You can make an appointment via WCOnline: https://osu.mywconline.com/

The Digital Media Project (DMP)
The DMP is the division of the English department that manages, troubleshoots, and supports students in English courses by providing technical advice and equipment. You can use the DMP resources for your class project and poster. The DMP office is located in Denney 324 and offers equipment borrowing and program support from friendly, expert staff.
The Student Advocacy Center (SAC)
The Student Advocacy Center was established to help answer questions, direct you to the appropriate departments and people, familiarize you with university policies and procedures, and give you guidance as you look at ways to solve problems and make choices during your years at OSU. SAC aims to help you become better informed so that you can focus on your classes. SAC is located in 1120 Lincoln Tower, 1800 Cannon Drive and is open 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. They can be reached by phone at (614) 292-1111 or email at advocacy@osu.edu.

Counseling and Consultation Services
Counseling and Consultation Services provides a wide range of resources for graduate students. For more information, call (614) 292-5766.

Other course policies and resources

Student Academic Services
Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services’ website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml

Student Services
The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: http://ssc.osu.edu

Copyright Disclaimer
The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Diversity
The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Title IX
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 (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at http://titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Interim Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Molly Peirano, at titleix@osu.edu
Mental Health
As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

COVID-19 and Illness Policies

While our course will be online for the duration of Fall 2020, the following policies and statements apply to your experience in English 6750.01 and .02 and to your commitments to protecting yourself and others inside and outside OSU. These policies and statements are adopted and copied from the Arts and Sciences Teaching Transition Committee Report (July 7, 2020).

The University’s COVID-19 Transition Task Force guidelines and requirements were published on July 1 on the Safe and Healthy website. They include the following:

• “A daily health check to report body temperature and health status will be required for all faculty, staff and students each day they intend to be on Ohio State’s campuses in the autumn.”
• Face masks must be worn in indoor settings, including classrooms.
• Members of the campus community will be required to sign a pledge “to affirm their understanding of what is needed to help fight the spread of the virus and their intention to do their part.”
• “Accountability measures will be in place for those who refuse to abide by required health and safety guidelines.”

Student COVID-related Accommodation Process

The university is committed to supporting students and program participants with COVID-19 based risk factors. Student Life Disability Services, in conjunction with the Office of Institutional Equity, will work with students who are vulnerable to complications from COVID-
19 to ensure that they have the necessary resources to participate in university life as safely as possible. Ohio State students from any campus may submit a COVID-related accommodation request. Students registered with Student Life Disability Services can work directly with their assigned Access Specialist to modify their accommodations or make additional COVID-based accommodation requests.

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. In light of the current pandemic, students seeking to request COVID-related accommodations may do so through the university’s request process, managed by Student Life Disability Services. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

**Student illness or absence**
If you are too ill to participate in this course due to COVID-19 or another illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. All materials will be made available on Carmen, including lecture recordings and slides. Alternate assignments or extensions may be arranged.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Activity</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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| September 2| Definitions of and Perspectives on Literacy: The Great Divide         | *Jack Goody and Ian Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, 27-68. See also Goody’s Introduction.  
* Viera, “On the Social Consequences of Literacy” in *LiCS*  | Due on Carmen (before class): Two quotations that caused you to pause and questions related to those quotations |
| September 9| Literary, History, and Myth                                           | Barton, *Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language*, chs 7,8  
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<tr>
<td>September 16</td>
<td>Literacy, Language, and Writing</td>
<td>David Barton, <em>Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language</em>, Ch. 9-12</td>
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<td>James Paul Gee, “Literacy, Discourse and Linguistics: Introduction and What is Literacy?” in Cushman et al, Ch. 30</td>
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<td>September 23</td>
<td>Literacy, Culture, Community, and Ethnography; New Literacy Studies</td>
<td>John Szwed, “The Ethnography of Literacy,” in Cushman et al, Ch. 24</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
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<td>*Brian Street, “Introduction,” <em>Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy</em></td>
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<td>* Stephen Reeder and Karen Reed Wikeland, “Literacy Development and Ethnicity: An Alaskan Example” in Street, ch.7</td>
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<td>*Collins and Blot, <em>Literacy and Literacies</em>, chapters 1-3</td>
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<td>David Barton, <em>Literacy: An Introduction to the Ecology of Written Language</em>, Ch. 14</td>
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| October 7   |                                            | Teresa McCarty and Lucille J. Watahomigie, “Language and
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<td>October 14</td>
<td>Brandt, <em>Literacy in American Lives</em></td>
<td>Due: Draft of Book Review (peer response)</td>
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<td>*Alexander, “Reciprocal Literacy Sponsorship in Service-Learning Settings”</td>
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<td>October 21</td>
<td>Blommaert, <em>Grassroots Literacy: Writing, Identity and Voice in Central Africa.</em></td>
<td>Due: Book Review Symposium</td>
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<td>October 28</td>
<td>Wan, Amy. <em>Producing Good Citizens: Literacy Training in Anxious Times</em></td>
<td>Due: One page description of final project</td>
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<td>November 4</td>
<td>Literacies, Immigration, and Transnationalism, Translanguaging</td>
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<td>*Rounasville, “Taking Hold of Global Englishes: Intensive English Programs as Brokers of Transnational Literacy”</td>
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Viera Podcast: [https://cstw.osu.edu/writethinkteach](https://cstw.osu.edu/writethinkteach)

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<tr>
<td>November 11</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>Veterans’ Day</td>
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<td>Alvarez, <em>Brokering Tareas</em></td>
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<td>November 25</td>
<td>Black Queer Literacies</td>
<td>Pritchard, <em>Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy</em></td>
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| December 2 | Pritchard, *Fashioning Lives: Black Queers and the Politics of Literacy* | Oral Presentations
Course Evaluations
Final thoughts |
| December 8 | (Finals Week)                   | Due: Final Project                                                       |

**Selected Supplemental Readings**


