THE USES OF LITERACY

EngCmp 1552, Spring 2016
University of Pittsburgh
Prof. Annette Vee

Meeting time: T Th 2:30–3:45pm
Meeting place: 349 Cathedral of Learning
Course website: http://annettevee.com/2016spring_usesofliteracy

Prof. Vee's contact information:
Office: 628C Cathedral of Learning
Email: annettevee@pitt.edu
Office Hours: Thursdays, 12–2pm and gladly by appointment

Course Description

In this class, we will explore what literacy is beyond simply reading and writing. We'll visit literacy enacted in different contexts and historical periods to explore deceptively simple questions: What is literacy? How is it used in the world?

As we consider *what literacy is,* we will encounter theories of how literacy is learned, how it is distributed across various populations, and how it has changed throughout history. We will be in theoretical as well as practical dialogue with others as we read literacy scholarship and talk with people about their literacy development, practices, and teaching. We should all leave this class with an enhanced understanding of how people use literacy in the world so that we might better teach it and practice it in the future.

Course Goals

Students who successfully complete this course will have:

- Increased understanding of: the role of literacy in our lives and others'; how literacy functions in society; the ways race, class, gender and other human traits intersect with literacy and formal or informal education in the United States.

- Enhanced writing skills in creative non-fiction genres such as personal narratives, interviews, and research-based essays.

- Greater facility with informal, online writing for blogs and a familiarity with the Wordpress interface.

- Stronger reading skills for complex, research-based writing in the field of education, rhetoric and literacy.

- More strategies and skills to help others compose essays, for example: listening carefully to writers' needs and ideas; noticing patterns in their work and process; offering supportive and constructive suggestions for improvement.

- The ability to ask thoughtful questions on writing and life to peers.

- Knowledge that literacy is always aspirational: we can **all** be better writers and readers.

Course Requirements

This is a course on literacy, so together we will be doing a lot of reading and writing: 2-5 pages of writing and 30-60 pages of reading each week. To succeed in this course, you will need to stay on top of assignments, participate actively in online and in-class discussions, and respect your peers in conversation and reviews of their work. Specifically, you will need to:

- complete all course readings;
- arrive on time and prepared for class meetings and conferences;
- participate in discussions online and in-class;
- draft, revise and submit all course projects;
- review your peers' work regularly and have your own work reviewed;
- submit a Midterm and Final Portfolio including the work you've done for the class;
- submit all drafts, projects and work **on time** (day/hour that it is due; no credit is given for late drafts; late papers will normally be docked one letter grade per day, unless you get my approval for an extension before the due date).

If, at any time, you have questions or concerns about your ability to fulfill the expectations for this course, please contact me. I aim to help you succeed in the course, and together we can resolve any issue that may come up.

Course Readings

Readings for each week are listed on the course calendar (see below) by the day they are due to be read. You are not required to purchase texts for this course; all readings will be available online through CourseWeb unless otherwise noted. Throughout the semester, you will also be reading your peers' work and your own. You should be interacting with all of these texts as you read them, so you may print them out to highlight and annotate them, take notes in a digital or physical notebook, or digitally annotate the texts using a program like Adobe Acrobat. We will regularly discuss your reading and writing strategies in class and in one-on-one conferences.

Grading

Your grade will be based on your portfolio of work for the class (reviewed by your peers and me before I grade it), your participation in the class, and your final presentation to the class.

Midterm graded review of portfolio:	35%
Midterm blog portfolio:	10%
Final graded review of portfolio:	30%
Final blog portfolio:	10%
Participation (in-class):	10%
Final presentation:	5%

Late work will be docked one letter grade per day it is late, unless prior arrangements are made with me for extensions, etc. I offer extensions only in extreme circumstances. Individual assignments are not graded until the

portfolio; however, your portfolio grades will be adjusted proportionally for any individual late work or late drafts that your portfolio contains.

Participation

Participation in the class consists of short writings in class and on the course blog, peer review, discussion, and your general contribution to the work we do together. Participation grades are by their nature subjective, which does not mean they are arbitrary.

Someone with an excellent participation grade:
- will have attended class and appeared engaged without fail;
- will have offered timely, insightful comments to his peers;
- will have always brought her readings or other materials to class;
- will have contributed regularly and thoughtfully to class discussions both online and offline.

Some people are more likely to speak up than others and some are more comfortable sharing ideas after they have had more time to process them; for these reasons, I offer both online (that is, written and not spontaneous) and offline (that is, vocal and real-time) venues in which to participate in the class. It's normal to be more comfortable in one space than another, but I strongly believe that you will need to be proficient in sharing your ideas in real-time, asynchronous, written and face-to-face contexts to be a successful teacher, entrepreneur, employee, or anything else you may want to be in the future. Therefore, I will consider your participation across all of these venues and may call on you both in class and online to give you an opportunity to share your ideas. Please see me if you have questions about how to participate more actively in any area of the class.

Blogs

Writing and interacting online are essential parts of this class. Every week you will post to our class blog on some subject related to literacy or respond to two of your peers' posts. This will be done on a regular schedule.
Group 1: If your last name begins with A-L
Group 2: If your last name begins with M-Z

Everyone posts by Thurs, Jan 14 classtime.
by midnight, Mon, Jan 18: Group 1 posts
by midnight, Weds, Jan 20: Group 2 responds to two posts
by midnight, Mon, Jan 25: Group 2 posts
by midnight, Weds, Jan 27: Group 1 responds to two posts…. Etc….
Blogging ends Week 14.

I will give feedback on blogs occasionally throughout the semester (and whenever you specifically ask me for feedback), but you should rely primarily on your peers' responses to your writing as feedback. The blog is your space to introduce and discuss ideas about the class topic that are most interesting to you.

I will assess blogs twice during the term: once for a Midterm Blog Portfolio, and again for a Final Blog Portfolio. Portfolio grades will be based on the quality of writing as well as the general level of participation on the blog.

Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance in this course is required. Because this is a low enrollment course, your presence and contributions affect everyone. Regular attendance also means that you are writing and responding to writing regularly, and it means that your peers and I can give your writing the attention it deserves. For these reasons, you need to be in class, on time, prepared, every meeting. If you miss more than **one** week total of this course (2 class meetings), your final grade may be affected, up to half a letter grade for each absence over two. If you miss more than two weeks total of this course (4 class meetings), you are unlikely to pass the course.

It is your responsibility to get the assignments, class notes, and course changes from a classmate if you do miss a class. It is also your responsibility to keep track of and complete the missing work. In-class work such as peer review cannot be made up. If you miss class on the day a written assignment is due, make arrangements to turn it in on time. As mentioned above, every day the paper is late the grade drops by one letter grade.

I understand that things happen and occasionally you may need to miss a class because you're sick, you've missed your flight back to campus, or you have pressing personal or family issues. The policy above allows for such occasional absences without penalty. If you need to be absent for some extraordinary reason—because of a severe accident or illness, a family emergency or death, a religious holiday or jury duty—please let me know, and we will work something out. For such absences, either prior notification or subsequent documentation will be required.

Guidelines for Written Work

I specify word limits for assignments rather than page limits so that you do not need to use wide margins or tiny, strange fonts to display your work. Please use reader-friendly fonts such as Times New Roman, Arial, Calibri, Garamond, or Helvetica and sizes that are humane for your readers (10-12 point). Please use 1.5 to 2 line spacing. All peer review drafts should be printed out at the beginning of class the day they are due. All drafts to Prof. Vee should be turned in via CourseWeb for me to comment on electronically.

Physical copies of work are due when class begins. Online work is always due at 11:59pm of the due date.

Academic Integrity

The University asks us to include in our course descriptions this quotation from Pitt's Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (February 1974):

> The integrity of the academic process requires fair and impartial evaluation on the part of faculty and honest academic conduct on the part of students. To this end, students are expected to conduct themselves at a high level of responsibility in the fulfillment of the course of their study. It is the corresponding responsibility of faculty to make clear to students those standards by which students will be evaluated, and the resources permissible for use by students during the course of their study and evaluation. The educational process is perceived as a joint faculty-student enterprise which will perforce involve professional judgment by faculty and may involve—without penalty—reasoned exception by students to the data or views offered by faculty.

Plagiarism hurts the relationships and scholarship we construct during this class. Assignments for this course are designed to be relevant to your specific contexts—your personal literacy narrative, your future work as a teacher or learner, etc.—and are therefore rarely plagiarized in full. More commonly, students plagiarize by improperly quoting and documenting their sources. We will review how to properly document sources in class and I am happy to answer questions about how you can ensure that work you do for the class is your own. Additionally, please visit the English Department's site defining plagiarism and explaining how to properly document sources: http://www.english.pitt.edu/undergraduate/understand-and-avoid-plagiarism .

Should you plagiarize, consequences are severe: students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity, noted above, will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process that I initiate. A minimum sanction of a failing grade for the paper or project will be imposed.

Disability Resources

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please inform me and the Office of Disability Resources and Services as early as possible in the term. You can reach DRS at (412) 648-7890 or (412) 383-7355 (TTY) and you can visit their office at 216 William Pitt Union. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center is a free tutorial service for Pitt students. Writing Center consultants can help you learn how to generate ideas, organize your writing, and understand assignments. They can help you understand and deal with any sentence-level problems that you have, too. It's a great place to go in order to have a reader respond to your work so that you can do some intensive work on your writing. You can call for an appointment at (412) 624-6556 or make an appointment online: https://pitt.mywconline.com/

The writing center is located in 317B of O'Hara Student Center, at 4024 O'Hara St. Visit the Writing Center website at http://www.writingcenter.pitt.edu/ for more information.

Technology etiquette

Please turn off or silence your cell phone **before** class begins and keep it inside your book bag, purse, etc—do *not* keep it on your desk or lap during class. I allow and encourage the use of computers, netbooks, tablets, etc. in class for those who want to take notes digitally during class. These devices are *not* for socializing during class, however—during class you must log out of Facebook, Twitter, IM, message boards you follow, and any other site or service that will distract you from class. Studies show that these activities impede our ability to learn and participate. You may visit our blog, Wikipedia or dictionary sites, etc. to help you understand a concept we're discussing in class, but be prepared to explain any of your in-class Internet use to the entire class. If you are socializing online or on your phone (including texting) during class, then I will warn you only once during the term. After that, you will be considered absent for that class period. Please contact me if you have specific questions about this policy.

Course Schedule

Life is complicated; consequently, this schedule is subject to change.

Week 2 (Jan 12 & 14): *Why should we think about literacy?*

Tues: Intro to Course

Thurs: Scribner, Sylvia. "Literacy in Three Metaphors," *American Journal of Education* 93, no. 1 (1984): 6-21.
Find the course blog and register yourself using a pseudonym, then write a blog post responding to the prompt online.
Discuss Literacy Log assignment and definitions of literacy

Week 3 (Jan 19 & 21): *What is literacy?*

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Gee, James Paul. "Literacy and the Literacy Myth," *Social Linguistics and Literacies*. 22-45.
        Brandt, Deborah. "Sponsors of Literacy" *CCC* 49.2, 165-185.

Thurs: Literacy Log (with reflection letter) due to Prof. Vee in class.
        Discuss Literacy Narrative assignment

Week 4 (Jan 26 & 28): *Personal literacy experiences*

   Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Rose, Mike. "I Just Wanna Be Average," *Lives on the Boundary*, 11-37.
        Brandt, Deborah. "Remembering Reading, Remembering Writing."
        Akinnaso, F. Niyi. "Literacy and Individual Consciousness."

Thurs: Literacy Narrative draft #1 due; workshop them in class.
        Discuss Literacy interview assignment

Week 5 (Feb 2 & 4): *Literacy and identity*

   Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Delpit, Lisa. "Language Diversity and Learning," *Other People's Children*, 48-69.
        Fishman, Andrea. "Becoming Literate: A Lesson from the Amish"

Thurs: Literacy Narrative draft #2 due to Prof. Vee (11:59pm on CourseWeb).

Week 6 (Feb 9 & 11): *Lacking literacy*

   Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Purcell-Gates, Victoria. "A World Without Print," *Literacy: A Critical Sourcebook* 402-417 (Reprint
        from *Other People's Words*).
        Wolf, Maryanne. "The Beginnings of Reading Development, or Not." *Proust and the Squid,* 81-107.
        National Assessment of Adult Literacy materials http://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/

Thurs: Literacy interview draft #1 due; workshop in class

Week 7 (Feb 16 & 18): *Literacy in history*

   Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night

Tues: Resnick, Daniel P. and Lauren Resnick. "The Nature of Literacy: An Historical Exploration," 370-385.
        Vincent, David. "The Rise of Mass Literacy," in *The Rise of Mass Literacy*, 1-26.

Thurs: Literacy interview draft #2 due to Prof. Vee on CourseWeb (11:59pm)
        Discuss "What is Literacy?" essay
        Holly Keene comes to visit

Week 8 (Feb 23 & 25): *Literacy and citizenship*

   Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Vieira, Kate. "American by Paper."
        Chapter from Stevens, *Literacy, Law and Social Order*
        Materials from the US Citizenship test website: http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learners/study-test

Thurs: Draft #1 of "What is Literacy?" essay due; workshop in class
        MIDTERM BLOG PORTFOLIO DUE ONLINE 11:59PM.

Week 9 (Mar 1 & 3): *Literacy in communities*
Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Gere, Anne Ruggles. "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms: The Extracurriculum of Literacy."
        Moss, Beverley. "'Phenomenal Women," Collaborative Literacies, and Community Texts in Alternative
        "Sista" Spaces. *Community Literacy Journal* (Fall 2010): 1-24.

Thurs: Discuss Literacy in Context essay.
        MIDTERM PORTFOLIO DUE IN CLASS. (Includes Draft #2 of "What is Literacy? essay")

SPRING BREAK: March 7-11

Week 10 (Mar 15 & 17): *Struggles for literacy*
Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Lu, Min-Zhan. "From Silence to Words: Writing as Struggle." *College English* 49.4 (1987): 437-448.
        Cornelious, Janet. "Slave Testimony: We slipped and learned to read," *When I can read my title clear*

Thurs: Literacy in Context essay Draft #1 due; workshop in class.
        Discuss Literacy Remixed project

Week 11 (Mar 22 & 24): *K–12 Literacy education*
Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Mizuko Ito, et al. Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth
        Project http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/files/report/digitalyouth-WhitePaper.pdf
        Reading on Race to the Top or educational programs, To be determined.

Thurs: Literacy in Context essay, Draft #2 due online to Prof. Vee (CourseWeb, 11:59pm)
        Audio workshop [Audacity]

Week 12 (Mar 29 & 31): *Literacy technologies*
Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Baron, Denis. "From Pencils to Pixels: The Stages of Literacy Technologies," *Passions, Pedagogies, and
        21st Century Technologies*, 15-33.
        Hayles, NK. "Hyper and Deep Attention: The Generational Divide in Cognitive Modes." *Profession
        2007*: 187-199.

Online resources for learning to read, such as http://tarheelreader.org/

Thurs: Literacy remixed project Draft #1 due; workshop in class.
Discuss final presentation groups

Week 13 (Apr 5 & 7): *Literacy crises*

Blogs: Group 1 posts by Mon night; Group 2 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Sheils, M. "Why Johnny Can't Write." (1975). *Newsweek.*
Trimbur, John. "Revisiting Literacy and the Discourse of Crisis in the Era of Neoliberalism," in *Strategic Discourse: The Politics of (New) Literacy Crises*, ed. Lynn Lewis. Logan, UT: Computers and Composition Digital Press/Utah State University Press (2015):
http://ccdigitalpress.org/strategic/afterword.html

Discuss Final Portfolio & Final Blog Portfolio assignments.

Thurs: Prof. Vee is gone for a conference; Meet with your literacy research groups.
Literacy remixed project Draft #2 due to Prof. Vee (CourseWeb, 11:59pm)

Week 14 (Apr 12 & 14): *Wrap-up*

Blogs: Group 2 posts by Mon night; Group 1 responds by Weds night.

Tues: Discuss ideas from your literacy research groups.

Thurs: Present literacy remixed projects in class / meet with your literacy research groups.

Week 15 (Apr 19 & 21): *Final presentations*
Tues & Thurs will be final group presentations about literacy.

Thurs, Apr 21, 11:59pm: FINAL BLOG PORTFOLIO due via CourseWeb.

Thurs, Apr 28, 9–1pm in Prof. Vee's office, 628C CL: FINAL PORTFOLIO due.

Class Projects and Portfolios

You will draft, workshop and submit individual projects throughout the term. I will comment on these projects individually, but I will not until they are submitted in your portfolio. You will submit two portfolios for the course: the first at **midterm** and the second will be submitted at the end of the term, in lieu of a **final**.

The **Midterm Portfolio** will be introduced with a **750 word cover letter** describing its contents and how they reflect your concepts of literacy and your own literate development over the semester. Following the cover letter, it will also include:
1. Literacy Log and reflection letter
2. Literacy Narrative
3. Literacy Interview
4. "What is Literacy" essay

The **Final Portfolio** will be introduced with a **750 word cover letter** describing its contents and how they reflect your concepts of literacy and your own literate development over the semester. Following the cover letter, it will also include:
1. Literacy in Context essay
2. "Literacy Remixed" project
3. "What is Literacy" essay, substantially revised
4. Group literacy research project and reflection

Your **Blog Portfolios** will contain unrevised blog posts and responses, plus your reflection on your blogging. They will be introduced with a **250-500 word cover letter** in which you reflect on your blogging in addition to analyzing a blogger you admire. The portfolio will consist of FOUR items:
1. One post
2. One response
3. Two posts or responses (your choice)

Portfolio assignments

Detailed assignment sheets will be handed out when each of the assignments are introduced in class. To give you a sense of the course and scope of work you will do, however, a brief explanation for each assignment follows below.

Literacy Log

We swim in a world of print and symbols, often unaware of the literacy skills we must muster for everyday activities. For one day, you will log all of the literacy events you participate in. You may record using an audio recorder, Twitter, a paper notebook, your smartphone or anything that's convenient for you. You will turn in an edited, typewritten printout of your literacy log, along with a 250-500 word reflection on your log.

Literacy Narrative

Are you literate? What does that mean? How did you get there? Who are the people who helped you become literate? What particular literacy events stand out to you from your life? Taking cues from our readings by Rose and Akinnaso, write a 750-1250 word narrative detailing several moments in your literacy history.

Literacy Interview

Now that you've thought more about your own literacy history, how does it compare with the literacy history of others? Following the examples of Brandt and Heath, interview (and audio-record) one person who has a background significantly different from yours—they must be 10 years older or younger than

you OR have grown up in a different country OR speak a different native language from your native language, etc. Weave your own reflections with the words of your interviewee into a 750-1500 word essay.

What is Literacy? essay

What is literacy? Literacy is a contested term, notoriously difficult to pin down and with huge political consequences resting on its definition. Using your own literate experience as well as the work from at least *two* literacy scholars discussed in class, you will answer the challenging question "What is literacy?" in a 750 word essay.

Literacy in Context essay

Most of the scholars you've read argue that literacy is always enacted in certain contexts and is best studied in context. This essay gives you the chance to do just that. Find a community that interests you—your favorite coffee shop, online forum, church group, Greek organization, etc.—and spend at least 2 hours intentionally observing the literacy practices and events of that group. How do they create and interpret texts? How do they work together or communicate as they do so? What kind of literacies are called upon by the physical environment in which they meet? Write a 1000-1500 word essay connecting your observations to the ideas of at least *two* scholars discussed in class.

Literacy Remixed project

Transform one of your essays into an audio, video, web-based or multimedia piece.

Group literacy research project

In this project, you will name one of the problems you see in literacy today: its uneven distribution; stigmatization of non-literates; rising standards of digital literacy; issues of literacy related to immigration; education and learning disabilities, etc. Based on your research interest, I'll put you into groups of 3-4 people, and together you will research the issue. Consider: Who are the people involved? What are the stakes? What policies pertain to this literacy issue? What might educators do to affect this issue? Each member of the group will research one component of the issue in order to create a fuller, coherent picture of it. Your final presentation will be based on this topic.

Final presentation

During the last week of class, each group will each lead the class in a short activity based on their Literacy Research project. Make it interesting and interactive! You may choose to create a website, teach a mini literacy lesson, create a movie, script and perform a short play, design a game, develop a small piece of software, or countless other things to demonstrate your answer to one of the critical questions we've asked in class.

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Literacy Log & Reflection

<u>Due: Thurs, Jan 21 in class. Also to be included in the Midterm Portfolio.</u>

We swim in a world of print and symbols, often unaware of the literacy skills we must muster for everyday activities. Shirley Brice Heath, resisting the stark dichotomy that Goody and Watt, Walter Ong, and others drew between orality and literacy, defined a concept of "literacy events" in order to characterize the rich, social context that occurs around reading and writing of print. She writes in a 1982 chapter called "Protean Shapes in Literacy Events:" "A literacy event is any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive processes." Employing Heath's term, David Barton describes a number of "literacy events" that occur in many people's lives: reading the paper, reading signage, writing notes to teachers, etc.

Using these concepts, plus what you've read in Scribner, Gee and/or Brandt, keep a log of "literacy events" that you participate in for one full day.

<u>The Log:</u> Make a note of the time of day for each record and how you participated in the literacy event, who was with you, and what purpose it served. The more detailed your notes are, the easier it will be for you to write the second part of this assignment: the Reflection.

You may record these notes on an audio recorder, through texts to yourself on your phone, through Twitter or Facebook status updates, a note system on your smartphone, or using the good old-fashioned technology of pen and paper. Whatever works for you. **No matter how you record your notes, you must turn them in to me on paper: a copy of your handwritten notes, a printout of your Twitter feed or texts, or a transcription of your audio, etc.** However, you do not need to edit it for me—just give it to me as you recorded it. There is no page/word limit on this part of the assignment, but if you claim to participate in just three literacy events in one day, I will doubt your status as a college student!

<u>The Reflection (300-500 words):</u> To accompany and interpret your raw data observations about literacy events in your day, write to reflect on the events of the day. This reflection does not have to be written in extremely formal academic language—you are encouraged to use "I," for example—but it must be typewritten and proofread. Here are questions for you to consider as you draft this letter:

1. What is your definition of "literacy" How does it relate to Scribner's concept of literacy, or Gee's or Brandt's definitions?
2. Did you include literacy activities *beyond* print in your Log? Why or why not?
3. How did your literacy history or habits affect your participation in "literacy events" (Heath)?
4. What surprised you about your recording of "literacy events?"
5. How might you characterize your experiences on this day compared to your "literacy events" in high school, or in the future? How do the events differ in number or in kind?

The Literacy Log and Reflection will not be workshopped in class; therefore, I encourage you to draft the Reflection on your own, visit the Writing Center, or have a friend read it over. Never hand in a first draft.

Staple your typewritten Literacy Letter to your paper copy of your Literacy Log and bring them to class.

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Literacy Narrative

Draft #1 due: Jan 28 (draft workshop, BRING THREE PRINTED COPIES TO CLASS)

Draft #2 due to Prof. Vee: Feb 4 (11:59pm on CourseWeb)

Also to be included in the Midterm Portfolio.

Are you literate? Did you grow up in a literate culture? What do those things mean, anyway?

Wherever/whatever/whoever you are with literacy, this assignment asks you to describe one tiny sliver of your history of how you got there. Who are the people who helped you become literate? What places or institutions were helpful to you as you were learning literacy? What particular literacy events stand out from your life?

Write a 1000-1250 word narrative detailing some scene, phase, or key person in your literacy history.

This assignment is designed to let you let your writing wings a bit. Do NOT write in a formal academic style; it will be a strange match for the personal story you tell. You have a chance to workshop the essay and to get feedback from me prior to receiving a grade on the essay in the portfolio, so you can take risks without fear of jeopardizing your grade.

The most successful narratives are likely to have the following qualities:
6. Specificity and detail: what was the particular book you **first** remember reading? (Perhaps you find a copy of it at the library and revisit it!) What did your 3rd grade teacher who taught you cursive look or sound like? What did it feel like to first "get" some deeper interpretation of Shakespeare? What was your sister doing when you were caught writing on the walls in your kitchen?
7. Personal style: Take some risks here and try to write in a style that reflects you or your literacy learning process. Tell a story that we want to hear.
8. Reference to aspects of literacy that we might identify with having done the readings and discussion for the course: social situations surrounding literacy, historical scope of literacy practices, connections between literacy and personal identity, etc.

You can think of Rose's or Akinnaso's work as a model for how to tell a good story (although yours will be much shorter). Brandt's concept of sponsorship might be useful to jog your memory, and her article on remembering reading and writing can help you differentiate between your reading and writing memories.

You do not have to cite anyone explicitly in your Narrative. But if you are using a concept from the readings (such as sponsorship), you should acknowledge that in a footnote.

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Literacy Interview

Draft #1 due: Feb 11 (draft workshop, bring 3-4 copies)
Draft #2 due: Feb 18, 11:59 on CourseWeb
Also to be included in the Midterm Portfolio.

You've reflected on your own literacy events and practices in the Literacy Narrative and Literacy Log; in this assignment, you have the chance to learn more about someone else's literacy.

You will interview (and audio-record) one person who has a background significantly different from yours—they must be 10 years older or younger than you, have grown up in a different country or speaking a language different from your native language, etc. Your interview may be anywhere from 30min to 3h—it's up to you. But make sure you have enough interesting experiences to write about. **Weave your own reflections with the words of your interviewee into a 1000-1500 word essay.**

For this assignment, do NOT submit a transcript or audio recording of the interview. Your essay should interpret and select from the audio interview.

DO choose at least ONE concept of literacy from one of the readings for the course and connect it to the experiences of your interviewee. Whose theory of literacy fits best with your understanding of your interviewee's literacy practices? You can footnote a citation rather than putting it in the text if it makes more sense with the style you choose for your essay.

Once again, you have a chance to workshop the essay and to get feedback from me prior to receiving a grade on the interview in the portfolio, so you can take risks without fear of jeopardizing your grade.

Interview strategies: Try to avoid yes/no questions (Do you like to read?) because they often don't yield interesting responses. Instead, try: How do you feel when you read now? Here are some sample questions you may want to ask in your interview:

·What are your first memories of learning how to write (or read)?
·Who was the most important person to you in your efforts to learn to read and write?
·What was the most challenging time for you in terms of reading or writing?
·What do you like best about your writing?
·What kinds of things do you read?
·How do you use reading and writing in your workplace?
·Where do you see yourself reading or writing in the future?

Brandt, Vieira and Rose may serve as models for how to tell a good story, and Brandt and Vieira both refer to interviews in their writing.

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What is literacy, and why does it matter?
Draft #1 due: Thurs, Feb 25 (draft workshop in class)

Draft #2 due: Thurs, Mar 3 (with the Midterm Portfolio in class)

You can discuss your draft in conference with Prof. Vee during midterm conferences ~Feb 29 (sign up Feb 25).

The course is called *Uses of Literacy* and we've explored multiple meanings and uses of literacy from social, historical, educational, economic, religious and practical angles from many theorists of literacy: Barton, Gee, Rose, Brandt, Fishman, Vieira, NeCamp, Resnick & Resnick and Delpit. Now's your chance to weigh in: **what is literacy, and why does it matter?** *Drawing on at least TWO of the literacy scholars discussed in class, answer this question in a ~1000 word formal essay.*

Whose theory of literacy fits best with your understanding of literacy as it is lived in your life, the life of your interviewee, or in society today? Which ideas about literacy offer the most explanatory power? Do these theories of literacy fit better with the formal classroom or learning outside of the classroom? What do they fail to capture about literacy, and how do your ideas rectify that failure? The work we've read in the class doesn't offer "answers," and, in fact, some theories are in conflict with others. This is your chance to sort out where you stand.

Do NOT begin your essay with a dictionary definition.

You will have a chance to workshop this essay, but you will not automatically be able to get my feedback before you turn this essay in for your final portfolio. If you would like my feedback, we can talk about your ideas at our midterm conference.

Here are some sample questions you may want to explore in this essay:
- What practices do you consider literacy, and what practices do you **not** consider literacy? What are the essential differences between these practices?
- What does it mean to be "literate?" Is it possible to be "illiterate?" How do these definitions change with people's social contexts or ages?
- What are the stakes for defining what literacy is?
- How does literacy get valued in workplaces, education and society? Why do these values matter?
- How has the function or definition of literacy changed in history?

You don't have to answer all of these questions—you can't in a paper this short! Consider some of them in your writing, but don't write a lockstep paper that follows these questions paragraph by paragraph.

Note that the word count here is rather short. I'll stop reading at 1250 words! The shorter word count is meant to help you cut out the fluff and focus on the questions at hand.

English 1552, Spring 2016

Literacy in Context Essay
Draft #1 due: Thurs, Mar 17 (draft workshop)

Draft #2 due: Thurs, Mar 24 (due to Prof. Vee online through CourseWeb)

<u>Also to be included in the Final Portfolio.</u>

Most of the scholars you've read argue that literacy is always enacted in particular, socially-constructed contexts and is best studied within those contexts. This essay gives you the chance to do just that. Find a community that interests you—a workplace, your favorite coffee shop, online forum, church group, Greek organization, etc.— and spend at least 2 hours observing the literacy practices and events of that group. This observation should be, if possible, separate from any time you might spend in this place normally. In other words, do not go there to study or be on your phone or do something else. Really observe. If the space is familiar to you, your objective is to approach this space in a new way, with the lens of literacy. If possible, take pictures or make sketches of the place you observe to include those in the essay. Note Beverly Moss's description of her methods in studying Phenomenal Women, Inc. on page 5-6 of her article, "Phenomenal Women."

Ask you observe, ask: How do they create and interpret texts? How do they work together or communicate as they do so? What kind of literacies are called upon by the physical environment in which they meet? **Write a 1000-1500 word essay connecting your observations to the ideas of at least *two* scholars discussed in class.** Fishman, Gere, Moss and Purcell-Gates may serve as good models for this essay.

Working in concepts from the readings can be very challenging. **For this paper only, do NOT include direct quotes from the texts from the class**. **Additionally**, don't choose which text you want to work with ahead of time and then force your observations to fit into those texts. Instead, observe your place first. Then, think about which concepts really might help your reader understand the place you're observing. Explain those concepts in your own words and connect them to your observations. It's relatively easy to find some quote from a scholarly text and fit it into a paragraph that's somewhat relevant. I'm asking you to engage with the scholars and texts and ideas from this class on a deeper level, rather than just stick citations into your text.

Here are some sample questions you may want to ask yourself as you observe your place:

1. What kind of people come here often? How old are they? What religious/ ethnic/ racial/ class background do they seem to have? What do they wear? Do they know each other? How do they interact with each other? How do all of these things affect the literacy practices of this place?

2. What kinds of texts/writing are around the place? (Brochures, menus, warnings, mission statements, hymnals, books, etc.) How do people interact with those texts? At what level do they appear to be written? For what kind of audience?

3. What kinds of writing (if any) is produced in this place? How does language circulate? What kinds of language appear to be most valuable or most prominent in this space?

4. What kinds of technologies intersect with writing in this place? Are there laptops, billboards, chalkboards, etc.? How do the technologies impact the kind of writing and reading that goes on in this place?

English 1552, Spring 2016

Literacy Remixed Assignment

Draft #1 due: Thurs, Mar 31 (workshop)
Draft #2 due: Sun, Apr. 10 (on CourseWeb, with Composition statement)
Presentation in class: Apr 19 & 21
Also to be included in Final Portfolio, along with Composition Statement

You've considered literacy from many different angles in this class. But you've only written about it in text. For this assignment, you'll push your literacy skills a bit more. You'll consider literacy through a digital project.

The basis of this digital project will be one of your previous essays for this class: **your narrative, interview, definition, log, or context essays.**

You'll choose one of those essays and *reimagine* it as an audio or video project. For example:

- An audio essay (3-5 min long, for which NPR might provide good examples)
- A video (something under 7min that could perhaps be uploaded to YouTube)

By *reimagine*, I do not mean: read your essay aloud and record it. I mean: turn it into something *very different* from the original, but keep the spirit, topic, argument, and/or focus of the original. I am skeptical of Power Points as digital projects. If you use PowerPoint in the typical slide of images and text kind of way, I don't think it will be pushing your literacy skills much. If you have questions about composing in other formats, just ask me!

The goal of this project is to have you push your literacy skills and think critically about what it means to compose in digital formats. If you're not already skilled as a digital composer, that's all right. This assignment will gently push you in this direction, from wherever you're starting. You can discuss your progress as a digital composer in your Composition Statement.

Composition Statement: In your 300-500 word Composition Statement, discuss:
- choices you made in your digital composition (and choices you *didn't* make)
- the goals you have for your composition
- the challenges you faced
- what you learned from the project

We will go over audio composition in the program *Audacity*. We will not go over video composition in class. If you'd like to do a video, you can teach yourself this by using Windows MovieMaker or Mac iMovie or visiting me in office hours.

You'll share your work with the class, so be sure to get permission from anyone you record via audio, video, or photo. You are not required to put your work online, but I think it would be great if you did! (on our blog, YouTube, etc.)

On Mar 31, you'll work in your peer groups in class on this project. Bring headphones.

During our last week of class (Apr 19&21), we'll enjoy these projects together. Make something you're proud to share!

English 1552, Spring 2016

Literacy Challenge Essay & Presentation

Topic choice due: Apr 5, one paragraph, in class (presentation groups assigned based on this**)**

Essay Draft #1 due: April 12 (draft workshop; Apr 7 is also a work day for your group)

Essay Draft #2 due to Prof. Vee: Tues, April 19, 11:59pm on CourseWeb

Group Presentation in class: April 19 & 21

This assignment consists of two related parts:

- A 1000-1500 word essay (written individually)
- A group presentation and reflection

The essay is also to be included in the Final Portfolio, along with a reflection on the group presentation.

Literacy Challenge Essay

In this project, you will explore more deeply one of the challenges you see in literacy today:

- its uneven distribution due to uneven school quality, etc.
- rising standards of digital literacy
- generational disparities in literacy
- challenges of teaching students with a diverse range of literacy experiences at home
- the "kids these days" perception that writing skills are declining
- issues of literacy related to immigration
- education and learning disabilities
- another topic of your choice?

Your essay should address:
What are the key factors contributing to this challenge in literacy? (Poverty, gender stereotypes, lack of support for a diversity of learning styles, etc.)

Who are the key figures thinking about this challenge? We've covered a lot of ground in this class, so you should be able to draw on at least two scholars we've read—*plus* at least one additional literacy scholar. See Prof. Vee for suggestions, or follow the references in the articles you've read for this class.

Who are the people most affected by this challenge in literacy? (immigrants, young people, people with dyslexia, etc.) And how does the challenge affect a wider group?

Finally, what are your ideas about addressing this challenge? Which aspects of the challenge will be the most difficult to address, and why? You know a lot about literacy after taking this class. You don't have to "solve the problem," but you should have some good ideas about how to move forward.

For this paper, I want a real Works Cited section because I'm asking you to use at least one outside source. You are welcome to use a different citation system, but I'd suggest MLA and this resource from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center to help: https://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/DocMLA.html

Literacy Challenge Presentation

Your final presentation will be based on your Literacy Challenge Essay.

Prof. Vee will assign final groups based on your one-paragraph proposals.

With your group, you will design a 20min in-class activity for us. This activity should help us to experience the challenge in a new way or think in a new way about how we could address it. It should be creative, interactive and interesting. No monologues and PowerPoints!! You will get feedback from your peers during your presentation/activity, and Prof Vee will use that feedback to assign an A/C/F grade to your group as a whole.

Your group will have a chance to work together in class on April 7 and April 12 (essay draft workshop). You will also need to find time to coordinate with your group outside of class.

Presentations will be in class on Apr 19 & 21, the last week we meet. Make them fun!

A 250 word reflection on your presentation will be part of your Final Portfolio.

English 1552, Spring 2016

Midterm BLOG Portfolio
Due: Feb 25, midnight, via CourseWeb

10% of your final grade for this course

All semester, the blog has been a space for you to hash out your thoughts on literacy and teaching and life in general—without intrusion or judgment from your prof. Now it's time to take stock!

Choose:
- Your best post
- Your best comment on someone else's post
- Your next-best comment or post

Paste links to all three of these into your document. Do not paste links to your editing screen. If done correctly, your link will look something like this: http://www.annettevee.com/2016spring_usesofliteracy/an-article-about-starting-literacy-education-very-young/
For your comments, you can just link to the post on which you commented. I'll know which comment is yours.

Do not revise anything.

Then, write a mini-cover letter (addressed to me, no more than 300 words) in which you introduce your posts and comments. (Put your links at the beginning, or end, or within your 300 word mini-cover letter.) Describe your thoughts as you posted them and now, upon reflecting on them. Tell me about: what you learned from writing in this dialogic, online space; what you're still curious about or what you're still learning; and how you might change your blog writing for the 2nd half of the semester or the future.

You'll be graded on the quality of the posts that you've chosen, as well as your general participation on the blog. I tend to weigh these two things equally. So, if you have 3 great comments/posts but only posted/commented three times, you'll do fine on the quality portion of grading and poorly on the participation part. If you're missing just a comment or two, but have otherwise said great things on the blog, then your participation will be just OK but the quality of your posts will boost you.

English 1552, Spring 2016

Midterm Portfolio, **Due: Mar 3, in class**
(with optional extension to Mar 15)

Your peers and I have read and responded individually to each piece of your writing for this class. Now your goal is to assemble your work together in order to tell the story of what you're learning about your own writing and about how literacy works in the world. Your Midterm Portfolio will be a reflection of all of the hard work you've done in this class. It is worth 35% of your final grade.

You have to print stuff out. Include: 1) peer review drafts 2) the draft that I commented on 3) final draft. Put them in reverse chronological order, so I see the final draft on top, and older drafts as I flip through.

Contents of the Midterm Portfolio should be (in this order):

9. **Cover letter** (500-750 words). The letter should be addressed to me (Prof. Vee). It should introduce the contents of the portfolio and provide a sense of your development in the class. In the letter, you can describe: how your initial goals for the class have shifted; what your goals for the rest of the class are; what you're most proud of; what you think you need the most work on; what you've learned about your own writing process; how you think about literacy now...you get the picture. The cover letter is the most important part of your portfolio because it introduces and connects all of the content inside. (You do not need to provide cover letters for any of the other parts of your portfolio. This should be enough.)

10. **Literacy Log and NEW reflection letter.** You did a literacy log at the beginning of the semester. But your thoughts on literacy might have changed since then. You have two options for revisions for your Literacy Log. 1) You can create a new log by taking notes on your literate interactions for a new day. AND then write a 300 word reflection on this new day's log, and how you now think of literacy. OR, 2) Take your old log and write a new reflection statement about how your log might be different now, or what events are missing or extra in this old log. For either option, please include your old literacy log along with your new, revised version. Put your NEW literacy log on top of your old one, and paperclip everything together.

11. **Literacy Narrative**. You should revise your Narrative based on my comments and your own thoughts since you originally wrote it. Put your "final" draft on top, include all previous drafts behind it, and paperclip everything together.

12. **Literacy Interview.** You should revise your Interview based on my comments and your own thoughts since you originally wrote it. Put your "final" draft on top, include all previous drafts behind it, and paperclip everything together.

13. **"What is Literacy, and Why Does it Matter?" Essay**. This will probably be the first time I've seen this essay so you likely won't have comments from me. However, you should include comments from your peers and your original draft of this essay. Put your "final" draft on top and paperclip everything together.

Put everything neatly into a folder with your name on it and turn your portfolio in to me during class.

English 1552, Spring 2016

Final BLOG Portfolio
Due: Apr 21, 11:59pm, via CourseWeb OR the blog

All semester, the blog has been a space for you to hash out your thoughts on literacy and teaching and life in general—without intrusion or judgment from your prof. Now it's time to take stock!

Choose:
- Your best post
- Your best comment on someone else's post
- Your next-best comment or post

Paste links to all three of these into your document. Do not paste links to your editing screen. If done correctly, your link will look something like this:
http://www.annettevee.com/2012fall_usesofliteracy/2012/09/23/our-social-writing-experiment/
For your comments, you can just link to the post on which you commented. I'll know which comment is yours.

Do not revise anything.

Then, write a mini-cover letter (addressed to me, no more than one page or 300 words) in which you introduce your posts and comments. (Put your links at the beginning, or end, or within your 300 word mini-cover letter.) Describe your thoughts as you posted them and now, upon reflecting on them. Tell me about: what you learned from writing in this dialogic, online space; what applications you see for blog writing in classrooms (if this is an interest of yours); what kinds of online writing you might see yourself doing in the future. If you're feeling adventurous, post this to the blog! If you'd like to keep your reflection private, turn it in on CourseWeb.

You'll be graded on the quality of the posts that you've chosen, as well as your general participation on the blog. So, if you have 3 great comments/posts but only posted/commented three times, you'll do fine on the quality portion of grading and poorly on the participation part. I tend to weight these two things equally. If you're missing just a comment or two, but have otherwise said great things on the blog, then your participation will be OK.

English 1552, Spring 2016

Final Portfolio, **Due: Apr ~~28~~ 29, 9–1pm, in 628C**

Your goal in your Final Portfolio is to assemble your work together in order to tell the story of what you have learned about your own writing and about how literacy works in the world. This will be a reflection of all of the hard work you've done in this class. It is worth 30% of your final grade.

You can drop this off in my office 9-1pm on ~~Apr 28~~ Apr 29. If you can't make this time window, please email me to set up a time to turn it in. We'll have a short conversation/check-in when you turn it in.

Contents of the Final Portfolio should be (in this order):

You have to print stuff out. Include: 1) peer review drafts 2) the draft that I commented on 3) final draft. Put them in reverse chronological order, so I see the final draft on top, and older drafts as I flip through.

1. **Cover letter** (750 words). The letter should be addressed to me (Prof. Vee). It should introduce the contents of the portfolio and provide a sense of your development in the class. In the letter, you *must* describe the kinds of revisions you made to the pieces included here. And you *may* describe: what you've learned about literacy; how this knowledge will serve you in your future; what you're most proud of; what you've learned about your own writing process; etc. The cover letter is the most important part of your portfolio because it introduces and connects all of the content inside. (Note that the Literacy Remixed project has a separate Composition Statement, but you're welcome to refer to that digital project here in your cover letter, too.)

2. **"What is Literacy?" Essay**. You turned this in for your Midterm Portfolio. The version you turn in here will be revised from that version to reflect your new understandings of literacy, plus any revisions based on my (ADV) comments from your Midterm Portfolio. Don't forget to include your drafts, including the one I commented on in your Midterm Portfolio.

3. **Literacy in Context Essay**. Revise this essay based on my comments, and include it here.

4. **Literacy Remixed digital project**. Your project will be a separate file uploaded to CourseWeb, or it will be a link to a YouTube video or something similar. In the portfolio document, you'll have a 250-500 word Composition Statement that describes choices you made in your digital composition and revision process, the goals you have for your composition, the challenges you faced, and what you learned from the project. Include information for how to find your project, either online or in CourseWeb.

5. **Literacy Challenges essay.** This essay should be revised based on my and your peers' comments.

6. **Literacy Challenges Presentation reflection** (250 words). Reflect on how your group worked together, how you came up with your idea for your interactive activity, and how you think the activity went in class. Optional: If you're planning to teach as a career or in the future, how did this activity help you think about designing class activities?